



WILMSLOW  
WAY BETTER  
W.S.

# WILMSLOW BID ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024

## Introduction

The Business Improvement District (BID) is a partnership between the businesses in Wilmslow and a range of partner organisations.

The BID's vision for Wilmslow is to create a destination of choice for residents, visitors, employees and shoppers, making Wilmslow a location where business and the community can thrive.

Wilmslow BID was approved in August 2022, with 74% of organisations voting in favour,

representing 85% of the rateable value of those that voted.

The BID started on 1st November 2022 and is delivering a circa £1 million investment into Wilmslow town centre through to 31st October 2027.

Businesses pay a small additional supplement through the business rates system (the BID levy) which is invested into a range of improvement projects and services which are

over and above the services provided by the Local Authority.

STATISTICS:

**74%**

voted in favour of BID

**85%**

of the collective rateable value represented by those who voted

**£1 million**

(circa) of investment

## How the BID Operates

The project is managed by the businesses in Wilmslow through an elected Executive Board, this Board has a terms of reference and has contracted with registered charity Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside to project manage the Business Improvement District. The executive meets at least six times a year.

## The BID Levy

All non-domestic ratepayers in the geographical area with a rateable value equal to or above £15,000 are liable for a BID levy. This includes all organisations that occupy a rateable property (hereditament) and property owners/ leaseholder (when units are vacant) in the BID geographical area. The BID levy 1.55% of rateable value for all hereditaments.



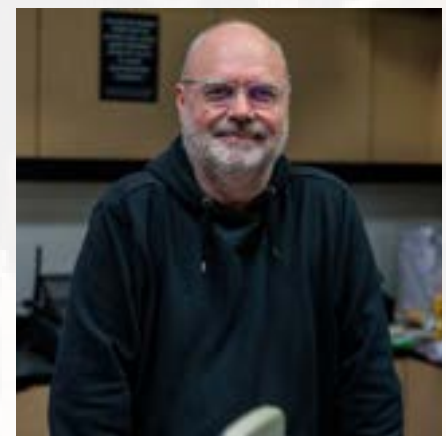
## The Wilmslow BID Team

<b>Lisa Russett</b>	Wilmslow BID Manager	Lisa.russett@groundwork.org.uk
<b>Adam Gerrard</b>	Operations Manager	Adam.Gerrard@groundwork.org.uk
<b>Greville Kelly</b>	Director for BIDs and Business Services	Greville.kelly@groundwork.org.uk
<b>Stephanie Leese</b>	Business Team Co-Ordinator	Stephanie.leese@groundwork.org.uk
<b>Jane Hough</b>	Deputy Director for BIDs and Business Services	Jane.hough@groundwork.org.uk

## The Board

<b>Joanna Davies</b>	Chair - Black White Denim
<b>Angela Donaldson</b>	The Information Commissioner's Office
<b>Charles Jarvis</b>	Cheshire East Council
<b>Chris Hilliard</b>	Electric Bike Shop
<b>Danny Brown</b>	Howden Insurance
<b>Jane Eastwood</b>	Boots
<b>Martin Lowe</b>	Surburban Green & The Wine Cellar
<b>Neil Matthews</b>	Mail Boxes ETC
<b>Samuel Burrows</b>	Wood Fire Smoke
<b>Susan Marshall</b>	Hoopers
<b>Tony &amp; Luis Munding</b>	The Rex Cinema
<b>Tony Jones</b>	Orbit Developments
<b>Jo Wise*</b>	Cheshire East Council
<b>Mark Goldsmith*</b>	Wilmslow Town Council

\*Advisory Capacity Only



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Joanna Davies



*"2023/24 has been another significant year for Wilmslow, its businesses, residents and visitors.*

*The BID team has continued to focus and deliver on key KPIs to ensure the town lives up to its promise to provide a "way better" experience, including marketing and town centre promotion, business leadership and support.*

*The 14 members of the board give up their time voluntarily most months to create, consult, analyse, plan and action initiatives to drive footfall, increase dwell time, spend and create a sense of community.*

*Despite ongoing economic and global headwinds, we are improving across all measurable areas and will keep developing ideas to continue this trajectory.*

*Without the positivity and can-do attitude of the board members (including representatives from Wilmslow Town Council and Cheshire East Council), levy payers, Groundwork and our suppliers this would not be possible.*

*I am very much looking forward to what 2024/25 will bring."*

**Lisa Russett**

**MESSAGE FROM  
THE WILMSLOW  
BID MANAGER**



*"The BID's second year has been a year of improvement, development and change which has been challenging but also, like year one very exciting and I've loved being part of it. We continued with our calendar of events, adding to the visitor experience and elements of interaction. We also carried out essential maintenance to enhance the town's kerb appeal.*

*One of my 'core memory' moments has to be Wilmslow Live; it was a big hit with thousands turning out to enjoy the free live music, over the bank holiday weekend. Wilmslow was absolutely buzzing and I'm looking forward to bringing the event back in 2025.*

*A key development for 2024 was the production of a new Wilmslow town map. Designed for first-time, occasional and regular visitors to Wilmslow, as well as residents, it's the perfect guide to Wilmslow's amenities and iconic buildings.*

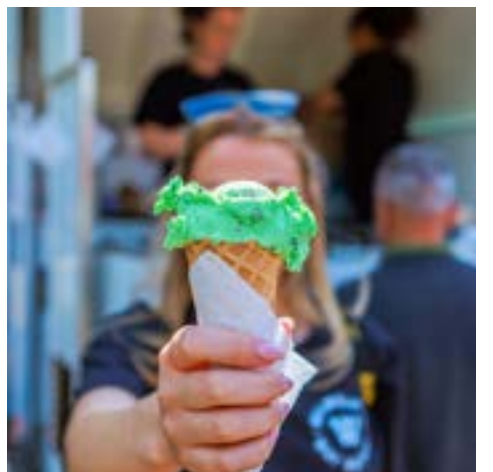
*We continued working with key stakeholders from Cheshire East, Wilmslow Town Council, WNPIG, Wilmslow Civic Society, Cheshire Police, Wilmslow High School, Wilmslow Youth and In Bloom to look at how we can improve gateways, the aesthetic of our community and event spaces, as well as improve parking issues and move forward with improving the radio network, tackle anti-social behaviour and theft.*

*Collaborating with the various businesses within the BID and community groups, has been hugely insightful and it's clear the dedication and commitment of our business community is having a significant impact on collective success of Wilmslow, transforming it into a hub of activity.*

*We have big goals for 2025. It's essential we continue to drive sustained economic growth. The undeniable community spirit is evident and it's been great to see so many businesses working together."*



# PROJECTS DELIVERED IN 2023/24



## Theme 1

# Creating a 'Way Better' Experience

Since the BID's inception, it has looked to identify areas where enhanced cleansing could take place, delivering work above and beyond what the local authority is duty-bound to deliver.

Building on the work completed in year one, the BID completed jet washing of both sides of Water Lane, from the traffic lights at Rex junction starting at Pure Fashion and the Cheshire Watch Company, all the way down to to Zumuku Sushi.

We also worked with the In Bloom Team to identify where additional floral enhancements can be

positioned. Alongside Wilmslow Town Council, we appointed a new supplier for floral enhancements across the town centre to ensure Wilmslow stays vibrant and colourful through planting and the maintenance of our beautiful spaces.

An exciting development was the production of a new Wilmslow town map. Provided free of charge to local businesses, central hubs, train stations and hotels, it is a handy resource for both residents and visitors. The map highlights over 17 distinctive key buildings, selected for their unique architecture and design,

which help guide and direct visitors around the town.

It also details convenient parking options and accessible routes.

2024 saw the reinstatement of bunting along Grove Street for the summer months.



In line with the commitment to deliver a Way Better Experience for Wilmslow and create a vibrant, attractive and engaging environment for both residents and visitors, the BID has delivered and supported several events throughout year two.

# Christmas Light Switch On

Working in partnership with Wilmslow Town Council, the annual Christmas Light Switch On took place in November, with the BID supporting the delivery and organising local resident and Manchester United Ladies footballer Millie Turner to help switch on the lights.

The evening saw a change to the layout and location of the stage to allow for the safety of the increased crowds.

Over 13,000 people descended on Bank Square and surrounding streets to ring in the start the Christmas festivities.

KEY STATISTICS
Footfall: <b>13,000</b>
Skaters: <b>300</b>
Children at Santa's Grotto: <b>125</b>



# Wilmslow Winter Wonderland

In December 2023, the BID delivered its second Wilmslow Winter Wonderland, this time spanning over three days.

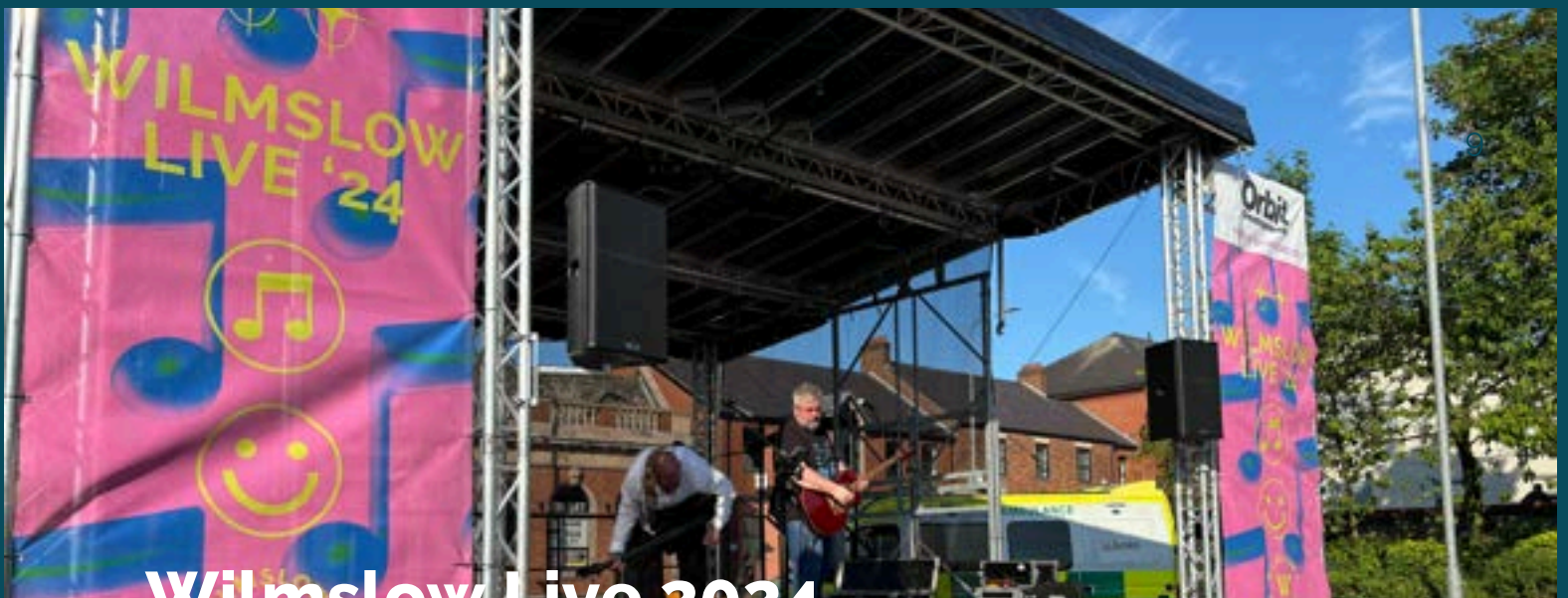
The weekend once again saw the installation of a pop-up synthetic ice rink in Bank Square, with the addition of children having the chance to visit Santa in his Grotto, fairground rides, games, giant gingerbread men along Grove Street and a Christmas market across the weekend.



“Well done to all concerned. It was so fabulous to see our town buzzing. Great to see these events as makes wilmslow a vibrant, attractive place.”  
Paula - Resident







# Wilmslow Live 2024

The inaugural Wilmslow Live took place during the last May Bank Holiday weekend and created lots of buzz, with activities across the town from Thursday 23rd – Monday 27th May.

A stage was built in Bank Square hosted by Silk FM, with performances throughout the day from the very best local talent, including Aura Music Academy, Wilmslow High School's Sunstate Band, all-female Siren Sounds choir and Alderley and Wilmslow Musical Theatre Group.

A Family Fun Zone with free games and activities was installed along Grove Street with a street food and drinks area set up by

local businesses and venues along Hawthorn Lane.

A 'What's On' guide was created and distributed online and in stores containing information of food deals, offers, events, performances and activities that were happening at local venues throughout the BID area.

Social media stats showed that 21.8k people were engaged and reacting on Facebook and 38.9k on Instagram throughout the event.

Additionally footfall for May 2024 was up 2% on May 2023 across the town centre.

## KEY STATISTICS:

Wilmslow Live 2024

**+2%**

footfall YOY

Wilmslow Live 2024

**60,700**

social media engagements





# Space Fest

In March and April 2024 the BID funded Space Fest.

An 'out of this world' Easter adventure, Space Fest saw a static discovery trail of 14 space themed characters, including aliens, spacemen, robots, star wars characters and a Buzz Lightyear in venues around the town, with a prize for competition entrants.

There were also astronaut performers across the town centre and a planetarium at Wilmslow Library to drive footfall, increase dwell time and encourage customer spend.

1,000 trail maps were distributed physically across the town and just under 200 completed digitally. The planetarium had 11 showings. Social media statistics showed 11.6k people were engaged and reacting on Facebook and 20.6k on Instagram throughout the event.



"Its great to see these events and festivals taking place, bringing the town and the business community together. Not only have they contributed to the improved 'buzz' around the town but they are a great way to showcase what Wilmslow has to offer."

Neil - Mail Boxes ETC

## KEY STATISTICS:

**32,200**

social media engagements

**11**

showings at the planetarium

**1,200**

trail maps completed





Amidst these endeavours, the BID has continued to nurture partnerships with key stakeholders from Cheshire East, Wilmslow Town Council, WNPIG and Wilmslow Civic Society to look at how we can improve gateways, event space and tackle parking issues.

We worked in partnership with Wilmslow Town Council and invested in CGI imagery to enhance the town prospectus which sets out a vision and approach to totally revitalising the look and feel of the town centre for residents and visitors alike. This public realm strategy has only been possible

as a result of the positive partnerships forged through the Wilmslow neighbourhood plan. This collaborative working continues throughout the town, with several other stakeholders committed to seeing the masterplan developed and implemented.

We also formed strong relationships with key stakeholders from Cheshire East, Wilmslow Town Council, Cheshire Police, Wilmslow High School and Wilmslow Youth to move forward with improving the radio network and tackle anti-social behaviour and theft.

In our pursuit of community engagement and empowerment, we've maintained an open line of communication with Wilmslow residents and the bustling business community.

Regular e-bulletins and newsletters were sent monthly to consumers and the business community regarding events and activities across the town centre so they could be involved, informed and have a voice.

We now have a subscription list of 1,497 recipients which is an increase of 24.15% from last year.



## Theme 2

# Delivering 'Way Better' Marketing & Town Centre Promotion

We continued to increase our reach and engagement across Wilmslow's Way better digital media platforms, promoting town centre businesses, events and activities to raise the profile of the town centre and attract visitors and shoppers.

Combined Facebook and Instagram views were 301k, reach was 258.9k and interactions were 16k. We saw an increase of followers by 1,066 to 2,751 on

Facebook and on Instagram our followers jumped from 992 to 3,969. A total increase of 4,662.

Businesses were able to contact the marketing team directly by emailing marketing@wilmslowswaybetter.co.uk, whilst the team also proactively met and engaged with businesses across the town on a weekly basis.

We worked closely with Wilmslow.co.uk, Knutsford

Guardian, Cheshire life and Cheshire living on editorial opportunities and paid for placements to increase reach of the Wilmslow's Way Better message.

We also secured SPF Funding which was used for evolution of the Wilmslow's Way Better brand and provided us with the funds to ensure we could enhance and improve the website ensuring a heightened user experience.

## KEY STATISTICS:

### 258,900

combined reach on Facebook and Instagram

### 4,662

new social followers



## Theme 3

# Providing 'Way Better' Business Leadership & Support

We established the BID board to provide businesses with a stronger voice, creating new opportunities, and tackling barriers to growth for businesses in the town centre.

As part of our continued commitment to the professional development of our BID

members, we continued investing in free training for our BID business employees.

Six different courses were held in total including a Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid in the Workplace, a Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid, Paediatric First Aid, Level 2 Award in Health

& Safety in the Workplace, Level 2 Award in Working at Height and Fire Marshal Training.

These efforts have not only equipped 65 employees with essential life-saving skills across 520.5 accredited hours, but also resulted in a significant cost-savings of £16,305 for BID businesses.

In 2024, we held six different courses, including:

- ▶ Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid in the Workplace
- ▶ Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid
- ▶ Paediatric First Aid
- ▶ Level 2 Award in Health & Safety in the Workplace
- ▶ Level 2 Award in Working at Height
- ▶ Fire Marshal Training

**"I found the 2024 BID course very useful, thank you."**  
Course Attendee

Furthermore, the BID provided free online accredited courses in a range of topics, including Food Hygiene in Catering, Allergen Awareness, Leadership & Management, GDPR Training and Customer Service, with 180 topics in total.

For any businesses wanting to enquire about training, please email [stephanie.leese@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:leese@groundwork.org.uk).

**6**  
courses held

**65**  
employees trained

**520.5**  
accredited hours

**£16,305**  
cost-saving for Wilmslow businesses



## What We Plan to Deliver in Year 3

We will continue to raise the profile of Wilmslow town centre and the Wilmslow's Way Better brand through our website, PR and social channels.

Our goal is to deliver exciting and engaging festivals and events in the town centre, including a bigger and 'way better' Winter Wonderland, a spring/Easter Comic-Con, and of course the return of both Wilmslow Live and Street Fest, along with much more to be arranged working with other local groups and partners.

There will be continued investment in enhancements

including hanging baskets, floral arrangements, and way finders to enhance specific areas.

We will work with Wilmslow Town Council to provide a 'way better' Christmas tree with enhanced lighting from previous years.

From April 2025, bunting along Grove Street will once again be reinstated following positive feedback from businesses and visitors.

Enhanced cleaning along Alderley Road and Water Lane will continue.

We are also looking at the

current capabilities of the CCTV and footfall counter software and we have plans to investigate new advanced technologies to evidence and record more accurate intelligence within our town centre.

We plan to look at the work we have already done and gather feedback via an annual business survey across the town centre. This will give businesses more opportunities to collaborate and share best practice.

And last but not least we will continue to make improvements to the website user experience, as well as produce engaging on-brand content across all 'owned' channels.





## Income and Expenditure 2023/24

The accounts below are for Year 2 of Wilmslow BID - 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2024.

Income	Forecast	Actual
BID Levy Contribution	£203,350.00	£218,737.00
Sponsorship & Ticket Sales	£13,500.00	£10,402.00
Contribution	£-	£415.00
Other	£-	£2,250.00
Bank Interest	£-	£1,183.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£216,850.00</b>	<b>£232,987.00</b>

Expenditure	Budget	Actual
Theme One - Way Better Experience	£108,200.00	£92,502.00
Theme Two - Way Better Marketing	£40,525.00	£41,853.00
Theme Three - Way Better Business	£19,175.00	£17,890.00
Management & Levy Collection Costs	£39,506.00	£37,457.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£207,406.00</b>	<b>£189,702.00</b>

There is accrued expenditure of £330 for the Wilmslow BID external accountancy fee. The income figures for the Wilmslow BID's FY 23/24 includes income in advance to cover expenditure during BID year 24/25. This is due to the billing cycles utilised by Cheshire East Council being different to the BID's financial year.



**For more information on the Wilmslow  
BID, please contact:**

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