

**City of Inverness Area Committee**

Minutes of Meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held remotely on Monday, 31 January 2022 at 2.00 pm.

**Present:**

**Highland Council:**

Mr I Brown  
Mr D Macpherson  
Mrs I Mackenzie

**Other Representatives:**

Mr M Smith, Manager, Inverness BID

**Officials in Attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Area Manager  
Ms F Hampton, Director Inverness Castle Project HLH (Management and Admin)  
Ms A MacLeod, Events Development Manager HLH (Management and Admin)  
Ms J Murray, Victorian Market Manager  
Mrs O Bayon, Committee Officer, Performance and Governance

**Preliminaries**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs C Caddick.

**2. Exclusion of the Public**

The Working Group **RESOLVED** that 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 no declarations of interest.

**4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

There had been circulated minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 December 2021, the terms of which were **NOTED**.

**5. Presentation**

Following on from the decisions taken at the Working Group meeting held on 20 December 2021, matters had progressed. A presentation was given on the updated plans for an Events Programme and the current budget position by the

Inverness Events Development Manager.

During the presentation the following comment were made:-

- congratulations were expressed for successfully running a number of events at the end of 2021. Positive feedback had also been received from the public despite the challenging COVID -19 circumstances;
- it was confirmed that the Scottish Government Event Sector Guidance regarding COVID was still required in the planning of events;
- the impact of the vaccine certification legislation, and the impact of current external factors on the events sector, were acknowledged;
- the Inverness Events forum had been a successful channel for open communication and collaboration with stakeholders and event providers. The next forum meeting was planned for the end of February 2022;
- it was confirmed that a Workshop was being planned for Members of the City of Inverness Area Committee in March 2022;
- the Inverness, Nairn and Badenoch & Strathspey constituency was successful in its levelling up fund bid for the Zero Carbon Cultural Regeneration Project. It was explained that the project included the developments at the Northern Meeting Park, Bught Park and Inverness Castle / Townhouse sites;
- the 200-year bicentenary Highland Games would be a priority event in 2022 and the entry method would likely include online ticketing;
- it was queried what impact COVID-19 vaccine passports would have on attendance figures for both competitors and visitors to the Highland Games;
- a suggestion was made that the Stoltman Brothers, the local successful Strong Men competitors, be invited to attend the Highland Games as it was anticipated this would raise further event awareness and increase attendance figures. It was further suggested that additional independent businesses, organisations or groups be also invited to the Highland Games such as; the Farmers Market, the Black Isle Brewery, the Vintage car event and local distilleries;
- it was queried if the COVID-19 testing station located at the Highland Council HQ rear carpark could be temporarily relocated to allow the Red Hot Highland Fling event to proceed at the Northern Meeting Park;
- it was important to have clear timelines for events, including the last possible date that events could go ahead on the events calendar;
- reassurance was expressed that the Events and Festivals Working Group was well represented on project boards and project teams to take the levelling up projects forward;
- information was sought, and provided, if the 2022 Halloween event would be increased in size compared to 2021;
- Members were invited to confirm that they were satisfied with the events output from 2021 during the COVID pandemic and, secondly, that they were comfortable with the direction of travel that events were taking in 2022; and

Thereafter, the Working Group **AGREED** that They were satisfied with the events output from 2021 and that they supported the direction of travel that events were taking for the 2022/ 23 season and **NOTED** that the Programme was subject to change depending on the nature of COVID-19 Guidance and Council Policy in force at the time.

## 6. Annual Report

The Inverness City Area Manager presented the draft annual report on the activity of the Working Group and the plans to be progressed for 2022/23.

During discussion the following comment were made:-

- it was confirmed that the report would summarise how events were delivered in 2021 in line with the City of Inverness Area Committees vision and include recommendations for events delivery in 2022/23/;
- it was hoped that if the branding was good, it would attract people who wanted to sponsor or financially contribute to events; and
- ongoing updates will be provided to the Events and Festivals Working Group to update on progress against objectives.

Thereafter, the Working Group **NOTED** that the annual report on the activity of the Working Group and the plans had progressed for 2022/23 and would be presented to the next meeting of the City of Inverness Area Committee on 17 February 2022.

## **7. Financial Monitoring**

The Inverness City Area Manager highlighted that the 2021 events programme was delivered on budget, in this regard a budget report on the Events and Festivals would be provided to Members in the upcoming City of Inverness Area Committee on 17 February 2022. In addition, it was confirmed that a budget allocation of £303k was Proposed to be recommended for approval at the City of Inverness Area Committee set for 17th February 2022 in respect of the 2022/23 events and festivals programme .

Thereafter, the Working Group **NOTED** the expenditure to date and the anticipated costs of the remaining elements of the Winter festival Programme.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Monday 28 February 2022 at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 11.10 am.