

Minutes of Meeting of the Events and Festivals Working Group held in the 2nd Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness on Monday 10 September 2018 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Highland Council:

Mr G Ross
Mrs E McAllister
Mrs T Robertson
Mr C Smith

Other Representatives:

Ms A Wilson, Hotel Association

Officials in Attendance:

Mr G Reynolds, Inverness Events Manager
Miss J MacLennan, Principal Administrator

Mr G Ross in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr I Brown and, from Other Representatives - Ms J Cuddy (Eastgate Shopping Centre), Ms J Murray (Victorian Market Manager), Mr M Smith (Inverness BID), Mr G Ambrose (Inverness Loch Ness TBID) and Mr M White (Events Business Solutions – UHI).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. 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.

4. Actions from Previous Minutes

There had been circulated Briefing Note from meeting held on 27 February 2018, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

Arising from the Minutes, in relation to Item 4 (Events Management Plan), it was explained that the issues raised with High Life Highland had taken time to resolve.

It had been necessary, on grounds of safety, to close the Infirmary Bridge following the concert in the Northern Meeting Park on 8 September to enable an operational review to take place. Evidence had been gathered which enabled the recommendation to be made to the Safety Advisory Group that the Infirmary Bridge would be kept open after

concerts in Northern Meeting Park. However, it remained expected that Infirmary Bridge would be closed following major events in Bught Park to speed up the dispersal of spectators and prevent the creation of bottlenecks.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

5. 2017/18 Budget

An update was provided at the meeting by the Events Manager on the 2018/19 budget.

Members were reminded that at the City of Inverness Area Committee on 30 August representations had been made for further Budget information. In this connection, a demonstration was provided as to how this information could be presented, breaking costs down into sections and to specific events. As shown, expenditure was predominantly on mandatory requirements relating to the health and safety of the Public. Further detail was available from the Events Manager. Otherwise a Revenue Monitoring Statement, showing event expenditure, could be provided to future meetings of the Working Group. In the meantime, a retrospective account of the 2017/18 budget could be provided to the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Thereafter, the Working Group:-

- i. **NOTED** the update on the 2017/18 budget;
- ii. **AGREED** that a revenue monitoring statement be circulated to future meetings of the Working Group with further more detailed analysis at the meetings as and when required; and
- iii. **AGREED** to provide the City of Inverness Area Committee with a retrospective set of accounts for the 2017/18 budget in the new suggested reporting format at the next appropriate Committee meeting.

6. 2018 Programme Inverness Highland Games and Gala

The Events Manager provided a verbal update on the success of the Highland Games and Gala.

For a relatively modest amount the event had provided a wide package of activity, generating considerable benefit for the City. In addition, on the Friday night, dancers had entertained visitors on the High Street and, whilst this did not generate additional income for the Games itself, it raised money for the Rotary Club and generated a good atmosphere whilst also promoting attendance at the Games as well.

The Working Group **NOTED** the update.

7. Riverlights Update

The Events Manager provided a verbal update on the progress to date regarding the details of the Riverlights project.

At present work was underway to determine the costs involved and, taking into account the operational complexity of the project, the route. The proposal was to have a combination of electrical sculptures that were created locally transforming the city's buildings into an art gallery showcasing local talent. The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) had indicated that they were keen on collaborating with events and incorporating potential learning experiences

into their curriculum. Details of the various ideas as to how this might be achieved were outlined and the view taken that this provided an excellent opportunity for students to gain practical skills. This also strengthened the professional links between the Council and UHI.

In the long term the proposal was to extend the Riverlights to the Canal and Harbour areas and focus on the use of local talent which opened up the opportunity to diversify into a number of new collaborations with business and community groups. However, taking into account work currently being undertaken with the development of a proposed partnership arrangement with UHI based around their curriculum, it was likely that the Riverlights Pilot event would not be in place until November 2019. It was suggested that this could tie in with the establishment of Christmas markets in due course and that discussions should take place with the business community. The importance of ensuring the launch of Riverlights was a success by securing additional partners was emphasised and it was acknowledged that the support of the City of Inverness Area Committee in acting as a foundation for this to happen was vital.

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

8. Marketing and Merchandising Sub-Group

The Events Manager gave a presentation on the on line merchandising undertaken by the Braemar Gathering and PoppyScotland. These were run by the Business Incentives Group who provided event-specific merchandise for sale in partnership with event organisers. This was particularly beneficial for events which were not equipped to hold stock and did not have the mobile units needed to operate at outdoor events or to provide mobile shops. While welcoming the proposal and asking for further information, Members requested sight of samples to ensure that only quality merchandise was provided.

Accordingly, the Working Group:-

- i. **NOTED** the update;
- ii. **AGREED** to further investigate the proposal, with a view to a trial being in place for the Hogmanay event, with samples of the merchandise being made available at the Working Group's next meeting; and
- iii. **AGREED** that future written Marketing updates be provided to future meetings.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on 23 October 2018 at 10.00 am in the 2nd Floor Committee Room, Town House, Inverness but acknowledged that, following on from discussion on the previous item, an additional meeting could be called should there be a need to consider the question of merchandising for Hogmanay Show before the next scheduled meeting.

The meeting was closed at 11.20 am.