

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EMERGENCY POWERS COMMITTEE – 19 FEBRUARY 2007

BURNS AN' A' THAT FESTIVAL 2007 EVENTS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

Joint Report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services and Acting Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the approval of the Committee to allocate grant funding from the Development Services Committees' Grants to External Bodies Budget, to fund the staging of two events at Dean Castle, Kilmarnock for inclusion in the Burns Festival Programme in 2007.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Burns an' a' that Festival was established by the former Ayrshire and Arran Tourist Board (A&ATB) in 2002, with the aim of increasing tourism and economic impact in Ayrshire through an annual Festival celebrating the National Bard and the influence of his life and work on contemporary Scottish culture. The aim has always been that, year on year, the Festival would grow in terms of the programming, stature and domestic and international recognition. The continued development of the Festival towards the year of Homecoming in 2009 has been a primary aim.
- 2.2 The A&ATB, supported by an external events management company undertook the planning, organisation and management of the Festival in the first 4 years (2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005).
- 2.3 The Festival was funded by direct grant support from the public sector agencies in Ayrshire, with the contribution from East Ayrshire Council being an annual grant of £40,000. The A&ATB worked with a festival steering group which was representative of the funding bodies.
- 2.4 In each year of the Festival, the funding contribution from East Ayrshire Council was allocated on the basis of £30,000 towards the costs of running the Holy Fair in Mauchline and the remaining £10,000 being allocated to the general marketing budget of the overall Festival.
- 2.5 Due partly to the change from the area tourist boards to the new structure of a single national tourism promotion agency (VisitScotland) on 1 April 2006 and also the considerably increased and dedicated focus which is required to run a significant festival, it was recognised that an independent festival company was required to provide the resource to concentrate exclusively on the development of the festival on a year round basis. Accordingly, the Burns Festival Company was formed in 2006.

- 2.6 The attention of the Committee is drawn to the fact that the Burns Festival Company considers that in order to secure a seat on the Board of Directors, an organisation, such as the Council, would need to contribute an annual sum of £100,000 to the Festival.

3. REVIEWED FORMAT OF THE FESTIVAL

- 3.1 The Board of the Burns Festival Company has reviewed its approach to the Festival and will not be offering direct financial support to events in East Ayrshire in 2007. The Company will offer marketing and promotional support for events where the events meet the company's criteria for inclusion in the main Festival Programme.
- 3.2 Discussions with the Chief Executive of the Burns Festival Company and representatives of Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire have highlighted that the Company are keen to ensure that East Ayrshire Council continues to support the Burns Festival and develops its role in future years. Assurances have been given that events in East Ayrshire will be included in the main Festival programme and that venues in East Ayrshire will be considered for the main Festival events in future years.
- 3.3 As noted in para. 2.3 above, in previous years the Council made a direct contribution to the Festival. Under the new arrangements the Council is not obliged to make a direct financial contribution to the Festival, but can consider financial support for events that can then be put forward for inclusion in the Festival Programme.

4. THE 2007 BURNS an' a' that FESTIVAL

- 4.1 The 2007 Festival will take place between Wednesday 23 May and Tuesday 29 May, with the major focus being on the weekend of 26/27 May.
- 4.2 The Holy Fair in Mauchline will take place on Saturday 26 May and this year will be planned and managed by the Mauchline Burns Club.
- 4.3 At its meeting on 21 December 2006, the Emergency Powers Committee approved grant funding of up to £20,000, payable to Mauchline Burns Club, to stage the Mauchline Holy Fair as part of the Burns Festival Programme in 2007.
- 4.4 As there is limited time available to organise new events, it is proposed that the Council promote two new music events in the Dean Castle Courtyard during the Festival. These events would open up the courtyard as a venue and would ensure that Kilmarnock features in the Burns Festival programme. It is envisaged that two events would be held on consecutive days and would feature a variety of musical styles with tickets available to purchase at affordable prices. The costs for the events, estimated at £20,000 would cover hire of equipment and staging, security, marketing and artists' fees.

- 4.5 If it is not possible to secure suitable artists for music events then it is proposed that a new Burns related exhibition is developed in the North Museum at the Dick Institute. This could be achieved at an estimated cost of £15,000.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A financial commitment of up to £20,000 has been approved by the Emergency Powers Committee towards the costs of the Holy Fair in Mauchline.
- 5.2 The estimated cost of staging two events at Dean Castle in £20,000. This funding can be allocated from the Grants to External Bodies Budget, subject to approval by the Council of the 2007/08 budget.
- 5.3 In total, the funding required for the above proposals will remain within the allocation made in previous years to the Burns Festival.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Nil

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The development of the proposed events for the 2007 Burns an' a' that Festival will be undertaken within existing staff resources.

8. POLICY / COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The development and promotion of new events for inclusion in the Burns Festival Programme in 2007 will support the commitments made under the Improving the Environment and Improving Opportunities themes of the Community Plan.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 It is considered important that the Council retains a role in supporting the Burns Festival event programme in 2007 and builds this role in future years. The financial support from the Council to the Mauchline Holy Fair and to the two further events at the Dean Castle will ensure that East Ayrshire retains a place in the Festival and benefits from the national and international marketing activity that the Festival Company undertakes in support of the Festival.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That the Committee

- (i) approves the allocation of £20,000 for two events at Dean Castle as part of the Burns Festival, or if these are not achievable, £15,000 for a Burns related exhibition at the Dick Institute
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report

WILLIAM STAFFORD
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

JIM KANE
Acting Executive Director of Development and Property Services

WS&JK/JAG&JRS

14th February 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Implementation Officers - john.griffiths@east-ayrshire.gov.uk and
john.spooner@east-ayrshire.gov.uk