



Lincoln BIG

Business Improvement
Group

Annual Report

2019-2020

Making Lincoln City
Centre a great place

www.lincolnbig.co.uk

Chair's Report



Welcome to Lincoln BIG's annual report – which reflects on what has been a rollercoaster year of two halves.

The Business Improvement Group ended an action-packed 2019 riding high on the euphoria generated by the ultimate vote of confidence from its 800-plus levy payers. In our November re-ballot, you gave us a clear mandate to continue assisting you for another five years.

We were excited about the future and the opportunity to support you from 2020 to 2025 and we were determined not to rest on our laurels. However, no-one could have predicted the devastating impact of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic or that it would force Lincoln into lockdown. From the outset, Lincoln BIG staff pledged to stay positive.

As I write this, there is still a lot of uncertainty, as businesses and city workers are still in lockdown and do not know when they will be able to go back to some form of normality, wherever possible. Undoubtedly, the past few months will have led many to reassess their operations and explore ways of adapting to a changed economic landscape.

Lincoln BIG has always played a key role in supporting its levy

payers whatever the economic barometer says, and staff continue to stay in touch with businesses throughout this challenging health crisis (using a skeleton staff).

When the city was hit by the Coronavirus, Lincoln was certainly bucking national trends in comparison to many other destinations, with its amazing ability to continue attracting major inward investments.

The team are working hard to recover “lost time,” safe in the knowledge that the city remains a growing magnet for shoppers and tourists. Many businesses and organisations are confident it will quickly reclaim its reputation as a great, must-visit destination.

Over many months now, we have been fortunate to be able to say that Lincoln has its own unique identity and the city has been outperforming many other places. There remains plenty to look forward to, with the ongoing development of The Cornhill Quarter, changes underway at St Marks, on the University of Lincoln campus and in the Cathedral Quarter.

Ursula Lidbetter
Chair

Chief Executive's Report



It has certainly been a year of exciting highs and unprecedented lows for levy payers, irrespective of whether they work within the retail, professional services, industrial or higher education sectors.

The Lincoln BIG team has shared every moment – from our joy to being voted in for another five year term at the BID's November re-ballot and the excitement when we announced the Lincoln IMP Trail, to our efforts to keep businesses informed about the availability of Government help after Coronavirus hit the UK.

We were still buzzing from the re-ballot result and ready to continue supporting our levy payers, having declared three future priorities and devised a 15-point action plan for delivery, when the virus struck.

Today, despite having had to work with a skeleton staff and being forced to postpone or even cancel some major events during these challenging times, we are eager to get back to delivering on our original promises for 2020/2021.

I have thoroughly enjoyed leading the Lincoln BIG team over the past 20 months and I am delighted to say that our staff have stayed positive and committed, despite the recent change to working arrangements.

We've chalked-up some great achievements over the past five years. Now we're determined to do even better. Hopefully, our brilliant Lincoln IMP Trail will give everyone a much-needed boost, by injecting extra fun and excitement into the city, whenever it hits the Lincoln, helping to rebuild footfall and causing a social media frenzy!

Looking to the future, we regret where we had to postpone or

even cancel popular events due to social distancing guidelines, but there is no change to our key priorities and promised actions.

With the words **WELCOME**, **EXPERIENCE** and **VALUE** uppermost in mind, we pledge to promote a safer, cleaner, welcoming city centre, through our street management work, expanding Security Group, support for the city's Pub Watch Schemes, the night-time economy and more.

The **WELCOME** matters. We recognise the importance of having a clean, bright, welcoming city, which encourages people to return time and again for shopping, sightseeing, meetings and more.

EXPERIENCES matter. We aim to animate the city by delivering vibrant events, the good management of public spaces and by working with partners to impress visitors.

VALUE counts. We will continue to offer great travel and parking deals, run cost-savings initiatives with partners and support good travel access schemes into 2021 and beyond.

Sarah Loftus
Chief Executive

Lincoln BIG is a Company Limited by Guarantee.

It is controlled by a 20-strong Board of Directors representing city stakeholders. It trades as a small business – paying VAT and filing Companies House returns. Lincoln BIG does not distribute profit. It reinvests surpluses into delivering its Business Plan to improve Lincoln city centre.

Founder Members

Ursula Lidbetter OBE	Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce
Suzanne Sampson	Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce
Councillor Richard Metcalfe	City of Lincoln Council
Councillor Donald Nannestad	City of Lincoln Council

Co-opted Members

John Latham	University of Lincoln
Elly Sample	University of Lincoln
William Harrison	Lincoln Cathedral
Councillor Colin Davie	Lincolnshire County Council
Gemma Skaley	Lincoln College
Chief Inspector Philip Baker	Lincolnshire Police

Company Secretary

Michael Squirrell	Wilkin Chapman LLP
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Investor Members

Freddie Chambers	Lindum Group
David Lewis	Siemens
Dave Skepper	Stagecoach East Midlands
Valerie Johnson	St Marks Shopping Centre

Lincoln BIG Levy Payers

Carl Jacklin	Agatha
Dean Cross	Waterside Shopping Centre
John O'Donoghue	Home / Craft / Old Curiosity Shop
Mark Brewer	Imp Travel
Stan Matthews	Thompson & Richardson (Lincoln)
Ian Robinson	White Hart Hotel

Financial Forecast

For the year ended 30 June 2020

Income	£
BID Levy	421,564
Investor Membership	61,500
Projects	259,308
Radio Scheme	32,827
Access Scheme	565,449
Other Operating Income	392,684
	1,733,332

Accounting Period: Final Audited Accounts published October 2020. Presented at AGM on 4 November 2020

Accounts: Include overheads – apportioned to individual projects

Our Funding: Approximately one-third the BID levy. One-third from grants/voluntary donations. Remainder from our trading activities

Expenditure	£
Safety & Strategy	41,901
In Bloom	14,428
Events	109,997
Evening Economy	33,839
Access	463,820
Street Management	81,277
Visitor Information	264,661
Projects	273,498
Central Administration	159,325
	1,442,746

This year there will be a surplus of funds due to the postponement/cancellation of activity and additional grants received. These funds will be deferred for activity during the financial year 2020/21.

COVID-19 Response

In March, the city was disrupted abruptly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The focus of the Lincoln BIG team immediately changed to providing services to levy payers virtually. The activities impacted by the pandemic included the wardens – whose ambassadorial roles in helping visitors to the city, street management including graffiti and chewing gum removal would not have been practical at this time; and our evening economy support provided by our Evening Economy Manager who were furloughed until we are able to support the reopening of the city centre.

The team resorted to social media and e-newsletters to share news of Government announcements as well as news and information of importance and relevance to the city.

We also delivered a range of additional services for our

levy payers in response to COVID-19.

We led with our partners the creation and delivery of a Recovery Plan for Lincoln city centre which will continue to evolve into 2021.

The importance of having correct contact details for all our levy payers has been highlighted by this situation, as well as the need for all to sign up to our e-newsletter to allow for efficient communications.


All our contacts have now been amalgamated in one database, and all on this database are to be encouraged to sign up for our e-newsletter in addition to following us on social media.



Lincoln BIG
Business Improvement
Group

FACEBOOK

33,826
Post reach

Lincoln BIG page views
980
Post engagements 
5,631

TWITTER

239 tweets
1,716 profile visits

183.9K
Tweet impressions



360
Reactions

LINKEDIN

Total page views 364
141 new followers

SOCIAL MEDIA MARCH, APRIL AND MAY ANALYTICS

Keep connected and updated, follow us
on our social media



Please ensure we have your up-to-date information and contact us to ensure you are receiving our newsletters and updates.

Our activity during COVID-19 has been:

Financial assistance

We have negotiated the delay in collection of the levy until October 2020

We have not charged for the radio scheme between 1 April and 30 October, but the radios are still live

There will not be an admin charge for re-joining the Bus and Car Park schemes

Bus passes were free May – June 2019

LoyalFree App membership

We have continued to promote businesses that continued to trade online or provide a takeaway service both through the app and through our social media platforms

Level 1 Security

Developed a discounted offer in partnership with Level 1 Group to provide access to security services for levy payers

Webinars

Three FREE webinars on Optimising your business during and Post-COVID delivered by Grounded Places

‘How to do your own PR and Marketing’ webinar delivered by Mary Murtagh

Marketing service

‘Get Connected Creatively’ - FREE marketing content support available for five levy paying businesses that are continuing to operate during the coronavirus outbreak

Relaunching the High Street Campaign

Working with businesses to create a recovery plan for the High Street

Residents Survey

Carried out to inform the recovery of the High Street

Street dressing

Provided Keep Lincoln Safe posters, floor graphics and hand sanitiser to levy payers

Lobbied Government through ATCM and BID Foundation

Re-organising and planning events dependent on Government guidelines on lockdown

Cancellation of our events programme to the end of September



2020 including Imp Trail, the Beach, 1940s Weekend, and Steampunk

Rescheduling of Lincoln Fashion Week to October half-term 2020

Planning of our events programme for 2021

Imp Trail

Design an Imp competition launched for the general public. The competition winner to have their design painted on the 30th Imp ready for the 2021 trail.

Planning for 'Glimpse the Imp' in the city over the Christmas period.

Full trail to be launched in 2021

Business Support

Daily e-newsletters to businesses providing relevant topical information

Provided business support as part of Business Lincolnshire's Coronavirus support programme to local businesses

Business Survey carried out to lobby Government

Levy paying businesses asked to complete the survey to develop services in response to local need and to assist in lobbying Government

Press and Radio

A number of interviews undertaken by the Chief Executive

Lincoln BIG have created a safe and inclusive environment during COVID times! Their sweep of posters highlighting that Lincoln in SAFE and social distancing is in place has really helped us as a business improve the service we give our customers and members through education and joint marketing. We have "borrowed" a Queue Ends Here sign to add to our very own Nationwide Welcome sign. Together these signs have helped us create a queuing strategy that keeps my team and the customers and members safe.

The city is alive with Lincoln BIG posters and floor signs helping with social distancing. On a recent "High Street" walk I completed on the Primark re opening day I was amazed at how professional and engaging the BIG wardens were with the public, managing possibly the longest queue I have ever seen on the High Street! It was calm, yet there was an excitement in the city that the High Street was yet again become vibrant and healthy – Lincoln is safe and a beautiful city to visit. Working with Lincoln BIG, Nationwide Building Society in Lincoln are proud to play their part on our Healthy High Street.

Debra Canwell

Nationwide Building Society



Have you ordered your posters ?

If not, speak with Lincoln BIG – they have been nothing short of amazing! Thank YOU!

Highlights from 2019-2020



We have created fabulous festivals, celebratory crowd-pleasers, annual attractions and special happenings which have added an irresistible magnetism to Lincoln's city centre, keeping people coming back for more!

We have created quality support services to help our levy payers with the daily demands of running a business, allowing them to take advantage of opportunities to benefit from the extra footfall generated.

1. WELCOME – Creating a well-managed, welcoming and safe city

Wardens Service

Our team of wardens are always active. This year we welcomed Rachel as a volunteer warden to our scheme. Steve, Danny, Morgan and Rachel are out and about, giving street furniture a lick of paint, returning stolen goods to levy payers, delivering information on our activities and responding to queries. We even introduced calling cards this year so you could give us feedback on our activity and highlight areas of concern.

Over the past year, the wardens have removed 2.5 miles of graffiti, continued to paint the street furniture with the Government grant received through City of Lincoln Council, cleaned the Cornhill Quarter and parts of the upper High Street with our gum buster machine and vacuum cleaner.

Street Management Service

We have continued to work closely with City of Lincoln Council,

Lincolnshire County Council, Lincolnshire Police and other agencies to reduce the level of begging and anti-social behaviour in the city centre. During the year, we commissioned a gate to be built for St Peter's Passage (between House of Fraser and Blacks) to stop the anti-social behaviour. The gate was put in place in July 2019.

Evening Economy

Our Evening Economy & Security Manager, Marion Cooney, attended and supports Lincoln's Uphill Pubwatch and City Centre Pubwatch meetings. In total we have 65 active members. Over the past nine months the key achievements have been Ask Angela scheme and Drinks Detective scheme. A new Tasking Group was set-up to tackle issues in the City. This group has helped exclude 12 individuals.

We continue to support the Street Pastors who over the past year have assisted 638 revellers, given out 150 pairs of flip flops, 243 bottles of water and 95 space blankets.

Patrol hours decreased to Saturday evening only during the latter part of 2019 due to funding.

The evening economy website and app has been logged 4,476 times by 180 members. Twelve new managers have been visited this year with radio training being rolled out to all managers, bar staff and door staff across the sector. Unfortunately, our work with the evening economy was cut short and all pubs, restaurants and clubs were closed by the Government on 20 March.

Security & Safety

Hundreds of levy payers enjoy the benefits of our free Security Group membership. This membership includes Shopwatch, to help shops protect against thefts. There are currently 478 active members, with 34 joining over the last nine months during which time Intervention team businesses logged on 23,578 times to report incidents, receive the latest updates and alerts or to view the profiles of offenders.

We have 180 radios in use in the city centre, allowing businesses to alert each other to potential



shoplifters. Users say they no longer feel as though they are tackling this issue on their own. Therefore we have invested this year in the radio scheme by introducing a new channel to give better reception for all users.

We invested in a new defibrillator that has been installed outside Boots on the High Street and seven others have been brought back into service throughout the city with new pads and batteries, bringing the total to eight.

We have continued to support the City Centre Intervention Team. At the end of 2019 the team had worked with more than 140 different individuals on the streets, logged in excess of 1,700 actions and recorded 487 reports of incidents or anti-social behaviour.

During the COVID-19 lockdown the radios continue to be active, with

the Lincoln BIG Board agreeing that businesses would not be charged for the period 1 April – 30 September 2020. As a result, existing users will only be charged for six-months rental for 2020/2021.

Street Dressing

During 2019 the In Bloom scheme displayed 150 hanging baskets, 120 street planters, 124 St George's and Lincolnshire Day flags with 180 Christmas trees bringing colour and vibrancy to our city. We have also hung 12 miles of bunting across the city for various celebrations and events.

The In Bloom scheme was postponed for Summer 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown with plants not being an essential item. In May, the wardens were out displaying 1,000 Keep Lincoln Safe posters, 300 floor stickers, 300 bottles of hand sanitiser and End of Queue A-Boards.

2. EXPERIENCE – Creating a world class experience for all who visit, live, invest and work in Lincoln

Events

In 2019 we delivered/commissioned in the region of 350 events across the city. All were set out in our annual events calendar which is always in high demand by our levy payers and partners.

- **Tour Lincoln 2019**

The Tour Lincoln open top tour bus operated by Stagecoach East Midlands and managed by Lincoln BIG ran for 148 days across the summer season with 6 tours a day - a total of 888 tours!

- **Lincoln by the Sea 2019**

Families loved to make a beeline for “The Beach” – one of our hottest attractions of the school holidays. Loads of fresh seaside sand and colourful deckchairs were guaranteed. Thousands of children visited and enjoyed the event.

- **Dinosaur Trail 2019**

During the summer holidays, we welcomed T-Rex footprints to the city as part of a trail leading to The Collection to see the Natural History Museum exhibition.

- **1940s Weekend 2019**

Our legendary 1940s Weekend was expected to attract in the region of

some 50,000 visitors, but inclement weather led to us to cancel the first day, reducing numbers to an estimated 25,000. The Sunday was a great success! With Blighty Belles and 52nd Street Jump being popular attractions. FP Watsons the Chemist on the Bailgate won the window dressing competition and Bells Tea Room were the winners of the best dressed competition.

- **Asylum Steampunk Festival 2019**

It was a real honour to welcome about 150,000 Steampunkers from around the globe for the city’s annual weekend in August, which took place in the uphill area of the city. As it was a very hot weekend, we thank all those businesses that gave out free bottles of water!



- **Pumpkin Trail 2019**

To celebrate Halloween, the second Pumpkin trail was organised within the Cathedral Quarter for children to find the pumpkins in shop windows. This was, as always, a resounding success with both children and the retailers.

- **Imp Trail 2019 and Beyond**

Our third sculpture trail has been under development since mid 2019 to launch 30 colourful Imps to animate the city centre. We have recruited sponsors and appointed 30 artists from 200 submissions to create their design onto our 30 Imps. The Imps are ready to be introduced which will now be in 2021. Which will be your favourite?

Before COVID-19, the Imp has met 23 of the sponsors for the IMP Trail – the trips have varied from Skegness seafront - inside Ruddock's printing factory and Lincoln Cathedral! Sponsor trips have also included the delivery of their bespoke sponsor badges and the official sponsor certificate. These enjoyable visits have been shared on the IMP Trail social media pages, creating lots of excitement and awareness of the trail online, with posts reaching up to 9,500 people on the IMP Trail Facebook page and almost reaching 1,000 followers on the Instagram page.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government's guidelines the decision has been taken to postpone the Imp Trail for 2020 and launch in the Spring of 2021. The team will be bringing you 'Glimpse the Imp' to the city over the Christmas period.

- In addition to the above events, in 2019 we delivered/commissioned Classic Cars, Scoot on the Waterfront, MINI Day and Bike Fest on Brayford Waterfront, three Street Food Festivals on the Cornhill and High Street, the Reindeer Parade and Thors Tipi during the Christmas period.



Animating the City

- **Lincoln Creates 2019**

Our Lincoln Creates project, provides small grants to creative practitioners working collaboratively with local businesses with the aim of supporting the city's regeneration and making Lincoln a more attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

Over the last year the grants have supported James Mayle's Lincoln Imp-themed artwork on the former Boots' store in the city's High Street and artist Lee Sass illuminated

'Cut-Outs' project of well-known Lincoln dignitaries in Sincil Street. In February we put out a call for artists to come forward with their proposals for Lincoln Fashion Week - 'Instagrammable Moments'. The aim was to brighten up the shop windows in the city with fashion themed artwork that people can snap a selfie with. The response was overwhelming- we had 63 submissions. Our intention is to continue with this project once the High Street reopens as part of Lincoln Fashion Week in October 2020.

Vibrant High Street Experience

• LoyalFree

This LoyalFree loyalty app – which allows smartphone users to claim special deals and discounts and discover trails and events – has proved increasingly popular with businesses, shoppers and leisure-seekers since its introduction last year. To-date we have had 2,442 engaged app users 26,886 LoyalFree interactions and 4,827 redemptions of deals/stamps. There have been 15,445 profile views of businesses and 1,391 trail interactions on 8 live trails we created. It is proving a success!

• Visitor Information Centre

Our management of the city's Visitor Information Centre came to an end with the responsibility having passed back to the City of Lincoln Council. We would like to thank Michele Sims and her team at the VIC for their loyalty and commitment in delivering a high standard of service, recognised by repeatedly achieving the Tripadvisor Certificate of Excellence. We wish them "all the best" and we're still only a phone call away.

3. VALUE

• BIG Bus and Car Park Deals

Employees of levy paying businesses are saving themselves jointly across the city £170,000 per annum by purchasing the Lincoln BIG Bus Deal, run in conjunction with Stagecoach East Midlands; combined with our discounted Car Parking schemes with City of Lincoln Council. Levy payers can offer this cost-effective way for their employees to commute to the city centre.

The Bus and Car Parking schemes have been interrupted this year due to COVID-19, but with employees able to make BIG savings on commuting by bus and car with these deals we are confident it will regain its popularity later this year and into 2021. Our thanks go to Stagecoach East Midlands who suspended payment of the bus passes during April and May but still allows the passes to be used, especially by our key workers.

Lincoln BIG also manages the Lincoln Park & Ride with Stagecoach, allowing employees to park for free at Waitrose then catch the bus into the city centre. The service has seen 37,230 passengers this year prior to the service being suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



• Partnership Working

Throughout 2019, working with Bishop Grosseteste University and Grimsby College, levy payers were offered free courses for their employees. These courses were well attended and included Health & Safety, Fire Safety, Manual Handling, Conflict Management, First Aid, Personal Alcohol Licence, Food Hygiene and World Host.

In September, we welcomed Martin Green who gave a fascinating talk on culture, leadership, and place to a 60+ audience. Martin is known for masterminding some of Britain's most significant major events including the opening

of The O2 in London; the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic opening and closing ceremonies and the opening ceremony of the 2014 Tour de France Grand Départ in Leeds.

• **Access Lincoln**

Lincoln BIG continues to manage the Access Lincoln project, promoting sustainable travel in and around Lincoln to individuals, businesses and visitors to the city. Levy payers have taken advantage of the some of our Access Lincoln initiatives, such as 'Dr Bike', offering free bike servicing to staff, our organised lunchtime walks for employees in the city and the installation of new public bike pumps and bike storage to encourage more people to travel into Lincoln.

Over the past year, levy payers have covered 55 miles with the lunchtime leg stretches! We have arranged 36 bike servicing sessions, carried out 4,000 individual Travel Plans, purchased two mobile bike racks which are used in various locations across the city and purchased two bike pumps! One has been installed at St Marks and one is to be installed at the Train Station

Through Access Lincoln we have offered discounted bus travel for commuters outside of the BID area, providing three months FREE bus travel for apprentices and those



returning to employment, to help them to get to their workplaces.

In November 2019 Access Lincoln won 'Physical Activity Programme of the Year' at the Lincolnshire Sports Awards for the cycling and walking initiatives undertaken by the team. This included the Cycle Fest in June 2019, fortnightly lunchtime leg stretches in the city centre and led bike rides around Lincoln, all aimed to encourage more people to get fit and active.

• **Collaboration 4 Growth**

Lincoln BIG levy payers are among scores of businesses who have benefited from the Collaboration 4 Growth programme, which offers grants of between £2,000 and £7,000 and stages specialist workshops that are designed to help businesses owners to develop their skills and expand their businesses. Over the last year businesses have benefitted from:

- 20 grants, totalling £180,968
- 22 workshops, involving 41 eligible businesses
- Participation in 17 business support events

We have also worked with our partner, Lincolnshire Chamber, to develop a programme of workshops covering a range of topics, including social media, PR and marketing and management training. We have also targeted some of these workshops at specific sectors such as creative businesses and tourism and hospitality sectors.

Since the onset of COVID-19 we have been developing and delivering a programme of online workshops. This has worked well with participants stating that it had 'exceeded their expectations'.

In February this year, we applied to extend the C4G project to June 2023 - we expect to hear the outcome of this bid later in the year.

Investor Members



Please ensure we have your up-to-date information and contact us to ensure you are receiving our newsletters and updates.



Actions for Delivery 2020-2021

WELCOME

- Manage and maintain our warden service
- Respond to business requests to target hotspot areas for graffiti removal and cleaning using our gum removal machine and vacuum cleaner
- Delivery four community clean-up projects
- Deliver and manage Lincoln In Bloom project
- Increase the number of venues involved in the Ask Angela Campaign and increase membership of our Security Group by 10%

EXPERIENCE

- Deliver five quality events
- Deliver a sculpture trail and manage existing seasonal trails in the city
- Develop tourism projects with our partners
- Develop five High Street experiences
- Develop a public spaces plan with landowners

VALUE

- Increase take-up of the BIG Bus and Car Park passes by 5%
- 40 businesses to receive up to 12 hours targeted support under the Collaboration4Growth programme
- Enable businesses to access the Collaboration4Growth programme
- Manage and promote the Park & Ride service
- Work with partners to promote Lincoln's uniqueness through three campaigns.



Getting involved

If you are interested in any of the projects or activities detailed in this publication and you would like more detail or to get involved then please contact us.

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Lincoln BIG
Street Management



Lincoln BIG
Security Group
Exclusion Scheme and
Civil Recovery in Action



Lincoln
in Bloom



Lincoln BIG
Events & Promotions



Lincoln BIG
Evening Economy
Management



Lincoln BIG
Access



BID Levy area

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European Union
European Regional
Development Fund