

Businesses encouraged to shape the future of Northampton town centre as BID benefits are highlighted

February 2017: Thank you to all the businesses that continue to work with us as together we aim to improve the business opportunities and trading environment of Northampton town centre.

Your Business Improvement District (BID) provides a fair method by which we can, by working together, fund additional services. This is done by charging a levy based on Rateable Value, so that it is fair to all businesses. This funding is pooled to provide the opportunity to benefit all businesses in the town centre.

We encourage all businesses to get involved to help us shape and prioritise the projects and activities to ensure that the BID achieves its objectives. Here, in the words of town centre businesses, are just some of the benefits of being part of a BID.

Hosts, networking and PR

Yvonne Spence, who owns independent boutique Voni Blu in St Giles Quarter, said: "As a business we have benefitted from a number of initiatives and promotions and I think the BID's wider work to promote the town centre as a historic market town and highlight the diversity on offer with the range of specialist independent stores, award winning theatres, places of interest and fabulous restaurants is great.

"I feel Northampton BID has given us a voice and brought town centre businesses together. The Hosts are a good link, taking on board our feedback and keeping us informed as to what is going on. They are a friendly face to the public and really do deliver a feel good factor. The regular e-newsletters also keep us updated and the breakfast meetings are a great opportunity for businesses to meet and get to know each other so that we all understand what is in our area and how we can all help sell the town.

"Northampton BID provides opportunities for like-minded people to come together and work out suitable and sustainable projects that are inclusive for all and help us work with the local council to promote the town centre and all its individual facets.

“It is difficult for us to monitor the exact outcome of the promotions we have got involved in, but getting our word out to a wider audience can only be positive and the features in the paper are something we would not have done at this stage in our business.”

Hanging baskets, Christmas trees and social media

Sali Brown, Managing Director of Chelton Brown Lettings & Sales in George Row, said: “We have been involved in Northampton BID from the very beginning and have taken part in various initiatives and promotions over the years.

“I think the work the BID does is very beneficial to the town centre and as we are based opposite St Giles Church, we see a lot of how the BID makes a positive impact,

“We are very active on social media so we also benefit from the BID’s engagement on Twitter and Facebook. They do not just concentrate on helping the retail outlets, as a service industry we feel very much included in all they do. A project that stands out was our involvement in a short film about the BID which was promoted online – this is just one example of how we have been able to promote our business through the BID. We look forward to continuing our involvement in the future.”

Excellent media coverage

John Dowick, who owns The Dressing Room boutique in The Ridings, said: “Being part of the BID has meant we have benefited from excellent coverage in the local papers and magazines, something as a small business we would not have otherwise been able to afford or justify. The BID has commissioned a series of features focusing on different areas of the town centre and this can only be good for resident shops and businesses.

“On top of the positive PR, we also really value the work the Hosts, Kimberley and Matthew, do. They are real ambassadors for the town centre, helping visitors and also keeping us up to dated and informed.”

Reaching a wider audience

Screen Northants is a non-profit organisation based in the Grosvenor Centre which aims to promote access to the film industry.

Becky Adams, Director of Screen Northants, said: “Thanks to the BID we have been able to reach a wider audience of collaborative business owners based near us. From distributing promotional materials about our film activities to helping us link up with other businesses for mutual benefit, the BID's help has been very useful, especially as we are a non-profit organisation which also aims to showcase Northampton and all it has to offer.”

Impactful social media and Christmas magazine

Berties Clothing on Guildhall Road got involved with the BID’s Christmas-themed social media and volunteered to take part in a short video message to promote the Golden Ticket prize draw. They were also featured the BID Discover Northampton Christmas magazine, which all town centres were encouraged to submit copy for

Co-owner Duncan Wild said: “The Golden Ticket festive campaign has been gathering more momentum each year and our customers love it. We had many customers commenting that they had seen the short film and magazine, so it was a successful campaign to create awareness and encourage shoppers. All the marketing efforts by the BID play their part in contributing to an increase in trade throughout the year, especially at Christmas. If local businesses contribute high quality content showcasing themselves, the town centre can only keep improving.”

Support and features in the local press

Laura Elliott, Manager of Zara Health & Beauty salon in Market Walk, said: “From a social media perspective, although we are very active on our Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram accounts, it's really great to have support from the BID who regularly share and retweet us.

As a small but growing business, the features in the local media really help us too, as this can be very pricey. It means we can put money into different aspects of our business including training, improvements and so on. Having our salon featured in an interesting newsletter or in the newspaper is great as it gets our name out there and helps us reach a wider audience.

“The quality of the BID features and advertorials are always brilliant as well, so we are always extremely happy with the work created for us, and we are always given plenty of time to make changes. I love the way it's always of relevance too, for example the seasonal Valentine's and Christmas themes that ties in with our own promotional activity.

“I also feel that the support the BID team offers is second to none. The way they communicate and keep in touch through the Hosts and email bulletins is consistent and really helpful. As a manager working together with a team of people I really couldn't ask much more.”

A reminder about how to get involved

Our BID Hosts and BID team regularly visit businesses and everyone is encouraged to get involved in working groups. Town centre businesses are all invited to become BID members and to become board directors.

If you are a business in the Northampton town centre BID area and would like to find out more about how the BID can help you, email: info@northamptonbid.co.uk or visit www.northamptonbid.co.uk.