



HELPING our businesses and town PROSPER



Dorking BID

THE STORY SO FAR

The Dorking BID (Business Improvement District) is managed by The Dorking Town Partnership. When the BID was first voted on, the vision was to create a prosperous Dorking through invigorating the experience of those who shop, work and visit the town, by celebrating all that Dorking has to offer and by ensuring the economic resilience of the town.

The services and projects provided to date by the Dorking BID were outlined in a Business Plan which you voted on in Spring 2017.

The Dorking Town Partnership which delivers the BID is business led and business funded and is accountable directly to you.

Working in collaboration with a range of other partners, Dorking Town Partnership's Board of Directors are drawn from local business representatives and work on a voluntary basis and diligently to deliver the Business Plan projects.

Your BID levy raises about £200,000 per year to deliver the projects that you voted for. Additionally, we have attracted income from markets and grants of almost £19,000 since the BID commenced.

In 2022 the Dorking BID is coming to the end of the first term and in order for us to continue to operate, we must now look to you to review our work to date and to build

upon this by helping us to formulate a business plan for the next 5 years. The new plan will then be subject to a vote in June 2022

Remember, if you choose for the BID not to continue, all the work and cumulative achievements detailed in this document will wind down and eventually cease in spring this year.

The last decade has seen towns across the UK experiencing massive changes as peoples' shopping habits move and their choices change. This has been exacerbated further by the pandemic and having to meet the unprecedented challenges that this has brought. In this undeniably tough trading environment Dorking must continue to adapt, recover, and grow, in order to thrive.

Our town centre must be fit for purpose and able to compete with other places. Not only in recovering from COVID and its impact, but the ever growing and ever-present online challenge remains. Town Centre businesses must move with the times and offer consumers what they want, when, and in the way they want it. It is crucially important to not only have a plan but to be aspirational for our businesses and our town. You can do this by showing you still support your BID.

Vote "YES" again for the Dorking BID!



Chair's Comments

TELL US WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Bringing footfall into the town: The Rob Walker Festival and Artisan Market (right)

We have now entered the final few months of the first term of the Dorking BID and I am very proud of what we have achieved. The acceleration of online shopping and the challenges that the pandemic has presented to the business community has highlighted the essential need for the BID as we supported businesses during this difficult period.

Of course, we must not forget all the initiatives and projects that the BID delivered in the pre-COVID times and we plan to continue this work once we understand your priorities for the next 5 years.

Please contribute to this important process by telling us what you think works best for your business so that we can reach a consensus as to what should be included in the BID plan for the next 5 years. Initially, we ask that you do this by completing the survey which can be accessed on our website www.dorkingtowpartnership.co.uk. Alternatively, if you need a hard copy of the survey, please contact charlotte@dorkingtowpartnership.co.uk

I would like to thank everyone for their support and hard work on making the first term of our BID a success.

We ask that you continue to support the BID and vote YES in the forthcoming ballot, so that the good work that the BID does for Dorking carries on.

Andrew Fuller
Chair - Dorking Town Partnership



WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)?

A Business Improvement District or BID is an arrangement whereby businesses collaborate to decide what services and improvements (in addition to those already provided) they wish to make in their location, how they are going to manage and deliver those improvements and what they are prepared to pay to make them happen. This information forms a business plan that will be voted upon by all prospective levy payers. If the majority vote YES by both number and rateable value a BID exists for a maximum of 5 years and must spend the funding raised within the BID area and in accordance with the agreed business plan.

An Investment In Your Business

This document aims to both review the success of the Dorking BID and also offer the opportunity to all in the BID area to secure a BID for the next 5 years. A chance to invest £1m plus over the next 5 years to secure the firm foundation we have laid and to build upon it. Together we can continue to not only improve the town centre but be aspirational for it and our businesses.

The Funding - Your Money, Your Say

As central and local government funds steadily decrease, a great many town centres are deciding to adopt or continue this private sector management model called BIDs, to better fulfill the wishes and wants of their business community. Dorking BID is an example of this and is funded by businesses in the area that pay a set levy based upon their rateable value. This investment is ring-fenced and can only be spent within the BID area on the ideas and themes agreed and voted upon in the business plan. It is important to note that the levy has nothing to do with normal business rates which pass straight to the government.



BID initiatives: opposite page - the Dorking Christmas Festival and Christmas Window Competition have proved a huge success, while the LoyalFree app has engaged 3,598 users. This page: the recent Christmas window trail saw visitors follow a very excited badger shopping for presents and summer was bursting with colour thanks to hanging baskets and planters dotted around the town



The BID Company

The Dorking BID is managed by the Dorking Town Partnership which is made up of a Board of Directors drawn from local, large and small businesses from within the BID area. The Dorking Town Partnership is a private, not for profit, independent company. Any local levy payer is eligible to become a member of the Dorking Town Partnership and can then be put forward to serve as a Director of the BID.



“A vibrant town is essential for attracting the right calibre of employees to Dorking. That is the primary reason that I both support and am involved with Dorking Town Partnership. The events that are held, the Artisan Market and the colourful displays commissioned are key areas where Dorking Town Partnership has delivered.

NICK BOOT, BULLIMORES



THE VOTE

If you are eligible to pay the levy, you are eligible to vote, so you decide if the BID continues. Of those that vote, if a majority of businesses vote in favour of the BID by number and by total rateable value, the levy will be mandatory on all businesses in the BID area apart from those that may be exempt.

What Happens if it is a 'NO' Vote

If you do not vote "YES" then Dorking BID will simply cease to exist. All the services and projects including the website, marketing and events will stop immediately at that time.

Many services and events will be lost. This includes...

- Over £1m BID levy investment in supporting Town Centre businesses will be lost over the next five years.
- There are over 300-plus BIDs in the UK now and Dorking would lose ground with other BID locations such as Oxted, Walton, Guildford and Camberley.
- The website www.dorkingtowndpartnership.co.uk will close down.
- The @HelloDorking brand on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages will cease along with promotion of local businesses and their offers.
- Our physical and online events such as Christmas Festivals, Surrey Day, Art Trails, Hello lamp post campaign, Shop Dorking, markets and many more will not happen.
- LoyalFree and the 'Shop the Window' initiative will close.
- No regular marketing or promotion of Dorking and its businesses in various media channels including Surrey Life, Surrey Homes, Vantage Point, The Challenger and Surrey Magazine publications.
- No independent body to regularly lobby Mole Valley District Council and Surrey County Council on matters such as traffic and parking issues, maintenance and economic development.
- We will no longer be able to advocate for businesses.
- The relationship between the Dorking Town Partnership, Visit Surrey and Surrey Hills Enterprise will cease including all the associated activities and initiatives.
- Businesses will not have collective representation and input into a Future Dorking strategy.
- Support for organisations such as Men's Shed, the Food Float, the Museum and The Caves will end.
- COVID support provided by the BID will end.



“ I feel that as a business owner it can be lonely and overwhelming but the BID brings me support and a feeling of safety that I am informed and part of a community, with fresh ideas and inspiration to improve my business. I think these first few years in business would have been very different if I didn't have the BID by my side. Worth every penny!

TERESA WELLER, HAIR ART



✓
**Vote YES
for DORKING
BID to see
these services
and projects
continue**



A 'No' vote would see the loss of many services and events and the marketing and promotion of the town

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Vote YES for DORKING BID to see these services and projects continue ✓

Our work is varied and addresses the services you, our BID levy payers, wanted to see delivered in addition to those the local authority provide. The Dorking BID will have invested on average £200,000 per annum delivering the following exciting new business initiatives by the end of its first term. Your BID is having a significant impact on footfall and sales in our town centre. These advances and benefits will continue with new projects for 2022– 2027 if businesses vote ‘YES.’

Here is a selection of projects and services we have delivered over the last 4+ years:

INSPIRATIONAL Dorking

- Created a strong public facing brand for Dorking with the launch of @HelloDorking which is used across all of our social media channels including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- Our social media following includes 5000 followers on Instagram, 3250+ on Facebook and 2,350+ on Twitter.
- Branded campaigns have included; An Hour from London, the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower, Shop Local, Feel Good Friday and Hello Lamp Post, Art trails, Photographic competitions and Live Breathe Dorking.
- An ambitious events programme has delivered a range of events including the Christmas Festivals which attracts over 7000 visitors. Other events have included the Rob Walker Centenary Festival and Britain in Bloom.

Thousands of residents and visitors engage with the town through our social media channels and the ‘Free after Three’ parking initiative encouraged visitors to shop and stay on and enjoy the evening economy

- Partnered with other organisations such as Visit Surrey to promote Surrey Day. In 2021 the Dorking page on Visit Surrey was clicked through almost 17,000 times!
- As a member of Tourism South East, we have promoted tourism opportunities to encourage more visitors to the town.
- 24 Artisan Markets have taken place.
- Over 3400 users visit the Dorking Town Partnership website each month and 16% of our audience is international
- Our ‘Free after Three’ initiative has provided free parking on Friday after 3pm encouraging visitors to shop and to stay on and enjoy the evening economy.

OPERATIONAL Dorking

- You asked us to advocate for solutions to traffic and parking issues and we have progressed this. Although unsuccessful in our initial attempts to persuade Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) to instal yellow cross hatch boxes to help resolve traffic congestion in the town centre, our campaign did grab the attention of Surrey County Council (SCC). Following meetings with them we have commissioned the Future Dorking Placemaking project. We envisage that taking this work forward will be a key objective providing the BID receives a yes vote.
- We have also ensured that MVDC and SCC provide an appropriate level of cleansing and maintenance across the town centre which is in line with their Base Line agreements.



You asked us to bring Dorking together and we have done this by:

- Installing Lamp Post Banners around the town helping to promote a sense of place.
- Supporting local organisations including Men’s Shed, The Food Float, The Museum and The Caves
- Organising network events and training including First Aid, Mental Health First Aid and Social Media.
- Negotiating a trade waste contract with Environmental Support Services Ltd which has delivered savings to those who have used it.

- In partnership with the Friends of Dorking we have delivered Christmas Lights, trees and boats around the town. Additionally, we have provided baskets and planters to more than 110 businesses.
- Won Gold for the South East in Bloom, Business Improvement District category and overall category winner.

You asked us to provide every business with an online presence and this has been achieved by:

- Creating a new website which can feature all businesses.
- Engaged LoyalFree to provide both a customer focused app but also ‘Shop the Window’ initiative. This was especially useful in lockdown when physical shops were closed as the app enabled retailers to sell on line. LoyalFree has promoted 50 offers and has engaged 3,598 app users.
- We have over 3,700 subscribers to our online newsletters and customer emails.
- Vacancies can also be advertised on the website.

“

The BID vision, to re-imagine how our town centre looks and functions, has got off to a fantastic start with the help of a group of world-leading consultants in urban design. The “Place-making” ideas generated can now be widely shared and discussed and could form a template for incremental improvements to the town centre for many years to come. This is a very exciting prospect for the future of Dorking.

COUNCILLOR NICK WRIGHT



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS cont'd

ASPIRATIONAL Dorking

• Following on from the production of the Future Dorking strategy we have now produced a public realm document which includes placemaking and improvement ideas for the town. Potential traffic solutions are also addressed in the Future Dorking strategy.

• When we commenced the BID we had not expected to find ourselves supporting businesses during a pandemic. When this situation arose, we responded rapidly to support you. We sent out over 30 newsletters offering information and advice on grants and COVID regulations. We provided practical support by making available 500 bottles of sanitiser and 400 floor stickers to businesses across the BID area.



“It’s a great opportunity to showcase local produce and businesses and to attract visitors locally and from surrounding villages.”

BASIL DOHA, MULLINS



The BID provided practical support and 500 bottles of sanitiser during the pandemic and saw the town win the South and South East in Bloom award (BID category)

DORKING BID IN NUMBERS

£200k
average amount per year invested by the BID to deliver initiatives

5,000
followers on Instagram and over **3,250** on Facebook and **2,350** on Twitter means we can promote the town and its businesses to a huge audience

3,700
subscribers to online newsletter and customer emails



3,400
visitors each month to BID website

17,000
click throughs on Dorking’s page of the Visit Surrey website on Surrey Day



7,000
visitors attracted to the Dorking Christmas Festival

3,598
app users take advantage of the LoyalFree app



24
Artisan Markets have taken place, bringing Sunday footfall to the town

300+
BID towns in the UK, including nearby Oxted, Guildford and Camberley



500
bottles of sanitisers made available through the pandemic and 400 floor stickers



TELL US WHAT YOU WANT FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

We want Dorking not only to sustain its current level of success but to be a market leader and example of best practice as a town centre. We would like you to tell us what has worked well and what needs improvement. It is your ideas and your feedback that will form the basis and content of our next business plan.

With this in mind, we would appreciate you completing our survey and returning it to us by Friday, 25th February. You can complete the survey by visiting our website www.dorkingtowpartnership.co.uk

As part of our ongoing review process we conducted a mid-term review to seek your views about the BID. This feedback will also be used in shaping the new Business Plan.

If you have any questions, please contact Charlotte Whitaker, Manager of the Dorking Town Partnership at charlotte@dorkingtowpartnership.co.uk or call 07377 096892



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