



ALSTON MOOR BUSINESS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Date/Venue: Wednesday 13 May 2020, 6pm, online via Zoom

Present: Ian Grey (Chair), Janis Goodfellow, Gina Perryman, Elaine Edgar, Lesley Mearns, Guy Harmer, Gary Wright
Apologies: Andy Holt

Minutes of committee meeting held on 15 April 2020

Agreed, with no matters arising. **Action for Gina** to publish on the website. All action points discharged, or carried forward as detailed below.

Finance and Membership

Janis presented the latest finance figures. Limited changes since the last meeting in light of the free membership offer. £872 remains in the United Utilities grant fund. The only current expense is our Zoom account, and it was agreed that we should continue to subscribe to this for as long as we need. Gina has sent the Committee instructions on how to use the account, and reminded everyone that we have unlimited group meetings, and no restriction on their length, so make the most of it for any purpose.

Free Membership Offer

6 new members have joined, and several more are known to be on their way. All have had their profiles added to the website. **Action for Gina** to remind all members to get theirs on.

Gina had circulated a list of potential members. Janis has some edits to make to this, and will re-circulate with those; **action for Janis**. We can then decide how to approach these businesses. A lot on that list are farmers, and we wondered if that sector already have a business group, e.g. as NFU members, whether there was any value to them of AMBA membership. Elaine suggested that maybe the Show Committee could join, and disseminate matters of interest to the farming community; **action for Elaine** to contact the Show Committee.

Front Street Steering Group

Gina reported that she'd received notice from the Steering Group yesterday that the trial panel, due to be laid at around this time, was not now going to be laid until 'later this year, post lockdown'. The actual carriageway work, dependent on the success of the trial panel, is being pushed back from Summer 2020 to Spring 2021. AMBA, which is part of the Front St Steering Group, was not consulted on this decision. We agreed unanimously that we should push for the work to go ahead as originally planned in 2020. **Action for Gina** to set up a video meeting between the AMBA steering group members and Claire Driver.

Marketing Group sub-committee

The sub-committee met via Zoom on 29 April to see what we can do in the short-term. Various activities are being progressed, and the group will meet again at the end of May. Guy has invited accommodation providers to form a group, and so far 14 of the 28 contacted have responded positively.

Heritage Open Days Group sub-committee

Guy, as Chair of this group, said there is still interest in putting 10-12 events on, although Andy Holt has advised that Alston Town Hall won't be getting involved. Ian had been in communication



ALSTON MOOR
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

yesterday with the national HODs team. There is still a hope from them that HODs will go ahead, but maybe in a virtual format. They said a national decision will be made in June as to (a) whether HODs will go ahead and (b) if so, what format it will be in.

United Utilities sub-committee

There is one grant currently being considered by the sub-committee.

After the last minutes went out, a member asked that we minute the organisations who have benefitted from grants. It was agreed that we would publish the organisations, but not the amounts, on the website. **Action for Janis** to provide a list to Gina to go on the website.

Action for Ian to meet with UU to see if they will allocate more funding (once the time is appropriate to do so). Carried forward, as not appropriate yet.

Facebook

After some discussion it was agreed that it was appropriate for our 2 Facebook Pages (AMBA and Visit Alston Moor) to join Facebook Groups. Admins for those Pages are responsible for deciding which Groups to join, based on the following policy.

The Facebook Group promotes AMBA, its members, and Alston Moor in a responsible, positive and inclusive way, demonstrating values that we would wish to associate our Pages with.

In cases of doubt or concern, Admins will consult the Committee for guidance.

There had been some issues with one local Group. Having consulted with the members who had raised concerns with the Committee, in light of the fact that the posts causing distress had been taken down, Ian did not contact the Group Admin, but would be prepared to do so should Members ask for support in the future.

Coronavirus Recovery Plan

The Marketing Group are looking at specifics in relation to what we can do to help businesses get back on their feet, and lots of information continues to be circulated to members via regular emails. In terms of Alston Essentials, raised at the last meeting, AMBA would be happy to play an advisory role in this, and offer support where possible, but it would be for those behind the scheme to progress it. Elaine will be liaising with those concerned.

Ian represents AMBA on the Alston Moor Emergency Response Group, and reported that that group has a really good committee who are doing an incredible amount of work, and operating very efficiently.

AOB

Potential MP visit – Janis reported that South Tynedale Railway have been in contact with Neil Hudson's office, and they were interested to learn of AMBA. Neil is keen to visit STR and the wider Alston Moor business community when he can, and Janis will keep in touch to arrange that. **Action for Janis**.

People and Places Survey – the annual report on Alston Town Centre has just been provided to AMBA. Key areas highlighted for improvement are car parking and cobbles reinstatement. The data is also helpful for our Shop Local campaign; over half the Alston Town Centre businesses who completed the survey reported lower takings and profit in 2019 compared to 2018, which is a worrying trend. Ian is in touch with Yvonne Wells from Eden DC, who commissioned the survey, to give



feedback on its use to us and to ask them what they propose to do with it. **Action for Ian** to report back to the Committee.

Date of next meeting

Next meeting after 1 June, which is the Government's next key milestone date in terms of the recovery strategy; **action for Gina** to agree suitable date, with a time of 6pm so Andy can join us.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.