

## **CRIEFF SUCCEEDS BID LIMITED**

**Minute of an Open Meeting for all Levy Payers held on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, Strathearn Artspace, 7.30 p.m.**

**PRESENT BID Board Directors: Bob Anderson; Scott Bennett; Stuart Cassells; Neil Combe; Graham Donaldson, Chairman; William Frame; Simon Pengelley**

**ATTENDANCE: Alan Rankin, Acting BID Manager; Jean Ann Scott Miller, Board Secretary; Tom Flanagan, Perth and Kinross Council and 46 recorded Levy Payers**

**APOLOGIES BID Board Directors: David Agnew; Ailsa Campbell; Ann Cowan; Kate Graham; Stephen Leckie; Anne Younger**

1. Alan Rankin gave a brief review of the format for the evening.

### **2. Chairman's Report**

Firstly, I would like to thank you for coming tonight, it is important that businesses are interested in the future of Crieff and its economy.

It is exciting to realise just how far we have come in 12 months. The Business Plan was endorsed and supported by 70% of the businesses who voted, and a new board was voted in by the levy players to deliver the Business Plan.

I would like to thank the Board for all the hard work that has gone into setting up a new organisation. We have all given many hours, on a voluntary basis, without which there would be no plan and no way forward for Crieff.

As you will all understand, it is very difficult for a group of individuals who don't know each other to come together and work in an effective manner, and although there have been challenges, I can honestly say that the Board is now an extremely effective body.

I would like to thank Stephen Leckie, who put a huge effort into launching BID in Crieff, but due to work commitments could not continue as Chairman. He has been very supportive to myself as the new Chairman and the Board in general. Stephen continues as a Director and is fully supportive of our efforts to date.

I would also like to thank Andrew Cuthbert and Paul Attewell, who resigned during the course of the year. Andrew put a huge effort into a number of areas, including parking and traffic issues.

As you will all know, we have faced a huge challenge in the last few months and have had to find a new Manager for the BID. This has caused us to lose a lot of time in our first year, and none of us went down this route lightly. The Board and I are very confident that we have found a new Manager who will work in Crieff on a full time basis to ensure that the local economy is stronger. We are

delighted to introduce our new Manager, Neil Combe, who starts his role on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

I would also like to thank Alan Rankin, who has returned to help us over the last few months. He has worked tirelessly and efficiently to ensure we have a solid base for BID to build on as we go into Year Two.

The Board would also like to thank a number of Companies who have assisted us in our first year:

- Finlaysons, Accountants, have been very supportive, and ensure that our finances and budgets are up to date
- Miller Hendry, Solicitors, have also assisted us, particularly at the outset, when we needed a great deal of help to set up the Company
- pHReedom – Annie Leaver and her team have helped us greatly in shaping the recent recruitment process. (I believe she has a few special HR offers for Levy Payers, so please contact her directly for assistance with any HR issues you may have. Details are posted on the BID website [www.crieffsucceeds.com](http://www.crieffsucceeds.com))

In our reports tonight, you will see that we as a Board are being honest and open with everyone. The first year has been challenging, but all new organisations take a bit of time to find their feet. However, we have delivered on elements of the Business Plan and have set the foundations for the following four years.

As we built the Business Plan, we were promised considerable funds from Perth and Kinross Council to assist us, but their initial grant of £32,000 was cut in Year One to £12,000, and there is likely to be very little – if any – extra funding available over the next four years. As a result, we have had to cut our cloth to match that loss of revenue.

PKC has announced great plans for Perth City, budgeting £500 million on projects such as the City of Culture, renovation of the City Hall and Museum and many other projects, including the lighting of the city, but it does feel that the rest of Perthshire is being left to fend for itself.

On a positive note, PKC have assisted us in lots of other ways. They do pay a levy on all their buildings. They collect the whole levy free of charge, and, as you will hear later on, they are trying to sort out the Town Hall so that we can have a business hub and tourist office in the centre of Crieff.

The collection of levy payments is now working efficiently. We did have significant challenges on this front, and again, I would like to thank Alan for a huge amount of work to ensure that the levy payments are collected effectively. The BID Board has issued clear instructions to PKC that every effort must be made to recover due levies and nobody should be allowed off the hook. Not paying is just like cheating others who have paid.

Going forward, Crieff does face a lot of challenges, and I was very sad to hear that Frank Thomson's have closed their doors, but there is a great deal to be proud of in Crieff. We have a booming housing market; the food sector appears to go from strength to strength; we live in an ideal location to attract people from all over Central Scotland; we are in an area of outstanding natural beauty; we have attractions in and around Crieff no other area can boast – The Famous Grouse Experience, Crieff Hydro, Auchengarrich, Drummond Castle, Comrie Croft, golf courses that are wonderful, amazing specialist retailers, and shooting and fishing estates which bring huge revenue to the area. I am also delighted to welcome Jamie Landale and his wonderful plan to bring life back into the Square with his hugely ambitious plan to set up a destination deli and restaurant in the heart of Crieff.

On a personal note, I hope we can see the arrival of a new supermarket in Crieff, the present situation has rumbled on now for 12 years, and the time has come to sort this out very quickly. Aldi quoted in their planning application that 75% of current food spend goes outside Crieff. This is ripping the heart out of our town. It is up to us, all of us – not just BID, to make the most of what we have.

We recognise a number of areas where we have not been as effective as we would have liked. We have not come up to scratch with our communication strategy, and we aim to remedy that in the coming year.

Finally, ask yourself one question: if we don't push onwards with a plan such as ours, where will Crieff be in five or ten years from now?

By being here tonight, you show how much you care about our town. As our new brand says "Come Home to Crieff".

Let's make this work.

Thank you. I will now hand back to Alan to take us through the rest of the evening.

**3. Annual Update Presentation** Alan Rankin explained the rationale behind the Annual Update document. Within the Business Plan, four distinct areas of activity had been established – Marketing, Welcome to Crieff. Bottom Line, and Making it Happen. Sub-groups from within the Board were responsible for progress in each of these areas, and the relevant group leaders would lead the presentation, which would be followed by questions from the floor. A traffic light system had been used in the slides to demonstrate progress, or the lack of it. He invited Stuart Cassells to open the session.

### **3.1 Marketing – Stuart Cassells, Glenturret Distillery**

- Marketing group had taken strongly visionary approach to crucial area.
- Priority given to developing Crieff brand and logo. Following consultation and discussion, logo designed to encapsulate landscape and architecture of Crieff, with strap line "Crieff Feels Like Home". To be used in all future advertisement/marketing ventures – posters, videos, advertorials etc.

- Two brief sample videos shown – “Where to Eat”, and “Outdoor Things to Do”.
- BID to take control of Crieff’s digital footprint - Facebook and Twitter accounts established.
- crieffsucceeds.com website already operational.
- visitcrieff.scot to go live in a few weeks’ time - local business listings and information on events and activities.
- Phone app also being developed.
- Working with VOLPA, local marketing company. Plans evolving for major new event.
- Event Support Grants totalling £10,000 distributed, with five events receiving support.
- Scheme available to all events organisers - £17,000 budgeted for 2017.

### **3.2 Welcome to Crieff – Neil Combe, Carnelian Crafts, BID Manager designate**

- Business Plan a complex document.
- Group priorities Traffic/Parking and Business Improvement Grant programme.
- BID inherited new parking regime from other community groups.
- Detailed and helpful discussions with PKC on-going.
- Two-hour Free Parking to be extended to three hours.
- “First 15 minutes free” meters still under review in Perth, so no immediate change possible – on-going discussion.
- Need for vastly improved signage – on-going discussion.
- Support given to Crieff in Leaf and Christmas lights.
- Business Improvement Grants totalling £8,000 distributed.
- £10,000 available in current year.

### **3.3 Bottom Line – Simon Pengelley, Strathearn Artspace**

- 2015 Christmas event very successful – to be repeated in 2016.
- Networking meetings off to a slow start. Regular schedule of breakfast meetings to be established at Crieff Visitor Centre – occasional guest speakers to attract interest (inspirational or commercial).
- Communication weak over the year. Essential to harvest email addresses – cost of paper mailing at £350 unsustainable.
- Monthly Newsletter – brief, succinct, informative – to be established.
- Staff Loyalty Scheme investigated. Advice from other BIDs that not cost effective, not popular, not worth doing – abandoned.
- “Crieff Card” – local voucher scheme – work in progress. Board in discussion with local provider. Not yet convinced that scheme would be cost-effective. Possibility of linking with Perth card – would need evidence of local support.
- Initial attempts at group purchase unsuccessful. Further investigation of possible cost-savings in refuse collection – at present up to 9 different operators in Crieff on any given day. Spreadsheet to be issued allowing levy payers to compare utility prices.
- World Host Programme to be pursued – training for retailers/hosts/staff.

### 3.4 Making it Happen – Scott Bennett, Strathearn Gallery

- Appointment of Neil Combe as BID Manager – crucial step forward.
- Four vacancies on Board – applications invited in specific areas: finance, hospitality, trades, education, health. Possible involvement of youth. Open process.
- Membership – crucial to the BID’s development. Applications invited. No financial liability. Membership demonstrates commitment to the BID Company. Members eligible to vote at Annual Meeting.
- Communication admittedly poor during year. All sections of the Board committed to improvement.
- Town Hall – discussions on-going with PKC to secure use of the TH as BID office, business hub and modified VIC. Known that VisitScotland were leaving Crieff, but co-operation with BID had secured a delayed departure. PKC now committed to carrying out programme of repairs/refurbishment. Work to start in New Year, and occupancy expected in late spring.

**The presentation concluded at 8.30 p.m., and Alan Rankin opened the Q&A session.**

### 4. Open Forum

- **Q:** What percentage of income did the Business Improvement Grant total of £8,000 represent? **A:** Total income received £82,000. Sixteen applications submitted, not all successful.
- **Q:** What percentage of income remained uncollected? **A:** £82,000 collected from total of £98,000. £9,000 outstanding from businesses which had changed hands or gone out of business. Further £1,000 due from businesses which had made special arrangements. Twenty-eight businesses, owing approximately £8,000, had elected not to pay – these would be pursued under legal action.
- **Q:** Given the reduction in the budgeted grant of £32,000 from PKC, had they reduced any other due payments? **A:** PKC were the single biggest levy payer in the BID area. All these payments had been met in full.
- **Q:** The reduction in grant from the budgeted figure of £32,000 to £12,000 made the budget incorrect and misleading. If the true figure had been shown in the Business Plan, would this have affected the ballot? **A:** Impossible to say as the sum was committed at the time of the Business Plan being formed.
- **Q:** A figure of 70% support for the Business Plan had earlier been quoted. Did this mean support from 70% of eligible voters? **A:** No. Of an electorate of 312, the turnout headcount had been roughly 60%. Of these, 70% had voted in favour of the BID.
- **Q:** If PKC can get away with paying one-third of what they had pledged, can all levy payers take the same line? **A:** No. The grant was additional funding and PKC had met all their levy obligations. **Tom Flanagan, PKC, intervened to give the Council’s position and assure the meeting of continued support.**

- **Q:** What was BID doing to secure an inflow of businesses to vacant shops?  
**A:** Board believes that successful implementation of the Business Plan and the knock-on effect of re-establishing Crieff as a successful thriving community will encourage new business opportunities.
- **Q:** On what terms were PKC offering the use of the Town Hall? **A:** The Council would charge a peppercorn rent and were undertaking the full costs of refurbishment. No levy money would be involved.
- **Q:** The levy was compulsory. Given the established shortfall in income, would it be increased during the remaining four years of the BID? **A:** No. The levy had been detailed in the Business Plan and was fixed for the initial five-year programme. The Board had been prudent during Year One and would continue to work to provide value for money.
- **Q:** The Business Plan referred to the need for further external funding. What progress had been made? **A:** Applications for LEADER funding and other external sources were high on the Board's agenda. The major event anticipated for 2017 would require £75,000 external funding, and this was actively being pursued.
- **Q:** The issues of traffic and parking had been mentioned. What was actually being done? **A:** BID had inherited an agreed initiative. As stated, the Board was working closely with PKC to fine tune/improve the system.
- **Q:** A grant from PKC had just been awarded for the Drummond Arms. Did the group involved own the building? **A:** Not a question for BID. **A representative of Crieff Community Trust confirmed that public money had been given to the Trust to allow a feasibility study to go ahead. The Trust did not own the building.**
- **Q:** How had the recent appointment of the BID Manager been conducted? **A:** An open process. The post had been widely advertised. Six applications had been received, two of which had been for a part-time role. One very credible application came from someone at present resident in Canada, though proposing to relocate in Scotland, and had been time-barred. One applicant had withdrawn. The remaining two had been interviewed, and both had proved to be excellent candidates. After due consideration of all the relevant factors, the interviewing panel had selected Neil Combe.
- **Q:** Favourable reference had been made to the redevelopment of the former Edinburgh Woollen Mill. Would this business not have a hostile impact on established businesses in the town? **A:** Competition was a constant component in the retail arena. As earlier stated, Crieff's re-establishment as a thriving community would encourage competition and increase footfall.
- **Q:** Why had no attempt been made to tidy up the appearance of the empty shops? **A:** Costs had been obtained for installing window vinyls in the former Edinburgh Woollen Mill, and at £4,000 were unacceptable. Not always possible to secure the consent of owners, but the Board would continue to pursue this programme.
- **Q:** Why had the Board changed the goalposts on the brief for a promotional video? **A:** The Board had reviewed options, and decided on a proposal which provided best value for money.

- **Q.** Why were BID Board Minutes not timeously posted on the website? **A.** These were normally posted when issued. There had been a slight delay in posting the 6<sup>th</sup> September minutes, posted on 24<sup>th</sup> October.
- **Q:** Could BID act as an ambassador to attract new businesses to Crieff? **A:** Limited opportunities to act in a proactive role, but success and prosperity would bring their own reward.
- **Q:** Did the Board recognise the need for an over-arching policy on event support, to embrace all areas including cultural events? **A:** Yes.
- **Q:** When would the promised schedule of networking events begin? **A:** First week in December. Date to be confirmed.

**The meeting concluded at 9.15 p.m.**

Signed .....

Date .....