

Combined Visit Kelso & Committee Report

Ongoing: Membership

As always, we would like to thank our existing members. We appreciate your continued support in our efforts and commitment to doing all we can to promote the town and surrounding area. We have had a great influx of new members and although some members have chosen not to renew. Our membership is healthy.

Ongoing: QR Code Window Stickers

The QR code stickers have been a great success. Scanning the QR code will take you directly to the website. Often visitors ask questions about the town when they are here and the QR code is a great way to get them straight to www.visitkelso.com. If for any reason you have not received your sticker or require more, please get in touch by emailing info@visitkelso.com and we'll make sure we get one to you.

Ongoing: Key Themed Shop / Business Window Dressing

Kelso is renowned for its window dressing competitions, our thanks must go to every business who participates and every volunteer who organises. Themed windows definitely make for an interesting walk around our town and are a great conversation piece for our community and visitors.

Regular windows competitions include Kelso Civic Week and Kelso Ladies Day (specific thanks to Kelso Racecourse for their sponsorship and very generous gifts for participants).

We are delighted over the past 18 months to also include the following themed window displays - Platinum Jubilee, Tour of Britain, M- Pulsive Dance School, and UCI Cycling.

Ongoing: Town Maps

Can members please ensure they have a good supply of the [Visit Kelso town map](#) for distributing to visitors.

If you need a supply, please collect from **Focal Point Furniture** or **Borders Cookware**.

We want to give our town and surrounding area visitors as much information as we can .

Ongoing: Parking

The issue of town centre parking has been raised again and businesses need to work together and help free the town centre congestion up and allow visitors and customers to park in the centre and use the facilities and businesses. Please can you do all you possibly can to ensure town centre spaces are not used by business owners and staff. It's in all our interests.

Ongoing: Visiting Journalists/ Bloggers

We have had some great press coverage recently from blogger “ The Chaotic Scot “ and journalist “A Man in Kilt “. We do welcome bloggers and journalists to our town and surrounding areas . We were also highlighted in the Lonely Planet Guide of best places to visit !

Destination Sector Marketing Fund (2022 /23)

The Visit Scotland Destination Sector and Marketing Fund awarded a grant to Visit Kelso to promote the town and surrounding area as a destination for off-season visits and a place to come to for a trip related to improving well-being.

- Creation of an off-season image bank of 300 images and 4-6 pieces of drone footage.
- The creation of four lesser-known story films about Kelso, narrated by Alasdair Hutton. The working titles are:
 - Sir Walter Scott’s First Love
 - Freddie the Scottish Wonder Horse
 - The Commercial Monks of Kelso Abbey
 - The Capture of Roxburgh Castle

All four films are live on both [our website](#) and the [Visit Kelso YouTube channel](#)

The Facebook and Instagram digital marketing campaign commenced on 25th September 2022 with two adverts a week posted on our social media platforms, promoting our off-season campaign utilising our Visit Kelso image bank .

Since we started the campaign we have reached over 115,000 people between Facebook & Instagram and have attracted 230 new followers on Facebook since the beginning of October. Our Facebook visits to the page have increased by 33%.

We started January 2023 with our Wellbeing Warrior Campaign. It was a great start to 2023 and it allowed businesses to highlight any particular wellbeing opportunities that they offer. Visit Kelso received great coverage on television, radio and print . Our social media traffic and click through rate have also increased throughout this period. We have continued the Wellbeing Warrior Campaign with a dedicated page on our website highlighting any business offerings that promote wellbeing .

Hanging Baskets (Summer 2022 & 2023)

Our thanks again to all the participating businesses. Both summers the take up has been high and the town looks amazing . Our special thanks to the volunteers who hang / take down and to Brian Rogers who undertakes the “watering services. “

Queen's Platinum Jubilee (June 2022)

I think we can all agree the Kelso celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee were outstanding and our thanks go to everyone who worked incredibly hard to make this event the success it was .

Kelso Civic Week (July 2022 & 2023)

Our thanks to the organisers of Civic Week, the town truly does shine . The Spot the Odd Object Competition is always incredibly well supported and challenging. Thanks to all who participate. (Over 50 business and over 100 completed entries)

Proclamation of King Charles III (September 2022)

On Sunday 11th September, Kelso Town Provost Gavin Horsburgh read the proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III in our beautiful Town Square, followed by a moment of reflection by our wonderful Kelso Churches. Our sincere thanks go to everyone involved in this unprecedented event.

Christmas Lights (December 2022)

We would like to extend our thanks to the Christmas Lights Committee for the wonderful festive lighting display we have in Kelso this year. Their hard work and fund raising activities have allowed our town to be a shining light in the Scottish Borders which we are all very proud of. We look forward to supporting all your hard work again in 2023.

Christmas Market (December 2022)

We are pleased to say that the Visit Kelso Christmas market was held on Sunday 4th December 2022 and was a great success. Thank you to all stall holders who attended and braved the chilly day.

Kelso Crown Trail (April 2023)

Many thanks to all the businesses who took part in the Kelso Crown Trail. Apologies to anyone who missed out, we really didn't expect such a level of support and we really appreciate you all. Thank you to Browns Newsagents and Seasons for always organising and helping. We would like to extend a huge thanks to FLOORS Castle for their sponsorship .

Time Capsule (April 2023)

On Friday 28th April, the time capsule in Kelso Square was reopened, revealing more than a dozen items, which had never been catalogued and which saw daylight for the first time in more than 60 years.

The main items found were 200-year-old nameplates relating to the workmen involved in laying the cobbles in the square over the past two centuries.

The contents of the time capsule are now on display in the Town Hall before being reburied later this year.

FINALLY

A huge thanks must go to all our volunteers who give up so much time, knowledge and expertise to allow us to run Visit Kelso for the member businesses.

A special thanks to both Wendy and Jackie for their continued perseverance of all things social media , we appreciate your time and effort .

Finally should you wish to join , we would welcome you. Our community thrives because we all work together.