

Working Together For A Brighter

FUTURE

enjoy wolverhampton
Business Improvement District

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022





Foreword

We are pleased to present our annual report that provides a review of what has been another busy year for Wolverhampton BID. At the start of the year in April 2021, we had emerged from strictest confines of the coronavirus pandemic and at the start of this BID term's second year we have a regular testing programme in place and a successful vaccination scheme well underway, with a hopeful air that we have seen the worst of the pandemic.

The BID continued to keep abreast of changes in government and public health guidance for businesses, making sure we shared relevant and timely information to our city centre business community. With the impact of staff shortages, a lack of customer confidence across hospitality, leisure and retail sectors and with a significant amount of office and commercial sector employees working from home, the impact of the pandemic was still being felt.

Appreciating the impact the pandemic continued to have on businesses' ability to trade and the reduced services of the BID during 2020-21, with restrictions limiting our ability to deliver events and some staff on furlough for periods, the BID took direct action and issued a 15% reduction in the levy for all levy payers for 2021-22.

The year from 1st April 2021 through to March 31st 2022, was focused on getting back to 'normal', encouraging people to return to the city centre, strengthening customer confidence and supporting our city and its business community wherever possible. With highlights from the year ending 31st March 2022 and projects and activities for the year ahead in this annual report, we will continue to work together for a thriving city centre.

Welcome from the BID Chairman



The year from April 2021 to March 2022 saw some huge changes to the conditions that under which the BID operated in the previous year. While the situation with Covid continued (and still continues) to evolve, the year eventually saw an end to most restrictions on workplaces and businesses of all types and the city centre began to properly emerge from its narrowed lockdown identity.

In what was Year 2 of the BID's second term, the BID Board's priority was the continued and, in some cases renewed, delivery of specific elements of its 2020-2025 Business Plan. The Board supported the BID team seeking out every opportunity to support the city centre and levypayers, who faced different challenges depending on their sector of operation.

In financial terms, the Board had agreed a 15% reduction in BID levies for this "year of recovery", along with helping businesses receive details of and help with applying for government grants.

Re-engagement with the city centre was crucial and events of all sizes and for all ages took place across the BID area helped to build confidence and reminded visitors, workers and residents of the pleasure of engaging with the life of the city centre.

As the year progressed, a new set of challenges also appeared, associated with a number of economic factors and, at the end of the year, world events, the effects of which we are all very aware of.

Communication and support will remain essential and the BID will play its part in helping levypayers have a voice - whether about Christmas lights or crime prevention, or the impact of infrastructure changes.

As we move forward through 2022, the contents of this report clearly show the achievements and the value to the city centre that the Business Improvement District provided to levypayers over the last year.

Iain Watkins

Wolverhampton BID Chairman

BID Team Welcome



Cherry Shine – BID Managing Director

Cherry is focussed on driving forward and directing all activities of the BID, making sure the BID delivers projects and services that are right for the city centre and taking opportunities to adapt and develop projects wherever possible. A significant part of Cherry's role is maintaining representation of the city centre at Towns Board, Relighting the City, the Cultural Compact and Rainbow City Project Board, making sure the city centre remains at the top of the agenda and that every opportunity to support the city centre is embraced. Cherry is actively looking for additional funding to support the BID's levy income to represent a strong return on levy payers' investment.



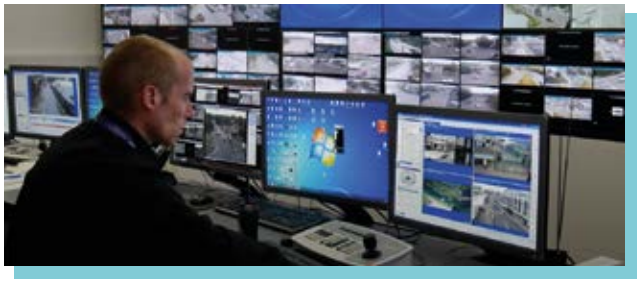
Shaun Boyce - Office, Projects & Social Media Manager

Providing direction to the City Ambassador team, Shaun ensures effective engagement and timely communications are made to our city centre businesses. Our social media remains topical, relevant and engaging for an ever-increasing audience with close to 14,000 followers. Taking a lead in delivering our Seaside in the City and Christmas events Shaun has ensured we deliver high quality events that continue to attract families to our city centre. He has a fundamental role in shaping the BID's marketing and communications which means we are reaching new audiences and taking more opportunities to promote the city centre.



Lucy Armstrong - Project Co-Ordinator (Business Crime Partnership)

Through her focus on supporting businesses for a safer city, Lucy has continued to facilitate a healthy discussion and topical focus for the Pubwatch group, helping raise awareness of the 'Ask Angela' campaign and driving forward towards the launch of the 'Barred from one, Barred from all' project to reduce anti-social behaviour in our night time economy. She continues to work tirelessly to maintain relevant communications via the radio link, making sure the city centre's DISC crime reporting app is used effectively and remains useful for sharing intelligence across all city centre businesses. As charity secretary for the Alternative Giving CIO she manages fundraising activities, building awareness of the campaign and partner engagement for this worthy cause.



BID CCTV Operator

Our CCTV operator makes sure our city centre is safe. The intelligence he gathers to support the Police is fundamental to a safe and welcoming city.



City Ambassador Team

Our team's daily patrols provide a friendly welcome and reassurance to all in the city centre. Their awareness and understanding of city centre operations is second to none.

Highlights from 2021-2022

A few projects and services that we are extremely proud to have delivered.



Supporting Traditional Retail, Leisure & Hospitality

During pandemic lockdowns we adapted our services to bring customers to our independent businesses online via Shop Appy whilst customers were unable to access shops and services in the normal way. Throughout 2021 and 2022 our focus shifted back to supporting retail in its traditional format by bringing additional football back into the city and shining a light on our businesses. We knew that consumer confidence needed to grow, so our social media messaging changed to build confidence and to remind people of what they had been missing from our great range of national and independent retail businesses, leisure and hospitality. We also focussed on encouraging people working from home to come out and support our High Street.

Our social media following at Enjoy Wolverhampton has grown to 14,000. Shaun actively maintained a prompt response to customer queries during uncertain trading periods so we were able to give customers confidence that our city centre was 'Open for Business'.

We revisited our
#Be Proud... Be Vocal... Do More... Spend Local!
marketing campaign which has always been relevant, but needed more emphasis than ever as we sought to support our businesses that suffered from a loss of trade.

Relighting our City Centre for Christmas

Investing over £20,000 in Christmas Lights for the City Centre was more important than ever to make Christmas 2021 a bright and inviting welcome to all visitors and shoppers. The lights were installed on:

- Cleveland Street,
- Garrick Street,
- Market Street,
- Princess Street,
- Snow Hill,
- Victoria Street (section),
- Darlington Street,
- Lichfield Street (section),
- Princess Square,
- Queen Street
- Stafford Street

We also invested in additional lights for the Queen Square Christmas Tree meaning it sparkled brighter than ever.

Working in partnership with the Wolverhampton Train Station team we also installed a 12ft lit Christmas tree on the new Station concourse to bring a real festive welcome to all visitors to our city centre at the key gateway.

Securing Additional Funding for Events

One key aim for 2021 to 2022 was making sure we secured any funding available that would help support the revival of our city centre and High Street. Through the Government's Welcome Back Fund, it meant that we were able to secure an additional £50,000 for events in the city centre. Using this funding we delivered a month-long ice rink event at Queen Square which attracted over 7000 people throughout December. Thanks to £10,000 from the Holiday Activities and Food fund we secured the extension of the ice rink event for an additional week after Boxing Day which enabled families to enjoy the free ice rink over the remaining school holidays.

Having secured additional funding it enabled us to add to our own festive events programme which includes Santa's Grotto, which we deliver in partnership with the Mander Centre and to introduce our Elfie Selfie trail, enjoyed by over 1600 people. With a prize worth £2,500 for completing the trail we enticed people to visit the 10 Elfie Selfie locations across the city centre. The prizes also served as a showcase of the range of retailers, venues, Christmas gifts and present ideas that Wolverhampton city centre has to offer.

Thank you once again to all 10 businesses that hosted our Elfie Selfie's.

Coca Cola Truck

Embracing the opportunity to bring the iconic Coca Cola Truck to Market Square, the BID team worked hard to facilitate the event which has huge appeal, attracting people from across the West Midlands to our city centre. After an unfortunate technical failure with the truck itself the BID team worked alongside the Coca Cola events team to ensure the iconic truck visited the city centre and on the 17th Dec we were incredibly pleased to see circa 8000 people visit the attraction, boosting footfall to this side of the city centre.





Supporting British Art Show 9

The most significant touring contemporary art show made its way to Wolverhampton from 22nd January to the 10th of April 2022. Understanding the opportunity that BAS9 would bring in terms of significant footfall, spend and showcasing our city, we secured funding from Wolverhampton University and matched it to provide an extra City Ambassador for the 11 weeks of the exhibition. Greeting people as they arrived in our city centre to visit the art show and helping them find their way to the Art Gallery, University Art and Design Building and the Offsite 9 locations provided for a warm welcome for visitors, strengthening their perceptions of the city, helping to encourage return visits and ensuring people make the most of their visit, all of which is a staple part of the City Ambassador service we provide.

Seaside in the City

As restrictions lifted we had the ability to hold events again and to bring back footfall. With some restrictions remaining to restrict the spread of Covid, Seaside in the City was more important than ever to deliver. In order that we would be able to maintain a 'covid safe' event whilst bringing families back into the city to enjoy the fun of the seaside we delivered the event on the Piazza with the stunning backdrop of St Peter's Church.

Using the Piazza enabled us to deliver the event whilst maintaining compliance with visitor numbers and to do this we partnered with the Grand Theatre to provide our booking system. Over the four days of the event we saw 3000 people attend, with families and children participating in the BrickLive 'make and take' sessions and sandcastle competitions. Families enjoyed all the fun of the seaside in our city centre at a time when travelling abroad remained challenging for many.



Enjoying Live Music & Entertainment Once Again

Bringing live music and entertainment to our city centre when restrictions lifted meant that we were able to bring our largest event, Enjoy Wolverhampton Live! back to Queen Square. Headlined by Heather Small from M people and with a strong line-up that included S Club 7's Jo O'Meara and DJ Graeme Park the marketing for the event continued to put the city on the events map. Unfortunately, even with the date of the event being moved to August due to the restrictions this did not mean the event was blessed with summer weather and unfortunately attendance at this annual event was lower than anticipated as the rain did not ease.







Welcoming People Back to our Evening Economy

May 2021 saw the re-introduction of the Late-Night Safe Haven service which is delivered in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, West Midlands Police and supported by St John ambulance. The first night of the service reminded us why the provision is absolutely essential for the evening economy with one of the BID Safe Haven team witnessing an attempted kidnap. Statements and evidence gathered on the night resulted in the perpetrator being arrested and subsequently sentenced to three years.





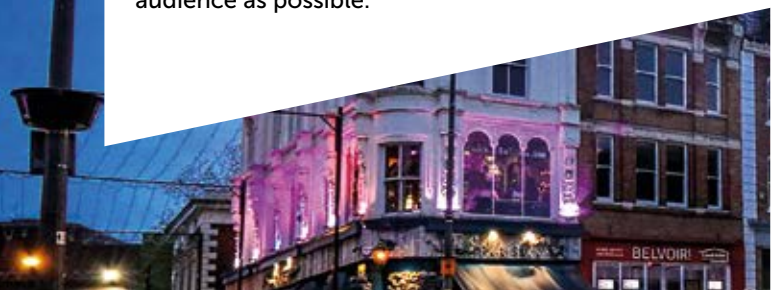
We took the opportunity to remind people at all night-time venues about the 'Ask For Angela' campaign, especially pertinent as the safety of women at night became a strong focus following events during the year.

May also saw the BID's Night Guardian service reinstated with their patrols to complement the Late-Night Safe Haven by offering a warm welcome to revellers enjoying the night time economy. Our Night Guardians also enable us to understand what happens in our evening economy, how we can support our businesses and helps us understand how we can reduce anti-social behaviour with the intelligence the team collate.

Festive Parking

The BID secured FREE Sunday parking in December 2021 at both Mander and Wulfrun Centre car parks which was key to attracting much needed footfall back to our city centre businesses. We aim to continue this offer every Christmas to give a strong message to all our Christmas shoppers.

We also make sure that we share the marketing for the festive parking offers that the City of Wolverhampton Council provide to make sure it reaches as wide an audience as possible.



Vibrant Gateway to the City

Working closely with Wolverhampton's Train Station Manager we have built a fruitful relationship that is bringing a more vibrant welcome to all train passengers.

Working collaboratively with Wolverhampton Train Station and West Midlands Trains we submitted a funding application to Cross Country's Customer and Communities Investment Fund which was successful in securing £134,000 towards the creation of an Enterprise and Community Hub within the new Station building.





The Second Year of our Second 5-year Term (1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022)

Wolverhampton BID Company's total levy income expected for 2021 - 2022 was £511,207, however, in acknowledgement of the pandemic, national Covid restrictions and reduced services of the BID during 2020/21 we issued a 15% reduction in levy to all levy payers for 2021-22. With the 15% reduction applied, the total levy due in 2021-22 was estimated at £436,436.75. During the year the levy income increased slightly to £437,282 (as at December 2021). To date we have collected £353,815, representing 80.9% of expected collectable levy income for the year, with funds still being collected.

Bringing Additional Income to Supplement the Levy

To date the BID levy has been supplemented by £32,725 from the radio link scheme and promotional activities, £8,568 from the Government's Holiday Activity Fund, £5,573 from government grants and £9,226 from Christmas event income so far representing 12.8% additional funds. Further additional income of over £50,000 is expected from the Government's Welcome Back Fund prior to the year-end giving us a strong rate of return on the levy funding invested in the city centre.

The Year Ahead – 2022-2023

The third year of our second term started on the 1st April 2022, and now with no covid restrictions in place in we are excited to bring our full programme back on track. The estimated levy due in 2022-23 is £497,140.42 (based on the National Non-Domestic Rates correct as at 23.3.21) which includes an inflation factor of 1.55%.

The BID will aim to complement its levy income with an additional £40,000 from its promotional activities and will actively seek additional funding to support the BID's activities.

EXPENDITURE ACROSS OUR 4 PRIORITIES IS SET OUT BELOW:

- Clean, Safe & Welcoming £173,110
- Marketing Promotions and Events £150,180
- Accessibility and Parking £46,975
- Business Support £24,005

CORE COSTS:

- Staffing and Overheads £121,785
- Levy Collection costs £17,587
- Contingency £3,498

Alongside the budget set out above, reserves of £100,000 will be utilised to bring forward projects and initiatives that have met delays due to the pandemic restrictions during 2021 to 2022.





The crowds enjoying Enjoy Wolverhampton Live! 2022

Looking Forward to 2022 to 2023

A snapshot of the activities and events that the BID will be working on.

Spring Clean

We understand that having 'pride of place' is important and that first impressions count, especially when large numbers of people will be visiting our city for events during the year. Which is why we will be focussing on graffiti removal and fly post removal across the city centre and cleansing hotspot areas including Castle Yard and Lichfield Passage. Our City Ambassador team will always make sure offensive graffiti is reported to the Council's cleansing team and that they report any areas in need of cleansing on their daily patrols.

Strengthening our Summer Events Programme

Building on our events programme we aim to bolster footfall with the aim of getting closer to the pre-pandemic levels we saw in 2019. For April 2022 we looked to introduce a bigger than ever Easter events programme including a Giant Easter Egg hunt and Easter craft workshops with the aim of bringing families back into our city. Our aim is to support footfall across all of the city by carefully selecting the egg locations and ensuring that children and families enjoy Wolverhampton over their Easter holidays.

Enjoy Wolverhampton Live! - June 2022

Bringing our largest event back in June 2022 will help to grow confidence in our city, whilst supporting footfall throughout the day and into the night. With a strong daytime line up with huge family appeal the timing of the acts is set to make sure we attract people to dwell 'do some shopping' and also 'grab a bite to eat' at our city centre cafes and restaurants.

The evening music concert promises to takes us on a journey through the 80's, 90's and 00's, headlined by Martin Kemp. We are delivering a day of entertainment



with popular appeal to reach the largest potential audience and to attract footfall as close to the 10,000 we saw in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. We will utilise the large event screens and social media for the event to advertise city centre businesses, encourage dwell time and ensure that the audience to the concert stays well beyond the concert to boost the trade for our evening economy.

Wild in Wolves – Summer 2022

Join us on Safari in the city. With the aim of bringing a steady flow of footfall to the city centre over the summer holidays we will bring our Wild in Wolves sculpture trail to 10 locations, encouraging families to visit the city centre, to follow the trail, providing another reason to visit our city for the full six weeks of the summer holidays. As with all of our events we will take the opportunity to build awareness of businesses, products and promotions to this captive audience, encouraging increased spend and dwell time.

Krazy Races – August 2022

As a sponsor and all-round supporter for this exciting event we can't wait to see the crowds in Queen Square as the' Krazy carts' make their way from Queen Square down Darlington Street. Brought to you by the Krazy Races Team, this event promises to drive footfall to our city centre in August and hope that features on the city centre's event programme in years to come.



A Summer of Events



Seaside in the City – August 2022

Bringing this family favourite of an event back to Queen Square is something all the BID team are excited to see. We hope to strengthen the community spirit of the event in August 2022 by working in partnership with West Midlands Fire Service.

Supporting Additional City Centre Events

Whilst the BID delivers its own programme of events throughout the year we also play a central role in encouraging and supporting additional events in the city centre. 2022 promises to be a busy year with the Queen's Jubilee bringing an extended Bank Holiday for us all to celebrate and enjoy.

We also welcome the Commonwealth Games, particularly the Cycling Time Trail which will take in our city centre and also the Queen's Baton Relay starting off the celebrations. We will ensure that businesses are kept informed about the events and that event organisers provide the right level of information to businesses within a timely manner, enabling our businesses to take full advantage of the events and celebrations.

Our Strong City Voice

The BID continues to represent the city centre across many different meetings and forums. Through our representation at the Towns Board we have been able to guide investment towards the city centre from the £25 million funding secured. As the Council deliver on the Future High Street fund public realm improvements around Victoria Street and North Street, we will continue to ensure that our businesses' voice is heard. Whilst works are ongoing we will do whatever we can to support those most affected whilst these much needed changes take shape. We will continue to strive for the best possible outcomes for our city and look forward to the works being completed and anticipate the delivery of BID funded events to drive footfall and spend in and around the new public spaces created.



Enterprise and Community Hub

Having secured £134,000 to deliver an Enterprise and Community hub at the new Wolverhampton Train Station, this project is going to be a real focus for the team in 2022 / 23. With the unit currently being a shell within the stunning new Station building we are looking forward to fitting out the unit and bringing it to life with a comprehensive and engaging programme to support community engagement, rail travel, passenger confidence and enterprise support, all from this new gateway.

A Vibrant Welcome

Having 'adopted' Wolverhampton Train station during 2021, one of the first projects we want to deliver is the introduction of vibrant art murals that showcase what our city has to offer and inject a sense of pride and celebration. We have now commissioned two artists to bring life to the train station waiting room and customer lounge, selected from an amazing range of artists whose submissions were all of an incredible quality. We are working closely with the team at Wolverhampton Train Station to have the murals installed and look forward to people learning more about our city whether they are visiting our city or just passing through.





Looking Forward to 2022 to 2023 *Continued*

Business Support and Strong Communications

Communication is key, and we understand how important keeping our business community 'in the loop' is, especially during the pandemic. Sending regular, relevant email updates to over 250 city centre businesses regarding business grants, support, funding opportunities and city news ensures that we are keeping all our city centre businesses up to date.

Will remain committed to maintaining our quarterly retailers / business meetings, holding them via zoom if necessary but definitely welcoming the opportunity to now host these 'in person' and we thank McDonalds, Yorkshire Building Society and Mander Centre for hosting our latest retailer and BID Board meetings. These retailer and business meetings give businesses a chance to meet with the BID team, network amongst likeminded business representatives, discuss shared issues and hear the very latest city centre news.

Business Networking & Engagement

Retailer / Business meetings also offer an opportunity for city partners to present to businesses on future projects, city regeneration and opportunities, ensuring our city centre business community are engaged and updated all city centre activities including up and coming BID events and activities.

Our Enterprise and Community hub at Wolverhampton train station, once the fit out is completed, will give us a space to hold more networking events, showcase our city centre businesses in a prime location and also provide a space for city centre jobs fayres, training courses and business support sessions.

Showcasing and Supporting our Independent Businesses

Independents Day is a UK wide celebration of our independent businesses. This year to support the campaign and celebrate the range of businesses we have and the people that work within them, we will promote our independent retailers and businesses via a spotlight feature focussed around this national campaign in July 2022.

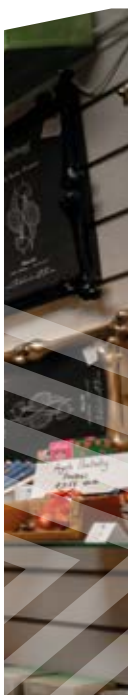












The BID Board of Directors

Whilst maintaining strong representation across all sectors in the city centre, the BID's Board of Directors have welcomed new Directors this year. We give a warm welcome to Kevin Kay from Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club who brings particular insight into Wolves FC and strengthens our involvement with our iconic football club.

We introduce Sophie Clement, Police Inspector, who has an insight into crime and safety in our city that is second to none. We welcomed Councillor Stephen Simkins (Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy) as our Local Authority representative. We also welcomed Andrew Alloway, Wulfrun Centre Manager who brings a wealth of knowledge from his vast experience in managing shopping centres across the region.



Iain Watkins:
BID Chairman



Alison Westwood:
BID Legal Director



Andrew Alloway:
BID General Retail Director

Sophie Clements:
BID Crime & Safety Director



Councillor Steven Simkins:
BID Local Authority Director



Chris Bourne:
BID Finance Director



James Thomas Horton:
BID Marketing Director



Richard Scharenguivel:
BID National Retail Director



Sham Sharma:
BID Night-time Economy Director



John Henn:
BID Independent Retail Director



Kevin Kay:
BID Access and Parking Director

BID Directors – Final Remarks

As we have moved through the year getting closer to 'normal' seems more realistic! However we appreciate the impact of the pandemic has meant that shoppers and consumers habits have changed significantly and that we all need to adapt and respond to these challenges. The range of BID services highlighted in this report demonstrates that we are doing what we can to aid a strong city centre recovery. By continuing to work together, bringing investment, vibrancy and footfall to the city centre and always having the prosperity of our City Centre in our focus we look forward to our City Centre's brighter future.

Cherry Shine *Wolverhampton BID, Managing Director*



British BIDs 10

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