



3rd ANNUAL REPORT 2014

We are pleased to announce the imminent completion of the second stage of capital works which will mark the realisation of one of QPA's primary goals – the renovation of the space for flexible contemporary uses. Since the Steering Group was first established in 2009 this has taken almost exactly five years and has been achieved for less than £500,000. A programme of events based on hires and events for which QPA has sought project funds begins in spring 2014. This also marks an important transitional moment when QPA Ltd becomes the leasee of a venue with entrepreneurial, marketing, maintenance and operational responsibilities requiring regular revenue and expenditure, instead of an advocacy, consultative and fund raising group focussed on capital works.

A total of £154,330 has been raised from the Landfill Communities Fund and GCC Social Enterprise Fund, towards the second phase of capital works and £2,610 from three Area Partnerships (Southside, Langside, Pollokshields) for a permanent Notice Board. This amounted to a lesser sum than that originally envisaged to cover the cost of the performance canopy in the prize-winning design by ZM (2011-12), and the facilities building.

As a result the design, structure and content of these elements was reviewed by the Steering Group and ZM Architecture, to meet both budgetary constraints and the constructive suggestions of those attending the 6 October 2012 launch event as well as the comments of potential grant givers, such as Creative Scotland. These additional elements were specifically the desirability of a deeper canopy to give performers better protection (which was beyond the structural capacity of the original backdrop/ canopy design) and better on-site facilities including an additional WC and a basic refreshment point. The Canopy was completely redesigned as a solid roofed structure carried on four substantial columns with a partial back wall containing electrical supply. The facilities block or 'Shack at the Back' was also reconsidered and enlarged to provide an additional WC, more changing space and a small kiosk for the sale of hot drinks etc. While this, to our regret, entailed the loss of ZM's original design which would have created more of a landmark in the park and a multi-positional backdrop or roofing structure, the revised design retains considerable flexibility and provides much better protection for a sizeable group of performers. The 'Shack at the Back' provides more facilities for a wide range of community and arts performance and other uses, providing cost effective hires for small and medium scale events. Following the tendering exercise, it has proved possible to complete both elements with the available funds. We wish to acknowledge with thanks the flexibility and professionalism of ZM Architecture and the contribution made by all members of the steering group during this process. The

contractors, Covanburn, are currently on site and the completion is scheduled for the end of March. The same contractors are re-surfacing the public footpath that passes through the site and we also acknowledge with thanks the continuing cooperation and support of Glasgow City Council Land Services. Because of the priority given to fund raising and delivering these works it has not been possible to stage any QPA-originated events and no income was therefore earned from event hires during 2013.

The organisation has been making the adjustment from project-driven fund raising to venue and event management. This work is complex and ongoing.

A draft lease for the Arena site was received from Glasgow City Council in December 2013 and, with support from Jobs and Business Glasgow, Burness Paull are providing legal support to complete this negotiation. A Permission to Use agreement has been secured to cover the initial programme. Discussions are taking place with prospective suppliers, with GCC Licensing, the Farmers' Market and Land and Environmental Services staff to enable refreshment sales from the Kiosk.

As part of the development of a site manual with booking, operational, maintenance and risk management procedures, Safety First Solutions were commissioned to carry out a capacity survey to determine safe occupancy using six standing/ seating options. This survey demonstrated Arena capacity ranging from 858 all seated to 1510 all standing, using the tiers and Arena floor.

The current capital works include provision of hand rails at the Arena entrance in response to a safety recommendation made in October 2013. It should be noted that the facilities building includes a WC with disabled access and that the capacity calculations include provision for up to 8 wheelchairs.

The website has been re-configured to work better as a venue site and to harness social media to help promote events. However, more needs to be done to ensure rapid, timely site updates and to follow through on the Marketing Plan.

Since September 2013 QPA, largely through Events Manager, Marie Davidson, has been promoting the venue to individuals, organisations and groups. Events which have been confirmed include:

Sunday 6 April	Counterflows Festival
Sunday 18 May	Scottish Opera Unwrapped performing Madam Butterfly
Saturday 14 June	Theatre Ecole
Saturday 21 June	Southside Shindig
Saturday 3 August	Southside Food Collective Food Fair
Saturday 27 Sept-	Radio Active

There has also been an enquiry from artist Nickki Pardasani to hire the arena two days per week for children's art classes during the summer holidays. This is to be confirmed.

The Southside Shindig is QPA's own originated event, made possible by grants of £9,849 from Big Lottery Celebrate and £1,500 from GCC Vibrancy Fund. As part of the Commonwealth Games

Queen's Park has been twinned with Asia and the Shindig will be six hours of interactive events involving music, dance, art, food, play and storytelling of the four UK countries and those Asian countries taking part in the Games. There will be workshops where the audience can come along e.g. learn how to play the bagpipes, sitar or hear the 'stories my grandparents told', etc. A sculpture made out of recycled goods and representing the Commonwealth/Games will be constructed by the public will be built. During the day food demonstrations will also take place with participants showing how they "make the best stir fry/potato scone/chapatti/Welsh cake etc". Fun food competitions will also be held. Music and dance performance will be held at the arena throughout the day. Another exciting aspect is the commissioning of a new piece of music from musicians from Scotland, Ireland, Pakistan and India which will be premiered on the day at the newly finished arena. The theme of the day is participation and learning, the main focus being that the participants/audience get involved, have fun and the opportunity to talk to each other.

We are most appreciative of the expertise of Marie Davidson in developing these events and her input and network knowledge makes it clear that QPA will need an experienced part-time events officer to develop and facilitate network development and handle booking enquiries and arrangements and that raising funds from event income and grant sources will be a major priority.

The Board are also encouraged by the informal play and exercise use of the Arena by joggers, toddlers and others which shows a degree of public ownership and pleasure in the site even before regular programming develops.

Since 2010 QPA has been in contact with The Common Guild about an innovative arts work/event being developed, for which Queen's Park and the Arena were the favoured site. Unfortunately, the operational requirements for and desired functionality of a permanent canopy structure for performance have proved ultimately incompatible with a screening event such as that planned for Phil Collins' project for Festival 2014. An alternative local site is being sought.

Three Directors' meetings have taken place during the year and the Steering Group has met four times. We thank Community Renewal for enabling meetings at their offices. There have been numerous other meetings with ZM Architecture, with the contractors Covanburn, with councillors and council officers, with Common Guild, and with Marie Davidson who has from September 2013 to end March 2014 been a self-employed, part-time Events Manager, based at 32 Albert Road thanks to the support- in- kind of Community Renewal.

June Bell became a co-opted Director . Keith Hawley became the Director representing Govanhill Crosshill Community Council (CC). Evelyn Silber was nominated to succeed Bob Marshall as the representative of Langside, Battlefield and Camphill CC following his removal from the eligible area, but he has since been co-opted as a Director. There continues to be no nominated representative from Shawlands and Strathbungo CC and an appointment from Mt Florida CC is pending following the resignation of Mark Charlwood. Because of the issues which arise in ensuring a quorum at Annual and Directors meetings it may become

necessary in the coming year to seek stakeholder agreement to a revision of the Articles and Memorandum.

The outlook for 2014 is very positive thanks to the completion of works and signs of interest from event organisers and hirers. However, future viability will depend in large part on translating the public enthusiasm for the project into event hires and generating hire income and grant support sufficient to meet QPA's core costs, including employment of a part-time events organiser. The Board are actively working on partnerships and mutually advantageous relationships with other local arts organisations to achieve synergy and economise on resources. It is also our intention to seek to strengthen the Board with more events and marketing expertise and to recruit further volunteers to add to the excellent work undertaken by Jacquelyn Williams and Leanne McGuire to support the website and events.

I thank my fellow Directors and Steering Group members for their commitment and support in 2013-14. All give their time, expertise and energy freely and for the benefit of the local communities.

Evelyn Silber

Chair