

Minehead BID Company Limited Annual General Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on:

Date and Time: Tuesday 24 September 2019 at 6.30pm

PRESENT:

Graham Sizer (D)	Chairman
Andrew Hopkins	BID Manager
Chris Corbett (D)	The Hairy Dog/Stones (Company Secretary)
Ryan Boulton (D)	Card Factory
M Burgess	Member of public
Cllr Mandy Chilcott (A)	Somerset County Council
Ian Daniels	Waverley B&B
Jackie Jago	Threads
Cllr Marcus Kravis	Somerset West and Taunton Council/The Arkade
Jon Lee (D)	Stuarts
Lewis Lintern	Regal Theatre
Angela Neal	Blueberry
Martin Neal	Blueberry
Mark Perry	Top-2-Toe
Alison Prior	Wombledon
Debbie Sawatzki (D)	Lovely Boutique
Cllr Terry Venner (D)	Minehead Town Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council
Naomi Waters	Apple Tree Tea Rooms

Sarah Wilsher (Minutes)

1 Welcome

Graham welcomed everyone to the first BID Annual General Meeting and explained that the AGM would cover annual reports, election of Directors, reflect on the past and look strategically to the future. These were all issues that needed to be covered under Company law. He then ran through in more detail how the agenda would run and who would do what.

He explained that an open meeting for BID levy members had been held on 3 September. This was the forum where specific projects and issues of concern could be raised. It had been a success and more such meetings would be held in the future. Levy members could also approach a BID Director or the BID Manager at any time.

Graham thanked the Directors for all the hard work they had undertaken over the last 12 months and they introduced themselves. He also thanked Lucy Ball, their expert consultant who had helped bring the BID to life, and Ian Douglass, their original Company Secretary. He also thanked Sarah Wilsher for taking the minutes of the meetings and Ian Melhuish for keeping the books in order.

2 Apologies

AR Computing, British Heart Foundation, Courtyard Framing, Sam Murrell (Somerset West and Taunton Council), Sharon Potter (Knickerbocker Glory), Premier Inn, Robson and Stephens Funeral Services, Claire Stevens (Knickerbocker Glory), West Somerset Railway and Jim Whittaker (D) (Channel Adventures).

3 Chairman's Report

Graham Sizer explained that there were 300 BIDS throughout the Country. Essentially businesses within the town contributed financially to improve the town and make it more vibrant, which in turn leads to higher footfall and increased trade. This concept is followed not only in the UK but throughout the world. BIDs were becoming more popular as towns suffered from a lack of Government investment and businesses wished to make more decisions to protect their existence and increase their turnover.

240 businesses in Minehead had been consulted on the Business Plan for the BID and then voted through a legal ballot to form a BID. The BID would last five years and each year every business would have to pay the equivalent of 1.5% of their rateable value to the BID. If a business was sold or changed hands the new owner would still be tied to the BID and if a premise remained empty then the landlord would have to pay. Council offices and charity shops were not exempt.

The vote that formed the BID took place in April 2018 and the Company was finally set up in July. It then took another three months to register an office, adopt a Constitution, appoint Directors, set up bank and VAT accounts and start collecting the first year's levy payments. It was not until the Autumn when the levy payments provided funds to work with, that the Business Plan for the BID could be turned into reality.

The BID has four main spending themes which take up 80% of the budget. The first year was spent in testing the water and not making major financial commitments to projects. From feedback received it was learnt where members felt the money was being used to best value.

Graham added that he was pleased with the BID's achievements and acknowledged that some of the projects and events would not have been as successful without good partnership working with other agencies, particularly Minehead Town Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and to a lesser extent Somerset County Council. Links were made and assistance given to community groups running existing events. It was estimated that in manpower outside of that directly paid for by

the BID, both Council officer time and actual match funding from other sources in the first year, BID's projects in general had been boosted by 30%, or the equivalent of £30,000.

Andrew, as the BID Manager, was a huge asset to the BID, not only in bringing his expertise and experience to the role, but in saving money on overheads and administration by not wishing to use an office that was earmarked for him, but to work agilely from cafe table tops and the odd vacant desk in town offered by members. This also meant that he was in the heart of the BID area and visible and approachable to BID levy payers. Similarly, very few expenses claims were submitted by Andrew or indeed by any of the Directors.

Being one of the smallest BIDs in the Country overheads were expected to be proportionally higher, but in practice all Directors voluntarily worked hard to make sure things happened - marshalling at events, delivering bollards, erecting flower baskets and bunting, distributing fliers and newsletters, etc. - which reduces such costs.

During the first-year accountability and transparency were important to the BID, together with approachability and accessibility, and this had been achieved. Graham thanked Andrew and all the Directors for their valued input and dedication.

4 BID Manager's Report

Andrew Hopkins highlighted some of Minehead BID's achievements and actions since BID officially began in July 2018. During the 18-month consultation period before the ballot in April 2018 four key strands had been identified which formed the business plan. These were:

1 Events - 'Let's put the buzz back into Minehead'

In year one BID had funded the Women 4 Women event last November; all the entertainment at last year's Christmas event organised by Gateway Events; the May Day celebration in Wellington Square; the Steampunk Festival; the Cycle Grand Prix; entertainment at the Artisan Markets on the Quay; the Steam Bus which ran during the Summer from the station to the town centre and to the harbour; the entertainment, shop dressing, vehicle parade and tank for the Forties Weekend. BID had also commissioned the Eat Festival to take place on 12 October and had enabled other groups to run their own events in the community by funding the training for three members of Gateway Events to achieve the Chapter 8 training qualification which allows Gateway to put out road signs and close roads when events take place.

2 Marketing - 'Let's shout about Minehead and its wonderful assets'

So far the BID had funded free after 3pm car parking in North Road car park in the run up to last Christmas; produced regular printed newsletters which were hand delivered to all BID levy payers updating members on the BID's work; joined Visit Somerset, the County's destination marketing organisation as Platinum Plus

members; created Visit Minehead social media channels on Facebook and Instagram to promote events, offers and activities in the town; provided regular updates via Twitter and the new members Facebook group; written copy for features in the Exmoor and What's On Somerset magazines; provided regular press releases, comments and articles issued to the County Gazette and West Somerset Free Press. The installation of a footfall monitor was planned and it was hoped that it would be in situ before Christmas, listed building consent permitting.

3 Public Realm - 'Maintaining what we have and enhancing what we love'

So far the BID had erected bunting in The Parade, Park Street and Friday Street; erected 41 additional hanging baskets in Park Street and Friday Street, relocated benches released by the District Council from The Esplanade project to new positions along The Avenue; funded the Christmas tree in the forecourt of The Old Hospital and contributed half of the money required to improve the Christmas light infrastructure in The Parade.

4 Reducing Costs for BID Levy Payers

Meercat Associates had been engaged to help BID members save money on their overheads. Meercat had reported to Andrew that they had already signed up with 14 BID members and had identified savings totalling £22,236.

Andrew also reported that 96.7% of the BID levy had been collected and Minehead BID had one of the lowest shop vacancy rates in the south-west. All the BID decisions and Board minutes were available on the BID website and a private members group on Facebook had been set up to enable BID levy payers to interact with each other and the BID Manager and Board.

The first open forum had been held on 3 September. This had been successful and would take place quarterly. This was another way of making sure that the BID was being open and transparent in their activities.

In year two it was intended to focus more on Holloway Street, the lower Avenue, the seafront and Seaward Way and to extend the marketing to further afield. In this respect commitments had already been made to provide Minehead focussed content for the Visit Somerset website and a four-page spread in the new 2020 guide, which would be a stand-alone leaflet available throughout the County and hopefully to guests at Butlins and passengers on the West Somerset Railway. Through this partnership it was hoped to get the Minehead name out to a much wider audience.

Finally, Andrew concluded that he welcomed ideas and suggestions and was always keen to meet and hear the thoughts and views of members. Although part-time he would do his best to respond as quickly as possible. He looked forward to working with businesses in year two.

5 **Company Secretary's Financial Report**

Chris Corbett reported that it was necessary for the BID to abide by the Articles of Association and the rules of Companies House, and tabled the Management Income and Expenditure Report for the period to 30 June 2019 (see attached).

Chris pointed out that £58,052 had been carried forward to year 2 and would be allocated to events, public realm, administrative functions and reducing accounts.

Lewis Lintern (Regal Theatre) asked why there was a BID levy outstanding at the year-end of £18,436. Chris explained that the levy was collected by the District Council who during the Spring had been through challenging times as a result of the demise of West Somerset Council and the transformation to Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT). This had caused delays with SWT paying the levies monies to the BID.

Clarification on 'reducing costs' was requested. Chris explained that £2,750 was paid to Meercat Associates to help BID members reduce their overheads. No commission was paid to Meercat Associates.

The high cost of the Steampunk Festival in relation to other events was questioned. It was explained that the Steampunk Festival was a late addition to the events diary and as such more costs were incurred, such as room hire. Also, the event was underwritten. It was hoped that in future years this event would generate more money and that an income would be received.

It was emphasised that the intention was for the regular events to become self-sustainable over time, for instance, the Eat Festival had been paid for three years. Most of the BID funds would be spent on year one, but by the last year it should be paying for itself and the BID input would be reduced to £0. Similarly, funding was being given toward the Gateway events at the moment but the plan was for these events to become self-sustaining and for the BID contribution to be withdrawn.

Alison Prior (Wombledon) asked why BID did not run events themselves. It was explained that the BID did not have the manpower to run the events themselves but by contributing financially they were ensuring events happened and helping to improve them. Alison also thought that the posters publicising events needed to be larger and displayed earlier. This would be taken on board in year two.

6 Election of Directors

Graham explained that due to the Articles of Association and the recommendation of British BIDs, two Directors needed to stand down in order to keep the Board fresh with new ideas. Naomi Waters of the Apple Tree Tea Rooms (non-licensed cafe representative) and Sam White of the West Somerset Railway (visitor attraction representative) had volunteered to stand down. Election papers had been distributed amongst the BID membership but no nominations had been received. However, a few people had shown an interest in becoming more involved. The posts of Director would remain open until filled. As the Articles stated that a BID

could function with five members and the Minehead BID currently had seven it was considered to be a legal entity.

Andrew advised that each Director had responsibility for a section of the BID area and more people were needed to be street representatives, either as Directors or Ambassadors for their neighbourhood. This would enable the BID to have a greater interaction with BID members.

As well as a geographical responsibility, Directors also represented commercial sectors. Non-licensed cafes had been Naomi Water's area, public houses was Chris Corbett's, Debbie Sawatzki and Jon Lee stood for the independents, Ryan Boulton for multiples or regional and Jim Whittaker for professional businesses (accountancies, etc.). With Naomi no longer on the Board there was a gap to fill for non-licensed cafes and the loss of Sam White had left the attractions sector role vacant.

Alison from Wombledon expressed an interest in becoming a Director and was given the necessary form to complete. Martin Neal from Blueberry and Jackie Jago from Threads wished to be an Ambassador.

Graham added that one of the BID Directors had to come from one of the Councils and that this needed to change annually. Last year Andy Hadley, a retailer, was West Somerset Council's representative. This year, it was Terry Venner from Minehead Town Council. Graham expressed his thanks to Andy for all his support in guiding them through the maze of how Councils work and welcomed Terry to the BID. Andy and Naomi had both offered to remain as advisors.

7 Questions from Levy Payers

Eat Festival - 12 October

More information on the EAT Festival was requested. It was explained that the road would be closed from the Friday Street end of The Parade to the Beach Hotel, with about 85 stalls along it and activities would take place at the Old Hospital. Andrew agreed to ask the EAT Festival to contact the businesses in The Avenue and to put more information on Facebook.

ACTION: Andrew to ask the Eat Festival to contact the businesses in The Avenue about the event and to put more information on Facebook.

Christmas Festival - 29 and 30 November and 1 December

Graham reported that a survey had been undertaken to find out what businesses thought about a three-day road closure. The taxi and bus drivers and the more elderly section of the population were not very happy about it. Cafes and restaurants tended to benefit more than the retail outlets when a road closure was in operation. There was a need to learn from the event to find out what works and what doesn't.

Alison Prior stated that there was need for free parking on these days to encourage shoppers into the town centre. Martin Neal expressed concern over the barriers themselves.

Cycling Grand Prix

One BID member stated that the cycling event had destroyed business. They had not seen any customers during this event. There was no nearby car parking available and generally their customers do not walk into town.

However, it was acknowledged that accommodation providers, including those who are BID members, had benefitted from the Grand Prix.

It was felt that the event was too cycling centric and needed to encompass other activities too. Also, more partners needed to be involved in its organisation in order to ensure its future survival.

Alison Prior asked whether the cycling route could be around the industrial estate instead of around the town centre. Graham advised that this was being seriously considered by the Cycling Club, however, other towns had set routes around their industrial areas and had not been as successful. Naomi Waters stated that wherever it was sited problems would be caused, however having the route through the centre gave the town more exposure. She also emphasised that the Grand Prix was a national event, which brought people into Minehead from elsewhere in the UK

Publicity

It was noted that information on events needed to be provided earlier. The BID Facebook page could be used to publicise events. Businesses could then tie in their own marketing strategies with the event.

Some events had been set up too late (Steampunk Festival) or BID's input had come in too late (Forties Weekend). It was agreed that an itinerary needed to be planned further in advance.

Andrew advised that Julian Highfield, Director of Butlins, knew which Butlins music weekends led to an increase in visitor numbers from the resort into the town, and wished to work with the BID. Lewis Lintern stated that advance notice of events in the town was essential for the Regal Theatre as companies/artists were booked 18 months ahead.

The BID Board and Manager were thanked for all their hard work. The town looked great and there were now sound foundations on which to build.

Meeting finished at 7.30pm

SW – 03.10.19