

NOTES FROM MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 27th, 2012 AT PLEASURE BEACH RESORT

Name	Organisation
Present:	
John Barnett (Chair)	The Wave/Stardream
Roger Mellor	Glasdon
Steve Whitehouse	FTS
Claire Smith	Number One Hotels
Wayne Smith	Northern Rail
Philip Owen	Barclays Corporate
David Cam	Pleasure Beach Resort
Peter Watson	The Data Works
Damien & Helen Broughton	Danbro
Alistair Baines	Cassidy & Ashton
Dave Adamson	Accordant
Ray Eyres	Parkinson's
John Child	Sandcastle Waterpark
Tracey Bell, Lesley Calland	Scream
Steve Preyzner	Progress Recruitment
Sue Kendrick	Blackpool Airport
David Chapman	Linksgate Leisure
Jane Littlewood	Wyred Up
Steve Pye	Federation of Small Businesses
John Holt	Houndshell
Justin Allitt	Allitt's Estate Agency
Neil Sutch	Royal Bank of Scotland
Rob Knighton	Eclipse Developments
Michael Williams	Crown Entertainments
Pauline Waterhouse	Blackpool & The Fylde College
Wendy Swift	NHS Blackpool
Pauline Lai	The Mandarin/Rouge
Nathaniel Butters	NB Energy
Robert Richards, Tricia Morrison	Napthen's
Mark Yates	Brooks Collectables
Robert Wynne	West Coast
Eileen Ormand	Town Centre BID
Joe Bullock	Premier Inns
Jenn Newton	Sea Life Centre/Merlin Entertainments
Darren Webster	Blackpool Zoo
Natalie Wyatt, Nicola Atanassova	Marketing Blackpool
Damien Bourke	Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre EDC
Colin Wright	A4E
Ed Christiano	Encore Design
Phil Hough	Scrummy Tummy
Alex McIntyre	The Property Scene
Richard Lefton	Lefton's Group
Nicholas Testa	Barcelo Imperial
Advisers/Observers/Guests	
Philip Welsh, John Donnellon	Blackpool Council
Peter Legg, Stuart Gibson,	Blackpool Council
Paul Breslin	Keep Britain Tidy
Michelle Riley	Blackpool & The Fylde College
Alistair Clarke	Social Enterprise Solutions
Apologies	
Neil Jack, Alan Cavill	Blackpool Council
Howard Lewis	The Hilton
Jane Cole	Virgin Trains
Michael Hyman	Leonard Dews
Nathan Smith Hilliard	The Village, Heron's Reach
Iain Hawkins, Kate Shane	Merlin
Angela Tierney	Marks & Spencer
Trevor Roberts	Blackpool Transport
Sue Sankey	HSBC
Coral Horn	Pink Link
Charlie Lowe	Heathcotes
Chris Hibbert	Henco
Zera Remtulla	Laila's
David Hardy	Champion Accountants
Declan Dowd	Carlton Hotel
Maria Noto	Lancaster House Hotel/Oliver's Bistro
Paul Crossley	Kenrick & Co
Hugh Evans	Chamber of Commerce
John Wilson	Eric Wright
Warren Spencer	Blackhurst Budd
Claire Griffiths	Premiere People

1. **Welcome and apologies**

John Barnett (Stardream/The Wave) formally welcomed members to the first meeting of 2012. It was noted that he was standing in as chair at the request of Howard Lewis (The Hilton) who was unable to attend the meeting.

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

The minutes of the last meeting in November were accepted by the group. There was only one matter arising:

Give A Little Campaign

Philip Welsh (Blackpool Council) thanked members of the BBLG for the various contributions to the Council-led Give A Little Christmas appeal. He said the appeal had resulted in the contribution of £50,000 worth of gifts, cash and vouchers for attractions and events, ensuring that more than 1,000 children across Blackpool received presents.

3. **Blackpool Town Centre: Future Initiatives**

John Donnellon, Service Director for Built Environment (Blackpool Council) gave a presentation on future town centre initiatives.

Central Business District

He gave a brief update on the temporary traffic arrangements that would be put in place for the Central Business District development, which is due to start on site around April time.

He said the key objective was to construct the highways in phases in order to minimise disruption during the main season. Works will take place with few full road closures during the year-long programme from April 2012 to April 2013.

He said the scheme was now going out to tender and the successful contractors would be challenged as to whether they could manage the road works/traffic arrangements even more efficiently and limit any disruption even further. There was a regular dialogue with taxi companies and their representative associations about potential disruption.

The phasing of the roadworks is provisionally scheduled as follows:

- **Phase 1:** April 2012 demolition of buildings on Cookson Street – normal traffic flows maintained
- April to May – closure of Buchanan Street and construction of New Larkhill Street. Localised diversion required for Buchanan Street
- End of August – Buchanan Street re-opened and New Larkhill Street constructed and Larkhill Street closed
- **Phase 2:** New Larkhill Street closed with diversion around Talbot Road, Buchanan Street & George Street (to allow site preparation for construction of buildings).
- **Phase 3:** Work on Dickson Road, Springfield Road and High Street requires some traffic management but no closures (September to October)
- **Phase 4:** Starting November and running through to February/March 2013, works on Talbot Road between High Street and Dickson Road in phases with rolling closure of Talbot Road and diversion using Springfield Road, High Street and Abingdon Street

Mr Donnellon said that information would be made available for businesses to distribute to customers.

With regard to the Central Business District tendering process, he said that this was being handled by Muse and related to three elements:

- The development and refurbishment of Talbot Road multi-storey car park
- The proposed new Blackpool Council offices with associated commercial and retail space
- The new Sainsbury's supermarket development

He said that any companies interested in getting involved in the tendering process should contact Muse direct. Contact name: mike.horner@musedevelopments.com

Mr Donnellon emphasised that any contractors would be encouraged to use local labour and Sainsbury's had also expressed its intention to ensure that the jobs created in the new store benefited the local population.

Town Centre Working

Mr Donnellon reported that the Council was now reviewing its town centre planning policies and seeking to take a more proactive approach to encouraging growth.

He said that the BID company was already engaged in this work, but he was also keen to have a small number of nominees from the BBLG to work alongside planners and other partners to refine and review the action plans that will underpin the overall strategy.

These nominees were not limited to the retail sector, but could include anyone with an interest in the town centre's economic growth.

Anyone interested in getting involved in this town centre working group should email philip.welsh@blackpool.gov.uk in the first instance.

4. Inbound Tourism: Private Sector Consultation

Sue Kendrick (Blackpool Airport) gave a brief presentation on plans to stage two workshops with a range of local stakeholders on the future of Blackpool Airport.

She said the workshops would seek to challenge perceptions about the airport and its future role, and would also explore ways of building inbound tourism and other aviation services. It was envisaged that a range of key industry players would also be involved in the workshops, including the Lancashire and Cumbria Tourist Boards and British Aerospace.

The workshops are scheduled to take place on **Thursday, March 1st**. Open invitations to be sent out to members of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group (via Philip Welsh) over the next week or so.

5. Getting Blackpool Working

Peter Legg (Blackpool Council) gave a brief introduction on a deteriorating unemployment situation in Blackpool.

He said that the December figures put Blackpool as the worst place in the North West, the first time that had happened since records began. He said that youth unemployment was the fourth highest rate in the North West with the trend getting markedly worse.

He then outlined a range of national and local initiatives aimed at tackling these unemployment issues.

Note: A copy of his presentation with details of the various schemes and contact names is being sent out with these notes.

There then followed two separate presentations, one by Alistair Clarke on behalf of Social Enterprise Solutions, the other by Michelle Riley on behalf of Blackpool & The Fylde College.

Work Placements

Alistair Clarke gave a brief presentation on a work placement programme that was being delivered through the Flexible Support Fund in association with Job Centre Plus.

He said the scheme was aimed at over 25s and was intended to create 200 work placement opportunities of between 4 to 8 weeks duration before April. These placements would, in turn, build up skills for people over 25 so they get a reference for future employment.

Mr Clarke said the scheme provided employers (small to medium enterprises with less than 250 employees) with a candidate, aged 25 and over, who had been without a job for 13-52 weeks. Candidates continue to receive benefits and bus travel is funded.

Each placement is 25 to 30 hours a week and creates an ideal opportunity for hoteliers, shop owners, warehouses, charity shops and social organisations.

He emphasised that there was minimal paperwork attached to the scheme.

Any business interested in providing a work placement can contact him at:
alistair@socialenterprisesolutions.co.uk

Apprenticeships

Michelle Riley gave a brief outline of the apprenticeships scheme for 18 to 24-year-olds which provided cash incentives for small to medium enterprises (businesses with under 250 employees) to take on apprentices.

Under this scheme, businesses received £1,000 after six weeks and a further £1,000 after 26 weeks. She said that businesses were only obliged to pay £2.60 an hour for a minimum 35-hour week, and apprentices would benefit from Level 2 or Level 3 training as part of the apprenticeship.

Anyone interested in offering such an apprenticeship, contact Michelle at
MRIL@blackpool.ac.uk

The group was broadly supportive of any attempts to improve the unemployment situation in Blackpool and particularly of those initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for young people.

However, a number of employers within the BBLG expressed concern over the complicated and often bureaucratic process that had to be followed to find the right sort of apprentice or work placement. It was also difficult to keep track of what seemed to be a constantly-changing programme of work-related initiatives.

It was agreed that much more could be done to co-ordinate activities and make the various schemes more easily accessible to employers.

Philip Welsh said that whilst it would be difficult to influence Government policy, there was an opportunity to co-ordinate efforts locally. He said that this could be picked up as part of the action plan being developed through the economic baseline study.

PW to discuss prior to the next meeting with Peter Legg and other interested parties.

6. Business Partnerships Report

Philip Welsh (Blackpool Council) reported on a selected number of items from the report issued in advance of the meeting:

Economic Baseline Study

He reported that members of the Blackpool Cabinet had now met to explore the economic baseline study and had drawn up their own list of economic priorities, many of which were of a similar theme to those drawn up by the BBLG at its November meeting.

He said the next step was to draw up a combined list of priorities that were then underpinned by clear actions. The list would also be aligned to the Fylde Coast economic strategy to ensure there was no conflict between the two.

He said he hoped to have a draft action plan for consideration at the March meeting.

Better Bus Fund

PW reported that he would be seeking expressions of support for a Blackpool Council and Blackpool Transport Services combined bid to the newly-announced Better Bus Fund.

He said the bid for up to £5m of funding would focus on bringing benefits to the town centre and tourism economies by:

- Installing bus priority traffic management controls to improve reliability of services
- Providing contraflow bus lanes in certain areas to allow key services to bypass one-way systems, again increasing reliability and potentially increasing frequency
- Defining a town centre bus and tramway interchange
- Improving town centre bus accessibility and upgrading passenger facilities

PW said he would contact relevant businesses over the next few days with further details of the bid along with a clearer indication of how they could support it.

Blackpool Tramway Extension

PW reported that some further exploratory work was being done on possible extensions to the seafront tramway, should additional funding become available at some point.

Among the options being looked at was an extension from Talbot Square up to Blackpool North Station, and a link to St Annes via the Blackpool South rail line.

As part of this exploratory work, consultants (from an organisation called SDG) have been asked to look at the potential economic impact of these options.

He asked the BBLG if he could provide SDG with some contact details so that they could interview a number of selected businesses in Blackpool. The group agreed to this.

It was anticipated that the interviews would be carried out in the early part of February.

Ministerial Visit

Members of the group expressed disappointment that the Tourism Minister had not responded to the letter from Howard Lewis about various suggestions that had been discussed to improve the visitor economy during the Minister's visit to Blackpool in November. It was agreed that a further letter be sent. **PW to co-ordinate this with Howard Lewis.**

7. Any Other Business

Protecting Blackpool's Bathing Beaches

Paul Breslin from Fylde Beach Care (part of the Keep Britain Tidy Group) gave a brief presentation on bathing water quality along the Fylde Coast.

He said that the latest report published in November 2011 had not been good with five beaches in Blackpool and Lytham St Annes failing quality tests.

He said that this may become an even bigger problem in years ahead when places with failed beaches would be required to display "Bathing Not Advised" signs, which could have a significant detrimental effect on the visitor economy.

Mr Breslin said that there were various initiatives underway to try to improve water quality in partnership with the three local authorities, United Utilities and the Environment Agency.

However, he said there were behavioural changes that individuals and businesses could make such as implementation of water usage saving schemes and water "harvesting" that could help reduce pressure on the drainage and sewerage network.

Any business interested in looking at such initiatives in more detail can contact him at:
paul.breslin@keepbritaintidy.org

Mr Breslin said that there was also some resistance to a proposed new pumping station at Singleton which would also alleviate some of the problems along the coast. He said the group might want to consider sending a letter of support for that investment to Fylde Council.

PW to co-ordinate a letter with Howard Lewis, chair of the BBLG.

Royal Appointment

John Barnett announced to the group that David Cam had that morning been formally appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire. The group warmly congratulated Mr Cam on the appointment.

8. Date and time of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for **8am for 8.30am, Friday 30th March, 2012** at The Revolution Bar, Market Street, Blackpool Town Centre (venue and car parking arrangements to be confirmed)