

MARCH INSIGHTS by CHRIS TURNER

Spring is well and truly with us, and planning is taking place across BIDs for Easter, Eid, and Passover. Always an exciting time of newness.

Ballot data

Congratulations to eleven BIDs: Sligo, Lancaster, We Are Waterloo, Ripon, Marble Arch, Bilston, Camden Town Unlimited, Euston Town, Hatton Garden, Your Pontypridd, and Station to Station on their successful ballots. Unfortunately, Rye Town Centre and Harrogate Accommodation were unsuccessful in their ballots.

The British BIDs National **Spring Report** is coming out soon and as ever the headlines are interesting for those BID geeks like me! There are now 352 BIDs in the British Isles, five more than this time last year, and we put £184,971,060 a year into our local economies; BIDs absolutely work. There have been 71 ballots in the last twelve months, with a 92% success rate, and 11 new BIDs came into being. The full report will be distributed as ever by social media and be up on the British BIDs web site. Previous surveys and reports are available in the British BIDs library [here](#).

[Ask for Angela](#) is ten years old and we congratulate them. A key support tool for many BIDs running PubWatch programmes, it provides a mechanism for those in a situation that doesn't feel right—whether on a date, on a night out, or after being approached by someone making you uncomfortable—you can go to the bar or approach a member of staff and ask for “Angela”. Staff trained in the Ask for Angela scheme will understand that you need help and will support you quickly, discreetly, and without drawing attention. Ask for Angela was created and developed in 2016 by Hayley Crawford. What began as a local safeguarding response quickly grew into a nationally recognised scheme, now known across the UK and beyond. Ask for Angela is widely adopted by pubs, bars, clubs, restaurants, and entertainment venues as a simple but powerful way to help protect customers who feel unsafe, vulnerable, or at risk. The scheme is named in memory of Angela Crompton Phillips, who was tragically killed by her husband, Thomas Crompton, in June 2012 at their home in Arminghall, Norfolk. The attack followed a domestic

argument and shocked the local community. Ask for Angela exists to honour her memory by helping others escape unsafe situations before harm occurs.

One of the more interesting pieces of analysis for BIDs in England is the amount of money that local authorities spend. The data is available in both local and composite form. Alison McGovern Minister of State (Housing, Communities and Local Government) gave the link in Parliament and most interestingly gave information on the cost of administering BID ballots which are recorded on **Revenue Outturn RO6 Line 428** published [here](#). The total spend in 2024-2025 on managing BID ballots across England was £18,248,000.

[Protecting What Matters: Towards a more confident, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom](#), sets out the government's first steps towards what they hope will be a more connected, cohesive, and resilient United Kingdom – a place where neighbour continues to look out for neighbour and people come together with a shared sense of values, pride, and belonging. The action plan follows decades of rapid change – technological advancements, demographic change, local industries collapsing, the increasing cost of living and the decline of vital public services. This has caused a strain on social cohesion. The 'call to action' as the government calls it has already been seen by some as contentious but is worth a read as a clear statement of intent that links into the Pride in Place agenda.

It is always interesting to see the way that BIDs and their local authorities work together, and one new example is the work that the [Birmingham Central BID](#) and the local authority have done in the plans to transform the central heart of Birmingham. A new Birmingham Central Heart [Prospectus](#) has been unveiled to international investors by Birmingham City Council. The area will act as a key gateway between HS2 Curzon Street Station and Central BID's area around New Street Station to the Bullring, as well as towards Colmore Business District and the wider city centre. The Birmingham Central Heart Prospectus was launched to global investors at MIPIM – The International Market for Real Estate Professionals – in Cannes, France, this week. Proposals include safer streets for walking and cycling and better connections to public transport.

The regular data sets from **MRI** are always worth a look, particularly allowing BIDs to benchmark their own data against the national sets. Their latest analysis suggests that [Retail footfall](#) picked up in the week leading into Mother's Day, rising +1.3% week on week across all UK retail

destinations, with shopping centres leading the uplift (+3.2%). Retail parks (+0.2%) and high streets (+1.7%) also saw an increase in visits, however growth was more modest. Friday (+9.3%) and Saturday (+10.4%) were standout days for all UK retail destinations; high streets saw strong week on week growth on Friday (+10.1%) whereas Saturday proved to be much busier for retail parks (+13.1%) and shopping centres (+13.5%). This coincides with the last-minute dash for Mother's Day gifts. Regionally, retail destinations in the Southeast (+3.1%) and East of England (+3.1%) stood out with strong week-on-week performance recorded. Overall, visits to shopping centres (+4.2%) and retail parks (+3.1%) recorded their first annual footfall increase in four weeks, however high street activity dipped slightly by -0.7%. This trend reinforces how key calendar dates continue to shape visits to retail destinations, with the next major opportunity for retail stores and destinations arriving soon as Easter falls earlier this year.

As a reminder, the upcoming **British BIDs 2026 Online Course** schedule is [available](#), and we are pleased to be offering a new course on *Monitoring and Evaluating Your BID*. Business Improvement Districts return to ballot every five years. To secure continued support, they must demonstrate that they are delivering the right priorities effectively, transparently, and with measurable impact. Robust monitoring and evaluation are essential, and this course provides that. Other 2026 Academy [courses](#) include: *An Introduction to BIDs, BIDs and Place Shaping, Managing a BID Efficiently, Planning & Managing a BID ballot* and the *Responsibilities & best practices for BID Directors*.

The remaining 2026 classes for our [Certificate in BID Management](#), [Diploma in BID Leadership](#), and [Certificate in BID Marketing](#) courses are available to book – click on the links provided for more information, and if you would like to enrol in any upcoming classes, please email Shayni.Langhelt@britishbids.info.



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