



Lincoln

Business Improvement
Group

Background

Lincoln BIG, representing city centre businesses, was established in 2005 in response to a need to promote the city more widely. The BID works closely with Visit Lincoln, the City of Lincoln Council, the Historic Lincoln Partnership, and Lincoln Cathedral. The latter is represented on the BID board and the BID is represented on the Historic Lincoln Partnership. The BID is a key funder and founding partner of Visit Lincoln, the city's Destination Management Organisation.

Lincoln BIG's approach to place branding

Place making is central to Lincoln BIG as a place management organisation, and the BID is concerned with, "peoples' experience of the city centre across a range of issues; a good place for business to operate, a good visitor experience, good for residents and shoppers. The challenge is working across the different interests."

Lincoln had no single core resource for place branding; this was the motivation for creating Visit Lincoln, which manages the place brand. The BID doesn't undertake marketing separately and works with Visit Lincoln as the marketing organisation.

Lincoln's public realm is very important to the BID; championing investment and quality is central to a desire to preserve the value of local heritage assets.

Lincoln BIG's use of heritage in place branding

Heritage is integrated into a wide range of the Lincoln BIG's activities, from contributing to the care and management of the city centre to events and themed programmes. Street decoration gives a seasonal look and feel to the city and the warden programme supports caring for the environment. The BID runs the visitor information centre and has invested in signage, mapping, interpretation, city guides and open top bus tours for the city centre.

Entertainment and events are staged throughout the year and are the BID's largest expenditure. In 2015 to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta the BID and partners staged the Great Magna Carta weekend with over 50 events; the Baron's Charter Trail of decorated baron sculptures was a particular success. The success of the themed approach has influenced how the BID approached Lincoln's commemoration of World War 1, the visit of the Poppies Wave to Lincoln Castle, and 2017 plans to commemorate the Battle of

Lincoln and Charter of the Forest.

The Cathedral is an important partner and an essential part of Lincoln's identity and tourist offer. The BID works with the Cathedral at Board level. Examples include managing joint ticketing arrangements for the Cathedral and Castle and events in and around the Cathedral.

The BID is also a partner in the city's cultural strategy and programme, having supported the development of a partnership as a response to reduced cultural investment by the local authority. Arts Council England and Visit England 'Cultural Destinations' grant funding has supported a three-year cultural programme delivered through the Lincoln Cultural Partnership.

Benefits of heritage and place branding activities

From the BID's perspective;

"The historic city is a fundamental part of the city identity and a huge asset ... It gives uniqueness to the place particularly when the retail centres we are competing with all have the same brands. We look different; offer a better quality visitor experience, plus the heritage tourism potential of the assets. This cannot be created without the heritage assets, which bring differentiation to the place brand."

Challenges of using heritage in place branding

The Cathedral is delivering a major Heritage Lottery Funded building programme and new visitor centre. Through its focus on the public realm, the BID sees other opportunities for underused heritage assets to be opened up and made accessible. The BID views its role as encouraging and supporting development, but is conscious of the need to balance the short-term requirements of levy-paying businesses with the longer-term investment needed to develop heritage assets.



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