



THESE MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED BY THE BOARD AT ITS NEXT MEETING

A Meeting of the Abingdon BID Board Was held on Tuesday 26th September 2017 at Slade Legal

Attendance:

Julie Downing, Russell Downing, Mel Inness, Jill Carver, Melanie Smans, Sandy Lovatt, Bryan Brown, Suzanne Huggett, Nick Cosford.

Welcome

Bryan Brown welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of: Paul Holt, Kevin Thomson, Giancarlo Ungaro

Minutes of last Meeting

There being no matters arising, Bryan Brown proposed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

Roles, Responsibilities and recruitment of the Board

Before the above was discussed, Bryan Brown announced that he would be stepping down from the board and as a director. Bryan has been a big supporter and part of the BID and still is, but feels now is the time as he no longer holds a business in the town and has commitments now in other places that needs his time.

Russell Downing also announced in Paul Holt's absence that as his career has now resulted in him not working in a business in the town, it would no longer be appropriate to continue as Chair. Paul stated that he will still be a supporter of the BID and carry on as a director until the position is filled also continuing to see through certain issues that need his attention.

Russell Downing brought up that a Mel Inness was willing to step in as Interim chair until the end of the year. Bryan Brown put to the board any objections, the board unanimously agreed. An email will be sent to notify the businesses.

Julie Downing is to find the BID constitution also, memorandum and articles to look



at meeting quorum.

The board looked at the responsibilities of the BID board to include administering the business plan, board members are ambassadors of the BID, promoting to other businesses. We need more people around the table that can attend the six weekly meetings. Julie Downing will approach more professional services to fill the gaps in the mix of businesses.

Aga Candan from Wildwood will attend the next board meeting. Also, Jill Carver informed the board that Becky Murphy from Babelquest is interested in joining. Invitations will be sent to both to attend the next meeting.

Review of the Business Plan

It was agreed that the four key projects that were agreed in May would continue:

Empty Units – Iain Nicholson will continue working in the town until his contract ends at the end of January 2018 funded by the Vale, Iain has already carried out viewings for potential independent retailers. There is however a problem with the size of the units available for the right retailers to come into town. Could the BID approach the landlords of Bury's Street to discuss the high rent issue?

Car Parking – Lobbying the Vale regarding the opening hours of the multi-storey car park, but also working with the Vale to look at plans for the refurbishment of the multi-storey including signage of car parks around the town and potential of staff permits at Rye Meadows car park. Layla Moran has been approached to back the lobbying of the extended hours. Sandy Lovatt also agreed to look into the progress.

Wayfinding- It was agreed to continue with the initial strategy plan at £3,500 then bring back to the board for consultation. Match funding will be looked at from the Vale and the Town Council also through grants to enable the most effective outcome. This project will roll over the rest of the term of the BID.

Joint Procurement – No more budget will be spent on Meercat, but the service will still run to enable businesses the opportunity to save money on the utilities. Julie Downing will carry on informing the businesses. Russell Downing stated that it was



a proven fact that the scheme is a fantastic opportunity to try to cut costs, but businesses are weary to try.

Marketing through website, social media and Experience Oxfordshire, Salters Steamers and the Oxford Bus Company will continue as an ongoing project.

Further ideas and comments:

Jill Carver mentioned that we could produce a leaflet to help promote all the independents and all that is good about Abingdon. We need to shout out to what we have on offer and entice people back into the town. Russell Downing will produce a marketing plan of action to put before the board. Julie Downing will contact the Oxford Bus Company as they will be rebranding their Abingdon Buses, could we look to put a catchy slogan on the buses to stick in people's minds?

Mel Inness questioned what developments have been made regarding the promised completion of the refurbishment of Bury's Street. Melanie Smans would ask Cllr Mark Murray for a statement of progress on the Charter Area. Nick Cosford mentioned that there is a lot of bad feeling around the town, gaining information on the Charter area would help the uncertainty and lack of communication. Bryan Brown mentioned that the Charter area is the only area in the town that can be redeveloped and can have an instrumental effect on the growth of the town.

Questions were raised relating to Yr2 income relating to the Business Plan. The Business Plan stated income of £125,000 with additional income of £39,000, totalling £164,000. The true income will be £115,000 with full collection. The second payment of £17,500 has been paid back for the full repayment of the loan.

Looking at the Visit Abingdon Website, need to add under objectives – To act as a vehicle for attracting larger funding.

Sandy Lovatt mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a good link between the Town Council and Visit Abingdon websites to allow visitors to either site the information about Abingdon and see what the town has to offer.

Footfall is down in the town as well as spend. Saturday afternoons are increasingly quiet. The footfall sensors although do take in account the cars on the roads, it still gives a good pattern and data to measure. It was decided to keep the sensors.



Julie Downing will ask JLL, Bury's Street managers if we can have their footfall data.

AOB

The subject of potential mediation between a business and the BID was brought up. After discussion it was agreed that we do not know exactly what the questions were that were being asked or the issues, therefore how could the BID go to mediation? An email will be sent to the Vale asking for the questions that were being asked before an informed decision could be made. In future, the Board would ask that all questions were directed back to the BID for the Board to answer.

Experience Oxfordshire annual renewal is due next month. It was agreed to reduce the package to half the cost to £999 annual fee as we still gain full exposure at their Visitor Information Centre to promote Abingdon and website presence which are essential, but we also will still have access to many other benefits.

Next Board meeting: 7th November 5:30pm Slade Legal