



# Sherborne Area Tourism Forum

Notes of the Meeting held on Thursday 16 November 2017 at 2.30 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Manor House, Newland.

**ATTENDANCE:** Janet Schofield (Chair & TIC), Barry Brock (Sherborne Museum and Notetaker), Cllr. David Birley (STC), Jane Adkins (A Head for PR), Cindy Chant (Sherborne Blue Badge Guide), Marjorie Snowden, Moira Western (Douzelage), Helen Priest (Artslink), Sally Westlotorn (COT), John Gaye (Sherborne Literary Society), Trevor Savage (Sherborne TC), Cllr Jon Andrews (DCC/STC), Geoff Ward (Sherborne Steam & Waterwheel Centre), Bob Walden (Sherborne Twinning Association), Maria Wingfield Digby (Sherborne Castle).

- 1) **Chairman's Opening Remarks:** Janet welcomed Maria Wingfield Digby to the Forum, and expressed her appreciation for the prior submission of members' reports, which enabled the business of the meeting to be handled more expeditiously.
- 2) **Apologies:** Nicky King (Eastbury Hotel), Linda Woods (Sherborne Abbey), Gillian Gunner (Sherborne in Bloom), Josie Elias (Photographer), Patricia Spencer (S&DFHS), Samantha Muir (Musician).
- 3) **Minutes of previous meeting:** Approved.
- 4) **Matters arising:** Covered under the agenda items which follow.
- 5) **SATF Activity Update and TIC Report:** Please see Janet's and Josie's attached reports. Janet drew attention to the addition of a Blog to the website, which would provide the opportunity to look at some matters from a different point of view, and she offered Forum members the chance to participate if they wished. She also encouraged members to use the online form (<https://www.visit-dorset.com/whats-on/submit-event>) on the 'Dorset Events Hub' on the Visit-Dorset.com website to promote their events. There is no charge for this.
- 6) **Member updates:**
  - a) **Chamber of Trade** - Sally reported that the COT was participating in a Pack Monday Fair review with Sherborne Castle Estates and The Events Crew, and that it was hoped that over a period, fresh life could be breathed into a format that, although highly valued, had been looking increasingly tired. She also reported on the efforts to raise dementia awareness in the town, and Trevor confirmed that the mayor had identified two business challenges - to support local enterprises and to support the Dementia Action Alliance. Helen provided further details of what was happening under the guidance of ArtsLink.
  - b) **ArtsLink** - Helen reported that ArtsLink was in the process of launching its Spring programme, and that she was hopeful of a good attendance at the Modigliani Lecture, arranged for 29 November.
  - c) **Sherborne Literary Society** - John reported that the Society was looking for a new Festival Director. Not all Festival events had been a success this year, and he felt it would be important to try to enhance the 'festival' feel in future years, and to bring people in from further afield wherever possible. Marjorie questioned the timing of the Festival, and wondered if the similar Dorchester and Yeovil events had attracted people elsewhere. John explained that October is a key time for new publications, but recognised that the timing of the event is something that should be considered.
  - d) **Sherborne Museum** - Please see Barry's attached report. Barry drew attention to the Museum's forthcoming events: the 'Concealed, Revealed' talk due to take place on the following day (17 November);

and the programme of Museum Winter Talks, which were now open to the public, and which included the following: -

- Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December, Barbara Elsmore talking about *Looking back at Lord Digby's School*.
- Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January, Barry Brock talking about *Prison for the Poor: Sherborne's Bridewell and its subsequent history*.
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February, Katherine Barker talking about *Pack Monday: Sherborne's 'living history'*.

- e) **Sherborne Steam & Waterwheel Centre** - Geoff highlighted elements of his attached report and confirmed that the next Open Day had been scheduled for 8 January 2018.
- f) **Somerset & Dorset Family History Society** - Please see Patricia's attached report.
- g) **Douzelage** - Please see Moira's attached report, which she updated for members attending the meeting.
- h) **Sherborne in Bloom** - Please see Gillian's attached report. Janet offered congratulations on behalf of the Forum for the recent Britain in Bloom Silver Gilt award, and thanks for the Hanging Basket Project, which she thought had been highly successful and enhances the town.
- i) **Sherborne Town Council** - Trevor provided an update on two projects. The Town Council had prepared a draft Paddock Project heads of terms of lease for SCACT, but this was unlikely to be discussed for the moment, until SCACT's own pre-planning application had been fully considered by the planning authorities. In respect of the roof repairs required as part of the Digby Hall refurbishment project, these had been costed and were not likely to be as expensive as feared; however, they would have to be coordinated with the upgrading of the air-handling equipment located on the roof. The internal changes required were still being assessed. In response to a question, Trevor confirmed that Sherborne House was for sale on the market, but following further discussion, was strongly of the view that this sits outside the influence of the Forum.
- j) **Abbey 104** - No prior report had been submitted.
- k) **Blue Badge Town Walks** - Cindy expanded on her attached report.
- l) **Sherborne Twinning** - Please see Bob's attached report; he reminded members of Sherborne Twinning's planned Epiphany Dinner/dance, due to take place on 6 January 2018.
- m) **Sherborne Castle** - Please see Maria's attached report, in addition to which, she reported that the Gardens at Sherborne Castle had been identified as a 'partner garden' by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), which meant that, amongst other things, RHS members could enjoy free admission during April and October each year.
- n) **Jon Andrews** - Jon expressed concern about the poor quality of the town's pavements, and advised that he was discussing this with the Highways Department.
- o) **David Birley** - David was able to confirm that the Summer Festival would take place on 16 June next year. He was also alarmed at the number of town centre businesses which were due to close (most noticeably Dodge's, two jewellers, and the Oxfam charity shop) and asked what could be done to encourage town centre shop owners.
- p) **Marjorie Snowden** - Marjorie raised concerns about car parking in the town. Trevor reminded members that a parking review had been initiated, although this was not the responsibility of the Town Council. Jon reported that a road signage review was also underway, which he hoped could lead to better usage of car parks in the north of the town. John said that he had always found it easy to park in Sherborne.

## 7) Possible SATF initiatives: -

- a) **Cruise Educational** - Janet reported that she and Jane had attended this event, together with Cindy and Rob from Sherborne Castle. She thought that it had been really worthwhile, as they had met several cruise companies, who had all expressed an interest in the variety of attractions available in Sherborne.
- b) **Wayfinding and shop window vinyls** - Janet said that she and Trevor had met Sarah Harbige, responsible for Leader Funding, to see if either of these initiatives would attract support. Sarah had seen both as part of the same project, and believed that they warranted the preparation of a funding application, but neither the TIC nor the Town Council had the necessary resource, which was frustrating, as this project had obvious advantages. Janet asked member organisations to see if they could help, and Moira suggested approaching the Volunteer Centre in Dorchester, to see if a volunteer project manager could be found. Maria proposed that the Forum should approach key players in the town's tourism sector (e.g. the Castle, the Abbey, the Almshouse) to see if they could help with the necessary funding. With regard to the window vinyls, Trevor said he had received one estimate that the cost for a non-reusable vinyl (12ft by 10ft) would be approximately £650. Maria suggested a more economic, because reusable, alternative could be to employ a Dorchester firm to create displays out of chipboard instead of vinyl. Janet said she would follow up these suggestions.

**8) Walter Raleigh 400:** Bob and Cindy had agreed to think about ways of commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Raleigh's execution, and had considered a film show, a walk, and a Tudor banquet. Unhappily English Heritage had not shown interest in supporting an event in the Old Castle grounds. Maria said that Sherborne Castle would be focusing on Raleigh throughout the year, and was liaising with other interested parties with Raleigh links (e.g. Hayes Barton). Her own book, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, would be published by Pitkin on 1 February 2018.

## 9) Any other business: -

a) **'Key Pillars' sub-group** - Janet asked members to consider inviting Sherborne's main tourism 'pillars' to establish a sub-group intent on promoting the town. She suggested that the first tier of 'pillars' might constitute Sherborne Abbey and Sherborne Castle, and that a second tier might constitute the Old Castle, the Almshouse and the museums.

**10) Date of next meeting - Thursday 25 January 2018 - 2.30pm - The Council Chamber, Manor House, Newland.**