

Minutes of Bute BID Board Meeting

Date: 22nd January 2025

Location: Bute Fabrics 5.30pm

Attendees: John Glen (JG)
Sophie Reid (SR)
Ian McCulloch (IM)
Reeni Kennedy-Boyle (RKB)
Kirsty Durrant (KD) online
Gloria Fear (GF)
DL Gordon (DLG)

Apologies for Absence: Alistair Forsyth, Duncan Martin, Erin Murphy, Fergus Murray, David Adams McGilp

Matters Discussed

Action

1. Declarations of Interest: RKB has an interest in RCGF

2. Minutes of previous meeting of 18th December 2024: Approved

3. Presentation from Gloria Fear of Bute Island Radio

GF gave a presentation on the possibility of a collaboration between Bute BID and Bute Island Radio, to support the station and benefit the levy payers. It could also benefit BID by allowing us to promote Visit Bute to their online audience. Several options were proposed around sponsorship or buying advertising space. The Board will consider these proposals and make a final decision at the next Board meeting in February.

ALL BOARD

GF left the meeting at 6.05pm

4. Update from Argyll & Bute Council: KD presented an update on behalf of FM in his absence.

RURAL GROWTH DEAL – a date for a ministerial visit has now been confirmed with a reception provisionally booked in Bute Yard. This could be a good opportunity to showcase the island and its businesses. A photo opportunity at the Pavilion is also planned.

ROTHESAY PAVILION – phase 1 of the redevelopment has been completed. Phase 2 and 2B, which are mainly concerning the internal of the building, are aiming to start in 4 weeks. When the works are completed, the Council will be looking at ways the Pavilion can support the local economy.

ALBERT PIER – the building has secured planning consent to demolish and a contract to carry out the demolition is being awarded. There are no plans to redevelop the site at present, but FM would emphasise the need for coach parking.

ROYAL HOTEL – the former UK Government Levelling Up Fund has been rebranded by the current Government as the Community Regeneration Partnership Fund. The Royal Hotel has been identified as a potential project for this funding. Representatives of the UK Civil Service will be visiting the island in February. Successful applicants will receive Capital Funding in the financial year 2026 / 2027

REGENERATION CAPITAL GRANT FUND (RCGF) – looks likely to be restarted with former Phase 1 projects being looked at again, including Fyne Futures

DEMOLITION OF ROTHESAY ACADEMY – consent to demolish has been obtained. Funding is being sought to meet the cost of the demolition and the future plan is for family and other types of housing

VISITOR LEVY (SCOTLAND) ACT 2024 – the public consultation is now open until 10th April. A drop-in session is arranged for Bute on 10th March and online Q&A sessions will also be available

DLG

5G / WI-FI – the BID are not aware of this being a priority for levy payers but IM pointed out there are areas of the island with poor coverage and RKB reports it can be a problem for new businesses trying to get connected. SR suggested putting a survey to the levy payers

EMPTY COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES – the Empty Business Property Officer at A&B Council will make a visit to the island to look into this problem and will attend the Board meeting in February to report

PROJECT PLAYPARK – all relevant information has now been submitted to the Council and we are waiting on written consent to proceed

5. Bute Kitchen Update

DL has met with Lizzie McKirdy of Bute Kitchen for the first review into their grant spending

6. Proposal for Online Learning Platform

DL proposed switching to an online training platform for levy payers instead of the Networking Meetings, which are not well attended. RKB pointed out that there are free resources provided by Business Gateway and HIE but the uptake is poor in this area. It was decided the budget could be better spent elsewhere. Networking meetings will continue when an important topic arises.

JG left the meeting at 6.30 pm

7. Marketing Plans and Budgets

DL has received confirmation from the Council that the Digital Notice Board can be used for paid advertising. She has approached various companies for quotes for off island marketing and for getting the maps reprinted in English. DL would also like to begin arranging a promotion reel for the cafes and restaurants in the same style as the pub reel.

DLG

8. Active Travel Project Report Update

Colin Young will be contacting us with a view to updating the statements on this report

9. Levy Exemption Request for Hardship

DL has received another request for an exemption from the levy on the grounds of hardship. The Board referred to the decision from the previous request at the December Board meeting. KD will check if there are any other options. A discussion followed on the connection between the Bid Levy and Business Rates

KD

10. AOCB

IM raised his concerns about the Visitor Levy and the frequency of Board meetings.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm