

**WE ARE**

**Warrington BID 2**

# ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2023/24

The Warrington Business Improvement District





# 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.

Now in its second term, we look back and acknowledge the resilience, strength and adaptability shown by every business throughout 2023/24, and we thank the business community for the confidence, trust and belief in the BID team to deliver BID 2 from 2023-2028.

Throughout 2023/24, we have regularly engaged with the business community, understanding and implementing their needs, opinions and feedback, aligned with the BID 2 business plan. Alongside this, we have continued to keep our town centre clean, safe and welcoming for everyone, by working with, and alongside the business community, Warrington Borough Council, and Cheshire Constabulary to ensure you receive the support and services you need.

In August 2023, Amy Dawber returned as the Warrington BID Manager after a period away from the role on Maternity leave. Amy returned to work in a part time capacity with Andrea Morley retained as Commercial & BID's project manager at Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside, supporting Warrington BID 3 days a week.

## Message from the Chair

Looking back over the last 12 months of the BIDs first year of the second term, we've had some fantastic successes to shout about. Importantly, we've enjoyed some well organised large-scale events, including Krazy Races, Warrington's Weekend Wonderland, Warrington Music Festival, and Warrington PRIDE.

**Krazy Races** certainly was a memorable experience for all the family to enjoy, and something businesses should be proud of. The impact, success and atmosphere it brought to Warrington town centre and the business community was momentous, and one I have never experienced in the many years I've worked in Warrington.

**Warrington's Weekend Wonderland** again provided us with a festive experience for all the family to enjoy and cherish. Bringing communities across Warrington, and further afield together, to relish in festive fun, good food & drink, and creating memories.

Of course, the town has had many more events, with the **Tour of Britain, Warrington PRIDE, Luna New Year, Warrington Arts Festival, the return of Symphonic Ibiza in Golden Square and the ongoing success of the ever-growing entertainment programme at Warrington Market and Time Square Quarter**. All significantly supported by your BID levy.

June 2024 brought us a month of high profile, well attended events, that generated a **30% increase** in visitors to the town centre, compared to the previous month. The launch of Warrington's first Krazy Races event on Bridge Street hugely supported this increase with new audiences visiting Warrington.

Another success was the bigger and better return of **Warrington PRIDE 24**, delivered by town centre partners and the BID. Working with local businesses, sponsors, an event

management company, community groups and the LGBTQ+ community we welcomed and entertained the people of Warrington and further afield. The day was filled with exciting events, thought-provoking talks, performances and creative showcases, all kicked off with speeches and a parade from Time Square before winding its way through the streets and culminating in Golden Square.

The day ended with Golden Square hosting the most fabulous party of the year with performances from **Danny Beard, Tia Kofi and LGBTQ+ artists**. Importantly, Warrington came together to spread love, acceptance and PRIDE throughout our community.

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 the town centre. We have also worked hard to ensure that businesses are supported and connected, prioritising the needs of the business community.

We've provided fully funded training opportunities and hosted our quarterly **Meet Your Neighbour** business networking event. With plans to launch a Business Crime Reduction Group in 2025.

Looking ahead, the BID team is in the best position to support business needs and is committed to doing so. We have more events planned for 2024/25 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.

**Dave McNichol** Chair - Warrington Youth Zone

# We Are Warrington and We Are Proud!

**Dave McNichol**  
Chair of the BID and Chief Executive  
Officer of Warrington Youth Zone



**Our Team**  
The Warrington BID team is always available and can be contacted on **07810 123994** or **07483 932667** or email **warringtonbid@groundwork.org.uk**



## The team

Amy Dawber	Warrington Business Improvement District Manager	amy.dawber@groundwork.org.uk 07810 123994
Andrea Morley	Commercial & BIDs Project Manager	andrea.morley@groundwork.org.uk 07483 932667
Adam Gerrard	Operations Manager	adam.gerrard@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@groudwork.org.uk

## Executive Board

Dave McNichol	Chair - Warrington Youth Zone
Ian Cox	Deputy Chair - Golden Square Shopping Centre
Lynne Bennett	The Gateway
Chris Rudd	Chris Rudd Solicitors
Chris Persoglio	Culture Warrington
Cllr Laura Watson	Warrington Borough Council
Jade Foulkes	Knight Frank
Carla Yearsley	Lloyds Banking Group
Mike Butler	Vandal
Sonia Johnson	Mamar's
Dawn McElroy	Primark
Chris Hatherall	UTC
Jess Bowman	JD Wetherspoon

## Observers (non-voting):

Eleanor Blackburn	Warrington Borough Council
Inspector Lee Hillyard	Cheshire Constabulary



# What we have delivered in 2023/24

In 2023/2024, the following projects were delivered:

## THEME ONE: PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR PLACE

### Social Media Growth

Over the past year, our social media efforts have been laser-focused on profiling Warrington as a destination to visit, explore and celebrate its unique mix of heritage, people and businesses.

Through We Are Warrington, we've successfully brought together the essence of Warrington, encouraging people to engage with us and share their thoughts. Our aim has been to highlight the incredible work happening behind the scenes at the BID and raise awareness of the people and projects making a difference.

In November 2023, We Are Pink joined forces with us to support our PR and social media strategy. Their involvement has been pivotal in driving greater engagement with visitors and boosting our social reach. The team's presence at key events and across the town centre has strengthened trust and awareness, allowing us to build lasting relationships with the Warrington community.

We're proud of the progress we've made and invite everyone to stay connected by reaching out at [marketing@wearewarrington.co.uk](mailto:marketing@wearewarrington.co.uk).

### Public Relations (PR)

This year, Warrington BID has significantly strengthened its profile, not just locally but in surrounding areas such as Liverpool.

We've worked hard to position Warrington as a key player in the region, promoting the town's initiatives and events across influential media platforms. With extensive coverage in the Warrington Guardian, Warrington Worldwide, Liverpool Echo, BBC Radio Merseyside and many more, we've proudly elevated Warrington's reputation in the North West.

From November 2023 to July 2024, Warrington BID secured 53 pieces of press coverage, reaching an impressive audience of 7.7 million. This coverage has helped shine a spotlight on the town and its growing appeal.



### Social Media Success

**Total Reach:** Our social media reach exceeded **3.1 million people** this year.

**Video Views:** Video content was viewed more than **480,000 times** across platforms.

**Fans & Followers:** We've grown to **17209 fans & followers** on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn - an impressive **12.5%** increase from the previous year.



### Website & Online Presence

Our websites remain critical communication channels for Warrington BID.

The We Are Warrington BID website attracted 35,000 visitors this year - an incredible 67% increase from the previous year. This growth in traffic is a testament to the efforts we've put into promoting key events, along with ongoing efforts to keep people engaged year-round.

A few notable highlights include:

- **Key Traffic Peaks:** Traffic surged during major event periods, such as Weekend Wonderland, Lunar New Year, May Music Month, Pride and Crazy Races.
- **Top Pages:** Our Things to Do in Warrington page is now the most popular, reflecting the community's interest in local activities and events.

### Footfall Increase

Time Square, a key hub for shopping, dining and entertainment, saw a massive increase in visitors during May and June, with nearly two million visitors over an eight-week period.

### Social Media Success

**Website Breakdown:**

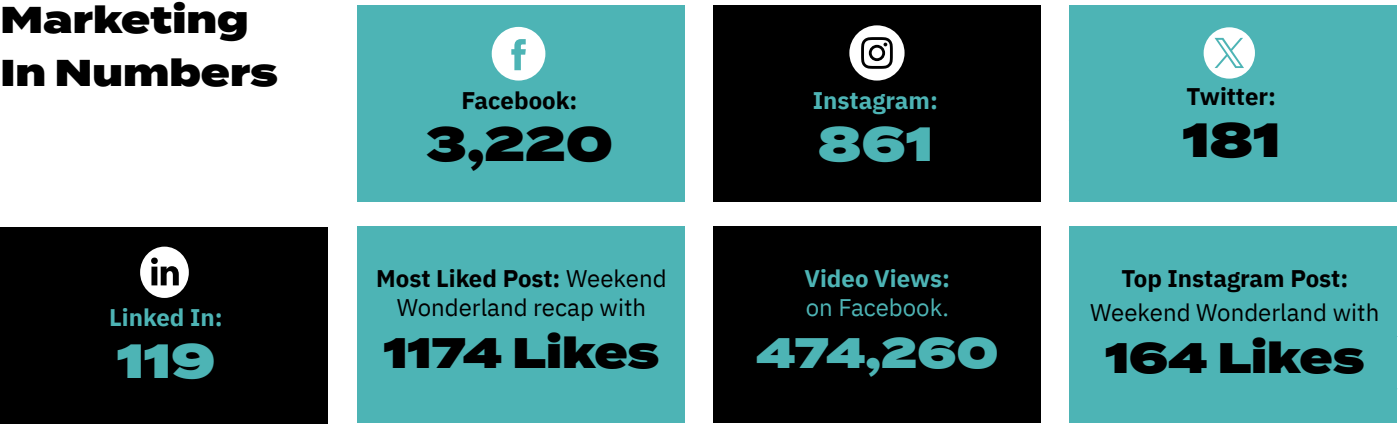
- 35,000** active users (up from 21,000 last year)
- 10,000** visitors from organic social media (28% of traffic)
- 23,000** visitors from organic search (65% of traffic)

**Top 3 Most Viewed Pages:**

- Things to Do in Warrington - **11k views**
- Weekend Wonderland 2023 - **9.7k views**
- Warrington Pride 2024 - **3.7k views**

This was driven by events like Proms in the Square, Pride and Crazy Races, which significantly boosted the footfall across the town centre.

### Marketing In Numbers



This really has been a standout year for Warrington BID, and we are excited about continuing to build on this momentum. Thank you for being part of the journey and we look forward to even greater things in the coming year!



## Warrington's Weekend Wonderland 2023

The Weekend Wonderland was the highlight of the festive season.

The two-day extravaganza transformed Warrington into a winter wonderland, with highlights including Independent Street Markets, a Christmas parade, musical performances, a light show at the town hall and workshops for children. Local businesses benefitted significantly, with many reporting increased footfall and the atmosphere was truly magical.

- **18 pieces of press coverage** reaching an audience of **1.5 million**
- Social media reach: **180,000+**
- Video views: **85,000+**



## Lunar New Year 2024

Warrington welcomed its first-ever Lunar New Year celebration, which transformed the town into a festival of colour and sound.

Held on February 18th, this exciting new event celebrated the Year of the Dragon with traditional lion and dragon dances, martial arts demonstrations and a variety of cultural activities.

**Highlights included:**

- 50 artisan market stalls.
- Live performances, crafts and food.
- Collaboration with partners including Warrington Borough Council, Culture Warrington and LiveWire to create an authentic and vibrant event.



## May Music Month 2024

In response to the cancellation of the Neighbourhood Weekender, Warrington's first-ever Music Month filled the gap, offering an exciting calendar of musical performances throughout May.

The event celebrated local talent across various genres and was a massive success, with a strong showing from Warrington's music scene.

- Concert Series featuring a range of genres including rock, jazz and indie.
- Local and regional artists showcased their talent at venues across the town.



## Warrington Pride 2024

Warrington Pride returned in June 2024 with a powerful message of inclusivity and celebration of diversity.

This year's Pride parade drew over 500 attendees and featured live music, performances and community workshops. Warrington BID partnered with local organisations such as Golden Square, Warrington Market and Warrington Youth Zone to bring this community-centred event to life.

- **500+** attendees.
- Significant coverage across local media.
- Collaboration with partners to create an inclusive atmosphere.



## Krazy Races 2024

The event was an absolute spectacle, with families and businesses alike cheering on their favourite teams as they tackled obstacles, chicanes and even water splashes.

- Free event with a fun, competitive spirit.
- Significant footfall increase across the town centre.



## Events & Marketing Support

Warrington BID played a leading role in managing and promoting several high-profile town centre events. These initiatives were critical in boosting footfall and driving engagement across the town.





# THEME TWO: DELIVERING AN ENHANCED EXPERIENCE FOR CONSUMERS AND VISITORS



With an established calendar of annual events there is always something happening to draw a crowd into Warrington town centre. We worked in partnership with our partners at Culture Warrington, Golden Square, Warrington Borough Council and professional event organisers and suppliers to support and enhance the town centre programme of activities and events throughout 2023/24.

During this year, Warrington BID managed and funded two large scale events, Warrington Weekend Wonderland and Warrington's first ever Krazy Race's event. In November 2023 we draw record crowds of 63,000 people over the Christmas weekend event- up 5% from the previous year. Retailers and Hospitality businesses recorded huge sales and income across the weekend.

Warrington's first Krazy Races event turned the town centre into a thrilling racetrack, with 40 teams racing homemade soapbox karts down a specially designed course on Bridge Street. Spectators could view, admire and sit in the karts all displayed at Old Market Place in Golden Square. This was an opportunity for visitors to meet businesses and charities across the town and discover more about their products and services. Thousands of pounds were raised for the charities that took part in the event. Over 4,500 people travelled more than 10 miles to visit the event, ultimately spending money and leisure time in our town centre. Some Hospitality business recorded a 350% increase in trade.

Lunar New Year, May Music Month, and Warrington Pride have all been delivered with support from the Warrington BID team. The BID team managed this years PRIDE parade where hundreds gathered in Time Square with banners, flags and streamers. The parade made its way from Time Square to Golden Square as attendees walked, danced and skated to the soundtrack of Samba Mundo Drummers.

Throughout the year, the BID has continued its work with the dedicated town centre Policing team, the Police and Crime Commissioner, town centre businesses, public services, PTAC group, and voluntary and community groups to address issues relating to shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour, business related crime and homelessness. This partnership is for the benefit of levy payers, businesses and visitors to the town, ensuring Warrington remains a safe place to visit.

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

- Enhancing CCTV and surveillance in town centre, with additional attention to area's experiencing higher levels of crime.
- Hosting bike marking events with our dedicated town centre PSCO, Tony Spruce.
- Supporting businesses with crime reduction audits on their premises or venues. Inspections completed by our town centre Designing Out Crime Officer.
- Involvement into new suveilannce equipment for under cover officers as part of Project Servator

In July, we celebrated the relaunch of Warrington Arts Festival, part of the town's Place Partnership Programme, made possible following a successful grant application totaling £840,000 to Arts Council England. The application was submitted by Culture Warrington and supported by Warrington Borough Council and Warrington BID. This is just the beginning of a vibrant two-year programme that will transform events and culture in Warrington town centre. The aim of the Place Partnership Programme is to strengthen existing cultural activity in the town centre, working collaboratively with the community at all stages to create more opportunities for the people of Warrington, and encourage people throughout the borough and further afield to visit events, and spend time and money in our town centre.

As part of the programme, Warrington BID have supported the artwork installation in Golden Square, created by artist, Leanne Van.

# THEME THREE: BUILDING A SUPPORTED COMMUNITY OF TOWN CENTRE BUSINESSES



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 business community.

We have provided or funded:

- Accredited training to our BID members
- Through Groundwork's Race to Zero programme and accessing UKSPF funding, businesses have received grant support and funding towards improving their energy efficiency and progressing to net zero.
- Investment in software that provides accurate visitor data, monitors visitor trends and footfall, enabling us to provide business support and data to new, existing or expanding businesses.
- Continue our Quarterly BID members networking event – Meet Your Neighbour. Giving businesses the opportunity to collaborate with neighbouring businesses and showcase new and existing venues.

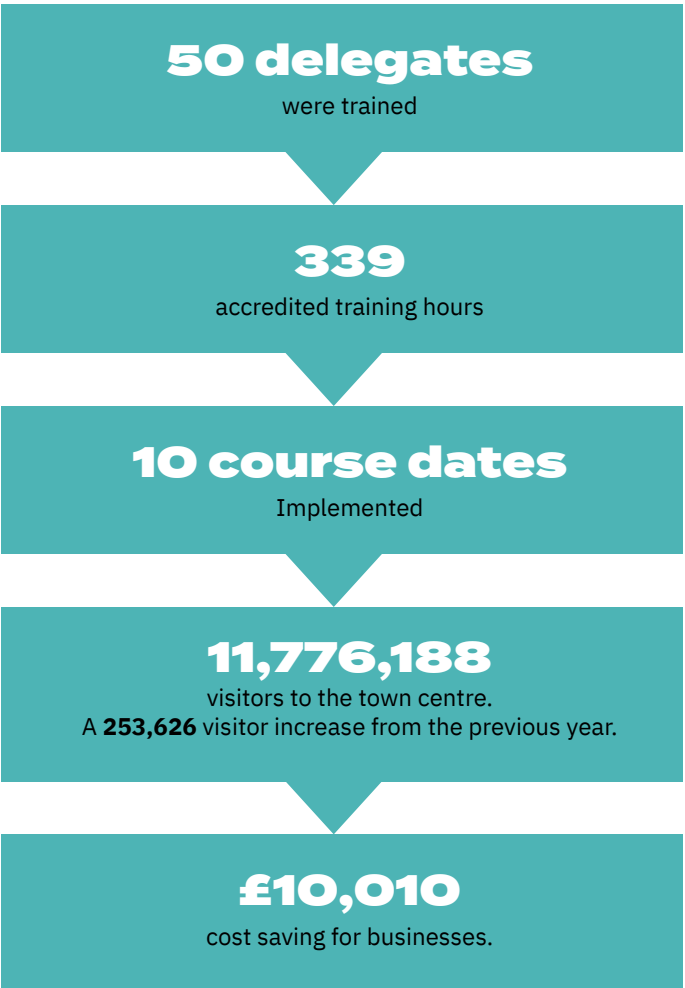
During 2023-2024 the BID funded training courses with the following accredited topics covered:

- Level 2 Award in Health & Safety in the Workplace
- Emergency First Aid in the Workplace
- Fire Marshal Training
- Paediatric First Aid
- Emergency Paediatric First Aid,

As an advocate for town centre businesses, the BID has developed a relationship with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, Dan Price, Cheshire Police Chief Inspector for Warrington, Neil Drum, Town Centre Inspector Lee Hillyard, the Designing out Crime Officer, Alison Gabbout and our dedicated town centre PSCO, Tony Spruce. The BID has conducted regular town centre audits 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 2025.

## 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 email, 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.





# WHAT PROJECTS WILL BE SUPPORTED, DELIVERED OR FUNDED IN YEAR 2 OF BID 2.

In 2024/2025, the following projects will be delivered:

## THEME ONE – 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 existing and new consumers and visitors.

Throughout year 2, we will deliver:

- Further develop and maintain the We are Warrington BID consumer website to raise the profile of Warrington across the Northwest
- Through UKSPF funding, we will conduct a feasibility study to identify the need/demand for a tourist/visitor information centre for Warrington town centre
- Through UKSPF funding, we will conduct a feasibility study to identify the consumer’s perception of the We Are Warrington brand
- Create and deliver a dedicated year-round programme of marketing and promotional campaigns to raise the profile of Warrington town centre
- Deliver 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)
- Further enhance our programme of PR and hard copy literature driven features in local and regional publications.
- Produce high-quality promotional videos for Warrington as a destination of choice for shoppers, visitors and investors
- Ongoing marketing & photography support for Warrington town centre events and festivals
- Continuation of our regular online blogs
- We will monitor footfall trends and intelligence and tailor our marketing campaigns to reach different and new audiences of consumers across Cheshire, Greater Manchester & Merseyside.

## THEME TWO – DELIVERING AN ENHANCED EXPERIENCE FOR CONSUMERS AND VISITORS

The BID will continue to make investments into the town centre events programme, environmental enhancements & aesthetics, and security and safety initiative to ensure that we have a vibrant and attractive environment that people will want to visit.

- More from the Watch This Space, to include, working with culture and arts communities to develop public art installations across the town centre, to be installed in identified area’s of ASB and crime hotspots.
- Install new signage and directional way finders
- 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
- We will deliver and support an enhanced programme of events and initiatives to attract visitors and consumers to Warrington town centre:
- Artisan Markets to support and wrap around high profiles events
- Support the plans for a Food & Drink Festival in Warrington town centre
- Introduction of a town centre heritage trail
- Continue to build on the success of Warrington’s Weekend Wonderland, Warrington PRIDE, Warrington’s Month of Music and Luna New Year celebrations
- Launch a programme of seasonal events



## THEME THREE – 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 the Police 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 in Warrington town centre
- Deliver new insights and data about our town centre consumers –Using our audience behaviour data software to better understand our consumers, where they come from, what their buying trends are and what demographics they represent

- Continue to 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
- Through Groundwork’s Race to Zero programme and accessing UKSPF funding, we will continue to provide businesses with funding towards improving their energy efficiency and progressing to net zero.



## Finances

BID Income	August 2023 - July 2024 - BID2 Year 1
BID Levy Income	£343,406.00
Voluntary Levy Income	£531.00
Other Income	£6,242.00
Bank Interest	£728.00
Total Income	£350,907.00

BID Expenditure	August 2023 - July 2024 - BID2 Year 1
Theme One - Passionate About Our Place	£53,597.00
Theme Two -Delivering an Enhanced Experience	£129,492.00
Theme Three - Building a Supported Community of Businesses	£25,363.00
Project Management & Administration	£21,937.00
BID Levy Collection Costs	£6,978.00
Total Expenditure	£237,367.00
Provisions to Complete Projects	£(342.00)
Surplus for 23/24	£113,198.00
Actual Surplus	£150,845.00



**For more information,  
please contact**

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