

Penrith Business Improvement District Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday
Time: 5.30pm
Location: Zoom Video Call

Attendees

Darren Broad, Argos (Chair) - DB
Dan Harding, Foundry 34 and Angel Lane Chippie (Vice Chair) - DH
Heidi Marshall, Dodd Accountants – HM (Finance Officer)
Jamie Redman, Wrights Coffee and Ice Cream and Mr Simms Sweet Shop - JR
Charlie Shepherd, Rotary Club of Penrith - CS
Simon Whalley, Eden Valley Artistic Network - SW
David Whipp, Starfruit - DW
Philippa Ball, BID Administrator / Manager (recording) - PB

1. Apologies

[Celia Atkinson, M&S – currently away from work and unable to attend BID board meetings]
Heidi Marshall, Dodd and Co - HM

HM has formally tendered her resignation from the Board. The Board accepted Heidi's resignation and thanked her for her hard work and dedication. Heidi has done an excellent job over a number of years and the BID is grateful for the hours of volunteering Heidi has done for the town.

2. Matters Arising

2.1. Update on projects: greening reduction in scale – DW

DW has spoken to The Pot Place and requested details of the minimum financial commitment for Greening 2020. DW is currently pending this information and will distribute it to directors by the end of the week. At that point the decision needs to be made as to whether any plants are put out around town in 2020. If not, decisions need to be taken about what happens to the plants, for example are they distributed to the community, or planted up by community gardeners. DH offered to collect the plants from The Pot Place.

DW will ascertain how quickly The Pot Place would be able to plant up the beehives and planters once restrictions are lifted. At present the staff are furloughed.

2.2. Administration reduction – PB

At present PB is working reduced hours to provide Covid-19 updates and support only. The board discussed if hours should be amended or kept at 10 hours per week. PB recommended keeping hours at 10 hours only for the next three weeks and then reassessing. Approved by board.

3. Current State of Play: what more can BID do to support levy payers

The meeting discussed how best to support levy payers during the restrictions:

- 3.1. Virtual Penrith – Discover Penrith website and social media feeds are ongoing and PB is sending regular reminders about updates via email. Platforms such as ShopAppy would be too resource heavy for Penrith BID to accommodate at the present time.
- 3.2. Reconnecting with the Community – online stories using Independent Shops Guide: no further action at this time. Social media activity to continue as at present.
- 3.3. Ongoing online and telephone support – no further action
- 3.4. Contact MP / Secretary of State to support British BIDs request for support:

“Our second request of government relating to a waiver of BID levy payments for those in the leisure, hospitality and retail sectors remains under formal consideration. If anything, this request is now more important given the Prime Minister’s announcements over the past few days and will provide a life-line for the large number of BIDs facing inevitable financial insecurity without emergency assistance.

We would now ask ALL BIDs to contact their MP asking them to liaise with the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support our request. Rethinking the ballot announcement and securing the levy waiver are vital to the future of numerous BIDs, each of which will be crucial in the process of recovery after this virus has passed.” *British BIDs. 24.03.2020*

Action: Board agreed PB to send letter on behalf of BID to Neil Hudson MP

- 3.5. Working with E.D.C. / levy payments (see guidance)

EDC have agreed an advanced payment of £20k to the BID bank account to help with cash flow. Levy invoices need to be raised and the directors discussed how best to do this without putting added unnecessary pressure on businesses.

Action: EDC to raise levy invoices, with a due date of 31.07.2020 and with an accompanying letter explaining the reasons for raising the invoice, the extension of terms and also how BID are helping businesses.

4. Delay of AGM

‘Not more than fifteen months shall elapse between the date of one annual general meeting of the Company and that of the next.’ Proposal to delay AGM until 22.08.2020

Action: AGM delayed until early August.

5. Planning for post crisis

The meeting discussed how best BID can reaction when lockdown is lifted, what actions should:

- BID take to support levy payers?
- Businesses take to reconnect with their customers and the wider community?

It was agreed that the primary role of the BID is to market the town and encourage people back into the town. To support this BID took the following actions:

Action: PB to contact BID working party and ask for regular video call to plan for recovery

Action: PB to contact levy businesses and help them to think about post-lockdown action they can take to reconnect with the community

Action: BID to re-allocate the £1k budget from Tea in the Park to a ‘Penrith is Open’ campaign

Action: PB to design some branding which all levy payers can use to shout out that 'Penrith is Open for Business'

6. Finance Update (Please refer to attached cash flow projection)

The advanced payment of levy moneys of £20k will greatly help with cash flow.

Action: DB and PB to approach larger levy payers and ask for their support in paying levy monies early to further assist with cash flow.

Any other Business

SW – EVAN are running an online Virtually EVAN campaign which is working well for the gallery. This is in place of the usual Open Studios and Art Trail.

Date of next virtual Meeting: 4pm on Monday 11th May 2020