



BYRES ROAD & LANES BID COMPANY LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT
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1. Introduction

Following a successful ballot 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. The BID comprises 204 businesses with 190 owners.

At 31 March 2018 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
- Derek McNeil, Trios, Ruthven Mews, Ruthven Lane
- Colette French, Time and Tide, 398 Byres Road

It is with great sadness that we learned of the sudden and unexpected death of David Howat on 3 March 2019. David was managing partner of Pattison & Co, 117 Byres Road, and had chaired the BID from its beginning in April 2015. As well as his role in the BID, David was an important member of the Friends of Glasgow West and was well-known and admired throughout Glasgow and Paisley.

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:

- A: Accessibility
- B: Facilitation
- C: Marketing, PR and promotion
- D: Events, festivals and markets
- E: Clean, green, safe and attractive place
- F: Environment and streetscape

3. Delivery against themes

The fourth year of activity delivered projects and initiatives that developed the foundations and experience established in the first three years of the BID's existence.

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. 67% thought that updating the Byres Road map was important or very important.

The BID continued to collaborate with the design and consultation team throughout the year, working on the comprehensive public realm improvements and redesign of Byres Road, to be delivered through the City Deal, including the co-hosting of a business breakfast in June. The decision by Glasgow City Council in October 2018 to introduce segregated cycle lanes on either side of Byres Road provoked considerable concern amongst BID businesses. The cycle lanes would require the removal of all on-street parking spaces on Byres Road north of Church Street. Businesses believed that this would have a significant impact on accessibility and footfall, particularly for those with mobility issues. A public meeting with the key councillor and officer was held in November 2018. A subsequent petition confirmed that over 90% of businesses opposed the removal of the parking. The BID continued to liaise with Council members and officers with the aim of ensuring that the proposals improved the environment of Byres Road for all road users. This included full representation by businesses at a design workshop held in March 2019.

The original proposal to rollout free wifi in Byres Road by Glasgow City Council has been overtaken by events. In the previous year; consultants appointed through Scotland's Towns' Digital Towns Pilot Programme concluded that the improvement in mobile 4G deployment, allied with the removal of roaming charges for European visitors, has rendered publicly provided free wifi less important than envisaged in the business plan. Digital marketing continued to be important for the area, with the BID attending a Digital Towns workshop in December.

Theme B: Facilitation

Acting as a unified voice of the business community, 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) continued in post. A full-time marketing & events co-ordinator was in post until December 2017 when she relocated to Canada; work to recruit a successor was underway in early 2018 and the post filled in July 2018.

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

Preferential rates continue with eyebright (formerly Business Advisory Support) and Changeworks Recycling to lower BID business costs. There have been significant annual savings for businesses.

Maintaining a good mix of uses in the area is fundamental to its success, as reflected in planning policy. Representations were made on two planning applications for change of use. One property applied for a change from retail to office accommodation in Byres Road twice, in August 2018 and in March 2019. The BID opposed such changes, which would undermine the mix of uses, each time. Each application was refused. A second property was the subject of an application to change from retail to restaurant / café use, within the Byres Road Core Retail Area. This application was objected to by the BID and was also refused consent but the business continues to trade.

A successful business breakfast was held in May 2018, again attracting businesses that had not attended previous networking events. The Annual General Meeting was held on 13 November.

The board of directors of the BID welcomed the production of the Govan Partick Strategic Development Framework (SDF), and the focus on holistic spatial development and placemaking that it brings to this important part of the city. The BID response to the consultation was positive and welcomed the opportunity for renewed focus on the lanes, and the creation of new civic space in the southern part of the BID. However, the document was silent on the Church Street baths site, at a key junction of Byres Road and the university campus expansion. This site requires a comprehensive mixed-use masterplan and an innovative approach to the re-use of the listed building that will allow it to contribute to the evolving cultural quarter.

The BID continued to liaise with Scotland's Towns Partnership and BIDs Scotland as they worked towards their merger in the autumn, attending the launch of the new Scotland's Improvement Districts in September and the subsequent networking event. The BID was asked to attend the inaugural Scotland's Place Leadership Summit in November. In January the BID was invited to represent the Glasgow BIDs on the new Scottish Cities BIDs group. The group met the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and stressed the importance of Scotland's cities being able to access the Town Centre Capital Fund, which was accepted. The BID worked with the emerging Great Western Road BID to pass on experience and logistics.

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.

The website underwent a comprehensive review and redesign to migrate it on to a more cost-effective platform. Content continued to be developed in respect of the blog, newsletter and an up-to-date events section.

Significant time was dedicated to social media activity. Further development of curated content saw Facebook likes increased by 14.5% to 6627 at the end of March. Twitter followers increased by 28% to 1,558 over the same period. Instagram recorded the highest growth, increasing by 41% to 1685 followers by the end of the year.

Two promotional **campaigns** were undertaken, During the summer a gazetteer was produced based on the bespoke illustrations in the area guide. With a clear focus on individual lanes and the various areas of Byres Road, the publication highlighted the wealth and variety of businesses in the area. In

In addition to general distribution these were targeted at visitors to key local events in the Glasgow 2018 calendar, notably the cycle races and the art installation in the Clyde Tunnel, as well as the Summer Celebration. In tandem with the Christmas Celebration in November (see Events) a promotional booklet was produced with a record number of 54 businesses participating. The brochures were distributed in advance of the promotional period, to increase reach.

The Visit West End **gift card** continued to be promoted and sales grew steadily throughout the year, reaching a peak in November 2018. This prepaid Mastercard card is available to buy online and from one BID business and offers recipients over sixty 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.

The short promotional video produced in 2017, designed specifically for social media use, continued to showcase the area:

<https://www.facebook.com/VisitWestEndGlasgow/videos/716802411836201/> By March 2019 it had been viewed for 7,091 minutes.

The BID continues to work with People Make Glasgow to promote the area and has worked with the convention bureau staff to encourage business to participate in promotions and initiatives aimed at conference visitors. The intention is to ensure that the BID area is a 'must visit' destination within the city.

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 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 hoped that this will be addressed to some degree by the public realm improvements planned for Byres Road and developments at the University campus redevelopment.

As in the previous year, in June 2018 the BID made financial contributions to the **West End Festival** and the **Ashton Lane Proprietors' Association's Festival Sunday**. In November 2017 the BID contributed to support the West End Festival's St Andrews Day Torchlight Procession, supplemented by social media promotion of the events. The BID also collaborated with the inaugural Glasgow Contemporary Art Fair and GlasGLOW productions to promote the events and ensure that BID businesses profited from these new items in the calendar.

The **Summer Celebration** on 24 June brought family fun to the whole area. Taking advantage of the Council's 'Playing Out' initiative offering free road closures, Vinicombe Street and Church Street were closed and transformed into festival sites. A free land train ferried visitors between the two locations and was exceptionally well received by the public. The BID is acutely aware of the lack of usable space to deliver activity to benefit businesses at the southern end of the BID, who continue to report significant reductions in turnover (20 – 25%) since the closure of the Western Infirmary.

After the success of the Bill Forsyth films at 'Bill in the Botanics' the previous year, in August 2018 the iconic Glasgow location was home to the 1980s science fiction-themed '**Back to the Botanics**' screenings. The cinema events were very well received, with 98% of the audience saying that they would like to attend the following year. The screenings delivered a strong economic impact, with 61% visiting the shops, restaurants and services within BID area as part of their visit. 60% spent up to £30, with nearly 10% spending more than £50.

As in 2017, for the **Christmas tree lights switch-on event** on 26 November 2017, the BID continued to collaborate with the Ashton Lane Proprietors' Association to extend family-friendly activity and performances across Vinicombe Street and Ashton, Cresswell and Ruthven Lanes, which succeeded in spreading footfall across the area. Vinicombe Street again hosted a Christmas tree, a stage with performances from local artists, and festive gift stalls, which reported good sales. The BID also partnered with the Beatson Cancer Charity, for the second year. A promotional discount booklet, featuring offers and discounts from BID members, was produced and distributed. More than 7,000 people attended the Vinicombe Street site throughout the day, with strong attendances across the lanes.

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

The business plan research revealed that 61% felt that the lanes were not visible or noticeable to visitors and shoppers.

The issue of the siting, size and overfilling of commercial waste bins continued to be one of the major areas of complaint by BID businesses, particularly in the lanes. The BID lobbied Glasgow City Council to prioritise the early rollout of the new commercial waste arrangements in the BID area, and this was rolled out in September. This has had a significant positive impact on the environment and amenity of the area. The collaborative partnership with Changeworks Recycling continued to deliver real bottom line benefits to BID businesses.

The BID instigated a weekly area condition survey, highlighting any instances of graffiti, fly-tipping, flooding or other issues, and reporting them to the relevant authorities. This has been very successful.

BID staff continued to work with business liaison officer PC Philip Warner to monitor crime rates and to relate feedback from businesses to Police Scotland. This resource doubled with the advent of PC Mick Ferry on the beat. Directors are aware that this is the only area of Glasgow with dedicated business liaison police officers. From August 2018 the BID funded dedicated phones for these officers, to provide real-time intelligence to the police and facilitate a prompt response to incidents. Over a thousand business cards with the officers' contact details were distributed to local businesses.

The issue of theft and antisocial behaviour continued to concern local businesses. A retail security group was established to focus on this key issue and has developed the Business Watch initiative. Personal safety was identified as an area of concern, particularly for lone workers, and the BID funded six trial periods of the Pick Protection personal safety product.

In May the BID was offered a complimentary place at the 'Scotland's Retail and Tourism' conference, run by the Scottish Business Resilience Centre.

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.

Christmas lights in Ashton Road car park and Dowanside and Ruthven lanes continued to add to the festive feel of the area. A Christmas tree was sited in Vinicombe Street for the third year. As well as forming a key element of the Christmas celebration event, the tree was very much appreciated by businesses, residents and visitors.

The BID continued to liaise with the University of Glasgow and their contractors regarding the development of the campus into the former Western Infirmary site.

Together with Glasgow City Council, Dowanhill, Hyndland & kelvinside Community Council and Benton Scott Simmons, the BID was part of the team that won the 'Place ' category for the public realm work in Vinicombe Street in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2018.

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.

Survey responses from the outdoor cinema indicate that whilst people have travelled from across the Central Belt and beyond, there is a strong local element who are welcoming the experience of seeing their valued local assets enjoyed in new ways. There has been very positive feedback regarding the Summer Celebration, outdoor cinema and Christmas Celebration. 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 the Scottish Towns Partnership provide useful information and advice to BIDs and emerging BIDs across Scotland. The BID has attended conferences and seminars offered by both organisations, and has had staff and director involvement at workshops with the Scottish Towns Partnership.

Glasgow City Council is one of the BID's most important partners, and relationships have been developed with key officers of the Council in Development and Regeneration Services (Economic Development, Neighbourhoods, Planning & Building Control), Land and Environment Services (Roads, Projects, Events, Lighting, Glasgow Botanic Gardens) and Glasgow Life. The directors gratefully acknowledge the financial contribution that Glasgow City Council has made throughout the first four years of the BID's existence.

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. Connections have been established with the University's managing contractor, in order to reduce the impact and harness the benefits of the construction on site.

BID staff continued to work with PC Philip Warner and PC Mick Ferry, Police Scotland's dedicated business liaison officer, on a number of issues that affect businesses and residents. There are established links with Police Scotland's Operational Planning team in relation to event management and public safety.

Glasgow, 24 October 2019

John C Turner

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