

**Minehead BID Company Limited Board Meeting**

Minutes of meeting held on:                      Date and Time: Tuesday 9 June 2020 at 5pm

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Graham Sizer	GS (Chairman)
Julian Abraham (D)	JA
Ryan Boulton (D)	RB
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	MC (Advisor)
Cllr Andy Hadley	AH (Advisor)
Cllr Anne Lawton	AL (Advisor)
Jon Lee (D)	JL
Sam Murrell	SM (Advisor)
Martin Neal	MN (Ambassador) – part of meeting
Alison Prior (D)	AP
Debbie Sawatzki (D)	DS
Cllr Terry Venner (D)	TV – part of meeting
Jim Whittaker (D)	JW
Sharon Grant (Social Media Manager)	Daffodil PR
Livvi Grant (Social Media Manager)	Daffodil PR
Andrew Hopkins (BID Manager)	AJH
Sarah Wilsher (Minutes)	

GS welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained Zoom meeting protocols. He introduced Julian Abraham from The Old Ship Aground and Anne Lawton, Minehead Town Councillor, as a new Director and Advisor and advised that Scott Murphy from Morrisons had also intended to join the meeting, but had been unable to due to unforeseen last-minute work commitment. Everyone introduced themselves.

**1. Apologies**

Tracy-Ann Fraser	TF (Ambassador)
Scott Murphy	
Jacqui Sherwood	JS (Ambassador)

**2. Anything to declare**

There was nothing to declare.

**3. Matters arising from previous meeting held on 25 May 2020**

*AOB: The Bank Holiday Weekend in Minehead*

SM reported that she had checked with colleagues at SWT as to whether the car park at Quay West had two designated campervan parking spaces, as stated by GS at the last meeting, and had been advised that there were no overnight parking spaces in the District Council car parks. Both AH and MC advised that there were parking bays for overnight stays in certain former West Somerset Council car parks.

#### **Adoption of minutes of the previous meeting**

SM advised that under *AOB: The Bank Holiday Weekend in Minehead*, an incorrect telephone number had been minuted for members of the public to ring if vehicles stayed overnight at Warren Road car park. They should ring the main SWT telephone no: 0300 304 8000 or the police on 101 rather than the Coronavirus helpline.

TV proposed and DS seconded that subject to this amendment the minutes of 25 May 2020 were an accurate record of the meeting. The proposal was AGREED.

#### **4. Invoicing situation for year 3 and bad-debt provision**

Steve Perkins, Income Specialist with Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) reported that BID levy bills usually went out to BID members on or around 1 July and were payable 14 days from the date of the invoice. Although the BID had expressed a wish not to bill members for year 3, this went against legislation and the advice of British BIDs. It was not possible to opt out of any year in a five-year BID. The possibility of delaying the invoices had therefore been looked at instead. There was no reference to delays in the guidance, only advance payments. In year 1 there had been a delay of about six weeks in sending out the invoices, with no resulting issues, so it was considered that a delay in billing could be done.

The BID period could not change without re-balloting so the BID year was still from 1 July to 30 June and this would remain on the invoice, irrespective of the date of the invoice. SWT would issue the invoices whenever the BID wanted them issued, but he and AJH were putting forward the date of 1 September as the issue date. For the 230 smaller BID businesses the option of paying by fixed term instalments could be given. The larger national businesses, particularly the nine larger companies, would not be given the instalment option. The levies of the top nine would bring in £63,000 of the total annual BID levy of £110,000, ie 57%.

Steve stated that it was prudent to have a bad debt provision. SWT had increased their bad debt provision for this year and he advised the BID to increase theirs in order to factor in the unknowns of year 3.

A joint SWT/BID statement would be prepared giving the reasons for delaying the invoices, confirming the date that the invoices would be sent out and reiterating the purpose and value of the BID.

AJH advised the Board that he needed their approval for the invoices to be issued on 1 September 2020, the option of instalment payments and an increase in the bad debt provision.

A discussion took place. It was thought best to delay the issue of the invoices and to send a letter to BID members to explain that the bill for the BID levy would not be sent to them until 1 September. A press release would also be produced.

AP suggested that there may be an issue with businesses restricting payment because no events had taken place due to Covid-19. GS said that the BID were legally obliged to collect the BID levy and that they had shown themselves to be good value for money in the past and intended to be so in the future, whilst AH stated that AJH had been very active over the past few months, assisting businesses and giving specialist advice.

Concern was expressed about the lack of an instalment option for the larger national businesses, particularly as the BID enjoyed a positive engagement with these companies and wished to maintain this. However, AJH explained that usually these invoices were paid by head office in a lump sum and the choice of paying smaller amounts over a longer period of time was unlikely to be taken up but we could offer this to all.

The length of time given for instalment payments was debated. AJH felt it should be 6 months as some businesses closed for the Winter, whilst JL thought that 3 months was the optimum period, before Christmas and closing for the Winter.

The bad debt provision was normally £5,000 and a levy of £111,000 was normally collected. However, due to the challenges of Covid-19 on all businesses with some businesses who may not be able to pay at all, and that other businesses may go bankrupt. DS felt a bad debt of £30,000 was appropriate.

Following the discussion:

JL proposed and DS seconded that the issuing of the BID levy invoices be delayed until 1 September 2020. The proposal was AGREED.

JL proposed and TV seconded that the principle of offering instalments over a three month period be accepted. The proposal was AGREED.

DS proposed and TV seconded that a bad debt provision of £30,000 be accepted. The proposal was AGREED.

## **5. Update on activity since the last meeting**

AJH reported the following:

- 1 He had been working with Minehead Town Council (MTC) and SWT on commissioning a signage package for all of the BID area and Alcombe which would be installed by Active Signs for Monday, 15 June to remind people about the need to socially distance.
- 2 He had been working with SWT and Somerset County Council (SCC) to reduce pinch points in the principal shopping area. Parking bays had been identified and would be removed along The Parade from Summerland Road to Floyds Corner on Wednesday, 17 June. An official announcement would

be made by SWT. He would be working with Beccy Brown of SWT on 15 June looking at the pinch points.

- 3 Following negotiations with SWT, it had been agreed that the fish van (part of the Friday Farmers Market) could be situated on Wellington Square for the time being.
- 4 About 30 to 40 businesses had taken up the £50 voucher scheme so far. This voucher could be spent on signage and protective screens and could be used at Active Signs and Print, Exmoor Printers, is OK Designs, Park Lane Interiors and Simply Blinds and Curtains.
- 5 The £5,000 grant from the Government to the BID was awaited.
- 6 The Government's High Street fund had granted £140,000 to SWT and Minehead was hoping some of this could be used to pay for the signage in the town centre. Minehead Town Council had agreed to pay for the signs on the seafront. Unfortunately, street ambassadors could not be paid for with this funding.
- 7 MTC, SCC and AH had met. The new Mayor for Minehead Town, Cllr Paul Bolton, and Cllr Andy Kingston-James, would be signing off up to £5,000 for signage.
- 8 Meetings with Butlins and West Somerset Railway would be taking place. The Railway were unlikely to be holding events this year and an announcement regarding the operation of trains this year was forthcoming.
- 9 Exmoor National Park Authority and Visit Exmoor were co-ordinating the recovery plan for the Greater Exmoor area. Minehead Town Councillor, Toni Bloomfield would be joining AJH and Sally Turner from the Information Centre on these discussions. Visit Exmoor were looking to the future re-opening and focussing on attracting families, staycations and the active.
- 10 There had been a case of anti-social behaviour in the beach hut opposite the Beach Hotel. This had been resolved with the assistance of the Police and SWT.
- 11 A very positive meeting had been held with Sgt Huw Jenkins. If anyone had any police issues could they please feed them through AJH and GS.
- 12 The BID was now a member of the Town and Pub Watch.

JA asked what would happen to the signage if the Government reduced the 2-metre distance to 1 metre. AJH advised that Active Signs were prepared for changes and could produce stickers to update signs at a minimal cost.

AJH said that Andrew Harry of Black Rock Health and Safety Management was able to give advice to businesses to help them complete their risk assessments. If any members needed Andrew's assistance they should contact AJH in the first instance.

## **6. Marketing Update**

RB reported that following the Board's concerns with the high cost of the gift card scheme (£7,000 set up fee plus £350 fixed monthly fee) he had spoken to BID Managers at Salisbury and Bournemouth who ran gift card schemes. (Exeter also ran a scheme and a response from this BID was awaited.) Both Salisbury and Bournemouth were positive about the gift card but had advised it should be part of a wider marketing package. RB had gone back to Chris Parker and asked for a reduction of £2,000 in the set-up fee and the provision of regular measurable data. Chris was liaising with the head office in Sweden and a response was awaited. When RB had received Chris' response he would bring it to a Board meeting.

AP expressed her concern with the high cost of the gift card scheme and didn't think it was value for money. She thought people were sceptical about the use of gift cards and asked if there was an alternative and cheaper proposal, which could be set up and managed in-house.

DS supported the gift aid scheme, she felt it would be popular with many local residents, Minehead businesses would benefit and the BID would gain a small percentage. She said the scheme needed to be set up and managed professionally.

RB advised that Salisbury, Bournemouth and Exeter had relatively much higher costs for their gift cards. Also, the Minehead loyalty cards had been a very time consuming project which had become a chore for local businesses. With the gift card scheme the administration and management would be done for the businesses. MC agreed that it was not possible for small businesses to set up a gift card scheme. The BID could fund such a scheme on behalf of independent smaller shops and if it doesn't work it could always be re-assessed

AP asked whether a discount voucher could be included in the Visit Somerset brochures. AJH explained that a voucher map was included in the Visit Somerset leaflet, but this would not be produced now until 2021.

RB reported that it was hoped to launch the Monster Hero Safari in July. Ten venues within the BID area were needed to promote the scheme. These needed to have sufficient pavement width and floor space to enable compliance with social distancing regulations. RB asked the Public Realm Group for their advice on ten venues which would meet these requirements.

### Totally Locally Scheme

AJH reported that Tracy-Anne Fraser had brought this scheme to the BID's attention. It comprised a range of posters encouraging people to shop local. Sharon and Livvi agreed to make Minehead versions of these posters.

## **7. Social Media Update**

Sharon and Livvi reported that they had talked with SWT officers regarding publicity and they agreed that it was finding the right balance between making people feel safe and encouraging trade.

Some businesses were just not contactable at the current time. They had managed to speak to a number of businesses a number who were planning to reopen on 15 June but others were going to wait and see how it goes and hopefully open on 4 July, which could be dubbed 'Independents Day'. Sharon and Livvi felt that an occasion should be built up around this concept and asked the meeting if they were happy for them to take this idea and run with an event on 4 July to celebrate independent shops and businesses. It was agreed that an Events Group meeting should be held to discuss this.

As regards social media, they were using the hashtag #WeAreMinehead on social media platforms. Features on specific businesses were being posted every other day. Businesses were generally very happy to be publicised on social media and were keen to chat to Sharon and Livvi when they called.

Drone footage of Minehead could also be put on social media and Sharon and Livvi were awaiting quotes from local companies with the appropriate licence. Once these had been received, they agreed to pass the information onto AJH and RB.

**ACTION: Sharon and Livvi to send details of quotes received for drone footage to AJH and RB.**

They were also planning to update the Minehead webpages on the Visit Somerset website.

Sharon and Livvi said that they would be visiting Minehead on Monday, 15 June.

## **8. Open Discussion**

JA advised that all was well at the harbour and generally everyone was social distancing. He was at the Old Ship Aground 90% of the time. Signage was needed on the quay. The local community were very strong and looking forward to shops, etc. re-opening. Fishing parties had started. Pubs, restaurants and cafes would find it difficult operating with a required social distance of 2m in place and most would need to wait until the social distance was reduced to 1m. JA agreed to make contact with licensed premises and to help them with interpreting the recommendations from Government.

JW reported that no activities had been run by Channel Adventure. If there was a demand problems would be experienced around lack of staff and resourcing. The Taunton branch would probably open before the Minehead unit as the Colleges would be looking for activities. He was pleased to report that the beach and seafront were looking clean.

SM reported that there had been an 82% take up of eligible businesses to the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant available from SWT and it was thought that those who hadn't applied had decided not to; it was not that they had failed to hear the message. The Discretionary Business Grant had been launched on 1 June. 135 applications had been received and 38 grants paid to date. It was more difficult to determine eligibility as there were strict criteria that had to be complied with. These

criteria were available on the Council's website. It was noted that the criteria included shared spaces in premises, such as renting a chair in a hairdressers. Communications were due to go out in the next few days about widening the scheme.

DS reported that she had spoken to Glenmore Bakery about the queuing issue on their side of The Parade and Glenmore had said that they would sort out their customer queuing themselves. M&Co, Edinburgh Woollen Mill and Argos would not be opening on 15 June.

JL reported that only three or four businesses would be opening in Friday Street on 15 June so he did not envisage any problems with queuing in the street.

AP reported that Wombledon would not be opening on 15 June.

MN informed the meeting that Watchet Market would start again on 1 July.

AL advised that she would be able to feedback to Minehead Town Council's financial seminar on 23 June when they would be looking at balancing the books and at the recovery fund.

## **9. AOB**

- **BID Board Update**

AJH reminded the Board that a representative was required for the hair, beauty and tattoo sector and also unlicensed hospitality.

### **Dates of future meetings**

A Marketing Sub-Group meeting would be held on Friday, 12 June 2020.

The next Board meeting would be on 23 June 2020 at 5pm.

### **The meeting finished at 6.42pm**