



How to keep up to date with the BID...

YOU can keep up to date with all BID projects and initiatives in a number of ways.

Our website - www.newportnow.co.uk - includes a 'Latest News' section that is regularly updated. Notes from meetings of the BID's board of directors are also published on our website. You'll find these in the 'Resources' section.

We send out news updates via email on a regular basis. To ensure we have your up to date email address, contact our manager Kevin Ward - kevin@kevinwardmedia.com

Keep an eye on our Facebook and X social media pages.

Message from our chairman, Zep Bellavia

WELCOME to our final newsletter of 2023.

Our volunteer Board of Directors, the majority of whom either own or run businesses in Newport city centre, know that times remain challenging for many of our members.

But there is also plenty of good news, including the latest footfall figures highlighted on this page.

As our manager Kevin Ward says, it is up to businesses to take advantage of the events that are driving the increase in visitors.

The BID is here to help in any way we can.

That might be through encouraging you to use our city centre app, or to accept the Newport Now gift card that can only be spent in the BID area. It could be via our Shopfront Improvement Grant.

It could be by us continuing to lobby local and central government on your behalf.

Or it could be as simple as offering you help and advice, something we do every day.

Remember that our daytime Street Ambassadors and our weekend Night Ambassadors are there to help you and your customers.

Their contact details are available on our website.

We will be in touch early in the new year with details of our first open meeting of 2024.

Finally, on behalf of the BID, I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

• **Zep Bellavia is Managing Director of Bellavia & Associates.**

City centre bucking UK footfall trends

NEW figures show more people are visiting Newport city centre than before the Covid pandemic – bucking 'high street' footfall trends in the rest of Wales and across the UK.

According to data from official counting software*, footfall in Newport city centre for the period January to November this year is 5.3% ahead of the first 11 months of 2019 (the last 'normal' trading year before the Covid lockdowns).

Across Wales, footfall for the same period is down by 12.6% and in the UK as a whole is down by 13.8% when compared to 2019.

There was more good news for city centre traders last month as the BID's Countdown to Christmas event attracted almost 9,000 additional visitors compared to an average Saturday.

Footfall figures show the Christmas lights switch-on, which the BID organises and delivers in partnership with Newport City Council, Friars Walk and Newport City Radio, brought in 8,900 additional people.

Analysis of 2023 footfall figures by the BID has shown major events are the key driver for people to visit the city centre.

As well as Countdown to Christmas, events like Armed Forces Day, the Big Splash, Pride in the Port and the Newport



Crowds at the BID's Countdown to Christmas event on November 18. Our event brought 8,900 extra people into the city centre compared to an average Saturday

Food Festival – the majority of which receive funding from the BID – have all attracted thousands into the city centre.

BID manager Kevin Ward said: "The BID is funded by the businesses of the city centre and it's important we spend their money in the ways that benefit them the most.

"These footfall figures show that Newport is doing better than other traditional high streets across Wales and the rest of the UK in terms of bringing people in.

"The numbers are not just driven by events, though. New additions to the city centre such as the redeveloped Newport Market, the four-star Mercure Hotel, and the refurbished Newport Arcade all play their part along with all of our independent and national businesses.

"We don't pretend that everyone who comes into the city centre for an event leaves with full shopping bags – but there is no reason why they shouldn't.

"The challenge for traders is

to tap into events footfall and to ensure they benefit as much as possible from the increase in visitors. This might mean opening at different hours on event days, or providing special offers.

"It is also important that we get the message out about Newport's increased footfall compared to the pre-Covid period to counter some of the often ill-informed negativity on social media."

*Figures analysed are for Jan-Oct 2023 v Jan-Oct 2019. Data is from footfall counters in the city centre operated by specialist company Springboard, and compared to Wales and UK averages.

Free money for visitors

VISITORS to Newport earlier this month were handed free money to spend in the city centre.

To mark Small Business Saturday on December 2, Newport Now BID partnered with Newport City Council to give out 100 of the BID's gift cards in the city centre.

The gift cards can only be spent at more than 50 participating businesses in the city centre, ranging from shops to pubs, cafes to art galleries.

The cards were in special 'Load This Card' envelopes.

Shoppers could follow the instructions on the envelope to load the card with money and then gift it to a loved one.

However, 60 of the cards handed out were each already loaded with money ranging from £100 to £10.

In total, our Street Ambassadors handed out more than £2,500 in 'free' money to shoppers.

Newport Now BID manager Kevin Ward said: "Small Business Saturday is all about supporting local businesses – and that is precisely what our gift cards do all year round."

Councillor Jane Mudd, leader of Newport City Council, said: "We were very pleased to be able to support Newport Now BID and bring a little more Christmas cheer to people who visiting Newport city centre.

"Newport does have a great



Just two of the 60 lucky winners who shared more than £2,500 as our Street Ambassadors handed out gift cards on Small Business Saturday. Pictured with our winners is Ambassador Gareth O'Neill

offering and we are particularly proud of our local businesses.

"We encourage everyone to shop local and support Newport businesses on Small Business Saturday, for Christmas and beyond."

Newport Now gift cards can be purchased online here: www.newportgiftcard.co.uk

Businesses can sign up to accept our gift cards here: <https://form.jotform.com/Miconex/universal-UK-mpl-merc>

BID's Night Ambassadors service is extended thanks to grant funding

THE BID's successful Night Ambassadors service has been extended for at least another six months thanks to a successful application for further grant funding.

The service, which operates on Fridays and Saturdays from 8pm to 4am, provides assistance to the public, the night-time economy and the emergency services.

It began operations in July 2022 thanks to a successful application for grant funding from the Home Office's Safer Streets initiative.

The funding allowed the Night Ambassadors to operate for 14 months.

In partnership with Newport City Council, the BID then applied for further funding from the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner.

The application was successful and the service is now secured until the end of March next year.

Early in the new year, we intend to apply for another grant to extend the service for another year.

BID manager Kevin Ward said: "The Night Ambassadors have proved incredibly popular with revellers, licensees, the police and licensing authorities since we introduced them.

"Grant funding means we can provide the service at no cost to BID levy payers and we look forward to extending it further."

Kids can post their letters to Santa

CHILDREN can post their letters to Santa in a special post box that has been installed in Newport Arcade.

The post box has been funded by the Newport Now Business Improvement District (BID) and constructed by local carpentry company Ollywood.

The bright red box, covered in Christmas decorations and marked 'Letters to Santa', is in the arcade until Christmas Eve.

Youngsters can post their letters to the North Pole seven days a week.

Parents should make sure the letters contain a name and address, as one lucky letter will be picked out to win a £50 Newport Now gift card. The cards can only be spent in the city centre at more than 50 participating businesses.

The post box will provide families with the perfect reason to visit Newport Arcade, which has been refurbished and is thriving under new local ownership, during the festive season – as well as all the other great businesses in the area.



The Newport Now 'Letters to Santa' post box in Newport Arcade

On December 9, the arcade was particularly festive as it staged its Independent Traders Christmas Market – with a host of Christmas goodies on offer from local traders.

Newport Now BID manager Kevin Ward said: "Our Letters to Santa post box adds to the festive feeling in the city centre following our Countdown to Christmas lights switch-on event last month, which attracted thousands of people into Newport.

"We're really keen to involve as many parts of the city centre as possible in our projects and events, and Newport Arcade – packed with fantastic independent traders – is a great place to visit.

"There are also some great businesses surrounding it in High Street, Newport Market, Cambrian Road and Market Arcade.

"We're grateful to the arcade for hosting the post box and we hope to see it full of letters to Santa."

BID database refreshed by MBA students

NEWPORT Now BID is working with students from the University of South Wales' MBA Global course on a project to refresh and complete our contact database for all levy payers.

MBA students will be in touch with levy-paying businesses in the city centre (anyone whose premises have a rateable value of £5,000 or more a year) during the next month or so to check we have the correct contact details on file for you.

The project assistance is being provided free to the BID by USW.

Students will aim to take up as little of your time as possible.

Any help you can give them will be much appreciated and make it easier for us to communicate with you.