



# Torquay Town Talk

*January 2010*

*Torbay Town Centres Company*

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## **Torquay BID Business Plan- arriving soon**

After many months of consultation, negotiation and research the Torquay BID Business Plan is finally published. Each of you will receive a copy posted to your business address in the next few days.

This Business Plan has been devised based on the results of the questionnaires that you completed for us last summer. We asked you to tell us what you thought were the most important things we could do to arrest the decline and to improve your trading performance in Torquay.

The priorities fall into 4 broad areas:

- Cleaner streets
- Better marketing and events
- High profile policing
- More influence on how the town is managed and planned.



When you read the Business plan you will see that it addresses these areas head-on with a programme of activities and initiatives that will really make a difference.

Please take the time to read this plan it is very important that you understand what we are trying to achieve, via the Torquay BID scheme. **You** will have the ultimate say in whether it will go ahead or not. In March every business (either locally or at Head Office) will have the opportunity to vote for this plan. For the vote to succeed there has to be more YES votes than NO votes and the YES votes have to represent the majority of the Rateable Value of all those who vote. It is really important that you have your say.

If the vote is positive then we are ready to start delivering the plan this summer. The Gum removal operator has already pencilled in a date in May to clean all the pavements of gum and grease. We have talked to designers about the possibilities for dressing up our empty shop units. The local Police Inspector is identifying suitable candidates to fill the additional BID police posts in the town. We have had discussions about town centre events and an advertising campaign for this summer and next autumn; in the next few weeks we will be talking to Christmas lighting companies about tendering for the new display next Christmas. So we are ready to hit the ground running as soon as we have the green light from you. If the vote fails then none of this will happen and Torquay will continue to operate in an unplanned and hand- to mouth fashion, allowing the competition from Exeter, Plymouth and the Willows to erode your market share.

Over the 5 year lifetime of the BID we will inject a minimum of £1.3 million into improving the trading environment of the Torquay town centre. Without it we continue to watch the decline and our market share disappearing out- of- town to Exeter, Plymouth and The Willows..

## An important date for your diary -hear all about the Torquay BID



With your BID Business plan you will receive an invitation to come to **The Imperial Hotel Torquay** on **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 6pm**. We are inviting all businesses in the BID area to the launch of the Torquay BID Business Plan.

We will present and explain the Business Plan, tell you what it will achieve, what it will cost and why you should support it with your YES vote in March.

Neil Scott of Totally Truro will also tell you about the Truro BID; what it has achieved since 2007 and how

their businesses have got involved in influencing how the city operates. To find out more about the Truro BID visit [www.totallytruro.co.uk](http://www.totallytruro.co.uk)

If you are not responsible for voting on the BID please bring along your manager.

We will be there to answer your questions and comments and to let you know how you can get involved in making sure we deliver this vital scheme for Torquay

**. PLEASE return the free post RSPV on the invitation or give us a call to let us know you are coming 01803 212270.**

## Christmas 2009

There was confusion about late- night opening over this period and I think we should explain. Last year we held a series of Retail Network Group meetings open to all retailers. We were told that late night shopping had been poor for many years because so few shops opened late and those that did, say it was hardly worthwhile. So we were asked to coordinate opening hours over Christmas and Bank Holidays.

In the July 2009 edition of Torquay Town Talk we asked all retailers to tell us their preference for late night opening, we followed this up with a discussion at the next Retail Networking Group and asked your colleagues attending to make the decision. They decided unanimously to open on Thursday in preference to Friday. We explained that we would have no budget for entertainment etc but we undertook to advertise the change using the little resources we had.

In September 2009 Torquay Town Talk we told all businesses in Torquay that the decision had been taken by the Retail Network Group to change late night shopping from Friday to Thursday. We reiterated that again in the November Torquay Town Talk.

To promote this change we had 15000 Christmas programmes, printed and distributed across Torbay and South Devon, we advertised on Palm fm and Heart radios and through the pages of the Herald Express, and on various websites telling people about the change.

The first 2 Thursdays were disastrous but so was the weather. The final two I understand were better and I know one or two businesses that did very well, but we know that it did not work as well as it should have done.



We need to get this right next year and so we need to know from you if you want to revert back to Friday nights, we will also need to know early if Torbay Council intends to introduce the £1 per weekend parking initiative again, as the decision came too late for us to change the dates last year.

Next Christmas if you vote for the BID, we shall have a lot more money and resources to put into marketing Christmas. We will have more and better Christmas lights, street entertainment and events to create a festive atmosphere and more money to promote and advertise the town at Christmas to keep our customers here and to attract new.

## Christmas Treasure Hunt



Sponsored by Wilkinsons and the Herald Express, thanks to all of you who participated in this. The prizes amounted to over £200 of Christmas goodies. Our worthy winners were the Holmes family of Torquay who were delighted with their early Christmas treat. We will organize another Easter egg hunt this year. I was so successful last year. Let us know if you want to join in. 01803 212270

## Business Rates Revaluation

By now you will have received your Business Rates valuation for 2010. We know that many of you will have seen an increase, in some cases this increase is substantial. The valuation was carried out in spring 2008 based on the rental values at that time.

As you know the Valuation is done by government via the Valuation Office NOT Torbay Council. The Council is responsible for collecting the rates and passing the funds back to Government.



You can lodge an appeal against your valuation with the Valuation Office after April 1<sup>st</sup> Visit their website [www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk) or call 01392 606900. To find out more about your valuation and how to appeal.

The good news such as it is, is that the rate in the £ is going to decrease considerably, from 48p in the £ to 40.7 p in the £, so, in some cases, even if your Rateable Value has increased the amount you pay may stay about the same. That will not apply to everyone however.

You may also qualify for Small Business Rate Relief (SBR) just two conditions apply: 1. you must occupy just one premise as a ratepayer. 2. The rateable value is currently below £15000 (rising to £18000 after April 1<sup>st</sup>) you are then **ENTITLED** to Small Business Rate Relief. To apply for this contact the Revenue Section, Torbay Council, 01803 207207 or email [business.rates@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:business.rates@torbay.gov.uk). You have a right to Small Business Rates Relief if both conditions apply to your business.

If you do not qualify for SBR you may be entitled to Transitional Relief which entitles you to a % discount on the increase in rates over 5 years.

You can ask for help on rating matters by contacting Torbay Council, Revenue Section on 01803 207207.

## Retail Networking Group

We are holding the next one on **February 4th at 10.00** at the **Argos Store, Union St**. These meetings are for you. We need to hear from you about how things are out on the streets. It is a chance for you to catch up with your colleagues and competition and to hear how they are doing. We will bring you up to date with the latest news on what is happening in the town. It is also an opportunity for you to influence decisions about what we do in the town. Please help us to help you; we need to hear from you so that we can make the right decisions. The Retail Networking Group offers you that opportunity **Please come along**, or you can call us on 01803 212270 or email [torbaytowncentres@btconnect.com](mailto:torbaytowncentres@btconnect.com)

## Torquay a plan for the future



To end where I began this is the BID Business plan you will be receiving in the next few days please take some time to read it and come to The Imperial on 11<sup>th</sup> February

If you want to comment on anything in this newsletter or if we can help please contact Lucy or Karen at Torbay Town Centres Co Unit B The Market Forum, Market St.Torquay.TQ1 3AE or email us: [torbaytowncentres@btconnect.com](mailto:torbaytowncentres@btconnect.com) phone 01803 212270