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MINUTES

WLE Stakeholder meeting tourism Boundary Park Kempen~Broek

Wednesday 20/01/2021
Online Teams Meeting

Aanwezigen:, Jörgen Janssenswillen (Gemeente Kinrooi), Jet Joris (NMC De IJzeren Man), Werner Mentens (Gemeente Weert), Giel Polman (Limburg Marketing), Lauren Verheijen (Breda University of Applied Sciences), Lars Moratis (Breda University of Applied Sciences), Coen Janssen (gemeente Nederweert), Harold Veugen (gemeente Nederweert), Sylvie Schrijvers (Stad Maaseik), Vincent van den Berg (Molennetwerk Kempen~Broek), Yvonne Van Moll (Natuurmonumenten), Erwin Christis (Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland), Kristel Neyens (Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland), Katrijn Neyens (Stad Bree)

Verontschuldigd: Hilde Beckers (Toerisme Limburg), Davy Timmermans (gemeente Bocholt), Chantal Storms (gemeente Cranendonck)

- Introduction

Everyone is welcomed.

The Wildlife Economy project is briefly introduced. The aim is to collect ideas on sustainable business models, develop a methodology with entrepreneurs who can then apply this methodology.

Lars Moratis of Breda University of Applied Sciences clarified that they will be commissioned by RLKM to develop this methodology that entrepreneurs can use to draw up sustainable business models (ways of creating value). The business model learns how to convert that value as an entrepreneur into revenue. Specifically for the Wildlife Economy project we are looking for business models that are based on the use of the landscape and that contribute to the landscape in a positive way. The method that is being developed will be translated into a workshop, which in turn will be translated into a training course that provides tools for entrepreneurs to develop sustainable business models. All this from the perspective of tourism, recreation and agri.

With this meeting we want to give Lars and his colleagues input for his research and check whether there are any known entrepreneurs who would be interested in working together.

We would like to hear everyone's impressions on the situation in the tourism sector.

- Jet Joris : despite Corona and 13 weeks of closure, NMC had more visitors in 2020

- Vincent van den Berg:

o The emphasis is more on individual enjoyment, there is no group experience because of the Corona measures. Schools are not undertaking anything in class either. We need to think about a different kind of tourism, more individual.

o People also get outside more. The new heritage app with the mill cycle routes has already been downloaded 1,000 to 1,200 times above expectations.

o Visits are also spreading more over the week, busy times like weekends are avoided.

- Giel Polman:

o The situation is difficult, the support measures help to some extent but it is unlikely that much will be invested in the near future.

o Giel agrees that the outdoor experience is done more individually, alone or in pairs. He wonders if Lars has data on this and what the new trends are. Lars confirms that BUAS will include data on this in the research (e.g. data outdoor activities in education). Some trends: staycation is here to stay and will increase, products or services with local or biological features are hot, in education they see more demand for edutainment, more interest in 'rougher' outdoor activities and more individual outdoor experiences

- Harold Veugen:

o Still hopes that the situation will change and that if the Corona crisis improves, group experiences will pick up. He does not want to go along with the delusion of the day.

o Which entrepreneur is a winner not only has to do with creativity but also with the measures he has to deal with.

- Coen Janssen: 25-35 year olds have come to know and appreciate nature now that fitness centers are closed. Entrepreneurs can capitalize on this to facilitate this category.

- Werner Mentens: Developing new things is going to be difficult. It's the government's job to help with this, it shouldn't just look at entrepreneurs.

- Katrijn Neyens: People generally experienced the summer positively, the whole staycation story did work. Experiencing nature is mainly done in small groups and from the city of Bree there is no focus on large groups.

- Sylvia Schrijvers:

- o A lot of entrepreneurs have also proven to be very creative. It was certainly a very good summer for the sector. Local residents got to know and appreciate their own products. A lot of positive reactions. Maaseik's "Get out safely" campaign also proved successful.
- o The visitors are looking for things to experience. Perhaps make an inventory of this. Then choose themes here and develop them further.

- Lars Moratis:

- o Entrepreneurs are forced to renew. Often coincidental circumstances are the reason for this. Research shows that mainly emergencies or regulations cause innovation, not so much an entrepreneur with super creative mind who innovates to innovate. Pandemics are often seen as a result of a lack of connection with the environment. There is a deeper awareness of the importance of nature to humans. This is something entrepreneurs can also allude to (mental wellbeing

In summary, there may be opportunities to develop new things with entrepreneurs if the bar is not set too high. This could mean a new go-around for them. Here we must take into account that everything happens in small groups, and that the trends focus on local and authentic experiences.

Farmers are also responding to this. There are numerous examples of this:

- Vending machines with fresh fruit and vegetables (short chain)
 - NL Limburg rural cooperation initiative Smakelink: selling its own products locally
 - Pannebakkershof in Bree: local produce store that sold a lot more during the lockdown.
- Everyone's experience with the increased flow of visitors in the recreational areas was asked
- Sylvia Schrijvers: We do notice that certain areas (walking and cycling) are coming under pressure due to multi-use. The fall lockdown does make it difficult. Especially since it takes so long.
 - Yvonne Van Mol:
 - o Everything is much busier. In the Kempen~Broek it is still doable, they have not had to take any actions on the ground there.
 - o Many more complaints and comments from recreationists, involvement is increasing.
 - o A lot of demand for geocaching.
 - Jörgen Janssenswill:
 - o Sometimes dangerously crowded at the Woutershof.
 - o Lots of demand for Take Away
 - o Need for toilets at hiking areas
 - o Social tourism effort: discovery trope of Tourism Flanders introduced
 - o Surroundings of Luysmolen was dangerously crowded, pity that Luysmolen is closed, here would have been opportunities otherwise.
- In the Belgian part of the Kempen~Broek there is anyway a scarcity of restaurants and cafes near the hiking areas, there are still opportunities here.

- Vincent van de Berg: People are discovering their own region much more because of the Corona crisis.

Lars asks about experience with gems of creative entrepreneurship

- Jörgen Janssenswillen: Luysmolen: beautiful location, baking bread, short chain, regional products, workshop, walking and cycling possible in the area, someone with ties to own region.

- Harold Veugen: Nederweert wants to grow in terms of tourism, experience how certain stories took place, experience history (e.g. Klein volk van de Peel).

- This is something we as a project office have also experienced in projects on heritage and identity. People are interested in stories from their own region. We are now going to submit a project with the municipality around the Boshoverheide urn field in Weert.

- Vincent van de Berg:

o Zorgvlietmolen in Molenbeersel can also become success story like Luysmolen

o Voorste Luysmolen should not only be an inn, but should also do better justice to the function of the mill. Staff is a problem here, but there are also opportunities.

- Giel Polman: Limburg Marketing has developed a tourist and recreational vision for municipalities. A marketing plan has been developed around this with, among other things, the themes of the Big 5 and Routes, Heritage and Places to Stay (stories that live in the area based on storytelling).

- Werner Mentens: The Hostmanship course (offered by Weert, IVN and RLKM) is also in line with this. The participating entrepreneurs were mainly asking for a better connection.