

Louise Baxter

I fell into BIDS by complete accident, after being made redundant from my role at Groundwork London I applied for a job as an admin assistant with Harrow Council in the Economic Development Department. This role was to assist with the smooth running of the employment programme that the council run.

Whilst this was happening the Council won a substantial amount of OLF (Outer London Fund) money and I worked closely with the team that delivered this assisting with small admin tasks. Halfway through one of the programme leads left and as there was not a lot of time to recruit I was asked if I would step in.

As part of the OLF programme we were tasked with setting up a BID and in November 2013 we went to ballot after a years worth of work and consultation. Harrow BID was successful albeit by the skin of our teeth.

In April 2014 we started the BID and have grown from strength to strength. I started out as the operations manager working closely with the council and one of our early successes was sorting out the cleaning of the town centre. The cleansing in the town started at 6:30am and finished at 2pm. We worked hard with the council to say that the town centre doesn't close at 2pm. After months of discussion the council put in a team that covers the town from 6:30am to 7:30pm.

In February 2018 the Chief Exc for Harrow BID resigned and the Board felt that it was right for me to step up as BID manager. I didn't want to be Chief Exc, so in March 2018 I started my role as BID manager with the aim of getting the BID back in as we went to ballot in the November.

After months of hard work and consultation and having the chance to prove that we could do an amazing job we went to ballot in November 2018. On 14th December the ballot was called... to everyone's joy we won with a 52% turnout 98% by number and 94% by RV.