

Northampton TOWN CENTRE BID

For the businesses by the businesses

Your Business Improvement District

Annual Report 2018/2019

While 2018 has been inspiring and exhilarating, the huge changes in our town centre and consumer behaviour, as well as Brexit uncertainty, has proven tough for Northampton town centre BID businesses.

Despite this, we have had many successes building partnerships with key leaders and organisations, initiating new approaches and delivering recognised projects – read on for a flavour of BID projects undertaken in 2018-19.

Many thanks to our BID directors, who volunteer their time to steer projects and events in line with the business plan objectives voted for by businesses in 2015.

Rob Purdie, BID executive director

DRIVING CHANGE

An unprecedented number of print and broadcast interviews with the BID's executive director at a local, regional and national level has boosted the BID's reputation as an influential organisation which is driving the town centre forward. We have been able to develop much stronger and productive relationships with the media and our many stakeholders as a result.



BUSINESS MIX



Breakdown of sectors in Northampton town centre

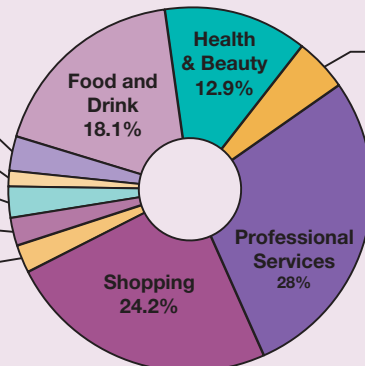
Evening Economy 3%

Culture and Heritage 1.5%

Charity Shops 2.6%

Car Parks 2.7%

Other Businesses 2.4%



Leisure 4.6%



Objective 1 – Promoting the town centre and its businesses

To develop, build awareness and promote locally and regionally the identity of Northampton town centre and the strengths of its business sectors: retail, health and beauty, culture, leisure, and professional services.

BUSINESS CAMPAIGNS AND PROMOTIONS

Discover Northampton town centre Summer magazine

The Discover Northampton town centre A5 Magazine was produced in August 2018, with 30,000 copies circulated to homes in NN1 and NN2.

40 businesses were featured in the Magazine, with 36 of businesses submitting vouchers. The inclusion of special offers and vouchers was a new feature to encourage people to come into the town centre to use the vouchers. Stories were also featured about businesses, events the BID has run and future activities.



Independent Retailers Month - July 2018



This July the BID team visited independently owned businesses in the town centre to take photos or short video clips as part of the #IndieRetail and #ShopLocal campaign to feature and shine the spotlight on independent businesses.

More than 20 businesses have been featured in this campaign.

TOWN CENTRE CONFERENCE

Northampton town centre - Our next steps

More than 150 people gathered at our 'Northampton town centre - Our Next Steps' business conference at the Park Inn Northampton in September 2018, with businesses and residents asking our panel of business, education and council leaders a host of challenging questions.



Subjects discussed included; The University of Northampton, Market Square, Christmas Lights, The Drapery, New Museum, Vulcan Works, The Old Greyfriars bus station site and town centre sites for new homes.

The mood of the event was that it is time to act, to focus on our town centre, to be positive and to move forwards.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Social Media

Throughout 2018 the BID ran several social media campaigns focusing on Small Business Saturday, Independent businesses and Christmas windows.

By the end of 2018 the BID followers has increased to:



4,577 (Up from 4,238 in December 2017)



1,425 (Up from 781 in December 2017)



707 (Up from 336 in December 2017)

Please like and follow us **@NorthamptonBID** so we can share your messages and images.

The BID also sends out weekly ebulletins and quarterly postal newsletters to keep our Businesses informed of activities and opportunities.

Monthly Meetings

2018 saw the BID hold monthly meetings for all businesses to attend with 7.30am and 6pm starts on advertised dates. We would like to thank everyone who attended these meetings.

EVENING ECONOMY AND LEISURE

Purple Flag awarded to Northampton for night time excellence

Northampton is now one of over 70 town and city centres in the UK and Ireland with Purple Flag status - a sought after accreditation for towns and cities that provide a 'entertaining', 'diverse', 'safe' and 'enjoyable' evening and night time economy.



Northampton town centre BID teamed up with the Borough Council to jointly lead the stringent application process, which also involved a huge collaboration of other key partners and businesses including Northamptonshire Police and Northampton Pubwatch.

The Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) awarded Northampton its Purple Flag in May. Comparable to the 'Green Flag' for parks and 'Blue Flag' for beaches, the accreditation promotes our focus on safety and security, and highlights the vibrant mix dining, entertainment and culture in Northampton town centre.

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Mystery Shopping Project and Awards

In Autumn 2018, 45 businesses took part in our second Mystery Shopping award scheme.

Businesses who took part undertook this on a voluntary basis at no additional cost. Five businesses scored 100%, while 23 scored over 90%. An awards presentation was held in November 2018 at The Platform.



Customer Excellence Workshop

In July we teamed up with Northampton town centre-based company Beyond Theory to offer a free Customer Excellence half-day training course. This training fits in with the BID's commitment to build on the strengths of Northampton town centre businesses.

CHRISTMAS

In 2018 the BID's Christmas activities centred on a series of activities designed to raise the profile of Northampton town centre to residents and encourage them to come into the town centre to shop, dine and enjoy.

Discover Northampton town centre Christmas Magazine

Our fifth edition of the Discover Northampton town centre Christmas Magazine was mailed to 30,000 homes and businesses in targeted postcodes in NN3-NN5. The magazine followed on from amended Summer publication format and included business offers and vouchers. It highlighted 56 businesses located in the town centre BID area and included 60 vouchers. The aim was to raise awareness and encourage thousands of people to visit our town centre and explore the festive shopping, food and drink, events, health and beauty options.



Paw Patrol Meet and Greet

In November, the BID arranged for Chase and Marshall from PAW Patrol to visit the town centre.

The duo appeared for four hours at Market Walk Shopping Centre undertaking photos and meet and greets with families. They then joined the Christmas Lights switch-on at 5pm on the Market Square stage.



Footfall on the day showed an increase of around 35% in Market Walk Shopping centre and over 20% overall in the town centre.

Northampton Christmas Prize Draw

In 2018 the BID's Christmas Prize Draw included both online and post box entry options.

Five post boxes were in the Grosvenor Shopping Centre, Market Walk Shopping Centre, Gold Street Mews, The Guildhall One Stop Shop and the Royal & Derngate.



Prize draw entry forms were included on the back page of our new Discover Northampton Christmas magazine, alternatively people could enter online by visiting the BID's website.

Five winners each won one £200 voucher to spend at the town centre business of their choice. While two other winners won prizes donated by the Royal and Derngate and Trapp'd Northampton.

Shop Local this Christmas - November and December

This winter 33 businesses volunteered to be involved in our festive-themed #ShopLocal social media campaign.

Our BID Hosts went out and about taking photos and gathering short video clips of the businesses.



Christmas Windows Competition

This generated a massive buzz on social media and was all about celebrating the efforts of our town centre businesses on their Christmas windows displays - it was the most successful social media campaign the BID has ever run.



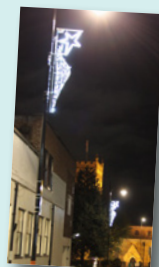
Run in partnership with Northampton Chronicle & Echo and via the BID's Facebook page, 2,300 votes were cast for the 38 businesses which registered.

Late Night Shopping and Entertainment

The BID organised two nights of carol singing in the Grosvenor Centre to entertain Christmas shoppers - performances were given by the Royal & Derngate Choir and All Saints Choir.

Lighting up our town at Christmas with Festive Lighting Displays

2017 saw the BID invest in 19 street lamp column motifs placed in roads throughout the town centre that did not have cross street lighting and the lights were again installed in 2018. Streets including College Street, Bradshaw Street, Wellington Street, St Giles Terrace, Guildhall Road and lower Bridge Street were all illuminated in the run up to Christmas.



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Objective 2: Developing the town centre experience

To create a sense of 'place' for visitors and people working in the town centre to enjoy.

CLEAN SAFE AND GREEN

Northampton town centre Tidy Day

Businesses and the BID team came together in April to undertake a clean-up of the town centre, which included litter picking streets and jetties.

Although it is Northampton Borough Council's responsibility to provide town centre cleaning services, the BID strongly believes in direct action and personal responsibility by all of us to support their efforts and keep the town centre clean and tidy.



#ShoePlants community project

Over 40 businesses got involved in the delightful #ShoePlants community project, thanks to the BID's support.

The shoe plant trail was run by St Giles Terrace in Bloom Group as part of preparations for the Northampton's East Midlands in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competition entries, and the fabulous pictures on social media generated a real buzz and sense of pride in our town centre.



Window Vinyl

The BID worked with Northampton Borough Council to install a window vinyl on the former Co-op bank site on Abington Street as part of the #CelebrateNorthampton campaign.

BID Host role

We said goodbye to our Host Matt in July and will be appointing his replacement this year. Meanwhile our remaining Host, Kimberley, has been working hard visiting businesses and supporting with projects. Other elements of her role include working with the police and borough council town centre wardens to report and address anti-social behaviour issues, helping with the street events organised or sponsored by the BID and to promote Northampton town centre to shoppers and visitors. .



From January to December 2018, our BID Host team has:



Reported 422 highways and street cleansing issues to the borough and county council.



Made 5,341 business visits and engagements.



Engaged with 2,323 shoppers and visitors to provide guidance, support or directions.

ACCESS AND PARKING IN TOWN CENTRE

Parking

The BID submitted an official letter to Northamptonshire County Council to object to their proposed car parking changes.

The principal concerns raised by businesses were around the variation to the hours for all time limited pay and display bays, limited waiting bays, loading bays and permit holder bays.

While the council made amendments based on some of the feedback, the proposals still moved forward and were put into place in November.

The BID will continue to lobby partners in respect to town centre parking.



HOSTING AND SUPPORTING TOWN CENTRE EVENTS

Summer Sports Spectacular July 2018

Northampton Street Circus

In May we hosted our second FREE one-day Street Circus, sharing the day with the Royal wedding of Harry and Meghan.

A main stage was held on the Market Square and roaming acts performing up and down Abington Street.

An extra 1,300 people were recorded on the footfall cameras during the day, as compared to the Saturday prior.



Our first BID summer sporting spectacular event was held in July, with a large screen which we installed on the Market Square.

Our village garden was packed with deckchairs for people to watch and enjoy Wimbledon and the British Grand Prix.

A touch-tennis court was enjoyed on the Saturday, so tennis fans and families could have a go at the same time as watching the professionals on the big screen.



Northampton Carnival



June saw the Northampton Carnival travel through the town centre, along St Giles Street and Abington Street. The BID was a sponsor of this event.

Heritage Live Weekend Entertainment

In September 2018 the BID hosted entertainment for one day to coincide with the Heritage Open Days weekend.

The entertainment also commemorated the First World War centenary.

Heritage acts and performances were booked for the day to include the Northampton Concert Band.

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Northampton Music Festival June

The eleventh Northampton Music Festival took place in June, with a Saturday night stage on the Market Square hosted by the University of Northampton and featuring a pop and rock Mozart requiem.



The BID supported the festival, with Sunday's stages on the Market Square, All Saints piazza, Abington Street, Guildhall Courtyard and The Platform (George Row) enticing music lovers into Northampton.

Music filled the air of the town from 12noon to 9pm with The Jets as the lead act of the day.

On the Sunday of the festival (17th June 2018) the four footfall cameras recorded an overall increase of +14.8%, with the Market Square showing an increase of over 69%.



Objective 3 - Business growth and investment

To encourage growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on the strengths of Northampton town centre.

TOWN CENTRE PLANNING AND LOBBYING

Northampton town centre BID has continued to work with Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire Police, property owners and their consultants to express the views and opinions of businesses and advocate the needs and wants of town centre businesses.

During the year the BID has lobbied partners on issues with relation to crime and security, town centre cleanliness, parking and town centre access including wayfinding and signage.

The aim of this is to work with all stakeholders to define, develop and promote the identity of Northampton town centre, to reflect its strengths, characteristics and heritage.

MONITORING

Footfall and Sales Monitor

The BID Retail Sales and Footfall Monitor reports for town centre businesses has been established since December 2016.



The footfall and sales information locally and nationally, enables businesses to compare their own company's performance to that of others in the area and against national trends.

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BID Financials 2018/2019

Businesses in Northampton town centre BID area pay a levy which is used to pay for the projects and services provided by Northampton Town Centre Ltd.

In 2018/19 the BID has worked with a total budget of £312,444 based on levy contribution in 2018/2019.

The following figures show the actual and committed expenditure for the current financial year to 31/03/2019:

Unaudited accounts including estimated accruals as at January 2019

Objective	Actual and Committed Expenditure - £
Objective 1 - Promotion	£109,774
Objective 2 - Experience	£85,777
Objective 3 - Growth and Investment	£29,470
Central Admin & Overheads	£47,774
Levy Collection costs	£9,732
TOTAL	£282,528

The final accounts for 2018/2019 will be prepared in April 2019 and will be available for BID members to review and discuss at the Annual General Meeting on the 26th September 2019.

Plans for 2019

We are looking forward to the year ahead where we will continue to work with key partners to drive projects that are important to BID businesses, ensuring that they receive value for money from their levy payments.

Following the Business Conference in September we announced three focuses for success in 2019-20.

- Getting vacant units back into productive use
- Developing the Market Square
- Building on the town's boot and shoe heritage

Paying Your BID Levy

Every Business in the Northampton town centre BID area is required to pay a levy, which is in addition to Business Rates and needs to be paid separately (regardless of how you pay the Business Rates). Prompt payment will help ensure that the objectives that were voted on in the Business Plan come to fruition. Northampton Borough Council is contracted by Northampton town centre Business Improvement District (BID) to collect the levy on behalf of the BID.

You can pay the levy in the following three ways.

Please always quote your BID account reference. This is a nine-digit number starting with a 7.

- **By debit or credit card** telephone 0845 372 1745 or online www.northampton.gov.uk/payments
- **Online** by creating a new Payee Northampton Borough Council and using the following account details; Barclays Bank, sort code 20-17-19 account number 70509035.

If you have any questions regarding your levy payment, please contact the Business Rates office at Northampton Borough Council.

Telephone 0300 330 7000 (Option 1 for Business Improvement District Levy)

Email: businessrates@northampton.gov.uk

To get more information about how to get involved with BID projects contact the BID team on 01604 837766 or email info@northamptonbid.co.uk

Northampton Town Centre Ltd

Citizens Advice Bureau Offices, 2nd Floor Town Centre House, 7-8 Mercers Row, Northampton NN1 2QL

T 01604 837766

E info@northamptonbid.co.uk

W www.northamptonbid.co.uk

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