



# Love Hastings .com

## BUSINESS PLAN:

2022 - 2027

CONSULTATION DRAFT



**WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER  
USE YOUR VOTE IN MARCH 2022**



# Forward

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## CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to read this business plan. It is important, because it is essentially our manifesto for the next five years - and if you vote 'yes' in the forthcoming ballot it will be the roadmap we will follow on your behalf.

Love Hastings exists purely to help businesses in the local area. We are not part of the council, so we can speak out on your behalf. And the money we raise from the BID levy gets spent on things like supporting key local events, ensuring the town is bright and cheerful at Christmas, and that there are flowers and greenery throughout the year.

I am one of several volunteer directors who guide the work of the BID - but we are always keen to have new people on

the board, so if you have the energy and the interest please do consider joining us to make a difference to Hastings for the better.

At the time of writing, this document remains a draft set of proposals which will not be finalised until 4th Feb 2022. For this reason I strongly encourage you to read what we are planning and take the opportunity to suggest changes before that date.

There will be several public meetings you could attend, or you can contact either myself or the BID Manager using **[office@lovehastings.com](mailto:office@lovehastings.com)** and we'd be very happy to hear from you.

## OUR SURVEY SAID...

During the summer of 2021 in the lead-up to reviewing our business plan and deciding whether or not to proceed with a second-term ballot we put out a survey to add to our current understanding of what things were most valued by businesses in the area.

With over 150 responses the results are a good barometer for us to say with some confidence that most of what we do is seen to make a difference.

- 01. Keep the town safe and clean**
- 02. Be a representative voice for local businesses**
- 03. Help 'sell' Hastings as a tourist destination**
- 04. Keep supporting key local events with cash grants**

# Past - Present - Future

The Business Improvement District (BID) allows almost 500 local Hastings businesses to collectively invest in projects that help the town thrive. It is constituted as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, separate from the council, and has a board of volunteer directors drawn from the business community. It runs on a five-year term, which is dependent on majority support in an independently run ballot of eligible non-domestic rates payers in the area.

**In March 2022 you will be asked to vote for another five years, and we urge you to say 'YES'.**

## 2017

Almost 75% of Town Centre businesses voted in favour of the BID (Love Hastings).

### Initial priorities

There were four priority areas set for the BID to concentrate on over its first five-year term. These were set out in the initial business plan which was approved by the ballot.

- A better-looking town with lots of events.
- Better marketing of Hastings to tourists and investors.
- Representing and supporting local businesses.
- A safer retail environment and nighttime economy.

## 2021

The BID essentially provides the town centre management function.

### What we did

As an independent organisation the BID is flexible and has been able to respond positively to the challenges faced over the past few years - as well as delivering on promises.

- Significant investment in Christmas lights and town planting schemes.
- Large sums injected into major local events.
- Almost £500k in grants secured for businesses during COVID.
- A revitalised Shopwatch and Barwatch scheme with CCTV being installed throughout the town centre.

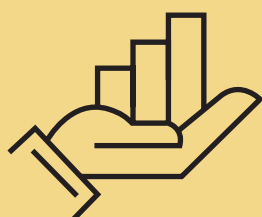
## 2027

With your support we can represent the interests of businesses for another five years.

### What comes next?

Our recent survey showed us what businesses value and what they want us to do more of in the future. If we secure a majority vote in the ballot these will be some of our priorities.

- A clean, green, and safe town centre.
- Supporting and representing the interests of local businesses.
- Marketing Hastings to tourists and investors.
- Cash grants to the events that make Hastings so special every year.



## Love Hastings

If re-elected for a second term we'd love to see more local businesses represented on the board of directors so we can ensure what we do meets your needs.



# Voting YES means more for less...

Earlier this year we carried out an extensive survey to ask you what you wanted from Love Hastings in the future. If you vote **YES** in the coming ballot this is what we will deliver - **with a 16% reduction in bills.**

## HIGH TO LOW PRIORITY STATEMENT OF WORKS BASED ON SURVEY RESPONSES...

Tourism marketing for Hastings as a whole

Environmental reporting (ensuring flytips, damaged paving, etc are dealt with)

Liaison with police and council about street community and rough sleepers

Provision and monitoring of CCTV in the town centre

Shopwatch and Barwatch (including the business radio network)

Provision of additional cleaning services and/or extra bins

Applying for grants on behalf of the town centre for specific projects

A positive giving scheme to help people escape from rough sleeping

Co-ordination of SIA security patrols (day and night time economy)

Direct one-to-one advice and support to businesses

Representation of local business on strategic groups (council, police etc)

Management of town centre space (markets, charity collections, events, etc)

Financial support to major local events (e.g. Fat Tuesday, Pirate Day, Pride)

Gaining media coverage for the town (BBC TV and Radio, local papers, etc)

Christmas and architectural lights

Provision of a free or subsidised bulky waste collection service

Provide information boards to advertise local events

Booking street entertainers for the summer

Social Media exposure and publicity for the town (Facebook, Instagram etc)

Flower troughs and hanging baskets

Provision of lockers for genuine street homeless people to secure possessions

Commissioning public art (murals etc)

Free web hosting and design for small businesses in the BID area

# SAVE 16%

### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST MY BUSINESS?

Our proposal for levy payments will see every business in the current area paying an average **16% less** than at present.

Under a new term, fees will only be **1.25%** of rateable value - so over half would pay less than £150 per year - and we are removing the £120 minimum payment, so **small businesses may see reductions of almost 50%.**

### Big real-term reductions

Since 2017 we have not applied any inflationary rises to the BID levy - meaning that in real terms the cost is already 13.7% less than when you first voted for the scheme.

Even without the proposed reduction if inflation for the next five years runs at 2% this would see the real value cost of your contributions down by 25% over the two five-year terms.



## WHAT WOULD A 'NO' VOTE MEAN FOR HASTINGS?

Voting 'NO' would mean that none of the projects or services outlined here would happen.

There is no 'Plan B' alternative to the work that Love Hastings does.

There are no other organisations that can raise the funds and deliver the projects that Hastings BID proposes. Hastings will lose its business voice and representation and the projects that you and your fellow business community have told us are important and vital will just not go ahead.

The £200,000 we raise to invest in the town every year would be lost

Our streets would be less safe with the loss of Shopwatch, Barwatch, the radio network, the Business Ambassador and local CCTV

Christmas would be a darker and colourless in the town centre without lights

There would be no single voice to speak for businesses to the council and police

Advice and support to businesses would be harder to access

The 200 flower troughs and hanging baskets in the town would be gone

There would be no organisation focused on marketing Hastings as a whole

There would no longer be an organisation to hold the councils to account on behalf of local businesses

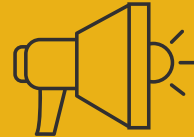


# What We Do



## Raise income

On top of the levy we also generate rental from town centre stalls and pitches as well as obtaining various grants on your behalf.



## Project management

We oversee the general management of all the scheme projects, but most of our time is spent on actually delivering work for you.



## Crime reduction

We have some 400 active members of the crime reduction partnership and process hundreds of reports leading to prosecutions and civil exclusions every year.



## Look and feel

This work covers everything from events funding to maintaining the town planting and putting up festive lights - as well as pushing for repairs to potholes and removal of graffiti.



## Business support

We are here to help whenever we can - providing free website hosting to small businesses and publicity to those new to the area - as well as being there in times of crisis.



## Marketing

Good publicity is key to ensuring Hastings stays on the tourist map, and we are the voice of local businesses in the press as well as having a strong social media presence.

# Business Watch



## ShopWatch

The BID gives every shop in the area free membership to the business crime reduction tools provided by the Business Watch scheme. This provides a radio network and a secure database-driven app and website that gives early warning of known offenders and a secure and easy way of reporting incidents to the police.

## BarWatch

Bars and pubs in Hastings town centre also get free membership of the Barwatch system if they are in the BID area.

This is a vital tool in ensuring that people known to cause trouble in the night time economy are identified and recognised and that staff and customers are kept safe as a result.



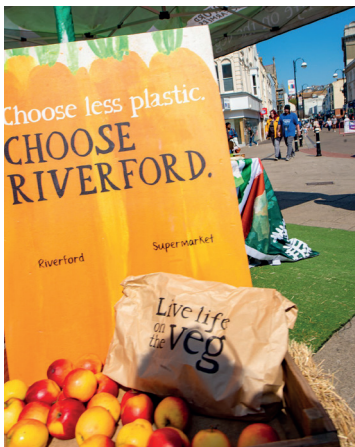
# What We Do



## Supporting key public events

Hastings is well-known as a town that is always worth visiting because of its wealth of free events. The BID helps many of these to stay in existence through the provision of core funding.

Pirate Day - Pride - Coastal Currents - Fat Tuesday - Bonfire - 1066 Mayday bike run



## Managing the town centre

Early in the life of the BID we took the decision to stop granting permission for pushy utility firms and credit-card companies to promote their services in the town - just one example of why Love Hastings is good for the town.

Weekly markets - supporting local charities - Christmas lights - planting schemes



## Getting jobs done

When we aren't pressing the councils to keep their land and street furniture up to scratch we aren't afraid of getting out our own paint brushes to give the town a little extra sparkle.

Reporting potholes - reporting graffiti - reporting fly-tips

# A voice for business



## In the media

When the media want to get a viewpoint from local Hastings businesses the BID is their first point of contact.

Over the past few years we have lost count of the number of times we have appeared on BBC South East or Meridian, or spoken on BBC Radio Sussex - always painting the town in a great light.



## Police and Council

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As an independent organisation representing business interests we can speak on your behalf to organisations such as the Police and the Borough and County Councils to get things done - be that increased patrols or pot hole repairs.

We have the time to support your interests.

“SPEAKING OUT ON YOUR BEHALF”

# What We Do



## A greener town centre

The BID has invested in buying almost 200 flower troughs and hanging baskets, saving thousands of pounds on previous rental and maintenance costs. The troughs are now well-established as year-round greenery.

Sustainable planting - self-managed watering and maintenance



## COVID support

From printing up hundreds of mask stickers to tracking down businesses who hadn't claimed COVID grant money they were entitled to, and lobbying for extra funds - we were there when it mattered.

In the early stages of lockdown the BID identified £1/2 million in unclaimed business grants



## Celebrating heritage

Love Hastings chairs the Trinity Triangle Heritage Action Zone project and we always look to find ways to celebrate the history of the town to help boost visitor numbers.

Queen's Arcade signwriting - John Logie Baird interpretation boards



# Partnership working



## Crimestoppers

Love Hastings' manager has been selected as vice-chair of Crimestoppers for the county.

Crimestoppers is the largest national charity dedicated to helping local people fight crime by giving them a safe means of reporting intelligence to the police without fear of reprisals.



## Neighbourhood Watch

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The BID is proud to have a leading role in Hastings Neighbourhood Watch, with the BID manager having been appointed as chair of this respected community crime-reduction organisation.

Working with the council, the aim is to revitalise the scheme and increase membership across all age groups.

"A VOICE FOR A SAFER HASTINGS"



# HASTINGS BID



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## A strong brand for Hastings

‘Love Hastings’ speaks volumes for the town and is a powerful marketing tool to promote pride in the area as well as encouraging visitors to the come and enjoy all we have to offer.

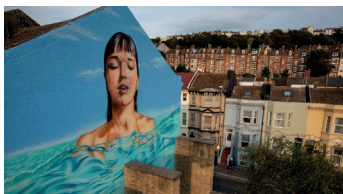
Marketing for tourism - promoting local pride



## Family activities

Whenever there are big events in the town Love Hastings seeks to encourage organisers to put on extra activities for kids to pull in families and increase dwell time.

Climbing walls - BMX tracks - prize trails - face painting - photo booths



## Public art

The BID supports numerous local artists and art organisations to create exiting and attractive public art works on walls and street furniture throughout the town - as well as in the windows of empty shops.

Murals - painted phone cabinets - projections - window dressing

## Tina Morris - Coastal Currents

**“The town needs more colour! Every year Coastal Currents Arts Festival looks to add new public art to Hastings and it is amazing to have the support of the local business community through Love Hastings. The BID contribution is essential for us as we are a community festival and without it we couldn’t have created all the great beautification projects in the town centre.”**

# Levy basics



## NO MORE LOWER THRESHOLD LEVY

We are doing away with minimum payments, meaning small businesses who previously paid £120 a year will see their **bills drop to as little as £63**.



## A FAIR DEAL FOR CHARITIES AND LARGE BUSINESSES

There are discounts for registered charities (80%) and serviced tenancies (who are only charged at 1% of RV).

The maximum levy charge will be £15,000 regardless of rateable value.

## Levy rules

- The threshold for liability to pay levy is £5,000 rateable value on your business premises.
- We will reduce the levy rate to 1.25% levy for the duration of the second term (a reduction from the current 1.5%).
- We will use the 2017 ratings list throughout the duration of the third term.
- We will be retaining the same levy throughout five years rather than having complicated inflationary change, so you will pay the same amount in 2027 that you do in 2022.



**THE ACTUAL LEVY YOU PAY WOULD DEPEND ON THE RATEABLE VALUE OF YOUR PREMISES. PLEASE SEE THE TABLE BELOW AS A GUIDE:.**

RV	Annual Levy	Weekly cost
£5,000	£62.50	£1.20
£10,000	£125	£2.40
£20,000	£250	£4.80
£50,000	£625	£12
£100,000	£1230	£24
£500,000	£6,250	£120
£1,000,000	£15,000	£288

# Our Team

## Volunteer directors

The BID is overseen by a board of directors, all of whom are volunteers. Most are drawn from local businesses within the BID area, but some may have business interests elsewhere in the town. Both the Borough and County Councils are also represented.



### CHAIR

Andy Harvey is manager of the Priory Meadow Shopping Centre and recently took over the role of Chair of Hastings Business Improvement District.

Andy has been at the centre for two and a half years, and is passionate about ensuring Priory Meadow works hand-in-hand with other local

retailers across Hastings to benefit the town as a whole.

Overall, Priory Meadow is showing great results, with low vacancy rates and some of the most encouraging footfall figures in the UK when compared to other centres in the same group.



### VICE CHAIR

Colin Dormer has been central to the development and success of Love Hastings since the business improvement district was first proposed.

He was formerly manager at F.Hinds jewellers in Priory Meadow and is now partly retired, but still active in the local business community.

Colin chaired the BID board until stepping back to the role of Vice-Chair.

He is determined to see the BID deliver real benefits to its members.

## THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

The board of unpaid directors are responsible for overseeing its activities and endeavouring to ensure everything the company does is for the benefit of members across the town.

It is a key function of the board to monitor the success of projects and

identify fresh opportunities to work in more effective ways to deliver the objectives of the BID.

Along with annual reports to members at the AGM this ensures that the BID is held to account in terms of meeting the needs of local businesses.





# Staff

Love Hastings is a small team - but an effective one!



## MANAGER

John Bownas is the current BID manager. He has been in post since January 2018 after a previous varied career working in local government. John has brought a fresh approach to the role and is just as happy rolling up his sleeves to tend the town flower troughs as he is chairing meetings and dealing with strategic issues.

- Day-to-day management of the town centre
- Running the Business Crime Reduction Partnership
- Representing town centre businesses in dealing with police and councils.
- Keeping Hastings businesses in the media



## BUSINESS AMBASSADOR

Peter Rolfe is very much the public face of the BID and is out on the streets of the town most days providing help and support to both local businesses and members of the public. A former council warden, he knows the town inside out.

- Supporting businesses through the ShopWatch scheme
- Reporting problems to the councils, such as flytips and pot holes
- Offering help and guidance to members of the public
- The eyes and ears of the BID on a day-to-day basis.

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Of course, we also work with local contractors to help us deliver various projects - including Hannington Gilbert who do such a good job putting up and maintaining the Christmas lights every year. They have been doing this for 27 years now, and with your vote they will be able to continue for at least another five.

# FINANCES

Income	Annual	Total
<b>LEVY</b> Money contributed by local businesses based on a prudent 94% collection rate	£183,000	<b>£915,000</b>
<b>RENT FROM STALLS AND PITCHES</b> The BID manages the town centre and is able to raise money from traders	£10,000	<b>£50,000</b>
<b>GRANTS</b> The council helps with Christmas costs - and we will apply for other funds as the become available.	£6,500	<b>£32,500</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b> We will look for opportunities to generate income by providing commercial services to offset staffing costs as opportunities arise.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£199,500</b>	<b>£997,500</b>

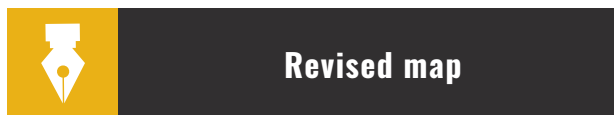
Expenditure	Annual	Total
<b>RUNNING COSTS (INCL. £10K PA CONTINGENCY)</b> General office costs plus staffing over and above direct project delivery (including £7,000pa collection fees).	£31,000	<b>£155,000</b>
<b>SAFE AND SECURE</b> Membership fees of the ShopWatch and Barwatch schemes for all levy-payers	£62,000	<b>£310,000</b>
<b>LOOK AND FEEL</b> Cash grants to events, year-round planting, seasonal lighting, etc.	£76,500	<b>£382,500</b>
<b>BUSINESS SUPPORT</b> Providing help to local businesses and representation on strategic groups,	£15,000	<b>£75,000</b>
<b>MARKETING</b> PR opportunities, social media campaigns and free web-hosting for levy payers, etc	£15,000	<b>£75,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£199,500</b>	<b>£997,500</b>

# BID AREA

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CURRENT ZONE

It is proposed to remove Wellington Square from the BID area as this is mainly a residential area. It is however, also proposed to adjust the map slightly to include The Yard at Waterworks Road, St Andrew's Market, and the rest of the pier.

These changes are subject to consultation with the businesses affected and the outcome will be reflected in the finalised business plan.







## BUSINESSES BACK BIDS



In recent ballots across the country towns are overwhelmingly voting **'YES'** for **BIDs**.

75

Average voter turnout percentage

80

Average 'YES' vote percentage

27

Number of post-COVID ballots held



## AN AGILE AND RESPONSIVE BID

### ALTERATIONS POLICY

The BID projects, costs, timescales and budgets can be altered subject to Board approval providing the changes are affordable and meet the BID objectives.

This enables the BID to operate flexibly to respond to changing demands of levy payers, the economic landscape and potential opportunities. Any change to the BID boundary or increase in the levy rate would require an alteration ballot.

Hastings BID will adhere to the 2017 ratings list throughout the five-year term to the end of March 2027.

The term renewal means replacement of the existing BID at the end of the current term on 31st March 2022, with new BID arrangements covering the revised BID area and subject to the rules and arrangements described in this document.





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## WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT?

Hastings BID is a business-led initiative supported by government legislation which gives businesses the power “to raise funds locally to be spent locally” on improving a defined commercial area. A BID is created when the majority of business rate payers within that area vote to invest collectively in local improvements.

There are now over 320 BIDs across the UK and eight within Sussex.

The BID is independent from local authorities and other statutory agencies and delivers projects over and above the baseline services provided by them.

Hastings BID first became operational in April 2017 and over the past five years, has invested levy payers’ money into Hastings on the things that matter to businesses.

We look forward to advocating and serving the business community in Hastings for a further five-year term.

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# 324

**THERE ARE 324 BIDS ACROSS THE UK**

Many BIDs are now well into their fourth term - a sure sign that towns across the country value the work they do.

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# £134M

**BIDS RAISE £134MILLION EVERY YEAR TO REINVEST IN TOWNS**

BIDs each typically raise several hundred thousand pounds from contributions made by local businesses, and this money provides the things the local councils simply cannot or will not do because it is not in their remit or they simply do not have the funds.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE BID

Under its Articles of Association as a limited company, Hastings BID has positions on its board for volunteer Directors, and we aim to ensure the majority of these are levy-payers together with two nominated by the County and Borough Councils; the Directors, other than the Council Directors, retire by rotation and are normally appointed at the AGM. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board are elected by the Directors. Levy payers may apply to become Members of the company and all members are entitled to vote at the AGM.

### **Hastings BID currently employs: -**

**Operational Manager** – responsible for ensuring the operation of BID activities are effective and give value for money to BID Levy Payers

**Business Ambassador** – a front-line role delivering support to businesses with particular regard to reducing business crime through the BCRP.

The BID team will be responsible to the Board to deliver the projects and services under the proposal of the Term-Two Business Plan.

### **Communication with BID Levy Payers**

The BID is established for business benefit and all members will be invited to Annual General Meetings, where past and prospective BID activities will be presented. Accounts are independently prepared each year and copies are available on request or can be found online at Companies House. A financial summary of activity will be issued with annual levy invoices.

Our team can be contacted at any time and are always open to hearing feedback and ideas. We issue regular newsletters, deliver social media campaigns, information and updates to keep everyone informed on the status of all projects. All communication can also be viewed on our website.

### **Baseline Services and Operating Agreement**

Baseline services have been agreed in principle, subject to a “yes” vote, with Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police East Sussex County Council Highways. These baseline agreements are set up to ensure there is no duplication of services and the services the BID are proposing to implement are in addition to existing services. These will be available to view on our website as an Appendix to this plan. Our **statement of works** is included within this plan on Page 4.

Under current BID regulations, Hastings Borough Council will continue to collect the levy on behalf of Hastings BID. Hastings BID pays a collection charge (3.5% of money collected, approximately £7,000 pa) for this service as indicated within the indicative five-year budget for term two. Hastings BID then receives the funds raised from the levy and these funds are then spent against the agreed annual budget outlined in the business plan, to deliver the Business Plan’s objectives.

The management and rules of the BID Levy collection arrangement and reporting mechanisms are set out in the **Operating Agreement** which is agreed between Hastings Borough Council and Hastings BID.

### **BID Proposer**

For the second term the BID Proposer will be Love Hastings Ltd, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales company number 10573685, registered address Rock House, Cambridge Road, Hastings, TN34 1DT. The Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association and Constitution are available on request.

Love Hastings Ltd will deliver the second term business plan should the BID be voted in for this second term.

The ballot will be run independently by Civica on behalf of Hastings Borough Council.

### **Notice in Writing**

Hastings BID will and has been complying with BID legislation in respect of the various notices required. A letter has been issued to the Secretary of State on 11th November 2021, giving notification of Hastings BID's intention to go to ballot.

In the event of a successful second term ballot (22 Feb - 24 March 2022) the BID will commence on 1st April 2022 and runs for five years until 31st March 2027.

### **BID levy rules – the detail:**

1. The levy rate to be paid by each hereditament or rateable premises over a rateable value of £4,999 will be calculated at 1.25% of its rateable value based on the 2017 non- domestic ratings list.
2. The first BID levy under the second term will be charged from the 1st April 2022, with subsequent levies due each year until 31st March 2027.
3. Where a hereditament is untenanted, tenanted, part occupied or vacant and is undergoing refurbishment or being demolished, the property owner or persons responsible will be entitled to vote and is obliged to pay the BID levy (subject to any discretionary rebates or discounts). Listed buildings, in line with business rates, when vacant are not liable to pay the levy. Hereditaments that are let for non-commercial purposes are also liable for the levy whilst they remain listed on the non-domestic ratings listing.
4. The BID levy will have to be paid by a new rate payer occupying an existing or newly rateable premises within the BID area up until the end of the five-year term on 31 March 2027, even if they did not vote on the Business Plan. Likewise, any new rateable property created during the lifetime of the BID and within the BID area will be obliged to pay the levy from the effective date the property is brought onto the ratings list.
5. The ratings list will be updated for any changes in ratepayer, appeals, additions or removals and liability will be adjusted accordingly.
6. If a business ratepayer occupies premises for less than a year, the amount of BID levy payable will be calculated on the number of days they occupy the property – known as daily charging.
7. **Discounts and caps:**
  - Regardless of rateable value no levy bill shall exceed £15,000
  - Where the ratepayer is a registered charity an 80% discount will be automatically applied
  - Businesses who are operating in a serviced tenancy property will pay at a rate of 1%



# PROPOSAL:

Love  
**Hastings**  
.com

## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT 2022 - 2027

# VOTE YES FOR...

- A stronger and more unified Hastings, bringing together the unique strengths of **the whole borough**.
- A more resilient town, working together to **reduce business crime** and anti-social behaviour and speaking out on your behalf to the council and police.
- **Clever tourism marketing** - looking for new ways to bring people to Hastings.
- Continued **financial support for key annual events**, plus Christmas lights, planting schemes, and other projects to brighten up the town.



By focusing on what you've said you want we can reduce existing levy fees from **1.5%** of rateable value down to **just 1.25%** - making your money go further.

Get involved in shaping the Hastings Business Improvement District for the next five years. It's your town - so your opinion and your vote are both important.

**WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER - ONE TOWN, ONE VOICE**

