

BedfordBID Board Meeting 103
Thursday 11th March 4:30pm, Virtual Online Teams



BedfordBID
Business Improvement District
Funded by Town Centre Businesses
www.lovebedford.co.uk

Directors attended:

Christina Rowe	BedfordBID
Sam Laycock (Chair)	The Harpur Centre
Dave Roffey	Bedford College
Greg Warwick	Jeeves Gentleman's Hair & Grooming Salon
Martin Keys	Gallone's Ice Cream Parlour
Steve McBrearty	Cash Converters
Charles Royden	Bedford Borough Council
Amanda Olliver	The Body Shop
Alex Falcon Huerta	Soaring Falcon Accountancy

Also attended:

Patrick Lyons	Bedford Borough Council
Samantha Hunt	Bedfordshire Police
Umar Ajaz	Bedfordshire Police
Leah Perkins	BedfordBID

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair, Sam Laycock, opened the meeting and thanked them all for attending. She informed them the meeting was being recorded.

Apologies were received from:

Paul Hunt	YMCA, Board Observer
Dean Thompson	The Swan Hotel, Board Director
Mike Lewis	Riverside Bedford
Tony Moliterno	Mayfair Financial

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING

The Directors approved the minutes of the last meeting.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR BY DIRECTORS OF THE BOARD AND APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair Sam Laycock said she is happy to continue to be the Chair. She informed the board there is an opportunity for someone to fill the Vice Chair position and Christina Rowe can discuss the role in more detail to anyone that is interested.

4. CONTACT DETAILS FROM DIRECTORS

The chair confirmed all details have been sent over. (NB except Mike Lewis who we still need photos and bio for the website).

5. DIRECTOR'S SKILLS AUDIT

Sam Laycock said that Christina Rowe is planning a director's skills audit, to understand the areas of expertise for future planning and delegation of tasks. One skill in particular the BID would benefit from is

bidding for funds and finding shared funding. It would be good for Greg to feedback the views of the High Street businesses. Christina will send an email to directors directly.

6. BUSINESS SURVEY POST LOCKDOWN3, BID4 REVIEW AND STAFF SKILL AUDIT

Sam Laycock said we will standby on this and we will be talking to businesses as much as we can.

Amanda Olliver said The Body Shop headquarters have sent out training day information this week to open on 12th April. Sam said we will start ramping up the communications, such as the pavement licence fees being paid by the council. Christina said that if anyone has question to add to the survey, to please email her.

Sam informed the board that the BID staff have been doing a few days in the office, doing admin and tidying up the town such as the removal of graffiti, which will continue.

BID4 review – Christina has been looking at the money and business plan, taking into consideration that we have practically lost a year from Covid and what can we get our teeth into straight away. Christina will give some feedback after reviewing the plan.

7. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

Patrick Lyons, Acting Manager for Economic Growth and Development, Bedford Borough Council provided an overview of the town centre development works;

Town Investment Plan - Waiting on a decision from the government of their £25 million bid for a landmark scheme including projects at the station quarter, Midland Road, a cycling scheme and an education project with Bedford College.

Town Accelerator Fund - A £1 million scheme they were awarded last year to spend before the end of this month. Key town centre projects including the Silver Street works, where the contractors have been working closely with the businesses to minimise disruption. This fund also includes 27 new cycling routes across the town, where signage and maps will be installed by the end of March. There will be secure cycle parking installed with the latest technology, to be completed by the end of the month. Large electrical sockets are to be installed around Harpur Square to allow large performances and attract greater footfall. A dropped kerb project will improve access for pedestrians with limited mobility in and around the town centre. Allhallows work is going well laying the granite, which will be a great new space.

High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) - £1.76 million for a landmark project. We are the biggest project in the eastern region. 2 elements - the shop fronts and using the space, including Goldings, BBtea, 90 High Street, 50 A-C High Street. The cultural element includes an art project by the town bridge, just under £10k, a 3D floor artistic mural with an interactive QR code for learning, to be installed by spring.

Amanda Olliver asked how long the Silver Street works would be going on to which Patrick replied that a majority of it would be done by the end of the month.

Greg Warwick said he was impressed about the electrical points being installed in open spaces for entertainment and that is something they really need. He said he heard plans for housing to be upstairs and shops downstairs in Debenhams and thought a better idea would be to open up the centre with a gallery which would be an amazing achievement, particularly when it is raining. Patrick said they are having active conversations with the parties responsible for Debenhams, Beales and BHS buildings and as a 90,000sq ft building, all options are being considered and he will bear Greg's idea in mind.

Sam Laycock said there have been positive changes for planning recently and that she explained to the government the positive and negatives to residential town centres, which need to be more experiential. Sam had 4-5 visitors in the last month at both national and local level, that see the vacant units as an opportunity to expand and adapt. There are new faces in the world of retail and we will see changes in the next few months. The BID needs to keep making sure the place looks good. Sam added that it is important to make sure CCTV works with the bike storage.

8. CULTURAL CONSORTIUM; BID REPRESENTATION

The Cultural Consortium needs BID representation as we are putting money into it, to which Christina is the Vice Chair. The Chair, Sam proposed Leah Perkins the Office Manager to also attend the group and have an item on the agenda to feedback to us, to which the board agreed.

9. UNLOCK3 TEAM WORKPLAN INCLUDING DRAFT OUTLINE EVENTS PLAN

The Chair, Sam gave an update of the BID team workplan who are communicating online via Social Media, the Covid Hub and the website. The team are now visiting businesses. We are hoping to keep as close to the lockdown dates as possible but safety is the key. Sam invited the board to give any feedback on the workplan document. Sam said to email Leah for any business content that Ben can share straight away.

10. OUTLINE DRAFT BUDGET/KEY PRINCIPLES 2021/22

Additional funding streams including Government grants for BIDs/businesses - to be postponed until we can put some ideas in writing. The voucher scheme will be pushed when more shops open to encourage local spending.

11. FORTHCOMING MEETING DATES SCHEDULE

Thursday 22nd April, 4:30pm.

12. OPEN GENERAL DISCUSSION

Town Centre conversation; how town centre businesses have/are adapting to the current situation and what we can do to further support BID businesses.

Martin Keys said he is seeing an increase in people and a lot of it is to do with the works going on. There is a buzz and positive vibe. People are starting to understand you have to start somewhere and new businesses to the town will see the investment as a positive. People are planning street parties on 21st June. Martin will be relaunching and the surrounding businesses can't wait for the restrictions to be lifted.

Greg Warwick said he has 8 individual rooms for hair dressing and they have created 2 new themed rooms.

Amanda Olliver asked when the works on the High Street will be completed. Cllr Charles Roydon said it is due to be completely finished on November 21st and he is optimistic that will happen. There are phased restrictions to cars on the High Street throughout the year and he will get all the information to BID to pass onto businesses and welcomed the board members to contact to him directly via email.

Greg Warwick fed back to Cllr Charles Roydon that he is really impressed with the High Street works. Charles informed the board that the council will be paying the costs of pavement licence applications. Martin Keys said it was important to get the message out which the BID will send out ASAP. Sam Laycock added that it is important to promote that the stone is being recycled which Charles will look into.

Umar Aziz from Bedford Police introduced himself, he has been in town for the last 8 months. He is keen to hear the burning issues and perspectives from businesses to adapt policing styles in town. Sam thanked the police for their work and said it would be great to have police presence when the restrictions are lifted and when VIPs are visiting.

Dave Roffey said Bedford College have building works going on from winning funding to renovate parts of the estate, which coincided with students not being onsite. This includes heat decarbonisation works, river water cooling using sophisticated pumps and turning the construction block into a modern methods of construction centre. The full-time students returned on Monday, where they and the staff are being encouraged to partake in voluntary rapid flow testing. This week there were 700 students a day tested with 2 positive results, so lower than the national and local average. They are asking all students to wear masks onsite, both outside and inside and staff ensuring this and social distancing as best as they can, which they are being generally responsive to. Part-time students are going back in a staggered manner from next week

and most people are glad to be back in the town. Hopefully we can start easing the restrictions sooner rather than later.

Alex Huerta asked what support the BID gives businesses to get up and running and generating an income. Alex is happy to offer support with budgets and funding, where she can feed back any concerns/questions from businesses to policy. Sam Laycock responded that the council have been very quick with getting the grant information out there. Leah Perkins will make sure all board members are on the mailing list so Alex can see what information we send out to businesses in relation to this.

Alex said there will be a lot of businesses who don't have the information to get up e.g., bringing staff back, borrowing more money and it would be useful for them to have a support base to help them get things done, like providing a checklist / recovery plan.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sam asked if anyone had a preference for the meeting time and it was decided to continue with a 4:30pm start.

The Chair concluded the meeting at 5:40pm.