

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 8th FEBRUARY 2005

INTERIM REPORT OF THE TOURISM & I.T. TASK GROUP

Members: Cllrs. B.Ashley (Chairman), A.Still & A.Wood

1. The members have met on 9 occasions and discussed aspects of Tourism in Kennet and Wiltshire with the following persons:-

Chief Executive, Kennet District Council
Tourism Development Manager, Kennet District Council
Webmaster, Kennet District Council
Financial Services Manager, Kennet District Council
Tourism Manager, Wiltshire County Council
Town Clerk, Malmesbury Town Council
Tourism Manager, Malmesbury Town Council

Visits have been made to the three KDC TIC's where the Task Force met most of the staff, and to Malmesbury TIC in North Wilts District.

2. Tourism pamphlets have been obtained for KDC, WCC and Malmesbury Town Council.
3. The Task Force have accessed the Local, Regional and National Government websites to gain an insight into their data.
4. The Task Group noted the report of the Finance Services Manager provided for the Budget Reduction Sub-Committee of 6 November 2002, entitled BUDGET 2003/04 – CORPORATE ECONOMIES which discussed the KDC Tourism Service.
5. Also noted were the Minutes of the meeting of the TOURISM GROUP of Wiltshire & Swindon Economic Partnership dated 20 April 2004 together with Cllr. Molland's letter of 30 September 2004 to South West Tourism regarding their consultation document 'Towards 2015 – Shaping Tomorrow's Tourism'.
6. The VisitBritain document 'Customer Contact Services – a framework for action' published in October 2004 represents the recommended way forward for Tourism involving greater e-contact through Customer Contact Centres (CCC). It envisages integration of TIC's into the networked e-business systems that are being established through regional and sub-regional Destination Management Systems and EnglandNet. The Task Group noted the CEO's comments that CCC's were being established in Trowbridge, Devizes and other District Councils in Wiltshire but no decision had been made as to the siting of Customer Service Points (CSP).

7. The Task Group noted the related action of the Human Resources committee in agreeing to a Customer Services Manager under the Customer First initiative, and the potential for a Tourism Manager as part of the Customer Services Manager's team.
8. The Task Group received Kennet DC Tourism budget data for FY 2001/02 until FY 2004/5 from the Finance Services Manager. The budget for FY 2005/6 is £398,410 of which staff cost is £269,580.

KDC TIC's & Tourism Development

9. MARLBOROUGH TIC
This is manned by one person within the Library. It is noted that the former TIC site in George Lane has not been let and that the expected benefit of its 'letting' has not materialised. The sales of goods formerly generated a useful income but this has not developed at the new site.
10. DEVIZES TIC
This office is situated in Market Square and also houses a member of KDC dealing with bus passes.
It normally has several people in attendance. The Visitor Services Manager has her office there.
11. AVEBURY TIC
Housed in a church on the edge of the village and has two staff.
12. KDC – TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
Sited at Browfort with the Tourism Manager plus one assistant who is currently working in the IT section.

EXISTING e-FACILITIES

13. KENNET TOURISM WEBSITE
The www.visitkennet.gov.uk website is currently under re-development by an enthusiastic KDC web manager and the Tourism assistant.
14. WILTSHIRE TOURISM WEBSITE
The Wiltshire CC website www.wiltshire.gov.uk has little to commend the Kennet area on its Tourism & Heritage pages.
The www.visitWiltshire.co.uk site is much more useful but we understand that WCC may be taking control back in house.
15. SOUTH WEST TOURISM (SWT) WEBSITES
The www.visitbritain.com website is very poor in assisting tourism in Kennet; the South West & South East sites virtually ignore Kennet.

OUTSTANDING INVESTIGATIONS

16. We need to meet the Members and Officers at Wiltshire County Council to discuss their current plans for the Wiltshire website.
'Wiltshire' is an important search engine word and there may be large benefits to Tourism in Kennet by better links from the WCC website.
17. We need to discuss the benefits of KDC Tourism-promotion with the Chambers of Commerce of Devizes and Marlborough.
18. We need to hear the views of Devizes and Marlborough Town Councils on the benefits of KDC Tourism-promotion and any links to their websites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. That the Task Group meet the WCC members and Officers responsible for Tourism, together with an appropriate officer from KDC, to discuss website co-operation.
20. That the Task Group meet the groups mentioned in 17 and 18 above to discuss the benefits of e-Tourism and TIC's, and produce a report with full recommendations for the next meeting of O & S.

Cllr.B.G.Ashley
Chairman