

## **BID'S BLOOMING BLUEPRINT FOR MINEHEAD**

Flower displays and street decorations are on the agenda for Minehead BID's programme in 2020 – with a pledge to continue adding colour and interest to the town's shopping streets.

This summer should see another 50 baskets provided for the town centre following positive comments about last summer's floral displays.

And later in the year traders will be given details of a £25,000 facelift for The Avenue which will involve additional plantings, bunting and Christmas lighting.

Minehead's Business Improvement District project was launched in July 2018 with a five-year plan which is being supported by levy payments from more than 200 local businesses.

It's part of a countrywide initiative aimed at improving the attraction to shoppers of town centres where the retail sector is under increasing pressure from out-of-town stores and online trading.

Money raised is divided between organising events, marketing and public space improvements and, says Minehead BID chairman Graham Sizer, all the feedback indicated that the group's initial efforts were already meeting with approval.

"We have had some very, very positive comments about the brighter appearance of the town centre thanks to the flower displays provided by ourselves along with partners Minehead Town Council and clearly here is one area where we can make a real difference to the atmosphere in the streets for relatively little outlay," he said.

"A lot of people have spoken favourably about the floral displays and how they can remember how well Minehead used to fare in the Britain in Bloom competition.

“It would be nice to think we could eventually achieve displays of a similar standard to those which used to put Minehead on the list of national winners.”

With a predominant red, white and blue theme to mark the 75th anniversary in 2020 of VE Day Holloway Street, the access streets from The Avenue to Summerland car park and Bancks Street will all be given a facelift this summer.

There will be more help for planting in and around the harbour area, already transformed through council and private investment, and all balanced at the other end of the sea front by Minehead Coastal Communities Team’s planting schemes carried out last year.

Mr Sizer said the success of the BID programme so far showed it was possible to transform the appearance of a town centre effectively and rapidly – as long as all parties worked together.

“The key to it is teamwork,” he said.

“Local councils, traders and ourselves are all striving for the same objective – a town centre which is more attractive to shoppers and a consequent uplift in retail takings across the board.

“How we actually do it is the issue which has generated a bit of friction in the past. But I honestly believe those days are over: our early experience has now shown us what works and what doesn’t and our next objective is clearly to build on the successes we have already marked up.”

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