

BID Board Minutes

Love Loughborough BID Board Meeting

07th July 2021 at 12.00

Via ZOOM

1. Welcome & Apologies

LCN:

Apologies:

Cllr Jonathan Morgan, PC Luke Jones, John Ashford, Rob Mitchell, Mike Tyler, MP Jane Hunt, Karen Barnett, Emma Bishop, Shona Rattray, Rebecca Garratt

In attendance:

Lisa Brown, Lez Cope Newman, Kelly Hill, Ioni Ashford, Sylvia Wright, Cllr Jenny Boker, Thomas Mackey, Helen Harris, Roger Perret, Andy Rhodes, David Pagett Wright, Alice Forfar.

LCN:

Message of condolence for Alvin Bailiss. BID gave a donation to Rainbows Hospice in memory of Alvin.

Congratulations to Charlotte & Sam on their wedding day.

2. Declarations of Interest

Nothing to declare.

3. Minutes of Meeting (AGM) held on 25th March 2021.

Nothing to declare.

4. Matters Arising not on the Agenda

Nothing to declare.

5. Partner Updates

- a. Charnwood Borough Council

SW: BID Ballot will be sent to cabinet for approval of the draft business plan and the intention of vote.

SLA with BID is agreed. CBC will give £25,000 to BID for them to support businesses across the borough. LB has all the details but there are various KPI'S in the SLA that BID will have to deliver and report on. Some of this is already being done like vacant unit counts and footfall. This includes various tasks, some that BID already complete such as footfall monitoring. This will also include expanding the work of BID in other areas to work with businesses across the whole of the Charnwood area. This will be more along the lines of online work. CBC and BID are pleased to get this sorted.

CBC are planning for the lifting of restrictions in a few weeks' time and will be working with BID on this to deliver a joined-up approach. How to get guidance out such as new posters will be made with guidance set out to make it clear for the reader. Promote Loughborough as a safe place still.

Events: Bedford Square/ Gateway project is progressing. There has been issues and new issues coming to light as we move forward. Events that involve a traffic management plan have been looked at. These include The Santa Fun Run and Race for Life. These will start in Queens Park this year instead of Market Place as no schedule is in place or known at this point what the roads will be like when these events will take place.

There have been more surprises underground as work has moved forward including a culvert underground outside Devonshire Fisheries. Foundation stones are being laid in Bedford square outside Roger's business, which is positive to see.

The Town Hall and Museum are both now open but under restricted times. This is new since the last meeting we had.

Town Hall are looking to get a new programme out soon, but regardless of this 40% income is already in despite the programme not being out yet to the public. This shows that there is an appetite for people wanting to come back. Weddings are booked and are being adjusted for current guidelines and restrictions. Will happily have more weddings for July onwards.

800 years: There will be a plaque unveiling on the 31st July which marks the date of the first chartered fair that was held in the town 800 years ago. Invites will be sent out soon for a small event to mark this. There will be an exhibition in the museum opening in July to celebrate the 800 years of the fair. This is scheduled to open on time.

Event to celebrate fair charter will take place in the Town Hall too.

Bring gazebos back to the town to extend the market. These won't stay out like market stalls. These will be outside Devonshire Square, they are looking to extend the market and have more stalls there and are incorporating pop up electric points in this area now.

LCN: with the posters going up to encourage footfall are we advertising more widely? Nationally?

SW: We are part of the uncover the story, which is part of the regional tourism campaign for Leicester and Leicestershire. This is focusing on the 800 years and looks at key elements that make up Loughborough such as great central and bell foundry. A video is being made that will be released by visit Britain and promoted more widely. There was some LLEP funding for this that made it possible. Filming is in progress; this was done on Armed Forces Day. If there is any opportunity, we are making sure Loughborough is part of it.

Midlands Today also picked up on Roger Boon in the market retiring.

LCN: nice tribute to Roger

SW: to mark the 800 years there will be different events taking place, including 'try a trade'. This will have CBC working closely with the enterprise hub to do some business support.

b. Police Update

AF: New town centre beat officer has now left. A big blow to the police. They are starting the recruitment process again but for the minute they must make do as they are. It is Luke Jones that has left that sent apologies for this meeting. Not much to report in the town.

Cycle theft in the town centre and The Rushes is high but the main person has been caught. They were stealing 5 to 10 bikes per day.

Jo L has no injunction on her now in the town but is causing harm. Can this information be passed onto businesses so they can report thefts in shops, a case file needs to be built up so they can lock her up. ASB or anything else must be reported.

LCN: has heard pick pockets on market days is up.

AF: not much as she knows has been happening, some, but not lots

IA: can get information to Tango Victor.

AF: CCTV know about Jo.

IA: will let businesses know and to report

AR: ASB is showing in the late evening and people causing a nuisance. Reports coming through every day. Travellers have been coming in, some at the drive thru but more in the town centre store.

LCN: most have now moved on.

SW: CBC have been collating information and CBC have been working with the Police. Engaged with S

AR: Dennis, do we know where he is?

AF: he is back in Derby.

LCN: Thank you for update.

c. LCC Update

HH: Sally Coleman strategic tourism manager, is seconded to city council. At the market and towns meeting it was discussed that people go to Cornwall and Yorkshire, but people don't visit Leicester or Leicestershire. LLEP passed over some money to help market towns as they are hubs for the county as part of the uncover the story programme. Sections on key market towns will be looked at.

Back to work is now live. You can walk into the centre to get help and advice for getting back into work. Help can include work +

It was limited to certain cohorts before but now it is available to all. It can also be used for upskilling people. They are working with Loughborough College and the enterprise hub on this.

The kickstart scheme: County Council is creating 30 places have been set up at county council and has increased the time frame of the placements from 6 months to 12 months. The process has been slow. Rep from DWP to explain situation. Created spaces but can't seem to fill the spaces. When it does work, they are well matched but there is a log jam that they hope will get quicker.

AW: signed up to kickstart but it is a slow process. Paperwork was ok but along wait to get staff through to use. Got nowhere, any pressure applied on this would be appreciated.

HH: Sally is reporting back. There is a hospitality shortage. EU Nationals have gone back home and are not returning back here to work, or people have found work elsewhere at Magna Park with better wages and shift patterns. Might be to do with Brexit too with EU Nationals.

LCN: seems to be a lot of people unemployed but we can't find them, people aren't coming forward for the jobs. Been on the usual sites but can't find anyone for the jobs.

HH: one of the problems with kickstart was that people must be registered on benefits to apply for the kickstart scheme and not all are on benefits.

LCN: it is reaching out to the right people to come forward for the jobs

DPW: Same issues with kickstart have been experienced at Moss Solicitors. They had two admin roles and they were hard to fill. Vacancy went out in November, and it took until end of May to get 1 person. Still looking for the other position to be filled. They were surprised with the lack of applicants. With furlough ending soon this might change. We thought it was the paperwork but seems to be lack of applicants.

LCN: thank you Helen.

6. BID Company Operational Update

a. Ambassador Update

a. Pub Watch

Had the first meeting in person last month with 26 licensees. Some new faces were there. In attendance was also the new beat officer (has now left) licensing and environmental health from CBC.

Discussed issues with COVID, guidance on COVID was discussed, pubs are being compliant and engaging. They are keeping on top of the risk assessments. A few have needed to be steered back to the right path.

There is now a uniform Pubwatch platform which is on the Love Loughborough website which promotes the safe pubs in town, their opening times are on there too. A poster has been created by CH for the pub windows too that they are all displaying. These have also been added to a trail on the LoyalFree app by KH.

Moving forward will be focusing on the NTE and providing conflict management training and training with fake identification checking. There are a lot of fake IDs in circulation so telling businesses to be mindful of this. Some are difficult to identify.

There was meant to be a meeting coming up with the police crime commissioner, Rupert Matthews to discuss issues that we have in the town, but this is now having to be rescheduled to a later date. Date to be confirmed

b. DISC Update:

Pub/club managers have used it before (information sharing platform) so are champions of disc. It will start with the NTE and then move to retail. It is a sharing platform which is safe to share information and will help move it away from social media and onto here, to be data compliant. The NTE are keen to get on board with it in Loughborough. Pubwatch will be on there soon and then move to day-time economy which was the original plan.

Monthly newsletter is going out which highlight latest restrictions, guidance on COVID. How to have a safe environment and promoted that IA is here to help where needed. This has been sent to businesses and is on our website. Providing information as the new restrictions get lifted to all businesses.

c. Police Commissioner Meeting – Postponed until further notice.

d. Retail Radio: 5 new businesses have joined the retail radio since the start of the year. The business hub in Loughborough now has 2 radios.

John Hatfield in CCTV is pleased with how the retail radio is going, businesses are reporting well, the business are working together. Positive situation. With footfall increasing anti-social behaviour might increase too, so telling the businesses how to report and to report all the time. Authorities need to be aware.

e. In Bloom

IA will be part of the judging day on 15th July. Love Loughborough have put up 235 baskets and 10 troughs in the town. IA will be the rep for businesses in the town centre.

SW: ask Catherine to link up with IA on new posters.

LB: Catherine has been in touch

LCN: thank you Ioni.

b. Ballot Update

LB: The latest results have just come in. We are in week 2 of the results and have 52 respondents which is about a 10% response which is average after 2 weeks.

Almost all respondents are from independent businesses. There is a high level of contentment with projects delivered to date- High 60's & 70's

95% of the respondent's think BID is good value for money.

Over 90% of respondents rate performance of BID as good or excellent

85% say they will vote YES (15% don't know, 0% No)

31st July is the closing date for the survey. As move into the weeks we will concentrate on getting the businesses to complete those surveys. So far so good.

LCN: Some businesses haven't had the factsheet apparently.

LB: everyone got emailed the factsheet and KH and IA have delivered one to every business in the town.

IA: KH and I have hand delivered to all businesses so could be that they haven't been past on

LCN: Can I have some incase people ask, just half a dozen or so

IA: to drop some round to LCN

c. Welcome Back Fund (SLA)

LB: £25K is agreed for the SLA with CBC and has been working with SW.

This will include delivering a town trail per quarter which will be 3 now until the end of the term. These will be physical and digital. This will help to increase footfall.

This will start with the summer trail that will commence this Saturday (10th July) in the town and will run for 6 weeks. 32 businesses are involved, and the public will find an answer to a question by finding the answer in the participating businesses window. There will be weekly winners. Prize is £100 worth of Love Loughborough gift vouchers, so the money will go back into the town (vouchers can be spent in participating businesses)

There will then be a Christmas trail in the winter and one at Easter.

We will also host 3 training sessions online, that will work like our campfire sessions, but they will be bookable for all businesses in Charnwood and be borough wide.

We can then provide KPI's, and the number of businesses trained in the borough. This may be centred around shopping local, ecommerce site and Shop Charnwood/Shop Loughborough and digital initiatives such as the LoyalFree app.

Monthly reporting on vacant units and footfall, which is one of the KPI's, are now on our website. These can be accessed and looked at monthly and download as pdf's. The link is:

<https://loveloughborough.co.uk/love-bid/footfall-statistics/>

Supporting the Welcome Back campaign to encourage footfall will be based around social media/ e marketing, eblasts and loyal free app.

We will be working with the COVID task force on messaging and reporting back.

BID will be promoting CBC's suite of events through all platforms and social media.

BID will also commission the University for a comprehensive COVID data report as part of the Fund.

Click and Collect will be promoted for retail and hospitality and we will engage with market traders to see if they can get them on board too.

LCN: are we on the trail. What goes into windows?

KH: yes, they are on the trail. Posters will be delivered this week when they are back from the printers

SW: it's already been picked up by Leicester Mercury and promoted it. Good to see it picked up so quickly.

LCN: thanks Kelly

DPW: Is there any guidance for businesses when lockdown ends, around masks and social distancing, use of COVID certification etc?

LCN: there are some COVID stewards helping and assisting businesses

LB: Is waiting for clearer information. Some businesses might want people to wear masks still but it's not law so difficult for the businesses to implement, it is tricky with equality act and hard to manage with exemptions etc.

BID will be having discussions with CBC on the messaging so it's clear and joined up.

LCN: Has spoken to some businesses and many of them have said that they will keep the screens in place. Put table and chairs back when confidence grows and do things gradually

LB: There is still lots of table service and distance between tables. Especially when many have spent a lot of money on outdoor seating etc. Swan in the Rushes is a classic when they have changed their whole car park to outdoor seating.

DPW: Moss is having thoughts on people coming back into the office as many might not be double jabbed so might wait until later on in the year for people to be double vaccinated and see how this new wave rides out with the delta variant.

SW: this is on the CBC agenda. The wording will be thanking businesses for what they have done, to make the town safe and for helping the public to feel safe in coming back into the town. We need to emphasise feeling safe and comfortable for people to still come into the town. They will be looking at this and getting a leaflet out. Encourage people to wear mask in more crowded spaces. Consulting with BID to see how we pitch it, not just a vacuum and support businesses that want to operate safely.

JB: Customers have high expectations and will want table spacing and social distancing. Many of the older generation will still probably will wear masks and will want these measures to still be in place

LCN: Keeps getting alerted with track and trace.

JB: had notifications of close contact via track and trace but not close enough to self-isolate

TM: he is getting notifications a lot on his phone as is his staff about being close to someone with covid but not close enough that he has to self-isolate. Staff are nervous of these notifications. Staff are worried at Barclays about people coming back into store as it is small.

d. Town Deal

LB: All completed projects are submitted, they needed to complete a questionnaire in regard to budgets restrictions and how they could make any financial savings as we got less budget allocated compared to what we planned for. Completed project questionnaires and in are awaiting the next stage.

Should hear after 5th July. Analysed project costs to see if budget cuts could be made. Made some reductions to Queens Park.

LCN: does that go back to government?

SW: No it doesn't. We've been successful in getting the money but as we have been given less money the questionnaire will allow the board to make informed decisions of where the money will be spent. It will now be an informed decision

and it is important we back the right projects and ones that will get matched funding. Protecting the money we have.

This doesn't go back to central government but through the council.

Chris Grace is no longer the project lead on this, CBC are in the process of announcing who will taking over this work.

We have accepted to government that we will be accepting the BID.

DPW: knows the town deal lead, it will be announced to the public in due course. But they have good experience. Decisions should be made in August of what will happen to the projects and what goes forward.

(AR had to leave meeting)

e. Bedford Square Regeneration Update

LB: The development has been problematic due to different reasons. There is going to be a full road closure from Wards End to Devonshire Square from Monday 19th 7.30am to Friday 23rd 4.30pm. This will mean no deliveries, recycling, flower watering or any vehicular access at all. Information has been circulated to businesses. Granby Street will be operating as a two-way street to allow access to Granby Street car park. BID is currently looking at options for recycling collections.

Beehive car park is free still on Sunday and after 6pm.

Steve Dibnah is talking to businesses/helping to sort deliveries.

LCN: communication has been better with businesses and the heat has been reduced with it. Any backlash IA?

IA: a few complaints but most have accepted what is happening

SW: working closely with highways on this and they are helping with guidance and diversion routes. More signage is coming in the next few days. Making sure that there is lots of information out there on this and enhanced signage.

RP: Communication has been good. How has communication been with key businesses such as Pickworth's and Moore & York been?

LB: Mike at Pickworth has good communication with LB, talk regularly. He hears rumours and this is discussed and given any answers BID has and then he passes that onto businesses.

RP: thank you for everyone's hard work on the projects.

f. We are Locals (Online Shop)

LB:

Platform is up and running we are progressing the online offer through a new platform – DISCORD in conjunction with Charnwood Borough Council.

Developing all the time but now able to offer automatic product upload from existing e-commerce sites to save significant costs for online selling for the business.

HH: is it being used well?

LB: there is a wine & drinks business on the charnwood platform that is working well and linking products and business to the online shop. 80% of his sales is coming from the platforms. Ours is widespread across the board but the Love Loughborough gift vouchers are selling well through the website.

Businesses could do with some more training on tagging and linking to it.

There is a lot of usage on the site

7. Town Centre Performance

a. Performance Data

LB: Footfall

January down 41% on December 2020

Feb down 1.5% on January

March up 29% on Feb

April up 26% on March

May up 13% on April

June down 8% on May

Busiest Days are Saturdays. Busiest time is between 11am-12pm with a dwell time of 125 minutes.

Now able to view footfall on our website at

<https://loveloughborough.co.uk/love-bid/footfall-statistics/>

This is mirroring Tyler's own footfall as their footfall has been down in June by 8% compared to May.

Hopefully with encouraging people back and lifting restrictions and the welcome back fund and CBC events this will help the situation and get the retail sales back up

LCN: Do we know Kinch Figures.

LB: no Christian Allan Clay was down to come but not here

HH: At the market town meeting all market towns were down in June.

LB:

Vacant Units – 1st July 11.5% Ground Floor

Now able to view at <https://loveloughborough.co.uk/love-bid/vacant-unit-reports/>

Business update:

We have seen Moda, Tooley's (moved from Carillon) Cactus Café, NeNe's closed. Esquires on High Street has opened and Goodies in Carillon Court is now open

No news on Echos.

Thornton's closed. Café in generator building will be opening

JB: Luxurio is opening soon in September. Second block up at the Railway station is nearly finished too.

8. Budget Update

LB:

Levy Collected: 68% Collected total of £171,500, collected.

Collected.

March 10,119

April 81,973

May 40,025

June 39,401

Total 171,518

CBC's Levy Collection charges are now reinstated

9. Any Other Business

Careers Enterprise Hub is having a job fair in late August or early September. There will be a market/job stall. More marketing will come out soon that we can promote.

TM: small business manager has got 116 new start-up businesses booked. Which is good news for businesses in Loughborough, businesses are getting ready to come through

RP: BID renewal emphasis is a high return for smaller businesses as larger businesses are paying a higher levy

JB: Is the café in the OAC open now

KH: they are recruiting staff for it

RP: end of this month it is due to open

JB: SW has been, and she wasn't invited

DPW: will get her an invite

SW: café is in good progress, the beauty of the building is shining through. The upstairs is all let.

Next meeting:

Tuesday 24th August at 5pm . Via Zoom