



Annual Report

2024-2025

(April 2024 - Sept 2025)



Greg Miles & Vanessa Ross

Co-Chairs, Kingston First

As we enter our new term following a successful ballot last year our priority remains for Kingston to be a vibrant town where everyone has an amazing experience.

Our new business plan for 2025-2030 sets out our key areas of focus and has been developed following extensive engagement with you. On behalf of all Board members, we'd like to thank you for your continued support and contributions.

We look forward to strengthening our relationship with members, partners and stakeholders to build on our successes of previous years and to ensure Kingston develops further as a successful and vibrant community where businesses and organisations thrive.



Kirsten Henly

CEO, Kingston First

Our successful ballot has given us a strong mandate to deliver key priorities, shaped by you, that will improve the town centre and help you succeed over the next five years.



This year is particularly special as we mark 20 years of Kingston First, one of the first BIDs in the country. We've already started the new term with some incredible achievements thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Kingston First team with plenty more to come.

This year, I'm really excited by the launch of our new digital app for both employees of local businesses and visitors. The app will serve as a centralised digital hub for all things Kingston, offering information on local businesses, events, offers, public transport and more. It will make it easier for people to explore and enjoy the town, while also providing a platform to showcase the diverse and independent business community.

We will be hosting our next networking event in November and I look forward to seeing old and new faces at this popular event. Read on to find out what other projects and services we will be delivering for you this year.

Thank you for your continued support and feedback. The Board, team and I are excited about the projects and services for the year ahead and look forward to continuing to work closely with you to help create a successful and thriving town centre.

Who are Kingston First

Kingston First is a business improvement district (BID) which operates within Kingston town centre. Set up in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, we are a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee and principally funded by a levy. This levy is used to provide additional projects and services to those provided by Kingston Council and other public agencies.

The company is governed by a voluntary board of directors who represent a cross-sector of the town's business community. They are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the agreed business plan. A dedicated team has delegated responsibility for its delivery and the management of the company.

VISION

Kingston will be a vibrant town where everyone has an amazing experience.

MISSION

By leading, supporting and working with our members, partners and community, we will create a town where our members can thrive and where people want to be.

Kingston First was the first BID set up in the country and following a successful renewal ballot in June 2024, the company started its fifth five-year term on 1 January 2025.

Key Achievements in 2024-2025



We've successfully transferred the management of the Ancient Market Place to the Councils new supplier Between the Bridges and look forward to building a strong relationship with the team to ensure we create a thriving town centre together.



We have continued to save you money with free training and discounted recycling services.



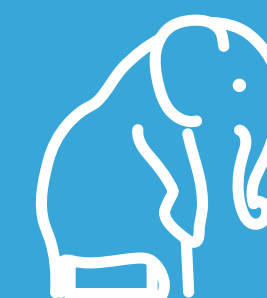
We've delivered another successful Christmas experience in the town centre and are looking forward to building on this as we take over the All Saints grounds during the festive period, while continuing to promote Kingston as a destination for Christmas.



We've refurbished the iconic David Mach phone boxes 'Out of Order', helping to drive footfall to Old London Road.



We've funded new projects and services that have a positive impact on the town centre, support local businesses, and promote positive community engagement as part of the Kingston Town Centre Community Fund, now in its second year.



We brought 10 new Gillie and Marc sculptures to the town centre helping to position Kingston as a destination for arts and culture.



We've grown our presence and engagement on socials - now with over 36k followers, helping to raise awareness of the town, local businesses and things to see and do.



We organised our second, free Light Up event helping to drive footfall and business engagement for the town.

Our priorities for our new term 2025-2030

Investing in a safe and welcoming town centre

SECURITY AND SAFETY We will:

Invest in additional skills and resources, including people and our team, to provide services and initiatives to contribute to a safer town centre. This will also include designated pastoral support to any member (owner or employee) who has been affected by anti-social behaviour in the town centre

Recruit a safe and secure representative from the Met Police to provide additional strategic expertise and insight

Advocate for a better and more widespread CCTV in the town centre

Continue to provide the town Radio Link and introduce other ways to share information and advice on safety, crime and anti-social behaviour

Provide monthly updates on what the Police have done to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and work with them to make sure your voice is heard and responded to

CLEAN AND WELCOMING We will:

Carry out regular deep cleans throughout the town to remove grime, gum and graffiti

Respond to your street scene concerns within 24 hours

Lobby for cleaner and healthier streets for people that work here and visitors, using data and insights to drive change

Invest, lobby and support public realm projects, including projects that improve the Ancient Market Place, Clarence Street and the riverside

Create a working group with landlords, estate agents and stakeholders to facilitate investment in the town centre offer by encouraging more diverse organisations, including more start-ups and meanwhile use

Our priorities for our new term 2025-2030



Promoting and celebrating Kingston as a unique destination

We will:

Introduce at least one new activation, experience or event that encourages footfall and dwell time in the town centre every year

Continue to celebrate and promote Kingston by managing and generating content for the consumer brand and website, **kingstonuponthames.info**, and provide year round advertising, PR and social media

Attract new visitors within and outside of the Kingston borough with marketing campaigns and activations targeting the after work crowd, students and families

Showcase our independent businesses with bespoke marketing campaigns and encourage new independents to set up home in Kingston

Work with local artists, Kingston University and Kingston College to deliver more public art around the town

Our priorities for our new term 2025-2030

Delivering a better connected Kingston town centre

We will:

Work with South Western Railway and other partners to transform the train station into a welcoming entry point into the town

Develop and implement a street-by-street improvement plan, including decluttering and greening for the entire town centre to help make sure streets look attractive, and are safe and accessible for everyone

Introduce new wayfinding across the town to better connect different streets and areas of Kingston

Lobby TfL and South Western Railway for better rail and bus links within and around Kingston



Our priorities for our new term 2025-2030



Supporting your success by saving you time and money

We will:

Support access to better broadband

Continue to help members in the town save hundreds of thousands of pounds through our free recycling, reduced cost trade waste and cost saving opportunities

Provide free training courses for members based on needs including mental health, sustainability, fire safety and first aid

Save employees money through our new digital app InKingston, replacing Keep it Kingston with bigger opportunities

Support businesses and the town to become a more sustainable town centre

Nurture a strong and connected community, investing in community initiatives, partnerships and bringing people together to create a thriving town centre

Be the voice of Kingston town centre; representing you and lobbying for what matters, including bidding for external funding that can be invested into the town

What you can expect from Kingston First this year



A new digital app for employees and visitors highlighting Kingston and a suite of offers, discounts, trails and competitions



An exciting Christmas offer and experience in the town centre



Our sustainability action plan and how we will support members



Another great networking event in November



Continued deep cleaning and graffiti removal



Creation of a new working group looking at tackling vacant units



Marketing campaign to promote independents



Marketing campaign focusing on 18-24yr olds



Contribute to a safer town centre by providing dedicated support to members

Financial Statement 2024-25

INCOME

Levy	
£933,204	Notes 1
Additional public and private sector contributions	
£87,402	Notes 2
Markets income	
£356,247	Notes 3
TOTAL INCOME	
£1,376,853	

EXPENDITURE

Attractive streets & spaces	
£277,585	
Marketing the town	
£250,042	
Supporting & informing	
£280,806	
Influencing & representing	
£112,731	
Overheads	
£118,780	Notes 4
Markets costs	
£325,859	Notes 5
BID5 Renewal	
£20,893	
Public Realm Transformation	
£ –	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	
£1,386,696	

Net surplus/(deficit) for the year 2024-25 (after tax)	
(£9,843)	Notes 6
Net surplus brought forward from 2023-24	
£548,955	
Net surplus carried forward into 2025-26	
£539,112	Notes 7

Notes	
The financial statement covers the period of 12 months from April 2024 to March 2025 inclusive. Full audited accounts were available at the Company's Annual Meeting held on 10 September 2025 and are published on the Kingston First website.	
1. 2024 Levy collection rate of 95% with additional prior year collections.	
2. Includes sponsorships, project contributions and bank interest received.	
3. Income related to the running of the Ancient Market Place and commercial spaces in the town centre.	
4. Overheads at 9.0% of total income include non-project staffing, office accommodation, IT, levy collection charges, legal and accountancy costs associated with the running of the company.	
5. Costs of running and servicing the Ancient Market Place and commercial spaces in the town centre.	
6. Net Deficit from Expenditure on projects and services was in line with plans.	
7. Surplus is carried forward for the projects and services detailed in the business plan, details of these have been outlined in this Annual Report.	
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 oversee the delivery of the business plan. You can find out details about the board and the Kingston First team on our website.	



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