

LVEP Board meeting minutes:

Meeting held on Wednesday 22nd January at 2pm. Bet365 Stadium.

Present

Charlotte Cain	Staffordshire County Council – Enjoy Staffs
Kim Hill	Staffordshire County Council – Enjoy Staffs
Ben Watts	Trentham Estate
Nicola Swinnerton	Staffordshire County Council
Olivia Thackstone	World of Wedgwood
Laura Gerrard	Alton Towers Resort
Lee Philps	World of Wedgwood
Frances-Marie Hitchen	University of Staffordshire
Craig Simmonds	Stoke City FC
Cllr Matt Swindlehurst	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Ed Bassett	Clip n Climb - Stoke
Maria Howes	National Memorial Arboretum
Lara Rowe	Tamworth Borough Council
Cllr Jane Ashworth	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Richard Drakeley	National Forest
Arthur Barnard	Philip Astley Project CIC
Steve Alty	Hilton – Garden Inn

Virtual

Cllr Philip White	Staffordshire County Council
Colin Sweeney	Weston Park
Andrea Sammons	Staffordshire County Council
Richard Swancott	Staffordshire County Council
Jonny Shelton	Staffordshire County Council

Apologies

Anthony Hodge	Staffordshire County Council
Angela Glithero	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Alastair Budd	Trentham Estate
Andrea Webster	Weston Park

1. Welcome and apologies.

Laura Gerrard (LG) – Interim Chair welcomed everyone to the second Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent LVEP (SSLVEP) board meeting.

Round table introductions – name, where from and role.

Apologies from Angela Glithero, Alastair Budd, Anthony Hodge, and Andrea Webster.

2. Debrief from The BIG Tourism Conference

Olivia Thackstone (OT) gave a summary of the feedback/survey from the conference on the 9th of January.

KH to circulate link to the LVEP video shown at the meeting.

Summary of Conference feedback to date.

Will be circulated with minutes of meeting.

3. Growth Plan and Priority leads update.

Craig Simmonds (CS) – Business Tourism

- Focus is on assembling a subcommittee with representatives from Major venues and SME's. Possibly opens to more than one subcommittee.
- SWOT analysis, particularly challenges and opportunities.
- Attend travel and trade shows as one destination.
- Conference bureau strategy review function for best needs.
- Programme Plan.

OT stated that Business Tourism Manager recruitment deadline had been extended slightly due to Christmas period, have had some good applications, and should be recruiting soon. This person/role will be key in working with this role.

Steve Alty (SA) commented that the BTM role will be a key role for many businesses as conferences is their bread and butter. Should ensure everyone is represented or have input.

OT commented it will be important to build a network – it was strong pre-pandemic, previously it was a traditional membership model, but there are other models now and all should be looked at to figure out which is best.

Currently there is a Meet Stoke and conference bureau website, it is likely that the conference website will be reignited.

SA commented Used to go to the confex exhibition to represent whole county.

CS commented that he has already had interest from the conference from others to get involved – e.g. Helen Cuddy expressed interest to help target people to be involved with subcommittee.

Frances-Marie Hitchen (FMH) – Education and Inclusion

- Works closely with NSCG (Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group) and South Cheshire Colleges and they are reporting having thirty interviews every 2 weeks regarding Tourism courses, so appetite is there.
- Info from employers on what they need is important and employability cases.
- Need businesses representatives on the sub committee for this priority group.
- Need a “Takeaway” for prospective students and in particular parents as perception currently is that the industry is only flight attendants and travel agents. Do not understand the benefits and career potential and so may steer their children away from it.
- Need to show UK’s playground and a flow chart/diagram showing pathway of levels of education e.g. Level 2 (GCSE), Level 3, Higher Education, Graduate training schemes and then careers.

Kim Hill (KH) – Link to our careers videos showing wide range of careers in the sector as showcase well.

-What do businesses want? Colleges are all over LinkedIn and are keen to connect, should encourage businesses to go into colleges and do a guest lecture on a career/business.

Travel Weekly shows what is going on in the sector.

Take off in Travel – FMH has asked if can do a showcase feature on the SSLVEP.

It has an A-Z of job roles.

FMH shows students the Forbes Top 100 and top ten is often full of hoteliers etc – shows students and parents it can be a hugely profitable and rewarding career. Not just a stepping stone or stop gap.

Key is educating students and parents about this.

Cllr Jane Ashworth (JA) asked, do we currently have any projections of future needs?

LEP did not do one but did not include VE.

Would be key to show Uni and College – graduate outputs from Tourism Qualifications to show prospective students and parents' what careers and jobs people go on to.

Publish this as a highlight.

- Link in with marketing leads, support in producing the materials and how to use.
- Use on Open Days, on websites etc.
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Laura Gerrard (LG) – Marketing & Business Support

- Priority is subcommittee – not just marketeers. How to communicate, content, feedback from conference – already had interest from Water World in getting involved. Want breadth and depth.
- New Destination Campaign – map out Key seasonal dates and identify gaps.

Cllr Matt Swindlehurst (MS) commented that it is imperative how to support one another, cross promoting others, thanks to the LVEP team the Discover Staffordshire Moorlands

www.discoverstaffordshiremoorlands.co.uk website has launched.

Now focusing on itineraries in same vein as the ones already created for Stoke and Lichfield. Need to look at commonality and link up. Ignore political boundaries and work together as the visitor does not recognise political and geographical boundaries. Do what makes sense for the visitors. This is the focus until the summer.

FMH – Give universities key open days, move in days and transition days info to VE businesses and vice versa, provide new students and family supporting them "whats on", "where to go", "things to do" so when they spend time here we can maximise the value to VE.

Online and physical leaflet rack on their websites. Both Universities and attractions/accommodation etc.

CC- Now we can get things moving, there is a request for all the Board members to send in which areas they feel they can support with.

CC to email board to gain information on who is to work in which priority areas.

4. Richard Drakeley (RD) – Sustainability

Slides are sent in separate attachment.

Sustainable Tourism Action Plan is seen as an internal guide and live document for LVEP.

SBEN (Staffordshire Business Environmental Network) are providing Carbon Literacy Training (CLT) to businesses, and it is suggested that all Board members if not already undergo the training and be advocates to the wider VE community.

Needs to be an increase on nurturing local talent – which can reduce carbon footprint of journeys etc travelling to work.

Link in with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

Marketing – celebrate successes of sustainability, more case studies, itineraries, and education etc.

Visitor Behaviour – informed choices, how to do better, everyone making a slight difference can have a big impact. Package incentives to encourage behaviour.

Role of LVEP is advocacy.

Richard to share draft of Sustainability Action Plan.

Look at how to measure success and progress, benchmark and compare to other destinations.

GSI – Index assessment.

Meeting with SBEN and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust in February.

5. Nicola Swinnerton – Local Transport Plan (LTP).

Slides will be sent in separate attachment.

The LTP is massive. Each District and Borough will also have their own plan, more palatable for each area.

Slides to be sent out with the minutes of the meeting.

Look into SBEN CLT training for the board.

Circulate draft of Sustainable Tourism Action Plan

Circulate slides of presentation

Education is key to ensure public realise what impact it can have.

Vision is to become efficient net zero transport network, but still need to get economic growth etc.

Multi-purpose journeys and car sharing – getting public to think more about what they do, and can they do it better?

New LTP will encourage walk/cycle/public transport.

We are custodians of our county.

Mindful of not creating social exclusion if people then feel the need to limit their getting out and about.

Looking at lower maintenance liability e.g. Reflective bollards not illuminous and LED lighting, etc.

Deter, Switch, Improve Diagram – how fulfil needs without travelling or travelling as far?

Need better bus network in Staffs to make it work.

Freight – encourage as centre of the country, how can work collaboratively better? Full loads to reduce trips, mobility systems like locker systems etc.

Change Fuelling – education needed.

If we all change behaviour a little it can have a significant impact.

Distinct locations need different things – hence localised plans.

Please contact Nicola for more information or to put forward ideas.

JA stated that getting into and out of the city later at night is a challenge. Need to look at the blue and green ways, Buses, trams without lines etc.

Priority bus routes and journey routes – map out to see where best.

Once it can get going, it easier to recruit and get jobs in further places or roles that require out of hours travelling.

NS – work with Stoke-on-Trent to get joint statement out. Also, Moorlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Cheshire etc – where it makes sense.

Recognising where people want to go is important.

RD asked as people's work patterns have changed, can more be directed towards leisure travel?

NS stated that car user mileage has jumped back up to pre pandemic levels, so if more people are working from home more, where are they going? That needs to be looked at – is it more likely to be leisure travel?

CC - Pilot that is occurring in Lichfield and Tamworth and the NMA and Tamworth Castle currently should feed into the LTP.

LTP is aspirational – must have hooks to get buy-in.

6. Starring Great Britain – Olivia Thackstone (OT) & Jonny Shelton (JS)

Visit Britain campaign to inspire more visits to Great Britain. Showcase what is happening in Britain now, and for educational purposes e.g. Fam Visits.

Younger travellers are driving it.

#starringgreatbritain

Visit Liverpool – social media has some fitting examples on it.

JS has visited Weston Park recently to do a video and is visiting other locations soon. Get in touch if you would like to discuss your venue more with JS.

SA stated that independent film companies may also be interested in Staffordshire venues.

JA – the Gatehouse Theatre in Stafford are hosting a festival next week.

7. AOB

KH – STEAM data – Beginning of February will be putting out a call to action to collect 2024 data. Please complete for your venue and promote to other businesses etc.

It is important to get info from venues that have submitted data before to get historical data and trends but also from new venues.

KH is also doing an education piece on why it is important to take part, what the benefits are etc to get more buy in.

Looking at transport data and events also.

Circulate video of JS at Weston Park

JA – asked about the Stoke 100 Centenary plans – can we get the plans shared to the board to get involved with and promote – exciting times particularly with an event on June 7th.

Will get OT to circulate materials to support.

OT stated that Liz Hulse is the Project Manager, and she is working with her to include/involve and engage the Visitor Economy sector.

LG Thank you's – LG to LVEP board and Kim.

Andrea Sammons (AS) update on Tourism Awards. To be held in Stoke at the Double Tree Hilton to mark Stoke 100 celebrations too. Please book your tickets asap to get the early bird rate. Promote the shortlist on your socials including LinkedIn.

Next meeting

Thursday 3rd April 10am – World of Wedgwood

Actions:

- Circulate LVEP video.
- Circulate Jonny Shelton Weston Park video.
- Circulate Meeting slides from all presenters.
- **All board members to reply regarding Priority group interests.**
- **Any interested parties to apply to Charlotte Cain for Chair and Vice Chair roles.**