



Discover
DUNBLANE
Historic | Beautiful | Engaging

Annual Report
2016-2017

Discover Dunblane
Business Improvement District
(Discover Dunblane Ltd)

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1. Welcome & Introduction



A very warm welcome to this our second annual update. We are now pretty much halfway through our five-year term, so this is a good time to assess progress that is being made and to look at the challenges that we are facing in delivering the business plan as a business community and as a community as a whole. In doing so we, the BID businesses, as a group can determine what changes, if any, need to be made to the activity plan in order that we are best placed to achieve the original objectives agreed in 2015.

Over the 2016-2017 period, we have seen the embedding of the key partnership between Discover Dunblane, Dunblane Community Council and Dunblane Development Trust. This partnership model is enabling more meaningful discussions and delivery with Stirling Council on important issues such as parking and the marketing and development of the great heritage that Dunblane possesses. I would like to thank Terence O'Byrne and Dougal Thornton for their support of Discover Dunblane.

As I mentioned in the recent October e-update, we have again delivered a significant number of successes during the year including:

- Events such as, the annual Discover Dunblane Christmas Extravaganza and Discover Dunblane Road Race. Also, we are in discussions with Stirling Council (economic and development dept) and anticipate agreement being reached that the 2018 Stirling marathon will come through Dunblane High street.
- Growth in the number of businesses (over 30) and young persons participating in the Education for Life and Work Programme.
- Parking - Stirling Council has now agreed to implement a 2 hour free parking zone on the north bound dual carriageway (between Stirling Road and Beech Road), this will be implemented in time for the dual carriageway re-opening.
- Increased interest in our social media activities.
- Ongoing utilisation of the Premises Improvement Scheme ensuring continued enhancements to the town centre trading environment.
- Supporting Dementia Friendly initiative — comprehensive marketing support package for the launch of the Dementia Friendly programme.

Several of these activities have delivered not only direct financial benefit to many businesses, but importantly, also demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving the trading environment and also raising awareness in the wider community of the products and services available in Dunblane. This mixed approach of promoting, enhancing and supporting Dunblane is exactly what was laid out in the five-year plan and one which the board strongly believes demonstrates that we are meeting and exceeding the expectations of the business plan.

Notwithstanding the successes delivered, this period has also been very demanding in terms of time and effort spent engaging on third-party projects that have the

potential to negatively impact the economic and built environment within our BID area.

Firstly, the Network Rail bridge replacement works. A mandatory project scheduled to last for a year, with initial plans showing full closure for four months of the dual carriageway (Perth Road/B8033). After many meetings and much communication, Discover Dunblane's input on behalf of the business community paid off and it was agreed to reduce the closure to a two-week period with an eventual closure of just 10 days. It goes without saying, any closure, no matter how short the period, impacts negatively on the vast majority of our BID member businesses and traders. Having spoken directly to a number of businesses the common view held was that the outcome achieved was the best possible considering the circumstances.

Secondly, the delayed completion of the first Streetscape project and arrival of a concept design for the Cathedral Square area are both additional examples of third-party activities that have required significant representation from the BID on behalf of our stakeholder members and wider business community.

The first Streetscape project has received many positive comments from across a wide spectrum of the community. However, the loss of a number of parking spaces in the Stirling Road area, continues to overshadow the positive outcomes in the eyes of some businesses and residents. The BID has listened to these views and taken them on board and as mentioned above we have now secured a two-hour free parking zone on the northbound dual carriageway between Stirling Road and Beech Road. In addition, there are ongoing discussions re the area outside the Victoria Hall. Progress is being made and we are very hopeful of a positive outcome.

The report to follow provides more detail on the above successes and challenges, together with an update on the activity of the three key working groups: Promoting; Supporting; and Enhancing.

Resource is a key constraint (time, people and funding) and there are areas where we have not made the level of expected progress as hoped and so prioritisation of activities continues to be key.

I would like to thank Scott Abercrombie for the incredible dedication and commitment to the BID, not least during this past year, and for the number of hours that are given to the BID and to the town beyond the level for which Scott is contracted. It is with disappointment, however, that Scott has now resigned as project manager and will vacate the post in late February 2018. This is a significant loss to the BID and I would anticipate that Scott's departure will result in a change in how the BID operates in 2018 and beyond.

The board continues to listen to feedback from members; at the annual meeting (end of November) it was agreed that a questionnaire should be sent to all businesses to

determine priorities for 2018. This will be sent out very shortly. Current key planned priorities for year three are: parking, development of the event calendar, growing our online presence and nurturing our community engagement (young persons, DDT & dementia group).

On a personal note, I have advised Board members, that I will be stepping down as chair of the BID at the end of February. I will continue to support the BID in a number of areas, but, the time is right for a change in leadership.

Finally, one of the biggest challenges we face as a board and as a BID is that all activity and success is down to only a few contributors; a small number of businesses; our community partners; and our project manager, who together continue to contribute time and expertise to the delivery of the agreed business plan. Without further businesses coming forward to support Discover Dunblane, the scope of what we are able to deliver in 2018 will undoubtedly reduce.

If you are interested in joining the board please do not hesitate to contact any existing BID board members for further information or email:

tom@discoverdunblane.co.uk

Current Board members are:

Tom Casey, Charisma	Graham Fleming, David Bennett & Son
Tracey Erskine, Erskine Eyecare	Cllr Graham Houston, Elected Member
Chris Duncan, Intelligent Displays	Richard Noakes, Dunblane High School
Scott Walker, Choices Deli	Carol Beattie, Stirling Council

Kind regards and many thanks once again for your continued support.



Tom Casey

Chair

2. Report Update

The following pages provide a summary update on our key actions and what we have delivered in year two of our five-year business plan and what activity is currently planned for 2017-2018.

3. Promoting

We have a subgroup which drives the *Promoting* agenda. Current businesses active in the group are: Erskine Eyecare, Charisma, Cathedral City Estates, Intelligent Displays, Dunblane New Golf Club and our Project Manager.

What we have delivered and what is underway

Event - Discover Dunblane Road Race

A very successful partnership has been developed between **Dunblane Runners** and **Discover Dunblane** leading to the annual 12k and 2k race being renamed ***Discover Dunblane Road Race***. Over 500 runners took part with the start and finish taking place in the town centre. Many of the businesses who were open on that day benefitted from the event in terms of increased footfall and spend. We supported the race to the extent of a £500 contribution as well as attendance at committee meetings and support on the day. We anticipate the partnership continuing in 2018. Proceeds from the race were donated to the **Dunblane Centre** where a cheque for £4k was recently presented.

Event - Christmas Extravaganza

Feedback from last year's event from businesses, residents and visitors, confirmed that this was the most successful Extravaganza yet. The event just past has also received significant positive commentary from businesses, residents and visitors. The Promo group and the Board were delighted that; McLean and Stewart were this year's lead sponsor, with three businesses — Intelligent Displays, Erskine Eyecare and Charisma — taking Gold sponsorship. This fantastic additional financial support ensured that yet again the Extravaganza met and exceeded many peoples expectations. A huge thank you to all our sponsors and supporters.

Online activity

Social Media continues to attract more business posts, albeit growth is relatively slow based on the number direct submissions from businesses. Recent successful posts covered Keith Brown MSP's visit to present a Dementia Friendly Business award to Bannerman's Pharmacy and the successful fundraising events by Hair Chair Dunblane for the Little Princess Trust.

More to do with Promoting:

Additional Events for 2018

The proprietors of the Village Inn have suggested an end of summer event prior to the schools going back. This was agreed in principle by the Promo group and will be explored. Once the Promo group have had the opportunity to meet with James Smith of the Village Inn the idea will be explored further.

Website development

The promo group recognise that the Discover Dunblane website would benefit greatly from more local content and information for visitors. It has been agreed to focus on updating over the next few months.

Promotional Campaigns

Initial meetings have already taken place with Historic Environment Scotland (HES). HES are key to attracting tourists / visitors. There is an opportunity to connect Dunblane heritage buildings to e.g. Stirling Castle/Doune Castle connection. Also, production of a visitor guide to include - events calendar, things to see, eat, drink and shop. A map has already been designed and produced. Repeating the 'think local' campaign but with more visibility and frequency has also been tabled and supported.

4. Enhancing

We have a subgroup which drives the *Enhancing* agenda. Current businesses active in the group are: Charisma; David Bennett & Son; and The Beechtree Cafe.

What we have delivered and what is underway

Network Rail – Bridge replacement works

In partnership with the Community Council and DDT, we have been successful in ensuring that this project has caused as minimal an impact as reasonably could have been expected. A special thanks to Terence O’Byrne, Chair Community Council for his efforts. We successfully negotiated a reduction in the total road closure of the dual carriageway from the original Network Rail plan of four months down to two weeks, actual time was 10 days. Succeeded in ensuring that no traffic lights would be in place during the nine-month period of work and ensured that the compound did not give the appearance of the town centre being closed for business. Lastly, we negotiated and ensured free parking in the lower part of Tesco car park to minimise disruption to businesses and local residents due to the loss of parking spaces on dual carriageway during the period of works.

Premises – vacant and changes

There were a number of vacant premises in the town centre during the year. The BID has been working with owners (old and new) to support early occupancy. Some examples are: SSE ‘Hydro’ Shop – we are facilitating discussions with a community centric organisation and we remain hopeful of a positive decision being made early in 2018. Archie’s – we supported the new owners (Robertson’s Tax and Accounting Services and Robertson Jones Wealth Management) re a change of use application. Premises are hoped to be ready end Q1 2018 following renovation of the premises). TSB has now been purchased, which means that all available premises now have new owners, albeit that 2 remain are available for let.

Premises Improvement Scheme

Derelict Buildings

In conjunction with DCP we are liaising with the owners of the; former Cantonese restaurant adjacent to the gold postbox and the former Tickety Boo building, to improve the exterior of both buildings. So far, the Cantonese restaurant owners have repainted the exterior, with discussions ongoing about further improvements. We are also seeking to ascertain future plans for re-instatement as an active retail outlet. Dialogue continues with the legal representatives of the former Tickety Boo building with regard to safety and maintenance of that building. DCP are also seeking to raise funds to improve the look of this building.

Matched funding

6 grants have either been approved or are in process which keeps us broadly on track for levels of activity this year. Information and application forms are available from the website for any business looking to enhance the exterior of their premises.

Replacement doors

A slow process getting approval from multiple parties for a door to be refurbished / replaced. First upgrade has now been completed with a further 6 identified and landlords approached. It is not expected that any further completions will be achieved this calendar year but we are hopeful that in the first half of 2018 progress will be more visible. Great support from Cathedral Estates in progressing this initiative.

Parking Strategy

Medium Term

Funding is being sought to the extent of £30k for a STAG analysis to be undertaken. This is a standard pre-requisite to enable government funding to be obtained for any future development and improvements in relation to parking and rail usage. It is an independent survey of travel and accessibility in and around Dunblane. We (DCP) are in discussion with Stirling Council and Network Rail in regard to funding support. The BID may require to contribute to the cost of undertaking this analysis.

Short term

Two-hour free parking zone has now been approved by Stirling Council on the north bound dual carriageway (between Stirling Road and Beech Road). Software change requests have been authorised by Stirling Council and the work will be completed week beginning 18th December, which will be ahead of the re-opening of that section of the dual carriageway. The final decision on Stirling Road (Victoria Hall area) has yet to be given by the Council and we are pushing for a similar outcome. We are also discussing further options with Stirling Council as to how we can secure more free parking spaces for shoppers in locations such as Millrow car park. Many thanks to Dunblane Community Council and to Cllr. Graham Houston for their ongoing support.

Streetscape Impact

There exist concerns by those businesses in the Stirling Road area over the layout of the changes made following the first Streetscape project which has led to a significant reduction in car parking spaces. This issue will be raised with other members of the DCP to determine what options are available. We will seek a business representative from the Station Road area to participate in these discussions.

Electric Car Parking spaces

We are also engaged with Scottish Government, via local MSP Keith Brown and with Stirling Council, for the introduction of three electric car parking spaces on the dual carriageway. Keith has confirmed that there is government funding available and Stirling Council have confirmed that Dunblane will be included in the next tranche of funding request to Scottish Government.

Town Centre Regeneration

Dunblane heritage

In partnership with the DDT and Community Council we have submitted a number of applications for grant funding to develop these valuable historical assets. To-date we have been unsuccessful, but still await a response from a recently submitted application.

Second Streetscape Programme

The consultants have taken away feedback received from Discover Dunblane BID, local business stakeholders and local residents with new proposals likely to show no reduction in parking and the possibility introducing short 10 minute drop off spaces. It is important to note that consultation is ongoing and that funding is yet to be secured to deliver any agreed plan.

Petrol Station

Exploratory discussions have taken place with the DCP and various 3rd parties with regard to a petrol station in Dunblane. We anticipate being able to release more information on this early in 2018.

Greener & Cleaner

We partner the DDT who deliver ongoing improvements to the environment of Dunblane town centre. We have supported the DDT by way of funding for plants and also the cost of replacement of street Christmas lighting.

More to do with Enhancing:

Overall the board feel that the enhancing objective is moving along and on-track to deliver the expected outcomes. That said we are frustrated at the pace of progress particularly on parking but this remains a key priority for 2018.

5. Supporting

We have a subgroup which drives the Supporting agenda. Current businesses active in the group are: Charisma, The Riverside and Dunblane High School, with support from a few members of the community and of course our Project Manager.

What we have delivered and what is underway

Work Experience

Three successful work experience weeks have been held as part of the pilot EfLW programme that we are developing together with Dunblane High School and Stirling Council. These events have been supported by more than 30 BID businesses and have made a significant difference to the confidence and work outlook for some of our young people. Feedback from the school and parents has confirmed that this programme has positively changed the lives of a number of young people. Whilst there were many businesses involved over the 3 events, some businesses warrant a special thanks; Steven Croal Hairdressing, Bennett's Butchers, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Doubletree by Hilton Dunblane Hydro Hotel, Old Churches House, Sue Ryder, Neroli's and Pet Styling. This success has been recognised by Scottish Government who are sending the Minister for Employability and Training to Dunblane to understand more about this business community led initiative. As 2018 is year of the young person we have applied for funding to help extend this programme.

New Initiative

Stirling Council has requested that the EfLW programme connects on a pilot basis to the *Founders4Schools* programme, which is designed to improve connections and interaction between schools, businesses, young people and parents. We have negotiated a small budget from Stirling Council for this additional activity. A communication will come out shortly on how you as an individual business can support this component of the programme.

Town Centre Community Support

Dementia Friendly Dunblane

The BID, along with Dunblane Community Council and Dunblane Development Trust are original members of the Dementia Friendly Dunblane Steering Group. The group has recently launched a 'memory café' in the Braeport Centre for those suffering from dementia and importantly for their carers too. In addition to being Steering Group members, the BID has provided funding (£500) for promotional material and advised on branding and social media.

As of November, twenty-two businesses and organisation have been visited by members of the Steering group and provided with information on how a business can become dementia friendly. Congratulations to Bannerman's Pharmacy on the

High Street who are the first business to receive the Dementia Friendly Business award.

Our target is for sufficient businesses to receive this very worthwhile accolade in order that Dunblane can be regarded as a Dementia Friendly City. There is thought to be more than 200 residents in Dunblane suffering from a memory illness with a high number suffering from dementia at varying degrees of severity.

More to do with Supporting:

Supporting Safety

Our liaison with the Community Council ensures we are well informed of broader community issues as well as feedback from businesses. We continue to monitor safety as a possible issue but for the time being no further action is planned.

Create a BID Club

This has not been progressed due in the main to resource capacity. The Board will look to seek views on this topic from members in the New year.

Business to Business forum

This initiative has been put on hold due in the main to 3 reasons: Attendance at the last business forum was very low and did not reflect the time, effort and preparation for the meeting. Secondly, the development of our online communication capability (includes our newsletters) ensures that quick and efficient 2-way communication exists. The final reason is our face to face presence through Scott and Caroline (our education coordinator).

6. Financial Update

For the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

- Regrettably, due to business workload of the Treasurer, the income and expenditure statement was not available for sign off at the December board meeting and as such could not be included in the report at this time. However, it will be attached to the report after sign off at the January board meeting. We apologise for the late submission.

7. Other Matters

Project Management

- Scott Abercrombie is our current project manager and works 15 hours per week with the Discover Dunblane BID. As advised earlier in the report, Scott has resigned his position as project manager and a replacement will be sought early in the new year in order that a handover can take place before Scott leaves on the 23rd February.
- At the Board meeting in December it was agreed to review the role of the project manager in order to ensure that the workload reflected paid hours. It is anticipated that this will significantly reduce the amount of time available for face to face meetings with businesses by the project manager.

Facebook - BID Members page

At the December board meeting it was agreed to suspend the members Facebook page as it was viewed as no longer serving the purpose for which it was originally intended. Whilst around a third of businesses had signed up to this facility, over time contributions have come from only a very few businesses. Often the content did not add value and the view of many businesses was that it had now become a negative vehicle which businesses did not want to be associated with. An alternative vehicle for B2B discussion will be introduced and further information will be made available in due course.

If you have any questions or comments on anything which you have read within the annual report, or wish to discuss any aspect of the BID, please do not hesitate to contact us:

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