

# **BYRES ROAD AND LANES BID COMPANY LIMITED**

## **Report and Accounts For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

I am delighted, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to present the report and accounts for the second year of trading of Byres Road and Lanes Business Improvement District (Byres Road & Lanes BID Company Ltd).

Year one, predominantly, was a year of establishing an office, recruiting personnel, and identifying goals. Year two was a year of delivery, with particular emphasis on events. The Board consider events to be a key aspect of our strategy: to drive footfall; to establish Visit West End as a brand; and to allow us to promote the BID area.

During the financial year the BID delivered a significant number of initiatives, include the Visit West End gift card. A full report of our activities accompanies this note and the accounts. I would commend these to you.

The challenges facing those of us who do business on Byres Road & the Lanes have not ameliorated: if anything they have come into sharper focus. Although logic would suggest that the new parking regime would free up parking spaces by preventing drivers using the area as a free 'park & ride', or parking all day, we tend to get negative feedback about the new regime, possibly because shoppers resent having to pay for parking. Rents, and their malevolent twin, rates, continue to be excessively high, and this has lead to the 'retail mix' becoming unbalanced. Add competition from online retailers and shopping centres, and it is easy to see why trading is difficult.

These problems are not unique to us of course. This perhaps explains the extraordinary rise in the number of BIDs, with 32 in existence in Scotland (including the newly created Shawlands BID), and a further 15 in development (including Great Western Road, on our doorstep.) Indeed I suspect that within a few years there will not be a city or town in Scotland without a Business Improvement District.

Although there is much for the BID to do, I am satisfied that year 2 saw significant progress along the direction of travel (with considerable further endeavours in 2017 - but these are for next year's report.)

I wish to record my thanks to our Project Manager, Deborah Murray. In December 2016 our previous Events & Marketing Co-ordinator, Elisabeth Norberg, moved on. We advertised the position on a well-known recruitment website and garnered, literally, hundreds of applications. We were delighted to recruit Kirsty Buchanan to the role in June 2017. I am sure that most, if not all of you, will by now be familiar with our effervescent and diligent new recruit.

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, over the last few months there have been some losses from the Board. Liz Williams, who was also our Company Secretary, has left the Ubiquitous Chip; indeed she plans to return to her Welsh homeland. We will all miss Liz's good cheer and common sense, and her knowledge of the hospitality business.

Bruce Finnie had to close By Distinction Art suddenly, when last minute negotiations with his landlord broke down. Bruce was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable contributor to our discussions, with considerable retail experience, and will also be much missed. I wish to record our immense thanks to them both.

David Nicholls (Brett Nicholls Associates) has been a stalwart of the BID since its inception. Every organisation needs a firm hand on the financial tiller, and there can be none firmer, nor more genial, than David's. Quite simply, I am not sure what we would have done without him. David leaves the Board at the AGM: understandably, the semi-retirement of his father from his business, and the imminent expansion of his family, leads David to take a hard look at his priorities. We are immensely grateful for his sound advice and hard work. We take some comfort from David's willingness to continue to prepare the annual accounts, and that we have secured the services of David's very capable colleague at Brett Nicholls Associates, Mhairi Galbraith, to assist with the day-to-day accounting.

We wish all three of our former Directors best wishes with their future endeavours.

I am pleased to report that the Board has been joined by John Turner (Janet & John, De Courcy's Arcade) and Derek McNeil (Trios, Ruthven Mews). Their retail experience will be

valuable to the Board, and it is particularly gratifying to have representatives from the Arcade and the Mews.

Chris Finnieston (Di Maggio's Group) continues to be a wise and trusty Board member and I thank him for his continuing good counsel and support.

All of these changes leaves some vacancies on the Board, and we would be delighted to hear from you if you either own, or work in, a member business, and feel that you would like to contribute to the BID. Full details of the time commitment, and the duties, are available from the BID office. Although Directors are not remunerated, the role can be very rewarding.

Glasgow. 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David", with a horizontal line underneath and a small dot to the right.

David J. Howat

Chairperson

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