

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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WHAT IS KINGSTON FIRST?

Kingston First represents more than 750 businesses and organisations in Kingston, championing their interests to stakeholders in London and beyond.

Our purpose is to support the commercial success of the business community in Kingston by delivering projects and services that ensure Kingston is a thriving and attractive environment to do business in, as well as a vibrant and exciting destination for people to visit, shop, live and work in.

INTRODUCTIONS



"I have supported Kingston First since the BID launched in 2004 and have worked in Kingston for many years. I have seen the impact Kingston First has had on improving the town centre; delivering projects and services and contributing to its growth over the years.

Kingston is set to undergo significant development and growth over the next ten years. Throughout this prolonged period of redevelopment Kingston's businesses need a strong representative voice to ensure this thriving commercial town centre continues to excel. I trust Kingston First, as the independent voice for business in Kingston, to truly represent the interests of my business and others in our area. I look forward to working alongside the new Chief Executive who brings a wealth of town centre experience to the job."

Andy Collins

Chairman, Kingston First
Operations Manager, John Lewis Kingston



"As the new Chief Executive for Kingston First, this is my first significant opportunity to reflect on the success and work we have delivered in the last 12 months.

Kingston First is the independent voice for businesses in Kingston town centre and we feel we can truly deliver for all organisations across sectors and sizes. Over the past year, we have created a robust new brand identity for the town, enhanced and improved the Christmas market offering and introduced a host of innovative services to support the Kingston business community. In 2017 we will build on these foundations to deliver new initiatives that ensure the future success of Kingston as a thriving town centre and a place people want to visit and do business in."

Kirsten Henly

Chief Executive, Kingston First

ENHANCING KINGSTON

We are committed to enhancing Kingston's vibrancy as a place to visit and do business in. We work collaboratively with businesses, Kingston Council and other partners in Kingston to deliver a series of initiatives that address the concerns of our members, solve problems and improve the experience of visitors to Kingston.

CLEANER STREETS

Kingston First contributes significantly to initiatives that improve the look and feel of the town's street scene to ensure Kingston is an attractive and welcoming centre for people to visit and do business in.

Twice a year we deliver a deep clean of Kingston's streets. We also invest in seasonal planting, making the town greener and more vibrant.



Installed more than **260** floral displays across the town, which supported Kingston's 2016 London in Bloom silver award win.

Cleansed more than **170,000** square metres of pavements and streets.

Removed **1.8 million** pieces of chewing gum.



RANGER RESPONSE SERVICE

Our Rangers are a vital support system to our businesses, year round. No job is too big or small for our committed team who, over the last 12 months, have responded to and assisted with concerns raised by businesses and visitors, including fly-tipping, cleanliness and graffiti removal.

Our rangers:



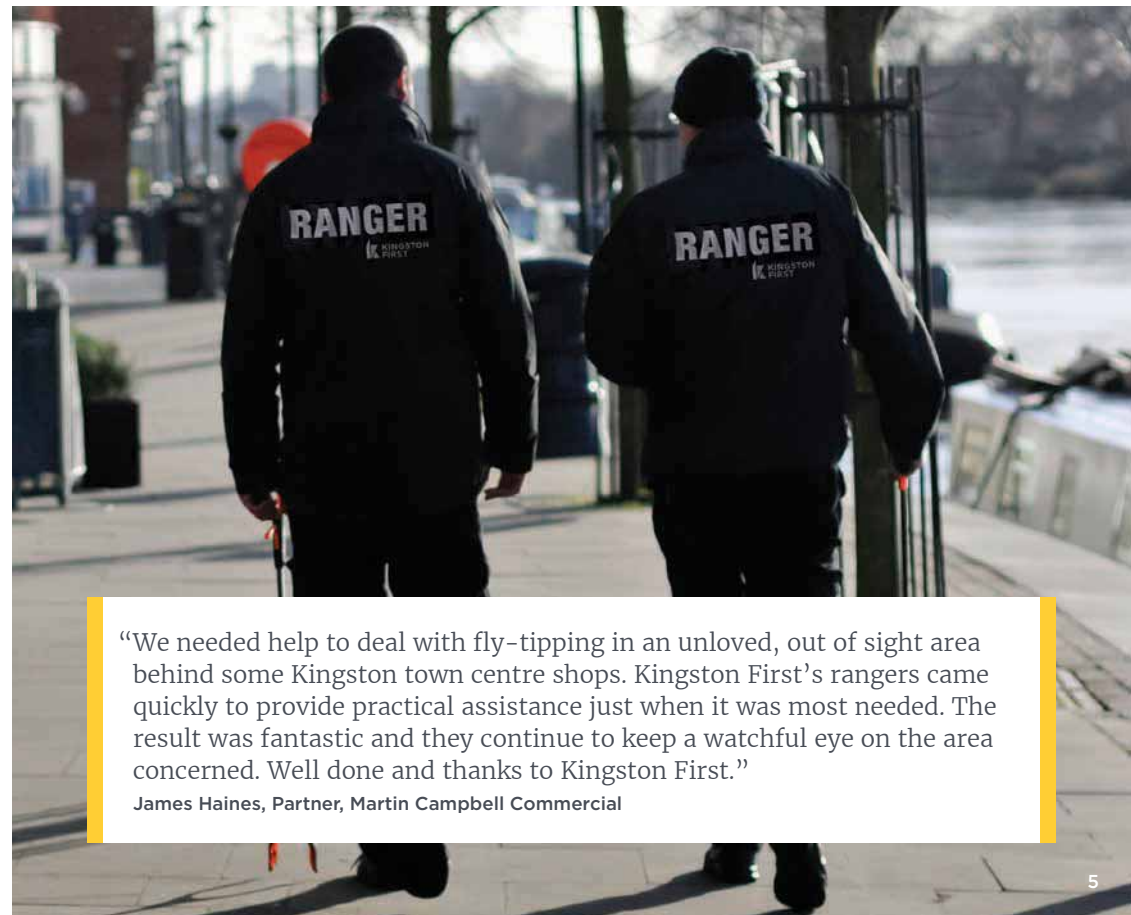
dealt with more than **9,000** incidents in 2016



removed **667** pieces of graffiti from Kingston's walls



removed **2,357** posters & flyers from the public realm



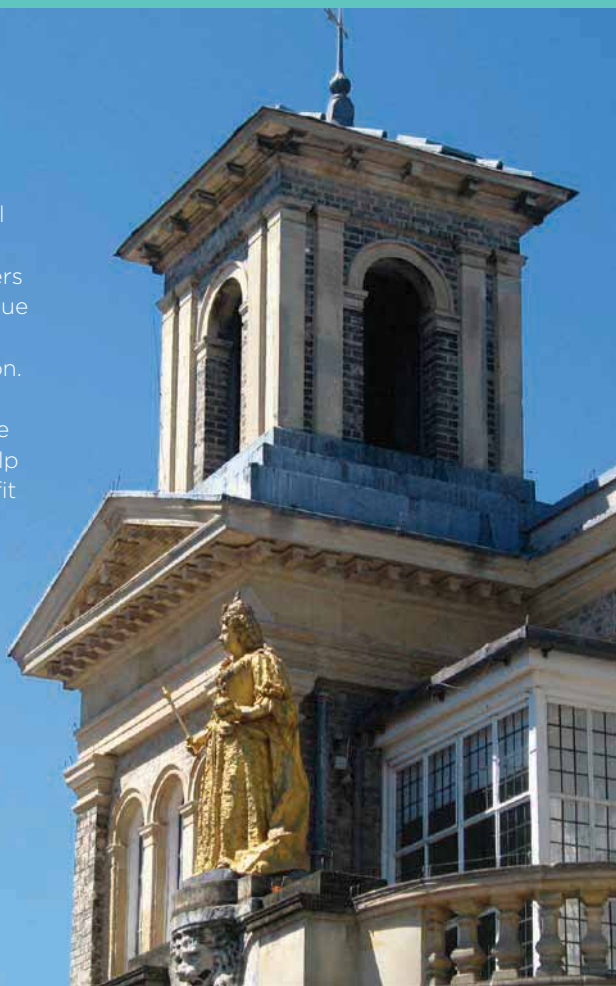
"We needed help to deal with fly-tipping in an unloved, out of sight area behind some Kingston town centre shops. Kingston First's rangers came quickly to provide practical assistance just when it was most needed. The result was fantastic and they continue to keep a watchful eye on the area concerned. Well done and thanks to Kingston First."

James Haines, Partner, Martin Campbell Commercial

THE ANCIENT MARKET PLACE

The Ancient Market Place is an integral part of Kingston's heritage and central to our destination offering. As managers of this space, we want to create a unique and memorable visitor experience, to encourage visitors to return to Kingston.

In 2017 we will focus on building on the success of this bustling market and help the wider town centre to further benefit from this footfall driver.



The Ancient Market Place is central to the profile of Kingston's town centre as a historic visitor destination

To enhance the success of the market and support late-night shopping evenings we launched the **Twilight Markets series**

SAFETY AND CRIME REDUCTION INITIATIVES

Maintaining the safety and security of visitors and workers in Kingston 24 hours a day is integral to the work we do at Kingston First. A secure town centre is fundamental to an effective trading environment and Kingston continues to be recognised as one of London's safest boroughs, according to the Metropolitan Police's 2016 crime figures.

We support a network of Kingston businesses to share information using the town-link radio system to ensure a direct line of communication on crime reporting. This system means swift and effective action can be taken on issues and incidents in the town centre.

We work alongside Kingston Pubwatch, facilitate free River Safety Training sessions for local staff and work with our network of partners to support recovery centres for vulnerable people on nights out in the town centre.



More than **120** day and night time businesses use the town-link radio service

80 businesses use Kingston First's dedicated online crime reporting and information sharing system

Support four alcohol recovery centres and safe place initiatives in the Every Church to reduce the strain on blue-light services

Trained more than **70** people through the RNLI life-saving river safety skills courses we run

Successfully renewed the Purple Flag accreditation that recognises Kingston as home to a safe and vibrant night time economy



MARKETING KINGSTON

We understand that to drive investment and footfall to our town centre we need to present a strong brand identity to visitors and businesses. In the last year we have worked to streamline Kingston's identity across marketing channels and created events and initiatives to generate exposure for the town centre.

STRENGTHENING THE BRAND OF KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE

New professional brand

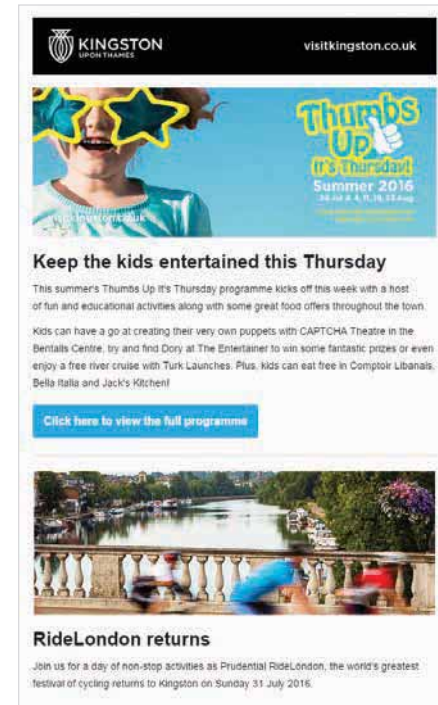
We created a new and professional brand for Kingston to communicate the town centre's offering in a clear and consistent way to visitors and businesses alike.



"It's great that Kingston First runs high profile initiatives that champion and support local businesses, across sectors and sizes"
Ian Brigden, Director, Meeting Point.

Refreshed online presence

We invested in a refreshed website to serve as the focal point for information on what's happening in Kingston offering free business listings for all Kingston First members. We have also been promoting activity taking place in Kingston on our social media channels for the first time – across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – where we now have over **11,000** followers.



Creating and supporting innovative and exciting events

As a family-friendly destination we have created a series of events to promote Kingston to this audience and drive town centre footfall.

We introduced **Thumbs Up It's Thursday**, the **Big Summer Market**, celebrations for the **Queen's 90th Birthday** and a number of themed visiting markets. We also facilitate major events on Kingston's calendar, like **RideLondon** and local community events, such as the **Streets** and **Diwali**.

We have supported the **Kingston Business Awards** since its launch; this event celebrates the excellent business in practice across Kingston and provides a profile-raising opportunity for Kingston's businesses. We extended our support for this event by sponsoring the 2016 Independent Retailer of the Year award.

Through engaging content, including interesting facts, videos and photography, we promote Kingston's profile to our online audience

We communicate new events and initiatives each month to visitors through our fast-growing e-bulletin database

Achieved **+54% YOY** growth in our social following in 2016



"We were the very proud recipients of Independent Retailer Of The Year award 2016, sponsored by Kingston First. Though we all worked hard as a team to win, we also acknowledge Kingston First for all their help, assistance and encouragement on projects we wanted to deliver throughout the year. For that we say, thank you Kingston First, from everyone at Team Food For Thought!"

Alan Martin, Director, Food for Thought.





KICKING OFF CHRISTMAS IN KINGSTON

For the last 12 years, Kingston First has launched Christmas in Kingston. Christmas is the most important trading period for businesses in Kingston and drives thousands of visitors into the town centre throughout the festive season.

Our mission in 2016 was to build on the success of previous Christmas activity, and expertly communicate Kingston town centre's festive offer to visitors.

We also install Kingston town centre's Christmas lights display, chosen with a traditional theme to compliment the heritage and character of our town. We transformed the annual Christmas market to raise its quality to rival that of competitors.

The 2016 Kingston Christmas Market was one of the most successful ever held; visitor dwell time increased and prompted positive visitor feedback

Co-ordinated the hanging of **100,000** energy efficient LED Christmas lights throughout the town centre



Installed the ten metre centrepiece Christmas tree, dressed with **7,500** LED lights and **2,800** baubles

A PR SPOTLIGHT ON CHRISTMAS IN KINGSTON

We launched a marketing and PR campaign to support the Christmas activity taking place in the town centre and:

- ✓ Secured more than **£225,000** in PR coverage including features in Time Out, Evening Standard, The Nudge, The Resident, Visit Surrey, Netmums and the Surrey Comet
- ✓ Our social media campaign included the creation of a Christmas in Kingston video, generating more than **50,000** views in four weeks
- ✓ Achieved a social media reach of more than **365,000** across six weeks
- ✓ Our advertising featured across Surbiton Rail Station, **38** bus supersides, **18** poster sites, the Surrey Comet and **5,000** bespoke 'Christmas in Kingston' flyers

Survey Results

Consumer feedback

We conducted a visitor survey to gauge their feedback on the Christmas market:

- **80%** said the market increased their dwell time in Kingston
- **More than half** of respondents said it would encourage them to visit Kingston again
- **94%** said the market was 'very good' or 'good'

Kingston businesses feedback

- **70%** said they felt the market influenced visitors to see Kingston as their preferred shopping destination





"The new Christmas market created a real buzz and community feel in Kingston. We enjoyed going as a team, and it encouraged us to spend more time shopping and dining in town."

Sanna Sand Carlsen, Account Manager, Ashdown Group.



"Really loved the Christmas Market this year, as did our customers – it created a great atmosphere for the town, increased footfall and was beneficial to the business."

Jenny Myers, Store Manager, East Limited.



SUPPORTING KINGSTON

We offer a variety of services to our members that help businesses save money and time. We listen to our members to understand how we can support them by providing the most important information as efficiently as possible and monitoring developments and policy impacts on the town centre they operate within.

CREATING COST-SAVINGS FOR BUSINESSES

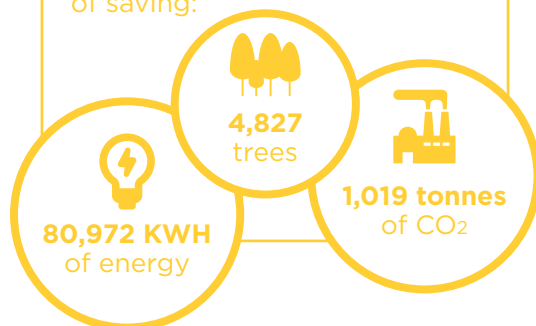
We deliver innovative services that enable businesses in Kingston to cost save. Our schemes use the influence and buying power of collective membership to give businesses the opportunity to save money, time and resource.

Our free recycling service and reduced-rate trade waste collection schemes help businesses save up to 60%. In spring 2016 we launched a cost savings programme offering free, independent consultancy on bill analysis and contract renegotiation, with all savings going straight back into our businesses pockets.

Assisted more than **20** businesses save over **£35,000** across utility costs, telecoms and other core costs, helping their bottom line

More than **250** businesses take advantage of the services we offer, saving nearly **£90,000** a year on recycling alone

In 2016 our free recycling service collected **645,625kg** of recycled material from our members. That's the equivalent of saving:



"As an independent shop in Kingston, the First Mile free recycling scheme is invaluable. Not only does it save us money daily, it incentivises businesses to think about their waste management more carefully. The savings from the scheme more than cover the BID levy so it is a 'no brainer' for us, and other indie's who use the service."

Mike Smith, Director, Banquet Records.



"The savings on our merchant fees have been considerable and with Kingston First's assistance we have been able to review our current contract and move over to a much more cost effective supplier. It's a good service and I would encourage other businesses looking to make financial savings give it a go."

Luke Spencer, Proprietor, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision.

COMMUNICATING WITH BUSINESSES

As the independent voice for business in Kingston, we keep our members up to date with information that affects their work.

Emergency incidents and issues:

We provide informative updates on issues or incidents that may directly impact our business community – this includes anything from flooding, to security and traffic issues, helping local businesses plan ahead

Town centre issues:

We ensure Kingston's business agenda is represented across the capital on important topics:

- *Business rates*
 - we are part of a pan-London consortium of business membership groups and BIDs continuously lobbying for a review of the business rates system

- *Crossrail 2*
 - we have made representations on this major infrastructure development that will bring considerable benefits to Kingston, the wider borough, South East London and Surrey areas
- *Town centre management*
 - we address our members' concerns on issues, such as street and traffic management and the *Go Cycle Programme*, providing up to date information on these developments

Town centre Performance:

We run a monthly tracker that covers footfall, sales, spend and car parking occupancy to provide Kingston's businesses with accurate updates on town centre performance and troubleshooting.



NEWS FROM
KINGSTON FIRST

TOWN CENTRE IN SIGHT
Latest reports on Kingston Town Centre Performance
May 2016
April 2016

ARE YOU THE BEST PUB OR CLUB IN KINGSTON?
Kingston's bustling social scene takes centre stage once again as the 2016 Best Bar None awards is launched.

Celebrating the pubs, bars and clubs that promote a safe, fun and friendly night out, entry for this year's prestigious awards is now open. Find out more about the awards here.

FREE RIVER SAFETY TRAINING
Kingstonfirst's next Free River Training Session takes place Tuesday 26th July at the Viper Rooms in Riverside Walk at 6:00pm.

Organised by Kingstonfirst in partnership with RNLI, this popular course has been running for four years and taught more than 350 people standard safety procedures for an emergency on the Thames. These include how to correctly throw perry lines and basic cold water rescue techniques. Sign up now

NEW DEFIBRILLATOR FOR KINGSTON RIVERSIDE
A vital piece of life-saving equipment has been added to Kingston's riverside, thanks to a successful funding application by Kingstonfirst. Chances of survival are greatly increased if a defibrillator is placed on a casualty within three to five minutes. That's why a new defibrillator has now been installed along Kingston's riverside, outside the Gazebo pub.

PRUDENTIAL RIDELONDON - 31ST JULY
The UK's premier world class road race returns to the capital in July - and Kingston is once again the best place to watch the action. To celebrate the return of RideLondon, Kingston is hosting a family fun day across the town centre, jam packed with activities promoting cycling and healthy living. Find out about the activity planned and access restrictions that are in place.

Financial Statement 2016

INCOME		NOTES
Levy	875,676	1
Other Funding and Contributions	173,368	2
Transferred Services Income	549,020	3
Total	1,598,064	
EXPENDITURE		
Enhancing Kingston	296,841	
Marketing Kingston	278,015	
Supporting Kingston	159,775	
Transferred Services Costs	548,278	4
Overheads	199,065	5
Total	1,481,974	
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year 2016 (After Tax)	116,090	
Net Surplus brought forward from 2015	174,527	
Net Surplus Carried forward into 2017	290,617	6

Notes

1. Levy collection rate of 98%.
2. Includes grants, sponsorship and project contributions.
3. Includes income related to the running and management of the Ancient Market Place, Monday Markets and commercial space management.
4. Cost of running and servicing Ancient Market Place and associated activities.
5. Overheads at 13% of total income, below BIDs industry standard of 20%.
6. A query on a long-term pension liability was resolved in Q3 of 2016, confirming surplus can be carried forward for spend on allocated projects in the remainder of the BID term.

Kingston First's voluntary board of directors represent sectors from across the town's business community. They are responsible for the financial oversight of the company and delivery of the five year business plan. You can find out details about the board and Kingston First team on our website, kingstonfirst.co.uk



YEAR AHEAD: PROJECTS FOR 2017

Over the next 12 months we are set to deliver a series of initiatives and services to support the commercial success of Kingston as a major London destination.

Developing the town's PR and marketing presence

Driving visitor numbers and spend is central to 2017 strategy – as the independent voice for business in Kingston, we are committed to adding value to, and driving the commercial success of, our member businesses. To achieve this we will focus on using marketing and PR to raise the profile of Kingston as an exciting and vibrant destination to visitors locally, regionally and across London.

A transforming town centre

With considerable redevelopment in the pipeline for Kingston's town centre and infrastructure, we will work collaboratively with our members to represent the collective voice of the town-centre, as well as with regional and wider-London stakeholders including Kingston Council, Transport for London, property owners and developers, and politicians. We will ensure redevelopment plans are communicated and managed, reducing the impact on Kingston to ensure 'business as usual' for our bustling commercial town centre.

Workshops and business support activities

We are committed to encouraging and supporting the development of staff within our member businesses. Feedback from our member businesses has suggested that First Aid, social media training, employment law and counter-terrorism training are important development areas for their organisations, so we will be organising a number of informative staff workshops over the next 12 months. These business skills workshops will also provide a valuable opportunity for members to network with other businesses in Kingston.

Christmas Market and seasonal promotion

After the success of our Christmas activity in 2016 we plan to make Christmas 2017 even better. We will extend the market's offering, adapt the footprint and invest in a professional, high-profile marketing campaign to promote the town throughout this key trading period.

New responsive deep cleansing

We will invest in a cleaner, greener cleansing vehicle, so we can respond even more efficiently to concerns and ensure that the town centre remains an excellent environment to visit and to do business in.



Kingston First

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FIRST**

Kingston First is the brand
name for Kingston Town Centre
Management Ltd

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