



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 first BID for Northwich commenced on 1st September 2014 and ran until 31st August 2019.

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 will allow the BID to continue investing in the town centre, supporting businesses and ensuring Northwich can continue to thrive as a destination of choice for consumers and shoppers.

The Northwich BID funds and delivers added value projects and services within the town. These projects are managed and controlled by the business community and the entire project is business led. The BID's funds come from a mandatory levy which equates to 1.5% of an individual businesses rateable value (on all businesses with a rateable value greater than £6,000). 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 2019 - 2020 are detailed in this annual report.





MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

MICHAEL THOMAS

As we look back on the first year of Northwiche BID 2, 2020 has proved to be such a challenging year for all our businesses. With the onset of Lockdown and the Covid-19 pandemic in March hitting towns across the country hard, I'm so proud of how resilient all our Northwiche businesses have been in pulling together and tackling the crisis, ensuring our High Street retains the spirit and passion that we have worked so hard to achieve over the last few years of the BID.

Thankfully, the majority of you have taken advantage of the support offered by the BID Team during this challenging time and have welcomed the many grants on offer from the government.

I am confident that in a time when things can return to normal, we will see our town bounce back to the thriving and bustling market town we knew and loved. In the meantime, keep fighting, and if anybody needs any form of support, guidance or help, no matter how big or small, the BID Team is on hand to assist.

With so many of you adapting how you operate to fit in with the 'new normal', I strongly urge each and every one of our amazing businesses in Northwiche to really get involved, embrace the support of the BID Team and show that Northwiche and its businesses are a community to be proud of!

HOW WE DELIVER THE BID

The Northwiche Business Improvement District is governed by the Northwiche 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 Northwiche Business Improvement District Business plan. For more details about the Executive Board, please visit www.northwichebid.co.uk.

WHAT WE HAVE DELIVERED IN 2019-2020

THEME ONE - A UNIQUE SHOPPER AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

A number of key marketing campaigns were put together during the year, including the Northwiche Together Campaign, the aim of which was to show how the Northwiche community has united since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak. So many businesses adapted their services and products in ingenious and creative ways, whilst consumers changed their buying habits to shop and support local, and we wanted to highlight this success story.

Another successful campaign was the Northwiche Wishes campaign, the premise of which was to engage with the Northwiche community to collect, share and reward their wishes. Each of the selected wishes was kindly fulfilled by a Northwiche business.

The Project Happy/Northwiche Heroes campaign that ran through the summer was a joint partnership project between Barons Quay and the BID. Project Happy has continued to run throughout the pandemic and many local people have engaged and provided their artwork. The finalised artwork will be displayed in Barons Quay and Witton Street. Northwiche Heroes campaign ran throughout July. This project celebrated those individuals in our community who were "real heroes" through the pandemic.

KEY STATISTICS



FACEBOOK REACH

Increased by 20% to 2.59 million from Sep 19 to Aug 20 compared to the previous period.



FACEBOOK

Page likes increased by 12% to 9033



TWITTER

Followers risen by 5% to 4203



INSTAGRAM

Followers risen by 34% to 3025



PR

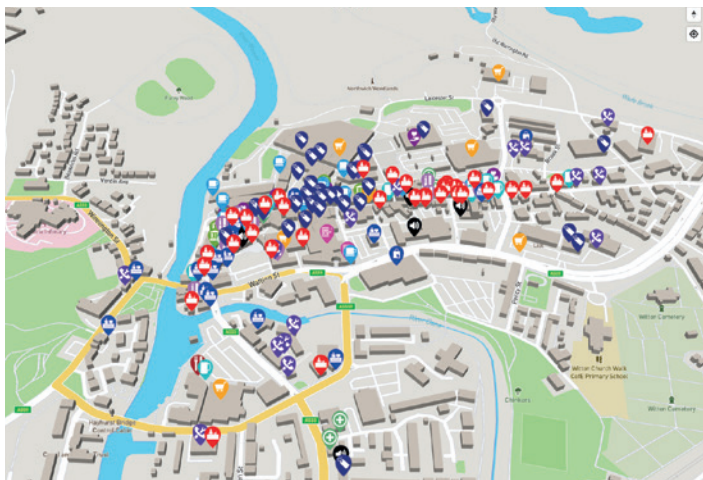
Over 100 pieces of media coverage online for the BID and its businesses



FOOTFALL

Following the first lockdown, footfall returned to 80% of where it was in 2019.

A "Northwich is Open for Business" Map was created on the Visit Northwich website as a resource displaying all businesses that informed the BID Team of their opening days, times and whether they were doing deliveries. This was displayed online and was a key tool for shoppers and those looking to come back in to Northwich in order to plan their visit effectively.



The e-bulletins continued to hit businesses inboxes with important information and positive stories about the Town Centre, while the social media accounts went from strength to strength, including both information on Covid-19 and uplifting snippets of daily life for Northwich shoppers and traders. Both the Visit Northwich and the Northwich BID website continued to be maintained while the BID's marketing agency Solutions 24-7 also drafted a wealth of press releases for the local paper and publications further afield. The popular consumer e-bulletin also kept shoppers up to date with the latest stories, offers and events, heavily promoting Northwich BID businesses

The Northwich Christmas Extravaganza 2019 was once more a huge success, with the town enjoying hosting an ice rink for the very first time much to the delight of local children and families. With fireworks, the lantern parade and a huge host of activities and trails in the town centre, the day was enjoyed by all.

"2020 was a unusual year in many ways due to the Covid-19 pandemic. What we did find was that the Northwich BID Team remained as dedicated and supportive as ever to keep the Northwich high street advertised as well as possible.

"We would like to thank The Team at Northwich BID along with everyone who has supported the Northwich high street last year and we look forward to working together throughout 2021 to re-build our high street."

- Northwich Superdrug Store Manager

Early in 2020, Social Butterflies was launched by Brightlife and Cheshire West and Chester Council's Cultural Services Team to promote inclusivity and the borough becoming age-friendly, as well as fostering an environment where everyone, no matter what age, feels valued. A butterfly was chosen as the symbol of the project because it represents, in the organisers words, 'the joy and pleasure to be had by staying connected and active in later life.' The BID had a great response to the call out for businesses to make a butterfly of some form to be displayed in their shop/store window to show that they were backing the campaign and launched a competition to find the most creative and ingenious designs.

Once again, the BID funded a number of planting schemes and image enhancement projects in the town centre in a partnership with Northwich Town Council. Projects included the installation of summer hanging baskets, railing planters, town centre bunting and planting schemes across the town centre – ensuring the area was bright and welcoming for shoppers, workers and visitors alike.



THEME TWO - A SAFER TOWN CENTRE

The BID has continued to work with the dedicated Policing team in Northwich town centre throughout the year to deal with any issues that may arise relating to shoplifting, theft and anti-social behaviour in the town centre. 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.

The BID Team have also 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.

THEME THREE - BUSINESS SUPPORT

BID funded training courses were provided throughout the year when safe to do so, in the following topics:

- **Emergency First Aid at Work**
- **Window Dressing Consultations**
- **Leadership Skills and Management Training**
- **Fire Risk Assessment**
- **Level 3 Mental Health in the Workplace**

Once the Covid-19 pandemic hit, due to social distancing measures, online seminars were utilised as an alternative to upskill staff in a number of topics, which proved to be very popular.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the BID Team finalised and produced the Northwich Recovery Strategy to help guide Northwich through the upcoming times ahead as the town looked to bounce back from the Covid-19 restrictions. A number of online Zoom meetings were also held with key stakeholders of the town to ascertain the best route going forward for when the town reopens after restrictions for Covid-19 have been lifted.

Throughout the year, the BID Team has held online Zoom meetings with a variety of Northwich traders, all discussing their ideas and fears for the future and establishing ways they can change their working lifestyle and patterns from the norm. These meetings were really successful and it has been a great way of communicating with traders as to what they want to see happen in the town going forward and what the personal barriers are for them as businesses themselves.

The BID Team has also telephoned all businesses in the Northwich BID area to discuss how the pandemic was affecting them and to offer support and guidance with regards to applying for any government grants. All important updates from central government and the council at a local level regarding Covid-19 were distributed rapidly to businesses to keep everybody up to date and informed.

THROUGH THE FIRST LOCKDOWN IN 2020 THE BID TEAM SUPPORTED BUSINESSES IN NORTHWICH TOWN CENTRE TO ACCESS OVER £1.6M OF GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

The BID Team handed out BID-funded Social Distancing packs to help Northwich businesses during the pandemic. The packs contained floor vinyls and a number of visual aids to remind customers about social distancing etiquette, and were extremely well received from all those who picked up a pack. Free hand sanitiser donated by Thor Chemicals in Wincham was also distributed to Independent businesses in Northwich.



THEME ONE - A UNIQUE SHOPPER AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Multi-annual £100,000+ dedicated marketing and promotional campaigns 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.
- ✓ Looking to re-introduce festivals and events in to the town centre when safe and appropriate to do so.
- ✓ Northwich BID Team – a dedicated team with the focus of helping and assisting businesses in Northwich Town Centre.
- ✓ Added value cleansing of the town centre, improved litter collection and cleansing, over and above the services provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- ✓ Investment in enhancements including hanging baskets, floral arrangements, landscaping and striking visual features to enhance specific locations.
- ✓ Support the development of the outdoor green space that will be created in the early part of 2021 where the outdoor market used to be positioned.
- ✓ The BID will lead on the entry into the RHS North West In Bloom campaign.
- ✓ Delivery of campaigns and projects that support better accessibility and sustainability in Northwich.

THEME TWO - A SAFER TOWN CENTRE

- ✓ Work with our partners Cheshire Police and the Cheshire West and Chester Council CCTV Team through delivering initiatives and activities that continue with the reduction of crime in the town centre
- ✓ Look at the feasibility of introducing Purple Flag Status to Northwich Town Centre

THEME THREE - BUSINESS SUPPORT

- ✓ Provision of BID funded Training courses and seminars to upskill staff and workers in necessary topics
- ✓ Continued support regarding help and assistance with any Covid-19 support and grant applications during the ongoing pandemic
- ✓ Joint Procurement Scheme - 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
- ✓ The Northwich BID Team will continue lobbying to create new opportunities and tackle barriers to growth for businesses/organisations in the town centre.



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

BID Income	Budget - Year 1 (BID 2) September 2019 - August 2020	Actual - Year 1 (BID 2) September 2019 - August 2020
BID Levy Invoice	£183,500	£175,803
Income from voluntary members	0	£201
Grants/ Fund Match (Financial)	0	£9,451
Bank Interest	0	£36
Surplus (Year 5) +/-	0	£2,191
Total Income 2019 - 2020	£183,500	£185,574
BID Expenditure	Budget - Year 1 (BID 2) September 2019 - August 2020	Actual - Year 1 (BID 2) September 2019 - August 2020
Theme One - A unique shopper and visitor experience	£127,500	£124,712
Theme Two - A Safer Town Centre	£6,000	£9,618
Theme Three - Business Support	£21,000	£14,123
Project Management & Administration	£21,750	£25,807
Accruals - Annual Audit	0	£250
Total - Expenditure 2019 - 2020	£176,250	£174,260
Actual Surplus +/-		£13,255

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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