

TRUST NEWS

APRIL 2004

THE NEWSLETTER OF DUNBLANE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The first edition of *TRUST NEWS* was distributed to all Trust Members in December 2003 and we hope that the recipients found it informative and useful. It was disappointing that we had no feedback from anyone about the first edition, so for now we are assuming that “no news is good news” and it is worth putting out another edition along similar lines. To minimise costs we have kept the content short and simple, in black & white with delivery via email or in hard copy by hand.

BOARD CHANGES.

In January, we were sorry to receive the resignation of Lynn Ramsbottom, who found that her heavy commitments to her own business and to the farm on which she lives made it too difficult to also give sufficient time to her role as Director, Local Economy. As a stop-gap arrangement, Mike Seal is covering this post. The current Directors are:

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

At the first AGM, 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. In addition to filling the Local Economy post we also have a vacancy for Vice-Chairman and we have the option within our constitution for adding another four Directors. We need to fill most of these vacancies as soon as possible and ensure that we have enough candidates for a strong board to be appointed at the AGM. The Trust, like any other company, cannot function effectively if its management is weak, so if you have some management experience of any sort, a little time (say around 2 hours per week) and an interest in seeing improvements in Dunblane, please let us know. The first stage would simply be a discussion with no commitment and after that, if you are still interested, you could come to a board meeting as a guest and see how we operate before deciding whether to stand or not.

MEMBERSHIP

The Company is wholly 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 has been absolutely vital to build a strong membership and we are very pleased to be able to report that we now have almost 300 Members. If each of you can persuade one other to join, we would soon pass our next target of 500. The more members we have, the easier it will be to achieve the improvements we all want to see. Membership Application forms are available at Burgh Chambers, the Library, the newsagents or from the Company’s registered office. For those connected to the web, the Application Form is also available via our website www.dunblaneweb.co.uk Please talk with your friends and neighbours, tell them about the Trust and the good work it is undertaking and ask them to join.

FINANCE.

The £5000 received from the Local Community Development Fund last year is sufficient to cover all our core costs for 2004, including insurance, stationery, postage, telephone costs, etc. We have no personnel costs because all our volunteers, including Directors, are unpaid and we have no premises or equipment costs because all the work is being done from people’s homes using their own equipment.

We are also delighted to announce that a further £5750 has just been granted from the second tranche of Stirling Council’s Local Community Development Fund to allow us to develop an extensive and potentially very important website for Dunblane. About six months ago, DunblaneCity.com was transferred to the Trust from the Tourism Group of the Dunblane Forum and very recently we acquired the website DunblaneWeb.co.uk from Stephen Crosbie, who runs a local plumbing business but who had also spent a lot of his leisure time creating and developing this site. The two sites are linked so that entering either of them brings you to DunblaneWeb.co.uk, which has been selected as the website for development. Priority actions include maintaining and developing general and specific information to support tourism, publishing information about the Dunblane Development Trust and its activities, creating and maintaining databases of Dunblane businesses and community facilities, providing membership information and setting-up email contacts. The project is being lead by Terence O’Byrne, extensively supported by Graeme Faulkner and Stephen Crosbie. If you have any experience or interest in website development or in the tasks of maintaining information up to date, we will be pleased to hear from you.

Membership fees, donations and some grant income has provided for our project needs so far, but we need much more if we are going to make the major impacts that are planned under the four Action headings in the Community Plan, i.e. Planning & Strategy, Community Facilities, Local Environment and Local Economy. Each of these action centres is now taking the responsibilities for raising its own project funds. The Trust is a registered charity, so if you know anyone who would like to make a donation to this most local of charities, please help us. All project expenditure goes to making improvements in Dunblane, nowhere else.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

Work is underway on the new Community Facilities Directory but some replies are still awaited before the booklet can be published. We aim to tie in the production of the booklet in hard copy form with the DunblaneWeb website going on line, where the information will also be available. We hope that by listing the various facilities and their current usage will make it accessible not only to present Dunblane residents but also to potential ones and to tourists planning a visit. Details of special local events could be incorporated.

The building of the new Dunblane Centre is now well advanced and we look forward to close cooperation with the management board on its launch and development.

The Skateboard Park Committee has now received sufficient funding to make a start with a simple initial skate board park design and are now negotiating with designers and contractors for an early start to work, which should not take long to complete. The Trust has been invited to participate in the Braeport Future Group which has been formed, with the agreement of the Braeport Centre Council and under the auspices of the Dunblane Forum. The Group's task is to investigate whether the Braeport Centre site could be further enhanced/developed to ensure its continuation in the role of a community facility but with a more secure financial basis for the long term. The Group is fully apprised of the need to tailor any proposals to provide significant new benefits for the community while safeguarding existing assets and usage. Initial Group members comprise representatives from the Braeport Centre Council, Braeport user groups, Dunblane Civic Society, Dunblane Council of Churches, Dunblane Local History Society, Dunblane Development Trust and others. The Group is inviting any other group or individual the basic aims and objectives to approach the Forum and express an interest.

PLANNING & STRATEGY.

Since the last newsletter, activities have continued to concentrate on the current priorities as follows.

Health Care Provisions. In conjunction with the Community Council, we have participated in a number of meetings to assist the local doctors to secure approval and eventually action to extend and upgrade our Health Centre. Forth Valley Health Board has confirmed that the drawing for the extension and upgrade and the costing of the project is being progressed as a priority for them. The general plan is to build a two storey extension in which a pharmacy will be incorporated, upgrade the existing building and provide for parking on the land currently occupied by the pharmacy. They will need to secure approval of Stirling Council who own the site on which the current pharmacy sits and get planning permission for the proposed changes. They will also need to secure a location for housing a temporary health centre for the period of construction and we have helped with the identification of possible options for this around Dunblane. We also attended a recent meeting on developing Community Health Partnerships which aim to extend public consultation and participation in all aspects of Health Care provision. We need to continue to ensure that Dunblane is well represented.

High School. We are maintaining contact with progress on the planned upgrade of our High School as part of the Public Private Partnership project for a number of High Schools within the Stirling Council area. Details are being prepared ready for the tendering process. It is clear that we will not get everything we would ideally like out of this project but we should end up with a considerable improvement of facilities for both the pupils and staff.

Planning. We continue to liaise with the Community Council on significant planning applications and we are preparing an outline proposal for extending the Mill Row car park capacity for discussion for Stirling Council planning.

Footpaths. We are working closely with the Civic Society and Stirling Council representatives on improving footpaths in and around Dunblane. This activity is linked to establishing safe routes to schools, which is another important priority for this community, particularly as it continues to grow.

We would like a few more members of the Trust to join us in our efforts to progress the items covered above and to help us plan for taking on more project work.

LOCAL ECONOMY.

An action group has been formed and we have now met several times. The immediate priorities based on the Community Plan are:

Town Centre Improvements.

In the Plan, this was referred to as Create a thriving High Street, but we want to cover all the town centre, not just the High Street. The Dunblane Business Initiative (DBI) members met in April and decided to wind-up their organisation and transfer the assets to the Trust, which now means that we can focus all our efforts through a single group of enthusiastic volunteers who want to see this priority progressed. The short term actions are: improving publicity and marketing of town centre businesses, supporting the Environment Group in making the centre cleaner and more attractive, supporting the Tourism Group on their activities to increase visitor numbers and attract Dunblane residents to visit the centre more often including bringing together the various activities around Christmas into a better co-ordinated festive programme and supporting the Planning & Strategy Group with their work on parking. After that, in addition to continuing with the activities already underway, we can turn our attention to such things as considering a 'Big Marketing Theme' for Dunblane, and following up the High Street Upgrade Phase 1 programme with a phase 2.

Developing Enterprise

We are participating in the Business Gateway program from Stirling Enterprise (STEP), who want to help Dunblane businesses where they can and as far as the willingness of the owners will permit. Ken Mitchell, who heads this activity for us has started to compile a list of the businesses in Dunblane and contacts have started. Ken is being helped by Colin Campbell and they will be acting as 'Professional Catalysts' in conjunction with STEP to help businesses obtain funding and other support as required. They will also be conducting market research with local businesses to establish their views on the Trust in three areas: the level of

benefit they would expect from involvement with the Trust, the problems they would like help with and suggestions on the development of Dunblane. STEP wants to organise a local Business Roadshow and we are helping to organise it. This will help to raise the profile of the Trust and provide a vehicle for contacts between ourselves and local businesses.

Business Parks

We await the publication of the Local Inquiry report which will include the Reporter's recommendation for the Barbush Business Park, but in the meantime we are making contact with the businesses in Duckburn and trying to find Dunblane businesses who would be interested in premises at Barbush if they were built. The site has been identified as suitable for Class 4 use, i.e. offices, research and light industrial.

Tourism

The Tourism Group is working with the Town Centre group as covered above and is also continuing with organising and running the established events such as the Tartan Day and the Santa Lucia procession. In addition, they are considering the possibility of an annual "Festival of Crafts", starting September 2005, which would be a showcase for craft skills based in Dunblane and hopefully bring a lot of people into the town centre. They will also be considering prospects for twinning and mechanisms to further develop relationships with transport organizations such as bus and ferry companies.

ENVIRONMENT.

The Dunblane in Bloom group has been formed and is being co-ordinated by Sandy MacKay - telephone 01786 822765 for information and to offer help with plant supply and planting etc. Sandy has set up a poly-tunnel for bringing on plants at Mo-Lawn at Kilbryde which will be used by the Dunblane in Bloom group only and will need some care and attention by volunteers - again please apply to Sandy as above. Sandy will also be placing 20 half barrel flower tubs at strategic places around the town in June, along other floral arrangements including upgrading of the roundabout in the High Street with roses and bedding, upgrading of beds at Smithy Loan and at Bogside.

The environment group has cleared the B8033 bankings which were in flower with first of all snowdrops and daffodils, making a beautiful sight on the approach to the Fourways roundabout. The Haining banking has also been cleared, again revealing many more daffodils and shrubs that were not visible before. This was a massive effort by our volunteers and we are very grateful to them. These banks can now be replanted with a wider selection of wild flowers and appropriate shrubs to give a more year-round display.

The second phase of Ochloch Park is well underway to improve and upgrade the entrance paths from Glen Road and Ochloch Park at the sub station. This will give disabled access and will include the upgrading of the wooden bridge with a new surface and secure handrails. This has all been made possible by funding and physical help from our good friends at the Civic Society and Stirling Council.

We have a new group formed for Newton Park, which is being co-ordinated by Peter Withington, telephone 01786 823982. Peter has already organised a litter pick and tidy up, which was very well supported by local residents and Stirling Council and longer term plans for the future upgrading of the park are to be developed. Please call him if you live near this park to offer physical and/or financial help.

The rose garden at the entrance to the Laighills has been the subject of vandalism recently. If you see anyone causing damage do not approach them, but do call the police as we have made them aware of the situation. Tidying and planting work is currently progressing.

We are also looking for volunteers to litter pick in the Laighills, please call Bryan Grieve on 01786 823112 if you can help, we will provide protective gloves, glasses and a litter picker free of charge.

This summer we will be carrying out further upgrading of the memorial gardens, especially the heather beds and the river banking. If you wish to help we will be there every Sunday from 10.00am to 12.00am and with the lighter evenings now with us, we will also be organising some mid-week evening activities.

If you have any ideas to improve any area in Dunblane, call the writer Bryan Grieve, telephone 01786 823112 and we will endeavour to help.

AND FINALLY.

There is much to do, but we have made an excellent start. Don't forget that this is your company, run by Dunblane people for the sole benefit of Dunblane. If you can help with any of the project work, donations, fund-raising, membership or in any other way, please do so.

Keep up to date with developments by participating in our action groups and by logging onto www.dunblaneweb.co.uk, where you will also find email contact facilities for any comments or queries that you may have.

Watch out also for more details about the AGM in September and, if you are able and willing to stand for a Board appointment please let us know.