Croydon’s countdown to Christmas got off to a cracking start on November 15th when thousands of spectators gathered to witness the dazzling, star-studded Town Centre Christmas lights switch-on.

North End and surrounding streets were transformed into a twinkling, winter wonderland when EastEnders star Laila Morse joined forces with Croydon’s Mayor, Councillor Eddie Arram to turn on the lights.

The actress who is starring in this year’s Fairfield Halls Christmas pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk, helped to kick off a five-weeks-long programme of activities being laid on in the Town Centre in the run-up to Christmas, courtesy of Croydon BID.

The ceremony was the climax to a lively packed programme of entertainment with an array of wild and whacky professional street performers plus a host of home-grown talent helping to build a sense of excitement and anticipation ahead of the official switch-on.

Whispering Christmas trees, stilt walkers, jugglers, circus acts and even Christmas puddings on skates were amongst the acts that kept visitors amused and enthralled as they mingled with the crowd while local musicians, community groups and singers added to the town’s festive atmosphere. The crowd were also treated to a personal appearance by Crystal Palace Football club players who turned out in force to support the event.

“The BID’s Christmas lights switch-on event has become increasingly regarded as one of Croydon’s annual ‘must sees’ events offering something for everyone and this year was no exception,” said BID chief executive, Matthew Sims.

An estimated 7,000 visitors were in the town in the build-up to the switch-on and according to our research, 67% said they had spent more time in Croydon as a result of our event.

This year, with the aid of sponsorship from developer Hammerson, the BID is breaking new ground by extending its programme of activities to embrace the key five-weeks trading period in the run-up to Christmas. Additional street and musical entertainment is planned throughout November and December and a spectacular Light Night event and parade will provide a magnificent, jaw-dropping finale to the celebrations on December 13th.

“With the additional entertainment we’ve planned over the next few weeks, we anticipate that more visitors than ever will be attracted into the town to take advantage of all the fantastic shops and facilities here and our aim is to ensure they have a truly memorable experience,” he concluded.

For more details of Croydon BID’s Christmas events programme, visit www.croydontowncentre.com. See over for more photographs of our fantastic switch-on event.

76% rated the event as good or very good.

67% said they had spent more time in Croydon as a result of our event.

82% said they would be doing most of their Christmas shopping in Croydon this year.

Seasons greetings from all at Croydon BID.

Contact Us: Tel: 020 8603 0050 Email: info@croydonbid.com

In Contact Autumn 2012

Croydon BID
Croydon BID is backing the ambition to restore Croydon to its position as the economic powerhouse of the South East.

The BID is partnering with the Develop Croydon Forum on a series of initiatives designed to promote the town as a location to invest, work and live.

The Forum was set up in 2011 to provide a collaborative private-sector led approach to promoting Croydon and encouraging inward investment. It represents organisations in the private, public and third sectors and members include, among others, developers Stanhope, Barratt and Berkeley Homes plus Hammerson, Westfield and Abstract. Matthew Sims, Croydon BID chief executive said: “Over the last five years, the BID company has played a significant part in improving Croydon’s competitive position and making our Town Centre a more welcoming place to visit and work.

“Partnering with the Forum is an important next step in ensuring we continue to work with key stakeholders to safeguard Croydon’s economic future. There is significant regeneration currently taking place in Croydon and it is important that we all work together to maximise the opportunities that this will create to drive economic growth.”

Annual Develop Croydon Forum initiatives include investor tours, VIP events, conference presentations and the Develop Croydon Conference which this year, featured London deputy mayor Kit Malthouse in a Question Time session.

A wave of new construction is already under way on several key sites in the town including a pedestrian bridge linking East Croydon railway station with the Town Centre, a new public service delivery hub in Fell Road and a major new 45-storey development of new homes and leisure facilities at Saffron Square. In addition, work is progressing fast on the Renaissance development in Dingwall Road - Croydon’s first new speculative office build by a developer in nearly a decade.

Meantime, huge investment has been pledged for the town’s two major shopping centres while planning permission has been granted for several landmark developments including Stanhope Schroder’s scheme for Ruskin Square, Menta’s mixed use scheme for Cherry Orchard Road and Guildhouse Rosepride’s 55-storey tower at One Lansdowne Road.
A new, state-of-the-art deep-cleaning machine could take the town by storm in the battle against gum and grime, if a pilot commissioned by Croydon BID is successful.

The high-pressure, Cyclone cleaning vehicle is capable of cleaning large areas in a short space of time while recovering and recycling the water it uses.

Several locations around the town are being given a facelift and new winter planting and floral displays have been introduced to improve the town’s appeal. New window vinyls have also been installed in the former Allders store to help enhance the empty store’s appearance.

Work on transforming the previously dingy subway between Fairfield Halls and Queen’s Gardens has just been completed following the installation of a highly colourful, public art display featuring a pantomimes and picnic theme.

The much-needed makeover was carried out by around 90 volunteers, led by local artists Susan Beresford and Jeanne-Marie Eayrs, (pictured bottom right) co-directors of Undercroydon, whose mission is to increase the use of public art with the involvement of the local community.

It follows on from a similar project commissioned by Croydon BID last year which served to vastly improve the appearance of the neighbouring subway that connects the former Nestlé building with College Green.

Meantime, with the BID’s support, plans are afoot to transform the hoardings outside of developer Terrace Hill’s Chroma site, opposite East Croydon station, with the introduction of a green ‘living wall’ complete with vegetation.

“It’s an unusual and exciting project and one with which we are delighted to be associated,” said BID project manager Maria Chapman-Beer.

“When viewed alongside our newly-installed barrier baskets at East Croydon station, not only will it be pleasing to the eye, the ‘living wall’ will go a long way towards softening the local landscape and bring life and colour to an extremely busy urban area, through which over 70,000 commuters pass by daily” she added.

Such has been the BID’s success over the years in helping to brighten up the town’s appearance that its efforts have once again been officially acknowledged in this year’s London in Bloom Awards, announced in October.

Two small pockets of green space – at Reeves Corner and Thomas Turner Path – developed with support from local businesses, volunteers, Croydon Council and cleaning contractors, Veolia, were awarded Level 3 certificates in the ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood’ awards organised in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society.

Makeover time for Croydon Town Centre

Life is set to look a whole lot brighter for busy commuters and those who regularly negotiate their way around Croydon Town Centre thanks to Croydon BID and its partners.

Several locations around the town are always high on our agenda in the battle to create positive impressions of the town and we believe the Cyclone machine will be a great addition to our armoury” she added.

In addition, the BID has re-introduced a weekly ‘grot spot’ wash-down service in order to tackle head-on many of the typical day-to-day cleansing issues that inevitably arise in our bustling commercial environment.

The new deep-cleaning service is being provided by the BID in conjunction with its suppliers, Community Clean who have wide-ranging experience in the public and private sectors of tackling nuisance issues and environmental enhancement.

Cyclone may soon be taking the town by storm

The machine has been introduced by Croydon BID to augment its scheduled deep-cleaning programme which is designed to supplement the routine work carried out by Croydon Council.

“Since the BID was established in 2007, we have invested well over £¾ million on cleansing and greening projects in the Town Centre to improve the town’s appearance and help increase its appeal,” said project manager Maria Chapman-Beer.

“Deep-cleaning, gum removal and washing and disinfection of ‘hot spot’ areas are always high on our agenda in the battle to create positive impressions of the town and we believe the Cyclone machine will be a great addition to our armoury” she added.

In addition, the BID has re-introduced a weekly ‘grot spot’ wash-down service in order to tackle head-on many of the typical day-to-day cleansing issues that inevitably arise in our bustling commercial environment.

The new deep-cleaning service is being provided by the BID in conjunction with its suppliers, Community Clean who have wide-ranging experience in the public and private sectors of tackling nuisance issues and environmental enhancement.

Photo courtesy of the Croydon Guardian
Croydon BID pledges to continue police funding

Croydon Business Improvement District (BID) has pledged to continue its funding of additional police resource in the Town Centre in the drive to prevent and stamp out crime.

The decision follows restructuring of the Town Centre Police unit earlier in the year which led to a change in the number of constables dedicated to policing the heart of the town.

The town has benefitted from additional police resource since 2008 when the BID and the Metropolitan Police Authority entered into a joint-funding agreement which ultimately led to the BID paying for five extra police officers bringing the total of dedicated Town Centre police up to 22.

“This is great news for all those working and doing business here in Croydon as it sends out an extremely strong and positive message about the BID’s continued commitment to tackling crime and improving perceptions of safety, no matter what time of day people visit,” said Croydon BID Chief Executive, Matthew Sims.

“Safety and security remains the BID’s number one priority and our partnership with the Metropolitan Police has served us extremely well over the years in achieving that. We look forward to working closely with the police to build on those achievements,” he added.

Deputy Borough Commander, Superintendent Rob Atkin said: “It’s fantastic news that Croydon BID has agreed to continue to fund extra police officers for the Town Centre area and that our partnership will be continuing. As well as funding the extra police officers, Croydon BID also plays an important role in bringing together local businesses with ourselves and other agencies so that we can all work towards reducing crime and antisocial behaviour in the Town Centre.

Destination Croydon made its debut at the 2012 Confex show after a consortium of local business joined forces with the BID to put the town on the map as one of the south east’s leading hotel and leisure destinations.

The group’s collaboration followed on from the highly successful DrupalCon event held in Croydon in August 2011, when more than 2,000 web developers from across the globe descended on the Fairfield Halls for a major week-long conference. The Croydon Visitor Centre assisted by negotiating special delegate rates with hotels, restaurants and bars and such was the overall success of the event, that it served to underline the potential that Croydon has in this sector.

To support the launch of Destination Croydon, a dedicated website and sales and marketing campaigns were developed to raise awareness of all the advantages that conferencing in Croydon can bring, being close to the capital, coast and beyond.

Now, the plan is to further strengthen the Destination Croydon brand and reinforce its credentials as an important player in this valuable sector of the south east’s economy with a presence at next year’s Confex Exhibition.

The Destination Croydon team is based at Croydon Visitor Centre, adjacent to East Croydon station. They are able to provide advice and information on all of the town’s hotel and conference facilities as well as assisting with negotiating and booking accommodation.