**Minutes of Board Meeting 21st September 2026**
**Held at 8, Westgate, Ripon**

Board Present and constituting a quorum: Mark Lancaster (Chairman), Rick Jones (Vice Chairman), Stuart Baldwin, Stephen Craggs, Andrew Williams, Megan Green, Rebecca Layton. Michaela Young (NYC rep)
Others Present: Lilla Bathurst (Manager), Layla Martin (Comms), Juliet Hawkins (Business Liaison), Claire Fitzgerald (Luminate Education Group)
Apologies: Tony Watson (NYC), Justin Scully

## Proceedings

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| The meeting was called to order by ML (Chairman) at 6:00pm<br><br>ML welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting, including Claire Fitzgerald from Luminate Education Group (Harrogate College).<br><br>ML reminded the Board that the meeting was being recorded (with the recording being destroyed after minutes are approved), to declare any conflicts of interest on the agenda and asked if there was any change to the register of interests. None were declared.<br><br>ML asked if the Board approved the minutes from the July Board and approval was given. | |

## Actions from previous meeting

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| • St Wilfrid's Stars - LB sent out the email. SB confirmed that Your Harrogate will be covering the awards.<br>• GYS - Full report circulated to the Board. LB has written to RCC to thank them. Master event list – MY read a statement from TW: a whole-council events list is being finalised and can be shared once legal and security checks are complete. TW is now chairing a cross-council events working group and will be forming a wider NYC events strategy, inviting feedback.<br>• Summer – see agenda item.<br>• Creative Streets - see agenda item.<br>• Christmas Thursdays and Saturdays - see agenda item.<br>• Transport Hub - AW has tried to get an update but no response as yet. There also appears to be slippage on the Town Investment Plans. | TW<br><br>AW |

Items for Discussion

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| <u>Apprenticeships – Harrogate College / Luminate</u><br>CF introduced herself as Group Head of Business Development for Luminate Education Group, responsible for apprenticeships, recruitment and onboarding for c.1,000 apprentices a year across Leeds, Harrogate and Keighley. Luminate took on Harrogate College from 1st August. Harrogate offers apprenticeships including hairdressing, hospitality, business admin, health and social care, early years, motor vehicle, carpentry and joinery, and electrical. Government incentives have changed to encourage employers to take on younger people given the rise in NEETs.<br>CF explained that her team can support employers at any stage – recruitment, setting up a Digital Apprenticeship Service account, or building a pipeline from full-time Harrogate College students. Ross is the dedicated business development contact for Harrogate College.<br><br>ML explained that the Principal, Danny Wild, has been looking to introduce a tangible campus presence in Ripon, for apprenticeships, young people and adult learning.<br><br>RJ explained the difficulties for Ripon learners: travel to York or Harrogate is long and costly (c.£1,200 a year for school buses), day-release for functional skills takes a large part out of the working week, and there is a gap in post-16 provision locally. RJ felt functional skills (English and Maths) could be delivered locally across apprentices and adult learners. LB added that learners from surrounding villages face the same problem.<br><br>CF confirmed that Harrogate currently delivers most training on employer sites, though not functional skills. The College gets the keys to a new building in Harrogate on 1st November with fit-out in January and CF offered to host a visit. CF will feed back to Danny Wild on the need for local provision and will send the incentive information and contact details digitally so that LB can circulate them to members.<br><br><u>Heritage Signs</u><br>LB confirmed that three of the six signs have been replaced using local contractors (a joiner from Masham and a Dallowgill fencing contractor), and the BID now has a blueprint for future replacements. Tates and the Racecourse will take ownership of the flower beds outside theirs and improve them, probably in the spring. Ripon in | CF<br>LB |

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| Bloom is considering the North Bridge bed as NYC Parks will not take on any further planting. The response on social media was very positive.<br><br>A contribution from the BID is on the RCC agenda, either to pay for one of the three signs or towards the remaining three. The remaining three do not need replacing at present but could be spruced up (e.g. creosoted).<br><br><u>Summer</u><br>LB reported that footfall for 1st July – 16th August rose by 13.31% versus 2025 and 18.14% versus 2024. Co-marketing with RCC worked well, with events clearly delineated as RCC or BID funded. 160 people used the climbing wall, c.200 faces were painted, and of 200 trail sheets more than 50% were returned, with 28 businesses taking part. Public feedback was excellent, including one response (featured in the newsletter) showing trail participants discovering and spending in new businesses.<br><br>JH confirmed trails with more content than "find a number" are getting a better response. LB said businesses would happily have a trail every week. JH noted that holiday trails are a free family activity which drives spend in shops and cafés.<br><br><u>Christmas Thursdays and Saturdays</u><br>AW suggested adding festive ambience on Thursdays and Saturdays in December, as summer music had increased dwell time and footfall and most big Christmas events finish by 22nd November. LB noted that this is not in the BID budget and that there were complaints last year about music from the Town Hall speakers, which are loud on the south side of the Square. AW said RCC could put a few hundred pounds in; summer acts cost c.£100–£200 for a four-hour slot. RJ suggested sponsorship. SC suggested the last weekend in November (Black Friday / pay weekend) as the key retail weekend. RJ and AW to work on a plan and circulate it.<br><br><u>Creative Streets</u><br>LB confirmed that the agreement between the BID, the artist and the foundry has been signed and the 25% deposit to the foundry is about to be paid. The land ownership form has been sent to NYC Property and LB will chase. A planning officer has advised on requirements; local structural engineers will design the foundations at a reduced cost; and LB is preparing the planning documents including a | AW<br><br>RJ/AW<br><br>LB |

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| biodiversity statement. Consultation on the wider permanent heritage trail, possibly with schools, will follow.<br><br>MG asked about maintenance. LB explained this will be the BID's responsibility – the statue will have a patina finish and will need an occasional specialist clean, which the foundry can do at low cost. RJ asked about insurance; LB explained this needs agreeing with NYC as it will be on their land and she has asked NYC about arrangements for the Blind Jack statue and other public art. LB will re-ask and copy in MY.<br><br>SC raised security against theft. LB explained the statue will be fixed with metal rods into a plate in the foundations and is in direct line of sight of CCTV.<br><br><u>Half Term</u><br>LB confirmed a one-day pumpkin patch, fully BID-funded, on Friday 30th October with pumpkins supplied by the greengrocer in the Arcade. A trail will start the week before, which must be completed to collect a free pumpkin. A Spooky Window Competition will run alongside Window Wonderland so that entries can be listed on the Window Wonderland map. LB has had no response from primary schools and asked Board members with governor links to help. RJ suggested a future Window Wonderland in February half term.<br><br><u>Christmas</u><br>LB confirmed that the Christmas market is booked with Little Bird and the deposit for the huts has been paid. Two generators and cabling have been hired from a Boroughbridge company as the Market Square electricity supply cannot service 20 huts. NYC will provide £4,000 a year for two years to Northallerton, Skipton and Ripon for Christmas activities, which will cover the generators and cabling; TW will then look to standardise support across the BIDs. Entertainment on the Square is booked, including elves and Christmas trees on stilts.<br><br>Late night shopping is on Thursday 26th November (the Thursday after the Christmas market), led by North Street businesses who will confirm by Friday what support they would like (e.g. a prize or card stamper). RJ explained that participation elsewhere is limited as chains do not open late. | LB/MY<br><br>LB |

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| Digital update<br>LM updated the Board as follows: Since the last board meeting the website attracted just over 12,000 active users (up c.51%), with 14,046 page views and 98,000 events, bolstered by summer events. LM thanked JH for keeping event listings up to date. The website is now ranking number one for Ripon, Ripon BID, Ripon events, things to do in Ripon, BID Ripon and events in Ripon.<br><br>Instagram was fairly static with 47.4K views and reach of just under 3,000. LM suggested revisiting the Instagram strategy with more video and reels. Facebook performed very strongly with over 200,000 views on c.£20 spend, particularly community and local business posts – e.g. the Valentino's / Little Ripon Bookshop event (7.8K views) and St Wilfrid's (just under 19,000 views).<br>ML thanked LM and will discuss the content strategy and GEO strategy with her. | ML/LM |
| Financial update<br>SB presented the year to August 2026: income was above budget, running and project costs marginally below budget (largely timing related).<br>SB presented the budget to August 2027. Levy income is forecast slightly higher due to revaluations. Other income is up £11,400 to c.£29,000 (including Christmas adverts, huts, NYC contribution, voluntary members and hanging baskets). Grants of £74,000 relate mainly to the £86,000 High Street grant with c.£7,000 remaining after August 2027.)<br><br>LB explained that NYC Revenues has agreed a cash-flow payment of c.£8,695 to the BID; the BIDs have jointly asked for 25% of levy upfront instead. SB stressed that the key issue is getting levy bills out promptly. LB confirmed a new NYC revenues team with two dedicated BID officers starts on 30th September. | |
| Annual Review<br>The Annual Review will be held on Monday 19th October. RL confirmed the date was fine for the Old Deanery and LB will email her. LB will prepare a presentation recapping the year, SB will present financial headlines and LM will collate a year of website and social media. Board members are strongly encouraged to attend. New board members will be sought. AGM formalities will take place at the November board meeting. | LB/RL<br>SB/LM<br>All |

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| AOB<br>MG asked about vacant units. LB keeps a log of enquiries, which she updates every two to three months, and passes on relevant requirements from a retail introductions network. The old BUD unit has been leased, the former Rosie & Clover / Lash Emporium unit is going to a pharmacy, and the Fat Face agents are not responding. A hair-extension salon is due to open in the old Stuff for Offices around November.<br>LB confirmed that the cinema now has "Coming soon" signage which is positive. | |

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| ML thanked everyone for their attendance and concluded the meeting at 7:10pm. | |

**Future Board meeting dates:** 17th November 2026, 19th January 2027, 16th March 2027, 18th May 2027