

## Chairman's Report 2016/2017

I am delighted at just how far we have come in our second year of Crieff Succeeds. Much of our hard work will become apparent over the next few months, and if there is a frustration, it is just how long it takes to get a programme up and running. Our successes include our new Website, an active Social Media campaign, and a very successful advertising campaign, which as you will hear shortly will be built on with the support of a £22,000 grant from Visit Scotland. Other highlights of the year include the renovation of the Town Hall, carried out thanks to significant financial support from PKC, which will allow us to support local business through a substantial Tourist Information role. In the next couple of weeks, we shall launch our new Crieff Gift Card, a fantastic initiative which I would urge all of you to get behind. We continue to develop the Business Plan, and as you will hear, we have some very significant events lined up for the coming year.

My thanks go to the Board. We are developing all the time, making good use of everyone's skills, and have gelled into an effective committee. My thanks go in particular to Neil Combe who has proved himself to be an extremely effective manager over the last year. With Neil's help, our communications with levy payers has improved markedly and we will continue to develop this over the coming year. Over the last year, we have lost a few Board Members, and my thanks go to Stuart Cassells from the Famous Grouse and Kate Graham from the Co-op, both of whom have moved on to new jobs out with Crieff. We wish them both well for the future. We also had a change in representation from Perth and Kinross Council, and my thanks and those of the Board go to Ann Cowan and Anne Younger, who both stood down at the Council Elections. I would also like to thank Simon Pengelley who retired from the Board as he no longer represents any local business.

I am delighted to say that the Board has welcomed two new faces as directors, Jamie Landale from the Crieff Food Company and Kay Aschaber of the Spence Gallery both of whom bring a great deal of experience with them. I am also pleased to welcome to the Board as advisers Graeme Bingham of Crieff Financial Services, Jim MacEwan of Finlayson's Accountants and Andrew Snowball, a retired business man with huge past experience in the Army and senior roles in the oil industry and the financial sector. We have also been strengthened by the appointments of Councillor Rhona Brock and Councillor Roz McColl to our Board. Finally, I would like to thank Jean Ann Scott Miller, who has supported us in a voluntary administrative role.

The Board decided to employ a part time Marketing Officer and the post is being advertised on our web site and further afield. This new appointment will allow us to develop even better communication with the levy payers, as well as helping us to promote Crieff. As part of this, the post-holder will update offers and events within Crieff on social media and our web site. This is an ideal way for those levy payers who are not directly involved with tourism to make the most of your levy payment. Our web site is not just for tourist related businesses, it is designed to benefit all businesses in the town.

My thanks and those of the Board go to Finlaysons Accountants and Jim McEwen in particular for all their assistance in looking after the administration of our accounts. I would also like to thank PKC for collecting the levy for us, Initial teething problems have largely been resolved.

As I mentioned earlier, PKC have invested a considerable sum in the Town Hall. Without this, it was in great danger of falling into disrepair, and we are grateful for this investment in the town's future.

Our thanks must also go to the Economic Development Department in PKC, who have been helpful on many fronts. We are also hopeful that with a new administration in Perth, we can expect a change of focus when looking at town development. It has to be said that we have great concerns that up to now everything has been Perth centric - everything from a free parade in Perth on the same day as Crieff Highland Gathering to lighting projects costing vast amounts, to the refurbishment of the Council Chambers and St Johns at the top of the High Street, to Water Taxis on the Tay and so on. Perth's economic development budget is, I believe, in the region of £500 million. It is time for our efforts in Crieff and those of other towns within PKC to be recognised and supported. Crieff Community Trust and BID are trying very hard to ensure that Crieff has a healthy economic future, and we need the backing of the PKC Executive.

On looking at last year's Report, I am reminded that certain things don't change. It is now 13 years since it was proposed that Crieff had a new supermarket, and we are still no further forward. This must have immediate priority with over 75% of food spend going out-with Crieff. On a very positive note, I am sure we are all delighted to welcome the new Crieff Food Company, which has already made a huge difference to the town centre.

In the next 12 months, we will continue with the successful Business Improvement Grant Scheme and we are developing a range of events for next year, based mainly around the Town Centre. These events are designed to increase footfall and, more importantly, the dwell time of visitors. Again, you will hear more of this as we go through our presentations tonight.

A notable benefit of a strong local economy is that money stays within the community. In effect, a circular flow of money is generated – money spent with the local café or restaurant returns to the local community in return for other services, estimated to be around 73% of the money spent.

There's no doubt there is a visible focus on celebrating and marketing our Tourist Assets. And BID is **more** than just that. It works for and benefits everyone. In the Summer we ran a marketing campaign – Just One – which featured businesses not necessarily linked directly to hospitality and tourism. And in just a few weeks-time, we will launch the Crieff Gift Card that will benefit all participating retailers. The website and the Business Improvement Grant Scheme are two other examples of how all businesses can make the most of the BID. From the taxi driver who ferries tourists from hotels to restaurants through to the joiners and decorators who refurbish new and existing businesses, BID works for everyone.

Crieff Succeeds only exists to work on your behalf, co-operating with PKC, Visit Scotland and other agencies to develop the Business Plan. There is a huge amount to celebrate: we have wonderful scenery and major visitor attractions on our doorstep; we have a growing reputation for quality food, in both the retail and hospitality sectors; there are real opportunities for us to develop an exciting and innovative programme of events. Let's work together to make Crieff an even more attractive, vibrant and economically healthy place to work and to live. Our future lies in our own hands. Let's make it a good one!

Welcome Home to Crieff