



Chair, Discover Halifax

Jason Gregg

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enjoyable visitor experience, two goals at the top of my agenda as Chair, and which will certainly add to the town's overall appeal.

Of course, we're by no means out of the woods yet, and these are still extremely tricky and unpredictable times. We know that the recession and cost of living crisis are making it hard for businesses and their customers, and it could be months before this situation improves. In light of this, we're looking at ways to make our budget go further than ever, using all the insight and data at our disposal and squeezing every last drop out of every penny we spend. Even more than previously, return on investment will be a key factor in our strategies, and we'll focus our attention and resources only on those projects and campaigns that we're confident will make a significant and positive difference.

Overall, we're optimistic. There are strong signs of real recovery: football has steadily returned during 2022 to almost pre-pandemic levels at some key 'indicator' venues in town. Also, encouragingly, within the Woolshops – the venue I've managed for 22 years – there are virtually no empty units. Halifax is performing very well relative to comparable towns in the region and this is a reflection of the strength of the town. Some exciting new developments will only help with this, and they include major upgrades already being made to the bus station, Northgate House and the A629. These, and other improvements, will undoubtedly help make Halifax a better place to do business and provide a more

The last year has seen notable successes for BID, which we'll cover in more detail in this report. Our exciting re-branding as Discover Halifax was one of those successes, as was bringing back in Bloom and winning a Silver Gilt award in the process! We also created an attractive and flexible permanent space for our Hub: an excellent base from which we promote the town and serve its residents and visitors. Right now, we're busy recruiting essential new staff to help us make the most of this superb facility. Our 2022 Christmas campaign was a big hit too, and we invested heavily in our fantastic new festive lighting show that made a big impression on everyone who saw it. The Dragon Trail, Digital Gift Card and use of Welcome Back funding are other obvious and significant recent wins for the town, all of them down to us.

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Thanks, all of you, for your support and hard work to date. Best of luck for the year ahead.

Jason Gregg



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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Discover Halifax Annual Report

2022-23

YOUR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



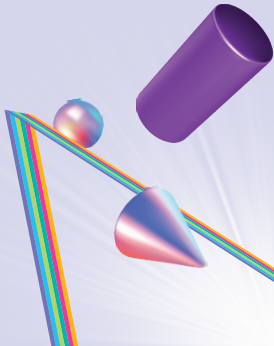
The first year of our second term has been another tough one, coinciding with new and continuing challenges created by an economic context beyond our control. Despite this, we have confronted things head on and responded wisely, enjoying a string of successes too: all cause for long-term optimism.

I would just like to take a moment to thank our former Chair, Leigh-Anne Stradeski. Leigh-Anne did an excellent job of helping to steer BID through the COVID pandemic and its many personal and economic repercussions. Winning a second term was a testimony to her stewardship, and to the skills and hard work of the entire BID team. Together, they won the confidence of enough Halifax businesses to secure this second term, and I'm honoured and delighted to be the new Chair overseeing it.

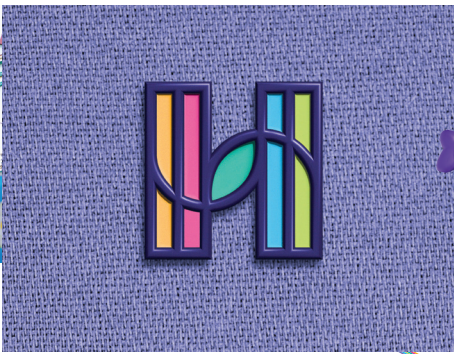


DISCOVERHALIFAX.CO.UK

Your Business Improvement District



Welcome to the Halifax BID Annual Report for 2022-23



Discover Halifax

Marking the progression to our new term of Halifax town centre as a Business Improvement District, we were keen to make a few updates and changes, one of those being our Discover Halifax and Halifax BID branding. You'll have noticed an updated 'H' logo and our teams dressing in more 'business attire' uniforms, we hope you're as happy with these changes as we are. It's all part of our efforts to ensure that Halifax gets the recognition we all know it deserves and to enable us to do our best to promote the town centre in every way possible.

We are using Discover Halifax throughout all publicity materials, avoiding the potential for confusion between Halifax BID and Discover Halifax - they're one and the same - it's still your levy money that's delivering everything!



Discover Halifax Gift Card in Numbers

£35,401
Amount in sales
1418
Cards sold

£7,537
Amount in sales
358
Card sold

ALL TIME

2022/23

Our Highlights

As always, we put a lot of time and consideration into our **communications**. We made great use of our website and social media accounts to share news and updates about events, businesses and community activity. Our team made it their business to keep abreast of what's happening around Halifax, sharing the latest news and events with levy-payers. We also continued with our regular e-newsletters, and produced seasonal magazines and newspapers, for distribution to the public, as well as creating lots of video footage with Leeds TV!

Christmas, as always, is a busy time for all and this year was no exception, with many businesses and customers feeling this was their first Christmas post pandemic and that in itself was something worthy of celebration. Our packed schedule of entertainment, trails and competitions ensured that Halifax was a solid choice for locals and tourists in this festive period, with our traditional favourites of Gifting Trees, painted windows and letters to Santa being complemented with a brand new **Christmas Wish for Halifax** children's story.



The **Discover Halifax Gift Card**, now in its fourth year, has recently had an upgrade, and now has the option of a 'digital card', enabling Apple or Google Pay as an alternative to the traditional swipe cards we're used to. Not only does this enable customers to store their Halifax Gift Card in their digital wallets, it also means that businesses with smaller card machines, with contactless only function, can now engage with the Halifax Gift Card in a way that isn't possible with the physical card.

Discover Halifax reengaged with **In Bloom** for 2022 and were delighted to be awarded not only the Silver Gilt Award level for the town centre floral displays, but an additional discretionary award for Promotion of Tourism. The judges commented on the 'warm welcome' they received in Halifax, and how impressed they were to see the town looking forward with a bright future, whilst also remembering our heritage. The dedication and commitment from the Discover Halifax team was commended. As well as our floral contributions to the town centre, we also supported events such as Jubilee and Pride with suitably themed bunting.



Welcome Back Funding

In early 2022, we were able to access a portion of **Welcome Back Funding**, a government fund made available to support the recovery of our town centres in the aftermath of Covid19. This funding enabled us to add to our usual activity, including the production of additional print materials, such as our Town Centre Pocket Guide, Spring Guide and supporting the Craft Ale Trail map, and jet washing streets and pavements across the BID area.



The **Halifax Heritage Festival** is going from strength to strength, although the sad passing of Her Majesty, The Queen, did result in several of the events having to be postponed at the last minute. As always, we were responsible for coordinating the event and producing the popular **Heritage Newspaper** packed with festival information. Overall, physical participation was as high as we could have hoped for, and feedback from the public has been overwhelmingly positive. As well as Halifax Heritage Festival, Discover Halifax has continued to support a wide range of town centre events, including Calderdale Pride and Halifax Festival of Words and looks forward to continuing to do so in future.

Our investment in the **Discover Halifax Hub** space, creating a permanent space for the promotion of Halifax has been well received by the local community, tourists and businesses. This space is not simply here to promote Halifax and the wider area as a tourist destination, but importantly, to promote the businesses of Halifax. The inclusion of display cabinets allows for businesses to promote their goods and services and digital screens enable vibrant advertising opportunities. The Hub space can also be used for flexible promotional activity and events in future.

In this, our first year of the new BID term, it was crucial for us to invest in new **Festive Lighting** for Halifax, it was a point that was frequently raised on our pre-ballot surveys and a pledge in our BID prospectus. Working with a world renowned festive lighting company, we put together a lighting scheme to complement our many beautiful buildings and show off Halifax in the winter months. In addition to this, we also provided 'mini Christmas tree hanging baskets' to businesses. As a town, we are lucky to be home to a number of heritage buildings, but with those buildings come listings and restrictions, so using flexible lighting methods like these mini Christmas trees has really strengthened our ability to deliver a festive lighting scheme across the town centre.



Unaudited accounts including estimated accruals at January 2023

Levy collected will be spent against projects and activities in line with the BID Business plan objectives.

Halifax BID financial year runs April to March, full audited accounts will be available to BID members at the AGM in July.

COMMITTED EXPENDITURE & ACTUAL BREAKDOWN

59%

Objective 1
Vibrant & promoted
£230,157.22

21%

Objective 2
Welcoming & safe
£83,377.03

04%

Objective 3
A place to grow & invest
£13,754.32

12%

General management
costs & admin
£48,315.22

04%

Levy
Collection
£13,000

Total income
£485,836.81

Total expenses
£388,603.79