

## RENEWAL PROPOSAL BUSINESS PLAN 2025 - 2029





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It's great to have Kingston First working on behalf of all of us. I know they are at the end of the phone to help, they keep me updated with what I need to know about the town centre, and deliver many projects which make Kingston a better place to work and visit.

Victor Pajak, Owner of Headquarters



### INTRODUCTION

Kingston First, the town centre business improvement district, was created almost 20 years ago in 2005. We are now approaching the end of our fourth five-year term and, for our work to continue, there will be a ballot in June asking you to vote YES for Kingston First. This will ensure we can support you for another five years.

Over the last five years we have supported town centre businesses and organisations through COVID, re-openings during the pandemic and the impact of the cost of living crisis, making sure Kingston remains a thriving and successful town centre. From an outdoor screen for Wimbledon to Light Up Kingston and the Chimp, Sculpture and Bear Trails we have introduced exciting interventions and marketing campaigns to promote businesses and bring people to the town. We've continued to deliver the town's Christmas offer investing in new bespoke lights, children's activities and art and craft markets. We've invested in public spaces with additional greenery, planters and deep cleaning as well as shaping the imminent transformation of Memorial Gardens and Eagle Brewery Wharf. We've provided you with insights on town centre performance and successfully lobbied for funding grants during COVID, new bins and more visible policing. We continue to save you money through free recycling, free training and our employee discount app.

Kingston First is unique for the town as we are solely focused and dedicated to improving the town for you. We work by uniting the collective influence of hundreds of organisations to invest more, driving more impact and championing your priorities.

We are proud of our work and the positive impact and difference it makes to Kingston and would like to thank the Kingston First team who deliver our projects and services and to the voluntary Board for its ongoing support. There is plenty to continue with to ensure Kingston develops further as a successful, prosperous community and an enjoyable place to work, visit, study and live in.

We now need your support in the renewal ballot to continue our work. The plans we outline in this renewal business plan have been shaped by your feedback, your challenges and your shared ambition for Kingston. We're excited to continue working with you and with your support we can collectively take on Kingston's future together over the coming five years.

Moss

Vanessa Ross, Co-chair Kingston First Board Gred Min

Greg Miles, Co-chair Kingston First Board Utile

Kirsten Henly, Chief Executive



## WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

#### **WHO WE ARE**

Kingston First Business Improvement District is a not-for-profit organisation, funded by and representing businesses in Kingston Town Centre, dedicated to creating a town where businesses can thrive and people want to be.

Every 5 years there is a ballot, where all businesses and organisations have a vote. Kingston First's next ballot is in June 2024, and if successful we will start our fifth term from January 2025 – December 2029.

- We are the leading voice for Kingston town centre businesses and organisations
- We listen and work in partnership with Kingston's businesses to represent them at a local and national level, and provide services which save them money and give them insight into the town centre
- We work to create an attractive and welcoming town centre through events, activations and improvements to public spaces
- We manage a strong consumer facing brand - Kingston Upon Thames - that positions Kingston as a destination and promotes local businesses and what's on offer in the town centre





#### WHAT WE DO

Our role is to support members and provide projects and services in addition to the services already provided by Kingston Council and the Metropolitan Police. All of our work adds to the statutory services they provide and wouldn't happen if Kingston First didn't exist.

KINGSTON	KINGSTON UPON THAMES
A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT YOUR LEVY CONTRIBUTES TO AND KINGSTON FIRST'S ROLE	A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT YOUR BUSINESS RATES CONTRIBUTE TO AND THE COUNCIL'S ROLE
Christmas - the market, lights and marketing	Day to day street cleaning, emptying the bins and fly-tipping
Activations in the town centre - sculpture trail, chimp and bear trails, street art, Light Up Kingston	Fixing and replacing street lighting and furniture
Cost-saving services such as - free recycling via First Mile and support to reduce your bills	Managing council car parks
Additional deep cleans and graffiti removal	Providing community support to vulnerable and homeless people
Keep It Kingston app, with offers for town centre employees, including discounted parking	Pest control in the town centre
Free training including Fire Marshall and First Aid	Managing licencing and enforcement matters
Extra flowers and planting in the town centre	Overseeing and managing roadworks and road closures

As town centres continue to evolve, our shared interest with Kingston First in the town's future success underlines the importance of our strong working relationship. Since becoming the country's first ever BID in 2005, Kingston town centre's business community has been able to rely on Kingston First for its creativity, endeavour and representation - something we as a council value greatly and look forward to building on.

Cllr Andreas Kirsch, Leader of the Council

## WHAT WE HAVE **DELIVERED FOR YOU OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS**

#### **ATTRACTIVE STREETS** & SPACES

- ▶ Deep cleaned over 25,000 square metres of the town centre every year, equivalent to four and a half football pitches
- ▶ Lobbied the Council for improved street cleanliness services including Achieved almost 8,000 subscribers a commitment for better and more efficient bins to replace the Big Belly bins
- Installed over 120 hanging baskets every year and introduced sustainable planting across the town
- Organised and supported over 50 visiting markets, activities and events to drive footfall and raise the profile of Kingston last year alone
- ▶ Delivered Christmas lights, Christmas market and new experiences every year
- ► Commissioned design proposals for permanent seating, planting and improved wayfinding at the train station, Lower Fife Road and Thames St. We are now working on the next phase of making this happen
- ▶ Secured over £1.4 million of funding for the improvement of Eagle Brewery Wharf and Memorial Gardens

#### MARKETING THE TOWN

- Introduced a town wide Sculpture trail, Chimp trail and Bear trail to encourage people to spend time in the town centre
- ▶ Delivered Kingston's first ever light event, Light Up Kingston
- to our monthly consumer newsletter featuring what's on and offers in the town
- Created a new consumer facing website kingstonuponthames.info with 13,000 visitors on a monthly basis which is rated highly by members

of members said Kingston First is a credible and trustworthy organisation

- ▶ Achieved over 32,000 followers across our social channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Developed and delivered promotions and campaigns every year including Easter, Summer and Christmas campaigns seen by over 70,000 people on average per campaign





**Deep cleaning** equivalent to 4.5 football pitches every year

700k people see our marketing campaigns

on average per year







New lights & experiences at Christmas every year

£900,000 in savings via First Mile recycling for members







Over 50 Markets & events in last year alone

App launched & 8500 employees signed up to **Keep It Kingston** 



#### **SUPPORTING MEMBERS**

- ▶ Over 8,500 employees from member businesses signed up to Keep it Kingston an app providing over 120 offers and discounts in the town centre exclusively for employees of businesses in the town
- Over 100 members attended our networking events
- Employees from over 250 businesses attended one of our training sessions ranging from First Aid, leadership, social media to river safety
- Provided 422,275 recycling sacks and stickers to members via First Mile, saving them £900,000
- ▶ Sent bi-weekly newsletters and information relevant to members, with over 96% of members finding them useful
- ▶ Coordinated several town wide reopening campaigns during the pandemic, providing guidance on how to operate safely and distributing in-store and social media assets, PPE equipment and sanitiser to hundreds of businesses

96%

of members say our e-communications are useful







## REPRESENTING & INFLUENCING

- ▶ Lobbied the Council for a Town Centre Vision and worked with members, developers and landowners to develop themes for the Vision focused on Riverside, Movement and Transport and a Town Fit for Future Generations
- ▶ Produced quarterly data and insight reports about town centre performance with 8 out of 10 members satisfied with our service
- Raised the profile of Kingston with local and national media coverage in the Metro, Primary Times, Surrey Live, Londonist, BBC London and BBC Breakfast, Time & Leisure, London TV and This is Local London
- Developed the only database of Vacant Units in the town centre to track trends and built relationships with landlords and agents to encourage a diverse mix of businesses
- ► Lobbied for much-needed financial support during COVID 19 and secured a Council grant of £25,000 for members in leisure and hospitality
- ▶ Part of a national campaign 'Bounce Back Better' lobbying the government for support and funding around business rates and reductions in VAT and NI contributions

## OUR BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2025 -2029

The Kingston First team have been collating and listening to your views to help shape our focus and priorities for the next term 2025-2029.

## OUR BUSINESS PLAN WILL FOCUS ON FOUR THEMES:

- **▶ INVESTING** in a safe and welcoming town centre
- ▶ PROMOTING AND CELEBRATING Kingston as a unique destination
- DELIVERING a better connected Kingston town centre
- SUPPORTING YOUR SUCCESS by saving you time and money

We are seeking your 'Yes' vote to enable us to deliver a new set of priorities based on your feedback.





ABOUT WHAT OUR PRIORITIES SHOULD BE.







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# INVESTING IN A SAFE AND WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

#### WHAT YOU TOLD US

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'Any improvement in town centre cleanliness and security would help'

'Entertainment on river bank to attract families and younger generations'

'Need more support from police to help with security and crime prevention' **89%** of members said they'd like to see more arts and cultural events

49% of members said we should prioritise helping to provide a clean, attractive town centre

**92%** of members said improved public realm is important to the future of Kingston

**42%** of members said safety and security was a concern for them

#### Vote YES and we will deliver the following:

#### **SECURITY AND SAFETY**

- Invest in additional skills and resources to provide services and initiatives to contribute to a safer town centre. This will also include designated pastoral support to any member (owner or employee) who has been affected by anti-social behaviour in the town centre
- Recruit a safe and secure representative from the Met Police to our Board to provide additional strategic expertise and insight
- Advocate for better and more widespread CCTV in the town centre
- Continue to provide the town Radio Link and introduce other ways to share information and advice on safety, crime and antisocial behaviour
- Provide monthly updates on what the Police have done to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and work with them to make sure your voice is heard and responded to

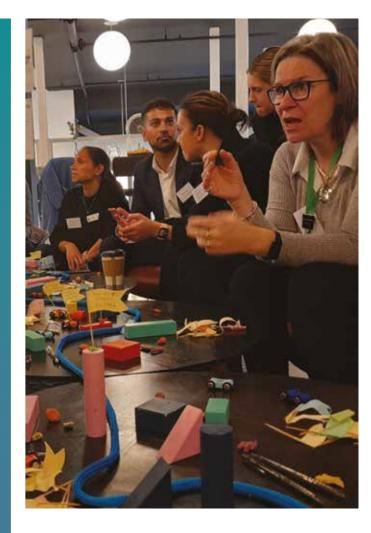
#### **CLEAN AND WELCOMING**

- ► Carry out regular deep cleans throughout the town to remove grime, gum and graffiti
- ▶ Respond to your street scene concerns within 24 hours
- ▶ Lobby for cleaner and healthier streets for people that work here and visitors, using data and insights to drive change
- Invest, lobby and support public realm projects, including projects that improve the Ancient Market Place, Clarence Street and the riverside
- Work with local artists, Kingston University and Kingston College to deliver more public art around the town
- ▶ Create a working group with landlords, estate agents and stakeholders to encourage diverse investment in the town centre offer including more start-ups and meanwhile use

#### WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Businesses, residents and visitors feel safe and are proud of Kingston. They rate it's cleanliness and welcoming appeal positively

Kingston's riverside will become a destination in its own right with new activities and experiences and better connections to the town centre





# PROMOTING AND CELEBRATING KINGSTON AS A UNIQUE DESTINATION

GG

#### WHAT YOU TOLD US

'Promote and help small businesses'

'More support and marketing for the night time economy and later hours trading'

'Fully supportive of a new visitor experience every year'

**49%** of members said we should prioritise marketing campaigns to improve footfall

**79%** of members said a strong brand for Kingston is important and they understand why we have invested in it

**85%** of members said activities for young children/families are important to the future of Kingston



#### Vote YES and we will deliver the following:

- Introduce at least one new activation, experience or event that encourages footfall and dwell time in the town centre every year
- Continue to celebrate and promote Kingston, its businesses and organisations by managing and generating content for the consumer brand and website, kingstonuponthames.info, and provide year round advertising, PR and social media
- Attract new visitors within and outside of the Kingston borough with marketing campaigns and activations targeting the after work crowd, students and families
- Showcase our independent businesses with bespoke marketing campaigns and encourage new independents to set up home in Kingston
- Provide an exciting and welcoming Christmas experience in Kingston, including a town-wide Christmas lights display

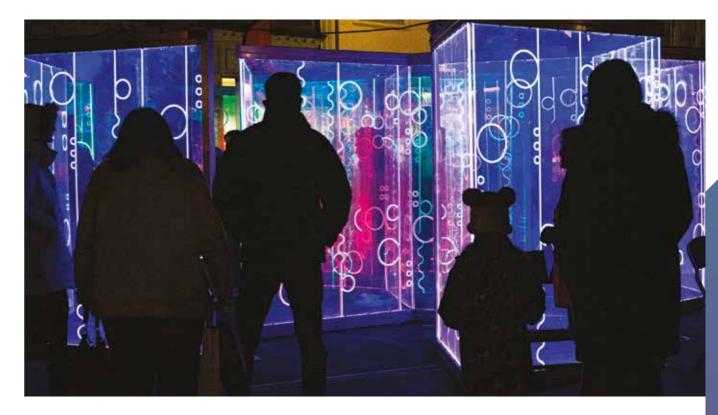
The Metropolitan Police works closely with BIDs across London. We value our partnership with Kingston First, as we respond to town centre concerns and problems with a collaborative multi agency approach. The Kingston Police team's priority is to keep the diverse communities of Kingston safe. Kingston First is a valued partner, coordinating town centre views and supporting safety initiatives.

Superintendent Joshua Laughton, Metropolitan Police

#### WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

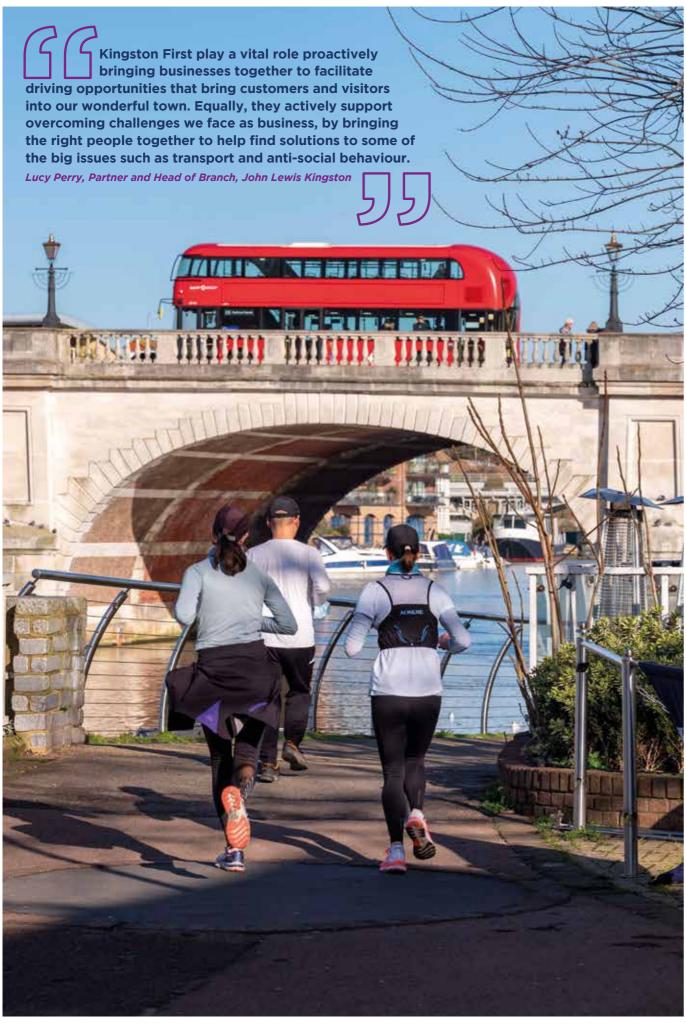
Kingston becomes known nationally as a destination for its retail and leisure offer as well as for its history, arts and culture experiences

We provide something new and interesting to do and experience every year in Kingston which helps support footfall and dwell time in the town centre









## **DELIVERING A BETTER CONNECTED KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE**

#### WHAT YOU TOLD US

'Improve bus waiting area in Eden Street in front of McDonalds'

'More signage for stores in Thames Street'

'If the transport to and from Kingston is made more convenient, it has a great business opportunity'

'Moving towards a partially pedestrianised centre, with better links to the High Street from satellite roads like Old London Road'

#### Vote YES and we will deliver the following:

- ▶ Work with South Western Railway
  ▶ Introduce new wayfinding and other partners to transform the train station into a welcoming entry point into the town
- Develop and implement a streetby-street improvement plan, including decluttering and greening for the entire town centre to help make sure streets look attractive, and are safe and accessible for everyone
- across the town to better connect different streets and areas of Kingston
- ▶ Lobby TfL and South Western Railway for better rail and bus links within and around Kingston

#### WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

A pedestrian friendly town centre that is easy to find your way around, with better transport links to/from Kingston

## SUPPORTING YOUR SUCCESS BY SAVING YOU TIME AND MONEY

#### WHAT YOU TOLD US

GG

'More work on bringing business to those empty shops by lowering business rates'

'Keep the flag flying we love it [Keep It Kingston], especially discounts for staff, and we need more shops on it' 'Good to see the work of KF separated out from Council responsibility. KF can lobby and influence rather than solve'

**91%** of members agree we should focus on saving them money and representing their needs

#### Vote YES and we will deliver the following:

- Work with partners and providers to tackle the broadband issues by supporting access to better broadband
- Continue to help members in the town save hundreds of thousand pounds through our free recycling, reduced cost trade waste removal and cost saving opportunities
- Provide free training courses for members based on needs including mental health, sustainability, fire safety and first aid
- Save employees money by continuing to grow and develop the offers and discounts through our employee discount app, Keep it Kingston

- Support businesses and the town to become a more sustainable town centre
- Nurture a strong and connected community, investing in community initiatives, partnerships and bringing people together to create a thriving town centre
- ▶ Be the voice of Kingston town centre; representing you and lobbying for what matters, including bidding for external funding that can be invested into the town
- We will develop a sustainability plan, support and encourage sustainability interventions across the town and prioritise local suppliers



#### WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Businesses and organisations in Kingston feel supported and listened to and are able to thrive in the town centre

We attract new businesses and investment into the town because of the support we provide and the community spirit we nurture

All employees are signed up and enjoy the benefits of our loyalty card app Keep it Kingston (KiK)









## WHAT A NO VOTE MEANS...

A 'no' vote would mean losing Kingston First, the services and support we offer and the projects we manage and deliver. Over 300 other towns and cities in the UK have BIDs, and local places like Putney, Wimbledon, Croydon, Sutton, and Central London all have BIDs investing in their locations.

A no vote means we will not be able to deliver the projects and services set out in this business plan such as...

#### NO ADVERTISING FOR YOUR BUSINESS OR PROMOTION OF KINGSTON

Kingston First developed and manages Kingston upon Thames' online profile including the number one website for promoting Kingston's businesses. A no vote means no website, social media or marketing campaigns to spotlight you and promote the town centre.

## NO CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

Kingston First funds and delivers the Christmas experience every year so there would be no Christmas lights, Christmas tree, market or stage.

## NO KEEP IT KINGSTON APP

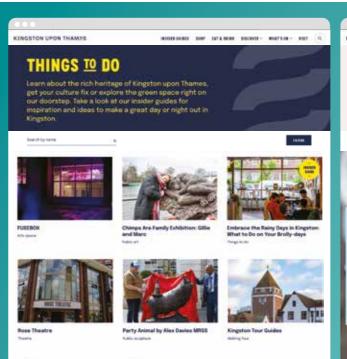
The app saves you and your employees money with discounts from local businesses as well as helping to promote you. This would stop if we don't secure a Yes vote.

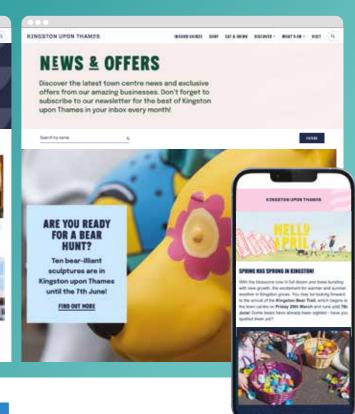
## NO FREE RECYCLING AND WASTE DISCOUNTS

Kingston First saves businesses hundreds of thousands with free recycling and trade waste discounts, if we no longer exist you will have to cover these costs yourself.

## NO COST SAVING SUPPORT

Kingston First provides free training, networking opportunities and access to services that reduce the cost of doing business. These would stop if we don't secure a Yes vote.







Kingston First have been fantastic with engaging with our small business. They have always been there to help and always got behind any promotion we have required. Their networking is second to none and would recommend them being core to businesses in the local area.

Sam Berry, Owner - Bone Idyll



If Kingston First is not successful in the ballot, all current activities and services will cease at the end of 2024 as there is no other organisation to deliver these projects, services and benefits on your behalf.

FOR OVER

E5 MILLION

FOR KINGSTON AND

SUPPORT FOR YOU

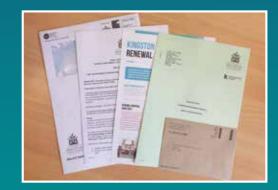
## **YOUR VOTE**

**BETWEEN 30 MAY** AND 27 JUNE, A BALLOT WILL BE **HELD WHERE YOU** WILL BE GIVEN THE **OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE TO RENEW** KINGSTON FIRST.

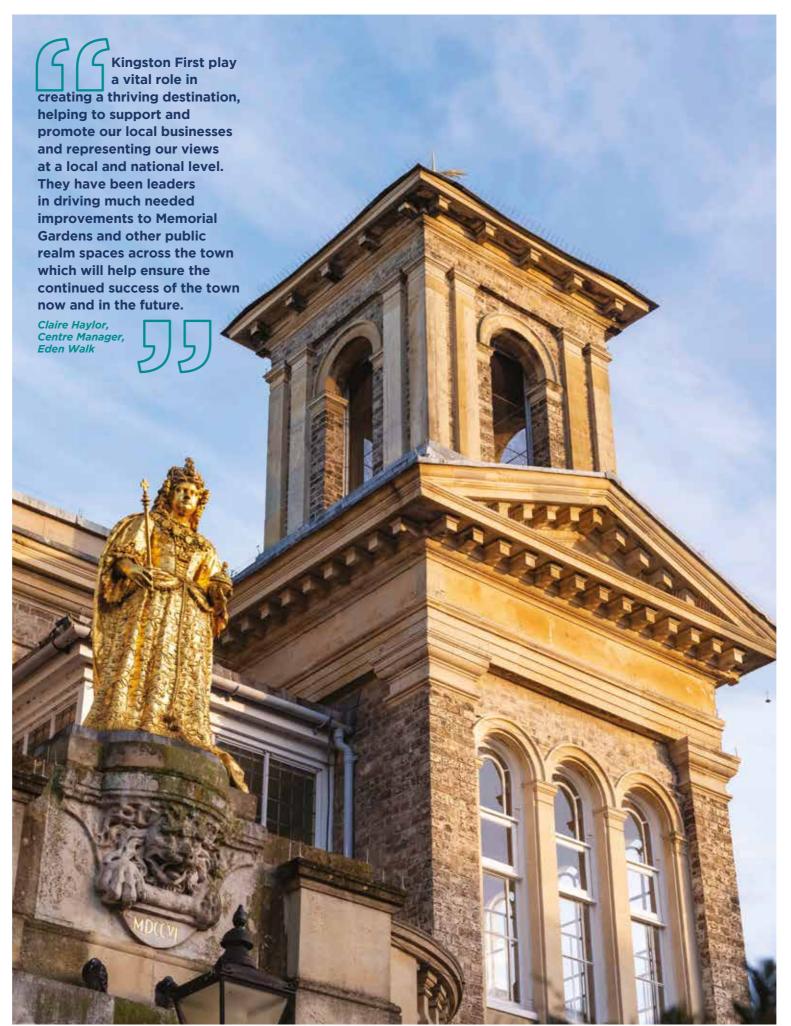
Each rateable business property, known as a hereditament, is entitled to one vote. Businesses occupying more than one hereditament will get a vote for each property they occupy. The result will be announced on 28 June and if successful, we will continue to work on your behalf through to 31 December 2029. To be successful, the following two criteria must be met:

- 1. A simple majority by number of those voting must be in favour
- 2. Those voting in favour must represent the majority of rateable value of those voting

The ballot paper will be sent to you through the post and you will need to return and complete by post.



This is an example of the ballot papers that will delivered to you in the post.



## **TIMELINE**

November 2023 -March 2024



Workshops, survey and working with members to understand your priorities



March 2024 Draft business plan released along with opportunities to give your views



22 May 2024 Kingston First launch drop-in

28 May 2024 Ballot papers posted



27 June 2024



Ballot closes -**Ballot papers** must be received at Civica by 5pm on 27th June

28 June 2024 Ballot results announced



## **GOVERNANCE**& MANAGEMENT

## KINGSTON FIRST A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area within which businesses and organisations work together to create a plan and coinvest into additional projects and services which benefit their area. Governed by legislation, BIDs operate over a set term, usually five years, at the end of which a renewal ballot may be held. During the term of the BID, all businesses in the defined area are required to pay a levy to see the projects and services set out in a democratically endorsed

business plan delivered. Out of the 300+ BIDs across the country, Kingston First was the first in the UK and has been operating for almost 20 years. We represent over 650 town centre businesses and organisations and have built up a strong track record of successfully delivering improvements, projects and services during this time. We are seeking a renewal for our fourth term, 2025-29, through a renewal ballot from 28th May - 27 June 2024.

#### **GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

Kingston First is a company limited by guarantee and is not-forprofit. It has a board of directors who represent the town centre's business and community sectors, including Kingston Council.

They are elected based on their skills and experience and give their time on a voluntary basis. The board meets at least quarterly, and is responsible for overseeing the successful delivery of the business plan and good management and governance of the Company. The Kingston First team is a dedicated, experienced and professional team led by the Chief Executive. They are responsible for delivering the business plan, its projects and services. Throughout the term, we produce an annual report and

audited annual accounts for each financial year, which are publicly available to members on our website and presented at the annual meeting. To find out more about Kingston First's board of directors and the team, please visit our website www.kingstonfirst.co.uk.

Kingston First will enter into
Operating and Baseline Agreements
with Kingston Council for the
duration of the term.
These documents are available
on our website.

#### **KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

We will keep you updated with our news, results and progress in a number of ways:

- Newsletter
- Member surveys
- Insights report
- Website
- Networking events & regular project events
- Annual meetings, annual reports and audited accounts
- Regular meetings with the team, one-to-ones and in sector forums

#### **OUR BOUNDARY**

We operate within the boundary shown on the map below which includes the following streets, either in whole or in part. Please also see our website for more information.

**Adams Walk** Jerome Place Alderman Judge Mall Kent Road **Apple Market Kings Passage** Ashdown Road Kingston Hall Road Lady Booth Road **Bath Passage Bishops Hall Market Place Brook Street** Milner Road **Castle Street** Nipper Alley **Charter Quay Old London Road Church Street** Penrhyn Road **Clarence Street** Ram Passage **Cromwell Road Richmond Road** Riverside Walk **Crown Arcade Crown Passage Skerne Road Dolphin Street** South Lane **Down Hall Road** St James' Road East Lane Steadfast Road **Eden Street Thames Side Eden Walk Thames Street Emms Passage** The Bittoms Fairfield North **Union Street** Fairfield Road Vicarage Road Fife Road Wadbrook Street **Griffin Centre** Water Lane **Grove Crescent Weston Park Harrow Passage** Wheatfield Way **High Street Wood Street** 

P P CROW

Horse Fair

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### **BUDGET**

## OUTLINED BELOW IS OUR 5 YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

Every pound of your levy is reinvested into Kingston town centre and support for you.

INCOME (£)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	5 Year Total	Proportion
Levy	1,037,225	1,069,638	1,102,052	1,134,465	1,166,878	5,510,258	97%
Grants and Sponsorship	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000	2%
Interest	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	1%
TOTAL INCOME	1,067,225	1,099,638	1,132,052	1,164,465	1,196,878	5,660,258	
EXPENDITURE (£)	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	5 Year Total	Proportion
Investing in a safe and welcoming town centre	308,000	310,000	312,000	314,000	320,000	1,564,000	27%
Promoting and celebrating Kingston as a unique destination	256,000	258,000	260,000	262,000	268,000	1,304,000	22%
Delivering a better connected Kingston town centre	110,000	111,000	112,000	113,000	119,000	565,000	10%
Supporting your success by saving you time and money	222,000	225,000	227,000	229,000	235,000	1,138,000	20%
Overheads	212,000	214,000	215,000	216,000	218,000	1,075,000	18%
Contingency	32,000	33,000	34,000	35,000	36,000	170,000	3%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,140,000	1,151,000	1,160,000	1,169,000	1,196,000	5,816,000	
Net	-72,775	-51,362	-27,948	-4,535	878		
Brought Forward	160,000	87,225	35,863	7,915	3,380		
TOTAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT	87,225	35,863	7,915	3,380	4,258		

#### THE LEVY RULES

- 1. The BID levy rate will be charged at 1.6% of the rateable value as at 1 January 2025 based on the 2023 Rating List.
- 2. All new hereditaments entering the Rating List after 1 January 2025 will be levied based on the prevailing list at the start of each chargeable year.
- 3. The levy will be charged annually in advance starting on 1 January 2025. There are no exemptions and no refunds will be provided.
- 4. For each subsequent chargeable year, the levy will be charged as at 1 January based on the 2023 Rating List values. The BID levy may increase by an annual inflationary factor of up to 0.05% (i.e. the levy may increase to 1.65% from 2026 and so on). It will be at the Board's discretion whether to apply the inflation factor each year.

- 6. The BID levy will be applied to all businesses within the defined BID area, provided they are listed on the National Non-Domestic rates.
- 7. Vacant properties will be liable to pay the BID Levy with no void period by the registered business rates payer, who may be the property owner.
- 8. Kingston Council or their appointed agent are authorised to collect the BID levy on behalf of the BID company.
- 9. VAT will not be charged on the BID levy.
- 10. The BID term will be five years from 1 January 2025 31 December 2029.

#### **FINANCIAL FORECAST NOTES**

- A levy collection rate of 98% is assumed based on previous years' experience.
- Grants, sponsorship and interest are based on previous years' experience.
- ▶ Contingency is 3% of total income.
- Overheads include non-project staffing, office accommodation, IT, levy collection charges, legal and accountancy costs associated with the running of the company.
- All new allocation of funds from the contingency budget and/or variations of budget allocations will be reviewed and decided by the Board.

# KINGSTON FIRST T 020 8547 1221 E info@kingstonfirst.co.uk W kingstonfirst.co.uk Neville House, 55 Eden Street Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT1 1BW Company Registered in England No.3838618 KINGSTON