



FALMOUTH

Business Improvement District (BID)

REVIEW OF BUSINESS 2021-2022

COVID-19

- COVID continues to dominate many aspects of personal and business life. Aligned with this are the combined challenges affecting trade linked to escalating costs, inflation, and Brexit
- From a BID perspective we continue to:
 - *Refocus our budget planning and delivery methodology*
 - *Provide a huge range of supportive structures to the town and business community through the continued rollout of the Covid response plan - Positive Engagement Plan - and its various components, and:*
 - *Provide regional leadership across the South West's towns landscape*

Through 2021 and 2022, a huge variety of initiatives were delivered:

1. Marketing – rollout of marketing support campaigns, business films, and business support webinars
 2. Operational – the biggest element here saw the Town Team lobby extensively for and facilitate the opening of an in-town Covid vaccination centre in January 2022. Alongside this, the Town Team proactively hand delivered thousands of LFT kits to hundreds of businesses - being the first town across the south west to undertake this; distributed Falmouth-branded safety literature and materials for the business community; installed in-town safety signage and surface dressing; and proactively dressed vacant units with impactful H&S and town support messaging
 3. Lobbying – the BID continued to shape through 2021 and 2022, the regional framework for the benefit of our business sector, working with Cornwall Council and partners around the Safely Reopening and Welcome Back Funds.
 4. We also provided extensive support to the regional business grants composition and delivery agenda, ensuring that Falmouth and Cornish businesses continue to receive payments swiftly and effectively. This was recognised nationally, with Cornwall being the most effective grant paying authority in the UK
 5. Leadership – Richard Wilcox continues to chair both the Cornwall Towns Group and the South West of England BIDs Group. He also sits on Cornwall Council's Economic Recovery Group as high streets/BIDs lead, and has been asked to input into national high street discussions.
- Some of the work undertaken through the COVID Positive Engagement Plan can be viewed here - <https://www.falmouth.co.uk/covid-19/>

A wide range of other quality projects and schemes were delivered, and these fall under the four themes of Marketing, Events & Festivals, Public Realm and Helping Businesses Thrive:

1. MARKETING

Continued development of the official destination website

- The BID funds and manages the official town website - www.falmouth.co.uk, a vital project as determined by the BID stakeholder businesses
- Development in terms of design and functionality has taken place, enabling the site to be fully responsive across all platforms and smart devices, with greater page content abilities for BID businesses, including embedded video options and enhanced imagery
- The website averages around 35,000 unique monthly visitors, making it the largest and highest profile site for the area. It supports hundreds of BID businesses with their profile pages ranking strongly via Google searches, being viewed by thousands each year

Official town social media platforms

- The BID continues to manage the town's official social media activity
- The Falmouth social sites continue to have influence and reach – Facebook has 55,000 likes, Twitter 12,000 and Instagram 18,000 followers - and are the major social platforms to promote, highlight and engage people with Falmouth

National PR campaign for Falmouth

- As voted for by the business community, the BID continues to deliver the effective and vital destination PR campaign for the town.
- This tranche of work is critical in raising the area's profile, leading to thousands of hits to digital platforms and ultimately visits, and provides a national platform opportunity to hundreds of our businesses
- Some of the results of that extensive strategic work can be viewed here - <https://www.falmouth.co.uk/falmouth-press-coverage/>

Regional radio campaign

- The Town Team have coordinated the delivery of a regional radio campaign via the Pirate FM platform during this challenging time
- Messages around COVID safety, the Positive Engagement Plan and business reopening were played at key times throughout 2021

2. EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

G7

- Falmouth was chosen as a major venue as part of the G7 Summit held in Cornwall in June 2021, as it hosted the International Media Centre
- The event was quite simply the largest and most significant in Cornwall's history and the BID was a key regional delivery partner

- The Town Team were heavily engaged with the Cabinet Office & Government G7 Summit Teams, as well as numerous regional partners, on several major strategic threads – PR, community and media engagement, security and logistics, and legacy planning
- In respect of PR, Falmouth BID was proactive in seizing the opportunity to showcase Falmouth’s business community to the rest of the world. To that end, Richard Wilcox, working closely with Excess Energy, developed a comprehensive G7 Media Portal which can be viewed here - <https://www.falmouth.co.uk/g7-summit-cornwall/>, and led on a strategic PR plan which resulted in millions of pounds worth of global coverage for the town and dozens of Falmouth businesses. Some of those results can be viewed here:

<https://www.falmouth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/LOW-RES-FILE-Falmouth-G7-Hero-Coverage-and-Outputs.pdf>

Falmouth Week

- Despite the challenges presented by Covid, the Town Team delivered a wide-ranging programme of water and land-based activity
- The BID supported its delivery, ensuring events took place across the town thereby maximising the impact

Tour of Britain

- The team were involved in the planning for the Tour of Britain cycling event which took place in September 2021
- Cornwall was the ‘Grand Depart’ stage and the race route passed through Falmouth.
- The team are coordinating activity with local partners

Festive Weekend

- A varied Christmas programme was delivered in 2021, the highlight being the return of the Festive Weekend
- Taking place over two days in December 2021, a wide range of activities and ideas were organised across the town
- The event was hugely well received, resulting in 7,000+ additional visitors

3. PUBLIC REALM

Visual impact

- The BID continues to add value to the street environment by co-ordinating and funding the install of bunting, street flags, seating, and banners
- This includes over 4,000 metres of colourful branded bunting and 200 street flags at the start of each season to brighten Falmouth’s streets and public areas as much as permissions and access allow
- A substantial transformation along Market Street took place in 2021, with the installation of a flag canopy array design to coincide with the reopening of businesses. This was hugely well received by the business and wider community

Big Spring Clean and Falmouth Mural scheme

- The BID co-ordinated around 100 volunteers to support improvements at dozens of sites across the town in the Spring of 2022, when the lifting of certain COVID restrictions allowed
- Town businesses, Falmouth Town Council, Cormac, residents, students and staff from the Universities of Exeter and Falmouth have all supported the initiative
- Many areas have been regenerated through a combination of street cleans, green space makeovers, beach and town litter sweeps.
- New for March 2022 and part of a wider proactive mural initiative, the BID commissioned a new public space mural as part of the Big Spring Clean. Sited close to The Lawn Steps, an area of open space between Well Lane and Gyllyng Street, the seven-metre-long 'Love Falmouth' mural has been designed by Falmouth artist Holly Astle. Hugely positive community feedback has been received.

Free public space WiFi

- The BID continues to oversee the award-winning free public WiFi scheme
- 12,000 unique devices utilised the service through 2021, despite Covid restrictions and lockdowns

4. HELPING BUSINESSES THRIVE

Free car parking

- The BID alongside Falmouth Town Council, has worked extensively as highlighted earlier, to support the business community through the COVID pandemic
- As part of a wider lobbying effort, free car parking was secured through Cornwall Council during the lockdown periods within the town centre

Free virtual business sessions and webinars

- The BID has supported or promoted numerous business support workshops in 2022-22
- These well attended events were undertaken with numerous partners such as Cornwall Chamber, VisitCornwall and Cornwall Council's Regulatory Team and sought to provide further support and advice for the business community during COVID

Shopwatch Falmouth

- The BID continues to invest in the shopwatch radio scheme as a further support mechanism for businesses
- The scheme is a useful way of connecting businesses in real time, with the Town Team and local security partners
- The BID subsidises the cost of equipment purchase to incentivise town-wide take up and usage.

For a further breakdown of BID activity www.falmouth.co.uk/media