

Discover Lanark is now moving into its second year of operation and the purpose of this annual review is to provide an overview of our activity over the last twelve months. The report reflects the work we and our partners have undertaken to deliver a broad range of services, projects and campaigns across our core themes of Appearance and Access, Business, Community, and Lanark and New Lanark.

The projects and services we have and will continue to deliver are aimed at creating a better and healthier trading environment in which businesses can be successful. Whilst some are designed to bring specific benefits to individual businesses, the majority are intended to increase footfall, to make the town safer and more welcoming, and to promote the town for the benefit of all businesses.

At the time of writing (October 2020) Lanark remains in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had an enormous impact on every business, employee and resident in the town. We had to react quickly when the enormity of its impact became apparent and so the services we delivered from April onwards were substantially different from those we had planned. Our current focus is on delivering projects to help with the recovery process but also on pursuing those projects which seek to improve the long term prosperity of the town for years to come.

Appearance and Access ~ improving how Lanark is presented to locals and visitors



Renovation of the Closes

Ten closes along the length of the High Street have been redecorated and had new and improved energy efficient lighting installed. This was in response to the shopper survey undertaken in 2018 which identified that a small but significant number of respondents avoid the closes in Lanark after dark. The closes project will be completed in the coming months with the introduction of improved signage and information.



Lighting Up Lanark ~ Wellgate Light Ceiling

The light ceiling in the Wellgate was introduced at the start of December 2019 as the first part of a wider project to better illuminate the town and its key areas and buildings of interest, in support of the evening economy. The response to the light ceiling from members of the public on social media was very positive. The overall lighting strategy will form part of the Designing Lanark masterplan outlined in more detail below.



Business Frontage Improvement Grants

Launched in February 2020, Discover Lanark has supported eight local businesses with grants in the first seven months of the scheme. These have entailed a range of works including the repainting of building frontages, new signage, doorway and window improvements. Discover Lanark will continue to support members in making improvements benefiting both the individual business but also bringing substantial improvements to the overall appearance of the town.



Designing Lanark ~ Town Masterplan

Discover Lanark has commissioned the preparation of a town plan. At its heart is the creation of a welcoming, better designed, easily legible and more diverse town, helping support and sustain the local business community within the area. Key elements include gateways (by road and public transport), public realm and event space, key vacant units, way-finding, greening, lighting and more. Whilst COVID-19 has delayed aspects of the plan, especially stakeholder and public consultation, this will be progressed in the near future. The plan will form the basis for leveraging future investment into the town in collaboration with South Lanarkshire Council and other key partners.

Business ~ putting successful businesses at the heart of Lanark's community



COVID-19 Business Support

Discover Lanark had to react quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring and through the summer. Initially, we distributed information about the support available to businesses from government and assisted over 45 businesses to obtain their Small Business Support Grant. Subsequently, we provided information and guidance to businesses across various sectors to help them with their plans to reopen.



COVID-19 Public information and Campaigns

From April onwards we used social media and the Lanark Loves You Business Directory on our website to provide the public with up to date information about shops and businesses which were open and / or trading online, and the measures they had put in place for the safety of the public. Latterly, we have used our dual 'Lanark Loves You' and 'Be A Local Tourist' campaigns to encourage the public to shop, eat and visit locally and safely. In July and August, our Lanark Loves You campaign had a reach on Facebook of over 100,000 whilst Be A Local Tourist had reached 36,000+.



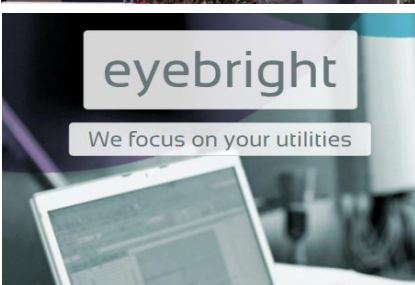
Lanark LoyalFree App

The LoyalFree app is targeted specifically at encouraging footfall in local town centres and High Streets. Launched in Lanark in July, the initial focus was on businesses that were either open for business or trading online. By the end of August, 100+ businesses were featured on the app through the trails and events sections. Slowly, businesses have also started to sign up to the special offers and loyalty rewards sections with currently nine offers up and running.



The Space @ Hyndford Place

Created to provide support to local takeaways, cafes and food shops, the pedestrianisation of Hyndford Place proved an instant success with members of the public. In particular, it enabled people to meet, eat and socialise safely in an outdoor setting. The feedback on social media about this project has been overwhelmingly positive with many requests to consider a similar project next summer, whether or not social distancing measures remain in place.



Cost Reduction Service

We have joined with Eyebright to secure reductions in business operating costs including electricity and gas, telecoms and merchant fees. Albeit this project has been on the backburner during the last few months, the very first customer they assisted, McKellars Jewellers, made a saving of £450 per annum on their water and electricity charges for each of the next three years, more than recouping their annual BID levy costs across that period.

Community ~ business and community working together for a better Lanark



Late Night Lanark and
Illuminated Lanimer Winter Parade
Friday 22 November
5pm - 9.30pm

Christmas Marketing Campaign

We proactively marketed the town in the lead up to Christmas with a paid Facebook campaign focusing especially on the key events: Christmas Market & Lights Switch On, Late Night Lanark and Illuminated Parade and Festive Taste in Lanark. In total, this campaign had a reach of over 325,000. Our online Advent Calendar featured 51 local businesses with a further 15 featured in our Embrace January in Lanark campaign.



Decorating the Town

Recognising the importance of making the town welcoming and attractive to visitors, Discover Lanark jointly funded the new High Street banners with the Rotary Club of Lanark and has taken up responsibility for the organisation and ongoing costs for the summer hanging baskets and winter mini Christmas trees. Last November, an additional 22 businesses came on board with the scheme, and a further 4 this summer.



Discover Lanark Website

The Discover Lanark website has been used to provide information to businesses about COVID-19 updates from Scottish Government and to highlight to members of the public the trading status of businesses as we have gone through the various stages of reopening. Currently, there are 190 businesses featured with website and social media links to assist the public in finding up to date information.

Lanark and New Lanark ~ working together to capitalise on tourism



Summer Family Trail

Unfortunately, government coronavirus restrictions meant that we were not able to deliver our major summer 2020 project - a themed family trail linking Lanark and New Lanark. This will now form part of our plans for summer 2021. In the meantime, we have been a contributing partner to an overall Vision Strategy for Lanark, New Lanark and the Falls of Clyde which highlights the area's heritage assets and the potential to turn these to far greater advantage for the community, its identity and its economy.

Financial Statements 2019 - 2020

The BID levy, which is Discover Lanark's primary form of income, is by law collected by the local authority, South Lanarkshire Council. The collection rate as of 31 August 2020, the end of our first year, was 88.7% which amounted to £136,000. Discover Lanark also seeks to lever in additional external funding to augment its delivery programme. This has been generated from a range of sources including grant funding applications and amounted to a total of £81,000 in the financial year 2019-20.

Discover Lanark's Financial Statements for the year ending 31 August 2020 will be considered at the Annual General Meeting and subsequently made available online on the Discover Lanark website and via Companies House.

For more information about Discover Lanark and our future plans, please contact the BID Manager, Antonia Pompa, at antonia@discoverlanark.co.uk.