

BYRES ROAD AND LANES BID COMPANY LIMITED

Report and Accounts for the period 16th April 2015 to 31st March 2016

I am delighted to present the report and accounts for the first year of trading of Byres Road and Lanes Business Improvement District (Byres Road & Lanes BID Company Ltd).

Following the creation of the Business Improvement District in March 2015, after a successful ballot, Paul Reynolds (Cup) and Mark Tracey (Booly Mardy), who had both contributed enormously to the success of the consultation process, stepped down. Although some members of the steering group stayed on, in the initial few months people left, and new faces came in. We became, therefore, a relatively new Board of Directors, none of whom otherwise knew each other. It took a little time, therefore, to settle into a coherent group, to establish an effective way of working, and to identify the goals that the Board wished to set.

A priority was recruiting good staff, and we made a key appointment early on in our Project Manager, Deborah Murray, with Elisabeth Norberg being appointed as Communication and Events Coordinator later in the year. I would like to thank both of them for all of their hard work throughout the year.

It became immediately obvious that much of what we wanted to do was dependent upon establishing a distinctive and recognisable brand. We decided to stick with “Visit West End” as our identity, and with the assistance of Maria Ure (Luminate PR) and Gillian Frank (BlockFace Design Studio) we decided on the “Be Here. Wander West” strap line and jaunty red and grey logo that hopefully you will all now be familiar with. Gillian Frank has continued to do much of our design work to a consistently high standard and we are always grateful for her contributions.

A detailed report of our endeavours is set out in the following pages, as are our accounts for year one. I would commend these to you.

I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking Directors who joined and then left the Board during the first year: they all contributed in their unique way, and we are extremely grateful to them. They are: Tracey Kinnaird (Pink Poodle); Paul McGowan (The Independent Mortgage Store); David Mullane (W2); Paul Reynolds (Cup); Becky Wollam (Waitrose); and Graham Campbell (Malcolm Campbell).

Finally, I would like especially to thank my current co-Directors: Liz Williams, who is also our Company Secretary (Ubiquitous Chip); Chris Finnieston (Di Maggio's Group); Bruce Finnie (By Distinction Art) and David Nicholls (Brett Nicholls Associates). I am particularly indebted to them for their ideas, wisdom, support and hard work. David Nicholls has assumed the mantle of "Financial Director" and keeps us right in ways too numerous to mention. In this task he is assisted by his colleague at Brett Nicholls Associates, Mhairi Galbraith. The Board, and indeed the Business Improvement District, owe them a rather large "thank you".

David J. Howat

Chairperson

Byres Road and Lanes BID Company Limited

BYRES ROAD & LANES BID COMPANY LIMITED

ANNUAL REPORT

5 MAY 2015 – 31 MARCH 2016

1. Introduction

Following a successful ballot, the Byres Road & Lanes BID Company Limited was incorporated on 16 April 2015 and began trading on 5 May 2015. The BID contains 204 businesses with 190 owners.

At 31 March 2016 the board of directors was as follows:

- David Howat, Pattison & Co (Chair)
- David Nicholls, Brett Nicholls Associates
- Bruce Finnie, By Distinction Art
- Elizabeth Williams, The Ubiquitous Chip
- Chris Finnieston, Di Maggios Restaurant Group

2. Objectives

The BID has a number of objectives:

- To create a strong local partnership that gets things done and makes our voice heard
- To improve the economic opportunities and the trading environment for the businesses in the road and lanes
- To increase customer footfall, customer linger time, customer spend and customer retention
- To make the BID 'cost-neutral' by saving businesses money through collective working
- To improve businesses relationships with each other, the local authority and the community
- To market Byres Road to a local, regional, national and international audience via consistent marketing campaigns, a range of events, festivals and markets and branding the area as a destination
- To give businesses a strong unified voice to engage with Glasgow City Council on area improvements and lobby for changes
- To support local voluntary groups who are working in partnership with the BID
- To act as a vehicle for attracting larger scale external funding

The BID business plan is arranged around six delivery themes:

- Accessibility
- Facilitation
- Marketing, PR and promotion
- Events, festivals and markets
- Clean, green, safe and attractive place
- Environment and streetscape

3. Delivery against themes

The first year of activity included substantial research and development work for projects and initiatives that would be delivered in Year 2.

Theme A: Accessibility

In the research carried out to inform the development of the business plan, 81% of businesses felt that there was inadequate parking available, with 71% believing Byres Road to be dominated by cars and traffic.

The Church Street Social Work car park is unused on weekends, and the BID developed a robust, detailed and costed pilot proposal for the use of the car park as a shoppers' car park in the eight weekends running up to Christmas 2015. Parking would be free on the production of a receipt from a BID business. This was considered to be a security risk for the building by Glasgow City Council, so the project was unable to proceed. The BID has continued to lobby for the use of this car park at weekends, as it is a key location for events and other business-related activity.

The BID has continued to lobby Glasgow City Council against the introduction of the £700 parking permit for businesses.

The rollout of free wifi in Byres Road by Glasgow City Council has been delayed, but the BID will continue to work in partnership with the Council and BT to achieve the deployment of this utility, with benefits for both businesses and visitors.

Theme B: Facilitation

Acting as a unified voice of the business community, and bringing businesses together to work and communicating effectively were seen as key issues in the business plan research.

A BID project manager (30 hours per week) joined the BID in May 2015. A full time marketing & events co-ordinator was recruited in December 2015. The latter post has attracted funding support from the Glasgow Guarantee.

The BID staff have produced monthly e-newsletters and quarterly printed newsletters, as well as communicating with all businesses on an ad hoc basis to keep them informed on emerging opportunities and issues.

Preferential rates have been negotiated with Business Advisory Support and Changeworks Recycling to lower BID business costs.

Non-domestic rates continue to represent a significant proportion of businesses' overheads and do not reflect the current trading conditions along Byres Road. During this period the BID has been working with levy payers to facilitate a collective appeal against the level of non-domestic rates, citing the closure of the Western Infirmary as a material change of use.

Theme C: Marketing, PR and promotion

The business plan research identified dissatisfaction with the way in which the area was marketed to tourists and locals. Development of a brand, more effective PR and the development of collaborative social media were seen as the most important actions.

New branding was launched in December 2015, developing the Visit West End identity and adding the tag line 'Be Here. Wander West'. Banners reinforcing the identity were produced and installed on lamp columns along Byres Road in March 2016.

Integral to the new brand deployment, the website was enriched with the creation of a blog, newsletter and an up-to-date events section, creating reasons to come back. The number of visitors increased from 200 per month in November 2015 to 800 per month in March 2016. Search engine optimisation work resulted in improved rankings on Google and Bing.

Development of tailored content on the Facebook page increased the number of likes from 1190 in November 2015 to 1541 in March 2016, an uplift of 29%. Likes and followers also increased on Twitter and Instagram.

With regard to marketing and advertising, relationships were built with local magazines and journalists, including Westender Magazine and West End Today. Events were advertised through posters and leaflets distributed in local shops.

Considerable research and planning had been undertaken to develop an area guide. Copy had been drafted and a series of illustrations commissioned.

PR support was engaged to support the launch of the brand and the associated Small Business Saturday activity on 5 December 2015 (see Events).

The BID considered a number of initiatives to develop a shop local card, and opted in favour of a pre-paid VISA gift card, to be delivered in Year 2. The idea of an employee loyalty card is still current, but is on hold until the launch and establishment of the gift card, to avoid conflicting marketing messages.

Theme D: Events, festivals and markets

Events and festivals are a key method of increasing footfall to our area, raising awareness and boosting spend. The business plan research indicated that 92% felt that it was important to increase the number of events. 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. It is anticipated that this could be addressed to some degree by the placemaking proposals for Byres Road.

The BID made a financial contribution to the West End Festival in June 2015, supplemented by social media promotion of the events.

The BID's first event took place on 5 December, in conjunction with the national Small Business Saturday campaign. 36 businesses took part in the collaboration, offering promotions, offers and discounts. The BID also managed to secure an exhibit promoting the new Snoopy & Charlie Brown: the Peanuts Movie, which saw fourteen Snoopy kennels designed by various celebrities installed on Ashton Road car park, the only Scottish date on a national tour.

Having gathered feedback from businesses, planning for the Spring Celebration was underway for the event in April. Planning was also undertaken for the first Byres Road Fashion Show, which took place in May.

Theme E: Clean, green, & safe, attractive place

A detailed inspection audit and report was received from Keep Scotland Beautiful on levels of cleanliness to ensure Byres Road and lanes meet the standards required of Scottish local authorities. It provides a useful benchmark for future improvements.

BID staff participated in, and helped promote, the Hillhead area clean up in March 2016.

BID staff worked with business liaison officer PC Philip Warner to monitor crime rates and to relate feedback from businesses to Police Scotland.

Theme F: Environment & streetscape

The business plan research indicated that street cleaning, areas to stop and sit, and creating a Christmas display were the most important proposals.

Building on the pilot that delivered Christmas lights on two trees in 2014, all the trees in Ashton Road car park were fitted with lights in December 2015. This was well received by businesses, residents and visitors.

The BID collaborated with the Byres Road Improvement Group in the development of the placemaking vision for Byres Road. Detailed comments and observations were made to Glasgow City Council on the report that was made available for consultation in January 2016.

Work continued with Ruthven Lane businesses to improve the situation regarding the large number of bins on site. Businesses, however, were reluctant to change their operating arrangements.

Work continued in respect of gaining landlord approval for the installation of art murals on the Iceland wall in Ashton Lane.