

Attendees

BID Board Directors

Andrew Dodd (Canterbury Cathedral) | Blake McCaskill (Republic Events) – until 10am | Clare Millett (Westgate Hall Community Trust) | Dhvani Patel (KPGP Services) | Gemma Purt (Girlingings) | James Clague (The Latchmere House Partnership) | Jon Mills (Canterbury Brewers & Distillers / Foundry BrewPub) | Jon Brothwell (Pybus Opticians) | Phil Collins (Oliver Bonas) | Rachel Sanders (BoConcept) | Steven Flower (Steven James Hairdressing)

BID Team: Lisa Carlson (CEO) | Rachel Pilard (Head of Marketing and Comms) | Lucy Martin (Ops Manager – Finance, Data and Governance) | Jamie Bentley (Ops Manager – Street Scene / Safe & Secure)

1. Welcome, Apologies and declarations of interest

- **Declarations of interest:** Canterbury City Council (Service Level Agreement)
- **Welcome:** Leah Brown (The Wayfinders Group)
- **Apologies:** David Lewis (Café du Soleil / des Amis) | Eddi Taylor (Azets) | Mark Stuart (Whitefriars/Riverside) | Melissa Browne (University of Kent) | Mike Weed (Canterbury Christ Church University) | Paul Turner (The Marlowe Theatre) | Zoe Rodda (Lily's Social Kitchen)

2. Operational Reports

The full Ops Report (Nov-Dec 2025) is available on the BID website, covering city performance indicators and the impact of BID activities, including:

- **City centre performance data**, including occupancy rates, sales trends, footfall, transport usage for both November and December, and business openings and closures.
- **Christmas programme results**, such as the Light Switch-On event, the six-week marketing campaign, the LEGO Trail, and the window competition.
- **Marketing performance:** covering website traffic, social media reach, newsletters, and engagement stats.
- **City Watch performance:** the City Watch radio scheme and BID Street Team activity.

Marketing – the future of MyCanterbury and Visit Canterbury

Blake McCaskill, chair of the Marketing & Events committee, and Rachel Pilard, Head of Marketing & Communications, presented the business cases for changing how we deliver local, regional and national marketing platforms:

1. Canterbury Gift Card
2. MyCanterbury Offers Card
3. Visit Canterbury Website

A comprehensive review of BID marketing channels following the 2024 ballot identified two main challenges: (1) limited data and (2) reduced return on investment from the Gift Card and MyCanterbury Offers schemes. In addition, Kent County Council took the decision to discontinue

support for district microsites by June 2026. Together these create both a strategic imperative and a time-critical opportunity to transition to a modern, integrated platform.

We propose to create a **Digital Town Hub**, delivered in partnership with Loqiva, to consolidate and modernise all consumer-facing digital marketing and communication channels. This transformation will replace the underperforming MyCanterbury Offers Card and Canterbury Gift Card, streamline BID operations, and create a single, high-impact digital ecosystem serving residents, businesses, workers and visitors that has a direct link to the new Visit Canterbury website.

The Digital Town Hub will provide a centrally managed digital infrastructure combining a personalised mobile app, business dashboards, real-time messaging, footfall analytics, event and offer publishing tools, surveys, maps and curated trails. It also includes an API enabling direct integration with a redesigned Visit Canterbury website, ensuring consistent, automated content distribution across all BID channels. This approach replaces fragmented systems with a single, cohesive platform that significantly improves efficiency, data insight and user experience.

The two business cases were reviewed by the Marketing & Events Committee, the Culture Forum, the Visit Canterbury Consortium and the Accommodation Provider Group, and they received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Stakeholders consistently supported the need for a website that integrates seamlessly with business and event content.

The move to the Digital Town Hub will result in a net saving, and we are awaiting final confirmation of funding for the development of the new website. No additional costs are anticipated.

Questions/comments

- Will there be support and training for businesses? Yes – via Loqiva onboarding and the BID team.
- Is the timeline quite tight? Yes. A full risk assessment and mitigation plan is available in the business cases. Regarding the new Visit Canterbury website, we had similar time pressures when we migrated to the current platform in 2022. We will monitor progress and seek agreement on a minimum viable product head of the anticipated launch date in May.
- Will a new Visit Canterbury website support video – yes.
- Poor WiFi in Canterbury remains a significant issue and is flagged for improvement in the Council's new City Centre Strategy.

Decision: Subject to final confirmation of costs, the Board confirmed delegated authority to the Marketing & Events sub-committee to confirm timelines.

City Watch

Now that City Watch is a sub-committee of the board, minutes will be provided ahead of each board meeting and a report provided by the Chair, Mark Stuart, and Operations Manager, Jamie Bentley.

Finance

Finance minutes from 23 November were circulated ahead of the meeting. The latest updates are:

- Accounts for year ending September 2025 are in progress and will be reviewed by the Finance committee on 24 February before circulated to the board for approval in May, ahead of the 30 June filing date.
- Summary position is healthy with total projected income at £778,624 and expenditure at £777,837.
- Levy collection is monitored monthly and the collection rate to the end of January 2026 is

tracking well – 85.2% vs 83.4% at the same stage for last year.

3. Boad Director Development

Leah Brown facilitated a director development session on “Creative Dialogue and Professional Standards” as part of our director training series focusing on:

- Professional behaviour / code of conduct
- Director duties and role clarity
- Decision-making and constructive challenge
- Q&A on BID operations

4. Council Updates

Bill Hicks, Director of Place and Cllr Chris Cornell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic Development presented an updates on the Council’s:

City Centre Strategy

- Long term strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable to provide a shared vision which will outlive CCC as we move through Local Government Reorganisation, providing a blueprint for future investment with clear narratives to help support future funding applications.
- Available to view on the Council website: [Town / City centre strategies](#)
- Developed via stakeholder engagement sessions, surveys, focus groups, drop-in events and 121 meetings with input from staff, residents, visitors, businesses, community groups and more (over 1,000 representations)
- Structure:
 - Place-based assessments
 - Town centre strategies
 - Project delivery via Place Boards
- Supports the ambitions of the draft Local Plan 2042/43
- Articulates challenges, things to get right and desired outcomes
- Appointed architecture, urban design and research practice We Made That to support
- Cabinet approval on 9th February

Levelling Up – Connected Canterbury projects

- Completed projects: Dane John power outlet, Aphra Behn statue, Poor Priests Hospital (“Marlowe KIT”) roof, St George’s Lane / bus station, Longport car park, Castle Keep stonework consolidation, St Peter’s Lane pavement repaving, Bicycle storage lockers and updated road markings, new wayfinding (ongoing)
- Ongoing projects:
 - Tower of St Mary Magdalene, Greyfriars Garden, Solly’s Orchard – due for completion Feb 2026
 - Castle Row Green Link – car park due to reopen end February, green link landscaping by end May 2026
 - Westgate Square – due for completion by early March with some aspects to be completed later
 - Three Cities Garden – landscaping due for completion by end March 2026, with lighting awaiting permission and consents.

- St George’s Square, St Radigunds Garden – end March 2026
- St Mary Bredman Square (in front of Nasons) – landscaping due for completion end, mural may be later.
- Dane John Gardens and City Wall – partial reopening in April, fully open early may
- Castle grounds and walkway – end August 2026
- Updates on progress with the [Council’s Levelling Up](#) works are available on the Council website
- Canterbury Unlocked – celebrating the completion and reopening of the Connected Canterbury projects:
 - Three month programme of events from late May to late July with later activities to follow
 - Launch event Sunday 24 and Monday 25 May

Parking changes due to take effect from April 2026

- +10p per hour on Band 1 Car Parks (£3.70 to £3.80)
- Average 4% increase on permits
- £10k set aside for district wide parking discounts
- Wincheap Park and Ride : options to expand capacity being considered by Overview
- Mercery Lane : TRO to permanently close current being advertised until 9th March
- Castle Street Multi-Storey : Redecoration work to start in March
- Castle Row Car Park : Due to reopen in April

Cultural Strategy

- Research & engagement:
 - Research began – October 2024
 - Four engagement workshops delivered – April 2025
 - 1:1 meeting held – May 2025
 - 12-week consultation survey conducted October 2025
 - Five focus groups with community partners – January 2026
- 8 ambitions:
 - Engage children and young people
 - Celebrate people, places and destinations
 - Grow the creative economy
 - Improve health and wellbeing, support healthy ageing and social prescribing
 - Enable participation and promote inclusion
 - Promote environmentally aware practice
 - Build an evidence base to attract investment
 - Lead by example through leadership, stewardship and collaboration
- Next steps:
 - Analyse consultation results
 - Adoption of strategy (April)
 - District Cultural Forum
 - Action planning, monitoring and evaluation

5. Actions & Decisions

Decisions:

Delegated authority to Marketing & Events Committee for final decisions on the Digital Town Hub and the new Visit Canterbury website.

Actions – including those carried over:

- Set up new Digital Town Hub – RP / Marketing team
- Decision on new Visit Canterbury website – RP / Marketing & Events committee
- Impact / ROI working group – LC/LM Q1 2026
- Risk register – LC / LM
- Review complaints procedure for the annual policy and compliance review – LM
- Address board vacancy and Board roles (Vice Chair) by AGM and Marketing & Events by Autumn 2026 when BM's board term comes to an end – LC / Advisory Group

Signed:

Date: 13 May 2026



Gemma Purt, Board Chair