



FALMOUTH

Business Improvement District (BID)

Mid term update on activity and progress...



FALMOUTH, THE SPIRIT OF THE SEA...

Falmouth is a diverse, vibrant and exciting destination, blessed with outstanding coastal scenery and a rich maritime heritage. Falmouth has a very good retail mix with over 70% independent specialist retailers, a great range of cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars and superb visitor attractions. In addition, Falmouth is a centre of industrial and educational excellence—University College Falmouth, Cornwall Marine Network, Falmouth Marine School and the Docks, which are home to many enterprising businesses.

FALMOUTH BID, THE BUSINESS NEED...

Falmouth is a great place BUT with changing market conditions, business rate and VAT concerns really affecting businesses, huge cuts to county tourism and marketing budgets, it currently faces challenging times. It was against this backdrop in April 2009, that Falmouth BID became the second location in Cornwall to introduce a Business Improvement District. Falmouth BID came into being thanks to the foresight of 71% of Falmouth's businesses, who voted for an innovative programme of activity that devotes 100% of its energy, focus and budget on the town.

And now its positive impact has seen other areas follow suit, with the emergence of a third BID area for Cornwall in Newquay and BID consultation currently taking place in Camborne and St Austell. The notion of business-led schemes such as a BID, that can make a difference and play a key role in local area development, has taken off throughout the UK in recent years, with more and more being voted in. Currently, there are 120 UK BIDs, with a further 40 going to ballot in 2012.

As we approach the mid-term of the Falmouth BID, we have produced this update to share with you what has been achieved to date. Each of the four Priority Areas you'll see highlighted, are ones that Falmouth businesses voted in and are contained within the BID Business Plan. All are ideas borne out of an extensive consultation period that led to the formal ballot and subsequent 'Yes' vote. Please also refer to www.falmouth.co.uk for further details on Falmouth BID and its activities.

DEMONSTRABLE VALUE OF THE FALMOUTH BID PROJECT?

- £2,000 worth of free business training opportunities for BID businesses (due to BID working in partnership with CMN) over the past two years of the BID programme
- FREE webpage on Falmouth.co.uk worth £750 over the term of the BID for all BID businesses to promote themselves
- Over 100 Falmouth businesses supported through FREE business courses and workshops
- 4,000 extra footfall in the town during the week of the new BID funded Falmouth Spring Festival
- 5,000 high value day cruise ship visitors dropped in the town centre this season via BID funding
- £40,000 worth of additional funding secured to spend on public realm improvements and other projects
- Over £250,000 of national media coverage for Falmouth via BID funded PR campaign
- Nearly £1,000 (through sales of Falmouth Shopper Bag) contribution towards Falmouth Christmas lights fund
- Significant contribution to a better public realm through community clean-ups and vacant site revamps
- Partnerships. Strong public/private partnerships between the BID and Falmouth Town Council has enabled match funding opportunities to be realised eg Woolworths, Ponsharden Hoardings
- Award winning. Community clean up at Bell's Court given Cornwall in Bloom Award

"The Falmouth BID is really galvanising businesses to think about what they want and to work together. The total sums are not large but the effects help us all feel that we are making a difference."
Jonathan Griffin, Director, National Maritime Museum Cornwall

"The Paint the Town Yellow Day as part of Falmouth Spring Festival was a fantastic success. The support from local daffodil farmers, traders in Falmouth, local schools and the design departments at University College Falmouth was overwhelming. The children had a fabulous day and it was great to work with the Falmouth BID to strengthen the town's community spirit."
Jacqui Owen, Falmouth Schools Co-ordinator

HOW HAS THE FALMOUTH BID SUPPORTED BUSINESSES AND HELPED DEVELOP THE TOWN?

Priority Area 1—Marketing Funded £70,000 worth of innovative new projects

The BID with extensive community and business support and involvement, unveiled a new logo and brand for Falmouth, has designed and launched a new destination website falmouth.co.uk, has commissioned new imagery that is being used in various ways to promote the area, instigated a cruise ship initiative, worked with the Falmouth Shopper Card scheme to design and rollout a new Falmouth Shopper Bag and driven forward an innovative national PR campaign

Priority Area 2—Events & Festivals Funded £40,000 worth of new activity

Falmouth has a wonderfully diverse festivals programme and the BID has been heavily involved in helping to grow and develop all of the main events—Fal Week, Fal Oyster Festival, Fal Sea Shanty Festival, Fal River Festival and Christmas. The BID has also enabled new festivals and initiatives to develop such as FAL350 and Fal Walking Festival and has organised a new annual festival—Falmouth Spring Festival (leading to 4,000 increased footfall to the town see Events page)

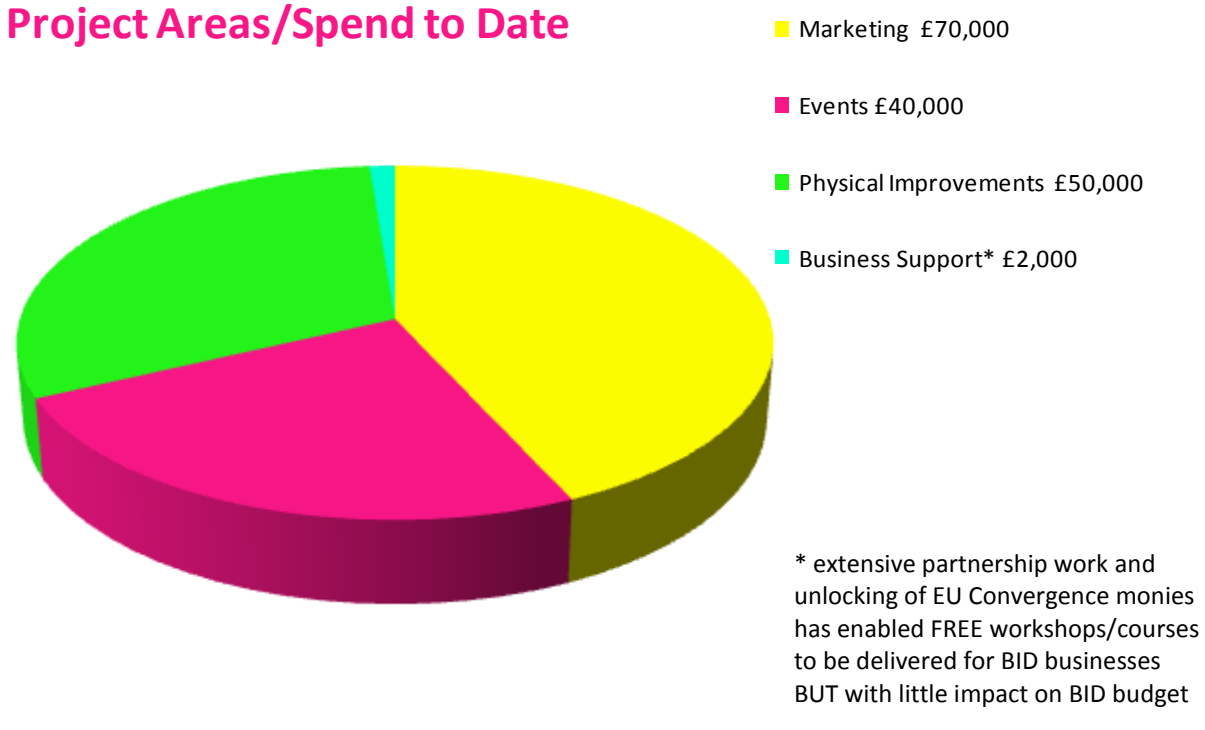
Priority Area 3—Physical Improvements Funded £50,000 worth of new town enhancement schemes

The BID has: provided 100 new floral displays 200 flags and over 2500m of bunting across the town, making it more attractive for visitors, customers and residents, installed new seating in partnership with Falmouth school pupils, undertaken a vacant site project, designed and distributed 200,000 visitor map & guides, revamped empty retail units and derelict areas of land and recently unveiled its Visitor Hospitality project that will seek to greatly improve in-town visitor signage, interpretation and information

Priority Area 4—Business Support Funded £2,000 (plus extensive in-kind support) of business training workshops

Over 100 businesses have been supported through FREE training workshops and courses in the past 18 months with BID working in partnership with Cornwall Marine Network, the 'Save the High Street' initiative launched by the BID has seen a lobbying campaign raising key issues affecting businesses such as VAT and business rate increases and the BID and Falmouth Council Town Management have been lobbying hard on car parking charging and issues affecting business growth and prosperity

Project Areas/Spend to Date



DID YOU KNOW?

The Falmouth BID has to date, secured over £40,000 worth of additional funding and in-kind support from volunteer BID payers, sponsorship, town organisations and European funding to enable even more projects to be delivered throughout the town. The BID is the lead body spearheading a bid for Coastal Seaside Towns Funding to roll out an exciting Visitor Hospitality scheme that will improve in-town signage, interpretation and information and to that end, has garnered the support and backing of numerous town organisations including Falmouth Town Council, Falmouth Town Forum, Falmouth District Hotels Association (FDHA) and Falmouth Harbour Commissioners.

PRIORITY AREA 1— MARKETING

The key areas to develop as voted in by Falmouth businesses and contained within the Business Plan— ‘BID should build the Falmouth brand and corporate identity, and ensure Falmouth is promoted with a clear communications strategy and consistency of branding. To include—outstanding Falmouth website, a Falmouth map/business guide, photographic library, public relations and special promotions around the Shopper Card, food, art and other themed ideas.’

What has the BID delivered so far?

A new logo for Falmouth

One of the strongest themes to emerge out of the BID consultation process, was the need to build the Falmouth brand and identity. Falmouth needed to tell its story in a clear, consistent, articulate manner in order to compete more effectively with other destinations. BID commissioned an extensive piece of research work in which hundreds of businesses, residents and visitors were asked their thoughts and ideas on ‘What makes Falmouth, Falmouth?’. The results that emerged from the surveys and workshops were fascinating and led to the unveiling of a new logo for Falmouth, featuring the Falmouth working boat with the strapline ‘spirit of the sea’. The BID has utilised this in all media formats and promotional materials from websites to Woolworths and worked with many businesses and organisations in the town who have done the same.



Falmouth.co.uk

The BID designed and launched in Autumn 2010, the new official destination site for Falmouth. With over 500 pages of content, ALL BID levy payers are eligible for a FREE page (worth £150 per year) to promote their business. Enhanced by an extensive social media platform, it is now the top performing destination site for Falmouth (20,000 unique hits per month and growing) and the key online promotional tool for the town:



PR

The Falmouth BID has appointed a Cornish PR agency to work with us on raising national awareness of our lovely destination. We have had articles in: The Times, The Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Daily Express and Countryfile to name a few. To date over £250,000 worth of national coverage has been achieved. The BID has provided extensive PR support to town event organisers, achieving over £90k worth of national coverage for the 2010 Falmouth Oyster Festival, £30k worth of national press coverage for 2010 Fal Week and in excess of £50k worth of coverage for the inaugural BID organised 2011 Falmouth Spring Festival. Furthermore, a press pack has now been produced and is being circulated to all leading travel editors to gain further coverage and profile for Falmouth.

THE TIMES

Great British Weekend: Falmouth, Cornwall



Clockwise from top left: profile in The Times, Red magazine, The Telegraph, Cornwall Today, Press Pack front cover and RHS website

RETURN ON INVESTMENT? 15:1. In other words for every £1 of your BID levy spent on PR, the BID is achieving at least £15 worth of media coverage. See the range of national and regional Falmouth coverage achieved at www.falmouth.co.uk/media.



Cruise Ship Initiatives

Falmouth receives in the region of 20,000 cruise ship visitors disembarking from 29 cruise ships each year. Approximately 50% choose to visit Falmouth with 50% opting for Cornwall wide excursions. In 2011, the BID has worked hard to enhance the experience of those that visit Falmouth by doing two things. Firstly and working in partnership with A&P and Falmouth Ambassadors, the BID has funded extra transfer coaches that has enabled a re-routing so that passengers can be dropped off for the first time at one end of the town (The Moor) and picked up at the other (Grove Place) which encourages visitors to spend more time and see more of Falmouth. The BID has trialled this with 5,000 passengers and given that the global day average day spend is estimated at £95 per cruise visitor, this has the potential to hugely benefit hundreds of businesses. Secondly, the BID has improved the information given to each cruise passenger via the design and distribution of a new Cruise Visitor Map & Guide, supplemented by a new online cruise ship section on falmouth.co.uk.

Falmouth Shopper Bag

The Falmouth BID has commissioned a new Falmouth branded shopper bag in 2011. Businesses are being offered the chance to buy them at £2 and sell them at £4 with £1 from each bag sold coming back into a BID pot that will be then be match funded by Falmouth Town Council and allocated to the Christmas lights and festivities fund. Nearly £1000 will be put toward the Christmas lights this year highlighting that small projects can make a difference.



Image library and Falmouth Life Project

The BID commissioned in 2010 a series of images to capture the vitality, vibrancy and landscape of Falmouth and to build an extensive image library that could then be used for a variety of promotional purposes. The Falmouth Life project launched in 2011, will seek to capture the diversity and energy of life in Falmouth as seen through the eyes of the people who live, work and play here.

PRIORITY AREA 2— EVENTS & FESTIVALS

The key areas to develop as voted in by Falmouth businesses and contained within the Business Plan— ‘BID should seek to provide marketing support to help the development and growth of existing major festivals, facilitate the growth and development of further major festivals and events adding to the Falmouth calendar and assist in the growth of some existing smaller festivals and support the development of new themes.’

What has the BID delivered so far?

Falmouth Spring Festival

Guided by business need, the BID organised and funded what is now an award winning new early season event to raise Falmouth’s profile and attract extra visitors before Easter. The festival celebrates Falmouth open and green spaces through music, dance, art, guided walks and fashion and has a strong community ethos to it.

Support from the FDHA, Fal River Links, Falmouth Town Manager, University College Falmouth and local traders, enabled a working group to drive forward with the BID and Event Cornwall, a host of exciting events that included Gardeners’ Question Time, a Spring Fashion Show, Castle Beach rockpooling, a Spring Fair, guided garden and coastal walks and art exhibitions. The accommodation sector through the FDHA, put together themed break packages to entice visitors. Community schemes saw Falmouth schoolchildren window dress 80 retail outlets as part of a Paint the Town Yellow Day and a newly formed ‘Falmouth Groundforce Crew’ revamped unloved corners of Falmouth such as at Bells Court and winning a Cornwall in Bloom Award.

Results?

- 4,000 visitors to the various events over the course of the week
- Businesses (Ribticklers 1-2% increase in footfall, Hawkshead experienced very positive impact) reported increases
- Over £50k worth of national coverage secured in regional and national press
- Cornwall in Bloom Award for community effort at Bell’s Court
- A new early season festival added to the annual events calendar



Henri Lloyd Falmouth Week

Substantive BID funding has enabled—a number of new events to take place on The Moor, numerous Fal Week promotional videos to be commissioned , the undertaking of the Paint it Red live art event, a new events marquee to be utilised on The Moor, promotional literature to be designed, online marketing campaigns to be started as well as extensive PR support to be offered.

Falmouth Oyster Festival

Substantive BID funding has enabled—50,000 promotional flyers to be designed and distributed, new elements of the Falmouth Oyster Parade to take place, the production of a series of promotional street banners and innovative PR support leading to over £100,000 worth of national coverage for the 2010 and 2011 events.

Falmouth Sea Shanty Festival

The Falmouth BID has been asked to provide PR support for this growing festival. Media coverage for the 2011 event was secured in a host of national publications and exceeded £50,000. This was backed up via an online campaign driven through falmouth.co.uk. A new logo for the 2012 festival is also being funded by the BID.

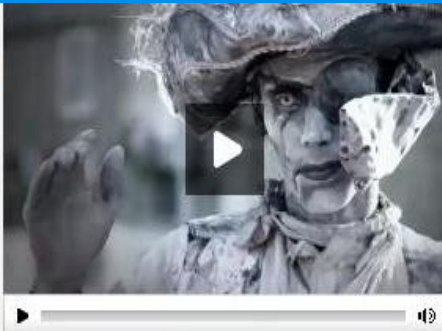
Seedcorn Funding

Fal River Festival — Falmouth BID has funded this growing event over the past two years, enabling new regional marketing and advertising to take place and promotional literature such as street banners and flyers to be produced.

Fal350 — the Falmouth BID developed a new logo to celebrate the anniversary of Falmouth’s Royal Charter and also provided marketing and PR support.

FAL Autumn Walking Festival—the Falmouth BID has provided support for this new event to enable digital marketing via a new website to be instigated

BID funds have been provided over the past two years to support new late night entertainment, promotional leaflets and street banners for **Fal Christmas** and marketing campaigns for **Love Parks Week** and **Cornwall Film Festival** to be undertaken.



PRIORITY AREA 3— PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS

The key areas to develop as voted in by Falmouth businesses and contained within the Business Plan— ‘BID should initiate schemes that will make a real difference to the appearance of Falmouth and help visitors enjoy and access more of Falmouth. It is hoped to make the BID money go further in this area by raising money through sponsorship, grant funding, enlisting the creative ideas of University College Falmouth and garnering more council support. The BID will work with other stakeholders to improve the presentation of Falmouth through initiatives such as floral or green enhancements, street art, flags and bunting.’

What has the BID delivered so far?

Town Dressing

The BID has funded and installed over 3000 metres of bunting, 200 Falmouth branded flags, street banners and 100 floral displays in 2010 and 2011 making the town centre more colourful and attractive for visitors and residents.

Vacant Sites

Numerous vacant or derelict sites have been revamped by the Falmouth BID—Woolworths, Threshers, Threadbare, 1 Market Strand, Leavy Herbs & Ponsharden hoardings. Furthermore, the ‘Falmouth Groundforce Crew’ was set up during the Falmouth Spring Festival and cleared five tonnes of rubbish from Bells Court and will work on numerous other identified sites in the lead up to Falmouth Spring Festival 2012. The Bell’s Court initiative recently won an award at the Cornwall in Bloom Awards Gala.

Falmouth Groundforce Crew

Established as part of the Falmouth Spring Festival 2011, this volunteer group seeks to revamp untidy and unloved corners of Falmouth. At Bell’s Court as mentioned, a community garden was created leading to a Cornwall in Bloom Award. Numerous other sites will be tackled during Falmouth Spring Festival 2012.



Public Seating

Visitor surveys and local feedback highlighted a lack of seating along the main thoroughfare and so the Falmouth BID with input from University College Falmouth and Falmouth Art Gallery, commissioned some with a Falmouth design firm in 2010. The result? Highly original, unique to Falmouth seating, that celebrate Falmouth’s creative spirit and artistic heritage. A new bench unveiled in the Autumn 2011 will cement this approach, being a collaboration with Falmouth School pupils, in an effort to celebrate local design talent.

Falmouth Visitor Map & Guide

The Falmouth BID, based on feedback gathered from visitor and business surveys, commissioned the design and rollout in 2010 and 2011 of a Falmouth Visitor Map & Guide. 180,000 copies have been produced and distributed throughout the town.



Visitor Hospitality Project

This will be the largest single project that the BID will deliver in its first five year term. Based on extensive business feedback during the consultation process, the Visitor Hospitality programme will provide superb visitor information, destination signage and interpretation of the area backed up an extensive business support and customer service training programme. Support from organisations such as Falmouth Town Council, Falmouth District Hotels Association, Falmouth Harbour Commissioners and Falmouth Town Forum has been excellent. The project aims to do three things:

- 1. To increase visitor satisfaction through an innovative range of visitor interpretive literature that will engage and inspire our future visitor and this has started with new Falmouth map boards having been installed in all in-town car parks
- 2. To get visitors to stay longer by enabling them to see and explore more. To go home, knowing that they have not seen everything but hopefully having an appreciation of what the town has to offer will undoubtedly prompt a return visit
- 3. To increase visitor spend in our BID businesses which will in turn help to further stimulate economic growth in the town



The key areas to develop as voted in by Falmouth businesses and contained within the Business Plan— ‘there will be opportunities to make a real difference on major issues such as improving parking and making the town more pedestrian friendly. BID will maximise the grants and support available from the EU convergence and other programmes to roll out effective business support and training opportunities and will monitor and lobby for more efficient and effective services provided by the new Cornwall Council and other public sector agencies.’

Business Support and Training

- * Over 100 Falmouth employees have been on FREE training courses
- * Every Falmouth business has had the opportunity to attend over £2000 worth of FREE courses and workshops through the Falmouth BID working with CMN. **None of the courses organised have come out of your BID levy contributions.** They have been made possible by the BID working innovatively with partners who have access to European Convergence Funds.
- * The BID has recently instigated a Welcome to Cornwall customer service training programme, tying in with the Visitor Hospitality project previously outlined.



FALMOUTH

Business Improvement District (BID)

SAVE THE HIGH STREET 5 POINT PLAN

1. Easy, free or low cost, innovative car parking arrangements
2. Co-ordinated, imaginative and well-integrated local public transport schemes
3. Well-funded, professional, holistic approach to town management which can form inclusive retail strategies
4. More business rates need to be kept local with businesses involved in how the business rates are spent
5. Cut VAT in half to 10% on retail, restaurants, hotels AND tourism businesses

The Falmouth BID, together with the Falmouth Town Council Town Manager have been lobbying Cornwall Council extensively to ensure BID businesses concerns and points are raised with reference car parking tariffs and policy. In addition, the Falmouth BID is seeking to fund and launch a car park subsidy scheme, working closely with local businesses to ensure success. This will be an out of main season initiative that is likely to run between January and March, with the Falmouth BID designing a regional promotional campaign to entice people to visit our town on these car park free days. The days chosen will be very much guided by when businesses need it most. More should be done to boost the town in these extremely challenging times and the easier and cheaper the BID can make it for people to park and spend time with us, the more it will benefit Falmouth BID businesses.

In response to the Government's appointment of celebrity retail guru Mary Portas to review issues affecting the viability of the British high street, the BID has spearheaded a campaign that seeks to tackle the key areas that affect the prosperity and growth of Falmouth. A detailed letter sent to Prime Minister David Cameron has been backed up by an extensive media campaign (right), meetings with Sarah Newton MP and senior Cornwall Council officials to lobby hard on regional and national policy issues that affect BID businesses (such as business rates and car parking as highlighted above). As a result of the proactive work, the BID and Town Managers were invited to Westminster to discuss the issues with an All Party Town Centres Group in Oct, presenting Falmouth's ideas for the high street directly to Mary Portas.

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LOOKING FORWARD

Despite the many delivered projects highlighted within this report, no-one is resting on their laurels. The hugely challenging economic conditions mean the BID is determined and focused on delivering many more projects that can benefit the BID businesses and the town. Falmouth is the only town in Cornwall that can call on the joint resources of a BID programme and Town Management function. This has developed into a strong public/private sector partnership that has so far enabled many ideas and new schemes to be implemented. Furthermore, match funding arrangements between the Falmouth BID and Falmouth Town Council has not only aided delivery but highlights how the BID is utilising its funds as effectively as possible.

The Visitor Hospitality project outlined will be the largest delivered over the next 12 months. In addition the BID will continue to respond to businesses concerns regards car parking tariffs and policy and business rate issues, demanding effective policy change where necessary and driving forward new ideas to benefit BID levy payers such as the Car Parks Free scheme. We will be also compiling a Falmouth for Business document and liaising with Government, regional agencies and landlords to ensure that Falmouth's profile is raised and the destination is as competitive as it possibly can be in attracting inward investment and new business. In terms of events, the second BID organised and funded Falmouth Spring Festival (17th-25th March 2012) will expand upon the success of the first (that saw an attendance of over 4,000 people at the various events), with many exciting new ideas in place to attract extra visitors to the town. 2012 is an incredibly exciting year events wise, with the Finn Gold Cup, J Class and Pendennis Cup and the BID will be playing a key role in maximizing the economic impact of these festivals for BID businesses.



The efforts, initiatives and projects instigated by the Falmouth BID, Falmouth Town Manager and Falmouth Town Council among others, is one of the reasons that Falmouth's vacant unit rates is one of the lowest in the country at 6.6% (the UK average is over 14%) and footfall (as highlighted in a recently unveiled Cornwall Council 10 yr survey) is the strongest of all Cornish towns but by no means are we complacent. A lot of work has taken place and is planned to improve the public areas, streets and open spaces of Falmouth to ensure Falmouth can be an even better place to work, live and play. And the more we improve our environment, the more attractive it becomes to visitors, would be investors, existing BID businesses and organisations and local residents.

Richard Wilcox is the Falmouth BID Manager, responsible for managing and driving forward the five year BID programme of activity outlined in the voted in BID Business Plan. He is supported by a Board of voted in volunteer Directors whose expertise develop key project areas:

Nigel Carpenter, St Michael's Hotel & Spa—Chairman/Marketing
Jonathan Griffin, National Maritime Museum Cornwall—E-marketing
Jilly Easterby, University College Falmouth and University of Exeter—PR/stakeholder engagement
Sally Wilding—Finance/Company Secretary
Richard Thomas, RTP Surveyors—Physical Improvements
John Hick, Pendra Loweth—Events development
Paul Wickes, Cornwall Marine Network - Business Training
Keith Hambly-Staite—Regional strategic engagement
Rosemary Riddette-Gregory, Falmouth District Hotels Association— Accommodation sector

Follow the Falmouth BID's progress

Details of all BID projects as well as updates and news can be viewed:

Via the website—www.falmouth.co.uk/media

Via Twitter—[@FalmouthBID](https://twitter.com/FalmouthBID)

Via Facebook— [Falmouth-spirit of the sea](https://www.facebook.com/Falmouth-spirit-of-the-sea)

Via the Falmouth Blog site— <http://falmouth.blogspot.com/>

The Falmouth BID issues weekly email updates and six weekly e-newsletters. If you would like to receive these please contact us with your email address using the contact details below. In addition regular reports and stories are submitted to the local media, a regular BID column appears in the West Briton and presentations are given every six weeks at the Falmouth Traders Association meetings.

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