



Welcome to our Annual Review

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2021/2022 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.

2021/2022 can be described as a year of two halves. April 2021 started with the shadow of COVID still looming large and while restrictions were gradually being eased, there was still much uncertainty among businesses and the public about the pending recovery.

Yet as the year progressed, and the vaccination programme began to take effect, it became clear that there was significant pent-up demand to get back to a level of 'pre-COVID' normality. Summer footfall quickly bounced back to 2019 levels aided by staycations and day visitors unable to travel abroad. This demand continued into the festive period and while short-term restrictions on hospitality impacted Christmas, numbers visiting the city remained steady into 2022.

Capitalising on this renewed consumer confidence, we ramped up our promotional activity. Event highlights included the return of the Chester Comedy Festival headlined by Jason Manford, Rich Hall and Ed Byrne, and Santa's Enchanted Grotto - an immersive Christmas experience that attracted thousands of seasonal visitors.

Our marketing activity was spearheaded by Chester BID's first-ever TV advert which was broadcast on Sky and supported by nearly 170 pieces of regional and national PR across TV, radio and print. Supporting our promotional activity we funded free parking, increased our city cleaning, and partnered on safety initiatives that saw new radios distributed and CCTV installed.

The BID is always busy behind the scenes ensuring the interests of businesses are at the forefront of city decisions. As well as attending more than 65 high street management meetings we lobbied for an extension to the pedestrianisation times and licence requirements to support alfresco dining.



While a return to traditional BID initiatives during 2021/2022 was welcome, we also recognised that the road to recovery will be a long one. To ensure the BID provides the support businesses need, we reached out to hear what you would like to see from us as we move into the second half of this BID term.

Our mid-term business survey was completed by more than 150 businesses and revealed several key themes:

- Clean, Green & Safe: as visitors return you prioritise an attractive city with cleaner streets, more planting, and an increased uniform presence
- You want 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
- Businesses value the lobbying of authorities, such as the police and council, and would like more direct business support to tackle issues like recruitment and improved information sharing

As I write this, we have already begun to review our staffing structure and future plans to ensure the BID is best set to deliver on the requests of our businesses.

Looking ahead, the challenges keep coming with increases in the cost-of-living increasing pressure on consumer spending. However, I am confident that the BID is 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 to all for your continued support.

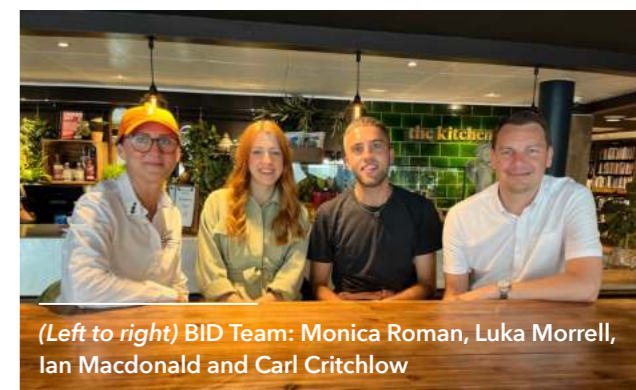
Carl Critchlow

Carl Critchlow | CEO | Chester BID

Our Team

The Chester BID team is always on hand to speak to you.

You can contact the BID office on **01244 403680** or email **hello@chesterbid.co.uk**



(Left to right) BID Team: Monica Roman, Luka Morrell, Ian Macdonald and Carl Critchlow

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


BID Board:

Katrina Kerr	Chair
Nick Hodson (Deputy Chair)	Nick Hodson Consulting
Emma McGlinchey (Co. Secretary)	Aaron & Partners
Rebecca Bradbury	Wilko
Nigel Driver	Grosvenor Estate
John Farrell	Ellis & Co
Ian Gordon	IKO Hospitality (Liquor & Co, The Cabinet Club and Craft & Company)
Katie Jones	Weasel & The Bug
Andrew Lewis	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Andy Mushet	Boots
Will Powell	Powells Jewellers
Tim Stratford	Chester Cathedral
John Welsh	Hickory's / Barlounge
Paul Wildes	Wildes Group
Andy Farrall	Andy Farrall Limited
Helen O'Sullivan	University of Chester



Enhancing

RETAINED CHESTER'S **PURPLE FLAG** STATUS FOR THE 4TH YEAR RUNNING



JOINTLY FUNDED THE INSTALLATION OF **8** NEW CCTV CAMERAS ON THE ROWS

INSTALLED WINDOW VINYLs ON **25** EMPTY UNITS INCLUDING BROWNS OF CHESTER

FACILITATED MULTIPLE DEEP CLEANS OF: MAIN CITY STREETS, SIDE STREETS AND ENTRIES, THE ROWS AND STALLS

CLEANED **250** SHOP FRONTAGES

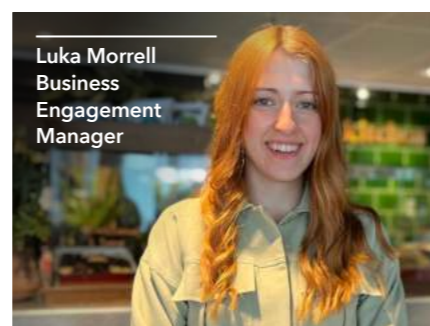
WALKABOUTS WITH: POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CHESHIRE
CHESHIRE POLICE CHIEF INSPECTOR FOR CHESTER

JOINTLY FUNDED REVIEW OF WAYFINDING AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE IN THE CITY

DISTRIBUTED **55** NEW CO-SIGN RADIOS TO BUSINESSES WITH CHESTER AGAINST BUSINESS CRIME



John Welsh
Enhancing Group Lead



Luka Morrell
Business Engagement Manager

The BID's 'Enhancing' function has three clear objectives: to create a city that is **safe, attractive, and welcoming** for the people who shop, work and live in Chester and for the tourists who visit us.

To help businesses report incidents more effectively we worked with Cheshire West & Chester Council to secure funding for over 75 additional city radios that link directly to the CCTV control room. We also co-funded the installation of new CCTV cameras overlooking ASB hotspots on Northgate and Eastgate Row.

Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):

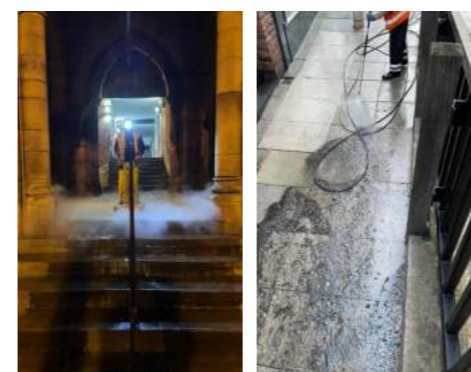
We continued to raise awareness with the Cheshire Police and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) about the negative impact that crime and ASB has on our businesses. We now have a quarterly walkabout with senior police officers to identify the issues raised by BID members. We also represent businesses at the Chester Against Business Crime's weekly intelligence briefing which deals with shoplifting and ASB. In partnership with Chester Against Business Crime we also distributed 55 new co-sign radios.

Over the 12-month period we reported a total of 364 ASB incidents. Broken down, these were:

- Begging - 234
- Drugs/Alcohol - 53
- Aggression - 4
- Illegal trading - 6
- Rough sleepers - 50
- Left belongings - 17



(Right to left:) BID Chair Katrina Kerr, BID CEO Carl Critchlow, Police and Crime Commissioner John Dwyer, PubWatch Chair Jenni Haken, and Mike Hogg, Don Mcrae and Vanessa Bond of the Chester Residents' Associations Group (CRAG)



Cleansing:

This year we have introduced a regular monthly cleansing schedule that sees specialist cleaning contractors tackle shop fronts and grot spots around the city. Our cleaning regime is additional to the cleansing carried out by the council and includes jet-washing, gum removal and steam cleaning of the pavements.

Particular attention is paid to the historic areas of the city as well as shopfronts, entries and alleyways under private ownership.

Parking:

We continued to work closely with our partners at Chester Racecourse to provide free parking facilities. These included free parking at the Chester Racecourse and Linenhall car parks on the last Sunday of each month and the day after race day.

We also funded free parking spaces at Chester Racecourse for five weekends in the run-up to Christmas - a benefit that translates to **4,000 free parking spaces**.



Monica Roman
City Host

City Hosts:

Our City Hosts continue to be the faces of Chester, welcoming visitors to the city centre while also logging environmental issues and reporting anti-social behaviour. They are also on hand to give more direct business support and are the first port of call for BID member businesses.

Over the 12-month period, our City Hosts:

- Made 2,595 visitor interactions
- Reported 513 city management issues
- Made 1,572 business visits



Chester in Bloom

Our flowers are back - and they're bigger and better than ever before.

We have installed more than 100 railing boxes, stand-alone planters and hanging baskets to decorate the city and bring a splash of colour for everyone to enjoy.



Christmas Grotto and Chester Gift Card

In the closing months of 2021, we launched Santa's Enchanted Grotto, a family-friendly Christmas Wonderland to help drive footfall and increase dwell time.

It was open 17 days, from 26th November through to Christmas Eve and proved a big hit with visitors. The event had more than 3,500 visitors with 1,822 adult and 1,553 children's tickets sold.



"The Santa was amazing and the staff were all fabulous. The thought, imagination and effort that went into designing the experience was obvious, and the trail to Santa's hut was wonderful. Santa's gift was delightful and much appreciated and making the stars at the end was a lovely finishing gesture and we didn't feel rushed out. I cannot praise the whole experience enough."

Customer feedback form



Our Chester Gift Card goes from strength-to-strength with more than 115 businesses now signed up to take part.

The total gift card sales **exceeded £85k** - money that is locked into the city centre and which can only be spent at participating businesses.



Street Art

Street art has been a particular focus over the past 12 months. We responded to calls from businesses to enhance the appearance of the city centre by working with local artists who turned everyday objects into one-off works of art.

Chester BID commissioned local Chester artists to deliver the mini-murals project, ranging from art school graduates to accomplished artists, who each put their individual stamp on the cabinets which are spread right across the city. With permission from BT OpenReach, 18 BT cabinets were transformed into unique pieces for the community to enjoy.

We gave one of our largest, long-term empty units on Foregate Street a Pop Art-style overhaul. The artwork celebrates the range of retail offerings on Foregate Street in a fun, fresh way and made the area more inviting to shoppers.



Julie Colclough



Emma Lucy



Rhi Moxon



Jack Few



Sophia Shaw



Nikki Pinder



Michelle Pickering



Mark Wigan



Justin Bunting



Rhi Moxon



Marketing and events

65
PRINT ADVERTS
ACROSS
12
PUBLICATIONS

INCLUDING:
THE CHESHIRE MAGAZINE; METRO; SHROPSHIRE LIVING; CHESHIRE LIVING; PRIME NORTHWEST, MID & NORTH WALES; WELSH BORDER LIFE

CHESTER GIFTCARD SALES:
£38,716
100+ BUSINESSES SIGNED UP

COMBINED DISTRIBUTION OF OVER
450,000

171
PIECES OF PR
TV, RADIO, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL

INCLUDING:
BBC BREAKFAST, ITV GRANADA REPORTS, BBC NW TONIGHT, THE SUN, BBC RADIO MERSEYSIDE, METRO (LONDON), MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS, LANCASHIRE TELEGRAPH, BIRMINGHAM MAIL, CAMBRIDGE NEWS, NEWCASTLE JOURNAL, TORQUAY HERALD, PLYMOUTH HERALD

£88,336
ADDITIONAL INCOME GENERATED

SUPPORTED THE CHESTER STUDENTS' UNION WELCOME FAIR

171
PIECES OF PR
TV, RADIO, NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL

INCLUDING:
BBC BREAKFAST, ITV GRANADA REPORTS, BBC NW TONIGHT, THE SUN, BBC RADIO MERSEYSIDE, METRO (LONDON), MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS, LANCASHIRE TELEGRAPH, BIRMINGHAM MAIL, CAMBRIDGE NEWS, NEWCASTLE JOURNAL, TORQUAY HERALD, PLYMOUTH HERALD

SUPPORTED THE CHESTER STUDENTS' UNION WELCOME FAIR

DELIVERED THE CHESTER COMEDY FESTIVAL

WHICH RAN OVER 12 DAYS ACROSS 12 VENUES AND FEATURED 35 COMEDIANS

Driving footfall, increasing dwell time and encouraging consumer spend is at the very heart of the BID's marketing and events activity. With this in mind, we organised the Chester Comedy Festival, which ran from 11-22 July and across 12 venues, including Chester Racecourse and Storyhouse.

The festival featured comedians from TV and the international comedy circuit and included household names Jason Manford, Rich Hall and Ed Byrne.



Consumer Engagement

We continued to build on our strong connections with the media, with 171 pieces of PR coverage locally, regionally and nationally.

Highlights: The Express, iNews, ITV Granada Tonight, BBC NW Tonight, BBC Radio Merseyside, Dee 106, Cheshire Life, Cheshire Live, Chester Standard.

Social Media

The growth of our social media channels has continued to be a priority.

We adapted our social media strategy in response to calls from BID members for a more targeted approach to the promotion of their businesses. As a result, we have seen a substantial increase in traffic across our social media platforms.

21/22 FY Mar-Apr	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn
2021/22 % Growth	16%	11%	33%	93%
2021/22 Audiences	8296	7090	6524	1099

Get in touch with the team to get your products, services or events featured on the BID channels. Just ring us on 01244 403680 or email hello@chesterbid.co.uk



Website

Responding to calls for more direct support across our web channels, we produced multiple business and sector profiles to highlight our members' broad offer. This promotion provided shareable content published on ChesterBID.co.uk and ExperienceChester.co.uk and via businesses' own websites and social media channels.

The BID team created a job board to connect the vacancies with jobseekers. Our job board is free of charge to BID members so please get in touch with your vacancy details if you are currently recruiting.

WhatsApp Group and Newsletter

To allow us to connect with businesses in real time, we continued to grow our Chester BID WhatsApp group which now connects more than 200 businesses. We use the group to share relevant local news and give information about opportunities and practical support.

In addition, we re-launched our monthly e-newsletter highlighting relevant city news, opportunities as well as providing information on footfall, openings and closures.

Want to showcase your products, services or events on BID digital channels?
Get in touch with ian@chesterbid.co.uk

AS PART OF OUR ON-GOING COMMITMENT TO PROMOTING THE SERVICES OF OUR BID MEMBERS, WE HIGHLIGHTED DOG-FRIENDLY RETAILERS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS IN THE CITY CENTRE. THIS CAMPAIGN WAS SUPPORTED WITH EXTENSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE.



Marketing and events

TV campaign

The BID produced its first ever TV advert. The month-long national TV ad campaign ran across August and September and was broadcast on Sky. Called Welcome to CHESTER, the ad strategy was supported by Destination Chester and Marketing Cheshire to maximise potential reach.

To attract more visitors, we focused on the following key areas:

- Aspirational Experiences
- Open Air City
- Overnight Stay
- Food & Drink

The target audience included those who were travelling more than an hour from the city, overnight and multi-stay visitors, and visitors from the M6 corridor and M25 north of London.

We supported the campaign with a four-page spread in The Cheshire Magazine and pushed the content on digital platforms Vimeo, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The video had more than 16,000 views on Vimeo and page views to the Visit Chester homepage were up 4% from the previous year.

PR highlights during 21/22 included:

- A spot on BBC Radio Merseyside when BID CEO Carl went live on air to discuss Chester's TV Ad and Chester as a destination
- Destination Chester TV ad on BBC North West Tonight, which promoted the 'City Of The Year' status
- Internet coverage on leading websites Cheshire Live, Chester Standard, Great British Life and Prolific North



The BID also launched a food and drink campaign: **'Chester: the Foodie Capital of the Northwest'** in response to the ending of VAT breaks by the government.

Declaring Chester the regional foodie capital we highlighted Chester's food and drink statistics which included:

- Eight restaurants in The Michelin Guide
- 70+ restaurants
- 50 bars and pubs
- More than a dozen independent coffee shops

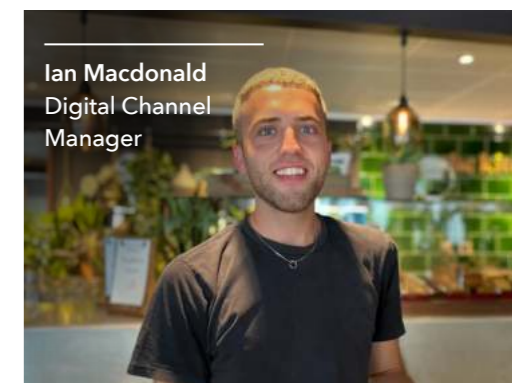


Radio campaign

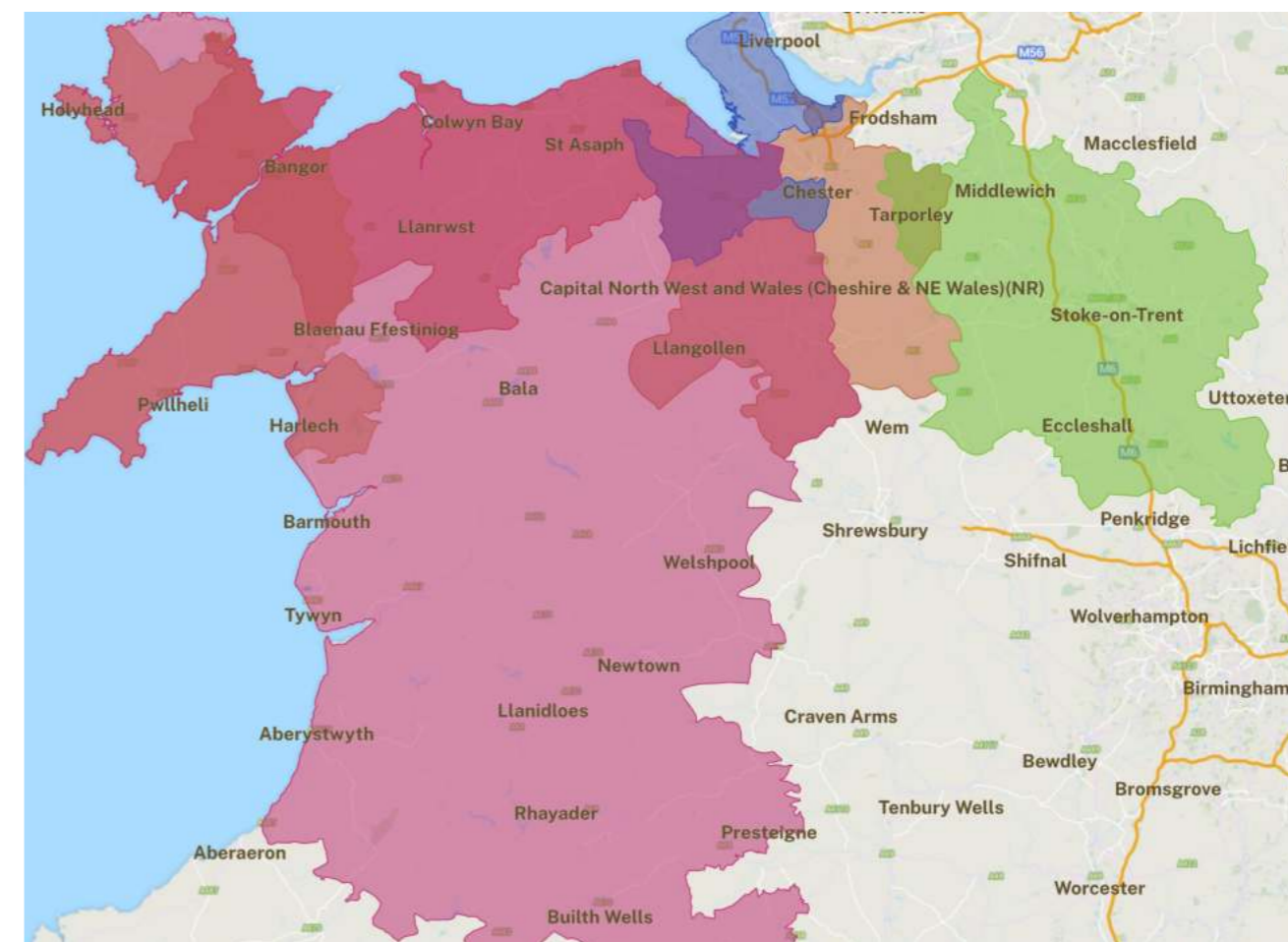
As part of our continuing efforts to shine a spotlight on the city we launched our largest-ever radio campaign, encouraging people to shop, eat and drink in Chester.

The campaign ran for four weeks in March and covered North and Mid Wales, the Wirral, Cheshire and Staffordshire and was supported by extensive promotion across social media platforms.

THE CAMPAIGN REACHED AN AUDIENCE OF OVER 1.5 MILLION



Ian Macdonald
Digital Channel
Manager



Supporting



The BID's 'supporting' role aims to bring the city together, to build networks and connections that support the city centre and the businesses within it.

Destination Chester

We are a key member of Destination Chester, a collective of city partners and attractions, and we continue to focus on promoting tourism across the city. Following last year's Design By Nature campaign, Destination Chester was able to secure £100,000 from VisitEngland to deliver an Escape to Chester campaign.

The campaign was targeted at 'pre-nester' couples aged 25-45 and focused on bookable experiences. It went live early summer 2022.



The campaign was targeted at 'pre-nester' couples aged 25-45 and focused on bookable experiences. It went live early summer 2022.

Results show that, across Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and the Audience Network, the **Escape the Everyday** campaign for Chester:

- Reached just over 1.05 million people
- Drove more than 25,000 visitors to the website

The average person saw each ad 5.06 times over the campaign period. The campaign has continued into the summer of 2022 with a marketing partnership with Avanti and Northern Rail

Professional Services

Our Professionals in Partnership services continued to grow. We now have an established quarterly networking event that has included James Timpson, CEO of Timpson Group, and Liz Martins, HSBC senior economist, as guest speakers.

Chester High Street Cell

Chester High Street Cell and City Management meetings are a public/private partnership that focuses on addressing operational issues across the city centre. Alongside members of the BID team and CRAG we have representatives from the council's highways, planning, street care and localities teams.

Key wins for the city over the past 12 months include the extended pedestrianisation of the city centre, simplified alfresco licensing processes and strategies for tackling graffiti and cleansing.

Reimagining Sustainable Transport in Chester: Thinking Smart Mobility

Cheshire West and Chester Council established a Sustainable Transport Taskforce to explore ideas and pilot approaches to making transportation more sustainable in the light of its aspirations to tackle climate change.

Along with The Chester Growth Partnership, the BID commissioned a report of the Smart Mobility Working Group, a 58-page document that reimagined sustainable transport in Chester.

It took into account the changing economic landscape and the challenges in the world of transport and had two key functions:

- To positively contribute to the work of the Sustainable Transport Taskforce, and
- Provide an input into the review of Chester's One City Plan

The work was undertaken by a small working group whose report is a contribution to the debate about the future of Chester.



Customer Service Awards

Chester BID's Annual Customer Service Awards returned for the 6th year in 2021. Over 170 BID members packed into Chester Cathedral to celebrate the excellent customer service delivered by our businesses that helps set Chester apart from other destinations.

BEST:	
Coffee Shop/Cafe	Marmalade
Food on the Go	Jaunty Goat Bakery
Restaurant	Hamayuu
Pubs, Bars and Clubs	Barlounge
Small Retailer (20 staff or fewer)	Lush
Small Fashion Retailer (20 staff or fewer)	Fatface
Independent Retailer (fewer than 5 branches)	Watergate Street Gallery
Large Retailer (21 or more staff)	Marks & Spencer
Health and Beauty Services	Scented Garden
Professional Services	Lloyds
Travel & Leisure	Storyhouse
Hotel / B&B	The Hotel Chester
Chester Market Trader	The Cheese Wedge
BEST of Grosvenor Shopping Centre	Whitewall Galleries
The Special Award	Shrub
Sustainability Champion	Jaunty Goat



Finance

While BID levy income remained relatively steady, the BID was able to capitalise on significant amounts of public funding made available for COVID recovery. Tapping into this additional funding enabled us to make significant investment in projects including street cleaning and distributing alfresco grants.

This additional COVID funding means we head into 2022/2023 with a higher surplus than originally forecast. In response we have budgeted to increase spending across our clean, green and safe initiatives and continue to invest in marketing activity aimed at driving footfall and encouraging consumer spend.



John Farrell
Chair Audit &
Finance Committee

BID INCOME	April 21 - March 22 Actual	April 22 - March 23 Budget
Income from BID Levy (Total Levy Billed)	339,660	314,400
Grants Receivable	20,000	20,000
Commercial Income	94,676	45,820
Other Income	88,336	1,500
C/F Balance		138,210
Total	542,672	519,930

BID EXPENDITURE	April 21 - March 22 Actual	April 22 - March 23 Budget
Management	168,743	174,139
Promoting	175,511	130,000
Enhancing	149,831	80,700
Operating	34,079	41,139
Supporting	7,236	52,000
Contingency	19,816	24,000
Surplus C/F		17,952

Strategic Direction

2021/22 was a bit of a stop/start year but now the city centre has returned to some semblance of normality with a good in-flow of visitors and exciting new start-ups. The stats show that, although things may not have returned to the levels experienced in the past, Chester has fared better than many other cities, and its ability to reinvent itself has been impressive.

In a recent survey for The Times, Chester was voted the third most attractive "Live/Work" city in the UK, and this perception that Chester is a place to live, work and enjoy should be something that will be a strong motivator after the experience of COVID. Take up of smaller units has been encouraging, with Watergate Street and Northgate Street both exemplars of really outstanding independent retail and hospitality and Bridge St embracing a great alfresco vibe. As I write, we are hearing that some bigger deals are in the pipeline which could see larger units being repurposed to deliver what people now want from a city centre.

The confidence shown by Home Bargains in constructing a brand-new superstore on Foregate Street and the refit of the Boots Beauty Hall to deliver the beauty brands that the city needs solidifies that area as a prime shopping location. And, of course, the units in the Northgate development are now opening with a car park that will bring people right into the heart of the city and a cinema that will increase dwell time. The board's focus this year has been on directing the levy and our resources into areas that BID members tell us are important to them and away from activities they value less.

- We have created the role of BID Engagement Manager to ensure there is regular face-to-face contact with businesses and that any concerns or suggestions are quickly relayed to those who can act on them. We are also delivering more seminars and training to help businesses cope with the day-to-day challenges they face, such as shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. This is a significant issue for many businesses and where we keep up the pressure and continuously suggest new strategies to those involved in its management.
- We have also deployed significantly more funding into areas such as cleaning, flowers and general city enhancement - I am sure you have seen the BT boxes - to improve the city



Katrina Kerr
Chair Chester BID

experience. And we will continue to do this so that people can enjoy a clean and pleasant environment.

- Our marketing efforts now prioritise collaborating with local suppliers and spreading the love so that more businesses are getting more benefit - especially on social media. However, as I write, the country faces a new and worrying challenge of the combination of escalating inflation coupled with never-before-imagined energy costs. I know that the people and businesses of Chester will show the generosity and acts of kindness we saw during COVID to those who will struggle, and that value and service will be at the heart of the city centre offer. And Chester BID will support this wholeheartedly. But, despite the grey clouds, there are still opportunities to seize if we all continue to work together and collaborate.
- The council has produced a draft of its One City Plan update which contains many of the ideas that various pressure groups in the city have suggested. Now it is time for everyone who can to get involved and turn those ideas into action, help to make them happen and to not someone else - we can make our own future!
- The council has committed to implementing the recommendations of the "Reimagining the City Centre" report conducted by CBRE which recognises the importance of Chester and calls for more resource on the ground and marketing to the property and investment community. So I'm optimistic about the future of the city centre in Chester and to pinch a lyric from Starship: "We can build this dream together... nothing's gonna stop us now," so let's crack on.

Katrina Kerr

Katrina Kerr, 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 local councillors.
- ▶ 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 marketing, events, enhancing and supporting businesses and the city.





ChesterBID.co.uk



ExperienceChester.co.uk

Contact us on: **01244 403680** or email: hello@chesterbid.co.uk

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