

Aberystwyth Steering Group Meeting

Monday 29th September 2014, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Gwesty Marine Hotel, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth

Attendees

Becky Bolderson, Caffi Morgan
Polly Leonard, Pollys
Ade Leonard, Pollys
Rob Thomas, Rickety Ramshackle
Chris Mackenzie-Grieve, MGs
Yvonne Crocker, Maeth y Mesydd

Berith Lochery, Broc Mor
Cyril Baker, The Jewellery House
Mark Joseph, The Jewellery House
Peter Austin, Ceredigion County Council
Peter Williams, The means
Laura Smith, The means

Apologies

David Michael, NLoW
Sue, Treehouse 2
Mike Fisher, Le Figaro
Cynthia Biggs, Clare's Wools
Joseph Evans, Gwesty Marine Hotel

Item	Detail	Action
1.0	Apologies for Absences CMG opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Apologies were given as above.	
2.0	Approval and signing of minutes of last meeting Group approved the minutes of the last meeting as an accurate record of the evening's discussions.	
4.0	Town centre updates a.) Feedback from Welsh Government on the Feasibility Report LS informed the group that, following the submission of the feasibility study, the Welsh Government had confirmed that further funding would be made available to enable the Aberystwyth BID to be tested at ballot. PA provided summary for those absent at last meeting on the process to date, including the application for funding from Welsh Government and the appointment of <i>The means</i> as consultants. Discussion ensued regarding the distribution of the feasibility study and data to town centre businesses. The following points were raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PW indicated that summary of the feasibility study would be distributed amongst the businesses, whilst the full study would be made available online;• PA reiterated that whilst the public bodies in the area could be amongst the highest levy payers, this would not translate into levels of control. The BID would be business led.	LS to distribute summary of feasibility study amongst businesses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group keen to engage with highest levy payers and to assess levels of support for the BID – LS indicated that discussions with the University were ongoing. <p>b.) The BID area – zoning options</p> <p>PW introduced the question of zoning the BID; key issue for the feasibility study was to identify which areas of the town should/ should not be included. This decision would ultimately fall to the steering group. The means have developed a feasibility matrix to assess the cost/ value of each proposed zone and assist the steering group in making their decision.</p> <p>A discussion followed, during which the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The steering group will play a leading role in the BID process. All businesses are welcome to join; PW informed group that, in order to go ahead, the BID must win on 2 counts at the ballot – the overall number of YES votes and the overall rateable value of those who voted YES; There is no general consensus on how national organisations vote – most companies work on a case-by-case approach. Guidelines by the British Retail Consortium and the FCA advise organisations not to support a BID levy over 1% unless there are clear benefits in doing so; Many larger organisations consider supporting the BID as a corporate social responsibility as it is in support of the local area and economy; The steering group will decide at what level the levy is set. They may also decide to implement a threshold on businesses with a rateable value below a certain (in which case voluntary contributions could be made); A threshold could also be considered for highest levy payers in order to secure their YES vote; The BID regulations offer a considerable flexibility on many of these matters – can be shaped by the steering group and the local situation. <p>c.) Updates from Ceredigion</p> <p>PA provided updates regarding the council’s activities in Ceredigion. This included the fact that both Lampeter and Cardigan were also considering the possibility of developing a BID.</p>	<p>PW & LS to introduce the matrix zoning exercise with the group next meeting.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Aber Arian</p> <p>a.) Initial feedback from the scheme</p> <p>LS provided updates on the Aber Arian scheme so far, in the form of a presentation (document attached).</p> <p>A discussion followed, which included the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BL suggested that the scheme should be run for a longer period than a month in order to maximise its success; RT & PL indicated that it would be valuable to collect info on where the vouchers were collected as well as where they were redeemed; AL made a comment regarding the desirability of a £1 discount, and whether this would affect redemption; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RT highlighted that the vinyl window stickers did not include details of the scheme, and in future should be tailored. <p>PW noted that there had been an impressive level of support for the scheme from the businesses which was encouraging for future collaborative initiatives.</p> <p>b.) Where next for Aber Arian? Progress and development</p> <p>The following points were raised in a discussion regarding the future of Aber Arian or other related initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB suggested that any future scheme would be more effective if the cards were wallet-sized; • MJ added that, if in future a percentage discount was offered, it would be an unequal cost to businesses – i.e. a voucher collected in a café and redeemed at a jewellers; • PW expressed the value of pilot projects in building support for the BID concept and highlighting the role a future BID could play; • In discussion on the development of a local currency, such as the Brixton Pound, PW indicated that this was a route to access European funding; • PW also noted that it was important to understand how the local pound stacked up against the visitor pound in determining future initiatives; • CMG highlighted that loyalty schemes recirculate, rather than generate, income. He indicated that 2 key areas must be considered – 1) how can we save money, 2) how can we boost revenue? <p>Questions were raised regarding examples of successful projects from other BID areas – group keen to understand what has been effective elsewhere; consensus was that this would help to shape the proposed BID programme and also to communicate the value of the BID to other businesses in the town.</p>	<p>LS agreed to distribute examples in line with the issues raised during the feasibility study amongst the group.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Upcoming town centre events</p> <p>a.) Last night on the prom – should the BID be part of the bandstand’s finale?</p> <p>PA explained that the event the ‘Last Night on the Prom’ was to celebrate the closing of the venue before the redevelopment commenced.</p> <p>Following a discussion the group decided that it would be better for the BID to be associated with the reopening of the bandstand than the closing of the venue.</p> <p>PA suggested that the BID could have an involvement in the management of the new bandstand in the future. A discussion followed which highlighted the points that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BID would not be required to take on council responsibilities and any involvement would be for the commercial benefit of the town; • A commercial enterprise may be more successful at managing the bandstand effectively. 	

	<p>b.) Christmas Celebrations</p> <p>Following questions from the group PA indicated that the council were fully in support of the BID and that they would try to financially support appropriate schemes.</p> <p>A discussion around the BID's involvement in the Christmas celebrations raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menter Aberystwyth and the town council are responsible for current celebrations and any plans by the steering group should consider those already in place; • Christmas celebrations are an important opportunity to boost the sense of town community, even if impact on trade is indirect. <p>A conversation ensued regarding the provision of free parking during the festive period. The following points were raised by the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the disruptions experienced by town centre businesses from the ongoing gas works and the proposed Mill Street development, businesses are entitled to apply for NDDR reduction; • In response to this disruption, CB suggested that the council offer free parking during the Christmas period as a good-will gesture to businesses; • PW suggested the steering group approach the council with the suggestion on behalf of the business community. 	<p>PW & LS to contact Menter Aberystwyth and the town council to discuss Christmas celebrations. Options for BID involvement will be considered and discussed at next meeting.</p> <p>PW & LS to draft proposal from the businesses to the council on the issue of free parking. To be distributed amongst the steering group for comment.</p>
7.0	<p>A.O.B</p> <p>Group noted that future meetings should include a representative from the town council.</p>	
8.0	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>10th November 2014</p>	