

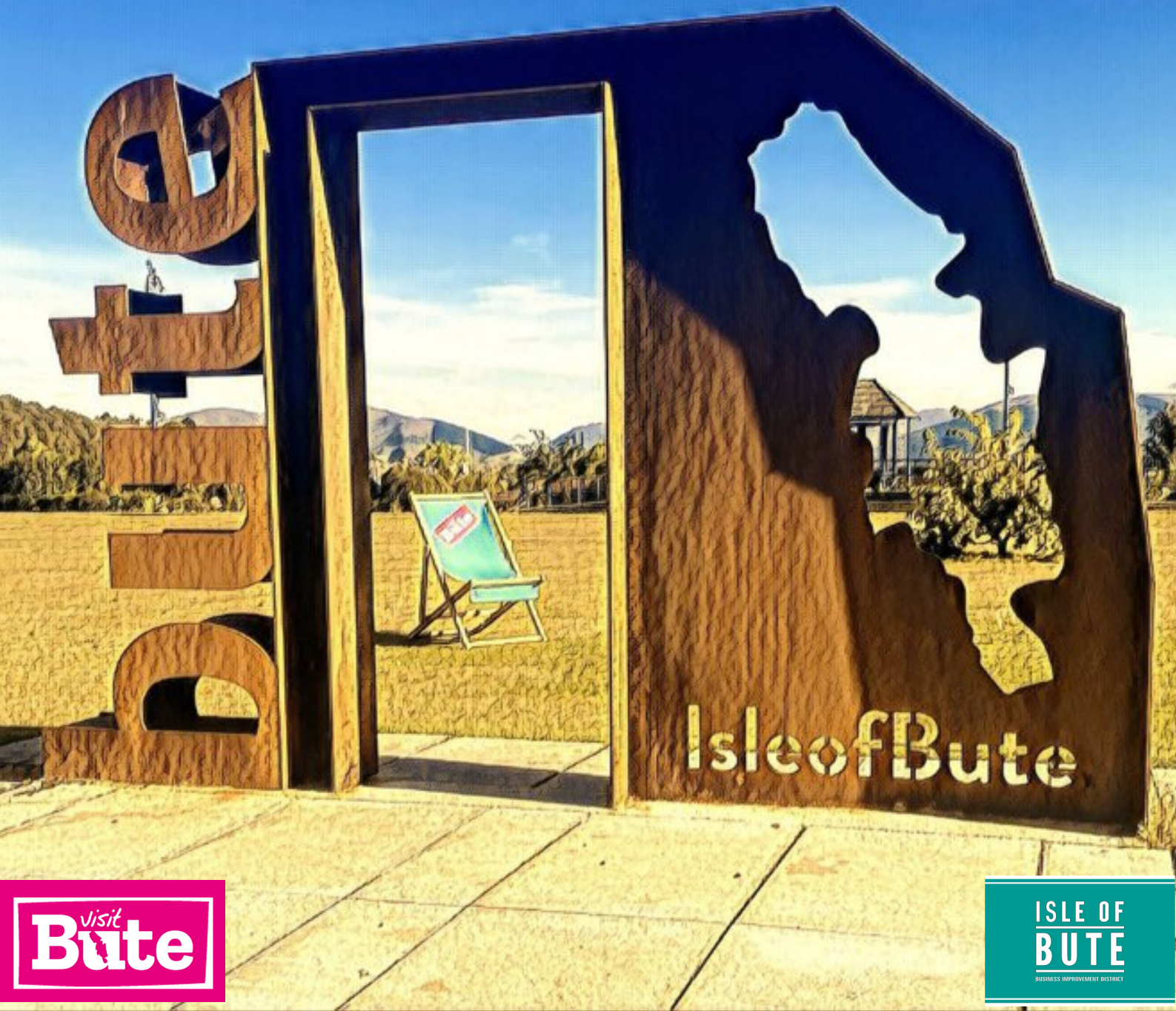
REVIEW

BOARD

ACTION

FUTURE

FINANCE



Annual Report
ISLE OF BUTE BID
2022

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BUTE BID AREA

The Isle of Bute is the only whole of island Business Improvement District in the U.K. It was decided that the benefits of having a BID should be far reaching and involve the whole Bute business community where it could. There are over 300 businesses on the island that pay an annual Levy based on their Non-Domestic Rating (NDR). We are pleased that there are a small number of businesses now paying a voluntary Levy who see its value and are willing to contribute to the collective effort.



JUST WHAT IS A BID?

BID stands for Business Improvement District, a geographically defined area where the businesses involved agree to move forward collectively in projects that are set out as the most relevant within their own business plan. These businesses finance the BID by paying an annual Levy fee for 5 years. There are no limits to BID projects, but must be new and additional projects and do not replace or replicate anything that Argyll and Bute Council or other statutory bodies are doing. Bute BID is managed in a full time role by the BID Manager and BID Assistant who are directed and assisted by a voluntary board of local business people to fulfill actions that will make Bute a better place to live, work and visit.



BID GOVERNANCE

Bute BID is a not-for-profit limited company, positively working on behalf of the island-wide BID Levy payers. The Board of Directors are volunteers and take no remuneration for their time or contribution. The Bute BID represents over 300+ businesses around the island. The volunteer Board Directors each represent various aspects of business sectors from retail through to industrial manufacturing. The goal of the Board of Directors is simple; to work creatively alongside the invested partners of Bute to build, improve and offer opportunities to make their island the best it can be. Currently there are 9 BID Board Directors. There are spaces for 12 Directors on the Bute BID Board.

Chair ADDRESS



We are just over 12 months into the initial 5 year term as a whole of island BID. Bute is the only island BID in the UK, and for that I am proud to lead and confer with the over 300-strong Levy payers that wish nothing but a collective success for this island. Working with such a diverse and talented Board on this BID has shown me the passion people have for this island - but it also shows me the many challenges of living and working here. Businesses have never faced such unprecedented upheavals in the last few years. A global pandemic had us all spinning and many companies did not or could not make it. Recovery after this has then been hampered with knock-on effects of Brexit, the Ukraine War, ongoing COVID created issues, not to mention increased costs of raw goods and the energy crisis to factor in. When the Bute BID came to its fruition after the completed vote in October 2021, the new board met together quickly to work on the best way to identify and deliver the broad **three** key themes that came from the 2021 business plan. Simply put they are; **marketing and promotion**, how do new audiences find us, and how do we keep the audiences we already have?

Perception, image and environment, with the government and our council resources annually depleted and vastly underfunded, just how are we going to keep Bute physically in good shape? And lastly - **advocacy, training and business facilitation**; 300+ businesses create a far bigger hammer to swing when lobbying for things that our island needs, external investment, skills training, much needed funding streams and fair representation. The themes are broad - but the answers are plentiful. Some ideas can be implemented quickly with maximum impact, and others are more complex, will take more time, need more input financially and some ideas will start organically and become regular activities that the Bute BID will undertake every year. This annual report is not an exhaustive list achieved by any means, but it will illustrate the input from not only the BID Manager and BID Assistant but the BID Board members of the many hours of time and hard effort to get our Bute BID ideal bucket list ticked off. There's more to come. Join me in supporting all the efforts the Bute BID are making and please feel free to bring your ideas to us as well!

Bute BID Chair
CEO Bute Fabrics *John Alen*

BUTE BID MANAGER ADDRESS

I came to the Isle of Bute in support of my wife in her post as the music teacher at Rothesay Academy. Having a great deal of experience in business, I wanted an opportunity to help the island. A chance meeting with Phil Prentice (Scottish Government Senior Officer for Towns Partnership & BIDs) at a Holyrood meeting, I was introduced to the idea of a BID. He was invited to Bute in 2019 to speak and there were approximately 30 Bute businesses in attendance. A BID Steering Group was started with seedcorn funding from the Scottish Government to explore the idea for Bute BID further. The attraction was the fact that businesses had to vote for or against a BID, and if successful everyone within a certain criteria had to contribute financially. I was the BID coordinator for the proposed BID, which went on to return a YES vote in September 2021. This created the very first whole of island BID in the UK. A proud moment for all concerned. Although the BID commenced on the 1st of October 2021 it was not until January 2022 that I was hired as BID Manager and later in May recruited Alayne Byers and then obtained an office. Despite a frustratingly slow start mainly due to sorting out agreements with Argyll and Bute Council, Bute BID has gone on from strength to strength working on the business plan objectives. In conjunction with our Council officials and councillors, the BID obtained additional funds for Children's Corner, the Rothesay fountain, the artwork on the prom and the canopy on the amphitheatre. The creation of the alfresco area on Montague Street and Guildford Square is the one project which has been fully appreciated and used by the residents of the island and our visitors.

The inclusion of music and dancing provided by local entertainers and dance groups has been particularly enjoyed. The three cruise ships brought over 2000 visitors to the island in 2022. A relationship we will continue to build upon.

In summary, the role of the BID coordinator followed by BID Manager has been an exciting challenge. The BID is in a strong position and now has an excellent working relationship with the Local Authority and a great number of important statutory bodies. As I said at the opening of this report, I came here to support my wife, and for that reason, I will therefore leave the post of BID Manager at the end of May. Susan has been offered a teaching position in Cheshire, which for her, is too good to refuse. This is an earlier than expected departure but a fabulous opportunity for Susan. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Steering Group for setting up the BID, the current Board of Directors, the officers of the Local Authority and the majority of Levy payers who have, not only supported the BID, but also me personally. I have certainly learned a great deal on the Isle of Bute.

John Weir
Bute BID Manager



BID BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Reflections of 2022



As a Bute BID director, I look back at what has been achieved on Bute since the BID was formed. I have to say that it is very challenging at present but the improvements made to Bute and Rothesay do give me a great deal of inspiration. I hope that we can as a BID continue to make Bute a better place for everyone.

Duncan Martin

Bute Blacksmiths

BID Board Director
Health & Safety, Data
Protection



I liked the BID's power washing of the town centre. It's a huge improvement, one that the council do not undertake. Expanding the public seating spaces to Guildford Square has proved very popular. A number of hospitality businesses remarked on this being helpful when serving at busy times. Ensuring the town was lit up over the festive period has really brightened the winter on Bute. The shorter days and cold weather businesses can struggle to attract people to spend any time away from the comfort of home so lighting up the town gave families another reason to enjoy being out and about and helped make Bute that little bit more magical over Christmas.

Erin Murphy

Holiday Let Owner

BID Board Director
Hospitality



I genuinely want Bute to achieve more trade and have a dependable market. Bute has a tough, seasonal market which can hinder new businesses to set up and thrive easily. As an accountant I'm at the coalface of businesses in this regard and am really happy to give up my time to enable and help promote the Isle of Bute through Bute BID. This is a fantastic place to live and work and I have always loved the island and the community within it. Bute BID has given me the opportunity to help the business community and the knock-on effect of then helping the wider community. Bringing more tourism will cause a ripple effect that benefits us all through various channels. I want a better, cleaner and more inclusive community that can work together to achieve great things for Bute.

Lesley McLean

One 2 One Accountancy

BID Board Director
Business Liaison Compliance



I felt there was a real buzz about Bute last summer and it's lovely to see the streets being cleaned and the town smartened up. Beginning 2023 with the current added pressure on business with high electricity bills, cost of living crisis and an increase in many overheads is a big concern. It is vital more than ever that we push Bute as a destination to increase footfall for businesses. It is exciting for me to be part of a positive movement that can make a real change to our beautiful island.

Sophie Reid

The Dressing Room

Vice Chair
BID Board Director
Events Planning



The first year of a new BID is a big challenge at the best of times however, I'm happy that Bute now has a collaborative force to work with as a Council official. From my experience funders and other statutory organisations are in the main, set up to support this type of business group. Bute BID staff and Directors have worked hard to promote Bute as a tourist destination, highlighting issues of local concern, attracting external income, and delivering projects on the ground. The BID has ambitious plans for the future and by working together with their Levy payers, partners and the wider Bute community I foresee great things will be achieved for Bute going forward.

Fergus Murray

Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation
Argyll and Bute Council Nominated Member Bute BID Board
(Non Voting)

Reflections cont'd



After the devastation of Covid our businesses then crashed into rising costs of both goods and energy. The small to medium sized business have never before been so doubly whammed. I joined this BID Board to ensure that the money raised was spent where it was needed - on this island. The mundane but essential stuff; cleaning, fixing & painting - things needing done every year. Later, with funding input we can go for the bigger projects, manage them hands-on from a local business perspective. I think it's crucial that we use local tradespeople where possible and have our both our community and tourists benefitting from and seeing the changes. The BID Levy payers are now a powerful 300+ group whose intentions must be actioned. I volunteered to help with that.

Sara Cross
Boat House Super Suites
BID Board Director
Marketing & PR



What a fast first year it has been finding our feet in all aspects of Bute BID involvement. With a broad range of achievements so far - from securing funding for fountain repairs and a new playpark on the prom, to improving street scene, Bute's brightest Christmas display and many things in between. We have a lot more to do with exciting plans for 2023. Our forever goal is to enhance Bute for the locals, businesses and visitors - which can be done when working together. We strive to increase our connection with Levy payers and are happy to collaborate on your aspirations.

Jen Deugal
Bute Tools
BID Board Director
Events Planning



My family have been in retail on this island for over 100 years, but I can safely say, these past few years have shown more ups and downs for business than I've ever dealt with before. Being part of an active and positive group for change in Bute is something I am happy to give my time to. My knowledge of retail and successful modern day shop retail I hope gives the BID Board insight. I'm very encouraged with the actions of the Board members so far. The ideas and projects coming forward will only make the visitor experience a better one.

Willie Glen
Glens Footwear
BID Board Director
Retail Liason



The last year being on the BID Board I really enjoyed being part of the positivity and ideas that kept coming. I have no doubt in the 5 year term the Bute BID will become an integral part of how Bute gets its tourist footfall, and how it will impress those who get here. Both my business interests on Bute require targeted marketing to be effective, so I was delighted to have the Visit Bute brand address the old website and socials making it look more current and giving a fair representation of all the businesses on the island. This first year was setting the ground work for the BID, the next 4 years will be where I think we'll really set the pace.

Alistair Forsyth
Bute Boat Tours &
Prospect House
BID Board Director
Travel, Leisure & Marine



BUTE BID IN ACTION

PERCEPTION, IMAGE AND ENVIRONMENT

BUTE STREET SCENE

Bute BID came right on the heels of COVID restrictions and with our island opening up fully for the first time, there was a push to get the place looking smart.

- 'Grot Spot' cleaning of main retail shopping areas
- Up to £750 offered to any Bute Levy paying retailer with a shop front to help improve it's facade
- 14 ornamental plant pots painted
- Over 40 bollards painted
- Bus shelter cleaned
- Street sign cleaning (ongoing)
- Promenade railings painted (ongoing)
- Agreement with ABC for Victorian Toilets
- Work with charity 'For Bute' to hang and maintain over 50 flowering baskets
- Manage outdoor visitor seating at the Amphitheatre annually.



BID COMMUNITY EVENTS

Using the Amphitheatre and Guildford Square as areas to hold family themed events, we hope in 2023 to branch out to other areas working with our Council. BID backed events held so far;

- Held 'Boogie at the Bandstand' Halloween Event 2021
- Hosted 2 Easter Events in conjunction with Project Playpark and DJ Scott McGregor
- Held 5 separate outdoor markets over two Christmas periods in 2021 and 2022
- Christmas tree and Amphitheatre decorations, lights and wreaths in 2021
- Business led Christmas Switch on event in Rothesay for families with Santa visiting, food and drinks and music provided with local schools and our local nursery
- First Easter themed decorations at Amphitheatre 2022
- New Bute map in Port Bannatyne
- 3 Christmas Window Displays Competition for retailers 2020 -2022
- Bute Christmas Illumination switch on event with special guests, famous footballer, Jane Ross and Shepherdess, Emma Gray, musical host Ricky Harrison, Bright Nights Entertainment, visiting Santa, school and nursery carol singing and Highland dancing displays. Over 300 people attended and watched the spectacular town light up using 11 projectors, three Christmas trees, 9 tree light wraps donated from Mount Stuart and a lit topiary garden display along the front.
- Name the Christmas Penguin (He's been called Bute!)
- Gobo Christmas Projector Competition
- Young Farmers Christmas Bale Competition

BID/VB PARTNERING

Who works with us?

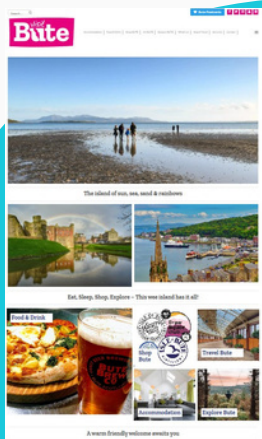
The BID office is a port of call for potential investors in Bute. Open Monday to Friday, the BID Manager and BID Assistant offer a place for imparting local information, business collaboration, business support as well as helping with potential premises and contacts.

- Mount Stuart Trust
- Police Scotland
- Our local Bute Councilors
- Argyll & Bute Council Direct Services
- Bute & Cowal Economic Development Officer - Marilyn Reilly
- Argyll & Bute Council Senior Development Officer - Colin Fulcher
- Hazel Mulholland - Manager, VisitScotland Discovery Centre
- Scottish Towns and Partnership - Phil Prentice, CEO
- Cowal & Bute Community Area Planning Group
- Cathy Craig, CEO at the AITC
- Bute Community Council

BID/VB ATTENDANCE

- Go Forth Conference Greenock Cruise Ships
- Argyll and the Isles Tourism Cooperative (AITC) Workshop
- Scottish Towns Partnership (STP)
- AITC AGM
- AITC Workshop
- STP Climate & Net Zero
- AITC VS Trade
- AITC/Visit Scotland Seminar Promoting Argyll & Bute
- Scottish Islands Group Meetings with CalMac

BUTE BID AND VISIT BUTE



MARKETING AND PROMOTION USING VISIT BUTE BRAND

The Bute BID Board took over the Visit Bute brand, website and socials in May. Ensuring the ultimate branding and relevant promotion of Bute, the Bute BID is now the organisation who has full control of paid and unpaid marketing efforts. Work began immediately on the VB website which was woefully out of date. Firstly its back end mechanics were remedied and a fresh new look was given, using more inspiring visuals and simple, engaging text. Every BID Levy payer has now been included in the website, making a fair and equal representation of all businesses on the island who promote their goods and services. This alone has saved businesses a previous joining fee of up to £120 annually.

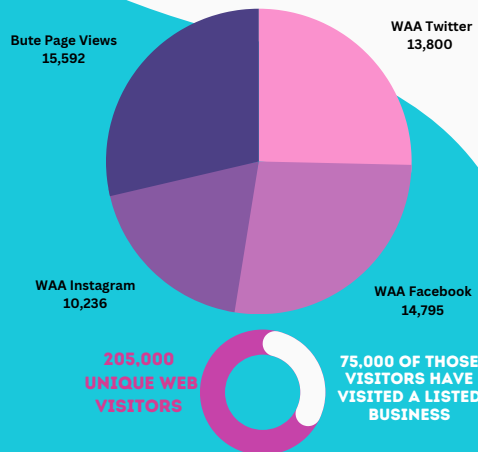
AITC/WAA

The outward promotion of Bute requires the BID to be partnering with suitable destination management agencies. The Argyll and the Isles Cooperative (AITC) is a Scottish Government backed agency whose remit is to promote Argyll and its Islands on a national and international platform. Their web and social media presence is 'Wild About Argyll' (WAA) who Visit Bute now work with. Bute now has a microsite which is nestled within the WAA website. Cathy Craig, CEO of WAA, now actively pushes Bute as a destination island and has recently gotten Bute an unpaid mention in The Times as the No.2 place to visit in their recent Scotland focus.



Scan here

WEB STATS FOR WILD ABOUT ARGYLL (FROM APRIL '22 TO DEC '22)



UPSKILLING



The BID Assistant and one Board Member have taken over 6 free courses in destination marketing and creating valid social media content provided by Business Gateway and Visit Scotland



Other promotional activities of the island are ensuring there are things to do when the visitor gets here. Ever mindful of getting the Visit Bute message out there, Bute businesses now own 25 branded deckchairs and two giant deckchairs that are to be put out at various places around Bute for use. These offer a practical solution, and are immediately 'Instagrammable & TikTokable'.

NEW CRUISING TRAFFIC

The BID Manager, Mount Stuart and local Councilor Reeni Kennedy-Boyle attended an industry event for Cruise agents in 2021. In 2022 we delightedly saw 3 cruise ships make Bute a destination stop. We distributed over 600 VB welcome packs to guests who debarked. Feedback from this was two fold - the visitors especially enjoyed their informative and piped musical welcome to the island, with many choosing to just walk around the town and a number even hiring a taxi to take the island tour that one local taxi company offers. The only feedback that the BID will action, is that some shops were closed that day and a lot did not open until later in the day. Ongoing cruise ship visits will be announced well in advance to the Levy payers from 2023. The retail footfall offered to Bute businesses is new and must be harnessed. The BID/VB will ensure all 2023 Cruise Ship landings will be well advertised in advance giving the retail businesses the chance to prepare.

WAA studies and insights show that visitors are looking for:

- Adaptable adventure - fresh air, outdoors, safe
- Wellness - nature, swimming, spa, quality food & drink
- Responsible - green credentials, visitor & destination
- Food, drink, the arts, makers & producers - processing & source, local impact.

This market tested knowledge helps us fit destination Bute into all of these categories creating targeted marketing in our outputs and gives Visit Bute an accurate platform to tailor all the advertising, blogs, socials and the printed media that we do.

HOLIDAY WEST HIGHLAND



Paid advertising reach was covered within the BID Levy in the magazine 'Holiday West Highland' in their Autumn/Winter focus. A first for Bute businesses, the FREE magazine will be in circulation until March 2023. Distributed through The Oban Times, over 50,000 copies are printed and distributed in over 500 outlets including airports, high footfall retail outlets and ferry ports across Scotland. Bute will feature again for their Spring/Summer magazine, highlighting Bute's 'Top Ten' attractions and two adverts pushing retail and accommodation on the isle. Any Bute business can also pay for a private advert alongside our feature and the BID have negotiated a 10% discount on their card rate. Should you wish to advertise just contact BID office.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR BUTE?

EVENTS

- The Bute BID plans for a man made sand pit at Children's Corner with a Jurassic theme
- Live Music Month planned for in the shoulder months, based in our local pubs and small venues - looking for local input and assistance
- Pricing a Roller Rink hire for a week within the summer month
- Bute Illumination - making full use of our 11 projectors to light up the island for both scenic and advertising opportunities
- Working with Bute Yard as a venue for local and visitor attractions, for example hire of an ice skating rink in the winter months
- Using the donations of 2 amazing raffle prizes (to which we will announce soon) it should run from April with the final draw being around August to help raise extra funds for Christmas 2023
- In discussions with a private investor who wishes to back an idea that will bring benefit to the local community and attract extra visitors
- Discussions with the official Mercedes Benz Classic Car Club to host an island event

INVESTMENT

- The Bute BID will work on pulling in external grants and funds to do even more for our Levy payers. We have applied for £10k in grant assistance since January to help part fund our existing projects. More grant applications are being prepared
- We will continue with the painting of the bollards and railings along the promenade. Paint has been provided by ABC. Painting will also be looked at for Kilchattan Bay and Port Bannatyne where needed
- This summer the BID will be working with ABC to have shelters assessed for being repaired and painted
- Working with ABC to look at plans and investment for the Albert Pier area in conjunction with Colin Fulcher of the AB Council
- Discussions are in place for more funding for Children Corner playpark in the future
- The soon to be opened 'step ashore' Pontoon facility will be worked alongside the Bute BID to assist with both their staffing and marketing in 2023 and beyond

2021-2022 BID/VB HIGHLIGHTS

OVER 600

Visit Bute welcome packs hand delivered to 3 individual visiting cruise liner customers



MORE THAN 15

separate singing, dancing, band and instrument performances held at the Amphitheatre in 2021/2022

FIVE

Separate days of BID Christmas Markets in two locations



3 new seagull proof bins, 25 deck chairs and 2 giant eye-catching deck chairs bought for visitors to use



2 free outdoor Easter and 1 Halloween family friendly BID events held for kids with DJ music, dancing and competitions!

9,382

unique Visit Bute followers across APP's



OVER 300

days of outdoor chairs and tables enhancing Rothesay's Street Scene provided between April and October 2021/2022

50

flowering baskets hung and maintained during Bute's summer season



£44K

of A&B Council funding secured for new toddler play equipment along with Project Park

FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS

Secured with A&B Council to rectify Rothesay's iconic water fountain near the Promenade

TWELVE

completed renovations from the BID Shopfront Grant Scheme

ADVOCACY AND TRAINING

The BID office will continue to work on advocacy issues that may negatively affect doing business in Bute. The recent price hikes in energy costs found us working with Eyebright, an external agent who is willing to support and advise small businesses on their energy costs including water rates.

TRAINING

The BID Manager has worked with Rothesay Academy staff to secure a fantastic business and hospitality training opportunity for students who wish to learn more within this sector. The famous Portavadie Spa and Sailing Facility will work with groups of six Bute students who will engage in hands-on experience in all the varying departments that the spa, accommodation and restaurant operate!



The Audited Accounts