

Lincoln BIG
Business Improvement
Group

Annual Report

**July 2024 –
June 2025**

Making a difference to
Lincoln now and in the future

www.lincolnbig.co.uk

Chair's Report

Welcome to our 2024/25 Annual Report, which marks the end of our fourth 5-year term as we move confidently into our fifth. Thank you to all who voted in last November's Ballot, where we achieved an outstanding 85.6% YES result.

We continue to emerge from the economic difficulties of the past few years, of which Lincoln has embraced the challenges and continues to adapt and thrive with the changing expectations of our visitors, who come to Lincoln for the experience rather than just shopping. Lincoln BIG continues to build on the successes that have led to five positive ballot results and work with businesses to keep Lincoln city centre vibrant, safe and attractive for visitors and residents alike.

This report highlights the work our team delivers on your behalf: keeping our city centre safe and secure, hosting events and tours that bring history to life, providing family-friendly activities, showcasing the city through trails such as our Ale and Cocktail Trail, and ensuring value-for-money travel into the city. Through initiatives such as the GEM Awards, BIG City

Fashion, and events we are always looking at ways of showcasing the excellence of Lincoln businesses.

It's also great that this year some of our work has been recognised nationally:

- Our Retail Crime initiative won the 'Best Safety, Security and Resilience Award from the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM)
- The Sightseeing Tour Bus became accredited by VisitEngland and won their prestigious Gold Accolade

Thank you for your continued support. We remain committed to delivering with your business in mind, attracting footfall, and fulfilling the promises set out in our business plan.

John Latham
Chair



Governance

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Lincoln BIG is the trading name for the Lincoln City Centre Partnership (Company number 04662323)

It is controlled by a Board of Directors representing city stakeholders. It trades as a small business – paying VAT and filing Companies House returns. Lincoln BIG does not distribute profit. It reinvests surpluses into delivering its Business Plan to improve Lincoln City Centre and operates under The Business Improvement Districts (England) Regulations 2004. Our board was made up of the following stakeholders:



Founder Members

Councillor Naomi Tweddle
City of Lincoln Council

Councillor Anita Pritchard
City of Lincoln Council

Simon Beardsley
Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce

Kevin Kendall
Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce

Lincoln BIG Levy Members

Carl Jacklin
Agatha Boutique

Nicola Lockwood
Bells Tea Shop

John O'Donoghue
to 30 June 2025
Carousel, Craft, Home & Void

Mark Brewer
Imp Travel

Matt Hayden
Nationwide

Stan Matthew
to 30 June 2025
Thompson & Richardson

Investor & Co-opted Members

Dr Tracy Buckby
to 5 Aug 2024
Lincoln Cathedral

Nicola Hall
Lincoln College

Councillor Tom Dyer
to 4 May 2025
Lincolnshire County Council

Councillor Liam Kelly
from 13 June 2025
Lincolnshire County Council

Freddie Chambers
Lindum Group

David Lewis
Siemens Energy

Dave Skepper
Stagecoach East Midlands

David Donkin
to 15 May 2025
Wykeland Group

John Latham

Company Secretary

Tom Hickingbottom
to 14 Mar 2025
Wilkin Chapman Rollits

Lauren Osborne
from 14 Mar 2025
Wilkin Chapman Rollits

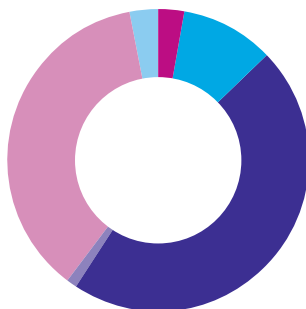
Financial Figures

For the year ending 30 June 2025

INCOME total:

£31,893	3% Welcome
£119,028	10% Experience
£568,826	46% Value
£9,075	1% Projects
£472,693	38% BID Levy
£36,765	3% Membership

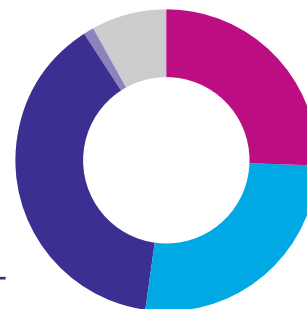
£1,238,280 Total



EXPENDITURE total:

£396,590	26% Welcome
£409,711	26% Experience
£601,426	39% Value
£21,746	1% Projects
£118,891	8% Overheads

£1,548,364 Total



Accounting Period: Our Financial Statement is for the year ending 30 June 2025, approved by Directors on 4 November 2025 and will be presented to our Annual General Meeting on Monday 24 November 2025.

Our Funding: Approximately one-third come from the BID levy, with the remaining two-thirds coming from both our trading and other fundraising activities. Therefore, for every £1 our levy members pay us, we work hard to multiply and gain a further £2 to spend on improvements for the city.

BID Levy: In line with national legislation (BID Regulations Act 2004 and Local Government Act 2003) and our BID levy rules set out in the Business Plan 2025-30, the BID is not permitted to discount the levy without an alteration ballot.

An increase in the BID levy collected was recorded in 2024-25, with a collection rate of 97.23%, compared to 97.3% in 2023-24.

Founder and Investor Members



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL



Lincolnshire
Chamber of
Commerce

P.C. Coaches



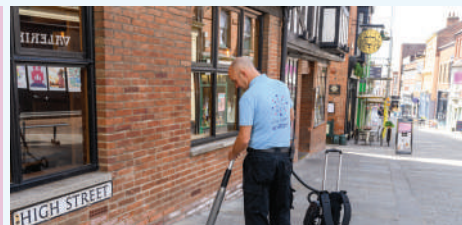
SIEMENS
energy



Priority 1 Welcome

What we delivered in 2024 - 25

Our Focus: Our primary focus to our levy members is to ensure our efforts elevate the quality of the public environment, creating an inviting atmosphere that encourages people to shop, work and visit. This commitment covers the safety and security for you, your businesses and our visitors, the preservation of the streetscape and creating an ambience through hanging baskets and Christmas trees.



Street Management

We continue to deploy uniformed City Centre Wardens to conduct patrols across the BID area. They play a crucial role in enhancing security of businesses and maintaining the city centre's welcoming ambience for both residents, visitors and employees. They also act as ambassadors.

Throughout the year, our Wardens undertook a programme of works, over and above the statutory remit of City of Lincoln Council, which included:

- Deep clean the streets and gum removal
- Graffiti removal
- Painting street furniture, ie railings, bollards and lamp posts
- Weeding of key parts of the city



Security & Safety

It has been a busy year for our security and safety team at Lincoln BIG.

At the start of the period, we gained the **Business Crime Retail Partnership (BCRP)** accreditation for our security activity to ensure the city is a safe place to work, shop and visit. This accreditation is recognised by the Police, local authorities and retailers alike, actively assisting in deterring and preventing shoplifting incidents. This accreditation lasts until May 2028.

In February 2024, we launched a pilot initiative with Lincolnshire Police whereby Danny Mason, one of our wardens, took on the role of **Retail Crime Liaison**, which involves gathering evidence from businesses and handing to the City Centre

Policing team to enable them to charge and prosecute offenders through the Court process. This position and close partnership have achieved excellent results.

From Police arrests between February 2024 to 30 June 2025, the following have resulted:

257 individuals charged
26 still under investigation
34 no further action

From those taken to court there were:

116 Prison sentences	15 Conditional Discharges
34 Suspended Prison sentences	1 Caution
34 Community Orders	2 Time Served in Detention
12 Compensation only	2 No Further Action by Court
23 Fines	14 Currently on Court Bail



Earlier this year, we entered the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) Awards for the category '**Best Safety, Security and Resilience**'. We are delighted to announce that at the ATCM Conference in Bradford on 18 June 2025, we were highly commended for all the work the team have been doing for the city and the work in dealing with crime, especially the shop thefts evidence gathering.



At the end of June, we invested in new digital **Hytera HP565 security radios** for our levy members to ensure we continued to provide fit for purpose equipment to keep reliable voice communication between members, the wardens, CCTV and Police at all times. These radios are durable enough to withstand dust, heat, shock and water submersion.

As part of this upgrade and our GDPR compliance, the **Littoralis (DISC) website and app** has also been upgraded. This system, which is free to all members, includes the activities of local offenders, security alerts and galleries of offenders. DISC is crucial to ensure you, and your business are kept up to date with all security information.

Working with Lincolnshire Police and City of Lincoln Council, **Hotel Watch** was set up to gather and share intelligence using the DISC app with participating accommodation providers to prevent pop-up brothels, child sexual exploitation, Modern Slavery, drug dealing and missing people.



Priority 2 Experience

What we delivered in 2024 - 25



Our Focus: We recognise the significant effect of hosting vibrant and memorable events that ensure visitors and locals have an enjoyable experience, enticing them to return time and time again to experience the hidden gems of our historical city. Throughout the year, we have continued to organise and support popular and new events, generating excitement and atmosphere within the city.

Teaming up with Open-Air Events and Place Immersive to offer summer excitement at the Cornhill, **Cornhill Cove** returned to feature a bespoke crazy golf course in the heart of the city and a range of family friendly street theatre and live music including Rhubarb Theatre, the Old Time Sailors, Back Chat Brass and the Vinyl Steppers.

A stampede of **Elmer**, the much-loved patchwork elephant, and eleven friends were welcomed to the city for the summer. The trail was kickstarted with mask making and photo opportunities with our very own Elmer, who visited the city on launch day. The finale of the day was all the children – and lots of parents/grandparents – stampeding with Elmer for story time at Central Library. The summer trail continued with Summer of Fun and various activities put on by Lush, Waterstones, Waterside Centre, Shelf Editions and Central Library.



The **Lincoln Sightseeing Tour Bus** operates across two Annual Reports. For this Report the bus operated 7-days-a-week from July to September and weekends, school holidays and bank holidays during October and April – June 2025. The bus extended its route in April 2025 to include International Bomber Command Centre, which was well received by visitors and the attraction especially in this anniversary year of VE Day. With this extension of the route saw an increase in schools booking the bus

as a private hire to enhance the curriculum and end of year trips.

Kickstart at the Castle was delivered in association with Robbo's Scooter Rally on Castle Square and Lincoln Castle where uphill came alive with music and entertainment for all scooterists.

1940s Weekend was met with glorious sunshine as we stepped back in time and immersed ourselves in the spirit of 1940s Britain with two unforgettable days of vintage fun in Lincoln's historic

Cathedral Quarter and across the city. This much-loved, free event has become a highlight of Lincoln's summer calendar—and 2024 event was the biggest celebration yet with live 1940s music and dance performances, delicious food and drink from local businesses, classic vehicle displays and fun-filled family activities and pop-up street theatre.

The iconic Winston Churchill, brilliantly portrayed by Derek Herbert, also returned as crowd favourite not to be missed!





The **BIG Spook** gave a spooktacular return to the Cathedral Quarter with its Strolling Bones Parade with puppets, musicians, performers and parades through the historic streets.

The Pumpkin patch also sprung up at Waterside Centre for families to pick and take home or carve at the Centre.

Christmas 2024 saw the Lincoln Light Trail illuminating the city with a dazzling array of light displays and large-scale installations on St Paul in the Bail, Brayford Waterfront and the Transport Hub;

joined by 20 Nutcracker Kings located in various businesses across the city. Then with its clear sides, roaring fires, and all the sparkling Christmas lights, Thor's Tipi returned to the Cornhill.

A prehistoric adventure came to the city over the Easter holidays with **Dino City**, a family-friendly event filled with interactive activities, exciting challenges, and fascinating dinosaurs including unearthing giant T-Rex fossils, visits from Pete the T-Rex as he roamed the Waterside Centre and Dino Ranger training on how to track and care for the dinosaurs.



Priority 3 Values

What we delivered in 2024 - 25

Our Focus: We acknowledge that businesses continue to face many challenges, therefore we are committed to providing support, value through our services whilst expanding our activity.

BIG Bus and Car Parking Deals

We maintained our collaboration with Stagecoach East Midlands and City of Lincoln Council providing levy members and their employees with a cost-effective deal to save money on commuting into the city centre for work. These collaborations ensure our city keeps moving, carbon emissions are reduced, and a safer environment can be enjoyed by all. The introduction by Lincolnshire County Council and Stagecoach East Midlands



Park & Ride

In partnership with Stagecoach East Midlands, Lincolnshire County Council, City of Lincoln Council and Waitrose we continued to manage the Park & Ride service. This 15-minute service remains an affordable and convenient method of travel into the city, ensuring less carbon emissions and a safer environment. Operating 6 days a week with free parking at Waitrose (off Nettleham Road) to Lincoln Central Bus Station. This year saw the passenger numbers exceed pre-Covid numbers for the first time.

For levy members and their employees to take advantage of the discounted car parking permits and bus passes visit:

lincolnbig.co.uk/bid-levy-payer-benefits/big-bus-car-parking



26% increase in Car Parking Permits in 2024/5 compared to 2023/24



3% increase in Bus Passed 2024/5 compared to 2023/24



7% increase in P&R passengers in 2023/24 compared to 2024/25.

GEM Awards

To recognise the success of the businesses in the city and using our voice to further enforce this, the GEM Awards entered its second year. The Awards recognise members for high levels of customer service and those who go the extra mile for their customers.

Continued success was shown by Lincoln Jazz Café, The Body Shop, Tortilla and Vice & Co who were all shortlisted for an award in both 2023 and 2024.



159 Businesses nominated



88% Average customer service score



92% Increase businesses nominated in 2025 compared to 2024



2% Increase of the average customer service score, from 86% to 88% in 2025

The Award Ceremony for the shortlisted nominees will be held on Thursday 2 October at Home.

Well done to all nominees and congratulations to those who were shortlisted and won.

Category

Accommodation Provider
Bar, Club, and Late-Night Venue
Coffee Shop, Tea Room, and Café
Experience and Entertainment
Health, Beauty, and Wellness

Independent Retailer
National Retailer
Professional Services
Restaurant

Winner

The Rest
Vice & Co
Vestry Hall
Akedo Gaming Bar
Beauty by Leah
@ Westwood Hair & Beauty

The Cheese Society
Body Shop
Pepperell's Solicitors
ASK



Winner of the Restaurant Category - Ask Italian



Back Chat Brass at GEM Awards



Events Planner

We continue to collate key city events taking place across the calendar year to inform our levy members of what's on to take part in campaigns like window dressing displays and promotional offers.



Secretariate

We continue to support and act as the secretariate for Bailgate Area Guild and Lincoln Pubwatch. In May 2025 we committed to act as the secretariate for the Lincoln Hoteliers Association.

Student Voucher Booklets

We continue to subsidise a booklet of vouchers encouraging students to experience hospitality, retail, leisure and healthcare at a discounted price. 10,000 were printed and distributed at the University of Lincoln's Freshers Fayre and the Waterside Centre's student lock-in event in 2024. This campaign has started for the 2025 student intake with booklets being placed in the accommodation rooms.

Our Future High Street

The Our Future High Street group continues to grow its members which provides a communication platform for all businesses in the city centre who are interested in the growth and prosperity of Lincoln, to receive information and provide feedback to key stakeholders on key initiatives.



Working with Partners

We continue to work with partners (City of Lincoln, Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Police) to address the challenges of our busy High Street and city. The Retail Crime Liaison role and Hotel Watch forms part of this initiative, with more detail on pages 6 and 7.

Profile

We continue to use our virtual voice through our marketing channels such as social media and e-shots, as a place where we advertise business news to provide them with more attraction.

Across the Autumn and Winter period we introduced Hey Lincoln, a podcast series to inform and educate including:

Emma Haigh - Jailhouse Frock

The challenges and rewards of being a business owner, talking through the uniqueness of the shop being 1940's/50's style and how shopping is an experience

Kim Vickers – Lincoln Castle

Focusing on keeping the castle as a prominent historical venue whilst modernising it through events such as the Castle Concerts

Marcus Askam-Yates – Lincoln Imporium

Discussing bringing an immersive experience to the city and his future plans for Lincoln

Paul Gibson – Lincolnshire Police

Talking about funding issues, policing in Lincoln and new types of crimes we're seeing in the city

Emma Jubbs – University of Lincoln

Talking about the University's role in the city, what students have to offer and the growth of international students

Toby Ealden – Zest

The opportunities Zest provides for young people and why creative arts matter

This year has seen an increase in all our marketing channels. You can see how well in the following graphics.



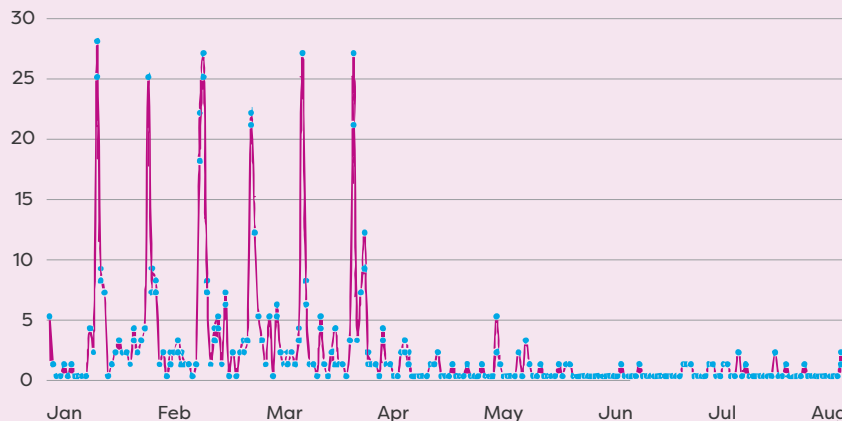
150 people signed up to the exclusive Hey Lincoln newsletter

443 followers on the Hey Lincoln Instagram

Kim's episode was the most watched on YouTube

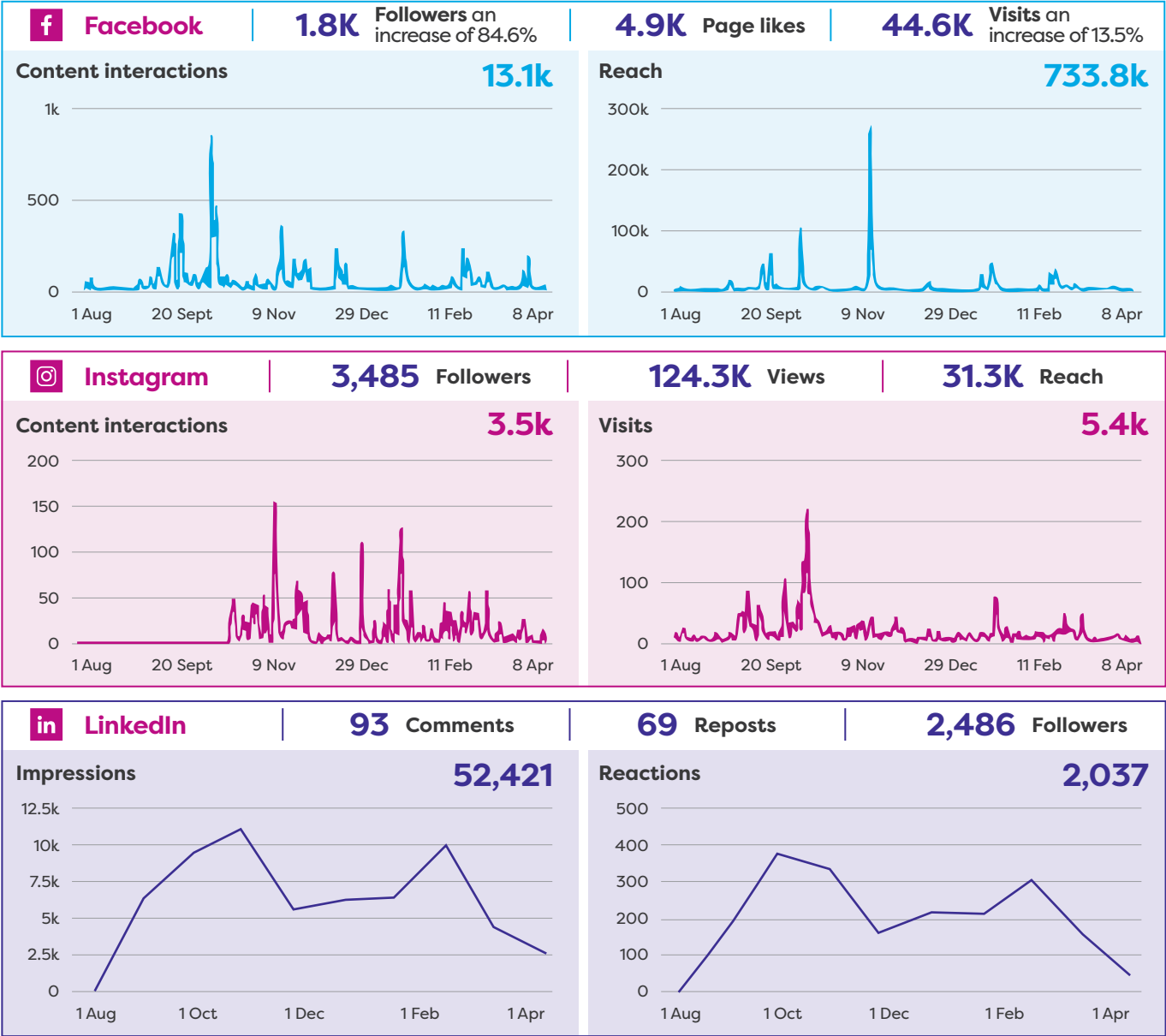
Engagement

● Unique listeners **313** ● Downloads **415**



Our recent social media performance shows promising growth across all key areas, with increases in followers, page visits, and overall engagement on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. This upward trend highlights a stronger and more visible online presence, meaning

our services are reaching and resonating with wider audiences. It also demonstrates that the campaigns and promotions we deliver for local businesses are gaining real traction, successfully attracting attention and engagement from the communities we aim to support.



Getting involved

Are you interested in any of the projects or activities detailed in this Annual Report? Do you have ideas that you would like to put forward? Would you like more details or to get involved? If yes, please contact info@lincolnbig.co.uk

Simon Beardsley, Managing Director

Lee Roberts, Head of Operations

Sharon Stone, Governance & Projects Manager

Danielle Hairyes, Relationship & Operations Manager

Yvette Mills, Safety & Security Manager

Courtney Harrison, Marketing Executive

Rebecca Johnson, Office Administrator

Danny Mason, City Centre Warden

Wayne Nettleton, City Centre Warden

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