Bathgate Community Development Trust ltd

Bathgate Partnership Centre

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**TO ALL MEMBERS of the Community Development Trust Ltd**

**Chairs Project Report 2025**

The last year since the AGM in November 2023 has been very productive with many projects taking off and new projects been taken on by the trust.

I have listed our active projects and plans below.

**Allotments**

A number of Bathgate citizens have been trying to get allotments established in Bathgate for a number of years including the Community Council. We have brought the various interests together and are recognized by the West Lothian Council as the body determined to bring this about. We have entered into detailed discussion with West Lothian Council. The Council recognizes that Bathgate is the area in West Lothian that needs allotment sites most so we are hopeful this will happen soon. A site has been identified and a ground survey undertaken which established that there were no problems and that the site was feasible.

A Bathgate Allotments Society was formed but failed to progress the scheme so the BCDT has formed a sub committee of the trust to take the necessary action and secure the funding that the WLC has earmarked. The funding will not be enough but will fund a fence for the site so the sub-committee is looking at other funding sources. An application for funding has been made to the Edinburgh Airport Community Fund and the National Lottery to assist with planning permission preparation. Unfortunately we have had no joy from these funding sources to date. The site will require formal planning permission and a community consultation will have to be carried out. Agreement has been reached on the dimensions of the site which is smaller that envisaged but will support a reasonable number of plots.

**Bathgate In Bloom**

This is a new area of interest for us as a trust, but we decided to step in when the Enterprising Bathgate BID organisation ceased operating. Bathgate in Bloom was one of their major projects and the flower beds and planters and hanging baskets in the town were all part of this. The flowers brightened the town up and were very popular, so we were delighted to win funds for flower planters from West Lothian Climate Action Network Eco Fund. Funds were also forthcoming from West Lothian Council to save the hanging baskets projects in the year 2024 . We are committed to keeping this new project up so are starting fundraising soon to do the scheme next year and keep Bathgate Blooming.

**Old Bathgate Railway Station**

We have been having discussions with Network Rail about the old Railway Station in King Street and managed to get them to clear up the site which had become an eyesore. We produced a three-stage plan to get the old platform back into use as a pleasant spot with some seating and flower planters and some information boards about the remarkable history of the return of the railways to Bathgate. Stage two could be a concession stand of some sort, maybe a coffee stop, and Stage three could be a footpath link to the new station. We have produced an artist impression of the revitalized platform and will fully consult the town on the plan if we have any success in acquiring the site.

**Community Gardens**

There is a lot of interest in establishing a community garden or gardens in Bathgate as evidenced by our Growing Opportunities in Bathgate survey. It was a project started by the Community Council a few years ago who had identified the former community centre site as a possible location. That was disrupted when WLC decided that it would be a site for social housing. This was cancelled and the top of the site advertised for sale. The council has indicated that the rear of the site could be used as a community garden.

The former Bathgate baths site in Mid Street has been identified as a common good land site and the council has no plans for it. A group of BCDT members have formed a working group to take the idea of a community garden forward. They have met often and agreed a plan for the site and discussed the process of taking a community benefit lease with the council. They are planning a full consultation with the community in the spring of this year

**Little Boghead Nature Reserve**

We were delighted to assist the friends of Little Boghead this year when they applied to West Lothian Clime Action Network for funds to improve the reserve with new signs and new trees.

**Guildiehaugh Depot**

The former highways depot situated in the middle of the community has been vacant for a couple of years since WLC build their new supper depot in Whiteside.

A plan to use it to build council houses on it was abandoned when the costs associated with decontaminating the site were considered. Alternative sites were to be found to build those much-needed council houses, so the BCDT is interested in utilizing the depot site for a community resource centre together with the former St Mary’s school playing field adjacent to the depot. The uses are at the ideas stage with a variety from micro businesses, local band practice areas to raised bed allotments and sport playing field or community meeting spaces. We have identified it to the council as a site of interest. The site has been cleared this year to make it more attractive to developers. We have not heard of any interest in the site but will press West Lothian Council to develop a masterplan for the site and ask them to consult with the community.

**Directory of Community Organisations for Bathgate**

This is a project we think would be very useful for the residents of our town, but we haven’t progressed it very much to date. It will be on our agenda for 2025.

**Town Centre Management**

We have been invited to take part in the Town Centre Management Committee and are sending two representatives along to these meetings

**Bathgate Together**

Many of the organisations in Bathgate have come together as a new organisation called Bathgate Together to share information as a network and hopefully stage events in the town centre among other activities. They took the lead for the last two years on the Christmas Lights Switch on in the Steelyard and are planning a Band Contest this year year. We are playing an active part and send along a representative to the meeting.

**Dreadnaught Hotel**

There has been a great deal of concern in the community for a number of years now about the old hotel site. The building is listed on Scottish Buildings at Risk register, and we were exploring opportunities for it to be brought into community ownership to bring the site back into use as a valuable community asset. The obstacles to this are many so we have parked this project for the time being.

**Financial Affairs**

We have appointed Barrie Scott and Co local Bathgate Company to do our accounts and do our returns to Companies House and HMRC.

Our banking is conducted through our account at Metro Bank

**Funding**

We are interested in accessing some of the new funding sources to bring some of our projects to fruition. Such as Scottish Governments Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and the Place Based Investment Fund, Climate Emergency Project Fund, and the Community Ownership Fund. One of our local councillors gave us a generous grant to get started with initial costs. We also received a very generous grant from the Community Centre Committee. We are actively looking at more funding sources

**Facebook**

We plan a Facebook page for the public soon but do have a private Facebook Group for the members called *Bathgate Community Development Trust Members.*

**Website**

Our Web site is established at [www.bathgatecdt.org](http://www.bathgatecdt.org)

**Ronald McLeod**

**Chair of the Bathgate Community Development Trust**

**Directors**

Paul Mallis, Jocelyn Lockhart, John MacDonald, Donald Stavert.