



Welwyn Garden City BID

A plan for WGC 2022-2027

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BUSINESSES OF



WONDERFUL
WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Message from the Chair, Jonathan Field

It is hard to believe our first term is drawing to a close. We have achieved so much over the last five years, despite the distraction of a pandemic!

We recognise how challenging and devastating the pandemic has been for many of you, and we understand how recovery is likely to be a long road. We want to support you through this period, just as we did through the pandemic, and this is reflected in the new business plan. The first year will be spent supporting the recovery of our town, getting us back on our feet, so that we can look forward to the following four years with some confidence and enjoy watching our town grow and flourish once again. In order to support this recovery, we will be significantly discounting the first year's levy.

We have listened to your feedback and have set up three new objectives for the next term which aim to deliver on our vision in a practical way, capitalising on the Garden City principles; a town designed for healthy living and sustainability, which make it a unique place to do business.

Looking ahead we will continue to work closely with partners, ensuring your interests are represented on our vision

for the town centre's infrastructure ensuring we as a town centre compete effectively. We will also invest our time and energy to influence our appeal to the young and families, and the elderly. Moreover, we believe that the principal landlords across the town centre could add value to their investment by working together with the BID in the best interests of our town centre.

I believe the BID is fundamental to the recovery of our town. We will continue to work hard for you, supporting and shaping future growth of our town that all of us depend upon.

I think you will agree that together, we have overcome many challenges and great work has been achieved. This can only continue with your support, so please vote YES in the forthcoming ballot, let's continue to shape the future of our town together. Thank you.



Jonathan Field
John Lewis and Partners,
Chair of Welwyn
Garden City BID Ltd

THE WELWYN GARDEN CITY BID BOARD MEMBERS AND THE ORGANISATIONS THEY BELONG TO

DIRECTORS:

Jonathan Field (Chair), John Lewis and Partners
Anthony Clements, Future Gifts
Carley Beck, Howard Centre
John Beech, Landlord representative
John Hughes, Resident representative
Ka Ng, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Mike Paraliki (Vice Chair), Stonehills Hairdressing
Mounia Le Gaufey, Ewart Price Solicitors
Nick Brown, Welwyn Hatfield Chamber of Commerce
OJ Daya, Waitrose
Terry Mitchinson, Editorial Consultant

COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE:

Cllr Tony Kingsbury, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

ADVISERS:

Chris Dale, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Sian Chambers, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

This prospectus should be read in conjunction with the full **Business Improvement District Proposal and Business Plan** accessible online at www.wonderfulwgc.co.uk/bid or by contacting the BID team on **01707 497930** or bid@welwyngarden.co.uk

Our Vision

“To create a town centre which is innovative, vibrant and sustainable, which builds on the unique Garden City principles and characteristics to make it a wonderful place to visit, work, live and invest.”

WHAT IS A BID:



A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined geographical area within which the businesses have voted to invest collectively to improve their trading environment.



The lifetime of the BID is covered by regulations and is set at no more than five years.



A not-for-profit company is set up and run by the businesses in the area and is responsible for ensuring that the aims and objectives of the BID Proposal are delivered.



There are over 320 BIDs in the UK. For more information about BIDs, visit www.placemanagement.org





Your Feedback

The last few months has seen extensive research undertaken across a wide range of businesses, organisations and stakeholders to ensure that the plan which has emerged has an in depth understanding of the views and aspirations of the businesses in the area as well as an appreciation of the perceptions of those who visit and work in the area.

Research and findings from the surveys, workshops and working groups, and interactions of businesses and organisations from across the Welwyn Garden City BID area has been considered, in shaping the ultimate Vision, Objectives and their associated activities.

All levy paying businesses in the BID area were invited to complete a business survey –

-  Sent by e-bulletin
-  Hand delivered by a BID representative
-  Downloaded via the BID website
-  Option to complete via phone or video call with a member of the BID team.

59% of all businesses had a personal visit to discuss the BID.

140 of these being unique visits.

56 detailed surveys were completed by businesses.

20 BID Renewal Newsletters distributed to businesses.



Workshops were carried out where all businesses were invited to discuss their challenges, opportunities and vision for the future of the town centre. These included budget setting, vision and objective setting and targeted workshops.



The BID website has a dedicated BID renewal page giving businesses up to date information on the renewal, with links to the renewal survey and FAQ's.



Achievements of the BID 2017-2022

Animated and Attractive

The BID has established itself as a great event host with events such as the World Food Festival, Cinema on the Green, Christmas Lights Event, Garden City Lights bringing additional footfall, providing promotional opportunities for businesses and being a great way to engage with the community.

Events

■ CINEMA ON THE GREEN

Transforming the Howardsgate Gardens into a free outdoor cinema attracted over 6,000 visitors. Businesses sponsored and advertised on the big screen over the 3 days.

“It was an amazing event, the staff really made it something special. It was fantastically organised and was nice to have something that was free for the whole family to enjoy. Well done!”

■ WORLD FOOD FESTIVAL

A celebration of world culture in the heart of Wonderful Welwyn Garden City. The World Music Stage showcased a variety of performances while visitors sampled the delights of the Food

Festival. The event received over 15,000 visitors.

“Not only was the food delicious and the music fantastic but how lovely was it to see the town so vibrant and alive!”

■ CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Christmas is a magical time in Welwyn Garden City, now established as The Home of the Christmas Lights. The trail of incredible light installations was completed by over 10,000 visitors.

“Thank you for making such an effort in what’s been a hugely challenging year for the town’s businesses. 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!”



“Enjoying the wonderful space and sunshine for a mid-morning snack! Thank you for organising this – could almost be on holiday!”

Susan Banks,
WGC resident

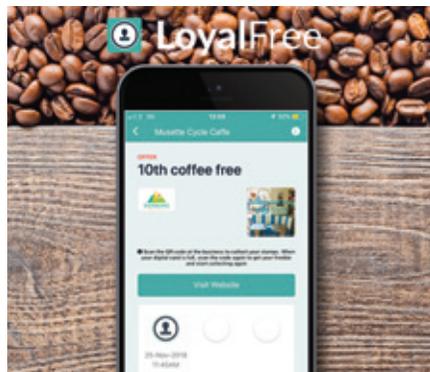


Other notable events and activities funded by the BID included: **Additional Christmas decorations** to enhance the look and feel of the town centre so as to improve visitor numbers and dwell time during the Christmas shopping period, **Garden Fair, Midweek Munch, Seasonal Trails and Campaigns** and **Welwyn Garden Petit Tour**.

Achievements of the BID 2017-2022

Promoted and Celebrated

- Developed a unique and now well-known brand for Welwyn Garden City town centre, 'Wonderful Welwyn Garden City'. Prior to the BID commencing, 81% of businesses felt that developing the town's identity and branding to attract more visitors should be a priority. The Wonderful Welwyn Garden City brand is now established and widely recognised.
- Developed and rapidly grew various social media platforms. The average reach is 10k, with peaks over 100k, post engagement peak of 22k and Christmas video viewed 36k times.
- Introduced a town centre App, offering discounts and rewards to visitors. The App has a trail facility which the BID utilised and has been



very successful, i.e., Christmas Trail, Easter Trail, Halloween Trail. To date the App has had over 2,000 downloads.

- Produced to|morrow Magazine, a unique publication with the sole aim of driving customers to the town centre and promoting BID businesses. All businesses had a chance to be featured for FREE in the magazine which was posted to 50,000 homes in specifically targeted areas. Over 120 businesses have featured.
- Organised the Welwyn Garden City Awards in 2018 where a record breaking 70 businesses took part, and almost a third of them scored 90% or over in customer satisfaction in the mystery shopping report.



- Introduced an innovative car parking campaign that ensures all investment goes back through businesses tills, by which the BID (thanks to a grant given by WHBC) pays back every £5 spent in your shop/business through 'the WGC gift card'. The campaign has been really successful with over 50 businesses seeing the benefit of it.
- Has been involved in promoting the delivery of the Centenary Celebrations since the Foundation's inception in 2006. Unfortunately, some of the plans couldn't come to fruition due to the pandemic, however the BID is hoping to be able to deliver some in the future.



Promotional material was produced for the town centre, including **Summer in the Garden City**, **Christmas brochures**, **Social Media Campaigns** including a Facebook group, **newsletters** and **Welcome back to WGC** video campaigns.

Welcoming and Accessible

- Took over the Welwyn Garden City Watch, which works in partnership with the police and CCTV to provide instant communication between shops and CCTV control room. The BID offered half price subscription to all BID businesses and a free one-month trial.
- Lobbied and assisted in providing enhanced CCTV across the town centre which is linked to the WGC Watch radio.
- Installed complementary flower installations which won a silver and gold award in Anglia in Bloom.
- Installed additional Christmas lighting each year, building up to a very popular display in 2020.
- Provided town centre Ambassadors who engage with businesses, are the eyes and ears of the town and report cleansing or maintenance concerns.
- Wayfinding, which included a newly designed town centre map which is displayed at strategic points such as car parks, stations and the Howard Centre.
- Worked with the police, WHBC and other agencies to share intelligence and tackle ASB.

A Great Business and Leisure Offer

- A strategic partner and influencer of town centre developments.
- A key partner in the WGC Visioning Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership.

- Provided a variety of FREE training courses for businesses, including degree courses.
- Provided the opportunity to apply for funding that would not be accessible to the town centre without the BID.
- Has regular engagement with developers of town centre schemes.
- Introduced footfall counters that provide real time figures and track visitor movement.
- Provided networking opportunities to businesses.
- Supported the Welwyn Garden City Symposium.
- Introduced the Innovation Grant Scheme to provide financial support to businesses within the BID area by helping them to adapt and diversify in response to the new challenges posed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Public Art for the Centenary Year

- The Henry Moore Foundation kindly loaned WGC one of their sculptures for our centenary year. Large Standing Figure: Knife Edge has stood proudly on Parkway all year next to the Coronation Fountain.
- 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 takes pride of place on the north end of Howardgate.



TOWN LINK RADIO TRAINING

WELWYN GARDEN CITY WATCH
Partners for the town centre

DAILY QUICK START

1. Turn on radio and set the volume to your preference.
2. Tune your radio to Channel 16, sign on and do a radio check with CCTV or another user.
3. Keep your radio on you or nearby to hear about or report any incidences throughout the day.
4. At the end of the day, sign off with CCTV before powering off the radio.
5. Place your radio in the charger, so it's ready for the next day.

WHAT TO SAY IN SHORT PHRASES WHEN REPORTING AN INCIDENT

Identify yourself and your store name, followed by where the incident happened and what direction the offender is heading.

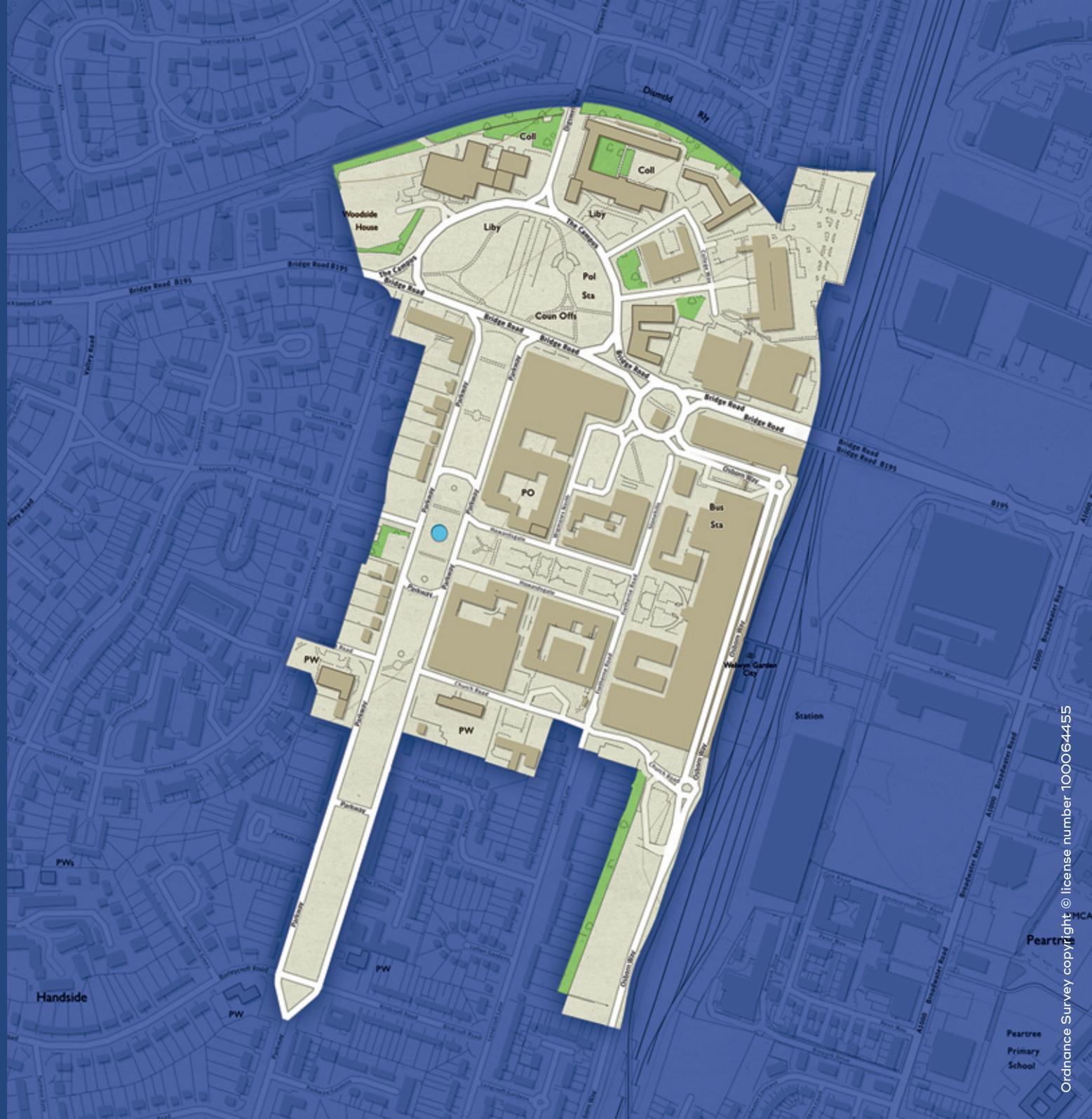
Give brief details of the offender(s), such as their sex, nationality/race, hair style and colour, age and build, clothing and its colour, what they are carrying, and any peculiarities.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BUSINESSES OF WONDERFUL WELWYN GARDEN CITY
wonderfulwgc.co.uk

The BID Area

The map represents the full extent of the Welwyn Garden City Business Improvement District.

The BID covers those businesses, whose rateable value is £5,000 or greater. The area includes any smaller business areas located off the roads or streets that are located within the boundary of the BID area defined by the shaded area on the map and any other road or street, even if they are not listed in Appendix two of the full Business Plan and Proposal. Any new road or street which is developed or which is within the BID area will be included.



Your Priorities



Businesses from across Welwyn Garden City identified key priority areas for a new BID which fall into three objectives:



Objective 1: Celebrate Wonderful Welwyn Garden City

Promote the strengths and develop the profile of Welwyn Garden City and all it has to offer to increase positive perceptions, loyalty and pride in the town centre.



Objective 2: Enjoy a vibrant and sustainable Welwyn Garden City

Provide a vibrant, safe and positive experience for visitors and workers in Welwyn Garden City to enjoy, exploring new sustainable opportunities with businesses and key partners.



Objective 3: Invest and grow in Welwyn Garden City

Encourage growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on the strengths of Welwyn Garden City.

Objective 1: Celebrate Wonderful Welwyn Garden City

Promote the strengths and develop the profile of Welwyn Garden City and all it has to offer to increase positive perceptions, loyalty and pride in the town centre.

Marketing and promotion of the town centre seems to be more important than ever to businesses in Welwyn Garden City. In the survey, the top three future projects ranked beneficial by businesses were all related to marketing and promotion.

In the workshops, comments around marketing and promotion included the need for digital promotion to be the focus for the BID, and that a BID business directory would be a good start to promote the local businesses and enhance the business community.



The BID will spend an average of £66,800 per year – a total of £334,000 over five years.

We asked ‘what would benefit your business?’

94% Raising the profile of the town centre.

93% Promoting the town as a destination.

89% Marketing to target and attract new businesses/investors.

What can be delivered if you vote YES!



IDENTITY AND BRANDING:

Develop and promote the identity of Welwyn Garden City town centre which creates a sense of pride by its businesses, residents and visitors.



CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Promote and develop award schemes which profile businesses and individuals and celebrates, recognises and promotes excellent customer service.



DESTINATION MARKETING:

Promote the town centre as a destination for visitors.



BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS:

Keep businesses engaged and informed of BID activities and issues which may affect their environment and to keep the BID informed of business needs and priorities.



PR AND MARKETING:

Develop the use of digital and printed marketing and PR to inform and increase awareness of Welwyn Garden City as a town, its events and all it has to offer.



COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT:

Marketing and promotional activity to support businesses during and after any economic or logistically challenging periods of time.



PROMOTING THE OFFER:

Promotion of the business, leisure, retail and cultural offer and other town centre events and activity through campaigns and initiatives such as a visitor website, a business directory, offers and schemes.



MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

Develop and use marketing schemes and initiatives to attract even more shoppers and clients.



“As a small business person in the private sector, it is really unusual to work with an organisation who actually get the job done, who are focused and don’t need prompting, it is unique! The BID is an asset for businesses and the area. Is the levy worth it? Absolutely!”

Mike Paraliki, Vice Chair of the Board,
Owner of Stonehills Hairdressing

Measures & Results

- Increased levels of sales activity & footfall across the whole of the town centre
- Positive media exposure locally and regionally measured through numbers of articles, publications, click-throughs on digital media and value through using advertising value equivalent. (a.v.e)
- Numbers of businesses and organisations actively engaged in BID activities and the use of and their association with Welwyn Garden City BID in their own marketing and promotion.
- Numbers of businesses, organisations and public regularly engaged and involved in a loyalty scheme.
- Increased interaction with and support from stakeholders





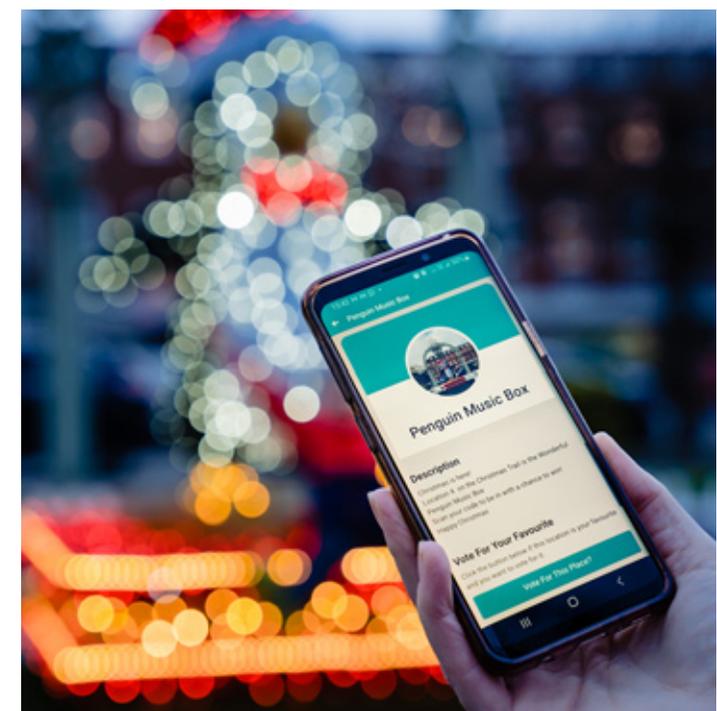
Objective 2: Enjoy Vibrant and Sustainable Welwyn Garden City

Provide a vibrant, safe and positive experience for visitors and workers in Welwyn Garden City to enjoy, exploring new sustainable opportunities with businesses and key partners.

From the survey, it is clear that the events and activities that have already been in place in Welwyn Garden City have made an impact on businesses in the area. When asked to say whether they were aware of the current BID activities, the top two 'yes' responses were to do with events or activities that make the town more vibrant.

In the workshops, 'Events and things to do' was the topic that was discussed the most. Events help to attract people in and create a sense of community. Suggestions for improvement in this area included having a wider range of events.

The BID will spend an average of £116,000 per year – a total of £581,000 over five years.



We asked 'what has been beneficial to your business'?

92% Installed additional Christmas lighting each year, building up to a very popular display in 2020.

86% Hosted and established significant events such as the World Food Festival, Cinema on the Green, Christmas Lights Event, Garden City Lights that bring additional footfall, provide promotional opportunities for businesses and are a great way to engage with the community.

What can be delivered if you vote YES!



EVENTS AND MARKETS:

Encourage, support and act as host to events, markets and heritage, sporting and cultural activity in the town centre.



STREET INFRASTRUCTURE:

Work with others to support the development of infrastructure which enables the streets and open spaces to be used effectively and sustainably.



THE HERITAGE:

Support and encourage initiatives which promote and celebrate the heritage and origins of Welwyn Garden City.



AMBASSADORS:

- To support businesses in tackling and communicating issues.
- To help promote the area, to welcome visitors and provide support for the implementation of events and animation in the streets and open spaces.
- To work closely with the Police, WHBC Street Wardens and other agencies to share intelligence and information which supports the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour.



ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS:

Provide additional floral displays, public art and festive and creative lighting to improve the appearance and vibrancy of the streets and open spaces where appropriate.



CRIME REDUCTION:

Continuing to develop and maintain the existing business crime reduction schemes, such as the Welwyn Garden City Watch and working with key partners, including the Police and the council's CCTV.



GREEN INITIATIVES:

Explore and implement where appropriate initiatives and schemes which support environmental sustainability which benefit businesses and those who visit and work in the town centre.



SAFETY:

Work closely with emergency services, the local authorities' statutory services and other key stakeholders during times of national or local incidents or emergency situations to maintain a safe and positive experience for visitors and workers in our town centre.

The BID works in partnership with Crime Reduction Agencies to ensure a safe and pleasant visitor experience. The BID recently took over the WGC Watch radio scheme, offering a 50% discount to all members. This is a great benefit to the town, increasing the eyes and ears on the ground.

Measures & Results

- Improve visitor and business perception of the sense of community & business safety.
- Reduction of incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Regular flow of information and sharing of intelligence to support business crime prevention.
- Measured assessment of the degree of litter and cleanliness of Welwyn Garden City town centre.
- Numbers of parking spaces available in or near Welwyn Garden City town centre both on and off-street.
- Improved perceptions of ease with which visitors, workers, and residents can navigate Welwyn Garden City town centre.

Objective 3: Invest and grow in Welwyn Garden City



We asked 'what would benefit your business?'

89% Marketing to target and attract new businesses/investors

88% Improved appearance of vacant buildings and sites through vinyls/ promotion

83% Local networking and initiatives to encourage more local trading

Encourage growth, development and investment of businesses which complement and build on the strengths of Welwyn Garden City.

The BID will spend an average of £46,500 per year – a total of £228,000 over five years.

In the workshops, commercial attractiveness was the third most talked about topic. There was a general consensus that the town needs more of a variety of shops and niche products to drive footfall, as well as there being a need to fill vacant units. Suggestions for how to improve this, included small independent retailers being encouraged into the town, and having pop up stalls available. It was also suggested that rents are a challenge for businesses.

Another important factor within this objective is helping develop effective business to business communication. In the workshops, business community was the second most discussed topic. It was highlighted that the BID could co-ordinate business to business initiatives, as well as possibly co-ordinating meetings and workshops hosted by the businesses that relates to the business needs. There was also the suggestion that the BID needs to try different methods of facilitating networking between businesses, such as exploring both online and physical means.

What can be delivered if you vote YES!



VISIONING:

Play a key role in the creation of a vision and plan for the town centre which is shared by all key stakeholders.



PROFILE:

Raise the profile of Welwyn Garden City as a great place to invest and develop a business in line with the vision and the masterplan.



PROMOTE INVESTMENT:

Work with partners, landlords and property agents to attract, engage and support potential investors in making commitments to invest, grow and develop in Welwyn Garden City.



EVENING ECONOMY:

Support the growth of a distinctive evening leisure offer, suitable for the town centre.



VOICE:

Represent business and organisation's interests in planning and delivery of developments in the public realm and the buildings of the town centre which complement and support the Garden City principles.



NETWORKING:

Promote and support the sharing of best practise, cost savings and business growth.



VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:

Develop a voluntary membership scheme and links between businesses and organisations in the town centre and those in its surrounding area to encourage an even stronger Welwyn Garden City economy.



ADDITIONAL INCOME:

Seek match funding, grant opportunities and other sources of revenue, both financial and in-kind, both for the BID and others, to increase the BID's ability to achieve its vision and objectives.



MONITORING:

Work with others to provide and report on a range of indicators which monitor the economic performance of the town centre including: footfall and foot-flow, commercial performance and customer perceptions.



BUSINESS SUPPORT:

Provide support to businesses at times of national or local incidents or emergency situations working closely with emergency services, the local authorities' statutory services and other key stakeholders.



“Post-Covid, there is a lot of work to be done to encourage people back to the town centre. We need the BID to continue with their great work!”

Mounia Le Gaufey, Partner
Ewart Price Solicitors

Measures & Results

- Increased level of investment in existing and new businesses.
- Increased range of businesses and organisations.
- Reduced levels of vacant and derelict properties across Welwyn Garden City town centre.
- Increased number of new businesses and organisations established in Welwyn Garden City town centre.
- Numbers of businesses and organisations actively engaged in award schemes for customer care and businesses performance.



COVID 19 Support



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.

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. COVID has changed the way consumers shop. People adjusted to working from home and shopping online and lost confidence in going to the town centre. Our shop local campaign, our ambassadors and our safety measures all helped to regain that confidence, although somewhat slowly. Even though we have lost some of our businesses during the pandemic, we have also been very encouraged by the number of new businesses opening.

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 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.

The BID:

- Offered support and advice to levy payers
- Helped with offering loans and funds
- Lobbied for further financial support from Government
- Supported negotiations with landlords
- Ensured security at premises
- Supported businesses using our social media platforms and LoyalFree app
- Kept businesses informed through regular newsletters, virtual meetings
- Saved money (furloughed staff, reviewed overheads, re-profiled budgets)
- Supported businesses in the re-opening process, providing advice, marketing materials and technical support.
- Offered training courses and co-ordinated support to adapt Covid Secure guidance for in-store operations, including provision of PPE, protective screens, signage and covid secure packs
- Launched the LoyalFree marketplace website, a shopping site that is free for BID businesses

- Helped transform streets to accommodate social distancing and provide a welcome environment for shoppers – including public information signage, support for queuing and hand sanitiser stations
- Surveyed businesses to better understand their needs
- Created and promoted interactive trails to support businesses
- Promoted businesses through social media campaigns such as the 'Welwyn Garden City at Home'
- Provided extra WGC Ambassadors to support businesses through a wide range of tasks to ensure the town centre is a welcoming environment for visitors.

The WGC BID Innovation Grant Scheme aims to provide support to businesses within the BID area by helping them to adapt and diversify in response to the new challenges posed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Successful businesses will use the funding to adapt and deliver innovative new ways to improve their trading circumstances.



WELCOME BACK TO WONDERFUL WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Thank you for supporting your local shops
and businesses, they need you!



wonderfulwgc.co.uk



REDISCOVER WONDERFUL
WELWYN GARDEN CITY



“The BID has been incredible through the pandemic with their useful updates on government guidance, grants available and how to apply and provided practical advice on shop security in lockdown and cost saving tips. The Welcome Back campaign was amazing and we all felt very proud of our town centre.”

Anthony Clements,
Owner, Future Gifts

Welwyn Garden City BID Budget: 2022-2027

Average
Annual Levy
Income:
£261,316



Objective 1 –
Annual Average:
£66,799



Objective 2 –
Annual Average:
£116,282



Objective 3 –
Annual Average:
£45,657

INCOME	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL
BID Levy Revenue (Note 1)	£200,525	£268,355	£273,722	£279,196	£284,780	£1,306,579
BID Levy Reserves B/F (Note 2)	£62,568	£0	£0	£0	£0	£62,568
Other Income (Note 3)	£25,000	£25,500	£26,010	£26,530	£27,061	£130,101
TOTAL INCOME	£288,093	£293,855	£299,732	£305,727	£311,841	£1,499,248
EXPENDITURE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL
Objective 1 – Celebrate wonderful WGC	£68,080	£66,080	£66,672	£67,275	£67,891	£333,998
Objective 2 – Enjoy vibrant and sustainable WGC	£115,030	£115,030	£116,060	£117,110	£118,182	£581,412
Objective 3 – Invest and grow in WGC	£45,165	£45,165	£45,570	£45,982	£46,403	£228,286
Central Management Costs, Admin, Office (Note 4)	£42,663	£43,562	£44,433	£45,322	£46,229	£222,209
Levy Collection Costs	£6,000	£8,100	£8,262	£8,596	£8,596	£39,384
Contingency (Note 5)	£13,155	£13,418	£13,686	£13,960	£14,239	£68,457
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£288,093	£291,355	£294,683	£298,077	£301,539	£1,473,747
Accrual for Renewal (Note 6)	£0	£2,499	£5,049	£7,649	£10,301	£25,499

NOTES:

- Assumes a 95% collection rate and 2% per annum inflation.
- Use of BID Reserves to support Yr 1 deliver to enable a lower levy to be charged (1.25% and 1.5%).
- Including income from landlords, associate members of the BID and other sources (including in-kind).
- Central admin, office and fixed overheads.
- Calculated as 5% of total levy billed.
- Accrual retained from levy revenue to provide for costs of renewal of the BID for any additional term, otherwise they will be spent on additional projects in the final year.

This prospectus should be read in conjunction with the full Business Improvement District Proposal and Business Plan accessible online at www.wonderfulwgc.co.uk/bid or by contacting the BID team on **01707 497930** or bid@welwyngarden.co.uk

Given the unprecedented challenges facing businesses this year, and considering that once levy criteria is set it cannot be changed during the term of the BID, the Board has made the following provisions:

- The first year's levy has been reduced back to 1.25% for businesses within a shopping centre and 1.5% for businesses outside a shopping centre in the first year of the 2022-2027 BID.
These rates are lower than the first year of the current BID.

- Some of the reserves which have been accumulated as a result of the limitations on normal delivery of events and promotional activity during COVID are being used to supplement the first year of the budget of this new term.
- For any business ratepayer who is legally required to cease use of their premises will be given **100% relief** for that time period if they are not in a position of being able to use for it for any other purpose.

What the BID will cost you

How much will you pay?

Following a successful ballot the payment of the levy by each business in the Welwyn Garden City BID is compulsory and is set in legislation. The BID levy payment is made regardless of whether the business chooses to vote or if it votes against the BID. The levy is regulated in a similar way to business rates.

The investment being sought from businesses in the BID area is still modest in relation to what can be achieved. For the smallest business in the Business Improvement District, the daily cost is less than the cost of a postage stamp and even for a larger business; the daily cost is less than the price of a sandwich.

With a 1.75% levy, the indicative weekly costs to a business are:

SMALL INDEPENDENT / PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



INDEPENDENT



NATIONAL



The Benefits

As a business which pays, whether through a levy or voluntary payment, you will have the opportunity to be directly involved in the decision making and action planning for everything the BID delivers based upon the BID's business plan.

As a business who pays into the BID this is an investment. The aim of the BID is to deliver as much value back in benefits, if not more, than the money you pay in.

By working together as a collective, you will be not only be benefiting your business but improving Welwyn Garden City.



Sources of Additional Funding, discounts, and inflation

The BID Company is committed to seeking additional funding where possible to increase the benefits that can be delivered to businesses.

Additional income sources include grants, voluntary contributions from companies outside the BID area and those not liable for the levy. It is estimated that this could be around £130,000 over the five year period.

In consideration of the challenges facing businesses over the last 18 months the levy in year 1 will be discounted.

The levy for future years will return to a level which is in line with the current BID levy percentage but no inflation will be applied until 1st April 2024. From there on will be an annual inflationary

increase of all levy charges year on year for the duration of the Business Improvement District. This will be a minimum of 2% or the inflation percentage as determined by the Consumer Price Index as at the 1st December of the year before the next billing process, whichever is the greater, rounded to the nearest tenth of a penny. (e.g. if a levy bill is £200 the inflation applied to this at a level of 2% would be £4 per annum). Negative inflation will not apply. Inflation will not be applied for the second billing cycle where the chargeable period starts on the 1st April 2023.

“ We recognise the unprecedented challenges our town centre businesses have faced over the last couple of years. We believe a discount in the levy shared across all businesses in 2022-23 is a welcome relief. We have been particularly prudent with our financial control over the last two years which has enabled us to provide this levy relief.”



John Hughes, Board Member

Ballot and Voting



Ballot timetable:

- Thursday 21 October 2021 –
Ballot papers issued
- Thursday 18 November 2021 –
Ballot closes at 5pm
- Friday 19 November 2021 –
Ballot results announced
- Friday 1 April 2022 –
Operations of the new BID start

Businesses in Welwyn Garden City will be asked to vote on whether or not they wish the Welwyn Garden City BID to implement the business plan over the next five years 2022 to 2027.

Ballot papers will be sent out on Thursday 21st October 2021 to the person identified in the specially prepared register of potential voters held by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. Each rateable property has one vote. A proxy vote will be available.

Completed ballot papers are to be returned no later than 5pm Thursday 18th November 2021. The result will be announced on the following day.

The ballot has to meet two tests to succeed:

- **A simple majority of those who vote must register a YES vote.**
- **The aggregate rateable value of those that vote YES must be greater than that of those that vote NO.**

Get involved – this is your BID

The importance of voting YES

If you want the BID and its collective influence and all its associated benefits to continue and support your business you will need to vote for it. If it does not get sufficient votes in favour both by number and rateable value, the BID and all its associated activities will stop as of 31st March 2022 and businesses will be left to face the challenges and uncertainties of the future alone.



**Vote YES
in the BID
Renewal
ballot!!**



“ I feel we have all benefitted substantially from working collaboratively, making us stronger as a town, particularly during the extremely difficult times which we have all had to face in the last year and a half. I would advise all of you within the BID area to engage with the BID team, you’ll be amazed at the specialist team that is available to help you.”

Carley Beck, Centre Manager,
The Howard Centre



Monitoring Success

Working with key partners

In order to deliver exceptional value for money within the framework of the aims and objectives of the plan, the BID will work closely with other key stakeholders and strategic partners such as property owners, the local authorities, other public bodies and the police. It will seek, wherever possible to influence and shape larger projects to the benefit of its own aims while supporting others to achieve their own objectives. In working with others, the overriding principle of the BID should not be compromised i.e. that the BID is providing services and benefits additional to those which would have happened if the BID had not been in existence.

Monitoring of basic service provision

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council are committed to sustaining core or basic services to the area for the duration of the BID so that the activities of the BID will be totally additional and complementary. Provision of Baseline Statements will allow the BID Company to regularly appraise the delivery of core services

and compare them with the details stated in the statements. From experience elsewhere we know this has an impact on delivery and helps to guarantee that money provided to the authorities via the business rates mechanism is targeted appropriately and well spent. This means that local businesses have some influence over Business Rates investment in their area and the effectiveness of local authority service provision.

Monitoring BID delivery

Monitoring and measuring the performance and effectiveness of the BID activities is an integral and essential part of the plan. Businesses need to be confident that their levy money is being invested as productively as possible to maximise results. The effectiveness of the measures undertaken will be gauged by key performance indicators monitored and relevant for each project area. They will include business surveys, photographic evidence, vacancy levels and new investment into the area. These measures and key performance indicators are identified for each objective and need to be monitored on a regular basis throughout the life of the BID.

Usage of our
FREE Wi-Fi
in the town 

121,105
connections per
year, on average

10,206
connections per
month, on average

2,331
connections per
week, on average

322
connections per
day, on average

69 minutes
connection time,
on average

1-2pm
busiest time of
day, on average

Governance

The preparation of this BID Proposal has been managed by the Welwyn Garden City BID Ltd which is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee. It is legally and operationally responsible to the businesses in the BID area for all BID activities and acts on their behalf.

The Board is elected by the members of the Welwyn Garden City BID Ltd, drawn predominantly from those paying a levy in the area and made up of a representative cross-section of the businesses and stakeholders of the area and key agencies associated with the successful delivery of the BID projects. It will continue to be driven by the private sector and includes one councillor from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

The main role of the Board is to safeguard the interests of levy payers by ensuring that the business operates in line with the BID plan, is professional and offers consistent value for money in line with its targets. The Board will ensure that the implementation of the BID will be monitored and delivered cost effectively, through keeping overheads to a minimum and using methods which will optimise the use of the revenue budget and add real value to the delivery of the plan.

All businesses will be encouraged to be actively involved in the Board and associated working groups to represent the levy payers. Through specific working groups, the Board will be instrumental in prioritising the requirements of the levy payers into deliverable projects which address their needs, within the framework of the



business plan. All roles on the Board, and any working groups are voluntary and are undertaken with a commitment to represent the interests of all businesses in the area.

There will continue to be hands-on dedicated Project and Contract Management to support the Business Plan initiatives from any working groups.

The management role will also provide administrative support and project delivery for the BID Company as well as coordinating activity with partner organisations and ensuring cost-effective delivery of projects through careful management of contracts.

This is your BID – Vote YES!

We have never needed each other more. We believe the BID is the vehicle to drive us through a challenging recovery period and see us into more prosperous times.

You've seen, heard and experienced all the great achievements over the last 5 years and the next 5 years could be remarkable, if you vote YES to the new BID plan.

We are confident that since the BID was created in 2017, we have made a significant difference to Welwyn Garden City. We want to build on this success to continue to deliver a Welwyn Garden City we can all be proud of.

Let's continue to work together shaping the future of our town.

This prospectus should be read in conjunction with the full Business Improvement District Proposal and Business Plan accessible online at www.wonderfulwgc.co.uk/bid or by contacting the BID team on **01707 497930** or bid@welwyngarden.co.uk

wonderfulwgc.co.uk



Nicky Wolff
BID Manager (Job share)

☎ 07747 456615

✉ nicola@wgcbid.co.uk



Mariana Bitonte
BID Manager (Job share)

☎ 07415 530542

✉ mariana@wgcbid.co.uk



Naomi Donovan
Ambassador

☎ 07376 384647

✉ ambassadors@wgcbid.co.uk

