

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the 2nd Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Monday 18 November 2019 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Highland Council:

Mr G Ross
Mr I Brown
Mr B McAllister
Mr C Smith

Other Representatives:

Mr M Smith, Manager, Inverness BID
Mrs J Murray, Victorian Market Manager
Ms A Wilson, Inverness Hotels

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager
Miss R Gardiner, Event Manager and Student, UHI
Mrs A MacArthur, Administrative Assistant

Mr G Ross in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been intimated on behalf of Mr M Goulding, CEO - Inverness Loch Ness, Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Councillor D Macpherson, Highland Council, Mr M Smith, Inverness BID, Mr M Whyte – UHI.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Members **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public should 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 Paragraph 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes from the previous Meeting held on 19 August 2019 which were **NOTED**.

Matters arising: Item 8 – Thank you to Liam Gallagher who led on the Kirking of the Council which went well and had been delivered as planned. The Kirking of the Council would now be organised by the Civic Team.

5. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No E&F 04/19 by the Inverness City Area Manager dated 11 November 2019 setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 September 2019 and showing the actual expenditure to date.

Thereafter, the Working Group **NOTED** the update.

6. Marketing and Merchandising Sub-Group

The Events Manager had been having discussions with the Business Incentive Group to sell merchandise at Hogmanay.

The acquisition of a card reader was in progress. The Redesign Committee and Executive Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment should be approached for their support in acquiring card readers.

The Working Group:

- i. **NOTED** the update; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Redesign Committee and Executive Chief Officer be approached for their support in acquiring card readers.

7. Thrifty 50 Update

Four “Thrifty 50” events had been run to date. One had been held at Halloween and recognition was due to Charleston Community Complex volunteers for their help. Thrifty 50 had not been held for the bonfire event. The Thrifty 50 should be run at the Highland Games and at Hogmanay, it had been tried at Halloween but had not been successful. Volunteers were now sought for the Hogmanay event.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

8. Upcoming Events

The Events Manager gave an update on upcoming events as follows:

- since our last meeting the Halloween Show on Ness Highlands had been staged, 6,600 people on the first night and 7,000+ people on the second night with special mention and tribute to lighting colleagues John Beaton and Alister Wemyss who had sadly passed away;

- suggestions welcomed for Santa and the Christmas Light Up – Santa possibly in a vehicle of some kind;
- Winter wonderland – social media had been very active for weeks and this event had been very popular;
- Red Hot Highland Fling – Council HQ to be open to allow the Control Room to be operational in Block B with heaters installed as HQ is closed over the Christmas/New Year period;
- Polish Spring Event – The Polish Wolves are looking to stage two events in the Northern Meeting Park to celebrate the end of winter in March and the Polish Heritage Day in May;
- The Inverness Highland Games Committee would meet on Wednesday, 20th November 2019 with Councillor Calum Smith joining this Committee;
- the 2020 Highland Games would include football playing youngsters visiting from Downey, California;
- Clan MacGillivray International Clan Visit;
- Dominion of Canada Pipe bands and Drums;
- Highland Pride (formerly Proud Ness) – would like to run their event again including Sunday, noon to 6 pm with consideration of an outdoor music stage; and
- the MOD was scheduled for October and would be approximately seven days.

The Working Group:

- NOTED** the update; and
- AGREED** to the Highland Pride extending their event on Sunday from noon to 6 pm.

9. **2020-2021 Action Plan and Report to CIAC (August 29th, 2019)**

The Action Plan had been put to the City of Inverness Area Committee to look at a proposal for the Inverness Meeting Park. A reduction in the Common Good Fund Budget has resulted in the Events and Festivals Budget having to be reduced to £0.275m noting that the budget would be increased by 25% in the event of the income earning opportunities planned for the Council not being realised.

All events were beneficial and popular and discussion followed on all the events currently held. The event for Hogmanay is known for being a free event with an unblemished record for safety and police arrests. The Inverness Hotels Association stated that this had been a peak period for accommodation in the hotels. For a small amount of money several successful events had been held which had marketed our city.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

10. Infirmery Foot Bridge (River Ness) Closures

The Halloween Show closure of the bridge had been cancelled by the Events Manager. Figures were given on the maximum number of people crossing the bridge. During events, on crossing the bridge, when asked, no visitors to Ness Islands had been identified, the pedestrian traffic on the Infirmery bridge had been the usual traffic comprising of residents and visitors to Eden Court.

Now that information was to hand spreadsheets should be altered to read:

- the Halloween Show on Ness Islands and the Winter Wonderland event, a full 16:00 to 22:00 closure of infirmery bridge was not required;
- the Bonfire Show – a full closure will of course be in operation; and
- the Hogmanay Show will be discussed at the Safety Advisory Group.

Members were asked to note that the dispersal of the crowd following the 2018 Hogmanay Show as a result of not opening both gates by the stage was unwarranted. This year it was proposed to open the gate at the Glenurquhart Road side of the stage, the gate would be monitored by security guards and if problems arose the gate could be closed.

The Working Group **NOTED** the operation of the Infirmery Bridge would be monitored on an ongoing basis in liaison with the Head of Roads and Transport and the Safety Advisory Group.

11. MWC 2022 Application

An application had come in from Scottish Masters International inviting the Highland Games Committee to host their 2022 World Championships. This event had been hosted in Inverness in 2014, 2009 and 2006. In 2014 there was a record 150 competitors with their respective families and friends attracting hundreds of bed nights in Inverness area. Unfortunately, as the 2014 event took place the week after the Independence Referendum it had slipped under the radar.

Given that 2022 was the Bicentenary of the Inverness Highland Games a return to Inverness for this event would be appropriate, desirable and logical. However, given the challenges that we have been presented with by recent budget cuts; the City of Inverness Area Committee will need to decide if it is affordable. The Games Committee would be considering the application on Wednesday 20 November 2019. The deadline for Inverness to submit a bid to host this event was May 2020. The venue will be announced in Ireland on 4 June 2020. Members asked that a best guestimate of costs be given by the Games Committee.

The Working Group:

- i. **NOTED** the update; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a best guestimate be given, by the Games Committee, of the cost for the World Championships 2022 from Scottish Masters International to be held in Inverness.

12. Any Other Business

Scottish Canals have called a meeting on Friday 6 December 2019 to discuss the Bicentenary of the Caledonian Canal.

In relation to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund, members are asked to note that further to the notification that we gave the CIAC at the February 2018 meeting, that an enquiry was submitted to see if the fund could be used to part fund the acquisition of projectors. It was incorrect for it claimed that we submitted a proposal, in fact an enquiry had been submitted in the format that was requested and this had clearly asked to be advised so that we could discuss submission of a proposal to the CIAC. The Riverlights event proposal would be decided at the Inverness City Committee on Thursday 21 November 2019.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next meeting would be notified in due course.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm.