

# BRISTOL CORE

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Bristol's local downtown organization, Bristol CORE, is an essential part of our active and engaged community. Our mission and passion are to bring people together to keep our town vibrant, celebrate its history, and plan for its future.

As the global COVID-19 pandemic continued to evolve in Vermont in 2021, the Zoom conferencing platform became the new normal for board meetings throughout the year. The decision was also made early on to postpone our June Main Street music event *Pocock Rocks* until 2022. With the uncertainty of COVID-19 case numbers in the state, the Board felt it best to focus on projects with less associated risk.

In January and February, the Board focused on re-crafting the Executive Director job description and began the difficult search process to fill the position in a timely manner.

The *Main Street Flower Basket project* returned this year with a new design that allowed two hanging baskets per lamppost for a total of 28 baskets on Main Street. All lamp posts on Main Street had sponsorship from a variety of generous local businesses and individuals. Our thanks to Rocky Dale Gardens for basket design and planting.

The *Bristol COWORKING* space, centrally located on Main Street above the Bristol Cliffs Cafe, continued to attract new members throughout the year, and by mid-August had secured four Dedicated members and four Shared members. The coworking space offers a beautiful open office space to accommodate the needs of local freelancers, startups, and remote workers.

The Board hired a marketing consultant to develop campaigns for local businesses in downtown Bristol and beyond. Sarah Audet of Hedgehog & Fox Collaborative has extensive experience working with nonprofits and has been a great addition to CORE. She has successfully worked with CORE and our Bristol businesses to craft engaging promotions that have boosted sales and brought traffic to our downtown shops.

Bristol CORE was awarded a \$7,000 grant from the Addison County Board of Realtors (ACBOR) to improve outdoor spaces in downtown Bristol. These improvements will encourage residents and visitors to better engage with businesses and the community. The grant was used to purchase outdoor seating along Main Street, recreational picnic tables for the Town Green, improved trash and recycling receptacles, and bike racks in the downtown area.

By mid-year, the Board was delighted to announce that Kate Bentley would serve as the next Executive Director of Bristol CORE. While born and raised in Georgia, Kate has lived in the Vermont Five Town area for the last ten years. She owns a ceramics studio in Bristol, Vermont, where she makes small-batch pottery and is also a weaver. She brings her many years of small business experience and creativity in marketing and storytelling to support fellow business owners in the Bristol area.

Even with the difficulties associated with the global pandemic, Bristol welcomed three new businesses to Main Street and North Street this year. After seven successful years at 25 Main Street, the partners of *Yarn & Yoga* sold the business to *Hermit Thrush Fiber Company* which has been a successful transition.

We also welcomed *South Mountain Tavern* to 31 Main Street, the previous location of *Hatch 31*, and *Jones the Boy Bake Shop* at 28 North Street, keeping downtown storefronts full of diverse and vibrant offerings.

Kate Bentley, CORE's new Executive Director spent the fall networking with local businesses, fellow Downtown Partnerships, and local organizations. She also expanded efforts to bring business to the downtown shops during the Bristol Harvest Festival through marketing and promotions. This year we saw a significant increase in traffic downtown during the event.

Bristol CORE continued its yearly tradition of decorating the downtown area for the Winter Holidays with wreaths and lights that added an inviting and festive feel to the downtown landscape. Our thanks to Scentsations for the wreaths and to the Bristol Recreation Department for their assistance in decorating.

In December, CORE revived *Chocolate Walk* and *Lumen Celebration of Fire & Light*. These events offered an opportunity to gather the community and support local businesses throughout the Holiday season. As 2021 drew to a close, CORE began the process of collaborating with Middlebury and Vergennes on local guidebooks to expand marketing reach within our broader community.

Fundraising, sponsorships, and volunteer person-power enable Bristol CORE to implement the projects and events that keep Bristol buzzing. A town appropriation provides a third of our funding, and we are truly grateful for the support of the Town Administrator, the Selectboard, and taxpayers in our fantastic community.

We welcome your ideas, involvement, enthusiasm, and financial support! To learn more about our signature events, current projects, get involved, or make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit our website, [www.bristolcore.org](http://www.bristolcore.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
Bristol CORE Board of Directors

Board Members:

Ian Albinson, Maura Donnelly, Kelly Hamshaw, Aidan Lenihan, Meridith McFarland, Alicia Standridge, Taylor Welch

Ex-officio:

Kate Bentley, Executive Director | Valerie Capels, Town Administrator