Application to Dorset's shared prosperity fund round 1

Weymouth AI Story trails

reference number is PFG579055518.

We believe high streets can be places that draw people into our town centres not just to shop but to interact, enjoy, learn and play.

Families start by simply scanning the first story point and playing for free. In a time many families are financially struggling to bring them into town for a free activity is a great concept when they can then engage with the characters by seeing them come to life in augmented reality and taking hilarious selfies with them. Along the route, players choose how the story evolves, creating a unique path for themselves. Younger children will delight in spotting the cute and colourful designs in windows and older (and grown-up children) will engage by reading the story and seeing the characters in AR. The funding request is for the development and promotion of the AI Geo-gaming platform with trails and permanent installation of them in over 120 businesses across Weymouth. Creating footfall, and a measurable increase in the visitor economy, marketing as attractions/trails and a definite place-making tourism product.

The platform is a permanent installation, which gives players access to a huge range of trails throughout the year.

When scanning their first QR code, players are given the option to choose which trail they would like to do. This really does give the area something for every target demographic.

The project will deliver new opportunities to experience a variety of locations in Weymouth, either individually or as a collective, in a fun and stimulating way. The trails will appeal to a range of demographics from groups of friends, to couples, to students, to cross generational families. Not only that but the addition of historic or nature trails would create a compelling activity for over the 50s demographic. Tourists will pick up on the trails over the years and be further encouraged to explore in a fun, exciting and educational way. The trails and games promote reading with magical stories, problem solving with engaging riddles and puzzles and creative thinking with the 'escape room' style game. The new summer 'River Folk' trail deals with environmental concerns in a fun and factual way and not only that, but all of the trails are a fantastic way to get people exercising, without even realising it.

- Explore the town in a fun, educational and interactive way
- A free activity to do with the kids
- Exercise and wellbeing by stealth

Total: £8000 +VAT

Grant application: £6800

BID contribution: £1200

Weymouth is a seasonal coastal town and initiatives which drive footfall and improve the visitor economy such as this help to keep businesses alive and increase spend both in high season as well as 'out-of-season'. Involving local businesses on the trail is a fantastic way to increase footfall and introduce new customers to them. With this platform, businesses can choose to add an offer or marketing message to their stop, so anyone visiting them will be encouraged to

come inside. We email each business involved to encourage them to add marketing messages and also to help spread marketing via their own social media channels, creating a win-win for participation and themselves.

We are unsure of an exact figure of who will benefit from the grant but when we ran a very basic trail in the town at Christmas we had nearly 800 participants over 4 weeks. If we take this case study from Horsham District Council who commissioned this geogaming platform in 7 towns and villages across the district in March 2023. They saw a steady increase in usage over the year and in total they had just under 7,000 trails completed meaning players have returned and taken part in 2-3 trails each. We are wanting this installed permanently for at least 4 years so even on a very conservative estimate at least 28,000 will engage with the trails, discovering new parts of the town and engaging with the business community.

TIMELINE:

Contract with High street Safari in February

set -up of geogaming platform February.

Press launch and PR invite to take part in first trail.

invite to national press to take part on every scheduled visit to weymouth

An example of trail launch and highlighting timeline. Final timeline to be agreed upon in consultation.

2024

Feb: Dinosaur trail

March: Mr Finniebakers Trail

April: The Springtopia Trail

May: The Bepuzzled Treasure Trail

June: Mystery of the Secret Keys

July: The Curious Creatures Trail

August: Summer Trail - Sports trail

September: Escape Room Trail - Mystery of the StarEaters

October: Spooky Creatures Trail

November: Christmas Challenge Trail

December: Christmas Trail

2025

January: The Alebrije Art Trail

February: Dr Cupid’s Couples Quiz

12 trails in place for the coming 3 years with trails replaced as new ones arrive.

Each trail will be promoted at key times of the year in press and on social media with the aim to drive footfall to the town and offer a new gaming opportunity for holidaymakers and locals.

MONITORING:

QR codes are printed on aluminium plaques that can be installed in venues permanently via screws or moved frequently via window suction cups. The unique digital platform means that every interaction on the trail is recorded and can be analysed.

By providing periodic reports we can give a view into the success of any trail and a fantastic opportunity to promote it's success.

As well as showing how many people are doing the trails, high street safari who are the company who have devised the platform, can provide data to calculate their contribution to health and the environment. These are fantastic figures to show the beneficial impact of the experiences on the community. Beyond analytics, every player on the platform is invited to fill out a Trustpilot review. These reviews will be crucial in gauging and promoting the success of the trails.

The install of all trails will be in the spring of 2024 but the trails will run for 4 years so each year we can monitor data trends and usage.

ENVIRONMENT Statement

As the plaques are a permanent installation this is preferable to plastic installations and can be moved to other locations.

Most of the trail is AI so this is a great resource as we can provide data to calculate their contribution to health and the environment.

The trails are completely digital, so no paper is used at any point, and users own smartphones are utilised to play so no extra equipment is required. Furthermore, all user's walking data is recorded (anonymously) reported on. This includes the numbers of steps users take and the calories they burn.

Pricing

Geogaming platform subscription (20+ AR trails) + free trail uploads with content provided by BID - £1,500 per year

Hosting fees - £500 per year