

# TOWN CENTRE MONITORING

## Overview

The audit was conducted on the first day non-essential retail could reopen following lockdown.

### Bognor Regis

Four of the five national chains in the core area previously noted as “at risk” have reopened – these being Mountain Warehouse, Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Peacocks and Bon Marché. Sadly, Trespass did close. There were five new independent shop openings: a pet grooming service; beauty parlour; Mexican takeaway; café; and a travel agent. There are also signs of refurbishment in currently vacant units where builders have confirmed new commercial tenants, and signs of life in places that have been closed for a long time. Plus, plentiful rumours that currently empty properties have new tenants lined up. Footfall figures compared to 2019 indicate a 28% decrease, however at the time of audit there was encouragement that people were returning to town centres with an increase in footfall of 159% from the previous week (in lockdown). Information provided by Bognor Regis Business Improvement District.

### Littlehampton

The presence of national chains continues to decline with the closure of TUI and Leaders. Added to this WHSmith and Barclays have publicised their intentions to close branches in Littlehampton in June. The large units formerly occupied by Bon Marché and Hartleys continue to be vacant. Peacocks has reopened despite earlier indication the store was to close. Although High Street is faring poorly, this is overcompensated by the increase in independently owned businesses in other shopping streets outnumbering closures. This has resulted in a net gain of tenancies and raised the town’s occupancy rate.

### Data

		<b>Bognor Regis</b>	<b>Littlehampton</b>
Market share	Occupancy rate	89% ↑	92% ↑
	National retailers	23%	15%
	Independent businesses	77%	85%
	Charity shops	13	9
Sector Breakdown	Retail	47%	43%
	Services	42%	49%
	Vacancy rate	11%	8%
Audit carried out on 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2021			