

**Minehead BID Company Limited Extraordinary Board Meeting**

Minutes of meeting held on: Date and Time: Friday 22 November 2019 at 5.45pm

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Graham Sizer	GS	(Chairman)
Andrew Hopkins	AJH	(BID Manager)
Chris Corbett (D)	CC	
Jon Lee (D)	JL	
Alison Prior (D)	AP	
Debbie Sawatzki (D)	DS	
Cllr Terry Venner (D)	TV	(part of)
Jim Whittaker (D)	JW	

Sarah Wilsher (Minutes)

**Apologies**

Ryan Boulton (D) RB

This meeting was called to discuss the 3-day Christmas event being organised by Gateway Events for 29 and 30 November and 1 December 2019, which includes a currently unapproved road closure of The Avenue and The Parade on the three days. The BID had already committed £4,000 towards entertainment over the three days.

As part of the road closure determination by Somerset County Council consideration is given to the event management plans and traffic management plans by a Safety Advisory Group (SAG). This Group is made up of representatives from the Local Authorities, emergency services, other relevant bodies and the event organiser. They provide a forum for discussing and advising on public safety at an event and aim to help organisers with the planning and management of an event and to encourage co-operation and co-ordination between all relevant agencies. Following SAG's report Gateway Events wished to meet with the BID urgently to agree how the BID could help them, particularly as additional costs had come forward as a result of SAG's concerns. In this respect Bill Howard and Bryan Leaker from Gateway Events had been invited to make a verbal presentation to the Board.

Prior to Bill and Bryan's arrival, the Directors had a pre-meeting, to discuss BID's existing and future involvement in the Christmas event, particularly in light of the recent report from SAG. Points raised at the pre-meeting were:

- Consultation with traders had been promised for May, but did not happen until August. No results had been disseminated.
- DS advised that some traders would not be able to get their deliveries during the three days due to the road closure. Argos were particularly unhappy.

- GS stated that the event needed to benefit traders in order for BID to provide any funding.
- The Victorian culverts on the north side of The Avenue could be damaged by the weight of the fairground rides.
- BID funding would be required to assist Gateway Events with addressing SAG's concerns.
- A discussion took place about a plan B if Gateway Events were not able to carry out their plans. The BID had paid towards the cost of entertainment yet any event with amplified music on public land needed a temporary event notice (TEN). A premises licence for Minehead would allow this but until this was in place amplified music would not be possible as it was too late to get a TEN for the Christmas event. GS reported that he had organised for businesses' private forecourts to be used for entertainers. Shopkeepers could also organise their own entertainers and could have amplified music under the terms of their own licences if they held one for public entertainment. It was noted that buskers were fine on public land as they were unregulated.

Bryan Leaker and Bill Howard arrived and presented the following:

### **Minehead Christmas Event Operating Issues**

#### Extra expenditure

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| ● Loss of funding/sponsorship/SCC late meeting | £2,000 |
| ● Order to lift one-way restriction            | £ 450  |
| ● Appointment of safety consultant             | £1,000 |
| ● Additional overnight security                | £2,500 |
| ● Loss of income from reduced fairground rides | £1,000 |
| ● Additional road closure equipment            | £ 300  |

#### Potential income to offset the extra expenditure

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| ● Collection at events                          | £ 400  |
| ● Fundraising events in early 2020              | £ 750  |
| ● Fundraising events to build reserves for 2020 | £2,000 |

Bryan reassured the meeting that there would be no blame culture. Gateway Events were concerned solely with protecting the event, learning from it and moving forward. As Chair of Minehead Connect he would now be lining up the publicity for the town and community.

Emphasis was put on the three day event going ahead, but there would be ramifications going forward if there was insufficient funding for this year, meaning that it was unlikely that there would be a Christmas event for 2020. Gateway wanted the event to be sound for 2020.

Bryan and Bill explained how the need for extra funding had come about vis-à-vis the road closure application and the SAG report. The road closure application had been submitted in September 2019, but the SAG meeting had not taken place for another

11 weeks. A large fairground ride was due to be installed at the top of The Avenue. According to Danter's the fairground operator this ride normally brought in about £2,000 per hour on the basis of 30 to 40 people for the 5-minute ride. Due to the culvert having a weakness and a lack of time for Gateway to organise for a structural report, this ride would not be part of the event and would be replaced with a lighter ride in the form of a go-through ghost train. BID asked what the financial arrangement was with Danter's and it was explained that the operators would take sufficient to cover their costs and Gateway would take 10-15% of the excess, which had already been spent on the additional costs arising from the SAG report.

BID asked who the safety consultant was. Bryan advised that it was Duncan White who works with Bridgwater Carnival.

Bill said that Somerset County Council were trying to help and their deadline of 2pm today (Friday) was to allow Gateway to make inroads into addressing their issues.

DS raised the concern of traders in respect of not being able to receive their deliveries, particularly Argos. Bill advised that Market House Lane to the rear of Argos would be open for deliveries and that he had tried to advise the manager of this. Also, Summerland Road would be open for deliveries to Iceland and the pet shop.

GS asked why the sum of £750 commission from the Fairground attendance, as seen in the Gateway Event minutes for the event budget in October had now become a £2,000 loss. Bill responded in that last minute issues had increased costs. Bryan elaborated in that although Somerset County Council had received the documentation for the road closure application on 3 September 2019, the 11 week delay before the documentation was looked at had caused increased costs late in the day as Gateway worked on complying with SAG's requests. Gateway Events could have cancelled the event but did not want to let the community down.

Bryan further informed the Board that BID would be the first in line to receive a refund of any monies BID agrees to give towards these costs.

Given that in the SAG guidelines produced by SWT it suggests there should be a minimum of 12 weeks to consider an application for an event where there would be up to 500 people, but it was recommended for events over that size that an application be submitted up to 6-9 months beforehand the Board questioned why the application was not submitted earlier and asked if there was a contingency plan in place if the road closure was not permitted. Bryan and Bill advised that delays had been experienced in submitting the application and that if there was no road closure there would be no fairground rides, which would leave the light switch on, the grotto in the old hospital and entertainment on the forecourts. Gateway had wished to bring more to the event than in previous years for the benefit of the community.

They continued in that Gateway Events had already entered into a contract with the fairground operator on the basis that the road closure would be granted. If the road closure was refused then there would still be an event this year, but there would not be an event in 2020 as Gateway Events would be sunk by this event.

JW asked what would happen if the weather ruined the event. Bryan replied that this would be at the operator's own risk. There had been no discussions held with Danter's in respect of compensation if the road closure was refused.

Bryan and Bill elucidated further in that a large extra cost was the additional overnight security which was a police requirement. Sgt Dan Bishop, the police representative on SAG, wanted two security people on board. Gateway's Safety Consultant had disagreed that this was necessary, but Gateway were no longer in a position to negotiate. There was now a need to manage the event and comply. This resulted in a loss of funding and consultant's costs. There was no in-house expertise.

When questioned on the original costs, Bryan and Bill advised that the predicted costs had proved to be inaccurate and that they couldn't go for sponsorship earlier on in the process as they did not have a committed event. The costings as presented could not have been seen in advance.

DS reported that the local traders did not want a three-day road closure. Bill advised that he had gone around and talked to businesses and had received a majority support from the traders. However, there was nothing in writing.

Gateway Events recognised that there needed to be closer liaison between the BID, Minehead Connect and the other associated organisations moving forward.

Bryan and Bill once more reiterated that Gateway Events wished the event to go ahead, come what may, whether or not the road closure was granted, but that this would cause the fall of Gateway Events. On behalf of Gateway Events, they asked if BID would help them?

At this point Bill Howard and Bryan Leaker left the meeting.

Various points were made by the Board, as follows:

- JW said that BID was being asked to provide monies to the organisation, not the event.
- CC said that if the event brings in people to the town then it will be a success.
- JW and AP said that there was a lack of marketing and communication about the event and it was too late to bring in lots of people.
- It was felt that the fairground would put off customers coming into the town.
- It was not known exactly how much money Gateway Events had? DS said that at the meeting held in October 2019 they had stated that they had £7,000.
- AP was concerned about some of the calculations being inaccurate on purpose to cloud the issue. The £450 for the Market House Lane road restriction to be lifted and the £300 for the additional road closure equipment were thought to be accurate but there was no evidence provided for the others. Also, no information had been supplied on a possible compensation demand from the fairground operator.
- It should have been planned months ahead.

Each Director then made the following statements in relation to Gateway Event's request:

RB (via email as read out by AJH): The BID needed to remember the money it was investing was businesses money who had paid their levy and many of the concerns raised (especially about a 3-day road closure) about this event was from businesses themselves. It was also a concern that it seemed that yet again the BID was bailing out Gateway Events.

CC – His businesses would benefit from the event so he would abstain. On behalf of BID, he said that the event had been poorly organised and posed a safety risk, but he appreciated the sentiment of holding a Christmas event for the community.

JL – The organisation of the event had started much too late and too little notice had been given. He was unhappy with the extra funding requested and the lack of evidence of need.

AP – There are no exact calculations and BID is not privy to Gateway Event's funding information. The BID therefore cannot give support. It is not in the interest of BID levy payers.

DS – She had spoken to many traders in the area where her business was located –all, particularly Argos, were concerned about the road closure and getting deliveries. There was discontentment within the business community. The BID needed to be aware of the need to use BID levy payers' monies in the levy payers' interest.

GS – Throughout the process there has been late consultation. The figures don't stack up against the predicted costs.

TV – He regretted that the BID Board had been placed in this very difficult position with regards this event. There had been a lack of communication and understanding of Gateway Events proposal for the Christmas festival and having already financed many of the acts and given support to the event in many ways, the BID is not a bank and must always respect the levy payers' views and comments at all times.

JW – It would be a massive financial and reputational risk for BID. BID should say no funding for Gateway Events and a statement should be provided to say that BID is not supportive of Gateway Events. There could be danger to the public.

The Board decided that they could not agree to further financially support this event. The entertainment, as already funded by the BID, could go ahead as well as the lights switch on by Minehead Town Council. The following statement was agreed:

**Written Statement by the BID in respect of the Christmas event proposed by Gateway Events**

Having carefully considered this proposal the Minehead BID Board agreed that they have provided an appropriate level of funding on behalf of the BID levy payers. In the absence of exact figures, the board do not have the confidence in Gateway Events to

commit further BID funding. This decision is informed by the safety concerns that have come to light through the Safety Advisory Group process, a lack of definite financial information about the extra costs involved, and broader concerns around the general principles applied in organising the event.

**Meeting finished at 7.15pm**