

Northampton Town Centre BID – Activities since March 2020

We have summarised the activities the Northampton Town Centre BID and their BID management company pfb UK Ltd have undertaken during the period of Covid lockdown and recovery to ensure that ongoing support and guidance has been available for all businesses in the BID area

During Lockdown

Mark Mullen, BID Operations Manager, has assisted businesses with their grant funding applications – chasing the council on their behalf and providing Business Rate reference numbers where required.

Business support

£35 million was distributed through grants to more than 2900 businesses

The BID has provided a tremendous amount of support to businesses over the last four months to assist with the continuation of their operations and give guidance where possible.

Actions we have undertaken are as follows.

- Individual support to more than 200 Businesses within the application process.
- The BID has given support for businesses in applying for their **grants** via Northampton Borough Council
- Other **funding options** available to businesses have also been communicated via ebulletins
- Provided regular updates and guidance on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.



Working with member associations to lobby Government on behalf of BIDs

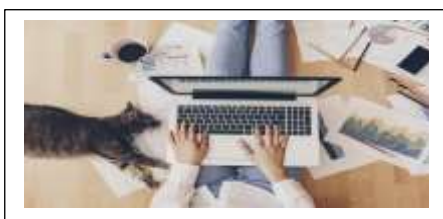
We undertook the following activities to ensure that BIDs were considered by the Government for ongoing support during the pandemic.

- Letters were sent to our local MPs requesting support from the Government for BIDs
- Liaison with Policy Advisers in MHCLG and dialogue with BID Industry representatives who have been having direct contact with Ministers and policy advisors, on the challenges facing BID's in respect of those coming towards the end of their current life and the issues surrounding revenue from levy bills
- Promotion of the 'Raise the Bar' campaign, lobbying the Government to increase support for businesses with a rateable value of more than £51k



Working with the BID Industry Bodies

Our BID Management Company have been providing, supporting and reviewing the latest advice and guidelines on a daily basis, liaising with the BID Foundation, Institute of Place Management (IPM) and Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) to ensure compliance. We have also been closely monitoring what BIDs elsewhere are introducing to ensure that we incorporate best practice.



BID Team - Home Working

Upgrades were made to our IT to allow us to work remotely throughout lockdown providing support and guidance. We were able to maintain contact with Partners remotely and meetings were held via ZOOM. This currently remains the case and no meetings are being conducted in person.



A **Covid-19 page** has been set up on the **BID website** – this contains the latest information and grants and links to sites such as Gov.uk, Public Health, Federation of Small Businesses etc. This is being updated whenever official announcements are made to ensure all the information is as up to date as possible.

Business communications

The BID has been publishing ongoing communications during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Providing regular information to assist businesses with all aspects of help available to them and all the latest government guidance.

The BID Team has coordinated a wealth of material for businesses

- **Regular ebulletins** have been sent out providing advice and useful information, including links to the latest Government guidance.
- Ebulletins for **Retailers, Hospitality sector, Hair Salons and Barbers, Beauty services and Tattoo Parlours and Gyms and Sports** venues have been sent out offering guidance for reopening, in line with opening dates announced by the government.
- Posts on **social media** have continued with a mixture of advice, promotion and information for businesses and members of the public
- A **social media campaign**, to highlight business stories and share COVID-19 news and announcements. A new Facebook group **#PayItForwardNN** – to act as an online business support hub
- Mark Mullen has spoken on **BBC Radio Northampton** on behalf of BID to discuss the impact of COVID-19 and what the BID are doing to support.
- Multiple **press releases** have been drafted and released advising on BID activities and support.
- We have held **sector specific webinars** to guide businesses through the recovery to return to work



A **new-look BID website** has been launched which includes a detailed COVID-19 information and advice page for both businesses and visitors, a **directory listing business** as they reopen and promotion of the Eat Out scheme.





We have compiled a **Business Support Guide**, updated regularly containing all the latest advice and information plus useful links, updated each time there is further guidance and sent out to businesses in the ebulletins as well as being available on the BID website.

The BID has hosted a series of **COVID-19 business support and coaching webinars**, in partnership with town centre business Beyond Theory

Specific advice for hospitality and evening and night-time economy businesses has been sent out and posted on the website. A dedicated webinar for this sector was held by the BID on 2 July ahead of re-opening.



A **dedicated Facebook Group** for ley-paying businesses has been set up to encourage communication between businesses and to promote opportunities to work together.

Several webinars by The University of Northampton were communicated to Businesses via the ebulletins, helping to upskill staff and provide advice to proprietors.

A guide to help businesses get the most out of their Social Media Channels was provided via ebulletins and the BID website.

The BID also compiled information regarding contactless payment systems to assist businesses with implementing changes if they did not already have these systems in place.



Northampton Town Taskforce & Reopening the Town Centre

The BID has been working closely with Northampton Borough Council and Northants County Council and other partners to ensure that the Town Centre is safe for all visitors and workers to return to as lockdown eases. Here is a breakdown of all the actions and activities undertaken by the BID to help the recovery of the area.



Mark Mullen, Our BID Operations Manager, is working with Northampton Borough Council and Northants County Council, alongside partners as part of the Northampton Town Centre Taskforce. The BID has led the Town Centre Task Force and the meetings are chaired by Ian Ferguson, Strategic Director Pfb, BID project management.

As part of the **Phase 1** re-opening of the town centre workstream the BID has worked to introduce a variety of measures in the town centre including:

- Identification of pinch points and hot spot locations re. social distancing
- Installation of 7 x sanitisation stations
- Additional cleansing
- Traffic Management in hotspot locations
- Guidance signage in line with Government regulations
- Working with businesses on queue management and use

- **Phase 2** of the works as part of re-opening the town centre have commenced. There are four key aspects to this, as follows:

- Co-ordinated communications to increase confidence and promote visits to the town centre, WHILST MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING
- Management of outdoor space, including street cafes and potential temporary seating areas
- Promotion of an industry standard, beyond the Government COVID-19 Secure certification
- Vibrancy of the town centre

Parking bays have been suspended along St Giles street following discussions with businesses to support food and drink venues with extending food prints to allow more converts. Costs of pavement licenses have also been waived by NBC.

Northampton Town Centre BID are an active member of the **Northampton Forward Board** providing business representation within considerations to deliver the Mater Plan.



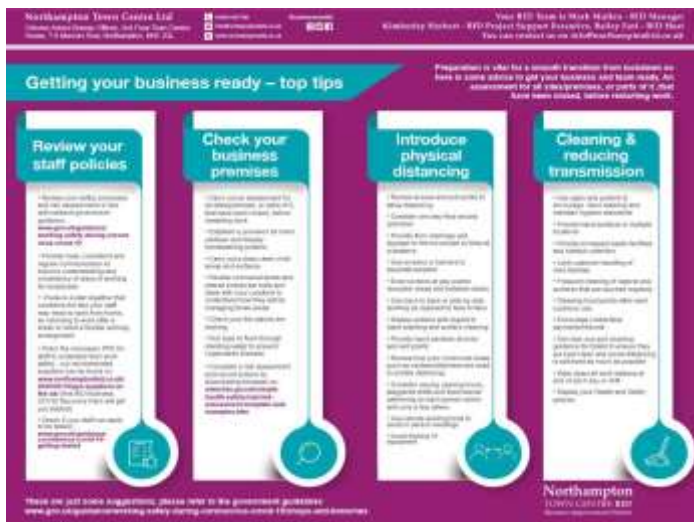
Northampton Town Centre BID Hosts

Kimberley Herbert Project Support Executive and Bailey Earl Town Centre Host, have returned since lockdown, providing a **daily patrol** of the BID areas, external **security checks** on premises and **liaising with businesses** in person and via telephone and social media.

Now lockdown has eased the Hosts are working 8.45 am – 5.15pm Monday- Saturday to cover the busiest periods of the day, to support those businesses that are open and to liaise with the public.



- Hosts are communicating/liasing with businesses via phone, email, and social media
- Hosts are directly posting on social media via Instagram
- The Host risk assessments have been amended for the current situation in consultation with the Hosts and they have been provided with guidelines regarding social distancing during COVID-19
- Hosts have been provided with PPE including face coverings, hand sanitiser, and gloves for use where appropriate
- Hosts are liaising weekly with Police, and partners to ensure safe operations on the streets
- Hosts have coordinated and led the distribution of Covid Business Recovery Packs to businesses



COVID-19 Business Recovery support packs have been produced and are currently being delivered to businesses by the Hosts.

We have received an excellent response to this scheme and so far, approx. 281 packs have been delivered with more to follow.

The packs contain the following items which have enabled businesses to open with the correct measures in place to make their premises safe for visitors and staff alike.



Business Recovery Starter Pack Contents

- 3 x social distancing floor graphics
- 1 x business compliance poster
- 1 x social distancing poster
- 1 x roll of social distancing tape
- 1 x 500ml bottle of hand sanitiser
- Newsletter filled with guidance and information



In addition to the Business Recovery Packs, **free face masks** have been given to customer-facing BID businesses in retail outlets where masks are now mandatory.

Our short-term initiative is to bridge the gap until members of the public become more used to providing their own coverings. We always urge people to wear reusable masks where possible.

170 boxes have been given out so far.

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Getting ready for reopening: Northampton Town Centre BID gives starter packs to independent shops

Non-essential shops are allowed to reopen from Monday

By Reporter
PAUL GILLMAN, JAMES GILLMAN

Business COVID recovery starter packs are being delivered to businesses by the Northampton town centre Business Improvement District (BID) team ahead of the reopening of shops on Monday, June 15.

More than 80 businesses have already requested the BID's Business COVID Recovery Starter Packs, which contain social distancing floor graphics, tape and a window poster, a business compliance poster and bottle of hand sanitiser.

The BID's Project Support Executive Kimberley Herbert, and the BID's Host Bailey Earl have been out and about safely delivering the packs – each one designed help businesses to manage the risk associated with COVID-19 and prepare for reopening.

Northampton Chron @ChronandEcho · 23h
12,000 face masks to be handed out to Northampton town centre businesses

12,000 face masks to be handed out to Northampton town centre busin...
Northampton town centre businesses will be given free packs of face masks for their customers
northamptonchron.co.uk

Business Improvement District (BID) levy paying shops and retailers have so-far been given 4,300 free masks.

It comes as face coverings have become mandatory in shops and supermarkets across England since Friday.

Northampton town centre Business Improvement District (BID) is aiming to distribute 12,500 disposable masks to 250 customer-facing businesses in total.

Crime and safety

During the lockdown period the BID have liaised with the police and other agencies to monitor crime and safety in the area. The BID team have also been communicating with businesses in the area to help them put the correct measures and PPE in place for returning to work.

- Daily patrols performed by the Hosts with security checks on premises in the area and reporting any issues to proprietors.
- Business crime updates have been included in the ebulletins and are available to view on the COVID-19 page on the BID website
- The BID's Northampton Town Anti-Social Behaviour Reporting Scheme (NTARS), is a bespoke programme designed to enable Northampton town centre levy paying businesses to collate and share intelligence on anti-social behaviour and 'low level crime'.
- The BID Operations Manager is in regular contact with Northamptonshire Police to ascertain what the police presence is in the town centre and what contingency plans are in place
- The BID has confirmed with NBC the latest on CCTV monitoring times and additional locations
- The option for additional security was fully researched – thankfully, however, the level of crime during the lockdown period did not increase significantly and this was deemed not necessary.
- An ebulletin that listed several local and national PPE suppliers was communicated to businesses to aid them in preparing their business for reopening safely.
- Daily briefings with the Police and other partners



Future Planning

Ongoing COVID guidelines restrict the ability for provide physical events and activities.

The BID focus is now based upon enhancing and providing additional Floral displays, Street cleansing, Lighting, Police resource and additional Host presence to improve the Town Centre experience.

Footfall remains 40% lower than prior to COVID and these projects will support the ability to promote a public message of "Safe and Clean" to encourage visitors and consumers to return.

Current promotions are in support of the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme and our Business Hero's campaign, celebrating individual and business achievements throughout the COVID outbreak.

Health & Wellbeing

The coronavirus outbreak has been an unprecedented time for everyone. The measures we must take to limit the spread of the virus has led to big changes to the way we live our lives. The BID has communicated how it is important you look after your mental health as well as your physical health during this time.

- Tips for those working from home were provided via ebulletins and social media to help people adjust to their new working environment