

**Minehead BID Company Limited Board Meeting**

Minutes of meeting held on:                      Date and Time: Tuesday 19 May 2020 at 6pm

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Graham Sizer	GS (Chairman)
Ryan Boulton (D)	RB
Cllr Mandy Chilcott	MC (Advisor)
Tracy-Anne Fraser	TF (Ambassador)
Cllr Andy Hadley	AH (Advisor)
Jon Lee (D)	JL
Sam Murrell	SM (Advisor)
Debbie Sawatzki (D)	DS
Cllr Terry Venner (D)	TV

Livvi Grant (Daffodil PR)	LG
Sharon Grant (Daffodil PR)	SG
Andrew Hopkins (BID Manager)	AJH
Sarah Wilsher (Minutes)	

GS welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting and introduced Sharon and Livvi Grant (Mother and Daughter team) of Daffodil PR, the newly appointed Social Media Managers for the BID.

Everyone introduced themselves.

**1. Apologies**

Jackie Jago	JJ (Ambassador)
Jacqui Sherwood	JS (Ambassador)

**2. Anything to declare**

There was nothing to declare.

**3. Matters arising from previous meeting held on 21 April 2020**

There were no matters arising.

**4. Adoption of minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of 21 April 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

**5. Social Media Managers – Sharon and Livvi Grant from Daffodil PR**

Sharon and Livvi reported that they live in Taunton and were regular visitors to Minehead. Sharon's husband used to work at Butlins and Sharon worked for Taunton Deane Borough Council for 13 years in the Mayor's office. Daffodil PR

was set up two years ago. They have clients all over the Country, across all sectors and one of those clients is Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT). A more strategic approach was called for with the joining up of organisations, one brand to be circulated and more fluid communications. Sharon and Livvi wished to engage with all the BID members and be their first point of contact. Whilst they were familiar with the area, they did not know all the individual businesses and their aim was to meet the BID members through the next few months by talking to them and assisting them by getting the businesses message out to customers. They acknowledged that a balance was needed between spreading the word to residents that Minehead was open whilst not increasing the number of visitors to the town.

AJH said that he would be working closely with Sharon and Livvi. AH advised that they should be talking to the Coastal Community Team to ensure that there were no conflicts between the workings of both the BID and CCT. GS agreed that there was a need to ensure that all businesses/organisations were working together for the same purpose and in this respect he would send contact details of associated organisations to Sharon and Livvi. He was also keeping the members of the Chamber of Commerce in the loop.

AJH felt that the increased social media messages and the work that BID were doing to assist businesses in their preparations to reopen, could lead to an increase in associate membership.

## **6. Roundtable discussion**

Graham urged all Directors and Ambassadors to keep in contact with the members in their areas every couple of weeks and to bring back to the Board any issues/problems. Directors/Ambassadors reported as follows:

*DS* – The town was getting busier. Glenmore Bakery continued to be very busy. Holland Barrett and the Grape Tree were open, but Debbie hadn't spoken to them for a while as there was usually a customer inside. Some independent traders who were currently closed were feeling low and there was much trepidation and anxiety about the future. Sanitisers and wall dispensers were being ordered for use within the shops by customers, but many sellers would not have the wall dispensers available until July/August. There were a few taxis about but she hadn't seen any in the rank along The Parade.

*AH* - He had seen two taxis using the rank, probably on an ad-hoc basis. He had been in touch with a few people on the list of those businesses who had not applied for a grant and found out that Council officers had also been contacting them.

*RB* – The shops needed to resolve how their internal layout would work with the regulations on social distancing. Some shops, such as the Co-op, had a member of staff on the door to limit numbers. Other units would only allow one customer

in at any one time. The Card Factory suffered from being long and narrow with little space between the aisles. The meeting noted that some businesses in the town had two doors so could have a separate entrance and exit.

*TF* – A one-way system would be employed in her two shops (Wellington and Minehead) with a reduced number of changing rooms and a limit on the number of customers allowed in at any one time. The charity shop in Blenheim Road would be installing a screen to protect the staff.

GS wished to find out what was happening in other towns and what Minehead could learn from others' experiences and practices. AJH said that he was having regular meetings with South West Bids Group and would be able to pick up tips, etc. from the other BIDs.

*JL* – Only the two computer shops were open in Friday Street. All the eligible businesses had been given a grant and the sole traders were completing applications for monies which the self-employed were entitled to. Stuarts Home Furnishers were hoping to re-open on 1 June and they were working towards this. They had sanitiser gel on order, also paper to protect the sofas, chairs and beds. Due to the nature of the shops in Friday Street he did not expect them to attract queues of people.

GS advised that the Farmers Market wanted to re-commence, if only with a limited number of stalls, on 5 July. Shelley wished to link with the BID in order to sort out any issues amicably. The meeting were concerned as to whether social distancing would work around the Farmers Market, particularly as there were often queues outside the fish van which could block the pavement outside Santander. An organised and ordered system would need to be put in place to prevent overcrowding. GS felt that the farmers market, or at least the fish van, would be best placed on Wellington Square where there was more space for queues to form safely. SM advised that there were covenants on Wellington Square which prevented commercial use of this area but suggested that SWT could be asked to waive the covenants for a temporary period.

**ACTION: GS/AJH/Shelley to approach SWT regarding the farmers market using Wellington Square for a temporary period.**

Sharon and Livvi advised that the Taunton Farmers Market were planning to start back on 21 May.

GS felt that The Parade would be the test-bed for the rest of the town centre.

MC and TV felt that there was the need to educate customers on how to shop and socially distance in order to maintain a steady flow of customers and prevent browsing and unnecessary blockages. TV expressed his concern that some businesses may leave if they did not get sufficient customers, but as a Councillor looking after the residents in his Ward, he was worried about possible influxes of visitors into the town. He advised that he had been given a list from SWT of

those businesses who had not applied for a grant and had contacted them all. Three businesses did not want a grant as they wished for the money to go to those who were more in need.

Unfortunately, the loss of income was causing hardship for the West Somerset Railway which was looking to raise £500,000 in order to keep going. To date they had had raised £100,000.

There was a general confusion as to when businesses could re-open. AJH said that Government were looking to 1 June in the first instance, but July/August was a more realistic time. Butlins were currently closed until the 3 July. Their re-opening would change the dynamics of the town. TV urged for a cautious approach. AH said that Butlins would not open at full capacity. They were planning for an intake of about 2,000 people and would be introducing social distancing. They were the biggest ratepayer in the town and deserved the BID's support.

AJH raised the point that the closure of car parks could make it more difficult for visitors. MC reported that Brean had re-opened their car parks in order to prevent traffic chaos and congestion from on-street parking. SM advised that in order to support key workers SWT car parks were open and charges were not being enforced. With the current easing of restrictions this may change and she was seeking a response from senior management. Before parking charges were again enforced, MC wished to see notices on ticket machines giving people fair warning of when this would re-commence. Enforcement would also encourage regular shorter visits to the town which would be positive for businesses. AJH stated that East Devon were looking at the implementation of social distancing controls in car parks. GS was aware of many more vehicles now being parked along the seafront.

Sharon said that information on best practice from other towns, the South West BIDs Group and local businesses could be shared on social media, and the Councils' and other organisations' messages also communicated via this medium. Posters and signs could also be tailor made for individual outlets within the town. People needed to be educated on how to shop safely.

MC felt that there was currently conflict as to what was and wasn't allowed, for example, the re-opening of schools would allow children to 'mix' yet they could not go shopping with their parents.

## **7. Coronavirus verbal update – work since the last meeting**

### *Marketing and Communications*

RB reported that he and AJH had been looking at new approaches to supporting BID members. A series of weekly features promoting businesses open across the town had been run with the West Somerset Free Press. RB is also revisiting the Minehead Gift Card in order to encourage local shopping.

With regards to the commission for a new BID website which was to incorporate an online directory of businesses, Scott of Huish Design and Marketing was now creating two websites: An updated BID website with relevant data on the BID, board minutes, blogs and examples of projects, Springboard figures, etc. and a new separate shoppers website, which would eventually promote all 244 BID members, but would initially focus on the businesses which were currently open. The websites would link with Sharon and Livvi's social media work and a printed guide to be delivered to each household in the local area was being investigated with Paul and Clive Smith from Word Gets Around.

A promotion with Active Signs, Is OK Designs, Park Lane Interiors and Simply Blinds and Curtains to enable businesses within the BID to get the necessary signs and screens to reopen was due to go live later this week. Businesses would be given a £50 voucher to get the necessary signs or blinds to match each businesses' individual requirements.

AJH advised that Visit Exmoor and Visit Somerset had updated their Minehead pages ready for when Minehead was properly open.

He was meeting with the South West BIDs Group every two weeks and this group had grown in number with Dorset BIDs now joining. He also had free access to the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM)'s information and was sharing this with the BID Board. Approaches had also been made to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Somerset County Council on their recovery work. SWT were working on a cross-county recovery plan with SWT leading on the recovery element. The High Streets Task Force had developed a Covid-19 recovery framework and a ten-point plan for getting businesses and town centres reopen. This work was the focus of discussions with these bodies. He was also involved in the Exmoor Recovery Plan being led by Visit Exmoor and Exmoor National Park and would be attending the Visit Somerset Board meeting later that week to learn about their work on the South West Tourism Zone.

AJH had continue to maintain and update the lists giving details of the businesses that were open, this was being promoted through our social media channels and the West Somerset Free Press campaign.

JL asked whether 1 June was a realistic re-opening date. AJH explained that the details of the Government's documentation (road map) did not exactly state when different categories of non-essential businesses could open. Some businesses would not be opening on 1 June as they were not prepared and needed to get PPE, hand sanitiser gels and social distancing controls in place.

## **8. AOB**

### **Springboard footfall monitor**

AJH reported that increases in footfall had not been as great as expected. The biggest increase in the last week week-on-week was 40% on Sunday, 17 May, but this was still a fraction of the footfall in the town pre-Covid. GS said that he would like to compare data with other south west towns using Springboard if they would be happy to supply their data.

## **9. Dates of future meetings**

It was agreed to have a Board catch up meeting on Tuesday, 26 May at 5pm in order to assess what had happened within the town over the Bank Holiday weekend and to talk about preparations for 1 June.

**The meeting finished at 7.35pm**