

**Councillor Ellen Forson**  
**Leader of the Council**

Ward 4 Clackmannanshire South (Multi Member Ward)  
Kilncraigs, Greenside Street, Alloa, FK10 1EB  
Email: membersservices@clacks.gov.uk



**Clackmannanshire**  
**Council**

www.clacks.gov.uk

Comhairle Siorrachd  
Chlach Mhanann

**THIS PAPER RELATES TO  
ITEM 13  
ON THE AGENDA**

## **Motion to Clackmannanshire Council Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

That Council notes the attached correspondence received by the Leader of the Council, acknowledges that the Leader does not have the delegated authority to unilaterally agree to the request contained within the correspondence on behalf of the Council, and resolves to determine the Council's position on the request received from Daphne Hamilton.

On this basis I am submitting the information received from Daphne Hamilton to allow Council to resolve its position in respect of the request.



Councillor Ellen Forson  
Ward 4, Clackmannanshire South

16<sup>th</sup> January 2025



**From:** Daphne Hamilton  
**Sent:** Monday, January 6, 2025 11:48:10 AM  
**To:** Cllr Ellen Forson Nikki Bridle  
**Cc:** Cllr Craig Holden Cllr Kenneth Earle  
Cllr Bryan Quinn Cllr Coyne  
**Subject:** Time critical support for Alloa Town Centre businesses

Dear Councillor Ellen Forson and CEO Nikki Bridle

**Alloa First Ltd and Clackmannanshire Council**

We are writing to you, and copying in other relevant councillors, to put right a wrong. A wrong that has resulted in businesses in Alloa's town centre Business Improvement District bearing a disproportionate financial burden.

The report to the Council in September 2023 stated:

"3.13 The Alloa First Ltd Board has maintained the BID levy at the same level for the past 15 years, however, like many other organisations, including the Council, it is also facing cost pressures...[Alloa First] has proposed to increase the levy..."

Advice from Scotland's Towns Partnership to Unfair Nae Mair – 4% MAX:

"At the end of the day, Alloa First hadn't increased levies from 2008. Over that period inflation increased by 30%." *Phil Prentice April 2024*

The reality for the businesses on the ground tells a different story:

A business owner who has traded in the same premises in the BID area since its inception in 2008 has seen their levy rise from £240 to £620, a 160% increase, **and has seen no benefit.**

The attached leaflet shared with businesses in the Alloa BID area over the period October/November 2024, provides evidence of our research and activities, see also the pdf of a comparator town, Linlithgow, and its BID levy levels.

It is clear for many, that the services of Alloa First are superfluous to the needs of their business.

Given your roles in approving the levies in the draft Alloa First Business Plan 2023-2028, we are turning to you for support to set things right.

**Unfair Nae Mair**, with the backing of more than seventy businesses, who have pledged their support since 25th November 2024, **are asking Clackmannanshire Council to:**

- I. recognise that the levy levels charged by Alloa First have imposed a significantly disproportionate financial burden on businesses in the BID area, and**
- II. support the call for an Alteration ballot to remedy this situation.**

By holding an Alteration ballot, to bring down the levies by December 2025, Alloa First Ltd could demonstrate support for all businesses and particularly the independent traders who support the town centre economy. Given the role the Council has played so far, businesses are seeking the Council's support to help bring this about.

**You will be aware of the tight timetables for BID ballots**, so we would appreciate an early response to our substantive requests.

Thank you

All the best for 2025

Your sincerely

daphne

daphne hamilton on behalf of **Unfair Nae Mair – 4% MAX**

**UNFAIR NAE MAIR - Is a group of Alloa businesses seeking lower levy charges from Alloa First**  
 Using actual non-domestic rateable values [NDR] the tables illustrate the kind of levies paid by businesses in the Alloa First Business Improvement District (BID) compared with (35) BIDs across Scotland and neighbouring BIDs (in 2023)

Non-domestic RV [NDR] £3,600			
Median	£200	Average	£184
<b>Alloa First Levy 2024</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>£312</b>	
ClacksFirst Levy	2.5%	£90	
Falkirk Levy	1.25%	£50	
GoforthStirling Levy	1.25%	<b>£45</b>	
<b>Alloa First Levy 2018</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>£240</b>	

- a. 30% increase for Band A levy payers 2024-2028
- b. 42% of NDR for Council's air testing station in Alloa
- c. 328% of NDR (non-domestic rate) on Police Dog Kennels
- d. Goforth Stirling Opt in if NDR less than (<) £10k
- e. Levy 9% of NDR highest in Scotland at RV £3,600
- f. Falkirk fixed one off payment £50 if NDR less than £5k

Non-domestic RV £9,000			
Median	£250	Average	£251
<b>Alloa First Levy 2024</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>£624</b>	
ClacksFirst Levy	2.50%	£225	
Falkirk Levy	1.25%	£100	
GoforthStirling Levy	1.25%	£113	
<b>Alloa First Levy 2018</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>£540</b>	

- a. 16% increase for band B businesses 2024-2028
- b. Goforth Stirling Opt in if levy <£10,000 at 1.25% of NDR
- c. Falkirk one off payment of £100 levy if NDR =>£5001 & = <£10,000
- d. £624 is highest town BID levy in Scotland at this NDR level
- e. % of NDR charged by Alloa First continues to be above the norm
- f. Falkirk businesses in the BID area pay 1.25% of NDR over £10k

The impact of banded levies	Direction & % of NDR Change		NDRs		Alloa First (AF)		Unfair Nae Mair 2.5%		AF Levy changes 2024	
			2018 RV	2023 RV	2018 Levy	2024 Levy	2018 if 2.5%	2024 if 2.5%	% increase	Direction
EXAMPLE A	Up	↑ 28%	£5,800	£7,400	£240	<b>£416</b>	£145	£185	73%	↑
EXAMPLE B	Down	↓ 16%	£7,500	£6,300	£340	<b>£416</b>	£188	£158	22%	↑

Using bands disguises the real levy levels. Using percentage of individual NDRates creates greater transparency. Alloa First directors set the levy levels. The legal route to change the levy is for directors to hold an alteration ballot

Non-domestic RV £35,250			
Median	£595	Average	£641
<b>Alloa First Levy 2024</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>£1,041</b>	
ClacksFirst Levy	2.5%	£881	
Falkirk Levy	1.25%	£441	
GoforthStirling Levy	1.25%	£441	
<b>Alloa First Levy 2018</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>£940</b>	

- a. 11% increase for levy payers in Band E 2024-2028
- b. Levy above all other BIDs within a 25 mile radius of Alloa
- c. £570 is the highest levy for the other 3 BID towns
- d. Alloa First charges hundreds more than neighbouring BIDs
- e. BIDs charging less in 2023 than Alloa First did in 2018!
- f. Since 2008 the Council has failed to recognise the "disproportionate financial burden" \* on small businesses

Non-domestic RV £50,001			
Median	£795	Average	£928
<b>Alloa First Levy 2024</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>£1,872</b>	
ClacksFirst Levy	2.5%	£1,250	
Falkirk Levy	1.25%	£625	
GoforthStirling Levy	1.25%	£625	
<b>Alloa First Levy 2018</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>£1,041</b>	

- a. 80% increase on NDR of £50,001 + at renewal in 2023
  - b. Kilncraigs (Council HQ), pays a levy of just 0.004%
  - c. NDR of £50,001+ and above is top band - Council HQ is £470,000
  - \* Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 Part 9 42(4)(c)(i)(ii)
- So if every business had A PROPORTIONATE LEVY of 2.5% of non-domestic rate this would raise a potential £97,000 a year. A 90% collection would raise c£437,000 over 5 years.

# A CALL FOR FAIR BID LEVIES BY Dec. 2025



Achievable with support of BID businesses and Alloa First



## UNFAIR NAE MAIR

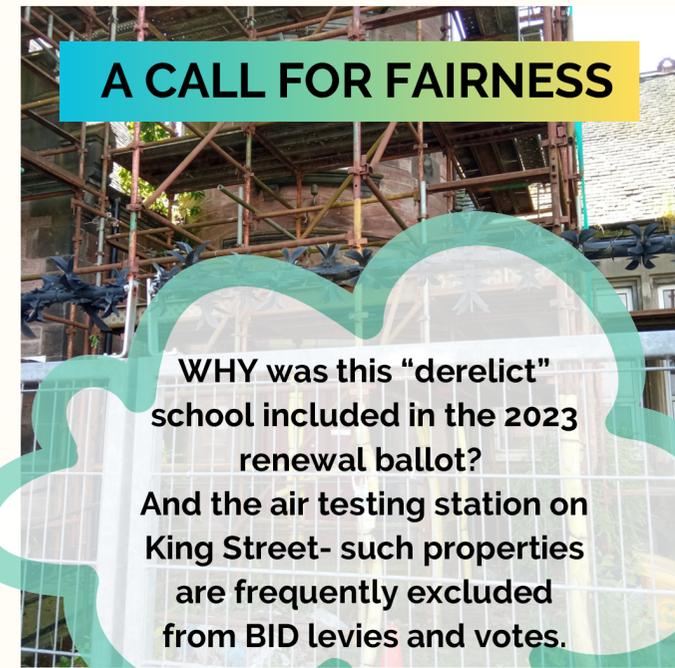
...is a group of Alloa business owners calling for an Alteration ballot to cut the levy levels charged by Alloa First

WHY? Because:

- .. a shocking third of businesses pay 30% more than before the renewal ballot in 2023
- ..Alloa town centre businesses have been paying high levies since the start of the BID in 2008
- .. levies disproportionately disadvantage Alloa town centre businesses
- ..Stirling, ClacksFirst, and Falkirk BIDs charge up to a maximum of 2.5% and did not increase on renewal (*see over*)
- ..Alloa First, charges a levy up to 328% of non-domestic rate for businesses in the BID
- ..it is the only way to create a fairer more affordable BID for all

## Unfair Nae Mair have:

- researched BID levies and services across Scotland
- met with directors of Alloa First and had their levy concerns dismissed by them
- consulted the Scottish Government funded BID agency Scotland's Towns Partnership, and Improvement Districts Scotland
- had another 5 years of Alloa First imposed on them by a 25 business majority where **one hundred and ten** businesses did not vote!
- identified 29 votes held by publicly funded bodies eg Clacks Council 14, Police 5, DWP 1, Scottish Courts 2, CTSI 2, Alloa First 1, FVCollege 1,etc
- called on Scottish Ministers, to revisit the regs. to limit levy levels to a max 4% of non-domestic rate
- **to ask you: "Are you happy with the hike in the levy since 2023?"**



## A CALL FOR FAIRNESS

WHY was this "derelict" school included in the 2023 renewal ballot?  
And the air testing station on King Street- such properties are frequently excluded from BID levies and votes.

**Your voice matters  
make it heard  
TODAY**

**If you support the call for an  
ALTERATION BALLOT**

*email:*

[unfairnaemair@outlook.com](mailto:unfairnaemair@outlook.com)

or TEXT: 07928 284 055

**Subject: - My business supports an  
Alteration Ballot -**

**Include: your name and business  
address.**

(Closing date 15 October 2024)

## IN THE FOREFRONT OF CHANGE

<b>ALLOA FIRST</b> (Population of Alloa 14 thousand & c246 BID levy properties)*							
Levy Banding	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
NDR** from	£95	£6,001	£8,500	£13,101	£22,251	£36,251	£50,001
NDR to	£6,000	£8,499	£13,100	£22.25	£36,250	£50,000	
% From	328.42%	6.90%	7.34%	6.30%	4.60%	3.70%	3.70%
% To	5.20%	4.89%	4.70%	3.70%	2.86%	2.70%	0.004%
<b>Levy</b>	<b>£312</b>	<b>£416</b>	<b>£624</b>	<b>£832</b>	<b>£1,040</b>	<b>£1,352</b>	<b>£1,872</b>
No. of NDRPs if known	80	32	50	41	21	10	12
<b>Levy raised</b>	<b>£24,960</b>	<b>£13,312</b>	<b>£31,200</b>	<b>£34,112</b>	<b>£21,840</b>	<b>£13,520</b>	<b>£22,464</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£161,408</b>	An increase of 60% on BID renewal in 2023					

\*\*Levies are based on non-domestic rates (NDR) set periodically by the Scottish Assessors Association

[Levies are in place for 5 years, any change requires an Alteration ballot.]

Key Levies above 4%

<b>One LINLITHGOW BID</b> (Population of Linlithgow 13 thousand & c 241 BID levy properties)														
Levy Banding	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
NDR from	£0	£1,000	£5,000	£10,000	£20,000	£30,000	£40,000	£50,000	£60,000	£80,000	£100,000	£200,000	£300,000	£400,000
NDR to	£999	£4,999	£10,000	£19,999	£29,999	£39,999	£49,999	£59,999	£79,999	£99,999	£199,999	£299,999	£399,999	
% From	Voluntary	0.90%	3.8%	3.30%	2.20%	1.90%	2.25%	2.40%	2.40%	2.25%	2.40%	2.00%	1.93%	
% To		1.80%	1.90%	1.65%	1.50%	1.46%	1.80%	2.00%	1.90%	1.80%	1.20%	1.33%	1.45%	1.50%
<b>Levy</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£90</b>	<b>£190</b>	<b>£330</b>	<b>£440</b>	<b>£570</b>	<b>£900</b>	<b>£1,200</b>	<b>£1,500</b>	<b>£1,800</b>	<b>£2,400</b>	<b>£4,000</b>	<b>£5,800</b>	<b>£6,000</b>
No. of NDRPs if known	0	54	78	72	13	6	3	4	4	0	3	1	2	1
<b>Levy raised</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£4,860</b>	<b>£14,820</b>	<b>£23,760</b>	<b>£5,720</b>	<b>£3,420</b>	<b>£2,700</b>	<b>£4,800</b>	<b>£6,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£7,200</b>	<b>£4,000</b>	<b>£11,600</b>	<b>£6,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£94,880</b>	No increase on BID renewal in 2024 ^												

\*Alloa First property numbers have been abstracted from the SAA website (based on 2023 rateable values). Levy banding from Alloa First Business Plan

^ Figures taken from the OneLinlithgow BID Business Plan 2024 (Non-domestic rates based on 2023 valuation)

[unfairnaemair@outlook.com](mailto:unfairnaemair@outlook.com)

Unfair Nae Mair - 4% MAX November 2024

## Unfair Nae Mair - 4% Max

A Business Improvement District (BID) comparison between:

**Alloa First Co.Ltd and the nearest small town BID One Linlithgow**

**Alloa First, has placed an unfair burden** on the majority of BID businesses in Alloa. Linlithgow levies deliver similar services to Alloa First, but One Linlithgow keeps levies at an inclusive level and below 4%, as do Stirling, Falkirk, and ClacksFirst BIDs. **A voluntary association, Unfair Nae Mair - 4% MAX** is determined to bring about change in Alloa and across Scotland. Why? Because there is no cap in Scotland, and the evidence shows that without a cap Scotland's small independent businesses have no protection from ill-advised BID companies. Levies are capped at 4% in England and are normally 1 to 2.5% of NDR. **To encourage support for Business Improvement Districts, a regulation cap of 4% MAX is needed in Scotland.**