

# ANNUAL REVIEW

2020  
2021







# WELCOME

## Annual Review 20/21

### Welcome to the 2020-21 Shrewsbury BID Annual Review.

There's no getting away from the fact that the past year has been incredibly tough for us all, but once again the determination and spirit shown by the Shrewsbury business community has been an inspiration.

Shrewsbury BID is run by businesses for businesses, and the events of the past 12 months have shown just how vital it is that we continue working together and supporting each other.

The collective voice of the BID has been a powerful force in a variety of ways - from liaising with the council to help members access financial support, to creating a bright and welcoming atmosphere in the town centre.

Communication has been vital, with video meetings and webinar training sessions becoming the 'new normal'. Shrewsbury BID has acted as a conduit for so much essential information that I lost count of the number of emails I received from the team - but each one contained an update that I wouldn't have wanted to miss.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the voluntary directors on our board - maintaining such a commitment during these most challenging of times is greatly appreciated.

We welcomed two new members to the board in 2020 - Alexis Hill, of The Loopy Shrew, Darwin's Kitchen and Darwin's Townhouse, and Mark Barrow, Director of Place at Shropshire Council - who bring fantastic insight and knowledge to the team.

I am very proud to be part of such a forward-thinking and passionate group of people, all working together for the good of our wonderful town.

Last year began with floods and ended in the midst of a global pandemic, but things are at last looking more positive with Shrewsbury buzzing with shoppers, diners and visitors once again. Long may this positivity continue!

**Mike Matthews, Chair of Shrewsbury BID**



Mike Matthews, Chair



Seb Slater, Executive Director

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# 1. PROMOTING & ANIMATING

Promoting and animating the town centre has been more of a challenge than usual over the past year, with lockdowns and restrictions in place throughout the year due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Back in the summer of 2020, life felt relatively free with national restrictions easing to allow shops and hospitality businesses to trade indoors and outdoors. Shrewsbury BID created the Shrewsbury's Open campaign - taking the form of banners, bunting and posters to brighten up the town centre and giving a consistent brand to the promotional activities taking place. The range of bold and exciting imagery has evolved throughout the campaign, and into this summer's bright typography.

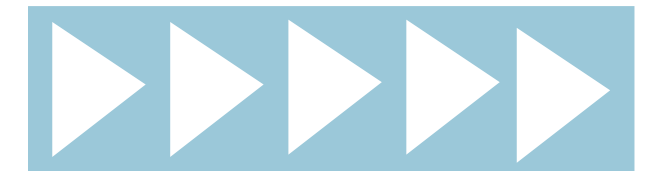
As part of the Shrewsbury's Open campaign, we organised activities around the town centre, including live music, which started last summer, then at Christmas, and now again this summer. Working in partnership with Theatre Severn and respected Shrewsbury-based musician, Chris Quinn, we have showcased dozens of fantastic artists who have provided top quality background music to really enrich the town centre's atmosphere.



By working with Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council, we were able to create more usable outdoor space for businesses to serve customers, and for people to enjoy spending more time in the town centre.

That desire to make more use of such a splendid setting has continued into 2021, with various businesses planning to utilise the castle grounds following a successful pilot event in May.

Another new initiative launched over the past year has been a series of audio tours. Again, using the Shrewsbury's Open branding to keep the consistent message, SO Stories are a collection of themed recorded tours enabling people to either listen while they visit or in the comfort of their own home - a great way of spreading the word about what Shrewsbury has to offer.



We have brought dinosaurs to the town centre, in the form of the Evolution Park outside The Parade Shopping Centre, and Shrewsbury Castle was opened up as a safe outdoor picnic area.





Christmas in 2020 was rather different to previous years, with shops only being allowed to open from early December and the nation still in the grip of the Coronavirus pandemic.

That being said, we still pushed ahead with our traditional Christmas campaign, albeit on a smaller scale than usual. The magic postbox reappeared alongside the beautiful Christmas tree in The Square for children to post their letters to the North Pole, and festive lighting displays were projected on various buildings around the town.

We also teamed up with Shrewsbury Business Chamber to help run the Christmas window competition for the first time, which proved to be a hugely successful project with dozens of businesses entering and more than 1,000 public votes deciding the winners.



The start of 2021 brought another national lockdown, but the annual DarwIN Shrewsbury Festival still took place in February to bring some positive curiosity into people's lives.

As with most events, it was hosted virtually, with talks and seminars taking place over video link and then being made available on the festival website for people to watch on demand.

It was a great success, with over 500 registrations for the events and people joining in from the USA, Ecuador, Denmark, Russia, Switzerland and Turkey, giving the festival a real international feel.

With the start of spring came fresh hope that the worst of the pandemic was over, as shops and hospitality businesses reopened in April. To refresh the town centre, we invited children to draw pictures which could be replicated onto flags as part of The Great Big Art Exhibition.



We had a fantastic response and 75 colourful designs are now fluttering over High Street, provoking great interest from all who see them. Shrewsbury even got a mention from Angel of the North creator, Sir Antony Gormley, who is involved with The Great Big Art Exhibition and praised our efforts to get young people involved in the project.





## 2. SUPPORTING & ENHANCING

**If there was ever a year when businesses needed some support, it was 2020, with the pandemic pressing the pause button on daily life - both during 2020 and into 2021.**

The Shrewsbury BID team has worked hard to provide a range of support - both directly and by working with the council and national Government to ensure businesses got the information and financial support they needed.

A top priority was liaising with Shropshire Council to help businesses access the grants and financial help they were entitled to through the Government's coronavirus support measures. And when businesses were able to open, we worked closely with the council's licensing team to ensure traders understood the requirements for using outdoor space correctly, helping to create the positive 'al fresco' atmosphere in the town centre.

The most visible form of support has been the Bounce Back campaign, with informative posters, floor stickers and other materials being handed out to businesses to display in their premises. It has been vital to give people the confidence that visiting shops and hospitality businesses is safe, with a wide range of procedures in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of customers and staff.

Part of the Bounce Back project included numerous webinars in partnership with both councils, West Mercia Police, businesses and national bodies, which have all been very well-attended, to help businesses navigate the ever-changing rules, regulations and restrictions during the most difficult trading conditions any of us can remember!

Another visible form of support has been the extra cleaning staff, funded by the BID and the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, who have patrolled the town centre cleaning and sanitising common touch-points. As well as the physical cleanliness, the patrols have helped to boost public confidence that the town centre is safe.

Funding from the BID and Recovery Taskforce also helped to provide subsidised protective equipment and cleaning supplies for businesses to keep their staff and customers safe.



**During the extended lockdown period in early 2021, we teamed up with Fran Riseley, a nationally-renowned specialist who has helped traders all over the UK transform their business and improve profitability. Fran provided a number of one-to-one mentoring sessions and video workshops looking at a wide range of issues, from visual merchandising and marketing to finances and selling skills.**

Alongside all of this, we have continued our work to help keep Shrewsbury thriving, such as the ongoing project to invigorate any empty shop windows.

The most recent examples being the photo gallery in the former Marianne's unit in Wyle Cop, and showcasing the amazing Shrewsbury Streetscape project in the former Edinburgh Woollen Mill in High Street.

Meanwhile, we were proud to work with The Ark to install the town's first 'alternative giving window'. A special card machine has been installed in the window of The UGC - formerly Multiyork furniture - in Castle Street for people to make donations directly to The Ark rather than giving homeless people loose change, which experts say can often cause more harm than good.

It's been a great success and plans are already underway to install another one elsewhere in the town centre.

More recently, the BID funded extra overnight security patrols in support of West Mercia Police to crack down on a series of break-ins of town centre businesses.





### 3. REPRESENTING & INFLUENCING

Shrewsbury BID has grown into a respected voice in the local community, both working in partnership with - and acting as a critical friend to - Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council, West Mercia Police and other organisations.

Perhaps the most obvious project to demonstrate this is the Big Town Plan, which attracted a lot of attention in the first half of 2021 as the partnership presented the Masterplan Vision for the future of the town centre.

We are an integral part of the Big Town Plan Partnership, working on behalf of our members to ensure proposals will be of benefit to businesses and help attract more visitors to Shrewsbury.

The Big Town Plan Festival, which took place at the end of January 2021, shone a light on the Masterplan Vision and the wider issues facing town centres - both here in Shrewsbury and nationally.

The festival attracted an audience from across the UK and beyond, putting Shrewsbury firmly on the map for its forward-thinking approach to regeneration and partnership working.



There is still much more to be done, but the Masterplan Vision was well-received and prompted extremely useful debate about a number of key themes, which will help form the basis of more detailed plans over the coming months.



On a similar theme, we took a lead role in the creation of a new place marketing strategy which will help promote Shrewsbury to a national audience. Business, education, community and public sector organisations came together to develop a new story and marketing approach for Shrewsbury.

The process involved understanding what makes Shrewsbury special, competitive and distinct from other places – and bringing this together in a new story that every organisation and individual across the area can tell and be part of. As the story says...



*Shrewsbury has amazing heritage and stories to tell; green spaces, outdoor activities and breathtaking countryside; a backdrop of captivating architecture, housing a unique sense of independence as seen in its shops, businesses, education and most of all, spirit!*

*“Our story articulates the distinctiveness and extraordinary characteristics of Shrewsbury, highlighting what makes us special, and recognises opportunities for the development and promotion of our town and surrounding area.”*

And finally, there has been the ongoing work to ensure Shrewsbury could reopen safely during Coronavirus restrictions, so the BID was a founding member of the Recovery Taskforce - a working group made up of local councils and public health officials which has met regularly over the past 12 months to ensure a joined-up approach to traffic interventions and other safety measures.





## 4. SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS

### 2020/2021 Annual figures

**402,146**

Average monthly reach

**+15.6%**

Compared to previous year

**20,177**

Average monthly engagements

**-7.9%**

Compared to previous year

**32,782**

Social followers

**+24.3%**

Compared to previous year

#### Monthly website sessions

All 3 platforms: **21,519**  
Original Shrewsbury: **15,018**  
Shrewsbury's Open: **4,046**  
Shrewsbury's Open Online: **2,455**

#### Social media takeovers

Average reach: **14,147**  
Average interactions: **437**  
Average increase in followers for content providers: **3.5%**

#### Media coverage (April 20 - April 21):

**363** articles in local, regional and national press, including Daily Mail and Visit Britain magazine.



## 5. WHAT'S NEXT?

**We're not done yet! We all have our fingers firmly crossed that the summer of 2021 will be the start of happier times, free from any major restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic.**

A calendar of events is being put together, predominantly using outdoor space, to really bring the town centre to life. We are teaming up with Shropshire Museums and The Hive to provide a range of engaging activities for all ages - from street art workshops to orchestra performances.

Shrewsbury Ambassadors will be returning to welcome visitors to the town, and our promotional work continues apace, with a major project under way to create a video showcasing the rich breadth of businesses and activities we have here in Shrewsbury.

Exciting plans are in development for a Shrewsbury Cocktail Week later in 2021, presenting numerous opportunities for hospitality businesses throughout the town, and attracting new customers from further afield.

A comprehensive training programme is getting under way, including retail mentoring, online and face-to-face social media training, and regular first aid at work sessions.

We will also be helping BID members apply for grants to help fund events in public spaces in the town centre. **Stay tuned!**



A campaign to encourage more footfall on Sundays is being planned, with a range of activities being considered to entice people to visit the town centre on a Sunday.



# 6. GOVERNANCE

Shrewsbury Business Improvement District is a business-led and business-funded body, working to improve and promote Shrewsbury town centre as a place to live, work, visit and invest. Following a successful renewal ballot in October 2018, the second five-year term of Shrewsbury BID started on 1st April 2019 and will run until 31st March 2024.

As a democratically elected, independent body, Shrewsbury BID enables more than 500 businesses to work collectively to influence and impact on how Shrewsbury town centre is managed and develops. We are a Company limited by guarantee Registration No. 08834790 and operate under The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004.

Shrewsbury BID is solely accountable to its members and is governed by a voluntary board of Directors from a representative range of sectors in the BID area. The Board meet quarterly to help ensure the priorities of businesses are being met and to monitor performance and delivery. BID Members receive regular email updates on our work and progress against our business plan priorities.

We engage our members on a wide range of town centre issues and invite them to get involved where possible. Shrewsbury BID works closely with industry partners including The High Streets Taskforce, The BID Foundation, Institute of Place Management and ATCM.

## Shrewsbury BID Board

**Mike Matthews, Chair**  
Prince Rupert Hotel,  
*Entertainment, Hospitality and Leisure*

**Kevin Lockwood, Deputy Chair**  
Darwin and Pride Hill Shopping Centres  
*Shopping Centres*

**Helen Ball**  
Shrewsbury Town Council  
*Public Sector*

**Tina Boyle**  
Acoustic Boutique  
*Independent Retail*

**Gemma Davies**  
Shropshire Council  
*Public Sector*

**Alessio Dyfnallt**  
Cooper Green Pooks  
*Property*

**Stacey Dodwell-Hill**  
Oberon  
*Independent Retail*

**James Handley**  
Big Town Plan

**James Hitchin**  
The Alb and Pubwatch  
*Bars and Pubs*

**Neil Jacques**  
Tesco and Shopwatch  
*National Retail*

**Nicholas Johnson**  
Hokum Entertainment  
*Hospitality and Leisure*

**Dilwyn Jones**  
Sabrina Boat  
*Non-specific*

**Paul Kirkbright**  
University Centre Shrewsbury  
*Education, Health and the Third Sector*

**Emily Periam**  
The Armoury  
*Bars and Pubs*

**Jonathan Soden**  
The Soden Collection  
*Independent Retail*

**Ann Tudor**  
TCA Accountants  
*Office and Commercial*

**Rachel Williams**  
Marks and Spencer  
*National Retail*

## Shrewsbury BID Team

**Seb Slater**  
Executive Director

**Stephanie Mansell-Jones**  
Business Liaison

**Emma Molyneux**  
Project Co-ordinator

## The BID team are supported by

**Imy King**  
Original Shrewsbury

**Simon Alton**  
PR

# 7. FINANCES

**Financial performance is monitored throughout the year via the Company Operations Group, a subgroup of the Board, with regular reports and financial controls in place to provide assurance to the Board.**

	2020/21
Reserves brought forward	53,580
BID Levy	274,131
Project Contributions	156,042
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>483,753</b>
Promoting & Animating	190,241
Supporting & Enhancing	78,381
Representing & Influencing	22,046
Big Town Plan	88,575
<b>Projects Total</b>	<b>379,243</b>
Overheads	73,899
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>453,142</b>

Reserves brought forward	53,580
In year change in reserves	-23,100
<b>Reserves Carried Forward</b>	<b>30,480</b>

The financial statements for 2020/21 confirm a continuation of strong financial performance. Whilst levy income collected at the end of the year was slightly lower than normal due to the flexible payment terms offered, significant additional income was secured to support our project work. Income in addition to levies once again far exceeded management costs allowing all levy income to be invested into projects. A strong cash-flow position has been maintained throughout the year.

These figures are presented as accurate at the time of writing. Full company accounts are prepared by independent accountants and are expected to remain consistent with the position reported here. The full accounts will be available on our website as a separate document.





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