

**TOURISM FORUM**  
**Thursday, 10th December, 2009**

## Present:-

Joanne Edley	Tourism and Marketing Manager, R.M.B.C
Marie Hayes	Events and Promotions Service Manager, R.M.B.C
Dawn Campbell	Events and Promotions Officer, R.M.B.C
Joanne Ellis	Promotions Officer, R.M.B.C
Caroline Wilson	Yorkshire South Tourism
Jon Broadhurst	Park Inn Hotel
J. Gourvenec	Park Inn Hotel
Lesley Twigg	Aston Hotel
Bridget Adams	Aston Hotel
Matthew Beck	Magna
Ryan Elston	Restover Lodge
Richard Swann	Woodsetts Parish Council
Stuart Jenkinson	Environment Agency
Grace Rogerson	Dearne Valley College
Andrew Birch	Dearne Valley College
Chris Hawkesworth	British Canoe Union
Brian King	Rotherham and District Civic Society

## Apologies for absence:-

Anthony Barber-Lomax	Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estates
Peter Keary	Elton Hotel
Rachel Charlton	Holiday Inn
Nicky Holt	Garnett Dickinson
Geoff Wilde	Leather Lines
Councillor Iain St. John	RMBC
John Savage	Stonecroft Hotel
Christine Thomas	RCAT
Mr M. Godfrey	Wath Golf Club
Jane Powell	John Powell Travel
David Bliss	Rotherham Minister
Rebecca Foster	Maltby Community School
Carol Bowser	Winthrop Park
Les	Harthill with Woodall Parish Council
D. Brown	Ibis Hotel, Rotherham
Stuart Reaney	Chesterfield Canal Partnership
T. Huxley	The Welcome Inn Hotel
Sam Brookes	Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council
Bernard Jones	South Yorkshire Transport Museum
Elaine Humphries	Friends of Clifton Park
Don Stewart	Yorkshire South Tourism
Anne Grayson	Conference Co-ordinator RMBC
Bernard Jones	South Yorkshire Transport Museum
Sue France	Aston Hall Hotel
Anne & Robert Holland	Throapham Guest House
David Adger	Churches Conservation Trust
Anne Hicks	Rotherham Minister

**1. ARRIVAL**

Forum members were welcomed by Park Inn staff and were shown to the area serving light refreshments.

**2. TOUR OF THE PARK INN HOTEL**

Forum members were invited on a tour of the Park Inn led by the staff. Staff from the Park Inn were on hand to answer any questions.

**3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager introduced Jon Broadhurst, Manager of the Park Inn, who welcomed Forum members to the Park Inn and said the hotel had been open for 2 weeks and outlined the Rezidor group's background.

**4. TOURISM AND MARKETING UPDATE**

Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager, gave a short presentation about accommodation developments in Rotherham:-

- Park Inn Hotel Opened
- 3 Self Catering establishment start up enquiries
- 2 existing serviced accommodation providers properties given advice on being assessed
- 1 Guest Accommodation Start Up enquiry
- Planning Application for extension to existing Hotel Accommodation
- Rural Grant available – if under £25,000 can apply through Business Link, between £25,000 and £150,000 apply through the business engagement executives Caroline Wilson at Yorkshire South Tourism and information from Joanne Edley, Tourism and Marketing Manager Rotherham, over £150,000 apply via Yorkshire Forward.

Work continued on developments at attractions which included:-

- Rother Valley Country Park – land train facility recently installed. Planning applications will be submitted in 2010.
- South Yorkshire Transport Museum – expansion has doubled floor space
- Clifton Park Developments – Phase 1 completed. Phase 2 will start when a contractor has been appointed
- Boston Castle Heritage Lottery Bid – funding from Heritage Lottery Fund will be known in the New Year
- Thrybergh Country Park Green Flag Award

- Flood Lighting of the Minster – lighting installed last week with launch ceremony
- Brown Signage enquiries – quite a few enquiries received from accommodation and attractions.

Communications Group and Pooled RMBC Promotional Budgets:-

- Tourism Promotional Budget Pooled
- Local Residents Promotion – On Your Doorstep leaflet available
- Heritage Open Days – successfully took place in September.
- Group Travel – looking to develop this with inserts from accommodation and attractions
- Mini Guide Publication – includes all assessed accommodation providers
- Walking Festival – One week in May 2010
- Access Guide – PDF document located on the Council website. Access Officers will check the quality of accommodation for Disabled facilities, according to agreed standards
- Tourist Information Point Posters – displayed in Thrybergh Country Parks and Parkgate Retail World
- Grants for Quality Assessments – 50% grant before March 2010 for sustainable projects.

## 5. YORKSHIRE SOUTH TOURISM - UPDATE

Caroline Wilson, Membership Manager, report on the following:-

### **Regional Visitors Survey 08:-**

First time the survey has been done in the region

Interview locations in Rotherham: Magna, Tropical Butterfly House and Rother Valley Country Park

Key Themes:-

- What type of visitors – Day visitors 87%
  - Overnight stays 2%
- Staying visitor origin – 97% of all visitors were of UK origin
  - 3% visitors from overseas
- South Yorkshire previous visits – 67% repeat visitors to Rotherham
- Age profile – high proportion were children
- Pre-arrival influences – leaflets score better than in other areas

Other results:-

- 50% via booking accommodation website
- 80% stayed in Rotherham in 50+ rooms

- 72% visiting cultural attractions (interviewees sampled at cultural attractions)
- 93% of visitors likely to recommend
- 83% of visitors will return
- 98% of expenditure spent on travel and transport

Caroline Wilson emphasised the need to attract more first-time family visitors and young professionals. Other areas for exploration are how we can get more people to spend on eating after 5pm.

Caroline Wilson suggested placing high satisfaction figures at the bottom of e-mails.

All survey results on [www.welcometoyorkshire.net](http://www.welcometoyorkshire.net)

Caroline Wilson welcomed the announcement for Easyjet to begin 21 weekly flight destinations from Robin Hood Doncaster-Sheffield airport, providing an opportunity to encourage more visitors into the area.

Caroline Wilson highlighted that Magna had been working on their website and their online booking facility. However a number of hotels have not updated their availability so Caroline Wilson encouraged hotels to update their details on the website.

Caroline Wilson updated that Doncaster Racecourse will facilitate promoting accommodation free of charge. Also the York Pass is to become the Yorkshire Pass, which will encourage people to visit South Yorkshire attractions and they will have a campaign to market this, for example, 2 for 1 restaurant discount vouchers and using local suppliers and food providers etc...

## **6. THE GREEN HEART SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROJECT DEARNE VALLEY**

Stuart Jenkinson, Environment Agency, gave a short presentation about The Green Heart a 5 year project: \_

- a cleaner, green heart to the valley
- access for all
- rediscovery of the river and countryside
- enhance wildlife
- support regeneration of the Valley

The River Dearne has vastly improved water quality which in turn has increased insects/animals/mammals attracting green tourism.

The Green Network of cycle routes will link into the Trans Pennine Trail and be developed using old railway lines and industrial land. The first phase is due to be open next year.

## 7. **BRITISH CANOE UNION FACILITY AT WATH UPON DEARNE**

Chris Hawkesworth, Planning and Facilities Manager Canoe Union, gave a short presentation and provided further information.

His presentation drew particular attention to:-

- Express Park own the land at Manvers Lake and had an obligation to produce a boathouse.
- The lake is strategically well situated – close to River Dearne, Trans Pennine Trail, M1 & A1M
- Canoe England have 30,000 members
- 480,000 affiliated clubs & 30,000 additional members
- 2,200 people paddle at least once each year
- 2 Canoe Olympic disciplines

Why Manvers?

- Because it's there
- Excellent flat water competition venue
- 45 acres of sheltered
- Good water quality
- River Dearne 14km owned by Environment Agency

The Management:-

It is managed by a partnership and is a not for profit company limited by guarantee.

Manvers Lake Management Committee – Professionals  
Manvers Waterfront Boat Club - Amateurs

Manvers Waterfront Boat Club is an open community club for all, 96 members since March 2009, including Juniors, Canoeists, Anglers and Triathletes

Competition teams will be called: Team Manvers

Manvers Lake and Boat House

A Northern and Regional coaching base, room hire, facilities & equipment hire

British Triathlon Event – swim, cycle and run

Organisers of this event have already approached the Park Inn about booking rooms during the event in July.

Manvers Lake will host open water swimming, Angling Development Board and Dragon Boating events.

Building extension and fit out contract to do extension and fit out.  
 July 2010 - First event to be held on the lake.  
 2011 - First years programme of competitive events.

Canoes are free to hire.  
 Hire times: 10am – 1pm on Saturdays.  
 And 6-7pm on Wednesdays during spring/summer (throughout British  
 Summertime period)

Manvers Lake  
 £12 per year to fish on the lake  
 £24 to be a member of the Manvers boat house for the whole year

## 8. TOWN CENTRE EVENTS

Dawn Campbell, Town Centre Events and Promotions Officer, updated as follows:-

Big Screen events & update:-

- Three Royal Opera House Events: Barber of Seville, La Traviata, Ondine - 300 people attended, much more than last year
- Last Night of The Proms - 150 people attended

Market events:-

- Festival of Food and Drink - Held on 1st to 3rd October, with a guest appearance by Sean Wilson who played Martin Platt in Coronation Street who exhibited his award winning cheese from the Saddleworth Cheese Company. There were demonstrations and cook offs taking place too.
- Monthly Farmers Market - continued to be held on the last Wednesday of every month

Christmas Event Calendar:-

A central budget has been bid into to hold town centre events with promotional shopping incentives:

Rother FM Competition – Super Santa:-

Held on four Saturdays in the lead up to Christmas from 11am to 1pm

Christmas Light Switch On Thursday 19th November:-

8,000 people attended – Music groups performed on the Hallam FM stage Alphabeat, Scarlet Fever and Libby.

- Sunday Street Market – 3 days on the weekend leading up to Christmas
- Saturday 12th December - Real Reindeer Event
- Saturday 19th December - 'Igloo' with craft workshops
- Brass bands performing at events throughout December

Added incentives to come into Rotherham - Click back offers can be downloaded from Rotherham Town Centre website which can be spent at various shops

- RMBC Free car parking on Saturdays until Boxing Day
- Shop opening hours on Sundays is 10am to 4pm
- 'Free after 3' car parking each weekday
- "Free Bee" bus – now running between Parkgate and Rotherham

Community events:-

- October 09 – Spiegeltent Arts and Folk Festival
- January 2010 – Farmhouse Breakfast programme with Jamie's Ministry of Food
- 'ACT' – a group of local Independents who are supporting the regeneration of the town centre and have contributed to one event in the campaign for Christmas and a further event on the Saturday of each month

Rotherham Minister floodlights switched on Thursday 3rd December  
Christmas carols played in the town centre 10 days before Christmas

Dawn Campbell asked for people to let her know about any events taking place in the town centre or in green spaces such as parks or recreational spaces throughout the Rotherham borough.

## 9. NEWS/INFORMATION ITEMS FROM FORUM MEMBERS

Tourism Forum members discussed:-

- setting up a Hospitality Group:-

The Accommodation or Hospitality sector requires a separate meeting group. It was discussed that hoteliers or venue providers are expected to work together and run the group themselves. Joanne Edley, Rotherham Tourism Manager, offered the group any help or assistance, as appropriate.

The following information was provided by Forum members:

Dearne Valley College - A Foundation degree had been developed and continues to deliver NVQ's and Apprenticeships etc... The college is looking to deliver modules to industries on Saturday's throughout next year particularly courses focused on work related subjects such as Customer Service and Handling Conflict.

Magna – Conferencing is busy with private and public events.  
Visitor attraction numbers have been maintained.

Events scheduled for 2010 include:-

- Heaven 17
- Help For The Heroes

- Haymaker Promotions
- Blues Festival (29th May) and various dance events.

Woodsetts village - Festival in June.

Restover Lodge Hotel - Ryan has attended, they are new members of the Tourism Forum.

**10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed: That the next meeting of the Tourism Forum be held in April 2010.

A future meeting could be held at the British Canoe Union at Manvers Lake.

The venue and date will be confirmed.