

WARRINGTON TOWN CENTRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022/2023

WEARE

Warrington

BID

2

INTRODUCTION

The Warrington Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined geographical area in Warrington. 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 by the BID Manager, the wider BID team and the BID executive board. The BID funding is generated from a mandatory levy which equates to 1.5% of the businesses' ratable value (on all businesses 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.

Warrington BID's first 5-year term draws to an end, with a successful ballot in April to develop and deliver a second term BID for Warrington. We look back and acknowledge the resilience, strength and adaptability shown by every business throughout 2022/23, and we thank the business community for the confidence, trust and belief in the BID

team to deliver BID 2 for a further 5 years (2023-2028).

The year started with the continuation of the BID 2 consultations and engagement visits. Throughout the year, we have regularly engaged with the business community to understand, implement their needs, opinions and feedback into the BID 2 business plan. Alongside our planning for BID 2, 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 Constabulary to ensure you receive the support and services you need.

In August 2022, Amy Dawber handed over the reins to, Andrea Morley to cover her Maternity leave. Amy returned to work as the Warrington BID Manager in August 2023 working in a part time capacity with Andrea who has retained a full-time role as Commercial & BID's project manager at Groundwork, supporting Warrington BID 3 days a week and the rest of her time developing business improvement districts across Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Looking back at the last 12 months of the BID's fifth and final year of its first term, we've had some fantastic successes to shout about with well organised events, including Warrington's Weekend Wonderland, Warrington Music Festival, Warrington PRIDE and Summer in town.

Warrington's Weekend Wonderland certainly was a memorable festive experience for all the family to enjoy, and something we as businesses should be proud of. The impact, success and civic pride it brought to Warrington town centre was momentous.

Of course, the town has had many more events, with the Rugby League World Cup, the relaunch of Warrington PRIDE, the return of Symphonic Ibiza in Golden Square and the ongoing success of comedy nights at Warrington Market, those and many more, all significantly supported by your BID levy.

In June, town centre partners, along with the BID delivered the town's first PRIDE event since 2016 – **Warrington PRIDE 23**. Working with the Local businesses & partners, an event management company, community groups and the LGBTQ+ community we welcomed and entertained the people of Warrington and further afield. Visitors descended into our town centre for a weeklong programme of PRIDE activities & events, exhibitions and education workshops from 17th to 30th June.

The main event on 24th June included a parade through the streets of the town centre, led by Warrington Youth Zone and Warrington BID. The day ended with Golden

Square hosting the most fabulous party of the year with performances from Fleur East and LGBTQ+ artists. Importantly, we created a safe environment to celebrate, diversity, collaboration and unity for Warrington's many LGBTQ+ communities based across the borough.

As in previous years, the BID has continued to keep the town centre safe, clean, and welcoming for everyone. We've seen the **Watch this Space** project aesthetically change the look, feel and security of two areas of the town centre. We have also worked hard to ensure that businesses are supported and connected, prioritizing the needs of the business community.

We've provided fully funded training opportunities and the introduction of a business networking event – **Meet Your Neighbour** and will soon launch our Business Crime Reduction Group in 2024.

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. We have more high demand events planned for 2023/24 and I encourage you all to work with the BID in continuing to make Warrington town centre a great place to live, work, entertain and shop.

We Are Warrington and We Are Proud!

Ian Cox

Interim Chair of the BID and Centre Director of Golden Square Shopping Centre

OUR TEAM



The Warrington BID team is always available and can be contacted on:

Phone: 07810 123 994 or 07483 932 667

Email: warringtonbid@groundwork.org.uk

WARRINGTON BID TEAM

Amy Dawber	Warrington Business Improvement District Manager	amy.dawber@groundwork.org.uk
Andrea Morley	Commercial & BIDs Project Manager	andrea.morley@groundwork.org.uk
Jane Hough	Deputy Director for Business Improvement Districts and Business Services	jane.hough@groundwork.org.uk
Greville Kelly	Director for Business Improvement Districts and Business Services	greville.kelly@groundwork.org.uk
Adam Gerrard	Operations Manager	adam.gerrard@groundwork.org.uk

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Ian Cox	Interim Chair - Golden Square Shopping Centre
Lynne Bennett	The Gateway
Lee Hillyard	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	Real 5 Networking
Jenny Carey	Bold Street House & Vandal



WE ARE

Warrington BID

WHAT WE HAVE DELIVERED IN 2022/23

IN 2022/2023, THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS WERE DELIVERED:

THEME 1 DESTINATION WARRINGTON

SOCIAL MEDIA

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 has 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 2022/23, 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 digital marketing platforms, get in touch by emailing marketing@wearewarrington.co.uk

WE ARE WARRINGTON SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



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



15,300 social media followers

- Facebook - 10,472
- Instagram - 2,990
- Twitter - 1,838



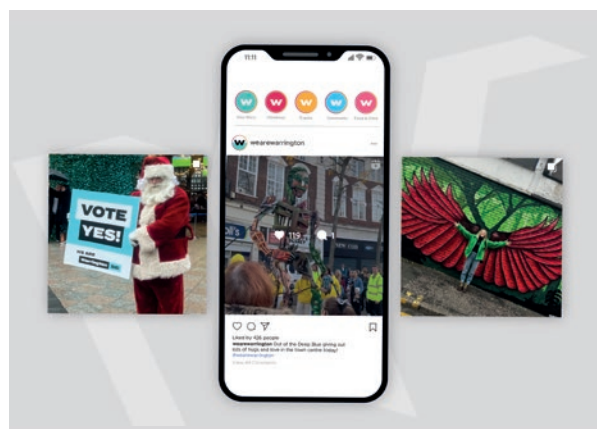
Warrington's Weekend Wonderland campaign delivering a reach to over **425,000 consumers**

PR

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

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, RADIO CITY & HITS RADIO



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. In 2022 we appointed Azizi media to improve the look, navigation and user experience of both websites. We have focused some time on 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 our plans for BID 2 will include a design facelift to both websites.

Period August 2022 – July 2023

Over the period of 2022-23 the website has seen over 21,000 users visit the www.wearewarringtonbid.co.uk website. Traffic had a noticeable peak between mid-November through to December 2022 and again towards the end of June 2023, this was the result of the promotions for Warrington's Weekend Wonderland and Warrington PRIDE.

Around 50% of our website traffic is coming from Google, with 26% from socials and 19% from direct links.

Top 5 Visited Pages

- Pride 2023
- Out of the Deep Blue
- Events
- Food & Drink
- Arts & Culture

We are ranking at the top of page one on Google for the following search terms

- Events in Warrington
- Best Restaurants in Warrington
- About Warrington Town Centre

MARKETING IN NUMBERS

BID YEAR 5:



Reach: 1.26m
Followers: 10,350



Reach: 370,000
Followes: 2,923



**FACEBOOK
PAGE LIKES**
9,227



**MOST ENGAGED
IG POST**
92
20/01/23 - Ruddies Pizza



FOLLOWER GROWTH 2021 - 2022



+997



+282



+265



FOLLOWER GROWTH 2022 - 2023



+1,869



+453



+261



FACEBOOK LIKES OVER THE YEAR

13,707



MOST LIKED FACBOOK POST

464



FACEBOOK COMMENTS

2283

Highest Reaching Instagram Post:

20/01/23
Rudies Pizza

1,476

Highest Reaching Facebook Post:

20/11/23
Father Christmas is
coming to town

69,637

MARKETING AND EVENTS SUPPORT

Alongside the specific business promotion, the BID has also led and supported on the marketing of several key events throughout the year, these include Warrington's Weekend Wonderland 2022, Warrington PRIDE, Summer in Town, Coronation Celebrations, Warrington Music Festival, The MELA and Alice in Warrington. 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, Warrington Borough Council, Solid ground and Warrington Wolves.

We have continued to see a collaborated approach to town centre events and marketing throughout the year, this has been achieved through the BID's Marketing and Events steering group. This group meets once a month and is led by the BID, and includes all the key stakeholders, businesses and partners within the town centre. The success and outcomes of this group have resulted in the development of a Hospitality steering group and plans for a Business Crime Reduction Group, resulting in a more effective and joined up way of working.

Through BID partnerships several schemes and improvements have been funded and delivered, these include:

- In November, the BID funded and delivered the town's first Christmas event since 2019 – **Warrington's Weekend Wonderland**.
- At a key gateway into the town centre, along Winwick Road the BID installed lamppost banners to promote the Rugby League World Cup. We have also funded and installed lamppost banners around the Cultural Quarter to make visitors welcome and to communicate the key themes and attractions our town centre has to offer.
- We have designed, installed and funded Window Vinyl's on 5 empty units including Marks & Spencer's and the contact centre
- Created, funded and delivered a dedicated events guide for programmed town centre events & festivals
- Throughout 2023 the BID has supported and part-funded several events including Warrington PRIDE, Warrington Music Festival, Alice in Warrington, Coronation Celebrations at Time Square and Springtopia Easter AR trail.



WARRINGTON'S WEEKEND WONDERLAND

In November 2022, 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. Over 60,000 people descended into our town centre for a weekend of festive fun and free activities. 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 light and sound projection show at the Town Hall.



FACEBOOK

Posts: 37
Reach: 192,323
Engagement: 16,148

INSTAGRAM

Posts: 27
Reach: 11,806
Engagement: 1,084

ADS

Reach: 220,994
Engagement: 16,148



"The weekend was level with 2019 for us, which given our average is around -15% is a big result, 61,562 visitors through Golden Square over the weekend. The week leading up to it was awful, so this was a real big win!"

- **Ian Cox, Centre Director, Golden Square Shopping Centre.**

"Bus passenger numbers were up +17% this weekend compared to the average, which is great news" – **Ben Wakerley, MD – Warrington's Own Buses**

"First time we've exceeded our income target all year!" – **Sonia Johnson, Founder of Mamar's at the bank**

RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP

The spectacular Rugby League World Cup was hosted at the Warrington Wolves Stadium throughout October & November 2022. Thousands of visitors from all over the world descended into Warrington Town Centre. The festival was led by Warrington Borough Council but with a marketing focus provided by the BID.

Throughout the marketing campaign, there was a total of 32 social media posts: 20 Facebook and 12 Instagram. There was also physical marketing collateral produced by the BID with the town awash with posters, flyers, bunting, floor vinyls and shop frontage artwork.

The event attracted thousands of visitors to Warrington to capture the world's best rugby players.



FACEBOOK

Posts: 20
Reach: 26,745
Engagement: 1,263

INSTAGRAM

Posts: 12
Reach: 5,323
Engagement: 484

ADS

Reach: 6,420
Engagement: 1,272

WARRINGTON PRIDE



PRIDE in Warrington was a vibrant week-long celebration leading up to the spectacular Warrington PRIDE weekend. The town centre held an unforgettable celebration filled with talks, films, art, comedy, dance, live performances and so much more.

The event closed with the most fabulous party of the year, sponsored by Unites Utilities and hosted by Golden Square. We celebrated a programme of performances showcased by HC Promotions & TAGS (TEENAGER, GENDER & SEXUALITY YOUTH SUPPORT) including DJ & singer Fleur East, Crystal from RuPaul's Drag Race UK season 1, and performances from local LGBTQ+ artists.

Importantly, as a town centre partnership we created a safe environment to celebrate, diversity, collaboration and unity for Warrington's many LGBTQ+ communities based across the borough.

Warrington PRIDE Partners included Warrington Borough Council, Warrington Business Improvement District (BID), Warrington Market, Golden Square, HC Promotions, TAGS, United Utilities, Culture Warrington, Warrington Youth Zone, University of Chester, Solid Ground and LiveWire.



FACEBOOK

Posts: 14
Reach: 13,554
Engagement: 1,419

INSTAGRAM

Posts: 11
Reach: 6,474
Engagement: 554

ADS

Reach: 95,983
Engagement: 102

THEME 2 AND 3

A SAFER, CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE TOWN CENTRE

The BID has continued to work with the dedicated town centre Policing team, town centre businesses, public services and voluntary and community groups throughout the year to address issues relating to business related crime, anti-social behaviour, homelessness, aesthetics and transport. This partnership is for the benefit of levy payers, businesses and visitors to the town.

Through BID partnerships several schemes and improvements have been funded and delivered, 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.
- After a 50% drop in public transport users', the BID designed and funded the 'Back to' campaign to drive footfall into the town centre after the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign distributed 30,000 leaflets and published targeted adverts to residents over the age of 66, encouraging them to rediscover what our town centre has to offer.



- We identified increasing levels of Anti-social behaviour occurring on certain days and times, the BID has worked in partnership with Warrington Youth Zone to part-fund two dedicated youth workers to identify young people causing ASB and encourage them to engage with the youth support and services available to them.
- As part of the 'Watch This Space' initiative, the BID has funded the redevelopment of two town centre landscaped areas at the Bus Station and Buttermarket Street. The aesthetic changes have created a sense of pride for the business community and town centre visitors, whilst enhancing Warrington town centre as a safe place to shop, work, live & entertain.



THEME 4

DOING BUSINESS IN WARRINGTON

TRAINING COURSES

Warrington BID have continued our support to the business community by continuously developing and adapting with the rapidly changing trading landscape. To do this, we have spoken with, and listened to, the needs of the businesses. We have provided BID funded accredited training to our BID members, monitored visitor trends and footfall, and have provided business support to new, existing and expanding businesses.

During 2022-2023 the BID funded training courses 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

43

Employees attended

250

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. 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.



As an advocate for town centre businesses, the BID has developed a relationship with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, John Dwyer, Cheshire Police Chief Inspector for Warrington, Neil Drum and the Designing out Crime Officer, Alison Gabbout. The BID has conducted regular town centre walk-abouts to highlight, address and aim to tackle business related crime. As part of this work, we will be launching a Business Crime Reduction Group in 2024.

In May 2023 we launched the 'Meet Your Neighbour' business networking event. This event is an opportunity for BID members to meet up on a quarterly basis in a business network environment, hear what plans the BID team have for the town centre. But importantly, gather in a space where they can meet, collaborate, share experiences and network with their business neighbours.



WHAT PROJECTS WILL BE SUPPORTED, DELIVERED OR FUNDED IN BID 2

IN 2023/2024, THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS WILL BE DELIVERED:

THEME 01 – PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR PLACE

- We want to further develop the town centre experience, ensuring that Warrington remains relevant and attractive to a broad range of consumers and visitors.
- Through BID 2 our dedicated marketing and promotional campaigns will continue to gain traction through several different marketing channels.
- Enhance the We Are Warrington brand to a more consumer friendly design.
- Design campaigns for individual zones across the town centre, to include Bridge Street, Horsemarket Street, Sankey Street, Time Square, Cockhedge & Golden Square.
- Creating and delivering a dedicated year-round programme of marketing and promotional campaigns to raise the profile of Warrington town centre.
- Develop and maintain the We are Warrington BID consumer website to raise the profile of Warrington across the Northwest.
- Delivering enhanced investment in social media to grow the on-line reach of businesses in Warrington town centre across key social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, LinkedIn and Twitter).

WE ARE

Warrington BID 2

- An enhanced programme of PR and hard copy literature driven features in local and regional publications.
- Production of high-quality promotional videos for Warrington as a destination of choice for shoppers.
- Dedicated marketing support for Warrington town centre events and festivals.
- Dedicated photography and videos of events and festivals in Warrington town centre.
- Continuation of our regular online blogs to encourage visitors to shop or visit Warrington town centre.
- Continuation of competitions to raise awareness and collate consumer data.
- We will monitor footfall trends and intelligence and tailor our marketing campaigns to reach different and new audiences of consumers across Cheshire, Greater Manchester.

THEME 02 – DELIVERING AN ENHANCED EXPERIENCE FOR CONSUMERS AND VISITORS

The BID will continue to make investments into the aesthetics of Warrington town centre to ensure that we have an attractive environment that people will want to visit.

- More from the Watch This Space to continually increase the attractiveness of the town centre to visitors and residents.
- Make investments into landscaping, sustainable planting schemes, introduce hanging/railing baskets across the town centre and to key gateways into Warrington.
- We will work with stakeholders and community groups in Warrington Town Centre to develop a portfolio of projects to enter the RHS in Bloom Awards.
- Deep clean of the town centre over and above that provided by the Council's Street cleaning team.
- Work with the culture and arts communities to develop public art installations across the town centre.

We will deliver and support an enhanced programme of events and initiatives to attract visitors and consumers to Warrington:

- Artisan Markets to support and wrap around high profiles events.
- Support the growth plans for future PRIDE celebrations in Warrington.
- Introduction of town centre trails.
- Heritage and Cultural events that portray the story of Warrington.
- Build on the success of 'Warrington's Weekend Wonderland'. Growing the event into additional areas to include the Cultural Quarter.
- Launch Warrington's first 'Krazy Races' event on Bridge on the 9th June 2024.
- Along with our partners, Culture Warrington and Warrington Borough Council, we will support the development plans for Warrington Contemporary Arts Festival through the significant £600,000 place partnership grant from Arts Council England.



THEME 03 – BUILDING A SUPPORTED COMMUNITY OF TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES

The BID will continue to bring together and support the Warrington Business Community ensuring all businesses have the opportunity for their voices to be heard. Our efforts under this theme will be focused on increasing the momentum we have with Cheshire Constabulary and other partners, increasing their focus on the town centre.

- Deliver a private sector led partnership for change – The BID will ensure the private sector led BID Board continues its work to bring together the views and interests of BID Levy payers.
- Distribute regular news and information of relevance to Warrington town centre businesses - The BID will provide regular updates and information on news, events, and business support opportunities.
- Deliver new insights and data about our town centre consumers –Using our new consumer behaviour, footfall and data software to better understand our consumers, where they come from, what their buying trends are and what demographics they represent.
- Provide Free and low-cost accredited training.
- Further develop the ‘Meet the neighbour’ networking group to give businesses more opportunities to collaborate and share best practice.
- The BID will continue to offer you access to joint procurement schemes to lower your bills and ensure you receive the best value for money from suppliers.

FINANCES

BID Income	August 2022 - July 2023 Year 5	August 2021 - July 2022 Year 4
BID Levy Income	£156,661	£311,877
Other Income	£18,751	£17,448
Bank Interest	£546	£8
Total Income	£175,958	£329,333

BID Expenditure	August 2022 - July 2023 Year 5	August 2021 - July 2022 Year 4
Theme One	£138,947	£88,501
Theme Two	£8,954	-
Theme Three	-	-
Theme Four	£10,389	£5,020
BID Manager & Project Management	£88,872	£88,872
BID Levy Collection Costs	£20,445	£22,981
Administration Costs	£7,716	£2,076
BID Development Costs	-	£5,000
BID Development Loan	£39,935	-
Accruals – Projects in Progress	(£2,722)	(£2,580)
Total Expenditure	£312,536	£209,870
Surplus for 22/23	(£136,578)	£119,463
Actual Surplus +/- (inc. PY)	£37,647	£174,225