

# Mansfield

## Business Improvement District News

### Full steam ahead for the Mansfield BID!

**Last month Mansfield Town Centre Partnership made a decisive move in its ongoing efforts to improve the fortunes of the town centre.**

FUNDS to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) have been provided by the Alliance Sub Regional Strategic Partnership, Mansfield District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. As a result, **New Horizon Limited**, an experienced consultancy company based in Nottingham, has been appointed to help set up Mansfield Town Centre's own BID initiative. It began work last month and is currently talking to key groups and businesses to make sure everyone gets a chance to have a say and to become involved.

#### So, what is a BID and how will it help achieve a better, more appealing town centre?

Well actually, it's pretty simple. A BID is an active partnership of local businesses similar to many that work well here already.

However, with a collective voice drawn from more than 500 businesses, it will liaise with the council and police to define current services and standards in the town centre then enhance them with specific additional activities and services determined by you. A precise geographical area will be identified and all the issues, problems and solutions necessary to encourage more people to visit, linger longer and spend more in Mansfield town centre will be considered. Agreed priorities might be more cleansing, more on-street security - particularly at night, shop local campaigns, long-term parking offers, holding bigger and better events to bring in more visitors, local and regional promotions or improving the market offer - anything that you feel will encourage customers in the town to spend more money in your businesses.

Once the area and the prospective supporting premises have been identified, the unit cost of all the agreed extra services can be apportioned and businesses advised of what their share might be. Then all businesses within the BID area that pay business council tax have the chance to vote on whether to allow the process to go ahead.

If a majority vote to support the scheme, it becomes **COMPULSORY** that **EVERY** business in the target area shares in the total cost. The BID Company ensures agreed standards and services are maintained so your money only goes on additional projects or or services, ultimately growing the profitability of the businesses across the

town. So the project is local, the vote is local, the spend is local and the control and management of that spend will be local too. Each business pays a small sum on a regular basis but by pooling the money from hundreds of contributors, a large reserve of funds to invest back into the town can be generated every year for a five-year period. This way **EVERYONE** pays and **EVERYONE** benefits.

#### Why do we need a BID?

New money and new energy has to be found if we are to halt the downturn in business fortunes here and make a start bringing in new traders and attractions. The problems and issues that exist in and around our stores and the shopping centre must be tackled in a new and radically different way.

The council and police can only do so much with limited budgets and they generally provide good services for the money they receive. However, if we are seeking excellence, many of us would agree the standards set and the services provided in Mansfield could be improved to put the town higher up on the list of places in which people want to spend time and money.

We could all carry on doing our own marketing and promotions, trying to encourage people into our shops and businesses - but ask yourself these questions:

- What if people stop coming past our doors?
- What if Mansfield is no longer the place of choice - your customers preferring to shop elsewhere?
- Can you afford to lose them?
- Can you afford the cost of attracting them back on your own?

More must be done now and we cannot expect the council or police to do it all on their own any longer.

With your help and support - your new local BID Company could be trading by the end of this year, a new tool to share to start fighting back.

#### Your business - your choice - your say

#### Have you completed and returned your BID Business Survey?

New Horizon has kicked off its research programme by preparing and distributing a business questionnaire. It is designed to understand the issues that are challenging businesses trading in Mansfield town centre,

teasing out the sort of actions you want to see happen to help your business prosper and grow.

The four-page survey was delivered by hand at the beginning of March to every business in town, together with an overview letter and an envelope to keep the completed form safe until it is collected.



If you haven't seen a copy or have misplaced it, then phone Pat Parkes, the Mansfield Town Centre BID Co-ordinator on **07794121207** and a copy will be delivered to you. If you've filled in a copy already and it has not yet been collected, phone Chris Hollins on 0793 2013442 and he will organise this. Alternatively you can simply stick a stamp on the envelope and pop it in the post.

All your views are important so please take the time to complete it. This is your chance to have your say and get your ideas on to the table to be considered with all the others and possibly be included in the BID action plan. Taking five minutes now to jot down your thoughts could help your business survive and blossom over the next five years.

**Find that form and get it filled in. You know it makes sense!**

### Come and see the results!

- **Head Office wanting better results but giving you less support?**
- **Fewer customers now than you've ever had?**
- **Businesses on either side of you closed down and looking tatty?**
- **Customers expecting more for their money?**

We have not only been asking businesses what their issues are - we have been speaking to visitors to Mansfield for their views also.

Come and see what businesses and visitors think they need. Bring



your ideas or suggestions of what you would do differently to make Mansfield town centre a regular, natural choice for shoppers and spenders, whether during the day or the evening, if only you had the money.

**The more you have to say, the better we'll like it!** Many businesses are finding it tough at the moment, not just in Mansfield, so let's get ahead of the game and do something about it. If we don't - what will the town centre look like in a year or two's time?

**If you do nothing else - just come and listen!**

We are holding two drop-in meetings on:-

**Wednesday 22nd April between 5.30pm and 7pm at the "And Why Not" Public House in Leeming Street and Wednesday 29th April between 11am and 2pm in the Old Town Hall**

Working together can and will make things happen and by adding your voice to everyone else's, we can start to get things moving. There are many BIDs around the UK and they all have one thing in common - they are all seeing good results from pooling resources!

**Let's make sure Mansfield town centre joins the ranks of the winners.**

Ring Pat Parkes on 07794121207 for more details and watch out for your personal invitation too.



Pat Parkes has been appointed as the Co-ordinator for the Mansfield town centre BID. One of the consultants employed by New Horizon, she started working in Mansfield in February and will be meeting council and police officers, business groups and individuals over the next few months leading up to the vote. She is here to listen to your concerns about the town, what your customers are saying and what you want to change for the better.

Pat has worked with large and small, multi-national and independent businesses around the Midlands for the last six years. During this time she has helped create safe, vibrant working environments, where customers, visitors and employees choose to work and spend their leisure time.

Her most recent project was to form a Business Improvement District in Nottingham city centre, solely for the licensed economy, in order to put the city's leisure offer back into its top slot as the great cultural day or night out.

Since 1984 Pat has been involved in family businesses in Shropshire and knows how important it is to keep ahead of the competition. Building on this experience, Pat has come to Mansfield, bringing a fresh perspective to help local businesses transform the town, returning it to its former glory, centred on a thriving, bustling and well-used market place.

"The most important part in all of this is that businesses get actively involved - that way the money raised goes further and makes a very obvious difference", said Pat. "It also goes a long way in removing much of the red tape that constantly frustrates many businesses. So if you are passionate about the future of Mansfield - this is exactly for you."

