

Report Title: **Fireworks Proposal**

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

1. Purpose of the report is to present a review of the Fireworks 2013 and submit recommendations for the 2014 event for Board approval

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Board takes note of the review undertaken from 2013, the lessons learned and how they inform the revised approach for 2014
- 2.2. The Board notes that APTL will be the lead on the event and Slammin Events, who brought the event back in 2013, will have a production role working with Alexandra Palace suppliers
- 2.3. The Board notes that APTL has already discussed changes to the Premises Licence for this event with the licensing authority based on the Safety Advisory Group review meeting held on the 20th November 2013, and that they are aware that approval is being sought from the Alexandra Park and Palace Board for the 2014 event
- 2.4. The Board is asked to note that the body of information regarding the 2013 event has been presented to the SAC and CC prior to the APPCT meeting (28th January). The SAC and CCs views will be presented to the Board meeting.
- 2.5. That on the basis of the proposal in this paper as subject to agreement from the SAC/CC the Board agrees that the event shall go ahead in 2014.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive**



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3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. After a four year absence the fireworks returned to Alexandra Palace in 2013.
- 3.2. The event produced a modest profit and delivered on a number of operational areas.
- 3.3. However customer service did not reach the standards that we expect and the body of this report outlines the significant improvements which will be made should the 2014 event gain approval.

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

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

5.1. N/A

Introduction

After a four year absence the Fireworks returned to Alexandra Palace on Saturday 2nd November 2013. Reviving this event on a commercial basis was always going to present challenges given that attendance had previously been free. The Event Liaison team's primary concerns were crime and disorder and medical incidents. In both these areas the Fireworks were a success. No incidents required police deployment throughout the event and there were no reports of crime. Similarly the medical services reported a low number of incidents given the 28,000 people attending and there were no significant matters of concern.

However as detailed in the body of this report we did not deliver against the high standards that we set ourselves in the areas of customer service and experience. Three hundred complaints have been registered since the event, including negative feedback through social media and emails. The key areas in need of improvement include: ticketing systems both pre event and on the day, Park access, disabled access and viewpoints, the quality of the beer festival, and family entertainment including the fun fair.

Below is a summary of the areas which proved the most challenging during the 2013 event and the recommendations for improvement should the event take place in 2014.

Lessons learnt from 2013 and Recommendations for 2014

6. Proposed Entry Fee / Ticketing

- 6.1 Following extensive benchmarking a ticket pricing system was put in place which offered early booking discounts with the price rising as the event date drew closer. There was also free entry for children under 10 years old which the majority of other ticketed firework displays do not offer. Initially there were concerns that the public would not want to pay for tickets to an event that in the past had been free. However 27,000 tickets sold out prior to the event taking place and a contingency was left to accommodate the free under 10's.

Ticket Table Breakdown 2013

Ticket sales by category

Type of ticket	Number sold
Adult early bird	17,370
Child early bird	1,648
Adult standard	7,451
Child standard	440
VIP sales	500
Free Under 10's	1000
Total attendance	28,409

The volume of pre-event sales required an extensive marketing campaign to inform the public that no tickets would be available to purchase on the night. This campaign was a success and the number of individuals who turned up expecting to be able to buy a ticket was small.

With 27,000 tickets to process the promoters' ticketing system experienced some problems but the majority of those whose tickets were delayed did receive them before the event via the online system. Those who did not receive the online e-ticket (in the majority of cases this was due to junk mail settings) were refunded by the promoter.

The £5 per head ice skating tickets also sold out with 2000 people taking to the ice over four sessions throughout the afternoon.

The marketing for the whole event had consistently promoted the fireworks first and the beer festival second. However it became apparent as the event started that a high number of people had bought their tickets believing they were paying to attend the beer festival and that the fireworks were of secondary importance.

6.2 Improvement recommendations 2014 - Ticketing

- All tickets will be sold prior to the event and there will be strong communication stating that no tickets will be available to purchase on the gates.
- Ticketing will be run through Alexandra Palace's official ticketing partner SEE Tickets, reaching a data base of three million Londoners.
- Ticket prices will remain at the 2013 rate however there will be a mechanism for (free) ticketing of children under 10 years old which will give us better control of numbers.
- The early bird offer will still be in place but will run for a shorter time in comparison to 2013
- An optional additional ticketing system for the Beer Festival will be implemented. This ticket will also give access to the South Terrace.
- An optional additional ticketing system for the Ice Rink skating sessions will be available as per 2013.

Ticket Type	Face value (net of VAT)
Firework only: Adult early bird	£6.00 (£5.00)
Firework only: Child early bird	£4.00 (£3.33)
Firework only: Adult standard	£8.00 (£6.67)
Firework only: Child standard	£5.50 (£4.58)
Beer Festival only (over 18s)	£5.00 (£4.17)
Individual Ice Skating session	£5.00 (£4.17)

**there will be no on the gate sales*

**booking fee will be charged*

7. Park Access, Road Closures and Curfews

- 7.1 Although the event build presented challenges, including the set up surrounding the Grove, the majority of the site was ready on schedule according to the restrictions required in the event management plan.

Members of the public wishing to use the Park during the build were mainly understanding of the restrictions in place and continued to use the areas that were still accessible.

The road closures and curfews worked well however there are recommendations which have been made by the Safety Advisory Group for improvements should the event take place in 2014.

7.2 Improvement recommendations 2014 - Park Access, Road Closures and Curfews

- Ongoing discussions with the Safety Advisory Group
- Implement a hard closure rather than a soft closure earlier in the day
- Ensure Alexandra Palace Way is completely sterile when event doors open
- Increased engagement and consultation with tenants and local residents

8. Disabled parking and viewing areas

- 8.1 The majority of those who booked disabled parking received access to the viewing platform but a small number of disabled guests did not find the provisions satisfactory.

8.2 Improvement recommendations 2014 - Disabled parking

- Disabled parking and viewing areas are under review by the Safety Advisory Group and significant improvements will be made.

9. The German Beer and Food Festival

- 9.1 A high percentage of people arrived on site early believing that they had primarily paid for a ticket to enter the beer festival and not for a fireworks display. The bars prior to the fireworks did not cope with the level of demand and struggled to provide the customer service that we expect. However the content of the event received positive review from the customers. Following the fireworks the bars were able to manage the demand from a service perspective however the German Beer did run out an hour prior to the official closing time.

9.2 Improvement recommendations 2014 -The German Beer and Food Festival

The Bars will be managed by Alexandra Palace's current bar provider, who run all of our bars during live music events and are accustomed to serving large numbers in a short time.

- The event will be ticketed separately to avoid any confusion and to guarantee access to all ticket holders (see **6.2**)
- The West Hall, which was not available in 2013, will be used in conjunction with the Great Hall.
- Those attending the first session of the Beer Festival will also have access to the South Terrace alongside those with VIP tickets.

- By ensuring that the South Terrace is a ticketed area we can control numbers and encourage families with buggies to stand on the hard surface area known as the BBC Car Park thus avoiding congestion

10. Funfair and Family Zone

10.1 Both the funfair and family zone fell well below our normal standards. Families had been encouraged by our marketing to attend the event early however the provisions that were in place did not meet with the customer expectation.

10.2 Improvement recommendations 2013 - Funfair and Family Zone

- A stronger communication message explaining that although Alexandra Palace has indoor space the event is first and foremost an outdoor firework display and access to the Palace is for Beer Festival and VIP ticket holders only.
- Encourage families to prepare for being outdoors for a number of hours (should they wish to arrive early).
- Allow re-admittance to the Park for people who attend the site early but limit access to two gates; east and west.
- Increase and improve the provision of attractions within the available budget.

11. Ice Rink

11.1 The Ice Rink proved a great success and although there will be small operational improvements made for 2014, the format worked well and we would intend to run this part of the event again in the same way this year.

12. Fireworks Budget

12.1 The costs are based on increases to the infrastructure provision following the debrief meeting of the Safety Advisory Group. The tickets sales and income are based on conservative projections using 2013 as a benchmark. The event is budgeted to make a 15% margin on expenditure which is sufficient to cover Trust overheads.

There is an expectation that attendance may exceed last year's sales and spend per head will be higher given the redesign of both the beer festival and site orientation.

13. Recommendations

13.1 It is the recommendation of this report that the Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust Board approve the proposals made within the body of this report, based on the lessons learnt from the 2013 event both operationally and commercially a successful event will be delivered.

14. Legal Advice

14.1 The advice of Bates Wells Braithwaite, APPCT Lawyers in connection with right to close the Park is:-

- That it is permissible under the 1985 Act to close almost the whole of the Park for the firework display except those parts already licensed or let to third parties. The terms of the Act allow us to close "any part of the palace and park for not more than fourteen

days in any one year". The proposal is for closure of less than 24 hours and excludes areas such as the Grove;

- We must follow the public notice and advertisement requirements of the 1900 and 1985 Acts (requiring public notices to be displayed at the principal entrances at least two weeks in advance and advertisements to be placed in a London daily newspaper in each of two successive weeks) and consult the Statutory Advisory Committee (which we have done – their advice will be circulated with the minutes of their meeting on 18 June, and the draft minutes of the relevant discussion are attached below);

15. Legal Implications

- 15.1 The Council's Assistant Director, Corporate Governance, has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments

16. Financial Implications

- 16.1 The Council's Chief Finance officer notes the change in approach proposed for the 14/15 Firework event. There are advantages for the Trust in becoming the lead organisation as set out in the report however, it is even more important that the Board are assured that sufficient insurance is in place and that they are aware that any trading shortfall remains with the Trust and not with the event promoter. Based on the 12/13 event performance and the actions taken to improve H&S and planning, it is hoped that both risks will be low.

17. Use of Appendices/Tables

- 17.1 NA