



Living Lerwick Ltd

Annual Report 2015/16

Together Let's Make Lerwick Town Centre Better

Introduction - Living Lerwick Ltd

In 2012 the businesses in Lerwick Town Centre came together and voted to create a Business Improvement District. A BID is an organisation voted for by the businesses in a set boundary and funded by those businesses. The businesses saw that this would allow them to have a bit of control and input into the future development and direction of the town centre. It was also their best chance of making a big enough difference to the town centre to improve trading conditions for all businesses.

So far, 55 areas across Scotland are developing a BID or have an operational BID already in place. The majority of these were started by small business owners or local groups who decided much more could be done to change and improve their area and trading environment. They are designed to bring together businesses and other stakeholders so that they can develop projects and activities which help boost the local economy. The businesses as a whole have a voice on issues affecting the area in which they trade, be it parking, cleansing, safety or the future long term direction of the area.

All properties in the BID area and listed on the Local Assessors Valuation roll are automatically members of Living Lerwick.

This annual report is a summary of year four of the BID.

Management and Board of Directors

Living Lerwick Ltd is managed under contract by CU Marketing Ltd and is overseen by a board of directors. The current board of directors are:

Chair

Gary Bain (LHD)

Vice Chair

Steve Mathieson (Visit Scotland)

Directors

Joe Christie (LHD Marine Supplies)
Emma Gibson (The Peerie Shop)
Gemma Jamieson (Specsavers)
Stewart Jamieson (Harry's)
Ben Mullay (The Camera Centre)
Frances Richardson (KGQ Hotels)

Outgoing directors were Craig Caldwell (TSB) and Cynthia Mathieson (M&Co)

Advisors on the Board

Alistair Cooper (SIC Councillor)
Linda Coutts (SIC Development)
Allan Wishart (SIC Councillor)

Chairman's comments

The first BID term has been a huge learning curve for all involved in Living Lerwick. A very small number of people started it with big ideas. Unfortunately, this coincided with major cut backs and huge changes within the Council.

The odds on achieving what was in the initial business plan have certainly been stacked against us during the first term. Despite this, if you go through each project line by line, we've achieved the vast majority. Unfortunately the various applications Living Lerwick has made for big funding, have not been successful but the foundations have been put in place for this to be achieved in partnership with the SIC in a second term.

Town centre regeneration is a big job, which takes a long time. We believe working together gives us the best chance of improving and enlivening our historic town centre.

We have learnt a lot about the how the council and government work, which departments and people to approach for help and support and gathered information on funding, legislation, law and local government.

The Community Empowerment Act recently came into force, which means we are now a "statutory consultee". This enables us to be a much more influential group on issues affecting our members and their needs.

We have been working with SIC Officials to increase understanding of the possibilities and the great benefits available through supporting Living Lerwick, from communication with the businesses right through to accessing large funds from outside Shetland.

There are big pots of money that SIC and Living Living Lerwick can access to provide more for the town centre and our members. This money can only be accessed jointly, so is dependent on a good working relationship

With the changes coming from the shrinking budgets, traffic calming, the school moving and changing policies we are all looking at challenging times for our businesses. We believe NOW is the time we must focus on working together not only to keep what we have but to strive to improve it.

As members, we all need to pitch in to make sure our businesses can thrive over the long term. It is clear that if we do nothing, nothing will be done. We can't stand back and expect someone else to sort it out, it isn't top priority for anyone else, it's down to us.

If you want to be part of deciding how we move forward, please get in touch. We need more directors and businesses to come forward and help us take control of the future of Lerwick town centre.

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

Winter Festival

Following on from our first three Winter Festivals, Living Lerwick listened to feedback received and produced a streamlined winter festival within a smaller budget.

To everyone's surprise with the awful weather, the Winter Festival kicked off with an incredibly well attended switch-on event. Santa arrived in town by lifeboat and the lights were magically switched on by the children from Peerie Foxes nursery with their magic wands. Santa and the Peerie Foxes bairns in their specially decorated trikes led the parade, followed by the Jarl Squad and the brass band.



The Christmas lights, and co-ordinated late night shopping were repeated from previous years.

Feedback revealed that the tradition of having a large tree at the Market Cross was very important to a lot of people. Due to this, Living Lerwick revived it by buying a large tree and lights and negotiating with Northlink,

Northwards and SIC in order to get the tree to Shetland and erected at the Market Cross. An application for assistance was also made to Lerwick Community Council, which provided funding for lights for the tree.



Santa's Grotto was busier this year. It was a joint effort between Living Lerwick and the Lerwick Lifeboat and held over a weekend.

Living Lerwick created a best window display competition with the winners being voted on by the public. George Robertson Ltd and Westside Pine won the trophy by coming joint first. Ninian came second with only one vote between them and the winners.

Now that the Winter Festival has become an established event, there are more volunteers who work to make it happen. Thanks must go to the Lerwick Lifeboat, Santa, the Peerie Foxes, the Jarl Squad, the brass band, Northlink, Norwards, the SIC and Lerwick Community Council.

1. Small Town, Big Heart - Streets Alive, Talk for the Town

Shopping Week

Living Lerwick organised the second Shopping Week in Lerwick town centre this year. The idea behind having a shopping week was to give people extra reasons to come and have a look and to give the businesses an opportunity to showcase what they do.



This year's shopping week built on the success of the previous year, with more than 50 businesses taking part with instore offers and mini-events this time.



Living Lerwick provided live music from local musicians in Harrison Square on the Friday and Saturday afternoons. Picnic tables were hired for the week to help shoppers enjoy

the music in Harrison Square and relax at other locations along the street. A spot-the-puffin competition was held all week with 25 puffins hiding in participating shop windows and £50 in vouchers were awarded to the lucky winning entry.

Ultimately, the aim is to have a Lerwick shopping week as successful as the one in Stromness but as it has been running for nearly 70 years, Lerwick has a fair bit of catching up to do.

New Website

Living Lerwick has had its website completely redesigned by NB Communication. This was done to put more emphasis on the businesses, events and news in the town centre as well as making it work on mobile phones and tablets. The website now contains a business directory where members have their own page and can create and edit their own content and events.

Facebook page and shares

Living Lerwick has a very active Facebook page and shares posts from all of its members on a daily basis. Per week, the Living Lerwick Facebook page is currently viewed by an average of 636 unique users.

2. Park and Bide

Park and Bide

In year three, Living Lerwick had met with the SIC departments which have statutory responsibility for the areas where members had raised issues. This had resulted in Living Lerwick designing and distributing a traffic survey to members. Responses were collated, analysed and presented to SIC Roads. In every issue covered by the survey, member opinion was equally split, which gave Living Lerwick no mandate to request any changes to traffic management.

In year four, it became clear that for Lerwick town centre, a decision from Police Scotland regarding no longer taking responsibility for what the traffic warden used to do, was causing serious problems for some businesses and customers. Living Lerwick researched what other towns were doing and met with the SIC Roads department to discuss whether the local authority could take responsibility as has happened in other places. Unfortunately, due to the comparatively small size of Lerwick town centre, SIC Roads could not take responsibility within the regulations they must follow.

The SIC and Police Scotland analyse accident data for the area. The most recent data coupled with the situation described above, meant they decided that changes to traffic management were

necessary. SIC Roads and Police Scotland devised options which both organisations felt they could manage effectively within budget.

These options were then put to Living Lerwick directors and Living Lerwick was asked to gain member responses to the proposals. Responses were gathered and fed back to SIC Roads. SIC Roads then considered the responses and adjusted their proposals. At the end of year four, SIC Roads met again with Living Lerwick asking if we could collect members views on the new set of proposals once they had been finalised. Directors agreed to do this as it is how Living Lerwick can ensure members views are being considered before major works are undertaken.

£1,100 was donated to Living Lerwick to assist members in making premises more accessible to disabled with temporary ramps. Members were emailed the offer of assistance and ramp types suggested. Many have been visited who could benefit from improved disabled access to encourage them to take up on the offer.

Let's Keep It Safe

Members have not expressed any further concerns which have needed the management team to discuss anything with Police Scotland.

3. Improve What We Have

Improve What We Have

Following on from year three where a lot of time was spent on large funding applications which were not fruitful, Living Lerwick changed its approach and concentrated on applying for smaller grants but more of them.

The Heritage Art Trail project was split into two areas for funding purposes. Successful applications were made to the Community Development Fund for £3,000 and the Heritage Lottery Sharing Heritage fund for £10,000. This level of funding ensures that in year five, Living Lerwick will be able to complete phase one of this project, the Smartphone app led Heritage trail around Lerwick town centre. The main aims of this project are to increase local footfall and pride in our town centre and cruise passenger footfall.

To improve the town centre customer experience on rainy days, all members who gave permission had their gutters cleaned free of charge.

During the summer months, 143 floral displays and bunting were provided and maintained throughout the town centre. This cost £5,383 and a Lerwick Community Council funding application brought in £1,000 towards the cost.



4. Give A Little Gain A Let and 5. Let's Keep it Safe

WorldHost Destination Status

Living Lerwick negotiated and administered a programme of free WorldHost customer care training for members. The majority of the work was done in year three, with the courses being run at the beginning of year four.

WorldHost is the recognised training standard which has been used at the Commonwealth Games Glasgow 2014 and other high profile events.



A high number of businesses were keen to improve their customer service and make a commitment to WorldHost standards by training their staff. Since enough businesses gained WorldHost Recognised Business Status, Living Lerwick applied for Lerwick town centre to become the most northerly WorldHost Recognised Destination in the UK.

Reduce Costs

Living Lerwick work with More for Business (now Eyebright), which provides a cost reduction scheme to BID members. This scheme provides businesses with cost savings on utilities.

More bang for our bucks

In year four, £46,677 worth of external funding has been drawn in for investment in the projects outlined in the business plan. Funding was obtained from SIC, the Community Development Fund, People 1st, Lerwick Community Council, the Heritage Lottery and Transport Scotland. Some of this is for projects in year 5.

Say What We Think

The management team and directors regularly have meetings with relevant SIC departments to keep up-to-date with development plans, put forward the views of the members where this is possible and encourage consultation with members when it is not.

Improved Information Flow to Members

The management team pass information to members on course availability and any issues which are believed to be relevant.

The Future

The Team

Additional directors have joined the board this year. The board is always keen to hear from members who would like to play their part in shaping Living Lerwick's projects. Any member who has paid their fees is eligible to become a director and there are spaces on the Board.

CU Marketing Ltd have the BID management contract and staff currently working on Living Lerwick are Christena Irvine (BID Manager) and a part time Finance Officer.

Small Town, Big Heart

The focus for year five under this objective will be increased promotion of the businesses through improved use of the business directory within the new website, continued sharing of members posts through social media, improving on existing events and a promotional video project.

Park and Bide

In year five, we will continue to work with other organisations on the improvement of parking in and access to the area.

Improve What We Have

In year five, we will complete the Heritage Trail project. This project aims to encourage people to find

out about the rich heritage of the town centre by making it very easy for them to explore and learn through a mobile phone app.

The project also aims to encourage cruise liner passengers, locals and visitors alike to move through and explore the area.

This project will highlight the businesses who contribute to Living Lerwick and provide information.

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.

We will also continue to support the WorldHost destination status for Lerwick town centre by providing WorldHost training for members.

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 income Living Lerwick receives is used to deliver the projects laid out in the business plan. The projects that formed the business plan came from the members' ideas during the consultation phase of the BID prior to it starting in September 2012.

All members of Living Lerwick are required by law to pay a Business Improvement Levy each year to help fund the work that is carried out on their behalf. The Shetland Islands Council invoices and collects the Business Improvement Levy and passes this on to Living Lerwick. This is added to the grants received to give a total income for the year which can be spent in line with the business plan.

In year 4 the SIC continued to support the BID with a core funding grant to partially fund operational and project management costs which means that more of the members levy money is used directly for their projects. Lerwick Community Council also continued their support by awarding grants towards the cost of the Winter Festival and the Summer Scheme. Funding was also secured to run the WorldHost training courses in September 2015 which allowed members to put their staff on this training for free. The Community Development Fund grant of £3,000 which was received in March 2015 was used to purchase the 4 large planters which were delivered to the Town Centre in November 2015, just in time to be planted up with small Christmas trees at the start of the Winter Festival. Grant applications were also made during year 4 to obtain funding to do the Heritage Trail project.

The Community Development Fund awarded the project £3,000 and the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded it £10,000. This grant funding is being used in year 5 to fund the information gathering and development of an app, both of which started in March 2017.

To date external funding of £161,568 has been secured by the BID for its projects in addition to the Business Improvement Levy.

Expenditure

The biggest project expenditure this year, as in previous years, has been STBH which includes the Winter Festival, Shopping Week, and the promotion of members' businesses.

The Summer Scheme which consists of the provision of flowers and bunting in the area is included under Improve What We Have. This project also includes the cost of cleaning the gutters on members' properties which is carried out by a contractor. The cost of the WorldHost courses which were run in September 2015 are included under the Give a Little, Gain a Lot project along with the cost of making funding applications.

Reserves

Overall an operating surplus was made which will be used as Living Lerwick's contribution towards the projects in the final year of the first term. For many grant applications the applicant is expected to contribute a percentage of the total project cost and Living Lerwick has built up reserves over the last four years to contribute to the final projects being carried out in year 5.

Income and Expenditure Account

Period 1st September 2015 to 31st August 2016. Full accounts are available to members from the Living Lerwick website.

Income	£	£
Business improvement levy	76,650	
SIC grants	23,500	
Lerwick Community Council grants	1,830	
WorldHost income	5,665	
Miscellaneous income	264	
Turnover		107,909
Expenditure		
Small Town Big Heart	34,484	
Park and Bide	920	
Improve What We Have	15,835	
Give a Little - Gain a Lot	14,866	
Let's Keep Lerwick Safe	625	
BID Management	17,200	
Operational Costs	16,354	
Total costs		100,284
Surplus for the year		7,625

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