

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

Report of: **Lucy Fenner Acting Commercial Director** (maternity cover for Emma Dagnes)

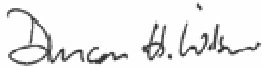
1. To update the Board on the recent developments and activities, in particular:-

- 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.
- 2.2. That the Board approve in principle the return of the Redbull Soapbox Race to be held in the park June / July 2015 (subject to negotiation)

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



Contact Officer: Lucy Fenner, Head of Client Sales APTL

Email: Lucy.Fenner@alexandrapalace.com

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 an update 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 July 2014 – September 2014

6.1 Exhibitions and Shows

In July Alexandra Palace hosted The Big Bang Fair, an exhibition targeted at 7-19 year olds celebrating science and technology. It was the first time the show had exhibited in London and saw a footfall of over 2,000. Alexandra Palace's Learning Officer, was also given the opportunity to exhibit at the show to promote the venue's learning and community programme. The client was extremely happy with the feedback received from the children and teachers who attended and was delighted with the management of the event. It is likely this will be a repeat booking for the Sales team.

Queensbury Boxing returned in July after a successful event held in March. Ticket sales were not as high as previously achieved due to the time of year, however the event was still considered a success and both the promoter and Alexandra Palace events team are now planning a forthcoming winter show.

Taking advantage of the successful drive we had from filming in the earlier part of the year, the West Hall became a studio for Nickelodeon to film children's programme "Get Your Skills On" which was sponsored by Fruit Shoots. The production team were delighted with the flexibility of the space and are keen to rebuild the studio in future months.

The BBC also took occupancy of our Victorian Theatre for two weeks to shoot a new "Ident" which is to be broadcast in October.

A high profile corporate client returned from last year with an even larger event, increasing their numbers and utilising all halls. The Great Hall was used as an exhibition area showcasing new products and our catering team delivered a BBQ for 700 guests on the South Terrace.

Summer In the City returned for a second year in early August and is now considered the largest UK event dedicated to the YouTube community, allowing creators and fans of online content to engage. The two day event sold out twice as quickly as last year with 14,000, 15-17 year olds attending the event. An industry day for 500 guests was also added to the line-up, giving an opportunity for the main sponsors to showcase their products. Due to the volume of "meet and greets" required at the event, the client is looking at ways of improving the delivery of this element of the show. Overall SITC was very successful and the promoter is keen to rebook for next year.

The greatly anticipated new beer garden outside the Bar & Kitchen at Ally Pally was launched with a street food and craft beer festival for the local community organized by our events team. The team's initiative attracted over 5,000 visitors across the day and due to its success was repeated on a larger scale four weeks later. The team are scheduling further beer garden events in 2015.

In addition over the past three months the Palace has hosted 17 weddings, accommodating in total over 8,000 guests.

6.2 Live Music

Palm Court hosted an event for the Camden Light Orchestra attracting 250 guests in July. On a slightly bigger scale, the Crouch End Festival Chorus performed Verdi's Requiem in our Palm Court at the beginning of September to an audience of over 700.

Alexandra Palace has recently announced gigs for Alt-J, The Libertines, Jamie T, Gas Light Anthem, Metronomy and Jake Bugg.

7. CATERING HIGHLIGHTS July 14 – October 14

Throughout the summer the catering team have continued with an intensive training programme. 6 people have gained their Bill liquor licences and 4 have achieved first aid and defibrillator training certificates.

Events Catering has been busy through what is normally a quiet trading period for events. There have been 15 weddings / party functions held on site, a major corporate event for Pret a Manger catering for 900 guests, and a 3 day Summer In the City event attracting 7,000 people on each of the 2 days.

7.1 Bar & Kitchen

The refurbishment works to the Bar & Kitchen and outdoor beer garden continued through the summer period and are close to completion. The B&K continues to achieve its stretching financial budget which was assisted through holding two very popular Street Food & Craft Ale events within the beer garden area.

7.2 Ice Rink Café

The Ice Rink Café continues to perform against its challenging targets for 2014/15. Extra attention to the vending machine operations during the summer period has helped maintain sales.

7.3 Park Catering (Ice Cream, Outdoor Event Catering, Coffee Offer)

The Park Catering team traded at every opportunity, weather permitting. This included ice cream sales, coffee van sales and a Pimms Bars on the outdoor beer garden at the 2 Street Food & Craft Ale events.

8. ICE RINK HIGHLIGHTS July 2014 – September 2014

The Ice Rink continues to perform ahead of trading forecasts and are implementing their Autumn marketing and pantomime on ice campaigns.

9. FORWARD FOCUS: SALES & MARKETING

October will see the return of Alexandra Palace's largest exhibition, the Knitting and Stitching Show. This year the organiser has increased the event open days to five and we anticipate increased footfall as a result. During this show the East Court is normally used as a picnic area, however in anticipation that the East Court might not be available for next year's show, the events team have agreed with the Client to place a marquee structure on the hard standing area in front of the pub where the Italian Beer Garden currently is. This will allow an improved catering offer which will drive up spend per head during the show. The structure will be in place for the five days of the show.

All teams are now moving into a busy season of concerts with 7 of the 13 live music nights taking place across 8 days. Artists include Libertines, Alt-J, 1975, Fat Freddy's Drop and Jake Bugg. The team expect up to 80,000 music lovers to go through Alexandra Palace over these dates.

In October, the venue will launch Purple Wifi, a strategic partner of Xirrus, our Wifi arrays system. The software obtains real time customer data and insight from all visitors that log on thereby gathering information that will allow the marketing team to identify and segment our audience, create tailor-made campaigns and drive customer loyalty, repeat custom and sales.

Sales packages for filming, boxing and experimental events have been put together to proactively target new business throughout the third quarter.

Alexandra Palace has been nominated for Best Venue and Best Venue team at the Event Awards taking place at the Troxy in October. The Head of Sales and Head of Event Operations will attend on behalf of Alexandra Palace.

10. FORWARD FOCUS: CATERING

Following the completion of the refurbishment of The Bar & Kitchen and outdoor beer garden the pub management will be focusing on improving sales and reaching its challenging financial 2014/15 budget. This should be achieved through the numerous music concerts taking place over September and November.

Forward planning is well under way to prepare for the forthcoming Knitting & Stitching Show and World Darts Tournament which are the catering department's biggest annual revenue earners.

11. FORWARD FOCUS: ICE RINK

The ice rink is moving into its busy period with the return of weekly ice skating courses. The Haringey Racers Ice Hockey home matches, Le Patin Libre Ice Skating Shows, and the Christmas Pantomime on ice.

12. SPONSORSHIP

BDS, our sponsorship agency, have sustained good progress with two brands in particular. Decision makers from these brands are scheduled to attend events at Alexandra Palace over the forthcoming weeks.

13. FIREWORKS 2014

The 2014 Fireworks festival was launched on Thursday 11th September and information went out across social media, the Alexandra Palace website and through mail outs to our existing database. Ticket sales are currently twice that which was achieved at the same time last year and a steady campaign will take place over the next month with increased coverage from 3 weeks prior to the event.

This year's event will see a variety of activities across the site and several additional tickets in operation. There will be a separate ticket for the Beer festival, which also gives access to the South Terrace, and separate tickets for the 4 ice rink sessions. We are working with ticketing provider See Tickets and all prices have been held at the 2013 prices.

14. REDBULL SOAPBOX

Following a very successful Redbull Soapbox Derby in July 2013 the Redbull team have made initial enquires about hosting the event again in 2015. A brief presentation will accompany this paper under Appendix 14.2 and Alexandra Palace Trading Ltd seeks the Board's permission to approve the Redbull Soapbox Derby in principle, to allow negotiations to continue and be successfully concluded.

15. CONCLUSION

APTL has performed strongly in the second quarter of 2014/2015; the event sales and catering targets have both been exceeded in this quarter and this will support the high targets outlined in quarter three, which are challenging.

The acting Commercial & Development Director, in conjunction with the Trading Company SMT, has started work on the strategy and profile for next financial year. The provisional order book is looking strong however focus will be on driving margins by achieving better value from suppliers and developing a holistic CRM / e-CRM function across the organisation. This initiative will incorporate the needs of the Fundraising strategy as well as preparing for the East Court functions coming online.

16. Legal Implications

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

17. Financial Implications

- 17.1 The Council's Chief Financial officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and notes the positive commercial performance to date and action planned to maintain momentum this year and next.

18. Use of Appendices

- 18.1 Appendix 1 - Schedule of events
- 18.2 Appendix 2 – Redbull presentation