

Report Title: **Report of the Chief Executive, Alexandra Park and Palace**

Report of: Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive Alexandra Park and Palace

1. Purpose

1.1 To seek the views of the Statutory Advisory Committee and the Consultative Committee a number of relevant issues, so as to advise the Trust Board

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the SAC and CC endorse the proposal to run the AP public fireworks display again in 2014, on a somewhat different basis to the 2013 arrangements to ensure a higher standard of delivery;

- That the SAC and CC note the forthcoming events programme, and progress in a number of areas including: the development of a fundraising strategy, an outline timetable for the options appraisal of car parking arrangements prior to public consultation, and
- learning and community programmes including a volunteer scheme and our project to commemorate the impact of the First World War at AP.

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive Alexandra Palace and Park**

Duncan Wilson

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3. Executive Summary

3.1 Fireworks. In summary we believe that the 2013 fireworks were on the whole a successful event, and will be recommending to the Board that we run the fireworks again in 2014 with a number of changes to event operations to address problems encountered last year.

3.2 Fundraising. The committees are invited to note that the Trust will be setting up a fundraising capability this year and that one of the options we have been recommended to consider will be a separately constituted Development Board, in line with best practice in the charity sector.

3.3 Car park feasibility study. The Committees are asked to note that this work is now underway and that surveys will be conducted over the coming months, beginning in January, to establish the level of demand for car parking at APP and examine the arguments for and against various forms of charging. A full public consultation would be launched before any decision was taken.

3.4 Learning and community. The committees are invited to note and comment on progress, in particular with the schools programme and the development of a volunteering capability by the Trust.

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

N/A

5 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

N/A

6. Fireworks

6.1 Background

After a four year absence the Fireworks returned to Alexandra Palace on Saturday 2nd November. 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 police were deployed throughout the event and there were no reports of crime. Similarly the medical services reported a low number of incidents given the thirty thousand people attending, and there were no significant matters of concern.

However, 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 and these include negative feedback on social media and emails received directly via our feedback@alexandrapalce.com address. 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 current recommendations for improvement should the event take place in 2014.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Ticketing

Following extensive benchmarking a ticket pricing system was put in place that 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 30,000 tickets sold out prior to the event taking place.

The volume of pre-event sales required an extensive marketing campaign to inform the public that no tickets would be available for 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 relatively small.

With 30,000 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.

Improvement recommendations 2014 - Ticketing

- Ticketing will be run through Alexandra Palace's official ticketing partner SEE Tickets, reaching a data base of eight million.
- Ticket prices will remain at the 2013 rate however there will be a mechanism for (free) ticketing of children under 10 years old, giving us better control of numbers.
- An optional additional ticketing system for the Ice Rink as per 2013 and also for the Beer Festival.
- The ticketing of VIPs and entrance onto the South Terrace is currently under discussion by the Safety Advisory Group.

6.2.2 Park Access, Road Closures and Curfews

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.

Improvement recommendations 2014 - Park Access, Road Closures and Curfews

- The structure of 2013 worked well however further discussions will be taking place with the Safety Advisory Group. Consideration will be given to the timings for the road closures with an expectation (following consultation with the tenants) that a hard closure rather than a soft closure will be implemented earlier in the day. This should avoid any confusion and will ensure the lane is completely sterile when event doors open.

6.2.3 Disabled parking and viewing areas

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.

Improvement recommendations 2014 - Disabled parking

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

6.2.4 The German Beer and Food Festival

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. 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.

Improvement recommendations 2014 -The German Beer and Food Festival

- The Bars will be managed instead by Alexandra Palace's current bar provider who runs all our bars during live music events, and is more 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.
- The West Hall, which was not available in 2013, will be used in conjunction with the Great Hall.

6.2.5 Funfair and Family Zone

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.

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.
- Encourage families to prepare for being outdoors for a number of hours (should they wish to arrive early).
- Increase and improve the provision of attractions within the available budget.

6.2.6 Ice Rink

The Ice Rink proved a great success with 2000 people skating over four sessions before and after the firework display. There will be small operational improvements made for 2014, however the format worked well and we would intend to run this part of the event again in much the same way this year.

7. EVENT SALES HIGHLIGHTS October - December 2013

7.1 Exhibitions and Shows

With an estimated eight thousand visitors per day, the *Knitting and Stitching* show continued to attract considerable footfall. 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.

7.2 Live Music

2013 was Alexandra Palace's busiest year to date for live music events and included Alice in Chains, Bjork, The National, The Vans Warped Tour, The Lumineers and Above and Beyond. Above and Beyond recorded the lowest number of noise complaints for a late night finish: two (including one made during the sound check) and all events garnered support and positive feedback on social media.

One notable incident during this time which received some press attention was the jump made by George Watsky from the rigging into the crowd during the Vans Warped Tour. 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.

7.3 Live Sport

PDC returned to Alexandra Palace on Friday 20th December running until the 1st January 2014. Around 44,000 people visited the site during this time and early indications show that this has been the most successful darts event yet. The Ping Pong Championships followed immediately in the New Year and the Snooker Masters runs from Sunday 12th – Sunday 19th January 2014.

7.4 Future Events

There is a strong music line up scheduled throughout 2014 including concerts from the Foals, Bastille and Disclosure. A number of exhibitions and shows are returning 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 will also be adding another sporting event to the calendar; Queensbury Boxing in March.

Below is a list of confirmed dates and events with more to follow throughout the next quarter.

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

8. Fundraising

8.1 The Trust is being advised by independent consultants “Wonderbird”, with significant experience of the sector about how to set up a fundraising capability and what targets we can reasonably set ourselves. They are generally positive about the potential for both capital and endowment fundraising but suggest that some governance changes will need to be implemented to maximise our potential, principally the setting up of an independent Development Board who would raise the money against a list of projects developed by APPCT. The feasibility of this approach in terms of our legal and statutory framework will be examined in the next month, and a decision on how to proceed will be taken by the Board in that light.

9. Car Parking arrangements

- 9.1 We have commissioned the Borough’s in-house car parking team to establish levels of demand for car parking at APP, and this work will begin this month and include some further surveys later in the year.
- 9.2 This work will be used to inform an options appraisal on which SAC/CC advice will be sought before the Board decides on how to proceed. Significant changes to the current free parking regime would require Charity Commission approval and public consultation.

10. Learning and Community Update

10.1 History Tours (24th and 25th January)

10.2

Following from a successful Open House in September we are offering guided tours of the Palace on Friday, 24th and Saturday 25th January. The group size has been reduced to 20 per tour with 480 tickets available over the two days. An email was sent to people on the September waiting list followed by an e-shot to all those on our general database. As of the 9th January all tickets have been sold, there are currently 62 people on a new waiting list with more emails and the level of interest remains high.

The level of interest in the tours of the Palace demonstrates a business case to run regular tours of the Palace. We are looking at the feasibility of running tours of the Palace for the general public four times a year (including Open House in September) at £7 per person (£5 concession).

10.3 **Alexandra Palace: War on the Home Front**

A decision on our listed building consent to remove the cage around the entrance to the Transmitter Hall and extend the ramp is expected the first week of January. If our application is approved work will start in February and is expected to take 4-6 weeks.

10.4 **Volunteering Update**

To assist with research for the temporary exhibition for War on the Home Front a research volunteer role description was circulated across Haringey in libraries, community centres, to community groups and on local resident's websites. The role description was also circulated to local universities and on other specialist networks in November 2013.

The level of interest received resulted in over 150 applications, with a large proportion of applicants from Haringey. 26 applicants have been shortlisted and informal meetings are currently taking place with all 26 applicants. 5 applicants will be selected and will form a research team, following initial briefings and training our team will commence their research in February. Initial research has found a number of archives holding material to this time including the British Library, the Imperial War Museum, Bruce Castle and Hornsey Historical Society and a list has been created for our volunteers to use as a starting point.

The Belgian refugees arrived at the Palace in September 1914. In this light we are intending to open our exhibition with a private view on Monday, 15th September (more details to follow). Opening earlier on the anniversary of the outbreak of War would conflict with the opening of many other anticipated events in and around London.

10.5 Our Volunteer database currently includes 113 volunteers. It is anticipated that there will be roles for 15 volunteers in all at this stage. The proposed volunteer roles include assisting with the Learning programme, leading guided tours, cataloguing the 1980's plans, and administration and coordination support.

10.6 **Learning Programme**

From the start of the academic year in September 2013 we have welcomed:-

Alexandra Primary School – 28 year 4 pupils

Tiverton Primary School – 60 year 6 pupils

Highgate Wood School – 11 key stage 4 pupils with special educational needs

To promote our 3 learning programmes we held an afternoon tea event on Monday, 9th December for local primary schools. The e-invite was sent out to all 63 primary schools by the Haringey Schools Advisor, teachers from 13 primary schools attended the event and a number of bookings have been taken for workshops in 2014. To engage with schools who did not attend the event the Learning Officer will be arranging meetings with Heads at our 19 target schools (those close to the Palace and from around the Borough) to promote learning opportunities at Alexandra Palace.

11. **Legal Implications**

11.1 The Council's Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and has no comments.

12. Financial Implications

12.1 The Council's Chief Financial Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to make.

13. Use of Appendices

13.1 N/A