



discover KING'S LYNN

Dear Colleague,

It is hard to believe that it is now September in what feels like the longest year on record! I know most of us have had to make tough decisions over the last 6 months and I think you would agree that the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic are far from over?

I am getting in touch to let you know about a great opportunity for our town centre and to urge you to get involved. King's Lynn has been earmarked to receive a significant amount of Government funding from the Town Fund. As your BID we have been involved in discussions about this funding, raising the issues of concern about the town centre and for town centre businesses. The BID Board has recently pulled together a vision document that sets out our aspirations for how our town centre might evolve over the next 15 years, you will find this in the following pages. We would love to know what you think, so please do get in touch.

Now is the time for you to have your say and directly influence the Town Plan and how the Town Fund might be used. **We are working with the Council and Consultants, Metrodynamics, to host an on-line workshop via ZOOM on Wednesday, 9th September from 1730-1900.** This is a genuine opportunity to have your say about what matters most to you in the short and long term. You must register your participation for the event by contacting Michelle Gant, **E: michelle@engaging-people.co.uk.**

If you are unable to attend but would like to contribute, please don't hesitate to contact Vicky Etheridge, BID Manager, **T: 07387 752 226 or E: vicky@discoverkingslynn.com**

With Best Wishes

Sharon Edwards

Chair, Discover King's Lynn

King's Lynn Town Centre 2035

Our town centre is undergoing fundamental change which has been precipitated and deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Up until March 2020 we were coming to terms with the impacts of changing lifestyle and consumer choices such as online shopping, out of town shopping, environmental concerns, choice and more. The COVID-19 pandemic has added new, unanticipated drivers for change which are keeping people away from town centres. It is hard to know how much of this impact is short term, i.e. consumer confidence, versus long-term, i.e. a permanent trend towards increased on-line and out of town shopping, and a higher proportion of people working from home. On the flip side, change presents opportunities.

We know that consumers are favouring "shop local"

and click & collect, and that there may well be a move of professionals and skilled self-employed from large towns and cities to more rural locations.

As a business-led organisation wholly focussed on King's Lynn Town Centre, we want to ensure that the Government funds available now are used to best effect to create a resilient, vibrant, thriving, centre where businesses and the community can meet their full potential. We passionately believe that now, more than ever a common, shared vision for our town centre is needed. A vision that is used to guide the current wave of investment and to inform and direct plans and policies, future funding and investment towards the same goals.

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Our Vision

In 2035, our town centre will be a vibrant, thriving place where people choose to live, do business, start a business, invest, visit, relax, socialise, and stay. It will offer quality of life with a clean and attractive environment, access to green spaces, quality housing and high-speed connectivity in the digital and transport sense. Residents, workers, and visitors to the town will be able to travel to and around the town with ease, and using a choice of affordable, low-emission transport and active transport options. King's Lynn will be the vibrant hub and main town of West Norfolk, a trading place, a meeting point, a home for creativity. Our beautiful waterfront, quayside and historic quarter will form an integral part of the town, as will the historic, quirky, and striking architectural features that exist in our high street and connected streets. The town will have a strong sense of place and identity that is owned by the community and immediately apparent to visitors.



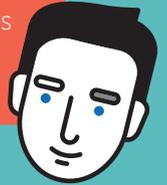
Achieving the Vision

- ★ The community, business, and public sector partners need to publicly commit to working together to design, agree and work towards achieving a shared vision.
- ★ Regular, participative, communication and engagement with the community and business to keep people informed and actively involved.
- ★ To align public policy at a local and sub-regional level to support the vision, particularly local planning and transport policies.
- ★ Place-shaping - re-draw our town centre, planning and designing amenities and services to make the town centre an attractive place to live and work, thus becoming a place where people need to be (i.e. living and working), as well as choose to be.
- ★ Putting young people at the heart of the vision, involving them in the planning and design, and designing and planning to ensure opportunities are maximised to their benefit. This will be their town.
- ★ Building resilience – in the workforce, in our businesses, in our infrastructure and buildings, recognising that our economy will keep changing and evolving and we need to be able to adapt and change with it.
- ★ To encourage and support entrepreneurship, particularly among young people.
- ★ To encourage and support creativity across the spectrum.
- ★ To raise aspirations about the opportunities available to the town and the type of place it could become.
- ★ Build on a strong sense of place, drawing on the cultural and historic heritage of King's Lynn.

Our contribution towards these goals

We have been working hard throughout the pandemic to support our members. We have provided regular communication and information about Government funding initiatives, business support schemes, and public health updates. We have supported businesses in their application for grants and checked that businesses have applied for all that they are eligible.

Our Street Rangers continued to patrol the town centre during lockdown, keeping an eye on empty premises and reporting any damage such as graffiti and littering. They supported Purfleet Trust to deliver food packages and encouraged those in temporary housing to adhere to social distancing and lockdown rules. They have become an invaluable source of intelligence on homeless and street drinkers, liaising closely with Purfleet and the Police.



As lockdown began to ease, we moved to support businesses with the task of re-opening. We opened discussions with the Council about signage and measures to control the flow of pedestrians in the high street. We provided over 100 packs of floor stickers and posters, distributed hand sanitiser, signposted businesses to PPE suppliers and organised webinars on risk assessment with accompanying documents. The Street Rangers continue to fill up sanitisers and provide additional / replacement signs.



We have rehung our bunting, distributed our flower tubs where they will not interfere with social distancing, and have provided some hanging baskets to lift the atmosphere and look of the town. Immediately prior to the reopening of non-essential retail we paid for some shop windows to be cleaned so that the town looked opening and welcoming.



The Farmers' Market was reinstated in July and both July and August markets have been highly successful with a number of traders selling out of stock. Better still, our trader numbers have been boosted by 2 businesses based in the town centre. We hope to be able to grow and develop the market further as and when social distancing measures ease.



A big part of the BID Managers workload these last few months has been working with the Council to "shout out" for town centre businesses and ensure your needs, hopes and fears are understood and reflected in the funding bids that are being put forward to Government, County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership. Our role as that voice for business and the voice for King's Lynn town centre has never been more important.

One initiative we have been working on with the Council is outside seating in public spaces for eating and drinking. This is important to boost the capacity of restaurants and cafes, and to offer the consumer a choice where they feel more comfortable.

We have recently introduced our Discover Local campaign and plan to grow this more over forthcoming months. Discover Local aims to encourage the consumer to support the town centre and independent businesses. It's not just about retail but the whole range of services on offer in the town.



What comes next – moving beyond re-opening to recovery and more

Building on all the above, for the remainder of 2020/21 we propose to focus on the following actions.

- Communications – continuing to provide regular, relevant information about funding, public health messages, changes to policy, training and development opportunities. We will also hold an AGM and want to get more feedback from you about how we can best support you, what you want the town centre to look like etc.
- Business support and resilience – facilitating access to local, bespoke business advice from experienced professionals, setting up training courses on topics that are requested.
- Money saving audits – looking at ways to help you save money
- Encouraging entrepreneurship, particularly among young people – setting up pop-up or incubator units to give new entrepreneurs as chance to test the market.
- Being the voice for business and the Town Centre – we will continue to play an active role on the Town Board and have regular meetings with our local MP and senior Council officials to influence and shape funding packages, public policy and decision-making.
- Attractiveness – this year we won't be organising a large Christmas event, instead we will look to make empty units attractive and install a number of lightdisplays / images.

How to get in touch

Vicky T: 07387 752 226 E: vicky@discoverkingslynn.com

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