# BYRES ROAD & LANES BID COMPANY LIMITED

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 1 APRIL 2025 – 31 MARCH 2026











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## 1. Introduction

Following a successful ballot in 2015 it was decided that the Byres Road & Lanes Business Improvement District (BID) should operate as a private company, limited by guarantee. The Byres Road & Lanes BID Company Limited was incorporated on 16 April 2015 and began trading on 5 May 2015. At the end of five years a BID needs to secure a mandate for a second five year term via a ballot of the businesses. This was achieved in March 2020, with the second term starting on 1 May 2020 and the third term on 1 May 2025.

The BID comprises 244 businesses.

At 31 March 2025 the board of directors was as follows:

- John Turner (Chair and Finance Director), Janet & John, De Courcy's Arcade, Cresswell Lane
- Chris Finnieston, Di Maggios Restaurant Group, Ruthven Lane
- Angela Dickson, Nam Amor, Ruthven Lane

## 2. Objectives

The BID has a number of objectives:

- To promote Byres Road & the Lanes as a prime 'must go to' destination for locals and visitors alike
- To help reduce your overheads and save you money
- To work closely with Glasgow City Council on the delivery of the City Deal project to enhance Byres Road
- To build and maintain closer links with the University of Glasgow as the work on the new campus continues
- To work closely with the Council, landlords, agents, and others to proactively encourage businesses to move into the area
- To seek additional funding to enable us to host a wider range of festivals and events in the BID area

The BID business plan is arranged around six delivery themes:

A: Getting here and getting around
B: Working for our businesses
C: Marketing, PR and promotion
D: Events and festivals
E: Clean, green and safe
F: Environment and streetscape

## 3. Delivery against themes

The United Kingdom continued its slow recovery from the COVID pandemic, but the high cost of living and energy prices had a negative impact on business confidence and viability. The BID team continued to provide promotion, information, assistance and support to businesses from the office at 61 Byres Road.

### Theme A: Getting here and getting around

In the research carried out to inform the development of the business plan, 89% of businesses thought that availability of parking was important or very important, with 94% concerned about the price of parking.

Contractors for Glasgow City Council started the implementation of Phase 2 of the £10m Byres Road City Deal project in August 2025. The project's aim is to increase the attractiveness and usability of Byres Road. The scheme was programmed to run for two years and would result in widened pavements, the introduction of cycle lanes, the introduction of seating and the development of rain gardens to improve the environmental quality of the street. The BID continued to receive funding of £25,500 pa from Glasgow City Council to fund a part-time City Deal Liaison role and an 'open for business' marketing campaign.

The BID team continued to oppose the proposal by the University of Glasgow to develop student housing on the land it owns currently used as a car park in Lilybank Gardens. The BID board of directors expressed concern over the loss of the only long-term parking provision in the area, and submitted a petition from local businesses to Glasgow City Council.

The BID team continued to oppose the increase in parking charges introduced in April 2024. This raised the price to £1 for 15 minutes, with a threat of a universal charge from 08.00 to 22.00 seven days a week. The BID worked with the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to provide a united front to vigorously oppose this extension of chargeable hours, which would have a serious impact on businesses. The BID chair was invited to speak to the Glasgow Times, a piece which made the front page of the paper. The universal charge has not been implemented so far.

### Theme B: Working for our businesses

Acting as a unified voice of the business community, working to bring new businesses to Byres Road and the Lanes, and acting as the point of contact between the Council and their contractors in the City Deal works were seen as key issues in the business plan research.

A BID project manager (30 hours per week) continued in post. The full-time marketing & events co-ordinator role was the subject of a job share, with one person working the first half of the week and the other the second half. One person had chosen not to return at the end of her maternity leave and her maternity leave cover left at the end of her fixed term contract. That post was vacant from September 2024 to July 2025, as the re-ballot in April 2025 gave no security of contract. Additional help with the re-ballot logistics was given by another BID manager in the West of Scotland.

Considerable work was put into the re-ballot process as the BID entered the last year of its five-year term. The BID proposal was submitted in December 2024 and the date for the ballot was set at 24 April 2025. The ballot saw a 42% turnout with 60% voting in favour of the BID. The third term started on 1 May 2025.

The BID continued to be a key source for information and support for members and helped many businesses with a wide range of queries, from help with bureaucracy to marketing. A monthly newsletter, Notes From The Chair, provided relevant and timeous updates and comment throughout the year.

In May 2025 Glasgow City Council made it clear that it was looking at removing the option of paying for the BID levy by instalments. This was countered by the BID chair saying that this option would be unacceptable and non-negotiable. The instalments remain an option.

The BID also supported the opposition by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce to the suggestion by Glasgow City Council that it was looking to impose a congestion charge on Glasgow city centre and a toll on the Clyde Tunnel.

The collaboration with Changeworks Recycling and eyebright continued to deliver significant cost savings for BID businesses on commercial waste and utility costs respectively, even in a difficult energy market.

The BID team continued to develop their contacts within various teams at the University of Glasgow, an objective in the business plan but one that had been delayed by the Covid pandemic and the resultant re-opening of the university to in-person learning. This resulted in a pilot Christmas event outside the Clarice Pears building on 22 November 2025, with stalls and entertainment. Around 1,000 people attended the event.

The BID team was on site at the Freshers' Fayre event in September, distributing information about BID businesses.

The BID continued to represent Glasgow in the Scottish city BIDs grouping, which provided relevant feedback and intelligence across the country.

The Glasgow BIDs continued to liaise closely with the Economic Development team at Glasgow City Council.

In October 2025, the BID saw a vacancy rate of 3.25%, far better than the national average.

**Theme C: Marketing, PR and promotion**

Consultation undertaken for the development of the 2025-2030 business plan indicated that BID businesses recognised the importance of marketing and advertising campaigns, with 86.1% thinking a strong social media presence to be very important or important.

Significant resource was dedicated to social media activity. There were substantial increases in performance following the revised posting strategy, focusing on quality of posts rather than quantity.

Full details of the very positive year in social media can be seen in the attached document, available at the end of this report.

The Visit West End gift card continued to be promoted. This prepaid Mastercard card was available to buy online and offers recipients the Byres Road & Lanes outlets where it can be redeemed. The BID continued to absorb all the costs associated with the scheme: businesses pay no more than they would by taking any other payment by Mastercard. By offering the gift card, the BID is able to compete with retail competitors such as the Buchanan Galleries and Silverburn. It retains money in the local economy and is attracting spend into the West End from across the Central Belt and beyond. Whilst still available as a physical card, it is also available as a digital product, which has proved to be the most popular option. The 'load this card' option continued to be available, with stands of cards for people to load themselves distributed around the area. The BID team produced specific promotions to highlight the gift card through Easter, Freshers and Christmas campaigns.

For the fourth year an advertisement was placed in the Kingfisher city guidebooks, placed in bedrooms in key hotels and designed to encourage visitors to come to the West End.

The BID team took a stand at the Scotland's Town Partnership conference in November 2025.

A grant of £12,500 to cover marketing activity had been agreed with Glasgow City Council, as part of the City Deal arrangements. Part of this was used to fund advertising on the Subway between September and Christmas 2025. It was also used to fund the advertising on the Council's 'toblerone' on Great Western Road.

**Theme D: Events, festivals and markets**

Events and festivals are recognised as a key method of increasing footfall to the area, raising awareness and boosting spend. The business plan research indicated that 88.9% of businesses thought that new events and festivals were very important or important, and 97.3% saw the continuation of existing events as important or very important. Unlike other BIDs, there is no easily accessible exterior space available in the area in which to host events, resulting in charges for road closures and parking suspensions.

The Christmas community event was produced again on Vinicombe Street at the end of November. A stage showcased local musicians and singers in festive mode and a small number of stalls offered seasonal gifts and food. The event culminated in the switching on of the lights on the LED Christmas tree. The event was undertaken with Social Bite's Festival of Kindness, who provided the tree. The event was undertaken in association with the Winter Wonderland events put on by the Ashton Lane Proprietors Association.

For the fourth year Make Music Day was celebrated, held annually across the world on 21 June. The exact form the event takes is flexible, but the music must be free of charge to the audience. Musicians performed outside Bird & Blend, in Cresswell Lane and outside the Clarice Pears building.

The 2025 edition of the Byres Road Book Festival took place over the September Weekend, in partnership with Glasgow Life, Waterstones, the Oxfam Bookshop and the Glasgow Grosvenor hotel. Audiences enjoyed sessions with writers such as Peter Ross, Andrea Gibb, and the chefs behind 'Glasgow on a Plate'. It also welcomed the Writing Wrongs group to the festival, with a day of creative writing. The festival was designed to drive footfall and spend to Byres Road and the lanes, and it succeeded in that aim. The audience survey showed that 88% of the respondents had spent money in the area (excluding book sales), with 33% spending between £20 and £50.

The inaugural Visit West End Restaurant Week took place between 2 and 8 March. Restaurant Weeks are run to great success in other BIDs: the drive of the initiative is to encourage customer spend within food and drinks businesses during periods of the year that may often see less trade, by offering limited-time deals and promos within the window of the initiative.

Nineteen Byres Road & the Lanes restaurants and cafes took part across a range of different price points. Results were strong for a launch project, with various points of feedback including: a 15% increase in sales as compared to the same day the year before in one restaurant; 298 covers explicitly booking in for Restaurant Week menu in another. All nineteen participants were also offered a cost-free photoshoot, with editing and asset handover included. Visit West End Restaurant Week was picked up by Glasgow Live, Westender, Glasgow Now, and the Skinny. Our website received 2000% of its usual traffic during the leadup, and visibility was further increased by a physical banner on the Byres Road/Great Western Road junction. The project shows huge potential for future growth, continuing to drive footfall and spend year-on-year in the area.

The BID also made a financial contribution to the Vinicombe Street Gala organised by Halo Arts as part of WestFest.

**Theme E: Clean, green & safe**

BID staff continued to work with Police Scotland to monitor crime rates and to relate feedback from businesses. In January 2026 work was underway for the development of the West End Exclusion Area for Byres Road, an initiative that Inspector Sibbald had worked on in the city centre. He also held a meeting for concerned businesses in Hillhead library.

The Business Watch initiative continued to focus on theft and anti-social behaviour in the area. Businesses were able to be connected via a WhatsApp group, providing real time information and intelligence. The anti-social behaviour and theft had led the BID team to investigate the feasibility of a bespoke CCTV system for the area. It was recognised that this would require external funding.

The BID team noted graffiti, rubbish, flooding and any other environmental issues, then timeously reported them to the relevant authority or Council service area. Any instances of problems that were brought to the team's attention were reported. The BID team also worked closely with the Council's two neighbourhood co-ordinators.

**Theme F: Environment & streetscape**

The business plan research indicated that working with the Council to ensure a high-quality City Deal was implemented in a way that minimises the impact on businesses was important to 94.5 of respondents.

There was continued close working with Partick Community Council. Relationships continued to be developed and enhanced with Hillhead Community Council and Dowanhill, Kelvinside & Hyndland Community Council.

The BID continued to fund the maintenance of hanging baskets in the southern part of Byres Road. These have been very well received by the businesses and public alike.

## 4. Community engagement

The BID's objective of improving the trading environment and attractiveness of the area is also delivering value to local residents and visitors. The decision to focus on family- friendly events forms a tangible connection with the local community. It is the intention to build on these positives to present a calendar of events that is embedded in the life of the community.

## 5. Partnership working

As an organisation with no assets in terms of land or property in which to do things, partnership working is essential to the success of the BID. At a national level Improvement Districts Scotland and Scotland's Towns Partnership provide useful information and advice to BIDs and emerging BIDs across Scotland. The BID has attended online and in-person conferences and seminars offered by both organisations, and has had staff and director involvement at meetings with the Scottish Towns Partnership. Scotland's Towns Partnership is an important connection for the BID, providing advice and information.

Glasgow City Council is one of the BID's most important partners, and relationships have been developed with key officers of the Council's Neighbourhoods Regeneration and Sustainability (Planning & Building Control, Roads, Projects, Events, Lighting, Glasgow Botanic Gardens), Finance, Economic Development and Glasgow Life.

As the BID's largest neighbour, the University of Glasgow is an important partner, particularly in the context of its significant development programme on the former Western Infirmary site. The BID board seeks to build on relationships developed across the university's departments and teams.

Glasgow, 27 October 2026



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John Turner, Chair
61 Byres Road
Glasgow
G11 5RG