



## WEYMOUTH'S BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

### Annual Report 2020-2021

#### CHAIR'S STATEMENT

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

2020-2021 has not been without its' challenges at a national and local level with business restrictions due to COVID and the subsequent lockdown measures imposed by Government. We recognise the unprecedented challenges presented to all businesses across the country, but particularly throughout Tourism destinations such as our own here in Weymouth. 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. During the Autumn and Winter months we reduced our immediate and short-term marketing of the town putting all our energy into National campaigns for 2021/2022.

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 newly appointed 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 still to represent our members, delivering our stated strategy and initiatives will be the focus of the board going forward to ensure that we maximise opportunities for across the town.

There have been many notable achievements throughout the last year with the continuation of existing projects as well as the introduction of several new initiatives. I know that not all levy payers agree with every initiative, but 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 can and do represent you and your views and would encourage any members that want to constructively engage with the BID to help deliver positive improvements for our town to get in touch. 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.

I also want to acknowledge the diligence of our small management team who commenced work during January's lockdown and have worked exceptionally hard to market the town nationally as well as build engagement with you as Levy payers. Across 2021/22 our focus is to continue to market the town whilst ensuring we invest in further improvement programmes improving how Weymouth looks and therefore performs economically.

I would like to take this opportunity to formally recognise the efforts of all our board members, who devote a considerable amount of 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 hope that new board members who wish to drive positive change for our town, will offer to volunteer, in order that every sector of our business community is represented and to ensure that we can deliver long term meaningful improvement for all.

Chris Truscott – Chairman

## INFORMATION & FACTS:

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 500 businesses that include national brands and independents in the retail, hospitality, leisure, office and public sector. The total number of BIDs in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, and Ireland now totals 322, which has risen since the last report by 32 new BIDs across the UK, as the business community appreciate the importance of a BID working for them investing 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

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. £280,000 per annum although this has reduced over the past year.

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.

## COVID19:

As with all towns and coastal communities across the UK, COVID has had an impact on business survival as well as the BID's activities. Major industry change brought about by the pandemic have changed our town and coastal community and as a result a very different economy has emerged following the growth of online business, e-commerce, working from home and people's aspirations for a new way of working. We have yet to see the full outcome of some of these changes, but as your BID we are ensuring that we provide leadership in shaping what the future looks like within Weymouth, whilst delivering to the immediate challenges of reopening and recovery.

## YEAR 3: THE PAST 12 MONTHS

### MARKETING WEYMOUTH

A fundamental part of the Business Plan was marketing the town to increase footfall and potential repeat visits. From the moment our new management team commenced in post from January 2021 we implemented a National Marketing strategy with a local PR company to ensure that the town was presented with the best opportunity to recover from COVID 19. We commenced a campaign entitled 'We are Sunshine'. During this time, we saw a 96.72% increase in users to the WAW website. We also ran an initiative to drive cold audiences from Birmingham, Manchester, Kent, Surrey, London, and Bristol to the WeAreWeymouth website with a total reach of 41.4k. During this period, engagement from social media increased by 366.93% and referral from Facebook accounted for 79.8% of the visitors to the WAW website. During the 'We Are Sunshine' campaign, 11 ARTICLES went to print REACHING 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE, with articles in The Daily Star, Sun, Independent, travel magazine, Dorset Echo and more.

#### Other Marketing initiatives included:

- 'We are Open' - celebrating the diversity of our town and promoting each sector as it opened to locals and potential visitors. We initiated a local social media campaign and worked with the Dorset Echo to have an 8-page feature about our local businesses with initiatives to encourage Dorset readers to visit our town.
- 'We are celebrating'- focussing on the Autumn/Winter months, commenced in August, promoting events and initiatives such as romantic getaways, sea-based activities and events such as the forthcoming puppet spectacular arriving in September. You will see plenty of activity on the 'We Are Celebrating' campaign in the ensuing months.
- Developing a Part funded events and map leaflet with WTC and Weymouth Pavilion
- Creating and distributing 25,000 town centre maps for visitor distribution in hotels and shops within the town
- Editing and printing over 500 Accommodation Brochures for potential visitors and in response to the daily visitor enquiries
- Undertaking a secret carnival QR code trail for one week in May, generating 225 unique users visiting various locations spread throughout the town
- Sponsoring the National Volleyball championships, which would not have gone ahead without the support, thus ensuring essential visitors to our town as we came out of lockdown.
- Engaging with the Dorset Volunteer Bureau to be partners in the Dorset Volunteer ambassador scheme, as a Tourism information point for the increased visitor numbers to the town providing guidance for visitors and improving footfall flow.
- Responding to all tourist information queries via phone, email and letter with over 300 enquiries during the first part of the year.
- Implementing and printing a new and improved Heritage Trail Leaflet including the 2021 heritage slab installations
- Promoting 450yr activities and events including press articles and signage in the town.
- Developing a puppet trail in shop windows, featuring service industries and promoting the Inside out 'Dundu' event.
- Partnering with Love Weymouth to improve business listings as well as promote gigs and events from throughout the town via social media and their website.
- Engaging fourth wall to making a superb video of the town now being utilised on our website and for use in the Autumn 'We are Celebrating' campaign.

#### IMPROVING WEYMOUTH

- We installed 6 Heritage slabs celebrating iconic heritage buildings within the town with plans to install 6 more during 2022
- We took part in Britain in Bloom; improving the town's hard surfaces by working with WTC and DC to ensure that attention paid to replacing litter bins, improving litter collection, weeding, painting bus shelters, display boards and railings, as well as increasing the overall attention to the gardens, planting boxes whilst we installed and maintained 311 hanging baskets. As part of Britain in Bloom we worked with local businesses on the determined route to improve empty shop displays and inform us of any areas of neglect in order to rectify it. Celebrating this concerted effort on behalf of the town we actively encouraged media to report on the Britain in Bloom work; with appearances on Greatest hits radio, BBC Solent, Dorset echo with future opportunities for PR in September after the awards ceremony.
- We utilised empty shopfronts used for events' lists and maps as well as history boards signposting to features within the town.

- We have been partly funding Community Safety Officers whose main priorities are to be actively involved in monitoring and supporting the night-time economy. We instigated a meeting, following concerns on ASB, with the Police, CSAS and WTC to ensure your views are not only heard but action is taken by the relevant public sector bodies.
- We successfully installed signage boards at the harbour foot passenger ferryboat crossing as well as at Greenhill gardens
- We are committed to do more with the Purple flag safety initiative, being pivotal in decision-making, ensuring the safety of Weymouth.
- Using our experience and expertise, we have been effectively working with Dorset council to ensure a tourism offer in the town through the summer months in the form of Dorset Volunteer ambassadors enhanced by our Weyfarer volunteer team and providing guidance to ensure that there is a united tourism offer for 2022.

## SHAPING WEYMOUTH

- During COVID restrictions we contacted businesses to collect a diverse range of views and suggestions via email newsletter and survey monkey with in-person meetings by request with individual business owners.
- We have continued to work with Town Centre Manager, Police and licencing to maintain Purple Flag Accreditation for our night-time economy
- We provided a conduit between levy payers and Dorset Council to ensure that COVID grant payments were made in a timely manner and that information regarding grant schemes were disseminated immediately they were available
- We provided Business Updates during COVID-19 about grants, schemes and support, working with the council to encourage the COVID sitting-out licence was adopted throughout the town
- We worked hard to ensure that the government welcome back fund was focussed in Dorset on enhancing Weymouth at such a crucial time for our local economy
- We contacted businesses to ascertain their concerns with regards the Neighbourhood Plan and attended meetings as well as voiced the concerns of the business community on the strategy.
- We actively raised matters regarding the shortcomings of the park and ride, plus raised concerns about the bus services and proposals with regards car parking. As a direct result of this the COO has been invited to be involved in the Parking and Transport Strategy group to ensure that any consultation process is transparent and delivers return for the entire geography of the BID business area.
- Documents were highlighted to levy payers and board members, regarding proposals from Department for Transport and Dorset Council on the local bus services.
- We highlighted Levy payers' frustrations with regards litter collections and maintained pressure to improve waste management services.
- We continue to maintain pressure on governing bodies with regards ASB whilst ensuring that appropriate reporting channels are disseminated to businesses
- The plans for the station gateway have recently been finalised and the COO has continued to sit on the multi-agency committee to ensure that the regeneration of that area is not only sympathetic to the original plans to conserve its green agenda but also impacts on ASB within the Park district area.
- The COO has attended meetings with Weymouth Area Development trust the station team and GWR to highlight the benefits of a CSAS presence at the station with additional information for tourists.
- We continue to meet regularly with other organisations to ensure the business community is represented and is established as a consultative organisation with the Police, local and county authorities and other relevant organisations.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

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

## THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

The main focus will be:

- Driving visitors and locals to the town to enhance the local economy during the autumn and winter months through the campaign 'We Are celebrating'
- 3-4 National marketing campaigns per year to increase revenue to the town.
- Delivering and marketing a series of new and exciting events throughout the town by partnering with Activate, the Ministry of Steampunk, City dressing as well as Weymouth town council, to put Weymouth on the map as a destination for 'staycations' and bring an all-year-round impact to the economy, providing a legacy to build upon for years to come.
- Working with Dorset council and Weymouth town council to ensure the successful completion of 10 large wall arts murals to form a trail across the town
- Entering Britain in Bloom 2022 with the intention of focusing on Radipole gardens, Jubilee sidings, the Railway Station, Kings Street, Park Street and Westham rd. (If the Station Gateway regeneration is completed)
- Continuing to collaborate with other agencies to attain grants for our town.
- Championing levy payer views with local government to ensure that due consideration is given to the impact of decisions for the town and the Business community.
- Ensuring BID presence at regeneration and development local strategy meetings.
- Completing a lighting scheme for St Alban Street.
- Installing more heritage paving slabs around the town.
- Ensuring we build a sustainable economy through events and improvements which provide a legacy for the town, for years to come.
- Fulfilling the obligation from 2019 for NYE Fireworks.

The continuous consultation process with levy payers will remain a priority over the next year, and therefore the team will be delivering a series of larger high-profile meetings, with speakers and experts engaged to answer your questions and share their knowledge and expertise, as well as meet our team in a one-to-one capacity. Meanwhile we will continue to visit areas of the town on a monthly basis in order to meet you on a 1-2-1 basis in person wherever possible.

For communication purposes we have implemented a new CRM to ensure we know who the primary contact is for your business. We want to keep you up to date and included in schemes and communication that are relevant to you and your business, including marketing opportunities and invitations to feedback for your views to be represented in key decisions. If you have not sent us your details, please complete the form attached.

Please note if you have a great idea for promoting your area or sector and wish to champion it then we would love to hear from you.

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

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2020/21 The BID financial year runs from 1st September – 31st August each year. A complete set of full accounts are available to view on the website. The P&L below is unaudited and purely a set of management accounts. The full audited accounts will be made available on the Weymouth BID website once they have been approved by our accountant [www.weymouthbid.co.uk](http://www.weymouthbid.co.uk)

<b>Income</b>	
Levy Income	236,682
Station Gateway Grant	5000
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Improve Projects	33,938
Marketing & Events Projects	53,969
Advertising, PR & Website	16,326
Staff Costs	58,422
General office & admin costs	25,897
<b>Balance / Reserve for the year</b>	53,129



It is important that the BID holds up-to-date information and contact details for businesses in the town. This is to make sure that the BID can deliver services effectively, inform you about opportunities within the town, consult, represent and promote your business and keep you informed on the work your BID is doing.

Your data will be kept in line with our Data Protection Policy, which details how we store and process data. Your information is always kept secure and will never be sold to a third party.

### How to send us your information



#### Online

Visit [www.weareweymouth.co.uk/levydata2021](http://www.weareweymouth.co.uk/levydata2021) - it's quick and easy and takes less than five minutes



#### By post

Complete this form and return it to We Are Weymouth, Pilgrim House, 1 Hope Street, Weymouth, DT4 8TU

Please complete this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS**

ABOUT THE BUSINESS		
Trading name:		
Legal entity:		
Business address: (inc. post code)		
Business email address:		
Business phone number:		
Business type:	Retail / Shop Bar / Nightclub Entertainment Venue Retail Warehouse Attraction/Museum	Café / Restaurant Hotel / Guesthouse Large Foodstore Professional Services Other _____
Operator type:	Independent Chain – National/International	Chain – Local Other

CONTACTS	
<b>PRIMARY CONTACT</b> Name: <input type="text"/> Role: <input type="text"/> Email: <input type="text"/> Phone No: <input type="text"/> Email Preferences: <input type="checkbox"/> BID Newsletter ( ) <input type="checkbox"/> PR Newswire ( )	<b>SECONDARY CONTACT</b> Name: <input type="text"/> Role: <input type="text"/> Email: <input type="text"/> Phone No: <input type="text"/> Email Preferences: <input type="checkbox"/> BID Newsletter ( ) <input type="checkbox"/> PR Newswire ( )

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE BID?				
1	2	3	4	5
Very Unsatisfied				Very Satisfied