



ANNUAL REPORT



Contents:

Introduction

Finances

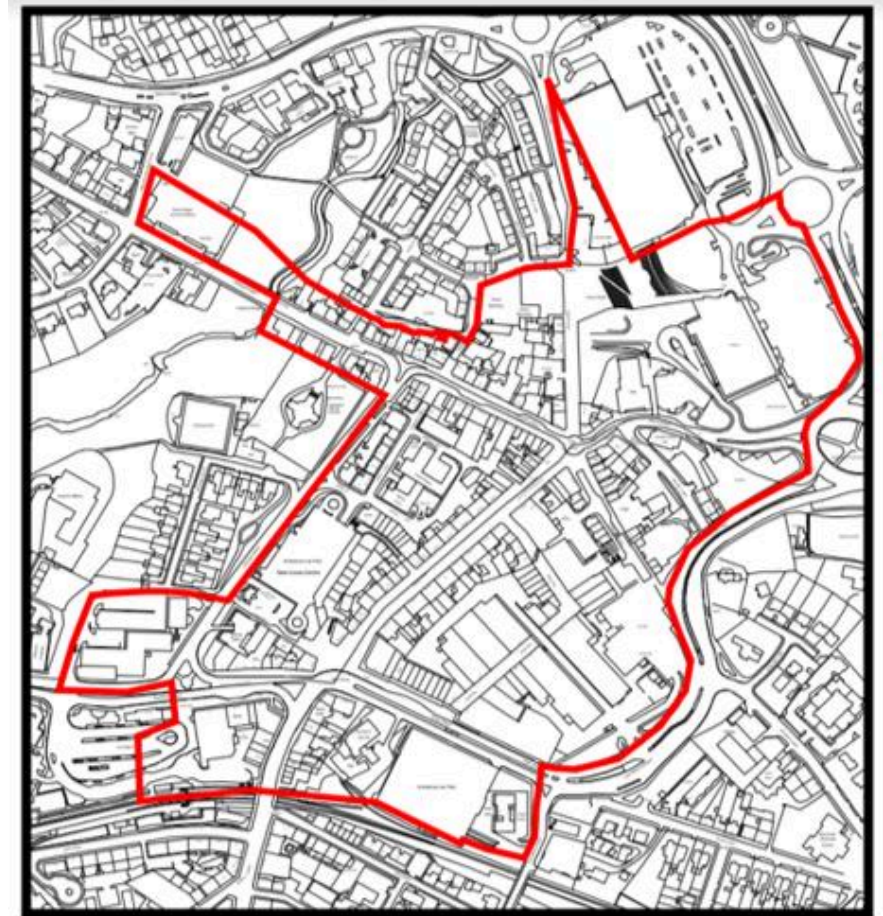
Events and Markets

Pride

Marketing

Wi-Fi

Plans and objectives



Introducing Hamilton Our Town...

Hamilton Our Town BID operates within the business improvement district area of Hamilton, South Lanarkshire. We are proud to play our part in supporting the town, its businesses, its community and any other person, group or organisation that contributes positively to the success of the area.

The success of a town centre has many factors, with key aspects including collaboration, pro activity and community action. In the absence of a community council, traders association or any other public facing group, the need for our activities is strong. It remains important for businesses to pro-actively engage and get involved where time allows to maximise the effectiveness of our combined efforts.

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a geographically defined area, where businesses can come together and agree to invest collectively in projects and services in support of the area. In addition, a BID provides an opportunity for business to give back to their community through the projects that are delivered. 379 businesses are located in the area with the majority paying an annual fee between £200 to £350 per year.

Hamilton Our Town operates with a volunteer board, made up from people from the business community and those willing to give up their time to positively impact their community. A manager is employed, supported by one part time team member to lead the organisation from an operational perspective.

Board members:

Mrs J M Smith - Chair

Rev J C Hood

Mr M W Logie

Mr D McLachlan

Mr M W Meyerhoff

Ms H Laurie

Mr J Mulvaney

Mr C Dewar



Hamilton People Magazine

‘We aim to play our part in supporting the town, its businesses, and it’s community’.





Indoor market event

Financial summary...

Summary



- Levy income received was £163,164 (£32,632 of which is VAT). -£6,423 year on year.
- Grant and commercial income £88,523 +£16,452 year on year
- Totals (inc VAT) 2023 £251,716 +£10,057 year on year

Highest spending project costs:

- Events
- Advertising
- Town centre Wi-Fi

Our financial position is positive versus last year supported by commercial, grant awards, and access to common good fund income, representing 35% of total income in the year. 84.4% of levy payments were received in the year.

Accounts on Companies House:

[CLICK HERE](#)



Hamilton Rock Choir

22/23 projects...

Events & markets:

As per business feedback from our widely circulated 2022 survey, a high proportion of businesses have cited footfall as a challenge and have asked us to carry out initiatives to support this. In addition, independent sources and our own research has indicated strong public approval for these activities which not only drive additional footfall, but also provide free to attend activities and events for children and their families.

2023 footfall results year on year (Source Place informatics)

- **Hamilton BID area +2.5%**
- Glasgow (City centre) -2.2%
- Scotland 0.7%
- UK 0.1%

In the year we delivered 13 footfall driving events +3 year on year and +8 versus 2019 (pre-covid), drawing in an estimated 36k additional visits to the town. These events included Pride South Lanarkshire, new monthly markets and the Christmas Light Switch on which according to Place Informatics increased footfall across the BID area map by 32.7%. The costs to host events includes, production, stall hire, road closure and stewarding fees.

Benchmarking versus 2019, our event costs have dropped by 6% whilst delivering an 160% increase in activity.

Commercial impact of using events to drive footfall:

According to the Institute of placemaking, available at Markets Matter (placemanagement.org) 'Markets increase retail sales, with significant numbers (55%-71%) of market visitors spending money in other shops.'

According to the High Street Task force online article, 'Footfall a key performance indicator' 'Footfall is the most important factor influencing town centre and high street vitality and viability'.





‘Footfall is the most important factor influencing town centre and high street vitality and viability’.



22/23 projects...

Our role in the town regarding the measure 'footfall', is to bring in additional visitors, which has been achieved against the backdrop of significant challenge. Business activity and ability to capitalise on footfall increases is largely out with our level of influence. However, there is significant anecdotal evidence of performance improvements provided to us following events.

In addition we are proud to deliver free to attend community focused events, celebrating our local town and people through the likes of the Hamilton Hero Award, Easter Gala day and various other vibrant activities that fill our town centre with colour and life.

Businesses contributing through the levy fee, grant funders and our supporters combine to create an important cultural and community impact that would not exist otherwise.

Indoor Markets:

In 2023 we introduced indoor markets following public feedback and an opportunity to go monthly with our footfall activities for the first time.

Purpose? Hosting events are expensive and out with our ability to fund on a regular basis as evidenced by activity levels pre covid. Markets function as a cost-effective method of increasing event days and in turn footfall through funding supported by vendors. This focus on value has become even more effective for our 2024 activity due to the purchase of our own market tables thanks to grant support. In addition, the use of indoor space not only supports weather related issues, it also supports a lower operational cost versus outdoors where road closure fees, stewarding fees and additional safety considerations impact.

**St Andrew's Hospice
at Hamilton Market**



‘Businesses contributing through the levy fee, grant funders and our supporters combine to create an important cultural and community impact that would not exist otherwise’.



Christmas festival

‘We are proud to deliver free to attend community focused events, celebrating our local town and people through the likes of the Hamilton Hero Award, Easter Gala day and various other vibrant activities that fill our town centre with colour and life’.



Hamilton Hero award winner 2023

Pride South Lanarkshire...

In 2023 we launched the areas first Pride events in support of the LGBTQ+ community. Funded largely through grants and commercial income the events provided 2 days of activities which delivered a first for the town and resulted in significant community impact as evidenced by over 60 survey responses following the event. Estimated footfall was 6k+ at the events opened by Scotland's first minister and reported by STV news and Clyde one.

Future of Pride South Lanarkshire.

To support the longevity of the Pride events and to support kick starting the movement in the area, the board agreed to move the events to a new community interest company with Hamilton Our Town still supporting with sponsorship, the Pride market and support in kind for Pride SL24 events.



Drag at the Townhouse





Photo by Made in Scotland



Marketing...

Promoting the town centre as a welcoming destination with a wide array of businesses remains a key function of our activity.

Our marketing strategy consists of the use of social media, outdoor and press as mechanisms to convey our marketing message. The 2 key messages that we aim to communicate firstly, is that of an interesting, vibrant area filled with high quality businesses. The second message is our call to action, 'Keep it local'. The strategy is underpinned by the requirement for business engagement and the creation of in-town content, such as events to support the messaging. In the year we achieved a 21% reduction in advertising spend versus 21/22 by pivoting advertising from outdoor components to online.

Business engagement:

We currently have 60% (+10% year in year), of businesses in the area signed up to this project which includes access to professional photography every 6 weeks, content creation and posts on Hamilton Our Town socials every 6 weeks.

Socials:

Social media management and photography continues to be delivered by our local Hamilton marketing agency Made In Scotland. Marketing strategy and all graphic content is delivered in-house by Hamilton Our Town providing significant cost savings.

Our social media metrics continue to improve including our follower number which reached 15,756 by the end of the calendar year. Facebook remains our most successful platform with follower numbers increasing by 16% in the year.

We aim to achieved 17k followers across our platforms by year end, a significant change from the 6k of followers just 3 years ago.

Press:

Our promotional activity featured within print and online press outlets including Glasgow Live, Daily record online, What's On Lanarkshire, Hamilton Advertiser print and online and Lanarkshire People Publications.





HAMILTON BID COVERAGE

6 Front pages In Hamilton

18 News pages in Hamilton

22 Full page event adverts across region

Multiple what's on listings across region

Constant social media event promo

All magazines available online



Rate Card Value of Campaign in 2023 is worth over £14k+vat

Marketing...

Lanarkshire People:

We continued our relationship with this publication as a component of our marketing strategy due to its distribution and targeting of specific areas of the town and region. We featured on the front cover of Hamilton people across all publication dates, with significant additional promotional content for the area included internally. Businesses have been encouraged to contribute content.

Festival Guides:

In the year we introduced online guides to our mix of advertising mechanisms covering two events. These PDF guides, promoted via our socials incorporated promotional messaging for businesses and links to our business listing section on our website. The guides also provided an opportunity to capitalise on activities within the Townhouse as an attractive reason to visit, whilst promoting one of our key contributors. In the region of 11 thousand downloads of these guides, fully produced in-house were achieved.

Other activities across the year included the Scotland Loves Local week-long campaign, Hamilton Our Town Website activity, feature page in the WestFest Magazine and press coverage for Pride including features from STV news and Clyde one.





Free Wi-Fi & additional activity...

Free Wi-Fi:

Hamilton Our Town continue to provide free to use Wi-fi across the town centre area as a service that supports a positive town centre experience and promotes improved digital inclusion. In the year we ended our relationship with our previous hosting supplier due to technical challenges and costs which had risen by over 30%. The system which is now hosted by Stampede records on average 200 users per week and over 10,000 users per year.

Additional activity:

In support of an improved look and feel of the town centre, we continue to provide floral displays and planters, managed through regular maintenance visits by GP plant scape, festive lighting and shop front grants. In addition, regular reporting of issues such as fly tipping, and winter weather provision reporting continues as part of our activity in support of the visitor and community experience.

In support of business collaboration, in the year we hosted three networking and one police crime support session for businesses alongside attending monthly pub watch meetings.

In addition, we continued to communicate our request for free parking to be introduced to the town centre via Quarry Street opening plans.

Vacancy rates:

Given the decline in retail and hospitality across the UK we continue to support the communication of vacant property availability via our Let Local section on our website. Vacancy rates within the town centre remained at the national average with Quarry Street 8% and Cadzow Street 1% well ahead of the national average of 15.9%.



Advertising highlights by numbers...

**60% of area
signed up to
photography/
digital promo**

**2,530 social
posts created
in promotion of
the area**

**180k
digital
engagements**

**1 National TV
3 Radio
appearances**

**6 ads with
Reach / Daily
Record online**

**9 front covers
for local
magazines /
news**

**40 pages of
content in
Lanarkshire
People mags**

**25,000+
audience across
our digital
channels**

Keep it local

Plans & objectives for the new year...

Objectives and plans for 2024:

We are delighted to be able to continue our core activities and projects such as planters, free wi-fi and festive lighting for another year. In addition, a continuation of the successful Hamilton Market project and a vibrant schedule of free to attend community events will be produced.

Hamilton Masterplan:

Given the importance and potential impact of this work, Hamilton Our Town aims to support the representation and communication of the views of the business community through the process. We await communication of plans following the public consultation work which will determine our next steps which may include a focused working group on this subject.

30-minute free parking trial:

We are pleased to see this trial commence. However, a request for improved signage to the council has taken place and we await actions regarding this.

Footfall:

Plans have been made to continue monthly footfall driving activity through the provision of events and markets. We are aiming to achieve an additional 40,000 visitors in the year through events and markets such as the Light Switch on and Pride South Lanarkshire Market. Additional funding has enabled the introduction of the Spring Festival which include three footfall drivers in March.

Our data provider, Place Informatics have reported a +3.8% increase in footfall in the first 3 months of 2024 versus last year, ahead of the UK's -1.7% result.



Plans & objectives for the new year...

Marketing:

We will continue with our current strategy that includes direct business promotion on request, professional photography and the use of social media, press to support promotion of the area and businesses. Scotland loves local week, business profiles and promotional guides remain part of the plans for 2024.

We continue efforts to improve the value of our social media with 17k followers a target for the year.

Financial:

We will continue our approach regarding commercial income receipt in the year, and aim to achieve a strong level of additional income through Hamilton Market activities whilst reducing event costs through the provision of our own indoor equipment. A prudent approach to financial planning due to potential changes in the town alongside consideration for new fund raising activities will form part of our approach.

Chair role:

At the AGM the board voted unanimously for **Joann Smith**, owner of Excel Sales and Letting to continue in the role of Chairperson





TRAVEL MONEY

BLACK
FRIDAY
DEALS

SAVE UP TO £850
PER BOOKING*

60's To The Charts
www.radiolanarkshire.co

Radio Lanarkshire
Locally Based, Locally Focused