

# A Day in the Life of a BID Ranger

Sam Bates has been a Newbury BID Street Ranger since 2015 and here she reports on a typical day in her busy role:

My day as a Ranger begins at 9am, as the town centre is beginning to fill with people on their way to work. It's the best time to walk the BID area in our High Vis Jackets, saying 'good morning' with a smile and making our presence known. This time of day gives business owners and staff the opportunity to report any issues that may have occurred over night that are cause for concern. Those issues could be a number of things from theft or damage to property to the homeless community sleeping on their properties.

Rangers are often the first port of call when matters arise and we are always happy to pass information on to other agencies where appropriate, whilst building up an accurate picture of the comings and goings within the BID area to feed back to the rest of the team. As Rangers, part of our job is to build strong relationships with all those who frequent the town on a regular basis whether for business or pleasure, including the homeless community, those who battle substance abuse and the vulnerable adults who make up our town community, meaning most issues raised by businesses can be resolved in a friendly, respectful manner.

At 10am the barriers go up and Northbrook Street becomes a pedestrian area. It's the time of day when we introduce ourselves to any commercial revenue bookings, ensuring that they are in the right location and are adhering to all safety requirements. We greet any buskers: most are making a return visit and are members of the Busking Permit System put in place by Newbury BID. For those who are visiting for the first time, we explain the permit system, collect their details and supply them with the information needed to join, should they wish to busk in the town centre in the future. The permit scheme costs nothing, but is beneficial to both businesses and buskers alike, meaning as a town we now attract a more diverse range of performers.

After checking that all is in order in Northbrook Street and Market Place, it is then time for a patrol of the whole Newbury BID area, with the aim to specifically spot and report any hazards, objects or buildings in need of attention or repair. Any fly tipping, graffiti or uncollected rubbish is reported to the relevant agencies and again offers the opportunity for business owners in all areas to discuss any issues with a Ranger as we pass.

By mid-morning the West Berkshire Business Watch radio system is in full swing. As Rangers, we carry a radio throughout the day, linking us to other radio users within the area comprising of retail businesses, including Park Way, The Kennet Centre, restaurants, licenced premises and PCSOs. When alerted on the radio, we can assist with surveillance of suspected offenders of shop thefts, missing persons and any suspicious activity, offering an early-warning system for possible retail targets and ensuring a continuous visual of suspects within the town centre, until the police are able to attend should they be required to do so.

As always, as we walk the BID area we are available to assist visitors and answer questions, assist with wayfinding queries, supplying information regarding specific businesses, retailers and all the various eateries and bars, and in general share our local knowledge to ensure visitors are made aware of the wide variety of attractions within our town.

After the busy lunchtime period, it's time to complete our daily business visits. Although we visit businesses throughout our day, the aim of our daily business visits is to collect and check contact

information. We speak specifically with management, aiming to keep our records up to date with management contacts and to ensure that management are aware of Newbury BID, the Street Ranger role, our aims and objectives, future events and initiatives, and ways that businesses can get involved in order to benefit from all that the BID offers. These business visits are recorded and discussed at the weekly team meeting where action points and follow up strategies, should there be any, are discussed and agreed.

Mid-afternoon brings its own challenges. Although anti-social behaviour occurs throughout the day, it's usually at its height by mid-afternoon. Instances concerning drug and alcohol use within the BID area are often brought to our attention either in person from the general public or through telephone calls received by business employees within the area, either to the BID office or via a Ranger mobile phone. Thanks to the good relationships that we strive to build and maintain with all members of the town community, most issues can be resolved quickly with a firm but friendly approach, and are usually resolved without escalation; however our radio system allows us to call for PCSO assistance, should it be required.

By late afternoon, as the town is beginning to become less busy, it's again time for another walk around the whole BID area. As always, we make ourselves available to discuss with the general public or business employees any problems that have occurred during the day, along with any new hazards. Then it's back to the office to feed back any information to the team, type up Business Visit Forms and email any changes of data to the relevant staff. We also record all requests for repairs or maintenance requested that day, and address any further enquiries received on the Ranger email while we have been out of the office.

At 5pm it's time to log out of the radio system, check and replenish our first aid supplies – and to look forward to tomorrow.