

**City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in 1st Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Thursday 8 October 2015 at 2.05 pm.

**Present:**

Highland Council

Mr F Parr

Mr G Ross (from 2.30 pm)

Mr H Wood

Other Representatives

Ms J Cuddy, Manager, Eastgate Shopping Centre

Ms A Windsor, Cluster General Manager, Columba Hotel, Inverness Hotels Association

**Officials in Attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager

Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager

Miss J Green, Administrative Assistant, Corporate Development Service

Ms L Mackay, Administrative Assistant, City Manager's Office

**Mr F Parr in the Chair**

**Business**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Sinclair, Highland Council, Mr G Ambrose, CEO, Visit Inverness Loch Ness, Mr C Marr, Chief Executive, Eden Court Theatre and Mr M Smith, Manager, Inverness BID.

It was noted that Mr G Ross would arrive late due to other Council business and therefore at this point the meeting was not quorate but would continue as a briefing.

The Chair welcomed Ms Amy Windsor, representing Inverness Hotels Association, to her first meeting. It was explained that the Inverness Hotels Association would be represented on a rota basis and that, as agreed by the City of Inverness Area Committee, Inverness and Loch Ness Tourism BID would be represented by Mr Graeme Ambrose at future meetings.

**2. Exclusion of the Public**

It was **AGREED** that, under Section 50A(4) 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 Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

The Group **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 5 – Mr F Parr (non-financial)

### 4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There had been circulated Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 18 August 2015 which were **NOTED**.

### 5. **Update on 2015 Events**

**Declaration of Interest – Mr F Parr declared a non-financial interest in relation to this item as a Board Member of MS Therapy Centre but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.**

An update was provided at the meeting by the Events Manager on the Winter Festival Programme which had just been launched.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- customers from all over Scotland and returning customers were booking rooms a year in advance of the Hogmanay concert which showed the successful promotion and popularity of the event;
- in relation to the event at Crown Primary School where the Christmas Parade for the Christmas lights Switch On Ceremony would leave from, it was confirmed that experience would be drawn from other parades which had previously been organised from the same starting point and further arrangements for the Parade were to be discussed with the Provost;
- the Eastgate Centre would be supporting the Christmas lights Switch on Ceremony with events and activities during the day, in aid of the ARCHIE Foundation, including an ice rink, reindeer, the arrival of Santa and the opening of the grotto which would be themed Peter Pan to allow for cross marketing with Eden Court;
- the Eastgate Centre was investing money normally spent on TV advertising into events and activities as it was felt this approach was more beneficial; and
- a request received from the MS Therapy Centre to set up a marquee in the Northern Meeting Park at the Hogmanay concert offering refreshments and a respite area for families with any profits going to the MS Therapy Centre Charity was welcomed and it was agreed the Manager would approach the Events Manager to discuss the process.

The Group **NOTED** the update.

## 6. 2015 Budget Forecast

An update was provided at the meeting by the Events Manager on the budget forecast which showed a current overspend but it was anticipated savings would be made following further cost analysis of events.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- the Common Good Fund was currently under pressure, especially due to the renovation of the Town House, and was closely scrutinised by the City of Inverness Area Committee in terms of how money was spent and what impact it brought to the City;
- hoteliers analysed peaks and troughs in room bookings to reflect rates to demand and gathered information on ancillary spend therefore the number of rooms booked in connection with an event and the overall impact of an event could be easily estimated;
- figures from a selection of hotels and B&Bs, via the Hotels Association, should be collected and reported to the City of Inverness Area Committee;
- when evaluating events, the Eastgate Centre surveyed a sample of retailers for feedback and analysed trends in visitor numbers within the Centre throughout the year taking into account national trends;
- there was a lot of information that could be drawn together to determine the economic impact of events for Inverness and the wider area, including research that had been undertaken in relation to the TBID;
- there was a reliance on the support of partners to provide feedback on events which should be discussed as a standing item at future meetings.

At this point, Mr G Ross joined the meeting.

The Group **NOTED** the budget position and **AGREED** to include Feedback as a standing item for future meetings.

## 7. Date of Next Meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 10 December 2015 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm.