

Imagine Dundrum - Chairperson's Report to AGM 2020

February 2019 to February 2020

Our 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 four 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.

Our work in 2019: An Overview

Throughout 2019, we have continued to work for our vision for Dundrum as a modern urban village, building on the work of the previous three years and both creating and responding to opportunities to realise our vision for Dundrum in diverse ways.

While in 2018, our main focus was to make a strong, well informed contribution to the public consultation on the Council's Local Area Plan, in 2019, a number of new opportunities arose to make substantial submissions dealing with the future of Dundrum Village.

Across the year, the group held nine Plenary meetings, many meetings of our sub-groups working on particular aspects of our work, as well as a meeting with Council officials.

Advancing the case for a Civic Centre at the heart of Dundrum: The Dundrum Civic, Cultural and Community Plan.

Making the case for a Civic Centre at the heart of Dundrum Village is one of our primary objectives. During 2019, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, in association with the developer Hammerson, applied to the Department of Culture and Heritage for a grant to examine the need for cultural, community and civic facilities in Dundrum. The terms of reference for this work focused on identifying current unmet needs and gaps in community, cultural and civic facilities and it will make recommendations as to where and how these will be delivered.

Imagine Dundrum worked on our submission over a number of months, beginning with a facilitated workshop in June where Mary Rafferty, facilitator, helped us to clarify our ideas and prepare a plan for making a strong and compelling submission. Over the following months, members of the group undertook research, drafted material and prepared a detailed proposal and plan for the Civic Centre on the site of the Old Shopping Centre, which was sent in December 2019 to the consultants conducting the study.

As well as preparing our own submission, Imagine Dundrum engaged with everyone on our mailing list, encouraging them to make submissions, and to support the Imagine Dundrum case for the Civic Centre. We are pleased that there were over 400 individual submissions as well as group submissions.

Challenging the Bus Connects proposals

Our work on the Bus Connects proposals and the threat they pose for Dundrum Village began in 2018, led by our Bus Connects team. Following an initial meeting with NTA and Council representatives, the team were asked to put together a set of proposals for addressing the problems

identified by Imagine Dundrum. This work was done, and a further meeting sought. In the course of waiting for this meeting, new proposals emerged from NTA, which will make the traffic situation in Dundrum even worse! The team has prepared further proposals, dealing with the impact on main Street and the interchange at Waldemar Terrace. At the time of preparing this report, the promised meeting with NTA and council engineers and planners has not materialised.

Thanking our advisors and helpers

In April, Imagine Dundrum held a 'thank you' event for all those who have assisted and advised in a host of ways over the past three years. The event took place in Holy Cross Pastoral Centre, and was planned and managed by an Imagine Dundrum team who organised a wonderful event, cooked food, and arranged photography.

There was a big attendance, which included all those who had helped with various public events, the children's consultation, our heritage work, our 1,000 Voices campaign, facilitation, graphic design and much more. This successful event was a great way of signalling our thanks for the generous assistance that we have benefited from so hugely.

Meeting with Hammerson

We continued to maintain contact with Hammerson, the developers who own the Old Shopping Centre site and a range of other buildings on Main Street, and have shared all our submissions and documents with them.

At a meeting in December, Imagine Dundrum met with representatives of Hammerson. The purpose was to explore the common ground in our approaches to the Local Area Plan, our work on Bus Connects, and to look for some indication of their timelines for the development of the Shopping Centre site. Hammerson indicated a new architectural team has been appointed with residential expertise, that their master plan for the shopping centre site is in development and a planning application is likely towards the end of 2020 (previously intended for Q4 2019). It appears that their focus has been on other projects particularly the project in Dublin City.

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 residents.**

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 core elements of our approach to the future of Dundrum. We are pleased to note that the 1,000 voices objective was met in 2019, and the focus now is on continuing to build the network of support.

During the year, several mailings went out to the growing mailing list. The main focus was on bringing key consultations to the attention of those on the mailing list and sharing information with them.

In the run up to the May local elections, supporters on the mailing list were asked to advocate with candidates for the Civic Centre. We circulated information about the consultation on the Civic, Cultural and Community Plan for Dundrum.

In December we prepared and circulated our first formal newsletter. We are most grateful to graphic designer Larry Byrne for his help with the attractive layout and design for the newsletter.

Making key connections

This year, Imagine Dundrum continued to build connections with key County Council staff who can help to ensure that Dundrum becomes an attractive, accessible place for residents, visitors and workers.

Some of the group's members met with the DLR Arts Officer, to explore ways in which Dundrum could benefit from arts funding and project work, and to try to bring equity to the arts investment in the West side of the County. This valuable connection will be built on in the coming year.

Members of the team also met with the Head of the DLR Parks Department and brought him on a walkabout in the Village, to point out areas that are run down and in need of work, or where there is scope to improve the Village. We were accompanied by one of our group of advisors/supporters who is visually impaired and who highlighted the multiple obstacles faced by blind people in Dundrum. Our hope is that this will lead to significant improvements.

We also brought a member of the senior staff of DLR Municipal Services on a similar walkabout.

The Community Awards

Imagine Dundrum was nominated by the Irish Architectural Foundation for the Dundrum Community Awards. We designed and prepared materials for this event, including some very attractive information panels. While Imagine Dundrum did not win, we were pleased with the recognition and with the new materials which will have ongoing value.

The Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Town Awards – first in our category!

Imagine Dundrum was invited to join a team made up of a number of local organisations, to prepare for an entry by Dundrum in the Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Town Awards. The team met regularly over several months. The judging by a panel of judges took place in September, where Imagine Dundrum presented our work to re-invigorate the Village, as part of the overall team presentation.

We were delighted that Dundrum's entry won first prize in its population category, with a cash prize and a trophy. This win helps to draw attention to the potential of Dundrum, and we are happy to be a part of the project.

MANAGING OUR BUSINESS

Involvement in the Public Participation Network (PPN)

Imagine Dundrum is a member of the DLR PPN, and provides information about activities and opportunities that can be of value to us. Members of the group took part in a number of workshops run by the PPN on issues of interest to Imagine Dundrum.

Successful grant applications

Imagine Dundrum made successful grant applications, which have resulted in most helpful finance for our work. We are grateful to Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community Department for the grant funding.

History of Main Street

Our history of Main Street booklet continues to generate much needed funds. Thanks to the author, Imagine Dundrum member John Lennon, for promoting the publication on his walking tours of Dundrum.

Our website and Facebook page

Our website continues to be an important communication tool, and our Facebook page is getting off the ground now as another channel of communication.

Our GDPR compliance, and lobbying registration

These important facets of our work are looked after well, and ensure our compliance with the necessary governance requirements.

THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Thanks to all the Imagine Dundrum team for another effective year's work and for their many investments in the work, which are too numerous to record.

We also wish to thank Larry Byrne, graphic designer for his generous assistance with a range of projects throughout the year.

Anne Colgan, Chairperson, February 2020