

## **CUPAR DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

### **NEWSLETTER: NOVEMBER 2015**

#### **Cupar's Town Centre Charrette**

In August the Scottish Government announced the Charrette Mainstreaming Programme Fund. Its aim is to enable local communities to actively engage in the design and development of plans for the future of their areas.

A charrette is a process of intensive engagement examining local issues and opportunities. The process is conducted face-to-face over two to three months. A charrette involves an experienced team of professionals carrying out a programme of workshops and discussions within the community to produce a plan of priorities for action. The Mainstream Fund invited local communities to apply for grants of up to £20,000 to support the costs of undertaking their community charrette.

Cupar Development Trust recognised that by holding a charrette the Cupar community would have the opportunity to have their say in how the regeneration of the town centre is carried forward. The community could agree about the local priorities to form a town centre action plan. This would set the direction for desired physical changes which can increase the vitality of the town centre, confirm key community assets and link closely with community services provision.

Fife Council backed Cupar Development Trust bidding for grant from the Mainstreaming Fund. Support was also expressed by the Community Council and the Business Association.

We then approached PAS, a Scottish charity with long experience of working at grass-roots level with local communities to achieve participative place-making. PAS has an established *charretteplus* model, an inclusive approach which brings spatial and community planning together. PAS agreed to provide their professional team to work in partnership to support the delivery of the charrette in Cupar.

*We finalised our application to the Mainstreaming Fund. The application is provisionally approved and we await the letter of offer. The grant of £20,000 requires that there is matching funding. We have submitted applications to Awards for All and to Fife Council's Community Plan budget. Although we await decisions we are increasingly confident that the charrette will go ahead. (Provisional pending receipt of letter of offer)*

A condition of the Mainstreaming Fund is that the charrette will be undertaken in the opening months of 2016. This requires that we move forward quickly. A key step will be to form a Charrette Steering Group on which representation from local groups and the other stakeholders will be invited. We will look to form the Steering Group the initial meeting of which will be held in late November.

The Cupar charrette will require organising a charrette programme of engagement. The programme will feature action to involve individuals of all ages, and to engage with local groups, local businesses and other stakeholders.

*Qn. Why is the focus of the charrette on the town centre?*

Ans. The town centre, by which we mean the Conservation Area of the town and adjoining neighbourhoods, is used by all Cupar's residents and attracts visitors to the town. The image of the town is established by the character of its centre. Making the most of its potential is vital to the future of the town.

*Qn. Why are the proposals for Cupar North and other development sites on the edges of the town not also to be considered during the charrette?*

Ans. Account taken of the wider social and economic trends and the needs of the community will set the context for assessing the potential of the town centre. However a charrette is recognised as the appropriate method for considering design and development at the street and neighbourhood level.

The proposals for Cupar North housing and the relief road are matters related to the town's Development Framework and are currently being assessed within the statutory Development Plan process and through the Development Management system.

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