



Annual Review 2022–23

www.theyorkbid.com

A Message from our Chair

“The first quarter of 2023 was the most successful of the BID’s seven year history”



Michael Hjort | Chair & City Restaurateur

As a BID with a remit to deliver against our business plan, we are not in the habit of continually blowing our own trumpet. We try

to take the ‘Ronseal’ wood stain approach and ‘do what it says on the side of the tin!’ However, all organisations need to celebrate success, and based on feedback from both businesses and the public, the first quarter of 2023 was the most successful of the BID’s seven year history.

We have listened to our retail and hospitality businesses and attempted to focus events and promotions on low footfall times of year. During January to March, we delivered new experiences, such as ‘Reunion’ on St Sampson’s Square and the hugely successful Colour and Light at York Minster. These sat alongside established events, such as York Restaurant Week (the most successful to date) and continued sponsorship of the York Ice Trail, delivered by Make it York. All these events focus on being accessible as well as attracting local people. Most importantly for businesses, they result in a return on investment through consumer spend.

We have also listened to our professional service members who wanted to see more coordinated information on upcoming major developments. Towards the end of 2022, the BID worked with public and private partners to produce a promotional film about the city’s commercial offer, and then showcased it to around 180 people at a

launch event in January. Feedback about the BID’s ability to convene people was overwhelmingly positive, and as a consequence, the Board have made this a priority going forward.

Whilst the BID will always have its mandate to deliver, we cannot ignore changes around us. A new political administration has just been voted in at a local authority level, and the BID will work quickly to ensure they understand the issues facing city centre businesses. This time next year, North Yorkshire will have an elected Mayor with access to devolved funding pots. The BID Board will make it a priority to become well connected with the new Mayor and their office.

The BID is increasingly invited to strategic conversations because it is seen to have its ‘finger on the pulse’ of business sentiment. This is partly due to the data we have access to, but also the connections we make. Our Exec Director sits on many local Boards and gets involved in national conversations through his position on the government’s High Street Task Force. On the BID Board, we currently have the President elect of the North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, the Chair of the Hospitality Association York, and the Chair of Indie York. This is alongside the MD of Make it York and elected Councillors from City of York Council. These individuals, along with other Board members, gives the BID a unique representation of business voices. In the coming year, we will look to ensure these voices represent the city centre in the strategic discussions we are asked to join.

How is York performing – the data and the ‘word on the street!’

“Predicting consumer trends and business forecasting seems harder than ever”



Andrew Lawson | BID Exec Director

Whilst speaking to businesses and colleagues over the last year, I’ve been confronted with a consistent message: that whilst many appear

to be doing good trade, rising utility, staff, and supply chain costs are squeezing the profits of many businesses.

Some of these costs have been passed on to the consumer, but it is not that simple in many cases. Just recently, a large hospitality provider told me how a global brewery chain raised their prices by 8% just days before an event. This volatility has led to higher than expected interest rates, which simply adds to the list of costs that businesses have to bare.

Some post covid trends continue to bemuse, with all businesses reporting staff retention and recruitment problems. During a meeting I attended with the Governor of the Bank of England, he confessed that their team do not know why many over 50’s have not re-entered the workforce post covid, and he has no idea when they will!

In addition, predicting consumer trends and business forecasting seems harder than ever. Figure 1.1 shows that for the financial year 22/23, footfall is down from pre-covid years. However, many traders tell us average spend per transaction is up, which is a positive (understanding inflation will play a part).

Figure 1.1 - Monthly footfall, York city centre (Source Springboard)

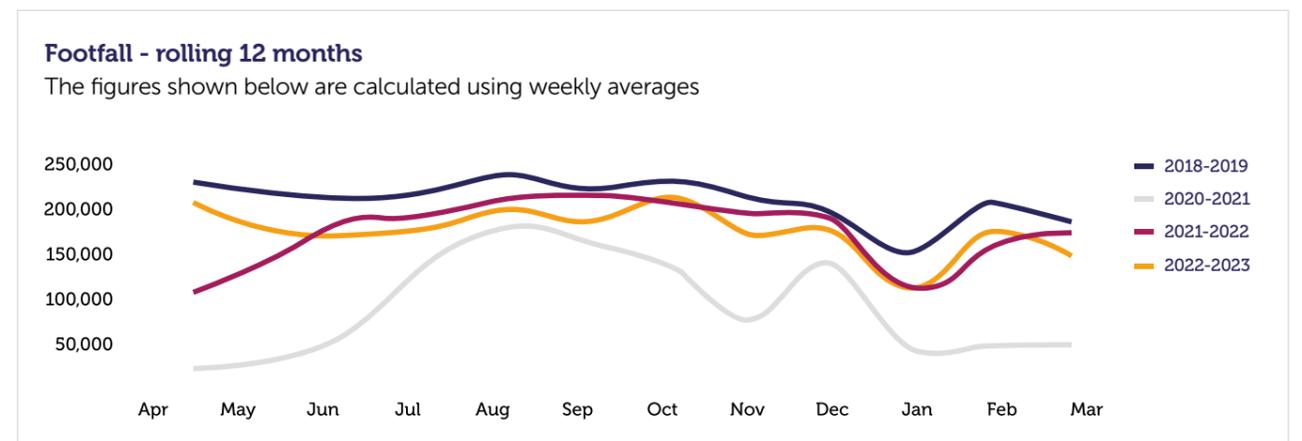
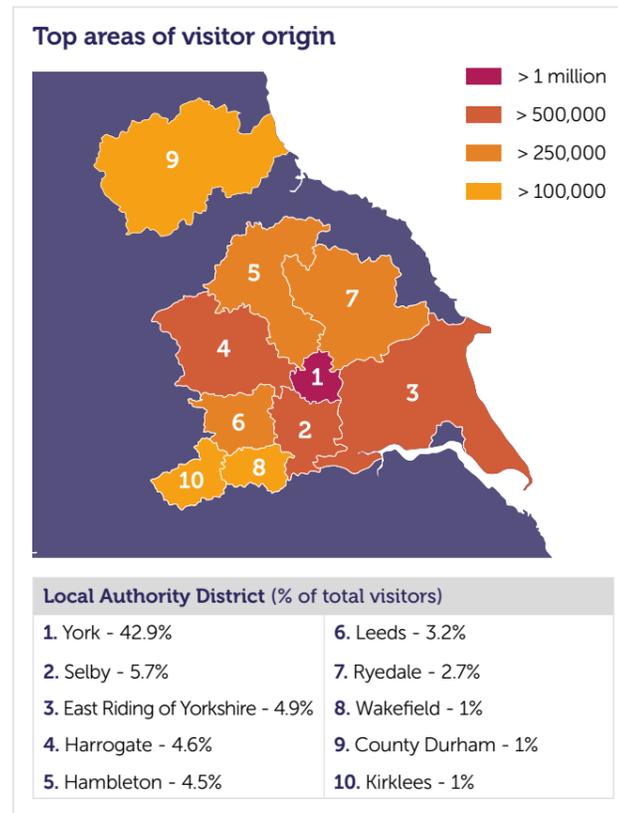


Figure 1.2 identifies the locations with the highest volume of visitors to York in the last year. I always like to highlight that despite what you sometimes read, York is a city well supported by locals, not to mention the local hinterland.

Foreign tourism numbers are still slow to return to the levels they once were, but American visitors started to return in 2022. Britain is still not on the safe list for Chinese tourists, which means numbers will be limited in the immediate future, and post Brexit red tape means the UK is only seeing an eighth of the foreign school trips it used to.

Figure 1.2 - Top 10 UK Districts for highest visitor numbers to York city centre (Source VMO2)



Retail and hospitality businesses told us that they had a good Christmas 2022, with retailers adding that postal strikes meant consumers' lack of confidence in online purchases resulted in more spend in store. VISA data verifies this, showing reduced online spend compared to previous years. Figure 1.3 shows that spend in store was marginally up during Q4 2022, compared to Q4 2021.

Figure 1.3 - Quarterly merchant spend in store, York city centre (Source VISA)

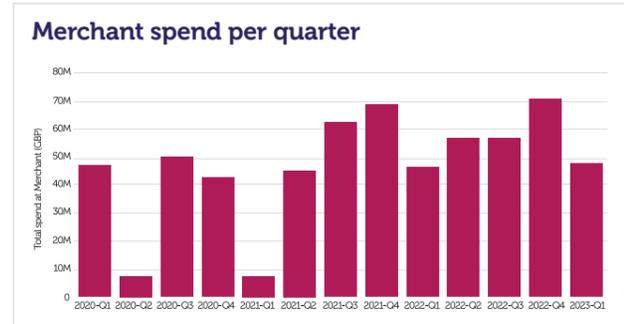
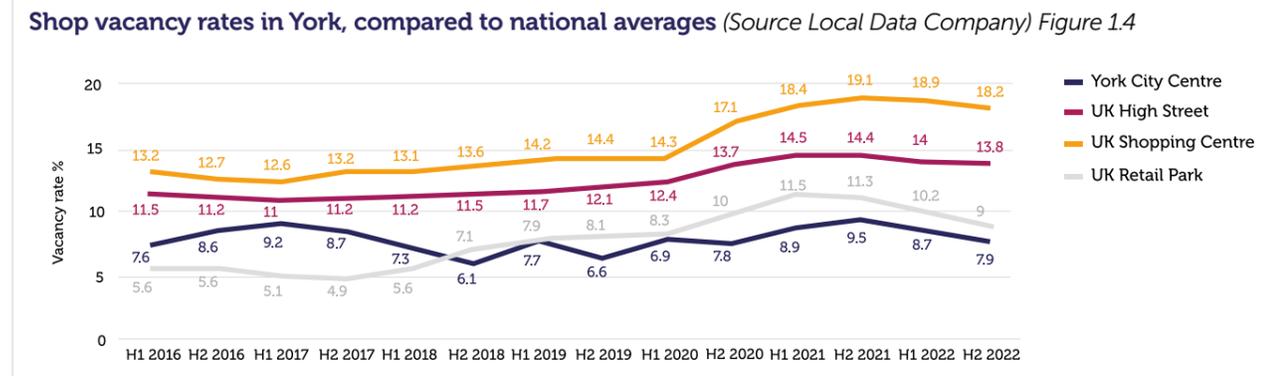


Figure 1.4 shows that York is in a strong position compared to national averages with regards to vacancy rates. We've recently noticed areas of our high street transforming: not long ago Davygate was looking derelict following the departure of Debenhams and Sports Direct, however recently we've witnessed many of these units becoming occupied by new jewellery and menswear retailers.

As a BID, we need to support businesses and create the best trading environment for them to flourish. I recently met with the new Council administration and highlighted what businesses have communicated to us as their priorities: a local plan with affordable housing; greater capacity in the planning system; pride in the look of our city; and a sustainable tourism strategy. We need strong leadership to make this happen. If we do, businesses in York will grasp the opportunity and in turn, provide jobs to locals and graduates who want to stay in our great city.



Year 7 Key Statistics



£365,000

York Restaurant Week attracted over 24,500 voucher downloads, boosting food and beverage trade by over £365,000



£140,000

Over £140,000 of additional funding secured from external sources for BID projects



100

Installed over 100 planters filled with pollinator friendly plants, and over 60 public benches for green spaces during Summer



160,000

York Winter Lights scheme spans 16km of city centre streets consisting of over 160,000 LED bulbs



18

Vinyl wrapped 18 vacant high street shops



220

'Skills School' has upskilled 220 employees from levy paying businesses, worth a market value of over £20,000



71,000

Street cleaners jet washed over 71,000 m² of city centre pavements, paths and snickleways



£250,000

Close to £250,000 worth of York Gift Cards sold



£61,000

Street Rangers recovered over £61,000 or stolen stock for local businesses & dealt with

4,900

bio-hazards (human/animal waste/drug litter) and over 6,900 other general litter items cleaned away. Responded to

174

rapid response business call outs



Ghosts in the Gardens won best 'Place Marketing' campaign at the National British BIDs awards 2022

352

cases of crime including theft and/or violence and 285 cases of anti-social behaviour

45

incidents required Rangers to administer first aid

The Year in Review

Colour and Light

During February 2023, the BID launched a new and innovative lighting project named 'Colour & Light'. The event was free to attend, aimed at attracting families into the city centre during the darker and quieter months of the year. The ten-minute-long show featured immersive content projected onto the South transept of York Minster and played on repeat every evening between 6pm and 9pm.

'Colour & Light' is estimated to have attracted over 45,000 viewers during the two-week period it took place, including the February half term. Based on the superb feedback received, the BID is looking at the potential for bringing this event back in 2024.

Winter Lights

During December 2022, the BID, supported by Make It York, launched a new and improved Winter Lights scheme which introduced a number of upgrades and new features to the existing display, including a complete modernisation of all LED string lights in the city centre, the addition of 'twinkly' lights on Parliament St trees (which can be programmed to animate and change colour), a trail of 12 life-sized nutcrackers for families to find, as well as additional lighting for 8 new streets which had not been included before.

The curtain of lights on York's historic bar walls remains a prominent feature of the display, as does the magical 'Tree of Light' at the Eye of York and the sparkling, illuminated Santa's Post-box in Museum Gardens.

Reunion

'Reunion' is a unique and interactive light installation which features a number of technicolour archways of light, positioned in a circle. York BID brought the artwork to St Sampsons Square during January and February 2023 to attract footfall and encourage dwell time during the darker and quieter months of the year. Reunion encourages the public to enter the space and interact with the arches, becoming part of the installation themselves.

College Green Pocket Park

The BID and York Minster have transformed College Green into a vibrant new Pocket Park, which opened in April 2023. Designed by local companies, PWP Design and Unconventional Design, the green is now an inviting and accessible space with new seating, wide paths, low-level play features, and pollinator-friendly wildflowers.



Ghosts in the Gardens

On the back of the success experienced during its launch in 2021, the BID brought back 'Ghosts In The Gardens' in September 2022, making it bigger and better. The new scheme introduced 25 new ghostly figures and 6 new city centre garden locations for the public to explore and enjoy.

The event proved to be particularly popular with families, which was evident by the high volume of comments and photos posted on social media. 'Ghosts in the Gardens' won best 'Place Marketing' campaign at the National British BIDs awards 2022.



Business cost savings & advice

In response to the economic crisis, the BID has launched a suite of support initiatives designed to assist businesses through periods of financial difficulty. These include the offer of a free annual memberships to BIRA, the one-stop-shop for business support and advice, as well as subsidising the cost of switching to LED lighting. Since the scheme launched in October 2022, the BID has helped businesses access support worth over £18,000 through these initiatives. The image (left) shows Mark, Manager of the York Dungeon with new LED lighting for their premises.

York Restaurant Week

York Restaurant Week continues to grow in both scale and popularity. Our most recent event, taking place in March broke all previous records, attracting over 15,000 voucher downloads, worth a monetary value of over £234,000 for food and beverage traders in the city centre. Across the seven events delivered to date, around 65,000 vouchers have been downloaded, worth a monetary value of over £891,000, that's an average of around £2,100 per participating business, during each event. The BID will continue to deliver restaurant week twice annually.



Skills School

York BID has partnered with the Business School at York St John University to deliver free and subsidised training for local businesses. Since its launch in October 2022, the BID has delivered 19 courses, attended by over 220 local employees, worth a market value of over £20,000. Some examples of course topics delivered to date are: first aid, mental health awareness, leadership & management skills, conflict management and disability awareness.

York Gift Card

Every York Gift Card sold locks spend into the city centre economy. Since its launch in 2019, the programme has rapidly grown to become the third largest in the UK, with close to £250,000 worth of sales. 334 businesses currently accept the card and new businesses are joining all the time. A new digital card is set to launch later this year.



York's future developments

York BID and strategic partners commissioned a short promotional film entitled 'It's All York', aimed at showcasing some exciting commercial developments York has planned for the future. To launch the film, the BID hosted a business breakfast at the Radisson Hotel, attracting over 180 attendees from the local business community. Representatives from each key development featured in the film were given 15 minutes to update delegates on their progress.

The film is available to download from the York BID website, which stakeholders are encouraged to share amongst their networks.



Street Rangers

The Street Rangers are one of the BID's longest running programmes and for good reason. Our Rangers are out on the streets 7 days a week, providing a reassuring presence to businesses and the general public. They regularly deter shop lifters, provide a source of local knowledge for visitors and routinely update businesses with city centre news. Furthermore, the team are dementia friendly, throw line trained and often reunite lost children with their parents. The image (right) shows Rangers Stu and Lewis on patrol at the Eye of York.



City Dressing

In the wake of the pandemic, we have witnessed several large retailers close in key areas of York high street. Where possible, the BID has worked with landlords, agents, and other partners to identify vacant commercial properties that would benefit from window displays, vinyl wraps or present an opportunity for pop-up shops and exhibitions. This initiative has led to quicker letting of empty properties and has improved the overall look of the city for visitors and residents.



Street Cleaning

Our Street Cleaning team take pride in keeping York streets looking their best, with another year of impressive stats. The BID recently invested in upgrading its vehicles and hot washing equipment to allow for a more intensive programme of deep cleaning.

Our newly launched 'SHINE' project targets run-down areas with comprehensive cleaning and refurbishment, including a lick of paint where needed. The image (left) shows our cleaner, Wayne, preparing to jet wash pavements and snickleways around St Sampsons Square.



Public Seating & Floral Displays

Each Summer, the BID rolls out several attractive outdoor seating areas, dressed with floral displays and play elements for the public to enjoy. Businesses benefit from the additional trade driven by the family-friendly spaces in different areas of the city centre, as well as places for staff to go for a well-earned break.

The additional seating makes York a more accessible, walk-able city, and spending time outdoors makes people feel they are a part of the local community. Bringing underutilised public spaces to life supports businesses, expanding their capacity beyond their physical constraints. These spaces are for anyone to use, to take food and drink purchased from local businesses, for picnics, or simply to rest.

The Year Ahead

Access & Transport

As stated in our 5 year business plan, the BID is committed to make our city accessible for all. In November, the BID used GPS data to help the Council better understand car parking usage; the origin of car park users; and how it effects the road network. This is an example of how the BID champions the use of data to better understand people movement and support partners with appropriate transport strategies.

Continue getting the basics right

During 7 years of operations, businesses have consistently fed back to us that they value our 'on the ground' services, and that York streets need to be kept clean and welcoming. The BID will continue to invest funds and resource into Street Rangers and Street Cleaning, ensuring these services are reliable, efficient and continue to support businesses on a daily basis.

Training & Support

With economic imbalance continuing to threaten business profits, the BID is committed to finding innovative methods of assisting businesses in their day-to-

day trade. We will continue to deliver subsidised training through our Skills School programme, and keep our finger on the pulse for support schemes that offer business cost savings and reduce energy usage.

Safety Partnership

The BID has been instrumental in forming a safety partnership forum where representatives from the Local Authority, North Yorkshire Police and business owners meet regularly to discuss key safety issues. The success of this forum has supported York in receiving a Purple Flag award, recognising our vibrant and safe early-evening economy. Moving forward, the BID will look to maintain and champion this status.

Shouting about Media Arts

York is home to a wealth of film and media businesses whose successes are not commonly known. Later this year, the BID is partnering with Aesthetica Film Festival and Viridian FX to host an industry focus event aimed at promoting some of these local success stories, as well as championing York's status as a UNESCO city of media arts. Following the success of the film launch event at the start of 2023, the BID will continue to seek out opportunities to facilitate events and valuable discussions.

Family Friendly Activity

Consumer trends tell us that experience is a defining factor in where people choose to spend their leisure time. The BID is committed to continue developing and promoting activity that is attractive to residents and families. We feel that Colour & Light succeeded in following this model and are looking at the potential for repeating this in 2024.

Street Art

Street art can make a huge difference to urban spaces, improving the appearance of unloved spaces as well as telling stories of the place and people who live there. The BID has ambitions of creating a street art trail, which will encourage residents and visitors to explore different areas of the city. Recently we installed two vibrant wall murals on York Barbican and the Foss Riverside Walk.

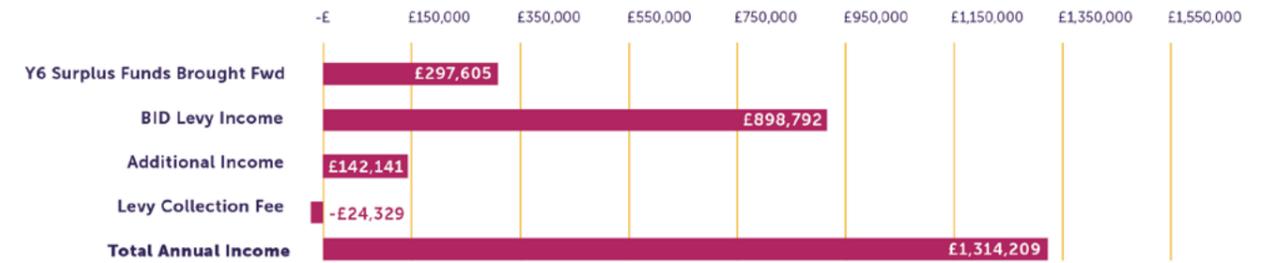


Financial Review

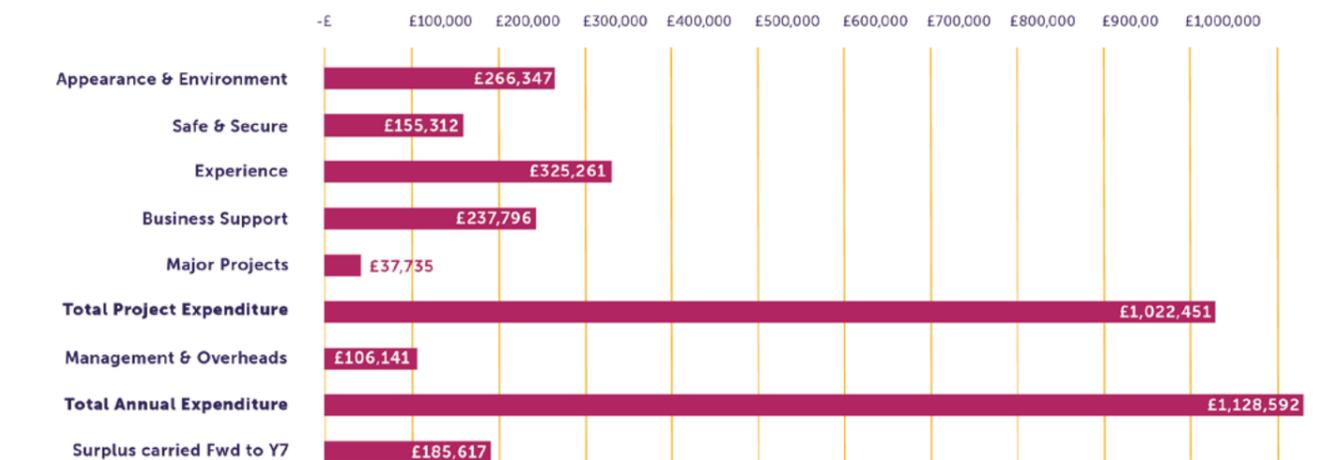
The financial year ending 31st March 2023 marks the start of York BID's 8th year of operations.

Due to the pandemic, a high level of cash reserves were carried forward into year 6. These funds have since been spent and/or committed to projects aimed at aiding the city centre's economic recovery. We are extremely grateful to local businesses for their continued support and trust in the York BID to effect positive change in our city centre.

Annual Income



Annual Expenditure



The figures presented are accurate at the time of writing but may be subject to change.

BID Levy Income includes some late payments from previous billing years.

The levy charge has remained at 1% since the BID began in 2016.

'Additional Income' includes grant contributions towards specific projects and revenue streams, e.g. voluntary membership fees, Skill School courses, York Gift Card breakage.

'Major Projects' refers to expenditure for large scale projects spanning several years, namely 'Improved Signage & Wayfinding'.

Full company accounts are prepared by HPH Chartered Accountants and are available at www.theyorkbid.com/downloads/

The York BID Board & Team

The York BID company is governed by a voluntary board of directors and advisors who oversee the delivery of a business plan across the BID's 5 year term. The board is made up of influential representatives from key business sectors, partner organisations, and levy paying businesses in the city centre.

The Board meet bi-monthly, as do sub-committees focused on steering each of the 4 programme areas. Levy payers and stakeholders are regularly invited to attend meetings and participate in specific projects. An annual general meeting is typically scheduled during the summer of each year, where members are encouraged to have their say on the company's activity.

York BID Team

Andrew Lawson – Executive Director

Carl Alsop – Operations Manager

Chris Bush – Business Manager

Rachel Bean – Projects & Finance Executive

Year 7 Board Directors & Advisors

Michael Hjort (Chair) – Owner of Walmgate Ale House

Neil Sanderson – Director, York Minster Fund

Robert Onyett – Managing Partner, Harrowells Solicitors

Sarah Czarniecki – Strategic Partner & Director, Grays Court

Adam Wardale – General Manager, Middletons Hotel

Angela Horner – Associate Director, Browns Department Store

Rebecca Layton – Owner of Galtres Lodge Hotel & Forest Restaurant

Sarah Loftus – Managing Director, Make It York

Doug Winter – Director, Isotoma

Will Zhang – Owner of Orchid Vegan Restaurant

Nicola Arthur – Store Manager, Boots

Neil Setterfield (retired 2023) – Store Director, Fenwick

Cllr Ashley Mason (retired 2023) – Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning, City of York Council

Cllr Andy D'Agorne (retired 2023) – Deputy Leader/ Executive Member for Transport, City of York Council

Alistair Graham (Advisor) – City Centre Resident

Lotte Inch (Advisor) (retired 2023) – Owner of Lotte Inch Gallery

Thank you

Working with partners is key to the BID's success. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our levy paying businesses and the organisations stated below for their ongoing engagement and support, **working together for a stronger York.**





Contact

The York BID
The Red House
1 Duncombe Place
York
YO1 7ED

Email: info@theyorkbid.com

Phone: 01904 809970

Web: theyorkbid.com

Social Media: [@theyorkbid](https://www.instagram.com/theyorkbid)

Street Rangers:

07809 900794
rangers@theyorkbid.com

**Rapid Response
Cleaning Hotline:**

01904 900181

Photography:

Images provided by Gareth Buddo,
Olivia Brabbs, Bill's Restaurant,
the York Dungeon and AdobeStock



theyorkbid.com