

Chair's Report

I am pleased to present the Annual Review and Accounts of St Ives BID for the twelve months ending 31 March 2025. St Ives Business Improvement District (BID) has been delivering new and existing services and initiatives within the town since 2014.

This year in question for the AGM marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter for St Ives BID, as we successfully secured our third five-year term, which commenced on 1st June 2024. BID3 brings with it a renewed mandate from our levy payers, with a levy of 2% of rateable value for eligible properties. As ever, BID is a business-led initiative supported by government legislation, giving businesses the power to raise funds locally to be spent locally on improving our defined commercial area. The Board of Directors remains responsible for ensuring that the BID is correctly governed. The last AGM was held in April 2025.

This year has continued to present challenges for businesses, with ongoing cost pressures and a rapidly changing economic landscape. BID has remained actively engaged with levy payers and statutory authorities, keeping businesses informed of available support and ensuring St Ives is well-placed to navigate these difficulties. Our monthly newsletter continues to provide news of events, support schemes, and key information for the town.

I (Alex Ward) have continued as Chair of the Board and work closely with Sarah Hooper, BID Manager, and I am delighted that we welcomed Catherine Cooper to the BID team in April 2024 as Business Liaison. Catherine brings over 25 years of senior-level experience in sales and marketing, having held senior roles at Bosch UK and Dyson, and she has already made a significant contribution to our marketing and business engagement activity.

A major highlight of the year was the launch of the **St Ives Gold Card** on 2nd December 2024. Designed for Cornwall residents, the Gold Card offers exclusive discounts and a minimum of 10% off at nearly 50 participating businesses across the town from cafés and shops to restaurants and more. Available for just £5 per year, the scheme has been warmly received and represents a powerful way to drive footfall through the quieter winter months, re-engage the local community, and lock spending within St Ives. The Gold Card also has a community dimension, with a portion of proceeds directed to local charities and community groups, with participating businesses having a vote on where those funds go. The scheme is already proving a strong addition to our offer and has continued into 2026 with an expanded network of participating businesses.

In terms of **town appearance**, BID continued to invest in floral displays and planting throughout the town to enhance the environment for visitors, residents and businesses alike. The **Winter Lights Project** returned for another season, with illuminations from Fore Street to Market Square and the iconic Fisherman's Lights around the harbour, helping to make St Ives a welcoming and vibrant destination during the darker months and extending the visitor season into the autumn and winter.

Our **events programme** has continued to play a vital role in generating footfall and celebrating what makes St Ives so special. BID stepped in this year to organise and deliver **St Ives in December**, a beloved community event that had previously been run by a volunteer group. The 2nd December celebration saw Santa arrive by lifeboat to a crowd gathered at the harbour, accompanied by St Ives School Choir, before a sleigh parade through the town, a magical occasion enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. We continue to sponsor a range of events

including the Food and Drink Festival, the September Festival, and the Porthmeor Longboard Competition.

In response to the needs of local employers and job seekers, BID organised a **Job Fair** in March 2025, held at the Salvation Army on Wharf Road. This brought together businesses from across the area with people seeking full-time, part-time and seasonal work, supported by the National Careers Service offering CV guidance on the day.

St Ives BID continues to work in close partnership with St Ives Town Council and the St Ives Tourism Association (now Visit St Ives), pooling resources including staff to deliver a joined-up approach to marketing and destination promotion, including joint management of the Town website as a one-stop resource for visitors.

Concluding comments

St Ives BID entered BID3 with real momentum. The Gold Card, the expanded events programme, and the strengthening of our team all represent meaningful progress for the town..

The BID Manager and Board of Directors will continue to work in partnership with levy payers, the local authority, the community, and all stakeholders to benefit the town economically, socially and environmentally. We are always looking for new ideas and new voices around the table, if you would like to get involved or share your thoughts, please do get in touch anytime.

Thank you for making the time to join us this evening.

Alex Ward, Chair, St Ives BID