



Highlights and Achievements 2020

2020: A challenging year for us all

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BUSINESSES OF



WONDERFUL
WELWYN GARDEN CITY



The BID worked extremely hard to plan and prepare for 2020, which was meant to be a year of celebrations as we entered Welwyn Garden City's centenary. The team kicked off the year with the Garden City Lights festival which saw over 30,000 people attend over the launch weekend... and then the pandemic hit.

Much of the town was forced to close. As a BID, we tightened the purse strings but maintained operations during the lockdown period and continued to be proactively engaging with the strategic recovery partnership, coordinating a range of campaigns and practical support to build confidence amongst you, our businesses and our consumers.

We have received such wonderful feedback from you and the general public, and we are pleased to have been able to assist so many of you through this tough time. Our agreed action plan for the year was turned on its head with our recent priorities focusing on the implementation of new government guidance and reacting to your needs.

We took the decision to furlough two members of staff for a short period and negotiated reductions in many of our committed contracts. The BID received a small amount of funding from government in order that we could continue operations following the immediate lockdown period. However, this only covered a proportion of our core costs for a limited time.

This activity would not have happened without the BID and, as you will appreciate, it has required significant funding. We have achieved this by reprofiling the BID budget and working flexibly to react to an anticipated reduction in commercial income.

This 2021, the BID will enter its final year of this five-year term and we really hope to work with you to secure another term. We will be working together with businesses to understand your needs and priorities and ensure we have a Business Plan fit for the future of our town's businesses.

We will continue to work hard for you and the town to help deliver the COVID-19 recovery and the future growth that all businesses will depend upon. We are committed to bringing our town back to life in a safe way, as quickly as possible, and our partnerships with levy payers are crucial to this effort. We value our levy payers support and would be very happy to talk through any of the above points.

OJ Daya

Welwyn Garden City BID Chairman
Waitrose Branch Manager

Positives
throughout a
challenging year

OUR CENTENARY YEAR

This year has been exceptionally challenging for us all. Our much anticipated year of celebrations for Welwyn Garden City's centenary could not take place as planned, which has been incredibly disappointing for everyone involved, including the WGC Centenary Foundation and the enthusiastic team of volunteers who have worked since 2014 on the Signature Projects. As we look back at 2020 we have plenty to be proud of having achieved in celebration of what makes our town and community so special.



GARDEN CITY LIGHTS

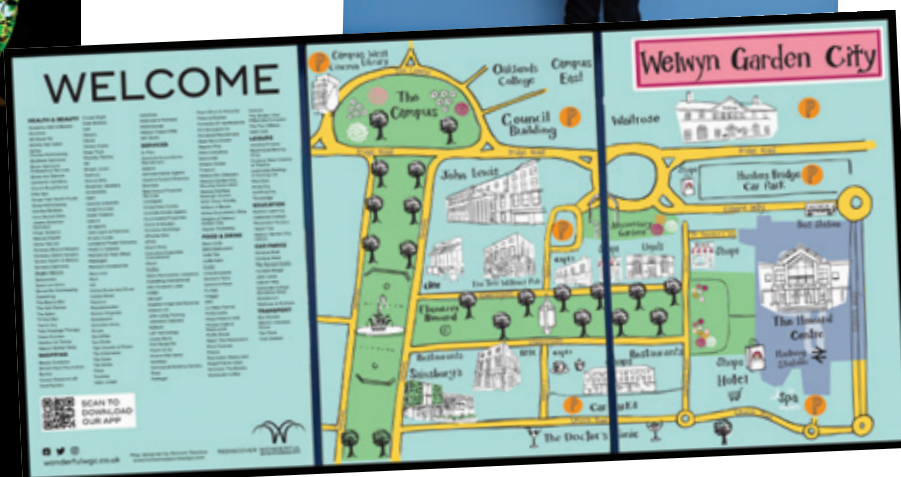
Our centenary year launched in style with the fabulous Garden City Lights event in January, organised in conjunction with the Centenary Foundation. Over 20,000 people enjoyed the amazing light installations around the town centre.



PROMOTING OUR TOWN IN ITS CENTENARY YEAR

The BID commissioned a drawn map and designed some exciting interactive artwork to support the centenary and the re-opening of businesses during the pandemic.

Some of this artwork is displayed at the Howard Centre.



CENTENARY ART

The town looked its best for its Centenary. The Henry Moore Foundation kindly loaned us one of their sculptures for our centenary year. Henry Moore visited the town some 40 years ago with the late Andrew Carnegie of the Digswell Arts Trust and expressed his interest in seeing his work displayed within the town. Large Standing Figure: Knife Edge has stood proudly on Parkway all year next to the Coronation Fountain.

The WGC Centenary Foundation has kindly extended the loan until summer of 2021.

We were delighted to be offered the opportunity by Herts County Council to celebrate Welwyn Garden City's centenary through 28 posters in the newly refurbished subways next to John Lewis.

A new statue of Ebenezer Howard created by local sculptor Ben Twiston-Davies was commissioned by the Centenary Foundation to mark the centenary. Cast in bronze and weighing half a ton, the statue stands over 7ft (2.2m) tall and is anticipated to be taking pride of place on the north end of Howardgate this Spring.



HOW THE BID SUPPORTED THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The BID has been involved in the delivery of the Centenary Celebrations since the Foundation's inception in 2006. All the years of planning would not be dampened even by a pandemic. We supported all the events and activities that took part in the town centre, we co-ordinated partners' support and helped businesses be a part of the celebrations. Unfortunately some of the plans couldn't come to fruition but we are hopeful we'll be able to deliver some in the next year.

Helping businesses survive the Covid Crisis



FOCUS ON BUSINESS SUPPORT

Ways we supported BID businesses:

- ✓ Helped in accessing Government support.
- ✓ Offered support and advice to levy payers on a wide range of issues, including representation to the local authority on issues surrounding payment of business support and grants.
- ✓ Helped with accessing Loans and Funds.
- ✓ Lobbied for further financial support.
- ✓ Supported negotiations with landlords.
- ✓ Ensured security at premises.
- ✓ Lobbied for extra support.
- ✓ Supported all businesses using our social media platforms and LoyalFree app.
- ✓ Kept businesses informed through regular newsletters.
- ✓ Hosted virtual business meetings.
- ✓ Launched 'Welwyn Garden City at Home' to support closed businesses.
- ✓ Saved money – furloughed staff, reviewed our rent and overheads, re-profiled budgets.

COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN

How BID helped businesses coming out of Lockdown:

- ✓ We set up a strategic partnership to plan the recovery.
- ✓ Supported businesses in the re-opening process, providing advice, marketing materials and technical support.
- ✓ Offered training courses on co-ordinated support to levy payers to adopt COVID Secure guidance for in-store operations, including provision of PPE, protective screens, signage, 'COVID Secure packs'.
- ✓ Launched the LoyalFree Marketplace website, a shopping website that is FREE for BID businesses.
- ✓ Helped transform streets to accommodate social distancing and provide a welcoming environment for shoppers. This includes public information signage, support for queuing and hand sanitiser stations.
- ✓ Surveyed businesses to better understand their needs.
- ✓ Created and promoted interactive trails to support open businesses.
- ✓ Promoted businesses through social media campaigns.
- ✓ Provided WGC Ambassadors who have been supporting businesses since June, doing a wide range of tasks to ensure the town centre is a welcoming environment for all visitors.





WELCOME BACK – A SUMMER RE-OPENING

The BID team and our town centre ambassadors were on hand to support businesses in planning their safe re-opening with a great campaign, video, social assets and a #shoplocal campaign. We also made the town centre Covid-safe with the introduction of hand sanitiser stands, information stands and signage.

CAR PARKING / GIFT CARD CAMPAIGN

We secured a grant for £30,000 from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council to incentivise the use of car parks in the town. We decided it was best used ensuring that money went straight back in your tills, through the Welwyn Garden City Gift Card campaign.

While active, the campaign was really successful over 50 businesses saw the benefit of it. The campaign had to be put on hold because of lockdown but there is still plenty of gift cards to be given away and they will all be back in circulation soon.



CHRISTMAS

Christmas was not cancelled, in fact it was a wonderful, magical time in Welwyn Garden City.

We added to the decorations, making Welwyn Garden City 'the home of the Christmas Lights'.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: FEEDBACK HAS BEEN FANTASTIC

"Love the lights! Thank you for making such an effort in what's been a hugely challenging year for the town's businesses. We hope to see the lights all back next year!"

Such an amazing initiative which gave children a touch of magic in what was a rather different and unusual Christmas. Well done and thank you so much."

EMMA KERN

"You did us proud, it was beautifully done and the town looked amazing."

DIANE WILCOX

"They have been a wonderful fun thing for the children and given us all so much pleasure. Really hope they will be back next year."

SYLVIA WAINWRIGHT

"This was a wonderful way to bring these beautiful lights into a dark world which we all have to endure in lockdown. Thank you Welwyn Garden City – you all did an amazing job. Yes please bring it back next year."

SARAH JOHNS

"I love the Christmas lights and decorations in Welwyn Garden City. Thank you for all the effort you put into making the town centre look wonderful, especially this festive season when we have all needed the extra cheer. Please bring them all back next year!"



Your BID Levy explained

Welwyn Garden City BID is a not-for-profit company set up by businesses in Welwyn Garden City town centre, supported by government legislation and with the aim to improve the area.

PAYING YOUR BID LEVY

Every business in the Welwyn Garden City BID area is required to pay a levy which is in addition to Business Rates and needs to be paid separately (regardless of how you pay the Business Rates).

Prompt payment will help ensure the objectives that were voted on in the Business Plan come to fruition.

You can pay the levy in the following four ways (please always quote your BID account reference):

- ▶ **Debit or credit card**, by calling 0845 6041064 or going online at WHBC Home Page / Pay / View all / Business rates
- ▶ **Cheque** payable to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- ▶ **Cash** at the Council Offices on The Campus, Welwyn Garden City
- ▶ **BACS**, creating a new payee using the following details.
Sort code: **40-46-08**
Account number: **41020900**

If you have any queries regarding payment of your levy please contact the

Business Rates Team on **01707 357000** or email **c.tax@welhat.gov.uk**

If you have questions about the Business Improvement District or would like to get involved in any of the working groups that help steer the projects, please contact the **BID team** on **01707 497930** or email **bid@welwyngarden.co.uk**

Make sure you make the most of the levy that you pay by taking advantage of the opportunities that the BID offers.

PROJECTED BUDGET 2020/21

INCOME	PROJECTED	BUSINESS PLAN BUDGET
BID Levy Income	£230,000	£290,772
Additional income (including grants and funding secured through other partners)	£75,133	£28,653
TOTAL INCOME	£305,133	£319,425
EXPENDITURE	PROJECTED	BUDGET
Animated & Attractive	£47,032	£71,924
Promoted & Celebrated	£51,106	£62,682
Welcoming & Accessible	£34,235	£78,088
Great Business & Leisure Offer	£18,454	£20,554
Central Management, Costs & Administration	£29,749	£54,652
Levy Collection Costs		£9,020
Contingency / Reserves	£24,000	£14,539
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£204,576	£311,459

FOOTNOTES TO FINANCES

- The income reduction reflects the loss of some levy paying properties in the town centre.
- These figures reflect our projected income and expenditure for the final two years of the BID term. Our financial year ends on 31st March 2021 after which we will be producing a full set of accounts which we will make available to all BID levy payers.
- The levy will increase by 2% this year which is determined by the BID Levy criteria on our Business Plan.



BID RENEWAL

2021 is going to be a better year for us all, it will offer our businesses some exciting opportunities.

In October the WGC BID ballot will take place, giving you the chance to vote in another 5 year term for the BID. We reach the end of our current term on 31st March 2022, so if you are keen to keep the momentum going, you need to vote YES!

Right now we would like to be visiting each and everyone of you to talk through the renewal survey. With current restrictions it makes it very difficult to do, so we are hoping to make it as quick and easy for you, whilst ensuring we listen to your feedback.

STEP ONE

visit www.wonderfulwgc.co.uk/renewal and click the survey to complete.

If you would like to make an appointment to talk through it, we are more than happy to do so over the phone, Zoom, or similar. Please email bid@welwyngarden.co.uk and put SURVEY MEETING in the title. By all means give us some proposed days and times that do or don't suit.

STEP TWO

Following the submission of your survey, if you have noted something that you'd like to explore or discuss, we will get in contact to arrange a convenient time to talk.

The WGC BID has played a vital role in providing you with a strong voice to make sure your interests are heard and now, more than ever, this is critical to the town's long-term success. These surveys can help you continue this essential role. Your feedback will help shape the future business plan, taking us through another successful five years together.

As we look back on what has been achieved in WGC over the last 5 years, we need to ensure that we do not let the pandemic overshadow our success. Here are some of our achievements:

- Wonderful reach on our social media platforms.
- Being a strategic partner and influencer of town centre developments.
- Introduction of the LoyalFree App, offering discounts and rewards to visitors.
- Award-winning floral displays and installations.

- Additional Christmas lighting year on year.
- Town centre WiFi.
- Hosted and established big events.
- FREE training courses for businesses.
- Mystery shopper scheme and awards.
- Introduction of Town Centre Ambassadors.
- An array of promotional material, including to|morrow magazine.
- Car parking campaigns.
- BID-managed Welwyn Garden City Watch.
- Real time footfall counters.
- Brought in about 15% in additional income.

Understandably, everyone will be tightening the purse strings, looking to cut back where ever possible. We hope the new term will offer some money saving opportunities making the BID even better value for money. If we do not secure a YES vote, many of these wonderful initiatives will be lost.

Let's look ahead with optimism.



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**RENEWAL
2022-2027**