

MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL GAMES PARTNERSHIP held in the CUSTOMER SERVICES OFFICE, 22 HILL STREET, DUNOON on MONDAY, 30 JUNE 2014

Present: Councillor Bruce Marshall (Chair)

Councillor Michael Breslin
Councillor Jimmy McQueen
Donald MacVicar, Head of Community and Culture
Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
Paul Farrell, Engineer/Technical Officer
Ailsa Cunningham, Environment Warden
Malcolm Barclay, Cowal Highland Gathering
Ronnie Cairns, Cowal Highland Gathering
Gary Stitt, Police Scotland
Paul Robertson, Police Scotland

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Dick Walsh
Councillor Gordon Blair
Councillor Alex McNaughton
Allan MacDonald, Amenity Services Manager
Alan Lothian, Cowal Highland Gathering
Fraser McGowan, Cowal Highland Gathering

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous Cowal Games Partnership held on 7th January 2014 were approved as a correct record.

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. MANAGERS REPORT

A Managers Report was submitted and Malcolm Barclay outlined the main areas covered by the report.

He advised that competitor entries are on a par with previous years with 459 dancers and 24 solo pipers with 2 weeks to go until the entries close and that the ticket sales so far are very close to where they are expected to be. To date he has been unable to obtain from the RSPBA an up to date outline of the number of pipe bands expected to compete at the

event.

Malcolm informed the Group that since the previous meeting on 7th January, they have worked hard to broaden the appeal of the event to the general visitor and replace any sales lost as a result of the loss of the major, whilst the main arena will retain the various traditional elements that makes Cowal the event it is, with the highland dancing, pipe bands, traditional wrestling and heavy athletics and the top field will have a real family festival feel to it.

He updated the Group on the “performance arena” which they are introducing to the event this year which will be at the top of the field and will be headlined by the “The Clan” Mountain Bike Stunt Team. He advised that they will perform a number of shows throughout the day and that the performance arena will also feature a performance by Clanadonia which are a traditional tribal drum group.

Malcolm reported that as well as the performance arena, there would be a mountain bike trial area, a pop up 3d cinema which is being supplied by Glasgow Science Centre, the return of Arties Tartan Tales, arts workshops from the Heart of Argyll, a digital zone for older kids where it offers the ability to play games from the latest consoles on a 50” screen, a speed shot competition and a bucking bronco.

He updated the Group on the town side of the event and advised that there will be children’s entertainers in the Argyll Gardens starting earlier on in the day to give children the best taste of what will be in the stadium later that day and was happy to announce that some of the kids attractions will be free on the day. He advised there will be a kids ceilidh band that will play in the bandstand until lunchtime, followed by a pipe band, who after performing in the bandstand will lead the hill race runners through the town to the start line of the race. Malcolm advised that he hoped to have at least 10 bands playing from Argyll Gardens to the stadium from mid-morning to mid-afternoon on the Saturday but this would be weather dependant.

He updated the Group on the marketing of the event and advised that this will be the key to the success of this years Gathering. He advised that 200,000 leaflets are being printed off and the majority of these leaflets will be distributed throughout the central belt aiming at areas frequented by families like visitor attractions, shopping centre, rail stations etc. Malcolm also advised that they are in the process of entering into a media partnership with the company that owns the Daily Record and this will fit perfectly with the profile of the average visitor to the gathering. He advised that Cowal Gathering now have over 1500 followers on twitter which will help widen the word and keep followers up to date on what is happening at the event.

Malcolm advised that he has also entered into a partnership with CHAS Scotland who operate hospices on Loch Lomond and in Fife and offer in home support to children with life limiting illnesses throughout Scotland.

He finalised by updating the Group on the sponsorship for the event, he

advised that Western Ferries have increased their support and are also in the process of signing of a deal with the Scottish Salmon Company.

Malcolm further updated the group in regards the financial position of the Gathering, including reference to the VAT position of the event

Decision

The Group noted the information provided.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(a) UPDATE BY HEAD OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

The Head of Community and Culture updated the Group on the report he submitted to the Council meeting on 23rd January 2014 to seek Council approval for maintenance of the existing Service Level Agreement.

He advised that at the meeting the Council agreed to maintain the level of financial and in-kind support for 2014 at the level currently set out in the SLA, that the wording of the SLA is amended to remove reference to the fee for a “major” championship and that the Cowal Highland Gathering are asked to ensure equitable access for all Argyll and Bute competitors in all events prior to an SLA for 2015 onwards being agreed.

Decision

The Group noted the information provided.

5. AOCB

Chief Inspector Stitt indicated that in terms of finalising the policing plan for the event he would need an indication very soon of the number of bands expected to travel to Cowal. Malcolm agreed to progress this as a matter of urgency with the RSPBA.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the Area Governance Assistant would liaise with Malcolm Barclay and Ronnie Cairns to arrange the date of the next meeting.