



Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-5



A Business Improvement District (BID) 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 here.

Bishop's Stortford BID is a not-for-profit organisation which is funded by businesses within the designated town centre area. Our key objective is to deliver additional support and services to benefit the BID businesses. It is a government run scheme, but locally funded and locally managed.

We are currently in our second term following a yes vote in Autumn 2022 for a new 5-year term enabling us to deliver an agreed Business Plan. Business premises with a rateable value of £10,000 or above, within the set area, pay 1.6% of their rateable value into Bishop's Stortford BID through an annual levy. There are around 330 businesses within the BID area, coming from a variety of sectors. The BID levy amounts to around **£220,000** a year, which is used to fund four key areas of the Business Plan:

- **Marketing & Promotion**
- **Events**
- **Supporting Businesses**
- **Placemaking**

These are explained in more detail on page 6.

Each year, the BID faces new challenges. In 2024-5, the hot topics have been changes in government legislation and fast-moving global events that impact supply chains and overhead costs. Throughout the year, we have worked hard to address these challenges - promoting the town centre and its businesses, delivering events, expanding our Discover Stortford brand, and providing BID-funded training, all of which play an important role. We also continue to strengthen key stakeholder relationships to ensure Bishop's Stortford is represented in important district and county decisions.

In addition, we are actively lobbying for public realm improvements and look forward to delivering some exciting projects in the coming months and years.

A message from our Chair:

It's my pleasure to welcome you to this year's Annual Report for our town's Business Improvement District. As we reflect on the past 12 months, it's clear that all businesses continue to face a challenging yet transformative period. Economic uncertainty, shifting consumer habits, and rising operational costs have tested resilience, but they've also sparked innovation, collaboration and renewed community spirit.

We continue to expand our engagement with levy payers through our regular business meet ups, one-to-one visits, e-newsletters, Bishop's Stortford BID website and a closed Facebook group. Please get in touch if you would like to arrange an appointment to talk through what the BID can provide for your business.

In this climate, the role of BIDs has never been more vital. We exist to champion local enterprise, drive footfall, and create a thriving environment for businesses to grow. From business support initiatives and marketing campaigns to working towards the Purple Flag accreditation and offering networking opportunities, our BID continues to deliver tangible value for every levy payer.

This year, one of our focuses has been on listening more closely to your needs, adapting our services, and investing our time in projects that make a real difference. Whether it's supporting independent retailers, enhancing the visitor experience, building new relationships or advocating for our town at regional and national levels, we're proud of the impact we've made together.

To get the most from your BID, we encourage every levy payer to engage with us: attend our forums, share your ideas, and take advantage of the support available. In conjunction with our Business Plan, your voice can help to shape our priorities, and your involvement will only strengthen our collective success.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we can continue to build a more vibrant, resilient, and prosperous town centre - one that works for everyone.

Michael Smith
Chair, Bishop's Stortford BID



The Team & Financial report

Bishop's Stortford BID is governed by an independent board, which oversees both the delivery of the Business Plan and the funds allocated. The board provide a wide range of skills and experience and represent a variety of sectors from across the town centre. In 2024-5, the BID funded two members of staff (joint BID Managers), to deliver the Business Plan.

BID staff & board as of 31st March 2025



Michael Smith
BID Chair
Jackson Square



Glenn Armon-Jones
BID Director
Barrow LLP



Gary Smith
BID Director
Nockolds Solicitors



Karen Burton
Joint BID Manager



Madeleine Lees
Joint BID Manager



Calvin Horner
East Herts
District Council



Martin Adams
Bishop's Stortford
Town Council



Graham Burgess
Coopers



Bradley Ives
Ruby Room



Sinead Corr
Bishop's Stortford
Independent



Leigh Keates
Peach



Sara Farnsworth
Waitrose



Richard Taylor
Simpsons Creative



Perry Colman
Hair by Elements
and Urban Spa

Income 2024-5

Summary	income £
Levy	£210,714
Balance brough forward	£9,705
TOTAL	£220,419

Expenditure 2024-5

Summary	Expenditure £
Marketing & Promotion	£53,570
Events	£66,586
Supporting Businesses	£35,878
Placemaking	£48,488
Operational Costs	£10,000
Contingency & Reserves	£5,897
TOTAL	£220,419

The Bishop's Stortford Business Improvement District (BID) is funded through a levy calculated as 1.6% of the rateable value of all eligible businesses within the BID area. This is reduced to 1.2% in the case of a tenant in a managed centre where a service charge applies, as at the 'chargeable day' (1 April).

2024-5 In Review

Marketing, Promotion and Events are key areas of focus, with around half of the annual BID budget allocated here. It's all about bringing in footfall and promoting the fantastic range of businesses we have in our town centre.

Marketing & Promotion

Highlights include...

Discover Stortford: Increased brand visibility through competitions, events and bespoke merchandise.

Media Coverage: Regular features in The Bishop's Stortford Independent, Flyer, Axis and The Bish.

Digital Channels: Social media and website engagement continued to grow, supported by video, reels, and professional photography.

Face of the Month: New feature showcasing standout individuals from BID businesses.

Food Tours: Partnered with Hello Food Tours to promote independent hospitality venues via guided tastings.

Gift Card Giveaways: Bi-annual draws supporting schools and charities in the local community whilst highlighting the participating businesses.



Events

Highlights include...

Summer of Sport Trail: Free family-friendly activity boosting footfall, awareness and engagement across the town centre in the summer holidays. All prizes purchased from town centre businesses.

Showtime on North Street: Circus-themed event with road closure to explore longer term pedestrianisation potential for businesses and residents alike.

Festive Fun Day: November event, launching the Christmas season in Bishop's Stortford with business offers, performances, giveaways, face painting, festive treats, and the town's Christmas tree lights switch-on.

Christmas Enhancements: Sponsored the town Christmas tree and added new decorations for extra festive sparkle.

Purple Flag Accreditation: Initial audit and groundwork toward national recognition for a safe, vibrant and welcoming night-time economy. Application planned for 2026.



2024-5 In Review

Supporting Businesses

Supporting our local business community remains a core priority, with a focus on grants, networking, skills development and advocacy.

Highlights include...

Premises Frontage Grants: Launched in January 2024 to help businesses enhance their business fronts, boosting both individual premises and the wider town centre environment.

Business Meet Ups: Informal gatherings, which took place in July 2024, November 2024 and March 2025, bringing together business owners, councillors and local police to share challenges, discuss opportunities and strengthen collaborations.

Training & Skills Development: Delivered free training on key topics including Google business profiles, print & design, social media, HR and first aid. Launched SEEDL in September 2024, an online training platform with over 300 courses available for BID businesses and their staff.

Business Awards Support: Sponsored and promoted The Indie's Extra Mile Award celebrating customer service and dedication (2024 winner was Stock Florist), as well as the Muddy Stilettos Lifestyle Awards.

Grants & Networking: Promoted available funding from councils and participated in local business forums, including the Chamber of Commerce and BSMB events.

Campaigning for Business Needs: Advocated for improvements such as parking - securing a freeze on Northgate End car park charges for 2025-6.

Bishop's Stortford Placemaking

A clean, welcoming, and well-lit town centre is key to creating a positive experience for visitors, workers and residents alike.

Highlights include...

Street Cleaning & Weed Control: Regular monitoring and reporting to the district contractor is helping deliver cleaner streets and improved public spaces.

Town Centre Lighting Projects: New power bollards (UKSP-funded) installed in South Street to enable LED tree lighting (Town Council grant-supported). New festoon light installation initiated on Devoils Lane to enhance atmosphere and safety, plus schemes in other locations explored.

Long-Term Placemaking: Active involvement in shaping the future of the town centre through North & South Street public realm plans, Old River Lane redevelopment and improvements around the train station, Goodyard and Anchor Street.



Our Business Plan Priorities 2025-6: Looking ahead...

On 1 April 2025, we started the third year of our second term, and continue to deliver the 2023-8 Business Plan. This was developed following extensive consultation, which took place throughout 2022. All businesses were asked what the key issues were for them, what they would want the BID to focus on and indeed if they wanted a BID. On 14 October 2022, it was announced that the BID ballot was successful. The BID is now in place until 31 March 2028. A re-ballot will take place in 2027 and businesses will decide if the BID continues for a third term.

Appointed as Joint BID Managers last year, Madeleine Lees and Karen Burton continue to expand the work of the BID making new and valuable contacts as each month goes by. This double-headed approach has helped push forward some complicated projects such as Purple Flag and issues around the Goodsyrd development. Maintaining the day-to-day work of the BID is just as important and this year we plan to increase our individual business communications with additional feet on the ground and regular pop-ins, plus an independent mid-term review to help us understand how we are performing.

Within the four key areas of the Business Plan, there are a number of initiatives underway.

Marketing & Promotion of Bishop's Stortford

Promoting all that Bishop's Stortford has to offer through a strategic, coordinated approach. The Discover Stortford brand continues to grow via social media, enhanced website content and targeted advertising. We will continue to publish regular columns in the local press, promote events to drive footfall and increase awareness of the BID's work and initiatives.



Bishop's Stortford Events

We aim to grow our existing events and collaborate with local partners - such as the Town Council's Carnival Parade & Fun Day and Christmas Market - to ensure local businesses benefit from increased footfall. Key events like our annual trail and Festive Fun Day are now established highlights in the Bishop's Stortford calendar. We also continue to work towards achieving Purple Flag status, recognising a safe, welcoming, and vibrant night-time economy, signals a safe night out in town centres.

Supporting Bishop's Stortford Businesses

We will expand on the success of previous training initiatives, offering both popular courses - such as First Aid and HR Essentials - and new sessions aligned with our Purple Flag ambitions, including Ask for Angela and Active Bystander training. Our new online platform, SEEDL, provides flexible access to over 300 courses for busy business owners and their teams.

We will also continue to work closely with councils on key issues like parking, traffic, and public realm improvements, while increasing opportunities for collaboration through regular business networking events, which have a proven track record in opening up wider town centre conversations with key stakeholders.



Bishop's Stortford Placemaking

Placemaking is all about creating inviting and welcoming places that people want to spend time in. Last year, we identified some significant projects, and we continue to push for progress on these with key stakeholders. Lighting schemes, street cleaning and bin storage remain top priorities.

The Bishop's Stortford BID Managers, Chair, Directors and board members are all here to work with BID businesses and deliver the best we can for our town. We look forward to working with you over the coming year.

How you can get involved

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.



Subscribe to the e-newsletter

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



Check the website

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



Follow us on social media

Instagram and Facebook pages for all the latest news and opportunities.



Join our Facebook group

A closed group specifically for BID businesses.



Meet with the team

The BID Managers and Directors welcome meetings with levy payers.



Attend a BID business get together

Meet fellow business owners, managers and other key stakeholders.

T: 07399 245280

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bishopsstortfordbid.co.uk

Closed Facebook Group

facebook.com/groups/bishopsstortfordbid



@DiscoverStortford





BID

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
BISHOP'S
STORTFORD

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