



THESE MINUTES WILL BE ADOTPED AT THE NEXT FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON
MONDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER 2024

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Tourism, Trade and Traffic Committee held on Tuesday, 24th
September 2024 in the Parish Office

Members:

Susan Whitlock	Christine Hopkins	P	Peter Jennions
Patricia Banks	Bernard Bennett	P	Kenneth Cameron
David Royle	Anne Cullen		Sue Pepper
Bob Bishop	Donald Darbshire (Chair)	P	Ian Bliss

Also in Attendance:

Graham Well (Parish Clerk), Niamh Morrison (Assistant Parish Clerk), Linda Scott (Hurst Castle), Diane Brushwood (Magical Milford), Paul White (Milford Music Festival), Donna Mosley (Paddle on the Green), Jon Crouch (The Cave) and Nic Carass (Go New Forest).

1. Introductions

Cllr Darbshire opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. All Councillors and attendees introduced themselves, together with a brief background.

2. Apologies

Mr. Tim Wedgewood of South Lawn Hotel.

3. Hotels and Country Parks

Niamh Morrison (assigned clerk of the meeting) presented a submission on behalf of Mr. Wedgewood of South Lawn Hotel. It was reported that trade had been exceptional so far this year for the establishment. Sales were up by 20%. The hotel is currently adding 6 suites which will take them to a total of 57 keys. The Pavilion which was added last year is working well for them, accommodating the banqueting business they wanted to keep. They have moved away from the wedding market, and this has had no detrimental effect on the business. Despite actively moving away from the wedding market they have looked after several local weddings since and will always take a view on this policy for our community.

4. Shops, Cafés and Hostelries

Mr. Crouch reported that the consensus from this sector was that the weather had a detrimental impact on business, and it was noted that there were less families in circulation this year. Trade was ticking over but not exceptional. He added sympathies to a local publican and restaurant on their recent closure and highlighted just how difficult it can be. Ms. Mosley echoed points raised by Mr. Crouch. She suggested that Milford-on-Sea should focus on drawing in more families with activities and small-scale events to attract more visitors. There were suggestions that there was a “hole” in the tourism offering in Milford-on-Sea and that planning for winter and weather proofing events is key to future success. The cruise market and affordable foreign sun holidays are more appealing to families which is a noted concern. They both reported that there was a real fear for the hospitality industry, it’s escalating running costs and surviving in a very competitive market.

5. Tourism

Ms. Scott from Hurst Castle reported that it had been a very challenging year, visitor numbers were down by 15%. She also reported that school trips have not returned to pre covid levels and they are actively trying to drive this sector.

They are currently undertaking a significant amount of conservation work including the walls, the main staircase and the coal store.

Cllr Banks asked Ms. Scott if she does or if she can keep a record of who visits the Hurst Castle which visitors come by boat, car or foot. This might help assist with the car parking issues. Ms. Scott can provide a percentage of visitors on which travel by ferry and walking on a short-term basis, she suggested this could take place in October to capture one week of school holidays and another week during term time.

They are very open to working with any organizations to get more visitors to Hurst Castle. The next major event will be at Halloween when they anticipate 2,500 to 3,000

Ms. Scott informed others that she also works with Rachel Lewis who runs the Visit Milford website. They have more than 9,000 visitors to this site, and she would like more content to attract more visitors.

Hurst Caste has been awarded recognised status by World Monument Fund – This is a leading organisation devoted to safeguarding the world’s most treasured and vulnerable sites.

Mr. Crouch asked Ms. Scott if she had visitor figures, and he would be interested. Ms. Mosley suggested that Hurst Castle work with the hospitality sector, Ms. Scott reported that they already do this by circulating vouchers on behalf of local businesses.

Cllr Bennett joined the meeting and was introduced by Cllr Darbshire. They informed the attendees that the Parish Council are working on launching a new website. This presented an ideal opportunity to incorporate new content.

Ms. Mosley suggested that local businesses could engage with Bournemouth and Southampton Universities to ask if students in the Marketing and Business field would like to run a project in the Milford-on-Sea area. This could provide some relevant data and statistics in a cost-effective way.

Mr. White said he recently visited Hurst Castle and was very impressed with the acoustics. He recommended they consider holding music events.

Nic Carass, representative from Go New Forest addressed the meeting. Go New Forest is a community focused organization whose job is to help make people create live long memories in the New Forest by driving revenue and business into local communities. It consists of 167 members and is not council funded. She highlighted the importance in achieving objectives through digital windows.

6. Events

Ms. Brushwood of Magical Milford reported that it was their 6th year organising the Christmas event. The monies required are £6,500 and they have just launched their Just Giving page. They are actively seeking sponsors for this year's event. She reported that the event would take place on Saturday 30th November, the reason being that the local school choir are key to the event and logistically a weekend day would be preferential. The timings of this year's event would be weather dependant, and they would announce this nearer the time. Free car parking and a road closure would be put in place as per usual. She suggested that she could promote a regular nativity event with local businesses for families.

Ms. Mosley said that such an event would perhaps work as a one off but not financially viable to run it every day after school. Ms. Brushwood suggested the event could run every Friday and Ms. Carass said it could be promoted on the Go New Forest Website and social media, and explained how any local business or event can access Go New Forest website and 'submit an event'. These events are circulated in a newsletter that reached 34,000 subscribers. This is a possibility to be explored through local business working together.

Mr. White from Milford Music Festival reported that they had a committee meeting last night (23rd September) and that it was decided that they would be rebranding the festival. They had a lack of volunteers and held an event to recruit, they had a registrar of interest from 97 people, and they now have 15 committee members. It was reported that they need £27,000.00 to run the festival and their working capital year on year is in excess on £2,500, they are facing storage issues and ongoing costs. It was proposed by Mr. White at the meeting that they donate to the Milford-on-Sea Charitable Trust, however no committee member seconded this proposal. Cllr Darbishire referred to the terms of the Music Event being held and one of those was the charitable donation that was to be made and still outstanding. Mr. White said their current monies are required for working capital. The festival is heavily reliant on sponsorship, and he reported that they want to ensure they have enough funds for 2025 before making the donation. He offered his assurances that the charitable trust would receive

Graham Wells, Parish Clerk, asked Mr. White if he was in the position to commit to a certain amount for the charitable trust, Mr. White reiterated he was unable to do so without knowing the festivals financial future status and it was very much dependant on sponsorship.

Mr. White confirmed that the vendor slots would be made available to all the local businesses. The positioning of these stalls was discussed. Access to the local roads is also going to be given careful consideration for the next event. He also said the next event would be a much smaller event, it will comprise of local bands and any advertising about the event will be kept within the village.

There was a discussion held between Mr. White and other attendees about running and sharing social media together.

Cllr Hopkins stressed that there needs to be more paramedic assistance for large scale events such as the last music festival. There needs to be a St. John's presence or the equivalent in place to ensure events run safely.

7. Terms of use of the Village Green

Mr. Crouch suggested that the Village Green could benefit some further maintenance and enhancement. Cllr Darbishire confirmed that this item would need to be discussed between the Parish Council as a whole and recommended it be placed on a meeting agenda.

Mr. Crouch is of the opinion that the village would benefit from more frequent small-scale events. Cllr Darbishire and Mr. Wells confirmed that the Parish Council are supportive of these types of events.

Ms. Mosley suggested that there is a refuse issue, particularly during the summer. The Village Green would benefit from recycling bins and better bins that prevent seagulls from causing a mess. She enquired if there would be any grants available for making improvements and provide recycling bins. Mr. Wells confirmed that these bins are under NFDC ownership and that they would need to be consulted.

Cllr. Bishop made several points. Village Greens have rules and rights and if you want to do anything commercial on this space it requires rights/permission. He stated that there needs to be fairness in the use of the Village Green and consideration needs to be given to those who are not directly located "on it". The Village Green is a "neutral space" and those who are not immediately adjacent have no less rights than those who are.

Cllr Hopkins stated that there needs to be official medical stands for all events on the Village Green and those organising the events must factor this in when planning.

Advertising on the Village Green was discussed by Ms. Scott. Cllr Darbishire highlighted the difficulties around signage and what may or may not be permitted. Cllr Cameron raised concerns about use of banners etc. and Cllr Darbishire suggested that advertising be done digitally.

Ms. Mosley suggested there could be a better Wi-Fi facility.

Ms. Scott suggested the notice board would benefit from up-dating, particularly the map on the back.

Weather proofing events on the Village Green was discussed and the possibilities of use of marquees. The idea was floated by many that the Arts on the Green tent remain in situ for an attentional weekend to accommodate a weather proofing event.

8. To discuss any current issues in the Tourism, Trade and Traffic matters and any support the Parish Council can provide

The Chair, Cllr Darbishire stated this was covered under previous the previous agenda items – all agreed.

9. Any recommended assistance or advice required from Hampshire County Council

The parking consultation that will take place in relation to Keyhaven/Barton-on-Sea was discussed.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and CLOSED the meeting at 12.09pm.

..... Chair

..... Date