

Operations Report: November 2020 – January 2021

Summary:

Between November and January Canterbury moved from national Lockdown 2 (November), to Tier 3 restrictions (2 Dec), then to Tier 4 restrictions (19 Dec) and finally to Lockdown 3 (5 January onwards). At this time of crisis, the BID Board and Team focused on supporting Canterbury's business community. We continued our work in partnership with Canterbury City Council on the Reopening of the High Streets Safely project, as well as delivering Christmas lights, safety signage, online webinars, sector meetings, the launch of a city-wide gift card, and a huge amount of support and communication around access to grants.

Highlights included 5 miles of Christmas lights switched on virtually and watched by over 25,000 viewers and the launch of the Canterbury Gift Card which has ringfenced over £22,000 to be spent locally at 105 city centre businesses in 2021. ***Below is a summary of this activity from November to January***, followed by more detailed reports on the activity of the BID.

We also ran a consultation survey and workshop on the Council's proposed changes to car parking, and continued our work on Climate Change with the Canterbury Climate Action Partnership, the Council's Climate Action Partnership Board and Produced in Kent's 'No Food Wasted' Forum.

November 2020 in Review



Friday 6 November – Canterbury Culture

Chaired the Canterbury Culture group meeting to hear about all the events and planned activities and events plus explore the layout of the events calendar for the next year.



Friday 6 November – COVID business updates

1. Promoted the new round of Business Grants from Canterbury City Council, including a resource toolkit to aid businesses with the month-long lockdown, and followed up with individual emails and phone calls to ensure our businesses had the information needed.
2. Published the Coronavirus Resource Centre's new resource toolkit to assist with the lockdown now in force across the country, with printable posters, animations, web and social media banners and materials.
3. Announced the launch of Kent and Medway Growth Hub's Canterbury business support page covering topics such as Free 1:1 Business Advice, Free Local Resources, Skills, Training, Research & Recruitment, Local Networks and Business Groups plus their Business Recovery Helpline to give advice and support.



Friday 6 November

BID CEO Lisa Carlson became the first BID representative to Chair of the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) Board of Directors. In addition to managing Canterbury's Business Improvement District, Lisa will now lead the town and city management industry over the next three years and support its navigation through the Covid-19 economic recovery.



Friday 6 November – Canterbury in Bloom award

The efforts of all the groups in involved in Canterbury in Bloom, chaired by the BID, even during lockdown, earned gold in South & South East in Bloom. It also led to special recognition by Britain in Bloom for the sense of community spirit that helped make the Canterbury community more resilient.



Wednesday 11 November – Canterbury Gift Card

Launched the Canterbury Gift Card to the public with marketing coverage on MyCanterbury, the KM and Heart Radio with a dedicated social media campaign.



Thursday 12 November – Trauma Packs (city safety)

Trauma packs presented to staff at Whitefriars shopping centre, Canterbury Bus Station and McDonald’s restaurant. The packs can be used by emergency services and others in the event of someone being seriously injured in the city.



Thursday 12 November – Christmas Selfie Trail

Launched our Christmas Selfie Vinyl Trail created in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University graphic design students on 8 different vacant units around the city, helping make Canterbury’s streets even more vibrant and attractive.



Friday 13 November – Defibrillators (city safety)

Published the locations of publicly available defibrillators in the city: Cathedral, Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury City Council, Friends Meeting House, Unicorn Pub (St Dunstan's), The Beaney and Whitefriars.



Friday 13 November – Bollards (city safety)

Announced CCC’s new city-wide bollards going live from Monday 23 November, designed to protect the city from a vehicular attack.



Friday 13 November – Christmas Lights Switch On

Hosted a Facebook Christmas Light Switch-On event which launched our film of the Lord Mayor ‘clicking’ the lights on. The event was promoted widely via social media and resulted in 25,500 views across Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. This event was huge success, with excellent reviews on community platforms and in the press, helping to launch the Lord Mayor’s Christmas Appeal and a Christmas single for musicians ‘The Kids of Yesterday’.



Tuesday 17 November – BID Training Webinar

Hosted our 11th training webinar of the year: “Changes to Planning Law and Class Uses - and the Impact on Canterbury”, presented by Lee May, Partner in Commercial Property at Brachers, to provide an explanation of the latest changes in planning and how they could have on Canterbury.



Tuesday 17 November

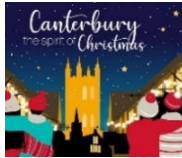
Attended the Historic High Streets webinar which explored the role of heritage as a key part of the city or town centre economy and building greater resilience for local high streets. Topics explored included managing a town or city undergoing change and strategies to help with recovery, and exploring the role of other uses in vacant shop units and city centre buildings to make a change.



Friday 27 November

Attended the Kent Environment Strategy Conference 2020 where the theme was “Kent 2050: The road to Net Zero”. The online conference focused on the challenges and opportunities of tackling the ecological and climate emergency and also saw the launch of the Kent and Medway Energy Low Emissions Strategy.

DECEMBER 2020 IN REVIEW



Tuesday 1 December – Christmas campaign

Launched our ‘Spirit of Christmas’ campaign, adapted with digital content to support shopping local and safely.



Tuesday 08 December – Christmas Window Tour

Toured the city’s Christmas windows with Lord Mayor Pat Todd and writer Rachel Phipps. Following this, Rachel published a blog on Canterbury's festive businesses, viewed by her thousands of followers. An album of photos taken during the afternoon was also made available to BID businesses.



Wednesday 09 December – Parking Consultation Workshop

Hosted our Parking Consultation Workshop, led by the Public Engagement Agency. Feedback provided by businesses will be included in our report to CCC.



Friday 11 December

Announced our support for the ‘Bounce Back Better’ campaign, a BID-led campaign urging more support for hospitality, leisure and retail businesses, who represent 65% of businesses in Canterbury.



Friday 11 December

Installed colourful bollard covers to remind shoppers to keep a 2m distance – produced with the Reopening the High Street Safely project.



Friday 18 December – Canterbury Gift Card Sales

Announced Gift Card sales of over £22,000, all ring-fenced for Canterbury’s businesses.

JANUARY 2021 IN REVIEW



Friday 8 January – Kent Police update (city safety)

Urged businesses and organisations to be vigilant following a spate of break-ins over the festive period.



Thursday 14 January - #iPledge Campaign Launch featuring pubs

Launched our new campaign, #iPledge, encouraging locals to share the place they are most excited about visiting when restrictions ease with each week having a different theme, with the first week’s theme being pubs.



Thursday 14 January – Accommodation Sector Meeting

Hosted our district-wide Accommodation Sector Meeting to hear the latest industry updates and take part in a shared discussion on planning for recovery.



Friday 15 January

Attended the Kent Business Summit with business leaders, local government decision-makers and academics to discuss regional challenges and promote Kent as a sustainable, innovative, forward-thinking and outward-looking county.



Friday 15 January – Parking Consultation Report launched

Published our Parking Consultation Report.



Tuesday 19 January – BID Training Webinar

Hosted our training webinar, “Content Creation -All the Hacks, All the Apps”, presented by Katy Towse, Director of Mint Rainbow Consulting. The hour-long session covered to all the apps needed to speed up and streamline content output, from scheduling apps and template tool kits to colour matchers and PNG creators.



Thursday 21 January – Retail Sector Meeting

Hosted a Retail Sector Meeting to bring local retailers together to discuss ways in which we could support digital sales over the coming months, including the provision of a digital platform for selling stock across the city, through to the subsidising a local delivery service.



Friday 22 January - #iPledge campaign featuring cafes

The second week of the #iPledge campaign featured cafes, with an interview with Luke and Alice Underdown, owners of Sun Street's Garage Coffee.



Wednesday 27 January – Google Garage Training

Hosted our third training session, “Get Your Business Visible on Google” which was delivered by the Google Digital Garage team. The session explored how best to promote a business using Google Maps functionality, understanding how a search works and setting up a Google My Business listing and how to manage it.



Friday 29 January - #iPledge campaign featuring beauty salons

This week's iPledge theme focused on beauty salons, with an interview with Maxine Carney, the owner of Camomile Rooms in Margaret's Street.



Friday 29 January – Canterbury in Bloom

Announced the 2021 South & South East in Bloom campaign with new categories for businesses: Pubs & Restaurants, Hotels & Guest Houses and Shops Fronts & Workplaces.



Friday 29 January – Valentine's marketing campaign

Launched our Valentine's Day marketing campaign, including a Valentine's guide on MyCanterbury pages, showcasing local retailers offering delivery.

Business Support:

Industry Sector Meetings and Support:

- **Hospitality:** Supported calls for special support measures to be introduced to hospitality, retail and leisure businesses by actively supporting ‘**Bounce Back Better**’ campaign, led by Business Improvement Districts across the UK, urging the government to provide additional sector support. Hospitality, leisure and retail (including personal care) represents 65% of businesses in Canterbury and UK Hospitality expressed concern that the new restrictions could result in 94% of hospitality businesses becoming unviable by March 2021.
- **Accommodation:** Hosted a district-wide accommodation sector meeting on 14 January to help plan for reopening and recovery.
- **Brexit:** Promoted business readiness ahead of the Brexit transition period coming to an end on 1 January 2021 with sector-specific advice and guidance, together with helplines, and links to industry experts. BID CEO, Lisa Carlson, attends regular meetings with BEIS in her capacity as Chair of the ATCM to report back concerns from businesses so that BEIS can better support businesses.

Training and Webinars

- Hosted **Changes to Planning Law and Class Uses - and the Impact on Canterbury** on 17 November.
- Announced our 2021 training sessions and sector group sessions:
 - **In Conversation with Accommodation Providers** – 14 January
 - **Content Creation – All the Apps, All the Hacks** – 19 January
 - **In Conversation: Setting up for Take Away / Click and Collect** – 21 January
 - **Google Garage: Get Your Business Visible on Google** – 17 January
 - **HR and Employment Law – What to expect in 2021** – 10 February
 - **Making the most of Facebook Business** – 10 March

Climate Change

Canterbury BID is part of the following groups seeking to reduce emissions as work towards being carbon neutral by 2030:

- Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP)
- CCAP’s Plastic Free Canterbury sub-group
- CCAP’s Repair Café sub-group
- Canterbury City Council’s Climate Action Partnership Board
- Produced in Kent’s ‘No Food Wasted’ Forum

We are also planning a trade waste audit in the new year in an effort to provide a better services for Canterbury’s businesses and to reduce emissions.

Parking:

The BID works with Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council, Kent Police and other bodies to ensure the city is coordinated, operates well and make sure that the levy payers’ interests are represented positively and that city centre businesses are included in vital decision making.

Canterbury City Council is seeking to make a number of changes to charges and conditions in Council car parks, including increases and decreases to car parking prices and the introduction of discounts and incentives to help support businesses.

We commissioned a local independent organisation the Public Engagement Agency Ltd, to work with us to obtain feedback and to write up an independent report. We hosted a virtual workshop on Wednesday 9 December for business to attend and provide feedback on the proposed changes and conducted a short online survey. Feedback from both the workshop and survey were used to produce a report that has been submitted to Canterbury City Council as part of the current consultation, and the report is available on the BID website.

Reopening the High Street Safely (RHSS) Project Update:

Here are the key RHSS key activities for November and December (in addition to the #iPledge campaign which is covered under marketing):

- 'Safe Shopping' high street banners were commissioned and placed on Canterbury High Street (outside Prezzo and Santander) along with a railing banner outside Fenwick.
- Similar messaging and images were used for advertising on the back of Stagecoach buses throughout November and December.
- A series of radio adverts were commissioned for Heart FM throughout November and December.
- In early December 80 bollard covers were produced by the RHSS team and positioned across the city centre with clear customer's safety messaging. The colourful bollard cover remind shoppers to keep a 2m distance, wear a mask and keep sanitising their hands.
- Once lockdown was announced Canterbury City Council brought in City Centre Street Marshalls, working 7 days a week. They were on hand to encourage the public to stay safe, maintain social distancing, wear masks and keep their hands clean. They do not have any enforcement powers however they are there report to the police, the council's Environmental Protection team or Kent County Council trading standards as appropriate.
- Invited businesses to seize one of 5 free places for a 1-to-1 session with retail, branding and communications expert Jo Wynn-Carter.

City Centre Update

- **Graffiti Removal:** BID Ambassadors reported graffiti and helped cleaned the offensive tagging from Burke and Best on Castle Street and the former Cotswold building on Sun Street. We also got quotes to clean Subway and GBK plus the graffiti of the Saffron Café wall and paid for another graffiti removal on Sun Yard.
- **Ambassadors:** Continued to report anti-social behaviour, litter and graffiti and other issues to the appropriate authorities, monitored occupancy rates on monthly basis and attended online council meetings to report, discuss and speed up resolution of any pressing matters. With the lockdown regulations, they were furloughed in December and they will be brought back in once it is appropriate to do so.
- **Other:** A new lamp was finally installed on the corner of Castle Street and St John's Lane, following our reports to KCC.

Marketing and Communications

- **Shop Local Black Friday:** Launched our #BuyLocalBlackFriday campaign and provided a toolkit for businesses.
- **Canterbury Gift Card:** Launched the gift card for general sale (online) in November. In total, 105 Canterbury businesses have signed up and over £22,000 worth of gift cards were sold before Christmas. We are promoting businesses who can accept the card for online sales whilst we are in lockdown. The gift card will be valid past the usual 12 months expiry date to allow recipients to spend their gift card when lockdown is over.

- **MyCanterbury:** Our 16 newsletters in Nov, Dec and Jan were opened 60,164 times (an average of 3,760 opens per email) at an average open rate of 23%. Our social media channels continue to grow and we now have 4,100 followers on Facebook alone.
- **Christmas:** We filmed a specially commissioned Christmas Light switch on film, promoting the businesses of Canterbury, the Canterbury Gift Card and a message from the Lord Mayor Pat Todd and Ben Roddy (Nurse Nellie) with the soundtrack provided by local band The Kids of Yesterday. The Video received 22,500 views on Facebook and promoted the Lord Mayor's Gift Fund.

The **Christmas Campaign** was run in partnership with Whitefriars, Visit Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral, The Marlowe Theatre and the Canterbury Museum and Galleries. Due to the ever-changing COVID situation, the initial plans had to be reduced and remain digital to ensure the campaign could change and compliment the messaging from the government. Even in this constantly changing environment, we were able to create the following campaign elements:

- Heart FM Radio advert (2 x versions adapted to Lockdown .2 and reopening in early Dec)
- £1,000 digital campaign on social channels sending people to the Digital Christmas Guide
- Dedicated Christmas Home Page on Visit Canterbury
- Digital Christmas guide to be shared across all channels
- Christmas Switch on event video to include 'support local' messaging
- Front page banner adverts with the Kentish Gazette
- 2 x Full page adverts – 'Cene Magazine and Inside KENT
- #CanterburyIsChristmas hashtag to be used by all partners on posts
- Christmas Vinyl Selfie - created to encourage footfall across the city and featuring a competition on Instagram @My_Canterbury #CanterburyIsChristmas.
- Advent calendar of Canterbury's Christmas windows will begin from 1 December via Instagram to encourage shoppers to return to the city when it is safe to do so. @My_Canterbury #CanterburyIsChristmas
- A city centre tour of Christmas Windows with the Lord Mayor
- Photographer to take images of shoppers in the city centre over Christmas
- Blogger Rachel Phipps commissioned to write a review of the Christmas Window Displays
- Digital tool kit including photos of the city centre available for all businesses to access
- **#iPledge:** On 21 January we launched the #iPledge campaign, which will run for 8 weeks, encouraging locals to keep our businesses front of mind. Each we ask locals where they pledge to visit first when businesses are open again, tagging in the business and a friend, thereby generating a conversation on social media. We are interviewing a business from that particular sector each week and are running a competition giving people the opportunity to win a £100 Canterbury Gift Card if they share and tag.
- **Retail Projects:** As part of the Reopening of the High Street Safely, Canterbury BID is helping research digital platforms that could help local retailers make the most of online sales and direct delivery as consumers have moved online. The project has involved the BID hosting a retail sector meeting on the 21 January which included presentations from platform designers. A B2C survey has been circulated through district wide channels to look online consumer behaviour and sentiment towards local retailers. This project is ongoing and most recently has involved the creation of a procurement document.
- **Press**
 - **3 November:** BBC Radio Kent regarding retail reaction to lockdown in the run up to Christmas.
 - **4 November:** ITV Meridian, featuring Canterbury BID (Gift Card), Fitzgerald Jewellers, Wrapped and Antoniou Hair & Beauty.
 - **5 November:** Canterbury's pubs were featured by Kent Live as they prepared for lockdown part 2 in November, including The Foundry and the Cricketers.
 - **12 November:** Our work with the city's Community Safety Unit with partners from Canterbury City Council, and Kent's Violence Reduction Units was reported in the press when emergency trauma packs were presented to staff at Whitefriars shopping centre, Canterbury Bus Station and McDonald's restaurant.

- **13 November:** ITV Meridian reported on our Christmas light switch-on event, which was also featured in the KM.
- **24 November:** BBC Radio Kent live from the city centre speaking about how the traders were preparing for reopening.
- **21 December:** BBC Radio Kent for the morning show about the high street
- **12 January:** BBC Radio Kent about the Bounce Back Better and #iPledge campaigns

BID Board Nominations

BID Board elections are currently on hold until the current lockdown ends. We hope there will be an update on the 22 February 2021 from the Government about reopening so we can plan accordingly. Nominees are listed on the BID website. Simon Youden, Store Director of Fenwick Canterbury, will join the BID Board as the only nominee in the National Retail category, and Dr Philip Pothan, Director of Communications at the University of Kent, replacing Posie Bogan as UoK's representative on the BID Board.

We welcomed:

- Victoria Grace Bridal who moved from its Faversham premises to Burgate
- No 35 who opened on St Margaret's Street

We congratulated:

- The Kent Law Society for raising money for Catching Lives.
- Sun Street jeweller TB Cousins who posted a wonderful film of their creations and Christmas window.
- Catching Lives' Christmas Art Auction, boosted by Canterbury's Barclays Bank who matched the total funds raised.
- The Friends of Kingsmead Field who not only earned Village Green Status, but also installed striking new signage to help engage visitors to the area.
- Alex and Gemma Bowness from Palace Street's Level Up Games for making the press as Canterbury's prominent Pokémon trader and sellers.
- Stagecoach and their passengers for raising over £56,000 for Demelza Hospice Care for Children from overpayments on cash bus fares.
- Canterbury city for being rated #5 in the country for the best place to live and work, scoring highest on factors such as Natural and Architectural Beauty, Quality of Life and ultra-fast Digital Access. It also came out top as the best place to start up a business.
- The Marlowe Theatre for pulling in audiences of over 90,000 with its free-to-view pantomime Nurse Nellie Saves Panto -the same number that normally experience the live panto each year at the Marlowe.

We promoted:

Please note, events were only promoted within the current regulations at the time of publishing:

- Kent and Medway Growth Hub's expanded support team which included a new Trading Standards Adviser, Retail Specialist Adviser and EU Transition Business Adviser (to assist with customs, import and export questions).
- City Feast's return to Guildhall Street for a special Covid-secure Christmas Edition from 12-31 December.
- The Beaney and The Roman Museum's #SupportOurMuseums campaign.
- Covid-compliant markets at the Westgate Hall including its annual Christmas market.
- Canterbury Cathedral's Christmas events, all streamed online, including a Christmas Sermon by the Archbishop of Canterbury and carols sung by the Cathedral Choir.
- ChamberCustoms, a new customs brokerage service for traders for when the UK leaves the EU from the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.
- An exhibition at Rock, Paper, Scissors on Stour Street featuring items created by Canterbury School of Visual Arts staff and students to raise money for their Christmas Gift Appeal.

- Southeastern's amended Christmas timetable.
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce's annual business survey.
- Canterbury Employment Law experts Girlings' Redundancy Masterclass workshop
- The opportunity for tourism businesses to take part in Visit Kent's Interreg Experience project, aimed at helping extend the tourism season and increase visitor spend in Kent.
- Our Christmas vinyl selfie trail and encouraged all to take part by exploring the city and entering a competition to win a £50 Gift Card.
- The Department for Education's new campaign 'An Hour to Skill', a one-hour a-week employment-enhancing skills class.
- The University of Kent's Kent and Medway Business Summit 2021 focusing on the future of town centres and high streets with Mark Robinson (Chair of the High Streets Task Force).
- Canterbury City Council's draft Climate Change Action Plan, and how they would like to hear the views of local businesses.
- New Covid-testing facilities at Canterbury's Sidney Cooper Gallery.
- Kent Cricket's Spitfire Ground supporting the nationwide rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme by opening a hub at its grounds for staff and volunteers working within the local Health and Social Care sector.
- Following the temporary closure of Castle Street Multi Storey Car Park, critical workers working in the city centre can continue to access a capped daily fee at Holmans Meadow car park instead.
- Canterbury Forum's meeting minutes, from their 11 Jan meeting, set up to give local residents and businesses a chance raise concerns and discuss them with city-centre councillors.
- Local Burgate recruitment firm HR GO's useful blog to help employers identify -and minimise- work burnout amongst their staff.