

<b>Report on</b>	(1) Tourism Ireland Indian Tour Operator Fam Trip (2) Strategic Events Update
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Browne
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Tourism & Events Staff

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b> If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform Council of the recent visit by nine Tour Operators from India to the district on Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> August, 2018
1.2	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed above.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<b>Indian Tour Operators</b>  Nine Tour operators visited the region on 13 <sup>th</sup> August as part of a fam trip to NI coordinated by Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI.
2.2	<b>Strategic Events</b>  Strategic Events need to continually develop and grow, maintaining not only our existing visitors but also attract new visitors. Growth is achieved through our event evaluations and listening to our customer's needs.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<b>Tourism Ireland Indian Tour Operator Fam Trip</b>  The Chair of Mid Ulster Council welcomed nine tour operators from India on a Tourism Ireland fam trip to the region on 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2018. The group visited Ballyscullion Park where they enjoyed a private house tour and lunch with Richard & Roslyn Mulholland.  The group then travelled through the district to Corick House Hotel for dinner and an overnight stay. Tourism staff greeted the group in the afternoon with packs of information on the district and a briefing on the region and tourism product in the area.

The Chair of the Council met the group later for dinner and while welcoming them to the district, stressed the links the Dungannon area has with India through Sister Nivedita, born Margaret Elizabeth Noble in 1867 who spent her early life in Dungannon, before leaving for India in 1898.

A force ahead of her time, she worked tirelessly to bring about improvements in the lives of Indian women, trying to bridge gaps between caste distinctions in Indian society. Many of the group were very familiar with Sr Nivedita and her work with the poor in India and fully appreciated this linkage with Mid Ulster.

Follow up information on Sr Nivedita and her links with Dungannon and in particular Ranfurly House has been disseminated to the group. Full information on the tourism product of the region plus film footage including the Seamus Heaney Liam Neeson film has also been circulated with the group.

Feedback on this visit from the group and Tourism NI who coordinated the itinerary for Tourism Ireland has been overwhelmingly positive.

3.2

### **Strategic Events**

#### Talfeta Festival

The first ever Tafelta Festival took place in Magherafelt Town Centre from 10 – 12 August. The idea for the festival came from the hospitality trade in the town following the success of last year's Magherafelt Christmas Market. The 2-day music and entertainment event was organised by Mid Ulster District Council in partnership with Magherafelt Town Centre Forum and local hospitality businesses.

From Monday 6 – Friday 10 August, Beyond Skin delivered an Orchestra of Change Makers Project in the Bridewell where young people aged 11 - 18 learned about performing, producing and choreographing a musical piece that was showcased in the Bridewell on Saturday 11 August at 2pm.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August free family entertainment took place in the town centre from 12pm – 4pm including face painting, balloon modelling, street entertainment and a street art workshop where children participated with graffiti and chalk art. Drop in arts and craft workshops will also take place during the same time in Bank of Ireland.

Meadowlane Shopping Centre was the focus of family entertainment on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August including face painting, balloon modelling and walkabout characters. A number of Hospitality businesses also took part in the festival putting on various promotions and entertainment over the weekend.

The event was very well received by the local community and provides an opportunity to build on and develop more entertainment and activities for next year.

#### Lumarina

This free 2-day event took place on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 August. The weather on the Friday reduced the numbers from the previous years, however the

attendees on the Saturday stayed longer at the event to enjoy the range of entertainment. Approximately 4000 attended this event. The caravan site was almost at capacity, enhancing the overnight visitor number to the Marina and the Mid Ulster Area. This events continue to developed, attracting both repeat visitors and new visitors to the event.

### Tales and Trails

The annual signature event for Maghera will take place in Maghera Walled Garden on Saturday 08 September from 11am until 4pm. This year's theme is Peter Rabbit, The event is free and is targeted at families. The expected audience, weather dependent is 3,000. A park and ride service will operate from the former Maghera High School Site.

A programme of entertainment has been arranged around this year's theme, to include 10 interactive stations around the garden, a live children's theatre show, storytelling under the oak trees, sports day games, face painting, messy play and the peter rabbit film on a large screen are among many of the exciting activities planned. A range of hot and cold food including a Barbeque, ice cream, sweet treats and tea and coffee will also be available.

### Magherafelt Craft Collective


Following Magherafelt Christmas Market in 2017 officers were approached by a local business who had participated in the Craft Marquee at the market about the possibility of setting up a group to support local craft businesses in Magherafelt.

She had felt that as most of the businesses participating in the Craft marquee were local and the range of products and the local talent should be supported. A meeting was arranged in February 2018 and 25 local craft businesses were invited to attend. This meeting was facilitated in the Bridewell by Officers for Tourism, Arts & Culture and Economic Development. There was a very strong desire to work together and form a collective of some sort and run various events and markets to showcase the local craft available in the local area.

#### Progress to Date:

- Craft Collective currently has 76 members
- Surveys carried out to ascertain views of members about how to progress
- 4 Makers Markets held in The Bridewell (31 March, 15 June, 4 August & 25 August)
- Monthly meetings held to develop Craft Collective
- Discussions about setting up a Community Interest Company to formally establish the Collective and ultimately leading to a retail space.
- Series of Workshops held as part of August Craft Month

The highlight of the groups year will be during the 2018 Magherafelt Christmas Market which the Magherafelt Craft Collective and planning presently.

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human: Continue to follow up with these operators.</p> <p>Risk Management: N/A</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: N/A</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: N/A</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Continue to follow up these links.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	

	<p>Pic 1. Some of the Indian Tour operators during their visit with the Chairman of Mid Ulster Council, Councillor Séan McPeake.</p>
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