



## Bognor Regis BID Team Update: 1 JUNE 2021

Please note that the update is structured to report progress against the objectives for 2021-22 published on the BID's website:  
<https://www.brbid.org/objectives>

### OBJECTIVE ONE: WELL KNOWN TOWN

- 1 Dynamic engagement with Multi Agency Stakeholder Place Branding Group and drive delivery of Place Branding (Rebranding strategy)**
  - Final design guidelines will be presented to multi stakeholder delivery group at meeting scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021.
  - All BR BID activities under Welcome Back Fund applications designed with values and visuals underpinning.
  
- 2 Proactively drive & co-ordinate BR Town Centre Transformation Team to support existing businesses and attract new businesses & visitors.**
  - **Levelling Up Fund:** Town Centre Transformation recommendations are not in scope for any funding under government's "Levelling Up Fund" being pursued by ADC on behalf of District, as they are capital, not infrastructure.
  - **Levelling Up Fund:** BR BID response to outline proposals sent to representatives of ADC working party prior to election. Once plans are finalised, ADC will approach stakeholders for letters of support.
  - **Levelling Up Fund:** BID continuing to support ADC's application through provision of evidence / data on footfall, occupancy rates, business / community survey.
  - **Town Centre Transformation Strategy:** HA and RB met with SN (BRTC) on 20<sup>th</sup> May and KR 24<sup>th</sup> May to consider next steps in presenting transformation strategy and formal creation of multi stakeholder "Town Centre Task Force" to members. HA to write letter inviting representation of elected member from each agency to participate in high level strategy group. Both agencies meeting end June / early July. Deadline for letters mid June.
  
- 3 Deliver Summer "Space To..." 2 promotion campaign in line with Place branding visuals & values.**
  - Visuals for campaign redesigned following media frenzy in early May as to cessation of all Covid restrictions on 21<sup>st</sup> June. New language and visuals allows for any / all or no legal restrictions in place. Which is good, as current frenzy is about there NOT being a cessation of all Covid restrictions on 21<sup>st</sup> June.
  - All collateral – posters, web ads, radio ads, bus rears, telephone boxes now signed off.
  - Welcome Back Funding request for total cost of campaign submitted to ADC by deadline, will now be submitted to MCHLG for approval under funding criteria. See section "New Emerging Issues" p6 below for full details.

- Risk to BR BID if funding application not approved: £13k, however, the cost of the campaign had been approved under Well Known Town Budget for 2021-22.

#### **4 Collaborate with stakeholders & community event organisations to deliver major event for 2022**

- Proposal developed for weekend event on “EXTREME” theme for summer 2022
- HA has been contacted by BR Carnival re BID / town centre business engagement for Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

#### **5 Deliver BRINDIES - promoting BID Independent businesses through unique identity & platforms**

- Professional photographer appointed at extremely competitive rate to capture images for BRINDIES. Quality of work excellent as evidenced in first business focus.
- CH has interviewed and written copy for first business.
- Thanks to Reynolds for agreeing to be “Guinea Pigs” for CH’s first focus – very much helped structure the approach to take forward with other businesses.
- CH progressing interviews and photography in June with: The Sweet Jar, Davis's Greengrocers, Snooks Gift Boutique, and, subject to confirmation, GFR.
- CH has secured provisional sign-ups for August publication (Dog and Duck, Sarah Jane Regis, EcoSwap, Patina, Little Piggies, The Brunch House) and expressions of interest from businesses who have heard about BRINDIES via word of mouth (Unique Knit & Sew).
- As this is a long term project, all independent businesses will have opportunity to participate and feature; CH managing invitations at present to ensure inclusion of businesses representative of all sectors (eg: retail, services), and locations (eg: Station Road, East End, Queensway, West Street)
- Go live date for all channels: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This is to coincide with Independents Day and when “shop local” message will need a boost following end of Fiverfest.)
- Prior to launch of BRINDIES, CH delivering “Fiver Fest” for Bognor Regis, again showcasing independent businesses and driving home the “Shop Local” message
- CH continuing to promote BR BID businesses via all BR BID social media channels.

#### **6 Deliver Christmas Experience 2021**

- Directors’ sub committee met 06.04.21, agreed theme of sustainability / Christmas Trees & baubles
- Key “Activity” weekend scheduled for Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2021.
- HA has met with WSCC Snr Sustainability Officer and Alex Street (ADC Cleansing)
- WSCC allowing use of their resources from their previous campaigns. BID Team will redesign in line with 2021 Christmas visuals.
- WSCC delivering “Wreath Making” craft activity at The Track 11<sup>th</sup> December (no charge); BR BID covering cost of accommodation at The Track.
- WSCC delivering “Recycle” message in town centre w/e 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December
- HA has informally shared theme with BRTC Events – further discussion will take place once design agreed to co-ordinate approach.

- ADC Parks & Greenspace have confirmed that Place St Maur will NOT be available for ice rink. ADC in active communication with operator re alternative location. HA spoke to Ice Rink Operator who confirmed alternatives being actively sought.
- BR BID will NOT be pursuing hire of WSCC recycled Christmas Tree as £5k cost not viewed as value for money by majority response from Directors.
- Year 2 of lighting contract which significantly enhanced Christmas Experience in 2020 and attracted positive response from businesses and community.
- HA has met with external designer and conveyed message / visuals. Deadline for first draft of Christmas Design is 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- HA has contacted print / installation team for more environmentally friendly alternatives for banners etc, and will be working on basis of reusing banners in 2022 (so no dates on artwork)
- Once design is ready, businesses will be invited to suggest business engagement activities they would like BR BID Team to organise for them to participate in.

## **7 Develop and promote the General Market (subject to ADC Licencing Review).**

- BR BID Market Licence renewed, subject to rescinding if required under ADC Licencing review.
- Market returned under Covid guidelines on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- Agreement with ADC Licencing Covid 19 requirements: No new traders, no more than eight pitches.
- HA updated Market Risk Assessment and was on site to monitor on 17.04.21
- HA contacted Licencing to request review of number pitches 25.05.21 – Update: reviewed 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021, awaiting confirmation to extend number pitches.
- At request of Traders, trialling weekday market on Tuesdays, rather than Thursdays.
- Reminder that ADC Licencing review is ongoing, and may result in BR BID having to withdraw from offering General Market. No date for review outcome at time of writing.

## **OBJECTIVE TWO: WELCOMING TOWN**

### **1 Ongoing provision and development of fully accredited BCRP scheme**

- BRTC contribution of £10,000 towards Community Warden Provision banked.
- Changes to internal staffing structure now enables appointment of 1 x FT position to take on the specific roles of BCRP Co-Ordinator with all associated administrative and meeting tasks, as well as an ambassadorial role with face to face engagements with businesses. This face to face role has not been possible under staffing arrangements to date, and has been flagged as vital in developing engagement.
- Provision of part time role agreed by Directors in Plans & Budget presentation for 2021-22. Reset of roles internally enables full time appointment at only £40 per annum higher cost.
- BID response to Youth ASB in town centre issued to all businesses and forwarded internally by BRTC to elected members. BID explanation for inability to host meeting with Sussex Police, plus message to businesses from Ch Insp Carter issued via all usual BID Channels, with invitation to submit any questions via BID for collation and send on. No responses received from businesses.

## **2 BR BID Specific Town Centre Transformation Projects (visual enhancement)**

### **2a Banner arms at Queensway**

- Nothing to report at this stage – ongoing project with BRTC

### **2b Wall art / signage Retailer 1, Bedford Street**

- HA has re-established contact with retailer 1, who are positive but request info on other businesses that have agreed to participate.
- Due to more immediate urgency of submitting applications to WBF and arrange delivery of the projects proposed, this project is temporarily on hold. Any BR BID proposal will require approval from retailer's branding team. Chicken and egg scenario...need one business to sign up first to prove to others that it's going to look awesome.

### **2c Wall art / signage: Derelict site for Heritage Quarter**

- Unfortunately, budget restrictions plus unknown future of site (therefore value for money of proposed artwork) means this has had to be put on temporary hold.
- Signage directing specifically to Heritage Quarter / Old Town specifically included in signposting project for seafront under WBF applications.

### **2d Wall art / signage: Retailer 2, Bedford Street**

As 2b

### **2e Slatted planter: Bedford Street**

- Agreement from ADC Estates.
- HA revisited original quote from service provider and carried out second site visit 27.05.21. It is hoped work can be scheduled for delivery by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.
- HA in discussion with ADC Cleansing about temp removal (and, ideally replacement) of bins at Bedford Street near planter to enable work to be carried out.
- NB: This project was refused under WBF, as not considered to be "temporary" or providing "additionality" with respect to strict guidelines. Cost will therefore be taken from "visual enhancement" allocation in 2021-22 approved budget.

### **2f Slatted planter: Heritage Quarter**

- Following discussion with ADC Property & Estates, best approach is to focus activity on one area, delivering multiple small interventions that have collective big impact. Heritage Quarter Planter enhancement postponed to gauge response to Bedford Street.

### **2g Plant tree on corner Queensway /**

- GB has liaised with WSCC in order that an appropriate replacement tree will be included in the 2021-22 planting season.

## **3 Enhanced CCTV Coverage in town centre**

- BR BID application for full funding submitted and considered by Safer Arun Partnership on 20.04.21
- SAP requested continuity details for the end of the initial three year contract that the BR BID is not in a position to pursue, due to the number of hypothetical scenarios that would need to be explored with other agencies.
- Following discussion with ADC Community Wellbeing Team, HA resubmitted application on the basis of 50/50 match funding. Awaiting reconsideration at time of writing.
- Impact on budget: Initial forecast presented to BID Directors included allocation for full funding of the enhanced CCTV coverage. This will need to be reviewed and

considered in light of external funding BID has been able to secure for other projects, but is still manageable.

- 4
  - BR BID funding contribution of £750 paid to BRTC to maintain graffiti removal from non ADC and non WSCC premises in BID Area.

### **OBJECTIVE THREE: ACTIVE TOWN CENTRE AT NIGHT**

- 1 **Engage Night-Time Economy businesses to define BID priorities for this specific objective in 2021-22.**
  - Nothing to report at this time
- 2 **Explore funding for replacement switches for BRSFL seafront lights to enable year round provision**
  - HA has spoken with SN from BRTC re potential funding
  - HA to outline request and rationale and submit for consideration through BRTC Grant Aid, or any other route Councillors propose. Grant Aid funding applications open in June.
  - HA has asked if would be considered eligible for funding via Safer Arun Partnership – awaiting response
  - HA connected GB (as BRSFL) directly with Festive Lighting Company to discuss requirements
  - HA will seek second quote once requirements established – cannot apply for funding at this level without comparative quotes.
  - Grant Aid Funding scheme anticipated to be published in June 2021

### **OBJECTIVE FOUR: BETTER PARKING**

- 1 **Continue to work with ADC to increase use of Fitzleet Multi Storey Car Park by town centre businesses and visitors.**
  - HA meeting with ADC Estates 09.04.21 – Refurb project ongoing but delayed.
- 2 **Continue to pursue proposal to repurpose upper levels of Fitzleet Multi Storey Car Park to enhance its appeal for parking on lower levels.**
  - Recommendation included in Town Centre Transformation recommendations – will be long haul on this one
  - HA raised idea for temp / occasional use for specific activities eg: market / exhibition / pop up food & drink type in meeting with ADC Estates 09.04.21 – agreement in principle, subject to all risk assessments and admin etc.
- 3 **Continued management of Two Hour Free Parking Disc scheme.**
  - Sales from limited number of essential retailers ongoing
  - Contact made with established provider for 2022 discs.
  - Discs will require some redesign in line with Placebranding visuals

- Shop Local message to continue on rear of disc to encourage footfall
- Sales turnover for 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2020 - 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 show a 42% decrease in income for parking discs with the same period 2019-2020.

## MEMBER SERVICES

- 1 Increase engagement with businesses – revisit feasibility of Ambassador**
  - See section 1 of Welcoming Town objective re appointment of full time BCRP / Ambassadorial role.
- 2 Continue to provide businesses with info, advice and support on direct cost savings**
  - BID's full plans for 2021-22 published to website 30.03.21
  - No businesses signed up to attend informal presentation of plans with Q&A session prior to reopening in April.
  - HA has been contacted by a new company offering business cost savings – HA to follow up and check position with Eyebright, who we'd started working with just prior to Covid.
- 3 Work with stakeholders to curate and deliver accessible training tools and opportunities**
  - HA to attend early-stage presentation of WSCC initiative online training resources for businesses 02.06.21. Course content includes wide range of practical information for all businesses, including social media, business finance, and will be hosted online, enabling flexible access.
  - ADC are lead on this project, BR BID to provide feedback and promote to businesses once ready.

## COMPANY / ADMINISTRATION / STAFFING / FINANCIAL

- 1 BR BID budget / finances**
  - BID Levy 2021-22: ADC May report £105 167 collected from total liability of £138,99
  - This represents 76% collection rate
  - However, minimum £6k collected since issue of report, which brings total collection to 80%
  - 2021-22 budget based on collection forecast of 83%
  - ADC progressing collection as defined in SLA
  - BR BID Directors have details of non-payees.
  - Decision as to withdrawal of BCRP services to non-payees required.

## 2 BR BID Accreditation

- Evidence of what's required has been collated –some gaps identified
- Confirmed that accreditation via BID Foundation is at no extra charge
- Deadline for accreditation prior to rebalot action begins: ie: Nov 2021

## 3 BR BID Re-ballot

- HA to attend British BIDs Re-ballot course in September 2021 - £100 + VAT

## 4 GDPR

- Still some outstanding returns for 2021-22 GDPR documents

## 5 2020-21 accounts

- HA working with Bluespire on historic cash accounting – final element to resolve before audit commences.

# NEW / EMERGING ISSUES

## 1 Project Proposals to Welcome Back Fund

- **Scope of funding:** It is important to understand that the criteria for project approval under the WBF is very specific, linked to the six strands identified as relevant to Covid Recovery.
- **How the funding is distributed:** Delivery partners must pay for all interventions up front, claiming money back from ADC in quarterly periods in arrears. This represents a financial risk to delivery partners. Similarly, whilst ADC “reimburse” their approved delivery partners, they themselves can only claim money back from MCHLG in quarterly periods in arrears. This represents a financial risk to ADC if the delivery partner’s projects, evidence base or financial record keeping does not meet the eligibility criteria and requirements of the WBF.
- **Delivery Partners for Bognor Regis:** The BID is the only official ADC Delivery Partner for Bognor Regis Town Centre submitting proposals for the WBF. All proposals have been shared with officer partners at BRTC and ADC to avoid duplication of proposals.
- **Timing of information from Government:** The timing of information regarding the fund’s eligibility criteria (which extends beyond the “Guidance” to include FAQ’s, feedback from WBF webinars and Local Authority guidance published at a later date) meant there was a narrow time window to submit projects for implementation in the summer season.
- **Significance of summer period:** The coming summer season is pivotal for Bognor Regis businesses. This is the second year where domestic tourism is likely to be significantly higher due to ongoing overseas travel restrictions. It was therefore crucial that the BID Team develop and submit proposals that would benefit town centre businesses in the peak “holiday” months of July and August, to encourage domestic visitors to enjoy their time here now, and choose to return when competition for overseas holidays resumes. The timing of the application process and various stages involved means that funding can’t realistically be

confirmed by MCHLG until mid June at the earliest. This therefore means the BID would be responsible for full costs of any projects should they subsequently fall short of the eligibility criteria.

- **Timing: Event / campaign planning:** The time scales for confirmation of funding are incompatible with the logistical planning for campaigns or project delivery, particularly at a time when there is peak demand. In response to the possibility of accessing the funding, Local Authorities and their delivery partners across the country are all looking to hire in temporary installations and event planners for the same time.

The delivery of ANY campaign or event or installation completely belies the amount of planning and organisation underpinning delivery. For example, the BID Team has been working on the summer “responsible tourism” campaign since March for delivery in late June / July and August. Similarly, plans for Christmas 2020 began in April 2020 – and had to be revised in line with Covid restrictions.

- **Timing: BID Levy collection:** The timing was also problematic in terms of timing of BID Levy collection for the 2021-22 financial year, with bills scheduled for payment on 15<sup>th</sup> April. Until the Team knew how much had been collected, we did not know how much - if any - budget would be available to cover the risk of these additional projects, should they fail the WBF eligibility criteria. The budget presented to Directors for the 2021-22 financial year was on the basis of an 83% collection rate, ie: £115,000 in BID Levy. As at 1<sup>st</sup> June, 80% of liable BID Levy has been collected. Any shortcomings in the BID’s applications to the WBF therefore puts the BID at financial risk.
- **Financial scrutiny :** As the WBF is subject to European Union regulations on tendering, this meant that all enhancement projects with any costs in excess of £2.5k required three comparative quotes. This is exceptionally time consuming, and again, made more difficult by the increased demand for similar provision across the country.
- **Permissions / Authority:** there was no point in submitting proposals for consideration under the funding if they wouldn’t be allowed to go ahead. This essentially meant that all projects had to be fully scoped out prior to submission. This included liaison and agreement for all six projects with multiple stakeholder partners (BRTC, ADC Property & Estates, Events, Cleansing, Environmental Health)
- **Availability of External Service Providers:** The BID Team has a staff of 1.8 FT people, and it is unrealistic to deliver every single element of every single project, meaning that we have had to source outside experts to help with some of the projects. With demand high across the country, and the timescale for delivery so tight, we had to commit to some elements prior to confirmation of funding to ensure delivery in July. This puts BID finances at risk.
- **BR BID Project Proposals to WBF:** HA initially submitted nine projects against Welcome Back Fund criteria, including the responsible tourism campaign, enhancement project through creation of temporary parks / greenspace, signposting for town centre and seafront, introduction of “catenary sculptures” to connect through from seafront to town centre and highlight the various “zones” (particularly East End and Old Town.), visual enhancement projects including Bedford Street. This includes three strategic projects focused on the BID Team

delivering additional, specific data and research services and taking on additional responsibilities to co-ordinate and drive transformation in the town centre, post-Covid.

- Of these initial nine proposals, two were considered “outside of scope”, one was considered as “not meeting additionality requirements”, and all were considered too costly.
- The plans were therefore revised in response to the feedback, completely re-costed, and resubmitted to ADC in time for the deadline to reach MCHLG.
- For the reasons of funding and timeline uncertainty explained above, specific information as to each project has NOT yet been shared publicly. As evidenced in the BID’s recent survey responses from 350 businesses and community members, the people of Bognor Regis are tired of hearing promises that are not then delivered.
- The three enhancement projects that the BID has committed to delivering through BID funds (if the funding applications are not approved) are still subject to final sign off and agreement to plans that can only be produced following two site visits scheduled for Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.
- Full details of what **IS** going to happen (rather than what we wanted to happen, or what COULD have happened if the WBF had been a magic pot of free money) will be publicised only when the plans are finalised, approved, and guaranteed to go ahead. And then I shall no doubt enjoy having people send me screenshots of social media comments saying how rubbish it is and how the BID doesn’t do anything.

## 2 Occupancy Rates

- BR BID ground floor unit occupancy audit carried out on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 shows vacancy rates as follows:
- Town Centre Area (London Road, High Street, Queensway, Station Road, Norfolk Street, Lennox Street, The Arcade) **8%**
- Full BID Area: **12%**

Bognor Regis is, therefore, faring much better than the national picture for vacancy. According to [British Retail Consortium](#) “In the first quarter of 2021, the overall GB vacancy rate increased to **14.1%**, from 13.7% in Q4 2020. “

- There is further positive news in terms of new tenants for currently vacant units, with at least four businesses known to be moving into properties in the Town Centre area by July.