

Sustainable Tourism Action Group

Thurs 22nd May, East Devon District Council offices, Sidmouth

Present:

Emma Whittlesea – SW Tourism	James Jacobs - Envision
Sarah Streater – SHDC	Jen Brogan – DRN
Sarah Holder – DCC	Rachel Mildon - DCC
Lyn Gibbons – Future Footprints	Keri Denton - DCC
Tom Dixon – Ruby Country	Helen March – Devon Wildlife Trust
Alistair Handyside – Higher Wiscombe	Neil Warren – SW Tourism
Charlie Plowden – EDDC	
Robin Head – Devon Farms Accommodation	
Dan James – Exmoor NPA	

Apologies:

Cllr Mark Walker – Ivybridge TC
Linda Blanchard – North Devon AONB
Nicola Poultney – Destination Devon
Lyn Winter – West Devon BC
Victoria Hatfield – Exeter City Council
Leanne Crawford - DRN

1. Welcome and introductions around the room, brief update from all.
2. Minutes of the last meeting – agreed, Election of chair – Jen Brogan, DRN Co-ordinator, Terms of Ref – some minor amendments final copy to be sent out with minutes.
3. Destination Devon

Nicola Poultney sent apologies, Keri updated group. Helen Garret now in post as the partnership's co-ordinator, they have a website and phone line (contact details to be sent out with minutes). Main activities include setting up of bank accounts, transfer of membership, budget planning and supporting ATP's including South Devon & Dartmoor, Essential Devon & Exeter.

Action: Structure Diagram was eluded to, will be updated and circulated to group.

The Management Board of DD is now called the Operational Executive.

Nicola is also looking at corporate sponsorship and funding etc.

4. RDPE

RDPE money in the Sustainable Tourism theme cannot be used purely for Marketing, promotion, business support or Hard Infrastructure e.g. Buildings. It can be used for 'soft' infrastructure such as walking trails and visitor interpretation amongst other things.

Further information about the funding can be found here:

<http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/what-we-do/regeneration/eafrd/introduction.shtm> . To find the Sustainable Rural Tourism information click on RPDE delivery and scroll down to the pdf.

There is a meeting on 11th June re themes for Sustainable Tourism, if you are interested in attending let Keri know ASAP. Location – Devon Hotel, Exeter

Potential themes coming from group:

Wildlife
Environmental economy
Culture – heritage
Natural resources – renewables

Confusion over different funding streams was identified as a major drawback to accessing potential opportunities. Contact details of DCC's funding officer and Funding News service to be sent out with minutes.

6. Destination Devon Sustainability Plan

The group were offered a final chance to comment on the contents of the Sustainability Plan. They were asked to provide a list of top 3 priority actions; these would be collated and recommended to the Destination Devon board and would be used to feed into the regional RDPE sustainable tourism theme setting meeting on 11th June.

The group highlighted specific actions that could be started, these included:

- 1.1 – Green Awareness Training/mentoring/incentives for businesses towards GTBS and David Bellamy
- 1.3 - Develop the South Hams Green Business Advice website into a countywide resource
- 1.4 – Set up a Green Network for Devon's tourism businesses
- 5.4 – Develop and promote a responsible visitor charter for Devon – Future Footprints to lead on this action.

Action: All to submit top 3 actions by 5th June.

Action: Rachel to add a date to the Sustainability Plan to clarify the latest version and set up a meeting with Future Footprints re. Devon's responsible visitor charter.

Action: Secretariat to circulate a link to the online version of the Sustainability Plan - http://www.destination-devon.com/site/1/news.html?&nv_item=26.

Follow up on current actions

The STAG group had started work on a few actions that they considered would remain in the final Sustainability Plan.

2.1 and 4.5: Develop and promote 12 new car-free itineraries - the group proposed changing the term car-free to 'Explore what's on your doorstep' or something more generic that would include car-free as well as low mileage / low carbon days out – appreciating that across rural Devon 'car-free' can be unrealistic.

Action: All to email Rachel with ideas for low carbon days out and suggest a new title under which to promote them – deadline 30th June.

3.1 and 3.5: Develop and promote 6 wet weather/low season days out, promoting Devon as a great all-weather, all year destination.

Action: All to email Rachel with ideas for great days out in Devon, whatever the weather, whatever the time of year – deadline 30th June.

3.2: Encourage businesses to develop green themed offers and late deals – not yet started.

5.1: Encourage Devon businesses and organisations to adopt the new Devon Brand.

Action: All - visit www.devonbrand.co.uk for brand guidelines and to download logos, colours, fonts and images etc.

5.3: Encourage businesses to make the most of their green credentials by producing a 'Top green marketing tips' factsheet.

Action: All – comments on the draft factsheet to be emailed to Rachel – deadline 30th June.

6.2: Promote a clear and consistent explanation of NQAS and Green Accreditations to visitors via websites and brochures.

Action: All – email comments on the draft NQAS and Green Accreditation explanations to Rachel by 30th June.

5. South West Climate Change Impacts Partnership

A partnership was established in 2001 to specifically look at the impacts of climate change on businesses. There are 6 sector working groups, one of which covers tourism – whilst they haven't met for over a year the group is being resurrected with a new membership. Emma Whittlesea from SWT is now chairing the tourism sector group and has called for those interested in joining the partnership to get in touch, the next SWCCIP meeting is scheduled for 25th June.

Action: Email ewhittlesea@swtourism.co.uk if you are interested in joining the partnership – deadline 30th May.

8. AOB

There are two papers out for consultation from the Devon Countryside Access Forum; the Strategic Plan for Water Related Recreation in the SW Region and the draft Marine Bill. Both DCC and SWT will be responding to these consultations. STAG was keen to ensure that Destination Devon would give the group the opportunity to comment on future consultations relating to sustainable tourism.

Action: Robin Head to circulate details of both consultation papers to the STAG group via the secretariat.

Forthcoming Events:

Adapting your Business to Climate Change workshop taking place at the Environment Agency, Manley House on Friday 6th June from 9.30 - 1pm (see attached flyer).

DCC is hosting a **green networking event** for the hospitality sector to meet with Devon food & drink producers and renewable energy / resource efficiency support organisations. The event is due to take place at RHS Rosemoor on 10th Sept.

Action: Rachel Mildon to circulate further details as soon as available.

Neil Warren reported that Devon now has 180 GTBS members.

9. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15th July, 10.30 start at the Cookworthy Forest Centre - located between Okehampton and Holsworthy on the A3079

<http://www.southwestforest.org.uk/cookworthyforestcentre.html>