

Report Title: **Report of Commercial Director APTL**

Report of: **Emma Dagnes, Commercial Director, APTL**

1. To update the Board on the recent developments and activities, in particular

- Commercial activity update
- The events calendar

2. Recommendations

2.1. That the Board notes the contents of the report and gives its views where appropriate.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive, APPCT & APTL**



Contact Officer: Emma Dagnes, Commercial Director, Alexandra Palace Trading Ltd, Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green N22 7AY Tel No. 0208 365 4343

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. This report highlights the activity taking place across the commercial areas of the trading company including the Ice Rink, Events Halls and Catering including Bar & Kitchen.
- 3.2. The report gives and updates on the strategic commercial projects currently in development
- 3.3. The report outlines the up and coming events schedule

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

4.1. N/A

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1. N/A

6. Event Sales Highlights October 2013 - January 2014

6.1 Exhibitions and Shows

With an estimated 8.000 visitors per day, the *Knitting and Stitching* show continued to attract considerable footfall. As the exhibition continues to grow year on year the Sales team are discussing options for further growth across the site with the organiser. This issue will remain a challenge until an appropriate and profitable solution is found for both parties however this show has been already been contracted for 2014 and 2015.

In October Alexandra Palace welcomed back *AMMA*. The Health and Safety Manager worked closely with the *AMMA* organisers in order to deliver a safe and compliant event whilst retaining the unique charm and purpose of this show.

Model Engineering returned running alongside the Masters Snooker. The event attracted significant footfall and spend per head was up in comparison to previous years. This was the last year of the current contract and the Sales team are now in negotiations with the organisers regarding future years.

6.2 Live Music

2013 was the busiest year to date for live music. Last October we held the phenomenally successful *Above and Beyond*. The client, band and tour management were pleased with the concert, which also recorded the lowest number of noise complaints for a late night finish; two (with one made during the sound check). No mobile phone thefts were reported but a number of phones were handed into lost property.

In November *Alice in Chains* and *The National* were both successful events but attracted lower footfall than expected against ticket sales. *The National* played two nights' mid-week and, given the older fan base, there may have been mitigating circumstances as to why a high percentage of people failed to turn up.

Later in the month *The Vans Warped Tour* saw 70 bands perform across multiple stages over two days. The festival was a success with regards to footfall, customer experience and client satisfaction. However one notable incident which received some press attention was the jump made by George Watsky from the rigging into the crowd. This action could not have been foreseen by the Events team and all were quick to react in a professional and safe manner. George Watsky made a public apology on social media and took responsibility for his actions.

The Lumineers were the final band to play in 2013 and recorded the highest attendance rate since JayZ performed in 2009. The majority of the audience attending had never been to Alexandra Palace before and the comments through social media and on the night to staff were overwhelmingly positive.

6.3 Live Sport

Over the last 6 weeks Alexandra Palace has hosted 3 incredible sports events; The Professional Darts Championship, The World Championship of Ping Pong, and the Masters Snooker.

The Darts was a popular sell out over the Christmas period and we welcomed around 44,000 visitors to the site throughout the event. Early indications suggest that this was the most successful darts event yet and the Sales team are currently putting together a proposal for expansion next year.

Ping Pong Championships took place in the break between the Darts and Masters Snooker, the event attract 1,500 people. There is a concern that due to the timing of the Ping Pong schedule next year this event may not be able to return in the slot the venue has available. The Sales team is working hard accommodate the date requests if at all possible.

Masters Snooker experienced a 20% increase on ticket sales in comparison to previous years' and the final was watched live on the BBC by 3.3million people. The event continues thrive and the fans have taken to thinking of Alexandra Palace as the home of Masters Snooker.

6.4 Future Events

The remainder of this financial year looks strong with *A Day To Remember* and *Foals* (2nd night just announced following a 1st night sell out) performing in February, and *Bastille* and *Disclosure* are set to conclude the year in March. The Sales team are now focussing on opening negotiations for 2014/15 with the following events already confirmed; *You Me At Six*, *Summer in the City*, and *Fat Freddy's Drop*, with more to be announced.

The Sales strategy going forward is to take a more aggressive approach by targeting tour management and in particular those that sell out Brixton Academy. We want to ensure that clients see Alexandra Palace as their next step venue rather than Wembley Arena. Initiatives will include increasing the number of networking events attended by the Head of Sales, sending 'gifts' to tour management when they sell out other venues, and developing relationships with new promoters.

In addition to the music line up, a number of exhibitions and shows are returning in 2014 including the RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show, Antiques and the London Festival of Modelling. However we are pleased to announce new events such as The Southern Homes Show, Primary Care Nursing Expo and the Edible Garden Show.

We are also adding another sporting event to the calendar with Queensbury Boxing confirmed for March.

7. Catering

- 7.1 The catering team faced challenges in the latter part of 2013 particular the Beer Festival at the Fireworks which proved to be a victim of its own popularity. Unacceptable queues and most significantly German beer running out at 10pm meant that a number of changes will need to be made in 2014. Further recommendations and analyses are outlined in the Fireworks Proposal.
- 7.2 The Bar & Kitchen continues to implement incremental improvements which include changes to the interior design and new serving presentations. The kitchen has recently been

modestly refurbished to ensure we are compliant with Health and Safety legislation and food hygiene standards.

- 7.3 The Beach area will undergo a small redesign to include the removal of the wooden planter and some resurfacing. Advice has been sought from the local conservation officer in regards to the permissions required for these works. A tender will be undertaken to appoint a design agency which specialises in “pop up” beer gardens, with the ambition that this area will be ready for June 2014.

8. Ice Rink

- 8.1 The Pantomime achieved its highest ticket sales to date, which was largely down to all tickets being sold online through SEE Tickets. The show itself received phenomenal feedback from customers. This event which is delivered by volunteers and our Ice Rink staff continues to delight audiences and is growing in reputation.
- 8.2 The Ice Rink team continues to work hard to achieve challenging targets. We have seen an increase in family, adult and junior skating but a decrease in other areas which leaves the business unit behind target for November and December. We do know from benchmarking against other ice rinks in London that they are experiencing a similar trend and Ice Rinks outside of London have suffered a significant fall in attendance rates.

9. STRATEGIC UPDATES

9.1 Ticketing

Following an extensive tender process Alexandra Palace has appointed SEE Tickets as its ticketing partner for a three year partnership.

9.2 Brand, Communication and Marketing Project

Jo Bergdahl was originally commissioned to deliver a brand blueprint which encapsulated the vision and mission of the Regeneration project. It has become apparent that further work is needed in order to clarify similar objectives for the Trading Company and also to increase stakeholder engagement. The Commercial Director has appointed Blue Rubicon, a communication consultancy which specialises in positioning internal and external marketing messages, to deliver a one off project in liaison with Jo Bergdahl.

The aim of this project is to produce a ‘roadmap’ that Alexandra Palace can use to align messages from all areas of the business. The results of this project will be presented to APPCT on its completion.

9.3 Sponsorship

The Commercial Director has recently approached five sponsorship agencies inviting them to pitch to become Alexandra Palace’s ‘exclusive sponsorship agency’ in order to capitalise on our increasing profile and significantly improved client list. All agencies have experience in venue sponsorship with a number of them also used to working with public buildings, trusts, and local authorities. Site tours were undertaken throughout December with presentations scheduled to take place in February 2014. This project has also been discussed with Wonderbird in order to ensure that aims and objectives work in tandem with the funding strategy.

10 Recommendations

10.1 That the Board notes the contents of this report

11. Appendix

11.1 Event Schedule

12. Legal Implications

12.1 The Head of legal services has been consulted on the contents of this report and has no further comments to add.

13. Financial Implications

13.1 The council's Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on the contents of this report and has no further comments to add.

Event Schedule

Date	Event
Sunday 7 th - Sunday 19 th January	Snooker Masters
Sunday 12 th January	Farmers Market
Friday 17 th - Sunday 19 th January	London Model Engineering Exhibition
Saturday 25 th January	Excursions
Friday 24 th - Saturday 25 th January	History tours of the Palace / Open House
Friday 31 st Jan - Sunday 2 nd Feb	The Southern Homes Show NEW
Sunday 2 nd February	Farmers Market
Friday 7 th - Saturday 8 th February	Primary Care Nursing Expo 2014 NEW
Saturday 8 th February	Haringey Racers hockey match
Saturday 8 th - Sunday 9 th February	Antiques
Sunday 9 th February	Farmers Market
Wednesday 12 th February	A Day To Remember Music Concert
Thursday 13 th - Saturday 15 th February	The Foals Music Concert
Sunday 16 th February	Farmers Market
Saturday 22 nd February	Haringey Racers hockey match
Sunday 23 rd February	Farmers Market
Saturday 1 st - Sunday 2 nd March	RYA Suzuki Dinghy Show
Saturday 1 st March	Haringey Racers hockey match
Thursday 6 th March	Bastille Music Concert
Saturday 8 th March	Disclosure Music Concert
Sunday 9 th March	Farmers Market
Saturday 15 th March	Haringey Racers hockey match
Saturday 15 th March	Queensbury Boxing NEW
Sunday 16 th March	Farmers Market
Saturday 22 nd - Sunday 23 rd March	London Festival of Modelling
Friday 28 th - Sunday 30 th March	Edible Garden Show NEW
Sunday 30 th March	Farmers Market
Saturday 5 th April	You Me At Six Music Concert
Monday 7 th - Tuesday 22 nd April	The Great Russian Circus Ltd (Park)
Saturday 12 th April	Haringey Racers hockey match