



Sutton Coldfield BID Board Meeting
Tuesday 9th August 2022, 4.30pm

Gracechurch Shopping Centre Management Office

MINUTES

1. Attendees

(alphabetical order)

- Alison Clack, Cerda Planning
- Angela Henderson, BID Chair, Gracechurch Shopping Centre
- Cllr David Barrie, City Councillor
- Cllr Jackie Cummins, Town Councillor
- Cllr Mark Roberts, Town Councillor
- Cllr Rob Pocock, City Councillor
- David Hemming, Burley Browne
- Mark Harris, Mark Harris Accountants
- Mark Wilkinson, Coburg Banks
- Michelle Baker, BID Manager
- Stephen Nixon, Enoch Evans LLP
- Stephen Roberts, Robson Lister

2. Apologies

None.

3. Chair's Announcements

Angela Henderson thanked all BID Board Members for attending and introduced guest speaker Jan Rowley, Regeneration Director for Sutton Town Council who had asked whether she could attend the BID Board meeting to update the BID Board on the Town Centre Masterplan and town regeneration. Jan Rowley provided a detailed update and members of the BID Board asked various questions regarding planning permission and regeneration.

4. Update from BID Manager

- I. Declarations of interest – this is a new item for Board members to declare any conflict of interest at the start of each meeting which then excludes that member from discussion and vote on specific item. This ensures transparency. The BID Board agreed by unanimous vote for this to be implemented.
- II. Approve July BID Board minutes (included within agenda pack). BID Board approved by unanimous vote.
- III. BID Board Terms of Reference (included within the agenda pack). The BID Board discussed and voted unanimously to approve, subject to a few amends.
- IV. BID Newsletter – the Summer Issue was circulated to the BID Board for review.
- V. Sponsorship of Christmas Lights 2022

There had been a verbal request from Sutton Town Council for the BID to contribute £25,000 for this year for the town's Christmas lights. This had been discussed in a meeting with Michelle Baker BID Manager and Jan Rowley, Regeneration Director at Sutton Town Council.

The BID Board were asked in the BID Board meeting to discuss and vote on whether the BID would contribute £25,000.00 towards the cost of the Christmas lights for Christmas 2022 and subsequent years of the BID. The Board were informed that the BID has contributed towards the funding of the Christmas lights in previous years with the exception of one year during the Covid pandemic when Sutton Town Council funded.

Olive O'Sullivan, CEO Sutton Town Council had also been in contact directly with Angela Henderson regarding the Christmas lights contribution but Angela Henderson had always said this must go to the BID Board for decision.

The BID had not received a formal written request or costed proposal and breakdown from Sutton Town Council. The BID Board agreed that the request should have been formally submitted on headed paper sent from Sutton Town Council and should have been a fully costed and transparent proposal for the BID Board to consider. In the same way that another organisation would request financial support / sponsorship.

Members of the BID Board discussed the matter at length and said that businesses within Sutton Coldfield that did not have a BID were not being asked to fund their Christmas lights i.e. Mere Green, Boldmere, Four Oaks and they felt that the Council should fund the Christmas lights in all or none of the areas in Sutton Coldfield as the

BID must legally ensure it is not duplicating the work of a Council. The BID Board did not want businesses (some of which are also residents within Sutton Coldfield) to be taxed twice for the same services as this is unjust. The BID Board agreed that the town was being penalised for having a Business Improvement District (BID) and areas that did not have were not being asked to fund their Christmas lights.

Members of the BID Board agreed that they had not been informed by the Interim BID Manager Keith Ward that a new lighting scheme had been purchased on behalf of the BID and that this matter has not been discussed by the BID Board previously. Sutton Town Council had placed the order directly with Birmingham City Council for a new lighting scheme for the whole of Sutton Coldfield and assumed that the BID would continue with the funding arrangement as they had in previous years. The BID Board agreed that Sutton Town Council were therefore the Client and Birmingham City Council were the supplier. The BID Board had not been consulted on which roads / streets should be included within the new lighting scheme and did not know whether the entire BID boundary was included within the new scheme. This presented an issue as BID Members are also in Duke Street, Midlands Drive, Brassington Avenue and Newhall Retail Park and it was not known whether the lighting scheme included these areas of the BID boundary.

The BID Board agreed that this was now a new 5-year BID term (2022-2027) and any previous arrangements could not be expected to continue without prior agreement and budget allocation. The BID Board felt that assumptions had been made about the BID funding the Christmas lights.

The BID Board were disappointed that interim BID Manager Keith Ward (according to Town Council CEO Olive O'Sullivan) had confirmed that the BID would continue funding the Christmas lights and that the Town Council had placed the order for the new lights on this basis. The BID Board said a decision such as that would require Board approval and was not within the remit of a BID Manager to commit the Board financially or contractually without prior Board discussion and approval.

Angela Henderson said that in previous years Gracechurch Shopping Centre had funded the main Christmas lights switch on event with Free Radio station for the town centre with the BID contributing a small amount towards the total costs and that this funding was no longer available from Gracechurch as budgets had been cut. The BID Board discussed and agreed that the BID should step in to fund this event and that the BID's Christmas budget would be directed towards continuing with the lights switch on event and Christmas entertainment. The BID Board agreed that a BID must legally provide additionality on top of services provided by a Council.

Michelle Baker said that the request for funding towards the cost of the Christmas lights had been mentioned verbally at the Chamber Business Fair. It was again verbally discussed by Council Officers Jan Rowley and Natalia Gorman in a meeting about Meanwhile Use of vacant shops and Michelle Baker had asked what would happen if worst case scenario the BID Board voted against funding and asked if the town would go without lights. Council Officers said the Council would not allow this to happen and would step in to fund the Christmas lights.

The BID Board agreed that the BID (funded by local businesses) could not be expected to fund the Christmas lights, the Lights Switch On Event and Christmas entertainment. The BID Board voted unanimously not to fund the town's Christmas lights and voted to instead explore the costings for a light switch on event.

- VI. Sponsorship of local Sepsis Charity. Tuesday 13th September is World Sepsis Day and the Charity will be at Gracechurch Shopping Centre with 10 static bikes. The BID had been approached to ask whether we would enter a group of 10 riders to cycle alongside each other for 1 hour i.e. all of us cycling from 9am -10am and as a BID donate £1,000 to their Charity which is the cost for a team to participate. The BID Board discussed and agreed that whilst this was a worthwhile cause and a fantastic local charity, the BID would be setting a precedent by agreeing to donate £1,000 to the charity. The BID will need a policy on donations and sponsorship requests moving forward.
- VII. Update on New BID Farmers Market.
- VIII. BID to adopt areas of land to plant /maintain. David Hemming provided an update and said that areas would include the gateway to Sutton Coldfield such as the train station. David Hemming said he would find out from the Council which areas could be adopted by the BID and that local businesses could also take ownership and maintain as part of their CSR policy.
- IX. Food and Drink Guide – the BID Board reviewed the guide.
- X. Summer holiday BID events – update on events booked.
- XI. BID NotWorking Event – Mark Wilkinson provided an update and said he is happy to lead on the planning and booking of guest speakers.
- XII. Elephant trail – update. The BID Board felt that there needed to be statues throughout Sutton Coldfield to be a successful trail and that if the BID did sponsor one elephant statue it would not be sufficient to attract visitors as a standalone item and needed to be part of a much larger trail. Michelle Baker

said St Giles Hospice (project and statue organisers) had said that the Town Council and the College were going to sponsor an elephant statue. Cllr Mark Roberts said he was not sure the Council's sponsorship was certain.

- XIII. Business Expo 2022. The BID funds £10-15K for the stage, staff, entertainment, gazebos and marketing for this event and it benefits mainly non BID members such as community groups and charities. The BID Board agreed that for the new 5-year BID term the BID needs to provide services and benefits for its paying members and voted by unanimous vote that the Business Expo would not go ahead this year and agreed that we would explore a new BID Members event to showcase its Members.