

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the Second Floor Committee Room, Inverness Town House, on Monday, 4 September 2023 at 1pm.

Highland Council:

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair
Mr I Brown
Mrs J Hendry
Mrs K MacLean

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager
Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Ms K Raite, Inverness Events Manager
Mr C Kershaw, Eastgate
Ms M Laws, Inverness Bid (remote)

Mrs Campbell-Sinclair in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mr R MacKintosh.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Members **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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 7 August 2023.

5. City Area Community Events Programme 23/24

The Inverness City Area Manager updated Members on the plans for the Community Events Programme for the period to 31 March 2024, in light of the decisions taken by the City of Inverness Area Committee at their meeting on 28 August 2023 to provide a Bonfire / Fireworks event, Christmas Lights event, and a Red Hot Highland Fling (RHHF), the latter of which would be a payable

event, with tickets costing £12.50 per person (of which £2 was VAT and £0.50 a booking fee).

The Events Manager gave an update on preparations being made for the various events including safety, security, licence and other applications, and quotes for entertainment and provision of services.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

Bonfire / Fireworks

- it was proposed the bonfire should be lit at 7pm;
- suggestions for Guys for the bonfire included a primary school Guy-building competition, with a possible link to the Eastgate Centre;
- appropriate public catering vendors, ideally local, was suggested;
- a meeting was planned with Adder Business (contracted Website supplier) to ensure the website was updated, with content to be previewed to Members of the Group in advance of publication, which would also be tied in with Corporate Communications;

Christmas Lights Switch On

- a summary was provided of the streets to be lit and the intended process for switching them on;
- consideration would be given to asking local hotels if they could extend the river bank lights;
- the event would be centred around Falcon Square, the Victorian Market, and the Eastgate Centre, and the assistance and cooperation of the management of both facilities would be sought, with detail on possible activities, themed competitions, vending, and appropriate catering to be discussed further outwith the meeting;
- it was intended that no road closures would be necessary;
- the event was due to take place on the last Sunday in November, and it was asked that the planned Elf on a Shelf event for that weekend be rescheduled;
- Eastgate and Inverness Bid would be key partners;

Red Hot Highland Fling

- given the decision to charge for the event, albeit a relatively small amount compared to many other, similar sized events, it was important the quality was high;
- there would be a move away from the traditional 'concert and compere' model of event, to a more inclusive 'Highland Hoolie' / Ceilidh type of atmosphere, with activities and dancing for all ages;
- it was hoped the event might start with a procession through the centre of Inverness, accompanied by Celtic drummers, fire eaters, stilt walkers etc, depending on budget available;
- links would be made with other City Centre stakeholders;
- various suggestions for the event were made, including the use of screens to project short films or live drone footage of the ceilidh

dancing, which could also be broadcast on social media and used for future event publicity.

Members **NOTED** the updates.

6. Budget – Update – 2023/24

Once more detail on the events programme had been confirmed, reports on programmed spend would be taken to future meetings of the Working Group.

Members **NOTED** the information provided.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Members **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be 9 October 2023 at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 2.40pm

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in Council Headquarters/Remotely, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday, 9 October 2023 at 2p.m.

Highland Council:

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair

Mr I Brown

Mrs J Hendry

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager, Communities and Place

Ms A MacNeill, Senior Public Relations Officer, Performance & Governance

Mr A MacInnes, Senior Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

Also in Attendance:

Ms K Raite, Inverness Events Manager

Ms M Laws, Inverness Bid

Mr D Johnstone, Chief Executive, Visit Inverness Lochness Bid

Mrs Campbell-Sinclair in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Mrs K Maclean.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Members **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.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 September, 2023.

5. City Area Community Events Programme 23/24

The Events Manager gave a presentation on the plans for the winter festival programme. Updates were given on the preparation for: bonfire and fireworks night, Christmas lights switch on and the red hot highland fling. This also included the links being made with other City Centre stakeholders.

During discussion, the proposed logo for the winter festival programme was shared and Members welcomed this. The winter festival programme website would comprise a homepage with links to each of the separate events in the programme. The website was scheduled to go live mid October and the date of Friday, 20 October was suggested with a media event to announce the launch of the website being arranged.

Tickets for the red hot highland fling would be available to purchase on the website. Members felt it important to have alternative options for purchasing tickets, for those who did not have internet access. Consideration was being given to entertainers to approach for the 3 solo performances at the event. Once sponsorship packs were available approaches could be made to potential sponsors and the importance of income from sponsors and ticket sales was highlighted.

The Inverness City Area Manager would brief the Director of Inverness Business Improvement District on the winter festival programme.

In relation to the Inverness Highland Games 2024, quotes for provision of a mobile grandstand had been sought. One quote for 2 x 250 seated grandstands had been received. Other quotes would be sought.

Members:-

- i **NOTED** the updates on the winter festival programme;
- ii **AGREED** the winter festival programme website proposed launch date be Friday, 20 October 2023 and a media release to announce the launch of the programme; and
- iii **AGREED** options for alternative ticket sales for the red hot highland fling would be explored.

6. Budget – Update – 2023/24

Once more detail on the events programme had been confirmed, reports on programmed spend would be taken to future meetings of the Working Group.

Members **NOTED** the information provided.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Members **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be 6 November, 2023 at 2pm.

Post meeting note: - date of meeting changed to 10 November, 2023.

The meeting ended at 2.40pm

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the Second Floor Committee Room, Inverness Town House, on Friday, 10 November 2023 at 12pm.

Highland Council:

Mr I Brown

Mrs J Hendry

Mrs K MacLean (remote)

Non Members of the Group in attendance:

Mrs M Reid (remote)

Officials in Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager

Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Ms K Raite, Inverness Events Manager

Mr C Kershaw, Eastgate

Ms M Laws, Inverness Bid (remote)

Mr D Johnstone, Visit Inverness Loch Ness (remote)

Mrs J Hendry in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

There were none.

2. Exclusion of the Public

Members **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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **NOTED** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 October 2023.

5. City Area Community Events Programme 23/24

The Inverness City Area Manager and the Events Manager presented an update to Members on the plans for the Community Events Programme for the period up until 31st March 2024, including the links being made with other City Centre stakeholders.

Bonfire Night:

- Estimated attendance of 12,000.
- No major incidents reported on the night.
- Parking restrictions worked well with support from Council team – notes have been made for future.
- Expected to come in on budget once final costings received.

Members welcomed the success of the event and noted plans for improving in future. Feedback from vendors had been positive, with many keen to attend again in future. Security measures had been effective with no notable disturbances. Gratitude was expressed to the Principal Traffic Officer and his team for their work to minimise disruption to nearby residents. Feedback from the NHS and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service about the value of the event in reducing incidents in the home had been positive.

Christmas Lights Switch On:

- Sunday 26th November, with the lights being switched on scheduled for 4.30pm.
- An action plan had been put together working with BID, the Council's lighting team, the Victorian Market, Eastgate Centre and Highland Hospice.
- An update on the £8k budget update was provided.

Further detail on the plans was provided as follows:

- The Victorian Market would be decorated, with music performance, face painter and a 'letters to Santa' writing area.
- Retailers were encouraged to offer sampling etc for the duration.
- Reindeer would be featured in Falcon Square organised by the Eastgate Centre.
- Falcon Square entertainment would be arranged and managed by Eastgate Centre and Highland Hospice.
- Christmas Tree in Falcon Square decoration would be provided by the Highland Hospice.
- Work was underway with the Hospice to arrange carol singers, brass band and a dedication to the tree by their chaplain.
- Details of the tree to be featured on the website.
- Aiming to have the lights turned on from the outside in towards the tree.
- Rev Murray has been contacted in relation to the event, as the Cathedral had plans to consider holding a St Andrews service at the Cathedral at 5.30pm, following conclusion the bells would ring.

During discussion, gratitude was expressed to Chris Kershaw for his help liaising with retailers and with the Hospice. The focus on helping city centre businesses was welcomed, and assurance was sought and provided that the welfare of the reindeer had been checked.

Red Hot Highland Fling:

- A proposed site plan had been drawn up using the Northern Meeting Park section to host toilets and bar.
- Eden Court Car Park would be used to accommodate Emergency Services.
- The Parade down the High Street, across bridge and down Ness Walk, would consist of around 10 fire walkers, 20-30 drummers and stilt walkers, and a pipe band.
- Tickets would go on sale on 13 November 2023.

Other tentative plans were provided as follows:

- Fire performers would host a 10-15 minute show after gates open.
- Ceilidh would commence with strategically placed dancers to help understand moves.
- 3 solo spots interspaced through the evening, featuring Robertson (Braebach) Siobhan Miller and Norrie McIver (Skippinish)
- Lone Piper to play at the Bells
- Fireworks display.
- Event closes to Auld Lang Syne.
- Bar tenders have been issued.
- Security tender has been received, awaiting parade confirmation.
- Insurance to cover cost of ticket prices has been secured. To cover up to income of £50,000, a £1000 charge is applicable, but this would protect the budget should the event have to be cancelled due to weather etc.
- Tickets to be sold at £12 + Booking Fee (£0.50p).
- 5000 tickets allocated for pre-sale.
- Under 18's to be accompanied by adult (max 2 per adult - under review) and all ticket prices to be set at the same with no allowance for children etc.
- 3 food vendors have been confirmed, with another 2 planned.
- There would not be the capacity to exit and re-entry to maximise crowd and atmosphere.

During discussion, the following issues were considered:

- further information was sought and provided on the timings and security plans;
- it was important essential information, such as the no re-entry rule, and the availability of free, child-friendly entertainment in the form of the parade, was communicated to the public;
- it was hoped vendors would price their offerings at a reasonable level;
- contingency plans in the event the tickets did not sell out were discussed, and it was proposed and **agreed** that the big screen be removed from the budget as it was costly and unnecessary;
- a Members briefing would be held closer to the event;

- the reasons for the planned ‘two under-18s’ per adult rule were summarised;
- assurance was sought that a clear, caring ejection policy would be enforced for disruption or inappropriate behaviour, and that a disabled area / platform would be available;
- merchandise sales could be considered for future years, if planned earlier; and
- consideration should be given to the provision of some seating, for example hay bales.

Overall Winter Festival Programme:

A summary was provided of publicity plans, including social media, and a demonstration of the website was provided. It was suggested that in future years, dates should be finalised as early as possible to assist tourism businesses to promote the events as part of accommodation publicity;

The Working Group **NOTED** the position and **AGREED** the points made during discussion.

6. Budget – Update – 2023/24

A budget summary was provided and was **NOTED**.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Members **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be 4th December 2023 at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 1.50pm.