Luton BID – Luton News column January 2023

**Looking forward to the year ahead**

Written by Julia Horsman, Luton BID Manager

As we reflect on the past 12 months, it’s a good time to evaluate all the positive things that happened across the year, as we look ahead to 2023.

As we are planning for the year, at Luton BID, we want to continue the momentum of last year, which was a really exciting and positive 12 months for the Town Centre with many large-scale events, successful projects and initiatives that came out of 2022.

Unfortunately, as we enter 2023, there are new challenges and ambiguity for businesses in Luton with the uncertainty surrounding the rise in energy costs and as future customers limit their spending. As we saw through the pandemic a real sense of resilience is visible from many town centre businesses we speak to. This means that the BIDs role in supporting businesses is more important than ever.

We will continue to talk and listen to business owners, community groups and partners to understand the best and most effective way to support the Town Centre. We are working on a range of projects for 2023 to improve the overall experience, environment and generate further growth and investment.

There are some really exciting developments to look forward to – with the new pocket park ‘Hat Gardens’ due to be completed at the start of the year, this area will add much needed green space to the Town and enhance the historic Hat District area. Work has also begun on ‘The Stage’, the major multi-purpose development and regeneration where Bute Street car park currently sits.

We are starting 2023 with optimism and excitement about the future for Luton, whilst continuing to listen to businesses to understand what they want from Luton BID this year.