

# WARRINGTON TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



**WE ARE**  
Warrington BID

## ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021/2022

# INTRODUCTION

**The Warrington Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined geographical area in Warrington town centre. Within this area, businesses collectively invest in, and enhance, Warrington as a welcoming place to work, shop, study, live, and spend leisure time.**

Warrington BID funds and delivers added value projects and services within the town centre. These projects are managed and guided by the BID Manager, the BID executive board and importantly the town centre business community. The BID funding is generated from a mandatory levy which equates to 1.5% of the businesses ratable value (on all business with a ratable value greater than £15,000). The BID will not, and cannot fund services that the council or other public bodies have a statutory duty to provide.

As Warrington BID's fourth year reaches a close, we approach a new ballot to develop a second term BID, we look back and acknowledge the resilience, strength and adaptability shown by every business throughout 2021/22.

The year started with the shadow of COVID still looming and the overwhelming uncertainty among businesses affected by the pandemic. Throughout the year, we have continued to keep our town centre clean, safe and welcoming for everyone, by working with, and alongside the business community, the council and Cheshire police to ensure you receive the support and services you need.

In August 2022, Amy Dawber handed over the reins to Andrea Morley as the new BID Manager to cover her Maternity leave. Andrea will take the BID through the next year and into the renewal ballot in April 2023

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

As 2022 closes, dare I say we're getting back to some form of normality with a good flow of visitors and exciting new businesses popping up. The data shows that Warrington has fared well compared to other towns or cities with footfall and spend levels returning to what we experienced pre 2020.

There are still hurdles, of course but with the determination of the business community and the support of the BID team we will continue to see growth and impressive investment plans for our town centre.

Looking back at the last 12 months of the BID's fourth year, we've had some fantastic successes with well organised events, including our very own Earth coming to the Parr Hall. It certainly was an out-of-this-world experience and something we as businesses should be proud of the impact and great success it brought to Warrington town centre.

Of course we had many more events, with The Welcome Back Festival, Tour of Britain and the Rugby League World Cup, all significantly supported by your BID levy.

In November, the BID delivered the town's first Christmas event since 2019 – **Warrington's Weekend Wonderland**. Working with the business community, partners and community groups we welcomed and entertained the people of Warrington and further afield. They descended in the thousands into our town centre for a weekend of festive fun and free activities on 26th & 27th November. The weekend was filled with Christmas markets, a visit from Santa Claus, family friendly free activities, carol singing, a parade

led by drummers and a spectacular projection show at the Town Hall.

We recognise the current economic climate is making profitable trading a real challenge, combined with the consumer having less to spend. Warrington's Weekend Wonderland was funded through your BID levy, meaning the visitors to the town centre could afford to stay here longer, and spend with our high quality retailers, hospitality and leisure businesses. Ultimately, helping to grow Warrington as a destination.

Throughout the year, the BID have also continued to keep the town centre safe, clean, and welcoming for everyone and provided training for levy payers. We have worked hard to ensure that our businesses are supported and connected, with the needs of the Levy payers a priority as we work alongside our town centre partners to ensure you receive the services and support you need.

Looking ahead, the challenges of the cost of living crisis keep increasing pressure on consumer spending, however the BID team is in the best position to support business needs and committed to doing so. I encourage you all to work with the BID as we navigate the next 12 months and pledge your support for a 2nd term BID in Warrington town centre.

**We Are Warrington and We Are Proud!**

**Emma Hutchinson**

Chair of the BID and Managing Director of Culture Warrington & LiveWire CIC



# OUR TEAM



The Warrington BID team is always available and can be contacted on 07810 123994 or email [warringtonbid@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:warringtonbid@groundwork.org.uk)

## WARRINGTON BID TEAM

Andrea Morley	Business Improvement District Manager (covering mat leave)	<a href="mailto:andrea.morley@groundwork.org.uk">andrea.morley@groundwork.org.uk</a>
Amy Dawber	Business Improvement District Manager	<a href="mailto:amy.dawber@groundwork.org.uk">amy.dawber@groundwork.org.uk</a>
Jane Hough	Deputy Director for Business Improvement Districts and Business Services	<a href="mailto:jane.hough@groundwork.org.uk">jane.hough@groundwork.org.uk</a>
Greville Kelly	Director for Business Improvement Districts and Business Services	<a href="mailto:greville.kelly@groundwork.org.uk">greville.kelly@groundwork.org.uk</a>

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

Emma Hutchinson	Chair
Ian Cox	Deputy Chair
Lynne Bennett	The Gateway
Neil Drum	Cheshire Police
Ben Wakerley	Warrington's Own Buses
Cllr Tom Jennings	Warrington Borough Council
Eleanor Blackburn	Warrington Borough Council
Carla Yearsley	Lloyds Banking Group
Brendan O'Sullivan	The University of Chester
Dave McNichols	Warrington Youth Zone
Andrew Hibbert	i-Supply Recruitment
Jenny Carey	Bold Street House & Vandal



**WE ARE**

**Warrington BID**

# WHAT WE HAVE DELIVERED IN 2021/22

## THEME 1 PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR PLACE

### SOCIAL MEDIA

As we returned to normality and restrictions were lifted we began to drive footfall into the town centre, highlighting the vibrant places for people to visit, increasing dwell time, encouraging consumer spend and showcasing a place where visitors want to come back to.

The growth of our social media platforms and the We Are Warrington brand has been a priority, adapting our social media strategy in response to BID member feedback for a more targeted promotion of businesses. Our social media team have produced content that highlights the people behind the businesses, showing the people you are buying from (independent or national), their products and offers, and promoting placemaking.

In 2021 real5 Digital were appointed to support our social media strategy with activities to engage visitors and increase our social media reach. We're pleased to report growth in our social channels throughout 2021/22, with a key part of this outcome being the team's attendance in the town centre at least once a week and at all large events.

To showcase your products, services or events on the BID channels, get in touch by emailing [marketing@wearewarrington.co.uk](mailto:marketing@wearewarrington.co.uk)

### WE ARE WARRINGTON SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



Reach of more than **1million consumers** through our website and social media



**14,000** social media followers

- Facebook - 9700+
- Instagram - 2600+
- Twitter - 1600+



Back to the High Street Covid Recovery Campaign delivering reach to **250,000 consumers** immediately after the covid lockdown of 2020

### PR

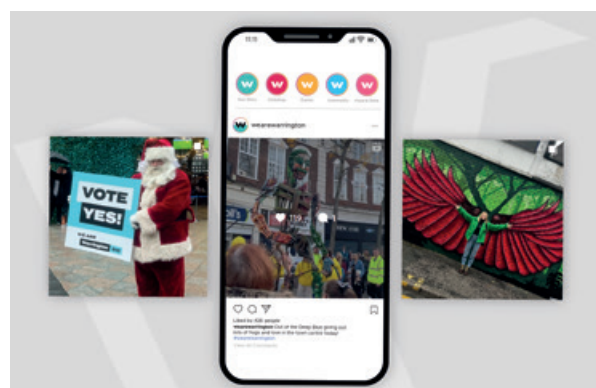
The BID has continued to draw on our strong local and regional connections with the media, resulting in 75 pieces of PR coverage, with a highlight of our town centre promoted in Cheshire Life.

### 75 PIECES OF PR

RADIO, REGIONAL & LOCAL

#### INCLUDING:

CHESHIRE LIFE, WARRINGTON WORLDWIDE, WARRINGTON GUARDIAN, CHESHIRE NEWS, METRO, RADIO WARRINGTON, REACH, BBC RADIO MERSEYSIDE, WIRE FM, THE GUIDE, LIVERPOOL CONFIDENTIAL, LIVERPOOL BUSINESS NEWS



## WEBSITE

Our B2C and B2B websites continue to be a key communication channel for the BID. Analytics are tracked and reported back to levy payers. We have appointed Azizi media to improve the look, navigation and user experience of both websites. We have focused some time developing our search engine optimization (SEO) and the results were positive, resulting in a higher google ranking position. Website development is an ongoing project and we will continue to focus on the development and trends.

## MARKETING IN NUMBERS

### CHRISTMAS 2021 CAMPAIGN



Reach: 68,616

Profile Visits: 1060



Reach: 4,340

Profile Visits: 428



FACEBOOK  
REACH

**+236,723**

(Increase of 202.3%  
compared to 2020/21)



INSTAGRAM  
REACH

**+42,845**

(Increase of 554.2%  
compared to 2020/21)



### FOLLOWER GROWTH



**+208.1%**



**+16%**



**+22%**



LINKEDIN  
ORGANIC  
ENGAGEMENT

**+13.1%**



FACEBOOK LIKES  
OVER THE YEAR

**10,815**

MOST ENGAGED  
WITH INSTA POST

**64**

**800+**

Pieces of Social  
Content Across 4  
Platforms

**72**

Blogs Written and  
Published Online

**1,164**

Highest Reaching IG  
Post: GS The Square



FACEBOOK  
COMMENTS MADE

**2535**



MOST LIKED  
FACEBOOK POST

**464**

**75+**

Pieces of  
PR on radio,  
regional &  
local media

**27**

Newsletters  
Produced and  
Distributed

Highest Reaching  
Facebook Post:  
We Are Warrington  
Christmas Video

**26,798**



## MARKETING AND EVENTS SUPPORT

Alongside the specific business promotion, the BID have also led and supported on the marketing of a number of key events throughout the year, these include the Welcome Back Festival, Back to our town, Tour of Britain, Christmas 2021, the world-renowned art illustration of Gaia (the Earth), Platinum jubilee celebrations, Heritage open days, and The MELA. In addition we have provided significant marketing and events support to our town centre partners at Culture Warrington, Warrington Market, Golden Square Shopping Centre, Cockhedge Shopping Centre, The River Reeves Foundation, Warrington Borough Council and Warrington Wolves.

We have seen a collaborated approach to town centre events and marketing throughout the year which has been achieved by the creation of the BID's Marketing and Events steering group. This group meets once a month and is led by the BID, but includes all the key stakeholders, businesses and partners within the town centre. The success and outcomes of this group have resulted in the creation and development of a Hospitality steering group, which has produced a more joined up way of working within the sector.

As part of our vision to make Warrington a **vibrant town centre** and a place where people want to visit, we've supported a wide variety of events, including but not limited to:

### THE WELCOME BACK FESTIVAL

As part of the high street recovery, the town centre began a month-long celebration to champion local people and businesses to 'Think Local, First' led by Warrington Borough Council, and funded by the European Development Fund. There was music, dance, storytelling, craft activities, live tennis, you name it, the Welcome Back Festival brought 'It' and people from all cultures, faiths and ages came together to rally behind the initiatives.

The Golden Square, Warrington Market, Cockhedge and other traders did a tremendous job in creating a buzz around the town.

Warrington town centre were placed second in the **Cities Outlook Report 2022 for COVID high Street spend recovery**.



#### FACEBOOK POSTS

**Reach:** 38,011  
**Engagement:** 1,641  
**Likes:** 211  
**Shares:** 76



#### INSTAGRAM POSTS

**Reach:** 7,153  
**Interactions:** 256  
**Likes:** 273  
**Comments:** 10



#### TWITTER POSTS

**Impressions:** 16,925  
**Engagement:** 281  
**Likes:** 36  
**Retweets:** 23



## TOUR OF BRITAIN

The spectacular Tour of Britain stage 5 finish concluded at the Golden Gates, Warrington Town Hall, on Thursday 9 September 2021. Thousands lined the streets of the route, with thousands more attending the Tour Village and stage finish. The event was led by Warrington Borough Council but with a marketing focus provided by the BID.

Throughout the campaign, there was a total of 77 social media posts: 40 Facebook, 37 Twitter & 20 Instagram. There was also physical marketing collateral produced with the town awash with posters, flyers, bunting, floor vinyls and shop frontage artwork.

The event attracted 177,500 visitors to Cheshire with 20,000 spectators descending on Warrington to capture the finish line and winner.

### FACEBOOK POSTS

**Reach:** 29,154  
**Engagement:** 1,541  
**Likes:** 160  
**Shares:** 64

### PAID SOCIAL AD'S

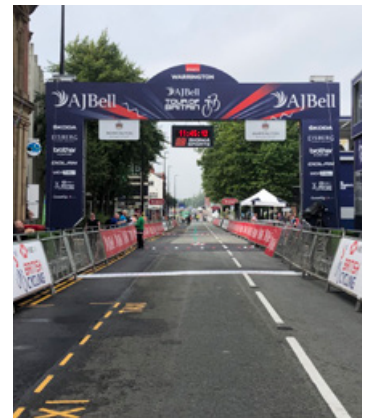
**Reach:** 40,514  
**Impressions:** 127,445  
**Link Clicks:** 962

### TWITTER POSTS

**Impressions:** 49,230  
**Engagement:** 555  
**Likes:** 112  
**Retweets:** 45

### INSTAGRAM POSTS

**Reach:** 8,284  
**Interactions:** 326  
**Likes:** 315  
**Comments:** 5



## GAIA

Bringing world class art and culture to our town, the installation was presented by Culture Warrington within the beautiful Parr Hall, all made possible by the support of Warrington BID. This event was to encourage the community to come back together safely as part of the UK's road to recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

We saw **8,200** visitors descend on our town centre, embracing

the opportunity to see Gaia over the 5 day period. There was also a programme of activities for children, young people, families & adults of every age to enjoy.

In addition, Warrington BID provided an Artisan Market for the launch weekend through our partner, Independent Street Markets. Significant marketing support was also given through the We Are Warrington brand and channels.

### QUOTE FROM CULTURE WARRINGTON

'Having the BID's financial and marketing support have been instrumental in Culture Warrington's progression to develop and deliver a diverse cultural programme within our town centre. Our charity relies on funding to be able to create vibrant & accessible programmes and thanks to the BID's support with Gaia and At No.25 we were able to create a high-quality free cultural provision for Warrington's community whilst diversifying our programme and reaching new audiences.'

**- Leah Biddle, Cultural Manager, Culture Warrington**





## CHRISTMAS 2021



With footfall and confidence slowly returning to pre pandemic figures of 2019, capitalising on this renewed consumer confidence was a must and we ramped up our marketing activity to support BID levy payers over the festive period. There was a priority to support retail, hospitality and local charities helping those in need.

The Christmas town centre marketing campaign ran for 6 weeks and included all events happening across the town centre, delivered by the various businesses from mid-November. The campaign included a wrap around the Warrington Guardian newspaper, 6 weeks of editorial with features including the face behind the businesses. A double page spread in Warrington Worldwide and supporting editorial.

To increase reach and engagement the BID also ran competitions through our social media channels, encouraging shoppers to purchase gifts in Warrington and not online. We gave away £1,000 worth of prizes which included a Nintendo Switch and donated items to the value of £200 to Warrington Foodbank.

After what felt like years of COVID restrictions the BID supported Culture Warrington to deliver the first Christmas event since 2019 with the installation of **At No.25: Where Its Always Christmas Morning**. This was a free family-friendly immersive installation in Golden Square, aimed at capturing the magic of Christmas Morning.





## THEME 2 AND 3

# SAFER TOWN CENTRE AND ACCESSIBILITY

The BID has continued to work with the dedicated town centre Policing team throughout the year to address issues relating to shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour and homelessness. This partnership is for the benefit of levy payers, businesses and visitors to the town.

In 2021, following a rise in violence and harassment against women & girls, the #SaferStreets campaign launched with the BID as a key delivery partner on the project. The campaign addressed and tackled behaviours through a visible campaign presence in and around the town centre.

The #SaferStreets initiative has delivered several schemes and improvements to ensure that visitors feel safe in our town centre, these include:

- Enhanced CCTV and surveillance in Warrington town centre
- Further improvements to street lighting on Bridge Street, Winwick Street and the bus station area.
- Development of training for local businesses to help them recognise predatory behaviour, identify vulnerable individuals and provide safe interventions.



## CHESHIRE POLICE DOG SUPPORT

The BID has continued to support Cheshire Police dog Leo after completing his training with PC Kerry Barber. Over the course of two years Kerry and Leo were deployed numerous times within the town centre area and have engaged in a wide range of policing operations aimed at making the town centre, a safer place. During the course of multiple deployments a number of offenders have been brought to justice. Some examples of Kerry and Leo's work include:



- Participating in a large number of Project Servator deployments into the town centre. Project Servator is a policing tactic that aims to disrupt a range of criminal activity, including terrorism, while providing a reassuring presence for the public and business community.
- On 9 occasions Leo found drugs and notably on occasion led to the arrest of individuals connected to County Lines drug dealing.

- Leo was deployed into the Night Time Economy on multiple occasions during policing operations, identifying individuals in possession of Class A and Class B controlled substances and providing a visible deterrence to those seeking to engage in drug related crime in the town centre, whilst supporting licensed premises to tackle crime and disorder.
- Kerry and Leo have also been deployed into the town centre during operations to tackle anti-social behaviour, resulting in some positive finds regarding individuals in possession of controlled substances.
- Kerry and PD Leo have spent the majority of their service focused on town centre policing, undertaking joint operations at Bank Quay and Central stations to disrupt and detect those engaged in criminal activity using the rail network.

### QUOTE FROM CHESHIRE POLICE

'We are grateful for the support of the BID, which has made a tangible contribution to local policing, supporting our absolute commitment to make our communities safer, bringing offenders to justice and making our town centre, a hostile place for criminals.'

**- Neil Drum, Warrington LPU, Chief Inspector, Cheshire Constabulary**

## PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING

To tackle and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, the BID have joined the town centre Homelessness strategy task & finish group and the Rough sleepers action group (RSAC). The groups are a collaborative response of the BID, town centre businesses, public services and voluntary and community groups across the town centre focused on addressing, preventing and eliminating homelessness.

## CCTV AND RADIO SYSTEMS

The BID team have also sustained strong working relationships with licensing & enforcement and the CCTV and Radio departments at MRS communications, Warrington Borough Council and Cheshire Police. The radio and CCTV systems are active day and night as a fast, reliable way to communicate or raise the alarm for urgent assistance. The BID had negotiated a new radio contract with MRS communications from 2023 onwards - this contract will not incur a cost rise and still stay at the current rate of £3 per week.

## WARRINGTON'S OWN BUSES

In 2021, through data provided by Warrington's Own Buses we discovered that more than 50% of bus users over the age of 66 had not renewed or applied for their free bus pass after the COVID-19 pandemic. As a drive to increase footfall into the town centre, and a push to encourage visitors to use public transport, the BID designed and distributed 30,000 leaflets to residents over the age of 66, encouraging them to discover everything our town has to offer, right on their doorstep, travelling by bus.



## BACK TO OUR TOWN

The Back to our town campaign was created, targeting those eligible for a free bus pass through a 6-sided direct mail leaflet advertising Warrington's Own Buses and our key town centre assets, such as Golden Square, The Cockhedge Centre and Warrington Market.

As part of the campaign we commissioned social influencer, **Girl about Cheshire** to spend a day in Warrington town centre, travelling by bus and visiting key businesses showcasing the town centre offers, products & promotions. Her following of over 11,000 produced the following statistics through Instagram:



**REACH**

**5,278**



**SAVES**

**22**



**IMPRESSIONS**

**6,013**



**LIKES**

**286**



**STORY VIEWS**

**1200**

(AVG. IN 24 HOURS)

**Installed Window Vinyl's on:**

**5**

empty units including Marks & Spencer's and the contact centre

**Agreed funding for:**

**WAYFINDING AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE IN PALMYRA SQUARE**

**Walkabouts with:**

**Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, John Dwyer**  
**Cheshire Police Chief Inspector for Warrington, Neil Drum**

**£3.7k**

Donation from a local business to invest in additional town centre safety and security measures



# THEME 4

## DOING BUSINESS IN WARRINGTON

### TRAINING COURSES

BID funded training courses were provided throughout the year, with the following accredited topics covered:

- Level 3 Emergency First Aid in the Workplace
- Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace
- Fire Marshal Training
- Level 2 Award in Principles of Manual Handling

**9**

Course dates delivered

**59**

Employees attended

**422+**

Hours of accredited training

### DEDICATED LINE OF ENQUIRY FOR BUSINESSES

The BID team have provided a dedicated line of enquiry for businesses, ensuring levy payers were the first to know about key town centre information, through emails, phone calls and business liaison visits to offer advice. Our good working relationship with Warrington Borough Council allowed us to provide a line of support for businesses needing to engage the local authority in various matters.



# WHAT WE PLAN TO DELIVER IN YEAR 5

## (2022/2023)

- Continue to raise the profile of Warrington town centre and the We Are Warrington brand through our website, PR and social channels.
- Deliver festivals and events in the town centre, including Warrington's Weekend Wonderland 2022, Alice in wonderland festival, Pride Festival, Krazy Races event and a Halloween & scarecrow festival.
- Invest in public art installations across the town centre.
- Investments in aesthetic enhancements including hanging baskets, floral arrangements, landscaping features, and wayfinders to enhance specific areas.
- Further investments into the Watch this Space town centre project. Watch this Space has identified a number of areas that require landscape/aesthetic improvements
- The BID will work towards Purple flag accreditation. This international award celebrates the safety and diversity of our night-time economy and offers reassurance to those planning a night out.
- Delivery of campaigns and projects that support better accessibility and sustainability in Warrington.
- Look at the current capabilities of the CCTV and footfall counter software and investigate new advanced technologies to evidence and record more accurate intelligence within our town centre.
- Provision of BID funded training courses and seminars to upskill staff and workers in necessary topics.
- Look at the current business networking groups within the town centre and develop a 'Meet the neighbour' group to give businesses more opportunities to collaborate and share best practice.
- Look at the feasibility of launching a Woman's health and Menopause awareness support group for businesses.

## FINANCES

BID Income	Actual – Year 4 August 2021 – July 2022	Actual – Year 3 August 2020 – July 2021
BID Levy Income	£311,877	£173,999
Other Income	£17,448	£4,025
Bank Interest	£8	£3
<b>Total Income 2021 -2022</b>	<b>£329,333</b>	<b>£177,427</b>

BID Expenditure	Actual – Year 4 August 2021 – July 2022	Actual – Year 3 August 2020 – July 2021
Theme One	£88,501	£39,777
Theme Two	-	£5,000
Theme Three	-	-
Theme Four	£5,020	£918
BID Manager & Project Management	£88,872	£82,724
BID Levy Collection Costs	£22,982	-
Administration Costs	£2,076	£3,363
BID Development Costs	£5,000	-
Accruals – Projects in Progress	£2,580	£23,442
<b>Total – Expenditure 2021-2022</b>	<b>£212,450</b>	<b>£131,782</b>
<b>Total Income less expenditure 2021-2022</b>	<b>£119,464</b>	<b>£22,202</b>
<b>Actual Surplus (including b/fwd) +/-</b>	<b>£174,225</b>	<b>£54,762</b>