

BID4OBAN Newsletter



BID4Oban Ltd

July 2013

Issue: 6

News from the BID Office!

The Continental Market

As a result of the clear breaches in licence at the recent continental market held in station square, BID4OBAN received a number of complaints from our members regarding the situation, and we acted accordingly.

Although the market was licenced by the council and therefore was not a BID4OBAN event, the situation was taken extremely seriously by us.

BID4Oban Ltd was asked some time ago by the council what our position was on a future market being held in Oban. We duly responded and made clear we were in favour of anything that promoted footfall into the town **on condition** it was not undermining local businesses, that there was a mechanism to vet participants and that it was of an appropriate quality. We also requested that the council engage with us in the planning of such an event so that we could influence all of the above.

We are acutely aware that this last market fell short of these standards and therefore we did not support the format of this market. Further to this we were not made aware of the format prior to the event, or who was attending the market and we are now actively seeking answers on a number of matters. We are aware of future markets planned to take place over the coming months and will be pursuing information on these also. We are aware of future markets planned to take place over the coming months and will be pursuing information on these also.

Specifically regarding the last market, one key issue is that the licence granted bore little resemblance to the actual traders present (with a few exceptions), and further, it seemed that there was no mechanism in place to quickly and effectively act upon blatant breaches of the conditions on the day (ie. the operator continued to trade regardless, despite several visit from the authorities).

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Representatives from BID4OBAN were in contact with the authorities and the police regarding the breaches of conditions during the time that the market was in place owing to the fact that the Market, in our view, **did not** comply with the following prerequisites we set out:

1. Reflect a true 'continental market' (with the exception of a 'minority' of stalls).
2. Quality to be of a high standard.
3. Non-Compete policy with local businesses (Retail or Foodservice)
4. Council to engage in advance with BID4Oban in planning event
5. Robust vetting of attendees

Therefore BID4OBAN has formally requested a meeting with all relevant parties in the coming weeks to try and work closer together to prevent such an incident happening again, and we have raised some specific questions to try to ensure this.

As stated earlier, we do take this matter very seriously, and we will ensure that we continue to work for the best interests of our members in Oban.

John Forteith (Chair BID4OBAN LTD)

BID4OBAN – 6 MONTH REVIEW

Following the successful “yes” vote for the UK’s first whole town Business Improvement District (BID) at the end of last year, the BID4Oban Company was formed and appointed its delivery team early in 2013. BID4Oban is now six months into its five year delivery plan and has already made a significant difference to Oban and its trading environment.

The 12-strong voluntary board was elected from local business people in November 2012 and represents a broad cross section of business interests in the town. The board has met regularly to take action to meet the objectives of the BID business plan.

The first important step was to appoint a team to turn the ideas into reality. Nic Jones was appointed as the project manager in late December. Nic moved to Oban where he owned and ran the Barriemore Hotel on the Esplanade with his wife Sarah for 8 years following a career in education. In the New Year, Nic was joined by Jasmine Boak as the BID administrator and Mike Rowell, events manager. Jasmine is from Newcastle and has lived in Oban for the past 3 years. Since moving to Oban she has worked for local businesses mostly within the hospitality sector. Mike has lived in Oban since the late 80s and has worked at Ballet West in Taynuilt for most of that time and is active in the town’s amateur dramatic scene.

The first project launched by the BID Company was the Business Frontage grants scheme. This scheme provides funding for existing businesses to improve their business frontages. This has a direct impact on the way that the town looks to locals and visitors and makes levy payers’ businesses more attractive to passing trade. The scheme can provide funding up to 50% of the costs to a maximum of £1000 inc VAT. To date we have been working with 13 businesses around the town, and the second round of grant applications are due by the end of September.



Further investment in the way the town looks has come through the BID Beach Clean in March, and the installation of new floral displays all along the waterfront, from Station Square to the War Memorial. These are now coming into flower and will provide a riot of colour for high season.



The events group have also introduced a number of new initiatives for Oban. The Oban Town Diary was taken over by BID4OBAN and the website completely revamped. This listings website is open to anyone holding an event in the town, from weekly exercise classes and bands in pubs to performances in the Corran Halls. Once on the website, the information is distributed as a What’s On poster in the newly repainted information boards, now the responsibility of BID4OBAN, and through the fortnightly “What’s On Oban” leaflet, available at 28 locations throughout the town. The leaflet is also circulated by the Oban Town Ambassadors.

Appointed in May, the Ambassadors are a very visual way that the BID is helping visitors to the town to enjoy what we have to offer. Their role is to provide a warm welcome, information and advice to visitors and to promote everything that the town can offer. They are recognisable by their turquoise shirts and bags and can be seen around the town from 9am to 8pm every day.



The ambassadors are Kay MacDonald, Duncan Elliot, Laken Hives and Joe Reich.

Kay has lived in Oban all of her life, her family roots are firmly set here going back several generations. Her excellent knowledge of the town and the surrounding areas was broadened further as she spent five years working in the local Tourist Information Office.



Laken is the youngest of the ambassadors but has just as much experience and enthusiasm as she has already worked in the tourism industry in the area for five years.

Duncan, originally from Easdale, spent ten years of his life as a dedicated member of the Coastguard Service.



Now retired, **Joe** spend his working life as a guard on the railways. He is also one of the founding members of the Oban War & Peace Museum and still regularly works there.

The Events Grant scheme has also proved extremely popular, £28000 is allocated annually to assist new events to happen and existing events to grow. The grants are targeted towards event that can demonstrate a benefit to the town's businesses by increasing the number of people coming into the town centre or encouraging those who are already here to stay longer. To date a total of £6900 has been allocated to three in-season events, the largest being the first Lorne Highland Games which recently attracted competitors and spectators from far and wide and was an extremely successful event.

There are a further seven events currently being considered for support and applications are always welcome, particularly for events taking place out of season (1st October to 31st March). The guidelines for funding require events to be taking place in or around Oban and they must have a demonstrable benefit to businesses in the town, in terms of increasing footfall and spend.

One area that the BID team are concentrating on in relation to increasing visitor numbers is to work closely with the council, the community council and OLTA in liaising with cruise ship operators to ensure that cruise ship passengers stay in the town and are given a great welcome to Oban.



BID4OBAN has several ways in which it has a dialogue with levy payers. The business forum is open to all levy payers and associate members and is a platform where businesses can talk to each other and to the BID Company. The first event, held in March, was extremely well attended and had speakers who offered ways in which businesses could improve their business skills and reduce their overheads. More forum events are planned for the future, with the next being later this year (exact date to be decided). The BID company also organised a forum in Oban High School, asking students (Oban's next generation of businessmen and women) what they thought of the town and the ways to improve it. The students demonstrated that they care passionately about the town, the way it looks and what we offer locals and visitors and made many mature and practical suggestions for improvements that they would like to see.

The BID project is a 5 year plan but already we are making strides in improving Oban as a place to live, visit and do business. In the months and years to come we will be working with businesses to establish a Love Oban Gift Voucher scheme and a loyalty card to encourage shoppers to shop local. We are working with the council and estate agents to improve the look of empty shops and way in which they can be brought back to life. We are also going to be working with the CHORD development to ensure that the best is made of this opportunity for the town.

We are happy to discuss the BID and its projects with businesses in the town. Contact us by email (admin@bid4oban.co.uk) or through Facebook or twitter and keep track on what's going on through our website or Facebook pages.

FREE ADVERTISING OF EVENTS AND OFFERS

Local Market

As a result of the recent debacle over the Oban Continental Market, BID4Oban feel that there may be an opportunity to organise an 'Oban Market' featuring local businesses and producers. The discussions around this concept are now underway and we will advise once we have a proposal outlined. If you are interested in taking part in such an event we would be delighted to hear from you.

The **Oban Town Diary** is a website built to promote events happening in and around Oban and to provide one place where locals and tourists can view future events. It also gives event organisers a place to advertise their events **free of charge**. Since taking over the Oban Town Diary the number of events has risen dramatically and continues to do so. However, not only does the website promote events in town, it also promotes offers, discounts and specials from various businesses & organisations. This all takes place under our '**LOVE OBAN**' section on the website. So whatever type of business you have, if you have an offer then put it on the diary! It's a fantastic source of **free advertisement!**



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