

Hello again everyone! Its good to be back with our fourth issue of this e-newsletter and our first of 2017!

As always, a new year brings new challenges and new opportunities for new and potential BIDs in Northern Ireland. With six BIDs now up and running, and others under consideration, BIDs are beginning to establish themselves as key vehicles for supporting businesses to improve their trading environment, offering real and tangible benefits. In this newsletter, you'll read how Belfast One is giving Belfast city centre businesses the opportunity to save up to 30% on their trade waste disposal costs. Ballymena BID has introduced an energy savings scheme and a Merchant Services initiative on card machines which is saving levy payers hundreds and, in many cases, thousands of pounds per year. The early statistics showcasing a clear Return on Investment for levy payers speaks for itself!

NI BIDs is delighted to be working with more locations to investigate the potential for BIDs to improve their trading environment. We have just published a Feasibility Study for Ballyclare DEA and are currently looking at BID options for Coleraine. NI BIDs have just been appointed by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to undertake a study scoping the options for the first Industrial BID in NI. Belfast is developing its third BID - Belfast Central Business District, which extends behind the City Hall and incorporates a unique blend of commercial, hospitality potential levy payers. The proposed BID boundary incorporates the new Integrated Transport Hub, 7 new hotel developments and an estimated working population of 65,000 – posing a unique set of issues for the newly formed BID Task Group. Good luck to all of them!

Now that we have more BIDs in the pipeline, it's important to ensure the current and future BIDs are prepared for the challenges that they will face. Building on our success with NI BIDs and informed by the learning from the NI BIDs Academy and training days, we want to ensure your Place Management journey is robustly supported. Over the next 12 months we will rollout a programme of 4 bespoke training days. Our experience shows that BID boards, chairs and managers face a unique set of challenges, expectations and opportunities when transitioning from BID development to BID implementation and delivery. BID Managers juggle multiple projects, working with a myriad of stakeholders, while dealing with BID levy collection. This requires unique project management and interpersonal skills. Many BID board members, while successful, experienced business people or public sector professionals, can struggle with the challenges and uncharted context of running NI's first BID companies. We understand these issues and have a devised a tailored series of workshops for everyone involved in this exciting BID journey.

Finally, we are also looking forward to second NIBIDs annual event, scheduled for June this year. Following our successful launch in June 2016, we will celebrate the success of the last 12 months and keep you abreast of exciting opportunities for established and new BIDs. The Team is busy planning a great programme. More details in the next newsletter.

Finally, finally! We will use the newsletter and website to introduce you to some great new services that could prove useful in supporting your BID realise its potential. To kick this off, Geosense and BidBase deliver that all important elevator pitch!

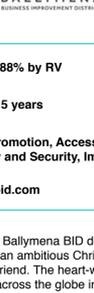
Finally, finally, finally, if you haven't already, please follow us on twitter for the latest updates and other interesting news and facts relating to #nibids. Until next time...

Best wishes



Mo Aswat

More detail including venues, programmes, registration and joining instructions to follow...

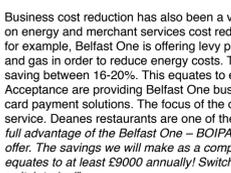


Result: 84% by Number, 88% by RV
Result declaration: 31st March 2015
Investment: £1.5 million over 5 years
Levy: 1.5%
Priorities: Marketing and Promotion, Accessibility, Supporting Town Businesses, Improving Safety and Security, Improving the Physical Environment, Innovation Fund
Website: www.ballymenabid.com

2016 was a good year for Ballymena BID. Ballymena BID delivered a bigger, better Ballymena Discount Day in November and rolled out an ambitious Christmas marketing campaign featuring the beloved Ballymena Bear with his new girlfriend. The heart-warming 'Innacle in Broughshane Street' video achieved over 135,000 views from across the globe in the run up to Christmas. Ballymena BID also forged the way for other NI BIDs, delivering BID Group Buying and saving schemes. Two pilot initiatives, banking Merchant Services and energy savings have delivered considerable cost savings for BID levy payers.

In addition, crime reduction initiatives, the CCTV system and a close working relationship with the PSNI, town centre wardens and BRAC has resulted in a reduction in retail theft in the period April to March 2016, while the Footfall Counters recorded 8% increase in pedestrian footfall for the month of December (way above the NI and UK averages!)

See the brand new website www.ballymenameans.com and their active Facebook page for continuous updates on these and new projects for the Ballymena BID, such as the Valentine's campaign, scheduled cultural food tour, our Spring planting project which will complement the Public Realm Scheme and a Poster Frame Project working with schools in relation to tidying up dilapidated areas.

Result: 84% by number, 88% by RV
Result declaration: 30th October 2015
Investment: £6.25 million over 5 years
Levy: 1.5%
Priorities: Promote, Enhance, Support
Website: www.belfastone.co.uk

Well if, like us, you have ever struggled to get a complete picture of all the news and activities going on in Belfast city centre you need struggle no more! The Belfast One website is now a great place to visit for all you need to know about everything that's going on in the city centre. Of course when you are in the city centre don't forget to say a big 'whattaboutche?' to the new Belfast One Ambassadors team. Arriving just in time for Christmas the Ambassadors have already enhanced and improved the visitor experience right in the heart of the city. The team of four ambassadors, Sarah, Curtis, Jonathan and Shanda, provide a warm welcome to visitors, workers and residents in the city centre and offer help and advice about Belfast and what's on offer, as well as a direct contact for local businesses. In the run up to Christmas they also spread festive cheer across the city centre by handing out free Belfast One bags to shoppers.

Business cost reduction has also been a very good quick win for Belfast One. They have focused on energy and merchant services cost reduction so far. Working in conjunction with Circa Energy for example, Belfast One is offering levy payers the opportunity to collectively purchase electricity and gas in order to reduce energy costs. The results so far have been amazing, with businesses saving between 16-20%. This equates to each business saving over £1000 annually! BOI Payment Acceptance are providing Belfast One businesses with a wide range of competitive debit and credit card payment solutions. The focus of the offer is on price transparency, great value, and customer service. Deanes restaurants are one of the latest businesses to sign up: "We at Deanes have taken full advantage of the Belfast One – BOI/PA UK partnership and taken up their Merchant Services offer. The savings we will make as a company are fantastic, amounting to over £750 per month which equates to at least £9000 annually! Switching over was easy and we would urge all BID businesses to switch today!"




Result: 84% by number, 91% by RV
Result declaration: 15th April 2016
Budget: £1.7 million
Levy: 1.5%
Priorities: Create, Celebrate, Invite, Inspire
Web: www.destinationcq.com

Destinations CO finished off 2016 with a Christmas video wowing website will all that there is to see and do in the area. Watch it via their website or Facebook page. New announcements made in February 2017 for major regeneration plans in and around part of Belfast's Cathedral Quarter started 2017 off with a buzz. So it is not surprising that the Destination CO BID has been on the case.

Working with The Cathedral Quarter Trust a presentation session with the following agencies was arranged to explain the plans to levy payers and answer any questions. Some of the schemes up for questions and discussion include the proposed Royal Exchange development, Student Accommodation Schemes, The Ulster University Belfast Campus progress, a planned Creative Hub in the old Belfast Telegraph Building and Government Department plans for new Public Realm and the High Street cycling initiative. Clearly the BID is playing its part in keeping its members up to date with information and of course lobbying on members' behalf with the developers and statutory agencies involved.

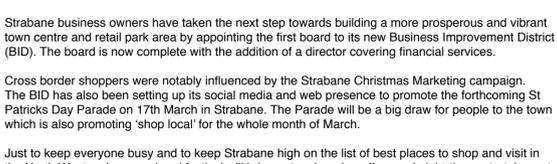
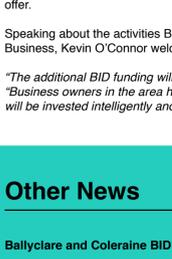


Result: 85% by Number, 82% by RV
Result declaration: 15th October 2016
Investment: £1.2 million over 5 years
Levy: 1.5%
Priorities: Boost, Entice, Enhance
Website: www.enniskillenbid.co.uk

As you will likely know Enniskillen BID achieved a decisive YES vote in October 2016! Announced at the Annual Business Awards, in front of over 300 business people and local dignitaries, it was an excellent launch for the establishment of NI's sixth BID. The formidable BID Task Group already knew that the hard work really begins after the YES vote... and got straight to work. Enniskillen BID Ltd is now a constituted company. The task group are working closely with the local Council to finalise arrangements for the process of issuing the Enniskillen BID levy invoices.

Enniskillen BID has welcomed the announcement from the Department for Communities of £5.2 million of investment for the upgrade of the public areas in Enniskillen. Enniskillen BID will work closely with this process. The support which will be on offer for businesses through BID will assist during the work on the public realm.

Enniskillen BID is working through a recruitment process to put in place a BID Manager to drive the exciting projects outlined in the BID Business Plan. There is an atmosphere of great anticipation within the Enniskillen BID area for the BID to begin work and for the results to be achieved.

Result: 87% by number, 92% by RV
Result declaration: 6th November 2015
Investment: £1.8 million over 5 years
Levy: 1.5%
Priorities: Marketing our City, Supporting Business, Better Access, Improving how we look, Innovate Newry Fund
Website: www.newry.com

Newry BID is delighted with the response to their Christmas marketing campaign. Using the theme of 'Perfectly Placed for Choice/Tastes/Moments' the campaign ran across radio, outdoor, press and social media channels. On-line measurement and on-going surveys by the BID confirm a positive response to the campaign which raised Newry's profile as a great place for Christmas shopping and night time celebrations!

Establishing a good digital presence for Newry businesses is a top priority for Newry BID. Members will soon have the opportunity to develop their e-commerce offers and social media presence with a digital support package to be launched in the next few weeks. We are looking forward to this one at NIBIDs! In addition, the new website newry.com, was launched and went live on 31st January. If you haven't seen it, you should, as it includes a virtual tour of the Newry city centre, featuring an interactive map showcasing BID members offers all confirming Newry as 'Perfectly Placed' for businesses. The website is the one stop point for all things Newry - highlighting good news stories, what's on offers and events. All BID members will have an opportunity to have a presence on the website.



Result: 95% by number, 98% by RV
Result declaration: 22nd April 2016
Investment: £640,000 over 5 years
Levy: 1.5%
Priorities: Promote, Enhance and Events, Welcome Theme, Innovation and Experience, Business Theme: Reducing Costs and Support, Incessant Theme: Creative Spirit.
Website: www.bidinstrabane.com

Strabane business owners have taken the next step towards building a more prosperous and vibrant town centre and retail park area by appointing the first board to its new Business Improvement District (BID). The board is now complete with the addition of a director covering financial services.

Cross border shoppers were notably influenced by the Strabane Christmas Marketing campaign. The BID has also been setting up its social media and web presence to promote the forthcoming St Patrick's Day Parade on 17th March in Strabane. The Parade will be a big draw for people to the town which is also promoting 'shop local' for the whole month of March.

Just to keep everyone busy and to keep Strabane high on the list of best places to shop and visit in the North West, a June weekend festival will bring extra shopping offers and night-time entertainment to the town. The BID will be supporting events and activity to support the night-time economy. The Evening and Night Time Economy (ENTE) sector is currently worth around £70 million to the UK economy and is growing rapidly. The Evening Economy is traditionally valued as the period 6pm to 11pm and is more geared around the hospitality, cultural, leisure offer, often targeted at the family market, while the period 11pm – 3am is the Night Time Economy – the more lively pubs and clubs offer.

Speaking about the activities BID Board member and Derry City and Strabane District Council Head of Business, Kevin O'Connor welcomed this project activity.

"The additional BID funding will undoubtedly help unlock Strabane's commercial potential," he said. "Business owners in the area have the best insight into the challenges they face meaning the funds will be invested intelligently and in the areas of greatest need."

Other News

Ballyclare and Coleraine BID Feasibility studies

Antrim and Newtownabbey Council have recently commissioned a BID feasibility study for the Ballyclare DEA. The Ballyclare DEA has a mixed economy. Ballyclare town is the main centre of trade and commerce parts of which are protected as areas of townscape character and as areas of archaeological potential. The area's economy mirrors its size and diversity with finance, legal, manufacturing, medical, digital, retail, food, agriculture all strong sectors contributing to a healthy economy.

The study involved extensive consultation with local businesses, Council and other statutory stakeholders. It also included a robust analysis of the quantitative data relevant to the potential for a BID in the area and for the Ballyclare town.

Paul Kelly, Head of Economic Development with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council said, "This is an exciting opportunity for the area. Significant funds have already been invested by Council and the Department for Communities (DfC) through, for example, Revitalise/Linkages scheme and public realm works."

Jamie Hamill, owner of local business The Spa at Dunamoy said, "After watching the recent success of NI towns implementing BIDs, I along with other like-minded business owners began to research the possibility of the initial model benefitting a small town such as Ballyclare. NI BIDs produced a robust report with helpful recommendations to our Council which hopefully will begin the process of our Town advancing with the model and businesses within a range of sectors reaping the benefits in 2018."

Causeway Coast and Glens Council and Coleraine Town Team have commissioned NI BIDs to assess the feasibility of a BID in Coleraine town centre. There has already been a great response to the survey and local businesses turned out in numbers at the recent 'walkshop'. The consultative work and data analysis continues and we look forward to finishing the report at the end of March 2017.

BIDBase is a web-based database tool design for BIDs. It provides:

- The power of a CRM system with the added dimension of hereditaments so it can be used for ballot forecasting, levy income analysis, influence analysis and lots more.
- The confidence that comes from evidencing your impact - levy-payer promotions, interactions with people and event attendance.
- The comfort of knowing that you need never be caught out by a levy-paying voter in your BID area asking: "so what has the BID ever done for us?"

Many BID boards on really tight budgets so BIDBase is offered on the 'premium' model. The free version meets the basic needs for the day-to-day running of a BID, plus the basic voter report you need to submit prior to ballot. The premium version has enhanced tools. BIDBase has been designed by people who work in BIDs and is very powerful. BIDBase introduces the concept of 'BID Stranger Index'; those people who have never had an interaction with the BID team, never been to a BID event and whose employers have never been promoted by the BID. That figure pops up on a dashboard whenever you log on (premium only), keeping the 'mission-critical' stuff right at the forefront of your mind.

BIDBase includes a constantly-growing list of national decision makers (premium only), those people who decide how their business votes in ballots across a region or even the whole country. We are carefully growing and maintaining this list, to make it as up-to-date as possible and publishing it with the consent of the people on the list, to make sure you stay on the right side of the Data Protection Act.

BIDBase has impressed everyone who's seen it so far and there's a short video outlining the key features at bidbase.org or ask for a login to our test BID data and see for yourself.

ElephantWiFi are fast becoming the industry leader within the Digital High Street sector, delivering future proof Digital Solutions built on Wireless technologies that allow towns and cities to take control of their Digital Future.

Our Solutions are built, designed and developed by listening to our current and future customer's wants and needs. ElephantWiFi, along with our in-house developed revolutionary Footfall Solution GEO-Sense, is delivering to our client's unprecedented insights into visitor numbers, movement and trends never seen or even understood before.

As part as our growing interest in the prosperity of our towns and cities and again by listening to people who are continually keen to and have a real interest their Places and along with working with Councils, BIDs, Town Managers and even Retailers, we have developed even more technology.

The launch of our bespoke individually designed Digital Information Kiosks. And we are very proud to announce our first of many installations country wide the installation within our home town of Hinckley, Leicestershire.

We are a dedicated team of professionals to include in-house IT Solution Designers, Experts and Developers who are absolutely dedicated not to just design Revolutionary Digital High Street Solutions but to advise and support our customers.

For more information please visit our websites: www.elephantwifi.co.uk / portal.geo-sense.co.uk

Rating Policy Update

Rates are one of the most significant costs to businesses not only in NI but across the UK. In November 2016 The NI Minister of Finance made a statement on Rating Policy. The statement outlined some significant proposals to change the ratings system locally. No doubt you will also have noticed that BIDs featured strongly in his proposals too. Clearly part of the future as far as he was concerned! In this statement he outlined a "groundbreaking package of measures aimed at modernising the domestic and commercial elements of the rating system in order to stimulate the economy as the foundation of a shared and prosperous society."

- In brief some of the key statements made by the Minister included:
- "I want to replace the existing small business rate relief scheme with a £22 million investment in small retail and hospitality businesses."
 - "I want to target support under the new scheme at the sectors that are key to the survival of our town and city centres."
 - "I also wish to bring forward a business empowerment zone pilot targeted at small-scale regeneration areas and developed in tandem with other Departments and Initiatives. I propose to start in Belfast with two pilots, on the Falls and Newtownards Roads, both areas in need of a greater peace dividend."
 - "I would also like to take forward a new scheme to incentivise conversion from commercial to residential occupation, by providing a rates incentive for the first occupiers of newly converted premises in our town and city centres."
 - "I would like to address the issue of empty property."

The Minister also stated an intention to introduce a 10% rates bill for charity shops. The outcome of the forthcoming NI elections make the timescales for the necessary consultation process unclear at the moment, but this is one to watch over the next couple of months. NI BIDs will do our bit to help BIDs in Northern Ireland submit their views individually and collectively on how best to change this system to benefit local businesses.

- Next Issue**
- In the next issue we look forward to updating you on...
- Registration details for the NI BIDs workshops events
 - More exciting BID projects and new developments
 - Contributions from our BID colleagues in the Republic of Ireland.

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