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ABOUT NORTHWICH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



The Northwich Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined geographical area in Northwich. Within this area, businesses collectively invest in, and enhance, Northwich as a trading environment. Northwich BID 1 commenced on 1st September 2014 and ran until 31st August 2019.

The Northwich BID funds and delivers added value projects and services within the town which focus on creating a destination of choice for residents, visitors, employees, shoppers and service users to make Northwich a location where businesses and the community can thrive. The BID will not, and cannot, be used to fund services that the council or other public bodies have a statutory duty to provide. The details of what the BID has delivered in 2018 - 2019 are detailed in this annual report.

The added value projects and services that the BID enables, is managed and controlled by the business community who part fund the BID. The entire project is business led, with the BID's funds coming from an additional, mandatory levy. For Northwich this levy equates to 1.5% of an individual business' rateable value on all businesses with a rateable value greater than £6,000.

In June 2019, businesses voted overwhelmingly for the Northwich BID to continue for five more years, with 77% of those who took part in the ballot backing another term for the BID.

This result allows the BID to continue investing in the town centre with a particular focus on the delivery of extravaganzas, events and festivals to bring footfall into Northwich, the provision of bespoke Social Media and PR support for businesses, further funding for floral displays and cleanliness and the delivery of training courses for BID business employees, amongst many other things.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

MICHAEL THOMAS

2018/2019 has been a really positive year for Northwich, despite the many trials and tribulations faced in an uncertain retail environment nationally. There have undoubtedly been some significant challenges but we continue to see consumer confidence increase in the town.

The Visit Northwich brand has gone from strength to strength over the past year, reaching thousands of people across social media and in local and regional media communications and spreading the word that Northwich really is a destination with a difference.

Our high quality events schedule throughout the year continues to draw in visitors from all over the North West, with families flocking to the town to take part in Easter Trails, experience the magic of the Northwich Christmas Extravaganza and look on in awe as giant dinosaurs roam the High Street as part of the incredible Now Northwich Festival.

Northwich was once more awash with colour as our floral displays took over the town, and with Northwich securing a Silver-Gilt in the North West in Bloom competition for the second year running, next year must surely be our year as we strive for that elusive and prestigious gold.

The next 12 months will see the BID again deliver a very ambitious business plan with investments into new events and festivals, further development in Marketing and PR, improvements into a greener and cleaner town centre and further investments in crime prevention and security, and I am confident that we can deliver.

As we move forward in to a new era of BID 2 delivery, I strongly urge each and every one of our amazing businesses in Northwich to really get involved, embrace the support of the BID Team and make a real difference in making Northwich a thriving hub of activity for shoppers and workers alike.



MESSAGE FROM THE BID MANAGER

JANE HOUGH

2018 – 2019 has been a fantastic and fast-paced year for the BID Team – from the Christmas and Easter Extravaganzas and the breath-taking Now Northwich Festival, to the Silver-Gilt success at the North West in Bloom awards and the incredible success achieved at the Northwich BID 2 re-vote in June.

There have been so many positive changes and improvements to our town and I am so proud of how far we have come since the BID first started five years ago. Businesses tell me that our town centre is greener, cleaner and more accessible to visitors and they now take pride in the floral arrangements and town dressing initiatives that the BID has funded over the past 5 years.

More than 405 members of staff have been upskilled thanks to the BID funded training courses we have run, while support has been given to the 25+ new independent businesses who have moved in to Northwich over the past few years.

As we look to the next five years and what Northwich BID 2 will bring to our town, there are clearly many hurdles of uncertainty ahead in the form of a lack of public funding, coupled with Brexit and the effect this may have on the retail environment. However, I am confident that together with the support of you, the business community, we can move forward and deliver on our promise in making Northwich thrive as a bustling town centre that we can all be proud of. Here's to the next five years!

HOW WE DELIVER THE BID

The Northwich Business Improvement District is governed by the Northwich BID Group. The BID group have elected an Executive Board to oversee the delivery of the Business Improvement District. The Executive Board work on a voluntary basis and are responsible for guiding and directing the Groundwork BID Team in the delivery of the projects and services contained in the Northwich Business Improvement District Business plan. The Executive Board in office at the end of 2018/2019 was as follows:

YOUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

CHAIRPERSON

Michael Thomas (McDonald's)

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Phil Bower (Northwich Art Shop)

TREASURER

Ann Johnson (Santander)

BOARD MEMBERS

Lina Higueta (Barons Quay)

Gerard Rooney (mosshaselhurst Solicitors)

Ian Massey (Sainsbury's)

Wendy Batey-Gray (Solutions 24-7)

Victoria Poole (Susan Howarth & Co Solicitors)

Chris Mundie (The Salty Dog)

SUPPORTERS/ADVISORS

Chris Shaw (Northwich Town Clerk – Northwich Town Council)

Cllr Sam Naylor (Northwich Town Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council)

Mark Simmons (Senior Locality Officer – Cheshire West and Chester Council)

Sergeant Kevin Davies (Northwich Police Unit)

BID TEAM

Jane Hough (Northwich BID Manager)

Stephanie Leese (Business Improvement District Marketing and Events Co-ordinator)

Partnerships are key to the BID project with collaborative working alongside Northwich Town Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Barons Quay, town centre businesses and the local community proving crucial with the goal of helping to improve Northwich further.



WHAT WE HAVE DELIVERED IN 2018-2019

THEME ONE - A VIBRANT AND CO-ORDINATED TOWN

INVESTMENTS IN THE MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF NORTHWICH

Website, Advertising, Communication and PR, Social Media, Consumer Competitions

The last 12 months has seen a whole host of PR & Marketing initiatives delivered by the BID. The Visit Northwich brand has gone from strength to strength with investments made in further developments to the Visit Northwich Website, social media presence and regular features in local, regional and national publications, as well as a number of videos and Northwich Live Facebook segments designed to pull in and attract visitors to the town.

Facebook reach increased by 79% to 2.16M from Sep 18 to Aug 19 compared to the previous period.

The social media accounts hit an all-time high during 2018/2019 with Facebook achieving a reach of over 10,000 per week, Twitter hitting over 100,000 impressions a month and Instagram having hundreds of likes per week on average, with businesses reaping the benefits by promoting their events and offers on these important platforms.

The re-designed Visit Northwich website (www.visitnorthwich.co.uk) continued to be the central point for shoppers featuring regular news stories, competitions and dedicated sections to retail, leisure and culture, while the dedicated Northwich BID website kept Northwich businesses in the loop with useful information on BID projects and benefits as well as information on training courses and meeting minutes.

The regular e-bulletins and quarterly hard copy newsletters kept businesses in the loop over the past 12 months, while the popular consumer e-bulletin kept shoppers up-to-date with the latest stories, offers and events, heavily promoting Northwich BID businesses.

Regular news features appeared in the Mid-Cheshire Guardian Series, So Cheshire, Mid-Cheshire Independent and Chester Chronicle throughout the year, and Northwich has continued to feature in a number of news articles in the national place magazine, Revive and Thrive.

KEY ANNUAL SOCIAL STATS



followers risen
24% to 8696



followers risen
15% to 4096



followers risen
49% to 2518



EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

2018/2019 saw Northwich host a wealth of inspiring and exciting events and festivals designed to pull in the crowds and increase footfall in our shops.

The July Festival of Arts was a success once again as it returned for its second year, with a huge range and variety of local artists and performers staging workshops, displays and craft activities for both adults and children alike.

The Christmas and Easter Extravanzas proved to be firm family favourites once more achieving the best footfall figures to date, while the school holidays in July and August saw the return of the hugely popular “Beach on the Quay” in partnership with Barons Quay situated outside the Odeon cinema.

In July 2019 the Northwich BID aided in the successful delivery of the Northwich River Festival in partnership with Northwich Rotary Club, while the summer months were awash with colour thanks to the ongoing activities of the Northwich in Bloom campaign.

October saw the awe-inspiring Now Northwich festival make its debut as dragons and dinosaurs took over the streets to provide a breath-taking spectacle, while the Dead Dead Good Weekend music festival back in May saw the town come alive as bands and performers took to venues throughout Northwich.

Christmas Lights Switch On

During 2018/2019 the Northwich BID made significant investments in to the town’s Christmas Lights, with lights installed on the gyratory system on Chester Way and two cross street motifs installed on the High Street. The BID once again also funded the Christmas tree on Town Park next to Town Bridge, as well as an additional tree in Weaver Square.



The Northwich BID Team

Over the past 12 months the Northwich BID Team has delivered a number of significant projects, services, events and festivals to enhance Northwich Town Centre – the details of which are documented in this report.

The team has also acted as your first point of contact with a number of partners and agencies including Cheshire West and Chester Council Economic Development and Regeneration, Highways, Estates, Regulatory Services, CCTV and Streetscene departments, Northwich Town Council, Barons Quay, the Environment Agency, Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire, community groups and commercial property agents.

THEME TWO – A SUPPORTED ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS

Training, Knowledge and Skills

A packed schedule of training courses was delivered by the Northwich BID throughout 2018/2019, covering essential and beneficial topics for businesses in the town. The Qualsafe Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work training courses proved to be as popular and valuable to employers as ever, while the Leadership Skills and Management training course funded by the Northwich BID was fully booked on every occasion.



72 Northwich BID delegates covering 28 businesses have received free training in the fifth year of the Northwich Business Improvement District, with all First Aid Training Certificates validated by Qualsafe.

The high uptake of courses demonstrates the real value that businesses in Northwich place in keeping their employees highly skilled and well-trained.



Specific courses that were delivered in 2018-2019 were as follows:

- Qualsafe Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work
- Principles of Risk Assessment
- Principles of Fire Risk Assessment
- Leadership Skills and Management Training
- Window Dressing Consultations

72 Northwich BID employees were upskilled through the BID training programmes in 2018/2019

Joint Procurement Scheme

During 2018-2019 the Northwich BID continued with the free Joint Procurement Scheme with Power Solutions that identifies cost savings within each individual business with relation to electric, gas and water. Offering a free energy review, the service has seen a number of businesses save money over the past year.

Brio Leisure Discount for BID Members

The popular partnership with Brio Leisure also continued throughout year 5 of the BID, allowing Northwich BID businesses and their employees to take advantage of a 20% discount on full membership at any Brio Leisure centre. Extending to family members in the same household, the scheme gives Northwich BID business employees access to 12 fantastic Leisure Centres with unlimited use of all facilities.



Marketing and PR Support

Through the Northwich BID, Northwich businesses can benefit from specialist Marketing & PR support to help gain exposure online and in the media. Working with Northwich based Marketing and PR Agency Solutions 24-7, news from Northwich and the town's retailers has featured 189 times over the past year (an average of over 15 per month) in local publications including the Northwich Guardian, Cheshire Live, Marketing Cheshire, Mid Cheshire Independent, Cheshire Independent, Revive and Thrive Place Magazine, So Cheshire, Heart of Cheshire, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Your West Cheshire.

All of these publications are read weekly by thousands of people which has given the businesses featured a great platform to spread their good news. Businesses featured include Gwen's Bridal, Northwich Art Shop, The Salty Dog, Cheshire Down's Syndrome Support Group, Matalan, Ubuntu Wealth Management, The Joshua Tree, Susan Howarth & Co. Solicitors, Crafty Stitches & Hotpod Yoga.



THEME THREE – SAFE AND SECURE

Crime Prevention Partnerships

The BID has continued to work with the dedicated Policing team in Northwich town centre throughout the year, and the team has visited individual businesses to offer support and discuss any crime related issues. In addition, the BID Team continued to work with Cheshire Police to deal with any issues that may arise relating to shoplifting, theft and anti-social behaviour in the town centre, purchasing anti-theft jingle bells. The innovative partnership between the two teams has contributed to developing a safer and more prosperous environment for traders and consumers to work and shop in alike.

Throughout Year five of the BID, the BID Team have sustained strong working relationships with both the Licensing & Enforcement department at Cheshire West and Chester Council and CCTV supervisor Keith Parsonage. These close links and relationships enable the BID Team to be kept well informed with regards to any criminal or unauthorised activity in Northwich, which in turn allows for information to be distributed to businesses in a timely manner, in addition to generating a prompt response whenever assistance is required in the town centre.

Theme Three – An investment of £255 in 2018-2019

THEME FOUR – GREENER AND CLEANER



Image Improvements

Throughout the fifth year of the BID, the Northwich BID team have once again worked tirelessly to improve Northwich's image, constantly looking at ways to improve how both visitors and businesses perceive and view the town. Significant investments have been made in floral displays, planting schemes and additional maintenance and cleansing in the town centre above the statutory obligations of the local authority.

Enhanced Cleaning

Throughout the fifth year of the BID, the BID Team once more maintained their partnership with Northwich Town Council to deliver an extensive and enhanced town cleansing programme. Creating a noticeable difference where the cleansing efforts have been taking place, the funding allows for daily litter picks and regular stone paving washing in addition to the previous baseline as set by Streetscene and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Northwich in Bloom

During 2019 the Northwich BID once more entered Northwich in to the prestigious RHS North West in Bloom competition under the Large Town and BID Categories. The project saw the Northwich BID Team work in close partnership with a number of organisations and volunteer groups, and after a huge effort Northwich was awarded with a Silver Gilt Award, being just one mark shy of Gold.

Floral Displays and Planting Schemes

The Northwich BID Team have invested significantly to enhance the floral displays in the town centre throughout Year 5 of the BID. In a partnership with Northwich Town Council, additional funding was provided to improve upon the previous level of raised bed planting all throughout the town, and as a result Northwich was awash with colour over the spring and summer months.

The BID also invested in additional double sided hanging baskets that were installed during the spring, adorning lampposts throughout the town centre and up along Leicester Street, Venables Road, Weaver Way, Chester Way and London Road which consequently saw Northwich blossom in to a riot of colour.

A number of extra railing baskets were also funded outside the Memorial Court on Chester Way, further enhancing the aesthetics of the approaches and exits of the town, while 12 bright and bold railing baskets were funded and installed on Dane Bridge. Colourful bunting once more adorned the streets in the summer months, while two flower tower fountains brightened up the street corners in Weaver Square and Dane Bridge.

During the festive season, the Northwich BID also funded the installation of 56 hanging solar powered Christmas Trees, decorating the lampposts in the town centre and providing a seasonal glow for shoppers of an evening.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The surplus generated in Year five of the BID will be utilised to deliver a number of added-value projects and services in the town centre during Year one of BID 2 above and beyond the current baselines delivered by the public sector.

BID Income	Budget – Year 5 September 2018 – August 2019	Actual – Year 5 September 2018 – August 2019
BID Levy Income	£192,500	£195,083
Income from Voluntary Members	Nil	£370
Grants/Fund Match (Financial)	£1,553	£13,168
Bank Interest	Nil	£58
Surplus (Year 4) +/-	£22,358	£16,388
Total Income 2018 - 2019	£216,411	£225,067
BID Expenditure	Budget – Year 5 September 2018 – August 2019	Actual – Year 5 September 2018 – August 2019
Theme One – A Vibrant and Co-ordinated Town	£128,896	£129,272
Theme Two – A Supported Environment For Business	£4,770	£5,656
Theme Three – Safe and Secure	Nil	£255
Theme Four – Greener and Cleaner	£41,000	£50,043
Project Management & Administration Costs	£33,875	£43,370
Accruals – Annual Audit	Nil	£250
Total – Expenditure 2018 – 2019	£208,541	£228,596
Actual Surplus +/-	£7,870	£20,167



WHAT WE PLAN TO DELIVER IN YEAR 1 OF NORTHWICH BID 2

THEME ONE – A UNIQUE SHOPPER AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Northwich BID will continue to invest in a dedicated marketing and promotional campaign to continue to raise the profile of Northwich Town Centre as a great retail, leisure, night-time economy destination and a fantastic place to do business. This campaign will include:

- ✓ Production of high quality promotional videos for Northwich as a destination of choice for shoppers
- ✓ Entering Northwich in to the Great British High Streets Awards to further raise the profile of the town
- ✓ Continued development and maintenance of the Visit Northwich website
- ✓ Continued maintenance of the Northwich BID website
- ✓ Continued social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- ✓ Continuation of the hard copy and business e-news bulletins
- ✓ Continuation of the Visit Northwich Consumer Bulletin
- ✓ Increase the presence of Northwich in regional and national publications, including newspapers, magazines and newsletters
- ✓ Dedicated Marketing support for Northwich events and festivals to include:
Christmas Extravaganza, Easter Extravaganza, Now Northwich Festival, Northwich River Festival and other events and festivals that drive footfall into Northwich
- ✓ Dedicated photography and videos of events and festivals in Northwich
- ✓ Facebook Live videos to engage with social media audiences during Northwich events
- ✓ Regular blogs online to encourage visitors to shop local
- ✓ Monitoring of the BID Footfall Counters throughout Northwich
- ✓ Continuation of competitions and trails to raise awareness of Northwich and collate consumer data

CURRENT 2019/2020 EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

- ✓ Now Northwich Festival – Saturday 5th October 2019
- ✓ Christmas Extravaganza – Saturday 23rd November 2019
- ✓ Easter Extravaganza – Saturday 11th April 2020
- ✓ Krazy Races – Sunday 14th June 2020
- ✓ Northwich Festival of Arts – July 2020
- ✓ Northwich River Festival – Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th July 2020
- ✓ Northwich Pride – August 2020
- ✓ Northwich in Bloom – July/August 2020

In addition to the events listed above, the BID Team are working with a number of partners to introduce additional events during the year, the details of which will be released once finalised.

BID Team

The BID team will continue to be a central point of contact for your business, for any issues or opportunities that may arise in Northwich. In addition to providing support, the team will be responsible for the delivery of the projects and services contained within the business plan and exploring opportunities for bringing additional external funding into the Business Improvement District.

Landscape, Cleanliness and Signage Improvements

2019/20 will see a number of additional investments in to planting and signage schemes across Northwich Town Centre, Chester Way, Leicester Street, London Road, Upper Witton Street, Venables Road and Albion Road.

The Northwich BID will once again look to install a number of hanging baskets across Northwich during the summer months, as well as festive solar powered hanging Christmas trees during December. A planted flower tower will be installed in the summer months to add a splash of colour, while the BID will continue to fund the colourful planters lining Dane Bridge over both the winter and summer months. The Northwich BID will also continue to add funding to a number of raised beds in the town centre.

The Northwich BID will also look to have colourful bunting installed across the town centre during the summer months.

During 2019/2020 Northwich BID 2 will once again fund additional street cleansing in targeted areas in Northwich Town Centre above and beyond the services provided by Northwich Town Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council, while regular image audits will also be undertaken by the BID Team throughout the year. Additional public toilet cleansing will continue in to 2019/20 as well as an improved litter collection service.

In July/August 2020 the Northwich BID will once again enter Northwich in to the prestigious RHS North West in Bloom competition, raising both the profile of the town and the standards of floral displays as a result. The BID will also undertake a number of community planting initiatives to brighten up areas in the town including over 1000 crocus bulbs in Barons Quay in partnership with local primary schools.



THEME TWO - A SAFER TOWN CENTRE

Throughout 2019/2020 the BID will continue to build on new and existing relationships with key partners to achieve low levels of crime in Northwich. The BID will work with Cheshire Police, Cheshire West and Chester Council Licencing/Enforcement Team, Cheshire West and Chester Council CCTV Team and the Managing Agents Savills at Barons Quay to ensure that retailers and business owners are kept informed and updated on key issues that affect the town.

The BID Team will also look at introducing Purple Flag Status to Northwich in order to demonstrate that Northwich is a safe and enjoyable location for a night out.

THEME THREE - BUSINESS SUPPORT

CURRENT 2019/2020 TRAINING COURSES AND SEMINARS

Emergency First Aid at Work	Wednesday 11th September 2019
Window Dressing Consultations	Tuesday 8th - Wednesday 9th October 2019
Leadership Skills and Management Training	Monday 13th January 2020
Emergency First Aid at Work	Wednesday 15th January 2020
Fire Risk Assessment	Tuesday 4th February 2020
Risk Assessment	Tuesday 7th April 2020
Leadership Skills and Management Training	Thursday 14th May 2020
Emergency First Aid at Work	Tuesday 9th June 2020

Additional investments will be made throughout the year in Training Courses and Seminars dependent on business requirements. This information will be collated through our client feedback forms and surveys that we periodically conduct with the business community. New course dates will be communicated to businesses as and when they are released through email and newsletter campaigns.

A number of investments will also be made in to Business Networking Events and Community Engagement and support, with a range of opportunities for BID businesses to attend Meet the BID Team sessions throughout Year One of BID 2.

Joint Procurement Schemes

The BID will continue to work with Power Solutions to help reduce the costs of telecom, utility and water bills that Northwich traders are paying. In addition to this service, the BID will continue to explore the feasibility of introducing other joint procurement suppliers. These could include trade waste, pest control and handyman services.

Northwich BID works with a number of partners and stakeholders:



For further information on the Northwich Business Improvement District, please contact:

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