

Barrow Business Improvement District

Minutes of Board of Directors meeting Tuesday 14th January 2020

Attendees: Paul Hodgson PH (Chair), Kieron Hart KH, Sandra Collings SC, Allan Kerr AK, Kay Bower KB, Phil Heath PH & Colin Garnett CG (Manager)

Open Meeting (Michael Barry and Helen Houston – Barrow Borough Council)

Presentation by Barrow Borough Council regarding the proposed Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) on Duke Street.

BOARD MEETING OPEN

1. Apologies

Rowan McClure (P.H. expressed the Boards condolences to Rowen and his family bereavement) and Stephen Leonard

2. Review of minutes

Attention was drawn to a few amendments that had been made and these were agreed. All attendees have been asked to carefully check minutes of meetings. These will not be published on the website until after they have been approved at the following meeting.

3. Finance report

Board reviewed finances and raised no concerns

4. HAZ request from Barrow Borough Council

CG and PH had a meeting with Barrow Borough Council last week. The Council requested match funding for the Heritage Action Zone scheme (HAZ). PH stated that the amount requested was impossible and that Barrow BC would need to do a presentation to the full board before they could discuss match funding the HAZ scheme and vote on the contribution amount.

As a partner in the HAZ scheme Barrow BID would be invited to sit on the scheme board and have input on decisions. Benefits of the HAZ scheme are:

- Possibility of drawing in £1.9m into the HAZ area (Ramsden Square, Duke St & Cornwallis St).
- Premises grant scheme which would enable businesses to draw down substantially more funding than the £1,000 maximum grant provided by Barrow BID. Businesses in Duke Street would apply to HAZ for premises grants instead of applying to the BID.
- Some cross over projects from Barrow BID including way finder signs and events.
- Possibility for Barrow BID to draw back some of the contribution on events like the annual Festival of Transport.
- Scheme would employ a Project Officer who would be based on Duke Street. This individuals could support/partner with BID Manager on projects and may create shared office space for use by Barrow BID.
- CG and PH are on the HAZ committee so they will have input on decisions made.

Concern was raised that levy payers in the HAZ might think that their levy contributions were being given back to the Council, however, all agreed that our relative small contribution would help to lever in a substantial amount to the area.

Barrow BC requested a set amount over a 4 year period, which Barrow BID cannot commit to, as they are

up for re-election in 2021.

CG was asked to find out how much levy is paid in that area, which he agreed to do, but P.H. advised that a decision had to be made tonight as the Council needed to know as soon as possible.

The board agreed to contribute £15,000 PA to the HAZ scheme over 4 years, with the first two years confirmed and the last two years dependant on the re-election of Barrow BID (5 in favour and 1 'yes' with caveat).

CG said that it must be made 'black and white' to HAZ levy payers on how they will be affected. It was agreed that it would be constructive to have a meeting with the Duke Street premises in the near future.

Action: CG to find out how much levy is paid by businesses located in the HAZ area

5. Christmas

Live music – relatively inexpensive and was well received

Shop Barrow Day – Free parking was popular (although better signage on payment machines required). BID paid for car parks and advertising, but the Council also contributed. It was thought that the timing was right and traders were happy and reported that there had been a good footfall.

New lights were well received, including taxi drivers. People were pleasantly surprised and said that they had enjoyed going out in the town.

Funfair had been popular.

Bluetooth music – generally gave a festive feel to the town and even had some people dancing. Good feedback about the speakers in the ginnel by Forum as it is a gateway to the town centre and the lights and music helped detract from its infamous past.

Santa Express – unfortunately had to be cancelled due to bad weather forecasts. Some of the event was rescued by Santa and his two elves being taken round numerous businesses in the town centre. Santa – Dave Took and the elves– did a brilliant job. All the venues were well prepared for his visit and he was given a very good reception.

Carol singing competition – schools enjoyed being involved and are keen to know about future events.

Negatives: Projector on the Town Hall wasn't working and was returned to supplier and the lights in the trees required multi-point connectors to improve them in 2020.

An invoice was received from Optech Fibres for additional infrastructure but it was agreed that this was acceptable as it would help the expansion of lights in the future.

Future Plans:

BID Manager to investigate larger scale event in 2020 and look at how we can attract a Christmas Market to the town.

The Board agreed that all events must be of a high quality and although it is good to attract people from out of town it is more important to keep local people in the town rather than going away.

6. Open meeting in February

It was intended to hold an open meeting in February for BID levy payers, business owners and managers with a presentation from British BID, but unfortunately British BID have double booked and won't now be available until April. After a discussion it was agreed that it would be better to hold the meeting in

early June after the Dino and Soapbox events have taken place.

Board members raised concerns that members of the public had attended open meetings and disrupted them. Following a discussion it was decided that all attendees would need to sign in and state which business they represented.

Action: CG to contact British BID regarding availability in June

7. Private Sector Funding and Voluntary BID Membership from Sept 2021

Negotiations are ongoing with BAE with the view to obtaining funding. Last year they sponsored the Soapbox Challenge and we are seeking support for this event and more initiatives in 2020.

CG is to send out a letter to the big corporate companies in Barrow to request sponsorship of events and also to ask if they would commit to long-term investment for a 5 year period from 2021 to 2026 as an Associate or Voluntary BID Member. As Voluntary BID Members companies would benefit from events that they sponsored but would not have the same benefit entitlement as BID levy payers.

CG is investigating voluntary membership in other BID locations and also looking into a scheme where corporates can sponsor an event and become an associate member. The aim of this is to bring in additional funds to the BID pot so that it is not only the town centre businesses financing Barrow BID and the regeneration of Barrow's town centre.

Action: CG to look at Voluntary BID membership in other BID areas.

8. Business Premises Grants

Currently awaiting information to complete applications.

9. Special Project Grants (applications)

- Dropzone have submitted a youth project application for financial assistance with a Furness Pride Event on 6th May 2020. The event will include a parade and should bring people in to the town with a mix of colour, vibrancy and inclusivity. Funding is requested to help towards costumes and dressing the town (e.g. bunting). It was noted that it was a well thought out application and provided plenty of information. The Board agreed unanimously to support the application.
- Waterslide – application to help fund a town centre waterslide event. Concerns were raised regarding safety, security and insurance for the event. In view of this the Board voted unanimously to reject the application, although they would like such events to happen in Barrow they did not think that the proposed venues were suitable. It was suggested that a more suitable location might be next to the Round House and CG is going to suggest this to them.
- Beautiful Places - application to help put on an exhibition in The Forum and Town Hall. It would be the same day as Dino Day, but the Board did not think that this would be of any benefit and questioned if there would be much footfall being based upstairs in the Forum. The application did not clarify how any contribution from Barrow BID would be matched with other funding. The Board deferred the application and asked for additional information including; Attendee numbers in 2019 and further funding.
- Signal Films – application for funding for workshops and events to bring art and culture to Barrow. A lot of information has been provided and there is a lot to read so PH will email out to Board members to vote when they have had time to look at everything.

10. Barrow Music Weekend

Board members were concerned about the quality of the proposed event which is planned as a 4 day event 1st to 4th October at various venues. The application lacked solid plans and adequate resources. CG is to respond by saying that Barrow BID does not have a pot of money to help with the event, but they could apply for up to £1000 as a Special Projects Grant. To do this they would have to provide more information in their application regarding funding and plans, as well as needing a bank account. The Board are to make it clear that they do not want to manage the event as they have no expertise in music festivals.

11. VE Day

The event is being organised and run by BAE Graduates. It involves a street party on Scott Street with tables, bunting, dancing etc. The Board agreed unanimously to partner with BAE and act as the overseeing company for the event providing public liability insurance.

12. Advertising Board at Barrow Rugby

Barrow BID has been invited to host/manage advertising on a new digital advertising board at the ground. The Board unanimously agreed to decline this offer.

13. Cando FM Advertising strategy

It was decided that advertising for February and March should be spring events – Dino Day, VE Day and the Soapbox Challenge.

14. Visit Barrow Project

CG will report on this when he has got all the costings.

15. 2020 Event Summary and areas of responsibility for Directors

It was agreed that 2 Directors would take responsibility for each event covering day to day decisions and working within a budget.

- Dino Day – K.H. and S.C.
- V.E. Day – more information before deciding
- Soapbox – A.K. and K.H.
- Festival of Transport – P.H. plus 1 other to be confirmed

16. Area of land next to Sports Direct – Urban Regeneration

CG and PH have put forward an initial proposal to the Council for suggested use of this area and asked for permission to get quotes. CG had met with Art Gene but their initial large scale plan was unsuitable. The proposal suggested by CG and PH includes:

- Gates at each end to match the Ginnel nearby. It is intended that this will not be a permanent way through and only one end would be opened, but if a special event was being held e.g. in outside market area both gates could be opened to channel people to the event.
- The Council will lock the gates at night and this will need confirming.
- Levelling of some of the ground.
- Multi-use area with mobile seating and planters that could be moved out on to Dalton Road for events.
- Projector – projecting films or publicising events on wall.

- Seating.
- Steps down to split level play area for small children to include buried tunnels with observation areas, bridge, boat, coloured soft surface and climbing wall.
- Family zone.

CG is meeting with suppliers next week regarding gates to match the Ginnel.

17. Documentary

There is to be an ITV documentary on Thursday at 7.30 pm which will feature Barrow BID. One of the Board members said that she had also been asked to do a live workshop at 6.00 pm on Granada Reports which linked with the documentary. The Board has no control over the programme but it was hoped that it would have positivity and at least show where Barrow BID is now when starting their journey to improving the town.

18. AOB

- No response following request for further information from Walney resident who raised concerns, so no progression on this issue.
- BID Board nominations – it was agreed that PH with one other Director would interview the two nominees. There has been interest from three other people and the Board needs to look at how many members it needs.
- CG would like to get local artists involved with BID work.
- Phone boxes in the town centre now have Visit Barrow / Town Centre information on them.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 11th February 2020 – venue to be confirmed.