

WE ARE

Warrington BID

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020



Photo by Vicky Outen

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The first Covid-19 lockdown, mid-way through Warrington BID's second year, has dominated activity and had an impact on businesses across all sectors in our town centre: from global brands and independent retailers in our shopping centres and high street, to our charities, cultural organisations, leisure and hospitality sectors. Huge losses to life, jobs and businesses have been sustained in our community and the full damage will not be known for some time.

Through the crisis, pre-recovery and recovery period, the BID has played a key role in developing a strategy linked to three key core themes of safety, sustainability and storytelling. Regular communication by email, telephone and face to face took place to enable businesses to access financial support and innovate and adapt in quickly changing circumstances.

However, amidst the pandemic, it's easy to overlook the strong work of the team earlier in the year. This report is an opportunity to look back at the positive achievements and happier memories working in collaboration with partners across the town. Great work and important foundations were laid for future partnership projects which can be reignited. These will be ready to activate and develop when restrictions are lifted.

I look forward to seeing these come to fruition in the months ahead under the direction of Nick White who was appointed as the full-time BID Manager in September 2020. Thank you to everyone who has continued to support us during this difficult time.

Emma Hutchinson
Chair, Warrington BID

THEME ONE - MARKETING A VIBRANT TOWN CENTRE

Although festivals and events ceased from March 2020 due to Covid, we were able to support a number of projects in the autumn and winter including Warrington Rotary's annual Oktoberfest at Parr Hall. We were also proud partners in Warrington's Light Night events which included immersive and interactive sound and light installations and performances alongside a high quality food and drink offer outside in Queen's Garden during the visit of The Moon installation to Parr Hall as part of Culture Warrington's Contemporary Arts Festival. Financial contribution from BID businesses helped to secure significant festival funding from Arts Council England and attracted approximately 4000 people.



“The financial investment of Warrington BID was crucial in securing funds from Arts Council England and the ongoing social media support and links with local businesses strengthened the event even further.”

Leah Biddle, Culture Warrington



Footfall up 8.9%
between Christmas and
New Year in Dec 2019.



Social media growth
increased by 28% to a
reach of 250,000.



63% footfall recovery in
June 2020 as reported
by Centre for Cities.

In December 2019, the BID supported a Christmas ice rink installation in the Old Market Place which operated throughout the festive shopping season and created and delivered a £15k multi-channel advertising campaign on bus stops, billboards and social media. This coincided with the launch of a B2C website, 'Warrington is Happening.' December 2019 footfall bucked the national trend with a reported increase of 8.9% in the week between Christmas and New Year including an up lift of 2.5% in Golden Square for the same week the previous year.



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“More than ever before Warrington BID is vital to help drive forward events and marketing for the town centre, and help support levy payers to enhance our own events. In December 2019 Warrington BID helped deliver a town centre Ice Rink for Christmas 2019 which became a centre piece for attracting people into the town and offered a real point of difference and reason to visit. As well as this, being able to work with all partners to create marketing campaigns and safety messages welcoming people back into the town has been a huge help during the town centre recovery period.”

Ian Cox, Golden Square

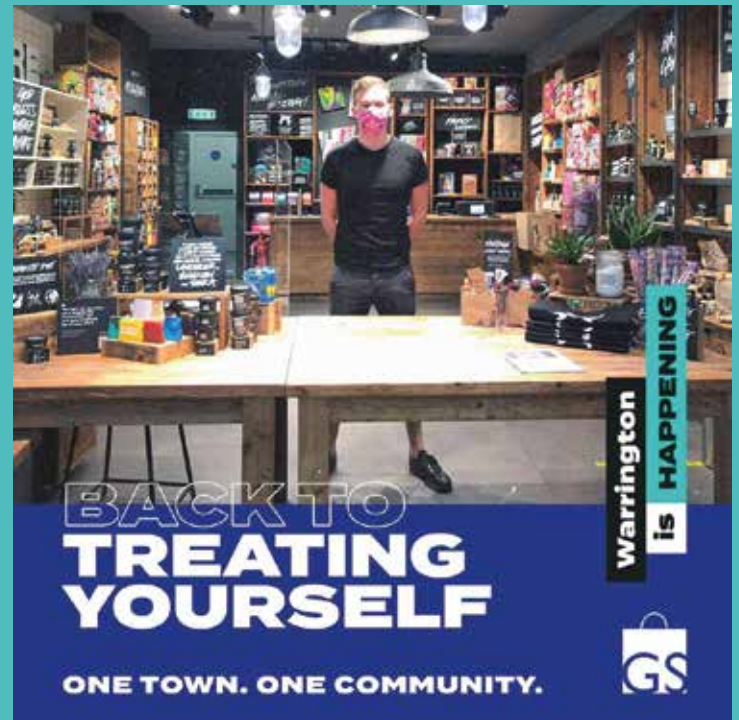
WE ARE

Warrington BID

Following lockdown in March 2020, a full review of Warrington BID's destination marketing messages was implemented which went from a clear 'stay at home' directive to a campaign to encourage consumer confidence and responsible, safe behaviours.

A customer survey provided evidence that shoppers were keen to stay closer to home and shop local. This data and insight supported a

complete rewrite of the website with a 'Back to ...' message and targeted social media advertising and PR over the summer. In March, the BID changed communication agencies to work with a consortium of Warrington based creatives with specialist skills in different areas of social media, web design, place branding, videography and photography. Social media growth in 12 months increased by 28% to a reach of nearly 250k, with 22k engagements (likes, shares and comments).



A highlight was a post showing the umbrella installation at Golden Square which reached over 38,700 people and received over 7800 engagements! The result in June 2020 was a 63% footfall recovery reported by Centre for Cities as being the highest performing town. We worked with Warrington Borough Council and businesses to secure coverage of the reopening of hospitality sector on Saturday 4 July from BBC Radio 4's You and Yours.

Environmental enhancements in the public realm during this period included a successful campaign for pavement cleaning on the high street which was carried out by Warrington Borough Council during the lockdown in March. We also brought together Prince's Trust volunteers, Wilko's, Warrington Borough Council and Groundwork CLM to deliver a £5k project to create a sensory garden on Buttermarket Street.

THEME TWO = SAFER TOWN CENTRE

The BID continues to work closely with Cheshire Police and Warrington Borough Council on initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. We were proud partners at the official opening of the Street Pastor's Help on the Corner space which was a makeover project with Groundwork CLM and the Prince's Trust which involved young people cleaning and redecorating an empty unit on the corner of Bridge Street.



1000 safe shopping kits distributed to customers

1000+ hours

1000+ Street Pastor patrol hours to support the night time economy



300 cycle marking kits funded to deter bike thefts

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“Help on the Corner has proved to be invaluable. The unit was used over seventy times by in the main vulnerable young people seeking a safe space or, unwell and requesting that we contact parents to take them home, or to call an ambulance and sometimes just to recharge their mobiles or have a free cup of hot soup or coffee.”

John Britton, Street Pastors



We funded 300 cycle marking kits in a campaign to reduce bike theft in partnership with the Cycle House and Warrington's town centre police team. Over Christmas we worked with the police, Cockhedge Shopping Centre, Warrington Market and Golden Square to distribute safe shopping kits and information to customers. The BID led a consortium of stakeholders on an initiative to invest in additional CCTV cameras on Palmyra Square and Museum Street.

THEME THREE = ACCESSIBLE WARRINGTON

Purple Tuesday in November was an opportunity for stakeholders to reinforce the town's commitment to disability awareness with a high profile promotional campaign with Warrington Disability Partnership backed by all the main partners. As part of the town's Reopening High Streets Safely strategy, we worked with Warrington Voluntary Action to pilot a team of uniformed street guides. These volunteers, many furloughed from their usual jobs, helped the public with advice on getting round the town safely over 3 weekends when the restrictions of the first lockdown were released.



THEME FOUR = DOING BUSINESS IN WARRINGTON

The team provided financial and practical advice to members during this ongoing period of uncertainty and instability including information about grants, PPE and social distancing, campaigning and advocating on the behalf of businesses hardest hit, such as hospitality with Council leadership, Local Enterprise Partnership, MPs and government ministers. The BID continues to work closely with Warrington Borough Council and key partners on a collaborative approach to high street recovery and a consistent signage and safety messaging scheme across the town centre. Close partnership working and clear consumer messaging resulted in a strong footfall return of 63% of pre-lockdown traffic with Centre for Cities reporting Warrington having the largest high street recovery in the UK.



PROJECT AND PRIORITIES: YEAR 3

Warrington BID will work with our partners including British BIDS and the Association of Town and City Management to lobby government for additional financial support for businesses as we continue to battle the COVID 19 pandemic. We will provide our members information on how to access grants and work with Warrington Borough Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership on the effective delivery of the financial support which is available.

A revised destination brand which embraces Warrington's indomitable community spirit will be launched. "We Are Warrington" will be the voice of the town centre led by Warrington BID and embrace the spirit of partnership and resilience which will be so important in bringing the town centre out of a challenging economic year. We will increase our social media presence and launch a refreshed business to consumer website. When COVID 19 restrictions are relaxed in collaboration with our partners we will deliver a programme of

events that encourages people back into the town centre safely.

Improving the town centre environment will be a major element of the BID's work during its second term. This will include the renovation of gardens within the pedestrianised part of the town centre, tidying up of grot spots and dressing of void units. The BID will work closely with the council on a community project called "Watch this Space" and in partnership with Culture Warrington deliver a series of public art installations.

We will work with Cheshire police, the local authority and our members to make the town centre safer and more welcoming, addressing problems of low level crime and anti-social behaviour. Through regular "community action walks" we will identify problem location/ issues and the actions required to resolve them e.g. targeted policing, improved lighting, additional CCTV.

Warrington BID Financial Summary	Actual - Year 2 August 2019 - July 2020	Actual - Year 1 August 2018 - July 2019
BID Levy Income	£238,712	£274,285
Grants/Fund Match (Financial)	N/A	£57,543
Bank Interest	£45	£13
Total Income	£237,757	£331,841

BID Expenditure		
Theme One - Destination Warrington	£184,089	£132,476
Theme Two - A Safer Town	£19,162	£32,571
Theme Three - Accessible Warrington	£5,628	£5,628
Theme Four - Doing Business In Warrington	£18,546	£22,685
Project Management and Administration	£64,384	£51,369
Accruals – Projects in progress	(£50,710)	£51,210
Total Expenditure 2019 - 2020	£241,099	£295,939
Actual Surplus in year +/-	£-3,342	£35,902
Actual Surplus total +/-	£32,560	