

## **SURF Dunoon Area Alliance**

### **COVID19 Work Summary to October 2020**

#### **Supporting Communication & Information Sharing**

COVID19 and the onset of lockdown highlighted the relevance of DAA cross-sector communication and knowledge base. There was a clear need for information to be shared broadly and more frequently as the many impacts of lockdown developed. The DAA facilitator took a central role in gathering information relevant to our community and rapidly sharing details on emerging guidance; funding and financial support; community action; and helpline information. Between March and June 2020 a series of 50 COVID19 information e-newsletters were produced and shared with 222 contacts across our community. Direct feedback from individuals, projects, businesses and public sector officers indicated that this information sharing helped to ensure that a range of funding and support was accessed locally.

#### **Responding to Business and Community Needs**

Through the DAA communication process it quickly became clear that, while many businesses were adapting creatively to the challenging circumstances and were able to continue trading, there was no central resource to share this information with the community. Through contacts established by the DAA supported Dunoon & Cowal Coworks initiative we were able to create an easily accessible online list of businesses trading through lockdown. The Open for Business list grew to over 200 businesses and individual traders. We received very positive feedback from businesses and community members on this short-notice intervention, which provided contact information and brought local traders and customers together.

Dunoon Presents BID accessed Scotland's Towns Partnership Resilience Fund, which allowed the list to be printed in full in the Dunoon Observer weekly newspaper, helping to reach an audience that might not be active online.

#### **Supporting Business Resilience**

DAA conducted a survey of local businesses to help inform a partnership response to supporting business resilience coming out of lockdown. 95 local businesses provided a useful insight into their immediate post-lockdown support and general digital support needs. In response to these findings Dunoon Presents BID led on PPE supplies and shared delivery options. DAA, working with the Dunoon & Cowal Coworks network, developed *Microbytes*, a month-long initiative building on previous Digital Dunoon discussions to improve the digital footprint of the area.

Co-produced with local design company, *Tacit-Tacit*, and supported by Dunoon Presents BID and Argyll and Bute Council, *Microbytes* was designed to build business-to-business connections; to highlight local contractors with digital expertise; to provide one-to-one advice; and to help point local businesses towards the most appropriate support and training on offer (across what can be a confusing landscape of regional and national providers).

#### **Heritage Initiative – The American Years Revisited**

With lockdown there was a significant risk that the project would stall, particularly given the older demographic of the volunteer group. However, the opposite has been the case – activity has adapted, moved online via Zoom and gathered pace in connecting locally, nationally and internationally to record a series of podcasts, now available on Youtube and via [www.americanyearsrevisited.org](http://www.americanyearsrevisited.org)

## **Cycling Friendly Town**

In 2019 and 2020 Dunoon Area Alliance facilitated a series of cross-sector meetings to explore the potential for developing a Cycling Friendly Town initiative. These meeting brought together local activity groups, third sector organisations, public sector officers and interested individuals and gathered an interesting overview of the range of walking and cycling activities connected to the area.

Argyll & Bute Council's Sustainable Transport team accessed funding from Transport Scotland's Paths for All fund to support the development of a Dunoon Bothy project in partnership with Cycling UK and supported by DAA. In August 2020 recruitment took place for a part-time Dunoon Bothy Co-ordinator to be employed and managed by Cycling UK and the successful candidate took up post on 5 October 2020. Their remit is to develop volunteer training and community engagement to encourage everyday walking and cycling around Dunoon. Discussions are underway with Argyll & Bute Council to explore options for a base for the project.

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