

THE VIEW

FROM THE RIDGE

Issue 1

SOCIAL
GOOD
STUFF

What is it
all about?

@ DUNBAR
ridge

Editor's Note

I am delighted to introduce the first View newsletter. The View will prepare a newsletter bi-monthly to inform interested people on the progress of The Ridge and our other connected developments. You can also read our newsletter on-line at www.the-ridge.org.uk and please feel free to get in touch with your own opinions and views.

In this edition we are focussing on The Backlands Project, some information about it and how it has already had a huge impact on a Dunbar residents' life.

What is The Ridge all about?

WHAT?

To provide training and support to help people find jobs locally; to support businesses to be effective and grow, creating more local jobs; to create businesses to fill gaps in the local economy, and create an effective local food supply chain.

WHY?

Because access to training opportunities remains a problem despite proximity to the capital; conditions don't yet exist for the sort of enterprises that will support new rural jobs; local food remains a niche for the affluent.

HOW?

We will continue to test our ideas, establishing local capacity and demand, which will help to minimise risks. This will allow us to continue development of appropriately scaled and sustainable solutions.

MARGARET MCCOLE
Editor-in-Chief



NEWS FROM THE RIDGE

➔ Music be the Food of Love



In case you didn't know The Ridge Cafe is currently catering for The Tea Dance at The Masonic Lodge on the first Wednesday of the month, 2-4pm, all welcome. Just remember the dance is not running in February

To stay abreast of all our holiday clubs and news about the Cafe checkout our Facebook page. www.facebook.com/theRidgeCafeDunbar/

➔ Facebook



Keep up to date with The Ridge by following us on Facebook, here you will find information, jobs and events.

We would love you to help us spread the word by sharing and liking our posts at facebook.com/theridgecic
facebook.com/theRidgeCafeDunbar
facebook.com/The-Ridge-Dunbar-Backlands-Regeneration

Looking forward to hearing from you!

➔ Good News



The Ridge has been accepted as Individual Learning Account providers

ILAs are excellent for workers who can now afford training that might otherwise be out of reach. And they're valuable for employers too, giving people exactly the skills they need for the workplace.



INDOOR & OUTDOOR MARKETS IN DUNBAR

The Ridge was recently asked to take over the running of the indoor markets that have up to now been organised and run by Romie and others. We have just applied for a market license to start these in earnest from early March 2016. These will be craft and fashion based and we will try to build a strong identity around these indoor markets and bring local musicians and others to entertain and inspire those attending to make it as much of a rounded community space as possible that offers a small scale commercial outlet to local producers and sellers. These will sit alongside the outdoor food and craft markets that will be established on the Backland's site early summer 2016 to provide Dunbar with an indoor and outdoor market offering throughout the year.

If you are interested in finding out more about the markets and how to get involved please contact Maggie at info@twodogdesign.co.uk

What is Social Enterprise?

The following is an excerpt from an article written for Social Enterprise UK. It should go some way to explaining Social Enterprise.

Have you ever bought the Big Issue? Read it over a bar of Divine chocolate with a cup of Cafe Direct coffee? Watched Jamie Oliver's Fifteen? Visited the Eden Project? Shopped at the Co-op?

Well, then you already know a bit about social enterprises: businesses that are changing the world for the better. Social enterprises are in our communities and on our high streets – from coffee shops and cinemas, to pubs and leisure centres, banks and bus companies.

Social enterprises trade to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community. And so when they profit, society profits.

The term 'social enterprise' came about from recognition that in the UK and across the world, there were organisations using the power of business to bring about social and environmental change without a single term to unite them.

At Social Enterprise UK we feel we must be clear but pragmatic when it comes to defining social enterprise. Here are what we believe are the characteristics of a social enterprise.

What is Social Enterprise?

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES SHOULD:

- Have a clear social and/or environmental mission set out in their governing documents
- Generate the majority of their income through trade
- Reinvest the majority of their profits
- Be autonomous of state
- Be majority controlled in the interests of the social mission
- Be accountable and transparent

The sustainability of any organisation depends on its ability to generate social-environmental impact and profit.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

My work as a teacher convinced me that school wasn't always the best place for everyone, or at least that some youngsters could really benefit from some 'real life' input as part of the mix. I was really impressed by Jamie Oliver's Fifteen, which featured in a documentary around the time I was thinking about ideas for what became the Ridge. He took in 15 youngsters who were not in Employment, Education or Training, put them a really high quality restaurant in London's East End - there they were expected to turn up and to TRY, and it was largely their efforts that contributed to the success of the restaurant.

It was never a smooth ride - they all had 'issues', but they were able to go to college and gain qualifications at the same time as working, and could see that what they were doing was 'real' and that putting in the effort really was in their interest, as well as giving them huge pride in what they were part of creating. Almost all of them are now running restaurants, all over the world. The format runs yearly, and has been replicated at Fifteen Cornwall.

I love good food, especially when local produce is used. We are so lucky here in East Lothian to have some of the best and widest-ranging produce in the world. I was also really inspired by the Manoir aux 4 Saisons, where the restaurant is supplied by its own fabulous garden. I wanted to bring together the training potential for horticulture and cooking/hospitality, with a quality restaurant with garden attached. With others, I set up the Ridge, and we set out to demonstrate that there is indeed a need for this sort of training, and that we are the people to provide it.

What we have ended up offering is a lot wider than the original vision (we do things like general employability training with a focus on Social Care, or Construction, and support training at the local Fashion School and Equine Therapy centre)



Kate Darrah Managing Director The Ridge

but we are able to be very responsive to actual needs locally, and to deliver these things alongside our original vision, without any loss to that core vision.

We run the training cafe at Bleachingfield and have a training garden at the Dunbar Backlands, which is a sort of microcosm of the original plan. We are now carrying out a feasibility study to see if the big vision is still relevant, and if so, whether/how we need to adjust it to meet local needs. For me, it's a really exciting journey - we have achieved so much, and I feel really privileged to work alongside a team of passionate and talented people, all committed to creating better opportunities for our local community. I'm very much looking forward to whatever the next steps may be, building on what we have already created, to do more and to do it even better.

WHERE IT HOPES TO GO

The Ridge supported by a Social Enterprise Development Grant from East Lothian Council has commissioned Phoenix Economics to carry out a feasibility study on the long term vision. Jenny Whyte of Phoenix Economics says PE is delighted to be working with The Ridge to inform their future development plans through the completion of a Feasibility Study that will provide an independent view on the likelihood of success of the organisation's vision to build a bespoke training centre in Dunbar. A proposal was sent out to stakeholders and local businesses the text of which outlined below. if anyone wishes to comment we would love to hear from you.

The long-term vision of the organisation is the creation of a training centre with the following elements;

- Training space
- Restaurant
- Events venue
- Market garden

A 6-acre site has been identified on the edge of Dunbar and discussion with the site owner is ongoing. The site may offer opportunities for co-location with a number of other developments. The aim would be to develop sufficient 'critical mass' to attract people to visit the project and spend money. This would support the ultimate aim of creating a largely self-sustaining venture. Potential co-locations under consideration include:

- Gallery space to provide a permanent home for the Richard Demarco art collection
- Gallery space for temporary exhibitions, in particular of local artists' work
- Studio space for local artists
- An accessible archive for the 'John Muir Collection' generated over recent years of Artist in Residencies
- Small-scale skate park and climbing wall
- Builders' yard for recycling of surplus materials

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In order to progress the long-term vision the organisation has commissioned Phoenix Economics to undertake a Feasibility Study to determine the practical and economic prospects of success of the proposed training centre."

The research methodology can be summarised as follows:

The Feasibility Study involves an appraisal of the market for the proposed Training Centre through a review of secondary data and key policy and strategy documents along with a series of consultations with The Ridge's key partners and stakeholders.

The consultation process will also offer trainees and local businesses an opportunity to provide input. A preferred option for development will be identified and the feasibility of this option in both practical and financial terms will be determined.



BACKLANDS REGENERATION

by Adi Girling

Regenerating some of the backland's in Dunbar is part of how The Ridge are trying to breathe life into unused and abandoned areas in town and through doing so, creating a productive and useful community space that supports our training agenda and the building of community assets.

THE VIEW

The regeneration of the Backland areas is being funded by the Coastal Communities Fund with further support from East Lothian Council and Dunbar Community Council as well as a grant from the Dunbar Common Good Fund. The Ridge is grateful for their support. We want to create a community garden space that provides opportunities for horticultural, hospitality and basic skills training,

Productive
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**“To draw
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community growing facilities and a space for holding occasional community markets to draw people into the site and into Dunbar.

The site will also in time provide community garden space that will add to the general public amenity in Dunbar and will provide opportunities for other groups and organisations to benefit from the opportunities and facilities the developed site will provide. The main functional uses of the site are as follows:

- Community Garden Space
- Community Growing Space including a poly-tunnel
- Training Garden / Training Building
- Occasional Community Markets

This is an important application and proposal for Dunbar as it is an ambitious attempt to create a beautiful and functional community space that aims to improve existing and underused spaces within the town centre and provide wide ranging community benefit within backland areas that will otherwise continue to decay.

It will bring an area with so much potential back to life and because the site will be under 'community ownership', it will give encouragement to Dunbar

that community based development can be significant, grounded, good for local businesses and the well-being and opportunities for people in and around Dunbar.

That is the intention and we are keen as always to have people engaged and involved in any work The Ridge carries out to improve Dunbar's today and tomorrow. Please contact adi@the-ridge.org.uk for further information or if you fancy getting involved.

“It will bring an area with so much potential back to life”



STORIES FROM THE RIDGE

I have been employed by the Ridge for 1 month after completing a 3 month Certificate of Work Readiness in the Backlands Project.

I had a stroke 18 months ago whilst at work which left me with some cognitive and short term memory problems. Having a stroke is life changing as no one expects it to happen to them and in my case no reason, despite numerous tests have discovered as to why.

It was quite devastating the slow realisation that I would be unable to return to a job that I had been in for 14 years, it felt that my life was finished, I was worthless and the fact that my employer had been quite unsupportive during the time I was off did nothing to alter this view I had of myself.



My OT put me in touch with the disability advisor at the job centre who told me about the CoWR that the Ridge was running and I was fortunate that I was offered a place. The 3 week classroom based work was a reminder of the reasons as to why we do certain things in the workplace, things that are done automatically without thinking why we do them.

Doing gardening work 2 days with Max, out helping him with his private clients was interesting as he was many things to different people. The 2 days working in the Backlands was informative as well as being hard work physically and never for a moment did I think that at my age I would be finding out about and helping to build decking and other upcoming projects such as building a shed, polytunnel and all the other ideas that are being discussed to develop this into a useful community space.



Being an assistant gardener the work is quite physical but the atmosphere, working for the Ridge is relaxed and it has shown me that although there are some things that I may struggle with help is always available from my co workers.

I owe the Ridge a great deal; this job has given me back my self-respect and confidence and has shown that every person has something to offer and for that I am very grateful.

Thank you.

“

**YOU+IDEA+COMMUNITY
+STARTSOMEGOOD
=IMPACT**

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the-ridge.org.uk