

Dine – It's all about local

Last month Dine restaurant on Cambridge Street hosted the Elsie Inglis campaign fundraising Gala Dinner.

As well as entertaining all the guests who bought tickets to attend, the restaurant also donated a dining experience for 10 guests at their newest venue which will open this month, helping to raise £1,000 towards the cost of a £50,000 Elsie Inglis statue planned for the Royal Mile.

This is just the tip of the iceberg as far as the restaurant's charitable giving is concerned. In the last seven years the owners have provided donations which have raised more than £60,000 for local charities, causes and community services.

Restaurateur Paul Brennan founded Dine with chef Stuart Muir in 2015. Since then they have branched out to Murrayfield, and are about to open a third spot in Canonmills in a newly created restaurant space for 50 covers by the Water of Leith. There is also a cantilevered terrace for pre dinner and post dinner drinks.

Recognising very well that their place on the Edinburgh dining scene is as a local business, they try very hard to get involved with the community and pay back the loyalty of their customers who are mainly locals.

The connection with the ladies who organised the fundraising campaign for the Elsie Inglis statue began with another fundraiser for Alzheimer Scotland in January 2020 just before lockdown, and Dine will also be contributing a prize for the Maggie's Edinburgh Ladies Love Lunch at the Sheraton Grand on

22 April 2022.

What Stuart and Paul have now decided is that it is better for them to focus on two or three charities such as Lynne McNicol's 'Its Good 2 Give' charity, the British Red Cross, the Esk Valley Rotary Club, Beatson Cancer Charity, and of course Elsie Inglis rather than giving a little to many charities.

Paul said: "Stuart and I both come from fairly humble backgrounds and the way we were brought up was to help other people. My dad was a butcher and my mum a dinner lady.

"When we first opened the business we struggled a bit, but we made sure that we supported local fundraisers. We are a local restaurant relying on local people to support us.

"We are now recovering after the pandemic, finding our feet again, and feel it is only right to keep up our charitable support for people who are having a tough time. Esk Valley Rotary Club told us they raised £6,066 most of which is going to Ukraine. We donated two gift vouchers for that, and we donated a table for eight to the Rob Roy Foundation and that raised £3,500 for the charity.

"We decided that we would concentrate on a few charities and you know it is not a big ask for us to give a table of four away as a fund-raising prize.

"When we first started we did not know much about marketing and didn't know how to reach our target audience, but now we have a name so we can help much more as people are prepared to pay for a meal here.

"During Fergus Linehan's directorship at Edinburgh International Festival entered an official partnership with the festival. This all started one night when Fergus came in for dinner with a famous conductor. Our diners gave him a round of applause and later that week we talked to the

festival about a formal arrangement which has lasted ever since.”

Stuart and Paul are opening a new venue – Canonmills site of the former public toilets 50 covers upstairs and downstairs – 12 for drinks in April and again are already embedded in the community.

Paul said: “Some of the locals had been trying to get a flowerbed created at the clock – the council had delayed doing anything about it so we got it approved for locals to plant and enjoy. Also we have cleared back vegetation along the roadside about five metres down to the Water of Leith. Standard Life own the land and we are talking to them about what else can be done in future.

“In Murrayfield we have become the venue for monthly meetings which we hold there with residents. There is of course a flood risk from the Water of Leith just there and we have provided flood gates for our own premises and the other stairs in the block. We consider ourselves proven operators in the community and like to get involved.”

Dine at Cambridge Street, Murrayfield and Canonmills.

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Dine on Cambridge Street