



Minutes
The Cumberland Hotel, Bournemouth
Tuesday, 19 Sept 2023
11:00 –13:00

MEMBERS PRESENT

Craig Mathie (CM)
Andy Lennox (AL)
David Bailey (DB)

Chair
Vice Chair
President

Sector Reps

David Jones (DJ)
Jackie Richmond (JRi)
Richard Wade (RW)
Rosie Radwell (RR)
Sarah Stainer (SSt)
Tim Seward (TS)

IEA Deputy
Attractions Deputy
Transport Sector Rep
Accommodation Sector Deputy
Conference & Convention Deputy
Accommodation Sector

BID Representatives

Louise Berkhauer (LB)
Martin Davies (MD)
Peter Ruscoe (PR)
Wendy King (WK)

Christchurch BID
Bournemouth Town Centre BID
Bournemouth Coastal BID
Poole BID

Professional Officers

Cllr Vikki Slade (VS)
Cllr Millie Earl (ME)
Sam Fox (SF)

Leader - BCP Council
Deputy Leader & PFH for Connected Communities
Director of Planning & Destination

Co-opted Members

Bill Perkins (BP)

Bournemouth Chamber of Commerce

Secretariat

Stevie Sainsbury (SS)

Destination Development Co-ordinator - BCP Council

Apologies

Andrew Emery (AE)
Carol Scott (CS)
Fiona McArthur (FMc)
Guido Schillig (GS)
Georgina Bartlett (GB)

Strategic Development Manager, BCP Council
Leisure & Attractions Sector Rep
Bournemouth Coastal BID
IEA Sector Rep
Poole BID Chair

Jacqui Rock (JR)
Jon Weaver (JW)
Lucy Filer (LF)
Morag Wood (MW)
Paul Kinvig (PK)
Samantha Richardson (SR)
Steve Turner (ST)
Tim Lloyd (TL)

Poole BID
BCP Council, Head of Events
Christchurch BID
Cultural Representative
Bournemouth Town Centre BID
National Coastal Tourism Academy
Conference & Convention Sector
Christchurch BID Deputy

1. Welcome & Apologies – Chair

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of those new to the meetings.

2. Actions from the last Minutes (not covered by agenda items) – Chair

None

Minutes were approved

Declarations of Interest – None

3. Update on Tourism Awards – Tim Seward

- 122 entries received
- Judging carried out slightly differently to last year with Mystery shop and visits as part of the initial judging process.
- Announcement of finalists took place on 13 September with a boat trip around Poole Harbour courtesy of City Cruises and culminating in a finer buffet at Hennings when the finalists were announced. Thanks were extended to City Cruises.
- Press release went out via Dorset Business News on Thursday 15 Sept.
- Tickets are now on sale online for the Gala Event which will take place on 9 November 2023 at the Pavilion priced at £94.10 (inc. booking fee). They can be booked via Tim Seward directly, saving on the booking fee.
- With the increase in the cost of glass something similar to last year's trophies is cost prohibitive so looking at other options.
- Two categories not yet sorted – Contribution to BCP Tourism and the Tony Williams Young Innovator Award
- Chair reported that the event on 13 Sept had been very well received and that it was good to see so many new entrants/people attending. He thanked TS for all his hard work.

4. Update on ABID/Tourism Levy – Chair

Chair thanked all those involved for their time and energy in getting the project to what he felt was now a very solid position and then provided the Board with an outline for the work so far.

- The idea came from the decreasing involvement and financial backing from the Council in relation to marketing the destination
- It was agreed that the DMB needed to become a more functioning entity able to develop funds and projects outside of the Council and therefore move to being a CIC. There was ARG funding from the R3 Group which if not used would have to be returned to the Government so the decision was taken to use this funding to develop proposals for a CIC. However, the proposal from the initial company approached were not able to deliver what was required so this was not taken forward.

- Following further discussion it was agreed that the ARG funding should be used to take forward proposals for the setting up of an ABID/Tourism levy, on similar lines to Manchester and Liverpool and a brief was put together for Consultancy firm, Mosaic to submit a proposal.
- Following receipt of the proposal an online vote was taken on agreement to use the ARG funding for this purpose and this was carried by 9 votes and no dissensions.
- Permission was sought from the Council to use the ARG funding for this purpose and approval was received this week.
- Mosaic has therefore now been asked to take this work forward on three levels:
 - Accommodation only
 - Accommodation and Attractions
 - Accommodation, Attractions and Hospitality
- They will look at options around it covering the whole BCP area or just Bournemouth, extending to incorporate Poole and Christchurch at a later date.
- Mosaic will submit their report by the end of October.
- It has been made very clear that they will need to engage properly with all stakeholders, getting round the table with them.
- The final report will be shared with the Board at the November meeting.
- If agreed to take forward it will take about a year and will be done in three phases:
 - Foundation
 - Development
 - Campaign
- Although there should be some of the ARG funding left to seed fund the project there will still be a funding gap which will need to be filled in order to deliver on the expectations.

5. DMB Priorities

- Chair reported that the DMB priorities (**to be circulated with these Minutes**) were last considered in 2021 and that although there was some work done in relation to the Destination Strategy which was subsequently adopted, the Board priorities need to be looked at again in order to ensure that the key objectives reflect the needs of all the sectors.
- Chair provided a quick overview of the 2021 Priorities and then suggested that this agenda item be linked to **Item 6 Sector Updates**, to get a feel for the current situation and what is going to be required moving forward.
- It was acknowledged that anti-social behaviour issues and impacts are high on everyone's priorities and Chair confirmed that Kelly Ansell and Sophie Sajic have been invited to the November meeting and, along with a representative from Dorset Police, will be asked to provide an update on the current position and what is being done.

6. Sector Updates

a. IEA - David Jones

- Sector is now approx. two thirds of the way back to pre-covid position
- Some markets are proving better than others with the Middle East the strongest and the Far East and Europe proving the most challenging
- Universities are all doing well
- Accommodation is still a struggle particularly for Language schools who are not able to secure enough host families to provide what is required. Some

have taken over hotels and are also using student accommodation which they would not normally favour.

- Bournemouth is particularly hard to 'sell' nationally at the moment
- One major issue remains visas and the fact that Language students cannot work over here - although University students still can
- The overall picture for the sector however remains optimistic

b. Bournemouth Coastal BID - Peter Ruscoe

- Anti-social behaviour, crime and abuse of staff remain the major concern
- Given the situation around the Blue Flags where a saving has already been identified PR asked for clarification from Cllrs on what else is going to be cut - particularly in relation to CSAS officers and which areas are likely to be affected.
- Working towards a Halloween 'Monster' event in Boscombe
- CTW not yet signed off with the Council although going ahead.

VS responded to the comments on finance to confirm that:

- With a £44m shortfall next year everything is on the table and it is quite possible that most things will be cut. The Administration are in the unenviable position of having to make 'life-changing' decisions.
- All non-statutory services are at risk. Some things are easier to make a decision on than others ie. those that do not have implications on staffing. She pointed out that for instance, although there is a statutory obligation to provide some form of Library service that obligation could be met by providing just one library not 24 across the area.
- Anything that impacts on staffing requires a longer consultation process.
- There is a two day consultation taking place the week after next and there is currently a lot of lobbying taking place.
- VS further pointed out that the current position was partly as a result of a failure over 3 years by the previous administration which had resulted in using all the Council reserves so there are now no reserves. However, she further acknowledged that the cut to the Government revenue support grant which dropped from £106million per year to just £6million per year this year, has obviously had a massive impact.
- In addition the Transformation Programme savings are taking much longer to achieve than originally imagined, due to both Covid and the impact of inflation.
- AL pointed out that although he took on board everything said re Council finances there are base line agreements in place (although apparently some still unsigned) which outline what the Council has to deliver as part of these agreements. One responsibility of the Council is to provide safe beaches and the Blue Flags are part of that provision. It is therefore only right that the Council should pay for the Blue Flags and not expect businesses to pick up the cost.
- VS responded to say that the beaches will remain safe for residents and will continue to be managed effectively by the Council. The saving identified is in relation to the accreditation of the Blue Flags and it is that accreditation that the Council are looking to BIDs and businesses to consider funding. AL and other Board members expressed dissatisfaction with this response but Chair requested that the meeting move on.

c. Bournemouth Coastal BID - Martin Davies

- MD clarified that his understanding was that if the Council cannot deliver on their obligations under the Base Line Agreements, then either the BIDs will have to cover the costs or these elements will be cut.
- MD reported that he has recently attended the Retail Crime Partnership sessions organised by Conor Burns but that they had not been as helpful as he had hoped. However, Chief Superintendent Heather Dixey, has proved really helpful and can be seen to be doing all she can across the BCP area to help. MD suggested that she be invited to the November meeting alongside Kelly Ansell's team which CM agreed would be a good idea. **ACTION**
- VS asked it to be noted that it was not the Council's choice not to attend these sessions they were not invited. However, the Town Centre Summit is due to take place on 20 November for which invites will be sent to everyone.

d. BAHA - Tim Seward

- Hotels are reporting a 30% drop in occupancy over the summer believed to be a direct result of the bad weather. The saving grace for them was the Air Festival and the following weekend's good weather.
- There are a record number of hotels on the market at the moment - approx. one new one a week.
- Anti-social behaviour issues remain the biggest problem alongside hotels seeing an increase in people leaving without paying their bills. There is a definite increase in fraud but the Police will not attend unless it is a life-threatening situation.
- The sector is working well with the University to encourage students to enter the industry. There is student event planned at the Marsham Court in November.
- Also working closely with BCP College on an apprenticeship event in February
- The Recognition Awards are due to take place next month which focus on celebrating individuals.
- BAHA is fully supportive of the ABID/Levy initiative
- TS reported that he is due to end his term in the BAH Chair in March and fully anticipates that Rosie Radwell will replace him as Chair.

e. Christchurch BID - Louise Berkhauer

- Christina Pengelly has now left the BID for family related reasons and has moved back to Canada.
- Need to focus on joined up thinking with the Council and LB asked who she should speak to in the Council given that there is no longer a specific Destination Marketing team. SF confirmed that her contact should be Sam Richardson who would normally have been at this meeting.
- The BID is busy planning Christmas events at the moment in liaison with the Town Council.
 - In relation to this PR asked for clarification on whether or not a decision had been taken on the provision of decorative Christmas lighting in Bournemouth outlying areas and Christchurch.
 - VS responded that those cuts have already been agreed and made through an Officer Decision Record and showed surprise that the BIDs were not aware of the decision. She confirmed that as Bournemouth has CTW and Poole has PCMLT the decision had been taken to

continue to provide funding to Christchurch Town Council for Christmas lights but the rest of the decorative lighting budget has been cut.

- **ACTION SF** agreed to get clarification from Isla Reynolds team as to what messaging has gone out and is planned regarding these cuts.
 - Grateful for the funding for one CSAS officer in the town. Feedback on having that presence has been that it has changed the energy in the town.
 - LB expressed concern that Destination marketing could become very Bournemouth centric, particularly if managed through the ABID. CM provided reassurance that marketing would focus on the whole area as it is to everyone's advantage for the whole area to be promoted. People do not stay in the one place when on holiday - they want to visit the wider adjoining areas as well. **ACTION SF** further confirmed that a new Marketing post has recently been created in Isla Reynolds team and once in place he suggested that the new postholder be invited to attend a DMB meeting to be introduced.
- f. **Bournemouth Chamber of Commerce - Bill Perkins**
- Requested for more information on the ODR in relation to Christmas decorative lighting. **ACTION:** SF to get an update from Corporate Comms and feed this back to the Board
- g. **Conference & Convention - Sarah Stainer**
- Rail strikes have been an ongoing issue but ironically have resulted in the creation of hybrid events which have been very beneficial. However, they have impacted on the number of delegates able to attend which has seen a decline.
 - Short lead in time for events continues to be an issue resulting in rotation being out of kilter
 - The position from 2026 onwards looks positive
 - Seeing more agencies involved rather than direct approaches from clients. This makes it even more important that BCP area is competitive on a national level as we need to sell the destination first which can be difficult when economic benefit is priority for clients.
- h. **Attractions - Jackie Richmond**
- Numbers for the industry have held up reasonably well over the summer, partly as a result of the weather when people are looking for inside attractions.
 - Adventure Wonderland has completely changed their working model as a result of pressures.
 - Costs continue to escalate and basically businesses are just holding their breath to see what happens.
 - Requested clarity on exactly what Destination marketing is still being provided through BCP Council particularly in relation to Partnerships. Businesses are unsure what they are getting and if provision is not what was offered through the partnership agreement, then businesses will not want to continue to contribute.
 - In response SF referred back to the new marketing post being created and suggested that a meeting be held with the new postholder and businesses to clarify the position.
 - He acknowledged that there were sensitivities but everyone must be aware that the Council cannot make promises it cannot keep.

Everything needs to be seen in relation to the current financial position of the Council.

- RR re-iterated that there needs to be clarity on what is being provided for the money businesses are contributing.
- AL pointed out that once the ABID/levy is set up businesses will have control, rather than the Council, over marketing the destination.
- TS stressed that destination marketing is of the utmost importance. If BCP loses its place in the market then other destinations will quickly move in and take over the market share.
- VS wanted to note that the situation is completely different in areas where there is a District/Town/Parish council as they do not have the same statutory responsibilities and in those areas residents pay an additional amount of between £30 - £90 which can then be used for tourism and marketing the area. ME asked if there was data and statistics available on what other authorities spend on tourism so that some benchmarking exercises could be carried out. SF confirmed that Sam Richardson would have all that information at her fingertips so suggested asking her.
- PR suggested that perhaps BIDs should be putting money into wider destination marketing and suggested having some conversations outside of this meeting. MD however, pointed out that BIDs would have to get permission from all their levy payers if they were to spend money outside of the local area.

i. Transport - Richard Wade

- Taxis have had a good year
- Trains have obviously been affected by strikes - notably over the Air Festival dates
- Beryl Bikes continue to be buoyant
- Buses have continued to benefit from the £2 fare. There is a new scheme coming into play but will have to wait to see how that works - it is a long term game.
- BAF - was really good on the roads with 31st August being the busiest day
- MoreBus are investing in a new fleet of Euro 6 diesel vehicles. In relation to sustainability infrastructure is a big problem with the grid not able to support electric vehicles and won't be able to for a number of years.
- Anti-social behaviour continues to be an issue across the area. BCP has put in an early bid for Transport Safety Officers but now need to wait to see the outcome
- Real time information stands in Poole Bus Station are proving very successful in improving monitoring of the area.
- There were major congestion issues on 9 September which need to be investigated in order to address future issues.
- Recruitment of staff continues to be a problem.

j. Eating Out - Andy Lennox

- High end of the industry doing well, low end not so well
- Pubs continue to close across the area but others are opening
- Basically been a pretty dire summer season, although the early September weather helped. All the same problems as the rest of tourism industry are facing.

- Preparing to batten down for the winter

k. **Poole BID - Wendy King**

- Crime and anti-social issues continue to be an ongoing problem. CSAS has been cut in the town with only one part time officer left.
- Plans for PCMLT are going well
- The Inside Out Festival took place at the weekend and despite weather was well received. The new Seafood and Sounds event also took place at the weekend
- The BID has applied for British BIDs accreditation. Only 30 BIDs have this but are hopefully of getting it.
- Focus on some business training sessions but are struggling to get buy in despite them being free

7. AOB

- **SF** confirmed that he will be leaving the Council shortly before Christmas. His replacement will be Wendy Lane who starts on 4 December providing a good period of handover so hoping for a smooth transition.
- **AL** gave an open invitation to Board members to the opening of his new pub in Broadstone on Thursday at 6pm.
- **AL** requested sight of a P&L statement for Seafront trading to clarify if the reported £6million was surplus or turnover. **ACTION**

8. Date of next meeting:

- Tuesday, 21 November 2023. Hennings, Poole Quay. 11am - 1pm