

**Shoppers and visitors in Minehead had a pleasant surprise last week.**

Minehead BID dipped its toe in the water with the launch of two new Town Centre events which they hope will catch on and become a regular part of the calendar. It was the usual early start in Minehead for the traditional 5am 1<sup>st</sup> May dawn wake-up call from the Hobby Horse. This year the Hobby Horse linked up with other colourful entertainers on Wellington Square later that morning. Minehead's two primary schools, St Michaels and Minehead First School took centre stage with a series of Spring maypole dances, followed by the West Somerset Morris Dancers and the Acorn Shanty Band to the delight of town centre shoppers.

"We deliberately kept the link low key for this first year" said Andrew Hopkins, Minehead's BID Manager. "Large crowds may have been off-putting for the youngsters. As it turned out, with 300 bystanders by mid-morning they remained unruffled and put on a wonderful display".

With the Bank Holiday approaching bunting around the Square stayed in place for the more familiar St Andrews Church May Fair on Saturday. Whilst at the other end of the town at the Harbour and with its own colourful bunting and flags the second Artisan Market of the season set up shop. Attendees were entertained by the Stoggymen who performed over lunch. Established last year this market is now gaining its own following. "BID has to be seen adding spice to all parts of the retail area of the town" continued Andrew. "Creating our own new events and financially supporting others already in existence such as the Artisan Market is part of our plan".

"Linking the different areas of the town to make an overall experience for visitors during the first May bank holiday we needed something else, and fortuitously we were able to take advantage of a late cancellation of a Steampunk Festival in Wales and they diverted themselves to us." Taking over forecourts and function spaces all over the town with Victorian cyber punk, visitors enjoyed something wherever they turned. Minehead's steam bus, a familiar site now, took passengers from one

area to the next. A music and variety show at the Regal were thrown in for good measure.

“Everybody, including the eccentrically dressed Steam punkers seemed to enjoy themselves.” said Graham Sizer BID Chairman. It was an experimental event for Minehead but our feedback has been positive”.

ENDS

For more information on these events, please contact Andrew Hopkins, Minehead BID Manager on 07703 668928