Barrow BID AGM

Location: BID Office
Time/Date – 6.00 pm, Tuesday 14th July 2026

Attendees: Paul Hodgson PH, Melanie Corrie MC, Sandra Collings SC, Neil Hodgson NH, John Edwards JE, Sharon Tate ST, Ashley Holroyd AH, Jonny Williams JW and Sarah Roberts SR.

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1. **Apologies: Kay Kane KK and Craig Healey CH.** Jenny has resigned as a Director due to the closure of her business. Her resignation was accepted. MC is to take over as chair with immediate effect following a unanimous vote in favour by the Board. An application for appointment as a new Director has been received from Jay at Waffle Time, but due to the ballot his interview has been on hold. JE and MC agreed to interview him. Craig has resigned as a Director with immediate effect due to working circumstances. He has put forward Andrew Gray as a proxy and this was agreed by the Board.

2. **Review of minutes from last meeting –** all agreed.

3. **Ballot Result –** the 3rd term renewal was successful with an overwhelming majority of the businesses supporting the BID. The new term starts on 1st September 2026. 68 additional businesses will be added with the new area covered by the BID. PH is going to produce a generic welcome pack that can be used for the new levy paying businesses, but also for any other new businesses that are set up and for commercial estate agents to hold copies for any businesses opening in premises that they are marketing.

4. **Finance Update –** MC in her new role as chair would like to see more information provided to the Board at their monthly meetings concerning finance, health and safety and staffing updates, due to the Directors being ultimately responsible. PH had obtained from Stephen (Accountant and business support) a detailed finance report. The Directors agreed that the report was too in depth for what was required every month. It was agreed to have in-depth reports quarterly and each month to be provided with a report showing cash in hand, significant spends and any outstanding recovery of funds. PH pointed out that levy payments trickle in over the year and grants often take a long while to be paid after the events for which they were granted. This makes it difficult to get a true picture of the financial situation from in year reports.

5. **Health & Safety –** the Directors are responsible for the safety of their staff and to make sure that there is insurance in place for events. PH said that all

events have to undergo a risk assessment and the relevant applications have to be made to the Council. New members of staff currently receive an induction pack and PH is working on an annual refreshing of health and safety training. Volunteers helping at events are given health and safety training, but they also have to wear a BID lanyard that has health and safety information on the reverse side. If there are any incidents PH will report them to the Board.

6. **Team Update –** the Board would like to be kept up to date with who is employed, their hours of work, their job role and any sickness. If there are any performance issues these should be summarised for the Directors. It was agreed to have an earlier deadline for meeting agendas to allow PH longer to work on putting the agenda together and to obtain any necessary information. In future all agenda items will only be accepted up to one full calendar week before the meeting, unless urgent. MC stressed the importance of Directors attending meetings and if they are unable to attend to send their apologies in plenty of time to avoid late cancellation of meetings due to not being quorate.

7. **Debt Write Off/Billing –** the Council has requested to write off outstanding debt from the BID's first term, 10 years ago, as the Council has exhausted all enforcement options. This was unanimously agreed. The Council wants to move to a new levy collection system in the BID's new term which involves moving to a new software system that other BIDs use. It allows for live reports and is cheaper per levy paying property than the current system. It doesn't go online till December so this would delay the bills being sent out as they would normally in September. PH has spoken to Stephen (Accountant & Business Support) and although some levy payments would normally be collected in that period, he doesn't think that there will be a problem and has suggested asking the Council for a contingency loan, although he thinks it would be unlikely that the BID would need to draw down from this. A levy payment deadline will be set for the end of January. The Directors agreed to all of this.

8. **Events Update –** FOT on Saturday. Similar arrangements as previous years. 236 applications for vehicles to exhibit excluding the emergency vehicles. Programmes have been produced. Sponsorship should cover all the costs. Soapbox plans are progressing well. 19 teams have registered so far. The BID is able to partner with charities or community groups to use the BID soapboxes. PH will produce a list for the Directors of events going into next year.

9. **Third Term Budget/Plans –** the majority of Directors agreed that a priority is CCTV cameras in the town centre to try to reduce antisocial behaviour. All the cameras in the town centre do work and further cameras will be fitted to

lampposts by Cumbria Police as part of HOB, but are currently awaiting manufacture. It was agreed to include cameras in the business growth grant scheme starting on 1st September with a maximum grant of £100 with 50% matched funding. The applicant would not have to obtain 2 quotes, but would have to provide proof of purchase and it would be stipulated that the cameras must be registered with the police. Window stickers advising of the use of cameras should also be displayed. The Board agreed that the police need to be involved with keeping the town centre safe and the police hope to attend the next BID meeting to discuss this. They are interested in setting up a Shop Watch scheme and it was suggested that there could be some form of BID Watch scheme. PH has applied to the Police Commissioner for funding for street rangers etc, but there is no money available.

The Board all agreed to continue with the annual Christmas trees, hanging baskets, dog friendly scheme, Barrow Buzz App and printing services for the 5 year term.

SC asked for a meeting to help businesses learn how to use the App. Manpower restrictions prevent the BID staff from helping everyone, but it was suggested that some help could be given at one of the breakfast meetings. Ecommerce is to be added to the App this year and links to digital screens. You Tube tutorials are available on the App. PH agreed that they could do better with utilising. SC asked for Jenni to take more of a lead on the Barrow Buzz App under her role managing communications.

BID breakfast meetings were discussed and PH advised that these are beneficial with 60 to 70 people attending. The BID team find them really important and they provide good leads. It was suggested that a log should be kept of who attends, so that non attendees could be encouraged to go.

Business Growth Scheme - it was agreed to keep the exterior grant at £1000 with a £2000 cap for everything.

Charity Grant Scheme – it was unanimously agreed not to continue with this, but to help charities in other ways e.g. possibly partnering charities with business in a buddy system via the breakfast meetings, free tables and advertising at events. PH will put a proposal together and send it to the Directors before the next meeting.

Events budget agreed. This isn't usually used but it is a contingency fund in case of sponsorship dropping out. It was agreed to keep this.

10. **AOB –** PH informed the Board that the railway station has now been adopted and a grant has been given by Barrow Town Council to place planters on the platform.

    SC advised the Directors that she has a meeting with the staff at The Bridge to put on a free event making quilts.

    JW asked about putting on BID events in the park now that it was in the BID area, but it is being left to local organisations to put on events there with the BID promoting and providing equipment.

PH is to meet with Simon next week to discuss staffing.

Date for next meeting: Tuesday 11th August 2026. 6.00pm @ BID Office