



# Visit Dursley Minutes of Meeting

On Zoom - Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 10:30am.

## Present:

Councillor Danae Savvidou (Dursley Town Council (DTC) & Dursley After Hours), Chris Shaw (Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW)), Andy Barton (Dursley Heritage Centre), Councillor Theresa Kinnison (DTC & Play & Sculpture Trail), Amy Helliwell (Stroud District Tourism Officer), Charlie Marwood (Escape Room), Sam Tombs (VIC/Library), Claire Parry (Hewitts) David & Julie Orchard (Ashen Plains Campsite), Karen Crowcombe (The Pulse) and Leah Wellings (DTC).

## 1. Welcome

Councillor Danae Savvidou opened the Visit Dursley meeting and welcomed everyone.

## 2. Apologies

Apologies at the meeting - Miranda Clifton (Cam Parish Council), Nola Bradley (Tyndale Arts), Rosie Powell (Dursley Farmers Market).

## 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes ()

The following points were noted:

- The Fairy Sculpture installation in Twinberrow Woods received a very positive response. The Sculptor Jackie Lantelli was very pleased. 3 of the fairies will be retained in the woodland and there could be future collaborations.
- There will be a new exhibition at the Heritage Centre on immigration. Date to be confirmed - it has yet to be finalised.
- Dursley's first Insider Guide featuring Danae (DTC) was published on Visit Stroud. We could look to develop more as a group. **Leah to look at.**

## 4. Update from Stroud District Tourism Officer

Amy (SDC) gave an update and the following points were noted:

### The Stroud District App

- The app has to date 2180 users.
- The Shakespeare Trail has been popular with 50 downloads. The Ghost Trail is a popular trail with 80 downloads.
- Dursley has 7 out of the 10 top sights on the app. With the most popular for Dursley being Dursley Market Place and Pedersen's grave. (Selsley common is a top sight for the District).
- The District and Dursley areas are downloaded the most, with 780 and 772 downloads respectively.
- The App now has some new features – a pop up feature to allow listing of events and also scavenger hunts, which is great news. There are plans to look at scavenger hunts for Stratford Park.
- **Everyone - Please let Amy know if you have ideas for any indoor trails across the district.**
- **Everyone - Please share the app posters where you can. Link to copy - <https://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/the-discover-stroud-trails-app>**

### Tourism Trends for 2024

- The wider trends for tourism promotions into the new year from Visit England include:
  - December Wonka Film Release (sweet shops/chocolatiers could use to advantage!)

- January - Wellness focus
- End February – Spring Outdoor focused – e.g. walking, outdoor activities/breaks, half term
- March – Camping, Easter time, Spring time, Oscars (10<sup>th</sup> March)
- 2024 – Look to promote any new accommodation, big events. **Everyone - Let Amy know of any.**

### **Footfall Data**

- Across UK/SW generally footfall has gone down for 2023 – terrible summer/cost of living.
- Dursley went down slightly for July -Aug 2023.
- Repeat visits across the areas dropped, figures show it's now pretty stagnant.
- Average dwell time during August 2023 in Dursley was 1 to 1.15 hours.
- Amy confirmed the data from the footfall counters utilises phones GPS. **It was suggested that having the geographical perimeter for the data and where it is picked up in the town would be useful.**

### **Signposting**

- **Everyone - Encourage our businesses/organisations to signpost where visitors could go next in town/district.**
- Leah & Amy have copies of the glossy 'Welcome to the Cotswold' Guide which covers some venues in the District if anyone would like a copy.

## **5. Feedback from the Visit Dursley USP meeting (16/10/23)**

The minutes had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that the 2 main things that stand out as USP's for Dursley relate to the Landscape and Heritage. Further discussion points/ideas raised:

### **The visitor offer**

- The Engine had started to discuss having a central offer/place in town that could pull visitors in – could be an attraction in itself with space to house a heritage offer/visitor information, for example, encompassing everything. Was discussed at USP meeting.
- It was recognised that everyone is cash strapped and space for a central place in town was also limited. Lots of elements to consider first, by working in partnership it could be co-ordinated in a viable way.

### **Signage & funding**

- People need clear directions/signage where to go in the town. We do have boards around town but we need to be consistent. Better signposting to the VIC at the Library would help too.
- The Rural England Prosperity fund now live – businesses/organisations can apply – tourism, leisure, heritage projects may be able to access funds. **Leah to circulate details.**
- The Dursley part of the Greenway, through Littlecombe, is almost ready and is another asset the town has which should be linked to /sign posted.

### **Marketing ideas**

- Via the Facebook Community – Mums Net community.
- The Engine works with an influencer, look at how we could tap into.
- Take advantage of cross promotion opportunities on social media. People visiting or staying somewhere – use comments to promote Dursley. Recent example of American visitor on Tik Tok and someone promoting Dursley.
- Tapping into the dog walking community.
- New walking events, new audiences/connections. E.g. women's walking events organised by Karen.
- DWW building links with railway and GRCC Railways partnership – there is some funding.
- **Andy kindly volunteered to do more heritage walks through the year which can be promoted.**
- Better use of Trip Advisor and Google Business to promote places in Dursley, example where to eat. Google is probably the largest platform used to raise awareness of businesses – Terri is a Google Local Guide and regularly does reviews e.g. restaurants in town. Pictures are encouraged. **As a group do we need to raise awareness across businesses so they can get people reviewing?**
- Look to work with businesses to create package deals, e.g. coffee & cake deal linked to a trail.

The next USP meeting - 27/11/23 at 10am.

## 6. The Engine & Visit Dursley – Traders Escape Room Event – 27<sup>th</sup> November

The invitation to the Escape Room event with traders was noted - still a few places available.

## 7. Updating the Town Map - ideas

The Council plan to produce an up to date Town Map. Ideas were put forward:

- Visitors would be interested in links to walks, landscape features and also heritage assets e.g. Town Hall.
- Map needs to fit into a wider strategy – scope what we need.
- Map needs to be clear and easy to use – not too busy/complicated that it's hard to read/work out.
- QR codes could be used to list businesses in the town which would help to keep the map up to date, instead of lots of adverts/business listings that go out of date.
- The old map went out of date quickly for visitors as businesses changed – disappointing for visitors.
- The artistic map in the Wotton under Edge car park is eye catching and attractive.
- The maps produced for rail walks by GCRP are clear, include illustrations and are very attractive.
- The Visit Stroud Guide includes a map with businesses, 45000 printed using advert fees. Good mix of businesses across the district (taxi, escape room and farmers market in Dursley included)

**Leah to look at the map examples given above & research contacts.**

## 8. Promotion of 'December in Dursley'

A December in Dursley poster would be published across town/social media by Visit Dursley, similar to last year. **Everyone - please forward items for inclusion to Leah.**

- The Heritage Centre have plans for an immigration exhibition soon, but details not finalised yet.
- The Chantry Centre have events. Check website for what's on.

## 9. Updates from group members:

### Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW) – festival & new walks (Chris Shaw)

- Very successful Festival for 2023 – 500 people overall.
- Visit Dursley connections worked well, reflected in the programme/offering.
- People attracted from halo towns and some international visitors.
- Took 45% bookings from email list.
- There are plans to do more to connect with the London Hiking facebook group.
- The train walk was disappointing. Although challenging, DWW is determined to keep trying to make these links work.

### Tyndale Arts – 2023 activities & events (Leah on behalf of Nola Bradley)

- This year's event went well and was successful. It started with the talk on Thursday night by Lois Edmunds on theatrical costume making which was very interesting and well-attended - in fact it was oversubscribed.
- The launch evening on Friday night was also successful, being attended by a large number of artists and their friends and families. Catherine Braun, leader of Stroud District Council kindly opened the event for us and was very supportive.
- The exhibitions on Saturday and Sunday went well and were enjoyed by artists and visitors alike. We haven't had a chance to get together and collate numbers etc yet but all the venues were busy and sales were good. Responses to the follow-up survey sent to artists aren't fully in yet but feedback so far has all been positive. The tie-in with the Walking Festival was useful (the refreshments at the Methodist Church were particularly appreciated!) and we would like to build on this in future if at all possible.
- We're about to start planning for next year's event and are looking forward to building on this year's success.

### **Halloween activities feedback (Leah Wellings/Terri Kinnison)**

- Festive Dursley Halloween event in the market place went well with good attendance.
- More feedback on the trails this year, all positive – the Twinberrow Woods Trail proved to be very popular – greater awareness this year.

### **The Artisan Market & new Coordinator (Charlie Marwood)**

- The new freelance Co-ordinator for The Artisan Market, from 2<sup>nd</sup> December market, is Sophie from TJ Soaps.
- The Engine is still the umbrella organisation for the market.
- The Winter Fayre event on 2<sup>nd</sup> December takes place inside at the Tab, with 15 stalls, music, kids activity table and refreshments.
- The Market would continue to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday on the month.

### **Plans for Pedersen Event April 2024 (Andy Barton/Leah Wellings)**

- Plans are underway for a Pedersen event in the town on 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> April. This would be similar to previous years – hopefully bigger and better!
- The Veteran Cycle Group have a small organising committee, locally Andy (Heritage Centre), Leah (Council) and Joe (Kingshill House) are all involved in helping them to make it happen.
- Between 40/50 Pedersen bicycles could be ridden in. The group usually arrange local accommodation and are here all weekend.
- Andy plans to organise a heritage walk to coincide. The trail on the app can also be promoted.

### **Other Members Updates**

- Andy raised awareness of discussions underway to create a memorial and hold a commemoration event to the US air force pilots who crashed in Dursley up by Ashen Plains in 1944. American families are involved in the discussions and there could be some interest from TV stations – watch this space.
- Terri advised that the GL11 Audio trail signs up in the Dursley Sculpture & Play Trail would be refreshed.
- Danae advised that Dursley After Hours are planning a free event with GL11 and Churches Together – 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024.
- Farmers Market Update supplied by Rosie – overall footfall has been a lot quieter this year, maybe impacted by car boot, cost of living. The 2 markets are also back to back and discussions have taken place with Artisan Market about the challenges with the timings. Advert was placed in the Visit Stroud Guide 2024 - coming out soon. It was costly but the amount of places it will be distributed to - hotels, cafes, homes etc I am hoping it will pay off! Stall holder numbers have increased to similar pre-covid numbers.
- Would be good to get the town promoted on BBC Radio Glos, Bristol and Wiltshire. **Leah/Chris to get details for all.**
- Town struggles to get volunteers to provide cakes for events. Wotton has a good 'Town Hall Tea' model which seems to work. Could we better co-ordinate as a town to set up a cake club or syndicate – could we offer opportunities to local organisations to use it as a way to raise money on a rota system?

## **10.Date of next & 2024 meetings**

**20<sup>th</sup> February 2024. 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024. 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024. 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024.**

All on Zoom, 10:30am start.

Meeting finished at 12:10pm

**Members are encouraged to work together and share information between meetings.  
Regular updates relating to existing activities/projects can be circulated via email.**