



# WATFORD

TOWN CENTRE BID

# NEWSLETTER

TERM 3

YEAR 1

EDITION 1/2

**Projects & campaigns**

**Business support**

**Performance insights**

**Crime & safety**

**Dates for your diary**



This is our Watford Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) newsletter for spring 2026, our team put together content specifically for businesses and employees in our town.

Our bi-annual newsletter keeps you up to date with all the current BID projects & campaigns to benefit Watford Town Centre.

Visit the 'For BID Businesses' section of [watfordtowncentre.com](http://watfordtowncentre.com) for up-to-date information about our services.

## Contact us

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Telephone: 01923 919 989  
[www.watfordtowncentre.com](http://www.watfordtowncentre.com)

## Social media

   @WatfordTownCentre

 @WatfordTownCentreBID

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# 1. Introduction

## About our BID

A BID is a business-led partnership which enables coordinated investment in the management and promotion of a commercial area. BIDs do not replace local authority and police services but provide additional, supplementary resources and activities. Over 340 BIDs are operating successfully around the UK.

Watford Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) was established in April 2016, after town centre businesses voted on its creation in the October 2015 ballot. Those town centre businesses then voted in favour of a second five-year term in February 2021 and subsequently voted overwhelmingly in favour of a third five-year BID term in October 2025, which will run from April 2026 - March 2031.

Our BID sees a diverse range of businesses in Watford Town Centre join forces with the overall ambition of improving the town centre for all its users. The BID is funded by Watford Town Centre businesses in the form of a levy, charged as a percentage of their hereditaments' rateable value.

Our vision is to maximise Watford Town Centre's potential as a dynamic, safe and welcoming place where its businesses flourish. We aim to create a vibrant destination that attracts visitors, supports enterprise and encourages investment.

**Enhance**  
the town centre experience

**Promote**  
Watford Town Centre

**Support**  
business growth

**Champion**  
collaboration

**Embrace**  
sustainability and innovation

## Meet the BID team



### Kara Mesiano

CEO & Company Secretary

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### John Hattingh

Business Against Crime Officer

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07732 009 438



### Cameron Evans

Cardboard Collection Service Coordinator

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## 2. Projects & campaigns

# New BID Term

We are delighted to have entered our BID's third term from April 2026 – March 2031 following a resounding 92% vote in favour in the October 2025 ballot of levy paying businesses. Watford Town Centre BID will invest over £3million worth of investment in the next five years.

### Our vision

Our vision is to maximise Watford Town Centre's potential as a dynamic, safe and welcoming place where its businesses flourish. We aim to create a vibrant destination that attracts visitors, supports enterprise and encourages investment.

### Our mission

Our mission as an organisation is to deliver the five commitments we have outlined in this business plan for 2026-2031. Our projects and campaigns are chosen and funded by levy paying businesses, with the overarching purpose of improving Watford Town Centre for its businesses and users.

## Enhance the town centre experience

Crime reduction, public realm enhancements, accessibility.



## Promote Watford Town Centre

Marketing, events, campaigns to boost footfall and communication.



## Support business growth

Training, town centre performance insights, support services.



## Champion collaboration

Partnering for shared success and influence.



## Embrace sustainability and innovation

Greener initiatives and forward-thinking ideas.



# Watford Clarendon BID



**We are delighted to announce that Watford Clarendon BID became operational from 1 April 2026. Watford Clarendon BID was approved following a successful ballot from February - March 2026, with eligible businesses voting in favour of the BID proposal.**

Watford Clarendon BID's Business Plan for 2026-2031 outlines the plans for the area, including a commitment to deliver over £1.8 million of investment into Clarendon and Station Road and its business community.

The governance and management of both Watford Town Centre BID and Watford Clarendon BID will fall under the responsibility of one company: Watford BID Ltd.

Watford BID Ltd.'s Board of Directors have approved a new organisational structure for the BID team, setting the direction for both BID terms' first year and beyond. The restructure will ensure the

team is well placed to deliver for levy payers across both Watford Town Centre BID and the new Watford Clarendon BID.

Our former Watford Town Centre BID Manager, Kara Mesiano, has moved into the role of Chief Executive and will lead the BID into this exciting new five-year term. The rest of the team and their BID roles are listed on page 3 of this newsletter.

Watford BID Ltd are currently recruiting for two new roles: a Corporate Business Support Manager to support engagement with Watford Clarendon BID levy payers, and a Digital Marketing Executive to further strengthen the promotion of both Watford Town Centre and the Clarendon Road district.

For any queries regarding the new BID team structure, we recommend you read our full news article on our website, contact the BID team or come along to one of our BID Drop-ins (details on page 16).

# Floral displays

**Our popular summer floral displays will return to Watford Town Centre in June 2026, funded by our BID!**

A favourite with local employees, residents and visitors – the beautiful display of flowers are provided by Amethyst Horticulture. We will have a mixture of hanging baskets, tiered planters and barrier baskets decorating our iconic bridge. We will also have additional planters for West Herts College and the Town Hall Quarter.

The floral displays add colour, vibrancy and greenery to the town during the summer months, enhancing the town centre experience for its users. The flowers will be implemented in June and will remain in our town centre until September when the climate is no longer suitable.



## 2. Projects & campaigns

# Pondside

The event space near the pond at the top of **Watford Town Centre** has officially been named **“Pondside”** following a public vote led by our **BID and Watford Borough Council**.

The newly named space has long served as a vibrant hub for performances, seasonal celebrations, and community gatherings, and now has a formal identity to match its importance!

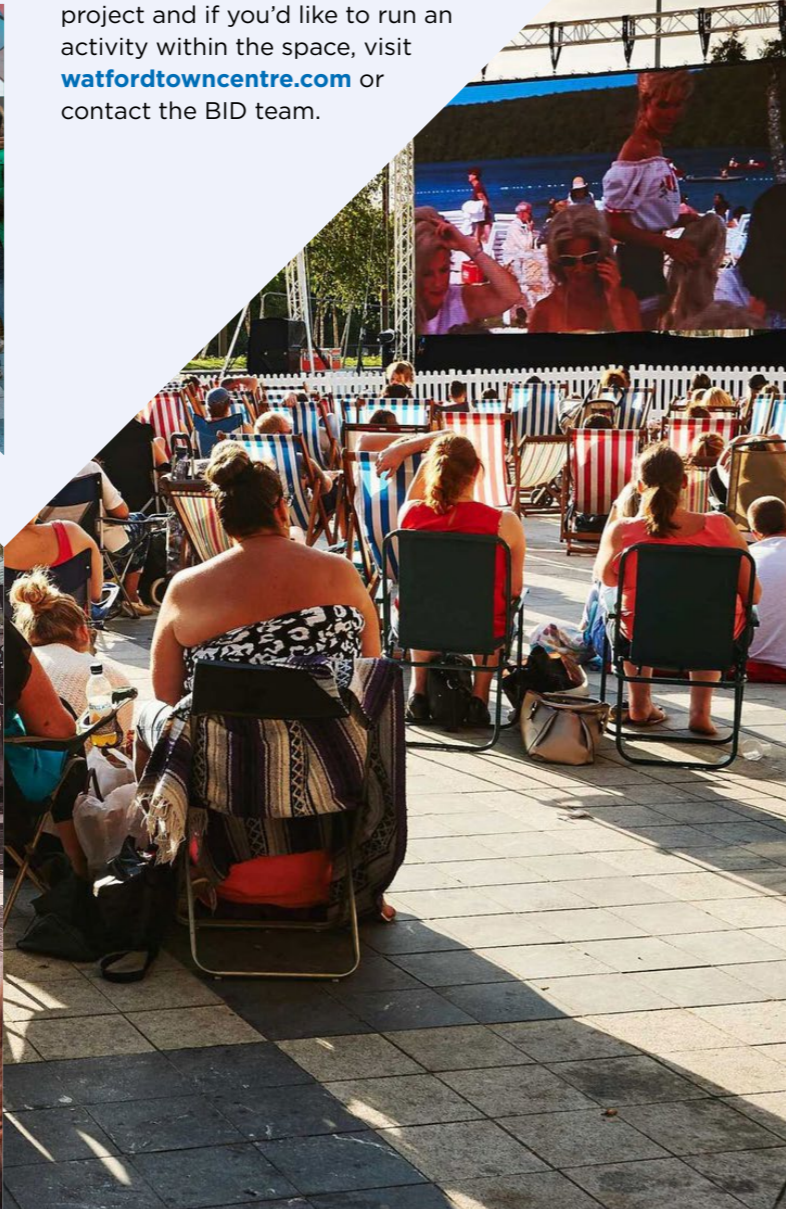
The naming initiative invited residents and stakeholders to take part in shaping the future of the town centre by selecting a name that reflects the space's character and location. “Pondside” was chosen for its simplicity, relevance and potential to become a recognisable brand for community engagement.

The renaming is part of a broader strategy to:

- Encourage more organisations to use the space for events and activities
- Create a stronger sense of place and pride within the town centre
- Support Watford's cultural and economic vibrancy

We have exciting placemaking initiatives this summer to revitalise the space including cleaning, painted artwork, signage and a Pondside programme of activities. This summer, we will also have a grassed installation with additional planters and seated area to encourage footfall, dwell time and enhance the experience.

For all the latest on the Pondside project and if you'd like to run an activity within the space, visit [watfordtowncentre.com](http://watfordtowncentre.com) or contact the BID team.



# Watford Unlocked coming soon

## Unlock exclusive access, offers and insights

**“Watford Unlocked”** is a brand-new initiative exclusively for **Watford Town Centre BID levy payers**, launching **June 2026**.

The concept is to deliver on the following objectives outlined in our 2026-2031 business plan:

- Create an exclusive **Watford Town Centre employee discount scheme** designed to encourage local workers to shop and eat local at lunch and after work.
- Utilise social media insights and Google Analytics to develop a clear understanding of **customer demographic data**. We will share these valuable insights with levy payers to help inform their marketing strategies and grow their business.
- Ensure a comprehensive summary of **Watford Town Centre performance insights** can be easily accessed by levy payers on our [watfordtowncentre.com](http://watfordtowncentre.com) website.

This means our brand-new initiative will provide you exclusive access to bespoke offers & discounts, vacancy rate data, retail spend insights, customer demographic data and company governance documents.

Watford Unlocked will be available to access via the “For BID Businesses” section of [watfordtowncentre.com](http://watfordtowncentre.com). Login details will be provided upon launch, free of charge, to all Watford Town Centre BID and Watford Clarendon BID levy payers and your employees.

If you would be interested in becoming an “early adopter” and gain early access to Watford Unlocked, please contact [marketing@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:marketing@watfordtowncentre.com) to express your interest. You can also email us any exclusive discounts or offers that you'd like to offer to local employees.

Please provide us with:

- Your business name
- Your proposed offer
- The date of expiry for the offer (if applicable)
- Any imagery you'd like alongside the offer (optional)

Visit [watfordtowncentre.com/unlocked](http://watfordtowncentre.com/unlocked) from June 2026 for full terms & conditions.

### 3. Business support

# Business Improvement Grant 26/27

Applications are now open for the Business Improvement Grant 2026/27, giving Watford Town Centre BID businesses the opportunity to apply for funding of up to £3,000 per business.

The grant intends to support small and medium sized businesses by encouraging them to look at their business and identify potential improvements that could be undertaken to enhance their offer, maximise their business potential and improve the overall customer and visitor experience.

Last year, ten businesses benefited from the programme, helping to create a more vibrant and attractive town for both shoppers and businesses alike. We are proud to have supported these initiatives, alongside Watford Borough Council via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and look forward to continuing efforts to boost the local economy in the future.

The full criteria and application form for the 2026/27 Business Improvement Grant scheme can be found by visiting the "For BID Businesses" section of our website under "Resources".

## Free cardboard collection service

As part of Watford Town Centre BID's service, our team member Cameron collects and recycles cardboard from small businesses in Watford Town Centre. Our Sustainability Award-winning service comes at no additional cost to levy payers and was introduced as an initiative to save local businesses money, whilst also being proactively sustainable.

Cameron collects cardboard three times a week in our electric vehicle, with 62 traders currently signed up. We are proud to have collected over 28 tonnes of cardboard since we launched the scheme in early 2023!

If you would be interested in finding out more and joining our Cardboard Collection service, please complete the operational agreement by visiting the "For BID Businesses" section of our website under "Resources". Return the form to [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com) or phone 01923 919 989 for more information.



## Watford Observer advertising opportunity

Watford Town Centre BID businesses have an opportunity to advertise with the Watford Observer local newspaper by providing a prize in their exclusive BID competition for readers.

In return for providing a prize worth £250 or more, you can benefit from a half page advert in the Watford Observer and the competition would also be highlighted on their front page. Watford Observer has over 50,000 social media followers making them the largest channel currently for Watford & Hertfordshire content.

For any competition, please provide 100 words, your logo, 2-6 images and any T&Cs you may have.

If you would be interested in finding out more, please contact [simon.murfit@newsquest.co.uk](mailto:simon.murfit@newsquest.co.uk)

Newsquest terms and conditions apply. Please visit [www.newsquest.co.uk/prize-competition-rules](http://www.newsquest.co.uk/prize-competition-rules) and [www.newsquest.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.newsquest.co.uk/privacy-policy) for their privacy policy.

## Watford Business Pledge

The Watford Business Pledge focuses on five key commitments: promoting fair employment, creating local job opportunities, boosting Watford's economy by buying locally, enhancing community wellbeing through social initiatives and adopting sustainable practices.

Watford Town Centre BID is a proud ambassador of The Pledge, and we'd love to see more of our local organisations getting involved for the benefit of the business community!

### Why you SHOULD get involved:

- Positive brand: Be recognised for being a responsible business
- Productivity gains: Employers benefit from improved rate of productivity when employees feel valued
- Recruitment and retention: If staff feel valued and supported in the workplace this results in greater loyalty and lower turnover
- Competitive advantage: Be a leader and advocate for best business practices
- Investor appeal: 4 out of 5 personal investors say that they will act based on sustainability or social responsibility factors
- Build your local business profile and increase brand reputation
- Your application content can be repurposed for tenders when bidding for new contracts or investments
- Find ways to extend your food practices by learning from others

### What you GAIN for being involved:

- Receive your certificate at our events and have the opportunity to network, feature in press releases and social media coverage
- Use the Watford Business Pledge logo and certificate to promote your business
- Have a case study created for you and shared on various platforms
- Submit news and activities to feature in our Watford Business newsletter and various Council communication channels
- Your logo and case study presented on our website



## 4. Performance insights

# Vacancy rates data

**A more localised approach to vacancy rates** - We're now focusing solely on Watford Town Centre's High Street when reporting vacancy rates. This more targeted approach helps us better understand local trends, identify why certain units become vacant, and highlight areas that are either thriving or may need support to attract new investment.

Area	No. of hereditaments	Number of vacant units	Percentage split of area vacant units	Percentage split of all hereditaments	Percentage split of vacant units
High Street	87	8	9.20%	2.60%	32.00%
Clarendon Road	11	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Queens Road (BID area only)	6	2	33.33%	0.65%	8.00%
Market Street (BID area only)	19	1	5.26%	0.32%	4.00%
Exchange Road	4	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hempstead Road	8	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
King Street	10	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Office	38	5	13.16%	1.62%	20.00%
The Parade	112	8	7.14%	2.60%	32.00%
Wilmington Close	5	1	20.00%	0.32%	4.00%
Rickmansworth Road	5	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Peace Drive, Sutton Road, Rosslyn Road	3	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>8.11%</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Retail spend insights

Watford Town Centre retail spend insights are provided by *Beauclair* data. We've provided the stats for March 2026 in this newsletter, but levy paying businesses can get in touch via [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com) for full access to all months' data.

### Watford Headline Metrics

- In Mar 2026, monthly retail sales in Watford were £12.6m. Year-to-Date (YTD) sales were £35.1m.
- Compared to Mar 2025, monthly sales decreased by -8.2% while YTD sales decreased by -6.6%.
- The decrease in monthly sales was due to a decrease of -8.4% in customer numbers and a marginal increase of +0.1% in average revenue per customer (ARPC).

Metric	Mar 26	Mar 26 vs. Mar 25	YTD Mar 26	YTD Mar 26 vs. YTD Mar 25
Sales	£12.6m	-8.2%	£35.1m	-6.6%
Transactions	593k	-6.5%	1.72m	-4.7%
Customers	146k	-8.4%	434k	-6.1%
ATV	£21.26	-1.8%	£20.38	-1.9%
ARPC	£86.27	+0.1%	£80.90	-0.5%

### Watford vs. Comparator Areas

- Monthly sales change between Mar 2025 and Mar 2026 in Watford (-8.2%) is lower than Woking (0.0%) and Reading (-6.7%).
- YTD sales change between Mar 2025 and Mar 2026 in Watford (-6.6%) is lower than Woking (-0.4%) and Reading (-1.4%).

Retail Area	Mar 26 vs. Mar 25	YTD Mar 26 vs. YTD Mar 25
Watford	-8.2%	-6.6%
Reading	-6.7%	-1.4%
Woking	0.0%	-0.4%
GB Benchmark	-8.2%	-4.3%

### Watford Sector Sales

- The five sectors with the highest monthly sales are Fashion (£3.84m), Grocery (£2.86m), Food & Drink (£1.98m), Health & Beauty (£1.45m), and General Retail (£898k).
- The five sectors with the highest YTD sales are Fashion (£10.8m), Grocery (£7.81m), Food & Drink (£5.67m), Health & Beauty (£4.17m), and General Retail (£2.98m).
- The five sectors showing the largest change in sales between Mar 2025 and Mar 2026 are Fashion (-£714k), Food & Drink (-£387k), Tourism (+£358k), Health & Beauty (-£266k) and Grocery (+£75.5k).

Metric	Mar 26	Mar 26 vs. Mar 25	YTD Mar 26	YTD Mar 26 vs. YTD Mar 25
Fashion	£3.84m	-15.7%	£10.8m	-9.4%
Grocery	£2.86m	+2.7%	£7.81m	+1.3%
Food & Drink	£1.98m	-16.4%	£5.67m	-9.9%
Health & Beauty	£1.45m	-15.5%	£4.17m	-8.4%
General Retail	£898k	-6.1%	£2.98m	-3.8%
Tourism	£861k	+71.3%	£1.25m	-0.1%
Transport	£230k	-5.0%	£698k	-5.9%
Entertainment	£207k	-10.0%	£653k	-17.3%
Household	£186k	-20.2%	£645k	-20.1%
Consumer Services	£105k	-34.7%	£424k	+5.8%

## 4. Performance insights

# Watford Town Centre brand growth

An overview of Year 5 of our 2nd BID term (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026):

### Online growth

(Apr '25 – Mar '26 compared to Apr '24 – Mar '25)

Total social media views increased by	Total social media net followers gained increased by	Total active website users increased by
<b>135%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>126%</b>

### Most followed social media accounts

(figures from 31 March 2026)

<b>f</b>	<b>10,372</b>	<b>📷</b>	<b>6,450</b>
<b>🎵</b>	<b>2,102</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>1,020</b>

**X** discontinued in January 2026\*

### Fastest growing socials accounts social media views

<b>📷</b>	<b>301%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>122%</b>
<b>🎵</b>	<b>116%</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>33%</b>

increase in Year 5

### Fastest growing socials accounts net followers gained

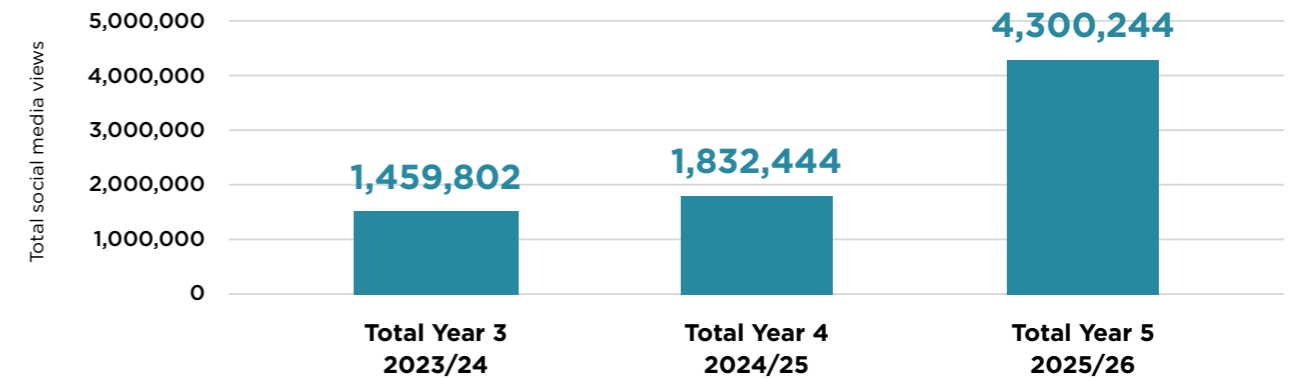
<b>🎵</b>	<b>143%</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>115%</b>
<b>📷</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>in</b>	<b>23%</b>

increase in Year 5

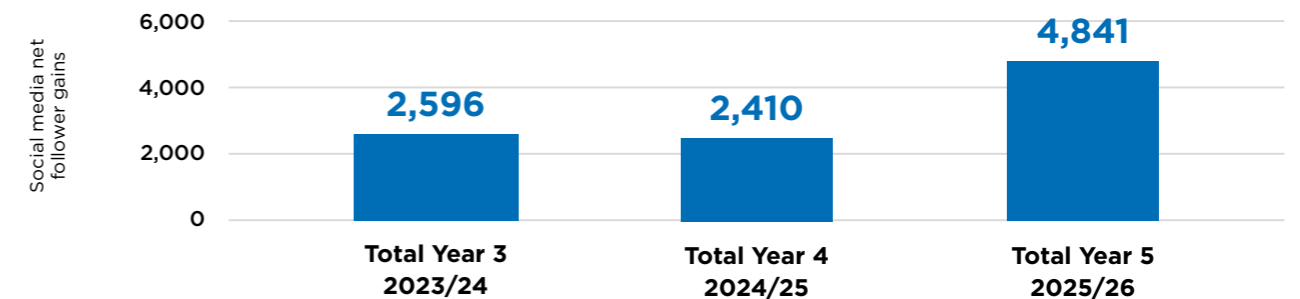
Total of **4.3 million** views of all Watford Town Centre posts from April 2025 – March 2026

Total active website users increased in every single month of Year 5 when compared to Year 4

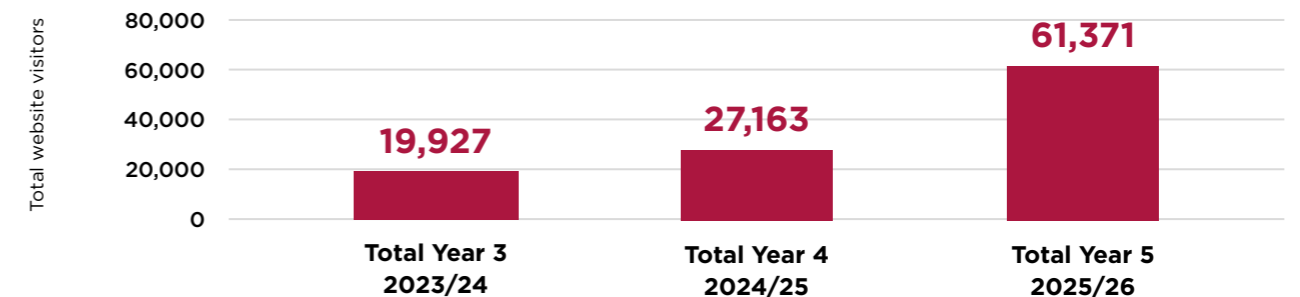
### Social media views



### Social media net followers



### Website active users



\*We discontinued X (formerly Twitter) in January 2026 due to distinct lack of growth and engagement on the platform, as well as its unsuitability for B2C BID/destination accounts

## 5. Crime & safety

# Watford Business Against Crime (WBAC) scheme

Watford Business Against Crime (WBAC) is a membership scheme, run by Watford Town Centre BID, which aims to reduce retail crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the town. We currently have more members on the scheme than we have ever had before, proving its value to businesses' safety and security.

### Benefits of joining:

- Exclusive access to intelligence about, and photos of convicted retail crime and fraud offenders.
- Participation in the WBAC Exclusion Order Scheme which sees persistent shop thieves banned from all member stores.
- Links to Hertfordshire Police through nominated PCSOs and police officers who work in Watford Town Centre.
- Monthly meetings to share intelligence.
- Free signage, stickers and crime prevention material.

Email [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com) for more information about joining the WBAC membership scheme, rates are reduced for Watford Town Centre BID businesses.

### Radio procedure guidelines:

1. State what business you are.
2. Be accurate with your information stating description of suspect, sex, nationality, colour, age, physique, skin, hair, outfit, and direction of travel.
3. Keep your message short and include what has been taken and what way they are heading.
4. Set your radio to an appropriate volume level. Log off when you finish your shift.

Remember, the radio is there for your assistance. Take some time to ensure staff know how to use it. If you need any help, contact John Hattingh on 07732 009 438 or [john.hattingh@herts.police.uk](mailto:john.hattingh@herts.police.uk)



## Community Safety Partnership seminar

📅 Wednesday 17 June 2026

🕒 10:00am - 12:00pm

📍 Cineworld Watford, Charter Place, Harlequin Shopping Centre

**All Watford Town Centre BID businesses are invited to join us for the Community Safety Partnership seminar on Wednesday 17 June 2026.**

It is a great opportunity to hear about 'individuals of concern' and receive crime and ASB updates from all partnership members as we strive to improve crime & safety in Watford Town Centre. You can also have a voice during the Q&A panel to share what you need in the way of support.

- Meet the Community Safety Partnership members
- Receive updated information on the partnership's achievements and future plans
- The latest crime & safety data for Watford Town Centre
- Q&A panel including PCC Leadership Team

**Please RSVP by Friday 12 June 2026** via email to [business@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:business@watfordtowncentre.com) to confirm your attendance.

## Martyn's Law

**The statutory guidance for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, has now been released by the UK Home Office.**

Alongside the statutory guidance, the Home Office confirmed it is continuing to develop a wider package of supporting material to help organisations understand the requirements of the Act and prepare for commencement. As and when we learn about these, we will share these with you.



Please scan the QR code to view the guidance and supplementary documents.

Whilst those that fall within scope of the Act may wish to begin considering the requirements, there is no requirement to comply with them until the legislation comes into force.

The Home Office encourages those wishing to find out more to refer to Protect UK ([www.protectuk.police.uk](http://www.protectuk.police.uk)) which hosts a range of Martyn's Law materials.



## 6. Dates for your diary

# BID Drop-ins

📅 First Tuesday of every month

🕒 12:00pm - 2:00pm

📍 Watford BID Ltd, Suite 5 Kings Court,  
153 High Street, WD17 2ER

**Introducing our new monthly face-to-face event: BID Drop-in.**

Hosted on the first Tuesday of every month, businesses are invited to come along between 12:00pm and 2:00pm for a very informal catch up and cup of tea with our BID team. If you have any queries for one of our team, this is a great opportunity to chat in person.

Please feel free to drop us an email before you drop-in!

# BID Social

📅 Tuesday 12 May 2026

🕒 6:00pm - 8:00pm

📍 Reveal Bar, 107-115 The Parade

You and your team are invited to the upcoming Watford Town Centre BID social on Tuesday 12 May 2026 from 6:00pm - 8:00pm at the brand-new "Reveal" on 107-115 The Parade! The bar opened in March 2026, occupying the former Barrio/Bosleys unit near the pond.

Enjoy a team evening out with fellow Watford Town Centre employees whilst enjoying a drink, eating delicious food and checking out a new venue!

There are limited spaces available, so please RSVP via [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com) or call **01923 919 989**, and leave your details:

1. Your company name
2. Number of attendees from your business
3. Dietary requirements

# Community Litter Picking

Some areas within Watford Town Centre can be neglected as they fall under the responsibility of landlords rather than the local authorities. Our community litter picks aim to set a positive example showing that all Watford Town Centre users have a responsibility to keep our town clean and tidy.

Previously, we have had staff members from a range of BID businesses join us for community litter picking days, including Cassio Lounge, Watford Palace Theatre, Leonardo Hotel and McDonald's.

If you would like to get your team involved, please email [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com) to let us know the date(s) you would like to join our team:

📅 Friday 15 May 2026

🕒 10:00am - 12:00pm

📅 Friday 17 July 2026

🕒 10:00am - 12:00pm

📅 Friday 25 September 2026

🕒 10:00am - 12:00pm

📅 Friday 19 June 2026

🕒 10:00am - 12:00pm

📅 Friday 14 August 2026

🕒 10:00am - 12:00pm

# Watford World Cup Fan Park

📅 Saturday 27 June 2026

🕒 12:00pm - 10:00pm

📍 The Parade & Pondsides

**FIFA World Cup fever is coming to Watford Town Centre!**

The Watford World Cup Fan Park is a BID-led activation designed to drive footfall and dwell time across our town centre on Saturday 27 June 2026 ahead of the England vs. Panama FIFA Men's World Cup match.

- Family-friendly football activities
- 'Fan Zone' outside pubs and bars with outdoor seating
- DJ, football trivia and competitions

Our Fan Park will be decorated with the international flags and colours of participating national teams - celebrating inclusivity and putting on a party for our diverse town!

The FIFA Men's World Cup takes place from 11 June - 19 July 2026. If you have any plans for the tournament - such as screening live matches in your venue - please let us know so that we can promote your offering.

If you would like to get involved with trading or sponsorship at our Fan Park experience, please contact [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com)

Please note our Fan Park will not include an outdoor screening of any World Cup games. Our aim is to drive footfall into Watford Town Centre and encourage fans to watch the games inside one of many venues showing live TV matches.



## 6. Dates for your diary

# Watford Fringe Festival

📅 Wednesday 1 July 2026 - Friday 31 July 2026

The Watford Fringe Festival is back in 2026 to celebrate its 10th anniversary, bringing you the best of festival entertainment right on your doorstep.

Every year the festival hosts high quality national and international Fringe acts for local audiences to enjoy alongside supporting the best of local talent to develop and perform their shows.

From starting out as a small-scale weekend of performances, it has now grown to become a regular fixture in the local cultural calendar with shows taking place throughout the whole of July. Venues right across Watford now host an extraordinary live line-up of great theatre, music, comedy, dance, magic and family fun-filled shows.

2025's festival was a record-breaking year with 136 live shows in 21 performance spaces and more than 5,000 tickets sold. There was everything from pre-Edinburgh Fringe shows to a band hot off their set at Glastonbury, a musician who appeared on the recent series of Channel Four's The Piano, the man who 'discovered' Wham!, the best in local talent and even live pro-wrestling!

This year's Watford Fringe Festival will officially kick off at a special launch event in Watford Town Centre on 4 July 2026. Venues already signed up to host performances include the Watford Pump House, Watford Colosseum and Watford Palace Theatre.

Watford Fringe Festival is only possible thanks to the support of Watford Borough Council, all the Fringe venues and the dozens of volunteers who give up their time to promote the shows and make sure audiences are so well looked after.

More info: [www.watfringe.co.uk](http://www.watfringe.co.uk)

## Birds of Prey Experience

📅 Sunday 2 August 2026

🕒 10:30am - 3:30pm

📍 Pondsider

**Brought to you by Watford Town Centre BID and back by popular demand!**

Watford Town Centre are welcoming back our feathered friends, with the return of our FREE Birds of Prey Experience!

You and the family can get involved in this captivating experience, witnessing elegant creatures soaring the skies of Watford as well as getting the unique opportunity to hold, stroke and connect with the birds.

It's a wonderful opportunity to witness something beautiful, be educated by trained experts and capture special imagery and videos. We are hopeful to welcome the following birds of prey: barn owl, tawny owl, little owl, long eared owl, kestrel, eagle owl, harris hawk, lanner falcon, Asian brown wood owl, Indian scops owl, white face scops owl, screech owl.\*

Visit The Parade event space (by the pond) between 10:30am and 3:30pm on Sunday 2 August for this incredible experience with Berkshire Birds of Prey.

*\*Birds of Prey availability on the day are subject to weather conditions - our feathered friends care about the weather just as much as we do!*



## Big Screen

📅 Monday 3 August 2026 - Sunday 9 August 2026

🕒 12:00pm - 10:00pm

📍 Pondsider

Deckchairs will be available, but you are also welcome to bring your own chairs, pack a picnic and head to the town centre. Then just sit back and relax whilst watching some old favourites alongside new blockbusters.

Due to limited space in the event area there will be no on-site traders but there are plenty of shops along the High Street to grab something to eat and drink.

Unfortunately, we can't control the weather! You are permitted to bring mini beach shelters or umbrellas to seek shade from the sun (or rain!). However, these will not be permitted for use if it is very windy.

You may be asked to move towards the back of the site if your shelter is obstructing the view of others.

Screenings will only be cancelled if weather conditions make the event dangerous e.g. extremely high winds.

The Big Screen is FREE and no booking is required, just turn up and enjoy the outdoor cinema experience!



## Big Beach

📅 Friday 14 August 2026 - Sunday 30 August 2026

🕒 10:00am - 4:00pm

📍 Near Watford Central Library

With the Big Beach, you don't need to travel to the coast to feel the sand between your toes, just head into town!

The beach is completely free and is the perfect chance for people of all ages to lap up the summer sun, with deck chairs and tables provided to help you relax.

There are a variety of beach toys and buckets and spades available from the beach hut, as well as any information you might need. The hut is open 10am to 4pm each day.





TOWN CENTRE BID

## Keep in touch

Send your contact details to [enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com](mailto:enquiries@watfordtowncentre.com) to subscribe to our e-updates and receive important information for Watford Town Centre businesses.



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