

Annual Report

2022 - 2023



Welcome to the Solihull BID Annual Report



Mel Palmer
Solihull BID, CEO

The past 12 months has seen strong growth in all BID project areas, our post pandemic building blocks provided a strong foundation for us to achieve our focused targets.

Our safe and secure project has seen increased engagement with not only existing partners, but also new links built with our local schools and colleges' leadership teams to deter and manage student behaviour relating to ASB and criminal activity in the town. The DISC crime recording app has enabled us to record and provide detailed data to share with relevant partners and to assist accurate shaping of our future plans.

Keeping the town centre environment safe is critical to the success of businesses in the area and to keep visitors to the centre feeling safe and reassured.

New openings and growth of existing businesses continues, adding strength to the Solihull economic footprint. BID multimedia promotions of the town centre showcasing our innovative programme of events continues to build a robust attractive offer to the visitor economy.

Our events programme this year is packed with activity to attract visitors old and new to our innovative townscape. Our offices and professional services are the backbone of Solihull and as the workforce has started to flood back to the office spaces, we are seeing the positive impact that this brings.

The BID team and I remain passionately committed to supporting the amazing two square miles of success that is Solihull Town Centre.



Kevin Johns
Chairman

Reflecting on the past year, I am proud to announce that our commitment to growth and development in all BID project areas has yielded remarkable results. The hard work and innovation from the town centre businesses and teams has enabled us to surpass our focused targets.

Our safe and secure project has not only strengthened our partnerships with existing stakeholders but has also fostered new connections with our local education providers. This collegiate approach has delivered excellent results in deterring crime and anti-

social behaviour in that sector. The Disc App has also become a key reporting tool to reinforce our reporting to the local policing team. Ensuring the safety of our town centre environment remains paramount and is at the top of the agenda for all sectors of business within the town centre economy.

The continuous growth of both new and existing businesses is an encouraging sign of strong growth in the region. Our BID promotions, across all media channels have successfully crafted an enticing experience for the visitor economy.

This year's events program is brimming with activity, designed to captivate both loyal and new visitors to the town. The returning workforce have brought a new confidence to the area and the associated spend is also reflected in this.

Alongside our dedicated BID team, my unwavering commitment remains steadfast in supporting and uplifting the remarkable triumph that is Solihull Town Centre.



Tony Elvin
Vice Chairman

It is thankfully a pleasure to provide comments for the Solihull BID annual report.

Touchwood and Solihull are really bucking the trend for footfall and sales across the country, thanks to the support of local people putting their feet on the ground and spending their time and money in Solihull.

There are very few towns that can boast the tenant occupancy that is evident here. Touchwood occupancy sits at just over 95%, with the rest of the town in a similar position. Already this year we have welcomed Mango, Levi's and Mint Velvet to our fashion portfolio and will be introducing more new and exciting brands as the year progresses. But why is Solihull, as a destination, in such demand?

I mentioned the support from local people, but beyond that, in order to foster that support, we need a viable proposition when they get here. As a destination we are cohesive, engaged, forward thinking and outward looking. Partners and stakeholders across Solihull work closely together, Touchwood, the Council, our local businesses, local people, the Chamber, the Police, the schools and colleges. The BID has such an important part to play as the glue that

binds us all together. Collectively we listen to feedback, we listen to each other and make improvements for the betterment of our community. And we have a John Lewis!

Over time the BID has evolved to better meet the needs of levy payers, customer service roles have been replaced by town centre security to give visitors confidence to spend time here, and support stores suffering from shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. In keeping with the prevalent collaborative approach, the local Police have also increased resources to ensure that proactive patrols take place every day of the week. Schools and Colleges are supporting us to address anti-social behaviour and this whole joined up approach is working well.

Something that has been a main stay of the BID offer, is the popular events programme. Even for businesses that do not directly benefit on the day from such activity, our events are a timely reminder to visitors, who may not otherwise come into town, what a fantastic place it is to be and provides a platform to showcase all the wonderful new businesses that have appeared since their last visit.

The BID is a vital cog in securing the future for Solihull as a compelling, fun, and safe destination.

Animating our Public Space

Events and Festivals

Solihull BID have been delivering key landmark events for the past 13 years and our expertise and knowledge of the events industry and the changing landscape of town centres has helped us to deliver these events to the highest standard.

We have grown the event portfolio each year to ensure we offer something new to retain our visitor interest. For the 2023 Jazz Festival we have added a 'Mini Marvels disco' and kids superhero parade with free balloons, face painters and entertainers, this ensures we are continually reminding families of the free activity to enjoy in the centre. Iconic tribute acts of Queen and Little Mix kick start the Jazz Festival, designed to capture another sector of audience who may not consider a Jazz Festival as an option, and we ensure all this entertainment is free to Solihull visitors driving the loyalty factor to our customers.

We have continued to support the homeless charity Change into Action and incorporate the awareness of the charity and fundraising opportunities through all our events.

Our new Solihull Nights project launches this summer with the aim to drive additional footfall to our hospitality venues and the events they are running within the town. This project will also be promoted through the VIP card. Our Jingle Bell Jog and Festive Feast also brought in the crowds and the additional Christmas lights really set the scene for attracting more visitors.

Bringing music, free activity and innovative interactive events for the public to enjoy, and really looking after those valued customers once they are here, is the secret to Solihull's success.



Marketing & Promoting

InSolihull Magazine

The InSolihull Magazine has evolved into the 44-page glossy magazine that boasts about the wonderful Solihull available from sites between Birmingham and London.

Delivered through Royal Mail to various local postcodes, it's also showcased on stands at Birmingham Moor Street, in the Virgin VIP Lounge at Birmingham International and at Solihull, Dorridge and Leamington train stations. The free magazine has been one of our most robust and effective methods to promote everything the town has to offer.

The magazine is also showcased in our local coffee shops and restaurants, with an additional four stands being installed this year in places such as Touchwood, Cineworld and the Core Theatre.

Website

We launched our new look website on the 1st July, with a fresh new look and slick user friendly pages we are thrilled to see how this improves our ability to market the town centre.

Social Media

25,650+

Followers across social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok)

Our Facebook page continues to be our strongest social media presence and posts on the BiD account had a post reach of 1.5million over the last 12 months, with over 340,000 post engagements.

BID Card

The BID card has not lost its appeal and we are continually visiting our office sector businesses to distribute cards to new starters or those who have not yet signed up. Over 55k cards are in circulation and the 152 businesses giving offers, events or discounts report seeing the benefits year on year.

VIP Card

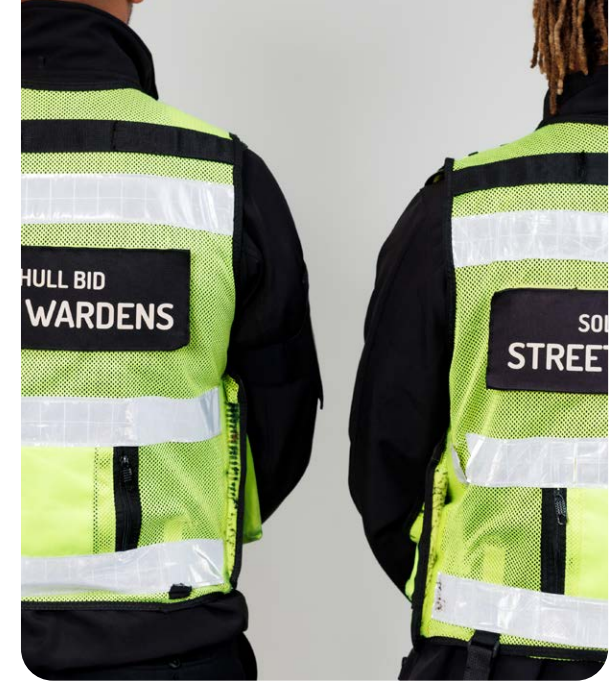
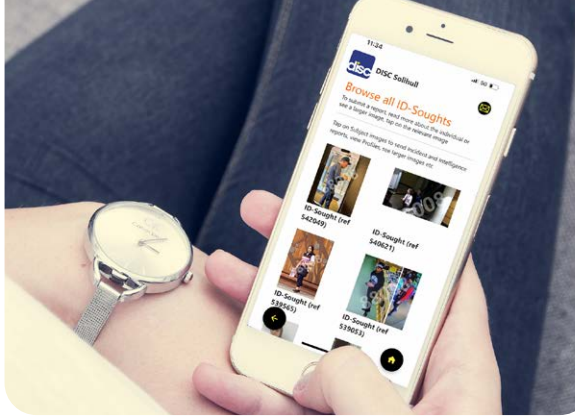
The VIP Card launched in 2022 and is our new footfall driver aimed at the general public. They can benefit from some fabulous offers and also access the what's on section with ease to ensure they always in touch with the town centre events. We have promoted the card through Royal Mail door drops, and give the cards out at each event and in particular through the family sticker trails.

Kids Club

Launched this July, the Kids Club has been set up in response to feedback that the family offer for kids in the town is not as strong as it could be. By launching the Kids Club, based on the sustainability whale logo, carers and parents will have access to a dedicated newsletter, and direct emailing to alert when a children's event is in the town. Businesses with child focused events can also access this promotional tool too.



Safer Solihull



Keep our town safe

Keeping our town centre safe and secure is at the heart of everything we do. Feedback from businesses, locals and visitors has given us a clear mandate to prioritise safety and retain our status as one of the safest and most welcoming areas in the UK.

Our Street Wardens provide a reassuring, welcoming presence to visitors and are hugely appreciated by businesses, providing instant help with any crime related incidents.

Our Street Wardens have recovered over

£58,000

worth of stock in the past 12 months, returning the items to the affected store.

Over 50 retailers on our Solihull town centre retail radio link. This gives businesses instant access to our Street Wardens as well as the local Solihull Police Neighbourhood Team, the CCTV Control Room and Touchwood and Mell Square security.

Over 120 premises have at least one member of staff registered on DISC – our crime reporting app for Solihull town centre. The app, totally GDPR compliant, allows businesses to share intel in real time to their fellow retailers.

We have recently engaged with the local schools and colleges to ensure we are all logging crime on the DISC portal and teaching staff are able to identify repeat offenders.

Solihull BID leads on managing the various retail crime forums, Counter Terrorism training and meetings with the local policing team. Our message of zero tolerance to all crime has never been stronger.

We will now be available for those who wish to speak to us and answer questions in the future.



Business Matters

Solihull is a hotbed of talent for the office and professional service sector, large iconic brands rub shoulders with innovative independents.

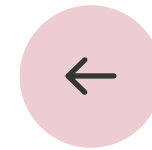
We would love to see more workers return to the office sites on a more regular basis as we are still feeling the gap in lunchtime trade now that a large proportion of staff continue to work a hybrid system between office and home.

We communicate the offers, exciting new openings, new job vacancies, workshops, and training opportunities to our office teams through our website newsletters and social media platforms.

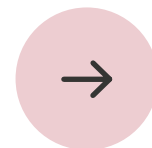
Our Pub Quizzes provide an ideal opportunity to network and feel part of the business community with over 15 different office teams entering for each one, it's also a fun way to meet your business neighbour.

The **BID employee benefit card** provides discounts and offers to over 150 places within the town and highlights the upcoming events, and our **Excellence Awards** give everyone the opportunity to showcase their talented teams. The events and festivals always have an additional giveaway with free lunches or similar to the Solihull workers.

The **Business Expo** is also a fantastic way to sell your businesses to a wider audience and also to see what your competitors are doing at the same time; we have a set date for the Expo and the next one takes place in Spring 2024.



Dedicated **Business Directory** mailed out to 10k homes showcasing the professional services and offices sector



Food Festival



Jazz Festival



Uniquely Solihull

Solihull has a glowing reputation for being one of the best places to live, work and visit. We consistently set the bar high and keep pushing our premium offer and welcoming environment message to the public.

Our dog friendly campaign was a huge success attracting visitors from further afield and new visitors who were thrilled to see the welcome for dog owners into the town.



SOLIHULL
BiD

We are now adding two new strands to our promotions, Solihull Nights, and VIP Kids Club.

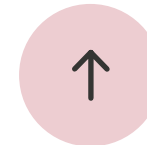
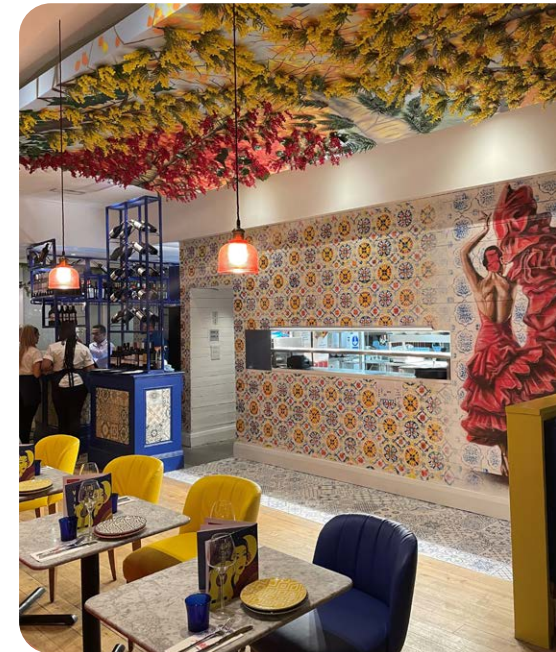
The Solihull Nights campaign will promote our evening economy offer making nights out in Solihull easy to plan and navigate.

The VIP Kids Club event will be launched at the Jazz Festival, aiming to attract our younger visitors to become repeat customers to the town, the emphasis will be on the events and free activity such as the superheroes disco, Dinosaur weekends and Halloween parades.

KIDS CLUB

The VIP Platinum card is our new campaign to attract and retain shoppers, offering discounts and experiences only available in Solihull. 20k cards were distributed through Royal Mail and a further 10k were given out at our events. The cards are a robust way to reinforce the 'shop local' sentiment and positive place association.

Our independent businesses are a critical part of the business landscape, and we ensure we are promoting these companies to showcase our unique offer. Our family trails direct footfall into shops with quirky fun interactive activities to increase the attractiveness of the offers. This year's King's Coronation event and the upcoming Whale's Tale event will be another hit with families enjoying the fun of the trail and our businesses seeing increased sales and footfall.





King's Coronation



Finances

Levy Income:

£633k

Other Income:

£29k

Cost of projects

£510k

Operating Costs

£136k

*THESE ARE THE PROJECTED COSTS
ONLY AS BID END OF FINANCIAL
YEAR IS 31ST JULY.



The BID Board

The BID is governed by a board of voluntary directors made up from all sectors in the business community. Their input is invaluable and our bi-monthly board meetings are an ideal platform to share ideas and best practice.

Want to know more about joining the BID Board ?

email : melanie@solihullbid.co.uk

Kevin Johns

Chairman, Prime Accountants

Tony Elvin

Vice Chairman, Touchwood

Kate Clarke

BNP Paribas

Lewis Collier

Popworld

Syrra Riaz

A Plan Insurance

Alison McGrory

SMBC*

Leon Sloyan

Metro Bank

Lisa Hopkins

Mell Square

Neil Churchard

John Lewis & Partners

**Chief Inspector
Deborah Johnson**

West Midlands Police*

*The BID Board includes some co-opted members including a representative from Solihull Police as well as from Solihull Council, as per the BID regulations.

SOLiHULL BiD

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solihullbid.co.uk

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