

7th August 2020

Dear BID Business

Chester BID – new name, new chair, new board members and new manifesto for Chester

I am writing to introduce myself and to give you some information about how Chester BID – the city's Business Improvement District - will be changing over the next few months

My name is Katrina Kerr and I have just taken over as Chair. I have lived in Chester for over 20 years and between 2013 and 2018, I was Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire. Before that I worked for a number of large communications agencies on a range of global and national clients.

You can check me out here <https://www.linkedin.com/in/katrinakerrmichel/>

Even before the crisis myself and the Board had begun to look at how we ensure we remained relevant to our levy payers and worked more effectively as a force for good in Chester. As we work through the current crisis, I think this is now more imperative than ever.

During lockdown we listened to our businesses and worked closely with the council on the reopening of Chester. We provided free parking by collaborating with the racecourse, we secured extended alfresco dining hours and our #CHESTERTOGETHER campaign has encouraged shoppers back into the city. Our engagement across social media has risen very strongly, and we were able to promote the activities of individual businesses, disseminate information and publicise the key schemes and loans available.

The impacts of the pandemic have been cruel and potentially enduring. Some business will not come back and other need help to re-establish themselves. Consumers need to grow in confidence and feel safe and protected.

Now that we are on the road to recovery, albeit slowly, I wanted to make contact to let you know what I propose to do. Because many businesses have been affected, our income will understandably not be what it was in previous years, but I am certain that with effort, energy, and imagination, we can deliver. Where there is a will there is a way.

Firstly, we are going to make things easier by shortly changing our name to Chester BID. We need a simple name that says who we are and will work well on Google, so we are easy to find. Making sure our paying members know what the BID is and what it does is a key priority. So, it is time to reconnect with those who pay our bill, get to know them again, share a beer or a coffee, listen to their views and together find ways to help them succeed.

Secondly, we are going to bring on to the board people who have skin in the game in Chester. You can see the board here ch1chesterbid.co.uk/welcome/bid-team/ and read about their experience. My Deputy will be Nick Hodson who is well connected into Chester's business community. At any one time, more than half will be levy payers representing retail, hospitality, and a range of service businesses to reflect the diversity of the city. Others will be appointed because they have the skills we need, and we are really pleased that the Chief Executive of the Council is now a member of the board which I am sure will lead to excellent cooperation and understanding between us and CW&C.

Thirdly we are going to keep our overheads as low as possible and our team tight so we have the ability to invest in projects that we feel will help the city, be they ours or brought to us by others.

Fourthly, we will be working on the following 3-point mission:

1. To understand the needs of our levy payers and other supporters and to serve their interests so that their businesses can thrive.
2. To champion Chester as a place to live, work study and visit and to support and collaborate with all other organisations, partners, and local councillors.
3. To enhance and add real value to the city experience with high quality interventions and improvements.

Finally, in order to deliver this mission, we will organise around three working groups which will include a mix of board members, levy payers, council officials and others with skills to share. If you want to get involved, please get in touch. The groups are:

- **Enhance led by John Welsh (Hickory's, Bar Lounge, Upstairs at the Grill)**
This group will work with all the key players to endeavour to make sure that everyone has a safe and welcoming experience in a clean, attractive city.
- **Support led by Nick Hodson (Non-exec Cullimore Dutton, Visiting Professor University of Chester, Business Coach, and ex-MD of Jane Lewis Recruitment)**
This group will collaborate with other groups and communities in the city to get things done, drive business and to create opportunities
- **Marketing and Events led by Amanda Reeve (Boots)**
This group will promote the city to generate spend, footfall and a positive image.
The group will find more ways to connect with levy payers.

If you are not part of our What's App group, please consider joining as we put all useful information here first. You can be added by emailing your mobile to hello@chesterbid.co.uk. Please also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and share our content in your channels when appropriate. We will be following you too! I will be holding regular coffee sessions and walkabouts with Carl the BID Manager and Emily the Marketing and Events Manager to have 121 conversations with business owners and their staff. I have set up an email so you can email me with any comments or questions katrina@chesterbid.co.uk.

The BID team are always on hand to offer help and support.

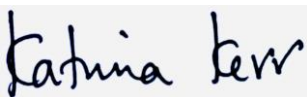
Carl Critchlow – BID Manager – carl@chesterbid.co.uk
Emily Ghazarian – Marketing & Events Manager – emily@chesterbid.co.uk
Luka Morrell – City Host – luka@chesterbid.co.uk
Monica Roman – City Host – monica@chesterbid.co.uk

The BID is funded by businesses in the city who have a rateable value over £18,000pa. If your business is below this level, you probably will not be an automatic BID member however you can join on a voluntary basis. If this is the case, we would ask you to consider joining our affiliate scheme because the more businesses we represent the greater our influence and the more initiatives we can deliver. Please get in touch with Emily if you want to find out more.

The near future will be tough for everyone, but I have never met anyone who did not like Chester and our collective job is to find a way of using all of Chester's assets to ensure our city thrives.

Wishing you the very best

Yours sincerely



Katrina Kerr
Chair - Chester BID