



Annual Review

Bishop's Stortford BID

2020-2021



Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District aims to raise the profile of the town centre as a great retail, tourist and business destination and improve the experience of the town centre for those who visit, live and work in the town.

About Bishop's Stortford BID

Bishop's Stortford BID is the business improvement district for the town centre. We are a not-for-profit organisation which is funded by businesses in the designated area. Our key objective is to deliver **additional** support and services to the town centre businesses.

Launched in October 2018, the BID was voted in for a 4.5 year term to deliver an agreed Business Plan. Business premises with a rateable value of £10,000 or above, within the set area, pay 1.5% of their rateable value into Bishop's Stortford BID through an annual levy. There are just over 330 businesses within the BID area, coming from a variety of sectors. The BID levy amounts to around £200,000 a year, which is used to fund the three key areas as per the Business Plan:

- **Marketing & Events**
- **Parking & Accessibility**
- **Backing Business**

The first year saw us make great progress in all areas of the Business Plan, including staging events in the town centre, forging relationships with key stakeholders, supporting businesses and more. The arrival of Covid-19 in March 2019 has challenged us all, and as such we adapted and revised our plans to ensure the support for businesses we provided was relevant.

We now look forward to delivering more of aims within the business plan.

A message from the Chair

I hope this annual report finds both you and your business well and our endeavours have supported you in some way.

The last year has been full of adaptations, contingency plans and laying strong foundations for the many challenges that lay ahead.

The relationships we have with key stakeholders means our voice is now being heard loud and clear by those that matter. This enables us to better protect your interest and actions that affect us all move along in a productive and positive way.

Most importantly, our door is always open for you to let us know what matters most to you and how we can best support you and your business, so please keep in touch.



Karen Burton,
Chair of Bishop's Stortford BID

The Team & Financial Report

Meet the Team

Bishop's Stortford BID is governed by a voluntary board of Directors and funds one part time BID Manager and one part time Marketing & Events Assistant (appointed in July 2021) to deliver the Business Plan. The Board represent the cross-section of the BID's levy payers and are focused on driving forward all areas of the Business Plan.

BID Manager: Gina Thomas

Marketing & Events Assistant: Natalie Fennell

BID Directors:

Karen Burton, Karen's Cakes

Sam Cook, Nockold's Solicitors

Glenn Armon Jones, Barrow LLP Chartered Accountants

BID Board Members 2020– 2021:

Dave Anderson, Bishop's Stortford Town Council

David Snowdon, East Herts Council

Graham Burgess, Coopers

Judith Bates, Premier Travel

Kathryn Hughes, Fashion Flooring & Interiors

Michael Smith, Jackson Square Shopping Centre

Perry Colman, Elements Stortford and Urban Spa Stortford

Roy Parrish, Pelham Interiors

Sara Farnsworth, Waitrose Ltd

Sinead Corr, Bishop's Stortford Independent

Income and expenditure

For the Period to 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

Summary	Balance Bfwd £	Income £	Expenditure £	Balance Cfwd £
Overheads	1,769	30,476	30,598	1,647
Marketing	61,204	37,971	51,678	47,497
Events	45,690	37,971	34,204	49,457
Parking & Accessibility	53,408	30,376	19,697	64,087
Backing Business	8,899	7,594	4,875	11,618
Contingency	13,191	7,594	20,785	0
Grant	-	9,730	9,730	-
TOTAL	184,161	161,712	171,568	174,306

The Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District (BID) is funded through a BID levy calculated as 1.5% of the rateable value of each Hereditament, as at the 'chargeable day' (1 April).

The levy collection rate at the time of writing for 20/21 is lower than we would expect. Clearly businesses have found paying bills difficult during the year and we have provided as much support as possible in terms of the timing of invoices and reminders, giving the option to pay in instalments and lack of follow up action, to date. Those who have not yet paid have now been sent their final reminder and a final chance to pay. Recovery action will be the next step.

Expenditure has not been as planned, with events and initiatives limited by Covid 19. The balance of funds remain in the BID account and will be put towards future projects and spent as per the Business Plan objectives.

2020 – 2021 In Review

Marketing & Events

With around half the annual budget allocated this area of the business plan, this is a key focus for the BID.

The original plans for 2020 – 2021 for marketing and events sadly were just not possible due to Covid19. We therefore as a board developed a new plan of action, by adapting ideas and exploring different ways we could market the town, the businesses and how to encourage people shop locally, but shop safely.

Work we have done has included:

- Reopening support
- Produced videos showcasing our towns offer
- Town trails
- Delivery scheme
- Targeted social media campaigns
- Increased communications to levy payers
- Newsletter delivered to 20,000 local homes
- Working with the local media to promote the town with paid for and editorial content
- Created Discover Stortford brand



Throughout the forced period of closures during 2020 and 2021, the BID gathered information on how businesses were open, from click and collect, online or takeaway and created a detailed listing which was shared widely using paid for adverts in the local press, social media and online.



At the start of 2021 the BID partnered with Click it Local to offer businesses a funded delivery service to help them reach more customers.



To help increase footfall in December 2020, ten members of the Gingerbread family were located in all corners of the BID area as a trail event for local children. With over 400 entries it proved a very popular draw.



We invited Julie Marson MP and Bishop's Stortford Mayor Cllr Keith Warnell to join us in reopening the town centre on 12 April, to help promote our town as open.

2019 – 2020 In Review

Parking & Accessibility

Covid 19 meant that during 2020-21 the parking and accessibility issues we usually face were different, and therefore we once again adapted. From many meetings with Herts County Council regarding the social distancing measures they introduced to the town centre, to the new developments taking place in the town and those being proposed, we have given a voice to the businesses in essential meetings and decision making processes.



The BID has been liaising with East Herts Council to see what can be done about parking across the town. Both to help town centre workers park and to enable shoppers to be able to find a space easily. In addition we are working with the Town Council and Herts County Council regarding the pedestrianisation of South Street to ensure the businesses voices are heard.



To reassure visitors to the town centre, we provided parking marshals in the busiest car park during key Christmas shopping weekends. They provided assistance to allow customers to exit promptly and helping to manage gridlock situations to ensure traffic could get moving quickly.

Backing Business

Supporting businesses throughout these unprecedented challenges has been our priority. This included signposting the various grants, offering training courses, providing a joint purchasing scheme with BID expert Meercat Associates to deliver a range of cost savings for businesses and reacting to each stage of the lockdown and reopening as required with updated guidance.



The BID funded Covid secure resources which were available to all businesses. These ranged from floor stickers, hand sanitiser, tape, information posters and more.



Covid Secure Risk Assessments were fully funded by the BID for all businesses who wanted to take up this opportunity. This proved popular, not only gave business owners the knowledge and reassurance they needed, also helped to ensure as a town we were doing everything we could.

2021-2022: Looking ahead ...



Our Business Plan Priorities

This next year the focus is on building back up; from attracting people safely into the town centre once again, supporting businesses recover from the challenges and working together with local stakeholders to make Bishop's Stortford the best it can be for us all.

Footfall boosting events can start again, with Halloween our first opportunity to do this, followed by Christmas. A festive day with late night Christmas shopping is planned for Thursday 2 December plus trail events and a #ScarySelfie Day. These all promise to bring the fun back to the town centre.

The new Discover Stortford brand gives us a great **marketing opportunity** to promote all that is here in our town. We'll be working on developing this further, and promoting it widely to all who live, work and socialise in Bishop's Stortford.

The BID will be here to **support businesses** as we all overcome the recent challenges. Just some of the ways we will do this are by offering training, sharing the latest Covid guidance and grant information, promoting of job vacancies and widening the use of the town centre radio for added security.

Making the town more accessible, both with parking initiatives and promotion of sustainable transport are a focus for the BID. Working with East Herts District Council we are devising ways we can encourage people into town easily.

How you can get involved with the BID

Bishop's Stortford BID is a business led organisation and we welcome all feedback, suggestions and comments from levy payers. Your input will help ensure we are delivering relevant and useful support and opportunities. By being proactive you will be aware of all initiatives you can get involved with. Working together we can achieve more. If you'd like to find out more about the work of Bishop's Stortford BID please get in touch.

Check the Website

We keep our website up to date with the latest news and information



Follow us on social media

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for all the latest news and opportunities.



Subscribe to the newsletter

We send monthly e-newsletters with useful information. Sign up via our website.



Meet with the team

The BID team and Directors welcome meetings with levy payers.



@DiscoverStortford



@StortfordBID



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Bishop's Stortford BID



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