Experience Guildford Board Meeting
Tuesday 18 November 2025
16.00 Yvonne Arnaud Theatre

Present:
Andy Wood – HSBC (Vice Chair)
Ian Blyth – The Mandolay
Nick Wyschna – The Fallen Angel
Irfan Ahmed – McDonalds (observer)
Susan Turner – Tamarind
Nick Aristodemou – The Harbour Hotel
Steve Cotney – Tunsgate Quarter
Mike Wilson – Yvonne Arnaud Theatre
David Goddard – Biddles of Guildford
Amanda Masters – Experience Guildford CEO

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

AW welcomed everyone to the sixth meeting of 2025, introduced Irfan Ahmed as an observer and potential new Board director, and thanked everyone for attending. Apologies were received from Abi Bowden, Alan Margetts, Tom Hunt and Dorothy Tsang.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

AW asked Board members to declare an interest or conflict of interest on any matter arising; none declared.

3. Minutes of last meeting

There were no updates to the minutes of the meeting on 16 September 2025.
Proposed: SC
Seconded: DG

4. Items for Information

Review of CEO report:

- Local Government Reorganisation has resulted in 2 unitary authorities; EG would have preferred 3 which would mean a greater sense of localisation.
- North Street regeneration has started with road closures, traffic issues and communications about works received with short notice especially Phoenix Court ramp closure. AM to meet with Berkeley Homes and will feedback all information and comments to the businesses impacted.

- Guildford in Bloom – EG are now partnered with Guildford in Bloom to look at sustainable greening of parts of Guildford. NW advised that the lamppost planting outside Halifax has been taken down; AM to investigate.
- Christmas 2025 – Illuminate Guildford has launched as has the 12 Days of Christmas window trail; Family Fun Day was well attended with big queues at the personalised bauble stand and snow globe; social media competitions going well.
- Business support – litter pick was so popular that it will become a quarterly event; almost 200 people have been trained so far this year; Town Centre Maintenance Group works well and fixes small issues around the town making the town a better place.
- Safe, clean & welcoming – Rangers have been praised by CCTV colleagues for their help with finding a high risk missing person in Guildford; PL obtained funding for drinks spiking test kits.
- Access and Parking – Accessibility Guide is now available; one retailer has changed the layout of the shop as a result of the accessibility assessment.

NW commented that Rangers in other locations are SIA trained and wear badges to confirm this. AM replied that EG Rangers are SIA and conflict management trained, however EG operates a hands-off policy. The SIA has recently expired and all 3 rangers will go through the training in the new year.

5. Items for Decision/Consideration

No items for decision or consideration

6. Finance and Legal

AW advised that with 3 months of the financial year left, there is £145k in the bank. Costs are running at around £42k per month with GBC still holding £20k of the current year BID levy. The situation is better than anticipated. AW thanked AM and the team for their efforts.

AW raised the subject of the future BID levy charge as there has been no change to the levy rate for the past 13 years. The current levy is 1% of the rateable value, and BID rules mean this cannot be changed mid-term. In prior years, the 1% levy raised £600k, however the rateable values fell for 2024/25 which for businesses, has meant lower rates. However, it has reduced the income for EG to £480k.

AM asked the Board to consider an increase in the rate. A rate of 1.5% would bring the levy income back to £600k, and the extra money raised would allow EG to do so much more. Other BIDs charge between 1% and 2%. DG commented that the value EG brings to Guildford should be promoted in the next 2 years to justify the additional levy if it is changed for the next BID term.

AW asked for volunteers to join the Finance Committee.

7. Office/Staff

No issues. AM thanked the team for their hard work this year.

8. Any other business

IB & NW commented that both their venues are very busy over the Christmas period. ST added that, for her, business was ticking over, but hard work. IA noted that McDonald's had a record October despite the North Street roadworks.

NA advised that the refurbishment of the Harbour Hotel should be finished by Easter 2026.

SC noted that Tunsgate Quarter was almost fully let with 1 unit still being readied. SC added that the Festive Fun Day was almost too busy.

DG advised that Biddles of Guildford are running a Name the Elf competition.

AM added that AMargetts had raised the issue of providing staff parking discounts at the York Road car park which is frequently empty during the week. AM has already raised the idea with TH. It was agreed that the car park has a bad reputation and is not well lit. AM to talk with TH about both issues.

9. Date of next meeting

The next board meeting will be held on 20 January 2026 in the Experience Guildford boardroom at 5.00pm.