

**BedfordBID Board Meeting 107**

**Pre AGM**

Thursday 17th January 2022 4:30pm,

Online Teams

**Directors attended:**

Christina Rowe BedfordBID

Sam Laycock (Chair) The Harpur Centre

Martin Keys (Deputy Chair) \* Gallone’s Ice Cream Bedford Parlour

Steve McBrearty Cash Converters

Amanda Olliver The Body Shop

Dean Thompson Bedford Swan Hotel

Charles Royden Bedford Borough Council

David Roffey Bedford College

Shaun Barnett Leaders Lettings

**Also attended:**

Elanor Karklas Bedford Borough Council

Andrew Dennison MacIntyre Hudson LLP

\*Part meeting attended

**1. CHAIR’S WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed the virtual attendees, and thanked everyone for attending and confirmed the meeting was being recorded.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING. ITEMS FOR AOB**

The directors approved the minutes of the last meeting. No outstanding matters were raised other than the preferred time for future board meetings was agreed at 4.30pm where possible. The matter of Roles and Responsibilities will be discussed as part of item eight.

**3. NEW MEMBERS APPLICATION**

Completed, signed forms are awaited from Gareth Hitchings at George & Dragon, Mill Street.

**4. AGM – TO RECEIVE APPLICATIONS FROM MEMBERS STANDING FOR REAPPOINTMENT AND/OR ELECTION**

Dave Roffey, Bedford College Group – NOTED,

Gareth Hitchings, George & Dragon, Mill Street – Membership application anticipated with the option to carry forward an application to become a director of the BedfordBID with ratification at the 2022/23 AGM. NOTED.
Shaun Barnett, Leaders Lettings – ratification from interim to full director status at AGM. NOTED.

**5. FINAL ACOUNTS 2020/21**

Andrew Dennison, Manager at MacIntyre Hudson (who have produced the Financial Statements for BedfordBID for several years), presented the final accounts previously circulated and ratified by directors in preparation of the AGM; available online.

He explained that the status of BedfordBID is slightly different from other companies in that it is a company limited by guarantee and therefore there are no shareholders so does not pay dividends. Also, Members are different from levy payers so members of the BedfordBID must apply to become Members.

Terminology in the accounts must refer to a profit and loss account which is what companies must report. However, this does not relate to BedfordBID as it operates on income and expenditure with results reported at the end of the year relative to a surplus or deficit and not whether there is a profit but whether the income for the year is matched or exceeded by the expenditure in the year.

These accounts are the first to show the full impact of the initial pandemic year with income considerably down. But then equally so too is the expenditure with a considerable drop of outgoings because of limitations of what could happen or indeed was felt appropriate. There was also limited activity for the year with the voucher scheme.

There is a surplus. The Company works on a cash basis and does not commit to any expenditure until the cash has been received. It carries forward reserves to cover costs committed for the beginning of the new fiscal years usually until levy payments are received. This shows a strong balance sheet and resilience for coming out of the pandemic.

Overall, it has been an unusual year for BedfordBID, but it is coming out of the pandemic in an extraordinarily strong and healthy financial position ready to meet the coming year.

The Chair thanked Andrew and opened the meeting for questions and queries from the directors. The matter of how the surplus will be used was raised to which, the Director of Operations confirmed that an overview of activity for the current financial year (2021/22) had been prepared and sent to directors as well as highlights for the new year ahead to be covered at the AGM.

In response to a question from a Member of the Board, it was further explained that BedfordBID also benefited from £10k applied furlough relief.

ACTION: to provide the list of businesses taking part in the LB vouchers scheme

**6. OPEN DISCUSSION – TOWN CENTRE CONVERSATION; BUSINESS FEEDBACK POST-CHRISTMAS 2021 AND NEW YEAR**

Chair opened the floor for feedback from the directors and the sectors they represent.

A Member of the Board reported a “tricky” period with footfall down 40% and not having Debenhams next door was “tough”, although conversion was up “massively” by 9% and average transaction value went up £2.30. So, although footfall was down, staff converted customers with conversions coming in up to 42% and ATV £19.20 which is “massive.” Conclusion was “really, really happy with the results.”

Foot flow became steady once High Street reopened receiving “great comments” from customers. However, still having same issues with skateboarders around the Silver Street area but generally a lot of positivity for the town.

The Chair reported that the Harpur Centre Santa operation had to restock on presents during the first two weeks but with ten days before Christmas usually their busiest, customers were more cautious because of Omicron and stayed away.

Foot flow around the bus station was probably a third of what used to and variable where there had been spikes but tailed off again.

Another Member of the Board reported that the hospitality venue had an “awful” period and approximately 50% down on expectations. There was “mass cancellations” and hosting Christmas parties with just 20 people in attendance! The first two weeks of January were also considerably “tough”. The conclusion is that there is a lot of recovery to do appreciating that ordinarily the hospitality sector would make a third of their annual performance in December.

Conversely, no major effects experienced nor any difference in terms of business with people still able to move properties nor with people coming into the office; still quite busy and “lots of people still moving to Bedford”. The aim is to get people moving into Bedford and then for the businesses to benefit from the new arrivals.

The Manager for Economic Growth and Development at Bedford Borough Council acknowledged how helpful it was to receive the feedback and overview from the businesses and reminded businesses to apply for any of the respective businesses support grants as available.

ACTION: to ensure the hospitality sector be supported in forthcoming marketing and promotional plans for town centre.

**7. TO RECEIVE INITIAL FEEDBACK ON OPERATION BLESS, CHRISTMAS RETAIL SHOPLIFTING INITIATIVE**

Between 13th December and Christmas Eve the local policing team set up an operation targeting retail shoplifting called **Operation Bless.**

This resulted in the arrest of 11 individuals within town centre for various different offences ranging from thefts, breach of CPN, robbery, theft from motor vehicles, burglary, and possession of drugs etc. Two stop searches were also conducted along with several community engagements which provided crime prevention advice and utilised both covert and overt patrols to prevent and reduce retail thefts.

With the support of BedfordBID, a CBO (criminal behaviour order) was obtained on a persistent offender and BeBAC reports were used to aid the police in the CBO case alongside a written statement from the BID.

Also of note is the progression Operation Highgate has made in the individuals attending. The meetings combine with the group focused on the Bus station and now incorporate several other partner agencies (including the Community Safety & Resilience team at Bedford Borough Council, bus station representatives, local councillors and council street cleansing and property management). There have also been representatives for the PCC and personal attendance at the meeting.

The Chair reported that Inspector Samantha Hunt, from the Bedford community policing team is also collating feedback from businesses as well as distributing a letter with an overview of what her team are planning in the coming months and hopes to apply for further funds to do similar targeted operations of this kind in the future.

Action: invite Inspector Samantha Hunt, from the Bedford community policing team to the next board meeting to update on progress.

**8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. COMMUNICATION AND VACANT UNITS – THREE KEY STRATEGIC TOPICS; DISCUSS**

Detail regarding roles and responsibilities of the BedfordBID team had been circulated to the directors prior to the meeting. Aspects of the role of the Office Manager was currently being undertaken by the Director of Operations which whilst unsustainable longer term, is aiding review and to potentially streamline the role particularly considering the ongoing financial status of the BID.

In response to a comment from a Member of the Board, the Director of Operations confirmed the need for and importance of an up-to-date BedfordBID businesses contact list exercise recently undertaken by the Champions and that the role of the Champions includes attending outdoor events to the benefit of town centre business.

Martin Keys joined the meeting at this stage.

Action: All directors to review and report back on the Roles and Responsibilities paperwork, preferably before but if not, at the next meeting for the definitive agreed job descriptions to fill vacancies accordingly.

Action: Review and discuss at the next meeting outdoor event attendance and ROI

**9. – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

***Monday 14th March 2022 @ 4.30pm, Bedford Swan Hotel*** *.*

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and concluded the meeting at 17.24