

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee: 4 October 2006

Subject: The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championships 2006

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report advises the Committee of details concerning the staging of the 2006 Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championships at Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton and provides a summary of the content of the independent evaluation undertaken at this event.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Council first staged the Royal Scottish Pipe Band in September 1999 at Balloch Castle Country Park. Since 2001, the event has been staged at Levensgrove Park, Dumbarton. The Scottish Pipe Band Championships have become increasingly successful, with consistently higher visitor numbers recorded. The Council now has agreements in place with the RSPBA to stage this event until 2009.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** This year's Scottish Pipe Band Championships were staged at Levensgrove Park on 20 May 2006. Unfortunately, this year the weather was unusually unkind with steady rain turning to occasional but prolonged downpours on the day of the event. One hundred and thirty five pipe bands participated on the day and, despite the poor weather conditions, the event drew in an estimated 18,000 visitors during the course of the day.
- 3.2** The advertising of the 2006 event was both more effective and cost effective than in previous years, mainly due to a grant of £12,000 from EventScotland. Wider and more sustained coverage was achieved with both local and national newspapers and the event was heavily promoted on both Radio Clyde and Your Radio.
- 3.3** The event was featured in advance in the Sunday Post, Daily Record, Evening Times and the Herald as well as local press in West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and Argyll and Bute. Many visitors to the event had learned of the event through the Council's and EventScotland's websites as well as the roadside advertising which stretched along the A82.
- 3.4** The re-opening of the Artizan bridge enabled a pipe band marching parade and competition to be staged in Dumbarton High Street. The march back to Levensgrove Park by participating pipe bands drew in additional visitors to the event.

3.5 An independent visitor satisfaction survey was commissioned by the Council. This was carried out by FairPlay, an economic development consultancy. A summary of the findings of this study is attached as Appendix 1.

3.6 The summary indicates that:

- 96% of visitors interviewed at the event stated that they had enjoyed the event either very much or to some extent;
- 49% of those interviewed were attending the event for the first time; and
- 96% of visitors interviewed at the event stated that they would attend the 2007 event.

Additionally, the summary indicates that:

- 87% would like to see more events of this type in West Dunbartonshire;
- 84% agree, or strongly agree, that West Dunbartonshire is a good place to visit;
- 74% of those interviewed at the event reside outwith the West Dunbartonshire area;
- the event retains a strong family-friendly orientation, with many visitors attending in large groups;
- around one fifth of visitors travelled in groups of five or more; and
- almost half (45%) of visitors attended with children as part of their party.

3.7 The summary of the visitor survey for the event concludes that:

- 89% of visitors interviewed at the event described the event management as excellent or good;
- the signage and signposting for the event was good and the park easy to find for 78% of visitors;
- 95% of sponsors and event partners interviewed considered the event to be both “highly successful” and “value for money”; and
- all sponsors interviewed wish to remain associated with future events.

3.8 Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire also carried out an event quality evaluation and this indicated extremely high levels of visitor satisfaction. Additionally, maximum points were achieved in the scoring of many aspects of event management and marketing.

- 3.9** Following the takeover of Allied Distillers by Pernod Ricard in 2005, some doubt existed over whether the new parent company would continue to sponsor the event, especially as the previous sponsor's event brand "Laphroaig" did not transfer to the new owner. Through discussion with Pernod Ricard, a one year sponsorship package was agreed for 2006, albeit at a slightly reduced level from that forthcoming in 2005 from Allied Distillers. The 2006 event was branded and marketed as the "100 Piper Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championship". The feedback from Pernod Ricard following the event has been positive and it is hoped that a similar sponsorship package can be agreed for the 2007 event.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** The 2006 Scottish Pipe Band Championships were planned, staged and managed entirely by staff of West Dunbartonshire Council, working in partnership with the RSPBA and other event sponsors and partners.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** In contrast to other organisations and Local Authorities staging Pipe Band Championships, entry to the Scottish Pipe Band Championships is free to the public. The income raised to help stage the event, aside from event sponsorship, comes from traders fees, programme sales, car and coach parking although no charge is made for cars bearing a disabled driver sign.

- 5.2** The annual net costs to the Council for staging previous pipe band championships have been as follows.

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|------|---------|
| 1999 | £24,119 |
| 2001 | £13,669 |
| 2002 | £11,821 |
| 2003 | £10,625 |
| 2004 | £8, 510 |
| 2005 | £11,034 |

- 5.3** This year there were increases in costs of hired equipment and services (e.g. marquees, fencing etc.) The fee paid to the RSPBA for the 2006 Scottish Pipe Band Championships was £30,000, a rise of £2,000 from the previous year. There were also one-off costs associated with the 2006 event e.g. fee for visitor survey, purchase of mobile billboards and preparation of permanent billboard site, new banners and artwork for new sponsors etc..

- 5.4** The budget available to stage the 2006 event was £20,670. While it has still been necessary at this stage to employ some estimates, the net cost of staging the 2006 event is put at £17,427.

- 5.5** As indicated above, an agreement in place with the RSPBA to stage the event until 2009 and appropriate budget provision for future years will be required.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Scottish Pipe Band Championships continues to be the largest outdoor event staged annually by the Council. Year on year the event continues to attract many thousands of new visitors to the area as well as both raising the profile of Dumbarton and bringing revenue to the area.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Committee notes the successful outcome of the 2006 Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championships.

7.2 That the Committee notes the findings of the visitor survey and the event quality assurance survey which confirm the important social, economic and cultural impact of the above event.

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Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Date: 4 October 2006

Wards Affected: All

Background Papers: Previous Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championships reports

Appendix: Summary from the Visitor Survey of the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championship 2006

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