

A new year message from Jessica D'Aulerio, Chair of Northampton town centre Business Improvement District (BID)

We hope you enjoyed a break over the Christmas period and, on behalf of all the BID Directors, may I wish you a happy and prosperous new year.

2016 was a packed year, with the BID funding a wide range of events and initiatives designed to enhance, promote and encourage the growth and development of our town centre.

There are so many highlights from 2016. We continued to promote town centre businesses through a series of spotlight features and our summer and Christmas Discover Northampton magazines, which we distributed to over 34,500 homes

In March the BID and town centre businesses participated in Clean for the Queen a national tidy day initiative, and May and June the BID trialled a street cleaning Glutton Machine for the first time. Vacant shop windows were also cleaned quarterly in 2016 to help to encourage the letting of those units.

I am particularly proud of the success of our Christmas campaign, with a record 3,246 people entering our Golden Ticket free prize draw and 10 businesses hosting Golden Ticket post boxes. Our eight winners, each awarded £500 of shopping vouchers, have chosen a long list of independent and high street businesses to spend their winnings in – ensuring every penny won is spent right here in Northampton town centre.

Last year the BID commissioned Retail Strategy Group CACI to undertake research to help develop a retail plan for the town centre which has revealed that the proportion of wealthy people living in our town centre catchment area is higher than the UK average – our next challenge is to devise a retail plan that will attract new brand names and businesses.

Events and entertainment were another focus for 2016. We hosted regular Saturday afternoon live entertainment at different venues and locations throughout the town centre, supported Northampton Music Festival, held an Artists Trail in the summer and organised networking events for town centre businesses.

Thank you to all my fellow directors, we all volunteer our time, without any remuneration, to steer the BID and ensure that all projects and BID events are in line with the business plan objectives that businesses voted for.

If you would like to get more involved, to suggest projects, are interested in joining our board of directors or a working group, we would love to hear from you. Our BID Hosts work tirelessly visiting and supporting businesses across the town. Please speak to them or contact our BID Project office on 01604 837766

We are looking forward to starting a new year and have lots of plans to continue to improve and enhance our town.

As a town centre business owner myself I continue to be very proud of what we have collectively achieved as a BID.

I strongly believe that together, as a BID, we can make a real difference.