



RTW Together Business Improvement District

Minutes – 11 March 2024 Lonsdale Gate, Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NU

In attendance: Alex Green (AJG), Alex Greig (AG), Alexia Taylor (AT), Hilary Smith (HS), Jenny Kitchen (JK), Justine Rutland (RT), Richard Simm (RS), Suzie Lewis (SL), Victoria Sampson

Apologies: Alex Grieg (AG), Clare Waller (CW), Nicola Paffard, Peter Allinson (PA)

1. Welcome by Alex Green

2. Minutes from last meeting: Approved.

3. Any conflicts of interest: None

4. BID Director Report

Supporting – Training & Conferences

- SEEDL: being renewed for £4000. It has over 200 courses and offers unlimited users to our BID members. There will be a big push on engagement in the coming months however if it is deemed not to have value it will not be renewed next year.
- Save the High Street: pilot trial being offered for up to 4 businesses. £1200 of value being offered for £250 per business.
- This last month around 30 individuals have qualified in Fire Warden and Level 2 Food and Hygiene training. Self-defence training starts in June and July. We are approaching nurseries and schools to try and launch Paediatric First Aid.
- JK asked how BID decided on the training topics to offered to levy payers. The BID members completed a survey last year which is what most the training initiatives have been based on. AJG also picks up business requirements in the meetings he has with levy payers. JK very connected with other agencies if the BID planning on rolling out any marketing, digital and creative training initiatives.
- VS brought up BID workshops and queried how is the BID is protecting itself when giving out HR and employment advice and not being seen as advice giver? BID has not offered any of this and has no specific plans to do so. If it does it will take on more of a supplier of information role as opposed to offering advice ie providing HR documentation for smaller businesses. The BID would use organisations such as ACAS and free statutory organisations to collate the information and distribute this to those BID members that need it assistance with HR documentation. April's Workshop Wednesday will focus on GDPR and this is being delivered by amongst others Loch Associates. BID should not use the word 'advice' but use 'help'. Individuals assisting the BID should

not be exposed and it is important that where BID members are looking to the BID for advice, the BID is not exposed. Look to set up some sort of disclaimer which makes it clear, in very straight forward language, that any discussion/conversation is for guidance only and cannot be relied upon. Professional legal/accounting whatever advice must be sought for individual circumstances of BID member. BID is trying to help businesses and point them in the right direction and be a portal for the members to come to the BID to say, for example, I don't know where to turn, can you give me some help. When companies assist the BID to help members there needs to be something written down to say we are not advising and cannot rely on this information, our terms must be clear in terms of professional negligence. In terms of self-defence training, how do we exclude ourselves against someone claiming against the BID? Must ensure we have insurance from provider of the training. BID should also look to its own insurance broker for advice.

- BID looking to support BID members who want to introduce apprenticeships in their businesses in term 2 – Cripps and the council run apprenticeships should be able to offer advice.

Supporting – Saving you money

- Photo library launched; headshots were successful, however limited engagement. Engagement of newsletter has grown due to rebalot process – BID now has a lot more contact details than at the start of January and the amount of newsletter recipients who open it has increased up to more than 50%.
- JR asked what proportion of BID members are receiving emails and are on the WhatsApp group? Hoping we will have a more accurate answer to this over the next few weeks: 170 numbers on WhatsApp - 100 on WhatsApp are BID members. There are 1200 recipients of newsletter but not all are BID members. The churn rate in chains is high so there will always be a continuous drive to keep on top of contact details. Three-pronged approach will be used: digital, ring businesses and in-person meetings. Board can help with mentioning the BID when meeting with business contacts as a very useful resource. Hoping to use students in Easter to start the process of contacting our businesses, now that we have a contact, to discover who is the ops person, finance person etc.
- JK – newsletter in YOYO for example is not going to the correct person, should be operations, is this maybe the case with other businesses? Message on next newsletter to ask if anyone else in the BID businesses should be receiving the newsletter to ensure it goes to the correct people (maybe click link to forward on?) Hoping to use students in Easter to start the process of contacting our businesses, now that we have a contact, to discover who is the ops person, finance person etc.
- Waste Collection: AG had meeting with Dave at Lilli Waste, a couple of contracts have come in from BID members, hoping for more Lilli Waste aware a couple of other companies are undercutting their service. Lilli Awaste cannot move on price.

Supporting – Business Security

- The new invoices from safe Town Partnership will give a 20% discount to levy payers and will cost BID around £10,000.

Supporting - Information, Data & Contacts

- Footfall data: will be able to see annual comparisons in the next week or so. BID will look to publish this information after establishing which information would be of most use to businesses.

ACTION: SL to contact JK if BID considering any marketing, digital and creative training initiatives.

ACTION: VS to draft a standard disclaimer, AJG to send VS a copy of what is being sent out and used at workshops.

ACTION: SL to approach HS and NP to get more information about their apprenticeship schemes.

ACTION: Add on note to the bottom of April's newsletter that allows recipients to click a link to send newsletter to a more appropriate person within their business.

Promoting

- Colley Raine proposal for 2024-25 – Approved.
- BID will go through a full tender process every 3 years from a good governance perspective.

Promoting -Visit Tunbridge Wells

- BID sitting down with Sarah-Louise shortly to ensure our plans are aligned and re-enforcing each other's efforts over the next year.

Promoting-TW Works

- Not moving forward with Calvermont; project coming in-house and being looked after by Colley Raine and working with HS's team to see if we can create a more permanent inward investment strategy to encourage businesses to want to move to RTW.

Promoting -RTW Together Events

- Waiting on full ROI of Ferris Wheel and looking to encourage TWBC to make sure they do Christmas activities in symbiosis with RVP. BID starting to look at Subuteo World Championships. Easter Bunny Trail being expanded and will have two age groups, 7 and under to spot letters and 8 and above to answer questions in addition to spotting letters.

Promoting – Events Grants & Support

- Launched with a few tweaks, including questions on sustainability. Deadline 1st April 2024.

Enhancing- Town Safety & Crime Prevention

- Looking at ways to improve CCTV system – new camera c.£10,000 so looking to add new camera to existing posts. Very useful when out of hours and no-one to operate camera and it's facing the wrong direction. We may be able to get 5 additional cameras instead of 1 new camera and post.

Enhancing- Town Safety & Crime Prevention

- Christmas lighting tendering process starts shortly. We may renew with existing firm, they are local, quick to sort problems, and offer care & attention however we will still do a full tender process. VS disclosed friendship with Chris Stille of Gala Lights. Looking at projection mapping too, Gala Lights cannot help with this. Recommendation to set up committee to deal with tendering process - Approved.
- Sponsoring In Bloom again and looking at street art project on the side of Brittens.

Enhancing – Public Realm Projects

- High Street progressing, consultation with High Street in a couple of days, good meeting with TWBC.

Enhancing – Street Cleaning & Maintenance

- Luciano had done loads of graffiti removal; gradually getting on top of it. JK has been contacted by Paul Frew of Extinction Rebellion (ER) and is setting up a meeting with BID and Extinction Rebellion. Hope this may lead to a decrease in ER graffiti.

Enhancing – Collaborations

- BID attended launch event for Amplifi TW, AG keen to meet WITH JK and Pete Kenyon to work out how BID can support Amplifi TW in the most productive way possible.
- Create TW – AJG explained Create TW for benefit of VS. Recommendation that RTW Together takes on Pump Room unit to allow CTW organise and run. BID could also use this room for training purposes. RJ -who will be looking after costs, utilities, services etc? Covered by CTW or by BID funding to CTW. There will be a contribution from Dandara to fit out the space. RS – if Pump Room to be used to facilitate creative events, storage etc then okay however RTW does not need another venue. AJG – Bob’s aim is to use the pump room to facilitate festivals like the Literary Festival, Fringe Festival, Unfest etc and not to run as a venue. Recommendation in principle– Approved. AJG to find out more of service charges etc and will submit a paper to the board. HS: Bid and TWBC are on the steering group for CTW. Bob has previous expertise in using empty buildings for creative activities.

ACTION: Board members to let SL know if want to be part of Christmas lights tender process.

ACTION: JK to set up meeting between BID and ER.

ACTION: AJG to find out more details of costs surrounding Pump Room.

Times of Tunbridge Wells

- BID had good relationship with TOTW. Particularly useful when engaging with the public. Now closed, gone digital only. Efforts being looked into to create something else locally, but AJG not sure if going ahead. Meeting with Nick Moore (worked for Kevin Spencer) next Friday – set up his own company. Closure has left a vacuum, only a few hundred Courier papers are delivered around TW. Interesting to see if we could help something else being developed, it’s important to have a local paper. RS – would require serious vetting as a social enterprise activity. Needs to be successful, readable and impartial. Robin Singer has set up Aspire. BID doing double page spread in their launch issue. Aspire is similar to So Magazine – glossy and monthly.

Enhancing – Staffing & Operations

Recommendation to employ a part-time Project Officer – Approved.

5. **Finance Report:** Finance sub-committee on Friday- outcome of this will be forwarded to all board members. Total levy for year £447k. Not changed since October because in November BID was notified by the council that they had incorrectly paid the BID some rates they had collected totalling > £7k and then in February we were notified that monies collected from BID members to cover collection costs, i.e. summons charges had been paid to the BID in error instead of being retained by TWBC, also c.£7k. Levy has been collected but is being used to repay TWBC. Jane Fineman has been contacted about concerns regarding TWBC reconciliation procedures and whether they are sufficiently robust – not heard back yet. This should not happen in BID’s second term. Going forward BID will pay £40.20 per hereditament. Cash carry forward position will be around £150k. Current spend is in line with proposed spend. BID has been through outstanding levy bills from years 2-4 and will issue approve summons collection and further proceedings after Friday’s finance meeting.

ACTION: SL to update board after Friday’s finance meeting.

6. TWBC update attached.

- Community Safety Plan: new plan will focus on town centre – youth anti-social behaviour, shop lifting and graffiti.

7. AOB

- Congratulations for the successful reballot. Thanks to board members for their support.
- Organise an evening out to meet all new board members and Colley Raine.
- AJG hoping there will be more new board members.
- JK: thank you for emails from AG and RS about events. Events are being outside the BID area which are possibly to the detriment of town centre businesses. TWBC can be mindful of the impact this has on town centre businesses when approving Dunorlan events – JR trying to get to the bottom of this with TWBC colleagues. RS – a couple of Dunorlan events are a smash and grab of the local economy and contrary to what the BID is trying to achieve.

ACTION: RS to meet with RS to discuss further in a month.