

Dunblane Development Trust

Report on Retail & Leisure Capacity Study in Dunblane Town Centre

Study Brief

This study was carried out by the Institute for Retail Studies and the Marketing Department at the University of Stirling. It was commissioned by Dunblane Development Trust as part of their application for funding from the Big Lottery Fund, which was not granted.

Methodology - Resident / Visitor Survey and Face to Face Interviews with Retailers

100 residents and visitors were surveyed via a questionnaire dealing with:

- Reasons for visiting High Street and number of regular visits made.
- Shops visited, services used, how they rated Dunblane regarding customer service
- Range of shops, convenience etc and overall view of Dunblane High Street

An age and gender profile was also undertaken.

Key answers to the questionnaire included:

- 65% - 70% of those surveyed thought the shops were average to poor.
- the High Street was quiet, lifeless and needed a facelift.
- the need for a review of parking.
- the absence of tourist information.
- the need for and benefit of the traders working together.
- the impact of Marks & Spencer.

Comparative Study

Peebles, Crieff and Kinross were the towns used to make comparisons due to their similar population size and wealth. All three towns are popular tourist destinations.

It is clear that Dunblane has great tourist potential but a lot needs to be done to market and maximise this. Compared to these other towns, Dunblane has certain physical restrictions which discourage shopping such as narrow pavements and the width of the High Street, but, most importantly, no co-ordinated or directed approach to tourism

In other towns, a 'comfort scheme' was available where local business permitted visitors to use their toilet facilities.

Recommendations

1. Traders Association
2. Restoration of Tourist Office (Museum)
3. Maximise Tourist Potential
4. Review and re-evaluate parking policy (this was seen as a major problem)
5. Improve signage with colourful signs to enhance the appearance of the High Street
6. Consider Farmers/Country Market and other events on a regular basis. This can lead to greater use of the High Street and the discovery of shops and goods which customers may not have been aware of.

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Assessment of the Project

1. The project was not intended to be an in-depth study.
2. The sample of people polled was small (100).
3. The university students had no previous experience but were advised and monitored by senior staff from the Institute for Retail Studies and the Marketing Department at the University of Stirling.
- 4.. The students used a qualitative research method and face-to-face interviews with retailers in the food and non-food sectors. Twenty eight different aspects were covered in the residents' questionnaire, the retailers' interviews and the comparative study.
5. People from Dunblane may conclude that they were well aware of most of these points already. However, this totally independent study took a fresh look at how best we could develop retail and leisure opportunities.
6. It is important that action is taken on the recommendations made.

Lawrie Dewar

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