

Haltwhistle Place Programme

Pen Portrait



Ian Dommett
Owner
The Old School House, Haltwhistle

I moved to Haltwhistle in May 2018 with my wife, Kate, to convert a former photography school on Fair Hill into a 5-bedroom bed and breakfast. In the time since we opened we have achieved VisitEngland 4-star status, won a TripAdvisor award for excellence with 100% 5-star reviews, and have a 9.9 rating on booking.com, the leading online booking site. This is the highest for any accommodation provider in Northumberland.

While we are recent arrivals in this beautiful part of the country, we are passionate advocates for Haltwhistle, Hadrian's Wall Country and Northumberland. I am a member of Haltwhistle Chamber of Trade and Heart of Hadrian's Wall Tourism Association.

We moved to Haltwhistle from Edinburgh where we lived for 28 years and raised our three children. I worked as a brand communications practitioner with over 25 years' experience on top UK brands, services and issues with particular strengths in behaviour change, social engagement and political campaigning. I combined strategic thinking with creative insight and practical campaign skills.

My work life started in London before moving to Edinburgh and working for Faulds Advertising, Marr Associates and 1576 Advertising. I set up my own consultancy in 2001 and worked with Golley Slater on the nationwide Army recruitment campaign. This was so successful that my consultancy was bought by Golley Slater in 2005 and I became MD of the Scotland operation until 2010 when I left to re-establish my own consultancy.

While best known for my political campaigns (SNP, Yes Scotland, Scottish Greens, Green Party of England and Wales) I am an expert in both traditional (advertising, design, PR, experiential) and new media (online, email, social media) communications and I have wide experience presenting to industry bodies, Higher Education and business. I have won many creative and effectiveness awards for clients as diverse as The Army, BBC Radio Scotland, Direct Holidays and VisitScotland.

I have particular interest in the development of social enterprises and was a Board Member of FirstPort, the Edinburgh-based social enterprise development company, for eight years.

Karen McGregor, former CEO of FirstPort, says of Ian: ... *'Ian was instrumental in the re-branding of Firstport in terms of our positioning and played a key role in developing the new strategy that was to work at the grass roots taking an asset based approach to working with communities. Ian has a passion and commitment to community development and the role of the third sector in providing support and impetus for individuals and communities to take transformative action. His work with FirstPort has led to the development and introduction of the 'What If...' initiative and his insights in community regeneration and empowerment have been hugely valuable to everyone at FirstPort.'*

For the last twelve years I have worked with Peoples Postcode Lottery, first as a marketing consultant and since 2011 as a trustee, originally as for the Green, Earth and Planet Trusts and since 2019 as Chair of the Care, Children and Support Trusts. This has involved the allocation of funds exceeding £50 million to charities in the United Kingdom and internationally.

Clara Govier, Managing Director at PPL says of Ian: *"Ian has been involved with People's Postcode Lottery long before he joined as a trustee of several Postcode Trusts. At the beginning of our journey he was instrumental in his marketing and communication advice as the brand grew in its new and challenging market place. As a founder-led, values based organisation, we seek people that share, mirror and understand our values. This permeates every part of our business and frames the way we work and who we work with. He gets it plain and simple – not everybody does – and the payback to us is truly beneficial."*