



Q2 2020 Newsletter – Issue 18

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PHOTO CREDIT: Skipton Castle by the town's ambassador, Judy Probst

If you're a business owner in the Skipton BID district, then we want to hear from you! We'd love to hear your stories, ideas and best practices that can benefit the wider Skipton business community. If you want to feedback on a recent event, get involved in a current project or simply have your say, we're listening!

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SKIPTON BID 
NEWS

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Dear Businesses,

Coronavirus is at the forefront of everyone's minds at the moment. We're officially living in the midst of a pandemic, and everyone has been affected. Whether you're self-isolating, working from home, or are anxious about what the future might hold, the coronavirus will have affected you in some way, shape or form.

The million-dollar question is how long will all of this go on for and how will it affect the daily lifestyle, business and social aspects of Skipton? Firstly, with regard to the BID levy you paid in 2019, the business year ended on March 31st 2020. In light of the current national pandemic, we are postponing sending any invoices for the 2020 levy fees due; the BID Board will review this decision around July 2020, and act according at that time.

With our spring and summer events cancelled, we too have had to quickly adjust our strategy and find a way to support businesses and communities in Skipton. In this issue, we highlight our new digital campaign to support local businesses #AtHomeInSkipton. This campaign will provide our community with an online reference for businesses and services that are operating at the moment, allowing the public to search and find them.

While #AtHomeInSkipton has been created during COVID-19, it has been designed to continue once trading and travel bans are lifted, showcasing that we are not only the happiest place to live, but also the healthiest – healthy for living, for business and for tourism. You can read more about this and how you can get involved on the back page, on our website and through our social media updates.

It's also my pleasure to introduce you to our new Marketing and Communications Officer – Liz Smailes. Originally from Boroughbridge, Liz moved to Skipton with her husband in 2018. Some of you may have met Liz in her most recent role as General Manager at The Tennants Arms Hotel, Kilnsey. Prior to that Liz spent 15 years in Asia, working in business services and the hospitality sector. During that time, she managed marketing communications and public relations through periods of a tsunami, SARS, H1N1, Bird Flu, five military coups in Bangkok, bomb attacks, floods, earthquakes and terrorist alerts. Needless to say, crisis management has become second nature and a necessary specialty for Liz, and we are immensely lucky to be able to draw on her experience here at Skipton BID as we all try to navigate the challenging months ahead. In this issue, Liz is taking a deep dive into how coronavirus might affect marketing in the next few weeks and months.

Between Liz and myself, we are here to help you as best we can. If you would like to speak with us about your business or to learn more about Skipton BID, please don't hesitate to call us on our mobile numbers during office hours or send an email to arrange a time for us to call you.

Kindest Regards

Geraldine Thompson

BID Manager and Director

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BEWARE FRAUD AND SCAMS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Law enforcement, government and private sectors partners are working together to encourage members of the public to be more vigilant against fraud, particularly about sharing their financial and personal information, as criminals seek to capitalise on the Covid-19 pandemic.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police, and they are using the Covid-19 pandemic to scam the public. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment.

Reports from the public have already included online shopping scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser, and other products, which have never arrived and a number of cases have been identified where fake testing kits have been offered for sale.

Criminals are also using Government branding to try to trick people, including reports of using HMRC branding to make spurious offers of financial support through unsolicited emails, phone calls and text messages. Reports of this activity are increasing due to the timing and changes of tax filing deadlines.

This situation is likely to continue, with criminals looking to exploit further consequences of the pandemic, such as exploiting financial concerns to ask for upfront fees for bogus loans, offering high-return investment scams, or targeting pensions.

Huge increases in the number of people working remotely mean that significantly more people will be vulnerable to computer service fraud where criminals will try and convince

you to provide access to your computer or divulge your logon details and passwords. It is also anticipated that there will be a surge in phishing scams or calls claiming to be from government departments offering grants, tax rebates, or compensation.

STOP: Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to

Action Fraud - <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

Your bank or the police will NEVER ask you to transfer money or move it to a safe account.

For further guidance visit <https://nbcc.police.uk/news/letter-from-the-nbcc-regarding-covid-19>

Skipton's PCSO Gillian Seed adds...

"The above advice is spot on, and I've just received information on a new scam where persons are knocking on doors stating they have been sent from the doctors etc. to spray the house to prevent the virus. Also if you live locally then you can check on your business premises as part of your daily exercise, and if not, don't worry as we are out and about."

Business Assistance **COVID-19** Resource Reference

The government advice is changing rapidly as the situation unfolds. Here is a summary of key Guidance to date of publishing this newsletter, for employees, employers and businesses in providing advice about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES THAT PAY BUSINESS RATES

The government has announced that the business rates holiday is to be extended to all businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sector for the next 12 months, to help those struggling with the ongoing Coronavirus. Craven District Council has issued letters to those businesses registered and eligible. If you have not received a letter by now and believe your business could be eligible, please contact Craven District Council.

A £25,000 grant will be provided to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses operating from smaller premises, with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,0000.

There will be additional funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of small business rate relief (SBRR). Furthermore, one-off grant of £10,000 will be provided to businesses currently eligible for SBRR or rural rate relief.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SALARIES

Under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all UK employers will be able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those employees that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis.

STATUTORY SICK PAY FOR EMPLOYEES

The government wants to ensure businesses are supported to deal with the temporary economic impacts of an outbreak of coronavirus. Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be able to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay for employees unable to work because of coronavirus. This refund will be for up to 2 weeks per employee.

TAX-HELPLINE TO SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES

HMRC has a set up a phone helpline to support businesses and self-employed people concerned about not being able to pay their tax due to coronavirus (COVID19). The helpline allows any business or self-employed individual who is concerned about paying their tax due to coronavirus to get practical help and advice. Up to 2,000 experienced call handlers are available to support businesses and individuals when needed. The contact number is 0800 0159 559.

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR BUSINESSES (TO OPERATE AS TAKEAWAYS)

Planning rules have been relaxed so pubs and restaurants can operate as hot food takeaways during the coronavirus outbreak, the Communities Secretary has confirmed. Currently, planning permission is required for businesses to carry out a change of use to a hot food takeaway. The government has confirmed regulations will be relaxed to enable businesses to deliver this service without a planning application.

For more information, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-grant-permission-for-pubs-and-restaurants-to-operate-as-takeaways-as-part-of-coronavirus-response>

LOCAL AUTHORITIES HELP

The government will provide an additional £2.2 billion funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no Business Rates because of Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR). This will provide a one-off grant of up to £10,000 to around 700,000 business currently eligible for SBRR or Rural Rate Relief, to help meet their ongoing business costs. For a property with a rateable value of £12,000, this is one quarter of their rateable value, or comparable to 3 months of rent.

Policies are being updated and released daily. For the latest information please refer to the government's dedicated website <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

HERITAGE EMERGENCY FUND

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has put together a £50million fund to support the heritage sector as an immediate response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The new £50m fund will be available for grants of between £3,000 and £50,000 and is intended to help attractions such as historic sites, industrial and maritime heritage, museums, libraries and archives, parks and gardens, landscapes and nature, survive the business shutdown order from the government.

For more information and how to apply visit <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/heritage-emergency-fund-launches-help-sector>

CORONAVIRUS AND MARKETING: HOW DOES THAT WORK?

LIZ SMAILES
MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICER SKIPTON BID

Just because guests are not coming through your door right now, this does not mean you should stop communicating with them. Now is the time to re-evaluate your brand, marketing and put in place a post-crisis strategy and communications plan.

Our daily news feed is brimming with critical updates that directly impact every aspect of our businesses and we find ourselves wondering: What could possibly come next? But it's not all bad news. The cancellations or postponements of events, meetings and conferences and the isolation measures prohibiting face-to-face business have opened up new opportunities for brands to build on their digital strategies.

TRADITIONAL MARKETING FORMS TAKE A HIT

When things are amiss in the world, marketing becomes a strange proposition. Political, social, and environmental factors begin to play an unpredictable role in marketing decisions. For rural towns such as Skipton, where the visitor footfall and local interaction has traditionally been strong and highly personal, any notion of a digital approach to marketing may have seemed superfluous to needs, until now. Almost overnight, the need for a digital presence and strategy is of paramount importance. Suddenly the need for an up-to-date functioning website, social media channels email database and online purchasing options are key to survival, and it was needed on yesterday's deadline.

In the case of COVID-19, many of us are likely thinking back to the uncertain times around the Foot & Mouth outbreak in 2001. However, in 2020 we are faced with a somewhat novel and challenging dynamic – the expansive influence and reach of digital media, and an ever changing landscape of demand and supply.

Today, consumers are digitally connected than ever before, and it can be a harsh landscape to navigate at the best of times. Now, in the worst of times, business leaders find themselves wondering:

- How can we possibly market in an environment like this?
- Amazon and other online retailers have it all stitched up; how can I compete?
- There are so many other things at stake, and, surely, we don't want to appear self-serving or even worse, as though we're trying to sell.
- Of course, we want to protect our businesses and continue to cultivate the potential for success and survival, but how do we approach marketing initiatives in such a sensitive environment?

EMBRACE THE NEW NORMAL

A key factor in resilience is adaptability. Livelihoods depend on jobs, and jobs depend on business and everyone understands that this is all about survival at every level. The most resilient businesses will survive in a new normal. And as

people turn to technology for information and connection in these times of need, it makes sense for businesses to ensure they are doing the same. So with regards to b) above, don't worry and sell, but do so respectfully.

What does that mean? The good news for marketers is that thousands of people are spending more time exploring digital channels that are specific to their respective and immediate needs. It doesn't have to be a hard sell though, no matter how immediate your requirement for cash flow may be. Those brands and retailers which remain active across relevant online platforms to consistently share expertise, informed knowledge, and bring value into online interactions without trying to sell overtly will inspire trust and positive brand association.

COMPASSIONATE MARKETING

Ultimately, marketing amidst a pandemic is no easy task. As market dynamics change rapidly, you need to be continually reassessing, to adapt, respond, and pivot according to the local issues at hand. And while doing so, now is the time to plan for the future. Because this will pass, and the people you've been supporting online through these coming months will come to support you once the doors are open again. Ensure that you keep the lines of communication open. Pick up the phone or send out an email to see how your clients are doing. Just being there to support them as a partner means a great deal in times of uncertainty. Compassion can also be contagious.

If you would like help with your marketing strategy, then get in touch with Liz. We're offering Skipton BID members 2 x 1hr complimentary consultation sessions.

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ARE YOU IN A POSITION TO OFFER PROFESSIONAL ADVICE?

Small businesses have confirmed that the areas of support that they most require include financial planning, business resilience, marketing and sales, strategic planning and digital skills.

We are looking for experts in these fields to share their knowledge via our newsletters, social media posts, and YouTube series.

Please send an email to info@skiptonbid.com if you would like to get involved.

SKIPTON BID LAUNCHES #AtHomeInSkipton

Skipton BID has created a digital campaign to support local business and service offerings available to the local community during the corona virus isolation.

As travel restrictions, shop closures and social distancing measures are imposed, Skipton BID has launched a digital campaign called #AtHomeInSkipton to support online trade awareness of local products and services that residents can access and purchase while isolating in their homes.

The #AtHomeInSkipton campaign has been designed to drive awareness in proactive and collaborative ways for people to care for themselves, their community and continue to support the businesses they trust. The local business community is invited to get involved with the new campaign by using hashtags in their own digital content, whether it's a social media post or a YouTube video. In doing so, it becomes referenced under the relevant seven areas that Skipton BID has identified to continue supporting various sectors operating in Skipton.

Geraldine Thompson, Skipton BID Manager & Director explains, "We have such a solid resource of expert advice, business services and wonderful retail diversity in Skipton and now more than ever is it important to support and draw on that offering. Business and health experts are seeking to reach out to residents and business owners to help them stay well and offer guidance through these uncertain times. And residents need that support too for their new daily lives, no matter how short or long term this period of isolation may be."

With so many of the town's spring and summer events cancelled, with this new campaign during COVID-19, Skipton Bid remains solution-oriented and supporting the community's commercial resilience, as well as promoting our residents' physical and mental well-being.

The seven areas Skipton BID has identified aim to create a digital reference guide for the local business and residential community to easily find appropriate products and services through this new lifestyle journey:

NOURISH: recipes, interviews and how-to video tutorials focusing on foods with key nutrients and easy strategies to support the immune system, reduce stress and improve wellbeing along with the hidden power of certain everyday store-cupboard ingredients.
(restaurants, grocery suppliers, hotels, market stall holders)

LIVE: the importance of establishing a happy home with household tips, maintenance advice, pet advice, gifts throughout the year, learning about interiors to improve social spaces in small homes, promote healthy sleep patterns, establishing new routines and rituals for living happily together.
(hardware, interior and retail shops, market stall holders)

MOVE: from at-home workouts to live meditation sessions or yoga poses and tips for boosting energy or releasing pent-up energy when working and staying at home.

(fitness and sport centres, wellbeing health shops)

SUSTAINABLE: adapted activities inspired by the nature and sustainable resources, gardening, with tips to try at home as we embrace this period of social distancing and endeavour to live more sustainably, making the most of whatever nature is around or available.
(nature, eco-shops, gardeners, architects)

CONNECT: staying connected to reduce anxiety and loneliness when practicing social distancing and how to check in with others and remain community-focused, especially when it comes to those more vulnerable.

(counselling, charity workers and social support groups)

MINDFULNESS: helping people shift energies and priorities from worrying about what can't be controlled to focusing on the present moment, whether that is setting up a home working environment, tips on staying grounded or how to manage your finances.

(lifestyle coaching, financial advisors, wellbeing service providers)

SOCIAL: creating a virtual bubble for Skipton, hosting real time events to allow and encourage the formation and interaction of online social groups such as teams, clubs, groups and neighbourhoods that would normally meet in real-world social places.

(pubs, cafes, tourist attractions and social or hobby clubs)

Skipton BID acknowledges that happiness is core to the residents and business providers of Skipton, with national recognition having been granted to the town over recent years. As we adapt to living in times of COVID-19, health becomes increasingly important. This relates to personal health, business health and environmental health.

Geraldine adds "I commend the many businesses that have been able to adapt and diversify their offering so quickly to cater for the public under the very challenging new social distancing measures. Everyone is keen to continue and support new daily needs and routines in all manner of ways possible for businesses and livelihoods to survive. We all need to boost our immune system, support local business and maintain a positive mindset. Collectively we make a success of #AtHomeInSkipton."

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

<https://skiptonbid.com/at-home-in-skipton/>

