

**The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness City Arts Working Group** held in the Chamber, Town House, Inverness, on Friday, 29 May 2015, at 11.30 a.m.

Present:

Mr K Gowans (Chair)	Mr T Prag
Mrs B McAllister	Mr G Ross

Officials in attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr C Howell, Head of Infrastructure, Development and Infrastructure Service
Ms C Shankland, Project Manager, High Life Highland
Ms L Lee, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in Attendance:

Mr R MacIlleathan, Gaelic Journalist and Writer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown, Highland Council, and Mr D Taylor, Creative Scotland. The Group **NOTED** that Mr Taylor had replaced Mr S Blair as the Creative Scotland representative for the Flood Alleviation Public Art Project, and **AGREED** that a letter be sent to Mr Blair, through the Chair, thanking him for his continued support while the project progressed and wishing him well. .

2. Declarations of Interest

Items 6 and 7 – Mr G Ross (non-financial)

3. Preliminaries

In accordance with Standing Order 18, the Group **AGREED** that item 7 on the agenda, River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Project, be taken immediately following the Minutes.

4. Exclusion of the Public

The Working Group **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

5. Minutes

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Working Group held on 27 March 2015, which would be considered at the meeting of the City of Inverness and Area Committee on 2 June 2015.

6. River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Public Art Project

There had been circulated Report No. ICArts 06/15 dated 22 May 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager highlighting the progress made since the last meeting and updating Members on the Launch event and Private Members' Briefing. Members were invited to consider progress made since the last meeting across the commissioned projects.

The Chair commented that the Launch event had been well attended and press coverage had been excellent. The possibility of holding a further event at the Eastgate Centre would be explored by Officers.

Mr R MacIlleathan gave a presentation on the history and folklore associated with the River Ness, with a view to providing information at a number of sites along the Trail between Merkinch and the Ness Islands. The Trail artists' preference was to use either maps, or a website. Mr MacIlleathan's suggestions included:

Interpretation of Gaelic Place Names: Carnac Point; Abban Street; Tomnahurich;

History: Saint Kessock; the Brahan Seer's prophesies (bridges); Balnain House - the Jacobite rebellion; public fishings; the Ladies' Walk; Clach-na-Cudainn; Bank Street; Friars' Shott and the Dominican Priory

Folklore: fishing – the salmon of wisdom; Fionn MacCumhail's burial place; Tomnahurich fairies; the General's well/healing well; St Columba and the Monster

Structures: the old bridges and ferries across the river; the cells under the old bridge; Ness Castle; Friars' Bridge; Cromwell's Tower.

He suggested that the interpretation be provided for perhaps 10 sites between Friar's Bridge and the Islands. Stories for each place could be in English and Gaelic and use both audio and written mediums, perhaps 300 words maximum.

In discussion Members were strongly supportive of providing information to visitors and locals on the history and culture associated with the River, and that this should be in Gaelic as well as English. However, care would need to be taken to co-ordinate the Trail with other project, and include signposting, so that information throughout Inverness was presented in a coherent way.

Member suggestions included: using colour coded way-posts for inter-linked trails; other sites, such as Queen Mary's house and the Maggot; provision of information on wildlife along the River; that audio information be read by actors, with voices/character appropriate to the story, in English, Gaelic and possibly other languages; that the proposed map could be in Gaelic as well as in English, and that sponsorship opportunities for the map could be investigated – this could assist with future revenue costs.

The City Area Manager gave an assurance that he would work with the Director of Development and Infrastructure with regard to all the projects that used signage to achieve an integrated outcome, and to source funding. He also undertook to lead on the choice of sites, and to look into Members' other suggestions. The Project Manager advised that potential funding of some

£20,000 from Bòrd na Gàidhlig would be investigated.

The Group having thanked Mr MacIlleathan for his presentation, Officers provided a verbal update on a number of areas, including that:

- the projects should be complete by mid-2016; however, it was more important to “get it right” than to meet timescales – the Art would be there for many years and should not be compromised
- all the artists would develop their concepts and detailed designs would be brought to the Group
- selection of sites for each of the projects would be done in a logical order, the Gathering Place first, followed by the Sculptural Destination – the artists understood the reasons for this. The proposed sites would be reported to the Group
- Dress for the Weather had set up an on-line portal for the Trail and were seeking suggestions from the public as to where interpretation points should be located
- Mary Bourne was currently working on pavements, the seating would be worked on in September.

In discussion, Members emphasised the importance of encouraging supporters of the projects to speak out. In particular there was a need to reiterate that the funding package had been agreed with HIE and Creative Scotland.. The City Area Manager advised that a publicity plan was being drawn up.

The Group **NOTED**:

- i. that further work would be done to consider the financial implications of maintaining the installations after the initial 3 year period;
- ii. the ongoing work on the preferred siting of some installations, particularly in relation to the options for the Gathering Place (to ensure they were in scope for the project) and the potentially competing interests for using the site at Friar’s Shott;
- iii. the development work being undertaken on the Children’s Riverside Feature; and
- iv. that officers would work up the funding scheme for the Gaelic trail.

The Group **AGREED** in principle that the Gaelic trail be developed, subject to further information being provided on funding and the integration of signage strategies with a report being made to a future meeting for final approval to be given.

7. Flood Alleviation Scheme – Project Update

The Head of Infrastructure gave a verbal update on the delivery of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme, particularly pertaining to its effect on the art works, including that:

- Bank Street would re-open that day; the re-routing of busses had been organised
- Huntly Street would re-open on 5 June
- Stage 2 works should be completed in July.

Members provided anecdotal evidence that the flood works were proving popular with people.

The Working Group **NOTED** the position.

8. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No ICArts 05/15 dated 22 May 2015 by the Inverness City Area Manager setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 April 2015 and showing actual expenditure to date.

The Working Group was advised that the budget was on target and spending was going to plan.

The Working Group **NOTED** the report.

9. Ramada Project - Update

A verbal update was provided on progress, and, following discussion, Members **NOTED** that:

- i. the City Area Manager had met with the Hotel Manager and that with the Hotel ownership changing hands, a meeting in June would be arranged with the new owners; the outcome of the meeting with the new owners would be fed back to the Group;
- ii. Creative Scotland was being kept informed and were understood to be supportive in principle; and
- iii. the project, if it went ahead, would be tied in with other City improvement projects, such as Station Square.

10. Date of next Meeting

AGREED as Friday 21 August 2015.

Given the likelihood that events would move forward and decisions be required (such as for the Children's Feature) prior to the next meeting, the Group **AGREED** that:

- i. regular updates be provided to Members by email;
- ii. the Chair be kept informed of progress;
- iii. an additional meeting would be called if required.

The meeting ended at 12.30 p.m.