11th November 2022

Dear Kings Heath Business

You will be aware by now that the recent BID renewal ballot returned a majority vote in favour of not renewing the Kings Heath BID. This means that the BID will be closing down by the end of March next year.

The Board of Directors of the BID are understandably disappointed by this result and feel that we let down the majority of our business community by not providing compelling enough reasons for the majority to vote in favour of renewing the BID.

We understand that our BID has had a troubled history, but were of the belief that we had put those historical issues behind us and were looking forward to representing you all as Kings Heath entered into a further period of exciting change in the years ahead, building on the already-excellent quality of our high street, which has some of the lowest vacancy rates in the UK.

That said, there were those that chose to campaign against renewing the BID and they did so by feeding businesses with lies and half-truths, both on paper and on social media.

So, as we say goodbye to you all, we would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight on a few things:

* The BID Board is not, and has never been, “pro-LTN”. You don’t need to take our word for this, just ask any of us individually what our opinions on the scheme are.
* Neither does the BID have any great influence over the scheme. BCC implemented it and we have consistently and publicly represented the views of business back to the council – more so than anyone else.
* As with the wider business community, there are a range of views within the BID Board as to the LTN. Councillor Lisa Trickett was appointed by Birmingham City Council to represent them, as a BID levy payer, on the Board. Every other BID in Birmingham, and most BIDs across the country have a council representative on their Boards. She was not recruited by the Board to join.
* Cllr Trickett has, and is entitled to, her opinions as to the best way to direct the BID, as are the other Directors and any levy-paying business. Board decisions are arrived at by consensus and no single Director holds sway over the majority.
* The BID Board did not re-draw the BID boundary to include schools. This happened five years ago and, in fact, there would have been fewer schools in the next BID term than at the time of the last ballot.
* Additionally, the BID works closely with all of the schools in the BID area and has provided a significant return on investment for each of them.
* The previous Town Centre Manager was not sacked by the Board. He left by mutual consent.
* Any figures you may have read as to the cost of this agreement are vastly over-stated.
* While the salary of our current manager is not confidential, neither is it in the public domain. He is employed by you and is happy to share these details and suffice it to say, any rumours about his salary are grossly overestimated.
* Additionally, in the previous financial year, he generated more income for the BID than he was paid.
* Reports as to our Town Centre Manager’s previous work history are also inaccurate and, in large part, irrelevant. He has proved himself to be an excellent manager since being employed by Kings Heath BID and has the unanimous support of the Board and many businesses across the BID area.
* The BID’s Street Warden team will not be replaced by more police patrols. That is an absurd assumption. What they will be replaced with are additional costs as more businesses will need to hire their own security guards.
* Mark Hudson, one of the driving forces behind the “no” campaign, is a resident of Brandwood, not Kings Heath. He has no business or employment in Kings Heath and ran this campaign as a personal vendetta against several of those involved with the BID.

Although the BID has a few months left to run, we have already had to begin the process of closing the company down. Sadly, this means that there will be no **festive lighting** along the high street this year and our **street wardens** and other staff are actively seeking alternative employment.

We are looking for appropriate local organisations to take over the **@enjoykingsheath** social media channels and website. If we can’t do that, then they will have to stop.

With no official body to take ownership of or liability for the **planters** around the BID area, the likelihood is that we will seek to place these with appropriate organisations in other parts of the city.

**Street Fest** and **Queens Heath Pride** may return in 2023 and beyond, but there is currently no organisation that exists locally capable of project-managing these events. These are events which have brought thousands of visitors to the area, and without the BID they will not take place.

Other things that the BID has delivered, such as the blood kit at Asda, deep cleaning of the high street and so on will simply not be repeated.

Equally, there was a range of exciting new projects that we were looking forward to starting on and these will now sadly not happen.

The Board of Kings Heath BID wishes every business in Kings Heath the best of luck for the future.

*The Board of Directors of Kings Heath Business Improvement District*