



**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020**  
**2pm – 4pm**  
**Virtual meeting**

## **MINUTES**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

David Bailey (DB)	Chair
Craig Mathie (CM)	Vice Chair
Mike Francis MBE (MF)	President

### **Sector Representatives**

Carol Scott (CSc)	Leisure & Attractions Sector
David Squire (DS)	Transport Sector
Guido Schillig (GS)	IEA Sector
Steve Turner (ST)	Conference & Convention Sector
Tim Lloyd (TL)	Accommodation Sector

### **Professional Officers**

Cllr Vikki Slade (VS)	Leader – BCP Council
Graham Farrant (GF)	CEO – BCP Council
Bill Cotton (BC)	Executive Director – BCP Council
Chris Saunders (CSa)	BCP Tourism
Jon Weaver (JW)	BCP Tourism
Stevie Sainsbury (SS)	Board Administrator - BCP Tourism

### **Co-opted members**

Sara Uzzell (SU)	LEP representative
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### **Apologies**

Martin Davies (MD)	Town Centre BID
Cllr Lewis Allison (LA)	Portfolio Holder - Tourism

### **Guests**

Andy Lennox (AL)	Wonky Table
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### **1. Welcome & apologies**

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone had any objections to the meeting being recorded. In the absence of any objections the meeting was recorded.

Apologies had been received from Martin Davies and Cllr Lewis Allison. VS confirmed that LA is currently on leave of absence until the end of August and that she will personally be picking up his portfolio work as she has recently had a high level of involvement in Tourism.

Chair confirmed that there were no declarations of interest.

## 2. Minutes from the last Meeting

These were confirmed as correct. No outstanding actions

## 3. Sector Reports

### a) Transport Sector - DS

- Rail Travel
  - i. Direct funding comes from the Government so controlled currently by the Government
  - ii. There have been increases in capacities related to the return to work policy
- Intercity Coach - National Express
  - i. No Government funding
  - ii. Have resumed a limited operation and seen a minor increase in use recently. Operating 7 days a week
  - iii. The two London airports have not yet restarted and there is no sign of them restarting soon.
- Local Buses (Yellow Buses and MoreBus)
  - i. Second tranche of funding from the DfT
  - ii. Have to provide a minimum level of service which has to be agreed with the local authority.
  - iii. Yellow Buses are running about 80% of the pre-COVID network in frequency and carrying approx. 30% capacity. Still a long way from being a viable business
  - iv. Main worry is mixed messages still coming out from Government over whether you should use public transport.
  - v. Message from last Friday is that at some point the funding will be withdrawn and this could leave the industry with something that is not sustainable.
  - vi. Need to see funding through to at least Christmas but guessing more likely to be November – bearing in mind the return to school policy.
- Taxis
  - i. Trade is still light – they are not back up where they would expect to be.
- Sightseeing
  - i. Discover Dorset has not resumed operating. Not sure if going to be viable to do so.
  - ii. Several members of the transport sector have written to the Council over the decision made to give over certain locations to Active Travel promoting cycling and walking. Main issue surrounds Poole Quay which is a particular concern to CSc because of the impact on City Cruises. Kevin Diffy (Taxis) reports similar issues and City Sightseeing has also been very adversely affected by this decision, as well as by the proposals for East Overcliff. There is a lot of frustration as these changes do not work for the Sightseeing businesses – although the purpose behind it is understood.
- Transforming Cities
  - Number of workstreams coming out and work is continuing on this despite COVID

Chair asked VS to respond following the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July when he believed the proposals for East Overcliff had been dropped.

VS clarified that the proposals have not been dropped for East Overcliff but do not involve a road closure. She admitted that the description used at the meeting had been very misleading – “pedestrianisation of the road all the way down to Bath Road”. VS confirmed that two modal filters along the East Overcliff and Boscombe Overcliff Drive are planned. They do not involve any road closures, they simply

mean that no one can drive from one end to the other – nothing is being pedestrianised and no roads closed. All properties will retain full access.

Chair asked for clarification on the expected benefit from these changes.

VS explained that all these changes are aimed at increasing pedestrian and cycle ability and moving people out of cars and onto alternative modes of transport. It is part of the Governments proposals to promote cycling – separate to the climate agenda. They have been done under an Emergency Traffic Regulation Order, which means that there is a 7-day notification period, following which they go live during the consultation period – ie: consulting while the project is in process. They are temporary and can only be made permanent after consultation.

#### **b) Accommodation Sector– TL**

- The majority of the accommodation across hotels is now open with varying levels of social distancing and PPE in place.
- Occupancy levels are running at an average of 50% at this time for the three months July, August and September. Strong average room rates have been reported which is an encouraging sign that people are not over discounting.
- The announcement of a reduction in VAT has been well received with the majority of hotels not passing this discount of 12.5% (real terms) to the customer but using this saving to try and make up some of the trade lost through three months of closure and prepare for the winter.
- The Marsham Court hotel has taken the difficult decision to close from September through to March due to the loss of business normally associated with this time of the year. (Dinner dances/Masonic weekends /large gatherings and coach business.)
- East Cliff hotel is closed whilst the Carlton Hotel is running with eight staff (Fifty remain on furlough) and no food and beverage offering. No inside spa, just outside pool.
- The Greenhouse hotel is extremely busy, so much so that they are recruiting kitchen and restaurant staff. They are much busier than forecast. They have introduced “working bubble” teams which seem to be working well.
- The Captain’s Club Hotel has reached 50% occupancy with strong rates. With the sunshine the terrace and restaurant are extremely busy. Have had to lose some members of staff due to the loss of function business for the summer months (Weddings etc.) The spa will re-open fully from August 1<sup>st</sup> at 50% capacity.
- Outside of BCP, rates appear to be depressed across the Forest, but Balmer Lawn is now open seven days each week instead of the five planned. Carey’s Manor has been hit with the loss of spa packages that include accommodation.
- Confidence in people booking self-catering premises is rising. Riverside Park in Christchurch has been running on 50% occupancy for July but has now re-opened all properties and is completely full for August with a very strong interest for both September and October. They have introduced a number of new practices and procedures.
- Caravan bookings throughout the region are strong for the summer months.
- TL confirmed that it looks as if ‘Staycation’ could be working for the Accommodation sector. Feedback from guests over the level of safety has been very, very encouraging.

Chair thanked TL for his very positive and encouraging report. He pointed out that at the O&S meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July there had been a comment that some businesses were not abiding by the law and asked VS to comment on the enforcement in connection with this.

VS reported that where people are in breach of regulations in relation to trading standards or environmental health then that would be dealt with by the Council and the team have been out to visit in the region of 85 businesses.

AL added that although there have been reports of breaches in the majority of cases these have been shown to be inaccurate and unfounded.

GF confirmed that over the last few months there has been a real mix between things that are enforceable and things that are advisory. There is a balance between trying to ensure people are kept safe and sending out a strong message and being too draconian, threatening prosecution un-necessarily.

**c). Attractions Sector - CSc**

- Some businesses have now started to open, running at about 40% of what would normally be expected, as a direct result of social distancing requirements.
- Brownsea Island due to open tomorrow offering limited time (3.5hrs) on the island. Splashdown due to open on 25<sup>th</sup> July when Government guidelines are announced. Swanage Railway running diesel service and hoping to move to steam soon but not seeing the capacities they need.
- City Sightseeing hoping to operate from next week. Has been running limited minibus tours down to Lulworth.
- Main concern from most businesses is whether or not the winter is going to be viable - this is particularly so for City Cruises. Because of the closure of Poole Quay, they have had to make all staff redundant there and are running a reduced service. CSc felt that for most businesses in this sector it is just a case of trying to survive.
- A postcode track and trace survey has shown that the majority of customers are not locals but day visitors within a 2hr drive time.
- Chair asked if CSc was aware of any businesses that are not confident that they will survive. CSc reported that the Heavy Horse Centre are really struggling to feed the animals and don't know if they should be opening or not. Soft Play Centres still do not have the go ahead to open so places like Lemur Landings and Farmer Palmers are questioning what they should do with their staff once furlough starts costing them money. There will undoubtedly be some casualties.
- Out of BCP area - the three museums in Dorchester are still closed.

VS reported that the discretionary grants package thresholds and guidance are being amended to make it easier for businesses like Soft Play are better able to apply for assistance.

**d). Conference Sector - ST**

- The sector has been hit really hard
- Large events are currently not viable. Looking at having smaller events using the large event spaces.
- Hoping to look at starting to hold exhibitions and conferences from January as long as there is no second spike of COVID-19.
- Waiting to see the results of the 'test' events being organised by the Government
- It is likely that there will be quite a high level of redundancies when furlough ends.
- ST reported that from a regional perspective he believes it is a time to start being braver and look at what can be done to attract new initiatives to the area that cannot be accommodated elsewhere.
- The BIC has moved a lot of events around in the diary and encouragingly it is looking quite strong for the rest of the year.

- The Bistro on the Pavilion Terrace is now open and doing steady business. Little Shed at rear of BIC is open.
- For BHLive the income from the car park is helpful but there has been a lot of on road illegal parking in the area causing a lot of blockages.
- ST believes that the sector is likely to be one of the last to come out of the current situation.

VS offered reassurance that the Council are aware of the parking problems and have just agreed a way forward which includes a short-term contract for tow-aways and a training programme for staff on clamping techniques. Unfortunately, there is nothing the Council can do regarding the level of fines as these are set by the Government.

DS expressed his appreciation for these new initiatives which he believed would be of great help in managing what has become a very difficult situation.

#### e). International Education Association – GS

- No changes regarding air bridges – still working with those countries.
- Visa offices are gradually opening up everywhere. It is now a matter of building confidence to travel.
- **Universities, Colleges and Boarding Schools** are hoping to re-open from September/October.
- **Language schools** – a few are re-opening in September, others are waiting until January. It is looking as if nationally around 30% have closed for good and it is likely that this percentage will grow. The sector was one of the first to go into lockdown and it looks as if it will be the last to come out. There are likely to be a lot of redundancies as soon as furlough ends.
- The Government has introduced new criteria for visas for the universities, colleges and boarding schools. Everyone is still trying to understand it, but it appears to be a small positive step.
- In September some universities will be online and some face to face, schools will be face to face.
- Chair asked if GS knew of any language schools in the BCP area that are closing and GS confirmed that at the moment he does not have confirmation of any but would not be surprised if some do end up closing.
- Chair asked for clarification on any impact from people from abroad not being able to travel on an ID card. GS confirmed that the impact will be on younger students who do not have Passports. Priti Patel recently confirmed, very strongly, that there are no plans to allow group or individual travel on ID cards. It would be good if this could be reconsidered for certain countries where the ID cards are as secure as passports, for example Switzerland, France & Germany but this is not currently on the radar.

#### f). Poole BID – SR

- Poole Quay - SR reported that he has witnessed a really good atmosphere across that area and plans are being worked on for the Lower High Street with JW. Concern is that whilst this is positive while the weather is reasonable there is a need to understand what can be done through the winter by way of events to encourage people to that area.
- Outdoor dining/ tables. Waiting to see what happens regarding the government amendment. Hope may progress today.
- There are concerns that businesses bringing back music may create crowds outside premises. This is being looked into.
- Heritage/Trails – discussing ideas with National Trust tomorrow. Open days are still planned for 11<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Sep. Potential to do some events with their linkage, including possibility for virtual events.

- High street is a concern – some smaller businesses are saying that they are not going to open – certainly not this year. SR felt it would be good to see if their issues over reopening could be investigated as there may be some things that can be done to encourage them to open.
- JW confirmed that as part of Reopening High Streets Safely funding three Information officers have been appointed – one for each area (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole). Their main role is to go out and meet with businesses across the whole area to see in what ways they can help. The Officers do not have any budget, but they can offer advice and guidance.
- MH felt that the businesses most in need of help are the small independent ones that have been used to working in a certain way for a long time and they are finding it difficult to adapt. Support needs to be directed towards them.

**g). Bournemouth Town Centre BID – PK**

- The BID has supplied over 300 queuing stickers across Bournemouth which have gone down really well
- About to supply 150 vinyls to participating retailers with the message – great to see you shopping, glad to see you are wearing a mask – taking the softly, softly approach
- Safety and security is the number one issue for people utilising services
- Stay local, spend local and now travel local is entering another phase. Major support for retail online and by way of a standalone supplement with the Echo and on Hot Radio.
- Next drive is major promotion w/c 1<sup>st</sup> August – Eat Out to Help Out campaign. All BIDs tentatively signed up to a conurbation wide project. TCBID providing window vinyls to those businesses taking part.
- Providing more sanitiser units for businesses.
- On a wider level there is a major campaign to support NTE and nightclubs who are in need of a great deal of support. Countrywide campaign around 'saving the dance floor' – GDP and jobs element involved – significant economic impact.
- Interesting conversations being had across the sector. Many reporting trading figures far in excess of what they anticipated and showing year on year growth for same period last year.
- Need to look beyond footfall concentrating on encouraging people to come, stay and spend before they leave. Focus needs to be on customer service and the experience.
- BID are going to be working with levy payers, irrespective of sector, to offer customer service training and support to build the experience for the customers.
- Safety and security remains biggest issue in the town. Multi agency working been really good with good feedback. As lockdown has eased there has been a focus on anti-social behaviour. As major crime incidents have happened resources have been moved or stretched so need to look at what resources we have going forward and how best it is used.
- Many businesses are in fact doing better than they expected at this stage, across all sectors and types of businesses, but the challenge going forward is for businesses to start operating differently reflecting the changes over the past few months.
- MH agreed that it is important for the Council to put pressure on businesses to move forward and to work on dwell time of visitors/shoppers.

**h). Eating Out – AL**

*As a result of IT related issues Andy Lennox was unfortunately unable to report in person but his report was shared through the 'Chat' function as follows:*

- Trade reported is between 15/25% down albeit that trade is much better than expected.  
(But we all expected sub 50% down)
- Sector cannot however be considered to have been doing well – no one is making a profit or expects to do so until December
- Let Dance campaign will be supported by Wonky Table – awaiting clarity on what they want.
- Ashley Cross Green is a concern as still ant- social behaviour and not allowed to have food stalls on Green. JW discussions are ongoing regarding possibility of some trading being allowed but there are some issues around licences that need to be understood before anything can go ahead. Resolution due to go through Parliament and waiting for that. VS pointed out that it is a balancing act between allowing space to be used by businesses and keeping it for community use where people can meet socially.
- Most of the big nationals are not open yet so Hospitality sector at the moment is seeing a false bubble - Hospitality is on a knife edge.
- Most of the sector expect to, with assistance from the national Eat Out offer, bring trade back in August.

#### 4. Feedback from Overview & Scrutiny Board meeting (20<sup>th</sup> July)

VS apologised on behalf of the councillors present for the way the meeting had gone and hoped no one had felt too uncomfortable. Chair pointed out that it was particularly disappointing that those people who had something important and valid to say were left to the end of the meeting when everyone had 'lost the will to live'. Chair then asked CSa if he had anything to report back from the meeting. CSa felt that most things had already been covered through the sector updates and did not have anything further to add.

Chair agreed that the only positive thing that came out of the meeting was that a working group is going to be set up to look at the issues raised in more detail and looks forward to hearing more about that in due course.

MH pointed out that that he was not able to respond at the meeting but that some of the issues raised were things that he can deal with and he will be sending around an email shortly once he has clarified some points with Chris Shephard

#### 5. Director's Report – CSa

- National Coastal Tourism Academy (NCTA) Hosted by Tourism and are an important link nationally. Funding from Visit Britain is about to come to an end. Waiting to hear if further funding will be forthcoming but will not hear for another week or two. CSa asked that wherever possible Board members support the NCTA as they are a valuable resource.
- Sam Richardson, who heads up the NCTA, has been heavily involved recently with DCMS and was asked to give evidence to them this week. **ACTION: Presentation to be circulated.**
- Coastal Tourism stats:
  - £17.1billion spend last year in Great Britain
  - Looking at a reduction this year of £10.35 billion in spend
  - 27 million visits
  - 285,00 jobs – predicting about 191,000 job losses
  - 67% coastal businesses will take a year to return to profit. 31% 2 years
  - 20-25% of businesses will close.

- Not a very rosy picture nationally – suggests we may be faring slightly better locally
- Grants
  - Retail Hospitality and Leisure sector – 1586 applications received
  - £32.5 million paid out
  - 488 companies still not claimed
- Small business grants
  - 4482 applications
  - £44.8million paid out
  - 583 companies still not claimed
- Furlough - 50,000 on furlough in this area
- Self-employed business support scheme - £45million being claimed
- BCP Council has been affected in much the same way as every other business.
  - 24-week COVID budget from 1<sup>st</sup> April
  - Adjusted income budgets accordingly
  - Good news - Agreed £50k funding for destination marketing
- Christmas Tree Wonderland – discussion ongoing but in a precarious position
- Arts by the Sea – going ahead in different format to include virtual and actual elements.
- The Events Team are now accepting applications for future events
- BH Live in precarious position. They have lost Arts Council funding as well as large amounts of income through COVID-19.
- Lighthouse have received Arts Council funding which may get them through to mid-Autumn. Actively pursuing other grants.
- Resort incident in June. CS felt that some clarification was required.
  - Weds 23<sup>rd</sup> June – busy at lunchtime but under control. Multi-agency met early afternoon and the position remained the same.
  - From 3pm onwards started to escalate and a serious situation was developing
  - Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> Major incident declared – meant other agencies could be called in. Resulted in a lot of media interest but provided additional powers
  - Profile of people causing problems was not the normal demographic of visitors. A lot of drug issues and knife incidents.
  - Since then beaches have been fairly quiet. Downturn in business but steady.
  - Multi-agency 'Consequence' meetings being held weekly now to report back and prevent similar situation arising.
- Beach App being developed – going live shortly. Shows where beaches are busy and where not. BCP-BeachCheck.

## 6. Events Update JW

- Bike Nights will not continue following pedestrianisation of the Quay.
- Opportunity to look at alternative types of events
- Fireworks not going to be possible as social distancing cannot be achieved
- Any event can now go ahead following government guidance but the guidelines and measures that have to be put in place make it extremely difficult for any large events to take place.
- Arts by the Sea – a lot of hard work gone into producing an event that is partly virtual and partly some small events, socially managed
- Christmas – very difficult, particularly in Bournemouth. BIDs and commercial contractors fund over 50% and the money is not there. Sponsorship also difficult to achieve. Looking at options which will be presented to the Council once consolidated. Unlikely to be any switch on events.



- Virtual Bournemouth Air Festival 202 – launching 31<sup>st</sup> July. A lot of Air Shows have done something similar. In Bournemouth the tone will be around a festival, not an Air Show. Being hosted by CentreVR. Looking at the wider, community appeal which is the direction in which the planning for this year was already going.
- VS reported that an internal working group has been set up around the future of the Air Festival which will be looking at all the proposals that the team have been working on to make the festival more sustainable and give it a wider feel with more community involvement. The working group has a broad mix of members covering all viewpoints.
- SH reported that in relation to small events and potential live music – some businesses are nervous about crowds building. Suggested some additional signage may be helpful to alleviate fears and assist in moving people on if crowds start to build. JW that there are a number of different solutions that are being looked at to avoid the build up of crowds – particularly based around individual performances
- SH also suggested that the situation may have opened up opportunities to look at a different offering – a more boutique feel to Christmas
- MH suggested that some local culture actions groups could be approached to bring in some different types of pieces of work into the Quay area. This would require some funding which MH suggested the BIDs may be able to assist with.

## **7. Campaigns**

- Plan was circulated after last meeting but there has not been a lot of feedback.
- Have now started campaign programme – quite active – basically around ‘We are ready, we are here to welcome you’. Promoting Beach App and Wonky Table app.
- Enjoy Summer Safely – funding. Up to £300,000. Asked regions to bid and customised campaign around specific areas. Working on a BCP/Dorset bid and also joining with South West bid.
- Chair asked about a generic video which promotes the area, that does not promote individual businesses. JW confirmed that this will be considered.

## **8. Destination awards**

- The Awards were postponed due to COVID-19 but now looking at what can be done in the future
- PK reported that some businesses have been asking what is happening about the winners etc. He felt that it would be helpful to do something even if only virtual. Chair confirmed that this is being looked into.

## **9. AOB**

- **Street Food Corner**
  - Chair drew the Board’s attention to an item on the list of planning applications in relation to the Upside-Down House being granted pre-planning advice for use of Street Food Corner. This is something that would be supported by Tourism as it would increase footfall through the Lower Gardens down to the Seafront.
  - Chair asked JW if it would also increase income for the Council above that which is currently achieved through Street Food Corner. JW confirmed that this would probably be the case, based on the revenues previously achieved through the Upside-Down House. However, he asked that it be noted that all income for the Lower Gardens goes towards the upkeep of the Gardens and is Trust income.
  - Chair felt that this was something that the Board should support given the long, difficult history surrounding Street Food Corner. JW agreed but pointed

out that the Trust has previously supported the area being used for food and nothing else. He confirmed that the Trust's perception on the new proposal needs to be sought. Pre-app advice said it would be supported.

- PK was not aware of the Pre-app advice but felt that the Town Centre BID Board would definitely be in support of Upside-Down House using that area.

- **Sector representation**

- CM pointed out that the Constitution has not been reviewed this year but asked pointed out that the Eating Out Sector is not currently represented officially, and he felt that this should be rectified. He proposed that the Board consider adding the Sector to the Constitution and suggested that Andy Lennox, who has recently been working closely with the Board, be appointed as the official sector representative for the Eating Out Sector on the Board. Chair confirmed that he would move forward on that motion. **ACTION: Chair to look into reviewing appointment of Eating Out representation on the Board**
- MH pointed out that the Cultural Sector is also not represented on the Board and asked that this be considered. JW confirmed that there is a position on the Board for the Cultural Sector, but an appropriate person has not been identified to take up the position. MH confirmed that the person would be from the currently named Cultural Compact Group. MH will look into this and suggest an appropriate appointment. **ACTION: MH to advise on a suitable person to represent the Cultural Section**

- MH reported that he had been made aware by Cllr Hadley that a key is available for opening up the Quay to allow the land train to continue to use that route. He asked that this be looked into.

## **10. Date of next meeting**

Chair asked that the Board revert back to having meetings bi-monthly on the third Tuesday of the month as per the Constitution in order to maintain continuity. Chair asked for any comments but in the absence of any, suggested that dates for the next few meetings be circulated on that basis.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> September. 2pm – 4pm. Currently planned to be virtual.