

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

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018***

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The Directors present their report with the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31st March 2018.

## **Principal activities**

The principal activity of the company 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 1st is financed through a mandatory levy paid by approximately 350 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  
Neil Davies

The company has four 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 appropriate inward investment

## **Review of Business**

The BID company programme of activity for the period 2013-2018 was developed from the original proposal document "Let's make our town centre better for business" which is available online at our website.

[www.orpington1st.co.uk](http://www.orpington1st.co.uk)

The prospectus lays out a variety of projects under each of the headings with an aim to complete them within the first 5 year term of the BID. During our 5th year of trading we have implemented projects from all 4 of the original theme groups and successfully developed and delivered a programme for the additional theme group - first for investment.

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

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018**

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**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.

This year we increased our funding for the two large scale summer events in Priory gardens, the **BIG O** and **Priory Live**, so that the events remained free to attend. The board felt that this was an important aspect of the event and one that encouraged the increased footfall and created the sense of ownership from the resident population.

Our aim is to attract customers into the town centre and this year we were also able to utilise the Market Square, which although not complete, is in the process of being renovated to provide for public events.

In September we delivered our first food festival called **Flavours of Orpington**, highlighting and celebrating the range and quality of the hospitality businesses that we have. This new week-long festival included a foodie Friday, music and comedy night, a Saturday demonstration kitchen which coincided with the relaunch of the Orpington Market and a Sunday community event in partnership with All Saints Parish Church. In December, to extend our Christmas offer we partnered with MYtime active to deliver Orpington's first very own **Santa Dash**.

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. However, it is also relevant to offer and support smaller scale events such as the photographic competition, which celebrates the town and supports the Mayor's charities. This year the supported charities focus is the homeless, a very real and relevant topic for town centres.

Our largest event remains the popular **Light Up Orpington**, our Christmas light switch on. This year the event was delivered during a period of increased terrorist activity and so increased security measures were imposed on all public events. This meant that we had to put in extra barriers which adversely affected the pedestrian flow. However, the positioning of activities across a much greater length of the high street also gave the opportunity for more of those businesses with a high street presence to be included in the festivities. Once again we had a full and varied programme of community acts on stage including local schools Father Christmas, characters from the Orpington 1st sponsored **Pantomime** and some great music acts, all were on stage for the countdown to the firework finale. Sainsbury's once again provided us with the necessary firing site to enable us to continue to host this popular attraction.

We are keen to promote all good quality events that take place in the town centre, adding vibrancy and helping us 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.

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

*FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018*

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## 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.

Building on the success of our previous charity calendar we once again worked with the Orpington Photographic Society to produce a Calendar **for 2018**. The theme of **People and Places** was used to engage customers and businesses in a competition that generated many inspiring pictures and stories of Orpington. The winning entries were shown alongside the works presented at the Society's annual exhibition.

The quarterly **magazine** continues to offer an excellent vehicle to communicate with local customers and residents, it provides a comprehensive review of the BID programme as well as promoting other events and activities that are relevant to local residents but beyond the remit of the BID. Its popularity continues to grow with 4 additional pages being added, providing a visitor's guide of businesses and parking information. We have also increased distribution to 13,000 households and have a further 2,000 copies available in the high street and this year we secured permission to have a stand available at Orpington railway station.

A new monthly magazine promoting local businesses and trades has been launched called **Orpington Connected**. It has a distribution of 20,000 and we are working with them on the editorial content.

The transfer of the content management of our **website and social media** to in-house responsibility continues to increase engagement as we build its content and work with partners to develop dedicated areas such as the student pages with South East London Colleges.

## First for Access

The BID continued to manage and fund the **public toilets** in Market Square until December 2017.

The Walnuts confirmed their intentions to build new toilets on the agreement that Orpington1st give up the licence on the current facility. The shopping centre was then able to lease the property from LBB to support the delivery of an improved Market Square. The premises are now back with LBB. The Walnuts have now started works and the new toilets are due for completion in July 2018. The agreement with LBB prevents Rockspring (The Walnuts Shopping Centre) starting work to adapt the old premises until they have completed and opened the new facilities to the public.

Supported by the BID, Orpington was the focus for the boroughs **Dementia Awareness Week** in May 2017 and the town centre businesses showed a great commitment to our aim of being the first dementia friendly high street in Bromley. The Odeon was the first in the country to host a dementia friendly screening, Tesco hosted an awareness event for stakeholders to promote access to services and we delivered training via the Dementia Bus. Our awards competition held in March 2018 also featured the first Clayton Turner Award presented to the most dementia friendly businesses.

We developed an interactive **car parking** map on the website and included all town centre provision in the quarterly magazine. We negotiated with the council to open the disabled car park to all customers after 6.30pm to support the restaurant trade as it was not being fully utilised by disabled customers after this time. This, alongside our previous success in negotiating free on-street parking in loading bays after 6.30pm, has greatly increased the amount of surface parking available for the growing evening trade.

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**Look and Feel - Environment**

We began the season once again with a **community clean-up** day in partnership with McDonalds, LBB and with assistance from staff at The Walnuts Shopping Centre and our waste collection provider, CD Waste.

We 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.

We have continued to carry out regular reviews of the high street's most challenging areas and requested businesses to inform us of any grot spots that require attention.

The special feature introduced in the Orpington 1st magazine to highlight the work taking place to improve the physical environment by businesses has now become a regular feature as the number of premises involved in updating and renewing shop fronts increases.

Our preferred waste supplier CD Waste continues to add new customers and strengthen its position in the town centre meaning we can continue to support reduced costs to levy payers and improved **waste management** across the high street.

The provision of easily accessible and good **quality public space** is a key ingredient in how a town centre functiona affectively. The BID's partnership with LBB, which successfully secured funding to create a new public space at Market Square, finally had the plans approved and the works, which were originally due to be completed by March 2017, have been started.

We continue to work with the local authority to find a solution to the ongoing maintenance that the town's **public realm** and street furniture requires. We hope to be able to extend the improvements that are being made to College Square beyond the boundary of The Walnuts and have identified several issues regarding signage that need urgent attention. Following months of dialogue, we have a full **signage** audit being delivered by LBB, due for completion in summer 2018.

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**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018**

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## **Security**

We continued to host the dedicated police team in our enterprise HUB until our recent move in February 2018 and are now supporting the SNT inspector to find new accommodation in Orpington town centre to support the broader team when the St. Mary Cray station eventually closes.

The town centre team, which is now fully incorporated into the boroughs SNT structure, provides the necessary resource to support the newly launched **Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)**. The system uses technology to great effect, making communication and reporting much easier and ensuring relevant and timely information is shared between businesses.

The **shop safe radio** scheme is now fully digital, and we are seeing an increase in the number of businesses using the system and have good evidence of its success. We continue with **Charity Watch**, operating across our charity shops to prevent theft and encourage improved business to business relationships within this often-vulnerable sector.

We are active members of the **Bromley Safer Neighbourhood Board** representing the business community, not just in Orpington, but across the borough and this year we took on the role of Chair.

This position gives us direct access not only to the new BCU commander but provides additional access to senior officers and policy makers at both City Hall and Scotland Yard, where we can represent both the borough position from an SNB perspective and the business position from our own Orpington town centre experience. Our involvement via the ATCM (Association of Town Centre Management) has also given us access to APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) meetings in the House of Commons, discussing violence, vulnerability and the increasing challenges facing town centres.

## **First for Business**

The Board of Orpington 1st is committed to ensuring that our business engagement and **communication** is robust and that we provide valuable **networking** opportunities. We want to ensure that all business requirements and requests are considered and that we can support them by working with those who are most experienced in delivery. We therefore promoted business events hosted by other support agencies and held a series of lunchtime sector meetings alongside the **BID for Business Breakfast**, in partnership with the BNI and FSB on the last Friday of the month at BR6, and our **Quarterly Open Forum** meetings taking place on Monday evenings at Finch House café.

We provide regular **e-newsletters** and encourage all levy payers to visit the website for updates. The enterprise **HUB**, located in the centre of the high street continued to provide affordable office accommodation, conference facilities and training rooms up until the end of February 2018, when we helped secure a new commercial tenant relocating from central London.

We have now moved into a new office adjacent to Market square on a 1 year sublet from Bromley College. This has provided us with a first floor BID office and a ground floor retail premises which we have opened as our second **POP UP Shop**. We currently host 8 separate start-up creative businesses who trade collectively under the umbrella of GIFTED.

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.

## **Awards**

Orpington's finest awards were once again held at the Odeon cinema in March 2018, recognising and celebrating the best businesses in the town centre. This year we had a significant increase in participation by businesses in the competition and attendance at the ceremony. We were delighted that the Deputy Mayor of London for Business Rajesh Agarwal agreed to film a welcome to the evening and that we could welcome senior politicians from the local authority and the borough commander of LFB on the night.

This was the first year that the Clayton Turner Award for the most dementia friendly business was presented, and we were delighted that Angelia Clayton Turner was present to present the award.

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DIRECTORS' REPORT (CONTINUED)**

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**Investment**

We have identified the need for Orpington 1st to take a lead role in ensuring that Orpington Town centre is considered as a place for investment by both the local authority and potential investors, that we are equipped with the necessary information and resources to act with confidence and credibility, and that we provide suitable marketing material and dialogue to increase interest and upgrade the quality of design and content within the town centre.

We continue to participate in relevant meetings such as the public realm stakeholder group. We are members of appropriate committees such as the LBB economic partnership and provide timely and relevant information to investment publications in order to ensure that Orpington and its business community is well represented.

Funding in the form of New Homes Bonus to support our programme for investment has included a gap analysis study that can assist in our targeting of new retailers and the development of the Opportunity Orpington event to encourage new business. The council now employs Cushman & Wakefield as their delivery partner on property and we have secured a £20,000 programme with them to complete a town centre study to evidence development opportunities and coordinate activity.

We have taken every opportunity to promote Orpington outside of the borough, through articles in relevant publications such as Invest Bromley magazine and Kent Life as well as participating in a case study for the GLA and assisting neighbouring councils in their own BID development.

We are currently working with the teams at Produced in Kent, the Kent Tourist Board and South Eastern Railway, to promote our position as the **London Kent Gateway** and ensure we maximise the opportunities that that can provide.

**Finally, the Ballot.**

In November 2017 we held a renewal ballot for the continuation of the Orpington 1st BID. The process leading up to the ballot provided us with the opportunity to discuss at both a local and head office level the concerns, issues and requirements of individual businesses. We also held a series of sector meetings to establish more specific issues in each of the industries that we represent and conducted a business survey which went out to all levy payers. The information collected from all methods of engagement was used in the development of the proposal for a second term 2018-2023 and it was this proposal document "make a difference" that was voted on.

We approached the ballot with confidence, but not complacency, and wanted the result, if it was a yes vote, to secure a greater mandate than in the first term which achieved a positive result but with the narrowest of margins. So, it was important to us to speak to and communicate with as many individuals as possible to ensure the process and content of the proposal was understood. The formal process is extremely detailed, but we did not want it to dominate our work and carried on identifying and delivering new activities such as our first food festival right up to the ballot date.

The result was 83.6% in favour by RV and 82.3% in favour by number, achieving over a 50% increase in the YES vote and giving Orpington1st the increased mandate we all wanted and is more credible for the BID in its position representing the town centre business community.

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**  
14 June 2018

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

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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 2018 set out on pages 8 to 13 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](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 deficit 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**

14 June 2018

**Chartered Certified Accountants**

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Crofton Road  
Orpington  
Kent  
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