

FODC Action Plan 2019

This Action Plan is based primarily upon the FODC Business Plan 2018-22. Goals and Action Points have been adjusted in the light of the Review of 2018. The Goals are

1. To Increase Income in order to attain financial viability without grants
2. To Further Develop the Core Team (Executive, committee, specific volunteers)
3. To complete the Visitor Centre Expansion which will provide a better visitor experience
4. To further Raise the Profile of the Castle and Visitors Centre
5. To ensure the continuation of the Community Heritage Project.

Action Points and associated Targets have been developed for each Goal. Six small action groups have been set up to develop strategies which will deliver specific Action Points, or on occasion an entire Goal.

The Sets of Action Points are: -

- To increase visitor numbers
- To increase income
- To further develop the core team
- To advance the Community Heritage Project (Action Group)
- To establish a strategy to complete the expansion of the Visitor Centre (Action Group)
- To raise the profile of the Castle and Centre (Action Group)

The three other Action Groups are Fund Raising; Education and Crazy Castle Kids; Events/Weddings.

It should be noted that although all but one of the Goals and targets for 2018 were achieved the strongly held view of all staff and volunteers is that the 2018 performance can be sustained, but further growth will be difficult without some increase in personnel and, more importantly, without a major increase in the floor space available at the Visitor Centre. Therefore, the Business Plan Goals and Targets for 2019 have been only marginally changed to take account of the 2018 outcomes, with an allowance of 2.5% for inflation in income, and 5% in expenditure. The large sum under "Grants" was used for specific purchases and did not contribute to meeting normal "running costs."

Visitor Centre Activity

The Business Plan specifies these Goals and Targets for 2019

	2018 outturns	2019 targets
Visitors	21,809	20,500
Castle Visitors	14,183	11,200
Cafe Sales	£38,374	£39,000
Shop Sales	£15,425	£15,900
Membership	174	185
Member Income	£98	£400
Ticket Sales	£20,934	£21,500
HES payments	£15,000	£15,500
Grants	£18,000	£19,500
Donation/Events	£16,000	£16,500

Target Cashflow 2019

2019	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Balance	1,900	2,100	1,700	2,500	1,500	nil	nil	3,300	2,000	500	4,000	200	4,300

2019 Cash In	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sales													76,400
HES													15,500
Events													16,500
Grants													19,500
Total													
Target	4,000	5,000	6,000	16,000	11,000	12,000	16,000	17,900	11,000	13,000	7,000	8,000	127,900

Cash Out	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Wages													62,000
Purcha													38,600
Fees													11,000
Events													9,000
Maint													3,000
Total													
Target	5,900	7,100	7,700	13,500	9,500	12,000	16,000	14,600	13,000	12,500	3,000	7,800	123,600

The team noted these specific points.

- Membership conditions have been reviewed as part of the strategy to complete the expansion of the Visitor Centre, and in addition the working year was changed from the Financial to the Calendar Year. A priority for the Committee and Staff in 2019 is to implement a drive to recruit more members.
- Accountancy assistance is required
- The HES support target has been reduced in the Cash Flow table compared with the Business plan to take account of the probability of a reduction in funding
- The recurring pattern of losses in the first three months of the calendar year indicate the need to retain a reserve fund large enough to cover these as well as any defray any unexpected problems. This should be set at 20% of turnover.

Developing the Team

Further Develop Team	Result 2018	Targets 2019
Identify a deputy/sub group for each core activity	3+6	10
Increase vol. numbers including C.K.K.	56	61
Widen vol. age range	achieved	achieved
Extra management appt	D. Manager	Account.
Training opportunities	Food Hyg.	VASA

The team noted these specific points.

- Training to be available through VASA (Voluntary Action South Ayrshire) Level 2 or 3 certificates in retail, customer service, cleaning.
- We will shortly be applying to VASA for a recognised volunteer friendly award.
- More “helpers” need to be recruited specifically to work in the Visitor Centre, perhaps through the current community briefing sessions re the Centre expansion plans.
- The possibility of utilising college student placements for those studying Tourism, and also Hospitality, as well as school work experience places.

Fund Raising

The team agreed to

- Create a template of information commonly required by funding organisations
- To recruit an extra volunteer to oversee the template and complete applications
- To focus upon a specific funding requirement for a period of 2/3 months
- The first area to focus upon is a source of funding to meet the costs of the feasibility study

Community Heritage Programme

The team believe that it would be sustainable to repeat this year’s programme in 2019 along with the Business Plan 2019 Objectives. The Heritage Project objectives are

- Developing the provision for genealogical research
- Enabling the FODC Community to learn more about the Castle Site and its wider landscape over time
- Making further provision for minority groups
- Continuing to expand links with other Heritage Organisations and groups

- Carry out a feasibility study and pilot study of a Community Oral History recording project
- Supporting planned excavations digs in 2019.

Targets for more involvement will be

- Secondary Schools
- Supporting planned excavations digs in 2019.
- South Ayrshire Outdoor Education team and the corresponding staff in North and South Ayrshire.
- Youth groups including the Duke of Edinburgh’s award; Scouts, BBs, Guides
- The general public in South Ayrshire, and Irvine and Kilmarnock

Education

Goals and Action Points	Result 2018	Targets 2019
More education visits	69 +21	72 + 21

The team planned to

- Contact Primary, Secondary Social Subjects, and Art Advisers in EAC, NAC and SAC.
- Circulate all educational establishments in Ayrshire with the refreshed programme.
- Send publicity material to youth groups, and community groups such as Guilds, Clubs etc.
- Focus on establishments in postcode areas with a lower take-up
- Seek feedback from those groups who visited in 2018 using the standardised form.
- Use the internet more to inform the public and target schools of the Programme.
- Offer a tour/snack package.
- Focus in particular on those areas and times which are less involved eg Secondary Schools in December April; Christmas Group visits; Corporate Events.
- It was noted that after a group visit some participating young people made a second visit with relatives. To encourage this trend visiting groups will be given discount ticket/publicity material for use by participants and relatives: these will be sent out with the consent forms used by groups in advance of their visit to avoid the “bottom of the school bag syndrome”.
- Schools will be asked to extend photo permission slips to include FODC if necessary

Events and Weddings

Goals and Action Points	Result 2018	Targets 2019
More weddings	5	6
More Events	22	22

The team planned to

- Weddings. Marketing of the location has been, and will be, reduced until the site is cleared up: analysis of marketing returns has changed future marketing strategies which will focus more on potential customers from Ayrshire and close by. It is also intended to seek to work with local hotels in Troon to offer a package to bridal parties: the package will include an option to use 4-wheel drive vehicles to access the castle.
- Events will be marketed as in 2018 using the Centre's Monthly Newsletter and the FODC website and Facebook page.

Complete Extension/Expansion Plans

The team's targets are to

- sign off the asset transfer
- identify funding for maintenance of the current Centre
- acquire quotes for plans and select one set for the Centre expansion;
- seek lottery/other funding for construction, equipment, furniture, and furnishings
- continue to seek feedback from community groups.

Raise Profile/Marketing

Targets are

- to establish stronger links with local groups (using the Asset transfer briefings), artisans, and food outlets (Eden, Auchans) through a series of briefings.
- To establish stronger links with similar centres & Regional Tourism boards and Visit Scotland, perhaps with joint promotions to create a tourist information hub. Leaflet B&Bs and hotels.
- to ensure that there are regular features in print media (local and national), including a "What's Happening" press release. Adverts in the national press other than the Herald's "Hidden Gems" had not proved worthwhile

- to ensure that there are features online regularly by continuing to use Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook (3,000 followers), SAC Events Page and the website. Continue to utilize the HES and Archaeology Scotland websites.
- to seek support from HES in gaining a Green Tourism Award
- to work with a specified budget, perhaps £1,000, plus gaining sponsors for the Newsletter.
- To develop a customer questionnaire to further identify the best media to generate custom.
- to assist with marketing targets identified by other teams.
 1. Membership. All media messages will carry information about membership, and encouragement to help (volunteer).
 2. Profile. All media messages will carry a strapline associating FODC with HES, and the University of Glasgow.
 3. Weddings. While use of UK Bridal will be dropped, links with the [REDACTED] will be enhanced.
 4. Funding. Coordinate activities with the Fundraising team to seek funding for the Newsletter.
 5. Publicising planned excavations digs in 2019 especially in Secondary Schools, Ayrshire Outdoor Education teams, and Youth Groups.
 6. Publicising Castle Visits 2019 especially in Secondary Schools, Ayrshire Outdoor Education teams, and Youth Groups.
 7. Events will be marketed as in 2018