



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Attendees: Amy Brewin (AB), Daniel South (DS) Dawn Penny (DP), Jim Bradley (JBr), Lindsay Winstone (LW), Mark Adams (MA), Nigel Webb (NW), Rebecca Thomas (RT), Tom Addiscott (TA) Tony Missen (TM)

Apologies: Adam Hopkins (AH), Darren Notley (DN), Dawn Thomas (DT), Helen Davies (HD) Johnathan Bowen (JB)

Item	Detail	Who
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>1.1 JBr opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, noting DS as an observer as a result of expressions of interest in becoming a board members and potential 'theme' projects support.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>2.1. Apologies given as above.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</p> <p>3.1 The minutes were agreed by all.</p>	
4.	<p>Pen y Cymoedd (PyC) funding update:</p> <p>4.1. PyC successful Vision Fund award: DP noted the successful award £25k.</p> <p>4.2. PyC Vision Fund conditions: DP added that as part of the conditions for funds to be released, we must have approval from RCTCBC for the installation of planters and welcome signs. Additional conditions include; 1) the PyC logo is used for all look & feel projects where possible, 2) money to be claimed in 3 stages: Signage - £3k, Empty units - £6k, Planters - £16k (however we can discuss moving these claims round in line with how project plan timeframe).</p> <p>4.3. Look & Feel funding / RCTCBC approval: JB added that he has written to DN asking for him to approve the planters and signs projects and that at a meeting with Simon Gale and DN on 7 May 2021, confirmed the decision is with RCTCBC Corp Estates. AB added that a plan being marked up and approved for planters is less complicated than the approval of welcome signs.</p>	
5.	<p>Levy income:</p> <p>5.1 Levy Collection: DP noted the current levy collection rate is 70% / £55,005.75 and the RCTCBC levy collection process continues.</p> <p>5.2 2021-22 levy bills issuance: JBr noted that RCTCBC have advised that it is a legal requirement for the 2021-22 levy bills to be processed in line with the council's rates billing cycle. JBr added we are not in a position to raise another bill whilst we have not yet carried out any 'visible' projects. Once we have RCTCBC's approval for planters and signs, we will be happy to send 2021-22 levy bills. AB noted she felt the rates department are not going to wait to send 2021-22 bills out whilst waiting for Corporate Estates to provide approval. JBr asked the board if they feel happy to send out 2021-22 levy bills to which all agreed they do not feel these bills should be sent when there are no projects to show. DP explained that we can provide an accompanying letter for the 2021-22 levy bills, however as liabilities of properties change on a daily basis, we do not have the ability to include an accompanying letter. AB added that this is because accompanying letters are manually printed and enclosed with the automatically generated levy bills.</p> <p>5.3 Look & Feel projects approval / issuance of 2021-22 levy bills: JBr rounded up stating that the BID is asking RCTCBC for agreement and approval for planters and signs before 2021-22 levy bills are sent out with the accompanying letter noting that bills do not need to be paid until 31 Dec 2021. JBr asked the board if they are in agreement to which all were in favour.</p>	



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Item	Detail	Who
6.	<p>Wales Cooperative Centre (WCC) & Our Aberdare BID partnership proposal:</p> <p>6.1 WCC Community Renewal Fund (CRF) partnership application: TA joined the meeting at 11:25 and JBr gave an overview of the time critical application for the fund and that a quick decision was needed to meet the deadline of Mon 31 May 2021.</p> <p>6.2 WCC overview: TA gave an overview of his role in WCC and that the CRF was announced 6 weeks ago and that his work as Social Business Advisor recognised a need for shared working spaces and that Aberdare is a focus for RCTCBC's investment priority and Valleys Taskforce objectives.</p> <p>6.3 WCC Our Aberdare BID partnership: TA explained that he wants to bring in funds from Westminster to the local economy and recognises that this money can facilitate a pilot project in line with the BID's 'Aberdare hub'. TA went on to note potential locations being the old Poundstretcher building, HSBC and Compton House, adding Compton House has better footfall and that the infrastructure is set up well to accommodate the Our Aberdare BIDs hub's needs. TA added that as this is a partnership, consultation and agreement from the Our Aberdare BID board is needed. JBr added that we need to have a hub to provide tourist information, an office for the BID manager, lecture room, offices with ante rooms and hot desk space with a view to also allow for long term rental office space also. JBr noted that the project must be self-financing.</p> <p>6.4 WCC Our Aberdare BID 'hub' projected costs: TA noted that the current projected cost is £280,000, including a job post and that £19,000 of this includes costs for local companies to provide refurbishment services. TA added that 90% of the fund has to be revenue and only 10% used for capital needs. JBr added that it is imperative that anyone would want to recommend the use of the office space/rooms.</p> <p>6.5 WCC Our Aberdare BID long term support: TA added that the space would be a multi-agency purpose building and to promote pre-start up to support embryonic business growth and that although this would be a 9-month project, WCC would want to support and work with Our Aberdare BID in the long term. TA added that this 'pilot' could provide the opportunity for the BID to own the hub going forward and that the hub also has the opportunity to increase footfall.</p> <p>6.6 WCC Our Aberdare cashflow: TA added that the fund works to a 6-month payment term in arrears and that WCC will outlay most of the cash flow so that there is minimal risk to Our Aberdare BID. TA rounded up by explaining WCC has strong governance and financial experience to make the application.</p> <p>6.7 Our Aberdare BID board WCC partnership comments: TA asked the board for comments. TM noted that he feels Compton House is a perfect location for the Our Aberdare BID hub. LW agreed, adding that it is good that it is right by a car park and has good footfall. JBr added Victoria Square has been out of the limelight for some time and so Compton House could work well. TM added that it is also close to Beth Winter, MP's office.</p> <p>6.8 Our Aberdare BID hub additional services: TA asked the board what other services/facilities they feel can be offered by the hub? MA noted that he could potentially provide B2B training services.</p>	



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Item	Detail	Who
6.	<p>Wales Cooperative Centre (WCC) & Our Aberdare BID partnership proposal (cont.):</p> <p>6.5 CRF outcomes requirements: TA tabled a ‘theory of change’ that explains the outcomes the CRF requires and this led onto a discussion regarding the measuring footfall outcome and that the quarterly existing data provided by RCTCBC would not allow us to effectively measure this outcome. DP suggested the BID could include a BID specific footfall capturing device as part of the additional services offered with the ‘hub’. An additional discussion took place regarding the attractiveness of Aberdare needing to be promoted outside of Aberdare to entice visitors into the area rather than locals going out to Cardiff/Swansea.</p> <p>6.6 CRF application support: TA noted local elected representation support from Beth Winter’s Cynon Valley Community Vision advisory group and that both Beth Winter, MP and Vikki Howells, MS have been asked if they will write letters of support for inclusion in the application. JBr asked for the board to vote in principle of the application. TA added that the role included in the application is ‘Hub Coordinator’ to assist the BID and Manager to run the ‘hub’ and that the ‘Our Aberdare BID’ name will be above the building, noting that we will be in partnership with WCC. JBr noted the potential of owning a building brings about potential issues as we are a 5 year project and that perhaps the council can purchase a building that we can lease. TA noted the Community Benefits Society may be able to help here and that they helped with Cwmbach’s Wetlands where a community centre is being established.</p> <p>6.7 WCC Our Aberdare BID partnership CRF application conclusion: There were no objections from the board and therefore agreement is given to TA of WCC to submit the CRF application.</p>	
7.	<p>Projects progress:</p> <p>7.1 Look & Feel PyC funded projects: JBr noted a comment made by one of the CVCV advisory group members in that there was a negative response on social media to PyC’s funding grant of £25k. DP explained that the comment was amongst other supportive comments and that the message from PyC had been misunderstood by some who did not know that the grant was to be added to the BID’s levies. TM asked what percentage of levy members have paid their levy bills to which DP confirmed is 70%.</p> <p>7.2 Info & Comms ‘hub’: A discussion took place regarding hydroponics, RCTCB’s sustainable food places scheme, and Bridgend Council’s current push on growing micro greens. DP questioned if hydroponics could be added as a provision within the ‘hub’.</p> <p>7.3 Look & Feel: DP explained that she and JBr carried out a walk-round to plot planter locations on a map and identified empty premises sites and that as yet, there were no waste ground sites identified.</p> <p>7.4 Look & Feel – empty units: DP noted a kind volunteer has offered to ring property owners/agents asking for permission to access their property and install window coverings. DP continued to explain that she has made a start and has obtained one permission in principle so far. DP added that local artist Linda Agostini continues to be provide great ideas for window coverings. Further work continues to ensure the most effective solution is provided. LW asked if we can get owners of buildings that are in bad repair to get them to make repairs. JBr asked if we can obtain contact details of property owners to which AB confirmed the rates department can provide these details. A discussion took place regarding the attractiveness of small independent shops and businesses, in the same way that Abergavenny offers.</p>	



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Item	Detail	Who
7.	<p>Projects progress cont.:</p> <p>7.5 Look & Feel – planters: DP noted that she has liaised with both Joy's Flowers and Gwillim to obtain quotes for the installation of planters, however they both feel the job is too large for them to be able to carry out and so we will revert to the original quote from Old School Nursery. DP added that she also asked both florists for a quote for maintenance, however it was felt that this job also could not be taken on by them.</p> <p>7.6 Marketing & Events – training workshops: DP explained that Aberdare-based Sgor Digital provided a draft easy to follow bite-size video explainer structure that can be accompanied by fact sheets, such as how do I set up Google My Business, Facebook, email, etc. DP will continue to liaise with Sgor and obtain additional quotes.</p> <p>7.7 Marketing & Events – loyalty scheme: DP noted that the BID's first theme group meeting took place (MA, DP, Andrew Chainey & Helen Davies) to discuss ideas and work on this continues.</p> <p>7.8 Marketing Strategy: DP explained that Marketing specialist Helen Davies has been giving regular advice and has been a huge support in ensuring we promote our levy members, the BID and Aberdare town and that Helen is devising the BID's marketing strategy and overall plan to promote projects, footfall, tourism etc in line with our budget and project plan. DP added she has received 2 quotes from local companies to provide a marketing strategy and has offered the work to Helen following our procurement guidelines.</p> <p>7.9 Marketing – free advertising through Trivallis: DP explained that Trivallis have kindly offered advertising space in their magazine that goes out to 10k residents. Helen Davies has taken a lead on this to provide content that promotes our levy members, what town has to offer and surrounding attractions/points of interest/routes to and from town.</p> <p>7.10 Information & Communication: DP noted that she uploaded a funding information PDF to the website that is regularly updated and shared via newsletter and social media.</p>	
8.	<p>RCTCBC car parking changes:</p> <p>8.1 Car parking and footfall: JBr explained that we compete with Tesco and Asda who provide free car parking which affects footfall in the town. LW agreed, adding that people park in Tesco for convenience. DP noted that in RCTCBC's response to our objection letter, they state they know the busiest time is in the morning yet they want to change people's shopping habits and get them to shop after 15:00 when there will be free parking weekdays. JBr noted that RCTCBC receive £300-400k pa from parking fees. DP added that RCTCBC did not provide a reason as to why their announcement of parking changes was made ahead of the objection deadline.</p> <p>8.2 Car parking provision for business owners: JBr questioned why Alistair Critchlow, teachers, etc don't have to pay to park their car for work, yet those who run a business, pay tax and VAT hav to pay to park their car for work. JBr added that if Gadlys Pit council permit car park was free for business owners and their staff that it would be full. DP added that DN noted he only ever sees 6 or 7 cars parked there. It was agreed that car parking charges are damaging the businesses in town.</p> <p>8.3 Car parking objection letter and response: JBr suggested the BID's objection letter and RCTCBC's response is sent to levy members so they are aware of the current situation and are aware that the BID is acting as the 'stronger voice' to improve parking facilities. All agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: DP to send letters to levy members via Mailchimp and publish on the BID's social media platforms.</p>	DP



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP
Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Item	Detail	Who
8.	<p>RCTCBC car parking changes cont.:</p> <p>8.4 Car parking scheme advertising: DP noted that she has been contacted twice by Reach Plc (Mirror Group: Walesonline, etc) to see if the BID would like to replicate Merthyr BID's scheme where the council offer free parking and the BID pays for the advertising of the scheme.</p>	
9.	<p>RCTCBC update – project management:</p> <p>9.1. Maintenance of covered walkways: AB noted that the Street Cleansing will be re-painting the walkways to Market Street and Canon Street to the car park. TM asked if the broken window above the walkway to Market Street can be repaired to which AB will investigate. JBr asked if DP can attend future walk-rounds with AB to which AB noted she will check with DN, however should not be a problem at all. ACTION: AB to invite DP to a town walk round.</p> <p>9.2. Presentation and maintenance of 'shop fronts': TM asked if RCTCBC has the authority to ensure property owners keep their properties in good repair. AB noted that RCTCBC do not have authority to enforce this, however that this is something that may be an authority enforcement focus. ACTION: AB to provide DP with an update regarding any forthcoming enforcement authority focus by RCTCBC to ensure property owners keep their properties in good repair.</p>	<p align="center">AB</p> <p align="center">AB</p>
10.	<p>BID support & relationship building – update:</p> <p>10.1 General support: DP noted she continues to receive general BID support from business owners, levy members and community members. DP added that she carried out further town walks to distribute floor stickers and it was a great opportunity to communicate projects progress face to face.</p> <p>10.2 Wall at end of Commercial Street: A discussion regarding the starkness of the large wall at the end of Commercial Street took place. DP added that this had also been discussed on social media as well as a discussion regarding the improvement of the underpass near the swimming pool. – decoration ACTION: DP to note Wall at end of Commercial Street as potential Look & Feel project</p> <p>10.3 Cynon Valley Community Vision (CVCV) advisory group: DP noted that she continues to attend CVCV meetings and a 'splinter group' that is suggesting an RCTCBC work placement scheme for staff to work at small business to improve relationships and make processes more effective.</p> <p>10.4 Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) – kickstart scheme: DP confirmed that kickstart guidelines changed and that Limited companies that have been running for 1-year or more are now eligible. DP stated that 2 kickstart roles to help with Marketing and Grant Funding will be of a great help. DP added that the placements would work from home and that £1,500 set up costs are paid for each placement (laptop, training needs etc). DP explained that she will contact RCTCBC's Staying Well at Work team for advice on job descriptions. ACTION: DP to start kickstart scheme application process for the hire of 1 x marketing support and 1 x grant funding support.</p>	<p align="center">DP</p> <p align="center">DP</p>



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Item	Detail	Who
10.	<p>BID support & relationship building – update, cont.:</p> <p>10.5 Further meetings: DP noted that she has met with/had discussions with; Age Connects Morgannwg’s Head of Enterprise, Adele Harries-Nicholas who has expressed an interest in better signage for Cynon Linc, South Wales Fire & Rescue’s Aberdare Station Manager, Tony Redman who is keen to be involved in any BID events, and subsequent email from station’s ‘alerter’ who wishes to be involved and support where possible. DP added, meetings to be scheduled include: St Elvan’s, Accessible Wales, RCTCBC’s Employment & training team, South Wales Police and St John’s Medical practice.</p> <p>10.6 BID complaints: DP noted no further complaints received, however felt she must note from the walk rounds she carried out that there seems to be a divide between the bottom end (Market Street & Cardiff Street) and top end of town, with a feeling that the bottom of town always get left out. DP reiterated to levy members that whatever has gone on before is not related to the BID and that all projects are for the benefit of all levy members no matter their location within the BID levy zone.</p>	
11.	<p>Finance update:</p> <p>11.1. Year End accounts: DP noted that our Accountant has produced first draft accounts, and work continues for them to be finalised.</p> <p>11.2. VAT: JBr noted that HMRC previously asked us to pay a VAT bill of £1,950 however we have communicated that we have not been in a position to pay and that we will be paying an annual payment of approximately £11k. This is owing to the levy bill reclamation from RCTBC that must include VAT in the invoice we provide them.</p> <p>11.3. Screwfix Foundation fund: DP noted that she is due to receive a decision by the end of June as to whether we have been successful in our application of £2-5k in line with the ‘empty units’ project.</p> <p>11.4. Coalfields Regeneration Community fund: DP noted that had been awaiting the company’s governance document required to include in an Expression of Interest ahead of applying for this fund. This fund can support marketing and promotion costs. In addition, the Business Development Manager (Natalie Sargent) DP spoke to suggested we meet with their Head of Operations on a strategic level.</p> <p>ACTION: DP to follow up with Natalie Sargent, Coalfields Regeneration Business Development Manager regarding fund application and strategic meeting.</p>	DP
12.	<p>Digital marketing update:</p> <p>12.1. Social media awareness and engagement: DP noted the BID’s Facebook/Instagram awareness and engagement continues to increase. DP added she is finding it increasingly more difficult to find time to regularly share levy members’ content using #ouraberdarebid, however that a kind volunteer has agreed to help with this which will help in the interim before the kickstart placement is in place.</p> <p>12.2. Levy member’s social media help: DP noted thanks to Nathan Williams from Get Connected who kindly took the time to invite 2,500 FB friends to like the Our Aberdare BID Facebook page that resulted in an increase of over 100 likes in less than a week. DP asked the board if they have time, please can they invite friends and family to like Our Aberdare BID on either Facebook or Instagram.</p> <p>ACTION: All to invite friends and family to like Our Aberdare BID on either Facebook or Instagram when time allows.</p>	ALL



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

Item	Detail	Who
12.	<p>Digital marketing update, cont.:</p> <p>12.3. Mailchimp email newsletters: DP was pleased to report that sign up to the newsletter has increased in 6 months with numbers now almost double what they were. DP added that unfortunately it is not apparent as to which email addresses are for levy members and/or what business is theirs and so work continues collate this info so that content can be adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>12.4. Google form - survey: DP stated that the Google form survey continues to be completed by levy members to find out more about them and their business and to ascertain what digital training they need to help promote their business.</p> <p>12.5. Social media stats: DP noted that she has not had time to collate the social media stats. JBr informed the board that DP is working many more hours than contracted and thanked her for the extra time and effort she is giving.</p>	ALL
13.	<p>AOB:</p> <p>13.1. Health & Safety: JBr noted that H&S is to be added to the board agenda going forward and asked that board members note any H&S issues they have within town or businesses so that they can be escalated as appropriate.</p> <p>13.2. Climate Change: JBr noted that Climate change is also to be added to the board agenda going forward as this is a massive subject and that we are in crisis situation.</p> <p>13.3. Tourism & Transport: A discussion took place regarding cycling parking facilities, etc. DP noted the current RCTCB draft tourism strategy consultation and that she will be completing the survey on behalf of the BID. TM added that businesses in town have received a thick booklet regarding the METRO and that it states that Mountain Ash platforms are to be extended to allow for longer trains but not Aberdare. TM also state that there is no mention of the use of Hirwaun station. MA added that the old 'chicken factory' is going to be the location for a new station to connect to Hirwaun station. A discussion regarding a potential park and ride car park in Hirwaun took place where TM explained that residents from Banwen, Seven Sisters, etc would drive to, to catch the train from Aberdare to Cardiff as it is quicker than catching the train from Neath. This led to a discussion regarding the tunnel from Cwmbach to Merthyr and whether plans to open it up are still on track. It was generally understood that the project is still on track and MA confirmed that it has been surveyed and been found structurally sound.</p> <p>13.4. Loyalty Scheme: MA noted Penarth's Fiver fest which involves local independents to offer product/services for a fiver. JBr noted Llanelli BID's loyalty badge and a voucher scheme where there is a cost to the BID. MA added that Albert Keen's scheme previously tabled has been adapted so that there would be no cost to the BID and that levy members would be giving away a product/service rather than money towards the scheme. Work continues for the Loyalty Scheme project.</p> <p>13.5. Welsh Places: MA tabled the 'Welsh Places' charter and that their aim is to work with town centres post Covid. AB confirmed that DN is involved in this project as part of the Transforming Towns scheme.</p> <p>13.6. Date of the next board meeting: It was agreed that the next board meeting takes place Weds 30 June 2021 at 11:00 above Peppers</p>	



OUR ABERDARE BID BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Peppers, 27 Canon Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AP

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – 11:00 – 12:00

MEETING ACTIONS:

Item	Detail	Who
7.4	ONGOING: DP to obtain feedback from levy members during day to day communication regarding low take up of the RCTCBC Town Centre Maintenance Grant and update AB/DN at project update meetings. TM in process of applying and will keep us posted on process.	DP
9.2	c/fwd: DP to confirm if Beth Winter, MP questions for Parliament, WG and RCTCBC can be shared with the Our Aberdare BID board.	DP
8.3	DP to send letters to levy members via Mailchimp and publish on the BID's social media platforms.	DP
9.1	AB to invite DP to a town walk round.	AB
9.2	AB to provide DP with an update regarding any forthcoming enforcement authority focus by RCTCBC to ensure property owners keep their properties in good repair.	AB
10.2	DP to note Wall at end of Commercial Street as potential Look & Feel project	DP
10.4	DP to start kickstart scheme application process for the hire of 1 x marketing support and 1 x grant funding support.	DP
11.4	DP to follow up with Natalie Sargent, Coalfields Regeneration Business Development Manager regarding fund application and strategic meeting.	DP
12.2	All to invite friends and family to like Our Aberdare BID on either Facebook or Instagram when time allows.	ALL