



**Minutes**  
**Sutton Coldfield BID Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 4.30pm**  
**Coburg Banks**

**1) Welcome and apologies**

Attendees (in alphabetical order):

- Alison Clack
- Cllr David Barrie
- Dagen Thompson
- Kevin Wood
- Mark Harris
- Mark Wilkinson
- Michelle Baker
- Stephen Nixon

Apologies (in alphabetical order):

- Anna Jackson
- Cllr Richard Parkin
- David Hemming
- Stephen Roberts

Dagen Thompson, Vice Principal of Sutton Coldfield College attended in Anna Jackson's absence.

Chair Mark Wilkinson welcomed all to the meeting.

**2) Finance**

Michelle Baker provided an update to the Board:

a) BID Budget Update

A copy of the updated BID budget was emailed to directors today.

b) BCC Clawback

Birmingham City Council have provided some further information on how they calculated the £27,552 clawback figure (of BID levy they paid to the BID but are insisting was not collected from businesses), but they are still unable to supply a list of the businesses the BID levy debt relates to.

Birmingham City Council said they would be willing to accept £15,000 repayment of the £27,552 clawback they are requesting is paid by the BID.

The Board discussed and agreed that this was not a resolution as Birmingham City Council had still not explained or evidenced how the figure of £27,552 in uncollected BID levy had been calculated and the Board felt they would be negligent to transfer £27,552 to the Council without key information being provided by the Council.

The BID has requested a list of business names, business addresses, the levy amount uncollected and the dates it related to many times, but Birmingham City Council continue to insist they are not able to supply this information as they do not have it and instead they provide alternative information. Birmingham City Council had said if the BID did not agree to the repayment, they would deduct the amount from the second tranche of levy to be paid to

the BID in October. Mark Harris maintained that the Council should be meeting the BID Board to discuss the matter and providing the data required.

The Board agreed by majority that under the circumstances they would agree to a counteroffer of £9,000 repayment. Michelle Baker to inform Birmingham City Council.

c) Operating Agreement

A BID levy payer had noted that the BID / BCC Council operating agreement states that the BID levy for the duration of the 5-year BID term 2022-2027 would be calculated using rateable values that were in place at the time of the ballot in winter 2021. The BID levy payer was disappointed that the revised rateable values would not be used as their rateable value had decreased following the 1 April 2023 government reassessment. This had been agreed and written by a BID consultancy company before Michelle Baker took over the management of the BID. Birmingham City Council confirmed to the business this is a legal document and the 2021 rateable values would be used to calculate BID levy for all five years of the current BID term. The new rateable values would be used in subsequent BID terms.

**3) Review of BID Food Festival**

Michelle Baker provided an update to the Board:

The 2-day Food Festival in September had been a huge success and attracted exceptional levels of footfall to the town centre.

The Board agreed that LSD Promotions had done a brilliant job in booking the stalls and managing the event and thanked Michelle Baker and Jade Hill for booking all entertainment including the cookery stage, chef demonstrations and entertainers, as well as advertising the event. The Board suggested that for future Food Festivals, LSD Promotions should provide security. Also, the location of stalls could also be extended to include other areas of town such as the Gracechurch centre as the Parade was incredibly busy and this would distribute footfall.

LSD Promotions have offered to run two further food festivals in 2025: one in spring from 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> April 2025 (Friday / Saturday / Sunday) and one in autumn: 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September 2025 (Saturday and Sunday). The Board agreed unanimously and requested that both events be named Food Festivals, as LSD Promotions had suggested the name Spring Fayre for the April event. Michelle Baker to inform LSD Promotions.

**4) BID Projects**

Michelle Baker provided an update to the Board:

a) The Gruffalo meet and greet

This will be held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024, on the same day as the BID's Farmers and Craft Market. Gracechurch shopping centre contributed 50% of the costs of the Gruffalo character and will host the meet and greet in Bishop's Court outside of House of Fraser.

b) Christmas Market

The BID is working in partnership with LSD Promotions who will organise and manage the new 22-day Christmas Market along The Parade from Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024. Their street trading licence has been approved. The BID will advertise the Christmas Market and organise festive entertainment every Saturday and Sunday during the 4 weekends in the run up to Christmas. It was agreed that the Christmas Market would be officially opened on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November by the BID Board and Town Hall panto characters who had contacted the BID to offer their support.

c) Christmas Entertainment

The BID has booked entertainment every Saturday and Sunday in the four weekends leading up to Christmas day, including a brass band, The Grinch, bouncing snowmen, bouncing elves, the Christmas Sloths, Granny Turismo, Christmas Tree Dresses and Toy Soldiers. The characters will be along The Parade as part of the Christmas Market.

d) Christmas Wreath Making Workshops

The BID organised and funded wreath making workshops in 2023 and this year they will be hosted by local businesses:

- Duke Inn
- The Cake Solution
- Heavenly Desserts
- The Station Pub

It was agreed that whilst the charity, Cherished has been supportive of hosting a wreath workshop, as they are not a BID levy payer they are unable to.

e) Other Christmas updates

Michelle Baker provided an update to the Board:

- The Rhodehouse – they are organising a children's gift appeal every Sunday during Christmas and all gifts donated will be given to the BID, to distribute to a children's hospital or similar.
- Gracechurch – MB introduced an ice rink supplier to Gracechurch and there will be an ice rink in Bishops Court, outside of House of Fraser this year.

f) BID Guardians

The BID funded this service with the same company in 2022 and 2023: the supplier is Facilities & Security Group Ltd t/a Focused Services Group. In 2022 / 23 four security guards patrolled the town centre every Friday and Saturday evening to provide a safe and reassuring presence for visitors to the bars and restaurants during the festive season.

The Board agreed to fund four security guards again this year, patrolling from 4pm-1am on the following 9 dates:

- 29th & 30th Nov (Sat/Sun)
- 6th & 7th Dec (Sat/Sun)
- 13th & 14th Dec (Sat/Sun)
- 20th & 21st Dec (Sat/Sun)
- 31st Dec (New Year's Eve)

Michelle Baker to inform supplier.

g) Homelessness Issue

The former Poundland on The Parade is attracting people sat in the shop doorway drinking alcohol and taking drugs. The Police have advised that the shop frontage should be boarded up and this has been reported to Avison Young who manage this premises on behalf of Birmingham City Council. They are arranging a quote for boarding, and they will send to the Council for approval.

h) Business Seminar

The next speaker event will be held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025 5.30pm-6.30pm, hosted by Sutton Coldfield College. Michelle Baker suggested local businesses could be invited to exhibit in the College foyer before the event. The Board agreed that the networking event held after the Sara Davies event in March had been a success, was very popular with local businesses and should be repeated in the Townhouse pub.

i) Bulls In the City

Mark Wilkinson outlined the sponsorship opportunity that had been circulated to the BID Board. The Board discussed funding a large bull statue as part of the trail next summer. It was agreed that the BID would not fund a bull as the BID had done this previously and still owns an owl statue, installed at the Gracechurch Centre. If Sutton Coldfield Town Council and the Gracechurch Centre each fund a bull statue for the town centre then the BID may reconsider so that there are enough bulls to see in Sutton Coldfield, but one bull statue would not be an effective trail in isolation.

**5) Other Updates**

Michelle Baker updated on other news:

a) I Am Yogi

This new yoga studio opened on 12<sup>th</sup> October in the Gracechurch Centre and the BID arranged entertainers 'The Walking Trees', which Gracechurch contributed 50% towards the cost. The BID also organised 50 students from the college to organise a large pop-up yoga class on The Parade as publicity for opening day, but the owner declined this offer.

b) Newhall Walk

Michelle Baker reported the damaged brickwork at the entrance to Newhall Walk to Avison Young who manage the retail park on behalf of Birmingham City Council; they repaired immediately.

**6) Upcoming BID Events**

- Meet the Gruffalo – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September.
- Vegan Market (not a BID event) – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November
- Christmas Market – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December
- Monthly Farmers and Craft Market – last Sunday of the month October and November

**7) Update from Stakeholders**

- Sutton Coldfield College – Dagen Thompson said College students now take their lunchbreaks all at the same time, rather than staggered times and asked the Board if this had affected the town or if they had any feedback.
- Sutton Coldfield Town Council – Michelle Baker read an update provided by the Town Council.
- Birmingham City Council – Cllr David Barrie provided an update.

The Board discussed Sutton Coldfield Town Council's proposal to fund free car parking in all Birmingham City Council owned car parks in the town centre for Christmas. The Board agreed they were supportive of the proposal and asked Michelle Baker to provide the Town Council with feedback:

-The need for the Town Council to display clear signage at the entrances, exits and parking machines on all car parks in the free parking scheme.

-Residents and visitors may not know which car parks are owned by Birmingham City Council and which are not, so a colour coded visual map would be useful and effective. The BID could share on social media.

-Clear communication is required so visitors know that Newhall Walk and Gracechurch are not offering free car parking at Christmas and the Board raised concerns that a visitor may receive a parking ticket by parking in a car park not in the scheme, which could be negative press for the town.

Michelle Baker to relay feedback to the Town Council.

**8) Any other business**

- BID Chair, BID Manager and 2 directors will be meeting with MP Andrew Mitchell on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November for a catchup meeting to discuss matters affecting the town including the lack of CCTV provision in the town centre.
- Toy Valuation Day – idea from Alison Clack was briefly discussed.
- Giant ball pit attraction – idea from Michelle Baker was briefly discussed.
- Antony Whitehead, founder of Our Town would like to meet the BID Board to discuss the Gracechurch development – the Board agreed to meet and asked Michelle Baker to arrange.

**Next meeting**

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024