**RTWT Notes of Meeting**

**8.30 am Monday 11 October 2021 via Teams**

**Attendees**

Nicky Blanchard (Chair)

Sarah-Jane Adams (BID Director)

Cllr David Scott

Alex Greig

Richard Simms

Peter Allinson

Gavin Tyler

Pam Loch

**Welcome and Apologies**

No apologies had been received from Board Members

The Chair welcomed Pam Loch to the meeting.

**BID Project Update**

A Remembrance Day display will be installed at the Clock Tower in Fiveways at the end of October. There will also be associated events.

Free Self Defence classes are being offered to levy paying businesses. There will be a day of classes on 27 October which will have capacity for 100 people. There be an further opportunity for businesses to organise classes for their own staff on other dates. There has been a positive response to this offer already. There will also be an offer of free personal alarms for attendees.

The classes above are the start of the BID Small Business School which will be an online platform with short video content on a range of relevant subjects for businesses e.g. marketing, dementia awareness. It was noted that this could be share with other BIDs once set up.

An Autumn/Winter bid booklet has been produced and delivered Friday 8 Oct and Monday 11 Oct. This is being delivered by the company that is undertaking the Money Savings work. The booklet seeks to engage with more levy payers and outlines activity in the next few months up to Christmas.

The Money Saving Service is also receiving good uptake now.

The updated maps are providing very popular and there may need to be a further reprint soon.

A project to improve the appearance of some of the utility boxes in the town centre is planned. The art work on the boxes will link to their location.

Christmas activities are planned as follows:

* Door bows are being offered to businesses which are free but with a request for a charitable donation (to go to a local town centre charity)
* Street entertainment planned
* A Christmas magazine will be produced to be delivered by the start of December. Holders for the magazine will be provided to businesses. Looking at option of distribution to residents also, possible via the ToTW.
* There will be a significant Christmas Campaign promotion the town in various publications including Kent Messenger, Inside Kent, ToTW incl So Magazine. The Board asked about promotion further a field – into East Sussex and this will be considered
* A Christmas film will be made once the Christmas lights are up
* The Christmas lights will be installed from 31 October and will be switched on 16 Nov. There will not be a big switch on event this year but this might be an option for future years as planning would need to start early (February)
* A gift wrapping hub will created in the Food Court of RVP. Free wrapping will be offered and businesses will be given cards to hand out to customers so that they know about the service. It was noted that the wrapping should be eco-friendly.
* Late night shopping will be promoted as the ’12 hours of shopping’. This will be on 20-22 December and will be 9am-9pm. Board Members asked if there could be a parking offer to go along with this. It was pointed out that there are already lower evening parking costs (after 6pm) in many of the car parks and this should be promoted. Cllr Scott agreed to discuss with finance/parking colleagues at TWBC.

Sarah-Jane has negotiated a regular column in the ToTW which will be titled ‘Meet the Street’. The first focus will be on Grosvenor Road and then Camden Road. Sarah-Jane has also had a request to talk about town centre issues on West Kent Radio.

RTWT and BID colleagues meeting for a walkaround the town centre today to consider what improvements could be made to street furniture (e.g. planters) at the top end of the town centre. This will focus on Grosvenor Road, Calverley Road (precinct) and Camden Road. Cllr Scott is also working with KCC colleagues to look at the need for streetscene improvements across the whole of the town centre.

**Budget**

Board members were referred to information on the papers. The levy collection rate for this year is now 83.01% which is an improvement on last year. Payments are continuing to come in so this should increase. However, there are still many businesses that are refusing to pay. A soft summons letter is to be sent to these in the near future, however, advice from TWBC has suggested that it might be difficult to get court time for hearings relating to non-payment. The Board requested action for those that were choosing not to pay e.g. put through to a debt collection agency. Sarah-Jane to speak further with TWBC on this. It was agreed that those businesses should not benefit from any of the services offered by the BID. Sarah-Jane will approach Hoopers and let them know that the Christmas lights will not be installed on their building as they have not paid the levy for the past 2 years.

AG requested a meeting to discuss how events grants are distributed in the future. It was agreed that this would be helpful to plan for grants in 2022-23. The requirements from events organisers (e.g. logo display) needed to be set out with greater clarity in the future. It was agreed that Richard, Alex, David and Sarah-Jane would meet in the near future.

**Any Other Business**

The Board asked Sarah-Jane how she was settling in.

Cllr Scott requested that he meet with Sarah-Jane to ensure that there was a good information exchange between RTWT and the Council.

Cllr Scott mentioned the new engagement tool that the Council has set up which will provide for more effective dialogue with local businesses and residents about ideas on how to improve the borough.

Hilary Smith updated the Board on the High Street scheme consultation. There has been a high level of responses to the survey which has asked if there is support for the scheme and if it should be made permanent. To date the majority are supportive. People have been able to make suggestions about how the scheme can be improved.

Pam Lock expressed her interest in joining the RTWT Board.

**Future Meetings**

It was agreed that 8.30 on Monday was a convenient time for future board meetings and that every 6-8 weeks was an appropriate schedule. Sarah-Jane will arrange the next meeting for November 22.

There was support for the meetings continuing on Teams.