

Imagine Dundrum Chairperson's Report for AGM 2019

February 2018 to February 2019

1. Background

Imagine Dundrum held its inaugural meeting in January 2016. We came together in the belief that it was timely and essential that an active local group would come together to work for a new vision for our urban village of Dundrum and its future, in the light of imminent redevelopment. Over the following three years, we have worked tirelessly to build community support for a revitalised village, and strong community voice to influence both Council planning for Dundrum and the plans of the Hammerson Group who will be redeveloping the old Shopping Centre site and other structures.

2. Our work in 2018: An Overview

Throughout 2018, we have continued to work for our vision for Dundrum as a modern urban village that respects and reflects its unique history and heritage, with a new Civic Centre and modern library, and a revitalised Main Street.

Our main focus was to make a strong, well informed contribution to the public consultation on the Council's Local Area Plan, and to encourage and support local people to make their submissions. We have continued to bring our proposals to senior executives in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLRCC), and Hammerson officials, to build awareness of Dundrum's heritage, and to continue to build community support. We have also made detailed submissions on public policies that could have a big impact on Dundrum, such as the BusConnects proposals and the government's proposals for new Building Height regulations.

Across the year, the group has held 10 plenary meetings, multiple meetings of sub-groups working on particular aspects of our work, as well as a wide range of meetings with community groups, officials, public representatives, and technical experts who have given advice and guidance.

3. Highlighting Dundrum's Heritage and the need to protect it

In 2017, we decided to publish a history of Dundrum Main Street, as a means of drawing attention to the rich architectural heritage of the street, and to support our application to DLR County Council to have buildings on Main Street designated as an Architectural Conservation Area. This task was done by John Lennon, local historian and member of Imagine Dundrum. "Main Street: A History of the Heart of Dundrum" was launched in March 2018 in the Holy Cross Parish centre by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan, T.D. It has proved to be a really popular publication, and its sale at €5 per copy has been a staple source of funding for our work.

4. Advancing the case for a Civic Centre at the heart of Dundrum

During the year, we did more detailed work on the case for a Civic Centre at the heart of Dundrum. Members of the Civic Centre sub-group visited centres in other counties with similar functions. We talked to a range of other stakeholders who might have an interest in the facilities that such a centre could offer Dundrum Village. We have now produced a new leaflet setting out the case for this centre and continue to seek local support for the proposal. All 3 Dublin-Rathdown TDs have given their support.

5. Meeting with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, DLR County Council

In June, Imagine Dundrum was invited to meet with senior executives of DLRCC to discuss and explore our proposals for a Civic Centre, and other proposals for Dundrum Village. This was a constructive meeting, at which we were very pleased to hear that the CEO is well disposed to the need for a Civic Centre at the heart of the Village, which could include a new library. The Council has made application for funding to carry out a detailed study of how this and other community facility requirements can be progressed. That application (under the national Urban Regeneration and Development Fund) has been successful and a Dundrum Community, Civic and Cultural Action Plan will shortly be prepared.

6. Engagement with Hammerson

We continued to maintain contact with Hammerson, the developer which owns the Old Shopping Centre site and a range of other buildings on Main Street. Members of Imagine Dundrum were given a detailed view of the planned refurbishment of Ashgrove Terrace and development of Pembroke Square by Hammerson, and we subsequently made a submission to DLRCC on the planning application. This submission broadly welcomed the application and its adherence to architectural conservation principles.

We have sent all our key documents and submissions to Hammerson, in order to keep them fully briefed about our thinking and the views of local people about the future development of the village. At a meeting in December, Hammerson indicated that their master plan for the Old Shopping Centre site is in development and a planning application is likely towards the end of 2019. The executives again assured us that they will consult local people in advance of a planning application.

7. Submissions on national policies that could impact on Dundrum Village

Imagine Dundrum made detailed submissions on two sets of proposals that could have an impact on Dundrum Village:

The BusConnect proposals: *Imagine Dundrum's* Local Area Plan (LAP) sub-group examined in detail the proposals from BusConnect and how they could impact on the Village. Several members of *Imagine Dundrum* also attended the public consultations and spoke with BUConnect officials.

A formal written submission was made, expressing serious concerns about the proposed increased volume of bus traffic on Main Street, and the impact of this increased traffic on the Bus interchange at the entrance to the Village.

Following on from this, *Imagine Dundrum* representatives sought and got a joint meeting with senior executives in DLR and BusConnect, where they outlined in detailed our concerns, and underlined the need for the proposals to be revised. A further follow-up meeting is planned.

The draft Building Heights proposals from Department of Housing: Members of *Imagine Dundrum's* Local Area Plan sub-group studied the draft Building Heights Guidelines and brought a report to the main group, which formed the basis of our submission. Our main concern is the fact that under these proposals, local people will not now have a say regarding the height of local developments. We also have serious concerns about how the removal or weakening of the cap on building heights might impact on Main Street.

8. Irish Architecture Foundation: Open House events

As part of our campaign to draw attention to and raise awareness of the heritage of Main Street, Imagine Dundrum accepted an invitation from the Irish Architecture Foundation to participate in the Foundation's very popular Open House event which takes place every year in October.

Two Imagine Dundrum events took place as part of the Open House programme. John Lennon brought over 40 people on a walking tour of Dundrum, supported by other members of the group. This walkabout was followed up by a talk on the background to and work of Imagine Dundrum.

A family workshop was also held in the Holy Cross Pastoral Centre where young children and their parents were invited to picture (and draw) their ideas for the future of the Village. These ideas were fed into our submission on the *Dundrum Local Area Plan* (see below).

9. Engaging the wider community

Throughout the year Imagine Dundrum continued to work hard to build awareness about the need for local people to have a voice in the future of the village, and also to bring our work and proposals to local residents.

Community update and information events: Updates were sent to the people on our mailing list giving them information about ongoing work. Press releases were sent to the Southside Gazette and other media outlets.

Imagine Dundrum were offered a stand at the ***Dundrum Arts and Cultural Festival*** in June where members met with the public attending the event, talked about our ideas for the future of the village, secured signatures of support and distributed information leaflets. We are grateful to our member Christine Cosgrave, Director of the Festival, for the opportunity to have the stand.

The 1,000 Voices project: In 2018, we embarked on a major project to collect 1,000 signatures in support of the 7 fundamental principles which are the core elements of our approach to the future of Dundrum. Members of the group disseminated and collected the support statements to individuals and groups of local people. We also got help from volunteers who brought the work to the attention of local communities. We are very grateful for that support.

In early 2019 we are very pleased to note that the 1,000 voices objective has been met and surpassed, and we are now embarked on collecting the next 1,000.

Imagine Dundrum website

Our website continues to be a key strand of our communication with the wider community, and all essential documents are available there. The website address is promoted on our documentation.

The Urbact presentation

The Urbact Project is an EU project aimed at promoting the sharing of learning among EU cities about best practice in urban living. The focus is on placemaking and the involvement of citizens in decision-making about how to improve and enhance our cities. It involves peer networks of people from a number of partner cities, which networks engage in exchange visits. In 2018, DLR was one of the partner cities, and Imagine Dundrum was invited to showcase our work, as an example of bottom-up community involvement in local planning. Two members of the group made a joint presentation to representatives from 7 European networks, who were impressed with our work and approach. The Main Street History booklet was presented to the visitors, with funding from DLRCC.

The PPN presentation

Imagine Dundrum is a member of the DLR Public Participation Network (PPN). Our PPN representative, Angela Irving, arranged for Imagine Dundrum to have a stand at a PPN Plenary meeting devoted to sharing information on the work of local community groups. Two group members made a formal presentation to the meeting about our work, while four others met with PPN representatives and talked about the work and gathered signatures of support.

Marlay House event

As part of the Council's Heritage Programme, John Lennon gave a well attended talk on the history of Main Street, and the event was linked with Imagine Dundrum. Members of the group looked after sales of the Main Street booklet, and gathered further support for Imagine Dundrum's principles for the redevelopment of Dundrum Village.

Airfield Event

Imagine Dundrum was invited to an event in Airfield organised by Josepha Madigan, T.D. and Minister for Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht, where Taoiseach Leo Varadkar was in attendance. Members of the group attended on behalf of Imagine Dundrum.

8. The Dundrum Local Area Plan

Imagine Dundrum was delighted when Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council agreed in 2018 to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Dundrum. Imagine Dundrum has campaigned actively for this. The purpose of a Local Area Plan is to take a detailed look at a specific area, identifying and analysing the various issues that are important for that area, and to set out objectives for the future of that Area. The local community must be consulted at a number of stages in the preparation of the LAP.

Imagine Dundrum immediately began to prepare to make our submission to the first public consultation – the pre-draft consultation that invites views on the 'big issues' for the Area. Our LAP sub-group began to research all the key issues for the Village, including traffic management, facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, open space and recreation, the needs of the public realm (pavements, lighting, seating, public facilities, and much more), community facilities including the need for a Civic Centre and new Library, business, housing, and the protection of the environment. This work was done over several months, culminating in a 50-page submission to DLR County Council, covering all the issues of concern for the future of Dundrum Village.

The work done on submissions like BusConnect, Building Heights, local consultations and earlier public consultations all fed into the submission, as well as special consultations (*see below*).

Consulting children and young people of Dundrum

In preparation for our LAP submission, we decided to capture the views of children and young people about the future of Dundrum, and their hopes and wishes for the village. We linked up with the Irish Architectural Foundation, who helped us to design a consultation with children. During May and September, we engaged with 5th class children in Holy Cross Primary School and Taney Primary School, and 5th year students in St. Benildus College. The young people did a walkabout in the Village, led by John Lennon, followed by workshops in the schools. The feedback from these consultations forms part of our LAP submission.

Consulting People with disabilities or mobility issues

Many people with mobility issues face challenges in negotiating the public spaces in Dundrum – pathways, crossings, street furniture, public toilets, parking and more. These issues and challenges

are experienced by older people, people with visual impairment, families with a child with a disability, parents with young children in buggies.

We engaged in a wide-ranging consultation with people with disabilities and mobility issues, and did 'walkabouts' in the village with a person with a visual impairment. We made a call out to the Imagine Dundrum mailing list, and got inputs on these matters from local people. All these views and experiences have been incorporated into our LAP submission.

The Public Meeting

As part of our commitment to promote community awareness about the impending developments in the village, and the LAP consultation, Imagine Dundrum held a public meeting to let people know about the LAP pre-draft consultation. At the meeting, Imagine Dundrum members outlined the content of the Issues paper published by DLRCC, and provided an opportunity for the participants to share views and ideas. We urged local people to make their own submissions. We are delighted that 153 submissions were received.

UCD Architecture project

Imagine Dundrum linked productively with 4th year/ Masters level architecture students from UCD who were focusing on housing Dundrum for their major project work. Two exhibitions of the work were held, and Imagine Dundrum members were guests at the exhibitions. Models from the exhibitions were also loaned to us for the launch of Main Street booklet, and the UCD lecturer in charge of the project, Stephen Mulhall, made a presentation.

9. Imagine Dundrum business

First AGM

Imagine Dundrum's first AGM was held in February 2018, and the new Constitution was approved.

Complying with the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): Research on the implications of GDPR for Imagine Dundrum was carried out by one of our members with legal expertise, and a policy document was prepared and approved by the group. This policy governs our engagement with the community and can be found on our website.

Lobbying: Imagine Dundrum has registered as a Lobby Group. An annual return of any lobbying activity must be made, and our legal expert group member has responsibility for making the return.

Grants: Imagine Dundrum has made three successful applications for community grant funding from DLR County Council's Community Grant scheme. These grants were for our day to day business, the production of the Main Street History, and the pre-LAP consultation with children.

New banner and leaflets: During the year we prepared additional materials to promote the work of Imagine Dundrum, including a printed explanatory flyer summarising our 7 key principles for the redevelopment of Dundrum Village, and a leaflet describing in more detail the proposal for a Civic Centre and new modern library. A new banner was also designed by a graphic designer supporter.

10. Thanks for expert, technical and other supports: Imagine Dundrum warmly thanks all those people who over the year have made major contributions to our work by providing us with expert advice and a wide range of technical and practical support. A 'thank you' event is being organised!

Anne Colgan, Chairperson, February 2019