

# **Original Edinburgh backed by some big names**

## **Prominent Old Town businesses back Original Edinburgh**

### **Renowned Old Town businesses urge others to back the Business Improvement District proposal with one week to go**

A group of Edinburgh business leaders have publicly backed the proposal to establish Original Edinburgh Business Improvement District in the Old Town ahead of the voting deadline on 28 November 2019, and have urged other businesses to support the initiative.

The business leaders from across a range of sectors urged other businesses to vote Yes to the proposal citing the transformative impact of the £4 million investment on the business environment in the Old Town.

Original Edinburgh is a collaborative business improvement project which seeks to empower business to take a leading role in the success of Edinburgh's iconic Old Town. They want to work together to deliver a varied package of investment to create a unique cultural, retail and hospitality experience, which optimises the use of our public space, for workers, the local community and visitors.

An improvement district is an innovative business partnership model which allows businesses to pool their resources and collectively invest in improvements to the local economy. The return on this investment, beyond what can be provided by government or local authorities, is realised through better business outcomes.

Evidence from elsewhere in Scotland and the UK shows that BIDs

can have a positive impact on the local economy. For example, Essential Edinburgh has generated £23.7 million of economic benefit over the last five years, and significantly reduced theft. Falkirk has invested £2.6 million in the town centre, and given out £100,000 in small business grants. In Bath, they've achieved 75% fewer trade waste fines and reduced trade waste costs by 25%.





Left to right : Aga Firat and Martin Clarke

Tony Crolla of the Vittoria Group, who has eight restaurants around the City, said: "I've read carefully the proposals put forward by Original Edinburgh to establish a business improvement district in the Old Town. I've also looked at the evidence on the impact of business improvement districts elsewhere in Scotland and the UK. I'm confident that my investment in Original Edinburgh will help transform the local business environment for the benefit of everyone. I'm fully behind it, and I'm voting YES for Original Edinburgh."

Martin Clarke of The Edinburgh Woollen Mill, said: "This Business Plan makes a compelling case; pointing to many of the challenges experienced by those who trade, work and indeed live in the area, and offering solutions. I have seen first-hand what a successful BID can bring through Essential Edinburgh and I am confident that given the mandate Original Edinburgh can deliver for all who share the Old Town."

Rachel Gregson of Bruce Taverns, which owns a wide range of pubs and bars across the Old Town, said: "I've spoken to many



businesses across the Old Town and it is easy to see where there are many common interests. Having a BID to advocate for businesses will allow the area to flourish and develop in a sensible way. Bruce Taverns will be voting Yes to the Original Edinburgh proposals.”



Rachel Gregson

Gavin MacLennan, General Manager of Lateral City Apartments, said:”Trading within a Business Improvement District is a dream. Communication is incredible; you just know what’s happening at all times. I support the campaign for BID status for the Old Town, and will be voting ‘yes’ for Original Edinburgh.”

Mhari Minto, Head of Marketing at Signature Pubs, who have three pubs in the Old Town, said:“We at Signature Pubs are voting ‘yes’ for the Old Town BID to proceed. Having worked with BIDs in Edinburgh before, we have seen the benefits that they can bring to individual businesses and the overall area

itself. Above all, if the individuals have a can-do attitude then it paves the way for new relationships and collaborations, therefore unites areas within.”

Aga Firat, owner of Cafe Coburn, The Wall Coffee and the Design House, said: “A single voice, speaking on behalf of many of our businesses, will be more effective and have more impact than many smaller efforts all saying slightly different things. A BID can help ensure our voices are heard in the decisions that will affect us.”

James McGregor, owner of the Royal McGregor Whisky Bar and Restaurant and Chair of the Original Edinburgh Steering Group, said: “We’ve been working hard over the last few years to make the case for a Business Improvement District here in the Old Town. The simple fact is that BIDs work – that’s what the evidence shows. They deliver more economic impact, reduce anti-social behaviour and crime, help manage the public realm, and make towns and cities more attractive places to live, work and do business.

“The package of proposals we have put forward to Old Town businesses will invest nearly £4 million in the area over five years. Having traded in the Old Town for over 20 years, I know this will have an enormous impact and benefit businesses and residents alike. Ahead of the vote closing next week, I’m urging all our local businesses to grasp this opportunity and vote Yes to Original Edinburgh.”