

BID Board Meeting



Location: BID Office, Duke Street
Time/Date – 6.30 pm, Tuesday 12th September 2023

Attendees: Jenny Fazackerley JF, Kay Bower KB, Paul Hodgson PH, Sandra Collings SC, Melanie Corrie MC, Mai Harrison MH, Jonny Williams JW, Allan Kerr AK, John Edwards JE and Neil Hodgson NH

1. Apologies – None

The Directors were informed that although no one has so far completed an application several companies/businesses have expressed an interest in being part of the Board and PH has been having meetings with them to discuss this.

2. Review of minutes from the last meeting – all ok.

E-mail vote held to decide on running the Soapbox Event in 2024 – the majority were in favour.

3. Business Growth Grant Applications:

- **Barrow Music Week** – 4 venues taking part in the event have applied for grants towards the cost of acts that they are hosting. These were all agreed by a majority vote.
- **Friends of Artspace** – concerns were expressed that the proposal was similar to the last Duke Street exhibition and that the financing for the event had not been clarified. The application was unanimously refused.
- **Vision Support** – as this was a further application to the grant that had already been awarded in the current term, the application was unanimously refused.

4. Social media update – Facebook reach was 636125 an increase of 9.06%. Instagram's reach was 10476, up 10.8%. These have been helped by the Soapbox Event.

5. Events:

- **Soapbox (review)** – overall the event was very successful. PH is having a review meeting with the sponsors BAE and Orsted next week. Footfall was about 30,000 an increase on the event 2 years ago. Business feedback has been very good especially from the hospitality sector. 4 new teams have already registered for next year. Charity carts raised on average £300 sponsorship as well as what they collected on the day. BAE are going to gift their carts each year for the BID to loan out and their apprentices will build new ones to race. It was discussed that the break in the middle of the day needs to be reviewed to keep people from leaving the event, possible entertainment. Local suppliers provided 95% of the requirements for the event. It is proposed to get an outdoor licence next year till later than 10.00pm for the stage entertainment.

Improvements for next year:

- No alcohol consumption by competitors.

- More obstacles.
- Emphasis on being a family event rather than a competition.
- Better management of pedestrian barriers.
- Do more with the pit area.

Other suggestions were to obtain feedback from businesses who have had a negative impact from the event and to look at the possibly employing people to help with setting up and clearing away.

BAE would like the BID to apply for a 3 year Soapbox contract – this was unanimously agreed. JF said well done to everyone for putting on a successful event.

- **Transformers Visit** – JE reported that this had been very successful and the town centre had been very busy. Footfall was about 15,000 compared to the normal of 7 to 8,000 on a normal summer school holiday.
- **Halloween/Autumnal Event** – 10.00 to 16.00 on 21st October. The Cave is booked for the outdoor market. PH has applied for a grant to put on the event for families to fill the gap between the Soapbox and Christmas. The event will include a pumpkin patch, The Cave, Touchline Disco, creative carvings, Window competition for businesses, a food demo and Cumbria Wildlife Trust's educational event about bats. The potential sponsor is looking to make this a yearly event with local organisations. Indoor contingency plans are being explored for some of the event in case of bad weather. Due to the short timescale the BID agreed to fund the event if the grant application was unsuccessful.

6. 2022/2023 Annual Review:

- 15 grants approved amounting to more than £16,000.
- 3 large scale events with footfall exceeding 70,000.
- More Christmas lights purchased.
- Bigger social media reach.
- Over 1,000 p introduce planted in town centre (and re-planting).
- 73 businesses have advertised with the BID this year.
- Over 1,300 metres of barriers used.
- 42 hanging baskets handed out and 126 Christmas trees.
- 32 dog friendly packs distributed and 1st town centre dog show held.
- 1st ever Natural Market.
- Biggest increase in tourism driven under Visit Barrow brand.
- Highest level of matched funding/sponsorship since the BID began.
- 15 newsletters in last 12 months (more than in last 7 years).
- Representation on all capital projects within the town.
- New taster event schedule.

PH suggested holding an open meeting for the Directors to introduce themselves to levy payers. Potential date of 19th October 5.00 to 7.00 pm, subject to booking a venue.

The Directors agreed to have the same budget as this year for events next year. The Santa Express is booked for 2nd and 3rd December, but a successful funding application to the Council means that it can return for a further weekend.

- ## 7. Interpreting Footfall Data
- PH was asked to explain the footfall data collection and interpretation. There are sensors for both directions in Dalton Road, Portland Walk, outdoor market, town square, Duke Street and Abbey Road. The sensors are

supplied by Springboard and this method of measuring footfall is widely used by councils and other organisations. It was acknowledged that the information recorded is total visitors to the town centre, therefore there is no method of being able to 100% ascertain the reason for an individual's visit. This information is only used for internal purposes and for stakeholders.

8. **Digital Town Hub** – as agreed this is going ahead with Loquiva and PH has had an initial meeting. Directors need to consider the name and branding for this. A CRM will also be up and running, using Solomon that most BIDs use.
9. **Purchasing Policy Recap** – JF led the discussion with reference to a paper copy of the BID's purchasing policy. AK asked why Fingerprints was not being asked to quote for all print jobs that the BID was undertaking. Questions were asked regarding the purchasing of feather flags and banners for the Soapbox Event and as to who had been asked to bid for the work? JF confirmed that in line with their purchasing policy that the costs did not reach the level required for tender and that as per the policy 2 informal quotes (including a local supplier) had been obtained and therefore there was no breaking of the policy. A local supplier provided the flags and banners.
10. **Town Centre Accessibility** – JW had been approached by a partially sighted gentleman to see if improvements could be made in the town centre for people with accessibility problems and especially the blind or partially sighted. He suggested digital help and the possibility that Barrow could aim to become an AAA rated town for people who have accessibility problems. There is a possibility that the Loquiva app maybe able to assist and the Directors want to look into sign language teaching.
11. **BAE PW Briefing** – A briefing meeting was held last week with BAE explaining their plans for the Debenhams and other shops purchased. JF thought that the meeting was very positive and that BAE were communicating better with levy payers about their plans and were very receptive to questions.
12. **AOB:**
 - **Town centre litter picking** – 2.00 to 4.00 pm Thursday 12th October. Joint venture between BAE, the BID and McDonalds.
 - **Dog friendly packs** – more need to be ordered due to a lot of interest.
 - **Women in Business** – Simon Fell is running a local Q & A event with Government Ministers next week. Attendance is by invitation only.

Date for next meeting: Tuesday 10th October 2023 at 6.30 pm, BID Office