

## Operations Report December 2018 – January 2019

Over the last two months, the **BID Team focused on** supporting businesses through the **Christmas** period, visiting businesses and finalising the **BID 2 proposal** following consultation, **planning for 2019 events** – including a series of free training events in the first quarter of the year (see “Dates” below for details) – and more recently gathering **city performance data for 2018** and the Christmas trading period.

We know it has been a challenging year for retail, but we want to say a huge congratulations to the business community in Canterbury. Together we have all given our clients, customers and visitors plenty of reasons to come to our fantastic city. Over 200,000 people came to Canterbury in 2018 for the festivals and events organised and sponsored by city centre businesses and organisations – including Pride, the Medieval Pageant, King's Mile Trick or Treat, the Late Night Christmas Shopping Event in the Cathedral Quarter, Canterbury Festival, the Christmas Window Competition (which received national press), and so much more.

We know that retail is in the midst of a massive transformation, but we also know that more than 80% of sales take place in bricks and mortar (source: ONS, Q4 update expected late Jan). The synergy between physical shops and online is increasingly important, but even more important is the experience people have when they come to our city - whether that is to enjoy a night out, visit their accountant, go shopping or visit our attractions. What is particularly significant for Canterbury is that we have a business community that is driving customer experience. We also know that whilst our vacancy rates aren't the lowest they have ever been, they are now lower than 2013 and consistently lower than the regional and national average.

We have more comparative data in our November and December City Performance Reports. For now, here is a snapshot of some of the data that is emerging from 2018:

### Footfall

As of March 2018, the BID paid Springboard to install a footfall counter in the city centre which means we will have year on year comparative data from March 2019.

Initial reports from Springboard are that footfall nationally continued to decline in December (year on year) as it has done in all but one year over the past decade, with a 2.6% drop nationally. High Streets fared better than shopping centres and retail parks, and capture rates. The Springboard Christmas review is available to download for free [here](#). Springboard's full 2018 report is due out at the end of January.

During Springboard's 2018 Christmas Footfall Webinar on 8th January, in answer to a question about the role of BIDs in revitalising the high street, Springboard's Marketing and Insights Director Diane Wehrle said:

**" BIDs are absolutely critical.** BIDs are the first time we've had a mechanism whereby retailers have a voice, and businesses in town centres have a voice, and are represented by a commercial business that has complete understanding about where they want to go and what they want to achieve. And because BIDs have a very focused business plan and they need to deliver on that, they don't get diverted into areas that perhaps town centre managers or local authorities would have been diverted into before BIDs existed. They speak the same language as business and businesses respond to that, and they can pull in the appropriate decision makers and implementers within a geography, to gain the advantage that everyone needs - so they're absolutely critical. "

## Vacancy rates

Canterbury's vacancy rates were lower on average throughout the year than in 2013 and lower than the regional and national average, but the national context shines a spotlight on it (see the table and graph below). In Canterbury:

- **Whitefriars shopping centre:** 70 units, fully let at Christmas and will be fully let again when Stag Coffee opens and Karen Mi
- **Dean and Chapter:** 62 units, all but five are let and three of the five are undergoing works (including the former Noa Noa store which is being divided into smaller units).
- **Rest of the city:** 440 units with 26 vacancies. These include all ground-floor units except residential (retail, food & drink, health & beauty, technology, travel & tourism, education, charity, financial & professional services and specialty).

Over the past few months, **we welcomed:**

- **Geri Collins Boutique** in Northgate, specialising in upmarket clothing and accessories
- **Warren's Bakery** moved in to the old Nauticalia shop in the Buttermarket and the old Natwest, St Dunstons
- **Stour Street Espresso** (formerly Willows Secret Kitchen) on Stour Street
- **Koko Beauty and Footcare** (formerly BBeautiful) on the 2nd Floor, 4 St Margaret's Street above the Micro Roastery.
- **Newsstand.co.uk**, a pop-up shop on Sun Street in the old Kennedy shop.
- **Jimmy James Barbers** in Palace Street (replaced Marrakech gift shop)
- **Other Christmas Pop-ups: MenKind** (Whitefriars), **Calendar Club** (Whitefriars/Marlowe Arcade) and **Cards for Good Causes** (Best Lane)

**The following are closed or due to close soon:** Steamer Trading (being replaced by Harris and Hoole Coffee Lounge), Karen Millen, Marrakech (replaced by Jimmy James Barbers), Crabtree and Evelyn, Blacks (relocating) and The Lighthouse (tenant moving in to replace).

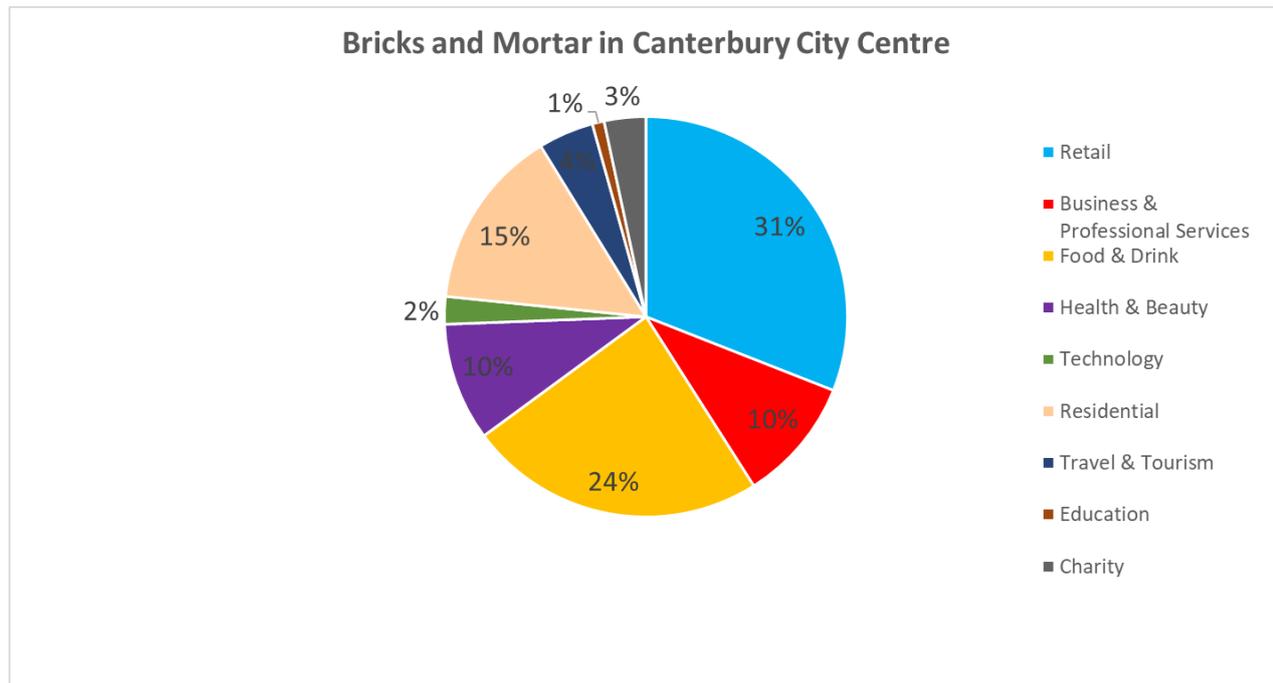
### Vacancy rates in Canterbury 2012-2018

	Canterbury							SouthEast	UK
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018	2018
January		5.5%	6.1%	5.4%	4.6%	4.6%	5.1%	7.7%	8.9%
February		5.9%	5.8%	5.7%	4.6%	4.4%	5.8%	7.7%	8.9%
March		5.9%	6.2%	5.6%	4.0%	4.8%	5.7%	7.7%	8.9%
April		6.2%	6.1%	6.0%	4.3%	5.5%	5.4%	8.2%	9.2%
May		6.5%	6.2%	6.0%	4.4%	5.5%	5.8%	8.2%	9.2%
June	4.0%	6.5%	5.9%	5.6%	5.0%	4.9%	5.8%	8.2%	9.2%
July	5.2%	6.7%	5.3%	5.4%	5.2%	4.7%	6.1%	8.1%	9.9%
August	5.8%	6.8%	5.4%	5.1%	5.9%	4.3%	6.7%	8.1%	9.9%
September	5.8%	6.7%	5.1%	4.7%	6.0%	5.6%	6.9%	8.1%	9.9%
October	5.8%	5.6%	4.8%	5.4%	4.3%	5.5%	6.6%	8.0%	10.1%
November	5.3%	5.9%	5.2%	4.9%	4.3%	5.6%	6.4%	*	*
December	5.0%	5.2%	4.5%	4.0%	4.6%	4.5%	5.8%	*	*
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>		

\*quarterly report available from BRC 14.01.19

## Sectors

These are the sectors occupying ground floor bricks and mortar space in Canterbury City Centre in December 2018:



## Tourism

Visit Kent have released figures on the value of Canterbury district's visitor economy on 9<sup>th</sup> January. The visitor economy grew by 8.1 per cent in 2017 and is now worth £491 million. 7.8 million visitors were welcomed in 2017 (up 7.5 per cent on 2015) and the highest number of visits to one destination in Kent. The value of day trips to Canterbury leapt up 10.6%, while the value of overnight stays across the district also saw a rise of 1.9%. The total number of jobs supported by tourism grew by 7.9%, with the industry accounting for 16% of total employment in the Canterbury district. Canterbury's strong performance reflects the countywide picture, where despite 2017's wet summer, Kent welcomed 65 million visitors.

We will be working with Visit Canterbury on the Destination Management Plan going forward.

## Sales performance

Many of the UK's largest shopping chains have reported Christmas sales and it's a very mixed picture. The British Retail Consortium said it's been the worst Christmas for retailers in 10 years, but some shops had a relatively good festive period.

We are gathering sales performance data for Canterbury and will make that available as soon as possible. Anecdotally, we know that sales performance over the Christmas period was mixed, with many independents reporting good sales and some national retailers with a strong online offering doing better than expected.

## High Street 2030 Enquiry and High Street Fund

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) released the following report - **High Street 2030: Achieving Change** on 20<sup>th</sup> December (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-high-street-report>). This is the second report released by alongside *The High Street Report* from the Expert Panel and it highlights the need for towns and cities to focus on public-private partnerships, local knowledge, strong communication and input from place professionals

MHCLG also launched details of the **Future High Streets Fund** with £675m allocated for a new initiatives to "transform local high streets into modern vibrant community hubs". Local authorities will lead on the bidding, but applications that include other stakeholders (such as BIDs) will be prioritised. We will be meeting with CCC soon to discuss options for Canterbury. Priority will be given to town and city centres facing significant challenges (such as Kent due to Brexit). The Fund will be split into two rounds with the first round requiring expressions of interest by the 22nd March. Those areas who submit a successful application will be permitted to develop a full business case detailing how they would use the Fund. Successful applicants for Round 1 will be selected this Summer. Round 2 will not open until 2020.

## Customer survey

Prior to Christmas we circulated a survey targeting local shoppers and visitors to find out what they think of our city. We received 660 responses with the majority from people who live within 30 minutes of the city, so regular visitors. 94% of the respondents felt the city has a good variety of outlets and 86% thought the city has a pleasant atmosphere. So while there is plenty we can work on to increase visitor experience, we know that our selection of outlets and environment appeals to local visitors.

## Looking ahead

- **BID 2:** the BID Proposal for a second term goes to Canterbury City Council by 18 January ahead of the Regeneration and Property Committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> January. This is the formal document that needs to be approved by CCC. We will then produce a printed business plan for all levy payers in the Spring, ahead of the ballot (13 June to 11 July).
- **'Love Your City' map:** We are currently creating a shopping map of the BID area. This is due for completion in early spring ready to launch alongside the new-look MyCanterbury website to form a 'love your city' campaign.
- **AGM date change!** Our AGM is effectively an annual conference each year with over 60 people attending each one. This year we are moving the AGM from March to May to coincide with the launch of the BID 2 business plan. Diane Wehrle, Springboard's Marketing and Insights Director, will be speaking about the importance of BIDs in revitalising high streets and Canterbury's potential.
- **Project meetings** coming up in February: Canterbury in Bloom, Medieval Pageant, Purple Flag
- **Road works:** we will meet with CCC in the next few weeks on planned road works on St Margaret's Street and future plans for St George's Street and Castle Street, and we will facilitate consultation meetings with businesses.

## Road Works

- **Resurfacing of Orange Street** is delayed until mid-March.
- **Station Road West multi-storey car park** is going ahead with work scheduled to start towards the end of February and have published a concept map for Station Road West transport hub on their website.
- **St Margaret's Street:** CCC plan to launch online consultation at the end of January. Work is estimated to last no more than two months – to be completed in Autumn 2019.
- **St George's Street:** We expect more information soon from CCC on timings and consultation.

## BID Board News

We welcome Paul Turner, Head of Finance at The Marlowe Theatre, to the Board as Finance Chair and Sue Langdown from the Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Associations (ACRA) to the Board as a Residents' Association Observer.

Sadly, we say goodbye to Therese Heslop who is moving on from Canterbury Cathedral and we thank her for all of her support and enthusiasm for the BID and for Canterbury.

## Ambassadors update:

Huge shout goes out to our lovely team leader Ambassador Cath who has officially been here for three years. That's three whole years of pacing our streets, reporting 2,700 issues, making 5,300 business visits and sign-posting and welcoming 34,000 people. From December to mid-January, Catherine, Simon and Kayleigh welcomed 3,621 visitors to the city, made 193 business visits and reported 207 issues to the police / council / Serco.

A recent highlight is the launch of the [StreetLink](#) app and website, which enables members of the public, and our Ambassadors, to connect a rough sleeper with the local services that can support them. If you see someone sleeping rough and are concerned, you can send an alert to StreetLink who will then contact the local authorities and outreach services. They will then locate the individual and offer them support. Cath, Simon and Kayleigh have been using the App and say that it has been a huge success.

## News:

- **City Centre WiFi** came out as a strong priority in both BID consultation with businesses and residents. As such, we have met recently with two WiFi companies – Elephant and Ink Spot WiFi. CCC officers and members were present at both meetings and we are looking at work with partners to deliver a wifi-enabled city.
- Lisa is to become the Chair of the **Association of Town and City Management's South East network**, a lobbying organisation that regularly participates in All Party Parliamentary Groups on the challenges facing high streets. Most recently, she participated in a debate on the rates relief in the new budget and the permitted development rights currently out for consultation.
- Big thanks goes out to **Dodgems and Floss** who organised a brilliant Secret Santa event for local businesses. 18 businesses took part, spending over £500 locally in the city. Some of the gifts included personalised bottles of local gin, escape room experiences and locally hand made cheese.

## We recently congratulated:

- **Whirligig Toys in Sun Street** on being named one of the top 25 UK businesses at the 2018 Independent Retail Best Small Shops Award held at the House of Commons on 13 November. Whirligig also won Gold and Judge's Favourite in the BID's Christmas Window competition and captured the attention of the national media.
- **Our own Medieval Pageant** was awarded finalist status in the Lasting Impression Category at the **2018 Kent Tourism Awards** held by Visit Kent.
- The **Kent Business School (KBS)** at the University of Kent won the Small Business Charter in recognition of the support it provides to small businesses in the region and the work it does across the University to support student entrepreneurship.

## January in Review



### 3 January

Canterbury was centre stage in **ITV's** national news programme with the Business and Economics Editor Joel Hills visiting Loake Shoemakers and interviewing Lisa Carlson on Sun Street. We talked about the massive transformation taking place on the High Street and the synergy between physical shops and online, and also the increasing importance of the experience people have when they come to our city - whether that is to enjoy a night out, visit their accountant, go shopping or visit our attractions. The work of BIDs is so important in helping our places remain vibrant. <https://lnkd.in/d3T3sYZ>



**8 January** – Lisa and Lucy attended a graffiti review meeting at CCC with a view to setting up new Graffiti Task Force. CCC have hired a Graffiti co-ordinator, Steve Broomhead, and they have launched a new **Online reporting tool for graffiti** which anyone can use. BID Ambassadors are working closely with Steve and helping with business permissions to clean the affected premises. Once we know what resources CCC plan to dedicated to graffiti removal, we will be able to plan for how the BID can add to these efforts as needed.

## December in Review



**3 December** Lisa took to the airways on **BBC Radio Kent** to comment on the future of high streets and the major shifts taking place in our towns and city centres. It is a challenging environment for retail nationally, and whilst Canterbury is not immune to that, as a city, we are leading on creating a experience for locals and visitors alike that is second to none. We have more shops than Bluewater, a thriving mix of independents (see below for the late night shopping review on the Cathedral Quarter and Kings Mile), a shopping centre with top brands and growing cultural offering alongside our superb heritage.



**3 December** Canterbury's **Medieval Pageant event was awarded finalist status** in the Lasting Impression Category at the **2018 Kent Tourism Awards** held by Visit Kent.



**4 December** We hosted Director of Corporate Services for Kent Police, Ian Drysdale, PC Sally Wright and PSCO Vic Dhillon to talk about the role of the BID in the city centre and to hear about Kent Police plans. Kent Police has received an Outstanding grade for Force Efficiency – only three forces were awarded this in the whole country. Vulnerability is a big issue now with the force dealing with an unprecedented amount of call-outs relating to issues around this. They are happy to support us with the stats we need for Purple Flag and also on training business to report graffiti, vandalism and anti social behaviour. We may also apply to the Police Property Fund for anti-graffiti wipes for the Ambassadors to enable a quick response on graffiti cleaning.



**6 December** We had a wonderful time hosting **Canterbury's Christmas Window Competition 2018**. Judging took place on Saturday 1 December with a panel of 4 judges. Lord Mayor Cllr Colin Spooner, Jane Ward, Director of Parker Print, Sue Langdown of the Alliance of Canterbury Resident's Groups (ACRA) and Rachel Phipps, Writer/Blogger. (**Judges' Favourites & People's Choice** award (Saturday 1 - Sunday 9 December) You couldn't have failed to notice the media attention on our very own **Whirligig Toys**. We saw a film crew from the BBC descend on Sun Street as the beautifully decorated window with its endearing theme of a letter to Santa captured the hearts of the nation



**10 December**

We were delighted to present the prize money to two local schools, St Stephen's and St Peter's, for their entries in our **upcycling competition** as part of this year's Canterbury in Bloom campaign. The prize money was made possible by the CCC Innovation Grant we won to support the Green Heritage Conference we hosted as part of this year's Canterbury in Bloom campaign. Their upcycled designs will become part of our 2019 Bloom entry.



**10 December**

We had a hugely enjoyable Christmas networking event thanks to our friends at the Chocolate Cafe who hosted us. Not only did we hear the fascinating story of how the cafe began, we also sampled their signature Balsamic Vinegar and Chocolate dipping sauce.





## 15 December

Our **Visit Kent Advent competition** saw two lucky winners claim their prizes of a hamper each containing beautiful, locally-sourced gifts. We managed to reach over 500k impressions, ensuring that our 'Handmade in Canterbury' film campaign was visible to all our visitors at this important trading time.

## Key Dates

### Full Board Meetings (all Wednesdays, 9:30am to noon)

- **16 January** (Whitefriars) – **Final approval date for BID 2 proposal**
- **6 March**– Final approval of Year 4 Accounts
- **15 May**, 9:30 to noon
- **17 July**, 9:30 to noon

### AGM:

- **May** – date tbc

### Sub-Committees Meetings:

- **10 January and 13 February**: BID 2
- **5 February**: Marketing and Events
- **12 February**: Finance

### Project meetings:

- **30 January**: Canterbury in Bloom
- **February** (date tbc): Medieval Pageant
- **February** (date tbc): Purple Flag

### BID Training Events (free to all levy payers)

- **22 January, 8:30-9:30 am**: Sadie Furner of Civica East Kent Services: Understanding Business Rates, BID Office
- **30 January, 8:30-10am**: Visit Kent: *Digital marketing*, BID Office
- **12 February, 8:30-10am**: Visit Kent: *SEO Masterclass*, BID Office
- **20 February, 8:30-9:30am**: David Morgan: Employment Law (a round-up of changes to the law in 2018 and law around social media (use and misuse))

### BID Networking

- **Tue 22 January, 5-7pm**: Metro Bank, 2 St George's Street
- **Tue 19 February, 5-7pm**: Bang and Olufsen, 1a Beer Cart Ln
- **Tue 12 March, 5-7pm**: Pybus Opticians, 5 Palace Street
- **Date tbc April, 5-7pm**: Oscar & Bentleys
- **Tue 14 May, 5-7pm**: Bill's Restaurant, 5 Rose Lane
- **12 June, 5-7pm**: Tower House, Westgate Gardens

### Events in Canterbury

- **24-26 January**: Wintersound Arts Festival, Sidney Cooper Gallery
- **25 January**: Canterbury Christ Church University Graduation, Canterbury Cathedral
- **31 January, 7:30pm**: Canterbury Society Design Awards, St Peter's Methodist Church Hall
- **27 Feb - 16 March**: War Horse, Marlowe Theatre
- **8-9 March**: AniFest, Canterbury Christ Church University
- **13-14 April**: Tudors and Stuarts History Weekend, Canterbury Christ Church University
- **4 May**: Vegan Festival, Canterbury College
- **25 January**: Canterbury Christ Church University Graduation

