OBAN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

20-page special inside this month's Review

Oban Business Improvement District
www.bid4oban.co.uk
Love Oban vouchers, the Oban pounds, were launched in 2013 by BID4Oban to encourage spending in local shops, restaurants and businesses.

Since then they have proved very popular and, over the last year, sales of these vouchers have increased by more than 30 per cent. By buying and using the vouchers you can ensure that the money spent stays within the Oban business community and local businesses.

Throughout the year there have been various promotions where purchasers of the vouchers have saved up to 10 per cent off the face value of the vouchers, thus saving on any goods purchased with them. Over the Christmas period there were record-breaking sales of the vouchers, which can be used in more than 70 businesses.

The Love Oban vouchers make ideal presents for weddings, anniversaries, and birthdays or just to say thank you to someone. They are available from the BID4Oban Office, Oban Phoenix Cinema, The Sports Shop Oban and Alba Art Shop.

By purchasing Love Oban Vouchers, you are supporting local businesses.

Full details on where to purchase and spend vouchers are available by visiting www.bid4oban.co.uk

Love Oban Gift Vouchers

Love Oban Gift Vouchers can be redeemed at over 70 businesses throughout Oban and are valid for 12 months! Check out Love Oban on Facebook.

You can buy your Love Oban Gift Vouchers from:
The Sports Shop, Argyll Square, Webster of Oban Photographic Centre, 122-124 George Street Bid4Oban, Stevenson Street and Alba Art Shop, Albany Street

NOW IT’S EASIER THAN EVER TO LOVE OBAN!
The principal aim of the BID is to deliver projects and services to improve the trading environment of the BID area to the benefit of businesses, their customers and visitors. BID4Oban is clearly focused on improving Oban as a commercial and tourist destination and its key objectives reflect this.

- Making the best first impression
- Let’s shout about what’s happening in Oban
- Extend the season
- Making Oban the place to stay, explore and spend
- Working together for a more prosperous future
- Making our town easier to visit

Since the inception of BID4Oban in 2012 and following a successful re-ballot in 2017 the organisation has worked to improve the business and commercial opportunities for Oban. The BID is funded by a small levy that is charged to every business in Oban with a rateable value of £3,000 or above. The smallest levy paid is £150 rising to £5,000 for the largest businesses generating an annual income of £145,000. The levy is used to supplement and fund services and grants for which there would be no funding available if the BID were not in place.

The BID was originally set up by a group of businesses in Oban; every five years the business community votes for the continuation of the BID or not, working to a fluid business plan that can adapt to the economic climate throughout the duration of the BID.

Details of the current business plan are available at www.bid4oban.co.uk. Bid4Oban is ideally placed to receive additional funding for key projects from various partners, including Argyll and Bute Council.

BID4Oban has supported not just the business community but other groups and organisations within the town with event-funding grants; funding of community projects and offered commercial support for community organisations.

During 2018 BID4Oban was the organisation chosen by Argyll and Bute Council to supply and install the festive lights for the town. Oban Electrical Services carried out most of the work, with an additional 106 lamppost Christmas trees supplied by BID4Oban. It is hoped that for 2019 the displays will be improved and extended to other areas of the town.
For the last five years Joe Reich and Kay MacDonald have been the face of BID4Oban and on hand to meet and greet visitors to Oban.

Every day is different with its own rewards and challenges. Almost every nationality on the planet has arrived in Oban at one time or another and between them Joe and Kay have welcomed and directed more than 60,000 visitors arriving by train, coach, ship, car, bike and even on foot.

One of the joys of being a Town Ambassador is not knowing what each day will hold; whether it’s going around shops and businesses to distribute maps and leaflets or being on hand to welcome cruise ship passengers as they arrive in their hundreds and sometimes thousands. All cruise visitors are warmly welcomed with a friendly smile, a map of the town and the stirring sound of a piper which, without exception, they love.

With both Ambassadors being dog lovers it is not just human visitors they welcome but also the dogs who accompany them and with the numbers growing every year. It has been good to notice that the number of places in town which welcome dogs is also growing to accommodate them and their owners. Joe and Kay often say that the best part of their job is welcoming all the canine visitors and being able to advise people where the best walks are and know that the dogs are enjoying their holiday too.

It is not just visitors to Oban who speak to the Ambassadors; many local people enjoying a chat with them to find out what’s happening in the town and which cruise ships are due in. Local people often help the Ambassadors by telling them of things which need attention, such as rubbish on the beach or advertising boards in awkward places that might be a hazard to a disabled visitor. These facts can then be passed on to the relevant person and dealt with. Many a friendship has been built up over the years with locals who...
are seen daily, visitors who return year-after-year and workers in local businesses; these are all advantages of being out and about. Helping to support the many events in Oban throughout the year is also one of the perks of being a Town Ambassador; from directing people to the Highland Games to making sure everyone is safe during the Reindeer Parade and fireworks and enjoying the music throughout the town for Oban Live, the Highland and Islands Music and Dance Festival and the Mòd, plus the other festivals that take place.

It is not all sweetness and light though, with wind and rain being two of the main challenges for Ambassadors; it is not easy to smile and welcome people when the rain is going sideways and your map is disintegrating in your hand. But often the reaction of visitors to our weather is a pleasant surprise as they either love it (they come from Texas) or they’re not bothered in the slightest as Scotland is not somewhere you come for the weather.

In the grand scheme of things, the weather is only a very small blip occasionally in what must be one of the best jobs in the world. Welcoming people to a beautiful town that they are passionate about and getting to spend each day telling everyone what a great place Oban; it doesn’t get much better than that.

Kay also keeps BID4Oban pages on the Town Diary and the popular Love Oban and BID4Oban Facebook Pages up to date. It is helpful if people get in touch with her about what events are happening in the town from the smallest to the largest.

**To promote new events, visit obanwhatson.co.uk or Love Oban or BID4Oban Facebook pages. There is no charge for this service, and it all goes to promoting events in the town.**
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

One of the key objectives of BID4Oban is to improve the appearance of the town. This takes many forms and the Business Improvement Grants have proved highly successful. To date BID4Oban has awarded £39,900 to eligible businesses, with 2018 being the most successful year so far.

These grants enable businesses to invest in the visual impact of their properties by way of improved signs or redecoration of a shop front. Ensuring the frontage of business premises look bright and well-cared for has a major impact on the look of the town. This benefits not just the business but its neighbours and the town as a whole.

Last year BID4Oban also ensured that most of the town centre bollards and railings were repainted as part of its commitment to ensuring the town looks its best.

Full details on how a business can apply for a grant can be found by visiting www.bid4oban.co.uk or contacting the office in Stevenson Street.

OBAN TOWN MARKETS

Oban Town Markets which take place in the Station Square area of the town over the summer months have proved highly successful. There are normally up to 10 vendors providing local produce and goods. During 2019 it planned to increase the number of vendors.

BID4Oban supplies the market traders’ licence, gazebos and infrastructure to enable these events to take place. By having one organisation running the markets it ensures that there is no duplication or unwanted vendors setting up ad hoc markets.

BID4Oban is keen to take bookings from any interested parties who may want to sell their goods or services. Full details and dates of markets are available on www.bid4oban.co.uk and Oban Town Diary.
What would you give for a wonderful new bed?...

BID4 A BED

MAKE US AN OFFER FOR THIS BED

ELARA 2 DRAWER DOUBLE BED & H/BOARD

£568

PLACE YOUR SECRET BID IN A SEALED ENVELOPE WITH YOUR NAME AND CONTACT PHONE NUMBER. POP IT IN THE BOX IN STORE OR POST IT TO US AT THE ADDRESS BELOW (ONLY ONE SET AVAILABLE).

Closing date 28th March 2019.

Bids will be opened on the 29 March 2019 and the highest bidder will be notified.

T&Cs: This offer is not open to Mathesons and associated company employees. We will protect your personal data. We will only gather what we need for the requirements of this auction. Entry data will be deleted/disposed immediately upon the deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant’s details will not be used for any other activity.

Mathesons Furnishings, Tweedmill, Soroba Road, Oban.
Tel: 01631 565195  www.mathesons.co.uk
Oban Walking Tours were set up in June 2018 in conjunction with The Port of Oban Cruise Group.

Twelve guides were trained to Scottish Tour Guides Association standards in a project jointly funded by BID4Oban Ltd, Argyll and Bute Council and The Oban Common Good Fund.

The project was created after requests from cruise ship companies for Oban-based tour guides to give visitors a genuine local tour experience.

Prior to the Walking Tours being set up there were few accredited guides to undertake the task in here in the town. Having locally-based guides enables Oban to provide walking tours of the area which can also be booked for anyone wanting a tour of the town during the peak tourist season.

These can be booked online by visiting www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk. Not only are passengers from some of the larger cruise ships using the service but Bid4Oban is also negotiating with some of the smaller cruise ships to provide bespoke tours for their passengers on a weekly basis.

By providing this service it ensures that most of these passengers spend their time in Oban using the local services of shops, restaurants and other businesses.

Many of these cruise ships have a very large crew and information is provided for them on what is available in Oban and the surrounding area.

As well as providing Walking Tours every cruise ship that arrives in Oban is met at the North Pier Pontoons or North Pier Harbour and provided with local information. This is in the form of maps, leaflets and the knowledge of the BID4Oban Town Ambassadors, along with a piper to pipe the passengers ashore and is always appreciated by visitors.

There are very few cruise destinations in Scotland providing such a bespoke service to these important visitors; 2019 will see 105 cruise ships of all shapes and sizes visit making it the busiest year ever.

The largest will be the Cunard Queen Victoria visiting on June 7. These visitors generate a huge financial benefit to the town, and BID4Oban will continue to grow and improve the service provided.

For further information visit www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk or www.bid4oban.co.uk
Step this way...

To book your walking tour search ‘Oban Walking Tours’ on Facebook

www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk

Oban Business Improvement District
www.bid4oban.co.uk
We are not just about shop fronts...

Apply now for an improvement grant from Bid4Oban

To find out more and to apply visit: www.bid4oban.co.uk/projects/business-frontage
BID4Oban uses part of the levy it collects from the business community to help support local events, festivals and community organisations. Since its inception, £212k has been invested in the Oban community ensuring events can function and are supported financially; with the organisation supporting festivals, clubs and community organisations.

Oban Live has been supported from the start and now generates in excess of £1.4M in economic benefit to the businesses in the town.

Daniel Gillespie of Decade Events Ltd who organise Oban Live said: ‘Without the outstanding support of BID4Oban in terms of their financial contribution and in-kind support from the BID4Oban employees it would make the event more difficult to organise. BID4Oban work in tandem with our team to ensure Oban Live is the success it is today.’

Another event that has benefited from financial and in-kind support is The Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival held in May each year generating an economic benefit to Oban of £1.2M. Motorfest has grown since small beginnings in 2015. Now held in September, it attracted in excess of 70 vehicles on display, many from outwith the local area. Combined with a mountain bike stunt show in 2018 it brought in excess of 2,500 visitors.

The BID4Oban Reindeer Parade and Christmas Lights switch-on has proved one of the best attended events in Oban during the busy festive season. In excess of 2,000 Obanites and visitors attended this year’s parade and celebration. This could not take place without the terrific support of The Rotary Club of Oban and Oban and Lorn Lions Club, Argyll and Bute Council and Oban Electrical Services.

Fireworks displays are always well attended and 2018 was no exception. With the help of Scottish Sea Farms, who sponsored the November 5 display, the event saw huge crowds line the Esplanade and the North Pier to view one of the biggest displays ever seen in Oban. A spectacular display also took place to celebrate the New Year from McCaig’s Tower.

During 2018 BID4Oban supported Oban Communities Trust (The Rockfield Centre) with a grant of £9,500. This project will be a key cultural hub that will benefit both the residents of Oban and the many visitors to the town each year.

Details on how to apply for grant funding can be found at www.bid4oban.co.uk or contact the BID4Oban office in Stevenson Street.
Oban Live

7th - 8th June 2019

Obanlive.com

Working in partnership with BID4Oban

Oban Business Improvement District

www.bid4oban.co.uk

Skerryvore
Lucy Spraggan
Elephant Sessions
We Banjo 3
Talisk
JigJam
Red Hot Chilli Pipers

Plus more TBA...
EVENTS LIST FOR 2019

FEBRUARY
10th & 11th Highland Cattle Society

MARCH
26th Visiting Cruise Ship (V.C.S.) - Hebridean Princess
30th V.C.S. - Astoria

APRIL
2nd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
7th V.C.S. - Magellen
13th Oban Town Market
14th V.C.S. - Costa Mediterrania
16th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
27th Fiddlers Rally
22nd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
23rd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess

MAY
1st V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
3rd – 5th Highlands & Islands Music & Dance Festival
7th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
12th Oban Sportive
8th V.C.S. - Astoria & Lord of the Glens
11th V.C.S. - Ocean Nova
14th V.C.S.s - Hebridean Princess
15th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
17th V.C.S. - Le Champlain
17th Scottish Islands 3 Peaks Race
31st – 2nd June Oban Provincial Mod
18th V.C.S. - Costa Mediterranea & Ocean Nova
21st V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
22nd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
23rd V.C.S. - Seabourn Quest
24th V.C.S. - Hebridean Sky
25th Oban Town Market
26th V.C.S. - Marco Polo & Corinthian
28th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
29th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
30th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager

JUNE
1st Oban & Lorn Lions Charities Day
3rd V.C.S. - Corinthian & Astoria
30th – 2nd July
West Highland Tennis Week
4th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
5th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
30th – 2nd July
West Highland Tennis Week
7th & 8th Oban Live
7th V.C.S. - Queen Victoria
10th V.C.S. - Silver Cloud
11th V.C.S. - Le Boreal & Hebridean Princess
12th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th V.C.S. - Corinthian
18th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
19th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
21st V.C.S. - Polar Pioneer
23rd V.C.S. - Corinthian
25th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
26th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
28th V.C.S. - Hebridean Sky
29th V.C.S. - Oban Town Market

JULY
26th – 2nd Aug
West Highland Yachting Week
2nd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
3rd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
5th V.C.S. - Corinthian
8th V.C.S. - Dumont D’Urville
11th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th Motorfest
18th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
21st Oban Town Market
25th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
26th V.C.S. - Seabourn Ovation

AUGUST
2nd V.C.S. - Corinthian
7th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
14th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
17th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
21st V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
22nd Argyllshire Gathering
22nd V.C.S. - Corinthian
23rd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
24th Oban Town Market & Oban Sea Kayak Race
24th V.C.S. - Ocean Majesty
27th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
28th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens

SEPTEMBER
4th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
5th V.C.S. - Pacific Princess
6th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
8th V.C.S. - Dumont D’Urville
11th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th Motorfest
18th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
21st Oban Town Market
25th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
26th V.C.S. - Seabourn Ovation

OCTOBER
2nd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
5th & 6th Craggy Island Triathlon
12th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens

NOVEMBER
5th Fireworks
T.B.A. Reindeer Parade

DECEMBER
31st Hogmanay Fireworks

FOR AN UPDATE LIST OF MONTHLY EVENTS VISIT WWW.OBANWHATSON.CO.UK
BID PARTNERSHIP WORKING

BID4Oban works very closely with Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance (OLTA) www.oban.org.uk The two have an understanding that ensures BID4Oban supports them financially with an annual grant of at least £10,000.

This ensures that OLTA can gain access to additional monies through match-funding of the grant given by BID4Oban. This is used to promote Oban as a tourism destination not only on their website but also by way of billboard advertising across Scotland, taxi-wrap advertising and on the Glasgow and London undergrounds.

OLTA pay a crucial roll in marketing Oban as a must-visit destination. Its website is testament to this being the first site you will see if you Google Oban.

It is part of the Argyll and the Islands Tourism Alliance ensuring influence is not just felt in Oban but the greater geographical area.

Neil McKay, chairman of OLTA said: ‘BID4Oban and OLTA have a fantastic working relationship and their financial input is vital to the success and future success of OLTA. This year BID4Oban, Oban Live and OLTA will be promoting Oban as a must-visit destination at the Visit Scotland Tourism Expo in April. By all organisations
working together we can raise the profile and potential of Oban as a place to visit.’

During 2017 BID4Oban, supported by Oban Community Council and The Oban Common Good Fund invested in the installation of Town WIFI. This is in the process of being extended to ensure WIFI is available across the North Pier Pontoons and along to the war memorial.

Town WIFI is very important for overseas visitors as many do not want to use their devices on mobile networks due to the costs. Since its installation thousands of visitors have registered or logged into the network provided by local installer Craine Communications.

MacQueen Bros Charitable trust match funded the Rockfield Communities Trust grant from BID4Oban with a further £10,000. Pictured left to right: Graham MacQueen, Gordon McNab, Andrew Spence, Linda Fraser, Kay McDonald, Joe Reich.
Ensuring the town looks its best is a key priority of BID4Oban.

During times of budget restraints it is increasingly difficult for the Argyll and Bute Council to fund many of the services previously taken for granted. BID4Oban invested in a street cleaning machine (the Green Machine) and this is in regular use in and around the town, operated by Argyll and Bute Council. BID4Oban is working with the council to ensure that the town is maintained to the best possible standard.

One of the signature projects that BID4Oban undertakes each year is the installation of 256 hanging baskets and planted railing troughs throughout the town. Last year the overall investment in this project was around £14,000 and covered the installation, maintenance, planting, hardware and delivery. The costs of supplying not only the plants but also the baskets that are used increases every year. This year BID4Oban is looking for residents and businesses to sponsor a basket or trough in return for their name to appear adjacent. The cost of sponsoring a basket is £25 and a trough £50.

Improvements to the entrance into McCaigs Tower are included in this year’s programme. This iconic attraction needs some care and attention; it is one of the most visited attractions in Oban and ensuring it is well-presented creates the best first impression for visitors.

Full details on how to support or sponsor a basket are available at www.bid4oban.co.uk
Shine a light on Oban is one of the key projects that BID4Oban will undertake this year. Following a funding award of £11,500 from The Oban Common Good Fund this will be match funded by BID4Oban.

The project will illuminate various locations within Oban with state-of-the-art controllable lighting to enhance the visitor experience, improve the ambiance of the town centre and create a town that is vibrant and inviting throughout the year. Ultimately there will be a reason to walk round the streets of Oban to view some amazing lighting enhancements that will be the envy of many tourist destinations. This gives Oban another unique reason to visit.

**PROJECT 1:** The Black Linn Burn – Illuminate the water and foliage of Black Linn from Combie Street Bridge to Oban Hospice Dove Centre.

Currently the Black Linn at Stevenson Street is an unkempt area of the town. There was work undertaken some years ago, including planting of shrubs and installation of net lighting. This lighting is now past its best, has become ugly and has an adverse impact on the wildlife of the burn. Part of the plan is to prune overgrown plants and remove the current lighting. The Black Linn will be illuminated from either side with colour changing lighting which during the evening will significantly improve the atmosphere of the area. It is also proposed to illuminate the underside of the Combie Street Bridge. Included in this project is the illumination of the six trees either side of the Black Linn on Stevenson Street and Airds Crescent. As an addendum, businesses on either side will be encouraged to apply to BID4Oban for Business Improvement Grants to improve the outward appearance of buildings and illuminate their buildings with eco-friendly lighting.

The preferred local contractor has identified low-cost options for various premises including the Lorn Public House and Ranald Hotel; these premises are in negotiation with the lighting contractor and BID4Oban.

**PROJECT 2:** Permanent illumination of the large preservation order tree outside the Rockfield Centre.

The current lighting is at the end of its usable life and new lighting will be installed which will be colour changing, eco and low-energy friendly. Given the importance that the Rockfield Centre will have for the town this will make a fitting entrance feature.

- There are other areas of the town that will be improved in future years and as funding becomes available.
BID4OBAN
GOVERNANCE

BID4Oban is managed by a board of directors chaired by Tony Cave, proprietor of Craigard Decor. The board is representative of the businesses and stakeholders in the BID area which also includes two representatives from Argyll and Bute Council.

Directors are responsible for the strategic direction of the BID; operating the company in an efficient and transparent manner; financial management and prudence and the delivery of BID projects and services in line with the business plan. They make decisions on grant funding programmes operated by BID4Oban and are responsible for monitoring the performance of the BID plus publishing the company’s annual report.

The day-to-day running of BID4Oban is undertaken by the BID manager, Andrew Spence who is accountable and responsible to the board of directors and manages the working of the BID company.

The BID employs two part-time Town Ambassadors, one of whom supports the BID manager with some administration duties.

BID4Oban is keen to recruit further directors from its levy payers. Please contact the BID office in the first instance.

BIDAGM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tony Cave, Chairman, Proprietor, Craigard Decor
Gregor McKinnon, Vice-chairman, General Manager, Manor House Hotel

BOARD MEMBERS:

Alex Needham
Cuan Mhor and Fishouse restaurants

Ian Clunie
B&B owner

Nicky Archibald
Estate Agent

Gilbert MacKechnie
Glenrigh Guest House

Roderick McCuish
Councillor and Deputy Provost, Argyll and Bute Council

Fergus Murray
Head of Economic Development, Argyll and Bute Council

John Forbes
Community Housing Scotland

BID4Oban AGM and annual review is held in March each year. Venue and date are advised in the public notice section of The Oban Times.
Why not make the most of digital accounting software whilst complying with MTD?
For most VAT registered businesses, Making Tax Digital starts in April 2019 when VAT returns need to be submitted from MTD compliant software to a new HMRC gateway and our digital accounting team can help you with this.
Once MTD compliant, you can focus on running your business whilst your bank feeds your business transactions into your digital software 24/7.
The availability of key business information ensures that you will make the best possible business decisions. Further reduce your administrative workload by issuing invoices electronically and accept electronic payments while using advanced automatic debt collection facilities.
An early move to Making Tax Digital (MTD) compliant software removes any compliance concerns, and reduces your administrative time, so why wait?

Call our digital accounting team on 01631 562643 or visit us at www.raclement.co.uk.
5 Argyll Square, Oban PA34 4AZ.
Offices also in Fort William and Tobermory.
See the website for details.