

Penrith Business Improvement District Board Meeting

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday 24th October 2018
Time: 5.30pm
Location: Eden Mencap, Ullswater House, Duke Street, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7LY

The regular board meeting of Penrith BID was called to order at 5:30pm on Wednesday 24th October 2018 in Penrith by Darren Broad (Chair).

Attendees

Darren Broad (Chair)	DB	Heidi Marsh	HM
Carol Grey (PTC Representative)	CG	David Whipp	DW
Dan Harding	DH	Philippa Ball (recording)	PB

1. Apologies

- Tim Lorton
- Simon Whalley (Vice Chair)
- Stephen Clarke (Vice Chair)
- Jacqui Taylor (Sabbatical)

Stephen Lindley has resigned his position on the board. It is hoped that another Rotarian will take his seat.

⇒ **Action:** PB to remove SL from Companies House

2. Welcome to Penrith Town Council representative

Carol Grey was welcomed to the meeting. Carol is representing the Town Council and will work in partnership with BID to promote Penrith.

3. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 19th September 2018

- Item 3 - DH to monitor Shopwatch over the next six months.
- Item 5.1 – PB to chase Bucket and Spade for Visit Eden promotional advert deadlines.
- Item 6 - PB to scan in signed EDC contract and distribute to all board members with key items for action.
- Action – PB and HM to review EDC contract and confirm expectations on both side.

4. Review of Update from BID Administrator/ Manager

4.1. Decision on Insurance

The meeting discussed Professional Indemnity insurance quotes received recent and the level of cover required for directors.

- ⇒ **Action:** PB to email the schedule for PI cover to directors, for them to decide the level of cover they would like for insurance cover going forward.

4.2. Decision on English Heritage Service Level Agreement

The meeting discussed the proposed SLA with English Heritage for the Christmas lights in the Castle lime trees.

It was agreed that PB should proceed with the SLA and follow up with the other owners of trees which are illuminated for Christmas.

The meeting discussed the best way to deal with the remedial work needed for Christmas lights. It was agreed to leave the lights in the tree throughout the year, with the knowledge that there may be a requirement to remove the lights if remedial work is required.

5. Finance update

HM presented the finance update for October 2018. Please refer to the Profit and Loss report for full details. All invoices to pay this month are standard bills and expenditure.

5.1. Greening budget

Final invoices have now been received and are to be entered into the budget prior to a project review meeting. There is a need to review the budget and to review how the greening project is run next year, in collaboration with Penrith Town Council.

The meeting discussed the overall expenses of greening. There has been an increased labour cost because of watering through the hot weather.

In the Britain in Bloom results Penrith was awarded Silver Gilt for the Large Town category

- ⇒ **Action:** PB to compose formal email to Phill Eyles and Rob Schmigel to thank them for their hard work and support of the greening and note Britain in Bloom made specific mention of them.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to speak to HM and DW and finalise a greening finances for the next meeting.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to make specific mention of Phill Eyles and Rob Schmigel in the next newsletter.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to include details of 2019 greening in next November newsletter as well as a thank you to sponsors.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to set up a 4-year deal for planter sponsorship.

6. Social Media Policy

The BID Social Media Policy will be addressed at the next meeting.

The board discussed social media posts and the communication strategy for BID going forward. Instagram and Facebook are now being used on a regular basis, with Hootsuite schedule management in place. It was acknowledged that there is a need to give equal prominence to all BID businesses, whether they have a social media profile themselves or not.

The board agreed all posts to be made by PB going forward, and for directors to stop posting to Facebook and Instagram. Posting requests should be made via PB to allow for them to be scheduled according to the page insights.

- ⇒ **Action:** PB to remove all directors from Facebook. DH to be left in place as an administrator as a backup.

7. BID approach to empty shops in town

DW opened the floor to discussions on how best to address the issue of empty shops in the town, particularly in particular New Squares. DB noted the BID cannot be responsible for filling empty shops, however, we BID can help to promote the area to attract new businesses. The meeting noted the following points:

- A number of shops have either closed or moved from the town centre.
- There have been reports of difficulties when trying to contact the New Squares letting agent.
- It may be possible for existing businesses to have displays in the window of an empty shop unit. This would make the premises eligible for business rates. BID would therefore need to negotiate with EDC for them to waive business rates for these premises.
- BID could work with the Chamber of Trade to encourage them to lead on increasing trade in the town.
- There is a need to promote the town and encourage potential new businesses to commit to opening stores and offices in the town. One way of doing this would be to host a town centre trade show, promoting the available locations and noting the benefits of operating from the town.
- Penrith has a notable lack of national retailers. There is a need to give them a reason for opening a store in the town.
- It has been noted there is a lack of National retailers in the town centre, but there isn't a reason for them to come to the town.
- EDC have a website which promotes empty shops and businesses for sale
- There is a mismatch between the national perception of the town, based on national reports and surveys, and the actual situation of the town centre. This is because the reports used standardised formula to calculate the desirability of a town, not taking into account small, successful independent stores.
- Penrith has a wealth of specialist independent stores which are vital to the economy. A number of larger national retailers are struggling and have posted profit warnings. As Penrith has a limited number of these stores, it has not suffered as much as other high streets.
- It was suggested that BID could gather all vacant property information on letting agents to understand the scale of the issue and then approach the council for discounted rates on those properties.
- £5m is being spent on improving the A66 at present and this needs to be promoted to the advantage of the town centre.
- With the new housing developments, there is a need for ensuring there is infrastructure in place to cope with the new homes, for example the road in Middlegate. BID needs a defined strategic plan, incorporating specific statements addressing these areas. This will drive actions and positive thought.
- Sharing of retail space to maximise square footage is a new approach for some retailers and this could be explored with EDC and promoted to businesses.

It was agreed that there is a need for BID to have a strategic approach to dealing with the empty shops in town.

- There is a need to lobby the councils ensure there is a good deal for rates.
- There is a need to promote leisure and a sense of place.

⇒ **Action:** PB to draft a letter to the chair of Sainsburys to review a strategic approach to the vacant plots in New Squares and a site visit to review the ongoing concerns. Contact details to be confirmed with DB.

⇒ **Action:** DB and PB to meet with EDC on 30/10/2018 and confirm next steps.

⇒ **Action:** PB to invite to arrange meeting with Rose Rowse, Eden District Council Chief Executive and Kevin Beaty (Leader of the Council) invite them to the next board meeting. Proposed discussion points to include the EDC master plan, BID concerns over empty shops and EDC economic development policies with regards to Penrith town centre.

8. Discover Penrith Website update

- Discover Penrith website goes live on Monday 29th October.
- Businesses will be able to update their own listings going forward.
- Levy payers will get information updated free of charge, including event listings for town centre events.
- PB will spent on average 4 hours per week on social media and marketing (out of 16 hours weekly hours)

8.1. Non-levy payer pages

The meeting discussed how non-BID levy payers can get a listing on the website.

- There is a need to promote places to stay to encourage people to visit. The directors discussed advertising campsites etc.
- It was agreed that in order to get a listing a business must first become a member of the BID, paying either 1% of business rates or £40 (as minimum payment) per annum.
- At present, events are being advertised free of charge. However, as content increases it may be necessary to charge for listings for non-levy payers, to ensure adequate allocation of administration time.

9. Visit Eden Summit – feedback (SW) (20 minutes)

SW was not in attendance. To be discussed next month.

10. Training audit

SW was note in attendance. To be discussed next month.

11. Any Other Business

11.1. Christmas project

Morrisons have provided funding to the value of £2k towards Christmas.

There is a need for BID to focus on Christmas for November, once discoverpenrith.co.uk is live.

It was agreed the plan will be done in 3 stages:

1. Pre-event promotion during November
2. Christmas lights switch on to take place on 1st December 2018
3. Christmas lights as the main focus for December, with some businesses having their own events and promotions which can be added to www.discoverpenrith.co.uk

⇒ **Action:** PB to arrange for a flyer to be designed and distributed to promote the lights switch on.

- ⇒ **Action:** PB to contact Rotary to confirm their involvement and plans for Christmas
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to explore the possibility of a 'march' through town, from the town hall / EVAN gallery to the bandstand.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to work with HM to find other groups who may want to take part, such as Park Run in santa hats, or Penrith Rocks.
- ⇒ **Action:** HM to confirm if the Chamber will do a Christmas window display this year. If so, BID will help support this event by arranging a 'people's choice' vote on Facebook, where shoppers can vote for their favourite window. The suggested prize would be a fish and chip supper for the staff of the winning business, provide by DH and Angel Lane Chippie. This could as be linked to Instagram with a specific hashtag to promote the event.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to confirm Christmas hashtag.
- ⇒ **Action:** PB to meet with HM to confirm Christmas project plan.

12. Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place at 5.30pm on Wednesday 21st November 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm by Darren Broad.

Minutes submitted by: Philippa Ball, Penrith BID Administrator / Manager

Approved by: Darren Broad

Signature:

