

Visit Kelso AGM

Wednesday 19th May 2021

Welcome to our 2021 AGM.

You will have been emailed a copy of our annual accounts to 31st January 2020 and 2021.

To 31st January 2020

Tour of Britain - £3800 Grant, £3800 Expenditure

The Tour of Britain Stage 2 passed through Kelso in September 2019 and Visit Kelso were instrumental in working with the Tour and SBC to promote the event which brought a great number of visitors to the area. Funding was obtained from SBC to assist with the promotional project.

Hanging Baskets - £2073 watering revenue, £2408 watering expenditure

Visit Kelso are responsible for the hanging baskets within the town. In 2019 we had 78 baskets planted for businesses by Newton Don as well as all the floral displays that businesses put up themselves. The watering service was well used with 100 hanging baskets and floral displays watered by the service run by Visit Kelso.

Those members using the watering service pay £20 per basket for a 12 week period. Visit Kelso funded an extra weeks watering from their funds as well as covering the cost of the plant food. We are most grateful for the donation received from Charity Begins at Home which allows us to continue the watering service past the 12 week period businesses pay for.

Subscriptions - £6557

Subscription levels increased in 2020 and we had 134 paid members benefiting from the work carried out by the Visit Kelso team. We would like to thank those that support our initiatives. We can only succeed by working together as a group with a strong message ensuring all are aware of what Kelso and the surrounding area has to offer via our marketing materials, flyers, tourism events attended, website marketing and a very active social media campaign.

Donations - £90 and Sticker Sales £43.50

We received donations from several town organisations in exchange for promoting their events – Kelso Laddies Association, Kelso Camera Club, Border Flower Club and Kelso Folk Club.

SBC Grant - £4000 and CBAH Grant £1000

We received extra funding from SBC for Tour of Britain work in 2017. Charity Begins at Home kindly awarded Visit Kelso with £1000 which was used to cover extended watering of the hanging baskets and also the purchase of extra hanging baskets and hooks.

Salary and Outstanding Pay - £4333

Visit Kelso are fortunate to have Emily McGowan from McGowan Marketing and Wendy Richardson work for our group in a marketing capacity.

Emily manages our project and funding application work and is involved in several sub groups bringing a wealth of experience and is responsible for updating the events pages on the Visit Kelso website and generally assisting with strategy and structure within the group. Wendy has carried out all social media postings, campaigns, lots of photography and created video content all for use on all our social media channels. Our group could not have performed without the work carried out by Emily and Wendy. As a voluntary group we can do so much but could not perform to the level we do for members without employing marketing help.

Advertising - £1371 expenditure

£790 was spent on the Christmas market campaign that a Visit Kelso sub group organised in The Square with performers and family activities. A marketing flyer was used which was distributed via Crescent Distribution, Kelso Life as well as a supply held and distributed by all the businesses in the town and surrounding area with the aim of ensuring all locals and visitors to the area were aware of the market and ensuring everyone was aware Kelso was open for business 7 days a week during December.

Visit Kelso advertised in the Kelso Laddies Civic Week programme, had postcards printed and distributed in Kelso Life and carried out some facebook advertising.

Website Expenses - £223

Visit Kelso pay an £19 per month hosting fee to Strive Digital who built and developed the current website and who manage the hosting.

Map Project - £5347 expense, Community Group Grant received and was a provision from 2018 - £5000

Visit Kelso secured £5,000 funding from Scottish Borders Council Grant scheme with the funds being used to fund our marketing toolkit project. This project allowed Visit Kelso to produce a town map and pop up banners. With the demise of the Tourist information Centre, it was felt a town map was imperative for visitors to have when visiting the town and surrounding area. This map is distributed and widely held by all businesses to be given to visitors. Visit Kelso also used the services of an external local distribution company to extend the reach.

The bank balance at the year end stood at £8,747.52 as per the balance sheet.

To 31st January 2021

Subscriptions - £6543

Subscription levels stood at 132 paid members for 2021 which we felt was very strong due to COVID and we are most grateful for the continued support given to Visit Kelso through the pandemic.

Great British High Street - £15000

Kelso had reason to celebrate when The Square was crowned 'Rising Star of the Year' and Scottish Rising Star High Street, in the Government-run Great British High Street Awards 2019.

The application was submitted for The Square to the Great British High Street Rising Star award in Summer of 2019 and Kelso was crowned the Best in Scotland and also overall Rising Star for the UK.

The winning high streets were commended for demonstrating their commitment to their local community, great customer experience, an environmental mind-set, an innovative approach to retail and providing community leadership.

The judges commented that The Square was a fantastic example of a community that had made huge strides in transforming its high street to significantly improve the experience for locals and visitors alike.

We could not have been successful without the work and commitment by many including the Visit Kelso committee, both past and present, and McGowan Marketing for all they do to support us. In addition, we would not be able to do all we do to promote Kelso and the surrounding area without our members.

COVID Grant - £2000 and TOWN BIDS- £1800

We received a £2000 grant from the SBC Coronavirus Business Support Fund which helped us deliver a strong marketing campaign to encourage staycation visitors to come to the area during the lockdown lifting between July and December.

We were granted a proportion of a Town BIDS application we made and were delighted to be able to put this to good use and this campaign will run in early Summer. To maximise impact this will also link into the "Loves Local" marketing campaign, both by Visit Kelso as well as the Scotland and United Kingdom campaigns.

Salaries, Outstanding Pay and Town Bid Application Costs - £8159

The costs covered McGowan Marketing and Wendy Richardson's cost as well as funding application work provided by Emily McGowan.

Advertising and Marketing - £779

£571 was spent on the Christmas market campaign. A group from within Visit Kelso ran the Christmas campaign for the town. An advert was placed in both Kelso Life and Gala Life to help communicate to all locals and visitors to the area that Kelso was open for business 7 days a week during December.

£75 was spent on boosting facebook marketing posts, £77 on a Canva pro licence and £56 on Crescent distributing out town maps to venues in the Scottish Borders.

Great British High Street - £3240

Following the win of the Great British High Street award, Visit Kelso have added walking trails to the website under the Activities section. The group created the routes and walked them in order to provide the content and information for the website.

Website Hosting - £230, Web Page Updates £148

Visit Kelso pay an £19 per month hosting fee to Strive Digital who built and developed the current website and who manage the hosting. In 2020 work was done to enhance some functionality on the website.

The bank balance at the year end stood at £22,375 as per the balance sheet. Taking into account provisions made to 31st January 2021 including £11,759 from the Great British High Street award and £1600 from the Town BIDS award the net cash position stood at £9016.

To summarise, as we ease out of lockdown we are working tirelessly to promote the town and surrounding area for the benefit of all members and are grateful for all the support enabling the group to continue with our marketing and promotional initiatives.

The membership year runs from 1st June and the proposal is to increase the annual membership cost to £60 for 2021/22