

Newport Now Business Improvement District

Board Meeting 4pm, Thursday, September 21, 2023

Conference Room, Riverfront Theatre

Agenda

1. In attendance: Zep Bellavia (Bellavia & Associates, Chair), Kevin Ward (BID Manager), Tracy Stokes (Belle Femme), Ian Lamsdale (Newport City Radio), Robin Hall (Kymin), Dan Smith (M4 Property Consultants), Nicky Vignoli (The Newporters), Nicola Marshall (Newport Arcade), Alan Edwards (Vacaras), Richard Ellis (Ellis Lloyd Jones, treasurer).

Also in attendance: Matthew Tribbeck (Newport City Council).

2. Apologies for absence: Steve Corten (Pub Watch), Jane Mudd (Newport City Council), , Gavin Horton (Horton's Lounge), Catherine McNamara (Liverton Opticians), Simon Pullen (Friars Walk).

3. Declarations of interest

- DS (re agenda item 7)
- IL (re Christmas lights)

4. Approval of minutes of last meeting

- Approved.

5. Finance update

- Cash in bank in the BID's current account as of last night is £19,068. All payments up to date. The next £20,400 monthly instalment of the levy is due next week. Therefore, balance at the end of September will be £39,468. Forecast was £39,807.
- Cash in bank in the BID's savings account as of last night is £49,471. This represents the £52,908 grant from the Home Office for the Night Ambassador service (minus the first 13 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 £157k – or 90% of the total levy bill for the year. However, this figure will include overdue payments from previous years.

- Income for 23/24 to date is £128,441 and expenditure to date is £134,660. Again, bear in mind expenditure includes grant-funded projects. Taking those out, gives us an expenditure of £109,248.
- The current cashflow forecast, which now includes first half actuals, is that we will end the year with a reserve/surplus of £17.3k.

6. Events update

- We were sponsors of the parade for this year's Pride in the Port, which was a huge success with thousands taking part. We also funded the Love Spreads concert on High Street on the evening of the Pride event. Footfall figures show at least 3,715 more people in the city centre on the day compared to the previous Saturday - an increase of 33%. This also represents an increase of 81% compared to the same Saturday in 2022.
- The next event to benefit from BID sponsorship is the Food and Drink Festival, which takes place on October 13-15. ZB & KW took part in the photoshoot to launch the event.
- This year's Countdown to Christmas is confirmed for Saturday, November 18. We are now offering 'event partner' sponsorships to other organisations. At this stage, we have confirmed sponsorships from Friars Walk and USW.
- MT said Food Festival would be biggest yet, spread across three days. More promotion outside Newport to encourage visitors. Tickets available for supper at Mercure Hotel on the Friday night. Third day will be street food theme.
- IL said night-time economy benefited hugely from Pride in the Port.
- KW said city centre footfall remains above pre-Covid 2019 levels, bucking Welsh and UK trends.
- MT said a What's On Newport platform was being launched soon by the council.

7. DS project update

- Kingsway leasehold for sale at auction this afternoon.
- Former Clark's shoe shop on the corner of Commercial Street and Llanarth Street change of ownership has happened. Tenant is now confirmed.
- Talking to Garrison Barclay to see if we can utilise any of their units as pop-up shops.
- Report out today by LDC stating first half of this year was first since 2020 to have retail units contracting. Information on type of businesses moving in to city centres (barber shops, coffee shops, bakers, vape shops) and moving out (hairdressers, fashion). DS to share report.

- Discussion around the importance of continuing growth of the independent sector to the city centre.

8. Ambassadors (Day and Night) update

- The current funding for the Night Ambassadors will run out in November. In partnership with the council, we submitted a funding application to the PCC. This has been successful, and we have been awarded a grant of £16,500 to extend the service for a further 6 months. In partnership with the council, we are also submitting a funding application via the Safer Streets fund. If successful, this would extend the service for 18 months from next April.

9. Loyal Free update

- The app is currently promoting 155 businesses – 25 via deals and 135 via events listings and trails.
- To date, there have been 7,494 interactions with the app, 3,031 interactions with the trails, 363 competition entries, and 1,171 deal redemptions.
- Free use of the app has been offered to the Food & Drink Festival and Newport Rising as part of our sponsorships.

10. Gift Card update

- Gift card sales for the calendar year to date are £995 (44 cards) – an increase of £245 (9 cards) since the end of June.

11. Savings Advisory Service

- PSP will next be in Newport on October 23.
- They recently identified £25k of savings for one owner of a number of city centre commercial properties.
- In total, the project has now delivered £102k in savings across 40 businesses since it was relaunched in late 2021.

12. Date of next Board meeting

- Thursday, November 23, 2023, at 4pm at the Riverfront Theatre.

13. AOB

- Shopfront Improvement Grant applications from New Pastures Home (Commercial Street) and TwoSixSix (Upper Dock Street) approved.
- Changes to commercial waste collection. MT said from April 2024 all commercial properties will need to separate waste. MT to share presentation.
- Board members were already aware of the 'Pointy Finger' Facebook blog & our response to it. ZB gave update following a meeting this afternoon between ZB, KW, RH, DS and

blog author Michael Enea, at which we emphasised that the BID is a non-political organisation and highlighted the key projects and services we deliver. ME has pledged to write a blog in support of the BID's renewal ballot next year.

- Shopwatch proposed along similar lines to Pubwatch to encourage retailers to work together with police and Newport Business Against Crime Partnership on key crime and ASB issues in the city centre. KW to keep Board informed of progress.
- MT said Newport Centre now demolished ready for new Coleg Gwent campus to be built.
- MT said plans in place to extend PSPO at Market Arcade and to complete refurbishment work.
- MT said Tramshed Tech due to open soon at former Information Station on Queensway.
- MT said new business grants via Shared Prosperity Fund are now open for applications. Open to both new and existing businesses.