

BID Huntingdon Annual Report 2016 - 2017

Year Five

**Aiming to make Huntingdon Town Centre a better place
for visitors, residents and businesses**

Introduction

BID Huntingdon, the first Business Improvement District in Cambridgeshire, was launched in November 2012 creating a true 'town team'. The 2012-2017 Business Plan, which can be found at www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk, details four major project areas and this Annual Report details the achievements of the fifth year 2016-2017.

BID Huntingdon is an independent, not-for-profit company controlled by the private sector. The Board of Directors is made up of up to 20 volunteers who are elected from a cross section of businesses. They run the BID and are responsible for delivery of the projects.

In July 2012, Huntingdon town centre businesses with a rateable value over £5000 (at that time) voted to establish a Business Improvement District (BID). Of those businesses that voted, 81% voted yes by number and 85% voted yes by rateable value to implement the Business Plan 2012-2017.

The BID is funded by a levy of 1.5% of the rateable value of each eligible business (those with a rateable value over £5000) in the BID area (see map below). The total income for BID Huntingdon in year five was £172,733 which included £17439 from projects, events and promotional space. Invoices for year five of the BID levy were issued in October 2016; monies were then collected by Huntingdonshire District Council and passed to BID Huntingdon. Financial information can be found on page 10 of this report and in the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 30 September 2017.

Map showing the BID area



There are four projects in the Business Plan 2012-2017

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Project 1 | Clean, Safe & Welcoming |
| Project 2 | Marketing, Promotions & Events |
| Project 3 | Business Support |
| Project 4 | Access, including car parking |

There are now a significant number of projects and events that have been completed or started in year five and will continue over the next five years. This Annual Report details the work carried out from October 2016 to September 2017.

More details can be found at www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk

Welcome

Chairman **Jon Kerby**
Vice Chairman **Graham Campbell**

Welcome to BID Huntingdon's fifth Annual Report.

The work of BID Huntingdon focuses on the success of the town as a destination and particularly the businesses in the BID geographical area. The work undertaken in year five has followed the four projects detailed in the Business Plan and this Annual Report is an overview of the achievements. You can see from the timeline on the following page the projects that have been completed in year five.

In year five, the BID Huntingdon Board of up to twenty volunteer Directors was a balanced combination of existing Directors and new Directors, with a broad spectrum of business experience from across all sectors of the town. The BID Board believes that BID Huntingdon is well placed to deliver projects that give a real return on your investment. Our thanks go to all the Directors for their time, support and expertise and also to the BID Huntingdon team who have seen the various projects through from conception to delivery.



Jon Kerby



Graham Campbell

Timeline of activities and projects

2016

October

Chilli Fiesta

November

Christmas marketing for the town
Christmas lights sponsorship
Christmas Switch On event
LIVE magazine November/December

December

Christmas marketing for the town
FREE after 3pm parking
500 FREE BID Huntingdon canvas bags distributed
Christmas competition
Christmas Craft Fair in partnership with Cambs Lock

2017

January/February

LIVE magazine January/February
Valentine's competition

March

Bunting in town centre
LIVE magazine March/April
Spring competition
Spring Craft & Vintage Fair in partnership with Cambs Lock
BID renewal business survey
BID renewal business newsletter

April

FREE First Aid training

May

LIVE magazine May/June
Option to include a FREE beauty promotion advert in LIVE
Beauty competition
FREE First Aid training
FREE marketing overview – EBC Media & PR

June

Summer market
BID renewal business plan delivered
BID renewal ballot papers delivered
Declaration result of BID renewal

July/August

LIVE magazine July/August
Summer entertainment competition
Covent Garden Entertainers & more
Where's Wally Competition

September

LIVE magazine September/October
Halloween Competition



Project 1 Clean, Safe & Welcoming

Town Rangers

Since January 2013, three Town Rangers have been working within the town making a significant difference in the BID area. This has been a successful project and the Rangers are an important part of the day to day running of the town. Thanks go to all the Rangers for their commitment to the role when faced with a wide variety of significant challenges on the streets of Huntingdon.

The Rangers cover the hours of 09.00 to 17.00 Monday to Friday and 09.30 to 16.00 on Saturdays and are now an established part of the wider town team with the Police, CCTV, HBAC, store security and the businesses.

Each Ranger undergoes several weeks of training covering licensing laws, health & safety and reporting procedures. Add to that dealing with first aid incidents and there's more to our Rangers than you think.

The Rangers are the 'friendly face' of Huntingdon and offer help and advice to its many visitors; from giving directions and helping people find their cars, administering first aid to re-uniting lost children with anxious parents.

The table below shows just some of the incidents that the Town Rangers deal with on a daily basis. What the table does not reflect is the emotion of a first aid incident, the anxiety of the victims of purse thefts, the frustration of anti-social behaviour and street drinking, blocked drains, uneven paving causing trips and falls for pedestrians with the resultant first aid to be administered.

Examples of incidents logged by the Town Rangers

October 2016 to September 2017

Graffiti / fly poster / trolley removal	1762
Lost children/vulnerable adults	38
Shoplifting	132
Tourist information / directions	1673
Litter / fly tipping	111
Drugs & alcohol related	46
Anti-social behaviour	87
First Aid	56
Business visits	1665
Delivery of material for businesses	312



Bunting



Colourful rainbow bunting, installed in March decorated the town throughout the summer adding a vibrant feel to the Town centre.

Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime (HBAC)

Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime, established in 2004, aims to 'Reduce members' losses and thereby contribute to the economic viability and prosperity of the area'. BID Huntingdon supports over 80 businesses by offering FREE membership to the HBAC scheme with the aim of making Huntingdon a safer place.

HBAC provides support by working closely in partnership with the Police and CCTV; analysing crimes, incidents and anti-social behaviour; distributing photographs of known offenders; issuing Exclusion Notices for prolific offenders; managing a two-way radio scheme (additional cost) that links businesses, Police and CCTV communication via meetings, newsletters and training. More information at www.hbac.org.uk

Project 2 Marketing, Promotions & Events

Huntingdon First - the marketing name of BID Huntingdon

Marketing Huntingdon as a destination has always been a key project for BID Huntingdon. The brand 'Huntingdon First' is used in marketing communications including the website, Facebook and Twitter, as well as for promotional events throughout the town.

Marketing and PR

Regular press releases were issued throughout the year on a variety of topics, which achieved a 98% uptake in local press, coupled with regular articles and adverts in the Hunts Post as well as various magazines such as Discover Cambridge and Visit Cambridge, which have been used to promote Huntingdon.

LIVE Magazine



Published bi-monthly, the magazine is used to promote a variety of local information including business updates, promotions, events, developments, social media, Huntingdon First website, promotion of independent businesses, competitions and local news. LIVE magazine is distributed to over 9400 businesses and homes in and around Huntingdon and there is also a digital version on the website.

Website

www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk

Visitors to Huntingdon now use Huntingdon First's website as one of the first ports of call to find information on what's on, businesses, transport and history. Since its launch in July 2013, the website has grown with the content being regularly updated to include news, events, history and 'Find a Business', which is an extremely popular function and beneficial to the businesses.

The website performance is tracked using Google analytics.

October 2016 to September 2017

96087 visits; 73731 were from new users and 22356 from returning users.

Most popular pages	Number of users
Home Page	51589
What's On	11875
Shopping	10336
Find a Business	4115
Events	3120

Facebook now accounts for 2031 referrals to the website.

Facebook/Huntingdon First

With regular posts averaging eight a week, the Facebook page has grown with 'Likes' and now achieves a good 'reach' (number of people seeing posts) and increased 'shares'. The page is used to promote business offers, BID Huntingdon events, local business events, town developments and news. Please 'Like' our page and link it to your business Facebook page. If you would like help setting up a Facebook page, ask us for advice.

Twitter

Set up in November 2014, @HuntingdonFirst has a good following as well as following local and regional Twitter accounts that are of interest. Hootsuite posts to Facebook and also posts to Twitter. This is still the case plus with stand-alone tweets.

Chilli Fiesta

Due to its popularity Chilli Fest UK visited for the third time in October 2016.

Christmas 2016



Christmas Lights Switch On Event

The Christmas Committee, drawn from a variety of Huntingdon organisations, organises this event, which is funded by BID Huntingdon and Huntingdon Town Council with in kind support from other organisations.

The BID Huntingdon team plays a large part in the organisation for the day alongside Huntingdon Town Council. This remains the biggest annual event for the town and took place on Sunday 20 November from 1pm to

5pm with HCR 104fm broadcasting music from the Market Square. FREE street entertainment, Santa in his Grotto and the evening ended with a fantastic laser light show, which all helped to draw a large crowd to this popular event.

Christmas Lights

Installation of the lights are jointly funded by BID Huntingdon, Huntingdon Town Council and Churchmanor Estates.

Christmas Marketing

Christmas 2016 was promoted in a variety of ways. Flyers and posters were printed, coupled with a package of marketing and promotions with the Hunts Post and radio ad's with HCRfm.

Craft & Vintage Fair

This popular event organised in partnership with Cambs Lock attracted footfall to the town in December for the Christmas Craft Fair and again in March for the Spring Craft & Vintage Fair.



Summer Entertainment, with Covent Garden Entertainers

Following the popularity of professional 'Covent Garden' acts, another act was booked to entertain shoppers and visitors on Saturday 29 July. World-renowned performer Felicity Footloose, brought high class entertainment. Additional free entertainment included Dave the Balloon Man and face painters with Jacen compering and entertaining the crowds playing his guitar and singing well know hits from the 60's and 70's. Town centre business Generations Dance also drew crowds with their amazing dance routines. 'A' boards and flags were placed strategically to promote the fact that the events were organised by Huntingdon First.

Support for the Markets

BID Huntingdon supports the markets in Huntingdon with marketing and promotion particularly in Huntingdon LIVE magazine, Huntingdon First website, Facebook and Twitter. There are traditional markets every Wednesday and Saturday and a fortnightly Friday Farmers' Market, all organised by Huntingdonshire District Council.

Focus on Independent Businesses & Competitions

Competitions held at Christmas, Easter and in the summer proved popular. Marketing included posters for shop windows, newspaper adverts and promotion in all Huntingdon First options: LIVE magazine, website, Facebook and Twitter. Independent Month in August featured a 'Where's Wally' challenge. The Christmas competition included vouchers as a prize for use in independent businesses. The continued support and encouragement from Niche Comics has again been very welcome.

Events

Throughout the year BID Huntingdon has supported many local events with marketing, promotion, advice and support. All events are promoted where possible in LIVE magazine, on Huntingdon First website, Facebook and Twitter. Examples include Town Centre Churches' projects of the 'Living Nativity' at Christmas and 'The Beach Party' in summer, Huntingdon Music Festival, The Riverside Gala, The Carnival, Potato Day, Shakespeare at the George and events at the library.

BID Bear

The BID Bear branded mascot has proved to be a great attraction and brought smiles to many faces as BID Bear handed out stickers saying 'I met BID Bear'.

BID Bear made appearances at Christmas for the Christmas Lights Switch On, on two Saturdays before Christmas and on a Saturday in July to support the Summer Entertainment and, weather permitting, makes an appearance at all BID Huntingdon events.



Project 3 Business Support

Supporting all businesses in the BID area is the primary objective of BID Huntingdon and this takes a variety of forms. Many of the initiatives are free to BID businesses and the addition of more projects will be a focus again next year.

Newsletter

The regular newsletter, which was a new initiative for year three, has continued to be distributed to all BID businesses. It carries important news about BID Huntingdon organised events and is directed at helping businesses to understand how the team at BID Huntingdon can assist in various areas such as First Aid, social media training and events. Information on a variety of business-related topics are included such as how to contact the Rangers and more.



'Springboard' Footfall Counter

In early 2014 a footfall counter, counting 24/7, was installed in the High Street. The statistics are received via a detailed report which is received weekly and monthly showing daily information and even the weather. Footfall reports are available by email and on Huntingdon First website: www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/bid-huntingdon/what-do-we-do/business-support/footfall-information

Empty Units

Each month a list of the empty retail units is updated and made available to BID businesses and any businesses or entrepreneurs who enquire about the opportunities to open a business. The vacancy rate in 2016/17 has been between 7% and 8%. On the website there are three pages dedicated to Commercial Property, Estate & Letting Agents, and developments www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk/for-business/property-opportunities

FREE Promotional Space

There are three areas available for promotional space in Huntingdon: the Market Square, St Benedict's Court and St Germain Walk.

If you would like to use this space to promote your business, please contact the BID office. BID Huntingdon businesses can use this space for free and the space is also used to generate income from third parties, bringing colour and movement to the streets.

Churchmanor Estates allow the use of the St Germain Walk area and the other two spaces are secured by an annual licence from Huntingdonshire District Council.

FREE Delivery of Promotional Material within the BID area

Throughout the year, flyers and promotional material have been delivered for BID Huntingdon businesses by the Town Rangers at the same time as LIVE magazine. Flyers are also distributed for businesses throughout the year to shoppers and visitors.



FREE Training

FREE 'Emergency First Aid at Work' training courses held in April and May were well attended.

Twenty four more businesses are now first aid trained.

Business Communication & Support

Essential information of use to BID businesses is distributed by BID Huntingdon on a regular basis via letters, flyers, newsletters and emails.

We help businesses in as many areas as we possibly can. From fly tipping to anti-social behaviour and licences for charity and raffles, the team will advise and inform on all aspects. Our vast range of contacts means we usually know who to contact to get the relevant information.

Project 4 Access, including car parking

Parking Offers and Parking Map

FREE after 3pm car parking was widely promoted in District Council car parks in December 2016. This increased footfall after 3pm on weekdays in December 2016 by 53.6 %. The car parking map is available online.



Town Maps and Guide to Shops & Services

The folded pocket size town centre map which incorporates the car parking options and guide to shops and services in one easy to read map is available from various outlets in the town centre and from any of the Town Rangers and also available at www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk. There are nine wall-mounted Guide to Shops and Services signs around the town.

Support for Shopmobility

BID Huntingdon supports Shopmobility with marketing and promotion particularly in Huntingdon LIVE magazine, Huntingdon First website, Facebook and Twitter together with providing an annual financial donation.



**Huntingdon
Town Centre**
Pocket map and guide to
Shops and Services



Company Information

Financial Summary 2016 - 2017

Income

BID Levy Contributions	£155,294
Other income (including promotional space)	£ 17,439
Total	£172,733

Expenditure

£177,316

Full details of the end of year financial accounts are available at www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk

BID Huntingdon Directors Year Five 2016 - 2017

Jon Kerby	Chairman	Cambridge Interiors
Graham Campbell	Vice Chairman	
Leon Beards		Churchmanor Estates plc
Rebecca Britton		Urban & Civic
Representative		Luminus Group Ltd
Tony Ogle		The Victoria
Steve Cox		Premier Travel
Cllr Brett Morrell		Huntingdon Town Council
Cllr Stephen Cawley		Huntingdonshire District Council
Rod Galbraith		Chequers Shoes
Nicola Jarmaine		Kingfisher Funerals
Daniel Mansfield		Hunts Post
Jeffrey Young		Wilko
Celia Barden		Shopmobility
Alex Akman		Alex's Café Restaurant (Resigned Jul 17)
Cllr Peter Brown		C.C.C (Resigned June 17)
David Potter		Waitrose (Resigned Sep 17)
Susan O'Hara		Shopmobility (Resigned July 17)
Cllr Roger Harrison		H.D.C (Resigned Aug 17)

BID Team 2016-2017

Sue Bradshaw	BID Manager
Jeannette Rowden	Administrator & Project Co-ordinator
Michael	Town Ranger
Julie	Town Ranger
Nathan	Town Ranger (resigned Aug 2017)
Bryony Barton-Carroll	Marketing Consultant
Mark Ellis	Company Secretary

The Next Five Years

The aim of BID Huntingdon is to continue to deliver the successful initiatives that businesses have found valuable; the Town Rangers, HBAC and Huntingdon First Marketing. We will build on the successes and provide an enhanced programme of events to boost footfall and entice shoppers with more car parking promotions.

To refresh the approach, the main Project Categories now come under 'Enhance', 'Promote' and 'Support'. Please see 'The Next Five Years' Business Plan at www.huntingdonfirst.co.uk

If you would like more information about the projects that BID Huntingdon is undertaking, or ways in which you could get involved, please contact the BID team:

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