



Shropshire Hills Discovery
Centre Advisory Board

21 November 2011

10.00am

Item / Paper

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Public

NOTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 8 MARCH 2011

10:00 am – 11.25am

Responsible Officer Tim Ward
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PRESENT:

Members

Shropshire Council	Mrs C Motley (Chair)
Craven Arms Town Council	Miss J Hoskins
Shropshire Hills AONB/ Craven Arms Community Centre	Mr D Gibbon
Secret Hills Network	Mr N Stephens

Officers

Shropshire Council	Ms A Stangar (Centre Manager - Secret Hills)
	Mr A Lee (Arts Manager)
	Mr T Ward (Committee Officer)

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting

Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Charmley (Shropshire Council) and Cllr. Mrs H Kidd (Shropshire Council)

Note of Previous Meeting

2. The note of the meeting held on 25 November 2010, as circulated, was confirmed as a correct record.

Performance and Developments at Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre for the Period October 2010 to February 2011

3. A report outlining performance and developments at the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre for the period January to October 2010 had been circulated. Further performance figures were tabled. performance of the centre had been adversely affected by the weather with total income down 2% and catering income down 14%. She went on to say that the large drop in catering income highlighted the fact that a large amount of the catering income was gained during school holidays.
4. The Centre Manager informed the meeting that the performance over February half term had been good with all the family activities well supported. She went on to say that the special offer in the exhibition had worked well and whilst this had an effect on income she hoped that it would increase income in other areas. The Chair commented that the main problem with the exhibition was that it didn't change and asked whether there was opportunity to make changes. She went on to ask whether there was the possibility of having an interactive element to the exhibition. Discussion followed around ways to improve the exhibition. The Centre Manager informed the meeting that she was currently working on ways to improve the exhibition but that there was the cost to be considered.
5. The Centre Manager commented that use of the library had levelled off and that the number of book loans in August and December had been particularly low – mainly due to holidays in August and adverse weather in December. Members commented that it would be useful to know whether this pattern was reflected over the entire county. Mr Gibbon commented that it would also be useful to know whether library users made use of any other services in the centre. The Centre manager commented that she estimated that around 90% of users just used the library.
6. The Centre Manager informed the meeting that an invitation to tender had been sent out for the Centre's marketing and that it was proposed that all the press advertising would be done as one campaign which would allow the marketing to be more targeted, cost efficient and innovative. She then outlined the proposed advertising for the current year.
7. The Centre Manager informed members that schools visits had increased by 22% over the year which was due in no small part to work the education officer had done developing contacts with schools and work done around joint marketing with the education officer in the museum service.
8. Mr Gibbon asked how the reduction in volunteer hours had come about. The Centre Manager informed him that a lot of this was due to the conversion of a volunteer to a modern apprentice and to the fact that a Farmers Market had been cancelled. Discussion took place around ways of getting more volunteers. The Arts Manager commented that it was the European Year of the Volunteer and that there may be opportunities to tie into this and also volunteer week. The Centre Manager reminded members that there was a cost involved in managing volunteers
9. The Centre Manager informed the meeting that a plum orchard consisting of specimens of 13 different varieties had been planted in the meadows as a result of a donation from a local resident and that further planting was planned next winter. She went on to say that 2 courses had been run in the meadows on hedge laying and coppicing. She expressed concern that the Councils requirement that instructors have £5 million pounds public liability insurance had meant that one of the instructors had not been able to take the course which had lead to increase costs.
10. The Centre Manager reminded members that there was still no funding secured for the BMX track at the Community Centre but preliminary discussions had taken place regarding the possibility of constructing a temporary track at the bottom of the meadows.

Other Business

- 11. The Centre Manager advised members that she was currently looking at budgets for the next three financial years and that by the end of the third year there was need the cut the subsidy received from Shropshire Council by half which would result in the need for savings of between £90,000 & £120,000.00. She added that at the moment she was looking at all aspects of the Centre to see where savings could be made.
- 12. Mr Gibbon advised the meeting that the Farmers Market had received permission from the Council to erect a store adjacent to the centre in which to store the market stalls and other equipment and also the gardening equipment for the Grow, Cook Share project. He went on to say that they were currently applying for funding from the LJC and Awards for All.
- 13. Mr Gibbon informed the meeting that the Grow Cook Share scheme had appointed a new gardener who was proving very good.

Date of Next Meeting

- 14. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 21 November 2011 at 10am. Members also agreed that other meetings could be called in the intervening period if it was deemed necessary.

CHAIR.....

DATE