

Annual Report

2025



Welcome to the Solihull BID Annual Report



Kevin Johns
Chairman

2024 was the year of elections and none so important to Solihull BID than our renewal ballot. The BID ballot is like any other election, and it allows voters (in the BID's case, its levy payers) an opportunity to vote on their feeling on how the BID has performed over the previous period without any marketing spin.

Having seen how the BID team has engaged with all businesses in the town centre it was no surprise that you, the levy payers, returned a massive YES vote with over 93% of all votes cast being in favour of continuing with the BID (a result any political party can only dream of). Such a massive YES

vote does not happen without the fantastic work of the hard-working BID Team. This BID term (five years) has seen the BID have to deal with massive changes in how our town centre has operated from closing down within six months of the previous ballot due to COVID and then finding new and safe ways of supporting businesses in welcoming people back into the town centre before moving into the new norm.

The BID, like all businesses, undertakes continual review of its activities to provide better support and events during the year to reach as many different groups of people as possible. This has seen the evolution of the Jazz Festival into a Music Festival and the Food Festival to include a drinks element as well as the family Spooktacular over the October half term and the Jingle Bell Jog.

The year ahead will see Solihull BID running the first ever Solihull Pride event in September – a first not only for Solihull but I understand it will be one of very few Pride events run by a BID across the UK.

Over the last eight years it's been an honour to be your Chairman and work closely with the BID Team and the Executive Board to support businesses in what is a great Town Centre. It hasn't been without its challenges – there's been a lot more highs than lows and being able to work in such a positive town centre is a privilege. The AGM will see me stepping down as Chairman and passing the baton on but if elected I will be providing a supportive role on the Board.

My final thanks go to Mel, who has been a pleasure to work aside, and I will miss our meetings where we challenge each other about what's the right approach to different projects. When it came to financials, I came out on top but when it came to what people like and want, Mel was a clear winner! I wish everyone all the best as you head into BID Term 4 (2025-2030).

Thank you.



Tony Elvin
Vice Chairman

“Solihull continues to stand out from the crowd both regionally and on a national level, proving itself time and again to be one of the UK’s most resilient and successful town centres.

“The BID constantly evolves to successfully serve the needs of its levy payers and the local community. This was clearly shown during the renewal ballot held towards the end of last year and such a resounding ‘Yes’ gives the BID a clear mandate to continue its invaluable work in Solihull town centre. By continuing to broaden the reach of its events – which will for the first time include Pride in 2025 – the BID ensures all sections of the local community feel welcome and safe

when visiting Solihull town centre. “An expanded security presence provides visitors the confidence to spend time in our cafes, bars, restaurants and retail businesses during a difficult economic climate for all.

“The BID is the glue that bounds all town centre partners and stakeholders – from us at Touchwood, to Mell Square, Solihull Council, Solihull Police and many more – and that is quite clearly a big reason for its success. Following the successful renewal ballot, we all look forward to championing Solihull town centre for the foreseeable future.”



Melanie Palmer
Solihull BID, Chief Executive

“For the past 12 months we have seen the green shoots of recovery and the future plans for a re-imagined townscape within Mell Square show that Solihull remains the sweet spot for the Midlands.

We will continue to connect our spaces, protect our people and businesses, and collaborate with all partners to deliver a stronger, safer environment for business and people to flourish, developing a brighter future for all.

“We received overwhelming support from our business community in last year’s renewal ballot and that gives us an extremely strong mandate to continue our valuable work until at least 2030. The next decade is going to be transformative for Solihull and we will ensure we take advantage to position the town centre the premier destination of choice in the Midlands.”

Animating our Public Space

Solihull BID have been delivering landmark events for the past 14 years. Through our industry expertise and experience, we have delivered these events to the highest standard.

We have grown our event portfolio each year to ensure we offer something new and retain visitors' interest.

Our 12-month calendar of festivals was rebranded to present Solihull as the place to visit in the region for festivals and events.

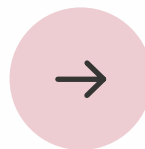
The 2024 **Solihull Food Festival** welcomed back celebrity chefs Glynn Purnell and Aldo Zilli and saw thousands of foodies flock to the town centre. The **Solihull Music Festival** once again encompassed a broad range of musical talent and genres attracting even more artists and

visitors alike, to the town centre and a number of our very best hospitality businesses.

Central to our **Family Festival**, 'A Whale's Tale' featured live performances within the 18m inflatable Whale Theatre, bringing hundreds of families into Solihull over the weekend. **The Solihull Spooktacular** again brought a fantastic Halloween atmosphere into the town centre and thousands of visitors in their scary costumes.

Christmas again was a huge part of the calendar and the **Solihull Festive Village** helped bring plenty of festive spirit into the town. With wooden chalets lining the High Street, visitors came from across the region to taste the delights of the market and stock up on gifts from our leading retail offer.

By bringing together music, activities and innovative interactive events for the public to enjoy, we take care of each and every one of our valued customers, and that's the secret to Solihull's success.



Marketing & Promoting

Website

110,000+

visits

Our website is dedicated to Solihull town centre and its thriving business community. Showcasing our dynamic calendar of events, the latest news and an essential business directory, it's the go-to site for residents, visitors and businesses alike. Expertly designed and accessible to all, our website also operates as an easy and accessible portal for our businesses and the public to connect with BID and share their feedback.

We will continue to develop this core platform throughout our fourth term, maximising its potential for Solihull's business community.

Social Media

30,300+

followers

With new, regular content we've attracted thousands of new followers to our social media platforms: Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and Threads.

Video content continues to be a main focus and is a big reason as to why our channels continue to grow across the board.

InSolihull Magazine

Available from sites between Birmingham and London, our InSolihull publication has evolved into a 40-page glossy magazine that showcases everything wonderful in our town. The free consumer mag is showcased on



stands at Birmingham Moor Street, Solihull, Dorridge and Leamington train stations. The magazine can also be found in local coffee shops and restaurants, Touchwood Shopping Centre, The Core and Cineworld.

Safer Solihull

Keeping our town centre safe

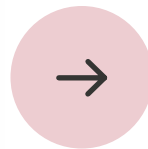
Keeping our town centre safe and secure is at the heart of everything we do. Feedback from businesses, locals and visitors has given us a clear mandate to prioritise safety and retain our status as one of the safest and most welcoming areas in the UK.

Our dedicated Security Officers are a reassuring, welcoming presence to visitors, supporting businesses by providing instant help with any crime related incidents. More than 60 retailers now access our town centre radio link, which provides instant access to the Security Officers as well as Solihull Police, the CCTV Control Room and Touchwood and Mell Square's security teams. Meanwhile, staff at more than 120 premises are registered on DISC – our crime reporting app. GDPR compliant, it allows businesses to share intel in real time to their fellow retailers. Through collaboration with key partners, we continue to focus on making the visitor

experience a safe and welcoming one. This is why we have led on things such as Safe Space, PubWatch and regular Police Beat Surgery meetings.

This allows all town centre stakeholders to come together to discuss any issues or opportunities that may have cropped up. We continue to work closely with all of our businesses and have provided hundreds of evening workers with personal alarms. We have also supported staff to become ambassadors for the Hollie Guard app which guides those at risk to places of safety on night outs.

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Business Matters

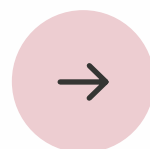
Solihull is a hotbed of talent for the office and professional service sector, with iconic brands rubbing shoulders with innovative independents.

We're continuing to attract more staff back to office sites – to boost the town's lunchtime trade – with a range of projects, bringing together fun activities, offers and giveaways to encourage office workers back into the town centre.

The Business Festival returned for the second year, engaging office and professional service workers with their business neighbours in a fun and informative environment.

Festival events included our much-loved Pub Quiz, attended by over 20 businesses, and our Solihull Business Networking Event. This brought over 50 local professionals together to network whilst listening to keynote speakers from a wide-range of business backgrounds.

The BID Card offers Solihull employees discounts and offers to more than 150 places within the town, while highlighting upcoming events and festivals with additional giveaways, free lunches and more.



**SOLIHULL
BID**



Uniquely Solihull

Solihull has a glowing reputation as one of the best places to live, work and visit. We consistently surpass ourselves and fellow town centres, showcasing our premium offer and welcoming environment to the public.



SOLIHULL
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Our **Solihull Nights** campaign promotes our evening economy, making nights out in Solihull easy to plan and navigate, showcasing the fantastic venues we have in the town centre.

The **VIP Kids Club** continues to be incredibly successful, attracting younger visitors and families to fun free events such as our children's discos, Whale Theatres, Halloween parade and free facepainting. We now have two thousand families signed up to our e-mail database, allowing us to directly market the town centre to families.

Our unique Family Sticker Trails give people yet another reason to visit our town, further increasing custom and boosting the town centre experience. From dinosaurs to singing animals, pirates and monsters – the trails have had a bit of everything to keep our younger visitors entertained and engaged in their local town centre.



Finances

Levy Income £616k

Other income £55k

Total Income:

£671k

Cost of projects £435k

Operating overheads £167k



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, GM Touchwood

Marcus Flowers

Store Manager, New Look Solihull

Kulvinder Dhanda

Manager, Metro Bank

Lisa Hopkins

Centre Manager, Mell Square

Collette Eccleston

Senior Insurance Consultant , Howden

Neil Churchard

Brand Experience Manager, John Lewis & Partners

Claire Jeans

Digital Executive, BNP Paribas Personal Finance

Ranjit Singh

Group Operations Manager, FB Holdings (Indico & Tio Latino)

*Alison McGrory

Assistant Director Communities & Partnerships, SMBC

Lee Waterhouse

Director - Mid Markets, npower Business Solutions

*Thomas Clayton

Inspector, 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.

*Nancy Buckley

Vice Principal, Solihull College & University Centre

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solihullbid.co.uk

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