

ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) DIRECTORS' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

The Board of Directors of Orpington First Ltd present their report with the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31st March 2019.

Principal activities

The principal activity of the company is to be that of a not-for-profit organisation owned and led by local business owners. It seeks to improve Orpington as an area to work, visit, live and invest in.

As a Business Improvement District (BID) Orpington First Ltd, trading as Orpington 1st, is financed through a mandatory levy paid by approximately 325 businesses in accordance with the Business Improvement Districts (England) regulations 2004. The BID has been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. It is led by a board of 5 directors drawn from levy paying businesses.

The company was incorporated on the 11th July 2012.

Directors

Sia Bodbin

Martin Price

Bill Perera

David Warnes

(Resigned 14 June 2018)

Neil Davies

(Resigned 14 June 2018)

Ozgun Ozgenturk

(Appointed 14 June 2018)

Andrew Cox

(Appointed 14 June 2018)

The company has five strategic objectives expressed under individual theme groups

- **First for Customers** - to improve Orpington's image and bring more people into town.
- **First for Look & Feel** - to improve the appearance of the high street and its feeling of safety.
- **First for Access** - to improve access to and within the town centre.
- **First for Business** - to improve our member's profitability.
- **First for Investment** - to encourage investment and ensure the delivery of a plan for the redevelopment of a vibrant, modern and relevant town centre.

Review of Business

The BID is now in its second five-year term which covers the period 2018 - 2023 having been successful in the November 2017 renewal ballot.

The programme of activity for the BID company has been updated from the original proposal document "Let's make our town centre better for business", to reflect feedback from the consultation process for the renewal ballot. The consultation consisted of a business survey, group focus meetings by sector and 1.1 conversations with levy payers in order to agree new priorities and projects.

The business plan for 2018 - 23 is available on our website www.orpington1st.co.uk

The business plan lays out a variety of projects under each of the themes with the aim to complete them within the second five-year term of the BID. During our 1st year of the new term we have implemented projects from all the theme groups.

ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

First For Customers

Events provide an opportunity to present the town to a wide audience and help to create a positive sense of place. The increase in footfall that they encourage provides an opportunity for businesses to engage with both current and potential customers and their content can help to build significant economic and social benefits for the area.

We are keen to utilise and connect all areas of the Town Centre but the final completion of the works to upgrade the Market square was particularly welcome as the space is central to the business community and easily accessible to customers.

Our priority is to host major events that attract footfall and whose content provides businesses with the opportunity to participate in or to benefit from the increase in visitor numbers.

But it is also relevant to offer and support smaller scale events such as the Easter trail which encourages customers to travel around the town and appreciate what businesses and services we have.

We started the summer season in style in May by celebrating the **Royal Wedding** with a live screening of the marriage of Prince Harry and Megan Markel. Held in the Market Square and with excellent weather and some great activities including a visit by the Queen (lookalike) the event proved extremely popular and the feedback from visitors and businesses was very positive.

At the beginning of **June**, we were delighted to partner with Bla-Bla Productions, a local company, to deliver a new children's festival called **Enchanted**. The event which promoted health, sustainability and creativity was held in the wonderful priory gardens and attracted large crowds.

In July we used the Market Square to install a pocket park with deckchairs, a bar and a big screen providing visitors with the opportunity to watch the final weekend of **Wimbledon** live.

We followed the tennis by trialling an evening of **outdoor cinema**, turning the square into a Greek taverna for the evening and showing Mama Mia the Movie ahead of the release of the sequel. It was very well attended and many customers requested a repeat for summer 2019.

During July and August, we have previously sponsored two major town centre events, The Big O Vintage Festival and Priory Live Music Festival, having been involved since inception. In 2018 organisers, Talking Box, approached Orpington 1st to say that they no longer wanted a headline sponsor and that they were rethinking the events. The Big O went ahead in 2018 but Priory Live was cancelled with organisers signalling intention of its return in 2019 being a paid for event. The Big O was moved to Surrey as a two-day paid for event for 2019. However, the organisers recently announced its cancellation.

These events had been created in partnership with and sponsored by the BID, so it is disappointing that they are no longer part of the Summer programme in Orpington. However, it does provide the opportunity to create new partnerships for fresh events that encourage visitors into the town and ensure we remain a vibrant and welcoming centre.

September saw the return of the town's food festival **Flavours of Orpington**. The final weekend included a music and comedy night with street food stalls for **Foodie Friday**, we hosted a demonstration kitchen and food market for **Saturday Showcase** and a community event run by churches together for **Sunday Service**, with a free BBQ and entertainment. The event showcases the town's important hospitality sector and this year we saw an increased number of businesses participating in the festival.

ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

In **November** the BID once again delivered the popular **Light Up Orpington** event for the 5th consecutive year. Again, we were delighted with the increase in the number of levy paying businesses participating in the event. As well as a full and varied programme of acts on stage, including local schools, we also had a range of community groups and organisations taking part. Alongside the BID Chairman, ward councillors, Father Christmas and characters from the Orpington 1st sponsored Pantomime were on stage for the countdown to the firework finale.

In **December** we partnered with MyTime Active to host the town's second Santa Dash which saw an increase in the number of participants and had excellent customer feedback.

The early months of 2019 saw the Walnuts Shopping Centre celebrate Chinese New Year and Easter, so the BID has supported these with additional activities such as bringing in the popular **petting farm** to Market Square.

We are keen to promote all good quality events that take place in the town centre that add vibrancy and help to shape the use of social space. We will therefore continue to encourage event organisers to share their events, to utilise the high street and to build connections.

Marketing

We continue to improve and broaden our communication with customers with both our online presence and with regular **presentations** at community groups and organisations which have proved extremely popular, especially with our older residents. We will continue to review and refine all communication to ensure best value is achieved between cost and engagement.

Building on the success of our previous charity calendars we once again worked with the Orpington Photographic Society to produce a Calendar **for 2019**. The theme of **People and Places** has been successfully used to encourage people to take a closer look at their town. The winning entries were shown alongside the works presented at the society's annual exhibition in September.

Our quarterly publication, **The Orpington 1st Magazine** continues to offer an excellent vehicle to communicate with residents, providing a comprehensive review of the BID programme as well as promoting news and events which are relevant but beyond the remit of the BID.

As well as an increase to 40 pages we have also increased the amount of editorial to 20 plus pages, taken the editorial inhouse and worked more closely with a designer. New local magazines continue to appear and disappear, and we continue to review and improve each of our editions to ensure that levy paying businesses benefit from an informative and engaging magazine and the opportunity to advertise at a subsidised rate, and the perception of Orpington is enhanced.

The **Orpington 1st website** is continually updated and regularly receives more than 20,000 unique monthly visitors. In the year ending 31st March 2019 the website received **over quarter of a million hits**. 6,000 subscribers receive regular newsletters updating them on the latest news, events and offers from the town's businesses and Orpington 1st has 10,000 followers across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The Orpington loyalty card has been updated with **Orpington Options**, enabling customers to redeem offers and discounts simply by showing them on their smartphone, as well as with the old loyalty card. New POS material and window stickers incorporating NFC technology was created to engage customers with the brand and encourage businesses to participate.

ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

First for Access

Following lengthy discussions between the owners of the Shopping Centre, LBB and the BID we were delighted that new **public toilets** were opened in the autumn located inside the shopping centre.

As part of the BID's ambition to become the first dementia friendly high street, we worked closely with the centre to ensure the new facilities included a **dementia friendly cubicle**.

The provision of accessible and good quality changing facilities for all customers is a key ingredient in how welcoming a town centre is and this year we have introduced **Mobiloo** at our events, which is a mobile changing facility for children and adults with complex disabilities.

Dementia continues to be a focus for our access program, and we are working closely with the BDAA to provide **free training** for levy payers and their employees to become dementia friends and support in making premises dementia friendly.

We have worked with LBB to carry out a comprehensive **signage audit** which has resulted in new signage being agreed which are due to be installed in the Summer.

First for Look and Feel

Environment

We began the season with a **community clean-up** day in partnership with McDonald's and LBB and with assistance from staff at the Walnuts Shopping Centre and our waste collection provider CD waste.

It provided us with the opportunity to remove large dumped items as well as carrying out a general litter pick across all areas of the high street on both public and private land.

New **litter bins** are also in the process of being delivered which have the addition of spaces for the BID to promote events and activities.

We once again provided the **summer floral display** towers and barrier baskets for the high street and complemented the Council's hanging baskets with additional displays in the conservation area.

This year we entered the town into the **London in Bloom** competition and were delighted to be awarded silver. The judges highlighted the excellent partnership working with local communities and the efforts being made by individual businesses in reducing their impact on the environment.

In November, the BID funded the installation of Poppies in trees across the high street ahead of **Remembrance Sunday** in act of commemoration.

Our waste management partner, CD Waste, continues to add new customers and strengthen its position in the town centre meaning that along with reduced costs to levy payers there is improved waste management across the high street, and we recently agreed a further reduction in the cost of food waste bins to further incentivise responsible disposal.

Security

This year saw the launch of **OBAC** (Orpington Businesses Against Crime), with an online information sharing system through which members can view mugshot galleries to search for known offenders, read an add incident reports and keep up to date with any relevant news.

Members using the app benefit from quick and secure login with a pin code, the use of voice-to-text to complete free-text elements of reports quickly, the ability to transfer images from CCTV to the DISC system using a phone's built in camera, and the option to receive push notifications for urgent, important alerts.

ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED (COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE) DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

The system enables local businesses to more effectively share information in the fight against crime.

With the introduction of the new BCU as part of the Met's restructure, town centres no longer have dedicated SNTs and the cost of additional officers has increased to an unaffordable level, we therefore need to use all resources available to us to support the security of our town.

Orpington 1st takes every opportunity to represent the concerns and needs of businesses and the Executive Director chairs the **SNB Board** for the Borough as well as being a director of LCP2 London's Community Policing board.

First for business

The Board of Directors of Orpington 1st is committed to ensuring that our business **engagement and communication** is robust. We want to ensure that all business requirements and requests are considered and that we can support businesses by working with those who are most experienced in delivery. In addition to our open forum meetings we are delighted to have introduced a dedicated business surgery with **Jo Johnson MP**.

In June we held our second **Summer Solstice Social** at Hisar's Al Fresco Lounge which was an opportunity for businesses to catch up with town centre news via the BID team and network in an informal setting.

We send regular **e-newsletters** containing updates on BID activity, as well as signposting relevant news from central and local government, and from City Hall. We encourage all levy payers to visit the website for updates.

As part of the work to support local enterprise and provide appropriate trading platforms we opened our second **Pop Up** shop. It provided space for local makers supporting seven different businesses and activated an unused retail premises.

In November, following **persistent lobbying** from Business Improvement Districts across the country, including Orpington 1st, Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond announced that a "Retail Rates Relief" would cut Business Rates by a third for eligible businesses from 1st April 2019 - 31st March 2021. Although welcome, the rates reduction offers short term relief to businesses, and not to all businesses, and Orpington 1st, in partnership with BID colleagues across the country, will continue to push for wholesale reform of what we believe is an unfair and antiquated tax.

It is important that in these challenging times for high streets we continue to develop relationships with relevant partners. We have been working directly with City Hall and in March, we hosted a visit by the **Deputy Mayor of London for Business & Enterprise**, Rajesh Agrawal. Along with a walk around town and visits to several businesses, a round-table discussion with senior representatives provided local businesses with the opportunity to voice their views on a variety of topics ranging from Business Rates to Brexit, including the need for start-up space for entrepreneurs, the transformation of high streets, the importance of the tech industry and the support available through the Growth Hub.

Rajesh showed great interest in the projects which the BID delivers and was complimentary about the breadth of business in town and the partnerships and engagement that the BID has developed.

In **March** we hosted our annual awards **Orpington's Finest** at ODEON Orpington. It continues to grow each year with more businesses entering and new categories introduced. This year was the most successful in terms of the number and quality of applications, and attracted almost 200 people from 45 organisations to the event, with senior representatives from the council and emergency services, as well as our sponsors, presenting the awards.

Our **joint procurement** programme, which is offered via Meercat Associates, continues to identify cost savings for our levy payers. This project continues to offer real value to our members and we would encourage everyone to take full advantage of the free service. Though our **partnership with CD Waste** many businesses continue to save in excess of their BID levy every year.

**ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED
(COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

The BID team continues to represent the Orpington business community at various events such as the signing of the Historic Friendship Agreement between Thunder Bay, Canada and the London Borough of Bromley, which celebrates over 100 years of friendship shared history and remembrance.

Investment

The BID team continues to work with landlords and agents, providing up to date information to prospective tenants to encourage inward investment and working with new businesses to support planning applications. The BID area currently has an occupancy rate approx. 4% above the national average.

We are delighted that after years of lobbying for a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of the town centre, the council has now committed to its creation and delivery.

In March, LBB applied for funding from the government's **High Street Fund** to support a public consultation. The BID team have been involved directly with the application, submitting information and organising a stakeholder meeting on behalf of LBB with a cross section of businesses, community groups and Jo Johnson MP, to gain agreement to take the plan forward.

The first round of funding will be announced in the summer and we will agree the consultation plan with the council.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

On behalf of the board

Martin Price
Director
6 June 2019

**ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED
(COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
REPORT TO THE DIRECTORS ON THE PREPARATION OF THE UNAUDITED
STATUTORY ACCOUNTS OF ORPINGTON FIRST LIMITED**

In order to assist you to fulfil your duties under the Companies Act 2006, we have prepared for your approval the financial statements of Orpington First Limited for the year ended 31 March 2019 set out on pages 8 to 14 from the company's accounting records and from information and explanations you have given us.

As a practising member firm of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at <http://www.accaglobal.com/en/member/professional-standards/rules-standards/acca-rulebook.html>.

This report is made solely to the Board of Directors of Orpington First Limited, as a body, in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken solely to prepare for your approval the financial statements of Orpington First Limited and state those matters that we have agreed to state to the Board of Directors of Orpington First Limited, as a body, in this report in accordance with the requirements of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants as detailed at http://www.accaglobal.com/content/dam/ACCA_Global/Technical/fact/technical-factsheet-163.pdf. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than Orpington First Limited and its Board of Directors as a body, for our work or for this report.

It is your duty to ensure that Orpington First Limited has kept adequate accounting records and to prepare statutory financial statements that give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities, financial position and surplus of Orpington First Limited. You consider that Orpington First Limited is exempt from the statutory audit requirement for the year.

We have not been instructed to carry out an audit or a review of the financial statements of Orpington First Limited. For this reason, we have not verified the accuracy or completeness of the accounting records or information and explanations you have given to us and we do not, therefore, express any opinion on the statutory financial statements.

Baxter & Co

7 June 2019

Chartered Certified Accountants

Lynwood House
Crofton Road
Orpington
Kent
BR6 8QE