



Shropshire Hills Discovery
Centre Advisory Board

21 November 2012

10.00am

Item / Paper

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Public

NOTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2012

10:00 am – 11.30am

Responsible Officer Tim Ward

e-mail: Tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: (01743) 252739 Fax (01743) 252713

PRESENT:

Members

Shropshire Council	Mrs C Motley (Chair) (from 10.45am)
Craven Arms Town Council	Miss J Hoskins
Craven Arms Community Centre	Mr D Gibbon
Secret Hills Network	Mr N Stephens

Officers

Shropshire Council	Ms L Cross (Visitor Economy Manager)
	Ms Z Griffin (Centre Manager - Secret Hills)
	Ms A Stanger (Assistant Centre Manager - Secret Hills)
	Mr T Ward (Committee Officer)

There was 1 representative of the press present

Ms Griffin advised the meeting that Mrs Motley had phoned to say she had been delayed. It was agreed that Ms Cross would take the chair until she arrived.

Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Owen (Shropshire Council).

Apologies were also received from Tim King Tourism Officer

Note of Previous Meeting

2. The note of the meeting held on 23 November 2011, as circulated, was confirmed as a correct record.

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

3. A report outlining performance and developments at the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre for the period April to October 2011 had been circulated.
4. The Centre Manager advised members that the report contained a brief update on performance since the budget workshop in January and also gave a more general overview of the work of the centre which it was hoped would give a clearer picture of the implications of achieving the required budget cuts.
5. The Centre Manager informed the meeting that use of the library had remained broadly comparable to last year and that receipts in the exhibition, café and retail area were down slightly on previous years but that gross turnover was still expected to exceed £300,000.
6. The Centre Manager informed the committee that the education team had been very busy and that they were currently working to secure funding to develop and deliver a new activity based around sustainability, a theme that had been requested by schools which would be delivered under the umbrella of the extended schools scheme with funding from a number of external sources.
7. The Centre Manager then took the meeting through a summary review of the Discovery Centre outlining what is the Discovery Centre, the things that the Centre does and the stakeholders and partners involved. She informed members that over 170,000 people used the centre per year and outlined the various uses visitors made of the Centre.
8. The Centre Manager reminded the meeting that the Discovery Centre had seen in excess of £1.5 million pounds invested over the past 12 years the majority through large scale grant funding. Mr Stevens commented that as well as the economic benefit and the service provided to the community the Centre had given Craven Arms a cultural link and identity.
9. The Centre Manager reminded members that to achieve the savings of £45,000 required in the next financial year the following measures were proposed: -
 - Implementing a reviewed structure of fees and charges
 - Reduction of the marketing budget
 - Continue to operate the reduced evening opening hours
 - Reviewing the cleaning and sanitary waste contracts
 - Reduce operating hours by 30 minutes per day from April
 - Reduce staffing levels during the day
 - Close the Centre on Mondays from September to March, except during half term holidays
 - Close the Centre for two weeks in December
 - Restructure staff at management level, leading to a reduction in overall staff costs

She went on to say that due to the recruitment freeze and natural staff turnover this reduction in operating hours and management can be implemented without affecting existing contractual commitments and that this model of operation would see the Centre close at its least busy times and so minimises the impact on our customers.

Mr Gibbon expressed concern at the reduction in the marketing budget. The Centre Manager commented that there should not be too much effect as a lot of the reduction was being achieved by the reduction in size of the offsite leaflet and of some of the adverts.

Mr Gibbon commented that the change in opening hours would need careful monitoring to accurately assess the effects.

10. Ms Griffin advised the meeting that work was ongoing to create a detailed plan for the year 2013 – 14

Other Business

11. Mrs Motley reminded members that this would be Ms Griffin's last meeting as she was leaving the Discovery Centre to pursue other opportunities. She thanked her for all the work she had done during her time at the Centre and wished her well for the future. Other members echoed these sentiments.

Date of Next Meeting

12. Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting would be held on Wednesday 21 November 2012

CHAIR.....

DATE