

[Hannah Clinch](#), Tacit-Tacit.

Dunoon Forward?

Useful links

[Dunoon and Cowal Co-works>](#)

[Dunoon Forward App>](#)

[Beach Hut Project>](#)

[POP shop>](#)

Contact: hannah@tacit-tacit.co.uk

Slide 1 / title

Given the theme of this conference I have decided to include a few slogans of my own in this presentation.

Dunoon Forward is the motto for the town.

I don't know exactly when the phrase was first coined, but it starts to appear on the town's coat of arms in the Victorian era when Dunoon was on the rise as a seaside holiday destination.

Slide 2 / 3 characters

Before I share insights into my work, I wanted to introduce you to three local characters who have taught me a lot about Dunoon's heritage and economic development.

The fine gentleman on the left is James Ewing. James was Lord provost of Glasgow and founder of the West India Trading company. He built his holiday home in Dunoon, Castle House in 1822, and his patronage of the town contributed to the area's growing prosperity. He was also the founder of the anti-abolitionist movement in Glasgow and the owner of multiple plantations in Jamaica. So, Dunoon's economic prosperity is intrinsically linked to Scotland's slavery legacy.

The fabulously named Beatrice Clugston was a 19C, Glasgow based philanthropist. She dedicated her life to improving the health and wellbeing of Glasgow's poor, visiting them in hospitals and prisons in Glasgow to address poverty. She challenged Doctors of the time on their approach to health care, and in 1865 raised funds to purchase a hydroponic hotel in Dunoon setting up the West Coast of Scotland convalescent home to provide affordable health care to Glasgow's poor.

Her work attracted the support of Florence Nightingale and Princess Louisa, she was famous for her fundraising bazars and her home continued to treat people with fresh sea air, salt waters and rest until the 1960s. Unfortunately, Beatrice's legacy has almost been forgotten in Dunoon.

George Giarrachi was a PHD student from Dunoon in the mid 1970s. He carried out an amazing piece of research exploring the economic and social impacts of Oil rig construction workers arriving in Dunoon on masse and the American Navy's presence in Holy Loch.

This book painstakingly documents the impacts of top-down decision making on communities, bringing together data on the increased rates of teenage pregnancies, the experience of black American service personnel, the impact on housing and the social relationships in the community.

Slide 3 / Design Diagram

I am a socially engaged design practitioner with a commitment to tackling the climate crisis through creating design led projects that aim to engage people with sustainable development.

Broadly speaking the projects I create follow a pattern of: defining the problem through research, prototyping a solution through to implementation.

Working within the context of a community means using community engagement tools and techniques to ensure that these processes are done with people in the hope that the solution is more human centred and ecologically sustainable. This work is sometimes done at risk and sometimes done with funding and always attempts to broker partnerships and share knowledge.

Slide 4 / Creative industries

In 2016 I decided to go back to study at Glasgow School of Arts Innovation School to obtain a Masters in Research to support the development of my design practice.

Because of my location and interest in cultural led regeneration I started to look at the growth of the creative industries in a rural context. As this slide shows the creative industries is not one sector but multiple sectors of creative work. In rural areas we tend to focus on a small number of these sectors such as Craft, Music and Visual Art, but what my research established was the diversity of creative disciplines in Dunoon that were unseen.

Through interviewing members of my community who worked in a diverse range of disciplines the research established common problems and challenges creative workers faced. From women like myself unable to progress freelance careers

because of care responsibilities, people on low and unpredictable incomes, poor access to specialist enterprise support and people feeling disconnected from peers and professionally isolated. All these issues had impacts on the health and wellbeing of freelancers and I still don't think we are fully aware of how freelance work reduce the rights and benefits to workers.

Slide 5 / Dunoon and Cowal coworks

In 2018/19, pre-pandemic, homeworking was not as well established as it is today and the data on micro enterprise activity is pretty hard to find. But as a consequence of the research and with the support of the Dunoon Area Alliance we started to host Dunoon and Cowal Co-works meet-ups open to anyone who was freelance, and home based and often working around care responsibilities.

The meet-ups took place in venues around the town to try and utilise places that could benefit from the trade but also to try and raise the profile of people who were hidden in their homes and not always welcomed with laptops into social spaces.

We got 35 people regularly attending meetings, 95 people becoming part of a loose social network. We held freelancer Christmas parties and training sessions to exchange skills. The work was ongoing for 18 months, but was not sustainable during the pandemic as there was no funding in place.

Slide 6 / POP shop

This is a picture of the People of Place or POP Shop. It was established in response to the co-works research in 2021 and is slowly being developed as a space for people and projects working in Sustainable Design, Heritage and the Built Environment. The shop has become a meeting, work and exhibition space for people setting up businesses around care responsibilities including myself. We have garages at the back that we are hoping to renovate into workshops and further desk space.

We don't have much capacity, the We is me and a voluntary board, but are slowly building up a suite of projects and services to provide users of the space with work in the community via POP Shop Enterprises CIC. We'd love to start meet-ups again, but don't have the capacity right now.

But we are starting to be able to provide valuable work opportunities to people historically excluded from the Creative Industries. Through the Dunoon Area Alliance and a partnership with a local employability project we have just established our first paid apprentice role for a single parent wanting to set up her own digital marketing company.

Another of the projects that utilised the Co-work network was the development of a heritage App for Dunoon. This project was commissioned by Argyll and Bute Council's Sustainable Transport Team. Because of interventions by the Dunoon Area Alliance the tender to develop content for the app was promoted locally and I put a team of Dunoon based providers together from the co-work network to bid for the contract, which we won.

Slide 7 / Dunoon Pier

Dunoon like any small town has incredible heritage assets. This is the iconic Dunoon Pier. The only remaining purpose built, timber paddle steamer pier in Scotland. However, there is a complete lack of interpretation of these heritage assets, which on a local level means we miss valuable ways of engaging with heritage and sharing our story of place.

Ultimately the project was developed during lock down and we had no access to local archives as very few are digitised, so we had to be inventive and work with people to access information from personal collections and Postcards and use our knowledge of place to coordinate information sharing with the support of the Dunoon Area Alliance and Dunoon CARS project. Part of the project was also about trying to bring together a fragmented voluntary heritage sector within the app and present people with local information in an accessible format.

Slide 8 / Maximisation

The app was launched between lockdowns.

The Dunoon Forward App is there as a community resource for education, health and wellbeing providers alongside visitors taking you on trails around the town. But no real investment has been made available to fund the promotions of the app properly, so our community is missing out on a resource that could be used across agendas. So my next slogan is Maximisation. Maximising investments being made even for small projects across different stakeholder groups and public sector silos will help build wealth, health and knowledge in our community.

On your chairs you will see a postcard. If you use the QR code on the back it will you to the app, so you can plan your visit to Dunoon.

Slide 9 / We are building a beach hut

Dunoon is a coastal community. There is a stretch of shingle shore in the town called West Bay. West Bay sits at the intersection between public space, the built and natural environment. It is also in a conservation area. Hotels, a café, crazy golf

course, benches, a playground and a toilet block are all part of the West Bay experience.

Over lock down we saw increased numbers of swimmers, walkers, dogs and cyclists using West Bay for recreation. We also saw the biodiversity of the beach flourish as the shingle was left alone.

Historically West Bay had seasonal beach huts on the shore. This heritage sparked a project to try and engage people with the regeneration of West Bay through researching, designing and making a prototype beach hut to stimulate conversations about place planning. The project started around the time of COP26 and our first engagement activity was looking at sea level rise on the beach.

Slide 10 / Historic West Bay

In Dunoon Beach huts were boat hirer's huts. They were seasonal and placed on the shore during the busy summer months. As the town declined the beach huts and the boat hirers and boat makers disappeared with the crowds.

Slide 11 / West Bay today

West Bay is a space that serves a wide number of people, but poor maintenance and a lack of strategy means that opportunities to engage with the natural and built environment are being missed, causing local frustration and a sense of disempowerment.

Slide 12 / Funders

Through working with a range of partners and funders including the Dunoon Area Alliance, Cultural Heritage and Arts Assembly who were a conduit to funding from Argyll and Bute Council and Creative Scotland we were able to develop a multidisciplinary approach to the project. Traditional skills training was funded via the Dunoon CARS project and historic Environment Scotland. We worked with the conservation officer to make sure the recruitment process for the traditional skills element of the project was promoted locally and Cowal based boat builder Ben Neville, won the contract, again keeping investment in the community.

Slide 13 / Funders

During the project we interviewed people about climate change, heritage, water quality and gathered information about how people felt about beach huts. There is no avoiding the tensions surrounding these nostalgic but somewhat exclusive structures. We also consulted with planning and the biodiversity officer and recognised early on that a beach hut couldn't be located permanently and couldn't disturb the shingle beach, so developed an approach to make beach hut

components that adapted work to the context and demonstrated traditional skills and low impact solutions.

Slide 14 / Sample Over the course of the project 100 people including young people from Dunoon Grammar School have been involved in workshops covering design, Green Map making to establish context, walks and traditional skills workshops. We have also collaborated with a range of local creative practitioners to create new work to display on West Bay to connect people to the research.

Slide 15 / Sample

The work is about the adaption and simple, repairable ideas, made from locally sourced materials that improve amenity at low risk.

Slide 15 / Signage

Signage to interpret the biodiversity and heritage of West Bay has also been created to try and broker new discussions about how to manage a natural asset for the benefit of the community and visitors.

We were meant to go onsite with the exhibition next week. However last Wednesday a digger was sent to West Bay by the council's amenities team to remove shingle and plants. This was following a Facebook campaign by people who didn't like the look of the plants on West Bay, seeing them as weeds which they felt ruined the place for visitors.

The conservation and biodiversity officers who we had been working with were not consulted about this work.

As a consequence of the 'de-wilding' of West Bay the exhibition is on hold until we can figure out how to respond. So working on these projects brings many unforeseen and sometimes quite upsetting challenges that we can't predict of budget for. One of the key issues I have working with public sector partners is how absorb costs and additional work caused by changes that are out of my control.

Slide 16 / Make it good

This is a slogan I coined If you make it good for communities the visitors will come anyway.

I keep coming back to it as it seems our local economy is so heavily skewed towards the needs of tourists that we forget the health and wellbeing of our community and the environment.

Slide 17

There is a famous story associated with James Ewing. When he built his grand house on the hill overlooking West Bay he built a wall around it. The wall was located on common drying green and the women of the town removed sections of the wall repeatedly.

Eventually a compromise was reached, and the wall's position was changed.

The thing is we don't have much time to keep removing these walls anymore. We need local leadership that understands community wealth building and environmental impact.

We need to keep channelling the Beatrice Clugston's of this world and think about how the environment can be used to care for our most vulnerable. We need to work with respect and listen to people that live place to help solve challenges if a community wealth building agenda is to thrive.

Slide 18 (25) /

I am going to leave you with my final slogan. It should say pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will, but I prefer to say optimism of the work.