

Minehead BID Company Limited Board Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on: Date and Time: Tuesday 17 December 2019 at 6pm

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Graham Sizer GS (Chairman)

Ryan Boulton (D) RB

Chris Corbett (D) CC

Debbie Sawatzki (D) DS

Jim Whittaker (D) JW

Cllr Mandy Chilcott MC (Advisor)

Samantha Murrell SM (Advisor)

Andrew Hopkins AJH (BID Manager)

Sarah Wilsher (Minutes)

Presentation on Plastic Free Minehead Campaign – Mark Ward, Plastic Free Minehead and Somerset Wildlife Trust

Mark advised that the plastic free community scheme was run by the Surfers Against Sewage. 700 communities had signed up to be plastic free across the UK. The campaigns had started in coastal areas and then spread inland due to its popularity. 100 communities had been awarded the plastic free community award.

North Devon were one of the first areas to sign up to becoming a plastic free community. Minehead began about 18 months ago. A steering group was formed and they obtained a community toolkit from Surfers Against Sewage (based in Cornwall).

The Plastic Free Minehead Campaign has five objectives, as follows:

1. Local governance – they need to show ‘buy-in’ from the local authorities. A presentation has been made to Minehead Town Council and they have adopted a plastic free strategy. Town Councillor, Steven Heard, sits on the steering group. Somerset West and Taunton Council already have a strategy in place. Somerset County Council are on board and MC sits on the steering group.
2. Local businesses – businesses can apply for a business toolkit and work towards obtaining a plastic free business award. Mark circulated a copy of the business toolkit document. Nine businesses have already been given the award and there were another four or five working towards it. In a town the size of Minehead only six businesses needed to obtain an award, but the

intention was to get all the businesses in Minehead signed up. It was all about sustainability and recycling.

3. Plastic free allies – this could include a letter of support for the plastic free campaign and getting other organisations, such as Scout Groups and Guide Associations, Women’s Institute and Schools, etc. on board. About one-third of schools in the town needed to get involved. Plastic Free Minehead were working with St Michael’s First School.
4. Plastic free events – for example, beach cleans. Five or six beach cleans had been undertaken to date in Minehead. These had proved popular with good sized turnouts. In fact local people were so concerned about litter on the beach that at times there was hardly any litter to pick up. A beach clean-up was proposed for January. It was realised that most micro-plastics and micro-fibres entered the sea from rivers, for instance in Burnham plastics from larger towns came in on the River Parrott and River Severn.
5. Steering group – consisting of representatives from businesses and local authorities.

Plastic Free Minehead were going for the plastic free school award. This built on the initial work done with eco-schools before funding for the scheme ended, and included litter picking.

By the early to mid-2020 Plastic Free Minehead would have enough evidence for Minehead to become a plastic free community, but Plastic Free Minehead wished to build on this. North Devon, for instance, had broken away from Surfers Against Sewage and formed their own Community Interest Company or CIC.

Mark advised that he was employed by Somerset Wildlife Trust, and worked with Plastic Free Minehead as part of a three year project that SWT (Somerset Wildlife Trust) were managing. The project had been granted funding from the Hinkley Point C Community Impact Mitigation Fund. He could thus undertake the admin for the Plastic Free Minehead Campaign as part of his employment.

Plastic Free Minehead wished for funding from BID in order to:

- Create an interactive online resource for businesses to help them find alternative suppliers, preferably local. Setting up such a resource would be time consuming and would include talking to leading plastic free communities that had already set up their own resource, and designing a resource that was both user friendly and held the information securely.
- Set up their own website, to run alongside their existing social media presence on Facebook.

Questions were then raised by the Board, as follows:

JW asked whether there were any case studies available of businesses who had improved their customer/visitor attraction by going paper free. Mark advised that there were no case studies by Somerset businesses but North Devon had such case

studies. Also, Surfers against Sewage, being a charity and national brand, could well have case studies on their website.

GS asked whether links could be made with North Devon suppliers, for example, for non-plastic containers, etc. It was noted that some Minehead businesses, such as the Jubilee Café, were already using sustainable and plastic free commodities.

Mark advised the meeting that throwaway cardboard cups had a high carbon element if only used once.

GS felt the campaign tied in with BID's objectives of having a beach with blue flag status (or equivalent to) and wondered whether having a bin on the beach was a good idea. MC advised that Somerset Waste Partnership had trialed such bins at Burnham on Sea and Weston Super Mare, but it had not proved successful as the bins had become contaminated. Also, high tide caused problems with where best to site a bin.

AJH reported that Plymouth Waterfront BID had won an award for championing plastic free strategies and, although a larger town, he could get some ideas/tips from them.

Mark stated that Exmoor were going plastic free and that if an award was attained it would be the first National Park in the country to achieve plastic free status.

Plastic Free Minehead were also talking to neighbouring towns, such as Watchet and Porlock about going plastic free.

It was agreed that Plastic Free Minehead should attend a BID Public Realm Sub-Group meeting in the new year.

1. Apologies

Jon Lee (D)

JL

Cllr Terry Venner (D)

TV

Tracy-Anne Fraser

TAF (Ambassador)

2. Anything to declare

GS reported that every Director needed to renew their interests every year. The appropriate weblink for this would be sent to all Directors and AJH for their completion.

3. Matters arising from previous meeting held on 19 November 2019

The following actions had been undertaken:

Item 3 – MC had chased David Hall to provide AJH with a quote for the Somerset County Council owned car park next to the railway station.

Item 7 – TV had chased a letter of support from Minehead Town Council in respect of the benches.

Item 9 – GS had sent photos of post boxes to AJH to send onto Royal Mail.

AJH reported that the Cycling Grand Prix had been postponed until 2021. GS advised that if the cycling route via Blenheim Road was chosen, the road between Northfield Road and Blenheim Road could be utilised with traffic light control to provide access to Quay Street.

4. Adoption of minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of 19 November 2019 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising from previous meeting held on 22 November 2019

The meeting discussed whether these minutes could go on the website. It was agreed that as they were an accurate representation of what took place at the meeting they should go on the website.

The Christmas festival was discussed and the following was noted:

- The lorry generators caused obstruction to those businesses in close proximity to them, which impacted upon trade.
- A future Christmas event should be organised by Minehead Town Council and the BID on behalf of the community.
- Gateway Events had no accountability and it was not appropriate for them to be self-appointed executors for such events.
- Concerns about the event had brought businesses together.

AJH advised that a sketch plan had been discussed with Minehead Town Council for Christmas 2020 in that there could be a celebratory event every Saturday leading up to Christmas, with only one road closure needed for the lights switch-on. It could include street entertainment and possibly a funfair on North Road carpark, but the details would need to be worked out and decided by the end of February 2020.

Last Minute Christmas Event – Will Rayner had put forward this event for 23 December, but due to illness he could no longer organise it. He had proposed gift wrapping stations, entertainment and an online inventory complemented with shopping advisors/ambassadors, etc. This was to be further explored for 2020 as it was agreed that it would be a good event to get people into town at the last minute to do their Christmas shopping.

Will had brought in Rupert Hawkins to help with the publicity and IT aspects of the event, but as the event could no longer go ahead Rupert was running a social media campaign to encourage people to shop local, emphasising the benefits of shopping local such as reducing carbon footprint, lower travel costs, etc. He was also tailoring the publicity around the various sectors – retail, food/drink, etc. The

meeting put forward suggestions for gimmicks, incentives and special offers. Rupert would be working with BID until 24 December.

The BID were providing free car parking days in SWT car parks on 23 and 24 December. GS would be putting the hoods over the ticket machines on 23 December but couldn't remove them on 24th. Jackie Jago had volunteered to do the ones in the Summerland Road car park and RB agreed to do the others. A laminated sign would be produced for the North Road car park as the hood would not go over the machine.

BID had organised some street entertainment in the run up to Christmas including Watchet Town Band who had played in Wellington Square on Saturday, 14 December and Ashley Jackson who would be performing on Friday 20 and Monday 23 December.

5. Ambassador and Director Feedback

There were no Ambassadors present at the meeting and the Directors had no feedback to give.

6. Update on BID Open Forum Meeting held on 10 December 2019

AJH reported that the Open Forum had covered two main topics – the Cycling event for 2021, as Paul Butcher from Minehead Cycling Club had been present, and the Christmas event. Also, Tracy-Anne Fraser from Bamboo had become an Ambassador and an additional volunteer had agreed to distribute newsletters, etc. DS advised that Attractions would like to be involved too.

7. Events update

DS reported that AP was leading on the 1960's event, including liaising with WSR, the organisers of the scooter rally and the owner of the new cinema.

The Women 4 Women evenings had raised £900 for Hope for Tomorrow's Bumble Bus. A cheque handover would be arranged which would create a positive photo opportunity.

May Day – it was noted that permission from parents would be required in advance for their children to be included in any publicity photographs. AJH to supply GS with a suitable form.

VE Day – a meeting had been held on 12 December. The event would be held over three days with a one-day road closure on the 8 May, from the start of The Avenue to the one-way system. There would be no impact on bus or taxi routes. In addition, there would be a church service as part of the national civic service, including bell ringing, and a party in the park (Blenheim Gardens). Minehead Town Council were leading on this; however, it was not a 'closed shop' and anyone willing to be actively involved would be welcomed.

Steampunk – Andrew would be talking to David Smith, the Steampunk organiser in the new year.

Summer entertainment – BID was to set up their own directory of contacts for street entertainers, including local groups and artists. AJH hoped to get an application for a premises licence into Somerset West and Taunton Council soon, which would make it easier for BID to organise street entertainment.

8. Public Realm update

Benches – a letter of support had been received from Minehead Town Council, but now Somerset County Council needed to know who would be responsible for maintaining the benches if BID folded. Minehead Town Council had been asked whether they would be prepared to take on the maintenance and a reply was awaited.

Brackets for the Lower Avenue – These were in place as well as the Christmas trees.

School bulb planting – this had been successful. A photo had been taken but sadly could not be used as permission to photograph the children had not been obtained from the parents in advance. The plants would go up in Friday Street in April with plaques.

Trees – Jon had been liaising with a Tree Officer from a London Borough, who had advised that the presence of cables, etc. below ground was not an issue in London and trees could be replaced. MC advised that the replanting of trees in The Avenue was a highways issue and that Somerset County Council (SCC) did not have a policy for replacement trees. However, this was likely to be looked into as part of the climate change strategy. Volunteers to replace trees needed to purchase the trees and maintain them for two years. JL was writing to SCC.

Hanging baskets – new baskets would be arranged for Holloway Street and Summerland. Graham had obtained the permissions of most of the landowners. To increase the number of hanging baskets and maintenance of the plants therein would cost about £7-8,000.

GS tabled a public realm financial summary which Ian Melhuish had prepared. This showed how much had been spent on public realm on a monthly basis from 12 February to 31 December 2019. About £11,000 had been spent over this period.

Concern was expressed about the amount of money that had been spent on public realm. GS advised that money could be spent on the 2020 Christmas lights scheme around the whole of the town which would include returning the globes to The Avenue. As part of this, AJH would be doing a walking tour with Bryan

Howe, Acting Minehead Town Clerk, which would no doubt result in projects for BID and the local authorities.

JW stated that the drains along the seafront needed clearing of sand and debris.

MC added that it was very difficult and very expensive to remove sand from the drains. There was no machinery to pick up wet sand. The District Council had contracted a private company that had removed 20 tonnes of sand, but afterwards the drains very quickly filled up again. GS felt that this issue needed to be looked at by the Public Realm Sub-Group.

ACTION: The Public Realm Sub-Group to look at the issue of sand and debris on the seafront/Esplanade.

Roundabout sponsorship – AJH was looking into sponsorship for the McDonalds and Butlins roundabout.

Post boxes – Royal Mail had confirmed that the two boxes that needed urgent repainting would receive this in 2020/21.

Wellington Square – SM continued to chase the repair of the benches.

Cardboard recycling – there was currently a lack of recycling facilities. It was thought that a scheme was being set up on the former Watchet paper mill site.

BID needed to talk to Butlins about who they use to remove their commercial waste and see if the operator would also work for local businesses.

9. Marketing update

AJH reported that there would be a Marketing Sub-Group meeting on 7 January 2020. The Visit Somerset brochure would include information on Minehead.

10. BID Manager's Monthly Report

AJH spoke to the report. 95% of the BID levy for year 2 had been paid. 38 businesses were still to pay. There would be no debt collections before Christmas. Six cases had been taken to the magistrates court last year. More were likely to be taken to court this year if they hadn't paid after chasing begins in the New Year and this was likely to be take place in March. There was £300 in the account at Somerset West and Taunton Council.

GS reported that thanks and financial remuneration were due to AJH for spending so much of his time on the Christmas Festival.

11. Financial Update

CC reported that there was £113,713.67 in the bank. £3,000 was due from the BID's issue of invoices. £12,500 was spent on consultants. Expenses needed to be allocated to specific events. It was agreed that there was a need to buy-in expertise to enable projects to move forward, e.g for destination marketing.

RB felt that graphs showing money available were very useful to show what was being spent and available to spend.

CC asked whether Meercat Associates were providing a good service and assisting businesses in reducing costs. AJH said that there was a need to ask Rishi Sood to provide an update report to the Board in the new year. RB said that the Marketing Sub-Group needed to actively promote Meercat as promotion via the newsletter was not sufficient. AJH said that evidence of actual savings made by businesses was required, particularly for the Board's consideration of whether to renew the contract.

12. AOB

SM advised that a Full Council meeting of Somerset West and Taunton was being held today. The No Taunton BID group were to make a representation to Full Council. The Council would need to decide whether they were in support of the Taunton BID as, being a business, they would be liable for paying levies if a BID was formed. The ballot for Taunton BID was due to be held in the new year. If the result was positive Taunton BID would have around 440 members. AJH stated that this should improve Minehead BID's finances as the admin costs for the levy invoices, etc. would be able to be shared with Taunton BID.

13. Dates of future meetings

It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be a planning one for projects the BID wishes to undertake in 2020, this will take place on Tuesday 21 January 2020
Events and Public Realm sub-group meeting to be held on Tuesday 14 January 2020.

Meeting finished at 7.45pm