

BRENTWOOD BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP GROUP VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

27 October 2020, 6pm – 8pm

PRESENT:

Brentwood Business Partnership Group:

Mike Hawkins	MHa	Chair, BBP
Alan Jefcoate	AJ	Vice Chair, BBP
David Barnes	DB	FSB
Cllr Gareth Barrett	GB	Brentwood Borough Council
Martyn Hart	MHt	Ingatstone Trade Cluster Representative
Cllr David Kendall	DK	Brentwood Borough Council
Cllr Roger McCheyne	RM	Brentwood Borough Council
PC Alex Plakhtienko	AP	Essex Police
Kaye Thurgood	KT	Central Shenfield Trade Cluster Representative
Support group		
Nishat Amin	NA	Brentwood Borough Council
Laurie Edmonds	LE	Brentwood Borough Council

APOLOGIES:

Helen Arran, Paul Beresford, Anne Elliss, Dan Foley, Tracey Lilley, Vickie O'Donoghue, Nish Patel, Nicky Smith, Daniel Cannon, Cllr Noelle Hones, Kim Anderson, Finula Crowe, Paul Mason-Hughes, Ian Southgate, Sarah O'Sullivan, Annie Sid, Nicki Treffers, Phil Drane

		Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>MHa welcomed all present and guest speaker PC Alex Plakhtienko from Essex Police.</p> <p>MH lead BBP members in paying their respect to former councillor and BBP member John Kerslake. KT and NP would like to register their gratitude to John in particular with all the work he was involved in with the community and businesses in Shenfield.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes from 15 September 2020</u></p> <p>Colin Barber requested to add his apologies to the minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>The rest of the minutes were agreed as a correct record.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p><u>Chairs Report</u></p> <p>Previously circulated and noted.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>Essex Police update - PC Alex Plakhtienko</u></p> <p>PC Alex Plakhtienko reported that Essex Police had established a new business crime unit in 2020 which adapted to the changes in regulations for businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>A business against crime strategy was also established with the objective to increase reporting of business crime. Alongside this, the other objectives were to increase confidence in businesses, improve crime prevention and to help strength partnership working. The vision was to create a safe and secure community where local businesses can thrive.</p> <p>Currently working on a criminal behaviour audit scheme, in which audits are placed on persistent offenders to help put sanctions in place such as banning an individual from a specific store.</p> <p>Business crime unit operation to tackle fuel theft, which has done well as there has been a reduction in thefts in petrol stations.</p> <p>Current campaigns includes crime reduction booklet to be launched soon, crime prevention advice for businesses over the Christmas period and the implementation of business pastors to deliver and act as a contingent between the police and businesses.</p> <p>CB mentioned Brentwood Chamber's new initiative 'Brentwood Connect' which is replacing the previous Town Link Radio, as a radio communication system between retailers on the high street. The new scheme run by Shop Safe is currently in a trail period for three months and incorporates cameras which can help lead directly to prosecutions if need be.</p> <p>DK shared an issue he has heard from residents on shopper safety and that not many police officers are visible walking on Brentwood High Street.</p> <p>AP responded that there are a high number of COVID-19 related reports in town centres and high streets with police officers patrolling in vehicles mostly. However the police need for businesses to report crimes more often. This allows the police to look at crime reporting data and deploy more frequent patrols in those areas.</p> <p>KT suggested that retailers could benefit from a simple guide to managing customers during COVID-19, for situations such as managing customers who refuse to wear a facemasks in store.</p>	

	<p>AP responded to say that his team would look into creating a flyer for businesses which would act as a guide on how to deal with situations and the relevant contact information for the police.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Update on 5 October PRED workshop to prioritise High Street recommendations</u></p> <p>LE summarised the outputs of the PRED workshop to prioritise High Street recommendations. It was agreed that there needs to be a focus on marketing, diversification, wayfinding & signage, car parking, enlivenment and broadband. Brentwood Borough Council are intending to commission Savills Place to hold a series of marketing workshops with key stakeholders in order to create new branding and comms plan to take forward and outline the marketing strategy.</p> <p>KT sees that some of the chosen recommendations are already in progress by BBP such as diversification, enlivenment and marketing, therefore it is great that BBP is and continues to be involved in the work to help the high streets thrive and succeed.</p> <p>KT was also pleased that signage and wayfinding were identified as key recommendations from the workshop, which is seen as an issue that has not made much progress in the past.</p> <p>DK offered his assistance to KT and the rest of the BBP members in regards to raising specific highway related issues such as signage to the Brentwood Local Highways Panel.</p> <p>CB added that marketing and enlivenment of the borough is seen as the important recommendations from Brentwood Chamber's point of view.</p> <p>DK highlighted that car parking was also a key recommendation from the audit and encouraged BBP members to put across their views and the businesses they represent on car parking in Brentwood, whether that may be charges, capacity etc, whilst the new Brentwood car parking strategy is being developed.</p> <p>DB advised BBP members to consider what other high streets and town centres across the UK are considering regarding the lack of diversity and equality between the high street retailers, SMEs and the large multinationals in out of town shopping areas. In addition there is also a growing trend that town centres are becoming social spaces to help accommodate residents who are now working from home and require access to local amenities and working space.</p> <p>KT added that the Savills Place Audit report was commissioned pre COVID-19 and could not take into account the effects of the increase in people working from home. Car parking and signage may become more important in town centres and high streets than ever before.</p>	

	<p>Shenfield High Street retailers have seen an increase in footfall from local customers throughout lockdown, as they are spending their lunch hours and breaks in the high street. Therefore it is important that the correct signage and car parking facilities are in place to meet the changing demand.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Update on the Brentwood Open Facebook Group & marketing group</u></p> <p>LE announced that Savills Place will be leading three marketing workshops with 12 key stakeholders across Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone to help develop and define the new 'Brand Brentwood', which would tie in with BBP's ongoing discussions around the marketing strategy for the Brentwood Open Facebook group.</p> <p>On behalf of Finula Crowe, LE asked BBP members present what their collective view is on making Brentwood Open only eligible for businesses that have a physical presence, e.g. excluding any online only or home-based businesses.</p> <p>The collective view of the members present was that the Brentwood Open Facebook group should not exclude businesses who have no physical presence, as this would prove very difficult to manage.</p> <p>MH also added that if the brand is to be expanded and exploited further, then the aim of the group should be to embrace more businesses in the borough, rather than block businesses.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Council Executive Report</u></p> <p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex has moved into Tier 2 (High alert) On 17 October, Essex County Council area moved tier 2 level (high). This does not include Southend and Thurrock who are still on tier 1 (medium). One of the key High alert restrictions impacting businesses is that people must not socialise with anybody outside of their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place. • New government hospitality, leisure and accommodation grant scheme On 22 October, the government announced that it will be providing additional funding to allow local authorities to support businesses in Tier 2 areas which are not legally closed, but which are severely impacted by the restrictions on socialising. Eligible businesses will receive up to £2,100 per month that the area stays at the 'High alert' level. 	

	<p>Brentwood Council is awaiting further guidance about how the scheme will be administered, how much money we will be given to distribute and what the expected timescale for delivery will be.</p> <p>LE will provide BBP members with more information about the grant scheme as soon as it is published.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>New Essex County Council hospitality grant scheme Essex County Council received confirmation from the government on 22 October that it would receive funding of £4.5m as a result of moving into High local COVID alert level. This funding will be specifically earmarked for supporting vulnerable groups and for certain workplaces. A new grant fund aimed primarily at the hospitality sector is likely to come forward in November.</p> <p>LE will provide BBP members with more information about the grant scheme as soon as it is published.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Kickstart scheme Aimed at creating new placements for 16-24 year olds at risk of long term unemployment, the Kickstart Scheme will provide employers with full funding for 25 hours of wages for 'Kickstarters'. Brentwood Council is still exploring options for how we can support local SMEs who need to partnered with other businesses to create the required minimum of 30 Kickstart placements.</p> <p>LE will provide BBP members with more information about Essex Kickstart gateway organisations as soon as details are confirmed.</p> <p>Planning Policy</p> <p>The Local Development Plan examination continues. There will be public hearings from 1-4 December 2020 with further hearings scheduled for February 2021. The hearing sessions will be available for the public to watch on the internet via YouTube.</p> <p>NA will send the YouTube link to BBP members.</p> <p>Corporate Enforcement</p> <p>A new COVID Tasking Group has been set up to bring together Essex Police and the Council's Corporate Enforcement, Licensing and Economic Development teams to help support local businesses now that we are in Tier 2 (High alert).</p>	<p>LE</p> <p>LE</p> <p>LE</p> <p>NA</p>
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	<p>Corporate Enforcement, Licensing and Essex Police have been out making joint visits to licensed premises to make sure they understand the legislation and steps they need to take to be compliant.</p> <p>Corporate Enforcement continues to do over 90 hours of patrols each month. Since lockdown, they have issued 210 penalty charge notices, primarily for vehicles parking on the pavement.</p> <p>NA to send Corporate Enforcement infographics to BBP members.</p>	NA
8.	<p><u>Business Trade Clusters Update</u></p> <p>Brentwood Cluster & Baytree Progress Update No update from the Baytree Centre.</p> <p>Shenfield Upper and Central Progress Update KT reported on behalf of Nish Patel that some businesses are performing well whilst others such as hair and beauty are suffering.</p> <p>Hospitality businesses are facing difficulties with the restrictions. However many have adapted and adjusted their service quite well in order to continue trading with the changing restrictions.</p> <p>Shenfield traders continue to see a high footfall numbers due to customers, who would normally be working in London, are now working from home and shopping locally.</p> <p>Ingatstone Cluster Progress Update MHt reported that businesses are looking forward to the Nutcracker trail, and best dressed Christmas window with the application form now complete.</p> <p>The sorting office and post office looks set to close, which is a concern to the businesses on the High Street.</p> <p>Ingatstone & Fryerning Parish Council have established an economic development working group that will discuss matters relating to the local economy and Ingatstone High Street.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Report on Recent Activities from Chamber</u></p> <p>CB reported that the member spotlight Zoom webinars are proving to be very popular, The next session is with Robin Bailey (former BBC Sport reporter) from Capricorn Media.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Report on Recent Activities from FSB</u></p> <p>DB reported that the FSB are continuing to support businesses in</p>	

	<p>areas such as insurance, late payment scheme and FSB Care (mental health). They are encouraging business partnerships and councils to provide mental health support for businesses who are struggling or have had to close due to COVID-19.</p> <p>The FSB are also continuing their weekly networking event, as well as business webinars for business support and advice. To view the latest events from the FSB, please visit: https://www.fsb.org.uk/event-calendar.html or contact David at david.barnes@fsb.org.uk.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Bid Applications</u></p> <p>Ingatestone Best Dressed Window Competition Mht explained that the competition runs every year for children up to 11 years old, in which they are to view and judge the shop windows in Ingatestone High Street. I&FPC then collect the votes of the best dressed shop from and each entry form from the children is added to a raffle with five winners announced.</p> <p>MH and rest of the BBP members present agree to go forward with the competition which will be sponsored by the BBP at no cost.</p>	
12.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 8 December, 6pm – 8pm

Location: Via Zoom