

WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRY TOURISM ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26TH MAY 2009 AT GOODNESTONE PARK GARDENS

Present: 16 members as recorded in Attendance Book. Annette McPherson in the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence received from Port of Dover, DGHA (Bill Hamblin) and Hardicot GH, Cllr Mrs Burnham (Deal Town Council).

2. MINUTES OF LAST GENERAL MEETING

It was proposed by Terry Sutton, seconded by Jon Iveson and passed unanimously that the minutes of a general meeting held on 14th April 2009 be approved and adopted.

3. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM

On the point recorded in Minute 4 of the last meeting Richard Mahony said that the estimated cost for the renovation of Horace Holyer's cart is £100.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

On behalf of the treasurer Annette McPherson reported that the Association's total funds stood at £5,897.31. Since the last meeting £480 has been paid out (Cruise Terminal Travel Show, White Cliffs Country brochure launch and Ray Haines' memorial fund). Brian Philp (Roman Painted House) asked how much of this fund is already earmarked for future projects. Annette replied that later in the meeting three projects, with costings, would be put to the meeting for members' decision on whether to adopt any or all of them.

5. ADVERTISING IN EUROPE

Mike McFarnell said that there is a good opportunity to exploit our area to the Europeans whilst the euro remains strong and he said he has already approached Dover Town Council to ask for a grant towards some form of appropriate advertising of White Cliffs area in France/Belgium/Holland. DTC has granted £500 which is presently being held by WCDHGHG, which organisation has agreed to match this sum from its own funds when Mike brings a specific project with costings to the Group. One idea Mike has is to put on video for exposure on You Tube, an interview with a young German student who enthusiastically sings the praises of Dover and area. Mike asked for the support of WCCTA – not only is he looking for financial contribution but also for further promotional ideas. A discussion ensued in which the majority of members expressed their support in principle of Mike's proposal but agreed that before the Association could make any commitment of financial support Mike would have to come up with definite projects together with realistic costings. Mike said that his present role is as a "clearing house" for any ideas local organisations or individuals could contribute to his plan and he asked that anyone with ideas should contact him direct.

6. PROPOSAL RE. CHARITIES' MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman said a proposal by Brian Philp and Richard Mahony has been circulated to members for discussion at this meeting. She said that technically Brian could not propose a motion as the Roman Painted House is no longer a member having not renewed its membership this year prior to 5th May 2009. It was however agreed by those present that the proposal should go forward for consideration by the members

today. The proposal: "That in view of the Association's stated constitutional aims - para 2.4 (To encourage the development of services, facilities and amenities for tourists within the area in co-operation with other interests) of promoting tourism in Dover District and considering the primary commercial interest in tourism of the majority of members, that the registered charities in Dover who have a primary non-profit making interest in promoting tourism, be invited to join the Association (para 2.8 (To encourage growth in the membership of WCCTA) and 2.11 (In support of the above objectives, to consult with, and establish cordial working relationships with all bodies and organisations directly concerned with tourism.....)) and to waive the annual subscription for them and to thus assist such worthwhile registered charities and further promote tourism." Brian said that charities in Dover are struggling financially particularly this year with the present economic downturn and reported that with rising costs the Roman Painted House has been forced to close on Sundays. He went on to say that as commercial interests form the majority of WCCTA membership he felt that some of the aims of the Association and its constitution are not being met. Brian's proposal was seconded by Richard Mahony and a lively discussion took place in which several points were raised. In answer to a query Terry Sutton said that he estimates that at least nine local charities would be eligible to join should this proposal be accepted – it was also pointed out that some larger concerns such as The National Trust enjoy charitable status. Furthermore such charities as Crabble Corn Mill have been members in the past but have not necessarily been keen to attend and contribute to meetings and he felt, together with several other members, that £40 per year was not an excessive amount for a charity to find i.e. less than £1 per week. It was also stressed by one member that should this proposal be adopted it could be viewed as unfair by paying members, most of whom are also struggling with the present economic depression but who realise an Association such as this cannot run without sufficient funds, funds which are dependent in the main on the receipt of membership fees.

Mike McFarnell said he has canvassed members of WCDHGH on this matter but received a small response only two of which supported the proposal and he therefore did not have a mandate to vote on behalf of that association. The Chairman suggested that charities have other avenues open to them for funding and could perhaps approach their local town or parish councils to support their membership of WCCTA. In the face of one member's criticism that he continually lacked support from WCCTA both Lady FitzWalter and Dave Atkins underlined the benefit of membership saying they have always received great support, Dave adding that having an Association such as WCCTA backing him he has been able to make progress on various matters concerning the Transport Museum in a more forceful way than would otherwise be the case. In general members agreed that the membership fee would not prevent a charity joining WCCTA if it really wished to do so. After all opinions had been thoroughly aired the Chairman put the proposal to a vote the result of which was: In favour – 1; against – 14; abstention: 1. Brian and Richard expressed their disappointment at this result.

7. DDC'S DAYS OUT LEAFLET

Debbie Dainton (Dover VIC) passed round copies of DDC's "Days Out" leaflet now printed in French and Flemish at a cost of £2,000. The leaflets will be distributed in France and Belgium by Horace Holyer. It is hoped later to print leaflets in German and Italian. Debbie asked if WCCTA would agree to fund Horace's trip i.e. hire of van, petrol, overnight accommodation and sustenance which is estimated to cost £420. Horace will be distributing the leaflets to suitable outlets along the channel coast - Patrick Williams (SeaFrance) is providing the cross channel trip. Patrick pointed out that many local charities, as discussed above, are included in the leaflets free of any charge thus gaining valuable publicity. It was agreed unanimously that WCCTA would provide £420 for this trip.

Debbie said that another £932 is being sought to prolong Horace's trip to four days in order to include the Ostend Travel Show which is extremely well attended. Trevor Bond (Ramada) who has attended the show on previous occasions said it is an excellent outlet for distributing promotional material and many of the 260,000 attending will be

particularly interested in our area. It was unanimously agreed that WCCTA should provide the £932 to enable Horace to attend the Ostend Travel Show. Mike McFarnell suggested that WCDHGHG might wish to contribute to the cost of these trips and said he would pursue the matter.

Debbie outlined DDC's plan to film more events in the area for inclusion on the promotional video completed last year. She said it is intended to include the Western Heights event (this coming weekend), Dover Regatta, Sandwich Festival and Deal Maritime Festival, thus covering the whole area. Debbie asked if WCCTA would agree to provide the £975 needed to complete this filming. The original video is already being used on the websites, for media promotions etc. and is proving an excellent advertising tool. The Chairman said that the reason Debbie has brought these requests for decisions at this meeting is because there will be no further general meetings until September and everything involved in Debbie's requests need to be undertaken prior to that time. Members voted unanimously to support this additional filming by the sum of £975.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mike McFarnell asked Debbie the situation regarding the DDC website updates. Debbie said that updating of the main WCC website has been successfully completed and that work on redesigning the "Visit" sites is presently ongoing and hopefully will be completed in a few weeks. Translations for inclusion on the web site of information in Germany/Italian/French are currently being undertaken.

Richard Mahony said that he has been receiving many complaints from his customers as to the cost of entry into Dover Castle particularly whilst some parts are presently inaccessible due to renovation work. It was pointed out that local management of the Castle has no influence on entrance fees charged as all English Heritage sites are primarily administered from its headquarters. Mike McFarnell said that in fact the entrance fee is modest when compared to fees charged by London attractions of equal status.

Terry Sutton said that LD Lines have announced 6th June as the start date of its high speed craft service to Boulogne.

Lady FitzWalter said that her conference room (in which today's meeting took place) is available for hire at £25 per day including provision of light refreshments. Lady FitzWalter was thanked by the Chairman and executive for today's hospitality.

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Cameron Macsween, the new Director of Dover and District Chamber of Commerce introduced himself to the meeting and gave detailed information on his plans for the future of the Chamber and said it was his prime intention to include all local organisations, large and small, in his efforts to influence matters of importance to the local area and in particular in regard to the regeneration plans for Dover.

There being no further business the meeting ended.