



**WE ARE**

**Warrington BID 2**

# **ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2024/25**



# Introduction

## 2024/25 has been a year to remember for Warrington town centre.

The BID has played a central role in delivering some of the busiest and most successful events the town has hosted. Warrington’s Weekend Wonderland, Pride, Lunar New Year and May Music Month all returned with bigger audiences, while the Warrington Food and Drink Festival and Warrington Mela brought something new. These events drew in thousands of visitors, created memorable experiences and gave businesses a clear boost.

We have been working in partnership with Culture Warrington to deliver the two-year Place Partnership Programme, funded by Arts Council England, with additional support from the BID and Warrington Borough Council. This programme has successfully delivered a strong series of events and festivals across the town centre, attracting new audiences, increasing footfall to local businesses, and strengthening cultural connections and community engagement.

The BID has also kept its focus on everyday priorities. Work has continued to make the town centre safer, to support businesses with training, and to improve the environment. Partnerships with Cheshire Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner, Warrington Borough Council and others have ensured progress is visible and practical.

This report sets out what has been achieved between August 2024 and July 2025, how levy payers have benefited, and what is planned for year three.

# Message from the Chair

## The past year has been one of Warrington’s busiest and most successful.

Warrington’s Weekend Wonderland returned with record numbers, Lunar New Year filled the streets with colour, May Music Month gave local talent a stage, and Pride grew into our biggest yet. On top of these familiar highlights, Warrington hosted the Food and Drink Festival and saw the return of Warrington Mela to the town centre. Both were packed with visitors and showed how much appetite there is for new experiences in the town. We were delighted to work with Cheshire Police and a range of groups from across the town to bring the VPX family fun days back for August 2025.

Events are only one part of the BID’s role. We have continued to work with Cheshire Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner and Warrington Borough Council to make the town centre safe. We have provided accredited training and networking for businesses. Our Watch This Space project has added public art and improved areas that needed attention.

The message is simple - when businesses come together through the BID, Warrington gets stronger. Year three will see the return of our events programme, a new public art mural, the implementation of safety initiatives through our Business Crime Reduction Group, and more support for levy payers. Thank you to every business for your continued backing.

**Dave McNicholl**  
*Chair (Executive Board), Warrington BID*



# The team



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



**Andrea Morley and Amy Dawber**  
The Warrington BID team is always available and can be contacted on **07483 932667**, or via email at **warringtonbid@groundwork.org.uk**

Amy Dawber	Warrington Business Improvement District Manager	amy.dawber@groundwork.org.uk
Andrea Morley	Commercial & BIDs Project Manager	andrea.morley@groundwork.org.uk 07483 932667
Jon Houghton	BID Project Assistant	jon.houghton@groundwork.org.uk
Laura Diffey	BID Programme Manager	laura.diffey@groundwork.org.uk
Jane Hough	Deputy Director for BusinessImprovement Districts and Business Services	jane.hough@groundwork.org.uk

The Warrington BID Executive Board’s role is to represent the business community in the Warrington town centre BID area and ensure that the BID performs its role effectively and fairly.

## Board Members (BID2 Year 2: August 2024 - July 2025)

Dave McNicholl	Chair of BID Board and Chief Executive, Warrington Youth Zone
Ian Cox	Deputy Chair of the BID Board and Centre Director, Golden Square Shopping Centre
Michael Butler	Vandal
Lynne Bennett	The Gateway
Chris Persoglio	Culture Warrington
Chris Hatherall	UTC Warrington
Jess Bowman	JD Wetherspoon
Chris Rudd	Chris Rudd Solicitors
Cllr Laura Watson	Warrington Borough Council
Jade Foulkes	Knight Frank
Carla Yearsley	Lloyds Banking Group
Sonia Johnson	Mamar’s
Dawn McElroy	Primark

## Executive Board Observers (non-voting)

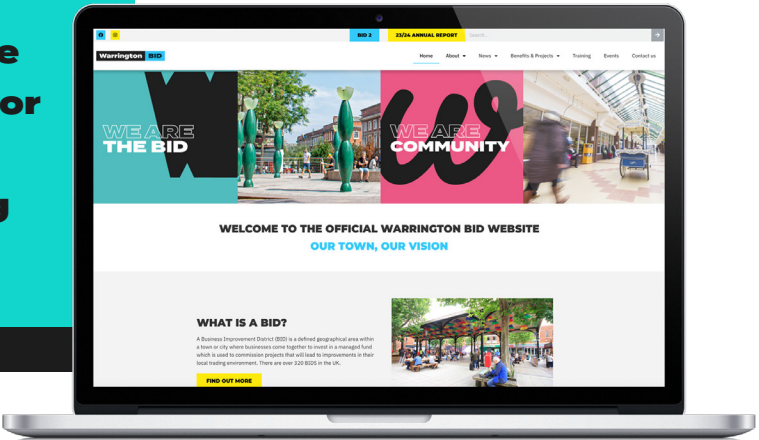
Eleanor Blackburn	Warrington Borough Council
Inspector Lee Hillyard	Cheshire Constabulary

# What we delivered in 2024/25

## Theme One - **Passionate about our place**

This theme is about how Warrington is promoted and how the story of the town is shared.

**The We Are Warrington website saw its highest visitor numbers yet, with clear spikes during major events.**



**Social media reached almost three million people, generating over 180,000 engagements**

Facebook grew by **4,200 followers**

Instagram following increased by **1,564** new followers, up 80 percent

LinkedIn up **46%**



**Video content viewed over 460,000 times**  
top-performing posts included Warrington Weekend Wonderland, Food and Drink Festival, and Pride.

## **A feasibility study**

recommended rebranding to Discover Warrington and exploring a physical tourist information point.

## **Consistent press coverage**

across Warrington Guardian, Visit Cheshire, Liverpool Echo, Warrington Worldwide, and BBC Radio Merseyside.





## Theme Two - Delivering an enhanced experience for consumers and visitors

Events continue to be central to the BID's work, giving people reasons to visit, stay and spend time in town.

### Warrington Mela 2024

Warrington Mela returned to the town centre in the summer. Supported and part funded by the BID but managed by WBC and additionally funded by ACE & UKSPF, the event brought music, dance and food from around the world and celebrated Warrington's diversity. Families of all ages joined in, and with a footfall of over 30,000 in the town centre on the day of the event, businesses benefited from the extra visitors.

### Warrington's Weekend Wonderland 2024

Warrington's Weekend Wonderland returned in November with its biggest programme yet. Independent Street markets, live music and festive Christmas spirit brought the town to life. Despite the main event being cancelled due to bad weather, the celebration still attracted 42,289 visitors on November 23rd - up 21.9% from the previous year. For shops, bars and restaurants, it was one of the busiest weekends of the year.

### Lunar New Year 2025

In February, the town marked the Year of the Dragon with traditional lion and dragon dances, martial arts demonstrations, craft workshops and more than 50 stalls. Tens of thousands attended, many experiencing Lunar New Year in Warrington for the first time. Supported and funded by BID and UKSPF, and managed by WBC, Lunar New Year is quickly becoming a favourite in the town centre's cultural event programme.

### May Music Month 2025

May Music Month filled venues across town with live performances from local bands and musicians. Introduced in 2024 to fill a gap in the calendar following the cancellation of the Neighbourhood Festival, it proved so successful that it returned for a second year. The programme ranged from jazz and indie to rock, keeping audiences in the town centre at a time when Warrington might otherwise have had fewer events. This year saw the return of the Golden Square and Time Square stages for Warrington Music Festival, followed by Proms in the Square as an add on event in Time Square, helping attract more than 64,000 visitors to the town centre across the weekend.

### Warrington Food and Drink Festival 2025

The first Food and Drink Festival was staged in Bank Park in May. Across two days, visitors enjoyed chef demos, artisan stalls and live entertainment. Businesses from across Warrington took part, with thousands attending. The festival received strong media coverage and showed Warrington can host large-scale food and drink events. Footfall for that weekend was 67,221 - a 16% growth from the previous year.

### Warrington Pride 2025

Pride 2025 was the biggest yet. The parade filled the streets with colour and music, Golden Square hosted live performances, and community groups ran workshops and activities. With a footfall of 37,580, the event drew people from across Warrington and beyond, underlining the town's reputation as a welcoming and inclusive place.

### Warrington Arts Festival 2025

Curated and managed by Culture Warrington, Warrington Arts Festival returned in 2025. Supported by Arts Council England's Place Partnership Fund, Warrington Borough Council and the active involvement of Warrington BID, the festival strengthened its connection to the town centre and local businesses, ensuring it truly reflected and benefited the wider community. The festival evolved into a large-scale celebration for 2025, offering standout moments such as a life-sized knitted house and an unexpected alien encounter. The finale on 26 July welcomed footfall of 42,993 - a 30% increase on the previous year.

### Additional Activity

Alongside events, the BID continued to invest in the environment and safety. Working with Cheshire Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner helped tackle retail crime and anti-social behaviour. Plans for the launch of a Business Crime Reduction Group in 2025 are in place.

In addition, the BID secured £21,222 from the town centre partnership fund. This has been split between VPX, which returns to the town centre in August 2025 with free family sports and wellbeing activities, and providing new festive lighting and trees at Christmas for the next three years.





## Theme Three - Building a supported community of businesses

The BID supports levy payers directly through business support as well through events and marketing.

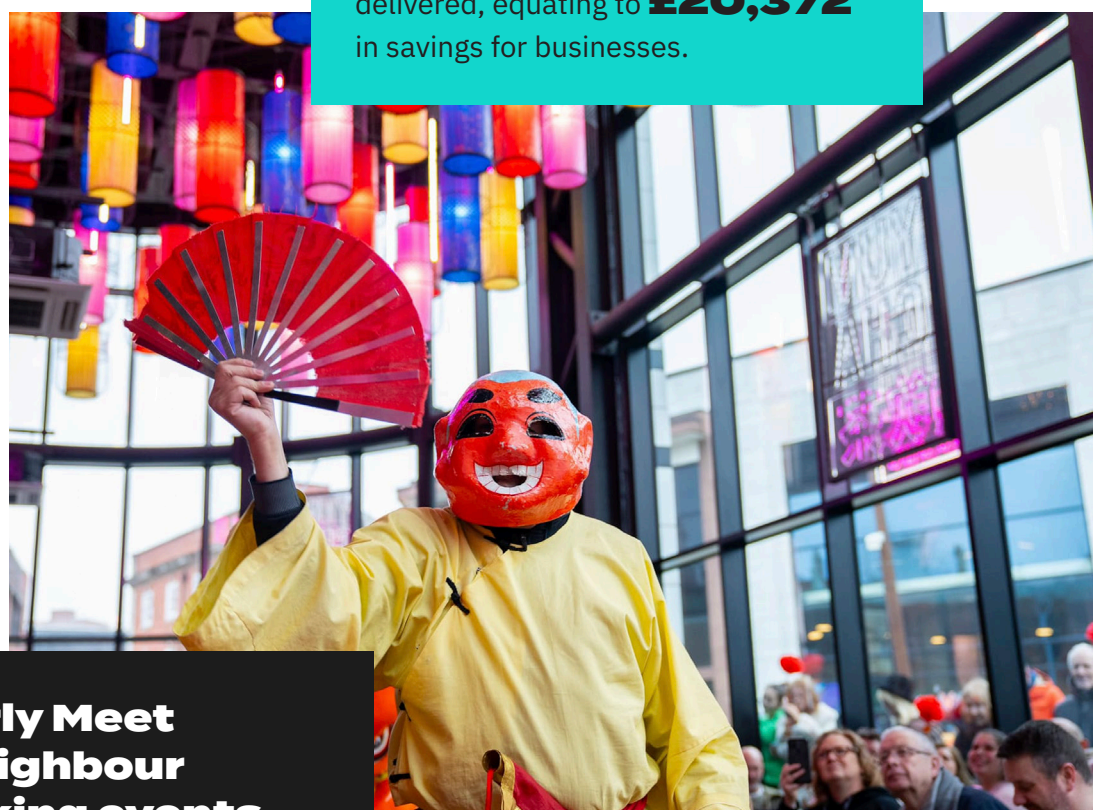


### Accredited training courses

were delivered across first aid, fire safety and workplace health and safety.

**107 delegates** trained in first aid, fire safety and workplace health and safety.

**827 training hours** delivered, equating to **£20,372** in savings for businesses.



### Quarterly Meet Your Neighbour networking events

gave businesses the chance to connect, share ideas and collaborate.



### Through Groundwork's Race to Zero programme and UKSPF funding,

businesses accessed grants to improve energy efficiency.

**Investment in data tools** gave levy payers insights into visitor numbers, patterns and demographics.

### The BID team remained accessible and proactive,

providing one-to-one support and ensuring levy payers had a clear line of contact with the BID team.

### Pubwatch initiatives

Included Ask for Angela and spiking awareness training materials.

### Street Pastors - The BID supports Street Pastors

who spend two to three weekends per month providing a night-time safety offer to NTE visitors. They are a voluntary group with a base on Bridge Street to support anyone feeling vulnerable, at risk or in need on a night out. We support the work they do with free training and funding opportunities.





# Looking ahead to 2025/26

Year three of BID 2 will continue to build on this momentum.

## Theme One - Passionate about our place

- Continue to develop consumer socials and website engagement.
- Implement findings of the feasibility study.
- Enhance PR output to support events, campaigns and town centre promotion.

## Theme Two - Delivering an enhanced experience for consumers and visitors

- Return of The Christmas Light Switch On and associated activity, Pride, Lunar New Year, May Music Month and Warrington Mela.
- Return of the Warrington Food and Drink Festival as an annual event, building on the success of 2025.
- Launch of Warrington Restaurant Week.
- Launch of the Business Crime Reduction Group.
- More accredited training and growth of the Meet Your Neighbour network.
- Use of data and audience insights to shape campaigns and attract new visitors.
- Installation of a new public art mural.
- November 2025 will see the installation of new Christmas lights and trees as part of a three-year contract.

## Theme Three - Building a supported community of businesses

- Pubwatch and NTE initiatives, including Ask for Angela and spiking prevention.
- Training on Martyn’s Law, first aid, fire marshal and mental health first aid.
- Partnership activity with Project Servator and Safer Business Action Week.
- Scam and fraud awareness campaigns with local banks, including the distribution of purse bells and cables.
- Continued collaboration with Street Pastors.



# Finances

## Income

BID Income	August 2024 - July 2025 - BID2 Year 2
BID Levy Income	£200,000.00
Other Income	£41,799.00
Warrington Town Centre Partnership	£21,222.00
Voluntary Levy Income	£70.00
Bank Interest	£1,276.00
Total Income	£264,367.00

## Expenditure

BID Expenditure	August 2024 - July 2025 - BID2 Year 2
Theme One - Passionate About Our Place	£79,322.00
Theme Two - Delivering an Enhanced Experience	£117,936.00
Theme Three - Building a Supported Community of Businesses	£31,431.00
Procurement and BID Project Management	£18,375.00
Administration Costs	£2,167.00
Other (including BID Levy Collection Costs)	£12,251.00
Total Expenditure	£261,482.00
Provisions to Complete Projects	(£320)
Surplus brought forward	£150,845.00
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	£2,565.00
Surplus for Future BID Activities	£153,410.00

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## **Contact**

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