

Annual

Report

2024



Welcome to the Solihull BID Annual Report



Kevin Johns
Chairman

'Over the last year, the Solihull BID has navigated a transformative period for our town, demonstrating our ability to adapt and respond dynamically to a rapidly evolving landscape.'

The relentless dialogue with our businesses underscored the crucial role of BID support in the ongoing recovery process. As Solihull BID, we became the bridge that unites all sectors, with a shared goal of staying at the forefront of innovation to ensure our future success. We've been unwavering in our mission to create connected spaces, safeguard our communities and businesses, and foster collaboration with all stakeholders. The result is a more robust and safer environment where both businesses and people can thrive.

'The ethos of Solihull BID is rooted in innovative thinking, which was evident in our response to recent challenges. During this period, we devised inventive and courageous strategies to ensure the safety and connectivity of our community, while lending support to local businesses. This proactive approach has strengthened our core, preparing us for a brighter and more prosperous future.'

'With both cohesion and support, Solihull BID and our diverse network form a strong business community that's far greater than the sum of its parts. Only through this innovative collaboration could we achieve the town centre we have today – not only a thriving hub for local retailers, employers and residents, but also a vibrant destination welcoming visitors from far and wide.'



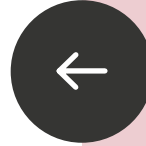
Tony Elvin
Vice Chairman

'While town centre prosperity across the Midlands has fallen behind, Solihull has stood out from the crowd, proving itself to be one of the UK's most resilient and successful post-pandemic town centres. This is no coincidence.

'By listening to local stakeholders, the BID has constantly evolved to meet the changing needs of levy payers and those visiting the town. By increasing town centre events and introducing a greater security presence, we have built a safe and relaxing environment, giving visitors the confidence to spend time here, whilst supporting stores to reduce

shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. In keeping with our collaborative approach, the local police have also increased resources, while we've partnered with local schools and colleges to successfully to reduce anti-social behaviour.

'As a destination, we are cohesive, engaged, forward thinking and outward looking. Partners and stakeholders across Solihull work closely together, bound by the glue that is Solihull BID. Collectively, we canvass feedback to better understand the needs of our local community.'



Mel Palmer
Solihull BID,
Chief Executive

'The past 12 months have seen much change in Solihull and the BID's ability to flex to this shifting townscape has been essential. Our continued dialogue with Solihull businesses clearly demonstrates how valued BID support has been in our town's continued recovery.

'Our towns and high streets are where commerce and prosperity meet. Solihull BID act as the conduit for all sectors to come together with a shared purpose, ensuring we stay ahead of the curve through innovative projects that secure future success.

We continue to connect our spaces, protect our people and businesses, and collaborate across our partnership to deliver a stronger, safer environment in which our town centre will flourish.'

Animating our Public Space

Events and Festivals

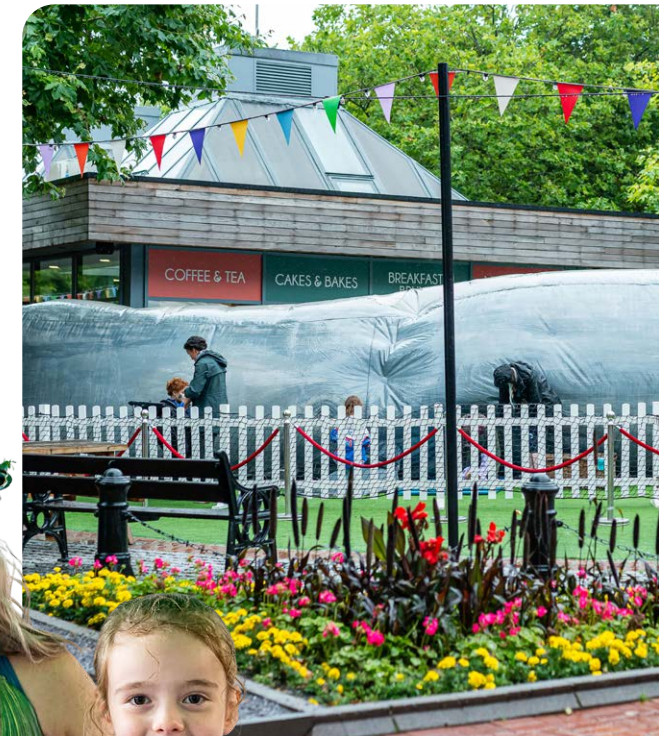
Solihull BID have been delivering landmark events for the past 12 years. Through our industry expertise and experience, we have delivered these events to the highest standard. .

We have grown our event portfolio each year to ensure we offer something new and retain visitors' interest. Recognising the need to attract more families to the town, our new VIP Kids Club and family activities have made a huge impact.

Meanwhile, our 12-month calendar of festivals has been rebranded to present Solihull as the place to visit for festivals and events. For the 2023 Food Festival, we welcomed back celebrity chef Ainsley Harriot, encouraging thousands of people to flock to the town and achieving the highest footfall and sales since COVID.

We replaced our Jazz Festival with the Solihull Music Festival to encompass a broader range of talent and genre, attracting even more artists and visitors alike. Central to our Family Festival, 'A Whale's Tale' featured live performances within the 18m inflatable Whale Theatre, causing such a stir that we've invited him back this year for more nautical themed fun.

Our Jingle Bell Jog and Festive Feast also brought in the crowds and last year's new Christmas lights really set the scene for the wide range of visitors flocking to our centre. 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

105,000+
visitors

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. Updated in 2023, we will continue to develop this core platform throughout our fourth term, maximising its potential for Solihull's business community.

Social Media

28,650+
followers

With new, regular content we've attracted 28,650+ followers to our social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok. Videos on our new TikTok account have already attracted over 29,000 likes, promoting our brilliant businesses and connecting Solihull BID with a younger audience.

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.

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 magazine can also be found in local coffee shops and restaurants, with an additional four stands installed this year.



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 dedicated **Street Wardens** are a reassuring, welcoming presence to visitors, supporting businesses by providing instant help with any crime related incidents.

More than 50 retailers now access our **town centre radio link**, which provides instant access to the Street Wardens as well as Solihull Police, the CCTV Control Room and Touchwood and Mell Square's security teams. Meanwhile, staff at more than 115 premises are registered on DISC – our crime reporting app. GDPR compliant, it allows businesses to share intel in real time to their fellow retailers.

Safer Solihull has evolved to incorporate more projects and further enhance our town centre's safety and security. Through collaboration with key partners, we have launched a new initiative exploring ways to identify and protect those who may be vulnerable whilst visiting the town, including instructions on how to access support.

We also approached **Solihull College** to create a new programme which recruits students studying Public Service and Criminal Law to become young **Security Ambassadors**. This has been highly effective in demonstrating to fellow young people that all ages are invested in keeping our town safe and crime free.

We also run a pub watch, a group dedicated to supporting the night time

economy through safety initiatives. We have recently secured funding to provide our evening workers with personal alarms, and have supported staff to become ambassadors for the Hollie Guard app which guides those at risk to places of safety on night outs.



Business Matters

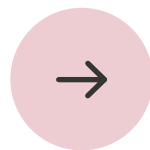
Solihull is a hotbed of talent for the office and professional service sector, with iconic brands rubbing shoulders with innovative independents.

As the lunchtime trade continues to rebuild, we're attracting more staff back to office sites with a range of projects. Our **'Bringing Fridays back to town'** campaign brings together fun activities, offers and giveaways to encourage office workers back into the town centre.

Our first **Business Festival** was launched in February this year, engaging office and professional service workers with their business neighbours in a fun and informative environment. Festival events like our pizza pub quiz provide ideal opportunities to network across Solihull's thriving business community, with more than 16 office teams competing for the cash prize and trophy.

The **Solihull BID Excellence Awards** were oversubscribed again this year with a record number of applicants. Our sparkling awards evening brought the people behind Solihull's success together under one roof to showcase their brilliant businesses, teams and achievements.

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**



Food Festival



Music Festival

solihullbid.co.uk



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.

Our **Solihull Nights** campaign promotes our evening economy, making nights out in Solihull easy to plan and navigate.

The **VIP Kids Club** has been incredibly successful attracting younger visitors and families to fun free events such as the superheroes disco, Dinosaur Weekends, Whale Theatres and Halloween parade.

Our **VIP Platinum Card** is also a resounding success, attracting and retaining shoppers with special discounts while highlighting experiences unique to Solihull town centre. We have now distributed more than 40k cards, building loyalty and increasing spend at our retailers. Independent businesses play a critical role in Solihull's business landscape, and we consistently showcase these companies and their unique offer.

Through quirky interactive activities, our **Family Trails** direct footfall into shops to increase custom and boost the town centre experience. This year, we've created musical animals and pirate monsters to grab the attention of our younger visitors. QR codes on our collectable key rings showcase family activities, while gathering crucial data for direct marketing.



**SOLIHULL
BiD**



Halloween





VIP
**KIDS
CLUB**



Finances

Levy Income £626k

Other income £85k

Total Income:

£711k

Cost of projects £575.5k

Operating overheads £174.5kk

Overspend* £37K

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

Please note that we have utilised carry over funds from the 2023-24 financial year.

solihullbid.co.uk



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, MD Prime Accountants

Tony Elvin

Vice Chairman, GM Touchwood

Marcus Flowers

Store Manager, New Look Solihull

Leon Sloyan

Local Director, Metro Bank

Lisa Hopkins

Centre Manager, Mell Square

Syrra Riaz

Commercial Account Handler, Howden Insurance

Neil Churchard

Brand Experience Manager, John Lewis & Partners

Claire Jeans

Digital Executive, BNP Paribas Personal Finance

Ranjit Singh

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

*Alison McGrory

Assistant Director Communities & Partnerships, SMBC

*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.

*Deborah Johnson

Chief Inspector WM Police

SOLiHULL BiD

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