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Edition 2

PRESTON PROUD

Business Improvement District Newsletter

IT'S A REAL COUP FOR PRESTON!

UP to 15000 music-lovers are expected to descend on Preston's Avenham Park for a spectacular free concert on Saturday 15th August.

Rock in the Park is being funded between the Preston BID and City Council in partnership with Rock FM and I urge all businesses operating in the City Centre to take advantage of the business opportunities that an event of this size will bring.

Major events like this are not only bringing unprecedented audience numbers and raising the profile of the City Centre, they also paint a compelling picture of a place which is attractive to investors, developers, residents, workers, students and visitors. Our local business community has been presented with some real opportunities to benefit from. The quality of events we hope to stage in the future will really put us on the map, and whilst it's great that we can do this sort of thing for local people to enjoy, it also makes good business sense.

We are still a long way away from the heady growth days of several years ago – but that said, additional footfall into the City Centre will give a great boost to business. The BID is creating a place where people want to be, and reaping the benefits as business and investors follow suit.

The extraordinary potential contribution made to the visitor economy from events such as this means that Preston must now make greater efforts to generate larger and repeat events. We are completely overwhelmed by the public's enthusiasm and support. It's a real coup for Preston!

Ken Williams

Chair – BID Steering Group

BID OFFICE

C/O North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
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British Retail Consortium - Retail Sales Monitor

UK retail sales values fell 0.8% on a like-for-like basis and rose only 0.8% on a total basis, from May 2008, when sales rose strongly in the sunny weather.

Food sales slowed after a strong Easter boost in April. Clothing and footwear fell below last May's strong sales while big-ticket homewares and furniture sales remained difficult.

Non-food non-store sales (internet, mail-order and phone sales) in May were 7.6% higher than a year ago, thus following the month's slowdown in store sales.



National High Street Index

It appears that the bright spot during March and April when footfall in our high streets remained at last year's levels, was just that - a spot of brightness in an otherwise fairly dark trading landscape. Following an annual decrease of 4.3% in May, footfall in our high streets has continued to decline into June, with a year on year decrease of 7.7% from June 2008.

The pressure on the high street is reflected in retail sales: whilst the BRC reported a overall sales increase in June of +1.4% on a like for like basis, this disguised negative like for like sales for non-food. Indeed, the differential between the performance of food and non-food sales is shown in the BRC 3 month weighted average, with a like for like increase in food sales of 5.4% between April and June compared with a like for like decrease of 0.7% in non-food sales over the same three month period.

Moreover, it seems that as customers stay away from high streets, regional cities are being hit even harder than towns and cities generally. While in June there was a year on year decrease of 7.7% in high streets nationally, in regional cities footfall declined by 12.1% in June; an acceleration of the 4.3% national decline in footfall reported in May and the 10.5% decline in footfall in May in our regional cities. From: ATCM



A new dedicated Business Support Service designed to meet the needs of businesses'

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) have introduced introduced a new, dedicated Business Support Service designed to meet the needs of businesses affected by the current economic conditions. If you're worried about being able to meet tax, National Insurance or other payments owed to HMRC, or you anticipate that payments coming due will cause you problems, you can get in touch with them to discuss payment options to help you deal with temporary cashflow difficulties. You can call the HMRC Business Payment Support Line on Tel 0845 302 1435. The helpline is open seven days a week.

BID Ambassadors



Since the team of Ambassadors hit the streets at the end of April they have made a significant impact to safety and security in the Business Improvement District by helping reduce crime and antisocial behaviour in the area.

Examples of the Ambassadors successes are:

- Assisted with and reported forty nine criminal incidents
- Fourteen have led directly to police arrests and further action.
- Sixteen occasions of shoplifting or other types of theft
- Assisted in the intervention of twelve drunken and antisocial incidents including fighting and lewd behaviour.
- Illegal street traders moved on
- Counterfeit goods traders moved on
- Helped tackle the city's drug issues
- Four drug users and a suspected dealer moved on
- Two back street areas cleared of drug paraphernalia including needles.
- Five serious first aid incidents including
 - Suspected heart attack, Major epileptic seizure,
 - Collapse of an elderly woman

PUBNET



Annual membership for the city centre Pubnet scheme is due for renewal soon and as such licensed premises in the Business Improvement District will receive a visit soon from an Ambassador.

In previous years Pubnet membership has cost £130 annually plus the cost of buying a two way radio. Under BID this has changed. The annual charge has now been dropped for all levy paying premises using the service and new radios can be rented at just £20 + vat a month plus £20 + vat a year license fee. These vastly reduced charges equate to about 85p a day and include a fast turn around service for any radio faults that might develop.

If you are a licensed premises that is not on the city centre Pubnet scheme and would like to be – either as part of your licensing conditions or just for the added security of being in direct contact with other premises, city centre CCTV and the police – then you can either stop an Ambassador, call the BID Operations team on 01772 653000 or email: crime@lancschamber.co.uk

In addition to the radio link, Pubnet meets on a monthly basis to discuss excluding criminals and trouble causers from pubs, clubs & bars. In attendance are representatives from the police licensing department and a local licensing solicitor.

Furthermore all members on the scheme receive a banning file which details those people who are banned from entering the forty eight city centre venues.

Proud kids launches in the city

Preston City Centre is set to be a safer place with Proud Kids – a child safety initiative developed by Preston's Business Improvement District (BID).

Visitors, when accompanied with young children, are being encouraged to collect a Proud Kids wristband from a growing number of city centre outlets. The wristbands, which provide space for parents to enter a contact mobile telephone number will assist lost children to be reunited without delay. Ken Williams Chair of the BID Steering Group, said: "I am certain that this initiative will prove to be a popular accessory to young children. However on a more serious note, these wristbands are intended to add a little more confidence to parents when bringing their children to the city. If a child wanders off, as they sometimes do, they will be wearing Mum or Dads contact details.



Ken continued "We're delighted to have secured the support of the Lancashire Family Information Service and Sure Start, Early Years & Childcare Service. We have also been overwhelmed by the support many of the city retailers have given to Proud Kids".

The outlets below currently stock Proud Kids Wristbands:-

M&S, Next (Children's), HMV, River Island, Argos, Accessorize, Topman/Topshop Harris Museum (info desk), The Holiday Inn, New Look, Peacocks, The Mall (ask me point), Thornton's, Clinton Cards (The Mall), Ethel Austin, Internacional, Domo Bags, Tourist Information Centre, Clarks Shoes, Harris Library, Margaret Mason Florists, Stagecoach (info office – Bus Station), Wilkinsons, Clinton Cards (Fishergate), Tanzogo (Bus Station), Lune Street Chippy

If your business isn't currently part of the scheme and you would like to stock the wristbands for FREE, please email : bid@lancschamber.co.uk or speak to any of the City centre Ambassadors.

Putting The Pride Back Into Preston

FREE customer service training - Providing world class customer service is the aim behind a new initiative launched by the Preston Business Improvement District (BID).

The Pride in Service Charter will focus on raising standards and providing excellent service to the many thousands of visitors, shoppers and tourists who come into the City Centre. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of meeting the needs and expectations of the diversity of customers visiting the City Centre in an united in an effort to make Preston a quality city to do business.



Some of Preston's leading businesses have already signed up and have committed to continuous improvement and the delivery of the highest level of customer service from within their organisation. The new Charter sets out the standards of service that people can expect in their dealings with operators within the BID area. Businesses signing up to the Charter are agreeing to put forward a customer Champion who will receive fully funded training in first class customer service and support. Businesses signing up to this new initiative will benefit from promotion on the BID web site as an organisation who are committed to putting their customers first.

For further information regarding this initiative please contact Nichola Bamber on 01772 653000 or alternatively send your enquiry to bid@lancschamber.co.uk.

Want to Work With BID

If you want to be a potential supplier to BID simply complete this form and post it back to us, or alternatively, register online at www.bidpreston.co.uk

Contact Name:

Company Name:

Telephone Number:

Email:

Product/Service Description:



Clever Bags

There is some evidence to suggest that more shoplifters are using foil-lined carrier bags to evade theft detection systems in stores. Savvy shoplifters have discovered that if they split the inner lining away from high-quality carrier-bags, insert a layer of metal foil and then reseal the inner, they can evade theft detection equipment which fails to pick up signals from the metal tags attached to merchandise.

Not only are these bags being used more frequently they are also becoming more sophisticated. They look like normal carrier bags, only the weight gives them away. Please be aware.

BID 4 Business

More than thirty levy payers from the City descended on the City Business Centre for the first in a series of free BID 4 BUSINESS events.

City Vision Manager Mike Brogran gave guests the opportunity to hear about the latest plans for the long awaited Tithebarn. With outline planning permission recently granted, the £700m development scheme does appear one small step nearer.

With something as important as this project, the invited audience were more than happy to share their thoughts and offer their opinions. BID will be hosting a series of free business events over the course of the year. Details will be mailed to you but you can keep abreast of all BID activities by visiting our website www.bidpreston.co.uk or our new Twitter page www.twitter.com/bidpreston.

Radionet

The BID Ambassadors have recently visited the eighty retailers on the Radionet scheme to survey their experiences of retail crime and their opinions on its prevention within the Business Improvement District. The results of this will be made available to all members shortly. Early analysis reveals a common theme emerging. So far a large majority of retailers are expressing a desire to be more proactive towards theft and as such BID intends to work with them to extend and improve the service that Radionet offers.

If you are a retailer or daytime business that wants to join the Radionet scheme and take advantage of the radio network across the city then please contact the BID operations team either through an Ambassador, by calling the BID office on 01772 653000 or by emailing crime@lancschamber.co.uk

The price of joining the scheme is the same as for Pubnet which is £20 + vat a month for the rental of a radio and £20 + vat a year for your radio license. Great value at less than 85p a day when you consider how much stock gets stolen from Preston's shops every day and particularly now when trade, in general, has slowed down so much.

