

## **Chair's Report - Year Ended 31 August 2025**

Reflecting on the past year, I am once again filled with an immense sense of pride in what has been achieved by our small but exceptionally dedicated team.

In a continued climate of economic uncertainty for the high street, Barrow BID has remained focused, proactive and ambitious. Through a combination of high-impact events, practical business support, and meaningful partnership working, we have continued to build confidence in the town centre and deliver tangible value for our levy-paying businesses.

As always, this report captures just a snapshot of what has been a busy and productive year.

### **Driving Footfall Through Events**

Our events programme continues to be a cornerstone of our activity, bringing energy, vibrancy and significant footfall into the town centre.

We delivered a series of large-scale events including Dino Day, Dave Day, the Festival of Transport, Brilliant Barrow Weekend and Soapbox Derby, and Autumn Fest. These events not only attracted thousands of visitors but reinforced Barrow's growing reputation as a destination for unique and engaging experiences.

Alongside these flagship events, we continued to develop our programme of pop-up activities, including crazy golf installations and outdoor film screenings. These smaller-scale activations play an important role in creating regular reasons to visit the town centre and support day-to-day trade.

### **Enhancing the Town Centre Environment**

A key focus this year has been on improving the look and feel of the town centre - creating a more welcoming and vibrant environment for both visitors and businesses.

Our hanging basket scheme and wider community planting initiatives have once again brought colour and life to the high street, supported by our town centre watering contract to ensure their longevity.

Through the SPF-funded scheme on Dalton Road, we have delivered targeted improvements including deep cleaning, installation of planters, and creative vinyling of empty units - helping to soften vacant spaces and improve visual appeal.

We have also continued to invest in our Christmas offering, including the introduction of new large-scale features such as the giant reindeer, alongside the renewal and maintenance of existing lighting infrastructure. Our Christmas tree scheme remains a valued initiative for businesses across the town.

## **Supporting Our Levy Payers**

Supporting our business community remains at the heart of everything we do. Following the success and oversubscription of the Business Growth Grant Scheme, we introduced a new Business Development Grant Scheme to continue providing financial support to businesses looking to invest, adapt and grow.

We also maintained our programme of bi-monthly business breakfasts, providing valuable opportunities for connection, collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The continued development of the Barrow Buzz app has further strengthened our ability to promote local businesses and events, offering an accessible platform for both businesses and the wider community.

## **Investing for Efficiency and Sustainability**

This year we have taken important steps to improve the efficiency and sustainability of our operations.

Investment in equipment and resources has enabled us to deliver services more cost-effectively, reducing reliance on external suppliers. Alongside this, the introduction of electric vehicles represents a positive move towards more environmentally responsible working practices.

## **Strong Representation and Partnerships**

Partnership working remains fundamental to the success of Barrow BID.

Through our involvement with Team Barrow and Brilliant Barrow, we continue to ensure that the voice of our levy payers is represented in wider strategic conversations about the future of the town.

By maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders and partner organisations, we are able to amplify our impact and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing regeneration and evolution of Barrow town centre.

## **Looking Ahead**

This has been another year of delivery, growth and continued momentum.

From major events to everyday improvements, from grant funding to strategic representation, Barrow BID continues to play a vital role in supporting the town centre and the businesses within it.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the BID team, board members, partners and levy payers for their continued support and commitment.

I look forward to building on this progress in the year ahead.

**Jenny Fazackerley, Chair**