

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

In an exciting major development this year we are finalising an agreement with a partner organisation with the resources to market and operate the Arena for a range of community and commercial events. The outcome should be a sustainable Arena with improved facilities and – most importantly for the many who have said, ‘That was a great event! What are you doing next week?’ – a developing programme of events and activities to enliven this area of the park and provide entertainment and new opportunities for local residents of all ages and backgrounds.

Five individuals and companies responded to the opportunity to submit proposals. The Chair, Treasurer and Board member, June Bell, joined by local businessman and our former Company Secretary, Andrew Montgomery, and Events Coordinator, Marie Davidson, interviewed applicants in January. Inhouse Ltd (www.inhouse.scot) were successful . An introduction to the company is attached.

QPA Ltd will be the leasee of the site from the City Council and thus retain responsibility and ultimate control. Inhouse Directors are now members of the Steering Group but not directors and do not have voting rights. At least one member of Inhouse will regularly attend QPA meetings which will ensure oversight of the event programme. An annual fee on an agreed sliding scale related to event development will enable QPA Ltd to build up a reserve to cover site maintenance and the charity's recurrent core costs. Inhouse will take on the marketing, event development, booking and day-to-day operations, initially on a 3-4 year agreement. While the details of the agreement are still being finalised heads of terms agreed include:

1. Inhouse will promote and support (through concessionary fees and advice) those wanting to mount community events, as well as promoting medium scale commercial events necessary to generate sufficient income to make the site sustainable in the long term.
2. Close liaison and consultation with local residents and Glasgow City Council staff, police etc to ensure events do not generate excessive noise or disturbance and do not run, as previously agreed by QPA, later than 2230.
3. Provision of a new website – www.inhouse.scot/queensparkarena – to market the Arena to users, promote events and facilitate on-line booking.
4. Inhouse investment in the site to develop additional amenities, e.g. improved staging and lighting, additional WCs.

5. Risk assessment, security arrangements etc which draw on Inhouse's expertise in this area of operation.

6. The agreement is subject to review.

The Board is satisfied that this arrangement provides the best possible basis for the Arena's long term success as a sustainable community and commercial event venue benefitting the local economy and the residents of the Southside. Negotiations are continuing with Glasgow City Council Land and Environmental Services. They are supportive since one of their principal aims is to increase usage of city parks during a period of diminishing resources. Presentations and meetings with local residents are planned for this autumn. It is envisaged that Inhouse may undertake one or two winter events but will be running a starter programme from spring 2017.

The desirability of a partner operator for the Arena has been evident for some time and has been signalled in previous reports. The purely voluntary efforts and expertise of the QPA Board and steering group, (who have since 2009 successfully undertaken public consultation, design, advocacy, fund raising and oversight of the capital works) has proved unsuited to the technical, administrative and time demands of event development, promotion and management.

The Southside Shindig was held on 6 June 2015 and Urban Roots' Dear Green Festival on 25 July, both with duration and attendances affected by poor weather though the ingenuity and determination of Marie Davidson ensured that the Shindig went ahead when other events in the city were cancelled. Approx 1500 attended the Shindig and 500 the Dear Green Festival. A fund raising event in aid of Syrian refugees was held on 13 September; despite rain (again) more than 950 people turned out and over £2.5k was raised. On 25 October the Arena was the starting point for Moira's Run.

However, we also received notice that the elaborate preliminaries for the Shieldhall Tunnel being undertaken by Scottish Water would require the closure of the Arena from 1 September (in reality October) 2015 through to spring 2016. In the event the works have been far more complicated than originally envisaged and plans for events up to and including August 2016 have been cancelled, including a projected choir festival, Shindig 2016 and the Glad Café's planned tenure of the cafe. Thus, no income has been generated and some repairs and remedial works are now urgent. The contractors Costain have been helpful in enabling some access and undertaking some restoration works on the grounds. Modest compensation has been received from Scottish Water and we are now prioritising remedial works and the technicalities of the handover.

The Board and Steering group have met four times - 20 Oct 15, 18 Jan 16, 1 Mar 16, 31 May 16 - but meetings have taken place with David Logan of Jobs Business Glasgow (to whom we are most grateful for support during the development of the Arena), with ENTRUST, now restructured to separate bodies in Scotland and from which the company has now resigned, with city council officers and with representatives of Scottish Water and Costain on site. Board membership is unchanged but all three Inhouse directors have now joined the steering group as has Marie Davidson. I wish to thank all for their efforts, especially Bob Marshall. As in past years Marie Davidson has devoted great efforts to the fund raising and organisation of the Shindigs and handling of event enquiries.

Evelyn Silber

Chair