

Meeting: Northwich BID Executive Board Meeting

Date: 21st May 2025 Time: 8:30am

Location: Northwich Town Council



Attendees:

- Ellis Wardle – Salt House NW (EW) (Chair)
- Jo Comerie –CWAC Regeneration for Mid-Cheshire (LS)
- Louise Hough – CRS Consultants (LH)
- Jane Hough (JH) • Jon Houghton (JonH) • Lynn Riley (LR) – Groundwork CLM - Kat Booth – Echo PR (KB)
- Cllr Sam Naylor – CWAC /NTC (SN)
- Kim Smith – Radio Northwich (KS)
- Cllr Rachel Waterman – CWAC / NTC (RW)

Apologies:

- Graham Allen – Sainsbury's (GA)
- Russ Figgis – Barons Quay (RF)
- Abda Obeid-Finley – Abda's (AOF) (Vice-Chair)
- Julie Kirkham – Brio (JK)
- Paul Heatley – Cheshire Police (PH)
- Gerry Rooney – Moss Haselhurst (GR)
- Chris Shaw – Northwich Town Council (CS)

Agenda Item	Minutes	Actions
Welcome / Introductions	EW opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.	
Declarations of Interest	Request for a standing declaration for advisory members of the board in their capacity as elected representatives to Cheshire West and Chester Council & Northwich Town Council, as both bodies are stakeholders to the BID.	
Approval of minutes and actions from last meeting	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Actions identified were included as agenda items for further discussion by the Board.</p> <p>No matters arising.</p> <p>Minutes approved.</p>	
Marketing & PR	<p>LR: provided an update of marketing & promotional activity. Refocussing the social media content in April around original content, dynamic graphics, on-trend reels & more business profiles has seen a marked increase in metrics to 890K views. Businesses featured report feeling a positive impact / perception</p> <p>Facebook : 153% increase from March</p> <p>Instagram : 64%</p> <p>RW: Visit Northwich is the positive counter to Northwich Life with its positive stories. The weekend round-ups are popular and well-received by the public.</p> <p>Campaign based activity has worked well with the Pokémon trail with participation rates increasing by 33%</p>	LR to bring detail to next meeting

	<p>The Food & Drink Guides featuring every hospitality and F&B BID business were produced in time for the NOW Northwich event on 3/5/25 and 2.5K copies distributed. These have been well received by consumers and especially the takeaway businesses.</p> <p>The What's On Guide that has been an annual publication by Visit Northwich is in production for the summer, autumn and Christmas events.</p>																	
Project Updates - RAG Report (for review and questions)	<p>EW: talked through key points from the RAG report starting with a summary of key successes & opportunities since the March 25 Board meeting to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement prioritised with 154 business check-ins and regular emails to all• Focussed contact with new BID areas in Station Road and Retail Park• Summer planting to be extended to new areas- Leicester St/Station Rd• 2 of the 4 task and finish groups initiated for events and business• appointment of JonH as new BID3 assistant manager <p>EW: Action from March Board to prioritise red elements of the RAG to ensure delivery of the Year1 program. Progress to date:</p> <table><tr><td>Action Status</td><td>March 2025</td><td>May 2025</td><td>Performance</td></tr><tr><td>Red</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>50%</td></tr><tr><td>Amber</td><td>23</td><td>16</td><td>30%</td></tr><tr><td>Green</td><td>5</td><td>13</td><td>160%</td></tr></table> <p>EW: All agreed that the AGM was a successful event and blueprint for more regular meetings with businesses. The format worked well and involving key stakeholders will connect businesses to the wider ambitions for the BID area. A September Summit was agreed with key stakeholders to be invited.</p> <p>LR: Reported the challenges identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A difficult trading environment as Budget changes start to impact on businesses.	Action Status	March 2025	May 2025	Performance	Red	2	1	50%	Amber	23	16	30%	Green	5	13	160%	<p>LR: To advise at next meeting</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value proposition for new BID3 remains a challenge/opportunity. • Delays to Active Travel plans by CWAC impacting on plans for Station Road <p>Project Update:</p> <p>JH: Provided an overview of how Groundwork is supporting its BID area. JonH is a new full-time addition to the team supporting events in Northwich (2 days), Wilmslow (2) & Warrington (1). With business engagement being a primary focus and businesses keen to see more events that drive footfall, this additional resource brings new capacity to delivering the BID priorities.</p> <p>LR: data metrics will inform assessment of impact of events and marketing activities. Footfall report was presented with dates confirmed for LR/JH to be trained on the system.</p> <p>Following the NOW Northwich event, a survey was sent to all businesses to gather feedback about their trading experience on the day. A detailed report was generated with headlines from respondents to include; 22.5% saw an increase in trading on the day: 22.5% reduced trading: 54.5% normal Saturday trading.</p> <p>JH: feedback from a meeting with Cheshire Oaks where visitors waited 20 minutes to be served a drink.</p> <p>JonH: Based on 2024 experience most businesses did not roster additional staff on the day. The timing of main performances at 12 and 6pm meant people did not stay in town</p> <p>JH: Provided the history of the event and how the name NOW Northwich was determined. A feedback meeting is planned with Cheshire Dance and stakeholders. The sustainability of the event is to be determined given the reduction in UKSPF & Arts Council grants. Contributions from BID/NTC/BQ =£15K and will need careful assessment against value for money.</p>	<p>LR to update at next meeting.</p>
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	<p>LR: Updated Board on other events planned in 2025 where the BID supports the activities of other stakeholders.</p> <p>Festival of Arts: Cheshire Visual Arts manage the Arts Trail around town with BID providing event support and funded workshops. This year BID will enhance with more public activity to draw footfall and boost marketing impact.</p> <p>River Festival: Rotary event with supporting activities for families managed by BID</p> <p>Christmas Extravaganza: NTC event with sponsorship from BID for activities</p> <p>JonH; BID will provide a summer program with featured events and music each week to encourage people into the town centre. These will be free to attend and family focussed.</p> <p>LR: Discussions are underway with stakeholders (Cheshire Police/Youth Fed) to host event/s for younger people in the summer to strengthen their connection to their home town.</p> <p>KD/RW: Raised opportunity for hosting a traditional carol service with brass band. This could include local choirs and an invitation to the Salvation Army etc</p>	LR:JonH to action and bring plan to next meeting
Pina Cola Festival Update:	<p>JonH: led discussions around Pina Colada Festival (PCF) 2025 emphasizing that this is a flagship event for the BID members and NTC.</p> <p>The Event Management Plan has been submitted to the SAG at CWAC to deliver a bigger, festival-feel event with a number of new variations to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building a sandy beach at the top of town thanks to a donation of sand from TG Builders • at the bottom of town, a new vibe by closing Weaver Way/Crown Street to provide a pedestrianised thoroughfare through the whole town centre and improved stage & hospitality areas. 	

	<p>Savings of £3k have been made already through procurement.</p> <p>Given the scale of the event, security on the day has been determined by a RFQ process that has now been awarded and has added significantly to costs. 27 staff will be employed on the day and overhead drone capability to provide pre-emptive CCTV. Footage will be available for marketing purposes.</p> <p>SN: Asked about sponsorship. Opportunities are being explored to include a climbing wall activity in Barons Quay.</p> <p>Businesses will be appraised of revised regulatory requirements around off-sales but compliance responsibility rests with them. New arrangements are in place to comply with Martin's Law with hostile vehicle mitigation in discussion with SAG.</p> <p>As all businesses are at capacity on the day, 3 additional food vendors will be added.</p> <p>EW: To counter some negative feedback following the 2024 event we have invited people to become PCF Ambassadors. 22 registered interest and 15 attended the first meeting. There were some new ideas that will be included in this years PCF and others for future years including a Pineapple Cup for best cocktail/mocktail and healthy alternative.</p> <p>Merchandising was discussed. PCF is not a corporate event as BID work for each business. It remains an opportunity for each business to put their individual stamp, branding, twist on PCF and use this to promote their USP rather than sell branded merchandising.</p> <p>Few of the PCF Ambassadors were interested in volunteering on the day and Groundwork has limited resource.</p> <p>RW: Suggested a request to NTC & CWAC Councillors</p>	<p>JonH: Update at next meeting</p>
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	JH: Explained that 85% of PCF is funded by the businesses, with contributions from NTC. Last year as BID funds were tight, CWAC provided a £20k loan for the event and this has now been repaid.	
Finances	<p>JH: Led discussions around the finance report.</p> <p>Income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BID levy collection is in a positive position, with a collection rate of 93% as of the beginning of April for the previous billing period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Liability orders have since been issued, resulting in further payments being made. • An end-of-year invoice has been raised for just under £12,000 to pay over additional levy income collected above the 90% threshold paid over in the previous period. • The first invoice for the 2025/26 billing cycle has been issued, totalling £147,500 - this is £12,500 more than our conservative estimate. This increase is primarily due to new businesses now within the levy area (e.g. B&M on the retail park, which was not rated pre-ballot and now contributes £11,000 annually). • Overall, project income is in a strong position, with great levy collection rates, especially considering the inclusion of new businesses in the expanded BID area. <p>Expenditure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing & Promotion is on track and will be fully committed once remaining activities - including Pina Colada Festival marketing, the What's On Guide, and summer advertising - are costed and purchase orders issued. • Events & Festivals will exceed the original budget by year-end. This is primarily due to: 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Late invoices from suppliers relating to the last financial year (e.g., £4,000 for the Movema performance at PCF 2024, now accounted for in this year), ○ Expenditure offset by income (e.g., we paid NTC £5,000 for the Ice Rink through this sub-theme, but we received income too as ticket sales were processed through the VN website and paid into the BID account). ○ If there are no objections, we propose increasing this budget line by £22,000. This would cover the items noted above, the £7,000 funding from NTC for PCF, and additional spend planned for Summer Activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional investments are being made into Station Road and Leicester Street. Station Road presents more challenges due to pending active travel changes. As discussed at the previous Board meeting, the remaining budget will go towards asset purchases such as hanging baskets and planters in the new BID area. • Proposals addressing the ASB and NABC sub-themes are currently being developed but will not be fully committed within this financial year. • Training courses are on track for full commitment, with excellent feedback from participating businesses. <p>Summary:</p> <p>All income is now invoiced, not forecasted – placing the BID in one of its strongest financial positions in recent years. We are aiming to carry forward at least £50,000, which we plan to maintain year-on-year to support cashflow and future projects.</p> <p>With the year-end in August, we will present a financial plan for the 2025/26 BID year at the next Board meeting</p>	
Regeneration	JC provided an update from Cheshire West and Chester to include;	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library program is progressing well. An event on 13/3/25 at Weaver Hall (temp library) was well attended and plans around future activities to be based at the library are well received. • Relocation of market – drop-in scheduled for 22nd and 23rd May led by the CWAC Markets + the Capital Delivery Team. Over 900 have responded to the consultation to date. • Weaver Square is still in procurement phase for a delivery partner with a decision about the successful partner going to Cabinet in July 2025. The scheme at Weaver Square is likely to be a mixed-use development site – with a combination of social housing / young professional housing, 2 /3 stories high with the aim being to get more people living in a sustainable town centre. It is a conservation area that constrains the demolition of the site that the meeting agreed would be a welcome development for the town as a signal of progress and new investment. • Active travel planning is ongoing with a separate route planned for pedestrian and cycle. Discussions with Active Travel England are ongoing with start dates to be confirmed. <p>LR: Importance of key gateways to the town especially during work at Weaver Way. BID has raised with Regen and requested that heritage grants for Northwich be explored.</p> <p>JH: Suggested traffic data be requested at key gateways</p>	
AOB	EW: Following a discussion with Board members, BID will arrange a September Summit for businesses and stakeholders to discuss key issues and opportunities for Northwich.	

Next Executive Board Meeting Date: 8:30am, TBC August 27th 2025 (venue to be agreed).