

EVALUATION OF THE #ShopLocalBexhill RUN IN CENTRAL WARD BEXHILL OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2020



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Introduction

In the Autumn of 2020 the recovery of the local economy in Rother appeared to be faltering. Following the loosening of lockdown restrictions in Summer 2020, local retailers were reporting that trade and customers had not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The #ShopLocalBexhill campaign was developed partly in response to data from shoppers and Town Centre retailers set out in a report published by Bexhill Chamber of Commerce in August 2020¹. The survey was focused on gaining views on the Chamber's plans to increase social distances through new traffic measures. However, it also collected information around shoppers habits post the initial lockdown.

80% of survey respondents claimed they had been out less often in recent months and 60% claiming that under normal circumstances they would go into the Town Centre. These stark results were borne out by anecdotal conversations with town centre retailers over the late summer and early Autumn months. Most reported less footfall and turnover than usual. The only businesses who reported increased turnover were ones where there was an established online selling element to their business.

In terms of financial support the Government via Rother District Council was supporting businesses during lockdown with grants which allowed retailers to 'keep their head above water'. There was an additional programme of support through the 'Reopening High Street Safely Fund' which provided Rother District Council with £85K from the European Regional Development Fund to spend on 4 project areas aimed at promoting High Streets. Rother agreed to spend the funding on a Christmas Shopping Campaign in Bexhill and funded lamp standard banners encouraging safe shopping. Rye and Battle Town Councils organised their own campaigns.

It was within this context that the #ShopLocalBexhill campaign was conceived and delivered by the Central Ward Councillors. The objective was to raise awareness with a Ward Newsletter to be followed up with a social media and poster campaign. However, Covid 19 infections continued to rise through the autumn and the Government introduced a full lockdown for a month from 5 November through to 2 December. When Rother and Bexhill emerged from the Lockdown they entered in Tier 2 Covid restrictions which meant that non-essential retail could reopen. However, with Covid infections still rising, on 19 December all non-essential retail premises closed and will remain closed until further notice.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine what effect the #ShopLocalBexhill campaign had in terms of turnover and encouraging people to shop locally in the short period 2 December through to 19 December. It also looks at what more Rother and the County Council could do to support local retail businesses and whether there are lessons to be learned in terms of rolling out a similar campaign when the current lockdown ends.

¹ Bexhill Chamber of Commerce Town Centre Survey August 2020 compiled by think.me.uk

#ShopLocalBexhill Campaign



The campaign had three elements:

- A ward newsletter with a headline article urging local residents in Shop Local – this Christmas. This was delivered to 2500 homes in the Town Centre between the beginning of October and 5 November when National Lockdown 2 was introduced. **Total Cost £350** for the printed materials plus volunteer hours estimated in excess of 30 hours for delivery.



- #ShopLocalBexhill posters displayed in shop windows throughout the Town Centre including London Road. We asked permission from our Sackville Ward councillor colleagues to offer the posters in Sea Road and the eastern end of St Leonards Road and were pleased to see the poster in the MP's office window. The posters were designed by a colleague and distributed in the run up to the easing of lockdown at the beginning of December. **Total Cost £40** for 200 posters plus 10 hours of councillor time for distribution.



- Publicity which included organising a press release, social media coverage and a paid promotion on Facebook to support take up of the posters. We distributed all but 20 of the posters to shops, estate agents and offices where the windows were visible from the street. During the time that shops were allowed to open we posted on Facebook and occasionally Twitter to promote the campaign. **Total cost of publicity £10** (Facebook Ad) plus 50+ hours councillor time spent on social media promotion and press releases.



The printing and advert costs were paid from the Councillor's campaign funds

Evaluation – Methodology

While the posters were very visible and retailers were positive about the Christmas trade we wanted to find out if the campaign had made a difference. Had people noticed the campaign and had they bothered to shop local in the short period of time between shops reopening on 2 December and 19 December when they had to close again? We also took the opportunity to also ask some additional questions around the numbers of retailers who

were operating online and what support they felt they needed to increase online sales as well as support more generally to improve their business. Finally, we asked shoppers about gaps – were there goods they would like to have bought in Bexhill but could not.

Because of the National Lockdown we could not interview shoppers or retailers face-to-face in the town centre. We set up an on-line survey and promoted it through social media. We split the questions between two groups – Retailers and Shoppers. We did not collect any demographics but respondents could only complete the survey once.

The survey ran for 9 days from 8 through to 17 January. It was promoted via Facebook with a paid for advert which encourage people to click through to the online survey link.

Headline findings

We found good awareness of the #ShopLocalBexhill campaign. The campaign needs to continue, with an evaluation again at the same time next year to see if we have achieved behaviour change.

Products that residents most wanted to buy locally but were unable to do so, were clothes and toys.

Retailers highlighted that the issue around developing online sales is not about the mechanics of setting up the tools but how to use the tools effectively. Specialist online marketing support is needed.

Having a clean, well maintained and attractive Town Centre was an important factor to encourage shoppers back into Bexhill.

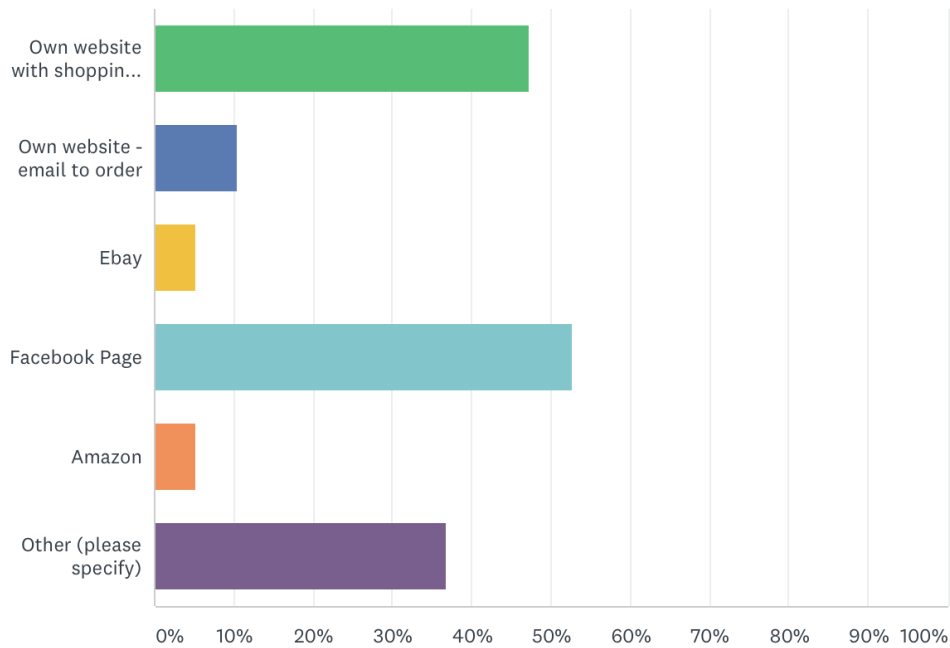
Detailed analysis

Of the 266 respondents completed the survey, 8.2% were retailers (22) and 91.8% (244) shoppers.

RETAILER FEEDBACK

85% of the retailers said that they were aware of the #ShopLocalBexhill campaign. 76% had displayed a poster. Most retailers thought that their customers were not aware of the campaign. 56% believed that the campaign did not lead to more sales. However, this may reflect the fact that the campaign was late started and finished early. One respondent wrote *“Difficult to judge. We were provided the poster in November during a local shutdown and then were only open for 3 weeks in December before being shut down again”*

When asked “Do you have an online ordering or online shopping facility?” 57% responded positively. Most retailers had introduced on-line shopping before March 2020 and those with an on-line presence used a variety of platforms:

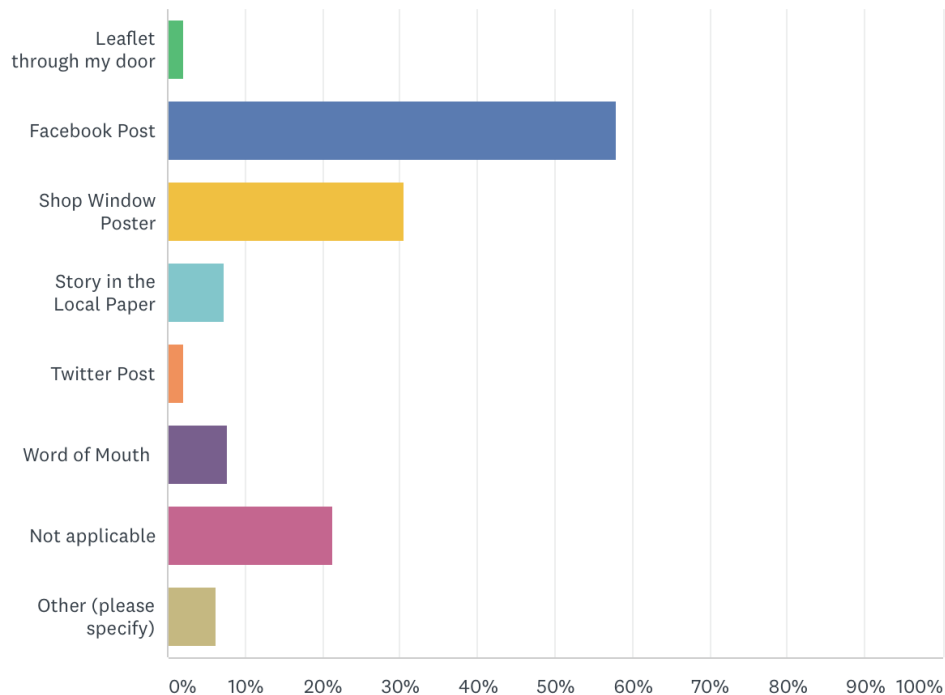


Where respondents had chosen 'other' they cited Google Market Place, 'Not on the High Street' and 'Etsy' (which is an online shop for handmade, vintage, custom and unique gifts)

Just over 70% of retail respondents said they would like support to increase online sales. One 'not sure' respondent said *"we tried click and collect basis during November but had little interest. Most calls were enquiring when we were opening again, and some people reserved things for when we reopened"*

SHOPPER FEEDBACK

91.8% of respondents to the survey were shoppers. Surprisingly, given the retailer responses, over 64% said that they were aware of the #ShopLocalCampaign. The response from the question about how they become aware is shown below. Respondents could select more than more source of information and Facebook was by far the most quoted source. This may have been slightly skewed as the survey itself was conducted through social media rather than face-to-face interviews or hard copy questionnaires. After Facebook, the next most popular choice was shop window posters which were recognised by 30% of respondents. Where people selected 'other' it was mainly to say that they had seen the posters elsewhere, for example, on notice boards around the town.



We asked shoppers whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. A sliding scale of 0 – 10 was used, with 0 representing strongly disagree and 10 strongly agree.

Respondents only slightly agreed with the statement *“I made an effort to shop locally during the run up to Christmas”*. (Scoring 5.43 on a Scale 0 – 10) Checking through the general comments those that did not agree tended to have already done their shopping online in November when the country was in National Lockdown 2.

On average they did not agree with *“I spent more in local shops in December than I would have in previous years”* (Scoring 3.91 on a scale of 0 – 10) and did not agree with this statement *“I have ordered online from local shops in December”* (Scoring 3.04 on a scale 0 – 10).

We asked an open-ended question about *“goods or items that you couldn’t source from a local retail stores”* The top answers were Clothes (27% respondents) and Toys (25% respondents).

Finally, we asked both shoppers and retailers *“Do you have any comments you’d like to make about what more can be done to support the retail sector in Bexhill?”* The full responses are set out in Annex A and B. But here are a number of interesting suggestions set out below.

A significant number of respondents who would like to see more **pedestrianisation** within the town and increased events to encourage visitors – but not on the seafront as this is thought to reduce footfall in local shops.

Many people commented on the mix of shops and the abundance of charity shops (without perhaps realising that charity shops bring visitors into Bexhill). There were a lot of comments about the new parking restrictions and worryingly, a significant number of shoppers who wrongly believe that there are no free parking spaces in the Town Centre. The majority of town centre on-street parking is free although restricted to 2 hours with no return for 4 hours.

Several shoppers said that the Town Centre could do with a facelift including making sure shop fronts are maintained and kept clean. *“The only asset Bexhill centre has to attract people to shop there is the place. So it is absolutely essential that the place looks good - clean, well maintained, attractive”.*

There were also comments about boarding up empty shops and making them look attractive and suggestions about reducing rents and rates and dealing with rogue commercial landlords.

There were only a few suggestions about creating an on-line directory along the lines of ‘Bexhill Unwrapped’. Current thinking however, is that shoppers go straight from the search engine to the retailers website or Facebook page, cutting out ‘the middle man’. This is highlighted by a retailer who stated that it is not necessarily getting online that is the issue but seeking professional advice around how to *“drive traffic to your website”* once it is up and running.

Recommendations

- Feed the results of this survey back to Rother District Council, the Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses.
- Continue to develop the campaign working with the local Chambers of Commerce in Bexhill, Battle and Rye. Aim for having promotional materials ready when the current restrictions are lifted. Include Councillors in the local delivery of campaign materials.
- Research sources of training in online marketing with emphasis on how to achieve search engine optimisation as well as how to adopt successful strategies to promote Facebook and other social media channels.
- Undertake some test events away from the seafront to retain footfall in the Town Centre (post Covid Lockdowns)
- Promote free on-street parking in Bexhill Town Centre through a social media campaign run by RDC and ESCC.
- Investigate ways to tidy up the appearance of empty shops – with decorative boarding or window films.
- Investigate whether there is more which can be done in terms of Rate Relief

- Roll out the public realm strategy and make sure the town centre is well maintained and cared for.

ANNEX A – Responses from Retailers (What more can be done to support the retail sector in Bexhill)

I think the council have done a lot in the last few years. I do believe though that the De la Warr pavilion has lost its appeal for some visitors. It used to have a cafe on the ground floor. This led out to the terrace there was often a band playing and deck chairs etc. Local art displayed in the corridors. It is quite expensive now and up too market for some people . Especially families.
The parking has helped massively now introduced, but there needs to be more for people to come in to town for (when circumstances allow) events etc. There is no 'joined up' thinking between retailers, no planning of how we get footfall back in the town centre, and most events are centred to the seafront, and actually lower footfall.
Make Western/Devonshire Roads pedestrian.
Grants to help businesses maintain decor of shop fronts. This would improve the look of the high street at a time when retailers don't have excess budgets and provide a boost to local decorating businesses at the same time.
Need to have more free parking in Bexhill to allow shoppers to come to town
Financial support to enable local businesses to continue trading
Great initiative. Unite town for Christmas. Lots of people were ready to support local shops. Need to carry on with all year round ideas to tie up shopping experience. Regular monthly events of quarterly events. A town pound scheme. Or other local shopping initiatives. Thank you for your efforts so far though.
Pandemic to end and more varied shops to entice people in. Far too many cafes etc in Bexhill.
Get the parking sorted!
I think the campaign was great - increasing awareness and getting the message out there. Thank you
I think the campaign worked locally but was also supported by social media campaigns from various outlets, including news stories on how high streets have to adapt. For the future, I think it would be really useful to help high streets get online, via courses and better still how to drive traffic to your website. As selling online as well as in shop, can keep business on the high street and pay the rent. I sell online but wasn't to keep my shop open rather than move to a warehouse on an industrial unit. The high streets need to be a mix of community feel, and more of an overall experience. Not just about shopping. A combination of both.
Better parking facilities including loading bay in Wickham Avenue
Town centre needs a good face-lift with greenery, seating and facilities. Customers have commented they feel unsafe bringing youngsters and teenagers to town because of the increasing anti-social behaviour particularly around any seating areas/benches in the centre. An increasing abundance of empty shops and charity shops also does not assist the situation.

Annex B - Responses from Shoppers (What more can be done to support the retail sector in Bexhill)

A Bexhill Autumn Fair, over a whole weekend ... stalls, a parade, bands, locally produced products of all types, Stilt walkers, Jugglers, a car race, amazing music at the Del- La Warr Pavilion, barbecue on the beach.... Bexhill is a stunning place, let's celebrate that fact and inform the rest of the world.
A nice children's clothes shop, card shop, gift shop, pound shop in Sidley
A Shop Local Discount card
A start would be retailers keeping their shops exteriors looking painted and clean, the town looks dated and derelict
ACCESSIBILITY! All people on the council or in charge or making these decisions should be required to try and use the town with a mobility aid, wheelchair or pushchair! My stepfather uses an electric wheelchair and can't get in a ridiculous amount of shops. We felt we could only come into town with our baby in a sling if we had the pram we avoided not worth the hassle at all. Outrageous when you consider the demographic of Bexhill's population.
Affordable clothes shops that suit younger residents. Move stores online and advertise during this pandemic when people are avoiding shops
Allow shops to operate in the town centre, rather than charity shops that have reduced rates. Not a fair playing field for shops whether big companies or independent.
As a former business owner, I feel very strongly that we must make Bexhill town centre shops a "destination" and retain as many independent shops as possible. A reduction in business rates would be beneficial.
As one that has tripped on the uneven pavements and been a victim of the numerous potholes in Sackville Rd and Western Rd, how about offering an acceptable surface underfoot. Work from the bottom up, as it were!
Better landlords made to look after their properties. lower rates?
Better parking
Better variety of shops. Particularly shoe shops, men's and children's clothing.
Bexhill is a unique town and more high end shops would attract locals and visitors- e.g. Hearts with Love shop in Devonshire road. Also toy shop and clothes shop for younger people.
Clean the streets up, stop the fly tipping. Repair the footpaths, close to traffic Western Rd 10 - 4pm each day except Sunday, only needs a barrier at one end. Have Police on foot patrol during the day.
Condensing the shopping area which is too spread out.
Consistent opening hours. Any time you shop in town after 4pm is a lottery for shops being open. Get a town centre manager. Encourage and book buskers. Good ones make people stop and listen and spend more time. This is why Eastbourne welcomes them. People stay in cafes longer. They come to listen on purpose. Lose some of the disabled spaces. Accept and embrace the charity shops. Encourage more. People from other towns come specially. Otherwise it is the same shops in a different town. Embrace Bexhill's differences. Bexhill town centre is like the world's end. There is nothing to draw people in and less to make them stay.
Create some incentives to get more traders
Cut down on the number of charity shops and cafes and encourage more diverse retail.
Do not allow non-essential shops to remain open during lockdown i.e. The Drug Store, The Catalogue Shop, Steve's Tobacconist and the dry cleaners in Western road to remain open instead of totally on the other shops that have had to close.
Do you mean local or local independent?

Due to difficulty walking and standing for any length of time, I usually cycle to the shops. The introducing of parking restrictions has made cycling along Devonshire Road easier now there's no double parking. I was disappointed that the proposal to pedestrianise Western Road didn't get anywhere. There need to be more cycle racks dotted around, not all in one place. If I've got a heavy bag I can't carry it far.
Easier/more parking
Encourage more independent shops to come/stay i.e. Books, clothes, and also stores like m & s, away from out of town locations. Provide good cheap parking, i.e. multi storey car park would also be good for shop workers.
Encourage or help with online presence
Encourage the new town council to give the shopping streets a facelift including trees. Keep business rates under review Proactively seek out new independent shops with incentives
Fashionable clothes for younger people.
Fill up empty shops Reconsider parking restrictions on seafront
Free adverts with web links on Weekly Council Email
Free parking
Free parking Reduced rates May be a Waitrose or M an S Food hall to attract more people to the town
Get better shops I never been to a more depressing town you can't get anything here
Get rid of the parking meters and parking charges.
Get the retail sector to ask - expel what they actually want/need to buy
Greater opportunities for small retailers to use social media, and maybe a website which co-ordinates this? Some training in website design?
Haha, yeah, keep the shops open
Have themed events more often (difficult through Covid though), the key to supporting retail is increasing footfall
Help them with business rates and save them from rogue landlords
Help towards payment of rent and council tax
Help with business rates
Helping small businesses get online effectively.
Hold a couple of Bexhill black Fridays and get all the shops to partake
I can only think of making it easier to park so I can carry my shopping to the car. As I cannot carry anything heavy, sometimes it's just not possible. I love shopping locally and chatting to the retailers. It's a lovely experience when they recognise that you are a regular, but sometimes I have to go further afield just because of the parking.
I don't go into charity shops as my impression is that they are (like many 'local family' businesses) cramped and dirty, and the goods not well displayed. Shops need to look as though customers are welcome.
I don't normally use the High Street as I don't want to use Charity Shops and traditional Cafes and that's really all there is.
I don't think the local ecosystem is very diverse. Mostly second hand shops, cafes and estate agents. But the local food offering - greengrocer, butcher, fishmonger, etc - is very good. Would like to see more shops that meet the needs of families and different age groups.
I make an effort to wear a face covering. Normally a shield. Though I still carry in my pocket, a mask. I also carry with me. A copy of my medical records. There are times. When wearing a mask is ok. Yet times when not. So I take a face shield. I wear a mask for as long as I am able. But switch to shield when I need to. But there are times when I forget at least one of them I have received both nasty comments and looks from local businesses and their customers. I now use, unsafe, with no detrimental comments, supermarkets.

I think more seating and cover outside shops to encourage people to socialise in good times and to queue safely in the pandemic
I think planning strategy needs to look to focus retail activity in the town centre, convert London Road more to residential where possible.
I think we need a range of shops which offer good prices . No more cafes, hairdressers, estate agents.
I won't shop in Bexhill now since the parking charges. I go to Ravenside, Eastbourne on a Sunday (free parking), Lottbridge Drive and Crumbles.
I would like to see a good deli in town.
I would love a few more clothing shops. Another toy shop would be good and also a sports shop
I'm new to the area and love the variety of local stores Bexhill town has, I would hope every support is being offered to those businesses in this difficult time to ensure all retailers stay open
It is vital that 2021 is the year that small businesses are supported by LA's to get online and improve their social media presence. Also helping the community to access businesses for click & collect etc.
It would be good to have some retail chains interspersed with the independent stores and for there to be a pedestrian only zone, Devonshire Rd would be ideal, so that cafes can have tables outside and create a central space that shoppers want to spend time in.
It would be lovely to have a really nice deli such as the one in Little Common. Also there are two Co-ops - a different store, maybe Asda/Tesco would be beneficial. A lot of the shops need a facelift - I think the town looks dirty. There are too many charity shops and/or empty shops. I think the new parking scheme works well and I believe people may be more encouraged to shop once the pandemic is over. Often in local shops the price of goods is higher - perhaps reduced rates might encourage slightly cheaper goods.
Just that we must support our local traders as much as possible.
Keep reminding us. It's a really good idea
Late opening on a Thursday for shoppers.
Less charity shops
Less charity shops
Less charity shops, lower rates and more clothes shops
Less charity shops. Less cafes and restaurants. We need an effort to get more individual shops in the town
Less taxi and disabled parking spaces
Less taxi ranks and disabled spaces might make parking easier for your average shopper. One taxi rank on town hall square is more than ample, and the disabled parking should not take up one side of an entire road with additional spaces scattered around. The whole town should be considered, not just the town centre. London Road has shops and looks like a dumping ground, especially with the scrap metal company parking scrap cars all over the pavement.
Lower rates and more retail shops.
Lower rents and rates to attract more varied/interesting retail outlets. Cut down on Italian restaurants!!!
Main retail shops
Make Devonshire road traffic free
Make the town more welcoming, by adding floral displays and having proper high quality designed signage on lampposts.
More businesses need to go online with products. We need more variety in Bexhill... too many charity shops & cafes
More for children. There isn't a lot for young people - aside from New Look there isn't a young person's clothes store.

More free parking and safer pavements that don't damage my wheelchair castor wheels (they need to change the paving slabs that are uneven and dangerous)
More of an online presence - love the COVID click and collect for local shops
More pubs
More quality high street names
More shops for children. And plus clothing shops
More shops for younger adults are a must can't think of one shop apart from food places that would make me go into Bexhill town centre
More support for specialist shops and independent shops. Let community groups (not just formalised charities) borrow empty shops until a renter is found. Focus on types of shops not already in Bexhill.
More variety of shops not charity shops, cafes or restaurants.
More variety of shops to cater to all ages
More variety of shops with affordable prices. I mostly shop online because of the pandemic, it feels safer. Most of Bexhill's shops are small and I found it stressful to browse and social distance.
Need more for young adults/teenagers. I would not go into town to shop for anything. I do go to the charity shops and Jacobs but that is it
Needs a large parking area. Maybe multi story car park. Limit the number of charity shops. I found the Xmas shopping question a little odd we were in lockdown from 2nd December in Bexhill!!
Needs to be far more up to date. Needs pedestrian area with outside seating. Needs a chain store or two to bring the shoppers to town like a costa or Starbucks
No more charity shops, estate agents or hairdressers. I know we like the little boutique shops but they just don't necessarily have the finance behind them to survive, especially with the state of some of the retail units and the amount of work they have to do to make them usable (even with a rent free period). The big names are what will bring people into the town and the boutiques would benefit from the increased footfall. Also having cleaner streets would be nice. Dog mess everywhere! I would never think of Bexhill for a Christmas shopping trip, because I know I wouldn't be able to obtain gifts for multiple people. Scatter box is probably the only place where I used to regularly purchase, and these days factory shop and Boots. However I no longer live in Bexhill, I just work there so it is convenient during lunch breaks, if I didn't work there I wouldn't come to Bexhill at all. Nothing for children, as a kid I spent a large amount of time in Gamleys and Woolworths, can't even get their Clark's shoes anymore. Not even any leisure facilities now to pull people in except the swimming pool which of course isn't in town. It's fine if you want a haircut, a new house and some bits from dearly departed great aunt Mauds wardrobe, but that's about it. It's awful to say but it just feels like another sad little seaside town full of empty and rundown looking units, which will not convince a business owner to take a risk on it, particularly now.
Now parking enforcement is here the town is easier to access. Encourage more retail shops rather than cafes/restaurants.
Online map like mayors website but with all the shops on saying what they sell plus same for businesses bit like Yelp maybe the guy who does the ONS website can do it
Opening time can be sporadic, e.g. some shops close at 4, others close for lunch. It makes the town centre less 'reliable' as a destination, compared to Ravenside which you know will be open 8am to 7pm Mon- Sat.
Park and ride from, say, Wainwright Rd, to Devonshire Rd
Parking issue has now been sorted out it is much easier to park in Bexhill Town centre than before new parking restrictions.
Parking issue. The council should encourage shop owners with a reduction in rates to encourage him to come and clean at Western Road and Devonshire Road the old shops should be boarded up and made smart so we don't look like a slum town with empty shops it's up to the council to

encourage shop owners to come to the town Parking and clean smart town to encourage people to come in
Pedestrianisation, tidying the streets, concentrating shops in fewer streets
Pedestrianise the streets.
Reconsider pedestrian only areas e.g. Western Road
Reconsider pedestrian only areas for specific times e.g. western road
Reduce the business rates, so that small businesses can compete with the bigger companies. Provide one road that is pedestrian only, it works in so many towns and restaurants on Western Road, Sackville Road, or segments of the seafront could add outside seating and live bands - when everything gets back to normal. A place to visit rather than just entertaining our own residents. We must make people come to Bexhill to visit and then stay to spend money and enjoy the town. Stop living in the past and stopping the future under the "conservation rules" some things are just silly and we need to move forward and keep the history without being stuck in time.
Remove parking restrictions.
Reverse the daft parking restrictions that have made it less attractive to shop on town!
Scrap parking charges
Scrap the parking charges on Rother car parks.
See my previous comment.....you can't have all the shops shut over the Christmas shopping period and expect people to wait and hope they can get what they want.....they will order them online to guarantee they will get them.
Smarten up shop fronts
Smarten up the shop fronts, put flowers etc around town, use empty shops for housing, or other purposes. If the town is about cafes, barbers, hairdressers and charity shops then make it a social space that we want to be in. I think independent shops need to be encouraged, smart shops with low business rates, good landlords. But u feel the whole of retail will be something different after this period.
So many local shops don't have accessible websites. Need a central website to list them all
Something for mums and babies would be nice- or parents and kids etc
Staff need to stick to the rules too. I was in a shop in Bexhill, the lady serving me lifted her mask from her mouth, coughed in my direction then covered her mouth with mask!!! Needless to say, I walked straight out without finishing my purchase & will never go in there again << a lost customer for that shop!
Stop business rates for small businesses in town, help support them during these times. Stop encouraging people shop with them as its prolonging this pandemic.
Stop car parking charges
Stop charging for parking! A lot of shoppers including myself will go to the supermarkets instead as I refuse to pay for parking! If you want to charge then ticket all those drivers parking on yellow lines and on pavements etc.
Stop ripping them of with extortionate rates
Stop turning all the empty shops into charity shops or estate agents! Maybe reduce rent charged on these buildings.
The council needs to stop allowing estate agents popping up, we have plenty also the idea too charge people too park in the town has basically put the final nail in the coffin of Bexhill town centre in my opinion
The Covid pandemic has changed the entire face of retail. Working from home will/should continue and Bexhill has a great opportunity to develop and cater for the ex-commuters. A good range of food outlet and more independent retailers would no doubt benefit the community who would otherwise rely on "London" retailers. Fewer charity shops as a result of a more diverse "resident" population during the day. Perhaps more local crafts and services to cater for tourism.

Economies will almost certainly de-centralise (a positive thing) moving “wealth” from the city to the coast. Business facilities to help remote workers?
The only asset Bexhill centre has to attract people to shop there is the place. So it is absolutely essential that the place looks good - clean, well maintained, attractive. Also local shops do not communicate well visually as to what exactly they sell (the picture framing inside Priceless Devonshire Road east side). It was months before I discovered lots of things about what shops in Bexhill sell. They seem to expect you do spend time discovering this. Small local businesses need to try harder - like Hearts!
The parking has made a huge difference, so nice to be able to pop into town without spending ages looking for a spot or having to do a long walk when I only have a short time. So much better now.
Theatre/cinema and free parking one day a week. Making parking info clearer as some are only 2 hours and that's not long enough for appointments and browsing and lunch
There is too much available online e.g. Amazon/eBay, unfortunately most small retail shops won't be able to compete. I think you've done as much as you can.
There should be caps on building rent because it's my understanding this is why shops have closed! (High costs) Too many charity shops and Estate Agents - why does this supersede retail? Clothing shops for young people don't exist in Bexhill. I think more people will support local if there were a better selection of retail establishments. I also think Bexhill is in danger of being a ghost town. If it wants to thrive, we must provide the younger residents with better options.
Think recent parking changes may HELP ok you may have to pay but you are more likely to get a space as commuters cannot park for day
Think this survey will not give true reflection during pandemic as many feel safer avoiding going around shops and not going out unnecessarily.
Too many charity shops, too many disabled parking bays, more high street names needed
Unfortunately because of the Covid I have only been to Bexhill town 3 times since March, I have moved to more online shopping than ever before. I will go back to visiting when all this shielding is behind us. I only hope the shops survive till then. I have used many shops for delivery and have found them so helpful. I didn't find Christmas gift shopping so easy as day to day.
Variety needs to be added to make Bexhill a place people want to shop. There are way too many charity shops!
We are in a pandemic. Stay home
We have a nice selection of shops, parking is still an issue
We have too many hairdressers and charity shops. We are a seaside town so gift shops are always good.
We need more clothing shops, since new look has gone I have to go to Hastings or Eastbourne, it's easier to do everything I need once I'm over there than heading into Bexhill town and then other towns for clothes and shoes.
We need more quality shops, less coffee shops and less tatty charity shops
We need more variety
We need to make the entrance to Bexhill attractive, at the moment London Road looks like a slum!
Website directory for shops
When lockdown make they get support financially so local trader can survive when they can open up again.
While shops are empty make sure they are maintained and perhaps have some sort of window display rather than dead flies
You need a good amount of free parking and the cost of things to be as close to online prices as possible. I'm not going to go out in the cold, pay to park (if I can find a space) to pay a higher price

for something when I can sit at home in the warm and get it delivered to my door for less money. Shopping locally is for rich people who can afford to pay more and afford the parking charges

You need to consider that the people running this campaign are middle class do gooders who can afford to spend more in the name of shopping local. Not everyone can. Fruit and veg in the grocers and meat at the butchers is one thing but gifts and homeware is just too expensive in independent shops. Stop lecturing and understand the audience is wider than those in your fan club