

Councillor Bruce Marshall
Ward 6: Cowal

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Cllr Alex McNaughton
Chair, Bute and Cowal Area Committee

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date: 1st November 2016

Dear Alex

Cowal Games Partnership

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Cowal Games Partnership following discussions which took place at the meeting of the group held on Monday 31st October. The meeting was the regular meeting which takes place in the weeks following the annual Gathering event and which gives the opportunity for the Gathering Board to discuss with the Council how the event went, and to highlight and discuss potential issues for future years.

This year's event was broadly successful, with increasing numbers of competitors and ticket sales maintained at previous levels. Financially, the event made a very small profit, despite a substantial cut in both financial and in kind support from the Council due to decisions made in the budget process of February 2016. The economic benefit generated in the wider Argyll and Bute economy using the formula provided by Argyll and Bute Council is estimated to be £4,570,141.

However, there are a number of challenges for the Gathering moving forward in regards costs associated with infrastructure at the Stadium and the need to continually improve the offer which is made to competitors and visitors alike. Considerable pressure is being put on the Games Committee in particular to upgrade dancers' facilities, and the 600 plus dancers who attend the event, and their

followers, are key to the huge monetary total generated. Given the ongoing reductions in Council support the pressure to improve facilities will place the Gathering Committee under very real financial pressure. I was asked at Monday's meeting to relay these concerns on behalf of the partnership to the Bute and Cowal Area Committee and to ask that the Committee take whatever steps it can to ensure that this pressure is recognised by the Council as budget discussions go forward, and that the support for the Cowal Highland Gathering is protected from any further reduction.

I trust that you will raise this matter with the Area Committee and look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Bruce Marshall

Cc Cllr JR Walsh, Chair, Policy and Resources Committee