

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29TH MAY 2002

BURNS FESTIVAL AND HOLY FAIR 2002

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the Burns Festival and Holy Fair held in late April early May.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In January 2002, the Ayrshire and Arran Tourist Board (AATB) secured funding totalling £450,000 for the promotion of a new Burns Festival in Ayrshire. The AATB then contracted Unique Events to manage and deliver the Festival which was to be focused on Ayr and Alloway.
- 2.2 Officers from both the Community Services and Development Services Department engaged in discussions with the AATB and Unique Events to ensure that East Ayrshire benefited from the Festival and that the areas strong links with Robert Burns were promoted.
- 2.3 Following discussion and negotiations led by Community Services Officers, it was agreed that the Holy Fair event, proposed by the Mauchline Burns Club for 27th April 2002, would become the launch event for the whole festival rather than the fringe event originally proposed.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Holy Fair in Mauchline was judged to be a great success both in terms of community involvement and support and it is estimated that 2500 people attended.
- 3.2 The Holy Fair featured many events and attractions, 53 stalls with local products and crafts were combined music, poetry, fiery preachers, stilt walkers and fire-eaters. The Burns House Museum had free admission on the 27th and 28th April and featured original Burns manuscripts and a slide show.
- 3.3 The cost of staging the Holy Fair was met by Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire and the Development Services Committee.

- 3.4 Staff from the Council's Museum Arts and Theatre section also involved in partnership with several local organisations to promote and develop a series of Festival Fringe events to run alongside the major events in Ayr and Alloway and at Culzean Castle.
- 3.5 The Ayrshire and Arran Craft Development Project, based at the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock managed the commission of a framed manuscript which became the Burns Humanitarian Award, which was presented as part of the Festival.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nil

5. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Early reports suggest that the Festival was successful and attracted visitors in numbers large enough to justify its creation and promotion. AATB and Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire will be producing a more detailed evaluation in due course which will be submitted to Development Services Committee in August 2002 .
- 6.2 At this stage it is not clear if the Scottish Executive and Visit Scotland will repeat their investments in a Burns Festival in 2003. The Director of Development Services, who has lead responsibility for the AATB, can confirm that the Burns Festival will be an annual event and has the support in principal to take this forward for 2003. Early negotiations with the AATB will take place to ensure that East Ayrshire's links with Robert Burns are effectively promoted and developed.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

WS/JAG/KH

13th May 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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AGENDA