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Northwich BID Annual Report 2014/2015

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. The BID commenced on 1st September 2014 and will run 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 2014/2015 are detailed in this review.

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 individual businesses rateable value on all businesses with a rateable value greater than £6,000.



Message from the Chair – Gaynor Sinar

It is my pleasure to share with you the first Northwich Business Improvement District Annual Report (2014/2015). It is hard to believe that we have delivered our first year of the Business Improvement District in Northwich - it has been a busy year for the BID and we are keen to share with you the projects and services that have been delivered in Year 1, along with our ambitious plans for Year 2. As I look around the town centre we are in a period of change, and that change is for the better of Northwich. With over £100m of regeneration projects, along with nearly £1.25m of private sector led investment from the BID over 5 years, as businesses we have never been in a better position.

2014/2015 saw us kicking off with placing Northwich firmly back on the map by developing and delivering an enviable marketing strategy along with a whole host of sought after events and festivals in the town. We have seen additional investments being made in the Christmas and Easter Extravaganzas along with the introduction of the Summer Extravaganza, Northwich Heritage Open Day and the Northwich Teenage Market. All of these events have added vibrancy and vitality to our town, along with increased footfall and spend in our shops, with some of our national retailers reporting a 20% increase in sales and independent traders reporting over a 75% increase on special event days.

Our Safe and Secure Theme has seen us work in an innovative partnership with the Northwich Policing Team and Cheshire Police and we have all become familiar with our very own BID PCSO Robbie Stott, who can be regularly seen in town and in our businesses, offering support and guidance on crime and security issues.

A Greener Cleaner Northwich has seen the BID Team work with the local authority and Northwich Town Council to establish current baseline commitments and this work is now coming to fruition with better planting schemes seen across the town centre, as well as a host of new landscape features and image improvements programmed in for 2016.

We now have a stronger voice; the BID Executive Board, along with the BID Team, have become strong advocates, working with a diverse group of stakeholders to address our local and national challenges and capitalise on opportunities.

Northwich is moving in the right direction, this has been evidenced over the last 6 months by us seeing 6 new businesses move into the High Street and a business expansion in the Bull Ring. There is confidence in Northwich and we need to ensure that we continue to deliver on our promises to further enhance our offer.

We are looking forward to continuing our work with our BID businesses, local authorities and business leaders to create new programmes, while thinking creatively about how to address the unique issues facing Northwich.

Finally, throughout this report, we share the details of the projects delivered in Year One and the plans for Year Two whilst looking forward to continuing to deliver high-quality projects and services that will ensure Northwich is an essential place in the region and drives our town's profile.



Gaynor Sinar

Owner of Curtain Magic & Chair of the Northwich Business Improvement District Executive Board.



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 for 2014/2015 are featured below.

Your Executive Board

Chairperson

Gaynor Sinar *Curtain Magic*

Vice-Chairperson

Mark Lever *Mosshaselhurst Solicitors*

Treasurer

Mark Baker *Santander*

Board Members

Peter Gibbs	<i>Waitrose</i>
Dee O'Brian	<i>Sainsbury's</i>
Deborah Hughes	<i>Boots Opticians</i>
Wendy Batey-Gray	<i>Solutions 24-7 Marketing Agency</i>
Jason Hannon	<i>Bruschetta</i>
Carolyn Shepherd	<i>ArtWork Studios & Gallery</i>
Adam Prestage	<i>Witton Chimes</i>
Kate Munro	<i>Vision Express</i>

Supporters/Advisors

Catherine Fox	<i>Area Programme Manager – Cheshire West and Chester Council</i>
Chris Shaw	<i>Northwich Town Clerk – Northwich Town Council</i>
Mark Simmons	<i>Senior Locality Officer – Cheshire West and Chester Council</i>
Inspector Dave Snasdell	<i>Northwich Policing Unit – Cheshire Police</i>

“Northwich Town Council has been heavily involved with the BID team during the past 12 months working hard to bring to Northwich some of the best events the town has seen. In particular the Northwich Christmas Extravaganza which has been a huge success! By working together we have managed to provide fantastic displays of activities, performers and entertainment as well as an excellent display of Christmas Trees and Lights throughout the Town. We look forward to working together this coming year to continue to provide Northwich with a timetable of events to be enjoyed by all.”

Chris Shaw – Northwich Town Clerk



Your BID Team

Since we received that all-important “Yes” vote in June 2014, the BID Team have hit the ground running by not only delivering the projects and services contained within this annual report, but also providing individual businesses and our trading environment with much valued support. It is no secret that Northwich has encountered a number of issues surrounding the Barons Quay development, Weaver Square, flood defence works, car parking changes and road closures throughout the year, but we all know that with any major regeneration programme there are always going to be changes. However, the BID team have strived to work with contractors, stakeholders and partners to ensure that

issues/ works are communicated and changes made to minimise the impact on the business community and our visitors.

You will also very often see the team in and around town, conducting image audits, meeting and supporting businesses with relevant issues and opportunities, working on programmes of investment and managing activity on special event days – their support and determination to deliver success in Northwich has been invaluable. Year 2 will be an important year for the BID and the team are already gaining traction with the BID’s ambitious plans to see Northwich grow and prosper in 2016.

“ We asked for help to promote our Black Friday event in November and with the help from the Northwich BID Team we were able to have fundraisers from The Joshua Tree charity to help with bag packing for our event – this made for a very enjoyable if not a little cold night and we would definitely ask for help with this again. Many thanks to all at the Northwich BID and to The Joshua Tree. ”

**Nic Jones, Deputy Manager –
B&M Retail Northwich**



The Northwich BID Team



What we have delivered in 2014-2015

Theme One – A Vibrant and Co-ordinated Town

Investments in the marketing and promotion of Northwich

Website and Digital App



In July 2015 we saw the launch of the Visit Northwich website, designed to give retailers, residents and visitors information on everything that is happening in Northwich. The website has highlighted the towns growing retail offer, special offers and discounts, provides updates on Barons Quay and showcases the breadth of green spaces and leisure activities Northwich has to offer. In addition, the website has been designed to be the main point of reference for the Northwich Business Improvement District with BID member only access features to enable businesses to manage their own business directory listing, upload their offers and own brand visibility as well as advertising their job vacancies. In addition the BID member section also provides details on meeting minutes, reports and BID member offers and services.

The first stages of a digital Application have been developed for Northwich, the funding of which has come directly from the Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative through its first stage application. Recently, the second stage funding for this project was secured and the application will go live in 2016. The digital application will bring the town's past and present day together, acting as the perfect

tool to encourage tourism. In addition, the app will feature sections on offers, events and jobs, allowing businesses to reach out to more people than ever before in this new, ever changing digital landscape.

Advertising, Communication and PR

Throughout the year the BID has developed press releases and advertising for special event days with local newspapers and other media communications. There has been a regular monthly feature in the Northwich Guardian, Easter event promotions in the Mid-Cheshire Independent along with more traditional forms of advertising such as banners located in and around the town, billboard advertising in the centre of Northwich and leaflets and posters distributed to shoppers and visitors. The weekly e-bulletin has also been a successful communication for alerting businesses to new BID projects and services, news stories, business offers and trader spotlight sections.



Social Media

2014/2015 has seen the launch of the Visit Northwich, Northwich Christmas Extravaganza and Northwich Teenage Market Facebook pages, along with the Northwich BID and Northwich Teenage Market Twitter accounts and the Visit Northwich and Northwich Teenage Market Instagram accounts. These social media channels have supported a whole host of activity around raising awareness of the town's events and festivals, raising the profile of individual businesses and Northwich, sharing business offers and sharing updates on developments and projects within Northwich. These social media channels have proved hugely successful with the facebook page generating a reach of over 25,000 people in the lead up to special events.



Events and Festivals

Even before the inception of the BID in September 2014, the BID Team were proactively developing a schedule of events and festivals in Northwich, kicking off by working in partnership with Northwich Town Council to deliver the best Christmas event in the history of Northwich. The BID has made some significant investments since its inception in the towns Christmas lighting, an additional Christmas Tree at Town Bridge and the programme of entertainment in the town centre on the actual day of the switch on.

In addition, investments have been made in developing the Easter Campaign and June 2015 saw the introduction of the Summer Extravaganza.

Working in partnership with The Market Company, June's Artisan Market brought a whole host of additional entertainment and activity in the town centre, which saw increased footfall and spend in our businesses.

A fantastic new edition to Northwich was the Teenage Market in July 2015, which is now going from strength to strength. The Teenage Market has seen our younger creative generation developing their appetite for becoming successful business leaders and entrepreneurs of the future, along with bringing a sense of vibrancy to the ever popular monthly Artisan Market.

Theme One – An investment of £84,202 in 2014-2015

“After celebrating our first year of trading of Northwich Art Shop in August we are rightly proud of everything Northwich has to offer. As a specialist retailer in Northwich we draw from over 150 miles radius and celebrate the many positive comments we receive about how lovely Northwich is. We are immensely supportive of the Northwich BID as well as being active members of the independent traders group NIRA. The work that the BID team does in promoting Northwich, whilst in its infancy, is certainly promoting a positive message about our town as it strives to find its feet following the major developments and investment in recent years. The BID events contribute to creating a lovely atmosphere in the town which is definitely good for business. We look forward to 2016 and the opening of Barons Quay repositioning Northwich as a viable retail and visitor destination, with the help and support of the BID team we feel we are well placed to continue to see growth.”

Phil Bower, Owner - Northwich Art Shop



Theme Two – A Supported Environment for Business

Training & Skills

A packed schedule of training courses was delivered throughout the year by the Northwich BID and covered essential topics for businesses in the town. With the Quallsafe Level 2 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work proving to be immensely popular and valuable to employers, all three one-day training courses were well attended by representatives from businesses. The Social Media and LinkedIn Training Course provided by the Northwich BID also highlighted to businesses just how important an online presence can be in generating sales, and both courses were again well attended.



Nearly 50 Northwich BID business employees covering 20 businesses have received free training in the first year of the Northwich Business Improvement District, with all First Aid Training Certificates validated by Quallsafe. This extremely high uptake demonstrates the real value that businesses in Northwich place in keeping their employees highly skilled and well-trained.

Northwich BID Business Group

The Northwich BID Business Group met twice in 2014-2015, in December 2014 and July 2015. Full copies of minutes and associated papers from the Northwich BID Group meetings are available from www.visitnorthwich.co.uk. The meetings focused on the projects and services that could be delivered in the first year of the BID, with a workshop event taking place for businesses to feedback suggestions and ideas.

The Mid-Cheshire BID's Breakfast event in July was also an essential briefing for Northwich BID Businesses that was well attended by employees and employers. Covering the key economic developments set to transform Northwich and offering a greater understanding of what the strategic plans were for the area concerning Economic growth, the meeting also served as an excellent opportunity to network with businesses from two other Mid-Cheshire Business Improvement Districts in the area.

Joint Procurement Scheme

In order to support the local businesses in the town, the Northwich BID teamed up with energy, voice and water consultants Invev (Intelligent Voice Energy



and Water consultants) to help reduce the costs of telecom, utility and water bills that Northwich traders are paying. Specialising in bill comparisons for businesses concerning utilities, the partnership has enabled businesses to take advantage of any cheaper prices or deals that might be available to them.

Several Northwich businesses, including Northwich Dry Cleaners, have already seen the benefits that working with INVEV can provide, while several more including Riverbank Day Nursery and Shine Africa are set to make savings over the coming months.

BID member discount scheme – Brio Leisure

Current local offers available to Northwich BID businesses includes a 20% discount on Leisure Packages at Brio Leisure where employees can take advantage of a 20% discount on full membership. Applicable in any of the centres and extending to family members in the same household that are over 17, the scheme gives Northwich BID business employees access to 12 fantastic Leisure centres across Northwich, Winsford, Chester and Ellesmere Port with unlimited use of all facilities. To date, almost 40 employees from Northwich BID businesses have signed up to the scheme.



Theme Two – An investment of £1,928 in 2014-2015

“Electricity is one of our biggest overheads for us so the savings we are making from the BID Joint Procurement scheme is very welcome indeed. It makes us more profitable and frees up money to reinvest in the business. We worked closely with the BID's joint procurement partner Invev to identify the saving and would highly recommend it to other businesses.”

Julia Edwardson, Owner - Northwich Dry Cleaners



Theme Three – Safe and Secure

A dedicated PCSO provision in Northwich

Year 1 of the Northwich BID saw the introduction of the dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) provision in the town, working in an innovative partnership with the Northwich BID to provide a committed service to the area.

By increasing communication between retailers in the town and Cheshire Police, and together with the hard work of the dedicated Northwich BID PCSO, the aim is to significantly reduce crime in our town and create a safer and more prosperous environment for traders and consumers alike.

Theme Three – An investment of £11,800 in 2014-2015

“In the first year of the Northwich Business Improvement District, shoplifting in Northwich has reduced by 42%”*

“Partnership working is the key to success to ensure Crime and ASB levels continue to fall and the community are safe going about their day to day business. The Police cannot work in isolation and need the basic Peel Policing principles to do our job effectively. That is having the support from all the community including the business community who are the eyes and ears for the Police. The BID management team are essential to this and some great work has been done during the past year in developing our partnership working working for the benefit of the area.



The Northwich BID PCSO Robbie Stott.

We are in touch on a regular basis with the BID team, passing on intelligence, advice and problem solving and this will continue to develop in the future. Northwich Town Centre has exciting times ahead with all the development taking place and we want to be involved in its success story to make it a great place to live, work and socialise in. ”

Inspector Dave Snasdell – Cheshire Police

*information sourced from Cheshire Police

Theme Four – Greener and Cleaner

Throughout the first year of the BID, the Northwich BID team, along with Northwich Town Council have been dedicated to continuously improving Northwich's image, constantly looking at ways to improve how both visitors and businesses perceive and view the town.

The team has been working closely with the Local Authority and Northwich Town Council to both establish and improve the baselines on highway cleansing, litter picking, floral displays and other town maintenance services, as well as conducting quarterly image improvement audits with partners including Streetscene, Councillors and the Local Authority to highlight key areas in need of improvement throughout the town.

The BID Team has also negotiated the return of the popular floral railing tubs along Chester Way, with several more landscape improvement and planting schemes in the pipeline ready to come to full fruition once the baselines provided by the Local Authority have been established.

Green Infrastructure Audit

A Green Infrastructure Audit of Northwich Town Centre and the surrounding area was also implemented by the Mersey Forest, with the aims of providing an evidence base and recommendations for plans to enhance the town on a wider scale. Funded by the Northwich BID and partners, the report includes plans that will deliver multiple benefits to the town, including image enhancements, cycling routes, climate change adaptations and increased connectivity to link the town with wider countryside attractions



“ Having been involved with the BID since its inception, I have seen how the team has been instrumental in supporting all the positive partnership working we deliver within Northwich Town Centre. I have worked with the BID Team on improving baseline services delivered by the Council through to supporting with funding opportunities for new innovative festivals and events. This partnership has also played a key role in tackling issues that businesses face including dealing with Chuggers & Fundraisers, issues with Pigeons and the general cleanliness of the town centre. ”

**Mark Simmons, Senior Locality Officer –
Cheshire West and Chester Council**



Income and Expenditure

BID Income	Budget – Year 1 September 2014 – August 2015	Actual – Year 1 September 2014 – August 2015
BID Levy Income	£174,000	£174,000
Income from Voluntary Members	£5,000	£151
Grants/Fund Match (Financial)	£65,500	£6,970
Bank Interest		£18
Total Income 2014 - 2015	£244,500	£181,139
BID Expenditure	Budget – Year 1 September 2014 – August 2015	Actual – Year 1 September 2014 – August 2015
Theme One – A Vibrant and Co-ordinated Town	£91,628	£84,202
Theme Two – A Supported Environment For Business	£19,000	£1,928
Theme Three – Safe and Secure	£56,000	£11,800
Theme Four – Greener and Cleaner	£26,000	Nil
Project Management & Administration Costs	£32,600	£31,827
Accruals – Annual Audit		£250
Total – Expenditure 2014 – 2015	£225,228	£130,007
Actual Surplus +/-		£51,132

Note: In addition to the financial income received by the Business Improvement District in 2014/2015 there has been additional investments made of £46,272, which have supported the development of the first stage Visit Northwich Digital Application, the dedicated BID PCSO, Green Infrastructure Audit, Christmas Campaign and Training Courses and Seminars. This additional investment has been secured through Cheshire West and Chester Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, The Mersey Forest, Cheshire Police and Northwich Town Council.

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



What we plan to deliver in Year 2

Theme One

Marketing and Promotion

- ✓ Further development of the Visit Northwich Website and the introduction of the Visit Northwich Digital App
- ✓ Continuation of the weekly and quarterly news bulletins
- ✓ Development of our Advertising and PR to a much wider audience
- ✓ Shopper/visitor guides – electronic and hardcopy
- ✓ Dedicated Marketing support – Alive After Five & Small Business Saturday and other special events
- ✓ Introduction of Footfall Counters across the Town Centre
- ✓ Competitions – to drive consumer awareness to Visit Northwich

Current 2015/2016 Events and Festivals

- ✓ Northwich Heritage Open Day
Saturday 12th September 2015
- ✓ Christmas Extravaganza
Saturday 21st November 2015
- ✓ Northwich Teenage Market
Saturday 13th February 2016
- ✓ Easter Extravaganza
Saturday 26th March 2016
- ✓ Northwich Teenage Market
Saturday 14th May 2016
- ✓ Summer Extravaganza
Saturday 11th June 2016
- ✓ Northwich Teenage Market
Saturday 9th July 2016

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.

“The BID Team helped our hairdressing salon recently when we celebrated our eighteenth year of business in Northwich. We wanted to hold an event where we could thank our customers past and present but also raise awareness of our salon to potential future business. The BID helped me with the media side, working together we were able to put press releases together which then led to articles within The Northwich Guardian and many social media sites including The BID news. The BID also features us heavily on all their social media sites, our posts and offers are ALWAYS retweeted. I think working with the BID has been great for us.”

Zoe Bentley, Manager - Wilsons Hairdressing, Northwich



Theme Two

Current 2015/2016 Training Courses and Seminars

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Emergency First Aid at Work
Tuesday 13th October 2015 | ✓ Guide to Successful Retailing
Thursday 22nd October 2015 |
| ✓ Emergency First Aid at Work
Tuesday 12th January 2016 | ✓ Fire Risk Assessment
Tuesday 26th January 2016 |
| ✓ Mid-Cheshire BID's Cyber Crime Seminar
Friday 29th January 2016 | ✓ Emergency First Aid at Work
Wednesday 24th February 2016 |
| ✓ Social Media and SEO for your business
Wednesday 20th April 2016 | ✓ Emergency First Aid at Work
Wednesday 27th April 2016 |
| ✓ Customer Services
Tuesday 10th May 2016 | ✓ Emergency First Aid at Work
Monday 13th June 2016 |

Additional investments will be made throughout the year in Training Courses and Seminars dependent on Business requirements and needs. This information will be collated through the annual business survey in January/February 2016. New course dates will be communicated to businesses as and when they are released.

Joint Procurement Schemes

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

“Northwich BID have been very supportive and informative in relation to the relocation of our business premises. They have put us in contact with various council members as required, and they have informed us that they are pushing for the landscaping of a “pocket garden” on the scrub land opposite Imperial Buildings and the installation of hanging baskets and planters around the Bull Ring, which will be a much appreciated improvement to our immediate location.”

Natalie Williams, Director – Temples



Theme Three

Dedicated PCSO

The BID will continue to part fund a dedicated PCSO in the Town. Our objectives for Year 2 are to continue to drive down shoplifting in Northwich, reduce anti-social behaviour and raise the profile of Northwich as a safe place to visit.

Improving our Night Time Economy

2016 will be an important year for Northwich and one where we will see the opening of Barons Quay which will bring a different, diverse night time economy to Northwich. With this in mind the BID would like to introduce a number of projects and initiatives to improve the night time economy. The BID are currently looking at the feasibility of introducing Purple Flag status in Northwich.

Purple Flag is an accreditation process similar to the Green Flag award for parks and the Blue Flag for beaches. It leads to Purple Flag status for town & city centres that meet or surpass the standards of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy (ENTE).

The scheme is a positive initiative that indicates an entertaining, diverse, safe and enjoyable night out throughout the UK and Ireland and is now being taken up internationally.

Introduction of a Northwich Town Centre Rapid Text Service

In February 2016 the BID will introduce a rapid text service in the Town Centre. This service enables organisations in the town centre to communicate information, warnings and messages that may affect other traders to key employees across the BID area and Cheshire Police, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Theme Four

Landscape, Cleanliness and Signage Improvements

A number of projects and services have been secured for 2015/2016, with additional investments being made in street cleanliness on Witton Street, planting programmes, including the introduction of additional railing baskets on Chester Way and new hanging baskets being introduced on street columns on London Road, High Street, Witton Street and Venables Road. Additional investments will also be made into the industrial area on Witton Street/Albion Road.



Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Project

The BID will work in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council to deliver the recently approved THI project in the town centre. The project will see £1.4m worth of funding to develop and support conservation works to the older timber framed buildings through a grant support programme.

It will also support heritage activities including heritage talks and tours, family days, special history sessions for schools, workshops on the management and maintenance of the timber framed buildings.

“During 2015 the partnership between Cheshire West and Chester and the Northwich BID has been strengthened by successful joint working in a number of important areas such as communications, marketing, events, and mutual support on grant submissions and improvement works for the town centre. We see the BID as a key player in ensuring the successful regeneration of Northwich town centre and in 2016 expect our partnership with the BID to develop further as Barons Quay looks forward to opening toward the end of 2016, improvements in the historic town centre progress and marketing and promotion of the town centre moves up a another gear.”

**Catherine Fox, Area Programme Manager –
Cheshire West and Chester Council**



Northwich BID works with a number of partners and stakeholders



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

Jane Hough

BID Manager

Tel: 01606 723175

Email: jane.hough@groundwork.org.uk

Mark Henshaw

Northwich BID Officer

Tel: 01606 723175

Email: mark.henshaw@groundwork.org.uk

