

## **EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

### **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY 18 JANUARY 2007**

#### **EXETER RED COAT GUIDES**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the voluntary Red Coat Guides.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Exeter Red Coat Guided Tours were first instigated in 1985.
- 2.2 There is an established daily programme of free public walking tours, except Christmas Day and Boxing Day, departing from Cathedral Green and the Quayside. There are also chargeable walking and coach tours offered to groups visiting Exeter. Due to city centre developments many of the tours have needed adjustment and new ones introduced to provide a consistently good service.
- 2.3 The Tourist Information Centre Manager now co-ordinates the running of the Red Coat Guides.

#### **3.0 RED COAT GUIDE ACTIVITIES**

- 3.1 A catalogue of over 26 guided tours has been developed over the past 20 years. Currently 16 tours are offered during the summer programme and 10 during the winter programme. A full listing of tours can be seen in Appendix 1. "Exeter City Voluntary Guides" organises its own meetings and has its own committee, elected annually. New tours evolve from research undertaken by the Red Coat Guides, which is then presented to their own committee for evaluation, acceptance or rejection. The committee liaises with the TIC Manager via monthly meetings and to devise the summer and winter programme of tours.
- 3.2 At present there are 29 voluntary Red Coat Guides. Since the last recruitment intake in 2003, 3 guides have retired and between now and March 2008 a further 3 guides will retire. A new 5 month training programme has been developed and recruitment for new guides will be towards the end of 2007 to start tour guiding from May 2008.
- 3.3 To maintain the camaraderie of the Red Coat Guides, the Guides organise their own social programme.

#### **4. MARKETING**

- 4.1 During 2006 there has been a successful advertising campaign promoting the Red Coat Guides. Extensive editorial coverage has been gained in many local, regional and national magazines and newspapers. The Red Coat Guides have featured in the following publications:

- Tourist Net UK
- South West Tourism Brand Campaign website
- The Essence of England, Scotland, Wales & Ireland 2006
- Express and Echo
- Sidmouth Herald
- Mid Devon Advertiser
- Devon Life
- A Day Out in Devon and Cornwall 2006
- Enjoy England Places to Stay and Visit: South West
- School Travel Organiser's Guide Directory
- School Visits 2006/07 (Secondary and Primary schools)
- Exeter Citizen
- Exeter City Council tourism publications
- Great Days Out leaflet 2006
- Heritage Britain
- DACOM Activities map (Heritage section)
- Exmouth Herald
- Mid Devon Gazette
- Dawlish and Teignmouth Post
- Days Out UK
- Enjoy England Days Out For All
- Devonshire's Heartland Visitor Attractions 2006
- What's on Exeter & Heart of Devon Guide
- Exeter Summer Festival 2006 programme
- Execite Magazine
- Essential Devon Visitor Guide 2006

4.2 Local company, Think Tank, designed the Red Coat Guide leaflet and poster which promotes tours to residents and visitors to Exeter and Devon.

4.3 During 2006 Westward Marketing distributed 130,000 Red Coat Guide leaflets and 1,250 posters to Tourist Information Centres, Visitor Information points, train and bus stations, attractions, accommodation providers throughout Devon and parts of Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset.

## 5.0 STATISTICS

5.1 The table below shows how many visitors took part in a Red Coat Guided tour and how many groups booked a tour.

	Visitors	Group Bookings
2003	12,708	162
2004	11,928	160
2005	12,489	159
2006 to date	14,842	173

5.2 Due to successful marketing campaigns visitor numbers have increased generally, with the "Ghosts and Legends" tour remaining a firm favourite. "Exeter Through The Ages" is a popular first time tour, as it gives a good overview of each period in Exeter's history. The "Catacomb and The Mint" tour creates a great deal of interest and regularly has high numbers of visitors taking part.

## 6. FUTURE PLANS

6.1 Under consideration for 2007 are two tours, Exeter University Sculpture Tour and the Canal Basin Ferry trip to Double Locks. Both these tours are being developed by the Red Coat Guides and if suitable will be added to the 2007 tour programme.

## 7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The cost of co-ordinating, marketing, training and developing the Red Coat Guides is met from a separate budget in the Economy & Tourism Unit and is summarised below using the anticipated 2007/08 budget forecast.

<b>2007/08</b>	<b>£</b>
Training	3,000
Uniform replacement and cleaning	1,430
Advertising and promotion	15,060
Other	1,000
Public Transport	4,000
Central re-charges	5,620
<b>Gross</b>	<b>30,110</b>
<b>Income (group tours)</b>	<b>7,210</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>22,900</b>

## 9. RECOMMENDATION that:-

- 9.1 The success of the Red Coat Guide service is noted.
- 9.2 The Council expresses its thanks to the Voluntary Guides for their continued valued service

**RICHARD BALL**  
**HEAD OF ECONOMY AND TOURISM**

**ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

**Background papers used in compiling the report:**

None

## APPENDIX 1

### Tour Descriptions

#### **Ancient Churches of Exeter - Circular**

This tour covers the early history of Christianity in the city. Visit the six medieval parish churches that remain, containing many features of architectural interest.

#### **Catacomb and The Mint – Finishes in the High Street**

Consecrated in 1837, the catacomb is explored by torchlight and can only be visited on a guided tour. This tour also includes a visit to 21 The Mint (subject to availability). Formerly the refectory of the Benedictine Priory of St. Nicholas, this building has now been lovingly restored to reveal a fascinating and varied past.

#### **Cathedral Close and Palace Garden - Circular**

Take in the splendour of the cathedral from the Bishop's Palace Garden and learn about the fascinating buildings in Cathedral Close, including Mols Coffee House – and the fascinating medieval courtyard houses.

#### **Cathedral to Quay – Finishes at the Quayside**

Starting in the picturesque Cathedral Close, this tour visits Southernhay's Regency terraces. Learn about the city wall and gates, before progressing to Exeter's historic quayside.

#### **Exeter's City Wall - Circular**

Discover the history of Exeter's city wall and the key events that have occurred throughout its history. Over 70% of the wall still remains. Allow 2 hours to complete the tour.

#### **Exeter Through the Ages – Finishes in the High Street**

This tour explores Exeter's past from the Iron Age and Roman times, through to the modern day re-development. Visit Northernhay Gardens, the oldest public gardens in the country and see the castle gate house, one of the earliest stone structures built by the Normans after the battle of Hastings.

#### **Forgotten Exeter – Finishes in Fore Street**

Discover the northwest of the city including the Iron Bridge, City Wall. The Mint and Tuckers Hall – the Medieval Guildhall of the Weavers, Luckers and Shearmen.

#### **Ghosts and Legends - Circular**

Learn why Exeter is reputed to be one of England's most haunted cities. Visit many of Exeter's historic buildings and listen to chilling tales about their ghostly residents. Suitable for all ages.

#### **Heart of Exeter - Circular**

Discover more about the buildings in Cathedral Close, some of which date from the 15th Century, and visit the Guildhall, one of the oldest municipal buildings in the country

#### **Historic Bridges and Water - Finishes in Mary Arches Street**

Discover the valuable role that bridges and water have played in Exeter's history. Visit medieval, stone, iron, steel and modern design bridges, as well as brooks, wells, leats, conduits, fountains and the River Exe.

#### **Medieval Exeter - Finishes at Stepcote Hill**

Beginning at Exeter Cathedral, this tour continues into the West Quarter -once the industrial heartland of Exeter. Walk across the Medieval Exe Bridge and see St Mary Steps Church, the 'House that Moved'.

**Murder and Mayhem - Circular**

Rebellion, riots, murder, burnings, hangings and the plague unfold on this tour. Learn about Exeter's turbulent past and visit sites of battle and punishment.

**Port of Exeter – Starts from Historic Quayside**

This tour starts at the Quay House Visitor Centre, and details Exeter's colourful maritime past as the third most important city in the country for the export of woollen cloth. Visit Exeter Ship Canal, the oldest pound lock canal in England.

**Roman Exeter - Finishes at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum**

Visit sites that once housed a Roman bathhouse, fortress and watchtower, before arriving at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, where fascinating Roman finds and detailed models of the Roman bathhouse and barracks can be seen.

**Spooks and Broomsticks – Circular**

Budding ghost hunters can get into the 'spirit' of Halloween by taking part in the ever popular Spooks and Broomsticks Tour. You will be able to listen to chilling tales about Exeter's ghostly past, and discover why Exeter is reputed to be one of England's most haunted cities.