



Second Annual report

March 2013

The first phase of site restoration and development reached fruition this year with contractors on site August and September 2012 and the very successful launch event, attended by an estimated 2,000 people, held on 6 October. The building works were achieved within budget but the timescale for the works slipped by several months, largely owing to issues within Glasgow City Council, who were managing the contract on behalf of QPA Ltd., and the weather. This prevented some anticipated taster events taking place during the summer of 2012. This first phase of work, as previously reported, was funded by the Landfill Communities Fund, the Strathbungo Society, Southside Central, Langside and Pollokshields Area Committees and Govanhill Community Development Trust.

A £10,000 National Lottery Awards for All grant facilitated the part time employment of an experienced Events Officer, Marie Davidson, and contributed to the costs of the launch event. The emphasis of the launch event was local and community involvement with 30 minute sets by a range of mostly local performers, including Shawlands Academy, Ecole Enterprise students, and professionals many of whom gave their services free or at a nominal cost. Marie, the MC, Greg Summers, and all the performers did an outstanding job and the relaxed atmosphere, range of people attending can be judged from the short film (U-tube 'queens park arena launch') and Bill Ward photos on www.queensparkarena.org.uk. The launch was attended by several local councillors and by Derek Mackay, the Minister for Local Government and Planning. Excellent feedback has been received from those attending.

This was also a valuable learning experience; the paperwork, follow-up liaison and time required to secure relevant licenses and permissions, all very efficiently arranged by Marie Davidson, was considerable and it was not possible to arrange on-site catering or extend the licenses of the Farmers' Market stands through the afternoon because at least 5 weeks' notice is required. The Farmers' Market traders benefitted during the early part of the event and contact has been established to liaise wherever possible on future events which coincide with market days. We are also reviewing and costing some recommendations made to improve site safety, specifically the provision of a perimeter hand rail and contrast edging to the lower tiers.

The event highlighted the need to develop more internal capacity to organise and market events, and to establish partnerships with other local event organisers, such as the

Southside Festival, Film Festival, Glad Café and others. A common issue appears to be the complexity and slowness of some of the City Council license issuing processes and the lack of communication both between the relevant officers and between officers and organisers in a multi-agency context. Efforts are being made to develop a joint approach to the City Council in order to make arranging events quicker and easier for local, largely community-run groups upon which the Council increasingly depends.

QPA has recruited its first volunteers interested in assisting with various aspects of activity through the opening event and a social session held on 16 February. A collaborative project with students on a Event Management course at Glasgow Caledonian University has yielded new event ideas and critiques of the current website which has yet to make the transition from an organisational and advocacy site geared to fund raising and restoration to an event and marketing tool.

Support from Glasgow Regeneration Agency has enabled QPA to commission a Business Plan (autumn 2012) and a Marketing Plan (spring 2013). The Business Plan has a community rather than commercial emphasis but the programme will have to generate income in order to meet core costs of QPA Ltd. Therefore, a three level fee structure for community groups, small to medium events and large scale events is proposed. The marketing plan, based on modest current resources, proposes optimising use of the website, social media, Park banners and small fliers distributed locally. It also recommends developing good liaison with a range of arts organisations and local promoters.

The second phase of capital development on the Arena will involve creation of the staging structure, final installation of power supply (supply from substation to park perimeter, metering unit and routing for supply in the Park having been undertaken during the first phases), and re-development of the existing building on site to provide unisex, disabled accessible WC, changing or storage space and a catering counter for the sale of light refreshments. However, this is contingent upon raising approx. £250k. Grant applications have been made to several organisations.

During 2012-13 we have welcomed Shawlands Academy and Ecole Enterprise as new organisational members. Jim McGregor has succeeded Claire Charlwood as the director representing Mt Florida Community Council. We warmly thank Claire for all she has contributed over her 3 years' involvement in the steering group. Tony Halifax resigned and the appointment of a successor representing Shawlands and Strathbungo Community Council is still pending. We are also pleased to welcome as a co-opted member, June Bell who in her former Area Development role in Glasgow City Council was most supportive during the early phases of the project.

QPA's tenure of the space continues to be problematic. The lease for the space promised by GCC for last September has not been forthcoming but progress has been made in agreeing the heads of terms by the appointed GCC agent, Access LLP and in agreeing the area to

covered by the lease. In the meantime a Permission to Use agreement is being drawn up covering a number of events. Thanks to discussions with Land and Environmental Services a regular maintenance schedule has been agreed to keep the site tidy between events and the regularity of the work is being monitored.

The coming year will be dominated by three major issues – the lease, whether further site development can take place and developing capacity to market the space and book events and establish event partnerships within a context of very modest financial and administrative resources.

Chair : Evelyn Silber

Date: 1 March 2013