

**Newport Now Business Improvement District**

**Board Meeting 4pm, Thursday, May 18, 2023**

**Meeting Room, Mercure Hotel**

**Agenda**

**1. Welcome**

- ZB welcome all to the meeting and thanked Mercure for their hospitality.
- ZB introduced NM to the meeting and she explained her role as owner (with her husband) of Newport Arcade and Arcadia Coffee House, and her interest in joining the Board.

- 2. In attendance:** Zep Bellavia (ZB, Bellavia & Associates, Chair), Gavin Horton (GH, Horton's Lounge via Teams), Dan Smith (DS, M4 Property Consultants), Alan Edwards (AE, Vacara's), Simon Pullen (SP, Friars Walk via Teams), Richard Ellis (RE, Ellis Lloyd Jones, Treasurer), Nicky Vignoli (NV, The Newporters), Kevin Ward (KW, BID manager).

**Apologies for absence:** Jane Mudd (JM, Newport City Council), Robin Hall (RH, Kymin), Catherine McNamara (CM, Liverton Opticians), Ian Lamsdale (IL, Newport City Radio).

**Also in attendance:** Matthew Tribbeck (MT, Newport City Council), Nicola Marshall (NM, Newport Arcade)

**Not in attendance:** Tracy Stokes (TS, Belle Femme), Steve Corten (SC, Pub Watch)

**3. Declarations of interest**

- DS, GH, KW

**4. Approval of minutes of last meeting**

- Approved.

**5. Finance update**

- KW provided a finance update to the Board.
- Cash in bank in the BID's current account as of last night is £15,708. All payments up to date.

- Cash in bank in the BID's savings account as of last night is £63,885. This represents the £52,908 grant from the Home Office for the Night Ambassador service (minus the first nine months costs), and the £50,000 Transforming Towns grant for the dressing of long-term vacant shop fronts (minus the cost of the first four phases). The money stays in the savings account to ensure it is ringfenced.
- Levy collection for 23/24 to date is just under £98k – or 56% of the total levy bill for the year. Businesses that owe levy from 20/21 onwards were summonsed to court on March 31. That resulted in a further £16,560 being paid (included in this year's income). Those who have still not paid have now been referred to the council's bailiffs.
- Our total income for 22/23 was £432,389 and our expenditure was £355,242. This included grant payments of £102k and a starting reserve of £73k.
- Income for 23/24 to date is £46,551 and expenditure to date is £41,374. Expenditure includes grant-funded projects. Taking those out, expenditure to date is £30,669.
- The Board approved significant cost savings for 23/24 at the budget meeting held on April 27 following a 28% reduction in levy income due to commercial property revaluations. All savings are now in place. This includes KW's reduction for four to three days a week. In general, KW will be working Tues-Thurs every week.
- The current cashflow forecast is that we will end the year with a reserve of £16.9k.
- Discussion around grant funding potential for this financial year. MT confirmed there were funds available from both Welsh & UK governments, but projects needed to be robust & adequately resourced.
- DS suggested applying for National Lottery funds, and would look at this further. Grants are available to rebuild communities following Covid. DS view is this should include business communities.
- ZB asked that External Funding be restored as a standing agenda item. KW to action.
- SP referred to Swindon BID closing due to significant property change of use from commercial to residential, making the BID unviable.
- MT said there was a balance to be had, and the council was pulling back a little on granting permission for more residential change of use.
- ZB said website updates needed following changes to hours of KW and Ambassadors. KW to action.

## 6. Events update

- KW reported that events we have funded or sponsored year to date are the City of Newport Half Marathon, the Big Sesh music festival in the Westgate Hotel, and both Record Store Day and Tiny Fest in High Street.
- We organised a shopfront display challenge for the King's Coronation. Entrants were judged by KW & NV. The winner was RJ Phillips Interiors on Bridge Street. They receive a £100 gift card. This was the total cost of the event.
- Newport is the Wales host of National Armed Forces Day on June 24. This will be a significant day in the city centre's calendar and the day includes a huge parade and a flypast by the Red Arrows. Most of the event is in the BID area, including Rodney Parade.
- We are again sponsoring the Big Splash festival on July 22 & 23, with the Newport Now Zone in Commercial Street & High Street.
- Other events benefitting from BID sponsorship this year include Pride in the Port in September and the Food & Drink Festival in October (which is expanded to two days this year) and Newport Rising in November.
- ZB suggested we need to encourage sponsors for the Christmas lights switch-on. KW to action.

## 7. DS project update

(DS works for the BID two days a month with the aim of filling vacant retail space.)

- Hairdressers coming in to Chartist Tower.
- Upper floors of Costa have been sold after being empty for years to residential developer.
- Talking to call centre with 100 staff looking at city centre location.

## 8. Ambassadors (Day and Night) update

- The Daytime Street Ambassadors service has now begun its new Tuesday-Saturday patrols following the Board's decision to remove the service on a Monday to save costs.
- Our Night Ambassadors service continues to be popular with public, licensees, police and council. They are providing an outstanding service every weekend, and both the police and council have praised the intelligence they are providing in their reports.

- The current grant funding for the Night Ambassadors will run out in September/October. Although not yet confirmed, KW is 99% certain that we have secured a further six months of funding for the service.

#### **9. Loyal Free city centre app update**

- The app is currently promoting 152 businesses – 18 via deals and 134 via events listings and trails.
- To date, there have been 5,674 interactions with the app, 2,315 interactions with the trails, 363 competition entries, and 797 deal redemptions.
- Free use of the app has been offered to the Big Splash, Pride in the Port, the Food & Drink Festival and Newport Rising as part of our sponsorships.

#### **10. Gift Card update**

- Gift card sales to the end of April show a 18% in cards sold and 5% in cash sales compared to the same period last year. This shows more cards are being sold, but for less value – perhaps showing the impact of the cost of living crisis.
- Miconex (gift card suppliers) is changing its model to focus on B2B sales this year (encouraging businesses to buy cards as rewards, gifts etc for staff and customers. There will be an online seminar for interested businesses later in the year.
- DS suggested promoting the gift card could be a project for MBA students at USW.

#### **11. Savings Advisory Service**

- The service is now going to be visiting Newport every quarter rather than every two months to save costs.
- The most recent visit in April saw PSP visit Eazability, Friars Fruits, Azira Aesthetics, the Flooring Company, Bar Piazza, Nanu & Gugu, Pritchie's Café, Lovely Nails and Kaspas.
- In total, the project has delivered £65,700 in savings across 36 businesses since it was relaunched in late 2021.

#### **12. Any Other Business**

- The application process for Purple Flag accreditation for the city centre has begun. The deadline is October 6. The BID is taking the lead on this process.
- DS said Dragons of Newport business club is hosting a wine tasting & business networking event on June 29 at Horton's Lounge.

- DS asked about our relationship with the market. KW said he was in regular contact with their marketing manager. He had held a meeting with traders' representatives to explain the BID and projects such as the gift card, city centre app, Savings Advisory Service etc. There is some non-payment of levy by some traders.
- DS asked whether Board members should take on specific roles to take some pressure off KW, given the reduction in management hours. KW to put a list together of tasks that need completing for next Board meeting.
- Board agreed unanimously to co-opt NM as a board member.
- NM said there would be a pop-up market in Newport Arcade on June 10.

### **13. Date of next Board meeting**

- Thursday, July 20, 2023, at 4pm. Venue TBC.