



BID LEAMINGTON 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

CREATE



SUPPORT



INSPIRE



COLLABORATE



WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

FOREWORD: CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to this year's **BID Annual Report** for the year July 2020 – June 2021. As highlighted within, this report **reflects on a year like no other**. It is a year that has seen every aspect of our way of life and doing business change, and accordingly many aspects of BID activities changed. This report has changed a little as well – condensed to focus on **our response to date and future plans**.

Reflecting on this year, we feel an overwhelming sense of **gratitude**, so we wish to **thank you dearly** – the business owners, managers and staff of our town centre. Your **support, resilience, creativity, adaptability, care and innovation** has been inspiring – and at a time when we really needed to **come together to help and inspire** each other, **we did**. Alongside this, we also know there have been lots of long hours, diverse **challenges remain**, and that no one is immune, so we continue to **stand by to help** in any way we can.

This year, we continued to deliver against our four pillars, including **Promoting, Enhancing, Supporting and Influencing**. However, the balance of time and investment in these areas changed. Also, in many ways **creativity and collaboration** between businesses and town centre partners, rose even higher up the agenda.

Supporting our members became our **number one priority** – and this took on many forms as we responded to Covid. We delivered **regular updates** aimed at translating complicated guidance via **email and various digital hubs**, and provided many businesses with immediate **financial, legal, HR** and other kinds of **advice and resources**.

Influencing gained importance, as we played a **key role in lobbying nationally for additional support**, and supported the **swift distribution of grants** with partners.

With doors closed and few events, promoting focused on the **digital space** to help drive online visits. Then when our town was open again, this turned to **enhancing** our environment which meant **building customer confidence** and making our town and its businesses **safe and attractive** to visitors. Our **creative and empathic approach** to this **made national headlines** and all of **this work is ongoing**.

Reflecting on the **complex path forwards**, there is much to be **positive and hopeful** about, including new planned investments and an array of events over the **summer and into 2022**, when Royal Leamington Spa will become a **host venue for the Commonwealth Games**. Alongside this, some sectors and businesses face clear **financial and structural challenges**, so working closely with the BID Board, we will continue to **proactively respond** to your business needs.

Together, this calls for **empathic and informed leadership, and inspiration** which your BID team can provide. This might be through **offering critical support right now to attracting new investment, guiding strategic change or inspiring each other**. Inviting our community out of ‘bubbles’ and helping them to **remain ‘connected’ to the heart of our town** has never been more important. This is what **#LoveLeamington** is all about.

We thank you **wholeheartedly for your support** in these challenging times, and encourage you to **please stay in touch**, as we support our town centre to **open, adapt and thrive** in the year ahead.

Thank You!

Sarah Horne
Chair - BID Leamington.
Owner, Sarah Horne Flowers



Stephanie Kerr
Executive Director,
BID Leamington



“*This Annual Report is a brief showcase of what we have delivered and our plans for the coming year. We thank you for everything you do that contributes to our fantastic town centre. We will do everything possible to support that.*”

SUPPORTING YOU, OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Supporting businesses in our town centre has long been central to our offer, though in the past year this was amplified and diversified. Supporting you - the town's businesses, became our most important priority. Moving forward, we will continue to create and deliver practical and innovative solutions to help businesses thrive.

Key highlights

Supporting Strategic Partners

- ✿ We continue to support our Local Authority with a **speedy grant process**, helping them (Warwick District Council) become one of the fastest authorities in the country to distribute funds.

Directing Grant Funding

- ✿ Helped businesses to access grant funding, that they may not otherwise have received. The value of this extends to **hundreds of thousands** of pounds.

Keeping You Updated

- ✿ Provided regular helpful Covid email updates. This included **business critical information** and **advice**. This is then posted on our website and in our Facebook Retailer Group. We have subsequently received many emails of thanks.

Practical Business Support

- ✿ Bespoke professional support is available to businesses and many have benefited. This includes **HR, legal, financial** and **property advice**. Relationships with existing businesses meant we gratefully offer much of this at no cost.

More Hospitality Sector Support

- ✿ We continue to **advocate for pavement licencing** to be easier, particularly in respect to the highway, and want to see rights for pubs, cafes and restaurants to operate as a takeaway maintained.

Your Wellbeing

- ✿ We've arranged **health and wellbeing** support for business owners and staff.

Pavement Licencing

- ✿ Created bespoke guidance and have **supported many applications** and Council negotiations with input, advice, drawings and print.



Lobbying for Support

- ✿ We regularly meet with our MP and local leaders. We've also contributed to and supported national lobbying efforts such as **'Raise the Bar'** and **'Bounce Back Better'** developed with thanks by Croydon BID. This led to grants of £10,000 and £25,000 for relevant businesses.

Media Coverage

- ✿ We issue **regular press releases** to highlight businesses challenges, showcase activities and generate loyalty. In the past year there have been monthly headlines.

Additional Financial Support

- ✿ We understand the financial challenges facing businesses and **continue to lobby** for additional support such as continued 100% rates relief (for hospitality and retail) and VAT reductions (for hospitality). Please do not hesitate to get in touch about your BID levy invoices also.

Bespoke Training and Help

- ✿ Bespoke **training and advice** in areas such as social media, mental and physical first aid training, marketing, security and more.



KEEPING OUR CUSTOMERS ENGAGED

Showcasing the Royal Leamington Spa brand and the local business offer went in a different direction and was of critical significance this year. With events cancelled and doors closed, our energy went into adapting our well-established digital space. Then, when doors opened again we responded, and came up with creative ways to invite customers back and build trust and confidence.

Key highlights

Creative and Powerful Campaigns

Our creative Covid safe campaigns have reached thousands, raised awareness, **attracted customers** and **inspired confidence, kindness** and **loyalty**. We deliver these online, on the radio, in papers and magazines, and in town. Some of our favourites are:

- ✿ **Spa Stars:** Over **800 nominations** for 250 local people. These were printed and installed in town.
- ✿ **NHS Angel Wings:** Two sets located in town, invited people to **share their love** for the NHS.
- ✿ **Pumpkin Path:** Featured 52 local businesses. We received **348 entries** – an increase of 160% on the prior year.
- ✿ **Santa's Post Box:** This fabulous postbox attracted overwhelming support from both children and adults. We **received 2,766** beautiful, heart-warming letters!
- ✿ **Online Competitions & Trails:** Love Leam month (February), Mother's Day (March), Easter (April) all provided opportunities for online competitions, egg hunt and trails.

Inspiring Videos Showcasing Businesses

- ✿ Our **'We will be Back'** campaign video has been viewed over 4,300 times and **reached 6,450 people**. Inspiring hope, it showcases local businesses and proudly displays hero shots of Leamington.

Fabulous Photos & Imagery

- ✿ Once again, we have a photographer and videographer out and about **capturing our beautiful town** and its businesses. Photos are provided back and used in our marketing.

Brand & Strategy Refresh

- ✿ Over 10 years we have developed a strong brand that we are proud of. However, this needs a refresh to become more powerful and reflect the changing digital space, so an exciting new **creative and digital media strategy** will launch in the coming year.

Our Websites!

- ✿ LoveLeamington.com was a website we hastily created to provide up-to-date Covid specific business information to the community, alongside our existing **royal-leamington-spa.co.uk** and **TasteLeamington.com** sites. Looking forward, **royal-leamington-spa.co.uk** is going to get a dramatic refresh.

Communications - Working with Local Businesses

- ✿ Around 25-30 marketing and promotions emails were sent to up to 400 businesses **inviting involvement** in the Little Book of Offers, Eat Out Help Out, Food Fest, Mothers Day, Easter, Pumpkin Path, Christmas and more.

Offers and Guides

- ✿ A smaller Little Book of Offers included **63 members' businesses** and reached 3,000 people. Offers were also available online. A new Taste Leamington and Visitor Guide has recently gone to print ready for the summer opening.

Creative Digital Marketing

- ✿ We have responded creatively to Covid with 17 different, **fun and helpful** sets of digital media. These were viewed by **25,000 followers** across our platforms and were targeted towards different seasons and customer needs. There is more to come.

Creative Collaborations

- ✿ Funded by the Council and LEP, we supported 'Creative Leamington' who brought **30 vacant units and business windows** to life with artwork from Local Young Talent in the LYT Festival. This collaboration between independent business owners, the College, University and young creatives tested QR code 'window shopping' and included a town trail, offers and bespoke website.

Events & Festivals

- ✿ We can't wait to see the return of the fabulous events and festivals that **bring our town to life** every summer! Our Food & Drink Festival is once again 'on the menu' along with many other partner-run events that we support in a variety of ways.

Shining a light on your businesses

Numbers of followers & visitors July 2020 – June 2021



561

Instagram Posts



762

Tweets &
748,910 Impressions



20.4%

Increase in Likes
& 2,000+ Posts



31,000+

Views of all our
websites per month

ENHANCING OUR TOWN CENTRE 🍷

A BEAUTIFUL, WELCOMING & MANAGED TOWN CENTRE

Butterflies, bunting and beautiful floral enhancements reflect a year where having an attractive and safe town centre was more important than ever and we even made national headlines! Tapping into the town's floral DNA and capturing local sentiment, we deliver attractive enhancements that help to ensure our town is welcoming, safe, vibrant and actively managed. Our approach to tactical placemaking is featured online by the UK High Streets Task Force.



Key highlights

Flowers, Flags, Banners & Bunting

✿ In addition to our **250 beautiful floral baskets** throughout the town, giant flowers are festooned across the streets each summer. Also EU funded lamp post banners, flags and bunting have been installed to **welcome customers**, foster loyalty, enliven and brighten spaces.

Floral Pavement Stickers

✿ Around 800+ floral social distancing pavement stickers (EU funded) have been supplied to member businesses and installed around town. The idea was warmly embraced and made **national** and even **international headlines**.

Posters & Window Stickers

✿ We distributed **300 Covid-safe** posters (3 x designs), **Shop Local** window stickers (3 x designs) and **Spa Stars** window decoration stickers at Christmas. This helped to provide **consistent messaging** and greater overall impact.

Leamington Butterflies

✿ Our beautiful butterflies flew out to **welcome customers back**, supporting them with information about local businesses and parking.

Bollard Covers, Planters +

✿ Over **100 bollard covers** (EU Funded) with key information were deployed and where possible we substituted cones with **planters**, decorated street furniture (e.g. Christmas train) and sign-posted businesses beyond the road closures.

Christmas Lights

✿ Once again **wowed residents and visitors** with Christmas lights jointly funded and delivered by BID Leamington in partnership with the Leamington Town Council and Warwick District Council.

Maps, Guides & Visitor Support

✿ After a pause in production throughout Covid, our maps and guides are **back in print** to support our visitor economy. These go alongside digital listings online. We continue to **support local stakeholders** such as the Leamington History Group, Shop Mobility Scheme, Tourist Information and other groups who provide tours and visitor services.

SHOP LOCAL

For every £1 spent with a local business, over half circulates back into our town's economy

Royal Leamington Spa

Meaningful Change, Crime & Anti-social Behaviour

✿ The Warwickshire Retail Crime Initiative and Retail Radio Scheme was relaunched along with the **DISC platform** this year and engagement has **substantially increased**. Our working partnership with local charities and Warwickshire Police continues, and we actively monitor antisocial behaviour, crime and begging. As part of our **Meaningful Change** campaign to support vulnerable people, we have **raised over £9,000** for local charities via our contactless donation points.

Town Centre Signage & Wayfinding

✿ We are excited to be supporting the District Council and various partners to deliver **new signage** in our town centre to the **value of £150k**. Funded jointly by CIL and the LEP, it will be delivered before Christmas and in time for the **Commonwealth Games** in July 2022.

A THRIVING CENTRE OF COMMERCE & CREATIVITY

We can't recall a time when it was more important for business owners to have a voice so that their unique needs are understood – and this continues. The BID team have an established and trusted track record of leadership and delivery, both locally and nationally. We provide strategic place leadership, have strong partnerships in place, sit on various boards and working groups to support and amplify our efforts, and ensure we are well-positioned to thrive.

Key highlights

Place Leadership & Strategy

✿ There is so much on the agenda in Leamington Town Centre. Alongside delivering our **Covid Recovery Framework** (please see website for details) there is a long menu of events, projects and investments in progress or planned. This includes the Commonwealth Games 2022 and the Future High Street Fund, of which **Leamington secured £10 million**. We advocate the development of a framework to bring all this thinking and investment together.

Strategic Research & Conversations: The Parade, Mobility, Climate Change...

✿ Ambitions to meet important **sustainable development**, health and well-being, environment, mobility, climate change and air quality goals are being discussed alongside practical, technical, financial and social considerations. To date, we have carried out a variety of **surveys** and see opportunities to improve research, dialogue and for greater business leadership as part of our emerging future agenda. Please let us know if you would like to **play a role**.

Lobbying for Additional Support

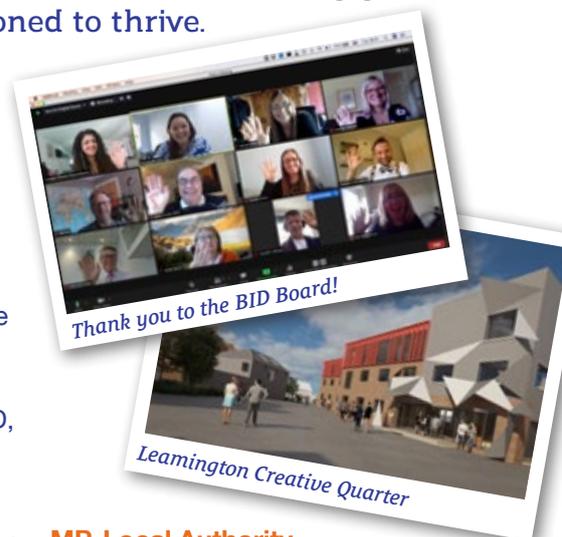
It is safe to say that the majority of support secured for businesses was a result of **hard, persistent and collective lobbying efforts**. This was partnership working at a national scale and it continues. Key lobby efforts included:

✿ **Raise the Bar**: led by Croydon BID, we contributed to letters to senior MPs and backed up efforts by **meeting local MPs** and business leaders, engaging local and regional press, and delivering email and social media campaigns.

✿ **Bounce Back Better** National Campaign supported locally by our **#MakeSomeNoise** for Hospitality Campaign and Video. Released on 17th December, it focused on hospitality businesses that were suffering due to Leamington being in Tier 3.

#MakeSomeNoise Lobby Video

✿ Following the success of our 'We Will be Back' poem and video (5000+ views) the **#MakeSomeNoise** for Hospitality video was **viewed over 4,400 times** across a variety of platforms and reached **24,502 people**. This was instigated by The Drawing Board and a number of local businesses joined in to support with their own. We loved that!



MP, Local Authority Leadership Meetings

✿ We have regular meetings with our MP Matt Weston and Council leaders to **coordinate local activities**. We also have various online conversations with business leaders, including MP Nadhim Zahawi (Minister for Business & Industry and Covid Vaccine Deployment).

Future Leamington and Placemaking Talks

In recent months, we have been asked to reflect on how the town centre is changing and what the future holds. We **delivered two talks** which are available online by Googling:

- ✿ **WDC Spark 2021:** Placemaking in Leamington
- ✿ **Leamington Society:** Re-vision 2021 – Supporting Positive Change in Our Town Centre.

LOCAL EVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRING OUR STRATEGIC INVOLVEMENT

Town Centre Projects - In Progress

- Commonwealth Games 2022
- Signage & Way Finding Improvements (£150k)
- Future High Streets Fund (£10 million+)
- Leamington Creative Quarter Development
- Mill St & other Private Investment
- Coventry City of Culture 2021/2022

Town Centre Projects - Discussion Phase

- Sustainable Transport Network (Cycle)
- Court St Car Park – WDC / CDP Plans
- Bath St Changes – WCC Plans
- The Parade – Early Discussions
- Leamington Lights – Research & Funding Stage
- Leamington High Line / Sky Garden (South Town)
- Covent Garden Car Park – Future

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

A stringent and cautious approach is adopted to managing BID finances to ensure efficient and transparent investment with measurable results. Typically, our budget closely reflects our five-year plan. However this year, as a result of Covid-19, the BID board agreed some changes to reflect current circumstances. Financial performance is monitored throughout the year.

Income – Covid Adjusted Budget

- Anticipating some business difficulties, the cancellation of events, which typically generate significant additional revenue, and grant funding uncertainty, a conservative 70% Covid-19 budget was agreed. BID Levy collection across 349 hereditaments continues, and additional income, has exceeded our revised budget. Any unspent funds will be carried forward to support Covid recovery and actions in the year ahead.

Grant Income & Other Funding

- Beyond our budget, we **attracted £6,000** from the District Council's Covid Support Fund to support our public realm response and a UK BID's support **grant of £15,243**. Alongside this, the EU 'Welcome Back Fund' has **funded £20,000** of enhancements to date. An **additional £50,000** is invested into town centre Christmas Lights by Leamington Town Council and Warwick District Council in line with the BID Leamington Baseline agreement.

Surplus & Levy Payment Terms

- This financial year (Y3) we were able to offer members flexibility in BID levy payment terms. As a result of grant funding and cautious expenditure, we can continue to offer flexible levy payment terms in 2021/2022 (Y4). This includes monthly payment plans and/or a three-month payment deferral (until 1st October 2021). Remaining funds (excluding 5% contingency) are apportioned to the delivery budget for the next financial year.

Additional Value

- Including the public and private sector contributions, a total of £96,132 revenue was raised to invest back into the town centre. This was in addition to the year-to-date BID Levy collected.

Review & Future Plans

- Going forward, a budget is in place to deliver events and promotions and support across the retail and evening economy sectors as well as a robust response to town centre recovery. BID income, expenditure and any write-offs are reviewed by the BID Board of Directors at Board meetings.

ANALYSIS OF BID INCOME: (£ Excl. VAT)	Y2-19/20 Budget	Y3-20/21 Rev. Covid Budget	Y3 Actual YTD	%Variance vs Covid Budget
Total BID Levy Payer Income	301,724	299,804	302,839	1%
BID Levy Payers Income Collected	295,690	209,863	230,759	10%
Voluntary Income - BID Membership	2,000	200	378	89%
Additional Income - WDC, WCC, Other Contributions	2,510	10	25,504	254,939%
Additional Income - Events & Sponsorship	35,200	0	250	250%
Subtotal	39,710	210	26,132	35%
TOTAL Income	335,400	210,073	256,891	22%
ANALYSIS OF BID EXPENDITURE (£ Ex VAT)	Y2-19/20 Budget	Y3-20/21 Rev. Covid Budget	Y3 Actual YTD	%Variance vs Covid Budget
Marketing, Promotions & Events	160,533	63,633	65,363	3%
Enhancing the Experience inc Lights, Baskets, Way Finding, WIFI	64,553	59,553	64,949	9%
Supporting Business	22,353	14,803	14,457	-2%
Influencing and Inspiring	15,527	14,527	14,212	-2%
Management & Operational Costs	46,992	45,792	41,027	-10%
Levy Collection (rate is lower than industry standard)	8,500	8,500	8,500	0%
Contingency 5% of budgeted income (as per industry guidance)	16,770	Brought forward from 2019 Y2 (please see notes)		
TOTAL Expenditure	335,228	206,809	208,508	1%
Surplus/Reserves to be brought forward in coming year	171	3,264	48,383	1,382%
Additional committed town centre income to support 'Enhancing the Experience' as per the Baseline Agreement	50,000	50,000	50,000	
Welcome Back Fund Investment - via WDC			20,000	
TOTAL Income available to support our Town Centre	385,400	260,073	326,891	

Notes

- In accordance with industry guidance, a contingency provision on expenditure of 5% has been applied to the budget and set aside from Year 2 reserves, in a contingency account.
- Operating costs includes premises and rent, professional and legal fees, BID levy collection fees, and management costs. Collection costs equate to £24 per unit, which is well below acceptable industry criteria (£35/unit).
- Management costs within the budget cover two full-time-equivalent posts. Given that the majority of BID projects are delivered in-house 70% of the Director budget and 80% of the Project Management budget has been proportioned into the delivery budget. This is split across project areas and the remaining is accounted for within management.
- Future expenditure is anticipated to be in line with the Year 2 budget.
- Christmas Lights expenditure is supplemented by income from Warwick District Council and the Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, as per the service level agreement. The contribution by the respective parties is as follows: BID Leamington £20,000, Town Council £20,000 and Warwick District Council £30,000.
- Actual figures are unaudited and correct at the time of going to print. Full audited accounts will be available at the end of the year.

WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR TOWN

BID Leamington is a Business Improvement District (BID) created by local businesses to support businesses in the town centre, and to help create a thriving business environment. The not-for-profit BID company is run by a representative Board of Directors, who oversee a small team that delivers projects and services funded by pooling BID levy contributions from businesses within the BID area with an RV of £15,000 and above.

This year (July 20 - June 21) is the third in the BID's five-year term (2018-2023) and the most challenging since it was established in 2008. Representing and supporting our 350 levy paying businesses, developing partnerships, influencing change and meeting local challenges with a focused and committed delivery body, has been needed more than ever before.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our work in the past year.

This includes the BID Board, all of our member businesses, and so many other partners and stakeholders, who have reached out to help during this challenging year.



We're doing our bit for the environment by reducing the length of this year's Annual Report - but we don't want you to miss out on seeing images of all our great businesses and projects, so head over to the BID Leamington website for our Visual Showcase and Covid Recovery Strategy!

WEBSITES

www.bidleamington.com
www.royal-leamington-spa.co.uk
www.tasteleamington.com
www.leamingtonfoodfestival.co.uk
www.leamingtonlanternparade.co.uk
www.loveleamington.com



YOUR BID SUPPORTING YOU

Executive Director: Stephanie Kerr
BID Project Manager: Alison Shaw
Office telephone: 01926 470 634
Email: info@bidleamington.com

 Royal Leamington Spa Town Centre
Leamington Food & Drink Festival
BID Leamington

 @LeamingtonGuide
@TasteLeamington

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