

Weymouth BID Annual Report 2019-2020

CHAIR'S STATEMENT

We are pleased to present the annual business report for the Weymouth Business Improvement District.

Challenges at a national and local level with reduced consumer confidence and uncertainty as well as changing behaviours and attitudes have been central to much of the work that the board have undertaken over the past 12 months.

This situation was compounded further with the advent of COVID-19 in first half of 2020. We recognise the unprecedented challenges presented to all businesses across the country, throughout Dorset and within Weymouth as well as Weymouth BID itself. We also understood the immediacy and significance of these challenges to all members as the entire country entered a prolonged period of social restrictions and decreased mobility, as a direct result we reduced our immediate and short-term marketing of the town which has resulted in a moderate retained surplus in our accounts. Most companies are likely to be impacted by the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, and the increased economic uncertainty, and the likelihood of long-term implications for many of our members.

We have reviewed our strategy considering the current situation and have found that it is not only still relevant, but even more critical to the success of the town and our members. As always, Weymouth BID continues to act as a strong representative voice for businesses in these times of uncertainty and change. Our volunteer Directors have worked hard with the management team to take the next steps towards delivering against our stated strategy for the benefit of all businesses and levy payers across the area. Our primary focus is to represent our members, to deliver value and support through engagement and appropriate challenge to all stakeholders to ultimately support you with your individual business activities. Delivering our stated strategy and initiatives will be the focus of the board going forward to ensure that we maximise opportunities for all across the town.

There have been many notable achievements throughout the last year with the continuation of existing as well as the introduction of a number of new initiatives. I know that not all levy payers agree with every initiative, the role of the board is simple, it's to listen to the wide range of views from members, influence and make decisions which will benefit the many and not the few and this is a principle that we will uphold. I'm proud that we are at the centre of developments for the town, representing you and your views, and would encourage any members that have a view to actively, and constructively engage with the board to help deliver positive improvements for the town, our town.

The management team have worked hard to maximise the success of each individual program for the benefit of members as part of our broader stated strategy, for their efforts I am thankful.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work closely with our partners at the local authorities, and all other stakeholders to represent and where appropriate challenge and we can only do this with your productive engagement and involvement.

Across the year we have seen a number of changes within the board team and I would like to take this opportunity to formally recognise the efforts of all board members past and present, who devote a considerable amount on un-remunerated time with the sole focus of making a positive difference to the area in which we all operate. I very much look forward to working with the existing board, and I hope more new board members who want to drive positive change for our town, so that we can deliver long term meaningful improvement for all.



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 2018, Weymouth BID has continued to focus on the priority areas of:

- Marketing Weymouth
- Improving Weymouth
- Shaping Weymouth
- Good Governance

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 approx. £300,000 per annum.

YEAR 2: THE PAST 12 MONTHS

MARKETING WEYMOUTH

EVENTS & FESTIVALS

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

- Christmas in the Square event 2019
- CinderTrail throughout the town – a unique series of installations through the town 2019
- Victorian Christmas fair at The Palm House 2019
- Christmas Light switch on and entertainment 2019
- Lions Motocross Event 2019
- NYE fireworks and subsidised bus travel
- Weymouth Witch Hunt 2019
- Halloween Crafts 2019

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Weymouth BID, through the 'We Are Weymouth' brand has, over the past six years, developed an extensive website as well as social media pages that reach out to a national, regional, and local audience.

Other Marketing initiatives included:

- Part funded events and map leaflet with WTC and Weymouth Pavilion
- Accommodation Brochure for visitors
- Cruise ships and Weyfarers – providing guidance for visitors and improving footfall flow
- Dine for Less Promotion with Dorset Echo
- Responding to all tourist information queries via phone, email and letter
- Running a popular website and maintaining an effective social media presence to market Weymouth
- Weymouth Heritage Trail Leaflets
- Providing local information and maps on the main bus stops and seafront drums
- Advertising at South Western Railway stations
- Summer Marketing initiative with local marketing company

- Radio advertising with Global in Bath and Bristol
- Banner to advertise Weymouth on Visit Dorset Site
- The BID COO spent time during lockdown with the Chamber of Commerce President making videos of our local businesses and advertising their “new normal”
- Monster Hero Safari Trail running between July-September 2020
- Totally Locally FiverFest initiative ran in October 2019
- Harbour Media were engaged to video the Christmas and New Year events for marketing purposes.

IMPROVING WEYMOUTH

- Extra Christmas lights for the town were provided by the BID
- Empty shopfronts used for events’ lists and maps
- Golden Broom awards in 2019 celebrated the best of our local businesses
- We published customer survey results in January 2020 to help guide our local businesses
- Weymouth BID helps to fund our Community Safety Officers in the town centre who are doing a marvellous job

SHAPING WEYMOUTH

- The Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project was part funded by the BID and our COO regularly attends the planning meetings - The first part of the project, upgrading Harbour Wall D, is now complete
- Our COO is Vice Chair of the Weymouth Town Centre Management Group
- We received news that our grant application (along with other agencies) to improve the Weymouth Gateway (railway station area) was successful and we provided the team with some funding. Planning is now at consultation stage
- 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.
- We contact 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.
- Weymouth BID is working with various agencies to ensure that Weymouth is a plastic free town by the end of 2020.

- Work with Town Centre Manager, Police and licencing to maintain Purple Flag Accreditation for our night-time economy
- Providing admin support for PubWatch and ShopWatch schemes
- Weymouth BID provided a conduit between levy payers and Dorset Council to ensure that COVID grant payments were made in a timely manner
- The BID provided Weymouth Business Support during COVID-19.
- Lobbying against the sitting-out licence restrictions
- We had the Small Business Saturday Bus Tour in Weymouth for the first time
- The BID lobbied the council to reopen the car parks and public toilets after the main lockdown period

GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Weymouth BID promised to be transparent and honest in all its dealings and we are now on the panel to judge other BIDs accreditation applications
- Our COO attends regular meetings of The BID Foundation which lobbies the government and meets with other UK BIDs to share best practice.
- All financial reports, meeting agendas and minutes are available for anyone to view on our website.

THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

The main focuses of 2020/21 will be:

- Rolling out the hanging baskets to the Park District and Harbourside areas
- Entering Britain in Bloom 2021
- Continuing to collaborate with other agencies to attain grants for our town
- Working with WTC on a lighting scheme for St Alban Street
- Installing our new heritage paving slabs around the town
- Vampire Festival on the Halloween weekend
- A Christmas event that takes into account the “new normal”
- NYE Fireworks
- 3-4 marketing campaigns per year

The continuous consultation process with levy payers will remain a priority over the next BID term.

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

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2019/20

The BID financial year runs from 1st September – 31st August each year. A complete set of full accounts for 2018/19 are available to view on the website.

Monthly Profit and Loss information is available on our website.

INCOME			
BID levy Income			£274,617
Government Coronavirus Grant			£14,500
Total income			£289,117
EXPENDITURE			
Events and Projects			
Improve		£53,375	
Marketing		£87,074	
			£140,449
Advertising Promotion and Website			£33,281
Staff and Outsourcing Costs			£51,067
General Office and Admin Costs			£27,917
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			<u>£252,714</u>
Balance/Reserve			£36,403

More information can be found on the Weymouth BID website www.weymouthbid.co.uk