

## **Chair's Report – Year Ended 31 August 2024**

Reflecting upon the third full year of our the second term, I am filled with an immense sense of pride and respect for the achievements of our small but mighty team.

In an economic and political situation that could best be described as challenging, Barrow is bucking the nationwide trend and seeing wholesale change and evolution, particularly within it's town centre.

From the delivery of major events, drawing thousands to the town centre, to the quieter behind the scenes activities, Barrow BID has been an integral catalyst for change and confidence, acting as a trusted partner and capable host.

I will cover a few of our highlights from what has been a very successful year – I'm sure I'll miss plenty out though, as during the writing of this report I realised it could unintentionally run to many pages!

### **Pride In Partnership Working**

During the year to August 2024, we have worked hard to establish and nurture our relationships with third party stakeholders, to ensure that we are working towards the common goal of rejuvenating the high street and supporting entrepreneurialism within the town centre.

I am proud to say that we have developed effective and productive working relationships with not only Westmorland and Furness Council, BAE Systems, Team Barrow (now known as Barrow Rising) but many more partner organisations who actively return to work and engage with us.

Working together and opening effective lines of communication has ensured that we are aligned in our strategic goals. This in turn has increased our influence and effectiveness on behalf of our levy paying businesses, enabling us to do so much more than we could as an individual organisation – this is certainly reflected in our annual accounts, representing a threefold return on investment for every £1 of levy income.

I truly believe that the future of the BID and the town centre is based in collaborative working and I am looking forward to seeing these relationships flourish over the remainder of our term and beyond.

### **Organisational Growth**

Our project team has continued to grow and develop, in response to the increased scope of our deliverables.

During the year we were delighted to welcome two Project coordinators, and the board boasts 14 directors, representing a diverse range of businesses and organisations.

## **Barrow Buzz**

One of the highlights of the year was the launch of the Barrow Buzz app. In partnership with Loquiva we created a smartphone app to help business promotion and awareness of what is going on in the town centre. The app has received a great response and continues to grow in it's use and effectiveness.

Alongside this, the Barrow Buzz business awards were born, with the inaugural awards ceremony held at the town hall on July 12<sup>th</sup>. Businesses were nominated and won awards in a variety of categories and enjoyed an evening of entertainment and celebration in a beautiful setting.

## **Events**

Our events programme has continued to flourish, with our established core events such as Dino Day, the Festival of Transport and our Christmas calendar continuing to attract exceptional levels of footfall.

This year saw the unexpected (and very last minute) organisation of the Dave Day motorcycle ride. Culminating in the safe arrival and management of over 20,000 motorcycles into our small town. The skill and professionalism of the team in successfully managing this enormous feat should be applauded – Barrow was well and truly put on the map.

August brought the first iteration of the Brilliant Barrow Weekend – providing a suite of local events across three days, with the Barrow Soapbox Derby being the jewel in its crown. A number of teams took part and huge crowds were seen in the town centre.

Other events included Autumn Fest – a new and highly successful collaborative event which will be repeated, Pooch Fest, Crazy Golf, Climbing walls and many more. We experimented with pop up and taster events to great degrees of success, even hosting an outdoor film screening and a fundraiser for the mayors charities.

## **Levy Payer Benefits**

We continued to support our levy payers in as many ways as possible. Our business growth grant scheme was fully subscribed and closed at the end of the year – to be replaced with a new scheme in the coming financial year.

We distributed hanging baskets, Christmas trees and dog friendly packs . We introduced a business printing service, held numerous community litter pick, planted many plants and flowers and expanded the Christmas lights to Duke Street and Ramsden square.

To conclude, it has been an incredible year of growth and achievement – I look forward to seeing what the next twelve months brings, I'm sure it will be just as impressive.

**Jenny Fazackerley**  
**Chair**