



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
**TOGETHER**  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

**RTW Together Business Improvement District**

Minutes – 03/07/23 – 1030 At Lonsdale gate, Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NU

In attendance: Alex Green (AJG), Alexia Taylor (AT), Hilary Smith (HS),

Justine Rutland (RT), Peter Allinson (PA), Richard Simm (RS), Suzie Lewis (SL)

Apologies: Alex Greig (AG), Clare Waller (CW), Nicola Paffard (NP)

Guest: Rupert Farrant -Durlings

1. **Welcome** by Alexia Taylor

2. **Minutes from last meeting:** Approved

3. **Any conflicts of interest:** None

4. **BID Director Report**

- AJG highlighted some points from the board report.

**Better Town**

- **Working in TW:** review of Calvermont TW Works campaign – project approved.

- **Improving Skills:** Proposal to run seminars, starting around September, on topics that can impact many businesses. The first one will be on AI, with an approximate cost of £3,000 – project approved.

The BID proposes to start running First Aid courses from September. Ideally, would like these to run every Thursday afternoon in September so as many levy payers as possible can attend.

**ACTION: Justine to ask if we can do this in the Camden Centre free of charge.**

- **Sustainability:** amplifi initiative was discussed. AJG made recommendation to become a founding member investing £2,000 to the initiative – project approved.

**ACTION: AGJ will forward amplifi website to board members**

Mobillo business cards: initiative to support professional services with sustainable, paper free business cards. Proposal to spend £4,000 from sustainability budget on this. PA felt this was tokenism and should be reviewed again - not approved.

Water bottle re-fill station: first location would be on Mount Pleasant Road outside the station. Filling station would be the same as those installed in other areas of the town by TWBC. Opportunity to add value this term. Subject to Southeastern agreeing to pay 50% of costs and the water station being branded – approved.

### **Accessibility**

- **Streetscene:** festoon lighting to be installed in The Pantiles colonnade – quote £9,500. Target follow to match fund 50% of the cost and be responsible for maintenance. Discussion over whether the lights are what the Pantiles traders want, JR has received mixed messages at previous meetings. Pantiles Traders have not had an AGM in 5 years, chair is David Podbury. Lower Pantiles cannot be included in this scheme but will be a term 2 project. RS highlighted that lower pantiles rents and cheaper than top. Initiative approved when confirmed that is what the traders want.

**ACTION: RS to meet with David Podbury, establish what is happening with Pantiles Traders and determine if a representative would be interested in sitting on the board.**

**ACTION: SL to send breakdown of levy payers and non-levy payers in the Pantiles to the board.**

- High street development: M Kaner proposal for High Street design & development to make what is there more permanent and look better - £6,000 to spend on design work. Consultation on High Street closes 3 July, a recommendation will be made after discussion. Currently more supporters than not, objections relate to congestion and the traffic flowing in the wrong direction – noted that response has not been huge. If planters are removed, they will be recycled to elsewhere in the town. Funding for the High Street project will be a match funded project in term 2. Design initiative - approved.
- Christmas doors: approval sought to spend up to £5,000 on sustainable wreaths, or something similar, for the businesses to display on their doors over the Christmas period and then store for future years – approved.
- Flooding: AT showed pictures on Walsh Bros over the past one hundred years, nothing changed.

**ACTION: AJG to show flooding pictures to Greg Clark**

5. **Ballot Progress & Dashboard Update:** My Soloman active, BID will end up with a core set of data. AJG having more engagement meetings. AJG involved in Pantiles seating dispute to diffuse situation and help resolve. Tentative voting intentions have started to be recorded in My Soloman. No clear themes from levy payers to be used in next business plans yet, need to do a lot over next 6 months. Must make levy payers clearly aware of what we have done. Will use Colley Raine to demonstrate exactly what we have achieved.

Levy data on Soloman is to be updated to reflect the change in rates/levy bills notified to us by Mid Kent Revenue. AJG starting to target the top 20-30 levy payers.

AJG has spoken to William Benson & Hilary on trying to get TWBC support from KCC venues, the police. PA told how in Canterbury the BID attended a council meeting, made a recommendation to council to support the BID and had levy payers go along to say why the BID should be supported. AJG doing presentation on 28 July to council members. HS told how when the BID was being set up

a cabinet report was written to get formal agreement from TWBC to support the BID. JR suggested we should do this again, especially because there are new members.

**ACTION: cabinet report to be looked at by RJ & HS.**

Networking sessions to start soon. AT suggested an evening event for all levy payers in July / August to meet the board & Alex.

**ACTION: SL to send out doodle poll to find a Thursday evening in July & August that most board members can attend. Venue will be The George, 29 Mount Ephraim, TN4 8AA, 6-8pm.**

#### **6. Finance Report:**

- 79% of 2023/24 levy had been paid - £362,110.
- Bank £488,870, Re-ballot budget £44,160
- Better Town & Environment – nothing to report.
- Activities – 44% spent, includes attraction first tranche payments of 75% to event grants and the Coronation.
- Marketing: on track, first RTW Guide came in on budget thanks to Walsh Bros purchasing advertising space.

**ACTION: Board members to let AJG know if any non-levy payers would like to advertise in RTW Guide.**

- Overheads: bill for admin and invoicing has been paid to TWBC
- Aiming for year end cash balance to be £30,000.

#### **7. Board Structure**

Expression of interest from another person to join the board but retail. There is a number of retailers already on the board however there are gaps in accommodation, professional services & culture. Suggestion to try and attract a professional services candidate based in The Pantiles.

Sub-committees are all now confirmed.

AJG still to tidy up paper on board structure and induction. Ideally another 5 directors required.

**8. TWBC:** Justine gave a TWBC update.

#### **9. AOB**

- Next meeting is 10:30 on 26 September at Cripps.