

# NORTHERN IRELAND BIDS

Some things are never for sure (apart from death and taxes) and in the world of BIDs it's that things never stand still! BIDs in Northern Ireland continue to deliver exciting and innovative cost-saving initiatives to thousands of businesses who are investing in improving their trading environment. In this newsletter you will read how some businesses are saving 30% on the energy bills and more or less making the BID cost neutral from a single initiative.

Marketing and promotion of locations has become more important than ever with the challenges that face the towns and city centres. Every single BID in Northern Ireland has recognised the importance of using events and good quality promotions to draw footfall into the town centres. Ballymena have done a remarkable job at this as you will read below by increasing footfall by 8.1% in December. Ballymena also tell us that they have an 88% occupancy rate which is fantastic news. Data for April reveals that the store growth curve we have seen so far this year continues, but growth is starting to slow. April's performance in openings and closures reveals a drop in overall activity, which has been slowly decreasing since September and has now reached a low almost equal to the mid-year dip in 2016.

Its also all go for new BIDs that are emerging in NI. NIBIDs has now completed feasibility studies for Ballyclare DEA and Coleraine. We certainly expect these destinations to develop as the year progresses. The next BID to go to ballot will be Belfast Central Business District, the third BID in Belfast. After a productive programme of consultation and engagement the draft plan is almost ready. We expect the ballot to begin in September with the result due in Mid October 2017.

We have also been in discussion with NI BID Managers on future training needs for them, BID Boards and BID Chairs. The first leadership training sessions in other parts of the UK have received excellent feedback. Participants got a fresh view of what it means to be a leader not only for the team but also for the place. Here's what some of the participants have had to say so far.

*"The training was such a good session. The session you ran gave me personal insight as to the Chair to start to encourage my own development of my role in terms of moving away from a functional/ transactional leader into a more considered and strategic forward looking view. The training was the thought provoking thing we needed to move from custodians of the purse into a space of adding real value. You provided us with a starting block to really get our imagination and thoughts flowing and removed the barriers to allow us to really truly reach out for a vision fit for our city."*  
**Simon Phillips, Marks and Spencer, Cardiff BID Chair**

*"I personally found the training session to be most beneficial and inspirational. You guys have worked with us every step of the way and have been instrumental to opening our eyes to the potential growth opportunities that could arise as a result of the BID and how dynamic and progressive we as a city could become."*  
**Marie Fagan, Hilton Hotel, Cardiff BID Vice-Chair**

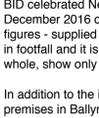
The NI BIDs team have also been helping with social media advice this year. Getting a clear and consistent high quality message across about your place on a regular basis is key to successfully engaging your levy payers.

So congratulations to all the NI BIDs who continue to make good progress and demonstrate the value of engaging businesses in improving their own trading environments! You are a real inspiration.

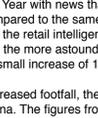
Best wishes

*Mo*

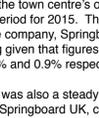
**Mo Aswat**



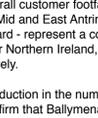
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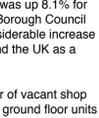
Sharon Scott



Peter Day



Sam James Burton



Oliver Knight



**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](http://www.ballymenabid.com)

Ballymena BID 2017, so what's been happening?

2017 got off to a busy and successful start for Ballymena BID with a range of initiatives underway. The BID celebrated New Year with news that the town centre's overall customer footfall was up 8.1% for December 2016 compared to the same period for 2015. The Mid and East Antrim Borough Council figures - supplied by the retail intelligence company, Springboard - represent a considerable increase in footfall and it is all the more astounding given that figures for Northern Ireland, and the UK as a whole, show only a small increase of 1.1% and 0.9% respectively.

In addition to the increased footfall, there was also a steady reduction in the number of vacant shop premises in Ballymena. The figures from Springboard UK, confirm that Ballymena's ground floor units are continuing to see new retail and business ventures. Ballymena now has over 88 per cent of its high street units occupied.

Marketing the town is also a key role for the BID. A successful and novel promotion was Movie Month which ran for the month of February, incorporating Valentine's Day promotions taking place in local businesses. The famous Ballymena Bears, Bertie and his beau Bella, who found fame in the BID's Christmas marketing campaign, were staged to be part of famous movie scenes such as 'Breakfast at Tiffany's', 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Star Wars' with the resulting images being used for an online 'guess the movie' competition. Engagement was encouraging with a 4,740 reach on Facebook alone for the competition and 1,714 impressions on Twitter. Coverage in the local press of the competition winners was also obtained.

At the beginning of April, the BID ran a very successful Ballymena Means Fashion campaign, utilising social media, press, radio, fashion bloggers and advertising to promote its fashion event on 8th April 2017. Hosted by town traders from the BID, many visitors came to the town to take advantage of the offers and discounts that were available on the day and to find out more about the fashion that the town has to offer. The dedicated day of fashion included many of Ballymena's well known retailers, both independents and high street stores, and feedback from businesses and visitors was very positive.

As part of the BID's crime reduction strategy, it recently launched a new retail crime reduction guide in conjunction with Ballymena Retailers Against Crime. The publication contains useful information for businesses in the Town Centre on a wide range of criminal activities and how to counteract them.

Continuing its busy schedule, the BID organised a digital business breakfast with the Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry for members and members of the public. The event focused on how to be successful in getting the most from the internet in a focused and profitable way, starting with the customer and working backwards.

Ballymena BID has a full schedule planned for the forthcoming months as it continues to promote, and work for, its members. More details can be found at [www.ballymenameans.com](http://www.ballymenameans.com) and on our Facebook and Twitter pages.



**Ballymena Bears, Bertie and Bella re-enacting a scene from 'Spider Man' during the Ballymena BID's movie month promotion of local businesses**

## BELFAST ONE

**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](http://www.belfastone.co.uk)

Well, Belfast One - The Belfast City Centre Improvement District - has hatched an eggs-sellent plan to help you do just that with the launch of the Belfast City Centre Egg Hunt.

Kicking off on Saturday April 8 and running to Tuesday April 18, the city was adorned with ten giant eggs nested in shops, hotels and restaurants throughout the city centre. Families were invited to hunt them all down for a chance of taking home the £500 prize which included £250 worth of toy store vouchers, restaurant vouchers, cinema movie and more.

Speaking at the launch of the initiative, Julie McCullagh, Marketing Manager at Belfast One said: "We are very excited to launch our first ever Easter Egg hunt in the city which is aimed at encouraging families to explore Belfast whilst having a lot of fun in the city."

"We had so much fun coming up with the clues and the locations for the eggs and we hope that families will embrace the idea and come in search of the eggs, whilst sampling the delights that Belfast has to offer."

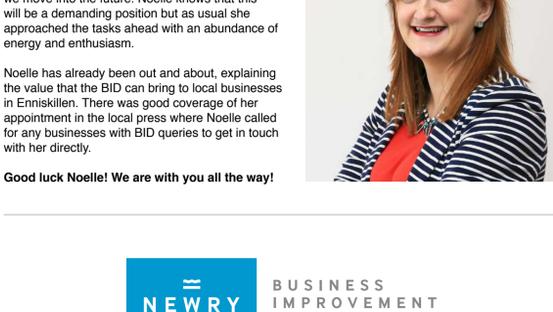
Belfast One has developed a five-year marketing strategy is to drive domestic footfall into the City Centre by promoting the fantastic retail, leisure, culture and entertainment offering and showcasing what a brilliantly unique city Belfast is. As part of this strategy they launched a new 'Alive After Five' marketing campaign aimed at boosting Belfast's evening economy.

The month-long campaign encourages people to stay in Belfast City Centre after they finish work to shop, eat, drink and socialise in a bid to stimulate Belfast's retail, leisure and hospitality industry after 5pm.

Bronagh Lawlor, Managing Director of Belfast One said: "As we approach the brighter evenings, we are starting to see a real buzz in the city centre after hours."

Stephanie Watson, manager of Havana Bank Sq. said: "This is a fantastic initiative for businesses in the city centre and a great way to spread the word about the top quality evening economy offer that our city has."

"During the week we run special offers most evenings and Alive After Five is a great way for us to promote these."



**Belfast One - The Belfast City Centre Improvement District - has hatched an eggs-sellent plan to help you do just that with the launch of the Belfast City Centre Egg Hunt.**



**Result:** 84% by number, 91% by RV  
**Result declaration:** 15th April 2016  
**Investment:** £1.7 million  
**Levy:** 1.5%  
**Priorities:** Create, Celebrate, Invite, Inspire  
**Web:** [www.destinationcq.com](http://www.destinationcq.com)

At the Destination CQ BID AGM on the 3rd April, the interim Board stepped down and a new Board of Directors were elected to govern the company for the remaining years of the BID plan. The Board is delighted to welcome some new faces including retailer Donagh McGovern, Michelle Davis from Ramada Encore and the playwright Martin Lynch.

**First Thursdays: Promotional Campaign**  
 We're pleased to announce First Thursdays as another pilot for summer 2017. This is a collective marketing and promotional opportunity for arts and hospitality businesses. Late Night Art which happens on the first Thursday of each month is already a terrific success. Galleries open late and many new exhibitions host their launch events, drawing crowds of appreciative audiences and creating both a sense of activity and a sense of community across the district and beyond.

Destination CQ will be supporting new walking tours of the galleries and exhibitions in our area on the first Thursday of July, August and September as promised in our CREATE strand to enhance and support the cultural offering in our district.

We will be combining these with a coordinated promotional campaign between the cultural venues and our hospitality members for people to linger in the area and enjoy all that it has to offer, particularly on a day that many of our hospitality members have described as a 'shoulder' day with slower business before the weekend.

**Windows wanted!**  
 DCO are encouraging businesses to join forces with their neighbours to support artists and showcase the district's arts and cultural identity! A pilot street gallery project is being created! The project will see premises across the area transform their street-facing windows into temporary exhibition space to display artworks to the street outside. Artworks will be installed in July and the pilot will run throughout August and in to September to form part of Culture Night 2017.



**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](http://www.enniskillenbid.co.uk)

Well the big news in Enniskillen is that the newly appointed BID Manager started work on 2nd May 2017! We offer our congratulations to Noelle McAloon who has taken up the position. Everyone at NIBIDs looks forward to working with Noelle as we move into the future. Noelle knows that this will be a demanding position but as usual she approached the tasks ahead with an abundance of energy and enthusiasm.

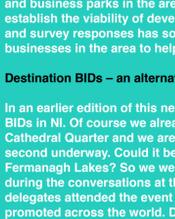


Noelle has already been out and about, explaining the value that the BID can bring to local businesses in Enniskillen. There was good coverage of her appointment in the local press where Noelle called for any businesses with BID queries to get in touch with her directly.

**Good luck Noelle! We are with you all the way!**

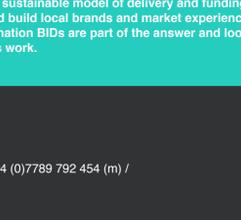


**Result:** 87% by number, 92% by RV  
**Result declaration:** 6th November 2015  
**Investment:** £1.8 million over 5 years  
**Levy:** 1.5%  
**Priorities:** Marketing our City, Supporting Business, Better Access, Improving how we look, Innovate Newry Funding  
**Website:** [www.newry.com](http://www.newry.com)



Newry BID has teamed up with Translink to promote Bus + Train week taking place from 5th - 11th June 2017. This promotion is in keeping with the BID's strategy to increase footfall and dwell time and to showcase that Newry is perfectly placed for visiting and shopping. The BID is encouraging local businesses to partner up with the initiative and offer discounts in local shops/restaurants by presenting the bus or train ticket to get the discount offered.

The BID has also been supporting the sharing of businesses expertise in the city. The store management team from Marks and Spencer, Siobhan Ruck Store Manager and Grainne Little, Womenswear Manager provided valuable insights into attracting customers with interesting and exciting window displays. The visual merchandising workshop was attended by local independents eager to learn from the experience of the big national operator. One of the workshop participants commented: "It was great that Siobhan and Grainne took the time to share their expertise with us. Some of their tips were really simple but effective. I am looking forward to putting what I have learnt into practice in my own window!"



**Result:** 95% by number, 98% by RV  
**Result declaration:** 22nd April 2016  
**Investment:** £640,000 over 5 years  
**Levy:** 1.5%  
**Priorities:** Promotion Theme: Marketing and Events, Welcome Theme: Access and Experience, Business Theme: Reducing Costs and Support, Innovation Theme: Creative Spirit.  
**Website:** [www.bidinstrabane.com](http://www.bidinstrabane.com)



As part of the BID Action Plan for 2017/18 and commitment to create a unique event for the town, the Strabane BID will be hosting a rock/pop concert on 10th June in the Canal Basin as part of the Summer Jamm festival. The event line-up includes, "The Blizzards (fronted by RTE's 'The Voice of Ireland' Judge, Bressie), Irish Folk/Pop duo Hudson Taylor, Ryan McMullan, lead support on Ed Sheeran's European Tour and Roisin O. This is the first time that a large scale event of this nature has come to this outdoor arena. The BID are taking on the management and cost of the Saturday night event.

Also in June the BID will be hosting a business networking event that aims to provide local companies with advice on opportunities to make business savings including energy, broadband and insurance.

The BID plans to develop a Shop Local Scheme that will enable shoppers to purchase gift cards or vouchers that can be redeemed at town centre businesses. It is anticipated that gift cards/ vouchers can spend in restaurants, cafes, bars, hairdressers, beauty salons and even commercial offices.

BID Team are also working with Council on the upgrading of the town centre Wi-Fi. The BID will manage the landing page for the Wi-Fi. This will link to an upgraded BID promotional website which will include the business directory, events and links to any promotions happening in the town.



March and April were really busy months for Belfast's third area working towards developing a Business Improvement District. The business planning consultation culminated in seven stakeholder workshops and one-to-one meetings with a range of businesses. Feedback has been positive and the consultation really is useful in taking business ideas and shaping them into a draft business plan. The plan will be ready in the next few weeks with a view to finalising the business plan over the summer with the ballot starting in September and the result announced in mid-October.

## Other News

### Sligo BID

Many of you will remember Sligo BID as enthusiastic participants on the EU INTERREG IVA funded BID project that finished in 2015. Since then Sligo has gone on to successfully become a BID and deliver a number of exciting projects to enhance the environment and boost business in this fantastic town. Here Gail McGibbon, CEO of Sligo BID explains what they have been doing.

Sligo BID was formed in March 2016. The first BID to form on the west coast of Ireland! The BID formed as a direct result of the INTERREG IVA, "Better Towns through Partnership" Project. We have 758 local businesses as members. They contribute a levy calculated at 3.09% of their respective rateable value giving the BID an annual budget of approximately €375,000. The key objective of the BID is to develop and implement a series of initiatives (agreed by the members) that are designed to promote and improve the trading environment and to drive footfall to the BID zone. Fundamental to the BID is establishing a good working relationship with the local council (both management and elected representatives) and to date in excess of 16 projects have been completed in a spirit of productive collaboration. The town is also certified as the first designated coach friendly town in Ireland from the Coach, Tourism, Transport Council of Ireland (CTTC) in February 2017. We are also delighted to have had Sligo BID selected as the case study for the National Urban Regeneration Framework document in development with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Next time we'll bring you an update on another of the BIDs in the Republic of Ireland.

### Emerging BIDs in Northern Ireland.

NIBIDs is delighted to have completed a BID feasibility study for Coleraine Town Centre. It was great to get involved in developing the study for the town where there has been an interest and enthusiasm for a BID for a long time. Indeed Coleraine was one of initial group of towns to explore the model for their locality. Coleraine was involved in the same EU INTERREG project as Sligo. Now that the feasibility is complete we hope that Coleraine will soon embark on the next phases of BID development, engaging even more widely with businesses and getting an business plan together.

Eager to develop the first Industrial area BID in Northern Ireland Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council have engaged NI BIDs to examine the industrial estates and business parks in the area. Our work is testing the appetite and assessing the data to establish the viability of developing an industrial BID in the area. Feedback from the meetings and survey responses has so far been encouraging and we look forward to working with local businesses in the area to help shape our recommendations.

### Destination BIDs – an alternative business delivery model for growing tourism

In an earlier edition of this newsletter we explained the opportunity for developing Destination BIDs in NI. Of course we already have our first Destination BID – Destination CQ in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter and we are still keen to tap into NI's rich tourism assets and get a second underway. Could it be the Kingdom of Mourne? Lough Neagh? Causeway Coast or Fermanagh Lakes? So we were delighted to discuss the opportunities for Destination BIDs during the conversations at the Tourism NI conference in Enniskillen on 18th May. Over 150 delegates attended the event to celebrate the successes and assets that NI has successfully promoted across the world. Delegates discussed the need to compete locally in the market but collaborate internationally to attract visitors to NI and Ireland. There was discussion about the draft tourism strategy and how it needed to unlock the latent potential that still exists. Importantly though, there was a recognition of the need to engage with tourism businesses and develop a sustainable model of delivery and funding for this sector helping it to collaborate locally and build local brands and market experiences and destinations effectively. We think Destination BIDs are part of the answer and look forward to working with organisations to make this work.

## CONTACT US

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