

OSWESTRY BID - Minutes

Tuesday, 14th April 2020

4pm to 5.30pm

Venue: Video Conference

1.	<p>Present: Ian Follington (IF), Chair Heather Noble (HN), Deputy Chair Allister Moutrie (AM) Sainsbury's Patrick Evans (PE), Evastore James Woodward (JW), ColdMove Tim Morris (TM) Booka Lee Lucks (LL) Oswestry Borderland Tourism Gemma Cap (GM) Morgans Tania McGee (TM2) Lanyon Bowdler Matt Potts (MP), Shropshire Council John Waine (JW2), Adele Nightingale (AN) - BID Manager</p>	
2.	<p>Welcome and Apologies:</p> <p>IF welcomed Members to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies – Lindsey Pierce, Stuart Phillips, Julie Gibson, Emma Chapman</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Last meeting and Actions arising:</p> <p>Minutes of last meeting approved.</p> <p>Any actions arising to be dealt with during the meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>Conflicts of Interest.</p> <p>Currently no conflicts of interest with Board Members.</p>	
5.	<p>BID Governance</p> <p>AN confirmed all current Directors were now registered with Companies House and that resignations had also been recorded.</p> <p>The Annual Return has been filed and the Registered Address for Oswestry BID Limited amended to Salop House.</p>	
6.	<p>Finance</p> <p>I. Levy Collection Year to end February IF: Levy collection to date is £249K for 2019/20, a 97% collection rate. AN had requested updated information on Levy collection for split by year but as Shropshire Council (SC) are currently prioritising payments of funding support for businesses this was understandably not available at this time and will be submitted asap.</p> <p>II. Cash in Bank as at end of March IF: £278K</p>	

	<p>III. 2020 Levy Collection</p> <p>AN confirmed that 2020/21 Levy Invoices went out on March 16th as required under the terms of Oswestry BID and its governing legislation. This was immediately before the COVID situation escalated. BID have notified SC requesting that the chase letter that would normally go out April 21st should be deferred. An email was sent out to mandated Levy Payers informing them that they would not be chased for payment at this time and that the situation would be monitored and revisited as the situation normalises.</p> <p>An email was also sent out to Voluntary Levy Payers informing them that the invoices would not be sent out April 1st and again the situation would be monitored and revisited as the situation normalises.</p> <p>Information gathered by British BIDS/National Federation of BIDS suggests that all supermarkets, banks, building societies, authorities etc. will pay the Levy in full but only a small proportion of smaller independent and hospitality businesses will be in a position to pay at this time. British BIDs have been lobbying the Government for financial assistance for BIDs to be able to support their Levy Payers and we were requested to write to our MP to gain his support. AN confirmed an email had been sent to Mr Paterson MP on the 25th March.</p> <p>In the coming weeks we will review the forecast and prioritise expenditure based on estimated collection rates given the above information. IF confirmed that a new forecast/budget would be re-issued before the next Board meeting for discussion at the meeting and approval.</p> <p>7. AN circulated a BID Manager’s Report to all Directors giving a brief update on all projects on the 1st April 2020.</p> <p>8. Marketing statistics were submitted to Board Members with the Agenda. However, it should be noted due to the addition of the COVID pages and the information put out on social media all marketing stats were massively increased and the traffic to the website dramatically increased.</p> <p>9. BID Response to COVID-19</p> <p>I. Professional Advice</p> <p>AN has investigated the idea of providing some HR/Employment legal and Finance advice for Levy Payers. A request was sent out to Oswestry lawyers/accountants and Lanyon Bowdler and Morris Cook responded positively with thoughts on how it could work. These proposals have been emailed to the Board and were discussed at the meeting. A vote was taken, and it was agreed to fund provision of these services with a cap of £2,500 spend on each (Legal & Financial). Total spend of £5,000 plus VAT. If this cap is reached the Directors would then review. AN/LP/JW2 to proceed.</p> <p>II. Government Funding</p> <p>We currently have 3 pages on the website dedicated to the current situation. One is detailing all useful information that comes through from Government/Council regarding funding, support and guidance. The other details those businesses that are still operating and offering delivery services etc. A third page provides ‘Health and Well Being’ advice.</p> <p>We are working with the trade body for BIDS, British BIDS, as they believe that the Government need to step up and look at how they could assist with BID Levy payments. They are lobbying Government for them to match the 100% business rates payments issued by giving those businesses 100% relief on their levy payment – the BID would then claim this back through the Local Authority. We were asked to send a letter to our MP to ask for his support with this and we have done so. To date I haven’t received a reply from Mr Paterson.</p>	<p>AN / IF</p> <p>AN</p>
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	<p>III. Oswestry's Recovery IF proposed we go ahead with welcoming, friendly temporary signage in the town centre as part of the recovery package as lockdown starts to be released. This was agreed in principle by the Board. AN to arrange meetings with SC and OTC to gain their support.</p> <p>GC suggested that we should look at ways to help Oswestry to be recognised as a 'safe' place to visit and shop. AN reported she had already spoken to local suppliers about the possibility of purchasing hand sanitiser with the One Oswestry logo on for distribution to businesses and LP/JW2 were looking at posters for the smaller businesses to remind customer's and staff of the social distancing rules as at the moment it looks like even with lockdown scaled back these rules will still apply. Board supported these initiatives and asked that AN develop a package and come back for formal approval at the next meeting.</p> <p>AM suggested we look at commissioning videos to celebrate the hard work of Oswestry businesses and also to welcome people back to Oswestry. We of course already have the DIY video completed awaiting distribution at the right time. This should have been released the week lock down came into force, so we didn't put it out then. AN to speak to Aaron Child re: a new video and if he can tweak the already completed DIY video so we can use this as we state to recover – this should only need a few tweaks.</p> <p>IV. Advice on funding We have put out and shared all useful information from the Government and SC/Oswestry Town Council (OTC) including an email advising all businesses that the Grant Funding application process had now been opened and we were dealing with phone call enquiries regarding assistance re: funding, the criteria and application process. MP explained that SC were working very hard to funding out to applicant businesses as soon as possible and with funds being paid into businesses bank accounts in approx. 5 days.</p> <p>V. Security Patrols AN confirmed that arrangements were in place for a Security Patrol as agreed by the Board ready to go should the Police's resources be reduced for any reason. AN is in regular contact with Inspector Ryan and the patrol could be up and running with 12- 24 hours. This patrol would cover the BID area and run 7 nights a week 10pm – 8am and the Board had agreed a spend of £5,000 would cover 6 weeks with a marked vehicle and licensed guard. The Board again agreed to wait for the request for help from Oswestry Police Station (Inspector Ryan).</p> <p>Projects <u>Core</u></p> <p>I. Footfall/WIFI AN explained we are still struggling to secure the permissions we need to start the installation. We have changed locations a number of times to try and make progress. This is a complicated process and we continue to press on. It will be vital to have Footfall monitoring data to be able to gauge the town's recovery. AN is talking to Elephant WiFi about short term equipment to gain some baseline data.</p> <p>II. Wayfinding Progress with the Wayfinding project was discussed, and the Industrial Estate will still be the focus for 2020 – with a target of completion of installation by the end of 2020. The colours, fonts, graphics and themes proposed by the consultant FRA were all well received and a number of points of feedback were noted regarding use of hyphenation etc. to be conveyed to FRA. As noted above, the current situation will necessitate a short-term diversion of focus and resources to support the town's recovery.</p>	<p>AN</p> <p>AN</p> <p>AN</p> <p>AN</p> <p>AN</p> <p>AN</p>
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10.	<p>AOB and next meeting date</p> <p>GC also suggested we speak to OTC about updating the mini golf in the park. We know the children’s play area has been updated and wondered if OTC would consider bringing this up to date, so it was more of a feature? AN to speak to OTC.</p> <p>LL asked about the status of the new coach signs. It will be imperative that we gain ‘Coach Friendly’ status to encourage coaches into Oswestry as soon as we are able to. LL reported that she believes Visit Shropshire are trying to obtain a Coach Friendly status for the whole of Shropshire. We have been waiting for these signs now for over 12 months from SC – AN to chase.</p> <p>NEXT BOARD MEETING: Monday 11th May 4.00 – via Zoom conference call AN to send out invites.</p>	<p>AN</p> <p>AN</p>