

# Brighthouse Business Improvement District (BID)

## Annual General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 6pm - Via Zoom

### ATTENDEES

Michelle Veasey – Marketing Manager

Lauren Barber – Marketing Manager

Euan Noble – Co-Chair

Lesley Adams – Co-Chair

Alex Kennedy – BID Director

Anne Colley – BID Director

Xanthe Quayle - Xanthe Quayle Landscape Architects

Karen Houghton – Calderdale Council

John - Ryecorn Wholefoods

Tracey – Overgate Hospice Retail

James – Yorkshire Payments

Rachel – Town Hall Dental

Roger – Wilding's Chocolates and Cakes

### APOLOGIES

Cllr Howard Blagbrough – BID Director

### 1. Introduction from our Co-Chairs

EN – Welcome to the first AGM. We are bound by a set of legal guidelines associated with the council and we are also operating within the guidelines provided by the government, because of this we have closed the office. We've been meeting regularly throughout lockdown, via this medium. And we think that BID is in a good shape.

BID was set up as a company limited by guarantee, unlike other BIDs, we opted for a minimum five and a maximum of seven directors and five years retained period. Directors can come and go as they please with notice. We also opted for more members than directors so we have 21 members and again members can leave, and new members can join, they must be levy payers and they must have paid their levy.

### 2. Treasurer's Report

The BID bank account was opened in June last year. We have collected about £117,000 of the 2019 - 2020 levy and that's a very good collection rate.

We finished the year-end (31st March 2020) cash positive. We spent wisely in our first year and we've embraced a lot of new technology.

We spent on the three core business objectives within the BID, all predominantly focused on getting people into town. And, although it suggests we haven't spent much on safe and secure, we've implemented an app and we have been working heavily with licencing as well.

We don't pay corporation tax because BID is a not for profit organisation. We are VAT registered and adhere to VAT rules.

As of today, we would have expected to have collected about 80% of this year's levy (2020-21) but at the moment we've collected 54%. Despite the council wanting us to send out summonses, we've pushed back and suggested that that's an inappropriate action. We have taken the position that

since we're not spending as much we don't need as much to run the BID and that we will be able to survive on the surplus that we were cash positive from last year. We are going to carry on doing what we're doing, which is digital and social media and trying to raise the profile of Brighthouse. We have also applied to the government for BID reliance fund.

We are being prudent but spending in the right areas.

### **3. Brighthouse BID Update – Michelle Veasey & Lauren Barber, Marketing Managers**

MV - The business plan was voted upon before Lauren and I were in post. The first thing we did was put together a robust delivery plan against the 3 objectives. Unfortunately, some of these activities have been hampered because of COVID.

LB - A lot has happened in our first year. We have successfully set up the office on Bradford Road and from August 2019 to March 2020 we held marketing surgeries every Wednesday morning free to all levy payers. We held various drop-in session back in October 2019 to inform levy payers our plans for the future and to ask for your opinion. In January 2020 we also held our first workshop 'How to attract your ideal customer'.

We launched our loyalty app LoyalFree in late November 2019 which has been building in terms of content, offers and businesses promoted ever since. You can download the app for free and as a levy payer, you can list your special offers and events on there. Each business signed up receives a dashboard to monitor live results and their growth metrics. We currently have 1,260 engaged app users; we have 51 businesses promoted and 21,600 LoyalFree interactions with Brighthouse.

We have started to implement a crime prevention app called SentrySIS to increase data sharing and reduce crime. This is in partnership with other BIDs so we can share information safely and securely with other local towns. We have a small number of levy payers who will be taking part in our BETA scheme to get the crime reduction system populated with useful content and start to see how this amazing technology can work in practice.

MV - At the beginning of 2020, we signed up to Place Dashboard. A lot of other BIDs have expensive sensors put into town to track footfall but as we are a really small BID this was just beyond the scope of what was possible at the time with the budget. Place Dashboard tracks movement using various mobile apps. They are constantly improving their platform and we have quite a lot of data now from the beginning of the year.

The data allows us to look at where people are travelling from as well, which allows us to target advertising on social media. The data shows that a lot of the visitors are spending time in the supermarkets and then leaving, so they are not coming into the town centre. That helps us look at campaigns that we can do to get these people to come and spend time and money in town. On screen is some of the high-level data that we've had during COVID as you can see the big drop is in March, but it is recovering quite nicely. In June, we had around 5800 people visit per day. Showing that confidence is improving.

We took over the events from the BBI, who did a fantastic stellar job and it is useful to note that if the BID had been a 'no' vote, then these Brighthouse events would have stopped. We ran a series of Artisan Markets and we organised the Christmas Light Switch On event in 2019. Because of COVID the Council will not allow us to host any events. The ambulance service has said that they will not attend any events and the police won't attend either. At this time, we cannot host any events.

Back in 2019 we started looking at how we could build on the success and improve the events for future. We've gathered information from businesses, exhibitors and visitors about the events and we've started to put a new strategy in place.

Our first Spring Clean was scheduled for Saturday 21st March with around 25 volunteers attending, including help from the local Girl Guides. This could not go ahead as planned and a new date is yet to be set. Working with Calderdale Council this is a coordinated approach to tackling litter issues in and around Brighouse town centre.

LB - Brighouse BID funded the floral displays across the town including the summer hanging baskets in 2019 and winter planters. Having blooming and beautiful flower-filled streets in Brighouse improves visitor experience for all.

Brighouse BID launched the first-ever parking refund scheme in Calderdale on 6th January 2020 when the new parking charges were put in place. The scheme means that visitors can claim back 1 hour of on-street car parking in Brighouse. The Brighouse BID business plan shows that the importance of parking and access to parking is crucial for 80% of businesses surveyed in the BID boundary and is the second biggest issue of importance. The BID continues to work with Calderdale Council on parking issues, but we do not have direct control over decision making on charges.

Independent Businesses of Brighouse have now taken part in two Fiver Fests since October 2019 which Brighouse BID coordinated along with Totally Locally. Each festival encourages shoppers back into their local town centres. Brighouse business took part in the Totally Locally Fiver Fests to not only introduce some great bargains for local shoppers, but also to showcase the town and the great shops and businesses we have here, and indeed, how important independent High Streets are to our communities and towns.

MV - Brighouse BID is on a new Board which will steer the plans and delivery of the Brighouse Town Deal Fund. Up to £25 million is available for Brighouse to use to develop ambitious and innovative plans to unleash our full economic potential which Karen and Xanthe will speak about in more detail about.

In February we met with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, to investigate how this money can be spent. We are looking at all different types of projects for the town centre including improving open spaces and the public realm, as well as transport and both the day and night-time economy and welcome your ideas. We've also met with Robin Tudingham, Chief exec of Calderdale Council.

And if COVID wasn't enough, we started the year with floods, many businesses within our BID boundary were greatly affected both directly by flooding to their properties and through a loss of trade. Lauren and I worked at the "Flood Hub" based at Brighouse Civic Hall to help coordinate help for Brighouse businesses. We spent our time assisting businesses, collating information, offering cleaning equipment, providing regular updates regarding grants available, road closures and official advice. We've been working hard trying to get the Council and the Environment Agency to speak to businesses affected by the flooding and investigate issues.

Unfortunately, we inherited a very sparse database from the council in terms of communication. We have spent a lot of time trying to build on that. We have recruited a fantastic ambassador to be a public facing presence. His role is to go out and speak to businesses - a uniformed presence on the high street, helping us promote the town and events as well as our initiatives and to ensure

antisocial behaviour and graffiti is reported quickly. But again, because of COVID we have put the recruitment process on hold until it's safe.

LB - Outlook turning now to the year ahead, firstly we must salute the spirit of the Brighthouse businesses especially our heroes who went above and beyond during the pandemic. Brighthouse BID has been busy reacting to the pandemic as well as planning for the future of the town centre. Here are just some of the ways we have helped:

- We have been sending out regular updates, providing our levy payers with useful business-related advice such as grant information, Government guidelines and upskilling throughout lockdown – we have changed from a monthly blog to weekly COVID-19 specific newsletter
- We have a dedicated page on our BID website to help with any questions or queries plus lots of free assets that can be easily downloaded
- We changed our LoyalFree app so that users could access a trail which informed them which businesses and services were still operating during lockdown. We currently have a trial regarding the Eat Out to Help Out scheme and we have launched Marketplace which is an e-commerce service where BID businesses can list and sell items for free
- The BID team have remained available throughout lockdown via phone, email or video conferencing
- Michelle and Lauren have hosted a Facebook live Q & A session to put your questions to the experts, to get expert advice and the latest news
- We have distributed over 200 social distancing floor graphics to town centre businesses to help businesses open safely
- We have been sending weekly press releases in the local paper and regional radio stations
- We have recently added some flowers to the town centre outside Yorkshire Building Society
- We have embarked on a Town Recovery Plan
- We created a promotion video during lockdown

A clear and collective plan is essential for Brighthouse as the businesses seek to welcome consumers back and stimulate business growth. Many businesses have been forced to close or remodel their trading arrangements just some of the impacts that will Brighthouse face, include:

- Limited gatherings
- Travel restrictions
- Hygiene requirements

MV – Marketing Plan - We are currently sharing business stories on a weekly basis. Place Dashboard is collating the town's footfall data to share with our levy payers and we have recently taken part in the #ILOVE #IWILL campaign to highlight areas in the Calderdale Valley as well as taking part in the government's enjoy summer safely and shop local campaign. As soon as it is safe to do so we will start organising a 'welcome back event' and investigate new and exciting trails to attract visitors back into town. We also look forward to being able to deliver the business plan when we can.

- The first month of the global pandemic we focused on business advice and signposting businesses to relevant government grants and funding. Our Visit Brighthouse channels concentrated on the stay home, stay safe message.
- Between 2 and 4 months into the pandemic, we hosted our Facebook live with David Cramp from Tax Assist. Visit Brighthouse encouraged shoppers to stay local and shop in Brighthouse for essentials only. We also made a promotional video which was viewed over 10,000 times subsequently allowing people to access Brighthouse virtually from across the world.
- Currently, we are promoting business opening hours and the safety measures that are in place across the town centre. As well as government schemes such as the Eat Out to Help

Out scheme. You can also find free assets to download including COVID safe posters on our BID website.

- The next normal will see both Brighthouse BID and Visit Brighthouse focus on the opportunities to enhance customer experience this could be anything from temporary and longer-term, seating, parklets, outside dining, events, animating public space through art and culture. As well as promoting transport and the means to access the town centre. While Brighthouse BID will continue to offer support and advice for specific sectors and identify funding opportunities such as Town Deals and Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.

#### **4. BID Director**

MV - We would like to acknowledge the retirement of Graeme Curry as a BID Director. Graeme Curry of the Pot Spot who has been a loyal and amazing contributor along with his wife Laurina to the success of Brighthouse both for their many years of contribution to the BBI and the successful running of the events and more recently as a Director of Brighthouse BID. We would like to thank Graeme and Laurina for their involvement and wish them both a very happy retirement.

We have 4 candidates that have applied for the role of BID director. In line with our operating agreement, a vote will be taken by the BID Members to decide who will be the successful candidate.

LB - We would like to take this opportunity to thank both Xanthe and Karen for their attendance this evening and will now pass you over to learn more about the Brighthouse Master Plan. Thank you.

#### **5. Brighthouse Master Plan - Reshape and reinvigorate Brighthouse town centre as a distinctive destination**

XQ - Hello, thank you very much for inviting us this evening, it is great to better understand how your organisation was set up and what you've been doing pre and post COVID. And it's clear that your core themes are around safe and secure, lively and welcoming and a destination town.

For those of you that don't know Xanthe Quayle Landscape Architects we are based in the Colne Valley. We're landscape architects, but the team includes transport consultants, public art consultants and access consultants. So, whilst it is just me tonight the approach has been an effort of a broad range of consultants and it's been developed with Calderdale Council and with the support and brilliant input from Lauren and Michelle. I was appointed last autumn, and consultation of the master plan was completed in July. The Master Plan essentially puts forward broad ideas around how to approach public realm strategy for the town. We will be working with other consultants to improve infrastructure for example the improvements to the A641.

A part of the core theme is looking at how to improve the canal side, how to enhance pedestrian links to the town centre and how to get the entry points to be welcoming. It's about creating a distinctive destination, which builds on the really strong offer of independent shops and events, a welcoming place that encourages people to dwell and use it on a local and regional level. In particular, delivering a change in pedestrian and cycling provision and celebrating the stories of the community and addressing potential issues around the infrastructure of the ring road.

There's a real opportunity to expand pavements and look at high quality finishes, whilst maintaining some parking but also potentially pedestrianise some streets.

How we deliver improvements and encourage people to enjoy the canal side will be a key challenge moving forward, there is real potential to create a much stronger heart to the town centre focused on the urban fabric and the canal.

Walking into town is critical, for example when you arrive from under the subway, how do you land and how do you orientate yourself? And of critical importance are the arts and culture themes that are embedded into the Master Plan. There are lots of opportunities, lots of brilliant buildings in Brighouse and some great ideas that coming through.

KH - 101 towns across the country were selected to bid for a possible 25 million pounds worth of investment. It was decided by civil servants and Todmorden and Brighouse were chosen.

The money will focus on three key areas of urban regeneration by which they mean remediation of derelict properties, demolition of properties that may be a blight on an area, but also importantly, development and improvements of buildings. It focuses also on connectivity and by connectivity, I mean literal connectivity of pedestrians, cyclists, cars and transport but also importantly a digital connectivity and lastly an accessibility to training and enterprise. One of the challenges is that pretty much all of the of the project is capital. And the second thing is the timeline associated.

We received £750,000 worth of advanced funding that needs to be spent by March next year. Again, all capital. Working with the town board, we've proposed to central government that we look at some improvements of canal frontage, some improvements to high street, and some work around wayfinding on arrival.

We have already submitted a readiness checklist which they've accepted. We've done some work to improve the town board to make the board compliant, as there were certain requirements that central government needed. There is now a slightly different makeup as we've recruited a new co-chair David Whitehead to work in support of Councillor Whitaker. I was appointed in July, to lead the work on this in Brighouse. We're not competing with other towns, but we do need to have a strong bid.

## **6. Questions**

What is in place for disabled for disabled people?

### **Answer**

The Master Plan is still at the very strategic level. But moving into the next stage that will be a critical aspect. We have an access consultant integrated into our team. And to make sure that at that the issue around inclusivity and equality requirements are part of our thinking right now, and not bolted on later on. So, I can't point to a specific example, but it is a key theme in our thinking.

If anybody has any questions or any thoughts offline, then more than welcome to contact us.

Thank you all.

**END**