



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

NOTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 25, 2013 AT THE ORACLE

Name	Organisation
Present:	
Martin Long (chair)	Napthens
Jane Littlewood	Rabbit Design/Wyred Up
Philip Owen	Barclays
Alistair Baines	Cassidy Ashton
Debbs Lancelott	HoundsHill
Fred Wills	First Medical
David Jones	Thirty30 Media
Carmen Conquer	Aspired Futures
Stephen Preyzner	In Training
David Chapman	Linksgate Leisure
Tracey Bell	Scream Management
Sean Killingbeck	Giles Insurance
Steve Whitehouse	FTS
Brian Bromley	Virgin Trains
Amanda Bennett	Marketing Blackpool
Sue Kendrick	Blackpool Airport
David Houston	Trinity Hospice
Pauline Waterhouse	Blackpool & The Fylde College
John Hesketh	One Blackpool
Gary Smith	A4e
Annie Heslop	Keep Britain Tidy
Gary Sawyer	AI Claims
David Cam	Pleasure Beach Resort
Kathryn Taylor	NSPCC
Neil Foulkes	HSBC
Damian Broughton	Danbro
Claire Smith	Number One Hotels
Roger Mellor	Glasdon
David Hardy	Champion Accountants
Jamie and Ray Kilgour	Kilgour Metal Treatments
Neil Sutch	RBS
Wendy Swift	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
Mark Yates	Brooks Collectables
Shilpa and Praful Patel	Carlton Hotel
Steve Pye	Federation of Small Business
Damien Gibbs	Butson Blofeld
Howard Lewis, Nick Taylor	Hilton Hotels
Susan Bamber	The Village, Herons Reach
Pearl Mina	In The Pink
Rob Knighton	Eclipse Developments
Cassie Spinks-Lewis	Blackpool Carers Centre
Gareth Birch	Napthens
Carole-Anne Jones	Progress Recruitment
Martin Heywood	Viva
Kate Shane	Blackpool Tower
Michael Hyman	Leonard Dews
Jonathan Cropper	Kingswood Stationers
Sarah Stone	Blackpool Theatres Project
Andrew Wareing, Andrew Atkinson	Voucher Packs
Robert Wynne	West Coast
Pauline Lai	Mandarin
John Barnett	Stardream/The Wave
Maria Noto	Lancaster House
Jenn Newton	Sea Life
Iain Hawkins	Merlin
Nathaniel Butters	NB Energy
Colin Johnston	Blackpool Grand
Les Ball	Town Centre BID
Advisers/Observers/Guests	
Neil Jack, Alan Cavill, Peter Legg, Philip Welsh, Polly Hamilton	Blackpool Council
Mark Marshall, Mike Taplin	Blackpool Council
Paul Maynard (and agent Simon Renwick)	MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys
Apologies	
Richard Lefton	Leftons Group
Trevor Roberts	Blackpool Transport
John Child	Sandcastle
Coral Horn	Pink Link
Andy Higgins	FP North West
Anne Catterson	Common Purpose
Doug Garrett	Close Link
David Buck	City Wing
Barry Howard	McDonalds UK
Michael Williams	Cuerden Leisure
Junior Bent	Nat West
Sharon Brook	Whitehead Gas Services
Helen Goodwin	Community Foundation for Lancashire
Gary Fearon	Johnston Press
Paul Crossley	Kenrick and Co
Chris Hibbert	Henco
Ian Macmillan	Chamber of Commerce
David Hardy	Champion Accountants
Rob Green	Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre EDC
Paula Davies	The Wave

1. **Welcome and apologies**

Martin Long (chair, Napthens) welcomed everyone including new members and guests to the meeting. He thanked the staff of The Oracle for hosting the meeting.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting/Matters arising**

All matters arising covered within the Business Partnerships Report provided at the meeting.

3. **Introduction to The Oracle**

Mike Taplin (Blackpool Council) gave the group a brief introduction to The Oracle youth enterprise hub and encouraged people to take a tour of the facilities after the meeting.

He said that the bid for funding to develop The Oracle had been heavily supported by the Business Leadership Group four years ago.

The centre had opened last June and young people were involved at every level – including the running and governance of the centre.

He said that the centre mainly focused on employment skills during the day and youth work in the evening. He said that young people aged 11-24 were able to utilise the various facilities and programmes at the centre, and there had recently been a very successful Oracle Youth Challenge which encouraged entrepreneurial activity.

He said that The Oracle would present further opportunities for private sector to contribute to specific projects that helped young people in Blackpool.

4. **Question Time with Paul Maynard, MP**

Paul Maynard, MP for Blackpool North & Cleveleys, gave a brief presentation to the group and then answered a series of wide-ranging questions posed by members of the business group.

During his presentation, Mr Maynard talked about the role of the private sector in underpinning the economy both nationally and locally.

He also talked about the importance of transport infrastructure in supporting economic development and emphasised the importance of preparing our young people for work, not just through skills and education, but also in creating a work ethic.

Mr Maynard then went on to answer a range of questions including:

Bathing Waters: He said he believed that the coastline throughout the UK had been neglected over the years. He emphasised the need for more cross-Council working on the Fylde Coast and for the water authority to prioritise the bathing water issue to ensure there was not a negative impact on the local economy.

VAT On Tourism: He said that he agreed with the industry stance on VAT and had spoken to the Tourism Minister and the Chancellor. However, the Treasury was not of a mind to reduce VAT because of the greater risk to public sector finances. He said there was Government recognition of the importance of tourism but there was more to do in raising its profile yet further.

Fracking: Mr Maynard said he had no fixed view on fracking. He said that he recognised the potential economic gains, but agreed that explorations could only be carried out in a safe environment. He said that any financial benefits derived from the industry should stay on the Fylde Coast rather than being transferred to Whitehall.

Alcohol-Related Crime: Mr Maynard talked about the problems caused in A&E in Blackpool as a result of alcohol-fuelled crime and also said he was frustrated that his constituents repeatedly told him that they did not feel that Blackpool town centre “felt like their own” after 5pm. He said a balance needed to be struck between remaining a tourism destination and also giving the town centre back to the people of Blackpool.

Retail Failure: Mr Maynard spoke about some of the national issues that impacted on retail failure and said he was particularly keen to address the issue where a firm goes into insolvency and the immediate reaction is to close all the stores. In America, a different approach is used that allows stores to try to trade their way out of problems. He said he was also keen to see more focus on making the town centre more “distinctive” from other towns.

Martin Long thanked Mr Maynard for finding time to address the group. He advised that an opportunity would be given to Gordon Marsden, MP for Blackpool South to address a BBLG meeting later in the year.

5. **Bathing Waters Update**

Annie Heslop (Keep Britain Tidy) gave the group an update on some of the activity that had taken place over the past few months to help resolve the bathing waters issue across the Fylde Coast.

She said that whilst there were challenges for the Fylde in terms of achieving the revised European bathing water standards due to be imposed in 2015, it was important to note that there had been huge improvements in water quality in recent years and North West beaches were among the most improved in the UK.

Ms Heslop said that the help and support of local people was still needed, particularly in terms of what was being put into the drainage system in homes and businesses, and also in helping to keep the beaches clean.

She said a number of Beach Clean initiatives had already been staged under the “Love My Beach” banner and there would be more opportunities for businesses and their staff to participate in similar initiatives in the year ahead.

Ms Heslop also reported on the activities of the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group that had been set up by the Fylde Coast authorities, the Environment Agency and United Utilities to address the bathing waters issue. The group had now established “the 10 things that need to happen” as the 2015 directive approaches. These are:

1. Reduce the number of spills from water company assets and reduce the flood risk within the sewer network.
2. Reduce the impact of polluted surface water outfalls.
3. Deliver sustainable drainage systems within 10 years.
4. Prioritise new development on brownfield land to limit the contribution of new foul discharges and to maximise the opportunity to reduce surface water flood risk.
5. Ensure management of surface water at new developments meets current best-practice standards.
6. Incorporate best-practice water efficiency measures in new developments.
7. Improve beach management – Keep Britain Tidy’s Beach Care Campaign will continue to get local communities and business involved through their organised beach cleans and other activities.
8. Work with and support the tourist industry, publicising and communicating the issues, promoting the role visitors play.

9. Continue to promote Fylde beach care and develop and support community and business initiatives that foster ownership of bathing beaches.

10. Improve land management practices. A significant proportion of pollution reaching the beaches on the Fylde, drains from inland areas via the Rivers Ribble, Wyre, Lune, Douglas and from the Crossens catchment in Sefton and West Lancashire.

6. Licence To Trade

Mark Marshall (Licensing & Health & Safety Manager for Blackpool Council) gave a presentation on the “Licence To Trade” initiative that was being explored to address quality issues in the holiday accommodation sector.

He showed examples of poor-quality hotels and guest houses that not only undermined the area in which they were located, but also had a detrimental effect on Blackpool as a whole.

The main issues were found to be:

- Rogue certification
- Anti-social behaviour
- Health and safety issues
- Inadequate building maintenance

He said that many of the complaints about low-standard accommodation could not be satisfactorily dealt with as they were neither licensing nor health and safety issues.

As a result, a group of interested parties are developing a plan for a compulsory registration of all accommodation providers that would help to address many of the issues faced by visitors by preventing problems before they arose.

The proposed Licence To Trade scheme would require all accommodation providers in the Blackpool borough boundaries to provide:

- Evidence of all documentation to comply with the legal requirements relevant to each hotel or guest house
- Completion of a mandatory bespoke training programme to raise awareness of skills and standards

Mr Marshall said the scheme could be administered by the Enforcement and Quality Standards team in Blackpool and would require businesses to register on an annual basis. Nationally accredited businesses would be excluded from the scheme.

He said that discussions about the scheme were ongoing, but a new by-law would be required to make the scheme legally enforceable.

Claire Smith (Number One Hotels) said it was vital that the business community supported the initiative as it had the potential to improve standards across non-accredited hotels.

Any pledges of support for the scheme should be sent to: mark.marshall@blackpool.gov.uk

7. Business Partnerships Report

Philip Welsh (Blackpool Council) drew the group’s attention to a number of items within his report:

Free Training For Businesses: Attention was drawn to free training courses that were being offered by Blackpool Council’s trading standards team relating to online selling and general sale of goods. PW said that the Town Centre BID might want to consider offering the courses to its members.

Promenade Roadworks: PW reported that there had been further delays in the remedial works on the Promenade between Coral Island and North Pier due to the icy weather conditions. He said he would circulate an updated timetable for the works as soon as possible.

8. Any Other Business

i) Conference Survey: PW reported that Marketing Blackpool, working in association with Blackpool Council, was planning to survey local businesses about the potential for improved conference facilities within the town centre. He said that the survey link would be sent out in the following week and he encouraged businesses to participate.

ii) BBC Familiarisation Visit: PW reported that the familiarisation visit to Media City had been co-ordinated by the BBC and not by Marketing Blackpool as stated in his Partnerships Report. He said that further relationship-building activity with BBC North was planned in coming months, with particular regard to links to education and the creative sector.

iii) Local Enterprise Partnership: Pauline Waterhouse (Blackpool & The Fylde College) enquired whether it might be possible for someone from the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership to address a future meeting. She said that this would be particularly useful in raising the profile of Blackpool and the Fylde Coast with the LEP. PW said he would seek to arrange this.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for **8am for 8.30am, Friday 22nd March, 2013** at **The Blackpool Tower**. Parking and breakfast arrangements to be confirmed.