



## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**



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## FOREWORD

The Great British High Street Awards 2015 sought to recognise that the high street is the life and soul of cities, towns and villages across the country supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs and offering a much valued social space.

The 2015 competition saw 230 high streets battle it out to be crowned Britain's best. Nearly 200,000 votes were cast by the general public for the 21 finalists – proof that the high street is as important today as it has ever been.

The awards offer a unique opportunity to learn from the very best and continue to make our high streets even better places to live, shop and work.

This document shares tips and real life examples of how high streets across the country have risen to the challenges of a rapidly changing environment to thrive in 21st century Britain – both for today and in the future.

It has practical advice and guidance for councils, businesses, town teams, community groups and interested volunteers who want their high streets to be the best that they can be.

We would encourage everyone to consider how they could implement some, or all, of the suggestions in this document and demonstrate the same local leadership and civic pride to help ensure that their local high street stays at the heart of its community for years to come.

Co-chairs of the Future High Street Forum:

**High Streets Minister, Marcus Jones MP**  
**President, Boots UK and ROI, Simon Roberts**



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# BUSINESS RATES BOOSTS

It can be a struggle for some businesses when they first start out and margins can be tight.

So why not see if you can reward entrepreneurial spirit by giving new shops, bars and restaurants taking over vacant areas a rebate, or cut business rates altogether?

Before the end of this parliament, councils will keep 100% of local taxes including all £26 billion that is generated from business rates.

Alongside this, they will be given powers so that they can cut business rates across the board to go alongside their existing discount powers – meaning they can incentivise new business into areas that were previously struggling.

## Do you know about Small Business Rate Relief?

From April 2017, small businesses that occupy property with a rateable value of £12,000 or less will pay no business rates.

There will be a tapered rate of relief on properties worth up to £15,000. Contact your council to find out if you're eligible

**Bradford Council** offered businesses on the North Parade a business rates discount. This allowed businesses more financial flexibility, meaning there was enough to pay the rent and stop properties becoming vacant. The latest figures show that vacancy rates in North Parade have fallen to 7%.

**Altrincham** put a raft of measures in place to support businesses. This includes town-wide reductions in business rates ranging from 8 to 15% in areas affected by developer disruption and high numbers of vacant units.

**Trafford Council** developed a Town Centres Loan Scheme which offered businesses interest-free loans of up to £10,000 (£20,000 on specific streets) when opening in previously vacant units. This has enabled 14 new independent businesses to date to open in Altrincham town centre. The terms state that 50% of the loan can be used against running costs, which includes business rates.

**Altrincham Forward** ran a campaign to publicise all business rates relief available at that time, making sure that businesses were aware of the process to follow to receive all available reliefs.

## POP UP SHOPS

Pop ups can reinvigorate spaces. Government planning changes have already cut the red tape meaning that pop up shops can be used to fill vacant shop fronts for up to two years or until a tenant can be found.

Pop ups offer an easy, low cost way for burgeoning businesses to take their first steps and offer a great way to get new and different cuisine into local areas.

Local authorities have discretionary powers to provide relief to retailers in their local areas. The Government automatically funds 50% of the costs.

If your town's residents have great business ideas but not the funds, the Government's Start Up Loans programme offers a low interest way for new businesses to get the leg up they need.



Rotherham High Street is home to the Makers' Emporium, a revamped building full of enterprising and innovative local creative businesses with low cost, professionally managed space for up to 35 makers.

Many artists or designers are selling their wares for the first time through the project, so the Emporium also offers all entrepreneurs one to one advice and business support made available by partners Rotherham Council, Rotherham Youth Enterprise and The Source Retail Skills Academy. Business Vitality Grant also offer to help with rent and fit-out costs for those taking longer term leases.

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# ENTERPRISING ENTREPRENEURS

The energy and enthusiasm of entrepreneurs can be a catalyst for change on our high streets.

People starting up their own local business in the town centre or on the high street often bring innovative new ideas that attract footfall, meaning potential new customers for all businesses in the area.

However, entrepreneurs often have a period when they're investing lots of time, effort and money before they start making a profit.

If your town's residents have great business ideas but not the funds, the Government's Start Up Loans programme offers a low interest way for new businesses to get the leg up they need.

Visit [www.gov.uk/start-up-loans](http://www.gov.uk/start-up-loans) for more details.

## Are you eligible for a Start Up Loan?

Start Up Loans is a government funded programme that funds mentors and entrepreneurs.

You'll have a delivery partner (assigned by the Start Up Loans Company) who will help you develop a business plan. This will be assessed and funding decided by the Start Up Loans Company.

You'll get a low-cost secured loan, business mentoring and a range of business support products if your plan is approved. You must pay the loan back within 5 years and you will pay a fixed rate of interest.

Capital repayment holidays are available, but you must pay interest each month.

To apply for a loan you must be 18 years old or older and living in the UK.

Helmsley in Business (HIB) was born in early 2012, due to a local concern about declining high streets. Initially only 20 businesses joined and the early years were a struggle, but due to the determination of the founder members, the numbers grew and there are now 55 members paying £180 subscription per annum.

They voted on a committee of volunteers, who lead the group, and objectives which include promoting Helmsley as an all year round destination, increasing the number of local jobs, encouraging authorities and other partners to work in an integrated way and to form a strong, sustainable network between businesses.

Monthly group meetings are held, with sub team volunteers for projects. The aim is to have two annual events, a summer one and Christmas one to coincide with Small Business Saturday.

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## BIG RETAILER, LITTLE HIGH STREET



When some big retailers move into a small high street, local independents can fear the worst.

However, any retailer that moves into an area wants the businesses around it to thrive – if they bring footfall to the area, there's more chance that everyone benefits.

To help generate that spirit of camaraderie, central offices of big retailers should look to encourage their store managers to get involved with the local community – whether that's through sponsoring local events or putting flyers in store – to make sure their brands are at the heart of high streets across the country.

For local retailers, that means approaching big brands with your local campaigns, and utilising their expertise and know-how to maximise it.

Business in the Community 'Healthy High Streets' programme provides intensive support for 100 high streets over a three year period through access to free expertise and resource, <http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/healthy-high-streets>. Partnerships with the local national park, District Council and Local Enterprise Partnerships in Helmsley have resulted in grant funding being received.

This has led to the first ever Visit Helmsley brochure distributed across the North of England and a new *Visit Helmsley* website being launched. This in turn has resulted in increased footfall, with the long stay car park experiencing an increase of around 14% in 2015.

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## COLLECTIVES

When local businesses join together, it makes communities an even better place to live and work.

For example, Pitshanger Lane in Ealing was the deserving winner of the London category in the 2015 awards. With its great community spirit, social media campaign and a commitment to supporting local retailers, Pitshanger delighted our judges.

To support their application, 50 independent traders worked together in close partnership with the community association, local schools, councillors and volunteers, creating a village environment in a London suburb.

A traders' association can be a great way for businesses and retailers to come together to organise events and campaign for issues that affect the local high street.

A good way to set up an association is to invite local people to a meeting to assess interest for the idea. Once there is a core group of people, a constitution can be drawn up to set out aims, objectives and logistics, such as the various different roles for each person.

To work together, you don't need a formal constitution, but it's really useful to have a proper structure for the group.

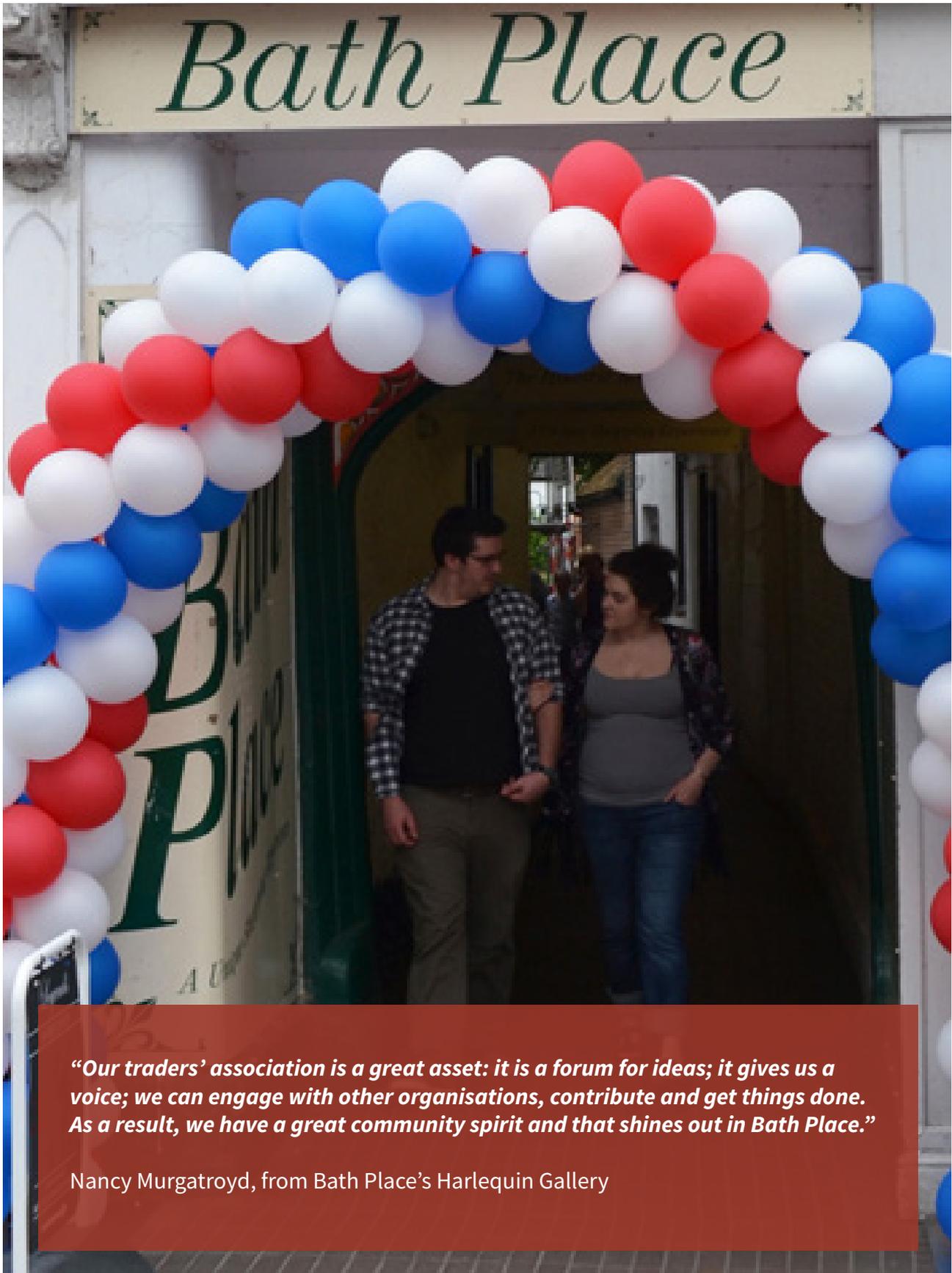
Bath Place Trader's Association in Taunton sprang into action and came up with a plan to tackle vacant units and declining footfall.



The 25 independent businesses worked collaboratively, with support from Taunton Deane Borough Council.

Events and competitions such as “spot the oddity” and “count the ducks” created fun for families throughout the year. Massive yarn bombing events attracted thousands of people to the street and on social media. Poppy yarn bombing for Remembrance Day also raised considerable funds for charity.

Decorative flags created a vibrant and uplifting atmosphere and emphasised the unique and unusual independent businesses in Bath Place. Bath Place is seen as Taunton's “jewel in the crown” and vacancy rates have fallen.



***“Our traders’ association is a great asset: it is a forum for ideas; it gives us a voice; we can engage with other organisations, contribute and get things done. As a result, we have a great community spirit and that shines out in Bath Place.”***

Nancy Murgatroyd, from Bath Place’s Harlequin Gallery

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# COUNCIL PARTNERSHIPS

When a council supports its local businesses, it can rejuvenate the high street.

Up and down the country, councils are developing local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and devolution deals, which mean that councils are already working closely with local businesses on growth.

Recruitment is a key issue for small businesses as the need to find the right person for a job is essential. In many cases, small businesses do not have a dedicated specialist for recruiting.

Apprenticeships can be a great solution to this problem, and councils seeking to support greater take-up of apprenticeships in their local economy have an opportunity to help SMEs overcome recruitment issues.

Councils could work with local further education providers to ensure that their courses reflect the needs of local businesses and facilitate collaboration with local businesses.

## **Have you thought about a neighbourhood plan?**

The Government has put power back into the hands of local people through neighbourhood plans, giving communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

Prestatyn Town Council and Denbighshire County Council set up a Town Together Forum of key stakeholders.

Dr James Davies MP (a former Town and County Councillor) said:

*“During the 1990s and beyond, Prestatyn High Street faced decline, and the impact of out of town and internet shopping was increasingly clear for all to see. The availability of a large area of developable land in the town centre allowed the construction a few years ago of a modern shopping park with free parking, right next to the High Street. I joined the town’s business community and many others in actively supporting these proposals.*”

*“The vast increase in shoppers now in the town, combined with an improving national economy, have provided Prestatyn’s traditional High Street with the best possible opportunity of regenerating.”*

**See Guidance for Councillors & Councils:**

[www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/get-involved)



Bisby Road



Thame Neighbourhood Plan wins RTPI award for innovative plan-making 2014

## Thame's Top Tips

The Thame Neighbourhood Plan was the first in the UK to be adopted following 18 months' community consultation on the draft and a referendum once the draft was approved.

**1 Set aside past differences.** Communities are more prepared to enter into positive dialogue with local authorities if on an equal footing.

**2 Trust communities and build bridges early.** This way plans can fulfil their potential and planning officers have a framework for determining planning applications.

**3 Always stay involved in the process.** Even if everything appears under control, this helps to ensure the plan doesn't go off course.

**4 Keep people informed.** Get them to understand the power granted to communities. This helps ensure good advice is provided when communities interested in neighbourhood planning approach their councils.

**5 Ensure enough volunteers to carry out consultations.** Seek professional advice on the technical aspects of preparing a plan.

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## APPS

The digital revolution is unstoppable and high streets must evolve and adapt to keep up with it.

The rise of online retail means Britain's shoppers are changing their habits and high streets need to adapt to continue to prosper.

Apps and other digital technologies can bring communities closer to the range of services good town centres offer, or reward people for coming into town by offering special discounts.

Apps can also be used to market local businesses and promote community events.

The Digital High Street Report 2020 details how private, public and third sector collaboration will future-proof high streets by using digital technology to generate billions of pounds of additional revenue.

The report is written by the Digital High Street Advisory Board, which was created to further the work of the Future High Street Forum.

Visit [www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/digital-high-street-report-2020](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/digital-high-street-report-2020) for excellent ideas on how to digitise your high street.



Experience Chipping Norton, a not-for-profit community group, delivered a media platform that is connecting, supporting and promoting local trade.

This includes the development of a walking app highlighting the best of “Chippy” and #ChippyHour – a social media campaign showing how much passion local residents have for their high street, including the local beer-guzzling dog!

Their top recommendations are to have strong, content-rich, mobile-friendly website to integrate trade, tourism and community; to use multiple social media channels to stimulate engagement and to promote local events and professional video and community vines.

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## WIRELESS BROADBAND

The rise of wireless-enabled smartphones, tablets and other devices means millions of Britons a week are logging on to public Wi-Fi while out and about.

Making use of phone boxes, rooftops and other existing structures, Wi-Fi hotspots can be positioned in busy high street locations across the country.

Offering free Wi-Fi to customers is a great way for small businesses to attract customers and works particularly well for restaurants and cafés.

Access to internet services also creates loyalty, as some customers will return to the same café each day in order to work, whilst ordering coffees and cakes.



Having got to the final of the Great British High Streets Awards in 2014, Bishy Road decided to install superfast digital broadband the following year.

“We agreed it would be beneficial for the businesses on the street and it was paid for by generous government grants for high speed broadband for businesses.

“Having installed this system, we met up with Patrick Olivier from Newcastle University, who lives close by. He asked if we had considered developing a Bishy App to allow people with their mobile devices to see what was happening on the street and to help forge links between the community and the Traders.

“Newcastle University took on the initial research and conducted a series of interviews with businesses on the street to find out how best this might be developed.

“We are now looking to take this to the next level. The essence of this is that the mobile user would know what was happening on the street. For example, shops have a new offer, an event is being planned, or the hairdresser has had a cancellation.

“Our next step is to take this prototype and analyse how best to move forward.”

**Cllr Johnny Hayes MBE Chairman Bishy Road Trader’s Association**

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, is a great way of boosting awareness of the range of shops and events available on your high street.

Spending time building up a dedicated following on your social media channel can take a while, but the effort you put in can reap real rewards.

Start by asking all of the local businesses and their staff to follow you and maybe even send you a ShoutOut.

Once you have a baseline following, you can reach out to other organisations to see if they want to engage with you on social media. If social media accounts stall, why not offer a competition to encourage people to interact with you? Asking people to send in photos of the high street for a small prize can really drive up your following.



Winners of the Great British High Street Competition 2015 were given training on how to make the most of their digital skills to attract new customers.

One hundred shops, bars and restaurants in each of the competition's 7 winning categories received tailor-made tips from Google's training taskforce – the Digital Garage on Tour.

Lowestoft's excellent branding campaign was launched in May 2015 with strong digital work, including a new town logo, website and social media pages.

Their "Customer Hero" programme rewards shop staff who exceed customer expectations and generate positive social media stories. A partnering app also allowed the community to track turtle locations for Lowestoft's "Turtle Trail" event – 20 giant turtles were located in shops and public areas for people to find. The Turtle Trail increased footfall by 15%.

***"Discover Lowestoft became a platform for us to promote the town, share stores, events and special offers to the community and our visitor economy. Since the launch, we have seen positive engagement with visitors and the community through social media and the website and more people visit the town."***

Darren Newman, Lowestoft Vision Business Improvement District (BID) Manager

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## SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENTS

Many businesses can be surprised at what painting their shop front and a good clean up can do. Simply cleaning your shop windows can have a big impact.

Businesses on West Green Road in Tottenham, London, have transformed the look of 20 shop fronts, with improvements to signage, lighting and window display units. Businesses were asked to contribute at least 10% towards the cost of the improvements, with further funding coming from the Government's £50,000 High Street Innovation Fund.

Smartening up the local high street can increase footfall and draw people to the area. Councils can also lend a hand, fixing broken streetlights or damaged road signs. Local

communities can organise a litter pick on the high street to make sure it's clean and tidy.

Bognor Regis used planning powers to ensure store fronts are presentable and in Raynes Park, London, they worked with Network Rail to have unsightly advertisement hoardings removed - this strong local partnership has now created a community garden in the space.

The Government is also working with town halls, campaign groups and businesses - including fast food firms and manufacturers of chewing gum, confectionary and soft drinks - to ensure a coherent and joined-up approach to littering.



*“People keep walking past, then stepping back and coming in! One lady asked: ‘Is this a new shop?’ We’ve been here 19 years! And then a sale happens. It has been great for business; people just notice my shop so much more.”*

Maureen Robinson, owner of Celebrations Partyware, West Green Road, Tottenham

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## PARKING

No one should be clobbered with a huge bill just for driving to the shops or going about their business.

Excessive parking fees put people off driving to high streets and damage local retailers and businesses.

**Did you know that the Government has brought in parking laws to help local shops?**

Drivers now have a 10 minute grace period when parked in a bay. This will prevent fines for being just a few minutes late back to the vehicle – be it in a paid or free parking space.

And the use of CCTV ‘spy cars’ has been banned in the majority of circumstances, ending automated fines landing on doorsteps and being issued in industrial volumes.

The Department for Transport has also published revised guidance that gives parking adjudicators stronger powers to hold councils to account so they can seek to address parking problems and to ensure parking policies support local shops.

In Alcester, local people demonstrated great community cohesion campaigning on issues such as parking, and fought to retain free parking in the town centre.



***“We have the luxury of free parking in all our town car parks with no time restrictions.*”**

***“Certainly we are all guilty of popping to the bank and then seeing a rather inviting little shop and thinking ...I’ll just pop in... before we know it we’ve been on the High Street for an hour and spent more than we should have - it works!*”**

***“Free parking, without doubt, increases spend per head and in return we have a thriving little market town full of independent retailers and a consistently high occupancy rate.”*”**

Sarah Bassett, Chairman of the Alcester Chamber of Trade and Commerce

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## TOWN PLANNING

Good town planning is essential for making sure the high street is accessible and easy to navigate for shoppers.

Since 2010, the Government has led far-reaching planning reforms that have put power back in the hands of local people.

As well as enabling new 'click and collect' facilities to be installed without planning permission, other planning changes include increasing flexibility on the high street so that shops, restaurants and banks can change use between one another.

Diversity is essential to a good town centre, which is why we have also allowed shops, banks and estate agents to change use to cinemas and gyms. On top of this, retailers are allowed to increase the size of existing loading bays by up to 20% to make deliveries easier.

Amble in Northumberland has made excellent use of government grants to build a brand new Harbour Village, which has significantly strengthened its appeal as a coastal town and attracted a large numbers of visitors.

Part of the infrastructure upgrade included the development of a large number of commercial retail pods, offering businesses the opportunity to market test their products with an 'easy in easy out' lease agreement. The pod design replicates the former brickworks that were on the site prior to it being a boat storage facility and provides an imaginative link between the commercial high street and one of the town's main visitor attractions – the harbour and quayside.

While the town already has a unique high street with up to 85% of businesses being independent, this collaborative development has helped the town along its journey to become a recognised tourist destination.

With a large number of independent businesses, St Giles Street is a destination for visitors to Northampton looking to find something different. A large improvement programme is scheduled to support the vibrant atmosphere created by the businesses and traders, which will include new paving, lighting and tree planting in the street.

### Could you get funding to spruce up your town centre?

The Government's Coastal Communities Fund helps coastal towns and villages provide training and employment opportunities and to stimulate economic growth.

Since 2012, over £120 million has been invested in coastal towns through the Coastal Communities Fund, which is helping local people regenerate cherished seaside areas.

The Coastal Communities Fund has been extended to 2020/2021 – find out more here - [www.gov.uk/government/news/multimillion-pound-boost-for-seaside-towns](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/multimillion-pound-boost-for-seaside-towns)

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## CREATIVE QUARTERS

Tourism is fundamentally important to creating jobs and growth in all parts of the UK. The Tourism Alliance estimates that retail shopping accounts for at least £15bn per year in tourism expenditure.

Although residents may support local shops, visitors from inside and outside the UK also need to use facilities to bring income into the area.

Many tourists wrongly assume that there won't be any shops in small towns and shop at major supermarkets before they arrive. However, they may need some help locating local businesses.

Some areas have created publications that can be promoted online to holiday makers so they know what to expect. This is a good way to show visitors that shopping locally isn't simply to increase profits for retailers, but so that tourists also get an insight into real life in the town.

Creative quarters are also an excellent way to drive people to visit the town and can be promoted through posters and booklets.

Ambitious plans to regenerate Tamworth town centre with the development of a new creative quarter were supported by the Government with a grant from the Local Growth Fund, which makes billions available nationally to support projects that will create jobs and help boost the local economy.



West Kilbride in Scotland reinvented itself over a number of years through nurturing craft studios and independent retail units. Local businesses worked with Visit Scotland and Creative Scotland.

The re-use of an old church building with very strong ties to the local community has created an exceptional venue and focus for crafts, providing a strong pull for tourists and local people.

It is recognised that no one element can drive development and that collaboration is key to continued success. It is the rich mix of town centre living, public service provision, trading and business activity, local organisations, cultural and recreational provision which will underpin the success of the town centre.

# Discover DARTMOUTH

Wander through Dartmouth's winding streets, lined with half timbered Elizabethan houses. Find a host of individual shops and explore a castle at the water's edge, cobbled Bayards Cove, or just watch the boats go by. In a town from which Gilbert, Raleigh and other sailors and explorers set sail for the crusades, Newfoundland, the Spanish Main and Dunkirk, history is all around you.



**DARTMOUTH  
EVERYTIME  
.CO.UK**

## Trips back in time

*Why not visit:*  
Dartmouth Maritime  
Museum  
tucked under the fantastic carved  
wooden Butterwalk.

The Newcomen  
Engine House,  
attached to Dartmouth Tourist  
Information Centre. Here you can see a  
huge beam engine, one of the key  
inventions of the Industrial Revolution.

Dartmouth's high quality tourism campaign has helped to bring new visitors to the town, especially in low season. Specialist marketing help was brought in to develop a new brand "Dartmouth Every Time".

The official Dartmouth tourism website was refreshed to reflect this new branding and several Dartmouth businesses and event organisers also share the branding on their websites using a variety of different logos.

It became clear that the most cost effective advertising to trial in year one, focussing on promoting the quieter autumn and winter seasons, was a national Railway Poster campaign using strong imagery and straplines backed up by a small amount of national newspaper advertorials and local advertising in Devon Life.

The five year Dartmouth marketing plan continues - with a digital campaign using Google AdWords, along with the creation of a photobank and bespoke video footage.

See information and guidance on Business Improvement Districts: [www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts)

Baker Street in Middlesbrough was a semi-redundant street with a high volume of empty properties. In March 2012, Middlesbrough was awarded £100,000 from the Government to revitalise the town. Given Baker Street's prime location between the shopping district and Teeside University, it was picked as the perfect location for an independent retail quarter.

Middlesbrough Council worked with landlords to attract independent retail and first time business owners with a package of support including:

- Financial assistance for fixtures, fittings, signage and refurbishment (up to £2,000 per unit)
- New paving, lighting, and resurfacing of the carriageway
- Rent-free periods
- A marketing and promotional campaign
- A dedicated retail specialist or mentor for businesses

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## EVENTS

Large events are a great way to attract new people to the local high street.

Events targeted at children, young people and families can be particularly successful as they encourage a new, younger demographic to take part in the local community.

Trying to set up an event on your own can be stressful and it might feel like no one will attend. That's why the best way to put on a successful event is to get everyone working together to improve the town centre.

If all of the local businesses are putting on an event in an area, such as a fancy dress or fund-raising activity, it makes the area vibrant and allows all the shops and businesses to link together.

When people stop working in isolation, it can often bring the costs of an event down. Try asking a local café to donate food or the council if they have stalls that can be used.

Newquay has always been a hot spot for events but they are concentrated in the summer months. They wanted to encourage footfall to the town in the low seasons.

The Zombie Crawl was started in 2012 by the Business Improvement District as a fancy dress 'walk' through the town centre to drive out the 'zombie population'. It was led by the BID team and approximately 50 people joined in. It created a buzz and received



excellent feedback in the print and digital media.

In 2015, the event boasted approximately 1300 participants in the parade and local shops, cafés and bars also hosted pre-event activities. Not only were the businesses engaged, but it allowed them to have a direct benefit from the event. There were two family discos at the end of the parade that the participants dispersed to, again benefitting the owners of those venues.



The Mill Road Winter Fair in Cambridge has run for eleven years. Originally conceived as a Christmas market, it has become something much bigger: a full day of music, food, dancing and art, plus stalls for local charities and community groups, with a road closure that runs the full length of the 'Mill Road Mile.'

Many traders use the day to fundraise for a charitable cause, or to do something different from usual (a hair salon stages live music all day). For many of the businesses on the road, it is the biggest trading day of the year - some report a week's take during the six hours of the fair.

The committee that puts on the fair is composed entirely of volunteers, and funded almost entirely from sponsorship and donations. With annual attendance approaching 30,000, the Winter Fair has become the quintessential Mill Road experience. With each passing year, it attracts more people from both the city and, increasingly, the wider region.



See our street party guidance for more practical advice: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party)

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## HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTS

Making the most of your assets is essential when it comes to driving tourism.

Many overseas visitors come to Britain for its rich history and monuments. By focussing on the unique heritage of your area, it is possible to maximise new footfall.

It is not just about traditional techniques – try something really innovative.

Tamworth Castle has kept watch over Staffordshire town for nearly 1000 years and was put to very good use by the local community. The unique space next to the motte and bailey castle has hosted a range of events that support the high street.

Folkestone in Kent worked hard to bring parts of the town together through the umbrella of their “HEART” initiative – Heritage, Education, Art, Regeneration, Tourism – to revitalise the town and restore civic pride.

By rescuing the town’s museum collections, thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding, that had been in storage for decades, they have been able to hold exhibitions and festivals.

Inside and outside the town hall, Folkestone events have tied in other key sites in the local area such as the historic harbour and the Leas to the town centre. This is prior to the building of a new local history museum that will tell the story of Folkestone for future generations of both residents and visitors alike.



Colne transformed its high street by converting two old arcades into thriving, quirky businesses.

Shackleton Arcade was a derelict building for over a decade before it was totally redeveloped by PEARL (Pendle Council’s joint venture company) and is now home to offices and a number of independent retail businesses.

Colne Arcade has been tastefully renovated by the building owner with financial assistance from Pendle Council and, with repaired shop fronts and improved lighting, now boasts a 100% occupancy rate.

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# MARKETS

Research has shown that traditional local markets can directly contribute to the health of the high street by increasing the number of shoppers.

Markets have been a key part of our towns and cities for thousands of years and have a range of benefits for town centres struggling against the rise of internet shopping.

‘Love Your Local Market’ (LYLM) is a celebration of the UK markets industry that takes place over a fortnight in May.

LYLM 2015 saw over 1200 markets in the UK come together to deliver the largest markets events for a generation, and to date the campaign has been proven to increase footfall in town centres by more than 10%.

LYLM can provide free branding and social media support to raise the profile of all UK markets and offer markets and traders the tools needed to improve operations, including those wishing to start up a new market in their area.

Faversham Market Co-operative was formed in 2011 and is managed by local people who have sought to develop the markets in the town. In addition to the traditional markets on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, in the last two years, successful additional markets have been created - a Sunday Antiques Market bringing new life into the high street when the streets were otherwise empty, and the Best of Faversham Arts, Crafts and Food Market on Saturdays which provides an outlet for local people to sell their wares.



The markets have produced an environment where local people have been able to market trade at minimal cost and develop their business ideas so they can take their market stalls to other locations or graduate to shop premises.



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## BARS AND RESTAURANTS

Increasing numbers of bars and restaurants needn't be a threat to existing businesses.

Encouraging new evening attractions onto the high street can actually boost the number of visitors.

Many local authorities are keen to grow the local economies of their area and are happy to help with licensing.

The Government is committed to an “urban renaissance” of town and city centres. It is important that city centres should not become ‘dead’ when the shops and offices close for the night, balancing a range of different day, evening and nighttime offers for all ages.

Evening and night-time activities are a fundamental part of the urban renaissance because they ensure the vitality of an area beyond normal working hours.

If a local council is worried about the concentration of night time bars in one area, they could grant licenses to distinct characterful areas such as a ‘Nightlife Quarter’, to be the focus of late night venues, or a ‘Theatre Quarter’, which would offer licensed premises to complement theatre activities.

The Town Team in Hoole, Chester, has encouraged and nurtured new bars and restaurants to provide a healthy nightlife in a parade of shops.



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## EVENING SECURITY

Many people fear that an increasing number of places to go out at night will bring trouble.

However, collaborations between the local community and the police can help make the night time economy safer.

Security is important to prevent anti-social behaviour, so collaboration with the police and the council can help businesses prevent a situation before it arises.

Best Bar None, a national award scheme aimed at promoting responsible management of alcohol license premises, and Street Pastors, volunteers who help people in need in busy town centres at night, are also useful initiatives to consider.

Brigg is a traditional market town on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds and 73% of its retailers are independents. Brigg Town Business Partnership (BTBP) provides them with a strong collective voice.

Their job is to enable each business to excel within an integrated high street, whilst retaining its individual identity, quality customer service and charm.

Brigg put in place a new Pubwatch scheme, allowing pubs to club together to share information, creating a safer environment for drinkers.

The Purple Flag scheme, run by the Association of Town & City Management, has been set up to establish national standards and raise the image of Britain's town centres by night.

The accreditation scheme recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night. Just as Blue Flag is an indicator of a good beach, Purple Flag is the indicator of where to go for a good night out. Visit [www.atcm.org](http://www.atcm.org) to find out how you can become accredited.



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# BISHY ROAD'S TOP TIPS

Bishopthorpe Road in York beat off hundreds of high streets across the country to be crowned Britain's best in 2015.

## 1. Develop a digital presence

Work together to bring high speed digital broadband for the benefit of all. We have used government grants to pay for superfast broadband for the whole street.

## 2. Look for digital innovation

We have worked with Newcastle University to develop a Bishy App. We have done research and built a prototype. We are now developing the app to improve our businesses.

## 3. Get your branding right

We have developed a family friendly brand that is widely recognised and has really helped to boost Bishy Road. The "I 'heart' Bishy Road" logo is known regionally. We have used a hand drawn family friendly brochures, a website Bishyroad.net and a quarterly neighbourhood paper, The Bishy Times.

## 4. Work with local charity shops

Our two charity shops are an important part of our high street. They pay the annual subscription (£40) and attend meetings but they have gained a great deal themselves. Our events raise thousands for local charities.

## 5. Events are excellent

Street parties are our speciality. On Bishy Road we have had 8 street parties in 5 years. Our biggest event was the Tour de France - the I heart Bishy Road became J'adore Bishy Rue in true Franglais style. Everyone was dressed in striped jumpers and berets and over 10,000 people had a wonderful day. We were given the award for Best Dressed Urban Street in Yorkshire.



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## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF HELP & ADVICE

**Great British High Streets Portal** – this not for profit and government funded portal is one of the resources from the Future High Street Forum: [www.greatbritishhighstreets.co.uk](http://www.greatbritishhighstreets.co.uk)

**Kick Start Your High Street ‘Action Pack’** – designed to help retailers and local people who are looking to take their first steps in supporting their high streets and town centres: [www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/kickstart](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/kickstart).

**Help for small businesses** – [www.greatbusiness.gov.uk](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk) provides support and advice for businesses to grow. A business support helpline is also available – telephone number 0300 456 3565.

**Community advice and support** - The Government has put in place a community advice and support service run by Locality, covering Neighbourhood Planning, Community Right to Build, Community Asset Transfer and Community Asset Ownership: [mycommunity.org.uk](http://mycommunity.org.uk)

**Association of Town and City Management (ATCM)** – As well as offering advice on town centre management, ATCM can assist on Business Improvement Districts: [www.atcm.org](http://www.atcm.org) Their website also includes the useful guide “100 Ways to Help the High Street”: [www.100ways.org.uk](http://www.100ways.org.uk)

**Markets** – information relating to retail markets and the services that the National Association of British Markets Authorities’ (Nabma) can offer: [www.nabma.com](http://www.nabma.com) and [www.loveyourlocalmarket.gb.com](http://www.loveyourlocalmarket.gb.com)

**Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)** – DCLG is providing support of up to £50,000 to areas to help with the costs of developing a BID through the BIDs Loan Fund: [www.britishbids.info/our-services/the-bid-loan-fund](http://www.britishbids.info/our-services/the-bid-loan-fund). General information and guidance on Business Improvement Districts can be found at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts)

**British BIDs** - innovative business led organisation focused on establishing and maintaining quality services and standards for the Business Improvement District industry: [www.britishbids.info](http://www.britishbids.info)

**Business in the Community** are running a Healthy High Streets initiative. The programme targets high streets that serve deprived areas: [www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/healthy-high-streets](http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/healthy-high-streets)

**The Greater London Authority** has a list of their projects and a map of the high streets where they work: please see: [www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/regeneration)

**Gfirst, the Local Enterprise Partner Pathfinder Group**, has a Retail Toolkit which can be found at: [www.gfirstlep.com/gfirst-LEP/About-Us/retail-toolkit](http://www.gfirstlep.com/gfirst-LEP/About-Us/retail-toolkit)

**Digital High Street Report 2020** – for ideas on how to digitise your high street: [thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/digital-high-street-report-2020](http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/digital-high-street-report-2020)

**Guidance for Councillors and Councils:** [www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/get-involved)

**Street party guidance** for practical advice on holding these go to: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-guide-to-organising-a-street-party) Members of the Future High Streets Forum’s Local Partnership Group also have useful information

**British Beer and Pub Association:** [www.beerandpub.com](http://www.beerandpub.com)

**Association of Convenience Stores:** [www.acs.org.uk](http://www.acs.org.uk)