

### **Formation of FGW Byres Road Improvement Group (BRIG)**

Byres Road is a well-known and much-loved place right at the heart of Glasgow's vibrant West End, and one of the city's key centres combining retail, leisure and tourism, valued by residents and visitors alike. But the night-time economy has grown extensively – with part now a licensing overprovision area – and the public realm looks simply uncared-for. With challenges from the national recession and Tesco's new superstore at Thornwood, we have a strategic opportunity to consider the future well-being of this important street.

If Byres Road is to become an attractive, unique street, fit for its 21<sup>st</sup> century purpose, significant long-term improvements are plainly required, for example in its

- built heritage and public realm of the street and its lanes,
- general amenity and day-time and night-time economy,
- ability to contribute to Glasgow West Conservation Area and the city as a whole.

Friends of Glasgow West's practical involvement with the Academy of Urbanism's 2011 nomination of Byres Road as a "Great Street", has stimulated us to set up a new FGW working group recently, called the "FGW Byres Road Improvement Group".

The Western Baths Club is supporting us by providing a meeting-place. The University of Glasgow Estates Department and Michael Dale (West End Festival) have indicated they will contribute ideas and effort to this venture. There are moves to create a formally constituted Byres Road Business Association, another potential key player.

FGW BRIG will evolve as time goes on – especially if Byres Road were to become part of any official "Action Plan" developed by Glasgow City Council. Along with community councils, local residents' groups, and the community at large, we would respond to consultations and other engagement. We might also initiate or catalyse action ourselves. In general terms, "Action Plans" provide a platform for developing links with local businesses, and for sharing knowledge, combining efforts in managing investment, increasing public awareness and making recommendations for further improvements.

Initially, as a group, we need to gain detailed knowledge of Byres Road's sustainability, heritage, environment, design, resources, economy, transport and access, licensing overprovision, community, health and wellbeing. We are also developing our understanding of "action plans", "placemaking", etc, and investigating creative examples of good practice e.g. those identified via the Academy of Urbanism.

We aim to collaborate with others - local MP and MSP, regional MSPs, local Councillors - Hillhead Ward / Partick West Ward - and 3 community councils (Hillhead CC; Partick CC; Dowanhill, Hyndland & Kelvinside CC).

There will be a public launch in June's West End Festival – and you will receive a formal invitation nearer the time. In the meantime, please share your thoughts on Byres Road!

Ann Laird, Convener

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