

BID plans revealed in roadshow

Delegates at a series of GY BID Road Shows in January heard the proposals that would deliver the main aims of the Business Improvement District planned for Great Yarmouth town centre.

The mini conference-style seminars were held in Market Gates, Palmers and Marks & Spencer, with more than 200 businesses invited to attend and support the BID.

Chairman of the Great Yarmouth Town Centre Partnership (GYTCP), Palmers Managing Director Mr Bruce Sturrock, opened each of the four events, highlighting his own support for the BID proposals and his concerns for the town centre if the Street Wardens, one of the main projects of the BID, were to finish at the end of March when Government funding ends.

He said the Street Wardens had been

behind many of the improvements to the town centre, helping to make it safer and cleaner for people working and shopping there.

Mr Sturrock asked if it was fair that only half the town's businesses contributed to these initiatives when all benefited from the CCTV, Street Wardens, events, marketing, promotions and the other initiatives the TCP manages and delivers.

He urged businesses that were already contributing to support the BID when it comes to the ballot in March and reminded them that they would not be asked to pay more. The cost of the BID is the same as their annual subscription to the TCP.

Town Centre Manager Jonathan Newman gave all delegates a GY BID proposals document and invited feedback. He said the projects and activities outlined

in the BID document would be finalised and published as a business plan prior to the ballot.

Mr Newman said the BID's aim was to build on the successes the TCP had delivered over the last nine years, enhancing the business support projects of the scheme and capitalising on the improvements brought about through regeneration schemes such as NRF and InteGREAT.

He said the GY BID proposals were based around the delivery of three clear objectives:

- **Improving safety and security**
- **Creating more events and promotions**
- **Increasing marketing and advertising**

All of these would build confidence amongst shoppers, change perceptions, increase shopping visits and boost footfall into town centre shops and businesses.

Safer Business Award for town

John Pond, the Town Centre Partnership's Retail Crime Reduction Co-ordinator, reminded delegates of the successes of the TCP's ShopSafe scheme.

He outlined how the BID would further enhance measures to combat minor crime, shop theft, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Over the last three years businesses participating in ShopSafe had benefited from reduced losses and an improved feeling of staff and customer safety thanks to co-operation between CCTV, Police, Street Wardens and more than 90 other radio users in the ShopNet system.

The Street Wardens, currently funded by NRF and the Home Office, had contributed to a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour and incidents of environmental damage, but most importantly had the overall impact of making the town centre feel much safer for people working, shopping and visiting.

Mr Pond said the ShopSafe scheme, complete with exclusion notices, photographs of offenders and the civil recovery scheme, had recently been approved for a Safer Business Award after being assessed by the Home Office-backed Action Against Business Crime Partnership.

All of these services and more would be available to BID contributors upon a successful BID ballot:

- Street Wardens expanded
- CCTV linked
- ShopSafe retail crime reduction scheme
- NightSafe licensed premises safety scheme
- Day to day operational management
- Retail radio link – ShopNet
- Exclusion order scheme
- Civil recovery scheme



Cost of the BID explained

GY BID would be looking for businesses to contribute at the same rate as members of the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) have been for the last few years.

Jonathan Newman said the BID would be paid for by an additional levy of 1.5% of the business rate at 2000 valuations. Only businesses with a RV of less than £8,000 would be exempt, however a 0.5% reduction was being applied to those shops whose entrances were located in Market Gates Shopping Centre.

Although the BID area was still being finalised, Mr Newman pointed out that businesses under the £8k threshold or outside the BID area could contribute voluntarily and benefit from the BID's services. It was pointed out that the majority of businesses would pay less than £10 a week to support the vast array of initiatives and projects being proposed.

Mr. Newman stressed that the BID levy would replace the current TCP membership subscription, not add to it.

More marketing for the town centre

Once a series of events and entertainment was in place, the challenge would be to make people aware of what was happening in the town, Jonathan Newman told delegates.

This would be achieved through increased advertising, a town centre website and regular editorials in the Great Yarmouth Mercury. GY BID would also seek to improve perceptions of the town and devise a media campaign to encourage more use of its shops, restaurants, pubs, cafes and other places of interest.

The campaign would promote Great Yarmouth and its town centre as a fun, lively and safe place to shop, eat and spend leisure time.

Marketing proposals include:

- Unique branding for the town centre
- A town centre website
- A town centre newsletter
- A retail brochure
- Annual market research
- Parking & transport initiatives

Christmas events push up footfall 12%

Extra events, marketing and entertainment were key to improving the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre and increasing the numbers of people using it regularly, delegates were told.



Jonathan Newman said he was convinced that the Town Centre Partnership's Christmas campaign demonstrated that additional funding for promotional activities, events and street entertainment could improve footfall into the town centre all year round.

He said with 2005 footfall generally struggling to match that of 2004, the Christmas lights switch-on followed by the

Christmas Fayre saw figures rocket by 12% for the last two months of the year. Events such as visits by Santa and his live reindeer, local radio road shows, carol services, fireworks and street performers all helped to make Christmas a more profitable time for many town centre shops.

Extra funding from the Business Improvement District would allow the Partnership to be more pro-active all year round in putting on events and advertising the town centre.

Events proposals include:

- Frequent high quality events such as the Christmas Fayre, Maritime Festival and food & film festivals
- French & continental markets
- Summer Sunday events
- Entertainment & street artists in the performance area
- Enhanced Christmas events

Ballot papers out on March 1st

All business being asked to contribute to the GY BID will receive ballot papers on March 1st 2006.

The ballot period will last 28 days and voting will end at 5pm on March 28th. The ballot will have to meet two tests - a simple majority (over 50%) must vote in favour and those voting in favour must represent a majority of the aggregate rateable value of those voting.

The result will be announced on March 30th and the BID will commence from April 3rd 2006.

It may be necessary for store managers of multiple retailers to complete a proxy form giving them the authority to cast the vote on behalf of their employer.

Key dates

February 14th

Business plan published on website

February 14th

Notice of ballot sent to businesses

February 21st

GY BID Open Day at Star Hotel

March 1st

Ballot papers received

March 17th

Proxy forms returned

March 28th

Final ballot day

March 30th

Result announced

April 3rd

BID commences

Main aims of the BID

- Build on Success
- Retain/Expand Street Warden Scheme
- Increase Events
- Increase Marketing
- Raise Profile of Town
- Change Perceptions
- Attract Inward Investment
- Increase Footfall
- Increase Business

What the delegates said

Beverley Rice – Bizarre Bizarre

“Yarmouth HAS to move forward. Without the Street Wardens the town centre will not be a pleasant place to shop. The Street Wardens are invaluable in all aspects, whether it be tackling petty crime, anti-social behaviour or reuniting parents with lost children.”

Simon Cooper – Coopers

“It will be good to see all businesses working together in a proactive way to improve the town centre for all the people working and shopping there.”

Denise Lovejoy – JJB Sports

“Without the BID we will lose the Street Wardens – this will be a great loss to the town.”

Susan Adcock – The Cloakroom

“Even though my rateable value is under the threshold I will be contributing to the BID voluntarily as I feel the projects will improve the town for everybody doing business in Great Yarmouth's town centre.”

BID open day planned for February 21st

If you missed the RoadShows then you will have another chance to speak to Bruce, John and Jonathan at the gyBID Open Day being held at the Star Hotel between 10.30 and 2.30 on Tuesday 21st February, please call in any time on the day to ask any questions relating to the BID or the Town Centre Partnership.

For more information on this and the Business Improvement District go to:
www.gybid.co.uk

PIPS offer for February

Public Information Pillars Ltd have been supporters of the Town Centre Partnership for the last six years and their unique and low-cost advertising has benefited many local businesses during that time. PIPs are now offering a spring special offer available until 31 March: A full colour laminated poster displayed for 30 weeks all across the season for only £15 per week*! Each advert is 2.1M tall and 1.0M wide and all the sites are maintained by local staff on a weekly basis. Book now to avoid disappointment, call 0115 938 3000 or 0845 260 2760. * One off printing charge of £75