

Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council in partnership with Tourism Northern Ireland invited local hospitality and tourism businesses to participate in two business engagement workshops exploring and discussing the opportunities for Mid Ulster (and wider) tourism industry to connect with / engage with the Seamus Heaney Centre to support the development of and strengthen the Heaney proposition for Mid Ulster.

This is a summary of the slides, discussions and participants' comments – it is not an analysis or recommendations yet about the way forward for a tourism cluster. It is the “raw” material from the Seamus Heaney Business Engagement workshops held at Tilly Lamp, Ardboe and Ballyscullion House on the 16th and 18th November respectively.

Please note this is only intended as a record for people who attended the workshops to use as background – it is not for wider circulation, as there is a risk that comments out of context (and without analysis/commentary) might be misunderstood.

Seamus Heaney Business Engagement Workshops

The agenda and objective of the workshop are detailed below:

1. Welcome and presentation by Anne-Marie Campbell, Director of Culture and Leisure, Mid Ulster District Council followed by a short viewing of a video of the Seamus Heaney Centre
2. Literary Tourism – The Opportunities
Ivan Broussine, BTS
3. Facilitated Discussion on the Brining the Seamus Heaney Experience Together
Stewart Walker, BTS
4. Summary and Close

Copies of Anne-Marie Campbell and Ivan Broussine presentations are available on <http://www.businesstourismsolutions.com/seamus-heaney-business-engagement.htm>

The objective for the workshops is summarised as:

The opportunity for Mid Ulster Tourism Businesses to find out more about the Seamus Heaney centre and how to benefit from the opportunities this presents to grow the visitor economy in Mid Ulster.

Facilitated Sessions

Working in Groups participants were asked to discuss the following questions and then post individual thoughts / actions required to achieve these:

1. How Can You / Your Businesses Benefit / Participate?
2. How Can Your Visitors / Customers Enjoy an Authentic Seamus Heaney Experience and Lengthen their Stay?
3. What Do You Need To Do To Make A Seamus Heaney Experience Memorable For Your Customers?
4. How Can You Work With Other Tourism Businesses To Develop Seamus Heaney Experiences
5. What Do You Need From Mid Ulster Council To Help You Develop Your Memorable Seamus Heaney Experiences?
6. What Do You Need From Tourism Ni To Help You Develop Your Memorable Seamus Heaney Experiences?

We were looking for comments and feedback on the actions and suggestions for each of the topics that would support tourism operators participate and contribute to a cluster that would help develop and strengthen the Seamus Heaney Experience in Mid Ulster.

The “verbatim” list of all points raised by participants and captured on the flipcharts is detailed at the end of the document.

As one would expect from such an exercise, there were a number of similar themes, topics and actions suggested, clustered around particular themes or topics.

We have summarised these into 6 themes on the following pages.

Themes

1. Product and Experience development (by operators)

- Seamus Heaney elements in tourism operators' premises (poems, pictures, referrals, books, orientation/interpretation)
- Poetry readings
- Literary tourism itineraries

2. Marketing & Communications (by the centre and with operators)

- Cross promotion with other attractions
- Discounts or ticketing via operators to generate referrals/visits
- Social media component of marketing with consistent #tag etc
- Integrate marketing into visitor marketing for the area (via LA)
- Developing propositions and rates for Travel trade by 2016 to promote for 2017
- Target incoming tour operators, ground handlers, EFL in Dublin and Belfast etc

3. Business Collaboration & Networking (between operators)

- Joint collaboration
- Promote centre, trails and private tours within own premises
- Packages and bundling of different operators' offer for visitor (transport, accommodation, tour shopping centre etc.)
- Skills development programme to engage all business though world host training for Seamus Heaney experience

4. Engagement and Support with Tourism operators

- Invite tourism operator in for hard hat tour of Centre
- Local champions or ambassadors (in community and amongst tourism operators)
- Communicate the Centre's events and other marketing activity to wider tourism community
- Develop a regular communications plan to engage local community and tourism businesses

5. Village Renewal and Public Realm

- Local communication, engagement and consultation programme
- Develop and resource regeneration plan
- Signage and orientation (links to centre and to trails)

6. Trails and the wider countryside (Heaney Country)

- Interpretation and signage
- Link to food and drink and other facilities along the way

Next steps from the Workshop

- Sign up to 26th November at The Inn, Castledawson, 2.00 – 4.00 pm
- Hear about and get a Tourism NI mentor to help you exploit Seamus Heaney opportunities
- Help us decide where the learning journey should go

Summary of Participants Verbatim Workshop Feedback

16th November 2016, Tilley lamp, Ardboe	18th November 2016, Ballyscullion Park, Bellaghy
Question 1: How Can You / Your Businesses Benefit / Participate?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create local economic growth • TNI can market a new Heaney experience to visitors in NI and ROI • TNI can take Heaney packages/experiences to market through TIL • Additional visitor numbers to Mid Ulster region • Extended stays • New market • Private Tours • Airport transfers • Ferry transport transfers • Plenty of choice and opportunity to spend money, enjoy experiences and tell others • Display information • Update our Knowledge • Not just a centre, but tell everyone about the trails and (what) the area contains • Children's events • Poems in houses • Turf fires • Advertise on sides of our buses - Ireland, UK, Europe coverage • Promote Heaney via web sites and social media to increase views • Promote, develop and markets the trail • Crumlin Goal - we can advice of mistakes made which all new attractions do and we can help cross promote Information for visitors • Go to the Centre for a visit • Plenty of information on display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A visitor experience for my guests • A day visit in Northern Ireland • An authentic experience • More visitors to the area • Stay longer in my self catering • Good level of interest in Seamus Heaney • Good First Hand knowledge of Seamus Heaney • Offering Accommodation • Guided walking tour around Bellaghy • Traditional Music in the Area • Litter Free Areas • Extra footfall in the village • Increased expenditure • Work together • Regular meetings • Networking opportunities • Events & festivals • Tourism forum • Tour / trails / connections • Visitor centre at Lough Neagh eel Fishery • Be included in tour • Interpretation signs • Include Heaney & Fishery as part of food tour with other businesses • Social media • Evolve Fitness and Cookstown leisure Centre could benefit from tourists who may wish to exercise when in the area • Families who want to additional attractions to attend / take part in • Give meals to groups • Extra footfall in the village

16th November 2016, Tilley lamp, Ardboe	18th November 2016, Ballyscullion Park, Bellaghy
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Question 2: How Can Your Visitors / Customers Enjoy An Authentic Seamus Heaney Experience and Lengthen Their Stay?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location -15 minutes • Accommodation, only 10 rooms with personal service • Meals for bus tours, with entertainment • Increased visitor numbers to district - adding to local economy and increasing spend • Packaging- literary packages at competitive prices • Create themed tours to include activities - golf, fishing, walking • Create overnight packages with B&Bs / hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors can hopefully find out about the Heaney centre via interactive display in Pharmacy - opportunity for visitors to buy tickets • Run tours over 2 days and include other activities • Connect through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food • Social outings • Social media • Use people and the personal touch • Use local ambassadors • Train local champions • Create packages • More quality accommodation • People centred tours • Limits to capacity overcome / managed • Integrity in everything we do • Connect people and places • Good advertisement & other visitor experiences and places to stay • Develop other visitor experiences • Good communication with businesses and partnering up • Delivering the personal touch • Connect to local tourism businesses
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Question 3: What Do You Need To Do To Make A Seamus Heaney Experience Memorable For Your Customers?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive experience • Poem readings • Clustering, networking, bundling, packages, accommodation providers vital • Have learning days/workshops for children who in turn will tell their parents • Trails need to be signed and interpreted along actual sites, i.e. Drains, fields • Authentic stories, tangible product, genuine writings, readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Packages and Market them • Carlton School / Heaney Centre • Trail Experience • Eel Fishery support for “authentic, local unique food experience” • Eel Fishery support for tours • Display his Eel poems in a traditional fishing visitor experience • Establish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trails ○ Connections
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail take in the Heaney places in writings, visit these and see buildings and meet personalities • Accommodation and locations and restaurants - package these up • Audio trails • Innovative interpretation along the way • Need to create experiences, need information from the SH Centre/Tourism NI • Work with boards (?) to develop information • Create packages for statutory boards to promote • Create tours linked with businesses • Link in and show them how close we (accommodation) are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Links ○ Business relationships • Marketing Plans • Pricing & Planning • Contract / Partnerships • Integrity / Shared values • Work with other tourism businesses • Link with the centre – brochure relate specifically to the Seamus Heaney centre • Link into the Trail • Authentic experience • Let them engage with the community • Let then write the poetry • Friendly • Hospitality • Socialising • Brochures & Info • Keep in touch regarding events / tickets etc.
<p>Question 4: How Can You Work With Other Tourism Businesses To Develop Seamus Heaney Experiences</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal introduction from us to SH Centre staff • Different and unique • Industry support • Need a "unique" experience which is social media usable e.g. Kodak moments at Dark Hedges (on Pinterest) • Money! • Need to get Tourism Ireland to advertise it, like Dark Hedges • Make Heaney more attractable than Game of Thrones, Causeway, Titanic • Increase our knowledge of Heaney 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make experiences memorable • Relate first hand experiences • Anahorish School close to Self-Catering – develop stories related to poetry • Develop clusters to connect • Coach operators • Education programme in Dublin • Educate own staff about the centre / Seamus Heaney and his work • Have displays on Seamus Heaney within various local businesses • New Eel Fishery Visitor Centre in 206/17 • Provide fresh and smoked eel for food tours • Visitor shop to stock Fish and other local artisan products • Create and Authentic experience • Make it fun • Collaborate and win visitors

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poems in shops and accommodation • Electronic link for booking of accommodation • I already work on my own Heaney Tour • I do readings to my customers and visitors • Visit & 7 Stay at my campsite • Target Caravanners, Motor Homes and Bikers • Knowledge • Integrity • Educated • Memorable • Fun • Authentic • Partners • Pricing • Networks • Encourage visitors to write poems • Encourage schools that visit to write • Link with centre and give directions to centre businesses on Heaney Trail • Context – Poetry & Landscape, tours of the locations • Visit Shepherds rest • Put Shepherds rest on the Trail • But a Seamus Heaney Hat & Scarf • Develop a phone App • I2I trail • Information • Knowledge • Tell the story • Communicate • Meet & Greet then <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ok – where to now? ○ Goodbye ○ Visit what next?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to give info on way out ● Good food at small cost ● Prams and toddlers – free
<p>Question 5: What Do You Need From Mid Ulster Council To Help You Develop Your Memorable Seamus Heaney Experiences?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council to promote whole area and businesses ● To keep in touch and have tourism offices etc. ● Evening where all businesses in area experience the centre (fam visits, hard hat tours) - businesses need to be knowledgeable for customers ● Council should network all businesses so everyone benefits ● Council to create networking platform for Mid Ulster ● For everyone to feel involved ● Need to know how businesses apply themselves to the SH Centre's marketing plan, 2016 domestic and education markets, 2017, international etc. ● Develop a full day experience for visitors ● Educate the trade ● Educate local people ● Tourism ambassador programme ● Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seamus Heaney is not as internationally famous as we think. Much more publicity is needed to make people aware of him and his poetry ● Village needs to be enhanced ● Empty buildings need attention ● Garden park area ● Flags removed ● Lough Beg area needs cleaned up (a favourite place of Seamus Heaney) ● Promotion ● Keep cluster together especially Heritage Cluster ● Knowledge and information from council ● Cross Marketing across the Mid Ulster Area ● Opportunity to work with centre – discount entry fee? ● Networking opportunities ● Use Centre as a hub for Heaney ● Linkage with common advertising to incorporate other businesses ● More festivals events & promotions to help draw people into the area ● Share the product with us, I already provide a product ● Continual support ● Village renewal ● Youth engagement ● Financial incentives ● Training – World Host ● Venues & Licensing – ● Locally the village needs quite a lot of money spent to visually improve the main street and the approach to the village ● Regenerate the vacant properties ● Rate reduction incentive to encourage property owners develop the properties ● Starting from a very low base and need finance to market and exploit what we

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	have to offer and money to enhance what we do have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money, money, money
Question 6: What Do You Need From Tourism Ni To Help You Develop Your Memorable Seamus Heaney Experiences?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link all NI attractions, not just a select few • Fund World Host training • Dedicate advertising platform to Heaney • Marketing support and training • Marketing, both domestic and international • Print, broadcast social media • Training for trade • Material for display • How the SH experience blends in with other complementary experiences • Marketing Tourism Ireland support • Familiarisation visits • To take more interest in the Mid Ulster area and promote the area • More brown sign • Brochures and a CD presentation • Farm visits • Education of businesses -we need to know what we are selling to be able to sell it • Information book or secure website on Heaney for businesses • Find a way to develop tourism -some businesses might not see value of Heaney to their business • TNI - promote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Advertisement • Travel trade advice / network • Meet the buyer • Days Out • Welcome Host • Event Support • Budget £10 million/ AONB officer • Tourism Body for Sperrins • Cruise Ships and Loads of Buses • Tourism NI needs to develop an initiative with local businesses to allow interactive links to the Tourism NI web site • Promote to countries such as China, Japan, USA who do know & love him

Workshop Attendees

Name	Company	Location	E-Mail
Monday 16th November 2015 Tilly Lamp, Ardboe			
Ann & Kenneth Badger	Roughan Lough B&B	Newmills	roughanloughstay@yahoo.co.uk
Mary Girvan	Wedding Parties & More	Dungannon	info@weddingspartiesandmore.co.uk
Tanya Thom	The Royal Hotel	Cookstown	info@theroyal-hotel.com ; tthom01@hotmail.co.uk
Alan Abraham	Annaginney Fishery & Caravan Park	Dungannon	charleneabr@hotmail.co.uk
Kieran Quinn	Crumlin Road Goal	Belfast	Kieran.quinn@crumlinroadgaol.com
Angela Quigg	Moneysharvan Cottage	Maghera	moneysharvan@hotmail.com
Hugh McCloy	Quinns Coach Hire	Ardboe	quinnscoachhire@gmail.com
Michael Quinn	Quinns Coach Hire	Ardboe	As above
May Devlin	Ballyronan Group	Ballyronan	maydevlin@hotmail.com
Genevieve Bell	Mid Ulster Council	Dungannon	Genevieve.bell@midulstercouncil.org
Wednesday 18th November 2015, Ballyscullion House, Bellaghy			
Derek Buckley	Bellaghy Chip Shop	Bellaghy	9fisherman1@live.co.uk
Cathy Chauhan	Lough Neagh Eels	Toombe	cathychauhan@loughneagheels.com
Rosalind Mulholland	Ballyscullion Park	Bellaghy	info@ballyscullionpark.com
Richard Mulholland	Ballyscullion Park	Bellaghy	As above
Colin Doyle	Shepherds Rest	Draperstown	Colindoyle.10@btinternet.com
Dorothy Coulter	Killymoon Castle	Cookstown	Dot.coulter@gmail.com
Fergal Kearney	Insight Tours	Bellaghy	Fergkearney11@aol.com
Glenn Donnelly	Cookstown Leisure Centre	Cook	Glenn.donnelly@midulstercouncil.org
Maurice Diamond	Bellaghy Pharmacy	Bellaghy	info@bellaghypharmacy.co.uk
Margaret Quinn	Dewhamill B&B	Magherafelt,	goingtoannagh@aol.com
Colleen Lowry	Blessingbourne	Fivemiletown	info@blessingbourne.com
Robert Carmichael	The Jungle	Moneymore	rob@thejungleni.com
Henry Walls	Waterfoot Cottage	Magherafelt	waterfootcottage@yahoo.co.uk
Nuala McReynolds	Kingsmills Self Catering Cottages	Moneymore	Nuala_mcReynolds@hotmail.com
Both Workshops			
Kathleen McBride	Tourism Northern Ireland	Belfast	K.McBride@tourismni.com
Brian McCormick	Mid Ulster Council	Cookstown	Brian.McCormick@midulstercouncil.org
Michael Browne	Mid Ulster Council	Cookstown	Michael.Browne@midulstercouncil.org
Anne-Marie Campbell	Mid Ulster Council	Cookstown	AnneMarie.Campbell@midulstercouncil.org
Mary McGee	Mid Ulster Council	Dungannon	Mary.McGee@midulstercouncil.org
Mary McKeown	Mid Ulster Council	Cookstown	Mary.McKeown@midulstercouncil.org
Stewart Walker	BTS	Edinburgh	stewart@bts-solutions.com
Ivan Broussine	BTS	Edinburgh	ivan@businesspointer.co.uk



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