
Chester BID
Annual Review
2022/2023



Chester's
Business
Improvement
District

Welcome to our Annual Review

It is my privilege to present the 2022/2023 Chester BID Annual Review.

This document details the BID's achievements over the past 12 months and highlights the hard work and dedication shown by the BID team and BID Board who are committed to supporting you, the great businesses of Chester.

2022 felt like a return to normality, footfall was on the up and the return of tourists gave the city a buzz we hadn't experienced for several years. It was also a period of review as we evaluated our learnings from the pandemic and considered how Chester BID needed to adapt to ensure effective support for businesses in the years ahead.

A restructuring of the BID team saw us promote Luka Morrell to the position of Business Engagement Manager. This new role provides businesses with a single point of contact and offers the personal engagement businesses found so valuable during the pandemic. We also consolidated our marketing and digital functions into one role by appointing Ian Macdonald to the position of Digital Channel Manager.

As the year progressed, we implemented initiatives to address the three key themes highlighted by businesses in our mid-term business survey:

1. **Clean, Green & Safe: Businesses prioritise an attractive city with cleaner streets, more planting, and an increased uniform presence:**
- We introduced our BID Maintenance Operative service providing an on-street presence 5 days per week delivering enhanced cleaning and renovations.
 - Our seasonal flower displays included additional tower planters, and we supported more business than ever to expand their floral displays and hanging baskets.
 - We helped Cheshire Police engage with dozens of businesses and provided funding for drug dog operations in the city.
2. **You wanted more promotion over social media that you and your customers can interact with and a move to smaller city centre animations over large scale events:**
- We recruited a Digital Channel Manager to integrate our web, social and email marketing into one service for businesses to utilise.
 - Smaller, weekend-long events such as our dino takeover delivered footfall over targeted periods and new trails and business events engaged with more BID members than ever.



3. **Businesses value the lobbying of authorities, such as the police and council:**
- We held multiple meetings with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, Cheshire Police, MP for Chester and council officers and members to highlight challenges faced by businesses.
 - We introduced a twice-yearly business crime survey to give BID members the opportunity to directly inform the police about crime and anti-social behaviour affecting their business.

2022 finally saw the opening of the Northgate Development, a scheme crucial to the future success of Chester. Phase one includes a new market, public square, car park and cinema and will help diversify Chester's offer, drive footfall, and increase consumer dwell time. To capitalise on this exciting new development Chester BID launched its **#INVESTCHESTER** campaign with the support of Grosvenor and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

#INVESTCHESTER aims to promote Chester as a city open for businesses and highlight opportunities for investment and development. Through a mixture of events, PR and digital marketing the campaign reached over 1.2 million people and created a suite of assets to promote the city to audiences that have previously overlooked Chester as an investable destination.

After a year of changes, I am confident that Chester BID is now in the best position to provide the support businesses need and encourage you all to work with us to navigate the next 12 months and beyond.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Carl Critchlow
Carl Critchlow | CEO | Chester BID

Our Team

The Chester BID team is always on hand to speak to you.
T: 01244 403680
E: hello@chesterbid.co.uk



BID Team:

Carl Critchlow	CEO	carl@chesterbid.co.uk
Luka Morrell	Business Engagement Manager	luka@chesterbid.co.uk
Ian Macdonald	Digital Channel Manager	ian@chesterbid.co.uk
Monica Roman	City Host	monica@chesterbid.co.uk
Tom Hughes	BID Maintenance Operative	
Lloyd Woodworth	BID Maintenance Operative	

BID Board:

Neil Hardy	Chair
Emma McGlinchey (Co. Secretary)	Aaron & Partners
Rebecca Bradbury	Wilko
Gemma Davies	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Nigel Driver	Grosvenor
John Farrell	Ellis & Co
Andy Farrall	Andy Farrall Ltd
Ian Gordon	IKO Hospitality
Helen O'Sullivan	University of Chester
Stephanie Peters	Pastry Pédaleur
Will Powell	Powells Jewellers
Tim Stratford	Chester Cathedral
John Welsh	Hickory's/BarLounge
Paul Wildes	Wildes Group



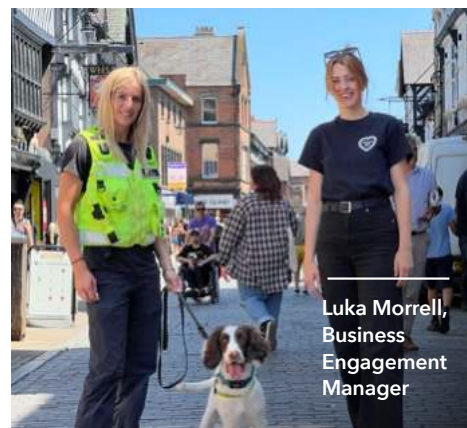
Enhancing

The BID's **'Enhancing'** function aims to create a city that is **safe, attractive, and welcoming** for people who shop, visit and live in Chester.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):

Crime and anti-social behaviour has a negative impact on both businesses and the visitor experience. Chester BID works closely with partners including Cheshire Police and Cheshire West and Chester Council to ensure they are aware of the impact on businesses.

- **Business Crime Survey** – Chester BID now undertakes a biannual business crime survey to give business the opportunity to share their experiences and help the authorities to effectively direct their resources. Each survey has been completed by over 100 businesses and is helping to identify trends and the most effective strategies to combat business crime.
- We held meetings with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and Chief Constable of Cheshire Police **to discuss our survey findings**.
- Chester BID supported Cheshire Police's 'Day of Action' by funding a drug dog to patrol the city centre resulting in **36 stop and searches, 7 positive indications and 2 arrests**.
- We have undertaken 11 walkabouts and greeting sessions with police officers to highlight problematic issues and introduce officers to business owners and managers.
- Over the last 12 months we have attended over **30 weekly intelligence briefings** hosted by **Chester Against Business Crime** to share information and feedback from businesses.
- **'Report It' video** – We have produced a short, easy to understand video explaining how and when to report crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Over the last 12 months the **Chester BID Street Team** have reported **over 80 incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour** including begging, drugs, and alcohol.



End Homelessness in Chester

End Homelessness in Chester is a collaborative project between Chester BID, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Chester Aid to the Homeless, Share, Soul Kitchen and The Chester Bluecoat Charity. The project aims to redirect funds that would usually be given to people on the street, to local charities who can help individuals who are rough sleeping in Chester.

As a founding partner of the project Chester BID is responsible for managing the contactless donation points that can be found in the Grosvenor Shopping Centre and New Chester Market.



Summer Spruce up

Our **'Summer Spruce Up'** saw the BID focus on a wide range of public realm improvements to ensure Chester continues to look its very best!

Floral Displays

Our ever-popular summer floral displays returned with over **130,000 flowers** planted in more than 100 barrier boxes, tower planters and hanging baskets around the city centre. In addition, over 30 hanging baskets were installed by businesses with costs subsidised by Chester BID.



City Renovations

150 bollards painted, 17 new benches installed, 16 bike racks renovated, 6 out of date information maps replaced and 12 empty units covered over with window vinyls.

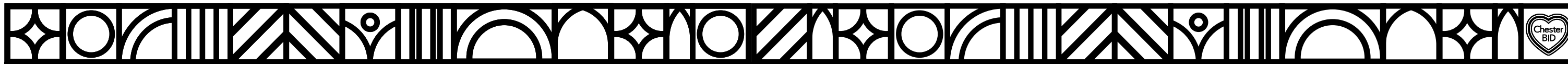


Defibrillators

This year Chester BID installed **4 externally mounted, 24hr accessible defibrillators** at strategic locations around the city.



(A contribution towards these projects was secured through the Cheshire West Crowd)



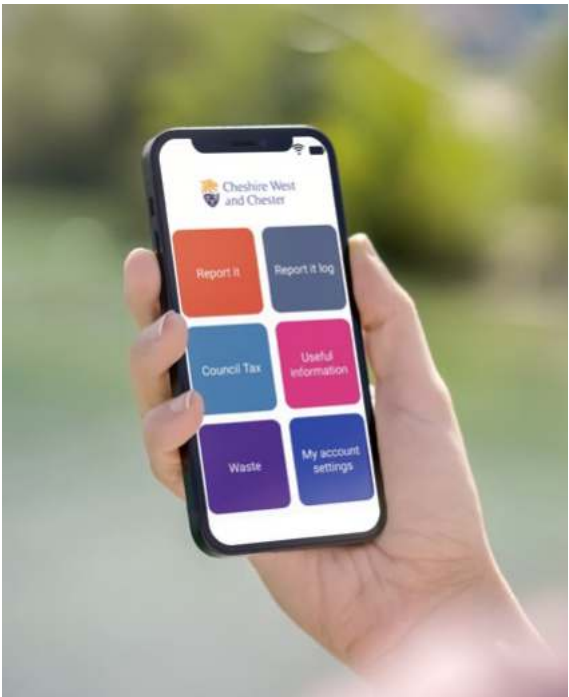
BID Street Team

City Host

Monica is our City Host and the public face of Chester BID. Not only does Monica provide a personal Chester welcome to thousands of visitors she also logs dozens of environmental and anti-social behaviour incidents each year. Over the last 12 months our City Host:



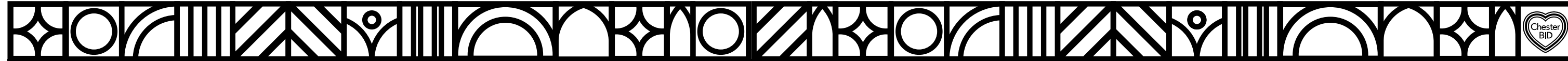
Monica Roman,
City Host



BID Maintenance Operatives

Introducing Tom and Lloyd, Chester BID's newest additions. Responding to calls in our mid-term review for a cleaner city centre, we have recently appointed two BID Maintenance Operatives to ensure Chester is always looking its best.

- Our BID Maintenance Operatives carry out daily cleaning and maintenance work over and above that provided by the council by focusing on private land and property.
- In addition to hundreds of shop front cleans our BID Maintenance Operatives have helped with property repairs, tackling graffiti and covering up damaged paintwork.
- Over the last year Chester BID has undertaken 306 shop front cleans and cleaned hundreds of square meters of pavement.

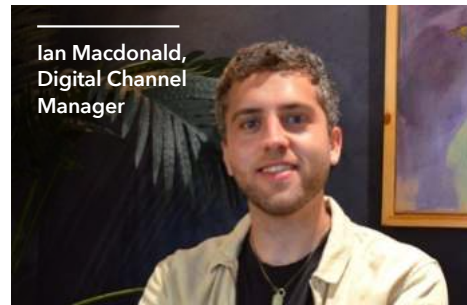


Promoting

Chester BID's external marketing and events activity is all aimed at driving footfall, increasing dwell time, and encouraging consumer spend. We use a range of communication channels to engage with shoppers, tourists, and residents to keep them up to date with everything Chester has to offer.

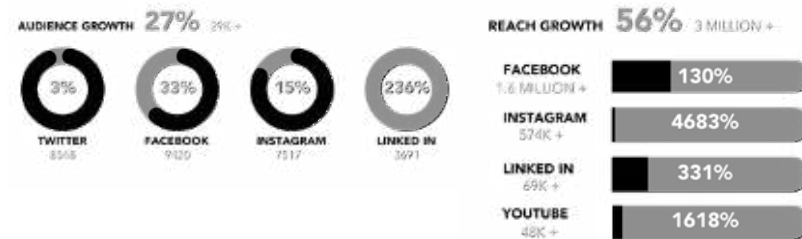
Digital Channel Manager

In our mid-term review you told us that you wanted more promotion of BID businesses and city activity on social media. In response we appointed a **Digital Channel Manager** with the skills to integrate our social media into our existing PR, web, and email marketing channels. This approach has seen significant uplift in our reach and engagement across all platforms.



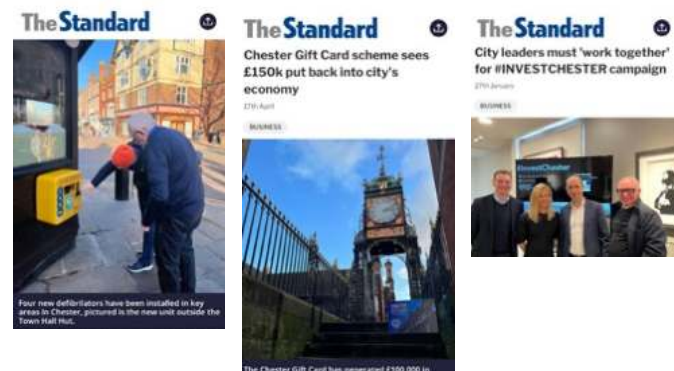
Social Media

The BID's social media reach has grown significantly over the last year, and we now boast over **29,000 followers across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn**. More engaging content utilising video and user generated content has **grown our reach by 56% to more than 3 million** across all our posts.



PR

Our PR strategy has seen us build on our strong connections with the media to secure **59 pieces of PR coverage** published and broadcast locally, regionally, and nationally across print and radio.

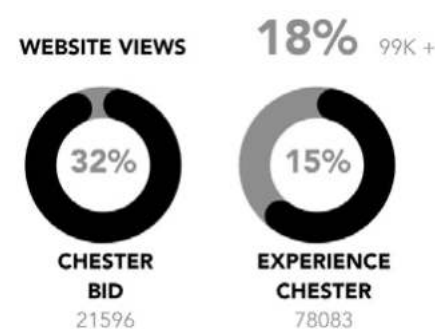


Websites

ChesterBID.co.uk is our corporate site that shares relevant news and information to keep you informed as well as valuable resources such as city footfall statistics.

ExperienceChester.co.uk is Chester BID's consumer focused website that helps visitors plan their trip and make the most of everything Chester has to offer. In addition to the latest city news and events, consumers can also find useful guides and blogs that showcase BID members and help drive awareness.

By working on new additions such as the guides, as well as focusing on making both sites more user and mobile friendly, it has resulted in a significant traffic increase over the last 12 months.



Internal Communications

Keeping businesses informed about everything that is happening in Chester is a key function of the BID. In addition to more than 2,500 personal visits carried out by members of the BID team, we now have more than 250 businesses in the BID-only WhatsApp group enabling us to connect with you in real time.

Our day-to-day comms are supported by weekly broadcasts and monthly e-newsletters sharing news, opportunities and summarising the month's activity.

If you are not already signed up email luka@chesterbid.co.uk

Campaigns

#MostInstagramableCity

The campaign set out to capture images of Chester's enchanting Christmas experience. Showcasing 20 BID businesses we worked with five specialist social media Influencers and created festive imagery to inspire consumers and build excitement in the lead up to Christmas. Targeted at a younger, social media savvy demographic the campaign reached an audience of over **890,000 across all our channels**.

#LoveChester

Over the course of four days in February a photographer captured loving moments of the public to celebrate Valentine's Day. Supported by a competition to win a voucher donated by Powells Jewellers, a bespoke landing page directed entrants to the BID website where they could access special offers, gift ideas and ways to treat your loved ones. **Digital Reach topped 141,000 impressions and boosted our Facebook and Instagram reach by 303% from the same period in 2021**. Winners of the competition were recently engaged and chose a wedding ring from Powells as their prize.

#DogFriendlyChester

The campaign set out to highlight the dozens of dog friendly businesses in Chester. By distributing dog friendly window stickers and an engaging video series, our businesses were able to market themselves to a potentially new, wider audience. Web and social media channels achieved over **108,000 impressions**.

Dino Takeover

August saw dinosaurs take over the streets of Chester as the BID brought the UK's largest Stegosaurus and her T-Rex friend to the city. This free to attend event, spread over two days, not only drove significant footfall but helped educate and inform with dino wranglers teaching the crowds about all things prehistoric.

Seasonal Trails

Our seasonal trails help to drive visitors around the city and encourage visitors to explore businesses they may not usually visit. The associated competitions help to expand our reach, followers, and engagement across all our marketing channels.

- **40 Businesses** took part in the **Halloween Trail**, with businesses visited over **2,700 times**.
- **25 Businesses** took part in **Dino Trail**, with businesses visited over **5,700 times**.
- **43 Businesses** took part in the **Easter Trail**, with businesses visited over **1,992 times**.



Christmas

We understand Christmas is the busiest time for businesses, so **Chester BID invests in a range of activities** that help set Chester apart from the competition.

Chester's only Christmas Grotto returned for a second year with a Narnia theme **attracting over 4,100 children and their families** to the city centre throughout November and December. The interactive experience catered for all in mind, with specialist SEN and autism friendly sessions also selling out.

Chester BID funded **9 days of free parking** at Chester Racecourse every weekend in the build up to Christmas providing over 4,000 free parking spaces.

We continue to fund additional Christmas lights on St Werburgh Street, Foregate Street, Pepper Street and St John Street. These include lamppost wrap lights, in-tree displays and the 5-meter light tree on Foregate Street.

Chester BID co-funds the annual 12 days of Christmas parade along with the council. The parade attracted over **10,000 visitors** and marks the official opening of Christmas in Chester.



Chester Gift Card

First introduced in 2020 the **Chester Gift Card** continues to go from strength to strength with over **125 businesses now signed up** to accept the card.

This year we also hit the milestone of **£100,000 worth of gift cards sold** locking funds into the city centre as these funds can only be redeemed with participating businesses.

If you are not already set up to accept the Gift Card, please get in touch at: hello@chesterbid.co.uk



Supporting

The BID's 'supporting' function is here to provide you with the help you need to run your business effectively. We represent the interests of businesses at multiple business groups and boards, offer training, sector collaboration, and help businesses navigate the public sector.

Being In Chester

'Being In Chester' is a subgroup of Cheshire West and Chester Council's One City Plan and focuses on operational issues and the management of the city centre. Alongside partners including Cheshire Police, Chester Residents Associations Group (CRAG) and other private sector stakeholders the group tackles everything from highways issues to cleansing to anti-social behaviour.

45+ Being In Chester and City Management meetings attended.



Destination Chester

Chester BID represents members on the Steering Group of Destination Chester, a public/private sector partnership focused on promoting tourism across the city. Alongside stakeholders including Chester Zoo, Cheshire Oaks, and Marketing Cheshire the organisation and its partners collaborate to raise the profile of Chester as a visitor attraction.



Sponsorship

There are dozens of organisations delivering events and campaigns that support both Chester and businesses. Supporting those that align with BID objectives helps us reach new audiences and support key sectors.

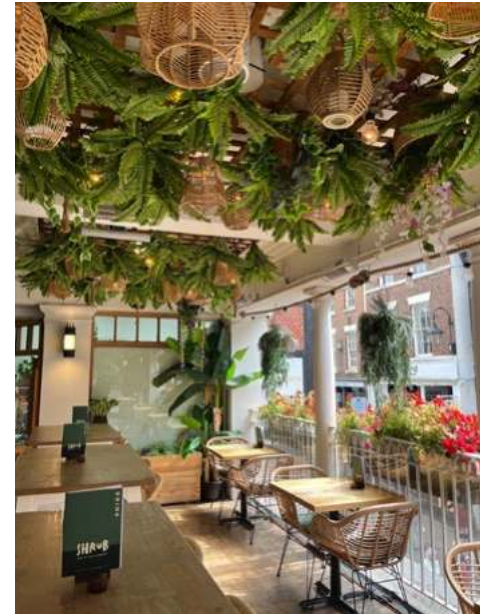
- **Chester Pride** – Now in its 11th year the annual Chester Pride event attracts over 21,000 visitors and provides vital support to the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Chester Hospitality Association Awards** – The inaugural Chester Hospitality Association People's Awards recognised the incredible hard work of the hospitality industry and raised £6,500 for the charity Hospitality Action.
- **ATfest** – Returning for its second year, ATfest is a fun and informative event promoting active travel in all its forms. The festival offered a range of activity areas including Bikeability learn-to-ride sessions; eBike Experience Zone and BMX skills training.



Business Growth Grant

Using funds secured through the BIDs commercial activities our business growth grant **distributed over £10,000** to help more than 20 business deliver a range of enhancements to their business that meet one or more of the scheme's objectives:

1. Helps their business to grow (recruit staff, increase capacity/turnover etc.)
2. Drives footfall into the city.
3. Increases consumer dwell time.
4. Encourages consumer spending.



Training

Chester BID offers a range of free training to help businesses **upskill their staff** and **enhance their offer**. Over the last year we have delivered:

- **10 Training sessions** on First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Crime Prevention, Fire Warden, and Deaf Awareness.
- **122 Members of staff trained** across multiple sectors.
- **32 Business drop-in sessions** held for business support.

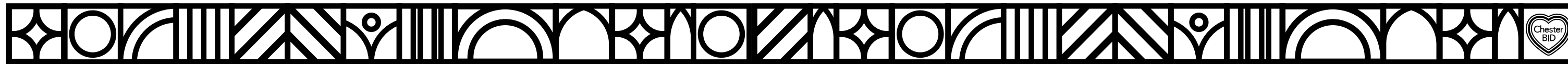
Got an idea for training that will benefit business in Chester?
Get in touch: luka@chesterbid.co.uk



Let's Get Digital

Our 'Let's Get Digital' training sessions have seen Digital Channel Manager Ian Macdonald provide free, one to one advice to businesses on how to maximise their digital reach through web and social media.

If you feel your business would benefit from some digital tips and advice email: ian@chesterbid.co.uk.



#INVESTCHESTER

This year Chester BID led on #INVESTCHESTER alongside partners Grosvenor and Cheshire West and Chester Council. #INVESTCHESTER is an inward investment marketing campaign that promotes Chester as a city that is open for business. Through a series of events, campaigns and digital marketing the campaign has **5 core objectives**:

- Attract new businesses by promoting Chester as a city open to development and investment.
- Engage the regional property industry ensuring they are briefed and onside.
- Capitalise on the momentum created by the opening of Northgate Phase 1.
- Create a suite of marketing assets that can be shared across a range of channels.
- Develop a sector focused database and communication strategy.

Events

- 1. Campaign Launch - November 22 - Knights Offices HQ.**
Attended by 30 stakeholders from the property and investment sectors. Presentations from Caroline Baker, Managing Partner for commercial property estate agents, Cushman and Wakefield and John Egan, Project Director at Vertex Hydrogen.
- 2. Speaker & Networking - Jan 23 - Clarendon Fine Art.**
Attended by over 20 stakeholders from the property and investment sectors. Presentations from Property PR expert Kate Heatley, Director, Inform Communications.
- 3. Tim Heatley - Feb 23 - Storyhouse.**
Over 150 attendees from multiple sectors heard from Property Developer and TV personality Tim Heatley, CEO of Capital & Centric. Pre-event walkabout with a delegation from both public and private sector and private meeting with the CEO of Cheshire West and Chester Council.



Tim Heatley,
CEO of Capital
& Centric

Campaigns - 'This is Chester'

'This is Chester' is a series of 10, short 1-minute interviews with BID members, city stakeholders and major employers talking about what Chester means to them. Interviewees included the MP for Chester, Chair of Storyhouse and Chester's favourite blogger Shitchester.



Dawn Robinson,
Owner of Chester
Boutique

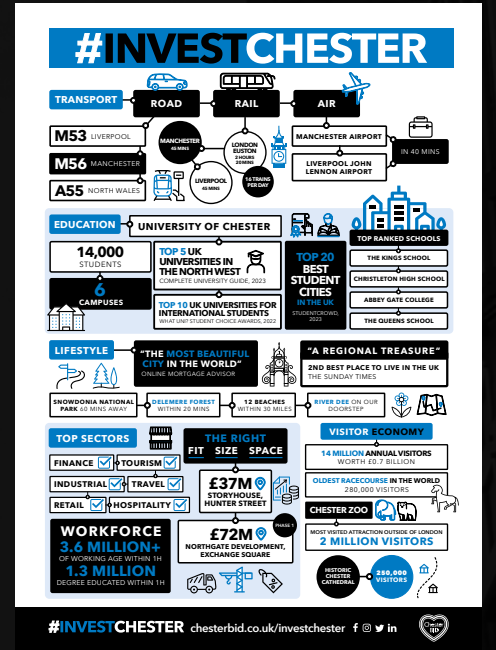
Campaigns - Place Northwest

A collaboration with property website Place Northwest saw a filmed round table discussion between Samantha Dixon MP; Cheshire West and Chester Council director Graham Pink; Legat Owen director Will Sadler; Donald Insall Associates chairman Tony Barton; Chester BID chair Katrina Kerr; and Chester Growth Partnership board member Andy Farrall discussing opportunities for investment in Chester.



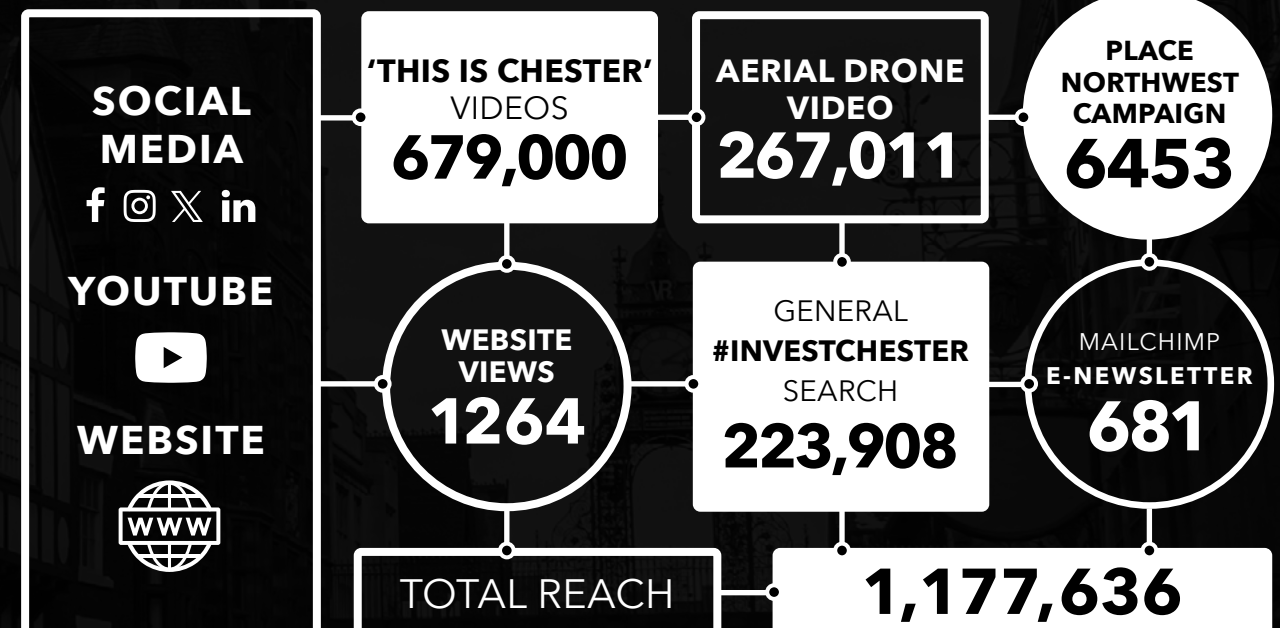
Assets

#INVESTCHESTER aerial drone video and infographic highlighting Chester's range of transport, educational and lifestyle assets.



Campaign Reach

10 PR ARTICLES IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS



Customer Service Awards

Chester BID's annual Customer Service Awards returned for the 7th year in 2022. Over 175 BID Members packed into Chester Cathedral to celebrate the excellent customer service delivered by our businesses.

A RECORD
BREAKING
26,688
VOTES WERE
CAST

BEST:	WINNERS:
Coffee Shop/Cafe	Rainbow Tea Rooms
Food on the Go	Chatwins
Restaurant	Chez Jules
Pubs, Bars and Clubs	BarLounge
Small Retailer (20 staff or fewer)	Hotel Chocolat
Small Fashion Retailer (20 staff or fewer)	The White Company
Independent Retailer (fewer than 5 branches)	Chester Boutique
Large Retailer (21 or more staff)	Wilko
Health and Beauty Services	Lush
Professional Services	Natwest
Travel and Leisure	Deva Travel
Chester Market Trader	Death by Tacos
BEST of Grosvenor Shopping Centre	Chique



Finance

22/23 saw a return to pre-COVID levels of levy collection with payments being made earlier in the year as trading patterns returned to normal. Funding from the BID Levy was complimented by another strong performance securing additional income streams to support BID activity. This included public funding towards campaigns such as #INVESTCHESTER and sponsorship towards our Customer Service Awards.

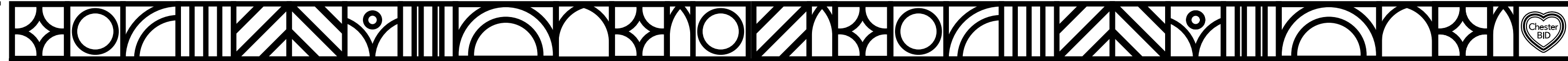
A restructuring of the BID team enabled us to respond to calls for an increased digital presence and further cleaning of the city. Investing in a Digital Channel Manager and BID Maintenance Operatives has enabled us to bring more services in-house offsetting staffing costs.

Looking towards 23/24 our budget continues to reflect member feedback that 'clean, green and safe' remains a priority while allowing flexibility to react to opportunities and challenges linked to wider economic pressures. Overall, it's been another strong year for the BID, and we'll continue to work hard to make sure this continues.



BID INCOME	April 22 - March 23 Actual	April 23 - March 24 Budget
Income from BID Levy	380,608	354,600
Grants Received	20,000	20,000
Commercial Income	54,278	5,000
Other Income	65,280	1,500
C/F Balance		156,926
Total	520,166	538,026

BID EXPENDITURE	April 22 - March 23 Actual	April 23 - March 24 Budget
Management	147,816	172,748
Promoting	181,145	134,730
Enhancing	93,784	74,700
Operating	41,877	41,915
Supporting	36,828	64,550
Contingency	18,716	24,000
Surplus C/F		78,833



Strategic Direction

I'd like to start with an introduction, I am Neil Hardy and earlier this year I was given the enormous privilege of being appointed Chair of Chester BID. With a background in tourism and digital marketing I joined the BID Board 18 months ago to help deliver the BID's digital strategy and was appointed Chair following a robust selection process. As a Chester resident I am committed to the success of this great city and I will give my all to ensure Chester BID does everything to assist you, the great businesses of Chester.



Neil Hardy
Chair Chester BID

The last 12 months have been a period of significant change for Chester. Phase one of the Northgate Development opened and is already beginning to influence the rest of the city. With a new market, car park and a group of new hospitality operators, that area of the city is no longer a building site and is now home to a new public square and dozens of independent market traders. Still to come is the new cinema which will help diversify the city's offer and complement Storyhouse's theatre and support our thriving food and drink scene. Phase two of Northgate is still under development and we are working closely with Cheshire West and Chester Council to influence what this phase will look like and ensure the views of our members are considered at all stages of its planning.

This year also saw the approval of the 'City Gateway' project that will see swathes of land around the train station redeveloped. While mostly outside of the BID's footprint the importance of this project can't be underestimated as it will ensure those customers and visitors that arrive by train experience a welcome worthy of this great city. The scheme will also deliver hundreds of new homes for residents that will sustain our local economy.

Chester BID will play its part in ensuring that the city center directly benefits and will work closely with stakeholders and partners to influence key decisions.

As a key strategic partner Chester BID is working alongside other public and private sector stakeholders to deliver the councils recently revised One City Plan. Representing BID members on the plans multiple working groups, Chester BID will play a key role in city centre management, transport, and tourism alongside the delivery of multiple strategic objectives.

I must also mention the long-term future of the BID ahead of next year's renewal ballot. This is a crucial stage in the BID's lifecycle as we head towards a 3rd 5-year term. I am confident the BID's current activity adds real benefit to both members and the wider city, but both the BID Board and I will be supporting Carl and his team to develop a vision for next 5 years.

To support this process, we want to hear from you, we want you to tell us what you want more of, want less of and what you'd like from your BID in future. On the back page of this annual review is a QR code taking you to our 2024 - 2029 consultation questionnaire and I encourage you all to take 5 minutes to complete it.

I want to thank you for your continued support and look forward to working with you over the coming years.

Neil Hardy

Neil Hardy, Chair Chester BID

Chester BID Objectives:

- ▶ **Understand the needs of our levy payers and other supporters** and to serve their interests so that their businesses can thrive.
- ▶ **Champion Chester** as a place to live, work, study and visit and to support and collaborate with all other organisations, partners, and stakeholders.
- ▶ **Enhance and add real value to the city experience** with high quality interventions and improvements.

About Chester BID:

- ▶ **Chester BID is a business-led initiative** that was voted for by the businesses of Chester in September 2014 and July 2019.
- ▶ There are currently **over 460 businesses**, with a rateable value of **more than £18,000**, situated within the BID designated city area.
- ▶ **Each of these members contribute a levy equal to 1% of their premises rateable value every year** to fund a wide range of improvements identified by the businesses themselves and set out in the Chester BID business plan.
- ▶ **The term of the BID runs for five years and means that approximately £2m will be generated and reinvested back into the city centre**, focusing on promoting, enhancing and supporting businesses and the city.

