

There is no doubt that this year has been the most challenging, unpredictable and exceptional of our first term as Halifax BID and my term as Chair.

The COVID19 pandemic has been an event of global significance and has had an impact on almost every aspect of daily life across the nation. In spite of this, there are reasons to be hopeful when it comes to what's happening in Halifax, and at BID we've been working hard to support the town through these unprecedented challenges.



This has involved responding to the rapidly changing situation, developing and implementing a raft of measures to support the town's economy, businesses and residents, while encouraging visits in ways that are safe and appropriate. Our normal work has continued where possible too, with progress in some exciting projects we're pleased to report on here.



COVID has dominated the period covered by this report and, right since day one, BID has worked strategically, collaboratively and creatively, both to minimise its economic impact in the face of plummeting footfall, but also to keep the public safe. We've devised comprehensive recovery packs and distributed them to many of our businesses to assist with their day-to-day business operations, as well as making even better use of our excellent digital tools like phone apps and social media platforms.

Our strategic partnerships have been more important than ever in enabling us to design and implement a wide-ranging, cohesive recovery plan. We've worked particularly closely with Calderdale Council, CD11, the Town Board, Visit Calderdale and Tourism Recovery, and we've been very quick to act upon the latest information and guidance from central government and experts in public health. Many of our partnerships are stronger than ever now, and that will stand us in good stead for the future.

BID's input into the town's Future High Streets Fund redevelopment project proved highly significant. We used our expertise and

influence not just to strengthen the application for funding, but also to widen the project's impact by making sure that plans for regeneration weren't limited to just one primary location. We also played an instrumental strategic role in the Reopening High Streets Safely initiative, providing invaluable knowledge and expertise in response to the Council's request, and, in the process, further strengthening our partnership.

The work we've done to promote levy payers' businesses has been considerable, especially in light of the restrictions resulting from COVID. Our major Shop Local campaign has been particularly strong, with high-impact advertising and PR delivered through almost every channel, from print ads on the sides of buses through to social media and broadcast TV. Effective communications have been central to our COVID response, and we're proud of our ingenuity here. We quickly developed new ways of communicating and sharing information, such as through our new Facebook community page, to complement the existing approaches that we have always had in place.

The October ballot makes this a crucial year for BID, and its future will depend on our ability to win the hearts and minds of the levy payers we serve. With so much hard work and so many effective initiatives already under our belt, I hope that sharing news about our activities and successes will go a long way to securing the ballot. We'll need to continue our excellent everyday work in the meantime, of course, and that includes the hard work of developing an ambitious yet achievable strategy for the years ahead – something we're busy with right now. COVID has forced all of us to rethink the town's future and how, as BID, we can best help it not just to get back on track but to thrive. The good news is that we're already in a strong position, with the resources, networks and influence to play a key role in the town's immediate recovery and longer-term success.

Of course, none of this work would be possible without the input of the businesses and organisations in our levy district and I know it has been more challenging than ever to remain engaged in this difficult year. On behalf of the board and staff, I would like to say how much we appreciate your continued support and look forward to a successful future.



Leigh-Anne Stradeski
Chair of the Board

Financials

Paying Your BID Levy

Every business in the Halifax BID area is required to pay a levy as well as Business Rates, and the levy needs to be paid separately (regardless of how you pay the Business Rates).

Paying quickly will help us to make sure that the objectives that were voted on in the Business Plan, do in fact come to fruition.

You can pay the levy in the following ways. Please always quote your BID account reference.



BACS, Telephone/Internet Banking

You need to contact your bank to make arrangements to pay this way.

- > Payments should be made to National Westminster Bank PLC.
- > The account to be credited is Calderdale MBC, Head Office Collection Account, Sort code 62:21:45
- > The bank account number should be formatted as 00000000 (eight zeros).

Please make sure that your BID Payment reference number is quoted in full, with no spaces.

Internet by Debit & Credit Card

Pay online, 24 hours per day by debit or credit card at our website: www.calderdale.gov.uk.

Please note that a surcharge will be made for credit card payments. No charge is made for debit card payments.

By Telephone

To use the Council's 24-hour payment line, simply call 0161 627 9915.

Payment by Post

Please make cheques payable to Calderdale MBC and send to Halifax BID Limited, PO Box 51, Halifax, HX1 1TP.

Please write your BID account reference number and property address on the back of the cheque.



Halifax BID Annual Report

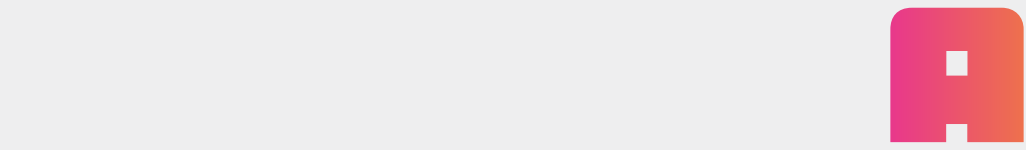
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2020/21
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Welcome to the Halifax BID Annual Report for 2020-21.



Communication

With such a rapidly changing situation, communicating quickly, clearly and regularly with levy payers has been absolutely key to our COVID recovery programme. We made it a priority to share useful information, ideas and guidance whenever we could, including from the Government, using appropriate and safe ‘contact-free’ formats and platforms, from e-newsletters to social media. We also repurposed our website as an information hub and created an all-new community Facebook page too.

Business Promotion

Promoting levy payers’ businesses remains central to our work, and we used a wide range of media to maximise our reach and impact. As well as local and regional press, we worked closer than ever with Leeds TV and Pulse Radio. We advertised in prominent sites too, for example on buses and our digital display at Heron Foods. Crucially, for extra safety we produced a mixture of printed and digital materials, and we’ll be distributing our usual printed promotional booklets again as soon as appropriate.

Gift Card

Our Gift Card scheme is doing well, proving particularly useful as a way for participating retailers to secure business for the town without requiring customers to enter shops during lockdown, or when they’re concerned about safety. At the time of writing, gift cards account for approximately a further £10,000 to be spent in Halifax over the coming months. That’s £10,000 destined for the tills of local businesses.



Relationship Building

Over the last 12 months we’ve worked even closer and more cohesively with key partners, pooling resources and ideas to help create a stronger response to COVID. As well as Calderdale Council, Cultural Destinations, Halifax Town Development Board, Visit Calderdale and Tourism Recovery, we also worked extremely effectively with the Community Safety partners, strengthening our relationships with them all. We take every opportunity to involve levy payers too, inviting them to give us their opinions and feedback as well as become involved in our work.

Christmas

Although COVID restrictions have hit many businesses hard, the impact on the town’s Christmas festivities was actually more limited. The reality is that the BID Christmas programme has never been particularly event-heavy, and this enabled us to run many of the popular seasonal activities that residents have come to expect. While the Christmas Light Switch-on was an obvious casualty of lockdown, we managed to host more festivities than many other BID towns, including favourites like the animatronic reindeers, painted shop windows and some small, outdoor, socially-distanced musical performances.

Heritage Festival

For the sake of safety, the Heritage Festival went online in 2020. We used the well-established LoyalFree app to guide people around virtual heritage trails, taking in some of the town’s most beautiful, iconic and historically significant builds and landmarks. David Glover hosted the event and we publicised it widely using digital platforms, but also through local directories which we knew would reach the older demographic that the event typically appeals to. Our partners at Leeds TV helped increase exposure too, boosting the number of people who enjoyed the festival.



Ambassadors

After careful consideration we decided to furlough our Ambassadors, helping minimise any health risk to them and the wider public, and also ensuring our resources were used as cost-effectively as possible. Ambassadors came back to work from June on reduced hours, and we’ll continue to adapt their hours in response to the changing situation. Ever since COVID struck, our Ambassadors have upheld BID’s commitment to regularly checking the town’s defibrillators, sometimes even voluntarily, in their own time.

LoyalFree

Our LoyalFree app is proving an extremely useful tool for businesses and customers, and we now have 157 businesses signed up to it. The app helps customers find deals, discounts and promotional events around the town centre, and it’s an excellent way for businesses to promote themselves – even at the last minute – using the kind of smartphone technology that we increasingly rely on. Special offers will be particularly attractive to customers on tighter budgets over the coming months, adding to app’s desirability.



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Covid Recovery Packs

Our Recovery Packs were very well received, helping dozens of businesses prepare themselves for COVID restrictions and minimise the impact of restrictions on their everyday operations and monthly turnover. We put a great deal of thought and effort into producing the packs’ contents, consulting the businesses themselves, then using an experienced design team to create effective, high-impact materials for the packs.



Unaudited accounts including estimated accruals as at January 2021

Income	
BID Levy Revenue	£330,502.01
Additional income	£46,437.16
Total income	£376,939.17
Committed Expenditure & Actual	
Objective 1 – Lively & Well Promoted	£110,889.97
Objective 2 – Smart & Attractive	£21,887.19
Objective 3 – Welcoming & Accessible	£46,455.21
Objective 4 – A Great Business & Leisure Offer	£5,496.01
Central Management costs and admin	£15,846.70
Levy Collection	£13,000
Total expenses	£213,575.08

Sentry SIS

Sentry SIS is the town’s new, state-of-the-art security system which enables the sharing of vital data between the Police and BID members. The system is now up and running successfully in Woolshops, and the plan is to roll it out across the whole town centre over the course of the year. It’s an exciting development and should help make Halifax a safer environment for businesses and visitors alike.

Smart & attractive

Inevitably, COVID limited what we could achieve in this area. Even so, we did invest in new Christmas lights for the 2020 festive season, and we also offered to reimburse levy payers for the cost of flower basket hangers if they bought them for their premises. Our new wayfinding maps have been installed, and as well as looking nice in themselves, they will help to guide people around town, making their visit more enjoyable and also increasing the chance of them visiting more businesses.

New technology

We’ve made significant investments in technology, but only after careful consideration and always with a view to maximising the financial return on anything we’ve spent. Footfall data technology has proved invaluable for helping us record and assess pedestrian traffic in different areas of town: data we use for making sure that our planned events, campaigns and initiatives have as much impact as possible.

Combined Digital Stats
(Commencing Mar 2020)

99,259
Pageviews

26,547
New Website Users

12,000
Social Media Engagements

