DEVIZES AREA TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Tony Aldridge

Partner: Rosemundy Cottage Bed and Breakfast

Member: Steering Committee, Devizes Community Area Partnership

See me on the Literature Stand

Devizes Area Tourism Partnership

❖ Devizes TIC, like others in old Kennet District Council, were taken on by Wiltshire Council, then funding transferred to VisitWiltshire.

❖ Closure 30 September 2011

❖ An informal group came together, representing Attractions, Bed and Breakfasts, Town Council, Devizes Development Partnership, Devizes website and Events. Main hotels and restaurants have then joined in.

❖ A simple, low cost plan, started and has grown and proved very popular. Similar has been adopted by Sevenoaks and a case study for VisitEngland.

Devizes Area Tourism Partnership

By 29 September 2011 DATP was publicised in the local press, with officer and councillors from Wiltshire Council.

Large pennants were displayed at the 4 new Visitor Information Points, each containing leaflets of local tourism information. Staff & volunteers made familiar of others. Window stickers in key locations, with cards & Devizes.org.uk web promoted the new contact numbers.

Newspaper clipping: Gazette & Herald Thursday, September 29, 2011 — Devizes

Groups and shops assume tourist information duties

STEPPING IN: Su Stafford of Wadworth, Peter Wheelhouse of Wiltshire Council, Kennet & Avon Canal Trust's Mike Rodd, Kate Freeman of Kennet Passengers, John Casa of Devizes Development Partnership, David Dawson of Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Wiltshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Public Transport Richard Gamble, Coun Fleur de Rhe-Philipe, Wiltshire Council, and Rosemundy Cottage B&B's Tony Aldridge. (37637) PICTURE BY ADAM DALE

Visitors this way please

By Jill Crooks
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A NUMBER of organisations in Devizes will take on a tourist inquiry role once Devizes Visitor Centre closes tomorrow.

Wiltshire Council is closing the centre, in the Market Place, and the eight staff have agreed to take voluntary redundancy.

To plug the gap, local groups and companies have joined forces to form the Devizes Area Tourism Partnership and a number of outlets will stock leaflets.

These include the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Long Street, Wadworth Brewery Visitor Centre, Kennet and Avon Canal Trust Museum, Devizes Books and Travelwise.

The museum and brewery visitor centre will answer general inquiries on the Devizes Visitor Centre telephone number, which will be redirected.

There is nowhere for visitors to the town to book accommodation, instead they will be given a phone number which will be answered by bed and breakfast owners.

Wiltshire Council will give display equipment now in the visitor centre to the participating outlets and there will be a sign on the visitor centre giving details on where to seek tourist information. Permanent signposts in the town may follow.

The Right Time Cafe in the Market Place will house the Connect 2 bus free telephone, allowing people to book journeys, and will also stock bus timetables.

Devizes Visitor Centre had 43,000 visitors last year and more than half the enquiries were about transport.

Kennet Passengers is part of the Devizes Area Tourism Partnership and spokesman Kate Freeman said: "It's terrific that we have multiple access points for tourism and we need to make sure they can link in to all the information at the Right Time Cafe. I think it's a suck it and see situation. We are terribly impressed with the work of Devizes Visitor Centre so it will be a hard act to follow."

David Dawson, director of Wiltshire Heritage Museum, said: "We are working together to give residents and visitors the information they need. We would like to involve more of the community with this, particularly community shops so they have leaflets for different attractions and they can tell visitors about things going on in the local area."

Coun Fleur de Rhe-Philipe, Wiltshire Council's cabinet member for economic regeneration, said: "This shows what can be achieved when organisations work together for the good of the town."

Wiltshire Council is closing other TICs and is instead investing £1.5 million over three years to Salisbury-based VisitWiltshire, which markets the county.

DEVIZES
WILTSHIRE'S HIDDEN GEM
Welcome
The official website for the Devizes Community Area
www.devizes.org.uk
free business & event listing

Scan with your 'phone for more information

Tourist Information

General Information
01380 800400
Accomodation
01380 620660

Devizes Area Tourism Partnership

- ❖ Visitor Information Points. In central attractions, plus Devizes Books (event tickets etc) cover the different entry points to the town, and open longer than the TIC, some on Sundays.

- ❖ The TIC building re-opened, by Age Concern, with sample of leaflets, inc town maps to signpost to VIPs. Key leaflets also in the staffed Gold Award Toilets and in The Shambles, covered market.

- ❖ Finger posts and signage updated, inc pointing to Information Points.

- ❖ New Town Centre Map, and now included in a 3 fold leaflet.

- ❖ New leaflets created in theme and staff updated. Promote restaurants that have menu items demonstrating use of local produce.

- ❖ Opportunities taken in Press, local directories to raise awareness. Joint attending of key exhibitions.

- ❖ Group Packages for visiting main attractions, welcome for key visitors.

- ❖ CPT Coach Friendly Town Award (1 of 20 towns and cities in UK)

Devizes Area Tourism Partnership

Bed and Breakfast Availability

❖ With the closure of the TIC one of the key elements that would be lacking for Visitors, was availability of accommodation.

❖ Whilst there is some move to searching via web, on phones etc there were still people calling into the TIC looking for a bed.

❖ However. The TIC often closed before the visitor thought of looking, and information for only the balance of the week was held.

❖ VisitWiltshire operated a system in Salisbury where a mobile phone was funded and passed around accommodation providers.

❖ All quality assessed Bed and Breakfasts around Devizes, ie previously liaising with TIC , were invited to a meeting. (at Rosemundy Cottage)

Devizes Area Tourism Partnership

Bed and Breakfast Information

- ✓ Participants are all independently quality assessed (as for TIC, and at that time VisitWiltshire), to maintain quality recommendations.

- ✓ 01380 620660: Local number, to keep call cost down for Visitor, probably calling from mobile so eg 0845 expensive.

- ✓ A "whisper" gives message to Visitor, and announces call to duty B&B

- ✓ Call stats, duration of ring and number handled and what times of day/week. Monitor any missed calls

- ✓ Answered by duty B&B owner, holding shared availability information. Most operate at least 8am to 9pm, some longer, and no period has been missed since we started 3 years ago, ie 365 days a year.

- ✓ Very popular with Visitors "why don't other towns have this system"

- ✓ Popular with B&B owners, many more bookings than via TIC. "We have certainly taken more bookings through the phone line than from the TICs. The work involved when holding the rota is well worth it and callers do appreciate the system".

- ✓ Saves previous time ringing round to find an available bed – now single call to easy number. Keeps visitors in the Area.

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