

Introduction

Since LoveBelper was launched in 2018, we have had extraordinary success in showcasing our beautiful town – we have pulled together all the independent and national businesses to deliver whole-town events which have increased visitor footfall to the town and drawn local people into the High Street. We have supported our amazing colleagues at Pride in Belper, hosted artists for the ever-popular Belper Arts events and linked in with our partners at Transition Belper and Accessible Belper.

Our proudest moment was the Great British High Street awards in January 2020 – LoveBelper founder and chair won the High Street Hero award, and Belper won the Champion High Street for England award – the judges (and thousands of votes from the public) confirming that this volunteer-run group has achieved an award winning level of community cohesion.

An essential part of LoveBelper is the bespoke built, outward facing website www.lovebelper.org

It is the window to the town and reaches far beyond the shops and businesses that make up our award-winning High Street. It is a partnership of the shopping experience, the diverse food offering, our Heritage, upcoming events and places to stay. It hosts the LoveBelper vouchers which are popular with local residents who are committed to supporting their High Street.

It has taken many hours to build and even more to maintain.

As you can imagine, our High Street has been devastated by the impact of COVID19. Despite the government assistance, Belper has already lost 4 independent shops, and more are likely to follow. LoveBelper is working harder than ever to find new ways to encourage local people and visitors to the High Street in a final bid to drive traffic to the struggling businesses.

Our request

The LoveBelper website was designed by a member of the committee with funds gratefully received from an application to Derbyshire County Council (from the remaining pot from the 2014 GBHS win) and Belper Town Council to build the website so that it could be free to users. In this proposal the web designer bore all the sunk costs and provided ongoing support and maintenance of the website for two years. That agreed 2 year period expires on July 31st 2020.

We are clear that the website is an essential part of our continuing commitment to marketing our beautiful town. It is achieving almost 500,000 hits per year. We have ambitious plans to develop the website to host more engaging features to drive traffic both to the site and to the town. We intend to focus dedicated volunteer time to engage all the ambassadors of the town –Heritage colleagues and the night time businesses will be our upcoming focus. The retail group are working on developing an online shopping platform to

be hosted on the website as we strive to maximise all avenues to support our independent businesses to be creative and survive these extraordinary times.

The social media team (a subcommittee of the main group) will be focusing on gathering up to date information about new businesses coming to the town as well as those who do not survive the impact of COVID. This means that visitors can trust in the quality of information hosted on the site and ensure visits are never disappointing.

In order to realise these ambitions, we need to secure the funds to meet the ongoing cost of maintaining and developing the website, including renewal of the hosting and domain names.

The quotation for this work is **£1296** for a 12 month period.

LoveBelper has some funds left from the GBHS win – whilst the majority is ringfenced for a celebration event (when possible), we are able to afford 6 months of this contract.

We are writing to ask if Belper Town Council are able to invest in our High Street and provide match funding by contributing £648 towards the cost of maintaining www.lovebelper.org

We are aware that there will be significant pressure on council budgets at present, but we urge you to consider helping us to maintain this existing, effective window to our town.

If you would like to discuss this proposal with members of our committee, we are happy to attend a Council Meeting at your convenience