

## NEWSFLASH



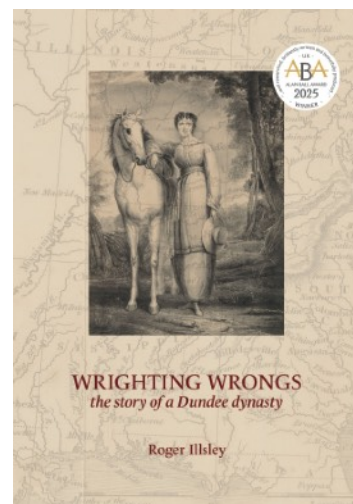
Dundee Civic Trust  
encouraging the best

## Double success for Dundee

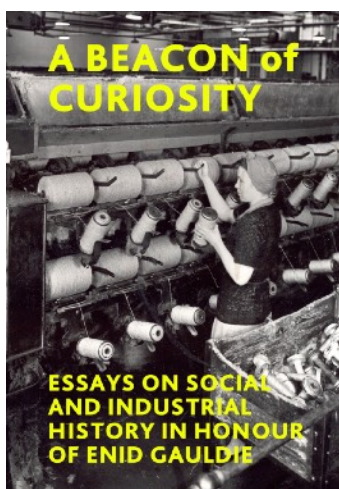
Brian Cram

I am delighted to report that Dundee's Roger Illsley and Abertay Historical Society are each celebrating success this month as winners of the Alan Ball Local History Awards 2025. Congratulations to you both from all of us at Dundee Civic Trust. The Alan Ball Awards, established in 1985, are designed to encourage and recognise high-quality local history publishing across the UK.

Roger's book, 'Wrighting Wrongs', was announced as winner of the *Alan Ball Award for best local history book published in 2025*. The book traces the fascinating history of the Wrights, a prosperous merchant family from Dundee and their participation in the social and industrial development and expansion of the town from the 1720s to the 1880s. It tells the story of James Wright junior, the foremost Scottish designer of 18<sup>th</sup> century provincial coins, and his famous daughter and social reformer, Frances Wright, who was born in the Nethergate. It is full of interesting historical facts and lots of illustrations. 'Wrighting Wrongs' is available from the Nine Trades of Dundee website and local book shops. All proceeds from sales go to Dundee Carers Centre.



The Chair of the judges commented: *"We had a large number of entries this year and the judges thought that your publication was outstanding in every way. It is full of well researched content, brilliantly written and beautifully produced, bringing to life notable members of the Wright family and the social and economic context within which they lived their lives."*



Abertay Historical Society's 'A Beacon of Curiosity' won the *Alan Ball Award for the best small publication in 2025*. 'A Beacon of Curiosity' celebrates the long and creative life of Enid Gaudie (1928-2024). Nine local historians, including DCT member and former Newsflash contributor Stephen Connelly and recent speaker Kenneth Baxter, explore themes that were close to Enid's heart, ranging from preservation of industrial relics such as the Telford Beacon to the triumphs of the textile industry and the shame of slum housing. 'A Beacon of Curiosity' is available on the Abertay Historical Society website.

The Chair of the judges commented: *"This is a new category for the award introduced this year so it is especially pleasing that the Abertay Historical Society is the first recipient of this. The judges thought your publication contained brilliantly researched and written essays that truly reflected the impressive life and interests of Enid Gaudie"*.

It's great to see two local publications win in these UK wide awards.

# Dundee Central Waterfront Workshop – Stakeholder’s Manifesto

## Fionn Stevenson

The long saga of unwanted dereliction at the waterfront continues, with seven of the Central Waterfront Masterplan sites having remained empty and boarded up for over twenty years. Various attempts have been made to enable temporary usage of these sites, but to date these have failed. Proposals for new offices and an E-sports Centre have come and gone over the years. The city council has so far been unable to attract developers to these sites with its current funding model and plan. Something has to be done.

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, Dundee Civic Trust held an invitee-only workshop to examine the Trust’s recent Waterfront Proposals document and explore new ideas to address the current blight in this crucial area of the city. The three-hour afternoon session took place in Thornton’s LLP offices and we are grateful to them for their support.

The 13 organisations represented by executive level participants included:

- Dundee Civic Trust
- Dundee Institute of Architects
- Dundee City Council
- City Centre and Harbour Community Council
- A Housing Developer
- A Transport Operator
- Site adjacent business/tourism organisations

The workshop took the form of a ‘Conversation’ which examined the DCT discussion document in relation to three core themes:

Theme 1: Creating a Liveable Neighbourhood

Theme 2: Transportation infrastructure

Theme 3: Temporary usage

The carefully facilitated ‘Iterative Design’ process allowed small groups to examine each of these themes and place ‘post-it’ notes with new ideas on a large map of the central waterfront layout as proposed by the Trust. Participants were asked to respond to the themes in terms of two consecutive questions: (1) what could happen at these sites in relation to this theme?; (2) how could these ideas be enabled? Initially all ideas were accepted, with each group adding new ones.



F Stevenson

The energy and engagement in the room at this stage was palpable – people were clearly passionate about ‘getting something done’! After a convivial networking break, a plenary session with all participants then developed the ideas from each theme into more condensed versions. Participants voted on these ideas, in order to form some consensus around a draft Manifesto. The final Manifesto was subsequently lodged as an additional ‘Idea’ in the city council’s ‘Call for Ideas’ consultation informing their Dundee Local Development Plan review.

Key calls to action for *Liveable Neighbourhoods* included: reducing the road dominance in the waterfront area to create a safe pedestrian friendly sense of place; increasing the density and intensity of use on the remaining empty sites; making planning easier for the developers and

community alike – a mindset shift is needed to break the current log jam preventing these sites from being developed.

When tackling *Transportation Infrastructure*, participants called for: reduced traffic lanes, changing traffic lights to suit pedestrians more, introducing shared surfaces, creating smaller blocks of development to increase pedestrian permeability and a wider public realm with gateways, links and more pedestrian routes. One suggestion was to create a regulatory Masterplanning Consent Area to enable integrated development to take place more easily and rapidly. The provision of Park and Ride facilities on the outskirts of the city would reduce commuter traffic at waterfront and enable road reductions.

There was an overwhelming feeling in the room that *Temporary Usage* for these sites was needed now to stop the current blight in this key tourist area. Ideas included: a year round seasonal programme for the empty sites as event spaces, with open markets, outdoor cinema, music, and light festivals. Temporary shipping container pop-ups on the periphery of sites could be an improvement on the current grey, graffiti hoardings – starting with one site near station. It was felt that in order for this to happen, Dundee City Council would need to fundraise for and commission a feasibility study into the temporary uses proposed. Perhaps the successful Business Improvement District funding bid could gain sponsorship from adjacent businesses for temporary landscaping of these empty sites.



The Trust is committed to working with the participant organisations to take these initiatives forward.

## Dundee Design Review Panel - A Collaborative Vision for a Better-Designed City Donal Hardy

Dundee Civic Trust is putting forward an exciting proposal to help strengthen the quality of development across our city: the creation of a Dundee Design Review Panel. As Scotland's only UNESCO City of Design, Dundee has a proud reputation for creativity and innovation. Yet, unlike many other UK cities, we have no formal, independent forum for reviewing the design of major planning proposals. This new idea aims to change that: positively, constructively and collaboratively.

The proposal draws inspiration from the well-established Edinburgh Urban Design Panel, adapting its successful model to Dundee's scale, character and ambitions. With major developments emerging, from the Waterfront and Kingsway corridor to new housing areas, civic buildings and the Eden Project site, there has never been a more important moment to ensure that design quality sits



at the heart of our city's future. National Planning Framework 4 places strong emphasis on sustainable, design-led planning, and a local panel would help Dundee deliver on these aspirations with confidence.

A Design Review Panel offers early, expert, multidisciplinary advice to developers before planning applications are submitted. Far from adding bureaucracy, it can actually streamline the process by helping design teams resolve issues early, reducing risk and encouraging clearer, more consistent proposals. The panel's purpose is supportive: to highlight opportunities, identify challenges and promote well-designed, climate-resilient and people-focused places.

The proposed Dundee model would be chaired by a senior Dundee City Council planning officer, with voluntary members drawn from a wide range of professional bodies and local expertise. Architects, planners, landscape architects, transport specialists, sustainability experts, academics, and community voices would all play a part. Meetings would take place monthly or bi-monthly, reviewing schemes where design quality has the greatest long-term impact: major housing, strategic sites, tall buildings, civic projects and proposals affecting sensitive heritage areas.

A clear, transparent process is central to the proposal. Developers would present their concepts at an early stage, receive constructive feedback from the panel, and later in the process will demonstrate how they have responded to the panel's advice. Reports would be published once applications are lodged, which supports openness and public trust.

The benefits for Dundee are significant: higher design standards, stronger sustainability outcomes, reduced planning risk, and a clearer expression of our identity as a City of Design. Most importantly, it would help ensure that the places we build today become the well-loved neighbourhoods, streets and landmarks of tomorrow.

## What a BID brings to a city

Julie Grail

A Business Improvement District (BID) is established following a ballot of all businesses that are eligible to pay towards its costs. If a dual key majority ballot is won (meaning that the vote is won by number of votes and value of votes cast) then a BID is created for a five-year term. The levy is then mandatory on all eligible businesses and is used to fund the proposals set out within the Business Plan upon which the vote is based.

Run by businesses, for businesses, a BID is a local not-for-profit management company that focuses on the needs of the business community with the aim of adding value beyond the statutory services that the public sector can provide. Transparent and accountable management and governance are at the heart of a good BID operation, thus ensuring it is a trusted model making a difference to those who pay the levy. Working collaboratively with all key partners and agencies across a city is core to achieving best value for the BID's investment.



A BID strengthens a city by giving local businesses a collective voice, dedicated funding, and a mechanism to improve the trading environment beyond what the local authority can provide. It creates cleaner, safer, more attractive streets and boosts economic vitality through coordinated investment.

The scheme started in 2005, and there are now just over 350 BIDs around the British Isles.

Julie is Managing Director, The BIDs Business

# High and Dry Street

# Campbell Archibald

It's well known that many High Streets - designed for an age long past - are struggling to attract modern buyers, pedestrians, and younger generations. Built around traditional local living and in-person shopping, they now face intense pressure from out of town retail, online convenience culture, and the expectation of immediate gratification.

These pressures are compounded by reduced council budgets, increased operational costs for vendors, and the rise of consumer levies such as parking charges and Low Emission Zones (LEZ). As these costs are passed on to consumers, the High Street becomes even less competitive and less attractive.

## Be Brave

Despite the doom and gloom, opportunities exist where bold thinking has been applied. Norwich, for example, faced economic challenges and declining footfall. By establishing a central market specifically aimed at startups and creative businesses, they created an environment that encouraged newcomers with low rents, guaranteed cost ceilings, and limited rates. Occupants are offered six months of low-cost trading, followed by six months of support and structured paths into occupying empty retail units.



*Norwich - An example that shows what bravery and innovation can unlock.*

## Experience Demanding Consumers

Today's consumers want more than a simple trip to the shops. As already seen in hospitality and entertainment, the High Street must evolve to offer memorable experiences. Dundee's independents - LiveHouse, Archie's, Barrelman, and others - demonstrate what small scale experience-driven businesses can achieve. But the town itself must support this momentum.

Some radical ideas to consider:

- A Beano Museum taking over the Nethergate Centre.
- Gaming and Digital interactive museum in old M&S.
- Pedestrianising Commercial Street, create café culture and entertainment.
- Electric vehicle charging along the Marketgait, entice chargers, gain lay time
- Expanded market and independent business support with view to creating the next tenants of the city
- A zip line from the McManus to Exchange Street

Radical, or simply unique enough to attract attention?

## Footfall and Planning

Recent visitor figures show Dundee has potential:

- 1.4 million visitors annually
- 300,000 directly to the V&A
- 140,000 to the McManus

So is the High Street itself the challenge?

Reform Street reflects the contrast: the High School at one end, buskers at the other. The question is how to guide the city's unique visitors - many arriving from cruise ships - to walk just 200–300 yards into a vibrant, welcoming urban centre.

Simple measures could help, such as **colourcoded street trails**:

- **Blue** for history
- **Green** for hospitality
- **Red** for shopping
- **Yellow** for culture

Beyond economic benefits, encouraging people into our city centres reduces packaging waste, delivery emissions, and car dependency - while restoring human interaction and the outdoor experience.

### We Can All Help

Every contribution matters. From government and councils adopting more agile approaches, to individuals supporting change, collaboration is essential.

A pragmatic, streamlined planning and regulatory process could reduce project timelines from years to weeks. To truly sustain growth, we need a comprehensive **entrepreneurial ecosystem** - support services, access to capital, and a culture that accepts risk and embraces innovation.

### Love of the City

As a proud Dundonian, my affection for the city is longstanding - even when mixed with occasional disappointment. With the Eden Project on the horizon, we must also play our part: making our streets safer, creating compelling reasons to visit, and growing the city's economic and cultural appeal.

### The How

Alongside the earlier 'curveball' ideas, we could also:

- **Discount evening parking**
- **Offer midweek incentives, events and create buyer culture**
- **Promote mixed use development:** bringing together housing, workplaces, leisure and dining to boost evening footfall
- **Expand green infrastructure:** turning brownfield sites into public spaces and parks
- **Use public service anchors:** relocating services such as libraries and council offices to the city centre
- **Walk around,** See it, find a solution and fill empty units
- **Dundee and Angus College initiatives,** for the Government to approve and allow Wellgate take over.
- **Improve connections:** better transport and accessibility to link surrounding communities with the heart of Dundee

And, of course... **a zip line!**

### The Future Is Bright

Even in a digital age, people still crave shared experiences. That return is coming - let's prepare now.

Campbell is Chairman, CAM Ventures.

(Author notes many other amazing activities, incentives etc. other than the ones mentioned above.)



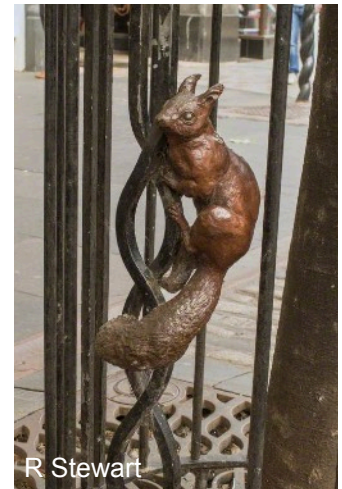
# 'The Squirrel o' Dundee' - A Tale for our Times?

## Roderick Stewart

ONCE Upon a time a cheeky little Red Squirrel and a Mischievous Monkey came to Dundee. They had been given fine places to live by Dundee's kind sculpture-man, Mr Gray. Everyone liked Squirrel and Monkey.

Squirrel had a nice tree to climb and Monkey enjoyed playing with his letters. Kind Mr Gray added many other interesting things for children to find. There were some coins, an arrow, some eggs and even a top hat. It was all great fun!

Years passed; Kind Mr Gray retired and the town council forgot about the little animals. The council was too busy painting '20' mph signs all over the pretty street cassies to think about the little Squirrel and the Monkey. One of the eggs was broken. Squirrel's tree was damaged and then chopped down completely.



The little Red Squirrel was very sad. "They have chopped down my tree. My circle of railings is the only one without a tree. How can a squirrel be happy without a tree?"

"And the big boys chain their untidy bicycles to my railing so that I can't even see out properly. I'm so sad."

Then he added, more hopefully, "My railing is only held together by two little bolts. If I had a spanner I could change it over for a railing that does have a tree. It wouldn't

take moments. I would be so much happier."

"Some friendly gardener might be able to plant a new tree at the same time", he concluded.

Monkey agreed. "I need a fresh coat of paint to brighten me up, so that people look up at me again."

"We feel lonely here in town amongst all the dirty chewing-gum, cigarette ends and vape stickers. Dundee grown-ups are so careless with their litter."



## Addendum

Our apologies to Audrey Dunn for omitting part of her email address at the end of the article 'More empty pews - not such good news' in the last Newsflash.

Audrey Dunn is the Churches Advisor for the Dundee area and she runs workshops on relevant issues as well as providing advice and support. If you are interested in finding out more, she can be contacted by email on [Audrey@dtascot.org.uk](mailto:Audrey@dtascot.org.uk)

## Changing perspective

Brian Cram

The recent Artemis space mission to the Moon made me think about telescopes and the way they bring objects into focus. Remember, when you turn them round and look through the wrong end, everything looks so small.



In the last edition of Newsflash I argued against the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Dundee City Centre, largely on the grounds of increased costs for business, but you may have read in the press that there has been an overwhelming vote in favour of establishing the BID with majorities in favour both in terms of turnout (76.9%) and rateable value (85.7%). It seemed that I was out of step with everyone, and it felt very uncomfortable, so just for a change I turned round my telescope and looked at my views from the opposite end.

The Dundee BID will launch on 1 May 2026 and aims to deliver “a safer, cleaner more vibrant city centre, one that attracts increased footfall from local residents and visitors”. I certainly agree with these aims as the city centre is in desperate need of positive action.

Some of the ideas for improving the life of our city centre seem to be based on restricting car usage and reducing their access to our city centre but as more of us buy electric cars can we change focus and see the new BID as an opportunity to boost access to our city centre while also encouraging active travel within the area? Imagine parking your car and going for a walk around a city centre full of interesting shops, restaurants, bars, cafes and places to sit and watch the world go by.

We have invested in significant car parking facilities, much of it on the edge of our city centre. They include the Bell Street hub, Wallace Street, Dudhope Castle, Overgate, South Tay Street, Greenmarket, Yeaman shore, Shore Terrace, Gellatly Street, Olympia, east Whale Lane, North Lindsay Street, Willison Street and Wellgate, all charging parking fees. There could be significant benefits, however, if there was more on-street parking, free for 45 minutes with no return, and even subsidised car parking in some of the existing car parks where two hours was free. BID revenues might be able to smooth the transition until the increase in the volume of businesses, able to operate in our city centre because of significantly enhanced footfall, more than compensated for any loss of parking revenue. We cannot be trusted to use these benefits fairly, and parking ambassadors would be needed to ensure that there was no abuse of the free parking. The Gallagher Retail Park provides a perfect example of the principle.



I think Dundee needs to look outside its city centre and promote itself as the car-friendly city, where you can find affordable parking: and having built all these car parks, to paraphrase the film, Field of Dreams, “We have built it, they will come”.

# Dundee – Cycling City

Catherine Wykes

Dundee is a compact city. Over half of trips made in Dundee are under 2km – a comfortable ten-minute cycle. Census data shows that 35% of Dundee households have no access to a car. According to the latest Walking and Cycling Index produced by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) and based on an independent survey of 1,139 residents, 12% of us cycle at least once a week, so why isn't this figure higher?

After I started cycling in Dundee a little over 10 years ago the answer became clear – we've designed cycling out of our city. Yes, we have a fantastic cycle route along the Tay estuary, and the Green Circular circumnavigating the city, but for most of us, a trip into the city centre or to local shops or schools means sharing road space with motor traffic, something that many people simply aren't comfortable doing.

Civic leaders were aware of this issue as far back as the 1930's. Between 1934 and 1945, the Ministry of Transport paid local authorities to construct over 100 cycle tracks, separating cyclists from the growing number of motorcars taking to the roads. Here in Dundee, you can still see evidence of one of these cycle tracks running along the Kingsway between Strathmartine Road and Old Glamis Road. However, the post war era saw a clamour for modernisation which impacted not just our built environment, but also how we viewed transport, with motorcars seen as the future and bicycles increasingly seen as belonging to a bygone era, of use only to children and hobbyists.



However, the post war era saw a clamour for modernisation which impacted not just our built environment, but also how we viewed transport, with motorcars seen as the future and bicycles increasingly seen as belonging to a bygone era, of use only to children and hobbyists.

In the UK, it has taken until the 21<sup>st</sup> century for us to catch up with some of our neighbours across the North Sea, and reevaluate the role of the bicycle as a cheap, healthy, efficient mode of transport.

Cycling instead of driving for some of our everyday trips helps mitigate the climate crisis and can help tackle transport poverty and congestion. UK Chief Medical Officers, in a joint statement in 2019, wrote that "if physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure". Active travel is a great way to integrate physical activity into our everyday routines.

There is appetite for change too. The 2025 Walking and Cycling index indicates that 28% of Dundee residents don't cycle but would like to. 80% of us support improving and increasing local off-road paths for walking, wheeling and cycling, and 62% support building more cycle paths that are physically separated from traffic and pedestrians, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic. Residents also want to improve the integration of walking and cycling routes with buses for longer trips.

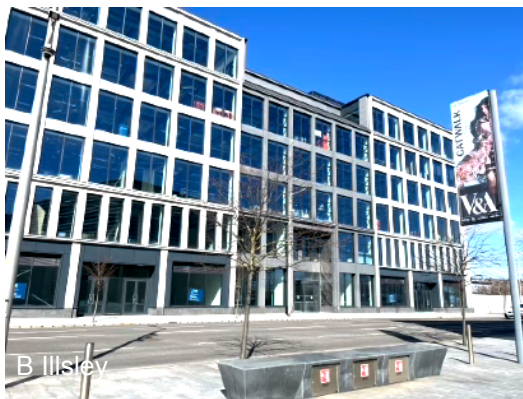


[Dundee Cycling Forum](#) believe that by rebalancing our street space and giving residents and visitors alike a genuine choice in how we move around the city, we can be a vibrant, welcoming city with a real sense of place and community. We support Dundee City Council's ambitious plans to create a sustainable transport network and look forward to the day when cycling in Dundee really is accessible to everyone.

Catherine is Chair of Dundee Cycling Forum

# The Nethergate Centre

Stephen Brand



It was announced recently that Thorntons Law would be moving later this year from Whitehall House into James Thomson House opposite V&A Dundee. It is good to see a locally-based, thriving business moving into such a prestigious office block. They will occupy the top three floors of office space with the other two apparently let as well. This made me think about what might happen to Whitehall House and to the Nethergate Centre generally once Thorntons have vacated their former offices.

The Nethergate Centre's construction began in February 1975, being completed and opened in early 1977. It was a £1.8 million project and consisted of a shopping mall of 13 units with offices above, fronting onto the Nethergate. There was also an entrance from Yeaman's Shore. The large T-shaped office block is comprised of approximately 70,000 square feet on five floors. There was a connecting elevated walkway (much derided and since demolished) that went across the road to the railway station. There are 80 car parking spaces below the offices.

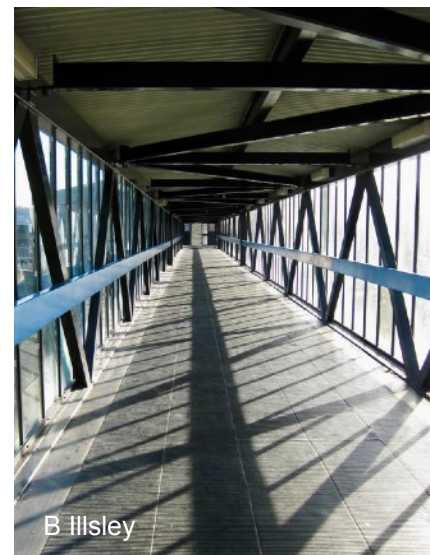
Initially, the Centre was occupied by Standard Life and a variety of insurance companies, with BBC Scotland, Dundee City Council, Tayside Valuation Board and Scottish Homes all having offices there. Thorntons moved their whole operation into four floors in 2006. When the latest Thorntons move goes ahead later this year, what will become of this large building? Tesco occupy the ground floor fronting onto the Nethergate but there appears to be little if any occupied space in the ground floor mall, now a Business Centre, or the offices above them.

The building is largely open plan and so has a lot of potential for imaginative uses. It is not dissimilar to the old BT building in Ward Rd, currently being converted into student flats; however, as we don't need more student accommodation, self-contained flats could be provided. There is space to create a corridor down the centre of the office with flats off to each side.

Alternatively, it could be used as a studio space for gym use or split up into small units for, say, arts and crafts or small retail and exhibition use. Could a food court with communal restaurant facilities be situated there? It is in a great site, central to the city centre, close to the universities, beside the railway station and the V&A and other tourist sites.

Could we adopt the co-living model that we have heard about recently at the Helen & Hard Architects' talk? There is also the undeveloped plot of ground immediately opposite, which is used as a car park. Could some project be done to utilise both?

The owners are, I understand, a substantial equity fund with pensions and property interests all over the country. What plans they will have for the Nethergate Centre is for them to decide. I hope they have some imagination and don't merely let part of it. We don't want the building to be simply boarded up and neglected or worse still knocked down, as it is in such a prominent position on the waterfront. It deserves some careful consideration to see what adapted future use it may hold. Watch this space.



# Can we live together differently? Barbara Illsley

There is an interconnected crisis in housing facing us in the western world which links the climate emergency, housing affordability and loneliness. The paradox is that we are living in larger homes but more of us live alone. What can be done? Can we live together differently in ways that help address these challenges? This was the topic of the fascinating lecture given by Norwegian architect Siv Helene Stangeland, co-founder of Helen and Hard architects, and delivered to a packed audience at V&A Dundee last month. The event was jointly organised by Dundee Institute of Architects, Dundee Civic Trust and V&A Dundee with the support of the Norwegian Consulate.



Helen and Hard has sought to design more connected, resilient and sustainable ways of living, adopting a co-living model. Their concept of 'gaining by sharing' seeks to combine a private, individual living space with common areas shared by a larger housing community. The main models are **co-housing** (private space with shared outside and inside space), and **cluster housing** (private space with shared outside space) and these are both distinct from serviced housing where staff and support services are involved; and also from

**communal** living, where there is very much greater provision of shared spaces.

Using beautiful images, Siv Helene introduced us to three of the Helen and Hard's Norwegian 'gaining by sharing' projects. The first was a **co-housing** development of 40 privately owned homes built on the site of the firm's former offices in Stavanger. Each home has 50m<sup>2</sup> personal space (living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom) plus access to 500 m<sup>2</sup> shared space and an indoor courtyard. Units can be combined for larger families and easily adapted for those with particular needs. The housing is constructed sustainably entirely out of timber. The design ensures that the shared space is visually and physically accessible for people of all ages. She explained that a participatory process was central to the design, allowing residents to influence how they use shared areas, and this approach also underpins ongoing management. Siv Helene is herself a resident in this development and her enthusiasm for this form of living was clear.

The second example was a **cluster** housing development in Vilbo where five different types of housing, including owner-occupied and supported housing for elderly, were organised around a central hub. The resulting diversity is seen as crucial to developing a sense of community. The different blocks are designed to provide for the needs of their specific residents but physical links between blocks and shared access to the central outdoor space helps to facilitate sharing and exchange.

The third example was a development of six residential buildings, also built in sustainable timber with sun-facing balconies. The shared element in this case was much more limited, consisting of a centrally positioned large sunny communal house, not physically connected to the homes, plus shared gardens.

Summing up, Siv Helene emphasised that we all need to rethink our approach to housing to meet social and environmental challenges and that co-living is one way to improve wellbeing in a sustainable manner. I found it fascinating to hear the experience of someone so committed to creating more caring communities and her views on the role of architecture in that process. Although we have a long tradition of community housing associations in Scotland, there are few directly equivalent examples of co-housing. If the sector is to grow here, a change in mind set will be needed, both from those interested in living collaboratively and from professionals engaged in the development process.

# Local Plan Review submission

Donald Gordon

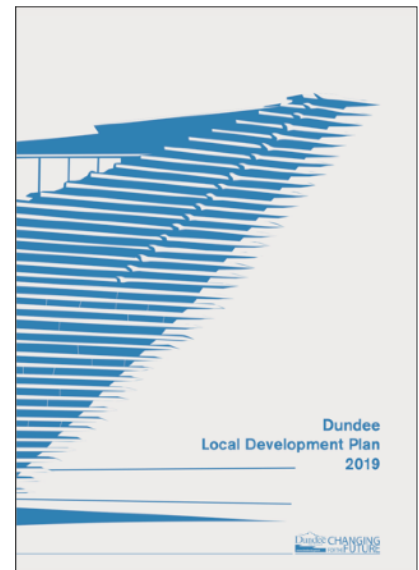
Dundee Civic Trust welcomes the review of the 2019 Local Development Plan (LDP19). The previous plan contained some valuable ideas, it is now outdated, and the introduction of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) requires a more ambitious, flexible and future-focused approach. The next Local Development Plan must respond confidently to these national priorities and Dundee's local challenges. DCT have lodged a substantial document, based on the existing sections of LDP19, and building upon the vision and strategies that were expressed.

Our view is that a clearer, more coherent vision is needed, one that integrates policy across sectors and replaces rigid 'Masterplans' with adaptable planning 'Frameworks'. Dundee's constrained boundaries limit further growth, and expansion north of the Tay will support long-term sustainability and strengthen the city's regional role.

Dundee's UNESCO City of Design status did not exist at the time of the last Review, but we must capitalise on it and drive a stronger, design-led approach. Policies must align with NPF4's Six Qualities of Successful Places, supported by clearer design guidance, mandatory Design and Access Statements, a unified City Centre Design Code and a multidisciplinary Design Review Panel that we are separately calling for. Higher-density development, including taller buildings, should be encouraged where it enhances liveability.

Economic growth requires Development Areas to sit within a citywide framework, backed by clear actions and adequate public and private investment. A dedicated Framework for Economic Growth would help coordinate priorities.

Housing policy must respond to the city's housing emergency. A comprehensive Housing Land Audit is essential, alongside support for higher-density living, reuse of vacant buildings, reduced car dominance and strong design oversight. Mixed-use development, retrofitting, and a Healthy Homes Standard should guide future housing, with student accommodation designed to be convertible later to general housing.



Revitalising the city centre is crucial, and we need more activity in it. Vibrancy will be restored by increasing the residential population, improving public transport, redeveloping key sites such as the Wellgate, Nethergate and Waterfront, and limiting out-of-town retail outlets.

The natural and built environment should be guided by regenerative design, with increased biodiversity across the city. Flood risk assessments must be broadened, waste management decentralised and a citywide renewable energy strategy developed. Demolition should be avoided unless fully justified.

Transport policy must reduce car dependency. Dundee needs better bus routing, improved journey times and higher ride quality, alongside a better-located bus station – another policy which we are calling for. Rail improvements, especially the line

to Edinburgh, are essential. Active travel should be supported through safer, flatter cycling routes away from main roads.

A more detailed summary of our proposals, and the full document are on the Trust's website:

<https://www.dundeecivictrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/LDP-responses-final-summary.pdf>

<https://www.dundeecivictrust.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/LDP-responses-final-18-Mar-inc-summary.pdf>

## Planning News

Fionn Stevenson

The last couple of months have been a remarkably busy time for the Trust's Planning Group.

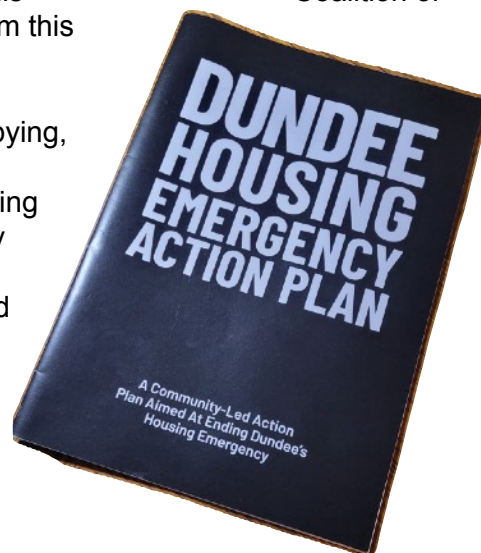
**Dundee Local Development Plan Review** – the 12,000-word response to the City Council's 'Call for Ideas' consultation has now been submitted on behalf of the Trust. At the same time, we also submitted our policies on: Dundee Housing Design Recommendations; Zero VAT on renovation projects; City Bypass; City Boundary Expansion and Central Waterfront Proposals. We wait to see if the draft Local Development Plan, due to be issued in Spring 2027, will contain any of our many ideas for improving the city. All of these policies can be found on our website under the 'Policy' subheading. We will also publicise these policies and proposals more widely during the forthcoming election period.

**Dundee Design Review Panel proposal** – this policy document has now also been lodged with DLDP3 'Call for Ideas' consultation. Such a panel can help to greatly improve major design proposals. Our next step will be to engage with the Dundee Institute of Architects and the council to explore how this idea could be developed and implemented. Numerous other cities in Britain already have such panels, and we believe that having one in Dundee would be fitting for our UNESCO status of "City of Design".

**The Central Waterfront Workshop**, organised by the Trust and held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March at Thorntons LLP, saw a full house of highly engaged senior representatives from 13 key stakeholder organisations operating in the area. A short draft 'Manifesto' was subsequently developed as a result of the afternoon's work and submitted to the Dundee Local Development Plan 'Call for Ideas' Consultation. This contained clear calls for action in order to create a liveable neighbourhood, sustainable transport and temporary uses for the seven empty sites sitting in this vital area of our city. The Trust will continue to engage with this 'Coalition of 13' in order to triage and work together on particular items from this Manifesto.

**Dundee Housing Emergency Action Plan** – after much lobbying, including by the Trust, the council made a u-turn and finally declared a Housing Emergency in the city on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, aligning with most other local authorities in Scotland who have already done so. They have agreed to work with the Dundee Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) coalition of organisations, and others, to address this issue. However, to date they have not responded to requests for a meeting to move this forward.

The HEAP plan can be seen here: [https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/policy\\_library/dundee\\_housing\\_emergency\\_action\\_plan](https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/policy_library/dundee_housing_emergency_action_plan)



We also made comments on the following planning applications:



The Trust supported the **proposed upgrading of Union Street**, with various caveats including: provision of suitable seating for disability, clarifying the weak sculptural message, showing how it fits into the existing Dundee art trails, adding pedestrian crossings to link Yeaman Shore to the station and Union Street to the Overgate, providing additional fencing protection for the rain gardens and providing a suitable plan for maintenance.

We continued to strongly object to the new house types for the **housing development of 42 dwellings in land to the east of Ballumbie Road**, because it

does not meet the Dundee Housing Design Recommendations developed by the Dundee Civic Trust. The layout lacks suitable local services within a 20-minute return walk and thus encourages car dependency. It also lacks the compactness and density needed to support a Liveable Neighbourhood. The primary school for this area should be built first before any further new housing is considered. The house types are not diverse enough and the layout lacks distinctiveness, places to play and focal points. The layout encourages urban sprawl on greenbelt rather than using a brownfield site.

The Trust supported the **re-use of the fine church building at 12 Rattray Street** (currently used by Hillcrest as offices known as 'The Cairn Centre') for much needed social housing. We commented that the living room/dining areas are too small and that the plans should demonstrate how furniture fits into the layout. We also noted the difficult entry route to the flats, and that Design and Access, Energy and Sustainability Statements should be provided.

We also supported a request by developers to extend the planning period for another three years for the much needed reuse of a fine building for **mixed use housing at Eagle Mill, 1 Dens Road**.



The application to construct welfare accommodation and EV chargers at the **Refuse Plant Dundee Waste Management Forties Road, Baldovie Industrial Estate** was strongly objected to by the Trust on the grounds that the consultants' flood risk report said this was a poor proposal, given the previous extensive flooding of this site by the Dighty Burn, twice in the last few years. This flooding will only increase over time. We are aware of the increasing number of poor applications for infrastructure related to necessary electrification and that there is a lack of good guidance for these to follow.

Two members of the Trust attended a PAN event on 4<sup>th</sup> March to publicise **a major affordable residential development and associated facilities at Wellburn Care Home 118 Liff Road**. We were left rather underwhelmed by the proposals, which lacked enough density to provide a viable Liveable Neighbourhood for the area, as well as lacking a sense of place due to restricted house types and poor car parking arrangements. We wait to see how the developer responds to our comments.

It was good to see proposals for a careful 'light touch' **renovation of the large and listed Northwood mansion at 118 Strathern Road**. The Conservation Statement was also welcomed. However, there is no signified disabled parking and it is unclear how wheelchair access is obtained to the building. We supported the re-use of this fine building, but with these caveats.



The proposed **travel shop refitting at 22 City Square** is in a 1924 listed building by the famous architect, Sir John James Burnet. Our only concern is that the original front detailing above the shop windows has not been shown and must be retained. We supported the application with this caveat.

The **demolition application for the listed Timex Factory at 27 Harrison Road** in the Dryburgh Industrial Estate included all the information from their previous PAN event showing an uninspiring new housing development. We have already provided comments at the PAN stage, but none of them have been taken on board. We await the full planning application in principle.

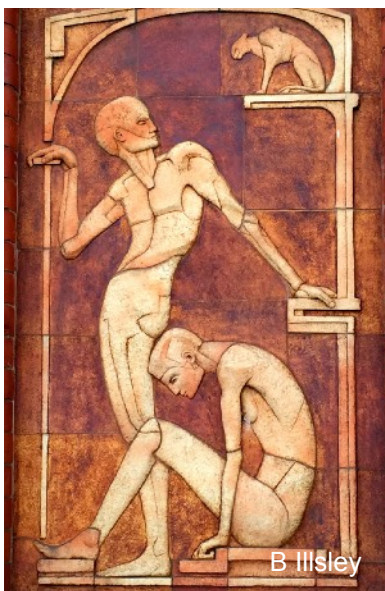
them have been taken on board. We await the full planning application in principle.

## Barbara Illsley - supreme editor-in-chief

Barbara is stepping down as editor of Newsflash and from the team, and this is her last publication. She is also retiring from the Board, of which she is a past chair. She has been involved in the production of no fewer than 51 of the 74 issues of Newsflash and as editor for six years. The DCT Board regretted that she didn't make it to a hundred!

Barbara is not retiring 'with a final flourish', as every issue of the much-admired Newsflash flourishes with interesting and readable articles. She leaves with our congratulations and thanks.

Donald Gordon, chairman.



# Dates for your diary

## 16 April 2026 at 7.00 pm

Dundee Art Society Gallery Roseangle  
**Annual General Meeting** followed by  
Roderick Stewart, **It's Dundee; they are Cassies**

Roderick Stewart has been an observer and photographer of cassies and their kin, kerbs and flags, for many decades and this illustrated roam around our streets aims to highlight the extraordinary skills and the sheer scale of labour required to create our gloriously-textured streetscapes.



## Season 2026-2027

### 15 October 2026 at 7,00 pm

Dundee Art Society Gallery Roseangle  
Matthew Jarron, The Origins of Dundee War Memorial

Wine kindly provided by Euan McNicoll, wine merchants.

# Dundee Civic Trust Membership Form

We are always keen to welcome new members. If you know of anyone who would like to join Dundee Civic Trust, please either direct them to the Trust website or print out the Membership form at the end of this bulletin.



### CONTACT US

Happy to hear  
from you at:

[DCT](#)

[info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk](mailto:info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk)

### Editorial Team

- Barbara Illsley
- Donald Gordon
- Brian Cram
- Stephen Brand
- Roderick Stewart
- Graham Nicholson

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(Corporate/Educational applicants only) Name or title of Contact

Address

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Town/City

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Telephone

Email

Membership Type:

Individual or Educational  
(£20 per annum)

Joint Membership (£30 per annum)

Under 25yrs (£5 per annum)

Corporate (£50 per annum)

Life (£150)

Joint Life (£200)

### Personal Data

I understand that Dundee Civic Trust will handle my personal data, as stated in the Privacy Notice. (See about this on the Trust's website) [www.dundeecivictrust.co.uk](http://www.dundeecivictrust.co.uk)

### Gift Aid (Boosts the Trust by 25p in every £1.00 at no cost to yourself)

I want to Gift Aid my annual subscription and any subscription I make in the future, or have made in the past 4 years, to **Dundee Civic Trust (SCIO)**. I consent to having my personal data processed for this purpose. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claims on all my subscriptions in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay the difference.

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Cash (in person only)  Cheque made out to **Dundee Civic Trust (SCIO)**

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#### Bank of Scotland

**Account:** Dundee Civic Trust (SCIO) **Sort Code:** 80 22 60 **Account No:** 12485969



Dundee Civic Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, established in 1973

The membership year runs from 31 October each year.

Date:

Please return this form to:

**Libby Simpson, Membership Secretary, Dundee Civic Trust,  
3 Dean Avenue, Dundee DD4 7LH**

[libby.simpson1@outlook.com](mailto:libby.simpson1@outlook.com)