

Experience Guildford Annual General Meeting
Monday 19 October 2015
6.15pm The Guildhall, High Street, Guildford

Present:

Esther Dadswell – Chair / Chapters Financial	Alan Martin – Food for Thought
Keith Churchouse – Chapters Financial	Gordon Jackson – Guildford Borough Council
Carolien Jones – Mad Hatter	Geoff Davis – Guildford Borough Council
Richard Jaehme – Keystone	Nikki Nelson Smith – Guildford Borough Council
Nick Watterson – Alliotts	Sally Anne Lowe – G-Live
Jane Lyons – The Keep/Guildford Pub Watch	Ian Blyth – The Mandolay Hotel (late arrival)
Ken Storr – Waitrose	Nick Wyschna – Guildford Fringe
Philip Denning – Tom Fox	Darren Francis – House of Fraser
Lyn Adams – The Whisky Shop	Stuart Craggs – EG Night Time Economy Manager
Amanda Masters – EG General Manager	Charlotte Whitaker – Experience Guildford
Lauren Dunican – Experience Guildford	Rosie Duhig – Experience Guildford
Richard Fisher – Experience Guildford	

1. Welcome and Introduction

Esther Dadswell welcomed everybody to the second AGM and noted that it had been a very successful second year of operation and that everyone was looking forward to the year ahead. Thanks were given to all directors for their time and contributions.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Kevin Lorimer (Chair / The County Club), and thanks given to Esther Dadswell for stepping in to the chair for the AGM at short notice, Steven Sutton (Cry for the Moon), and Andrew Colborne-Baber (The Bear Garden).

3. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the AGM on 22 September 2014 were approved.

Proposer: Keith Churchouse

Seconder: Charlotte Whitaker

4. Election of the Board

The following member stood down:

Rachel Smith, House of Fraser

The following members are standing for re-election:

Kevin Lorimer, The County Club - Chair

Alan Martin, Food for Thought

Esther Dadswell, Chapters Financial

Keith Churchouse, Chapters Financial

Stephen Sutton, Cry for the Moon

Ian Blyth, The Mandolay Hotel

Andrew Colborne-Baber, The Bear Garden

Carolien Jones, Mad Hatter

Philip Denning, Tom Fox
Richard Jaeme, The Keystone
Jane Lyons, The Keep/Guildford Pub Watch
Cllr. Gordon Jackson, Economic Development and Tourism Guildford Borough Council
Chris Burchell, Economic Development Manager – co-opted

The following were proposed to the Board:

Chris Ogle, Electric Bikes Guildford
Darren Francis, House of Fraser
Ken Storr, Waitrose

Proposer: Stuart Craggs
Seconded: Philip Denning

5. Financial accounts overview

Nick Watterson from Alliotts reported that the accounts are solid, with £537k income and a surplus for the trading year of £48k. The income comes from the levy paid by BID members and voluntary joiners. As anticipated, costs had increased compared with the prior year due to spend on promoting Guildford. The surplus had fallen from last year as spending increased, which was as expected. The balance sheet showed a healthy £155k of net current assets which should reduce as funds are allocated. There were no issues arising from the audit. The Board approved the accounts and this was noted by the members.

6. Highlights of the second year of operation

Amanda noted that the programme which was rolled out originated from requirements of the members, and fell into 4 categories:

Marketing, promotions and events:

- Privilege card: launched in March 2013 for employees to use in the town centre, now with over 3,500 cards in circulation.
- Customer Service Awards: new categories were introduced in 2015 and hope to add more in 2016, and received 9,300 votes in 2015. The awards ceremony was held at G-Live. The Surrey Advertiser is media partner and that partnership is set to continue.
- Independents Day: celebrates independent shops and aims to drive footfall to Guildford. It is hoped to develop further in 2016.
- Website: gateway for businesses in Guildford and they can upload a link to their own website. It can be used for any offers, promotions, job vacancies and has social media links - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. The website receives 20k visitors per year.
- Urban Beach: a new event for 2015 which was successfully installed at the Electric Theatre with free giveaways (candy floss, face painting, modelling balloons). There are plans to develop and extend this project for 2016.
- TGIF Thank Guildford it's Friday: licensed venues give offers to attract people to the town on a Friday night. The measure of its success is that taxi marshalls have to be provided on Friday nights as well as Saturday now.
- Christmas Lights switch on: 19 November 2015 is switch on day with acts and singers, reindeer at the Rotunda, mascot parade, Guildford Fringe, pantomime stars and fireworks. 8-9,000 people are expected and the roads will be closed for longer. There are new lights in the town centre, with the old ones being installed further out.

- Little Book of Offers: to promote businesses and increase footfall, with 30,000 being printed this year. Competitions will be on the website as they do not increase footfall, so the book will be smaller in 2015 than last year. Launch day is 19 November at the Christmas light switch on of this successful initiative.
- Bid in Bloom: Experience Guildford entered the competition in 2014, however in 2015 it was felt that it was a drain on resources. The plan for 2016 is to buy extra hanging baskets, increasing the number from 80 in 2015 to 100 in 2016.

Safe, clean and welcoming

- Best Bar None: 2015 was the second year the awards scheme has run, and standards in licensed trade have been raised. There has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour. The Boiler Room has been invited to the House of Lords in recognition.
- Purple Flag Award: the second flag was awarded this year. Thanks were given to Surrey Police, Guildford Pub Watch, Surrey Fire and Rescue. The international Purple Flag Award recipients are coming to the Mandolay Hotel to celebrate.
- Town Rangers/Bluecaps: are ambassadors for Experience Guildford and walking information points and First Aid trained. They gather intelligence, deal with issues and problems and are well trusted in the community. Congratulations and well done.
- Taxi marshals: at the start of the BID they were funded for Saturday, and now as a result of initiatives, have been introduced on Fridays too. Crime and anti-social behaviour are down by 80%.
- Guildford Town Crime Reduction Partnership (GTCRP): an information station put out to the members, which has led to ASBOs being issued banning the culprits from the town for 2 years thus making the town a safer place. The system has been split into the day and night time economy.

Access and car parking

- New signage: funded by Surrey County Council from the Department of Transport; Experience Guildford bought 9 additional signs in areas not covered by the Surrey County Council fund.
- Parking: there are not enough parking spaces in the town, however if managed correctly, the system works. There will be free parking after 4pm on Thursdays in December for Christmas. Large shops will most likely remain open, but it is not so easy for smaller retailers because of the cost.

Business support

- Free training from industry experts for those who require it. Social media training and website development are most frequently requested, and are often oversubscribed.
- Engage Guildford: a programme of networking breakfasts which are well attended. It is a good opportunity for retailers to be able to get together.
- Vacant units: bold picture removable vinyls are used to brighten up the vacant units
- Experience Guildford App: in development and due out mid-November. It will have the same information as the website and include the Privilege Card, car park information, the history and heritage of buildings and arts and entertainment information. It will have the facility to be expanded.

7. Questions and Any Other Business

Ken Storr commented on how impressed he was with what Experience Guildford has implemented, to see how hard everyone works and the time put in, and congratulations to everyone.

8. Close

Amanda Masters thanked Lauren and Charlotte, Stuart, Rosie and Richard for their hard work this year.

Esther Dadswell thanked Experience Guildford BID for their hard work, the Bluecaps for being the eyes and ears in the town, Amanda Masters and her team for all their hard work in 2014-15 and long may it continue, and Kevin Lorimer for his hard work and encouragement.