

## Press Release 2023



## SAILMAKERS SHOPPERS ‘VOTE WITH THEIR FEET’ AS FOOTFALL ROCKETS

The unveiling of a mural in Ipswich’s premier shopping mall has coincided with newly released figures that show shoppers are flooding back to the once struggling centre.

Footfall analysis at Sailmakers Shopping Centre has revealed a transformation in fortunes since it was purchased by new owner ALB Group last summer.

More than half a million people visited the shopping centre during December, which represents a 54 per cent increase on the previous year’s figure of 331,692. And figures for the whole of last year indicate a massive 66 per cent jump in visitor numbers compared with 2021.

The shift follows a decision by Nottingham property group ALB to carry out renovations to vacant units in the mall and offer lease contracts with more flexible terms to help entice new tenants on board.

A wealth of new businesses have flocked to take up units within the centre as a result, including Harry’s Handcrafted Doughnuts, health and beauty brand Bodycare, health food shop The Vitamin Bar, fashion brand Leading Labels, beauty salon Brows on Fleek and phone retailer Mi Mobile.

ALB also commissioned Birmingham-based artist Joe Miles to paint an enormous mural that captures the essence of Ipswich. The artwork, completed in two overnight sessions while the centre was closed, includes references to iconic connections like Orwell Bridge, the Willis Building, Ipswich Town FC, Ipswich Harbour and Ipswich Rugby Club, whose youth and junior teams are sponsored by ALB Group.

Arran Bailey, managing director of ALB Group, said: *“The artwork by Joe is amazing. It’s a masterpiece. It precisely encapsulates the new lease of life that we have been trying to breathe into Sailmakers Shopping Centre since we took it over last year.*

*“The visitor analytics are also extremely encouraging and demonstrate that our approach here is working and has the support of shoppers and businesses alike.*

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*“No doubt Covid and other factors played a major part in the previously declining numbers, but the analysis also shows that we are improving faster than the national average.*

*“We’ve approached the key challenges faced by the UK’s high streets head on – and it is clearly bearing fruit.”*

While Sailmakers recorded a 54 per cent uplift in December 2022, the national average for shopping centres compared with December 2021 was an increase of just 12.1 per cent. Meanwhile, the 66 per year-on-year increase at Sailmakers compares with just 30.2 per cent UK-wide.

The arrival of new tenants since ALB’s stewardship means the entire ground floor of Sailmakers is now fully occupied, leaving only three vacant units on the upper floors.

Oliver Marshall, Director of property agent FHP, which has been jointly marketing the Sailmakers units for ALB, said: *“It’s been a real success story since ALB took the helm of Sailmakers.*

*“The really strong December footfall figures have led to further lettings, and the combination of all these other positive factors has generated a healthy influx of both businesses and consumers.*

*“It’s great news for Ipswich and shows the rest of the UK what can be achieved with the right approach.”*

Sailmakers, which links Tower Ramparts Bus Station and Tavern Street, is one of a number of prime retail properties across the UK that ALB Group has acquired in recent years.

To find out more about the remaining available units at Sailmakers shopping centre, contact Oliver Marshall on 07887 787885 or email [oliver@fhp.co.uk](mailto:oliver@fhp.co.uk).

Press release written by [www.poppy-pr.co.uk](http://www.poppy-pr.co.uk)

ENDS

Oliver Marshall  
6<sup>th</sup> March 2023

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