

TRUST NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF DUNBLANE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Welcome to this first edition of *TRUST NEWS*, which we hope you will find informative and useful. At this time, we plan to issue two or three editions per year. To minimise costs we will keep editions short and simple and they will be delivered via email or in hard copy, by hand. We will be pleased to receive any comments or contributions you may have.

FORMALITIES.

Like all companies, we have had to complete many formalities and these are now in place. We needed a Plan and the Local Community Plan for Dunblane was published in May 2003. We needed fully documented Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were drafted and adopted. The Company was incorporated on 11th June and it was approved as a Registered Charity on 5th August.

We also needed Directors and a Company Secretary and the first appointees were drawn from the members of the steering group that had brought the organisation to this stage. Monthly Board meetings are being held and the Trust is being progressively developed to progress the actions in the Community Plan. The current Directors are:

Chairman, Mike Seal.	Company Secretary, James Campbell.
Treasurer, Fiona Conboy.	Administration, Terence O'Byrne.
Local Environment, Bryan Grieve.	Planning & Strategy, Ian Dalgleish.
Local Economy, Lynn Ramsbottom.	Community Facilities, Evelyn Roberts.
Community Council Nominee, John Seddon.	Dunblane Forum Nominee, Tom Smith.

At the first AGM, likely to be in September 2004, all the current Directors will resign and a new Board will be elected by the Membership. Current Directors may stand for re-election if they wish.

MEMBERSHIP

The Company is owned and managed by its Members and they also provide the volunteer labour required to do much of the work required to progress the actions in the Community Plan. It is therefore absolutely vital that we have a strong membership, so a lot of effort has been directed at this. Our recruitment rate has recently been substantially accelerated by one of the Members, Andy McLaren, undertaking a face-to-face recruitment campaign. Thanks to his efforts and support, we are now approaching the 200 mark. Membership Application forms are available at Burgh Chambers, the Library, the newsagents or from the Company's registered office and all Members can help by persuading friends, relatives and neighbours to join.

FINANCE.

We need core funding to pay for company essentials such as insurance, stationery, postage, telephone costs, etc. All our volunteers, including all the Directors, are unpaid and so far we have been able to utilise meeting spaces, office equipment and some supplies, provided free of charge by Directors and others. Even on the basis of this "minimum cost" approach, we still need up to £5000 per annum of core funding. This will increase substantially in future years if the Company takes on its own office accommodation and recruits any paid administration or project management personnel, which is what many other organisations like ours have done. We are pleased to say that we have recently received a Local Community Development Fund award from Stirling Council to take us through the rest of this year and beyond the first AGM.

We also need project funding to cover the costs of doing the work under the four Action headings in the Community Plan, i.e. Planning & Strategy, Community Facilities, Local Environment and Local Economy. Membership fees and donations, supported by some grant income has provided for our needs so far, but we need much more if we are going to make the major impacts that we hope to make.

We have formed a fund-raising committee and it is being very active in making grant applications to a wide variety of appropriate sources. Members of this committee are also organising local fund-raising events, which we hope will also be enjoyable social events for our members and friends. The first one of these, a cheese and wine evening, recently raised over £500 thanks to Kay Grieve and some other key helpers.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

Work so far has been concentrated on making contacts with all the various facilities that we have in Dunblane and what a list we have. We are now progressing with collecting and collating information so that a complete directory of current facilities can be published on the web and in hard copy. In addition to creating and thereafter maintaining a current directory, we are also working with the management groups of the various facilities to identify any gaps in the range of activities provided. We are also available to them if they need us to assist with volunteer labour, providing contacts to local expertise or for raising funds.

We know that there is a strong consensus in Dunblane for a public swimming pool and we are in active discussions with the Queen Victoria School to see if it is going to be possible and practical for their pool to be made available for wider public use. This is considered to be the only potentially viable option for the foreseeable future.

PLANNING & STRATEGY.

In the Community Plan there are several items that are clearly long-term and these are receiving steady attention but inevitably progress will be very gradual. The items that are in this category include schools, health facilities and affordable housing. We are represented in the local education forum to consider the Public Private Partnership to upgrade our High School and we are working with the Community Council and the doctors at the Health Centre to update a Primary Health Care Plan for Dunblane. The subject of affordable housing across the whole Stirling Council area is currently being dealt with within a Local Plan Public Inquiry and apart from attending this inquiry to hear the arguments from developers and Stirling Council, we can do no more until the outcome of this inquiry is known in several months time.

In addition, we have kept a watching brief on significant planning applications and have made submissions to Stirling Council over Park of Keir and Provan. Other long-term items that have yet to receive attention include parking and public transport networks but we are in close contact with the Community Council on both of these and with the issue of the national cycle network.

More immediate progress is being made in the area of paths and safe routes to schools. A large group of volunteers has adopted the six Dunblane Community Paths and in co-operation with Stirling Council the members will report four times per year on the condition of the paths out of which improvement actions will be identified and implemented. We have also started to look at paths taken by children on their way to school where improved surfaces, lighting, etc. may be required to make them safe and practical.

LOCAL ECONOMY.

It is planned that early in the new year a meeting of volunteers with commercial experience and interests will be convened to discuss the action list within the Dunblane Community Plan and identify the priority actions for improvements. In the meantime, we are working with the Community Council and others on trying to help make the festive decorations and other Christmas attractions as effective as possible in bringing seasonal trade to the High Street. Discussions with the existing Tourism Development Group within the Dunblane Forum are also progressing to see where the Trust can be of greatest assistance in supporting this vital activity.

Work has started to build a database of all Dunblane businesses so that we can promote the use of local businesses by residents and visitors and encourage business-to-business relationships. We are also about to commence work to identify what can be provided in Dunblane and via local agencies to support existing businesses and encourage start-ups.

ENVIRONMENT.

We received much praise for the flower tubs that were installed over the summer months through the town centre. Thanks to the determination and resilience of Sandy Mackay, his efforts in bringing these tubs into being were not spoiled by the attention subsequently given to them by a few unfortunate vandals. They will be replanted and repositioned in the spring along with some additional tubs for an even better show. Regular litter-picking, pruning, weeding and general tidying of the riverside paths, the public open spaces and the B8033 are showing substantial improvements and this will continue thanks to the ongoing efforts of many of our members. In addition, we provided the Civic Society with assistance in resolving the long-standing problems with Ochloch Pond and created significant improvements around the Memorial for the service on 9th November.

Over the next few months, major clearance work will be undertaken on the roadside banks between Beech Road and Fourways and on the bank below The Haining. This will allow the spring bulbs to provide a good display and after that, selective elimination of invasive species, pruning, introduction of new vegetation and general area management will be directed at creating and maintaining attractive, informal areas for a wide variety of wild flora and fauna. Other improvement work throughout Dunblane, including upgrading seating, will also be undertaken as project funds become available.

We are regularly litter-picking the Laighills and once funds are available, we will secure professional assistance to devise a layout and management plan for the Laighills with the intention of creating a formally recognised Local Nature Reserve covering all the areas other than the designated play areas.

AND FINALLY.

Although it is not a requirement for a Member to be actively involved in the activities of the Trust, any contributions that you can make within the Action Groups, on fund raising, on increasing membership, or on any of the items covered in this newsletter, will be very welcome.

We thank all those that have already taken out membership and helped us achieve the progress we have made so far. We also thank all those that have helped us and encouraged us in many other ways, including our key contacts in Stirling Council who have been very supportive. The Trust is not here to do what the Council is supposed to do, but we are here to make those additional improvements that residents and businesses in Dunblane want.

A Merry Christmas and Best Wishes to all for 2004. We have plenty to do and we shall enjoy doing it.

DUNBLANE DEVELOPMENT TRUST IS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE. REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND No 250969, CHARITY No. SC 034511. REGISTERED OFFICE: IVYDENE, LEEWOOD ROAD, DUNBLANE, FK15 0DR. TEL: 01786 822281