

## **Sandgate Business Forum**

Minutes of meeting 17/1/18 starting at 17.30 in Sandgate Library

### **Introductions**

Present were:

Paul Herring [Sandgate Trading]  
Tim Prater [Prater Raines & Parish Councillor]  
David [Portland Studio]  
Jo and Jeannette [Fabulous Nellie]  
Liz [L H Property]  
Jackie Wilkinson [Encore]  
Albane [Albane Studio]  
Robert Bliss [Parish Councillor and Sandgate Sea Festival]  
David and Karen [The Dog House]  
Jane Sharpe [Inn Doors Micropub]  
Patrick [The Village Store]

### **Sandgate Sea Festival Update**

Robert Bliss gave an update on the Sea and Food Festival and fireworks, which are being organised for August Bank Holiday weekend. The fireworks (and this year seafront band) are planned for the evening of Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> August, and the main market, entertainment stages and Festival on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August.

Updates for 2018 are that again there are likely to be more stands than 2017, it is planned to use Castle Road Car Park for stands and entertainment as last year, and there will be a range of stages along the sea front and also on the village green to seek to "pull" people onto the High Street.

The Forum then discussed the event.

The view was expressed that the event may feel more of a whole if the Fireworks ended the Festival on the Sunday night, rather than preceded it on the Saturday, with many "missing" the fireworks. It was understood that this increased the logistical challenge however, and that it essentially reduced the impact of the Festival from 2 days to one.

A range of ways of extended the Festival with local businesses and venues offering people more reasons to turn up earlier on Saturday (before the Fireworks) and stay later on the Sunday (after the Festival) as well as ways to encourage people into the High Street were discussed.

## ACTIONS:

- All businesses would be asked to think of an event / promotion / stall / display they could bring onto the High Street and around on the Saturday and / or Sunday and bring proposals to the next meeting.
- The Sea Festival Committee to be asked if they could get some entertainment / attraction near Sir John Moore Statue area to encourage “spread” and people walking down the High Street
- Suggestion that a Treasure Hunt requiring visits to / looking into local shops could be organised
- Noted that a full published programme / leaflet to be available in advance and on the day was a really useful tool for local businesses, especially if specific entertainments / events / promotions / stalls by businesses could be featured.

## **Business Forum Structure and Purpose**

The suggestion was that the Business Forum should feed thoughts, ideas and requests to the Parish Council who have some resources to support and promote business locally.

Robert Bliss suggested that the Forum should develop its own voice as an organisation to speak for local businesses.

Jane Sharpe offered to act as Secretary / write meeting notes for future meetings.

AGREED that meetings will be approximately 4 times a year, timed to plan towards events as required. The next meeting will be in March.

## **Future Events**

### **Flower display**

The recent history of the hanging basket scheme (and why they were removed from streetlights in 2017) was explained. There will be a display throughout the village and at the Golden Valley precinct in 2018, with displays going up in early May.

The colour scheme will be “Red, White and Blue” and there will be an offer to provide hanging baskets to shops and businesses at cost from the Council's supplier – the more businesses that take part, the more impact the displays will have. However if businesses wanted to arrange their own displays (especially in red, white, blue) that would also add to the impact and be welcomed.

### **Christmas Light Turn-on**

Although it was agreed that the Christmas Light Turn on was a good draw for people, at the Saga Pavilion it was felt it had little impact on the High Street and Village at this time.

It was discussed why the Pavilion is a good, safe venue for much of the vent (being away from roads, covered, large enough for 100's of people etc) and discussion focused on ways to encourage people to come down to the village after the Pavilion events. Suggestions included:

- a parade / procession from the pavilion down to the village after the event;
- Lights / trees on the pavement outside shops or on buildings;
- a firework display (similar to the Sea Festival display) after the lights turn-on event.

It was noted that a Firework display would cost somewhere in the region of £2,000, and that 20 sponsors paying £100 each would cover that cost.

### **Royal Wedding**

The suggestion of an event around the Royal Wedding was raised, but it was generally felt it wouldn't be a huge impact, especially on FA Cup Final day. Businesses were encouraged to have themed window displays instead.

### **Easter Egg Hunt**

Was proposed, with a number of people enthusiastic and some keen to focus on the Sea Festival and Christmas event in this year.

**ACTIONS** To contact local businesses and seek potential sponsors towards a Fireworks event. To bring suggestions of potential evening events after the light-turn-on and potential additions to existing decorations (such trees) and costs.

### **Parking**

The recently extended CPZ scheme was discussed. It was noted that the impact had been particularly harsh on staff of businesses who could no longer park for over 2 hours in much of the area. There were some positive and some negative views on the impact of the changes.

### **Wanted:**

- Request to Shepway to offer some sort of staff business permit;
- The new loading bay by 90 Sandgate High Street needs additional enforcement

- as it is currently regularly blocked by long term parking;
- Two Hour Free Parking signs to be made and put into local businesses to make it clear that visitor parking was FREE and available; [NOTE: these signs are now available and in a number of local shops: please contact Tim Prater at [tim@prater.org.uk](mailto:tim@prater.org.uk) if you haven't got one and would like one for your window]
  - Ask Saga about the status of their previous offer to allow free parking in their grounds at weekends. Is this offer still ongoing, and can we promote it to visitors?

### **Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 21 March in Sandgate Library, starting at 17.40.

It was agreed the next meeting would primarily focus on businesses input into the Sea Festival and Christmas events.

Marjorie Findlay-Stone would also be asked to attend and present on the Sandgate Society and the support it can offer to local businesses.