

## **Newport Now BID: How your Levy will be spent in 2024-25**

*The Newport Now BID – local businesses improving our city centre.*

As we enter the 10th year of your Business Improvement District, thank you for your continuing support as we work together to create better trading conditions for Newport city centre.

The BID was established in April 2015, following a ballot of eligible city centre businesses, to deliver a five-year business plan. In November 2019, we successfully balloted eligible businesses again for a second five-year term to 2025. The BID and its volunteer Board – all of whom either own or run city centre businesses, or are voluntary levy payers – continue to ensure the business plan you helped develop and voted in favour of, is delivered in its entirety between now and the end of March next year.

During 2024, we will again be balloting eligible businesses for a third five-year term to 2030. There will be a number of meetings and consultations between now and then as we work with our members to develop a business plan for 2025-30 ahead of the ballot in November.

The BID's volunteer Board members for 2024-25 are: Zep Bellavia (Chair, Bellavia & Associates), Alan Edwards (Vacara's), Tracy Stokes (Belle Femme), Steve Corten (Pub Watch), Ian Lamsdale (Newport City Radio), Nicky Vignoli (The Newporters community group), Nicola Marshall (Newport Arcade), Catherine McNamara (Liverton Opticians), Robin Hall (Kymin), Dan Smith (M4 Property Consultants), Simon Pullen (Friars Walk), Gavin Horton (Horton's Coffee House) and Councillor Jane Mudd (Leader, Newport City Council). Management and PR services are provided by Kevin Ward Media Ltd with Street Ambassador and Night Ambassador services provided by Safestyle Security.

Remember the BID is a private, not-for-profit company funded by city centre businesses via a 1.25% levy based on rateable values (1% in managed shopping centres).

The 2023-24 period was another challenging year for all businesses, including BIDs, as the cost of living crisis, high interest rates and high inflation all continued to have an impact.

The revaluation of commercial premises across England and Wales led to considerable reductions in rateable values. While this was welcome news for many businesses, for many BIDs this led to a drop in levy income.

Newport Now has seen its annual levy income reduce from £250,000 in 2018-19 to £175,000 in 2023-24 – a 30% reduction in our core funding.

This meant we had to be smarter in the way we spent your money and saw a variety in reductions in our spend during 2023-24 while maintaining all of our usual services. We are also increasingly focused on applying for external grant funding for BID projects, such as the Night Ambassadors service.

This reduction in income will continue during 2024-25, and we will again be seeking external funding wherever possible.

Each year we are required to report on four headline items:

- a. Revenue from BID Levy due to be received in 2024-25 is £175,000, plus an additional £5,000 carried forward from 2023-24. This is the lowest reserve in the BID's history and reflects the reduced levy income.
- b. Of this, we are forecasting a break-even budget for the 2024-25 financial year, leaving a similar reserve to this year to take into what we hope will be the start of the BID's third five-year term.
- c. The BID Levy is spent across three key themes as set out in the Newport Now business plan for 2020-25. **Future Newport** (delivering 'digital high street' projects and business support such as the city centre app, collective purchasing of energy and telecoms, and the city centre gift card), **Safe & Secure Newport** (a visible & reassuring presence on the street with our Street Ambassadors and Night Ambassadors, and working closely with the local police force, as well as free membership of the Newport Against Business Crime Partnership for all Levy payers and the purchase of additional radios for partners), **Welcome to Newport** (delivering a programme of city centre events and marketing). Spend on the three key themes accounts for 80% of Levy income with the remainder spent on core costs (management, office rental etc).
- d. The 2024-25 programme will see the BID deliver or fund a variety of projects and services within our themes, including:
  - i. An events programme that includes Countdown to Christmas, Newport Rising Festival, Newport Food & Drink Festival, the City of Newport Half Marathon, Pride in the Port, the Big Splash, and Small Business Saturday.
  - ii. At the time of writing, we have approvals in principle for Shared Prosperity Fund grants for Countdown to Christmas, along with a month-long Urban Beach during August, and a Christmas street market during December. If formally approved, this funding will help provide two additional events for the city centre calendar as we seek to expand the opportunities for our businesses via increased footfall.
  - iii. Working with partners to extend funding for the successful Night Ambassador service on Friday and Saturday nights in the city centre.
  - iv. Working with our partners in the local authority, police and licensed trade to retain Purple Flag status for the city centre's night time economy.
  - v. Rebranding the Loyal Free city centre app launched in 2022 as the Newport Now app, with new features and services for businesses and customers alike.
  - vi. Shop Front Improvement Grant, offering funding of up to £1,000 to levy payers.

- vii. Continuing to promote the Newport Now Gift Card, which can only be spent at 50+ participating businesses in the city centre and helps to keep the Newport pound in Newport.
- viii. Continuing to promote the Savings Advisory Service, which has saved BID levy payers more than £100,000 on their energy, telecoms, and merchant fees in the last three years.
- ix. Ensuring the voice of Levy payers is heard on city centre issues at local and national level with regular meetings and conversations with the local authority, Welsh Government and UK Government. This lobbying on behalf of our members has resulted in the retention of an additional 25% business rates relief provided by Newport City Council specifically for most retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in the BID area. This is on top of the 40% relief offered by the Welsh Government in 2024-25.
- x. Working with partners to further reduce the number of empty retail units in the city centre.

Our programme helps to create a city centre that is safer, more attractive, and well promoted. The BID is a private company financed by its members – local businesses improving our city centre.

If there are further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Newport Now BID team or visit our website [www.newportnow.co.uk](http://www.newportnow.co.uk)

*\*During 2023-24, the BID received additional income via a £16,500 grant from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent to continue the Night Ambassadors project to the end of March 2024.*

**Newport Now BID**  
**The Riverfront Theatre NP20 1HG**  
**Tel: 07824 472543**  
**Email: [kevin@kevinwardmedia.com](mailto:kevin@kevinwardmedia.com)**