



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE BOGNOR REGIS BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT LTD

YEAR 1: 2018 – 2019





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BACKGROUND

Following the majority vote in support of a focused Business Improvement District in Bognor Regis, Bognor Regis BID Ltd (the BID) was established on 1st April 2018. The geographic area covered by the BID stretches from West Street to Butlins, and from the Esplanade to the upper section of London Road.

The BID area incorporates 492 businesses, 292 of which contribute to the BID Levy, generating an income of around £141,000 per annum to invest in making Bognor Regis a place where businesses can thrive.

As part of the consultation process, businesses identified four main areas where they'd like to see improvements, and these form the basis of the BID's business plan for its initial five-year term.



The improvements were clustered into four main objectives, aimed at making Bognor Regis: -

- 1. A well-known town centre:** by improving the perception and image of Bognor Regis
- 2. A welcoming town centre:** by helping reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- 3. An active town centre at night:** by helping to stimulate the evening and night-time economy
- 4. Better parking:** by making it easier for visitors and staff to park in town

YEAR 1 ACHIEVEMENTS

Objective 1: A well-known town centre:

improving the perception and image of Bognor Regis

Promoting Bognor Regis

Businesses tasked the BID with promoting the town centre as a family-friendly shopping destination to existing residents, students and Butlin's visitors.

At the start of its first term, the BID partnered with Love Bognor Regis, a brand new, high quality website designed to showcase the best of Bognor Regis. The website went live in July 2018, and the BID pays for a basic listing for all BID Area businesses.

The BID continues to work with Love Bognor Regis and its sister company, VINCO Marketing, to create professional promotional material for events, utilising the impressive reach of the Love Bognor Regis website and its associated social media channels to raise awareness of Bognor Regis across a wide audience.

Events:

During the consultation process, businesses said they wanted to see more public events, both large and small. In its first year, the BID developed a calendar of events that it would deliver either independently, or by collaborating and partnering with other agencies and companies. It's important to recognise that events by themselves won't necessarily lead to a direct increase in sales or visitors to your business, but they do make the town centre a vibrant and attractive place to be, giving people the opportunity to experience something different. The hope is that, by bringing people into the town centre for an event experience, they will stay on for, and come back to your business.

Halloween 2018

In October 2018 the BID contributed financially to the Spirit FM themed Halloween Trail and live broadcast from London Road. The event tied in with other, long-running community organised Halloween activities and was hugely successful in bringing people into the town centre to take part in the fun. As a result, the BID has incorporated Halloween into its regular event calendar, with plans in place for a "Spooktacular" 2019, aiming to increase footfall for both the day and night-time economies.



Christmas 2018

The BID delivered three late-night shopping and weekend events to raise Bognor Regis's profile as a shopping and family experience destination for the Christmas period. The focus was on creating a fun, family friendly experience that would attract footfall, encourage dwell time and draw people to the different shopping areas of the town centre.

The BID worked with BRTC, ADC, Savill's and Coles' Ice Rink with the idea of creating a consistent theme for the town centre, co-ordinating design elements and timetables to ensure a smooth flow of events.

The Christmas programme included a range of professional street performance artists, local semi-professional and amateur musicians and members of local performance groups, the purchase of a professional grade snow machine, payment for local professional face painting services and the provision of a fully dressed Christmas tree in a prominent town centre location. The total spend on Christmas 2018 was just under £21,000.

The weekend activities proved to be a big draw, with Saturday events attracting an average 17,325 visitors, and Sunday events attracting an average 9,996 visitors to the town centre. This represents an average 10% increase for Saturday and 2% increase for Sunday attendance compared to the previous year. The late-night shopping events were not as popular, with only a negligible increase in footfall from the previous year.

Valentine's Day 2019

The BID's mini Valentine's event cost just £200, but gained a lot of attention, with significant engagement on social media and coverage in the local press. The BID purchased 50 large red bows from a local florist, which were tied to lampposts and street furniture all around the BID Area. Attached to the bows were small plastic hearts, which people could take to local participating businesses and exchanged for a small gift provided by the BR BID - again purchased from a local business.

Fifteen different retail businesses took part in the "Love from Bognor Regis" heart exchange, all of which received both additional footfall to their stores, and specific mentions on social media and the press.

Key figures: Valentines 2019

Cost: £200
Social Media reach: 57,717

Year 2 Events Easter 2019

The town centre was buzzing on Easter Saturday 2019. Working in partnership with Spirit FM, BR BID Ltd planned and delivered a full day of Easter events, including: a live broadcast from the top of London Road, professional street performance artists, a mobility scooter rally (in partnership with Mobility & Comfort), and a "Bunny Hop" character hunt event (in partnership with Unique Knit & Sew.)

The date of the BID event corresponded with the date of the BRSFL sea front funfair, lights switch on and fireworks, as well as Easter themed activities at both the Museum and Alexandra Theatre. The BID chose to jointly promote these events for businesses within the BID Area, creating the effect of an Easter Events "package".

The cost of the event totalled £5,000, of which nearly 40% was for pre-event advertising and a four-hour live broadcast from Spirit FM.

Analysis of footfall figures shows that the BID's Easter 2019 event contributed a 24% increase in visitors to the town centre compared to Easter Saturday in the previous year. On an unusually hot and sunny Saturday, people chose to go into town for an experience, rather than staying on the beach!

Key figures: Easter 2019

Cost: £5000
Footfall: + 24%

Independents "Day" 2019

The BID celebrated Bognor Regis's Independent Businesses on 4th July 2019 by creating the "Four Your High Street" campaign. Over the weekend of the 4th July, independent businesses were invited to create special offers based around the number four and given specially designed "chalkboard" posters to display in their windows. Brightly coloured banners were created and displayed for an extended period in the London Road, and participating businesses were showcased through social media posts on the BID and Love Bognor Regis's channels. Whilst the event was not expected to have a significant impact on footfall, it successfully drew attention to the number and range of independent businesses that bring variety to Bognor Regis.

The BR BID Culture Fund

Businesses have directed the BID to deliver quality events which improve the cultural offer in the town centre, by supporting and "piggy backing" off existing events and bringing more activities into the town centre. These types of events are very important, providing a rich and varied offering of entertainment and the arts that will attract visitors and locals alike, increasing footfall and, in turn, challenging misplaced perceptions of Bognor Regis.

To achieve this, the BID has created a "Culture Fund", giving individuals, groups and organisations the opportunity to apply for financial assistance to put on high quality events within the BID Area. The aim of this grant scheme is to help local artists, photographers, musicians and performers bring their ideas for events to life. This will, in turn, enrich Bognor Regis's offering in terms of entertainment, artistic and cultural pursuits, making our town more attractive for people to visit and engage with.

Using the fund, the BID has already been able to support the Southdowns Folk Festival 2018 and Blakefest 2019 and enable a higher quality range of nationally acclaimed soloists to perform at the annual Opera Night.

The General Market

The BID's Business Plan highlights the need to promote the town centre as a family-friendly shopping destination to existing residents, students and Butlin's visitors. One of the ways to entice visitors into a town centre is through a vibrant General Market. The BID took responsibility for the General Market in November 2018 and has been working hard to bring in a range of reliable traders selling quality merchandise, whilst being sensitive to the existing offering from town businesses

Objective 2: A welcoming town centre: helping reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

Community Warden

Following a full tendering process, the BID appointed SWL to provide a full-time Community Warden service for Bognor Regis. This is in addition to the rota of Wardens funded by the Southern Co-Op. The full-time warden was appointed in September 2018. The £35,000 annual cost of the Warden is generously supported by Bognor Regis Town Council, which means the actual cost to the BID is £25,000 per annum.

The Community Warden has proven to be an effective addition to the Bognor Regis BID Area, as their uniformed presence acts as a deterrent to offenders, is a direct point of call for businesses and provides essential information for the Police and other agencies.

BCRP

In less than twelve months, the BID has established a fully operational Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP), which has now been recommended for accreditation. The BCRP is a formal structure that includes a range of business crime reduction initiatives, including the DISC App for recording and reporting incidents, the Shop Radio scheme and the Exclusion scheme. This structure ensures that the BID's BCRP is well organised, operates within clear guidelines, and does not breach data protection laws in the way we collect, store and share sensitive information about individuals.

Full accreditation within such a short timeframe is a major achievement, and means we are now able to receive much more detailed information from Sussex Police. Membership of the BCRP is open to all businesses within the BID Area at no additional charge to levy paying businesses, and only £90 per annum for non-levy payers.

BCRP: Key figures (at 4th September 2019)

- 36 Business members
- 60 active users of DISC
- 643 reported incidents
- 13 offenders excluded from BCRP Members' businesses

Cleanliness and maintenance

The BID works closely with public and private stakeholders to improve the standards of cleaning and maintenance in the town centre, over and above what is currently being provided. In its first year of operation, the BID organised a "Spring Clean" event, which included a free fascia cleaning service for businesses, working with partners in ADC Cleansing to arrange clearance of problem areas (even when on private land), and a donation of high visibility jackets to benefit other community clean-up teams.

The BID continues to focus on specific problem areas where cleanliness and anti-social behaviour is an issue, working with landlords, business and residential tenants and other stakeholders on an "alley-gating" scheme. This can be a frustratingly slow process, as it takes time to identify all of the landowners and tenants affected and then achieve their consent to the work. However, the overall benefit to specific areas, and to perceptions of the whole town is a worthy outcome.

The BID continues to represent business concerns and find workable solutions in a range of forums including the Joint Arun Action Group, the Bognor Regis Local Action Team, and through its direct relationships with the Police through the Business Crime Reduction Partnership. In its first year, the BID initiated and facilitated a multi-agency meeting with nine different departments and agencies represented to address issues of rough sleeping and concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour.

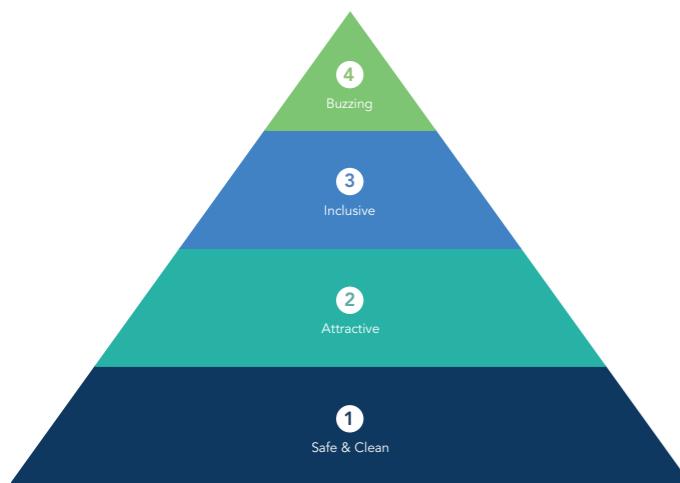
Objective 3: An active town centre at night: by helping to stimulate the evening and night-time economy

In its first year of operations, the BID made a long term commitment to the Night Time Economy by financing the reinstatement of seafront lights to Gloucester Road, where seven columns are now wrapped in festoon lighting. Gloucester Road is an important gateway to the seafront, and the lighting helps channel night-time visitors approaching from the east onto the Esplanade and towards the town centre.

Working with the University of Chichester, the BID conducted a research study into student spending, with a particular focus on the night-time economy. The final report reveals some extremely interesting findings about the changing habits and preferences of university students, and makes recommendations as to how local businesses could adapt to engage with more of the growing student population.

One of the key findings of the research is the perception of Bognor Regis being unsafe at night. The BID's focus has therefore been on improving this situation for all businesses through its development of the BCRP. Following recent accreditation, this can now be offered out to the night-time economy as a cost effective alternative to the existing Pub Watch scheme.

As part of this roll out, the BID will be working with Night Time Economy businesses to implement the principles of the "Ask for Angela" campaign, whereby customers (particularly women) are able to discreetly signal their need for staff support in difficult situations.



Source: Portman Group: Encouraging a thriving and diverse night time economy



Objective 4: Better parking: by making it easier for visitors and staff to park in town

The BID successfully negotiated with Arun District and Bognor Regis Town Council to offer the Two-Hour Free Parking Disc for January to December 2019. The Disc continues to be incredibly popular, with both residents and visitors to Bognor Regis. The two-hour parking scheme is made possible through a financial contribution from BRTC and the BID to Arun District Council for the use of their parking spaces, with all design, production and administrative costs paid for by the BID. All profits from sales of the parking discs are reinvested back into the BID Area.

In its first year, the BID introduced a "Special Offers" booklet which was given out with the parking discs. The booklet was intended to encourage "parkers" to become "partakers" and was effective in increasing footfall to participating businesses. The BID is now in negotiation with ADC for an extended contract for the two-hour parking scheme and plans to continue with the special offer booklet.

Whilst the BID does not have direct control of any of the Bognor Regis Car Parks, we continue to lobby and encourage our partners to make improvements to their visibility, accessibility and ease of use.

Member Services

The BID is here to support and inform businesses, and the first year saw the introduction of regular networking events, a quarterly newsletter and frequent emails highlighting opportunities for businesses to get involved. The BID Co-Ordinator has directly supported a number of businesses needing advice on putting on events and saved other businesses money by informing them about grants and reliefs they were previously unaware of.

Accessing funding available through Arun District Council, the BID arranged for a series of "Love Your Customer" Workshops, delivered by local training company Progressive Results Training. In addition to the workshops, businesses were offered the opportunity for a free One to One mentoring session to look at any aspect of their business.



Looking forward: Year 2 onwards

Now an established business entity with a core staff, the BID will continue to work with and for our businesses, pushing forward to achieve the goals you have set us in the four main objectives.

Year 2 will see the completion of a full annual calendar of events, with an enhanced programme for Halloween and an expanded vision for Christmas.

The BCRP will achieve full accreditation, enabling a more fluid and detailed exchange of information with the Police and other agencies. The BCRP can then be rolled out to the night-time economy as a cost-effective alternative to existing schemes. The completion of alley-gating and cleansing projects started towards the end of Year 1 will improve the cleanliness and safety in specific areas of the town and be extended to other areas.

The night-time economy will become a priority focus for Year 2, with the BID extending the BCRP, and by working with night time economy businesses to benefit from the research into student spending habits and preferences.

We will continue to inform you about funds and grants that could help you save money in your business and support you with any events you want to put on. Now fully staffed, our aim is to make more personal visits to specific businesses, in addition to continuing face to face opportunities through networking events, and social media and emailed updates.

We are excited to be continuing our work with you, and for you, in 2019-20.

BID BUDGET

When all eligible businesses contribute, the BID Levy generates a maximum £141,000 per annum. However, this is reduced by non-payment, a change of use of premises from business to residential, and change of use of business's eligibility (e.g.: where a charity shop stops retailing, and is then exempt from BID contributions.)

The BID also generates further income from the production and sale of the two-hour parking disc, and from the General Market. This brought the working capital for Year 1: 2018 – 2019 to £*****.

The following headline figures and pie chart show a breakdown of spending for the first financial year 2018-2019:

Headline figures for Year 1: 2018-19:

Levy information:

- Total monies received from Levy:
- Cost of administering and collecting Levy
- Percentage of Levy Income collected:

Business running costs:

- Rent of offices and storage:
- Employee costs:
- Office admin costs

Well Known Town:

Total budget allocated to Well Known Town

Total cost of Year 1 Events:

Income from General Market:

Welcoming Town:

Total budget allocated to Welcoming Town:

Total cost of Community Warden Services (to BR BID)

Night-time Economy:

Total budget allocated to Night-time Economy:
(Angelika payment?)

Better Parking:

Total cost of producing parking discs

Financial Summary:

At the end of the first financial year, the BID carried forward a £49,912 surplus to Year 2. The surplus can mainly be attributed to savings in employee costs, and income generated from the parking disc and General Markets.



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As the Chairman of Bognor Regis Business Improvement District Ltd, I'm proud of what we've achieved in our first full business year.

Despite the lengthy administrative and legal requirements in setting up the business, the necessary time taken to appoint a full Board, employees and additional service providers, we have managed to deliver across all areas of our remit.

I am proud of the BID Team – the Board of Directors who volunteer their time, skills and experience to attend meetings, support events, and even take a hands-on role in the day to day running of operations. And its employees, who go beyond the expectations of their role to deliver excellent service and value for money to benefit businesses in the BID Area.

In its first twelve months of operations, the BID has proven to be an effective partner, working collaboratively with stakeholders and other agencies whilst still retaining its independence and identity. This means that we are able to work with, but also challenge our partners in order to achieve the shared vision of "the best for Bognor Regis".

This report highlights the BID's achievements against its four key objectives in its first year of operations, looks ahead to plans for Year Two, and shows how your BID Levy contributions are being invested directly into your town.

We appreciate that times are challenging for all businesses, and so, on behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your contribution to the BID Levy, which makes the additional services we provide possible. The BID is committed to investing your contributions in the most effective way to deliver the improvements you've told us you want to see.

We start Year 2 in unusual times, with national political and economic uncertainty affecting consumer habits and attitudes. It's an established fact that the High Street is changing – the growth of online shopping and services continues to challenge traditional bricks and mortar-based businesses, and more and more residential units are appearing in our town and city centres.

Bognor Regis cannot escape the effect of these national trends, but we can embrace the opportunities they present. Together, we can adapt and engage the next generation of town centre residents and users and give them what they want, and what they need. We can create new reasons to bring people into the town centre, to view the space as a place for community experiences and fun. We can take back the areas that have become unloved and we can make them cleaner and safer for everyone to enjoy.

Together, we will help Bognor Regis achieve its full potential.

Paul Wells, Chairman
Bognor Regis Business Improvement District Ltd