

Horsham District Economic Development Team

# End of Year Report 2020

February 2021

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## Economic Strategy in Action

This report includes some of the Economic Development Team's highlights of the past year, for your information.

The day to day activity of the team is to support as many small businesses across the District in whatever way is required and our activity is diverse and organic in nature.

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone, particularly for our

local businesses.

Prior to the pandemic, the team already sought to respond to changing priorities and needs as they emerged. The pandemic had then brought about a whole new set of priorities and needs in 2020.

The Economic Development Team continued to deliver the objectives of the Economic Strategy during 2020 and will

keep on delivering the 5 priority areas in 2021. These priorities are as follows:

**Inward Investment**

**Enterprise**

**Skills and Employment**

**Infrastructure**

**Promoting the District Offer**

## Supporting our local businesses Enterprise, Promoting the District Offer

Prior to the pandemic, a **Business Drop-In Event** was hosted at Parkside on 18th February 2020, providing opportunities for networking and business advice with 16 exhibitors offering their support.

In April, we worked with Visit Horsham to launch **Essential Horsham**—a searchable online directory and map. A database of essential stores and delivery services was created to populate this and businesses were given advice on how to establish

**HORSHAM  
MARKETS** BY **FOOD  
ROCKS**

**CLICK & COLLECT  
OR HOME DELIVERY**  
**CLICK HERE TO BOOK**

home delivery services. It has achieved **over 100,000 page views**.

We had **Horsham Markets** develop COVID safe practices and a **click and collect and home delivery service** during the first lockdown, which handled **over 1,000 orders**.

A **Horsham District Business Support Group** was initiated via a **Facebook Group Page** during the first lockdown and has grown to **300 members**. The group is managed by ByLove Media and supported by HDC. The page operates as a peer level channel of essential business information and support, whilst fostering business to business networking.

HDC, in partnership with Visit Horsham, launched an easy to access portal called **Virtual Horsham** for local businesses who are trading online. The first 200 businesses to register are free until the end of August 2021. There are **currently 100 businesses on the portal**.

We have been working with the Communications team on production of the **Business Newsletter**, an email newsletter which acts as one of our key

## HIGHLIGHTS

**New media channel developed—  
Horsham.TV—  
following a successful  
pilot project before  
Christmas**

**113 people have found  
work in 2020 as a  
result of the Journey to  
Work and WISH  
projects**



Business Drop-In Event—February 2020



## Supporting our local businesses (continued)

communication channels with local businesses. Nearly 40 newsletters have been circulated since the pandemic began in March 2020. The newsletter has now reached **over 1,000 recipients**.

**High Street Reopening packs** containing sector specific support, were delivered across the District as stores were able to reopen in June.

The first part of the **Horsham Market Towns** programme, a business training and support project, was delivered virtually by Chichester College.

**Interactive online workshops** aimed at high street businesses were recorded and are available for access going into 2021. Over 20 businesses have benefitted from the sessions so far.

Topics were restructured in respect of current needs with sessions on online marketing and getting your business trading online brought forward. The underlying message is to ensure safety measures are in place and being understood and observed.

## Events and Campaigns

### Enterprise, Promoting the District Offer

The pandemic has intensified the challenges that our local high street businesses face.

In-person events to drive footfall and offer engagement were not possible in 2020 so events went 'virtual' and a series of campaigns were launched to support our local businesses.

**Respect, Protect, Enjoy** was a campaign to promote the safe reopening of the high streets and businesses across the district, following the first national lockdown.

A series of **online competition trails** with themed weekly quizzes and prizes, ran from April to July **reaching over 130,000**. The trails encouraged potential customers to visit the websites and Facebook pages of **over 75 local businesses** (see Figure 1 for topics and engagement figures).

**Tea at Two** invited businesses to offer special promotions to encourage visitors in the quiet afternoons of August.

**Virtual Big Nibble**— In September the annual Big Nibble went virtual and we learnt a

lot to apply going forward. It featured key businesses across the District, such as South Lodge and Leonardslee Gardens – producing videos with key chefs cooking their signature dishes, plus recipe cards and competitions. Each week had a central foodie theme which included: Horsham Markets and their suppliers; Future Food and Sustainability; Local produce; International Food Festival.

**The Virtual Nibble** reached 76,000 people with over 75,000 video views and featured 30 businesses

**Virtual Reality Trails**—We invested in two 'off the shelf' VR trails to test a paperless/ Covid safe approach. A **Halloween one in Horsham** and a **Christmas one in Steyning**. Run through local partners, Horsham Rotary and Steyning Community Partnership, these were interactive stories, where participants found posters in shop windows containing QR and NFC codes that generated virtual characters on their phones. The results will be assimilated into future Trail activities in 2021 when viable.



Buy Local Horsham District Champion Hot Chocolate Winner

Bylove Media

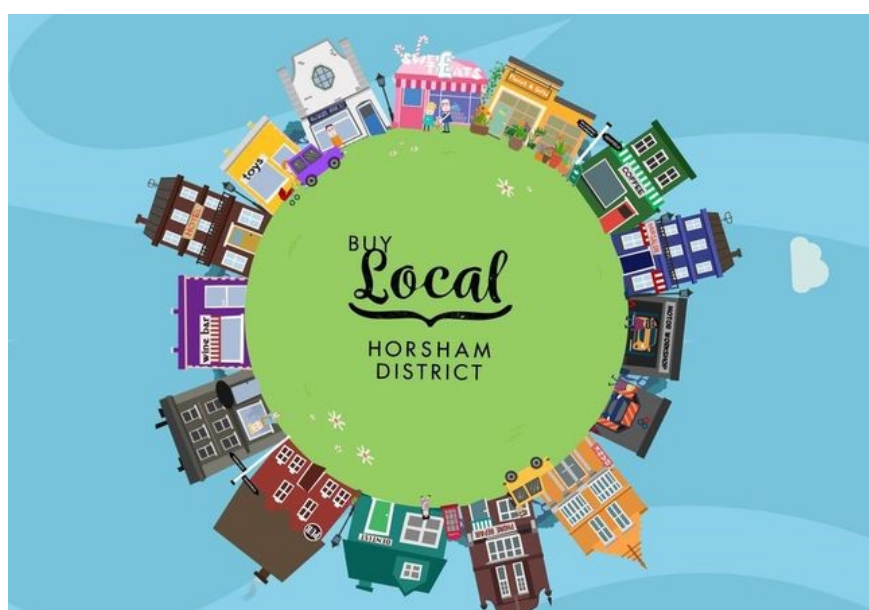
HDC HTWS Facebook Online Trails

Trail	Reach	Engagement	Notes
Gin		25,169	797
Afternoon Tea		24,705	1,612
Local Produce		32,156	1,554
Wine		12,988	297
Beer		10,707	217
Chocolate		10,001	297
Pub Food		9,680	464
Coffee		4,525	227
World Food		4,886	328
Fashion		7,555	465
Restaurants		14,290	1,136
Family Fun		2,083	67
General Winners Post		947	50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>134,617</b>	<b>5,793</b>

\* not all trails include figures for winner announcement and winner photo as some not yet available

\* 314 likes have been added to the page since the start of the trails.

**Figure 1: Reach and engagement figures from the Online Trails**





## Events and Campaigns (continued)

A major new **Buy Local** theme was introduced in October linking all subsequent initiatives across the District. This attracted strong publicity for the Council and was supported with animations, feature articles, social media work and local radio interviews.

**The Gift Hunters** sought to encourage residents to buy their festive gifts from local independent businesses, through a video-led social media campaign and competition. The feature video, with a nod to the

Jumanji Films, can be viewed on the [Hors-ham Time Well Spent YouTube channel](#).

Timed to fit the period of Tier 2 restrictions pre Christmas we ran **Window Wonderland** and **Champion Hot Chocolate** business and public competitions to support the shopping experience on our District High Streets

### Horsham.TV – a new media channel

Three pilot [online](#) local news magazines were published every Friday on the run up to Christmas. These attracted **15,000 views**

and they featured **30 local businesses**. A second series is planned in 2021 with the aim to make it self financing as far as possible.

**Take a Break** an initiative that targets home workers to encourage them to 'take a break' during their working day and visit their local high street was started in October 2020 and will continue into 2021 when safe to do so.



## Skills and Employment News

### Skills and Employment, Enterprise

We delivered the third annual **Apprenticeship Fair** on 29 February in the Drill Hall, with **nearly 40 exhibitors** from local employers and training providers providing **nearly 600 visitors** with information about their opportunities.

It was the last employment event prior to the pandemic with the September Jobs Fair being cancelled.

We plan to hold virtual **Jobs and Apprenticeship fairs** from the Spring in 2021.

Since April 2020, **J2W** (and **WISH**) helped over **50 people** into work.

**WISH** provides weekly support bulletins, live vacancies and online workshops. WISH is supporting over 150 customers.

A **new In2Work Support Officer** has recently started, providing support to those aged 25+ who have lost their job and need support getting themselves back into work.

Two **new Employer Engagement Officers** started 6th January 2021 to support all J2W Projects.

From February 2021, two new recruits will run the new **Y-WISH**, Youth Employment Hub, which will operate in Swan Walk once restrictions allow.



## 2020 Star Project: Journey to Work (J2W)

The Council has provided employment support to local people since January 2012, when **Journey to Work (J2W)** started. Initially funded with a small amount of money from DWP, J2W began life as a pilot project designed to alleviate the national NEET crisis with 1 million 18-24-year olds across the country not in employment, education or training. **That first year saw 62 young people supported and 25 find paid work as a result, 15 of them working for HDC.**

Since then the J2W programme has grown from strength to strength with **WISH clubs** also being set up to support rural communities from 2015. Both projects have combined so that **more than 1000 people have**

**been supported since 2012, with at least half of them finding work.**

Despite the obvious challenges, 2020 has also been a stellar example of how we have positively impacted on unemployment across our area. The past year has seen the J2W and WISH club projects continuing to offer dedicated and expert advice and guidance, as well as hard outcomes and solutions, to more than 250 people, with **186 starting on the programmes since the start of 2020. Of those engaged, 113 have found work** as a result of the support provided.

J2W was, until December, provided by Lesley Beauvoisin, who spent just over two years building and developing a new (and since March 2020 a much more remote) style of support and with Richard Brooks, from SETAS who run WISH, they have collaborated to create an outstanding programme greatly appreciated by the local Jobcentre Plus team and by local residents as well.

We continue to build on the previous nine years of J2W and adapt to support the current, local priorities and with the departure of Lesley to a new venture on the coast, we

have realigned Journey to Work to represent the growing number of projects, with **WISH** continuing remotely, a new **In2Work** project providing support to those hit by the pandemic and aged 25 and above, and a new **Y-WISH**, youth employment support hub in Horsham, due to start in March 2021. All projects will look to go back to physical delivery as soon as possible and will also provide new outreach opportunities to our rural communities.

In memory of Jan English, J2W Officer – 2012 to 2017. RIP.

### West Sussex Journey to Work

Horsham District Council also heads up the wider West Sussex Local Authority programme of employment support, also entitled J2W.

The programme has been funded by SIF for 3 years and has **engaged with 1990 West Sussex residents** and has **enabled at least 500 people to find work** in that time. SIF funding ends this year and LAs are trying to find other funding opportunities to maintain their services in the coming years.



## External Funding Successes

### Inward Investment, Enterprise, Promoting the District Offer

#### LEAP Small Business Grants

Over £284,000 has been secured from the **Strategic Infrastructure Fund** since 2017 for LEAP. So far over 130 local businesses have been supported via the programme. For 2020/21, **the scheme** has been geared towards funding projects for start-ups and new businesses, who may have missed out on support from central government.

#### RHSS Funding

Horsham was awarded **£128,132 from the Reopening High Street Safely Fund**. An internal office task force was created, including representatives from Economic Development, Property, Car Parks, Environmental Health, Community Safety, WSCC and Swan Walk. Town task teams were pulled together quickly in order to help set the priorities for the funding.

#### Journey to Work

The Council has successfully applied for **£1.3m worth of SIF funding since 2018**, with the amounts spread across the West Sussex Local Authorities. HDC's share of that money has been £170k.

In December 2020 we also successfully applied for **£95k of DWP funding** to support the new employment projects.

#### Further SIF Funding for Independent Retailers

We have secured **£80k of SIF funding** to support independent retailers. The scheme will be delivered in 2021.

**“Before the pandemic our bespoke in-house training sessions were delivered in-person which meant that as of March 2020 the business faced an uncertain future. Now, thanks to the LEAP funding all our training sessions are being delivered as live interactive webinar sessions online and our reputation and audiences around the world are growing”**

**- Responsible Research in Practice Ltd (LEAP Grant Recipient)**

SMALL BUSINESS AND APPRENTICESHIP GRANTS



## COVID-19 Business Support Grants

The ED team have been supporting local businesses in accessing the **business support grants** throughout the pandemic.

Officers have provided recommendations

on the discretionary grants as well as following up businesses for further information on their applications, helping businesses secure their grant funding.



Jengers Craft Bakery, Billingshurst



Reopening...The Flower Shop

## Monitoring and Research Enterprise

### Business Surveys

**Business monitoring surveys** ran online during Lockdown 1 and into Lockdown 2, analysing the impact that the pandemic was having on local businesses and helping to identify key support needs during lockdown and as stores reopened.

Respondents were contacted by the team where they had specific support requirements, from information on local PPE suppliers to employment support.

The outcome of these surveys also shaped the topics covered in the **Horsham Market Towns Programme**.

### High Street Report

We have also been creating a **High Street Monitoring Report** which started on a weekly basis from mid-June 2020, transitioning to monthly once stores had reopened after Lockdown 1. The report tracks the health of our high streets. Local footfall figures, car park data and shop vacancy rates are being monitored alongside research on the national trends.

## Encouraging Inward Investment

### Local Plan

Supporting Strategic Planning on the review of the economy policies of the local plan and how the overall strategy can support our local businesses and encourage inward investment.

### Gatwick Airport

Gatwick Northern Runway Development Consent Order Project - Provided the lead on the Socio-Economic and Employment Topic Working Group, to ensure engagement with Gatwick Airport as it brought forward the Masterplan and

development proposals.

### Think Horsham website

New focus and design of the Think Horsham website. This is now the main



Open for business

platform for the promotion of the District as a business location. Work will continue on enhancing the website to target key sectors.

## Developing Infrastructure

### Gigabit Voucher Scheme

Working with WSCC in promoting a Gigabit voucher scheme. Rural premises can secure a voucher of £4,000.

To date **approximately 30 communities across the County have applied** with £1.1m of the £2,65m voucher allocation claimed or at a very advanced stage. This represents 1,690 properties across the County with 738 properties in Horsham district (primarily residential).

We continue to work with WSCC in the promotion and marketing of the scheme, with the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

### Local Full Fibre Networks

Working with WSCC to develop full fibre network linking Crawley, Horsham and Burgess Hill.

The project will provide a new duct for digital infrastructure in a key economic/business growth hub, linking the northern county towns of Crawley and the Manor

Royal Business District to Horsham, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill and directly benefitting businesses in Horsham District.

It will also secure further benefits by providing the potential to digitally connect the county to the wider region. Work started on the network in October 2020.

### City Fibre

Worked with WSCC and City Fibre to provide gigabit-capable broadband services to public buildings in Horsham.



Digital Screen showing safety messaging  
June 2020

## Visitor Economy Strategy

Promoting the District Offer, Enterprise

Following the adoption of the **Visitor Economy Strategy** in 2017, the Team has been busy with a number of projects aimed at supporting and growing this important sector.

### Discover Horsham

In January, the [Discover Horsham website](#) was launched which is aimed at promoting the District offer to potential visitors.

### WildArt Project

Garry and Lynda were invited to present the **WildArt project** to a **European consortium of partners working in Digital Tourism**, as an example of good practice and shared learning. This was attended remotely.

## End of Year Report 2020

### Digital Tourist Information Signs

**£53,000 of LEADER funding** was secured for the **digital tourist information signs** in the rural car parks.

Bespoke digital screens have been placed across the District carrying interactive tourist information aimed at visitors to the district. We have worked closely with our **Parish Council and Community Partnership** partners to ensure that the content is appropriate and accurate.

The screens were swiftly switched to display public health safety messages in line with the pandemic, but will revert back to tourism once these messages are no longer required.

## Linking it all up

As has been demonstrated by the projects we have been working on over the years, working in partnership is key to the success of our Economy and the Team work collaboratively with a number of partners.

We collaborate with Coast to Capital, Business Hot House, our Economic Development colleagues across the county and the Arun Valley Community Rail Partnership, to name just a few.

### Horsham Business Improvement District

2020 saw the start on establishing a **Business Improvement District** for Horsham town centre (BID). A BID steering group was established, bringing together key businesses and organisations looking to draw up a long term strategy for the town centre. The views of our local businesses were sought through events, surveys and one to one engagement.

However, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, work on the BID was put on hold. The partnership working with the BID Steering Group continued, providing key communication with our town centre businesses. We are supporting the BID Steering Group in setting up a Community Investment Company, to provide a voice for the business community.

### Internal collaborative working

Collaborative working across departments went from strength to strength during 2020, which was essential for making sure businesses were getting the support they required during this challenging year.

We would particularly like to thank our Comms team, as well as Environmental Health and Community Safety.



Working in partnership has been key for many of our projects, including the Christmas Spirits Trail

**“Receiving the LEAP funding grant was essential for our business... Applying was very straightforward and the team at Horsham District Council were great at guiding us through every step of the process.” - Newboldology (LEAP Grant Recipient)**

## Summarising 2020

2020 has been a challenging year. Nevertheless, a lot has been achieved by the ED Team.

We have continued to deliver vital support to our local businesses, adapting to the changing priorities for **enterprise** that have come about as a result of the pandemic.

We have launched a number of campaigns and initiatives to champion our local independent high street businesses and to **promote our local district offer**.

The need for **skills and employment** support became even more essential during 2020. The Journey to Work programme has continued to

grow from strength to strength, helping local people find work and seeing the development of a number of new projects.

Securing external funding has backed the development of these new employment projects, with LEAP and RHSS funding facilitating vital projects for local businesses.

We have also made progress on promoting **inward investment** and improving **infrastructure** within the District.

We will continue to work hard supporting our local businesses as well as providing employment support to local people.



## Looking ahead to 2021

### Funding:

#### LEAP Small Business Grants

The LEAP scheme continues into early 2021. We will be seeking further funding for later in the year and into 2022 for this popular scheme.

£80k has also been secured from SIF for a **Retail Support Programme** and **Shop Improvement Grants**.

### New Campaigns and Activities:

We are currently fostering the development of a **new market** in Henfield.

#### Horsham Market Towns Programme

1-2-1 training sessions with individual businesses will be delivered in line with current situation. The programme will be completed by March 2021.

#### Start Up Local

A campaign is being developed which is aimed at encouraging people to go self-employed and start a local business.

#### Take a Break

The campaign, which began in October 2020 and is aimed at home workers, will continue into 2021 once it is safe to promote.

### 'We love... Horsham District'

A Valentines related initiative to support local business sales while under lockdown.

### New Footfall Counters

A new High Street data system for the District that does not rely on locally hosted devices promises much more reliable and useable information including place of origin and dwell times. Acquisition is being tendered under the RHSS Grant funding. The target is to have this in place by end of March.

### Partnership

We will continue to work in partnership with Coast to Capital, Business Hot House, our Economic Development Colleagues across the county and our many more partners.

### Employment & Skills:

Launch of the **Y-Wish Youth Employment Support Hub** for 18-24-year olds.

### The Virtual Support Hub

Development of a virtual platform for hosting and promoting our employment and skills events and programmes i.e. a web based 'Drill Hall for the District'



Horsham.TV will return in 2021

## The 2020 HDC Economic Development Team

Clare Mangan	Head of Economic Development
Lynda Spain	Economic Development Officer (Rural)
Garry Mortimer-Cook	Town Centres & Events Manager
Leigh Chambers	Economic Development Officer (Employment, Skills and Visitor Economy)
Julie Cavallo	Events Officer (Job Share)
Shannon Mackey-Witton	Events Officer (Job Share)
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