**Truro Traders Meeting Minutes – 16th July 2020, 4pm**

Attendees: Taren-Lee Corin (TLC) - Truro City Council (TCC), Joanne Reed (JR) Bang & Olufsen, Steven Webb (SW) - TCC, Bert Biscoe (BB) – The Mayor of Truro, TCC, Mandy Hoare (MH) - Zafiros, John Weir (JW) - Grounded, Philippa Crome (PC)- M&S, Lee Moorhouse (LM) - CEX, Ashley Wilkinson (AW) – Flavour Vapour, Joy Arnold (JA) – Truro Taxi association, Jan Allen (JA) – Deputy Mayor, TCC, Nick Seaton Burridge (NSB) – Scott Burridge Associates, Deborah Wilson (DW) - Melange, Rob Nolan (RN) – TCC and Cornwall Council, Aaron (A) – Try Dowr Weatherspoons, Rachael Hammond (RH) – Chamber of Commerce, Karen Collett (KC) – Blend 71, Charlie Snell (CS) – Bread & Butter, Melissa Retallack (MR) – The Body Shop, Jonathan Morton (JM) - RCM, Anne Westgarth (AW) – Bridge St Barbers, Sean Johnston (SJ) – Philip Martin and Abi Steel (AB) – Visit Truro

Alun Jones (AJ), Sian Knights (SK), Lindsey Craik (LC) – Truro BID

**Welcome on Zoom, housekeeping and introductions.**

Update on Truro BID activities – see [www.trurobid.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.trurobid.co.uk/coronavirus) - 5 pages created.

**Communications & Signposting**

**LC from Truro BID gave an** update.
During Lockdown we responded to media and business queries, and liaised with Visit Truro, who have the public facing website and supported businesses open during lockdown. Through social media on Super Saver Monday we have promoted those businesses who have been able to trade and also through Truro Trend. We have some advertising space with Ad-smart displayed at Three Spires Medical Centre and the Park and Ride – saying Truro is open and to shop locally.

At the start of lockdown, we supported businesses in making sure they obtained their grants and for those over £51,000 in rateable value, shared with them about ‘Raise the Bar’ campaign. Engagement with the businesses has not been easy, as many were on furlough. Checked on as many businesses as possible to see how they were. We understand the grants of £10k and £25k were quick to come through for most.

With the ease of lock down, together with partners we created the Truro Reopen plan and we communicated this on BBC Radio Cornwall, did joint press releases, the B2B e-newsletter, social media and with Visit Truro to the public. We have kept informed with all of government announcements and updated this on the Truro BID website pages and social media too. We shared Cornwall Councils messages, including the Growth Hub survey – seeing how businesses were doing and this important data was then fed back in order for Cornwall to lobby for more funding. Surveys and asking your views are important.

**Operations**

**SK from Truro BID gave an** update. We worked with our partners, Truro City Council, Visit Truro and were supported by Cornwall Council Highways and Transport which enabled us to deliver a plan that we feel is appropriate for Truro. We consulted Truro businesses where we felt a temporary pedestrianisation should be in place. The Truro Reopen plan includes a basic signage system, with signs saying, ‘keep left’, ‘thank you for keeping part’, ‘single file, narrow passage’ and ‘welcome to Truro’. Nitoe manage the road closures at present. The plan came into operation on the 15th of June and is reviewed by a steering group every Monday. The Sunday road closures have been removed, as of 19th July and the road closure periods have been reduced from 10am-4pm to 11am-3pm as of the 21st July. We hope these shorter periods will assist businesses with their deliveries, as well as disabled and elderly people park before to access the banks.

The road closures have been paid for by the Reopening High Streets Safely’ fund and we will have spent our pot of £25k by around mid-August. By reducing the hours on the closures and dropping Sunday, means we can help facilitate social distancing for the summer period and influx of visitors.

The taxis were considered and they go down Princes Street and loop around the Loan soldier to exit via Princes Street. Had some problems with closing River Street – which was reviewed and reopened. We have an economic and health crises and by having the roads temporarily pedestrianised has meant the public/customers have felt safe, being able to keep apart. Weve also been stencilling on pavements where people should stand to queue and adjusting queues and directions where necessary.

**TLC** from Truro City Council added. We have never done this before and it has been trial and error, we have adapted the plan each week. We have tackled the traders in Pydar Street to ensure there is space for customers to pass. Lemon Quay is operating the Truro Farmers Market on Wednesday and Saturdays and this is proving popular. We have ensured there is sufficient space and made sure we have actively liaised with businesses to ensure that there are no problems with the movement of people.

**AW –** since the road closures New Bridge Street has been struggling significantly – like we did when there was the fire incident in St. Marys Street. **BB/AJ to look into a general sign to point to New Bridge Street. AJ/SK liaise with Nitoe and remove the barrier.**

**MH** – shutting off Duke Street is of no benefit for the businesses. **AJ/SK/TC inform Nitoe to remove barrier/cones and sign and to let the taxis go through New Bridge Street again.**

**JR** – The road closures damaged Senso Systems in terms of deliveries/customer service, felt that they were not informed. **SK to add JS to weekly e-newsletter and check if Marcus is still on it. JR said if possible a letter/leaflet please. Senso Systems now following Truro BID on facebook.**

**BB –** With regards to New Bridge Street – river wall being repaired behind and there are some new units that will make the wheelie bins look nicer and little less smelly. There could be a sign from the car park, pointing to New Bridge Street to promote some access. **BB after the river works complete, help to persuade car parks to give directional sign. BB/AJ/AS liaise for design concept (fitting in with navigational signage at present).**

**BB** – with the Truro Reopen plan, the temporary pedestrianisation will assist the summer season with the movement of people ad queues. Both safety and trade are important. BB understands businesses need to front load and need access. BB thanked Kristian, Chair of Truro BID, as well as LC and AS for the press. **All - we all want Truro to be a cheerful, positive and welcoming place.**

**AJ** – Bunting is up and hanging baskets look beautiful.

**JA** – Truro is a weather led location, when schools break up there will be even more people. General feedback is that the pedestrianisation is welcome. When masks come into enforcement, the situation will change.

**Truro Safe**

**AJ** update – OPCC given Truro a grant of £8.5k for a 10 week cover over the summer for 30 hours of two security officers, to help address antisocial behaviour, as well as CCTV day time monitoring. **Please continue to report on email: 101@dc.police.uk.BB added**– We received this investment in Truro, as during lockdown children have not been at school and there have been serious issues e.g. increase in drugs, domestic violence and Devon and Cornwall Police has not had enough resources and have managed to obtain 500 extra hours of overtime, which is a significant investment – as police critically under resourced. The next issues will be management of street dwellers and safety.

**Langarth**

The development included the Hendra Retail application, it was rejected by Cornwall Council under the first application, then there was an extended version with a retail element and the partners, including Truro City Council objected. Truro BID to keep on top of this.

**Truro Town Fund**

One of four towns with a £25m investment plan, put to cabinet in Nov 2020, to fund up to £25m, gov will release against the criteria. All underway, just rationalising projects and will put to cabinet.

**Funding/Support to Cornwall Businesses in response to COVID-19**

Second tier £13m all distributed by Cornwall Council. Several Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the discretionary fund, which amounts to £20mn and Cornwall Council would like to pay this out and keep it in Cornwall. The first round of funding was well distributed, then there was money left over and Cornwall Council could use it to fund other businesses, however need to wait for permission, all forms there, all ready to go.

**Hospitality**

**AJ** – Limited in terms of putting on public events and encouraging gatherings. Would businesses like to focus on safety, how safe Truro feels. Any suggestions?

**Aaron** – Wetherspoons not doing too badly, only 4% down on this time last year, so not that far behind, pleased with how reopening has gone.

**RN** – from a licensing perspective – we have the new pavement licence that will allow you to put tables and chairs on the pavement. This applies to pubs or cafes. There will be more information w/c 20 July. You can apply for a licence, we have not seen the form yet. Cormac/Highways use to be responsible for this area and now it will come under the Licencing department. Cornwall Business Regulatory Authority have run webinars and had 18,000 attend them. The licensing team aims to be supportive. The licensing team were in Truro 15th July and were impressed with the Truro businesses and what they saw.

A-frames – this is ambiguous and is the responsibility of licensing and Highways. Yesterday businesses were spoken to, a light tough, just a chat. No £80 fine or chuck it away in a van. The A frames need to not be an obstruction. We do not want to take your advertising away, we want to make the environment safe for people to navigate.

Government announced its ‘Eat Out to Help Scheme’, to encourage the public to spend. Businesses will need to register and Visit Truro will support.

**Aaron** – Noted there has been an increase in takeaway food and people wanting to sit in the fresh air outside, where they feel more comfortable. Is there any way of exploring tables/chairs – an area for the public to do this? **AJ/TC – who would monitor/clean the tables and put away. What about the seagull mess. Not much space once the Farmers Market is on there. AJ/TC to explore if more bins possible/emptied more regularly?**

**Visit Truro and Visit Cornwall**

**AS** update. VT has been promoting Truro businesses on the homepage, those who were doing takeaways during lockdown, as well as social media which was timed to go out for the weekend. Team worked hard in updating all the details. It was a struggle to get the information from the businesses.

Summer Guide of 40,000 usually distributed, including at key places in Cornwall, but this did not happen. In this guide there are many businesses listed for free.

What is there to do in Truro? RCM, Hall for Cornwall, Shelter Box, and Library closed, no children’s entertainment in the parks. Cathedral just reopening and Player Ready, but not much else, beside retail and hospitality – looking at the whole visitor experience.

From a Visit Cornwall perspective, every tourist spends 19p in Cornwall of their £1. The visitor spend will be significantly down from last year. Campsites, caravan parks running at 50%. Self-catering is more popular, with visitors bringing their own food with them. Usual spend is £170m for food and drink and it will be half of this. Cornwall is seeing cancellations, rather than rebooking. Seeing a 30% drop in less visitors, half the spend. Returning customers not liking the changes and new customers do not know better.

Visit Cornwall is working with all Cornish Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) to see how to get people to town centres. Thinking of themed days, as most events cancelled, such as ‘Foodie Fridays’, ‘Made in Cornwall Mondays’ through to March 2021. Looking at targeting the early local retired market. Visit Cornwall has applied for a grant for the Greater South West, which will be a national campaign in August, alongside the theme days which will run to March 2021. Visit Cornwall will work with local press to elevate Truro and Cornwall. There is a poster to say visitors are welcome, spend your money here. With the Cornish twist, ‘One and All’ plus the town logo and BID logos. Overall consumers are still nervous and it is all about customer service and building confidence. Finally we will be producing a film for Truro.

**Royal Cornwall Museum**

**JM –** will reopen 12th September. Roof project complete and scaffolding will come down. We want the museum to be a safe space, valued by the community. RCM will be free for the first 6 months.

**Christmas**

**DW** – Truro has declined over the past years and the quality shops have gone. High Cross looks run down. DW colleague who has lived in Truro all her life, says she is upset by how Truro is looking. BB replied, that he agrees. A problem with the old Post Office building. Perhaps the Warrens bakery will get a tenant. There is an issue with rental values and property. Biffa are doing a sterling job of keeping Truro clean. **JA said she would investigate the songs around the tree/ carols and see what else we can do to rekindle that atmosphere. TC** said she had spoken to Sean at the Cathedral recently and before COVID-19 they had some great ideas.

**DW** – So many empty premises in Truro, such as Hotter, Treds, Thorntons, Carphone Warehouse and Laura Ashely….and more to close.

**LC** – With regards to the empty premises we are exploring putting vinyl’s in two units old Hawkins Bazaar and Anne Summers, however one has a homeless person and the other needs repair, before these are placed in there. Tricky with owners in London and property managers in Bristol. Also explored putting a vinyl in the Post Office, but not much luck with response yet. **LC/AJ looking into getting the empty unit windows cleaned from seagull mess. Also exploring pop up shops to fill empty units.**

**Joy A** – Many years ago, Truro had a fairground organs, bell ringers, stilt walkers, jugglers at Christmas. Joy would like to see more entertainment, rather than markets. **AJ/SK to explore costs Swamp Theatre, Perrenwell Bell ringers.**

**AW** – Could we have stalls in New Bridge Street for Christmas? TC Unfortunately we need to make sure emergency access can pass for this to happen.

**AJ** – perhaps no markets this year and the create atmosphere with entertainment.

**KC** – Asked to explore using Lemon Street for the markets. SK/AJ/TC this could be feasible, as requires less closure points and is a wide enough street for emergency access vehicles.

**LM** – Asked to explore River Street. SK replied that due to the buses, especially park and ride, this would not be easy to do. The Park and ride bring people into Truro.

**JW** – Asked could we use continental style huts. SK the issue is that the markets are put up and down and not therefore consecutive days. That is why the gazebos have been used in the past. We are exploring using this style on Lemon Quay and perhaps elsewhere this year.

**Car Parking**

**LC** has asked Councillor Geoff Brown. **AJ** explained that CC need the income from the car parks and Truro BID has campaigned to avoid increases. Just Park app means car parks cost as little as £2.26 per day to park. LC has asked CC to promote the Just Park App, as not a lot of people know about it. BB, CC taken a big hit in terms of revenue. **BB** has campaigned to have a window for free e.g. 11am-2pm, to delay bringing the car park fees in and campaigned to keep it free. Free parking would help on key trading days. **All please write to the local MP and Minister of Transport – those at the top.**

AW - £8 to park in Moorfield all day is too much. Also the Traffic Wardens have become increasingly strict and are hawking. Many businesses do deliveries and use the loading bay, it takes longer than 5 mins to do this. **BB please give me the ID number of the traffic warden and will look into it. BB also said it is important for customers to plan their visits.**

**USP**

**SJ** - What makes Truro different to any other high street, as most high streets have a Primark, Cathedral and museum? We could be more of a heritage city. We need to know what the businesses are doing, are they doing things differently and uniquely.

**SW** – It’s all about the experience and enrichment one feels from their visit. Bigger experiences, means visitors will linger longer.

**TC** – We are collectively working on a wider strategy all about events and experiences to collaborate more with various stakeholders across the city, to share experiences and layer in what we can do together.

**MR** – All about customer service. Since opening Bodyshop has done away with its discounts and have been trading better than before. Despite a 30% drop in footfall, they have improved their average spend from £15 to £22. By service on the door, we have turned this into an opportunity to sell and engage with customers.

**All agreed that we want Truro to be a place that we are proud of and we want it to thrive and look its best, we all want what is best for Truro.**

**AJ** – thanked those for attending.

Close