



Project Summary Report

BOWNESS & WINDERMERE FORWARD

Helen Moriarty

BWF Co-ordinator 2018 - 2020



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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to highlight the achievements of Bowness and Windermere Forward since the recruitment of Project Co-ordinator Helen Moriarty in February 2018 and Chair leadership from Colin Jones and then Sophia Newton from September 2019 onwards.

The report will provide recommendations for the development of current projects and aims to inspire the Board to continue its work and support the recruitment of a new Chair and Project Co-ordinator.

All budget, partnership contact details, passwords and log in details will be provided in a separate report for the benefit of the new Chair and Project Co-ordinator.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Helen Moriarty was initially employed by BWF, via its accountable body South Lakeland District Council, for 16 hours per week. Following maternity leave in 2019, the role was reduced to an average of 8 hours per week in an attempt to manage limited funding more efficiently.

The impact of Covid-19 has been significant on the progress and development of Bowness and Windermere Forward. Prior to the pandemic both the National Trust and Lake District National Park Authority had agreed to contribute toward the Project Co-ordinator role to help expand BWF's core funders from SLDC to a range of public and third sector organisations.

Both organisations had to withdraw this funding early in the pandemic. LDNPA had to remove themselves from the board entirely due to capacity issues and the National Trust paused all partnership projects which included an app and branding project which was in development with Bowness and Windermere Forward. Cumbria County Council managed to honour its commitment of £4000 to be drawn down on a project by project basis and SLDC were also able to continue funding support.

The pressure of lockdown on local businesses meant that it did not feel appropriate for BWF to continue the development of place making projects whilst businesses were addressing more immediate challenges.

The capacity of BWF Chair and Project Co-ordinator was also affected during lockdowns due to additional childcare responsibilities.

As this report highlights, there is a significant role for Bowness and Windermere Forward in the recovery phase of the pandemic. Understandably, progress during the Covid response stage has been challenging, however a suite of projects are 'shelf ready' for the next BWF Chair and Project Co-ordinator to deliver for the benefit of Bowness and Windermere.

DELIVERED PROJECTS

- **BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT**



the
SHAKE UP
BOWNESS & WINDERMERE
night

Drinks | Canapés | Chat | Action

Join our Windermere
& Bowness
Business Community
Thursday 28th March 2019
5:30pm - 8:00pm
The Lamplighter Dining Rooms
Windermere

We love what we have here in
Windermere and Bowness!
But if you've ever thought this place could
be, do, or look better, or that our two towns
could work more closely together...
... then join the growing number of
local businesses taking direct action
to improve our area.
We want to create a world-class vision and
consider the practical steps that will enhance,
shape and protect our area for the future...
...and we want **YOUR HELP**
to make this happen!
RSVP janettandsophia@createaflock.co.uk

**JOIN US ON THURSDAY 28TH
MARCH TO FIND OUT MORE!**

**BOWNESS AND WINDERMERE
PRESENT**

Bowness and Windermere Forward hosted two 'Shake Up Bowness and Windermere' events with promotional support from Flock PR and Media. The purpose of each event was to engage local businesses in the development of a business community led Action Plan for Bowness and Windermere.

Both events were well attended (45 and 92 attendees respectively) and positive feedback was received including:

'10 out of 10'

'Inspiring'

'Gosh our towns are amazing'

'I had no idea so much was going on'

'The energy and buzz in the room, you could just feel everyone willing things to happen'



The events highlighted a huge appetite for development projects in both towns, particularly regarding improving the areas events calendar, public realm and working together across Bowness and Windermere. The ideas gathered and shared at the Shake Up events informed the BWF Action Plan and ensured the plan was supported by a large number of businesses in the area.

The engagement also increased attendance at Board Meetings by current members and created a sense of purpose and urgency behind meeting agendas. Ten businesses expressed an interest in joining the BWF board following the events, however this interest was unfortunately not reflected at subsequent Board meetings. The traditional format of board meeting attendance to qualify as a board members may not be appropriate for the area due to the time constraints of small business owners.



- **SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT**



BWF have engaged local businesses and residents via the BWF Facebook page (1279 followers) and mail chimp (132 subscribers).

OUR BWF PROJECTS

Our long and short term projects for the area, including creating a Welcome to Windermere & Bowness brand.

PAGE 2

SCULPTURE TRAIL UPDATE

Bowness & Windermere Chamber of Trade project gathers momentum but still needs your help.

PAGE 3

ORREST HEAD PLANS

The National Trust's vision for the Windermere and Bowness area forms the basis of Friendly Fells & Lakeside Trails project.

PAGE 4

Both have been utilised to share updates, promote events, support partners, gauge opinion and share board meeting minutes by linking back to the BWF website.



PAGE 3 | NEXT BWF MEETING AND PROJECTS



PAGE 5 | FAMILY FUN DAY AT MILLERGROUND



PAGE 2 | LOCAL DISCOUNTS FOR GLEBE MARKET STALLS



PAGE 5 | NATIONAL TRUST LOCAL VISION

The newsletters were particularly valuable during the first lockdown to share grant links and celebrate local resilience.

Increased social media engagement has led to an increased connection to the business community who increasingly contact both the Chair and Project Co-ordinator regarding highlighted opportunities and updates.

This report recommends the continuation of businesses engagement in this way to demonstrate joined up partnerships working, celebrate successes and test emerging ideas.

The social media suggestion is that a Facebook Group that focusses on Local Business could be created in a similar way to the existing successful Windermere Town Council (WTC). The time implications of co-ordinating this idea would need to be discussed and considered. Pete Hamilton has kindly asked WTC if they could provide some advice and support on doing this which has been favourably met and should be taken into consideration moving forward.

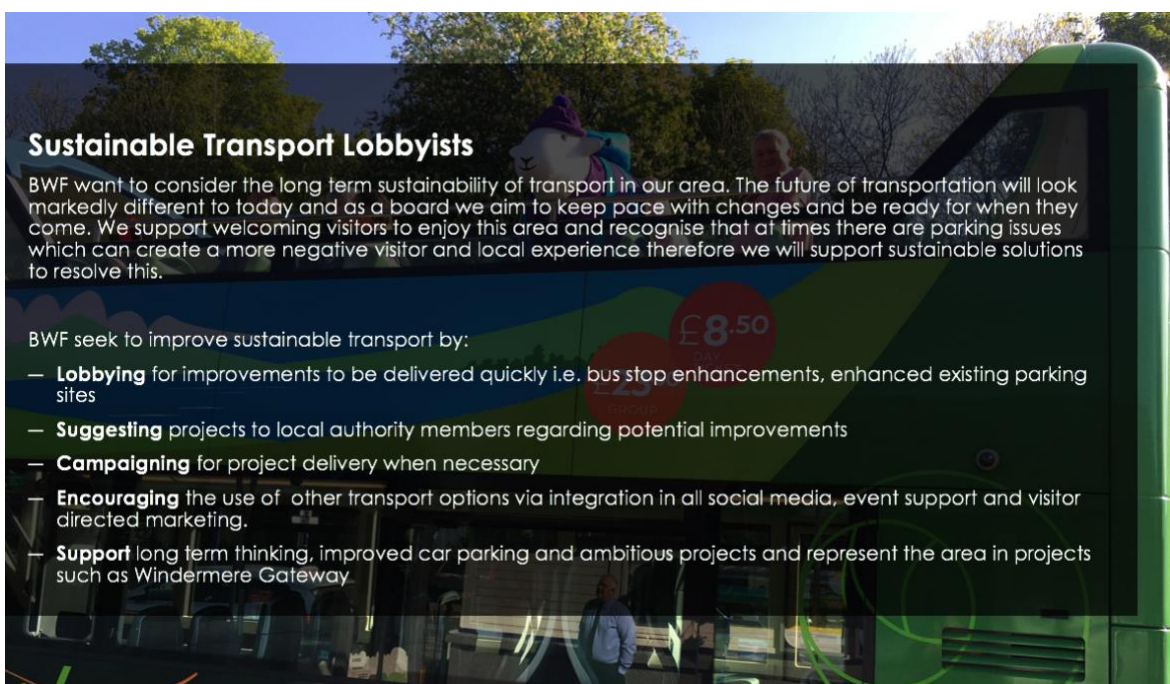
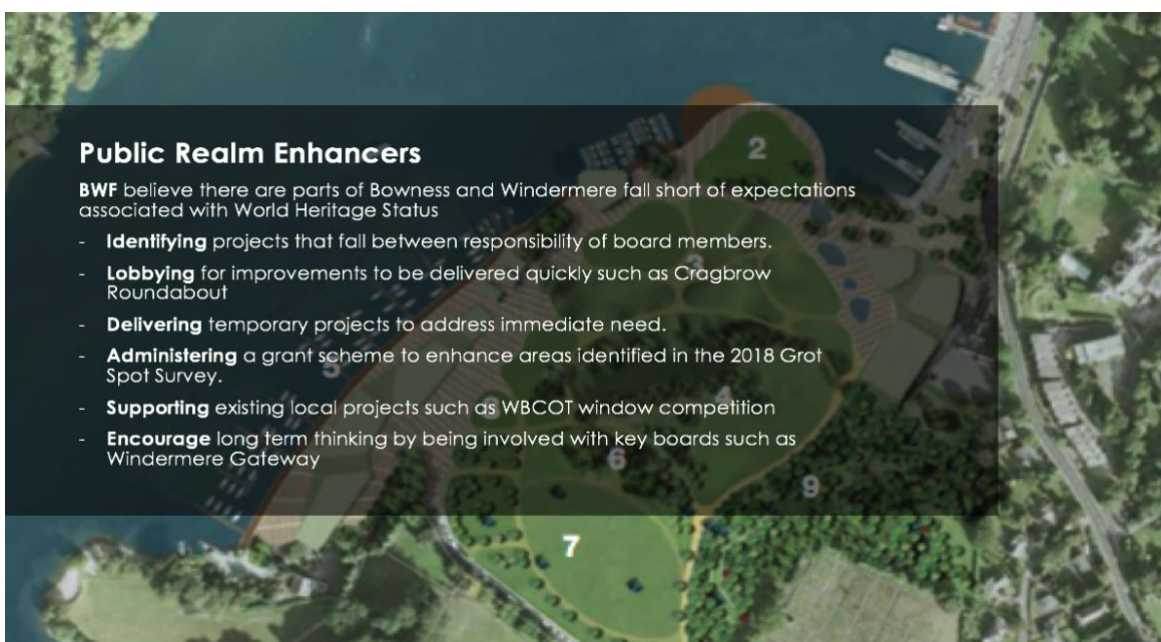
• BWF ACTION PLAN / VISION

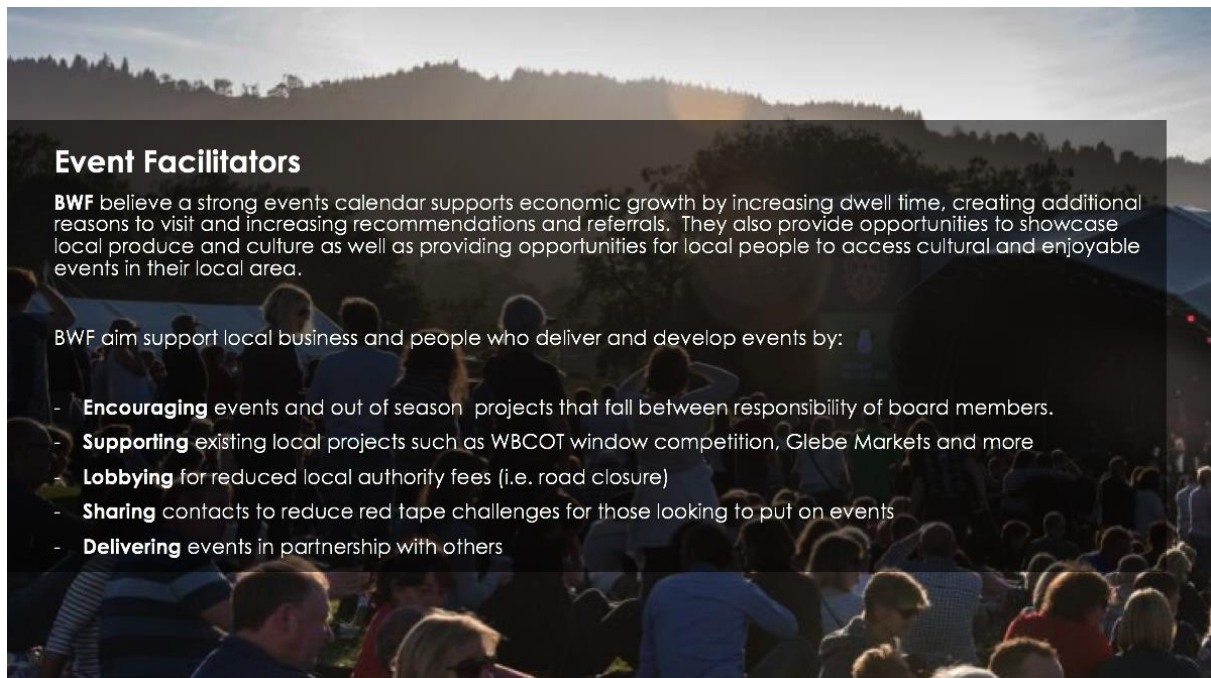
Following the Shake Up Events, increased business engagement and board conversations, a strategic Action Plan was agreed for Bowness and Windermere Forward.

It was agreed that BWF's roles included:

- Public Realm Enhancers
- Event Facilitators
- Sustainable Transport Lobbyists
- Visitor Economy Specialists

The identified actions and projects underpinning these roles are highlighted below.



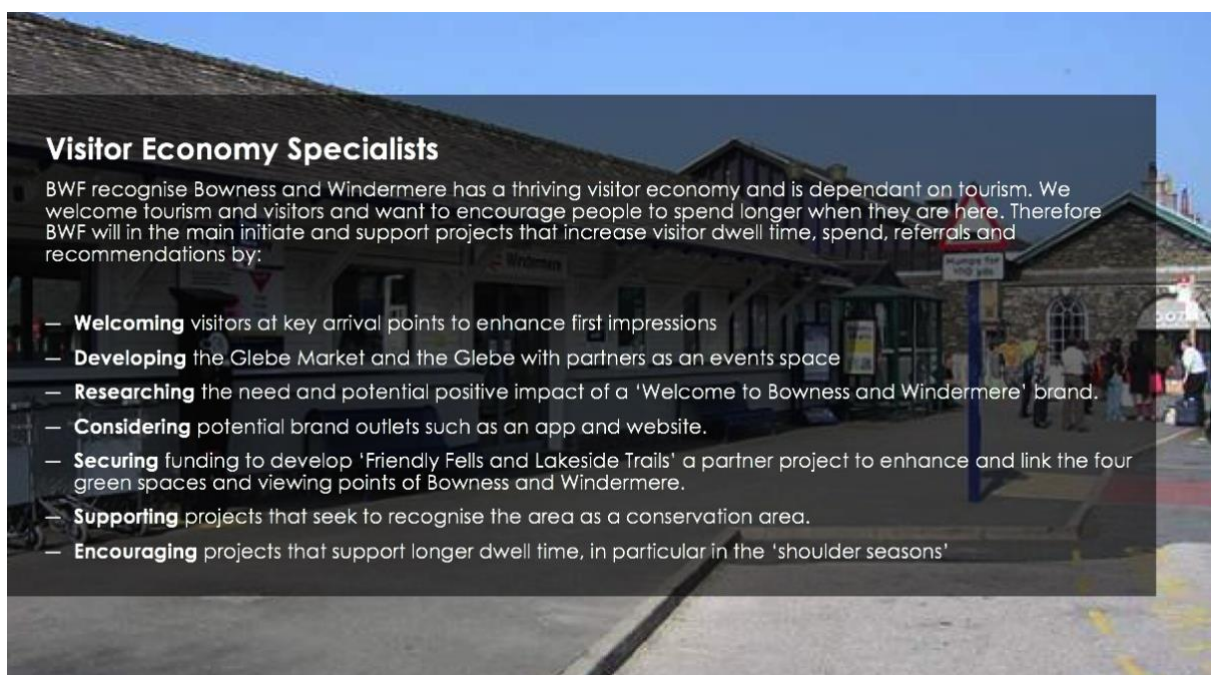


Event Facilitators

BWF believe a strong events calendar supports economic growth by increasing dwell time, creating additional reasons to visit and increasing recommendations and referrals. They also provide opportunities to showcase local produce and culture as well as providing opportunities for local people to access cultural and enjoyable events in their local area.

BWF aim support local business and people who deliver and develop events by:

- **Encouraging** events and out of season projects that fall between responsibility of board members.
- **Supporting** existing local projects such as WBCOT window competition, Glebe Markets and more
- **Lobbying** for reduced local authority fees (i.e. road closure)
- **Sharing** contacts to reduce red tape challenges for those looking to put on events
- **Delivering** events in partnership with others



Visitor Economy Specialists

BWF recognise Bowness and Windermere has a thriving visitor economy and is dependant on tourism. We welcome tourism and visitors and want to encourage people to spend longer when they are here. Therefore BWF will in the main initiate and support projects that increase visitor dwell time, spend, referrals and recommendations by:

- **Welcoming** visitors at key arrival points to enhance first impressions
- **Developing** the Glebe Market and the Glebe with partners as an events space
- **Researching** the need and potential positive impact of a 'Welcome to Bowness and Windermere' brand.
- **Considering** potential brand outlets such as an app and website.
- **Securing** funding to develop 'Friendly Fells and Lakeside Trails' a partner project to enhance and link the four green spaces and viewing points of Bowness and Windermere.
- **Supporting** projects that seek to recognise the area as a conservation area.
- **Encouraging** projects that support longer dwell time, in particular in the 'shoulder seasons'

The above aspirations are achievable if the strength of the BWF board is utilised. Each action depends on cross sector partnership working and collaboration. This report recommends the continuation of the above aspirations to:

- Harness the partnership potential of the BWF board
- Meet the needs of the business community.

- **GLEBE MARKET**

BWF instigated and launched the Glebe Market by working with Better Leisure to utilise the Tennis Court area and developing a partnership between Better Leisure and Prom Art via Geraud Markets. BWF, with support from Flock PR and Media, secured and promoted a local discount for stall holders, promoted the launch of the market and arranged musicians to create a pleasant atmosphere.



As the popularity of the market increased, the range of stalls was expanded and simplified to create a monthly 'Glebe Market' and an independent agreement between Better Leisure and a market stall co-ordinator was established which continues to date.

In September 2019 SLDC commissioned an independent review of the Glebe Market. The report highlighted the need for better local promotion to expand its appeal beyond the visitors in the Bowness Bay area and become a destination in its own right. The market could be better integrated into the community by increasing the presence of local stall owners. This could be achieved by promoting the current offer of a free stall to local charities. Additionally, a fresh fruit and vegetable offer would encourage more residents to use the market and support local wellbeing targets. This report recommends working with Glebe Market partners to deliver the recommendations of the review report and support the reopening of the Market when possible.

- **WELCOME VOLUNTEERS & VISITOR MAP**



In partnership with the Lake District National Park Authority, BWF recruited and trained Welcome Volunteers to support the aspiration of improving the sense of arrival at Windermere Train station.

The project aspired to replicate the welcome volunteers at the London Olympics, welcoming and directing visitors to the Tourist Information Centre for additional information.

Let's say hello as

WELCOME VOLUNTEERS

NEW OPPORTUNITY IN WINDERMERE!

Join Bowness & Windermere Forward and LDNPA to 'feel good doing good' as a Welcome Volunteer, sharing your smile and local knowledge with visitors at Windermere Train Station.

18th | 20th | 21st October

Choose a date and time that works for you and let Helen know you're coming via helen@bwforward.org.uk or 07533 552 066

AMAZING local discounts and perks available for all volunteers!



Welcome to Bowness & Windermere

MAP INSIDE!



Discover how much is on our doorstep. Leave the car and explore by boot, bike, boat or bus!

Whilst the Welcome Volunteer project received positive feedback from both visitors and volunteers, additional partnership work is required with local businesses and the Tourist Information Centre to ensure co-benefits are understood and delivered.

The development of an advertisement free map was considered important by the initial BWF Board because it highlighted a wider vision of Bowness and Windermere beyond the main attractions to increase dwell time and promote access points to scenic spots. The map highlighted the many viewing points which, excluding Orrest Head, which are missed by many visitors. The map was the first step to highlight the need to develop a Lakeshore Trails and Friendly Fells project.

The map was distributed independently to local Hotels and Bed and Breakfasts and via the Bowness Bay Tourist Information Centre. The remaining stock is stored at Windermere Library. This report recommends that the current stock is distributed via both Tourist Information Centres and via Board members for the 2021 season.

• **WINDOWMERE 2020**

The purpose of Windowmere 2020 was to create a covid secure event that could be enjoyed despite restrictions. Utilising the nation-wide 'Window Wanderland' platform, residents and businesses were invited to decorate their window and light them up between 7-9pm throughout December.

The platform enabled participants to register their window and access decorating tips. The platform also created a downloadable map for people to follow and enjoy the creations. 64 residents and businesses decorated their windows and the map received 1780 hits. Whilst it is impossible to know how many of the 1780 trail hits converted into people completing the trail, the popularity and interest in the concept is evident and this report recommends continuing the event in 2021.

The winning residential and business windows were selected by local judges; The Mayor of Windermere and Bowness, Cllr John Saunders, the Chair of the Chamber of Trade Scott Keenen and Caroline Robinson of Lakeland Arts. The winners received a local produce hamper.



Assuming covid restrictions are different in 2021, this report recommends asking participants to light up their windows over one weekend rather than over a month. This may encourage more people to download and complete the trail over a specific weekend but it is likely to create small crowds and therefore must be considered against current covid guidance. Additionally, this report recommends launching Windowmere 2021 in conjunction with other Christmas events in both towns.

This project was funded Cumbria County Council and supported by a task and finish group of local supportive businesses including Fidget Design and Keenandable.



- **PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT**

BWF launched a grot spot survey in order to better understand the areas residents and businesses want to improve. 50 residents and businesses took part in the survey and with generous support from ADL Architects, the identified grot spots were highlighted on a map to better demonstrate the extent of public realm challenges.

The results revealed that numerous parts of Bowness and Windermere would benefit from intervention. Respondents identified 75 possible actions which were categorised as follows:

- Redundant signs (ugly and contribute to street clutter)
- Old shop fixtures which are no longer in use (contribute to clutter / 'scruffy' appearance and distract from old buildings)
- Missing signage
- Confusing directional signage
- Poor visitor information poster display boards
- Exposed large bins (unsightly and contributing to street clutter in places)
- Poor maintenance of planting areas and trees

Following the survey BWF, with generous funding from Windermere Town Council, organised the removal of 10 redundant poles in Bowness and Windermere and liaised with Cumbria County Council to highlight a further six former electrical poles.



BWF also worked with Windermere Town Council to promote a SLDC funded Shopfront Enhancement Grant and reviewed 6 applicants. Vinegar Jones in Bowness were grant beneficiaries and worked with BWF and LDNPA Heritage specialists to redesign their shop front in a way that would not be incongruous to its traditional building and prominent setting.

This report recommends revisiting Shop Front applicants post covid to confirm project status. If grant funding is no longer required it would be beneficial to the area to encourage a second round of applicants and or liaise with SLDC to redirect funding toward other public realm improvements.

This report also recommends revisiting the grot spot map to identify remaining areas that could be addressed as visible 'quick win' projects.

DEVELOPED PROJECTS

• LAKESHORE CINEMA



BWF, together with a dedicated task and finish group, created the 'Lakeshore Cinema' event. The event planned to show seven films screened on a 17m screen at Cockshott Point overlooking Belle Isle over three days. The location would create a unique outdoor cinema experience.

The purpose of the event was to celebrate local resilience, raise funds for local charities and community groups and to provide a platform for local community groups to recruit additional members (ie Windermere Rugby Club and Ambleside Mountain Rescue).

Sadly the Government announced the introduction of further social restrictions in early September and the task and finish group agreed it was no longer responsible or feasible for the event to proceed and it was cancelled. All ticket holders received a full refund.

This project is 'shelf ready' for delivery at another time. Ticket sales, via event partner Trybooking, indicated a healthy trajectory for success. BWF secured an event license from SLDC by providing a

full Health and Safety and covid secure event plan. Landowner permission from the National Trust was also secured. An event page via Try Booking was established and a relationship with the Film Council to secure film licence permission was established. All branding and promotion is in place.

A partnership with One Delivery was also established to create a Lakeshore Cinema Snack Shop App which connected ticket holders to an onsite snack shop and local takeaways who planned to deliver orders to the Lakeshore Cinema.

The finance model for the event was possible because the up-front costs were reduced due to the covid-19. Ordinarily, screen hire companies would require a non-refundable deposit but on this occasion due to Covid, it was waived.

The potential for the event to generate community revenue was significant, a sell-out event could generate £13,810. A conservative estimated £6000 could have been raised via refreshment sales and advertising opportunities.

This report recommends relaunching this event in May 2021 if restrictions allow. However the favourable hire conditions may not be in place and significant upfront investment may be required.

The development of the Lakeshore Cinema was made possible thanks to a dedicated task and finish voluntary* group:

Sophia Newton – Chair BWF

Janett Walker – Flock

Scott Keenan - Chair of Bowness & Windermere Chamber of Trade / Keen and Able

Ally Tordoff – CoT member / Fidget Design

Amanda Buitelar – Windermere Backpackers

Jim Hutchinson – Windermere Rugby Club

Advisory Role - Dan Visser – Chair Cumbria Tourism

The National Trust and South Lakeland Council also provided fantastic support and the successful promotion was co-ordinated by Flock. If the board decides to relaunch this event this report recommends recreating the task and finish group and utilising the partnerships outlined above.

*Helen Moriarty completed the work as part of her Project Co-ordinator position. All other support, time, services and skills were given free of charge.

• **LAKESHORE TRAILS AND FRIENDLY FELS**

As highlighted by the Grot Spot survey, engagement events and by BWF Board members, many of the scenic beauty spots within Bowness and Windermere are not accessible or positively promoted and therefore not enjoyed by many of the visitors to Bowness and Windemere.

There is potential for the area to link the four major scenic areas of:

- *Millerground (SLDC)*
- *Cockshott Point (NT)*
- *Biskey Howe & Post Knott (NT & SLDC)*
- *Orrest Head (WTC & LDNPA)*

A single Lakeshore Trails and Friendly Fells project would cluster these areas to create community led branding, interpretation and promotion for the four sites. Together with physical improvements at each site, the project would create a sense of pride for residents and a joined up experience for visitors who would recognise the uniformed high quality signage and interpretation at each site.

BWF hosted several meetings to develop this idea and whilst difficult due to the multiple landownerships as outlined above, the appetite to improve and work together was evident. Fantastic improvements have been made at each of these sites and this project would aim to celebrate those improvements by creating interpretation, signage and access that reflects the expectation of World Heritage site visitors.

This report recommends continuing to work with the National Trust when covid allows to continue to develop this idea and maintaining a connection to the Lake District Foundation who are developing a wider Heritage Horizon project which a Lakeshore Trails and Friendly Fells project could complement.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

- **WINDERMERE GATEWAY**

The Windermere Gateway project is being led by the National Park Authority. As the project develops BWF are well placed to support community consultations and provide a business community link.

- **GLEBE MASTER PLAN**

This report recommends sharing the initial Grot Spot survey results, particularly the idea to utilise the LDNP public toilet roof to create a sense of arrival from the coach car park.

- **BRANDING**

In addition to a brand for the Lakeshore Trail and Friendly Fells project, a brand for Windermere and Bowness would be beneficial to the area. Bowness and Windermere's new brand should be the umbrella brand, and the Lakeshore Trail should reflect the parent brand. Bowness and Windermere is currently promoted by multiple partners, and therefore loses its own sense of identity. The Windermere Gateway project provides an ideal opportunity to celebrate the Welcome to Windermere & Bowness, but also risks yet another brand being added to an already confusing experience. The creation of a unifying brand, perhaps using the Gateway as a springboard, would create an important opportunity for businesses to bolster community pride.

A unified brand could provide:

- Branded WELCOME
- Existing tourist information centres reflect the WELCOME
- Unified signage across the towns, car parks
- Signage at car parks could have QR code that takes to you to Welcome to Windermere and Bowness website or a downloadable app
- New website/app which shares
 - o What's on today, this week, this month, next month, year etc etc
 - o Business offers and discounts

- Places of interest
- Maps
- Lakeside Friendly Fells Trail map
- Bus and train times
- Tour times
- Boat times
- Links to business websites

Additional benefits include:

- Improved confident online presence
- Keeping our towns relevant in an increasingly digital age
- Strengthens our brand WITHIN the Lake District
- Improved visitor experience
- Improved civic pride
- Supporting local small businesses (links to a dedicated website remove the need for small B&B's to create their own what's on pages)
- Positively influencing visitors to stay and explore the local area rather than the wider Lake District
- Encourages investment and creates a catalyst for change
- Enhances public realm by providing a template and brand guidance for signage and interpretation.

This report recommends looking to the Visit Kendal brand as an example of local best practice and to continue the development of this idea.

• **BWF CONSTITUTION**

BWF is a cross sector partnership of local businesses, local authorities and the third sector. Whilst BWF has been excellent at engaging businesses at events and via social media it has struggled to attract consistent representation at Board meetings.

Many businesses in the area are members of the Windermere and Bowness Chamber of Trade who via the current Chair Scott Keened have supported the Task and Finish groups of both Windowmere 2020 and the Lakeshore Cinema event.

Working collaboratively on these projects led to the suggestion that BWF and the Chamber of Trade merge to create a win-win situation and a formidable single organisation for the area. Currently it's not clear to several local business what the difference between BWF and the Chamber is. This confusion may lead to some businesses choosing not to get involved with either organisation.

Both organisations have their pros and cons, the Chamber has a growing membership and some great active members but needs to modernise. BWF has a paid resource, cross sector membership, great creativity, social media presence and a more modern 'feel' but needs more committed business representation.

This report recommends the next Chair and Project Co-ordinator discusses this possible solution for better alignment with both respective boards to agree a suitable way forward.

CONCLUSION

BWF have delivered and developed a number of beneficial projects for the area.

Thanks to successful engagement and vision agreement, The Glebe Market, Lakeshore Cinema and Windowmere all have the potential to provide positive focal points for residents and fantastic experiences for visitors.

BWF's work regarding the public realm is important and necessary for the destination to remain a beautiful place to live and visit. If all grot spots are addressed and access is improved to celebrate and link the areas stunning scenic spots, the destination can be significantly enhanced.

The potential to develop a destination brand as a partnership would strengthen the BWF board and further engage the business community either collaboratively with the Chamber of Trade or independently via current engagement strategies. The key to success behind any successful destination brand is engagement and the expertise of a professional place making and marketing organisation.

It's been a pleasure working in Bowness and Windermere. Thank you to all current and former Board members for your support and dedication and I wish Bowness and Windermere Forward every success in its next chapter.