

Session One – Accommodation Providers

Nicola Speed – Rugeley library
Carol Gamble – Staffs Wildlife Trust, Wolseley Centre
Trevor Barber – Silvertrees Caravan Park
Raymond Seed – Silvertrees Caravan Park
Ian Marshall – Cannock Chase AONB Officer
Paul Richardson – Old Smoke House
Hilary Goodreid – Town Clerk

Paul runs a 2 person, 1 bed luxury accommodation on the Chase targeting couples looking primarily to use Cannock Chase and the wider area – great base from which to explore Drayton Manor / Alton Towers / Birmingham / Lichfield / Shugborough etc. Attracts visitors from nationwide with only 20 – 30% within 20 miles.

Trevor and Raymond run family operated Silvertrees Caravan Park. Attracts people from all over the country – not many from the local area. Over the past year have been 90 – 95% booked. This site is a quiet family run site for people wanting to explore the Chase and also use as a base for further afield – only let for 3+ nights break.

Both accommodation providers promote the local economy for bars, restaurants and events. Need to link the promotion of what is available in Rugeley to these and other accommodation providers – possible opportunity for a webpage on the Town Council website that people can promote events, destinations and accommodation. This way we have the opportunity to capture secondary spend in the local economy.

Cannock Chase AONB is a destination in its own right and does not promote local businesses in its site. Interesting to understand how people around the country perceive Cannock Chase – they hear the words Cannock and do not associate it with historic forests and rural countryside, walking, historic buildings etc.

Ian advised that the AONB have developed a 'Sense of Place' toolkit to try to bring together the reasons to visit the area with place branding. [Sense of Place toolkit - Cannock Chase AONB \(cannock-chase.co.uk\)](#) There is the need to be mindful about the uniqueness of the Chase.

Discussion moved to getting tourists / visitors to the Chase without relying on private cars – those travelling through by canal struggle to identify buses that can get straight up to the Chase.

The library functions as the local tourism office with advice, leaflets and the opportunity to print off walks / street maps and history information for visitors. The Town Trail is always a useful starting point, as is the Landor leaflet on local history. Is there a possibility to create guided walks by local enthusiast e.g. Ghost Walks? Could this feature information from Palmer and the Bloody Steps?

Wolseley Centre attracts mainly local visitors. Have numerous events throughout the year including spooky walks, quarterly What's On update.

Ian at the AONB is looking to create a 16 – 20 page booklet on the flavour of Cannock Chase. 98% of visitors to the Chase come by car. Sustainability is on the agenda but limited opportunity to have charging points in the actual forest. Discussion was then around the opportunities to expand the Heritage trail to have walks from it signposted to the Chase and need to have discussions with buses about getting people to the site.