

Newport Now Business Improvement District

Board Meeting 4pm, Thursday, July 18, 2024

Conference Room, Riverfront Theatre

Meeting Notes for Publication

Agenda

1. Welcome

2. In attendance: Zep Bellavia (Bellavia & Associates, Chair), Nikki Marshall (Newport Arcade), Ian Lamsdale (Newport City Radio), Gavin Horton (Horton's Lounge), Councillor James Clarke (Newport City Council), Alan Edwards (Vacara's), Richard Ellis (Ellis Lloyd Jones, Treasurer), Tracy Stokes (Belle Femme), Cath Macnamara (Liverton Opticians), Nicky Vignoli (The Newporters), Dan Smith (M4 Property Consultants, via video link), Kevin Ward (BID Manager).

Also in attendance: Councillor Dimitri Batrouni (Leader, Newport City Council), Matt Tribbeck (Regeneration & Place Manager, Newport City Council), Roger Jeavons (City Centre Manager, Newport City Council).

Apologies for absence: Simon Pullen (Friars Walk), Robin Halll (Kymin Financial Planners).

3. Declarations of interests for Register of Interests

- GH stated he attends board meetings as a business owner and levy payer, not as a city councillor.

4. Approval of minutes of last meeting

- Approved.

5. Introductions to/from Councillors Dimitri Batrouni & James Clarke (ZB/All)

- ZB introduced DB. DB explained JC would be joining Board as council appointee, replacing Councillor Jane Mudd.
- Board introduced themselves to DB & JC.
- DB said he was not a business person, but he wants to be a partner and ally to business. He said the economic recovery can't be taxpayer led – it has to come from the private sector and the council will support in any way it can. He said we all need to play a part in changing the negative culture around the city centre. Problems are not denied, but they have become too amplified by social media.

- DB said will he enhance the positives all the time as a deliberate policy. If we don't, then who else will?
- He said he was not ignoring issues but he wants to address rather than continually highlight them.
- DB said he was looking forward to working with the BID & its members, and that small businesses are the engine room of city centre.
- JC said he moved to Newport 18 years ago and loves the place and has a real passion for it.
- He said he was not naïve enough to think there aren't issues in the city centre and we have to address them. Some are complex issues but sometimes they can be worked out simply. He said DB was bringing new energy to the political leadership of Newport.
- DB said every traditional town and city centre was struggling but this is our city and we want it to succeed. Everyone has to play a part. He requested that the Placemaking Plan team meet BID board members asap.
- ZB thanked for both for their attendance & said he was looking forward to working with DB & JC.
- AE invited JC to visit businesses in Llanarth Street. JC said he was happy to do so & to have a frank and open conversation.
- DB said if he and JC say they are going to do something they will, but they will be honest if they can't do something.
- NM said she would love to speak to JC re work she has done at Newport Arcade.
- IL said he would like to have more people from the council including officers on the radio. DB said council was not MI5 and will be creating a residents' dashboard on the council website with a business one to follow next year. He wants to get information out in real time wherever possible.
- JC said communication is ramping up from council. DB said he wanted to be asked difficult questions.
- JC said there will be other political parties involved in the Placemaking Plan steering group, not just the ruling Labour group.

6. Verbal update from City Centre Manager Roger Jeavons (RJ)

- RJ said he had been in post for almost a year.
- Work he had undertaken included empty property enforcement, PSPO for Market Arcade, renewed PSPO for city centre, redundant BT kiosks, working on project with NCH and Pobl re utility boxes, resolving CCTV issues, infrastructure issues – new paving

in city centre happening now – marathon & gas works, food festival, connectivity re maps, TJs and removal of scaffolding, met with business owners re waste regulations & protest marches, ASB, database of property owners which is complicated, cleansing routine changes, police meetings re ASB in market area & Upper Dock Street, city centre mapping, hostile vehicles, TV and movie filming, active travel and cycle lane provision, Safer City Centre group, grant applications re information sharing, biggest amount of time since April has been new waste regulations for businesses – still causing some issues/location of bins etc.

- AE asked what response he had had from the police re ASB. RJ said Gwent Police had received £1m from Home Office to provide additional patrols for high ASB areas. Important that people continue to report so it becomes a priority for police.
- DB said he met police this morning to talk about city centre issues. They now have 8 dedicated officers (not CSOs) for the area. He said he had emphasised we need visible policing as a deterrent.
- JC said he sits as a magistrate & minority of cases are Newport-based. Perception is not always correct.
- IL suggested quick win for ASB is bus station.
- NV said there was an issue with the gates on Cambrian Road being left open, encouraging ASB.
- AE said he had three customers last week who hadn't been to Newport before and said it was cleaner and safer than Queen Street in Cardiff.
- NV asked whether RJ was doing anything around public transport and encouraging people to use it. RJ explained it was not his remit. NV said bus timetables etc needed considerable improvement. JC said he is on board of Newport Transport and encouraged board members to contact him with issues and ideas.
- DB said part of his job is to get bigger investment into city and to hold Welsh and UK Governments to account to ensure promises are delivered. He also said he was more than happy to spend a morning/afternoon meeting city centre businesses with JC.

7. Finance update (KW)

- Cash in bank in the BID's current account as of last night is £63,042 with all payments up to date. Please note that we have received our SPF funding for the Urban Beach in full (£39,400) and 50% of the grant for Countdown to Christmas (£20,000).

- With 50% payment made to the Urban Beach providers (£11,790), and funding from the PCC of £3,300 for Night Ambassadors yet to spend, the cash in bank includes £50,910 In ring-fenced grant funding.
- Therefore, the 'real' cash in bank is £12,132. This will improve in the next few days as the July levy payment of £20,400 is awaited.
- Cashflow forecast for July end was a closing bank balance of £18,800. Once July levy is received, we will end the month with approximately £32.5k.
- Levy collection for 24/25 to date stands at £133,574 or 76% of the total levy bill for the year. Reminders went out in June. The next reminders will lead to court summons.
- Total income for 24/25 to date is £143,807 and expenditure is £80,765.

8. External funding update (KW)

- A reminder that we applied successfully for grants from the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Shared Prosperity Fund in March.
- The Night Ambassadors service, the funding for which ran out at the end of the 23/24 financial year, has been secured for another 12 months via a £36,000 grant from the PCC. This guarantees the service until the end of March 2025. Processing the grant has been delayed by the PCC elections but the council has agreed to cover the first three months' costs of the service (£9,900) with this sum then recovered from the grant (which is paid to the council and then forwarded to us). The grant includes a £3,600 annual management fee for the BID.
- The Shared Prosperity Fund grants are for three city centre events during the year.
- £40,000 for this year's Countdown to Christmas event.
- £39,400 to bring an urban beach into John Frost Square for the month of August.
- £15,000 to bring a Christmas street market into High Street for the month of December.
- The urban beach has been booked, and Green Top Markets have been engaged to deliver the Christmas market. We will continue to work with Arena Projects for Countdown to Christmas.
- All three grant award letters have been received, signed and returned.
- SPF grants have been forward funding to us as follows: Urban Beach 100%, Countdown to Christmas 50% now, 50% in September; Christmas markets 50% this month, 50% October.
- KW has met the council to discuss using SPF for a marketing campaign around Small Business Saturday and Christmas that will include the purchase of gift cards to be handed out to the public throughout December.

- KW and DS met the council yesterday to discuss using SPF for a pop-up shop in the city centre for fledgling businesses considering opening a retail outlet.

9. Ballot for 3rd term update (KW)

- Our ballot for a third term will be taking place in November. The ballot itself will run from October 31 to November 28, with the result declared on November 29.
- The working group of KW, ZB, RH and NV (with RE to be added) has met and also provided feedback on various iterations of the latest newsletter and our 2024 survey.
- The newsletter and survey was sent to levy payers at the start of this month – via hard copy, e-shot, website and social media.
- We have had 20 returned surveys to date, so we will remind businesses over the next week. The deadline is July 31.
- The elements of the Business Plan that do not change – levy rules, governance, voting procedures etc – have already been designed into the Business Plan document. The survey and the views of the Board will determine the themed content of the BP. However, at this stage KW said he did not anticipate huge changes to what we have delivered during our second term.
- The key legal milestones, including formal notification to Newport City Council (the ballot holder) and Welsh Government of our intention to extend the BID to a third term via a ballot, have been met.
- The next stage will be to meet with officers from NNDR and Electoral Services to agree baseline services and ballot procedures. KW said he anticipated this happening before the end of this month.
- Business plan launch will be at the start of October with an open meeting. The ballot campaign will also launch formally then.

10. Events/footfall update (KW)

- For the first 6 months of 2024, footfall in the city centre was 1.6% up on last year. This compares to footfall in Wales being down 5% and in the UK down 1.2% for the same period versus 2023.
- Footfall for the day of the Newport Wales Marathon in April showed almost 13,000 people in the city centre – more than double an average Sunday.
- The 80th anniversary of D-Day parade on June 8 brought around 1,000 additional people into the city centre compared to an average Saturday.
- Bear in mind there is only one footfall counter in the city centre – other than those in the Friars Walk and Kingsway shopping centres – in Llanarth Street. The council

continues to investigate a wider set of counters that will provide more detailed information.

- Newport City Radio's Love Live Music awards took place on June 6. Our Countdown to Christmas event last year won the award for Event of the Year. We sponsored the Best Music Venue award, which was won by Le Pub.
- Other major events through the rest of the year:
 - Big Splash, July 20-21.
 - Urban Beach, August 2-27.
 - Pride in the Port, September 7.
 - Food Festival, October 11-13.
 - Countdown to Christmas, November 16.
 - Christmas street markets, December 5-23 (Thurs/Fri/Sat/Sun) in High Street.

11. Ambassadors (Day and Night) update (KW)

- Funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Night Ambassadors' service for the first quarter of 24/25 was forward funded to us by the council due to the PCC election period. This will be reclaimed by the council from the OPCC. The remaining 9 months' funding will be claimed by us from the council on a monthly basis at £3,300 per month.
- The daytime Street Ambassadors delivered printed copies of the latest BID newsletter and our 2024 survey to all BID levy payers. If anyone is aware of a business that did not receive one, please let me know.
- The daytime Ambassadors were without a mobile phone for around a week due to a handset fault. This has now been resolved.
- IL highlighted the importance of the Night Ambassadors to night time economy.
- DB said he was restarting conversations with the health service regarding a night time triage area at weekends.

12. City centre app update (KW)

- The app is currently promoting 165 businesses – 28 via deals and 143 via events listings and trails.
- To date, there have been 10,184 interactions with the app, 3,234 interactions with the trails, and 2,111 deal redemptions. The app has 998 registered users in the Newport area.
- We have added a Big Splash trail to the app, covering all the zones for this weekend's festival.

- The new version of the app that will be branded entirely as Newport Now is progressing well and will be ready for launch in September. A reminder there is no additional cost for the design and build of this.

13. Gift Card update (KW)

- Since the last Board meeting, gift cards to the value of £345 have been sold. This gives us total sales for the first half of the calendar year of £655.
- During the period May 1 to yesterday, £148 worth of cards have been spent in the city centre. Year to date, £990 worth of cards have been spent.

14. Savings Advisory Service (KW)

- The planned visit in the first week of July was abandoned due to it being the week of the general election.
- PSP will now be in Newport on August 13 and we will promote heavily in the week or so leading up to the date.
- Therefore, savings identified for levy payers to date remain at £105,030, with £59,985 savings realised by businesses.
- KW is now meeting PSP on August 13 to discuss new marketing materials, and also to break down savings by category – energy, telecoms, merchant fees etc.

15. Purple Flag (KW)

- The self-assessment has taken place, led by the council's licensing team.
- The next step will be to formally apply for retention of Purple Flag status

16. AOB (ZB)

- KW said Inspector Richard Shapland, the city centre police inspector, has retired. His replacement is Inspector Rob Ball. KW has met him already.
- KW said that following a meeting of the Newport Business Against Crime Partnership in June it became clear NBaC was in financial difficulty and faced being voluntarily wound up. For the last 8 years, the only funding received by NBaC other than radio rentals has been £8,000 a year from the BID. KW organised a meeting of all partners (council, police, PCC) and it has been agreed that funding will be provided by the three other partners to supplement the BID's funding. This secures the immediate future of NBaC and the council's Public Protection Service Manager has been tasked with finding a long-term funding solution.
- Since the last board meeting, as well as meetings referred to in agenda items KW has attending meetings with the local franchise manager of Vodafone, representatives from businesses in Bridge Street and Clytha Park Road, the Homewards Delivery and EDI

groups, the new Executive Director of FOR Cardiff, 35mm Creative Agency, Councillors Batrouni, Corten and Clarke, City Centre Buzz, City of Newport Business Club, Vicinity, and Business News Wales.

- ZB referred to a leaflet handed out at the recent City Summit regarding inward investment and asked where the help was for businesses looking to locate in the city centre. MT explained it was via a database search of available properties, but that the council was looking at a new place website to sit alongside council website.

17. Date of next Board meeting

- Thursday, September 19 at 4pm at the Riverfront Theatre.