

18 08 20

Hello,

My name is Graham Sizer. I am the Chairman of Minehead Business Improvement District. I needed to say a few words in support of this application.

70% of our 240 High Street businesses depend directly on tourist spend; many others indirectly. Like other tourist seaside towns we are reliant on our local attractions to help boost our visitor numbers and make us a destination of choice.

Our Heritage Railway is part of the fabric of the town and is its most loved asset. The town would not have developed economically or architecturally as it has without the railway. Minehead is at the end of the line geographically, with only minor roads piercing the small settlements beyond us to the moorland South and West, and the sea is to the North. Our economy is fragile. Any threat to its magnetic pull needs to be minimised.

Our rail visitors add significantly to the vibrancy and financial viability of not only Minehead but to all the village stations up the line.

It is a significant employer in its own right, but proof of its importance in the Community and beyond can be counted in the number of volunteers locally that devote many days and weeks a year to its upkeep.

The loss of income to the corporation this season must be disastrous and will have been documented. The closure of the Railway to the town's shopkeepers, and indeed accommodation providers both in a fragile state already, has been huge.

Minehead's self funding Business Improvement District is one of the smallest in the Country. The town has become used to being an outpost and off the radar for most Government Funding. Businesses and residents know how to roll up their sleeves in times of hardship. A kick-start from this fund will not be wasted I can assure you. I hope you look on the application sympathetically.

Kind Regards Graham