

ANNUAL REVIEW

 SHREWSBURY
BID

19-20



WHEN THE WORLD STAYED APART
WE PULLED TOGETHER



WELCOME

Annual Review 19/20

Welcome to the Shrewsbury BID Annual Review 2019/20. As you know, this document is usually published in the Spring, but 2020 has been anything but a typical year - with severe flooding swiftly followed by the Covid-19 pandemic - so it felt right to hold publication until now.

The aim of the Annual Review is to look back on the past year and reflect on the projects and support delivered by Shrewsbury BID on behalf of town centre businesses over the last 12 months.

April 2019 saw the start of our second five year term following an emphatic ballot which will see over £2 million invested to support the town centre over the next five years. The overall result of 88% in favour by number and a turnout of 58% represented the joint highest UK BID result outside of London in the past three years.

My abiding memory of a very challenging 2020, will be the way that everyone worked together in Shrewsbury to help each other through some unbelievably tough times - from cleaning up after the floods, to finding a way to safely reopen following the coronavirus lockdown.

And the common thread running through much of the positivity in the town has been Shrewsbury BID.

Shrewsbury BID exists solely to support businesses and help to create an environment where business can flourish, by working collaboratively with local partners as well as representing our members with national government where appropriate.

I have always been proud to be Chair of Shrewsbury BID, but never more so than during the past year when everyone truly rose to the occasion to help Shrewsbury back to its feet and allowed us all to look forward to a safe and successful future.

I would like to thank all sixteen Shrewsbury BID Directors who represent the sectors across our town and play an absolutely vital role in shaping our work - your time and dedication to support Shrewsbury BID and our the town is very much appreciated.

Over the next dozen or so pages, we take a look at how the BID, and the business community as a whole, pulled together when we needed each other the most.

Stay safe, and thank you for being a valued member of Shrewsbury BID.

Mike Matthews, Chair of Shrewsbury BID



Mike Matthews, Chair



Seb Slater, Executive Director

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CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

Tuesday, 24th March 2020, is a date that will live long in the memory for many of us. It was the day that all “non-essential” shops and businesses were told to shut their doors, turning town centres into ghost towns overnight.

Communication was vital, with Government rules and guidelines changing by the day, along with a raft of financial support being hastily made available. We ensured our members were kept well-informed with a series of regular updates being shared via email and on the BID website.

With such a dramatic change in circumstances, all planned activity and events were suddenly no longer relevant and a whole new plan of action was developed.

Access to employment law advice

We teamed up with Shrewsbury-based employment law specialists, Bennett Briegal Solicitors, to provide a free advice helpline for all BID members, enabling them to deal with the often-complicated Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and other legal issues. The helpline was established within a week of the Government announcing the national lockdown and was much appreciated by the businesses who took advantage of the scheme.

Webinars

With the vast majority of people working from home, connecting through video technology became the new normal, and Shrewsbury BID hosted a number of successful webinars during the height of the pandemic.

The sudden lockdown presented a huge challenge, as well as a great deal of stress and worry, for business owners, and the webinars brought together legal specialists, accountants and experts from local government to help BID members make sense of the support on offer and discuss what was going to happen next.

Security patrols

With the vast majority of shops closed for an extended period of time, BID members were understandably worried about the security of their premises. So we quickly sourced security guards to carry out regular patrols of the town centre, who as well as checking premises, also advised business owners on how to improve their security measures if necessary.

Support Shrewsbury

While shops were closed during the coronavirus lockdown, we were determined to help businesses find alternative sources of income - so www.supportshrewsbury.co.uk was born.

Support Shrewsbury became the town’s “virtual marketplace”, giving businesses the opportunity to sell vouchers directly to customers who were unable to visit

their premises in person. The website attracted over **20,000 visitors** in its opening month and helped promote businesses that were trading and sell vouchers and products for those businesses who didn’t already have an e-commerce platform.

It is still live and will be developed to continue to provide support for town centre businesses in the future.

Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce

Shrewsbury BID played a central role in the formation of Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce - a multi-agency group which coordinated the reopening of the town centre following the coronavirus lockdown.

Working together with colleagues in Public Health, Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council, we lobbied for the most appropriate measures to be introduced to enable and attract people to come back into the town centre safely and allow businesses to reopen.

A lot of work was done to ensure the movement interventions were effective and beneficial to businesses, with support given to businesses who wanted to extend into the extra space with outdoor seating and service areas.

Subsidised PPE and starter packs

When shops were able to open again from mid-June, they needed to meet the necessary requirements to ensure customers maintained social distance. Working with the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce Group, we provided starter packs to help as many businesses as possible reopen under the coronavirus restrictions.

The packs contained items to support safe social distancing and help keep staff and customers safe, including social distance posters, window stickers, pavement markers, and an initial supply of masks and sanitiser.

PROJECT KEY

- Representing & Influencing
- Supporting & Enhancing
- Promoting & Animating





Bright and colourful flags and banners bring the message home that 'Shrewsbury's Open'.

SHREWSBURY'S OPEN

Mid-June saw the end of lockdown and the gradual reopening of shops and businesses. Good news, but still a worrying time and difficult for businesses to strike the right balance between welcoming customers back and staying safe. Moving into July, the hospitality trade was also allowed to reopen, and again a lot of work was needed to ensure staff and customers felt safe and welcome.

Alongside the need for individual businesses to make their premises safe, the whole of the town centre needed to be safe and welcoming for people - which was the main focus of work for the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce.

Traffic and movement interventions

Shrewsbury BID was a leading voice in discussions with highways officers at Shropshire Council, along with Shrewsbury Town Council, to find ways of allowing more space for pedestrians in the town centre. Enabling social distancing was (and of course, still is) vital to allow people to come back into Shrewsbury to support shops and businesses.

Closing High Street to traffic during the day created a central pedestrian zone and has enabled businesses to make

the most of the extra outside space, with seating areas popping up in loading bays and on pavements. Cafes, bars and restaurants have embraced the European cafe culture, and public feedback has been overwhelmingly positive about how the town feels safe and welcoming.

Bounce Back Shrewsbury

As well as the important safety measures, it was vital that the town centre looked welcoming whilst at the same time informing people of the necessary restrictions put in place.

Shrewsbury BID produced a range of bright posters, flags and signs which urged people to help Shrewsbury to 'Bounce Back' by following social distancing and other public health measures.

Signs were attached to pavements, using a range of Darwin-inspired animals, to demonstrate social distancing, and shops were provided with stickers and posters to display in their windows to explain the measures being taken to ensure people's safety.

Specially-designed flags were hung from buildings, with a range of messages such as "SY Together" and "Welcome Back", along with a total of **5 kilometres** of bunting strung up all around the town centre.

Shrewsbury's Open campaign

With the Government encouraging people to start getting out again during July and August, the focus shifted onto promoting Shrewsbury as a safe and enjoyable location - both for local people and those travelling from further afield.



Businesses have been provided with stickers and posters to reassure customers that their premises are safe.

Shrewsbury BID, along with partners within Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, created the Shrewsbury's Open campaign - a bright and vibrant marketing initiative to encourage people to visit the town centre. As outlined in the press release to launch the campaign:

"We really want to celebrate the amazing shops, hotels, pubs, restaurants and cafes we have here in Shrewsbury, and help people enjoy them in a safe and responsible way. A lot of work has been taking place with businesses, the councils and ourselves working together to make this happen.

"The Shrewsbury's Open campaign will run all summer, with its own website and imagery popping up around town in the form of festival flags, posters and banners. It's about welcoming people back into the town centre, with the necessary social distancing precautions in place, so we can all enjoy the summer."

The Shrewsbury's Open campaign received over **30,000 unique visitors** to its dedicated website and reached over **750,000 people** through our biggest ever Facebook campaign.

Music In The Square

One of the elements of the Shrewsbury's Open campaign was providing free music in the heart of Shrewsbury to add to the positive atmosphere in the town centre.

Working with Shrewsbury-based professional musician, Chris Quinn, a varied line-up of local performers was quickly put together, including musicians who regularly perform in festivals across the country.



Partnership working between councils and the BID has been central to getting Shrewsbury open again.



Outdoor seating and vibrant branding has made Shrewsbury feel welcoming.

The high standard of musicianship and laid-back feel of the performances prompted a lot of really positive feedback and added further to the European cafe culture atmosphere in the centre of town.

Picnics at the castle

One of the common themes running through all of the activities following the Covid-19 outbreak has been making the best possible use of Shrewsbury's outside space and public realm.

Again, working with Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, we took the lead on providing public toilets and a regular cleaning service to present the castle grounds as a picnic and relaxation area. We also held extensive discussions with nearby businesses about using the castle as a more formal dining area in the future - further enhancing the offer for customers and expanding the space available to be used safely.



Music In The Square has proven popular with businesses and their customers.



FLOODING RESPONSE

It seems like a long time ago now, but February 2020 brought the worst flooding we had seen for 20 years - forcing many businesses to close and causing tens of thousands of pounds worth of damage. In what would become a common theme in the months ahead, business owners rose to the challenge and worked together to help each other through.

Just as during the Covid-19 crisis, communication was vital, and Shrewsbury BID was quick to share information amongst its members and the public, hosting drop-in sessions and regularly sending email newsletters with the latest updates.

Lobbying for financial support

We led the creation and dissemination of a flooding impact survey and urgently worked with Shropshire Council and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to establish how much the flooding had damaged businesses - whether directly or indirectly through the sudden drop in footfall - so we could effectively lobby for financial support. Once funding did become available, we shared the information quickly with our members and supported them to ensure that everyone who was eligible for funding was able to apply with over £498,000 of flooding grants provided to Shrewsbury businesses by Shropshire Council.



Shrewsbury is #open4business

Immediately following the flooding, we launched a major social media and press campaign to send the message that the town centre was once again open for business. A series of photographs were taken of a wide variety of traders, all holding the #open4business logo, which were widely shared across the Original Shrewsbury social media platforms, as well as in the local press.



Our #Open4Business campaign helped encourage customers back into Shrewsbury following the flooding.



SUPPORTING & ENHANCING

Supporting our members and enhancing the visitor experience has taken on a number of guises during the past year - from coordinating new safety guidelines for bars and clubs, to introducing the Original Shrewsbury Ambassadors.

The Pubwatch group has gone from strength to strength, and Shrewsbury led from the front to establish a Shropshire-wide group, with towns sharing information to keep their venues as safe as possible.

The Original Shrewsbury Ambassadors project during the summer of 2019 was a huge success, seeing dozens of volunteers manning town centre streets to pass on local knowledge to visitors and ensuring they got the very best experience while spending time in Shrewsbury.

The amount of support being provided to our members has clearly ramped up in recent months, with first the devastating flooding and then the unprecedented lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Regular communication has been key, and we have worked hard with partners to quickly establish a bespoke package to help businesses pick their way through the various support options being provided by the government.

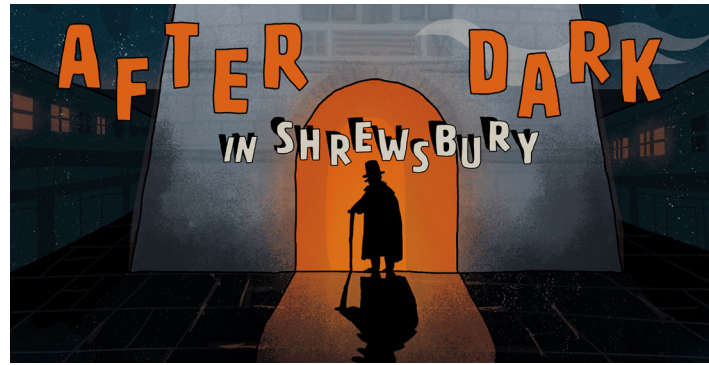
744 businesses interacted with



Original Shrewsbury Ambassadors welcomed visitors to the town during summer 2019



The Shoplatch Pocket Park was enjoyed by many during summer 2019



The After Dark guide featured spooky stories of Shrewsbury spots



We brought a Christmas tree and letter box to Father Christmas to Shrewsbury Square, guarded by a toy soldier

PROMOTING & ANIMATING

Aside from the whirlwind of the Covid-19 crisis, the past year has seen a variety of innovative and engaging projects taking place to enhance the town centre and encourage more people to visit - and spend longer in the town centre while they are here.

The Shoplatch Pocket Park saw thousands of people enjoying the town centre in a very different way while High Street was closed to traffic during spring and early summer. Nearby businesses and the Market Hall took ownership of the project and helped organise events which greatly increased footfall in that part of town.

The park had extensive media coverage, including a visit from BBC Midlands Today, which raised the profile of Shrewsbury across the region and turned the potential negative story of town centre roadworks into a major positive.

Social media activity has increased during the past year, with the Original Shrewsbury profiles on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram seeing significant growth. Instagram takeovers were hugely popular, with businesses using the Original Shrewsbury profile to share pictures and information about their service or products. Takeovers averaged a reach of over 7,000, over 280 interactions and a 16% increase in followers.

Halloween saw a focus on the town's night-time economy, with the After Dark in Shrewsbury guide directing people around a variety of pubs, bars, restaurants and hotels with a series of historical and spooky stories.

2019's Christmas campaign had a traditional twist, focused around 'letters to Father Christmas', with a special festive postbox and Christmas tree taking up residence under The Old Market Hall in The Square. Children were encouraged to write letters to Father Christmas using a beautifully-designed pack available from town centre traders, and hundreds of people took part.

The Darwin Shrewsbury Festival was another success, held over 10 days in February and covering a packed programme aimed at all ages with events held at venues all over town.

One of the main highlights was a rare opportunity to view some of Darwin's original letters and books through a private tour at Shrewsbury School. Among these important historic artefacts were two first-edition copies of the revolutionary On the Origin of Species.

Other highlights of the festival included free entry to Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, the Shropshire Young Thinkers competition, which once again really caught the imagination of schoolchildren, and a range of events designed to encourage curiosity and independent thinking.

MEDIA STATISTICS

218,619
average monthly reach

+126%
compared with previous year

16,843
average monthly engagements

+223%
compared with previous year

29,821 social media followers
+31% change year on year

24,051
average monthly website sessions



406
pieces of coverage in local, regional and national media (from April 19 to August 20), including coverage on BBC Midlands Today, The Sunday Times and The Guardian.

27
front-page articles in local newspapers



Seb on Midlands Today talking about the flooding in Shrewsbury



REPRESENTING & INFLUENCING

Representing our members is at the heart of everything we do. Whether it has been lobbying for urgent financial support for businesses, or negotiating with the council over the design of street improvements, Shrewsbury BID has maintained regular dialogue with our key stakeholders throughout the year.

Looking back at 2019, we strongly argued on behalf of our members regarding changes to the Park and Ride service in April. We also lobbied the council in response to the review of CCTV provision in the town centre, which resulted in the system being retained.

One of the highest profile campaigns was the launch of free car parking during August 2019, following extensive negotiations with Shropshire Council. The 'Appy Days' offer of free parking in Frankwell and Abbey Foregate was a great success, with traders telling us that people were spending more time shopping while they were in town.

Figures showed that footfall in Shrewsbury town centre increased by 2.2% during August 2019 compared to the previous year. During the same period there was a 3.5% decrease across the West Midlands, a 2.3% decrease for other market towns and an overall 1.6% decrease across the UK.

Christmas is always an important time of year, and we were pleased to negotiate with Shropshire Council to once again enable free car parking on late-night shopping days, as well as an extended Park and Ride service.

If there has ever been a time which highlighted the value of having a collective voice for the town centre, it has been in the first half of 2020. The BID's representing and influencing work has obviously been focused on the response to the floods and coronavirus pandemic, as outlined earlier in this document.



Shrewsbury BID was highlighted as an example for others to follow at the national BID Foundation conference.

BIG TOWN PLAN

Shrewsbury BID has continued to play a key role in the Big Town Plan Partnership, and 2019-20 signalled a new stage in the plan's development.

Shrewsbury businessman, David Parry, was appointed as the independent Chair to head the partnership board, and nationally-renowned urban designers, Glenn Howells Architects, were appointed to work on the masterplanning of the town centre, with a series of workshops taking place throughout the winter.

The initial findings are due to be reported later this year, and there will be a clear focus on how the proposals can be delivered.

A separate project, which will feed into the Big Town Plan, was undertaken to draw up a set of proposals for rejuvenating Castle Street. Businesses and individuals were engaged in the design process and a report containing a range of exciting and inspiring ideas is due to be published in September 2020.

The Big Town Plan has been central to the principles of the measures put in place to make the town centre safer in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Initiatives to improve the



environment for pedestrians and cyclists, such as removing through-traffic from the centre of town during the day, are being carefully monitored to help inform the long-term aspirations to help town centre businesses flourish in the future.



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, <i>Entertainment, Hospitality and Leisure</i>	Neil Jacques Tesco and Shopwatch <i>National Retail</i>
Kevin Lockwood, Deputy Chair Darwin and Pride Hill Shopping Centres <i>Shopping Centres</i>	Nicholas Johnson Hokum Entertainment <i>Hospitality and Leisure</i>
Helen Ball Shrewsbury Town Council <i>Public Sector</i>	Dilwyn Jones Sabrina Boat <i>Non-specific</i>
Tina Boyle Acoustic Boutique <i>Independent Retail</i>	Paul Kirkbright University Centre Shrewsbury <i>Education, Health and the Third Sector</i>
Gemma Davies Shropshire Council <i>Public Sector</i>	Emily Periam The Armoury <i>Bars and Pubs</i>
Alessio Dyfnallt Cooper Green Pooks <i>Property</i>	Jonathan Soden The Soden Collection <i>Independent Retail</i>
Stacey Dodwell-Hill Oberon <i>Independent Retail</i>	Ann Tudor TCA Accountants <i>Office and Commercial</i>
James Handley Big Town Plan	Rachel Williams Marks and Spencer <i>National Retail</i>
James Hitchin The Alb and Pubwatch <i>Bars and Pubs</i>	

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

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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.

	2019/20
Reserves brought forward	2,961
BID Levy	318,833
Project Contributions	171,945
Total Funding	493,739
Promoting & Animating	144,075
Supporting & Enhancing	77,381
Representing & Influencing	93,196
Projects Total	314,652
Management & Overheads	69,785
Total Expenditure	384,437

Reserves brought forward	2,961
In year change in reserves	109,302
Reserves Carried Forward	112,263

The financial statements for 2019/20 confirm a continuation of the strong financial performance seen in our first term. We have achieved budgeted levy income and significant additional income to support our project work. Income in addition to levies has far exceeded management costs allowing all levy income to be invested into projects.

A strong cash-flow position has been maintained throughout the year. This is supported by strong Levy collection performance which in turn facilitates prompt settlement of liabilities. 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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