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MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL GAMES PARTNERSHIP held in the 22 HILL STREET, DUNOON on MONDAY, 23 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillor Bruce Marshall (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair
Councillor Alex McNaughton

Councillor Michael Breslin
Councillor Jimmy McQueen

Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager
Pat McCann, Culture and Libraries Manager
Malcolm Barclay, Cowal Highland Gathering
Paul Farrell, Technical Officer
Inspector Paul Robertson, Police Scotland
John Forrest, Police Scotland
Ailsa Cunningham, Amenity Services Technical Officer

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were intimated from:
Councillor Dick Walsh
Donald McVicar, Head of Community and Culture
Ronnie Cairns, Cowal Highland Gathering
Fraser McCowan, Cowal Highland Gathering
Allan MacDonald, Amenity Performance Manager

2. **MINUTES**

The minute of the previous Cowal Games Partnership held on 4th November 2014 were approved as a correct record.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

None

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the public from 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.

4. **MANAGERS REPORT**

A Managers Report was submitted and Malcolm Barclay outlined the main areas covered by the report, with the following point noted:

Pipe Bands

Malcolm thanked the Partnership for their continued support and informed the meeting that talks are continuing with the RSPB in regards to agreeing the prize money for this years competition. Malcolm also explained that there remains an issue with the RSPB allowing the committee to communicate with Pipe Bands directly. Malcolm is currently collating a list of contact details for bands which will allow the Cowal Highland Gathering Committee to communicate directly with the bands and promote the

competition classes and prize money available this year.

Councillor Marshall expressed disappointment in the lack of cooperation on the RSPB's part and felt this was the reason for the lack of bands that had entered in 2014.

Councillor Marshall asked Malcolm about this year's prize money and Malcolm informed the group that prize money for 2015 would be less than the previous year with the money being split between 1st to 5th place and trophy's being awarded up to 6th place.

Malcolm also informed the group that although the RSPB requested that the MSR competition be removed, he confirmed that it will go ahead this year and that he was confident in a larger number of bands turning up this year, with a target of 35 bands but no more than 50.

Funding

Councillor Blair asked if funding was available for 2016 and Malcolm informed the group that a three year service level agreement was now in place with Argyll and Bute Council that would provide funding up until the 31st March 2018, the group all agreed that this was a positive outcome.

Dancers

Malcolm reported to the group that there was currently just over 200 entries which is a similar number to last year.

Councillor Marshall commented that this was excellent news and a boost for the local economy as most of the dancers and their families stay locally for the duration of the games.

Top Field

Malcolm reported that this year will see a continuation of the family entertainment that went down so well in 2014. He confirmed that the drakes of hazard, along with the clan mountain bike stunt team and the Glasgow science centre had all been rebooked to perform this year. The kids cycling track will also be brought back but made bigger to meet the demand experienced last year.

This year ceilidh tent will include performances from Skipnish and Dunmorg Gunner Sound as well as various other performances.

Charity Partner and Sponsorship

Malcolm informed the group that this year's events will have a charity partner which is Cash for Kids and 50 pence from each ticket sold will be donated to the charity.

A live music stage will be provided by Radio Clyde in conjunction with Cash for Kids and they will also provide media exposure for the Cowal Highland Gathering.

Malcolm took the group through this year's various sponsors which included the Scottish Salmon Company and Western Ferries who have been previous sponsors. Talks are currently in place with potential new sponsors McEwans and Heineken and Malcolm will update the partnership on the outcome of these discussions.

Ticket Sales

Tickets for this year event went on sale at the end of february and sales are up slightly on last year for the same period with Malcolm informing the group that the main grandstand sold out in eight minutes and the

enclosure sealing out shortly after that.

Malcolm also reported that a cruise company and a bus company had purchased a substantial amount of tickets and may need to purchase more nearer the time.

Chieftan

It was reported that this years chieftan is likely to be David Hayman but he will definitely confirm by the end of April.

Other Events

Due to the renovation of the Queens Hall this year, the Friday night ceilidh will be relocated to the stadium within a tent, making it a more outdoor themed event and Malcolm is hopeful that a barbecue will be provided by Food From Argyll.

Other events taking place outwith the stadium will include:

- Classic Cars Parade
- The annual Hill Race
- Childrens Ceilidh
- On street entertainment to include jugglers, clowns and stiltwalkers.

Partner Updates

Argyll and Bute Council

Roads:

Paul Farrell informed the group that most things are in place and he doesn't foresee any issues at this point.

A discussion took place regarding the use of cones in the Clyde Street area of Kirn and it was agreed that this should be looked at to scale back for this year and it wasn't necessary last year.

Culture:

Pat McCann told the group that he hopes to have the finances authorised this week which will allow the funds to be released slightly earlier than anticipated.

Amenities:

Ailsa Cunningham informed the group that everything was going well so far.

Malcolm went through the various parking options that will be available this year to ensure parking is not an issue.

A discussion took place regarding the clearing up after the event and Ailsa explained that it was business as usual for this year. It was noted that the clearing up on the Sunday is always very efficient.

Councillor Breslin commented on the financial loss in 2014 and noted that the event had a lot of ground to make up this year and asked if they were curtailing free tickets this year. Malcolm replied that they don't give away many tickets but will be continuing with the promotion of free tickets to primary school children when they are accompanied by a full paying adult, but that the cost of this is covered by an event sponsor.

Police Scotland

Inspector Paul Robertson informed the Group that from a policing perspective they were very positive about this years event. He explained that if any anti social behaviour takes place it is most commonly late at night or in the early hours of the morning.

Policing staff numbers will be reduced this year as the projected foot fall isn't as high as has been in previous years.

A discussion took place regarding the Waverley running an excursion this year, Councillor McNaughton asked if the Cowal Highland Gathering was mentioned in the Waverley's brochure and Malcolm replied that yes it is mentioned.

- 5. A.O.C.B**
None

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the Area Governance Manager would liaise with Malcolm Barclay to arrange the next meeting for June 2015.