

DUNBLANE DEVELOPMENT TRUST  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 – 2019



## **1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 The DDT Story so far**

Dunblane Development Trust was formed in 2003 out of the Community Futures initiative which resulted in the production of the first Dunblane Community Action Plan. DDT is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, with a board comprising 10 elected directors, bringing a range of business, community, professional and voluntary expertise.

DDT has been in operation for 12 years, and has made annual returns both to Companies House and to OSCR over this time. The Trust has successfully applied for and managed grants from a variety of bodies including the Scottish Government, Stirling Council, Forth Valley Leader, BIG Lottery Investing in Ideas, Awards for All and Foundation Scotland.

DDT has carried out many successful projects over the last 12 years, including volunteer activities such as Dunblane in Bloom, the Dunblane Environment Group, erecting the annual Christmas lights, managing the Braeport Community Centre, and the purchase and redevelopment of a gap site in the High Street.

### **1.2 Connected to the Community**

Dunblane Community Action Plans have been produced in 2003 and 2009, both based on very strong community engagement and participation through the Community Futures initiative. DDT was formed after the first Community Action Plan to take forward a number of the priority projects. The Community Action Plan of 2009 was an opportunity to revisit the community's priorities, and provided DDT with a continuing mandate for action over the next 5 years.

DDT also seeks to engage directly with the Dunblane community through its AGMs which are open to all, volunteering opportunities, communications in the local newsletter and through the [www.Dunblane.info](http://www.Dunblane.info) website. We encourage feedback, and are always aware that our efforts are directed at community need and benefit.

### **1.3 Town Centre Charrette 2015**

DDT, Dunblane Community Council, Discover Dunblane (BID) and Stirling Council jointly commissioned a Town Centre Charrette with support from the Scottish Government in 2015. The output of the Charrette process was expected to provide an Action Plan which could contribute to the future agenda for the DDT and other community organisations. There is still work to be done on this in 2016, particularly in engaging the wider community and establishing the priorities.

### **1.4 Community Vision for Dunblane**

The Community Action Plans of 2003 and 2009 established and confirmed a long term vision for Dunblane which is still valid today. The overarching role of DDT is to help the community of Dunblane to achieve this Vision.

## THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR DUNBLANE

**A welcoming, safe and inclusive community** – with first class childcare and educational opportunities for all ages, superb community facilities for leisure, arts, health and play, with a good range of housing to suit the needs of local people and new residents alike and where the local infrastructure is in balance with the population.

**An enterprising community** - with a thriving attractive town centre, bustling with shopping, restaurants and other facilities for local people and visitors. Where new enterprise is supported and encouraged and where an increasing number of people work within the town itself and where the local businesses work together to maximise their potential.

**A well connected community** - with good public transport links to major centres, where car use is supplemented with a good network of local transport to link the different areas of the town and where parking is useful and practical but does not dominate other needs.

**A town with a first class local environment** - with well maintained, safe paths and cycle routes within the town and to give access to the surrounding countryside, with parks and open spaces for recreation and delight, with a town centre that allows people on foot precedence over the needs of vehicles.

**A community proud of its heritage** - where the past enriches the present and helps to create a new and thriving future.

### 1.5 Strengthening Communities Programme

In 2015 DDT secured support and funding from DTAS (Development Trusts Association of Scotland) through the Scottish Government funded Strengthening Communities Programme. This has enabled us to employ a part time development officer to work with the Board and volunteers for a year to progress key targets, including the development of this 3 year Strategy.

In November 2015 the Board and leaders of the Volunteer Sub-Groups spent an “away day” discussing and deciding the DDT Strategy 2016 – 2019.

## **2 CURRENT SITUATION**

### **2.1 Board Structure**

DDT is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, with a board of up to 12 elected and 4 co-opted directors. There are currently 10 directors on the Board, bringing a range of business, community, professional and voluntary expertise.

To make practical progress, DDT has set up a number of volunteer Working Groups. These are the Dunblane Environment Group, Dunblane in Bloom and the Mid Week Group.

DDT (Projects) Limited was established in 2009 as a wholly owned subsidiary company, with the main purpose being to undertake funding, planning, development and construction of property for and on behalf of DDT.

### **2.2 Membership**

DDT is a membership organisation, open to anyone over 18 living in Dunblane. Junior membership is open to young people aged 12 – 17. Currently DDT has around 400 members, which represents around 6% of the eligible population. Our target is to have 10% as members by 2019. We keep in touch regularly with our members and the wider community through emails, press, and open meetings. Our Membership Secretary is not on the Board of DDT, but has a very important job of maintaining records, and keeping in touch with the members.

### **2.3 Partnerships**

DDT works in partnership with other local community organisations, in particular the Community Council and Discover Dunblane (BID).

DDT initiated and facilitates the Dunblane Community Facilities Forum, which brings together community facilities to share knowledge & work together.

The Dunblane Windfarm Community Fund is administered by DDT on behalf of the Dunblane Windfarm Community Fund Committee.

DDT is a member of Development Trust Association Scotland, and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, and participates in networking of local community development trusts in the Stirling area, and seeks to learn from others and share our own experience.

### **2.4 Resources**

#### Volunteers

There are 10 Board Directors, and a Membership Secretary who are all volunteers.

Dunblane in Bloom, the Dunblane Environment Group, and the Mid Week Group are all volunteers – around 40 in all who turn out regularly to undertake a wide range of environmental and maintenance tasks around the town. These are the activities of the Trust that are most recognised and appreciated by the public. The DDT strapline “Community in Action” describes this aspect of our work very well.

### Staff

We have a part time Caretaker and a part time cleaner at the Braeport Centre. Through the Strengthening Communities Programme funded by the Scottish Government, we have had support from a part time development officer from August 2015 to March 2016. A further year's funding has now been confirmed, and we are in the process of recruiting 2 part time staff to provide administrative and fundraising support.

We can access other paid support (e.g. to develop a website) through raising specific funds.

### Support from Others

We are members of DTAS and SCVO and can access the support they provide. Stirling Council has provided valuable practical support to the working groups and the Braeport Centre, as well as funding that has been secured from the Council's grant schemes. As we move forward, the continued support of Elected Members and the Council's Asset Transfer team will be crucial to the success of our Strategic Plan objectives.

### Assets

DDT has a 20 year lease of the Braeport Centre – a key community facility used by many local groups.

DDT owns the Riverview Building on the High Street, which was built in a gap site to improve footfall on the High Street. It currently has a popular cafe on the ground floor and flats above.

Dunblane in Bloom has a van which was provided by a local business and a polytunnel for propagating plants.

### Funding

DDT aims to develop a "mixed economy" model of funding, without over reliance on either grants or one source of income. At present, the Braeport Centre generates income from lets, which cover the running costs, staffing and maintenance. A small surplus is generated which contributes to the unrestricted reserves of the DDT as a whole. However, it is our aim to increase these unrestricted reserves by increasing our membership and fundraising activities.

The purchase and development of the Riverview Building was funded through a mix of grants and loans. The loan is being paid off by the income generated from the lease. Once the loan is paid off, it is anticipated that the income will become available for other DDT projects.

We have gained experience of applying for and managing grant funding for a variety of projects, and from a variety of sources, including the Big Lottery, Stirling Council, Scottish Government, LEADER, windfarm benefit. It is our intention to develop a funding and fundraising strategy for the objectives and projects set out in this Strategy, particularly for the redevelopment of the Braeport Centre.

## **2.5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

We carried out a SWOT analysis to examine our current position. This will help us to understand what we have to build on and what we have to address and improve on.

## STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Volunteers and skills** – at least 5000 hours/year are donated by volunteer groups
- **Governance** – we are well run and compliant
- **Funding** – we have the ability to access grants and receive donations from members
- **Assets** – we have a 20 year lease on the Braeport Centre, and the Riverview building is fully occupied
- **Relationships** – good relationships with Community council, Stirling council and other local groups
- **Joined up working/partnerships** - working more closely with other groups and Stirling council
- **Policy** – National and local policies of community empowerment
- **New technology/communication** – digital communication and social networking need to be used to best advantage
- **Assets & funding** – we can take more control of community assets such as the Braeport centre, and could have a role in regenerating redundant public buildings
- **Population/size** – Dunblane is growing, more people to get involved.

## WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

- **Volunteers/Skills** – volunteers are ageing and numbers are diminishing. There are some gaps in our skills base – particularly in communications and fundraising. We may be over-dependant on key individuals
- **Governance** – some policies and procedures weak, and we have a relatively low number of members for the size of community
- **Communication/profile** - No dedicated DDT Website or Facebook, DDT not well enough known
- **Funding** - Low level of unrestricted funds and financial reserves
- **Fragility of relationships** - Confusion among Dunblane organisations with regard to future projects
- **Diminishing resources** – public funds reducing – Stirling Council, Big Lottery and others. Competition with other groups for funds
- **Human capacity** - Volunteer burnout. Increasing legislation.

## **3 FUTURE STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Mission and Values**

Our Mission is to enable Dunblane to be welcoming, enterprising and well connected, with a first class cultural and physical environment. We do this by:

- **Developing and delivering projects** - that respond to community needs and aspirations, making the most of our community assets
- **Working in partnership** - with local groups, Stirling Council and other partners
- **Providing quality volunteering opportunities** - for all ages and abilities
- **Securing funding & resources** – by generating income, accessing grants and fundraising

## **3.2 Strategic Objectives**

Based on the Vision for Dunblane, and our own Mission, there are four strategic objectives for DDT over the next 3 years.

### Strategic Objective 1: Community Facilities and Activities

DDT has managed the Braeport Community Centre successfully for the last 10 years, and has recently secured a 20 year lease of the building from Stirling Council. A feasibility study & business plan carried out in 2014 identified a way forward for the Braeport Centre with physical improvements and community ownership. As well as major fundraising, this will also require greater community involvement and use of the Braeport.

It is also important that we have continued good relationships with the other community facilities in Dunblane, so that we can all benefit from shared knowledge, skills and resources.

### Strategic Objective 2: Environment and Greenspace

Dunblane is fortunate to have wonderful environmental assets to enjoy such as the parks, the river and riverside areas and the Laighhills. The work of the Environment Group and Dunblane in Bloom has contributed greatly to the maintenance and development of these areas, as well as the general environmental enhancement of the town – greatly enjoyed by its residents. Supporting these volunteer groups to be able to continue and take on new projects is a priority for DDT, as well as encouraging and helping new groups to form. In particular, the Dunblane Environment Group is considering developing its role to include path maintenance, in close liaison with Stirling Council.

DDT will play a role in taking forward the objectives of the Laighhills Masterplan, which includes the setting up of a “Friends of the Laighhills” group.

### Strategic Objective 3: Built Environment and Infrastructure

At the point of writing this Strategy, the final results of the Town Centre Charrette are still awaited, following community consultation. However, we anticipate that there will be several priorities that relate to the built environment and physical infrastructure of Dunblane in which DDT will wish to be involved as partners – or perhaps leaders – in their delivery. We have listed these in our priorities, but will need to await the Charrette outcome to agree our role and resources required.

The DDT “mid-week group” of volunteers will continue to be a valuable resource to other groups and projects, by providing their practical maintenance and repair skills. This will include the Braeport Centre, painting the Riverside railings, and future planning for Christmas lighting.

### Strategic Objective 4: Developing our Organisation and our People

To be fit for purpose to deliver our strategy and priority projects, DDT will need to address its weaknesses and build upon its strengths. We will pay attention to our volunteers and our members, ensure that policies are in place, and develop our communications and relationships. To assist with this we have set up a new “Communications Sub Group” and will aim to develop or attract someone with communication and media skills to assist.

### **3.3 Decision Making Criteria**

In order to assist in making decisions about our priority projects and activities for the next 3 years, we developed a set of criteria which we referred to in preparing this Strategy.

For every proposed Project and Activity we asked the following 6 questions:

- Does it fit with the DDT Charitable Objectives?
- Is there evidence of community need and/or community support for this?
- Does this build on our strengths and opportunities?
- Does this address our weaknesses and take account of any threats?
- Is there a lead group/person in DDT to take responsibility in taking it forward?
- How does it fit in with local (Dunblane), Stirling and Scottish strategies?

As a result, we believe that our priorities have been well considered, and rigorously tested. They have more chance of success and we are confident that we are doing the right things for the right reasons.

### 3.4 Priorities Projects & Activities

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Priority Project/Action</b>		<b>Lead Person/Group</b>
1.1	DDT to take on community ownership of Braeport Centre	Braeport Sub Committee
1.2	Fundraise for development and improvements to Braeport as identified in Feasibility Study	As above
1.3	Promote and increase community use of Braeport	As above
1.4	Continue efficient management and maintenance of Braeport	As above
1.5	Carry out small repairs, painting and maintenance at the Braeport Centre	Mid Week Group
1.6	Participate in the Community Facilities Forum, and encourage joint leadership with other facilities.	Braeport Sub committee

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENVIRONMENT AND GREENSPACE</b>		
<b>Priority Project/Action</b>		<b>Lead Person/Group</b>
2.1	Floral enhancements – troughs, hanging baskets, bedding areas, planting	Dunblane in Bloom
2.2	Maintain the Rock Garden and the Community Garden	Dunblane in Bloom
2.3	Maintenance of existing environmental enhancement projects in the Haugh , Millrow, Haining, the Braeport Centre, and the orchard.	Dunblane Environment Group
2.4	Continuing maintenance of the Glen Road	Dunblane Env. Group
2.5	Interpretation and signage – in the Haugh and at Bridgend	Dunblane Env. Group
2.6	Bench/picnic tables at the Millrow Playpark	Dunblane Env. Group
2.7	Work with Stirling Council to restore Haining Embankment	Dunblane Env. Group
2.8	DAWRP (Dunblane Allan Water Restoration Project) Phase 1: Repair wall, rebuild railing and open up path	DDT Projects Limited
2.9	Establish a “Friends of the Laihghills” group, initially under the umbrella of DDT	Alan Booth
2.10	Explore the potential of a volunteer Paths Working Group to maintain local paths.	Dunblane Env. Group
2.11	Revision of the Green Travel Map	Dunblane Env. Group

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>		
<b>Priority Project/Action</b>		<b>Lead Person/Group</b>
3.1	Continue to upgrade railings and benches around town	Mid Week Group
3.2	Review process for funding and erection of Christmas Lighting 2017	Mid Week Group
3.3	Contribute to a revised Parking Strategy, led by Community Council	Stirling Council with involvement from DDT/DDTPL
3.4	Re-design and development of Millrow Car Park and surroundings NOTE: depends on outcome of Charrette	Stirling Council with involvement from DDT/DDTPL
3.5	Re-design and development of Haining Car Park NOTE: depends on outcome of Charrette	Stirling Council with involvement from DDT/DDTPL
3.6	Work with Dunblane CC and Discover Dunblane to explore the idea of a commemorative statue to the Murray Brothers	Dougal Thornton

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANISATION</b>		
<b>Priority Project/Action</b>		<b>Lead Person/Group</b>
4.1	Review and develop Policies and Procedures	Secretary
4.2	Recognise value of existing volunteers and encourage new volunteers	Sub Group Leaders Chair/Vice Chair
4.3	Membership Communication and Development	Comms Sub Group Membership Sec.
4.4	Develop DDT Website and social media	Comms Sub Group
4.5	Improve communication with wider community through branding and press	Comms Sub Group
4.6	Participate in Dunblane "Core Group" with CC, Discover Dunblane, Stirling Council (current Charrette Group)	Barbara Allan Dougal Thornton