

# Minehead ETCRF Steering Group Meeting 2

## Meeting held Thursday 3rd December 2020 via Zoom

Present

Julian Abrahams JA Steering Group Chair

Andrew Hopkins AJH BID Manager

Richard Robbins RR Project Officer

Mandy Chilcott MC BID Director

Anne Lawton AL Advisor

Jon Lee JL BID Director (joined 18:20)

Debbie Sawatzki DS BID Director

Graham Sizer GS BID Chair

Sally Turner ST Advisor

Apologies

Andy Hadley AH Advisor

Lisa Redston LR Advisor

# Updates from previous meeting

## Blue Flag Status (Ref PRI1)

JA reported that he and Jim Whittaker have communicated so Jim is aware that the project has the backing of the ETCRF Streeting Group and he is happy to be able to proceed.

## Visitor Guide for Minehead (Ref M&C1)

This project will start shortly.

AJH reported that he has discussed this (and the Marketing Campaign project) with SWT and checked that these projects will be compliant with the fund’s procurement requirements.

AJH added that the Indicative Plan, published as part of our SLA with SWT, could be amended if necessary. The procedure was if we chose to do this, we use the original plan and made track changes, AJH would submit the revised Indicative Plan to Lisa Redston and she would get sign-off from Cllr Marcus Kravis.

# Projects under consideration for today’s meeting

## Proposal 1

Free Parking in SWT car parks in the run up to Christmas (Marketing theme)
Proposer: Minehead BID

A Project Procurement sheet had been circulated prior to the meeting for free parking in all SWT car parks from Monday 21st to Thursday 24th December 2020.

ST questioned whether the Sunday before Christmas should have been included.

AL suggested that perhaps the Sunday could be a “special” Xmas shopping day where shops not normally open might consider doing so. DS said she would not want to and felt that she knew several other shops who would also want to keep Sunday as a day off. Sundays have not been good retail days in the past.

JA suggested the Sunday is left out of the arrangement so the proposal can be signed off and arrangements made and they can be publicised as soon as possible so that people can plan.

It was agreed by all that the proposal should proceed.

No other formal proposals had been submitted for the meeting but there were some ideas for discussion to decide if the projects should be formally proposed.

## Discussion 1 – Commissioning One-to-one mentoring sessions for independent businesses with a retail consultant.

The proposal was to appoint a retail consultant who would have a detailed discussion and a review of a business, covering all aspects of their operation: display, merchandising, stock control, marketing, shelf displays, online sales. This review, which would result in an agreed action plan and will be followed up by a further meeting at a later date to review progress.

JA has spoken with a lady who had been recommended and she is very experienced and has worked with several councils, including North Somerset, Brighton and Hove.

He suggested that the ETCRF presented an opportunity to source and provide professional advice for some of our retailers.

MC commented that while attending courses arranged by the district council in the past, she was surprised that some business owners were not aware of measures that could help their business and felt offering professional advice could be a real benefit.

JA suggested that this offer might be of more interest for medium sized businesses. He said some contact would be made with other organisations the lady has worked with before committing but he wanted to seek opinions and get a feeling for whether it is thought to be a project worth progressing.

GS suggested it might be possible to run a trial – identify a small number of businesses to go through the process and report back to explain to other businesses what benefits they have found.

AJH reminded that at this stage we just need to know if it is worth looking into further to work towards making a formal proposal. JA suggested possibly doing a trial of maybe 10 sessions.

JA said he will put together a proposal with a view to trialling the process.

## Discussion 2 – Looking again at the possibility of facilitating a gift card scheme for Minehead businesses.

Some background information had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Once again, opinions were sought as to whether it should be progressed formally.

DS said she thought it was an excellent idea and had supported it when initially brought forward to the BID board, although it was decided at that stage it was too big an investment from the BID levy so wasn’t progressed. She recalled that there were several shops she was aware of which also thought it would be a good idea.

MC raised the question of the financial security of the project in the light of recent store failures and gift cards not being honoured.

DS explained that the card is loaded and can be spent with any of the participants in the scheme so it is different to a store card. It would also potentially be attractive, for example, to hairdressers and hospitality business so would have a wide range of benefits.

AJH explained that in a change from the initial proposal via BID, this one included more support from MICONEX so will require less time input from him. He feels that this is a good project with a tangible and beneficial outcome for businesses that participate.

The ETCRF Indicative Plan could be amended to incorporate this project by taking out some items, for example events and entertainment projects which could instead be covered by BID levy. There was the option to pay up front for the Gift Card for a year (a 10% discount is offered if that option is chosen) so there would be a longer-term benefit as well.

MC reiterated that she is concerned about where the funds would sit - AJH said he would ask MICONEX for an explanation of the financial risk.

*JL joined the meeting at this point, JA gave a brief summary of what had already been discussed.*

## Discussion 3 – Online shopping

The ShopAppy online platform was discussed and JA asked if anyone had had any involvement with it. DS reported that she has signed up and received support from ShopAppy who had been very helpful and had put a few of her lines into her profile but she has not found the time since then to progress it. She has the shop and her own website to manage already so she feels it will be difficult to find the extra time needed, and other may find the same problem.

DS had not spoken to anyone else who is on it. She did feel it might be more helpful to other businesses especially with support from ShopAppy.

AJH would discuss this with Craig Stone at SWT to understand what other support could be offered.

# Communications updates

RR reported that he has been updating the BID website and has added an ETCRF section. The aim is to spread the news about what is being considered and importantly to invite involvement from businesses in the town.

The ETCRF has also been featured in the BID’s latest email newsletter.

AJH added that the press release sent out recently was picked up by the West Somerset Free Press and a positive front-page article in the 27th November was the result.

JA said he has noted the intention to hold some form of public forum in the new year to spread the news to interested parties and invite ideas and feedback. He doesn’t feel there is time to do anything before the holidays. There should also be news of projects underway to announce at that time too.

# Date of the next meeting

JA said it is not necessary to have another meeting before Xmas. Project Procurement Forms for the 2 discussion items (Retail Consultant and Gift Card) can be drawn up and circulated for approval by email (and ratification at the next full meeting).

It was agreed that this would be a good way to keep things moving forward.

**The next full meeting will be:**

**Thursday 7th January 2021 at 6pm**