

Lichfield

Business Improvement District

Lichfield BID Board Meeting

16th December 2015 18:00 hours

The George Hotel – Lichfield

Apologies:-

Matt Burnell – The Smile Centre
Lizzy Braine – The Kitchen Shop
Lisa Prokopiou – Three Spires Shopping Centre
Wai-Lee Ho – Ruby Restaurants
Dave Crump – Greenwoods

In Attendance:-

Paul Maddox – The Scales & Three Spires Café (BID Chairman)
Simon Lumb – Friary Shoes (BID Vice Chairman)
Morag Pringle – BID Manager
Antony Beard - Accountancy & IT Services Limited (current BID Accountant)
Richard Lewis – Chamber of Trade
Lizzie Thatcher – Lichfield District Council
Simon Warburton – Lichfield Cathedral
Adam Burns-Mace – Tudor of Lichfield
Angela Burns – The George Hotel
Jill Mercer – Golunski Leathers
Lea Giblin – Angel Inn
Andrew Buckman – Kingston CPC
Brian Carruthers – Tempest Ford
Judith Lundie – Room to Inspire

Minutes from the last meeting

The minutes had not yet been received from Michelle Baker for the last meeting. It was therefore agreed that these would be deferred for review at the next Board meeting. Morag would request the minutes again from Michelle.

Christmas events feedback

Lizzie Thatcher asked for feedback on the Christmas events held over 5th, 6th and 12th December. Most of the planned events for Saturday 5th December had to be cancelled due to the extremely high winds as this was a health and safety concern. The current market stalls and gazebos used are not suitable for the wind speeds that were experienced that day.

Richard Lewis reported that the markets and events that took place on the Sunday 6th December were a huge success and the City Centre saw a high footfall over that weekend.

Simon Warburton reported that the Christmas market on 12th December also had to be called off half way through the day due to extreme weather conditions, however the Cathedral, the Gift Shop at No 9 and Chapters the Café in the Close saw a very high footfall that day and takings were up, possibly due to the weather encouraging people inside premises.

Richard Lewis advised that there had been some confusion over what events had been cancelled and what had been moved to the second weekend. Also that insufficient parking had been a problem for shoppers and visitors and also that litter had not been picked up after the events.

Morag Pringle reported that the street entertainers, paid for by the BID had been extremely popular with visitors / shoppers. In particular the Disney Frozen characters, who were very well received by children and adults alike. The stilt walkers were very good, but there did seem to be some confusion over who they were, as Jack Frost and Mother Christmas all in white were not traditionally recognised Christmas characters. Morag suggested that if they were used again, perhaps another type of event, such as Halloween, would be more appropriate.

Lizzie Thatcher suggested that a wrap up meeting be held with Morag Pringle to go over the successes and lessons learnt from these Christmas events so that the successes could be reported.

It was agreed by all that planning for the “Magical Christmas” events for 2016 should start as early as January 2016. Also that contingency plans must be included to allow for the weather. It was suggested that it may need to be considered that the market stalls be replaced with ones better suited to strong winds for the future.

The Bath Christmas market was discussed as a possible example of best practice to follow and it was agreed that contact should be made with Marketing Bath and Marketing Chester and Cheshire. The use of commercial radio for advertising events should also be considered as part of any future marketing strategy.

Brian Carruthers reported that the Christmas market on the South Bank of the Thames in London was sponsored by NatWest and suggested that we look for large corporate sponsors for next Christmas.

Governance Structure of the Board

Morag Pringle had circulated draft Operating Principles and Articles of Association prior to the meeting. These were reviewed by all.

The Operating Principles were approved with the following adjustments:-

Under section 3, Management, it was agreed that the term be changed from Management Team to Manager and/or Management Team.

It was agreed that the Board should meet monthly initially, until such time as smaller working groups may be established to manage each of the "Themes"; after which time the main Board may move to quarterly meetings.

It was agreed that the BID Delivery Manager should have an agreed expenditure limit of £500 per single transaction so long as the expenditure falls within the approved budgets. Any expenditure over £500 per single transaction would need to be authorised by two directors who are signatories to the bank mandate. Any major contracts or purchased, or any expenditure which would go over the approved budgets for said items would need to be authorised by the Board. The BID Delivery Manager would have access to the bank account for payments via BACS and a debit card would be available for use for the account.

The current Directors of Lichfield BID Limited are Paul Maddox, Simon Lumb and Angela Burns who are all signatories for the bank mandate. In addition Simon Warburton will be added as a Director and signatory.

The Articles of Association were approved with the following adjustments:-

It was agreed that a definition be added into both the Operating Principles and the Articles to show that the Board is made up from Directors of the Limited by Guarantee Company and also volunteer co-opted Board members.

Under section 3 – Members, it was agreed that all BID levy payers would be automatically classed as a BID Member, without the need to apply in writing. It was also agreed that upon vacating premises within the BID area and ceasing to pay the BID levy that said membership would also cease automatically.

Under section 7 – Quorum for Directors Meetings, it was agreed this be changed to read Board Meetings. 7.1.1 Should read it must never be less than two Directors plus three other members of the Board. Sections 7.1.2 and 7.1.3 should be removed as the item has been fixed in 7.1.1

It was agreed that Morag Pringle would make the necessary adjustments to the documents and then re-circulate these as approved items.

It was also agreed that Morag Pringle would work on a new Board structure to split members into smaller working groups for concentrating on specific projects and that structure would be presented and approved at the next full Board meeting.

Accounts / Budgets

Tony Beard presented a current set of accounts up to 10th December. It showed the Net income received in the form of an advance on the BID levy payments from Lichfield District Council of £30,000. One debtor of £500 which is the deposit on the offices and a minimal spend so far of just over £1900, comprised of two months rent on the offices, phone costs and other small sundry set up costs. There was an amount for the first VAT return but as the company had been set up as limited by guarantee, there would be no Corporation Tax.

Tony advised that as he has previously worked with Morag on other projects and knew of her experience, his charges would be very unlikely to exceed the initially quoted estimate of £2500 per annum. For that he would prepare monthly accounts, VAT returns and annual returns. He would also produce cash flow reports with budgets against actuals once all budgets had been finalised by the board. These would be presented monthly. Tony advised the Board that due to the set up of the company, there would be no pressing need to spend a year's entire budget within that year and that monies could be carried over without the risk of taxation, so long as all of the monies are spent within the five year term.

Tony would submit a formal quote to Morag and suggested that further quotes were received from local companies before the final decision was made on appointing the Accountant for the year. Morag advised she had one quote so far from a local accountant and would seek other quotes before presenting these to the board for consideration.

Projects Updates / Planning

Marketing, promotion & PR:-

Morag reported that she had met with the Lichfield District Council marketing team, to discuss what was already on offer and to discuss the possible collaboration with the City Centre Partnership Group to pay collectively for a new Marketing Strategy city wide. There would be a meeting in mid February to discuss this further with all of the partners. It was agreed that combining the BIDs budget for a marketing strategy with other agencies budgets would produce best value. Representatives from the BID on the Partnership would be Paul Maddox, Morag Pringle, Simon Warburton also representing The Cathedral and Richard Lewis also representing Chamber or Trade.

It was agreed that any marketing strategy should explore the possibility of market research amongst Lichfield residents to establish what they would like to see happen in the City.

Morag further reported that there had been a press release prior to her starting in the new role, to announce her appointment and this had been taken up by Lichfield Mercury. She has also circulated and approved the final draft of the insert "postcard" to be sent out to all businesses with the BID bills.

Morag asked Lizzie to amend the website to replace Michelle's contact details with her new contact details and also requested training in the website management so that she could take over the administration and updates.

Morag advised that she had now taken over the administration of both the Facebook and Twitter accounts for Lichfield BID and was continuing to post information on both.

A further press release would be done as soon as the first project had been identified with time scales.

It was agreed that regular E Newsletters would be produced to all businesses either quarterly or six monthly to update all BID members on activities.

Events:-

Christmas activities had already been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Morag had circulated a proposed grant application form for the use of Organisations wishing to apply for funding from the BID towards events they wished to put on in the City. It was agreed that a section be added to the application for the applicant to give details of past experience and track records for events. It was also agreed that applications for funding from a small, "ring fenced" events grants budget should be decided upon by the Events sub committee from the Board, once this is established.

KPIs for the BID activities have not yet been set by the board, nor have the budgets been finalised. It was felt that consideration should first be given to those events already identified in the BID business plan, namely Magical Christmas and Lichfield Food Festival. Once these had been budgeted for, any remaining amount in the events budget would be ring fenced for contributions towards other events and applications could then be invited. The board agreed that they would structure a 'call' to appropriate businesses to avoid ad-hoc funding requests being submitted before each board.

Morag advised that she had attended an initial meeting to discuss the planned Georgian Festival for next September and that she had already been approached for funding towards a project for the festival, as BID investment was being identified as match funding. The approach was to the arts council and the application needed to be submitted in January. The Board advised the applicant that they could identify the BID as a source of unconfirmed funding with an application pending (and in the context of the 'call for projects'). However, this was not a guarantee of future investment by the BID.

Crime Reduction:-

Paul Maddox advised that the BID business plan stated that we would provide free radios to suitable businesses in the BID area and free membership to Town Safe to all. At present members were still paying for this service and the existing contract with MRS for the radios was up to March 2016. Paul advised that he felt the quality of service from MRS was not there yet and that further discussions were needed with them as well as other possible providers. It was also agreed that we would need to review the notice period on the contract. This project would need to be worked on in the New Year to set dates for commencing.

After discussions a name of City Guardians was agreed upon for the BIDs team of roaming guides at busy periods in the city, to assist visitors and marshal the taxi rank as required.

Morag tabled some quotations obtained from local companies for uniformed jackets for the City Guardians and it was agreed to go for a Royal Blue jacket with high visibility details, printed with the BID logo and City Guardians on the back.

It was also agreed that the BID would look to employ two guardians for New Year's eve through a security company based in Tamworth. These would not be in the BID uniform on this occasion due to the short notice, but it was felt that this would be necessary to look after the taxi rank and City Centre from 10pm until 4am over New Years Eve into New Years Day. Paul Maddox advised that the security company had already been checked and had all accreditations and insurances in place. Morag and Paul to organise.

Morag and Paul would also work on a brief for inviting other companies to tender for the roles in the future and this would be circulated to the Board for approval.

Street and parking improvements:-

Morag advised that a meeting had been set for 11th January with the parking team from Lichfield District Council to discuss the improvements to be made to parking across the city to enable the BID to put together its own Parking Strategy. Paul also to attend this meeting.

It was agreed that the BID would support the purchase of credit card payment machines for the parking ticket machines and Lizzie Thatcher advised that discussions to date have outlined that the district could take over the running costs of the machines once installed. It was also agreed that the BID should request a pay on exit system for the Friary car park and also that the BID should look to support free or subsidised parking scheme for staff vehicles from the BID members.

It was also felt that the main issue was the provision of sufficient parking spaces for visitors rather than the costs for them to park.

It was further agreed to look at the possibility of improved signage for the car parks.

Morag suggested that contact be made with Mansfield BID as they had previously paid towards free Wi-Fi in their town, to scope out the effectiveness of the scheme and to gauge traders' reactions to the project. It was not felt that a site visit would be necessary at this stage and that contact with David Wilson from Mansfield BID would suffice to obtain their feedback. Lizzie Thatcher advised that Wi-Fi alone would in her opinion be unlikely to increase footfall significantly, the link with the system to include footfall counters would be desirable as the costs for installing footfall counters on its own may be similar to installing both the Wi-Fi and the footfall counters together.

Morag advised that she had set up a meeting with another Wi-Fi provider for 14th January and they would conduct a free site survey the same day in order to offer us another quote.

Business Support:-

The BID now has a full time City Centre Manager in post, Morag Pringle, in city centre offices in Sandford Street.

Morag reported that she has been working on group purchasing initiatives, the first being waste removal and recycling. She has been given the prices for the business rates from Lichfield District Council and she has a meeting scheduled with Fortress on 22nd December to discuss what they can offer. She has also approached Jones Waste Services but has not yet received a response from them. It was suggested that Briars is also contacted.

Morag also reported that she has been looking at potential grant funding available for future projects. Also she has a meeting scheduled for 18th December with the team from Tamworth and Lichfield 4 Business to discuss what business support they can offer and the potential to look at running training courses either free or at reduced costs for BID members.

The Board had been advised of the need to respond to the consultation request from Lichfield District Council on their proposed street trading policy. The Board agreed that the proposed charges of £40 per day per pitch would deter take up for special events and markets such as the Food Festival and Christmas markets. The area in Market Square is exempt as this is under the control of the City Council, but stalls set up on any other streets around the City would be subject to this additional charge. It was felt that an approach should be made to the Council to ask if these charges could preferably be waved on Festival days or that a special rate should be offered through for example the Chamber of Trade for a special licence for events. It was also agreed that traders with annual licences, such as food vendor vans, should be excluded from using this licence on special events days and should be subject to this same additional charge.

Simon Warburton advised that the council had reported that the fee was an actual cost and not profit making for the council, therefore the BID should ask for them to quantify how this charge is derived so that this value can be checked.

Morag advised that having checked other council's rates there is much disparity and that the proposed charge from Lichfield DC appears to be at least double that charged by other councils. Cornwall Council for instance charges only £10 per day for special events if there is an event in one location with at least 5 stalls. This could be an example to use for events such as the Food Festival and Christmas.

Brian Carruthers suggested that the BID form a special lobbying group specifically to target those who are in a position to change policies, as the BID is a representative of a large number of businesses in Lichfield.

AOB

Andrew Buckman stated that it was important the BID recognised the need to also represent the issues of the large number of professional services businesses in the BID membership.

Richard Lewis reported that he had met with a company called Rewarding Visits who had funding to provide touch points free of charge and to work on a city wide loyalty card. His contact details were given to Morag.

Tony Beard advised that the BID needed to take out Directors liability insurance and would send Morag through the details of a company who can quote for this.

Brian Carruthers requested that as meetings were being scheduled for 6pm after a working day, that light refreshments should be provided at future meetings. The other Board members agreed.

Date of Next Meetings

Monday 1st February 2016 – 6pm – The George Hotel (venue TBC)

Monday 7th March 2016 – 6pm – The George Hotel (venue TBC)