

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the 1st Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Monday 2 March 2020 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Highland Council:

Mr G Ross
Mr I Brown
Mrs I Mackenzie
Mr D Macpherson

Other Representatives:

Mr M Golding, Visit Loch Ness
Ms R Bell, Eden Court Highlands

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager (late arrival 11.45am)
Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager
Mrs L Dunn, Principal Administrator

Mr G Ross in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been intimated on behalf of Mr C Smith, Mr M Whyte, Ms J Murry, Mr M Smith, Ms J Cuddy and Ms A Wilson.

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. European Pipe Band Championships

This item was **DEFERRED**.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated Minutes from the previous Meeting held on 18 November 2019 the terms of which were **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, the following matters were reported:

Item 6: Marketing & Merchandising Sub-Group: The Redesign Board had been approached in regard to the acquisition of card readers and the outcome of this was awaited;

Item 8: Upcoming Events: Work was in progress in regard to the extension of the Highland Pride event. The Polish community was working with the Scouts to stage the Spring Event at Walker Park, Inverness and the Heritage Event would be held at Bellfield Park, Inverness. Work continued to support these events;

Item 10: Infirmary Foot Bridge: Closures were now being managed and funded by Community Services. The Working Group stressed that safety was paramount and any planned closures needed to be communicated to the public. In the meantime, operation of the Infirmary Bridge would continue to be monitored in liaison with the Head of Roads and Transport and the Safety Advisory Group; and

Item 11: MWC 2022 Application: Due to a specification change, the Games Committee had declined the invitation to host the 2022 World Championships.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

6. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No E&F01/20 by the Inverness City Area Manager dated 24 February 2020 setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 January 2020 and showing the actual expenditure to date.

The Events Manager reported that although no additional expenditure was expected for March 2020, a bad debt of £900 from three years ago remained outstanding. He explained that the debt had been pursued in line with the Council's procedures but had not been recovered and consequently this sum would need to be absorbed within the current budget. It was queried whether procedures needed to be amended to reduce the likelihood of this happening again in the future.

Thereafter, the Working Group **NOTED** the revenue monitoring position to 31 January 2020.

7. Marketing and Merchandising Sub-Group

The Events Manager provided an update during which he advised that £900 worth of merchandising had been sold at the 2019 Hogmanay event. Although this was welcome, further work was required to develop a marketing strategy which comprised of a broader sales portfolio and the most saleable merchandising products to maximise income.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

8. Thrifty50 Update

The Events Manager advised that sales to the value of £632 had been generated and that this full sum (i.e. 100%) had been allocated to the prize fund. The Working Group recognised that the initiative had potential to generate income but in order for this to be realised a large pool of volunteers was required to promote and sell tickets. The Marketing and Merchandising Sub-Group would look at taking this initiative forward.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

9. Upcoming Events

The Events Manager gave an update on the following events:

- a. Red Hot Highland Fling Review
- b. Polish Spring Event
- c. Polish Heritage Day
- d. Inverness Highland Games
- e. Downey California Visit
- f. Clan MacGillivray International Visit
- g. Dominion of Canada Pipes & Drums Band
- h. Highland Pride (formerly Proud Ness)
- i. Royal National MOD
- j. Monster Fest
- k. Red Hot Highland Fling Preview

The Events Manager also indicated that a watching brief was being adopted with regard to the current outbreak of coronavirus and further instruction was awaited from the Government as to the potential impact of this on future events. The Working Group allocated Members to serve as Ambassadors for the individual events in the programme.

The Event Manager provided details of the Safety Advisory Group's review of the 2019 Red Hot Highland Fling; at which it had been noted that a significant increase in attendance had been successfully accommodated by the activation of the site's designated alternative entrance and overspill areas. It was noted that work was now underway to expand the site's capacity and amend the show's event plan and licence accordingly.

There was detailed discussion during which Members suggested enhancements that could be made to the 2020 Highland Fling. The Chairman provided assurance that all opportunities to continue to refine and improve the event would be considered within the constraints of the Working Group's budget which had been reduced with effect from 1 April 2020.

Constraints made it essential that all efforts were made to reduce costs and maximise income generating opportunities including obtaining event sponsors and donations. He confirmed that work continued in this regard and that the meeting dates of the Marketing and Merchandising Sub-Committee would be circulated to the Group. In addition, further PR work was required to increase public awareness that the events were funded by Inverness Common Good Fund, i.e. not by Highland Council. It was also highlighted that a number of

specialists now attended meetings and the Chair urged the Working Group to utilise their knowledge and expertise and to work with partners to ensure the sustained development of the programme of events which delivered a high level of community benefits and a positive impact on the economy of the City.

Following detailed discussion, the Working Group **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** that the meeting dates of the Marketing and Merchandising Sub-Committee be circulated.

10. Infirmary Bridge Closures

The Working Group **NOTED** that update on this matter had been provided at Item 5.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be held on 18 May 2020.

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.