



## Weymouth BID Annual Report 2017-2018

### CHAIR'S STATEMENT

Welcome to the final annual report of what is commonly referred to as BID 1.

When the new Board came together in January 2018, I don't think any of us understood the challenges that faced us. Sadly the perception of the Weymouth BID had become tarnished and financially was in a deficit. Rather than reflect on the reasons behind this, it is better to focus on what we have done and are doing to correct that position. The financial position was worrying, as it is our role as a Board accountable to the levy payers to make sure that your money is spent in the manner that you expect and that the business runs to a break even position. Sadly we had to make a number of tough decisions regarding people, which was not a reflection of their work or commitment rather the reality of the financial situation. Through that cost cutting we have managed to end the 5 year period with a surplus.

Linked to the cost cutting, was a clear desire from all levy payers to understand where the money had been spent and on what. As a Board, who are all levy payers, we want true visibility and we have tried to provide that. There have been challenges in doing that, but we believe we have provided that.

Events have been a huge part of the expenditure of 'BID 1', and as a Board we recognised very early on that we had to make a fundamental change of perspective, by recognising that we are NOT an events company. Weymouth is blessed with abundance of creative people, who understand their event and market far better than any board. Events such as Fayre in the Square, Beach Volleyball and the Folk Festival demonstrate that. The role of the Weymouth BID is to provide support in delivering those events.

The last area to face the Board was the whole area of Governance. As a Board we have tried to tackle this head on by ensuring that we had an AGM where the Board members were voted for, we ensure that the Board minutes are provided for all to see, and that decision making is clear and transparent. There is more work to be done on this but we are totally focused on ensuring that we are clearly accountable to the levy payers.

This year, as I said earlier saw the end of BID1, the re-ballot. The depth of feeling that the Weymouth BID had created was clear for us all to see. The hard work of the Steering Group and the Board to pull together the business plan and the run the campaign was amazing. The result was obviously both pleasing (people believed in a BID and the new Board), and disappointing (that so many people felt disheartened at best and angry at worse about the BID).

Our challenge as a Board now is to deliver the business plan that we put forward and engage with as many levy payers to ensure that they feel their levy fee is being invested in what we all want – a clean, safe and vibrant Weymouth. The Board are local business people who only desire is to ensure Weymouth continues to evolve and develop. We welcome input and urge people to get involved, whether in creating events, sitting in sub-committees or joining the Board.

On a personal note I would like to thank everyone for their input, thoughts and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Lamb", is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Richard Lamb – Chairman

Created, funded and managed by the business community since 2013, Weymouth BID's vision is for Weymouth to be recognised as one of the UK's premier destinations, which is 'Open for Business' all year round.

There are 7 BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) operational within Dorset, some now in their third 5-year term. They cover Dorchester, Wimborne, Ferndown, Bournemouth Coastal Towns, Bournemouth Town Centre, Poole and, of course, Weymouth. Apart from the three Bournemouth and Poole BIDs, Weymouth BID serves the largest conurbation. We represent over 550 businesses that include national brands and independents in the retail, hospitality, leisure, office and public sector. There are now 290 BIDs in the UK, the first having been established in 2005. BIDs are formed by the local business community to invest in developing projects to enhance the economy.

Following Weymouth BID's 5-year business plan, voted on in 2013, Weymouth BID has continued to focus on the priority areas of:

- **Beating Seasonality in our Town**
- **Improving the Customer Experience**
- **Providing Improved Visitor Information**
- **Attracting New Visitors and Increasing Footfall**
- **Making Weymouth a Safe and Welcoming Town, Day or Night**

Working to benefit your business, Weymouth BID is funded from a levy of 1.5% on businesses with a rateable value of £6,000 or more. This generates an income of just over £300,000 per annum.

## **YEAR 5: THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

### **EVENTS & FESTIVALS**

A fundamental part of the Business Plan was the delivery of additional events and festivals, a proven method of increasing footfall and potential repeat visits.

Over the past 12 months, the events' and festival programme for Weymouth included events organised and managed by the BID team with supporting partners.

FEAST Weymouth, BIG Christmas and Ice Rink, February half term activities, Easter – Roarsome Dino have all contributed to increased footfall from locals and visitors.

For the first time, Weymouth BID organised a '12 Days of Christmas Competition' which helped participating businesses to increase their social media traffic.

In addition, Weymouth BID sponsored other organised events that aided both the building of Weymouth's reputation for its varied events' calendar and the promotion of the 'We Are Weymouth' brand to a wider audience to generate repeat visits out of season.

These included: Fayre in the Square, Weymouth Beach Volleyball, Wessex Folk Festival, Weymouth Fireworks, subsidised New Year's Eve travel.

## **MARKETING & PROMOTION**

Weymouth BID, through the 'We Are Weymouth' brand has, over the past five years, developed an extensive website as well as social media pages that reach out to a national, regional, and local audience. During the year ending December 2017, the website attracted over 1.2 million page views with the average visitor viewing more than 5 pages.

## **OTHER MARKETING INITIATIVES INCLUDE...**

- Supporting the publication of Town Maps, Event Leaflets, Activity Promotion and Visitor Magazines for distribution to hotels, holiday camps and businesses.
- The placement of easy-to-read town maps and event calendars around the area on phone boxes, empty premises and walls.
- Weyfarer volunteers continue to welcome visitors to the town, particularly cruise ship passengers, who are provided with information and maps.
- Developing media agreements with local media covering Dorset and the surrounding counties.
- Regular competitions and video interviews in association with local businesses and local radio stations to promote Weymouth
- Links with key local websites have been established to share data, including Visit-Dorset, the official council tourism website for Dorset.

## **REPRESENTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

The BID continues to meet regularly with other organisations to ensure the business community is represented, and is now established as a consultative organisation with the Police, local authorities and other relevant organisations.

Since January 2018, our Chairman, the BID Board and Chief Operations Officer have been contacting businesses to collect a diverse range of views and suggestions. There have been regular opportunities to discuss BID issues such as coffee sessions and forums.

We have been working with the Town Centre Manager to install hanging baskets, paint street furniture and provide cleaning equipment to volunteer groups. Dorset Waste Partnership have collaborated with us to provide an evening waste collection in the town centre.

## **THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**

The main focus of 2018/19 will be to initiate the BID2 Business Plan and to gain British BID accreditation. The continuous consultation process with levy payers will be a priority over the new BID term.

### BID area zoning

- Zones will be created within the BID area to ensure everyone has a voice and representation.
- A process will be developed for zones to gain project funds for specific investments decided by the zone occupants.

## **BID 2 Objectives**

- ***Improving Weymouth***

Support selected initiatives proposed by the Local Authority, community groups and Town Centre Management team to help deliver enhancements and ongoing maintenance. Work with property owners of vacant premises to identify opportunities for local craftspeople and artists to launch pop-up shop opportunities. Encourage the discovery of the entire BID area by visitors through enhanced availability of Tourist Information. Support initiatives to protect the community at the key gateways and shared public places in the BID area. Support, maintain and develop Purple Flag accreditation for our night time economy. Make the town more accessible and welcoming for people of all abilities through improved facilities. Agree targets every year to decrease anti-social behaviour, theft and damage within the town and work together to achieve this. Become part of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme and help to fund 2 full time officers in association with Dorset Police and the local authority to address anti-social behaviour and homelessness.

- ***Shaping Weymouth***

A strong, unified voice to champion our interests. By collaborating with all local agencies and community groups we will be in a much better position to seek funding in the future.

- ***Marketing Weymouth***

Market the BID area in the right way, to the right people. Review the current strategy and tools. Build a robust brand and marketing strategy. Manage the 'We are Weymouth' website and associated social media within a realistic and appropriate budget. Build annual events plan through coordinating with event organisers. Create marketing solutions that complement and enhance the work of others.

- ***Governance***

Through regular consultation, as well as the formation of expert BID sub-committees, your voice will be heard.

Our commitment to you is to follow our Memorandum and Articles of Association; to change governance arrangements only if absolutely necessary and only then with your permission; to provide full transparency of plans, spend and proposed investments; and provide you with the opportunity to comment and engage with us.

**It's your BID. And we won't forget it.**

## **FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2017/ 18**

The BID financial year runs from 1st September – 31st August each year. A complete set of full accounts for 2017/18 will be available from November 2017.

Monthly Profit and Loss information is available on our website.

### **INCOME**

BID Levy Income	£312, 720.00
Events Income	£160
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£312,880.00</b>

### **EXPENDITURE**

Events and Projects	£106,798.00
Advertising Promotion and Website	£43,130.00
Staff and Outsourcing Costs	£91,634.00
General Office and Administrative Costs	£62,353.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£303.915.00</b>
Balance/Reserve	£8,965.00

More information can be found on the Weymouth BID website [www.weymouthbid.co.uk](http://www.weymouthbid.co.uk)