

**OSWESTRY BID
OPEN MEETING
Tuesday, 23rd April 2019**

PURPOSE:

- **Outline Progress in Year 1**
- **Discuss Plans for Year 2 and Beyond**
- **Respond To Any Questions**
- **Take On Board Any Ideas and Comments On How To Better Serve Our Levy Payers**

YEAR 1

- Recruited full time BID Manager
- Expanded the Board Director numbers from 5 to 9
- Started work on dedicated website to promote the town and direct customers/clients to businesses in the BID Area
- Completed an audit on road signage on main routes coming into and around Oswestry
- Selected the preferred provider and developed a scope of work and costing for a footfall monitoring system that includes free WiFi for the town centre
- Committed to supporting a number of local events to help promote and expand these events to promote Footfall and commerce

Year 1



YEAR 2

- Develop & expand website (OneOswestry) & national campaign
- Footfall monitoring network & free WiFi live by summer of 2019
- Develop & distribute regular updates on commercial activity
- Support & promote local events to raise footfall & commerce
- Work with evening & night time businesses to grow footfall & commerce activity & pursue Purple Flag status
- Work with Local Authorities & other agencies to identify opportunities to improve & add to Public Realm & green spaces
- Work with Oswestry Town Council & Shropshire Council on an improved traffic management system & wayfinding
- Improve current CCTV coverage & extend / expand coverage down into the industrial areas

Year 2



Some questions asked and answered at the meeting:

- How does Footfall help business? *Provides key data to help businesses plan and improve.*
- Is tourism included as 'business'? *Yes.*
- Are CICs allowed as members? *Yes.*
- How would the hillfort, for example, fit with the new One Oswestry website? *Would be picked up under tourism.*
- Costs of WiFi/footfall project? *Proposed £100,000 over 3 years (capital & operating costs).*
- Could Mile End Tourist Information Centre be re-opened? *Not in its present location.*
- Could free WiFi map include the bus station? *We will look at the feasibility of inclusion.*
- Will 5G mean that wifi is old-tech? *No, trend is for growth of free WiFi along side 5G.*
- Data is all well and good, but how are we going to bring people to Oswestry? *Dedicated website and marketing campaign.*
- What numbers do you estimate will visit Oswestry? *We don't know how many people visit Oswestry, how often or for how at the moment. The whole point of the Footfall project is to measure and monitor this.*
- How do we use the data to attract new shops? *Once we better understand Footfall patterns and trends we can use this to help market opportunities for new investment.*
- As a BID Levy Payers what access to data am I going to get? *Levy Payers will receive regular updates and briefing meetings.*
- What if non-BID Levy Payers want access to data? *Become Voluntary Levy Payers.*
- What about the Live/Work approach? *We will explore opportunities for this, particularly in vacant properties around the town centre.*
- Can we look to connect Oswestry to the main line railway? *We will explore this with the relevant parties.*
- Could we have a shuttle bus service to meet the trains coming in? *Part of the overall discussion regarding better transport links for the town.*
- What would Directors say brings people to town? *Businesses that offer experiences and access to non-essential shopping items (i.e. food & drink and independent boutique shops).*
- We need investment in the town's public realm. *Agreed, there are number of current initiatives that we are supporting and working with Local Authorities on longer term schemes.*
- As map boards are replaced can I help with proof-reading. *Yes please.*
- Can we put a feedback form on the new website? *Will do.*

Some points made:

- TICs and brochures are still an important piece of the tourism puzzle.
- 35,000 brochures printed, 19,000 distributed nationwide.
- Rangers/Ambassadors work well in other towns.
- The footfall data will give us a benchmark and allow production of a growth report on the town.
- Footfall tracking can be deployed in any areas.
- View is that use of free WiFi will continue to grow in parallel with 5G.
- Experience is key in towns e.g. IKEA bringing in shops to see products and buy online.
- Tourism website having 33% visitor increase annually.
- What you don't measure, you don't know.
- There are pockets of data in town, but nothing like Footfall data.
- We are competing with towns that have this data to encourage investors or simply to better shape policy.
- With footfall data businesses can make informed decisions.
- BID working with Councils on the idea of incubation units for new business.

- Staff recruitment and retention is a critical issue for local business.
- When number of trains coming through Gobowen increases, this is a great opportunity for Oswestry to capitalise.
- BID looking to facilitate meetings with transport partners.
- What we need is an Oswestry masterplan, vision, pictures sell vision to public.