

**City of Inverness Area Committee
Inverness City Arts Working Group**

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Inverness City Arts Working Group** held in the First Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Thursday, 3 May 2018 at 2.30 pm.

Present:

Mrs H Carmichael
Mrs I MacKenzie

Mrs B McAllister
Mr G Ross

In Attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager

Ms R Cleland, Corporate Communications & Resilience Manager, Chief Executive's Service

Mr J Kelman, Principal Project Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service

Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator, Chief Executive's Service

Also in attendance:

Ms C Shankland, Exhibitions Officer, High Life Highland

Mrs I MacKenzie in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr A Christie.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Working Group **NOTED** the following declaration of interest:-

Item 5 – Mr G Ross (non-financial)

3. Exclusion of the Public

The Working Group **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.

4. Actions from Previous Minutes

There had been circulated Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 22 March 2018, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes it was reported that:-

- in relation to Item 4, an informal briefing had taken place and had been

- well attended; and
- in relation to Item 5 and, in particular, to the Children's Water Feature, an update on progress was contained in Report No ICArts 03/18, to be considered later in the meeting.

5. River Connections Public Art Project Programme

Declaration of Interest – Mr G Ross declared a non-financial interest in this item on the grounds of having a close relative who was a local artist 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 him from taking part in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No ICArts 03/18 dated 27 April 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager which provided an update on the progress made on the Project Programme since the last Working Group meeting.

“My Ness” (Gathering Place)

A presentation was made on the revised proposals including the materials to be used. The intention was to frame the river and to highlight the activities that took place around it and these revised proposals had been presented to the Evaluation Panel who had been very positive and who were recommending them for approval, amplified by a letter of support from Professor Jim Mooney. A short delay in commencing work, until later in 2018, would be encountered due to major works being carried out by British Gas in the Bught area, the car park site being used as the site accommodation compound. The Master Programme would be updated to reflect this.

During further discussion of this project, the following issues were raised:-

- the artists and Evaluation Panel were soon to launch the project. Members were to be briefed on 8 May with a launch to stakeholders and the press later in the month. Professor Mooney would be present at both events;
- the artists were well aware of the available budget;
- concerns were raised in relation to the drop between the bank and the shingle but assurances were given that this would have been taken into account during the site investigations and the engineering solution proposed was understood to be relatively straightforward, having little impact on the bank;
- in future, real-time photographs would be useful for the Working Group. This had not been incorporated to date bearing in mind the need to avoid unnecessary expenditure at the concept design stage;
- although concerns were raised about anglers casting, it was pointed out that the trees would be more of a hindrance than the structure and anglers were already aware of the need to avoid people on the bank. However, the trees on the other side of the river had yet to be considered;
- this proposal met the terms of the Brief and Members recognised that it had the potential to enhance the area;

- f The Angling Club were keen to renew the fishermen's hut and it was hoped this development could take place in partnership with the project team.

Children's Water Feature

Members were reminded of the site on the Ness Islands. The design had set out the installation in such a way that sightlines would show the rest of the river from that location through a natural channel. It had used the lades and weirs already around the River Ness as inspiration and, during the design phase, the artists, Bespoke Atelier, had consulted young people and used their ideas and the other shapes around the river to make the form of the stones. The stones would be patterned, partly to minimise slips, and materials were being investigated to address other health and safety concerns. Similar water features elsewhere had been taken into account and, amalgamating the remaining two designs and previous comments of the Working Group, particularly in regard to the need to break up the straight lines, this final design had been arrived at. The next phase would be to prepare detailed costings. While it was preferable to use natural stone, the cost might prove prohibitive and alternative materials might need to be considered, even possibly using spare materials from other projects.

During further discussion of this project, the following issues were raised:-

- while ideally a natural waterway would have been preferred this was not possible and a manmade piped channel would be needed to guarantee flows of water;
- the challenge of introducing a natural water feature would also make it more complex as ecological challenges would have to be taken into account;
- assurances were sought, and received, that the design would, when completed, look part of the landscape. Members were also reminded that the original concept from the artist was, in fact, to have no mechanical flow aspects and the feature would work with the water level of the river. However, this area had been chosen as it was one of the safest parts of the river but it also had the lowest water levels. The time the water feature would have most use would be in the summer when water levels were at their lowest. Furthermore, the use of a pump would address the issue of stagnant water;
- the incorporation into the feature of an aspect where children could increase/change the gravity fed flow was welcomed;
- if concerns were raised regarding the cost of this feature, the high levels of expenditure required to provide basic play equipment should be highlighted;
- the artist was confident that all aspects of the design could be met within the available budget. However, if any challenges or risks arose, they would be brought to the attention of Members; and
- Members were satisfied that the points raised at their previous meetings had been taken into account.

Rest Spaces

As it had been necessary to appoint a new contractor, a delay of 6/7 weeks had occurred. However, the contractor had now been briefed about the preliminary enabling works required and would also be used to put in the base needed for the Sculptural Destination – artist - Annie Cattrell . The pavement studs referred to at previous meetings were to be arranged so not to compromise the integrity of the artwork and were to be installed next week.

Sculptural Destination

The artist, Annie Cattrell, had made some test pieces and these were to be exhibited at the RSA on the Mound in Edinburgh. To accompany the pieces a poem had been written by Rab Wilson called “Seer”, written in broad Scots with an English translation, and it was suggested that it could be incorporated into the art work in Inverness. It was hoped the art piece would be installed in July/August but, for the launch, it would be useful to have up-to-date visual interpretations. Furthermore, it was confirmed that the piece would be orientated in such a way so that Inverness Castle would be visible through the space in the middle, providing an excellent photo point. The app, accompanying these projects, had a map with suggested photo points on it and this too could be included.

The Trail

Consideration was still required to determine what to include in the Trail.

The Working Group:-

- i. **APPROVED** the new revised proposal for “My Ness” (the Gathering Place) , to be called “My Ness” from now on;
- ii. **APPROVED** the design for the Children’s Water Feature and that costings would now be prepared;
- iii. **NOTED** the progress of the Rest Spaces;
- iv. **AGREED**, in relation to the Sculptural Destination project, to investigate the possibility of using the poem “Seer” in the art work and that up-to-date visuals be provided to the Members of the Working Group; and
- v. **NOTED** the progress of the other projects.

6. Financial Monitoring

There had been circulated Report No ICArts 04/17 dated 25 April 2018 by the Inverness City Area Manager which set out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 March 2018, including details of actual expenditure to date.

In this regard, Members were advised that the Common Good Fund element had now been fully allocated and all other costs were within budget. In addition, applications had been made to Creative Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and to the Council’s Capital budget. The management budget was being closely monitored, as a result of the time taken to deliver the project, but officers were confident that it too would be within budget. If at any

point there was a possibility of any budget being exceeded, Members would be advised accordingly.

Reference too was made to postcards which had been purchased in relation to River Connections – Mary Bourne and it was suggested that these could be used, perhaps in Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, to illustrate what had been achieved around the river.

The Working Group otherwise **NOTED** the terms of the report as circulated.

7. Press relations and forthcoming PR opportunities and risks

A verbal update was provided at the meeting by the Communications and Resilience Manager on recent media coverage in relation to the projects within the public art project programme.

The Inverness City Area Manager, in relation to My Ness and the Children's Water Feature, also recapped the arrangements proposed for the Members Briefing, the Public Launch and the presentation of the Annual ICARTS Report to the City of Inverness Area Committee. In addition, it was proposed that the Evaluation Panel and the Artists themselves present their work. Cognisance was taken of ensuring a date for the public launch was set to ensure maximum positive press publicity and that, given the different interest groups, the launches for these two works be separated.

Furthermore, Members were informed that a Press Release had been issued on Annie Cattrell's Edinburgh exhibition. Emphasis was on the fact that the Council had commissioned this piece of art which was now part of a national exhibition and a number of newspapers had already picked up the story. Press releases could also be issued at various stages, i.e. when work began, was completed and the unveiling, but for the main piece, My Ness, a more elaborate celebration could be arranged for the Spring 2019 with, given its amphitheatre arrangement, a series of small performances with a river theme.

The Working Group otherwise **NOTED** the position.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was **NOTED** that a provisional date for the next meeting would be 23 August 2018 at 2.30 pm, arrangements to be confirmed in due course.

The meeting ended at 4.05 pm.