

WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRY TOURISM ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8TH APRIL 2008 AT DEAL TOWN HALL

Present: 11 members as recorded in the Attendance Book – Annette McPherson in the Chair.

1. Apologies for absence received from: Tracey Ward (Sandwich Town Council), Jon Iveson (Dover District Council), Denise Ryeland (Tours of the Realm), Roger Walkden (DGHA), Patrick Williams (SeaFrance), English Heritage, Hardicot GH, Ardmore GH, St. Martin's GH, Christine Clear (Independent) and Lady FitzWalter (Goodnestone Park).

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM AGM (26.2.08)

Two members present – Richard Mahoney (White Cliffs Boat Tours) and Jane Langstaff (Deal & Walmer C of C) reported that they did not receive AGM minutes. The Chairman said she would advise Sandra Killick of this. It was suggested that Sandra should add an acknowledgment of receipt to all future minutes.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Bank balances as at today's date: Current Account £1,506.84; Deposit Account £3,050.02. Annual subscriptions received total £1,185.

The Chairman reported that an invoice in the sum of £1,950 has been received (not included in the above figures) from DDC for the filming and production of the DVD now up on both the White Cliffs Country and WCCTA websites. The Chairman also reported that she has been successful in applying to Dover Town Council for funding for Horace Holyer's employment this year in the Market Square. The Council has granted a sum of £1,500. Horace will be employed on port of call days (37 so far this year) and also for special events such as Dover Regatta. Annette thanked Debbie Dainton (Dover VIC) for her help with the presentation to DTC.

Richard Mahoney expressed his opinion that Horace should be employed full-time during June, July and August but it was felt by others present that this was not necessary. Debbie said that the DDC information display unit in the Market Square would be refilled within the next two weeks and that the VIC continues to be the main centre for distribution of tourist information for White Cliffs Country – Horace being an added bonus in the Market Square on key days i.e. when cruise liner passengers are in town.

Sandra Killick asks that members send in this year's subscriptions as soon as possible and ensure that they also return the Who's Who form. She is unable to send out the White Cliffs Country passes, or the new Who's Who publication until all relevant information is to hand.

4. GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF TOURISM

Richard Mahoney brought to the attention of the meeting recent reports in the local press that Dover may receive up to £4m from government funds for regeneration of the district and investment in tourism etc. Richard said that WCCTA should lose no time in applying for a percentage of this money so that it could look at undertaking projects that would enhance and add to the present attractions the district has to offer to the benefit

of all the Association's members. This suggestion generated a lively debate in which diverse opinions were expressed. Several members thought the idea to be a good one but reservations were expressed by others. Ray Haines (Dover District C of C) said that government money will not be given out without strict restraints. He said that it would almost certainly be DDC that received the funds in the first place and it would require any application for a grant to be made in a professional manner with plans detailing projects for which the money would be used. Ray said any final decisions are likely to be taken by DDC cabinet.

The Chairman said she hoped that as a tourist organisation WCCTA would be consulted on dispersal of the funds in regard to anything related to tourism.

Dave Jones (Rippledawn) said that from his experience it is essential that any application for a grant is made to the right person at the right time otherwise it is unlikely to be progressed through the system. Jane Langstaff said she fully supported an application for funding – she said the £4m under discussion is not the only money available – there are other bodies in the district which have money to spend on suitable projects and to whom applications can be directed.

At the end of the discussion it was proposed by Ray Haines, seconded by Terry Sutton and passed that the Chairman write a letter to the Chief Executive of DDC saying that following reports in the press regarding the £4m government funding to be given to the district this Association would like to apply for a portion from that fund to pursue specific tourism projects and would like to know how to proceed with such an application.

Jane Langstaff said that although it would not be a good idea to raise members hopes in relation to funds being granted it would be sensible to be prepared with definite plans should the opportunity arise. She therefore proposed that members of the Association be canvassed by e-mail for any ideas they may have as to how any money granted could best be used for the benefit of the tourism industry throughout the district.

It was pointed out that if an application is to be made it is likely to involve a complicated and time-consuming procedure – the Executive, all members of which work for the Association on an entirely voluntary basis, may not be in a position to take this on themselves.

5. **DVD/FILM PROJECT**

Debbie Dainton said that the DVD was recently launched at Walmer Castle and has already been shown at several sites including the Kent Travel Show. It has excellent footage of attractions and events across the whole district and has been very well received. It is up on the White Cliffs Country and the WCCTA websites and 50 copies are being made available for distribution on request (travel trade, coach trade etc.). A new screen has been purchased for Dover VIC on which the DVD will be shown. Debbie said that it is intended to embark on a second phase of filming this year to cover various events in the district such as Dover Regatta, Deal Maritime Exhibition etc. Debbie went on to say that there is still a need for printed literature to promote the district and 30,000 "Days Out" leaflets are being printed this year. It is also intended to bring back the Small Museums leaflet.

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ray Haines reported on his attendance at the Kent 20/20 Exhibition held recently at Detling. The tourism workshop was well attended and he learnt that KTA is to be amalgamated with South East Tourism to form a new organisation. He also attended a presentation by David Starkey in which Mr Starkey highlighted the many historic aspects of Kent and it is to be hoped that the new organisation mentioned above takes this onboard as the historic appeal of Kent has not been fully exploited in the past.

Ray said that the C of C is making representations to Dover District Council to replace the "White Cliffs Country" branding by "Dover District Tourism". It has long been a contentious issue but the C of C believes that Dover is a more internationally recognised destination than White Cliffs Country and now has a more positive image than in the past. Members were divided in their opinions on this subject. Adeline Reidy (WCDHGHG) said that her association fought very hard for the White Cliffs Country logo as it incorporates all parts of the district – she felt Deal and Sandwich would feel particularly aggrieved if that branding was dropped. Dave Jones suggested a compromise could be "Dover and White Cliffs Country".

Jane Langstaff reported that the small business exhibition recently held in Deal proved a great success. Those who took part were full of energy and enthusiasm and she feels there is real scope for extending this type of exhibition.

Dave Jones reported that Rippledown has joined forces with the St Margaret's Bay Trust and together they are making great steps forward on environmental issues. His centre attracts both children and adults and he is presently involved in 18 different projects. It is hoped to create a website which will give information on green issues, organisations and events and could also be used as a tool to seek out volunteers as and when required on projects. Dave drew attention to the fact that now the two local hostels have closed down there is a gap in the market for the basic student type accommodation his visitors look for. He asked whether members of the accommodation groups could help in this regard (B & B £12 - £22?)

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting and extended her thanks to Deal Town Council for their hospitality.

Next General Meeting: 11.00 a.m. June 10th 2008 at Goodnestone Park Gardens (followed by lunch)

Next Executive: 11.00 a.m. May 6th 2008 at Penny Farthing G.H.