



Living Lerwick Ltd

Annual Report 2012/13

Together Let's Make Lerwick Town Centre Better

Introduction - Living Lerwick Ltd

Living Lerwick Ltd, Lerwick town centre business improvement district is at the end of year one.

Following consultation with businesses in the area, a five year business plan was drawn up and in June 2012, a ballot of eligible businesses was held. A turnout of 67% was recorded with 82.7% in favour by number and 82.2% by rateable value. A copy of the business plan can be found at www.livinglerwick.co.uk.

The business improvement levy is collected by Shetland Islands Council and passed to Living Lerwick Ltd. It is added to other funding streams to assist in the delivery of projects and initiatives laid out in the business plan. During the first year, £70,882.60 was collected. Procedures are in place to collect the remaining £5,350. External funding of £31,841 to cover staffing and project costs was applied for and received during the year. There was also a trading income of £938.33. This gave a total income of £103,661.90 for the year.

This annual report describes how the funding has been used towards delivering the main aims of Living Lerwick Ltd for the first year, as prioritised by directors. More information is available at www.livinglerwick.co.uk.

Management and Board of Directors

Living Lerwick Ltd is managed under contract by CU Marketing Ltd and is overseen by a board of directors. CU Marketing Ltd staff working on Living Lerwick Ltd are: Christena Irvine (Manager) and Leigh-Ann McGinty (Admin Officer).

Board of Directors

Chair

Harry Jamieson (Harry's Department Store)

Vice Chairs

Steve Mathieson (Visit Scotland)
Ken Rae (J G Rae Ltd)

Directors

Cynthia Adamson (M & Co)
Eleanor Eunson (Boots)
Emma Gibson (The Peerie Shop)
John Watt (Thulecraft)
Gemma Jamieson (Specsavers)
Peter Lennon (KGQ Hotels)
Ben Mullay (The Camera Centre)
Inga Scott (The Stage Door)
Hazel Wiggins (Sweet Memories)
Ingrid Webb (COPE Ltd)

Advisors on the Board

Alistair Cooper (SIC Councillor)
Linda Coutts (SIC Development)
Laura Fiske (SIC Planning)
Angus MacInness (Northern Constabulary)
Allan Wishart (SIC Councillor)

Chairman's comments

Reflecting on the first year, I am very pleased with all the effort that has gone in to improving our town centre.

The winter festival was a great starter event for Living Lerwick. The huge turnout showed that the public are behind what we are trying to do and that they really do appreciate the efforts being made by the businesses in the area. As time goes on, it is becoming more apparent that folk are realising that it's the businesses who are trying to improve the historical town centre and make it a place we can all be proud of.

The new Christmas lights and fixings were expensive but like many things in year one, these are one-off costs. The new flowers and planters added to the decoration of the area during the summer months. A huge effort was made by bairns all across Shetland in decorating individual flags for Living Lerwick to create bunting with. It now hangs from one end of Commercial Street to the other.

I'm fairly happy with the way the Fair Isle Festival went for year one. Some of the retailers really put in a fantastic effort with their Fair Isle window displays and got right into the spirit of things. We made a healthy start with our street market and look forward to building up the

street market programme. I am looking forward to improving a lot of the projects for the coming year.

In general, Living Lerwick Management and directors have put in a great effort and we have achieved what we set out to do in the first year. There is, of course, a long way to go to address all the issues highlighted in our surveys but I think year one has got us on track for achieving it all by the end of year five.

I would like to thank the SIC for all of their support and in particular their help with the setup of the business improvement district; the BIG Lottery Awards for All fund for their support with the street market capital costs; Lerwick Community Council for their financial support with street decoration and their support of Living Lerwick.

There are many other Shetland organisations who have contributed through working with Living Lerwick on various projects too, all of which deserve our thanks. I would also like to thank the Shetland public for showing their appreciation of what we businesses are trying to do for the area. Last, but certainly not least, my thanks go to all the businesses in the area for the financial and other support they have given to make all of what we do as Living Lerwick possible.

1. Small Town, Big Heart - Streets Alive & Shetland Street

The first priority for Living Lerwick this year was to make the town centre more vibrant, friendly and welcoming through the Streets Alive and Shetland Street projects.

As this was our first year, all of the elements required to host events had to be put in place for future years. It has been a steep learning curve but we have now built up good working relationships with the necessary contacts and own the capital equipment we need.

Winter Festival

The Winter Festival kicked off with an incredibly well attended switch-on event in November 2012. The lights were magically switched on by the children from Peerie Foxes nursery with their magic wands. The children led the parade, followed by the Jarl Squad, the brass band, Santa with his classic car and members of the public.



With funding assistance from Lerwick Community Council, Living Lerwick organised 50 re-usable small Christmas trees for the area. Businesses decorated their trees and took responsibility for their care during the winter festival period. COPE Ltd are caring for the trees until the next winter festival, when we will use them again.



Santa's Grotto was held in a vacant property (kindly donated by Kathy Coull) every Saturday throughout the winter festival. Children could get their photo taken with santa while receiving their gift.

24 businesses helped in the countdown to Christmas by unveiling the contents of their advent box on their specified day. The public voted on their favourites through our Facebook page. Westside Pine won first place, Ninian, North Rock Gallery and M & Co. were joint second and Fine Peerie Cakes came third.

1. Small Town, Big Heart - Streets Alive & Shetland Street

Fair Isle Festival

On Sunday 4th August, the start of the Fair Isle Festival, the town centre was bustling with locals and visitors wearing their Fair Isle.



The event began with a Fair Isle Family Cycling Parade. Those who took part wore Fair Isle. Shetland Community Bike Project really got into the spirit of things by decorating a bike in Fair Isle livery.

Thordale Shetland Stud had their famous Shetland ponies in Fair Isle jumpers in the town centre on the day, which proved to be a huge hit.

Boots had a charity dunk for Macmillan Cancer Support, there was live music from Da Shanty Yellmen and the Papa Stour Sword Dance put on a rare performance.

Retailers went to a lot of effort to dress their windows to fit with the Fair Isle theme. There were many innovative and impressive displays throughout the week.

The majority of retailers agreed to extra opening hours as part of their shopping week and ran various special offers. The Fair Isle Festival provided a good chance for customers to prove their preferred shopping times, which enabled retailers to judge whether or not it's worth opening late or on Sunday. We are collecting information on the success rate, which will be used to improve future event planning and possibly suggest worthwhile improved opening hours.

The last activity of the Fair Isle Festival was the Oxjam Buskathon on Saturday 10th. The organisers partnered with us to pool resources and make it a big event. It was a busy day with lots of live music.

School and nursery children from all over Shetland decorated flags to be used as bunting in the town centre. We were very impressed with the response, as 1,514 individually decorated flags were received. The flags are now grouped by school and hang the length of Commercial Street.

1. Small Town, Big Heart - Streets Alive

Living Lerwick Street Market

We now have permission and have gained funding from the Awards for All Lottery Fund which covered the cost of the market stalls and storage trailer. Getting all the required permissions to run our street markets posed unexpected challenges, which caused delays.

The objectives are to:

- Draw more people into the town centre on a regular basis
- Create something new which generates a social buzz
- Improve the perception of Lerwick town centre



According to research, the benefit to the local area of a street market is a multiplier effect of 1.5 to 2 (people spend x at the street market and go on to spend $1.5x$ or $2x$ in the surrounding businesses). The street markets will also provide a cost effective way for start-ups to test the market for their products. If they are successful, they may wish to take retail space, which should reduce the number of vacant properties within the town centre.

We aim to achieve all this by having a completely different type of market from anywhere else in Shetland, with an ever-changing variety of unique and innovative products to keep customers interested. The key to this is to have a constantly changing selection of traders with new and different products which will attract the same customers again and again to see what is new.

The Living Lerwick street market was launched in Harrison Square at the start of the Fair Isle Festival. The uptake from traders was lower than it could have been. Feedback on every aspect of the street market was gathered from traders and nearby businesses. Based on the information received, we have made a few changes to the way we will run the markets in future.

Now that Living Lerwick own the market stalls, they can be used for any event and are also available for hire.



2. Park and Bide & 3. Improve What We Have

Park and Bide

Living Lerwick have been working this year on improving working relationships with and improving our understanding of the remit of the SIC Roads department and Northern Constabulary.

The Chair and Manager now regularly attend the SIC Roads department transport meeting, where any proposed changes to the existing parking and access system in the town centre are discussed.

Angus MacInness, Chief Inspector of Northern Constabulary is an advisor on the board of Living Lerwick Ltd. This ensures that the police know immediately of any concerns highlighted to us. The biggest issue faced by the town centre regarding the Park and Bide objective has been the lack of a traffic warden. This issue is being resolved as a new traffic warden has recently been employed.

Living Lerwick has also been working on the promotion of existing parking. A full list of the parking spaces available in the town centre is available on www.livinglerwick.co.uk.

There are further plans to ease the parking and access issues in the town centre. These will be implemented as and when possible.

Improve What We Have

Living Lerwick have tackled quite a few projects under the Improve What We Have objective in year 1.

Living Lerwick organised the re-usable Christmas trees funded by Lerwick Community Council to decorate the area during Winter. We also organised the new fixings and bought the new Christmas lights.

Ten market stalls and a trailer were bought with full funding from BIG Lottery Awards for All.

Living Lerwick made changes to the previous flower scheme by adding reusable planters to the mix. This meant that flowers could be seen at varying eye levels and that savings could be made on the cost of watering. Lerwick Community Council funded 50% of the flower scheme.



The bunting made from flags decorated by children from all over Shetland was created by Living Lerwick and uses the new fixings.

4. Give a little - Gain a lot and 5. Let's Keep Lerwick Safe

Reduce costs

Living Lerwick have been working with BID Scotland to introduce the More for Business cost reduction scheme to businesses. This scheme provides businesses with cost savings on utilities and insurance. To date, two businesses have used the card processing savings system and have saved £3500 between them.

Living Lerwick have also negotiated a 20% reduction for member businesses on adding their products and special offers to a new web system. The system holds product details for businesses who list and this creates a "virtual superstore for Shetland". The web system is due to be released soon.

More bang for our bucks

In year one, £31,841 worth of external funding has been drawn in and invested in the projects outlined in the business plan. Funding was obtained from SIC, Awards for All Lottery Fund and Lerwick Community Council.

Say What We Think

Living Lerwick has used the results of it's surveys to communicate the majority view of businesses and customers in the area to various bodies.

We now have representation at the majority of meetings where decisions affecting businesses in the area are made. Living Lerwick has been and will continue to work hard in making sure the opinions of businesses are considered when important decisions are made.

Support and Train

The BID Manager is now sent details of training courses and resources available to businesses and forwards these on by email.

A customer care course has been developed and trialled. Positive feedback has been received. The course and arrangements are currently being perfected taking feedback into consideration.

What customers want

The Fair Isle Festival was used to assess the customer need for improved opening hours. In our survey, the majority of customers said they wanted this. Feedback from businesses will reveal whether they actually used the shops during extra opening hours.

Let's Keep Lerwick Safe

This project has been about an improved working relationship with Northern Constabulary in year one and this has been achieved.

The Future

The Team

At the start of year one, the management and board of directors hardly knew each other and had little practical knowledge of how a business improvement district should operate. As with any new company, policies had to be agreed and procedures put in place. Now this has all been done, achieving the impacts required for future projects should become much easier.

Small Town, Big Heart

The focus for year one here, had to be on building up relationships and acquiring the capital equipment needed to deliver the events businesses and customers had asked for. The feedback we received from the winter festival, Fair Isle Festival and street market was generally very positive.

However, with experience, events can always be improved on, so we will be working hard to make all our events better for the coming years.

Park and Ride

There are various plans in place to alleviate parking issues in the town centre. We are working with various other organisations on the implementation of these plans.

Improve What We Have

The focus for year two will be on planning projects under this objective. These may attract large funding packages and are likely to bring very obvious physical improvements to the area.

Planning these large projects is extremely complex. It is hoped they will serve as a lasting legacy from Living Lerwick and the businesses who contribute.

Give a Little - Gain a Lot

Living Lerwick will continue to search for ways to reduce costs for businesses, bring in external funding, make the views of business owners count where it matters and circulate information on training and support.

In year two, we will also focus more on the provision of market research tools to businesses in the area.

Let's Keep Lerwick Safe

Living Lerwick will continue to liaise with Northern Constabulary on safety concerns. The situation will be monitored and action stepped up as appropriate under this objective.

Income and Expenditure

Income

The business improvement levy is collected by Shetland Islands Council and passed to Living Lerwick Ltd. It is added to other funding streams to assist in the delivery of projects and initiatives laid out in the business plan. During the first year, £70,882.60 was collected. Procedures are in place to collect the remaining £5,350 during year two, making full use of the extensive powers available under legislation. External funding of £31,841 to cover staffing and project costs was applied for and received during the year. There was also trading income of £938.33. This gave a total income of £103,661.90 for the year.

The SIC Development department gave grant assistance of £19,890 to partially fund operational and staffing costs.

The Awards for All Lottery scheme funded the market stalls and storage trailer by granting £9,873.

Lerwick Community Council partially funded the re-usable Christmas trees and the summer flower scheme with £2,078.

Expenditure

The board of directors rearranged the budgets in order to achieve what had to be achieved in year one.

The Improve What We Have budget was doubled to £32,000 and the operational costs budget extended by £2000. The additional budget for these areas was taken from Small Town, Big Heart.

The extra costs under both of these budget headings will not need to be incurred again and have set Living Lerwick up for the delivery of future projects.

The Improve What We Have budget covered the biggest expenditures of the year, which were to fund capital equipment that will be used for the duration of the BID and beyond. These costs included Christmas light fixings, the Christmas light scheme, Christmas trees, market stalls, a trailer and planters for the flower scheme.

Under operational costs, the one-off costs included office equipment and professional fees for setting up the company in accordance with the extensive BID legislation.

Draft Income and Expenditure Report

Period 1st September 2012 to 31st August 2013

Full accounts are available to members from the Living Lerwick office.

Income

Business improvement levy	£70,882.60
SIC grant	£19,890.00
Lerwick Community Council grants	£2,078.00
Lottery Awards For All grant	£9,832.00
Trading income (street market)	£938.33

Turnover **£103,661.90**

Expenditure

Small Town Big Heart	£21,104.27
Park and Bide	£3,000.00
Improve What We Have	£32,046.50
Give a Little - Gain a Lot	£4,000.00
Let's Keep Lerwick Safe	£500.00
BID Management	£10,000.00
Operational Costs	£13,060.29
Total costs	£83,711.06
Net profit	£19,950.85
Balance carried forward	£19,950.84

Living Lerwick Ltd is a 'Not for Profits' company and any surplus is carried forward to the following year, where it will be invested in delivering the projects in the business plan.



Together Let's Make Lerwick Town Centre Better

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LOTTERY FUNDED