

Vote for a Merthyr Tydfil that's ahead of the Valleys

A proposal for a Business Improvement District



the
big
heart
of Merthyr Tydfil





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The town centre represents one of Merthyr Tydfil's key assets, acting as the commercial, social and retail heart of the County Borough. It is the most important economic hub within the Heads of the Valleys area with a growing role as a tourist destination. And yet it has struggled to make the most of these opportunities. Added to this an expansion of internet and out of town shopping presents new challenges.

Given these threats, standing still is not enough to secure a prosperous future. Achieving further progress will require a clear and shared vision of what the town centre could become and the active involvement of those who know it better than anyone – local businesses and organisations.

The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil will bring a commercial perspective to the management and

improvement of the town centre and will realise energies and expertise that are often missing in regeneration contexts.

Businesses in Merthyr Tydfil have told us that they would like to see a programme of improvements focused on: Promoting Merthyr Tydfil; Welcoming Merthyr Tydfil; Engaging Merthyr Tydfil; and Transforming Merthyr Tydfil.

Please read on to see how The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil aims to implement this programme and create a brighter future for our town centre.

The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil Management Committee

the
big
heart
of Merthyr Tydfil



Our eight pledges to you

We will honour our commitment to these pledges in the service we provide over the next five years.

With a 'yes' vote in the July ballot we will:

- Make Merthyr Tydfil a clean, safe and pleasant place to do business
- Improve the wellbeing of our businesses and their employees
- Secure the best possible future for Merthyr Tydfil

1. We will promote the town centre to visitors and raise awareness of attractions

3. We will create a more welcoming town centre through our street ambassadors and support for the pubwatch & shopwatch schemes

5. We will actively represent the interests of businesses with any future development of the town centre

7. We will find cost savings to business through collective purchasing and recycling

2. We will capture more local spend by enhancing the town centre experience and encouraging repeat visits

4. We will improve communication between businesses, the community and the council as well as with contractors about town centre works

6. We will improve the town centre environment through greening and regular maintenance

8. We will ensure that all money raised will be used for the benefit of the BID area and that services we deliver are extra to those funded through business rates

**A BID will allow
businesses like mine
to have a real say in
how the town centre
is managed and
improved.**

Steve Morgan
Cosmetics4U



Promoting Merthyr Tydfil

Marketing the town centre to visitors and capturing more local spend

Merthyr Tydfil has much to be proud of, but has suffered from a range of economic and social pressures brought about through severe economic decline. The expansion in internet and out-of-town shopping, meanwhile, pose real threats to the town's ability to secure a sustainable future.

The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil will work to change perceptions, raise awareness of town centre attractions and make the most of the area's superb natural surroundings.



Our promotional activities will aim to:

Enhance the visitor experience.

By developing an understanding of the needs and behaviour of visitors, we will work to create a better town centre offer and improve the ease of visit.



Improve access and navigation.

We will work with partners to improve accessibility and signage to the town centre

Change perceptions

through implementing a wide ranging marketing strategy that celebrates Merthyr Tydfil's unique culture, rich heritage and diverse town centre offer.

Initiatives to increase footfall in to the town centre

Events and promotional activities focused on this area will showcase its unique offer and bring more visitors to the town as a whole.

Encourage return visits

through supporting promotional activities, improving the urban environment and developing a local incentive programme.



A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light-colored sweater over a collared shirt and tie, stands in a bar. The background is filled with shelves of bottles and bar equipment. The entire image has a monochromatic green tint. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

We want to create a better experience for our customers and a safer town centre environment. A BID could enhance the night-time economy in Merthyr Tydfil.

Nathan Williams
Y Dic Penderyn - Wetherspoons

Welcoming Merthyr Tydfil

Enhancing the town centre experience

The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil wants to create a better experience for all those visiting and working within the town centre.

We will introduce a series of initiatives to create a more welcoming environment and work closely with the Police, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and other partners to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. A long-term goal will be to achieve 'Purple Flag' status for the area's night time economy.



Our town centre welcome programme will:

Create a more welcoming place.

Our town centre ambassadors will assist visitors throughout their stay, call in responses to environmental issues, such as graffiti and rubbish, and report anti-social behavior.

Make access routes safer.

We will work with partners to improve the appearance of gateways and lobby to resolve traffic conflicts.

Improve the night time economy.

A Pubwatch scheme will allow licensees to share information about common issues, while a living above the shop initiative could increase trade and create a more vibrant town centre during the evening

Support the Shopwatch Initiative

by encouraging greater use of the scheme and subsidising costs for independent retailers



A man in a white shirt and tie stands in an office, leaning on a chair. The office contains a desk with a computer monitor, a bookshelf with binders, and a radiator. The entire image has a green tint.

The town centre has a lot to offer, but faces significant challenges. A BID could help bring businesses together and deliver targeted improvements to the trading environment.

Les Byard
St Tydfil Shopping Centre

Engaging Merthyr Tydfil

Better communication between businesses and realising cost savings through collective purchasing

A key element of the BID's programme will be to improve business interaction and the flow of information between each other, the community and the council as well as achieve cost savings through collective buying power.

We will work with agencies and contractors involved in town centre works to better inform businesses of development programmes and minimise their impact. We will also provide a representative body actively engaged in articulating the voice of business.



Our comprehensive communication programme will:

Improve business interaction.

We will deliver a networking programme which includes seminars and briefings. This will provide valuable opportunities to meet, learn from and trade with other businesses in the local area.

Realise savings through collective purchasing.

We will secure collective purchasing opportunities for our members, such as offers on financial products, utilities, stationery and paper recycling

Improve communication about town centre developments.

To mitigate any local disruption from streetworks, we will hold regular logistics meetings and produce bulletins, to keep you updated on developments.

Support collective action to reduce business rates

in the event of disruption from development works.



A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a dark blazer, is smiling and looking towards the left. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a bookshelf or display case. The entire image has a blue color cast.

Merthyr Housing is supporting the Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil, which will provide regeneration activities and help to sustain commercial activity in the town centre. A BID will significantly improve the town centre appearance as well as enhancing the visitors experience.

Karen Courts

Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

Transforming Merthyr Tydfil

Creating a thriving business and retail environment

While much work has been undertaken to enhance the centre of Merthyr Tydfil over recent years, further improvements could bring significant benefits. We want to progress a clear and shared view of what the town could become and the role it can play in the region.

We want to ensure that any new developments in the town centre bring with them significant benefits to existing businesses and help mitigate the threats posed by the expansion of internet and out-of-town shopping.

Our work will focus on making the town centre a cleaner, more pleasant place to be, with a secure and well-maintained environment. We will work to bring new retail and complimentary activities to the area as well as maximising investment by levering in match funding.

Our town centre improvement programme will include:

Small scale environmental improvements.

We will increase both the quantity and the quality of planters, hanging baskets, festive decorations and lights.

Additional street cleaning and maintenance.

We will supplement the work of other providers by introducing targeted responses to litter, refuse and fouling. We will respond rapidly to cleansing problems outside your business premises and tackle town centre maintenance issues.

Improvements to derelict buildings .

We will work to enhance the appearance of neglected premises that detract from the town centre environment.



The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil BID:

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

A detailed statement of our Business Improvement District arrangements is available at

www.thebigheart.net

Here are some of the key points:

What is The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil?

The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil is an unincorporated association with a management committee of 9 people, mainly drawn from local businesses and organisations.

It has been set up to enhance the image, attractiveness and business opportunities of Merthyr Tydfil town centre as a commercial destination and also to promote a possible Business Improvement District (BID).

Why is The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil running a ballot in July 2012?

If we are to become a Business Improvement District (BID), we need to run a ballot of eligible businesses. The ballot will ask a simple question: 'Are you in favour of the proposals for The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil Business Improvement District?'. In order for the BID to come into existence, a simple majority must vote in favour. But those voting must also represent a majority of the aggregate rateable value of the rateable value of the rateable properties (hereditaments) that vote.

In advance of the ballot, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will write to you to invite you to nominate who should vote on behalf of your organisation.

Which businesses are eligible to vote in the BID ballot?

If your business premises falls within the proposed BID area (see map on p.23) and has a rateable value of £5,000 or more, you are eligible to vote in the BID ballot.

How will the BID be funded?

If the ballot is successful the BID will be funded by an annual levy of 1.35% of rateable value on all eligible businesses. So if the rateable value on your business premises is £10,000, you will pay £135pa, collected in two instalments. The levy will be amended on an annual basis at the same rate as the NNDR 'multiplier'.

How can I be represented?

If our July 2012 ballot is successful The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil will be reconstituted as a new not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The first AGM will take place soon after the BID starts its work in September 2012.

All businesses that were eligible to vote, and that pay the levy, may become members of the company; any member can stand for election to the board.

Our Management Committee

Les Byard - Chair
(St Tydfil Shopping Centre)

Steven Morgan
(Cosmetics4U)

Andrew Mussett - Deputy Chair
(Wetherspoons)

Michelle Powell
(VAMT)

Jeff Edwards
(Merthyr Tydfil County
Borough Council)

Gail Scerri
(MTHA)

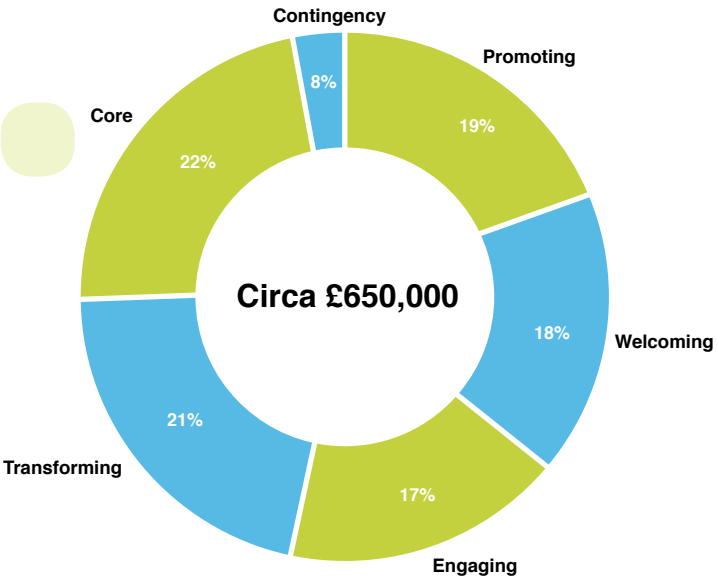
Claire Hallet
(South Wales Police)

Lyn Williams
(22 Seven)

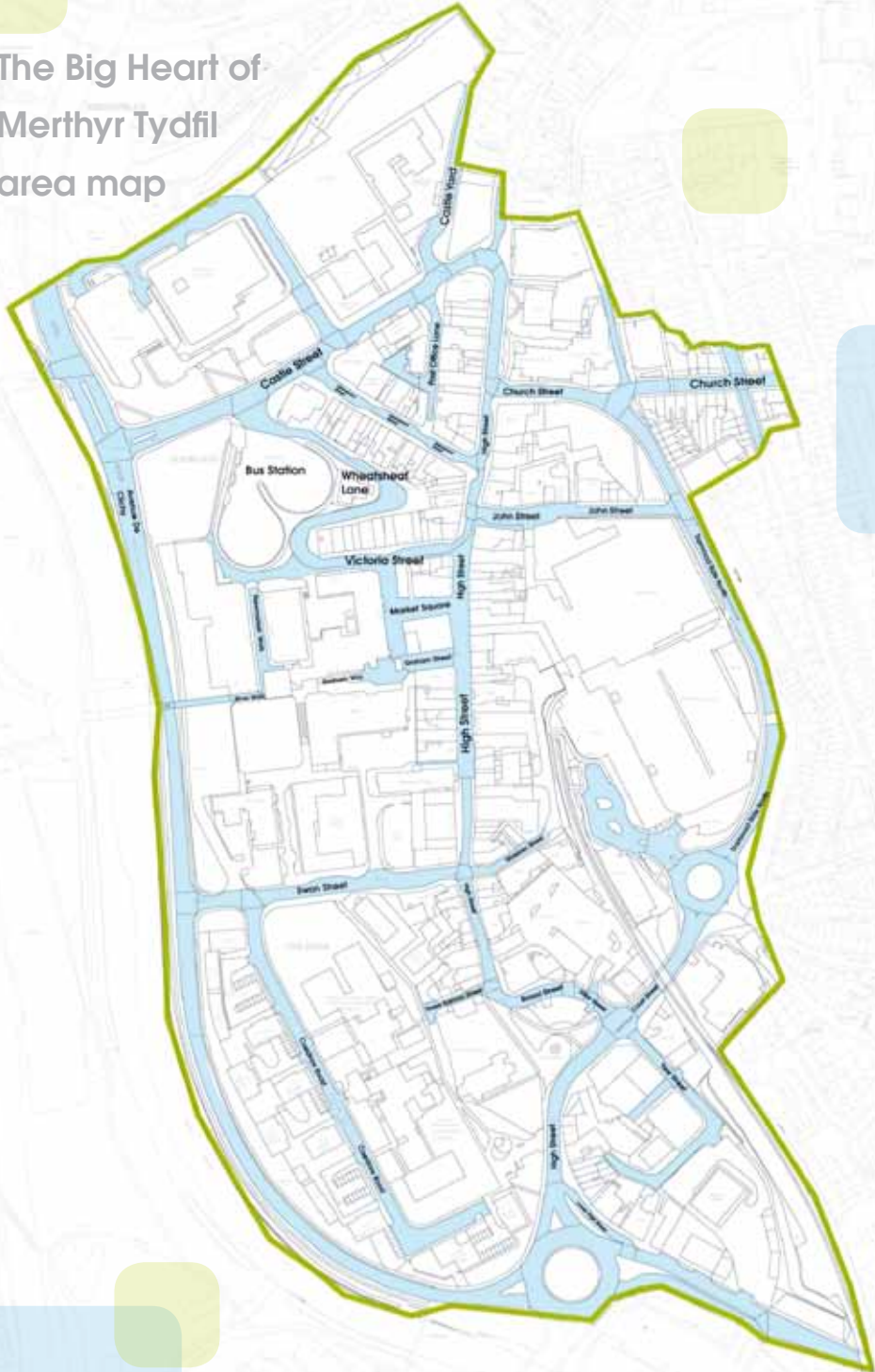
Lee Jenkins
(B&M Bargains)

INVESTING IN MERTHYR TYDFIL'S FUTURE

The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil will invest circa £650,000 received from local businesses between 2012 and 2017 on a comprehensive programme of improvements. In addition, the contributions from businesses will enable us to seek extra funding from other sources.



The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil area map



Your town – your vote

The Business Improvement District (BID) ballot is your opportunity to have a say in the future of the town you have invested in.

Vote yes to:

Promoting Merthyr Tydfil

Welcoming Merthyr Tydfil

Engaging Merthyr Tydfil

Transforming Merthyr Tydfil

Your voting pack will give you the chance to establish a BID that will bring a commercial perspective and realise energies and expertise to regeneration programmes for the town centre.

Don't miss this opportunity. When is it all happening?

May 2012

You will receive notification of the ballot

July 2012

Ballot closes. We will announce the result

2012-17

Town centre investment and improvement

June 2012

You will receive a ballot paper asking whether you want a BID for Merthyr Tydfil town centre

September 2012

If the result is positive we will deliver our programme

Early 2017

Decision on 5 year renewal based on our performance

If the ballot is successful, The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil will become a Business Improvement District (BID). Further detail on The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil Business Improvement District (BID) Proposal is to be found in a second document

'The Big Heart of Merthyr Tydfil Business Improvement District: how it will be established, how it will be managed'.

This is available at www.thebigheart.net

The work to establish a Business Improvement District in Merthyr Tydfil is supported by the Welsh Government

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government