Minutes of Board Meeting 22nd July 2024

Held at Ripon BID Office, 8 Westgate

Board Present and constituting a quorum: Richard Compton (Chairman), Stuart Baldwin, Stephen Craggs, Megan Green, Rick Jones, Tracey Ractliffe, Richard Taylor, Andrew Williams

Others Present: Lilla Bathurst (Manager)

Apologies: Mark Lancaster, Layla Martin (Comms Exec), Stuart Martin, Julian Rudd (NYC)

Proceedings

The meeting was called to order by RC (Chairman) at 6:00pm	
RC welcomed everyone to the Board Meeting. RC reminded the Board that the meeting was being recorded (with the recording 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. RC asked if the Board approved the minutes from the May Board and approval was given.	

Actions from previous meeting

Greaves Court: LB has received a response from North Yorkshire Police regarding the gate at Greaves Court and will be issuing a press release shortly. TV advertising: LB explained that Sky Adsmart targeted TV advertising (which is what Northallerton use at Christmas) is c.£3-4,000. LB & LM will look into it further and discuss with ML for next year's budget. Shop frontage improvements: 6 businesses interested and £1,900 of the £15,000 allocated. LB explained that it runs until August 2025. AW suggested we ran a maintenance project to remove the weeds and buddleia from various premises – LB will look into how we can do this. RT pointed out that National Maintenance week is 11-17 November this year so it might be a good idea to link in with that. LB will get quotes in from Ripon in Bloom, Nurture and a local gutter cleaning company. SC suggested this should be an annual service. RT also said they would promote that through the Civic Society. OneBanx: LB said there was no further movement yet on OneBanx but that she would raise banking hubs with David Skaith on Tuesday [LB has done this]. BID Board: LB explained that SC has joined the Exec Committee and RJ and ML had agreed to act as joint Vice Chairmen and RC thanked them.	LB

Items for Information/Discussion/Approval

Vacant Shops Academy LB explained that the first stage was complete which was the mapping of all the empty units. Ripon currently has 25 empty so 11% vacancy rate vs 14% national average. The next stage is writing to all the agents and landlords to get engagement and also requesting details from North Yorkshire Planning, Conservation and Business Rates to get them on board. LB suspects she will need to push the Combined Authority (who have funded the project) to get NYC to engage. LB flagged High Skellgate as a problem area with a number of businesses having left and two more due to leave. The VSA's suggestion is to lobby planning to remove any restrictions for change of use to residential as without a large capital investment involving widening pavements it is not a viable retail street and our efforts would be best placed elsewhere. RC asked how Ripon's rate compared with Knaresborough and Harrogate. LB said she would check [from Harrogate Advertiser: "using the most recent council data on vacant units in Harrogate, the town's rate stands at 7.8% – 42 out of 538 units. Knaresborough, has a vacancy rate of 8.2%"]. LB pointed out that vacancy rate figures did not take into account the size of the unit, so although Ripon's rate is higher than we would want, the majority are smaller units (the Curzon being the exception). LB went on to explain that the next steps are to break down the 25 units into the various categories such as under offer, let, with planning etc. This is the information we expect landlords, agents and NYC to submit. Then The VSA will advise on what we do next which might be ensuring that planning are talking to the landlords and where possible encourage compromise to remove any barriers to letting, or splitting the unit. MG said she felt that some of the issue is lack of information about what is available and LB said this project would enable us to hold all the relevant information and pass that on when ourselves, NYC or the CA received enquiries. Union Street in Aberdeen created a full website with all the details (which is probably not necessary in Ripon). SC asked if the project would identify where the vulnerabilities are i.e. where there are lots of nail salons or barbers – can we identify how long they have left of their leases and then be able to recommend new tenants in advance. LB said she would ask The VSA but didn't envisage this to be a problem where we are already engaged with the landlords or agents. TR asked how long the process would take and LB explained she expected in to run into next year. NYC / NY BIDs meeting	LB

LB and the other NY BID managers met with Julian Rudd (Regen) and Sherrie Williamson (Revs & Bens). JR confirmed there is a regen person for each constituency area, that Dave Caulfield had left the NYC and the new Assistant Director for Regen would be Kathryn Daly. LB said she would ask her to observe at a BID board meeting and re-engage with us [LB has contacted via LinkedIn and invited her to November Board Meeting]. LB explained that the NY BIDs were more confident about the systems being merged. LB had flagged the customer services problems for BID levy payers at NYC and this is being addressed. Enforcement action was discussed and SW explained that NYC are contracting an external company and once they are in place and they will then enforce the liability orders that are in place. LB said that the court date is set for 15 August. Yorkshire In Bloom Judging took place last week – LB has not heard yet how it went but our provision is better than last year with Nurture and with a trial of window boxes on top of the hanging baskets. We will look at other opportunities to fit these on streets that don't have pavement planters. Winners should be announced in September. Whole Town Boost RJ explained that the Michaela Young from NYC and Carolyn Frank from the FSB had approached the BID with a pilot project and an offer for Ripon to bid for £40k of funding for various projects to benefit businesses. The BID gathered a group of BID and non-BID businesses together to identify a "wish-list" to put forward to the panel. Up to £40K has now been approved to be spent on: • Digital mapping (£3.5k) • Google Garage Training (£1.5k) • Further training masterclasses(£3k) • Feasibility study into and provision of E-Cargo bikes (£4.5-6k) • Digital image bank (£1.5k) • Shop Frontage Improvements for non-BID businesses match funded(£15k) • History of Ripon Artwork for empty units (5k) **[NB: LB heard from York BID that we need to check that we do not become liable for business rates with a project such as this as they had had major issues – LB has asked Michaela Young to check on this].** All money has to be spent by March 2025. The funds do not sit with the BID but without our partnership with NYC and FSB, Ripon would probably not have been chosen as a pilot. RC congratulated RJ and LB on this. AW commented that he felt Ripon was getting a much better deal and would continue to do so with the new NYC. SC suggested	LB

using Communities House, The Arts Hub and perhaps the Methodist Chapel to split the Google training over 2 or 3 locations. Digital Update LB updated from LM as follows: Website 9.6K new web users since our last meeting (up 49.5%). Most viewed pages were D-Day Events, Walking Routes, Royal Engineers Freedom of the City and What to Do in Ripon. Retaining No.1 rankings for "Events in Ripon", "Ripon Events", "Visit Ripon" & "Ripon BID". We are finding that Trip Advisor & Visit Harrogate are our biggest competitors for given keywords. Instagram Via Instagram we reached 2,470 users with reach recorded as being up 53.9%. Follower numbers have also increased by 3.2%. The rise in reach may be attributed to Theatre Festival content & regional influencers sharing our summer activities. Facebook Via Facebook we reached 13.9k users with reach and interactions dipping slightly. As discussed with ML, we need to work on a new marketing plan as we move towards reballot including a platform bespoke content plan. Top performing posts focussed on the Ripon Fiesta, the White Rabbit Trail, the weekend round ups and also the Theatre Festival. LB updated from ML as follows: "The headline as far as I am concerned is you have been knocking it out of the park across social media to develop the profile of Ripon and drive people to the website. But we started from a very low base and in my opinion, we have only just reached the position we should rightfully be. It's the next task, taking on and beating our competitors which is where things get real. I have been doing some research as to the type of approach, resources and the sort of budget required. I wanted briefly to discuss this in open debate this evening following the Marketing Report from Layla but if you would be so kind as to ask if the Board would be happy for me to draft a marketing plan which would become part of the consideration for the next Ballot, I will have this ready for the next meeting." The Board approved this. Financial summary SB updated on the financial position.	ML/LM

Date for Annual Review The Board resolved to hold the Annual Review on **21st October at 6pm** – venue TBA but possibly the Arts Hub.	

AOB

AW asked the Board for its formal support on the feasibility study on the bus station, a transport hub and a link between Thirsk rail station and Ripon. The Board resolved that it was fully in favour.	

RC thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 7:10pm.	

Dates for 2024 Board Meetings: 16 September (Liz Faulkner to attend), 11 November