

ANGUS COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENTAL & LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 29 MAY 2003

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – 12 JUNE 2003

THE HAIRST FESTIVAL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This report outlines the development, programming and promotion of the 2003 summer arts festival, the Hairst. This report outlines the development, programming and promotion of the 2003 summer arts festival, The Hairst.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agree to note the contents of this report.

2. BACKGROUND /FINDINGS

In previous years The Hairst Festival 2003 has taken place over the three month period from July – September, this has proven extremely difficult to sustain in terms of management, budget and profile. The decision has been taken to limit the period of the Hairst 2003, which will run from August 1 – September 14 and will continue to promote and celebrate the best of Angus arts activity and Scottish arts and traditions. It is the intention that this shorter timeframe will generate a more focused approach to the festival and assist in generating a stronger 'brand' through a more intensive programme.

In addition to promoting the core programme of events that will be produced by the Leisure Services Department, relevant community based arts activities and performances are encouraged and promoted under The Hairst banner in our promotional material.

The intention remains to provide quality artistic experiences, to raise awareness of traditional arts locally and to encourage economic development through cultural tourism to the Angus area by highlighting and stimulating the rich range of traditional and contemporary arts activity and entertainment available in Angus throughout the summer period.

The success of the recent traditional music initiatives (Reports 1152/99; 1133/00; 72/01) and the increasing recognition of the benefits for economic development through cultural tourism encouraged a review of the festival and its focus for summer 2002, the success of the change of emphasis of The Hairst toward traditional dance, music and song was outlined in a monitoring report earlier this year (Report 73/03)

This year's programme will build on the successes of The Hairst 2002 by continuing to produce the Angus Folk Sessions, The Heritage Concerts, the Saturday Skirls, the Ceilidh and Scottish Country workshops & dances, and the Traditional instrument workshops. Monitoring of the Hairst 2002 suggested a number of changes to delivery, format and venues that should improve both the quality of the experience and increase the number of people participating in the events.

A number of new activities and artforms will be added to this year's programme which, it is hoped, will build on last year's audience by broadening the base of activity and also attract interest and participation from members of the public that would not normally have an interest in the traditional arts.

While the detail of the programme has not yet been finalised, it is the intention to include film screenings, drama workshops, traditional storytelling and poetry sessions, and, in an exciting development of the traditional music taster sessions, a weekend workshop aimed at young people which synthesises traditional instruments and state of the art digital recording techniques.

Angus Ahead and the Economic Development Unit have been key in the development of this year's festival by the provision of financial and 'in kind' support, particularly in the area of promotion and marketing. A significant addition has been the creation of a Hairst web site which will be launched in early June. The web site, www.thehairst.com, will list chronologically and thematically arts related activity generated by the community and private sectors alongside the core Council programme.

Angus Ahead is a long-term generic marketing campaign whose mission is to raise awareness of the character, strengths and opportunities of Angus at a local, national and international level. It has four long-term strategic objectives:

- to encourage a civic pride of Angus amongst the local communities;
- to increase investment in Angus;
- to maximise the tourism and heritage potential in Angus;
- to promote the distinct culture and natural beauty of Angus.

The aims of the Hairst are thus fully in line with the mission and strategic objectives of Angus Ahead, and the Hairst will be regarded as an integral part of Angus Ahead in 2003 and subsequent years.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The festival activities and promotional activity are being financially supported by the Angus Ahead, with funding bids pending to the Scottish Arts Council and Leader+.

The core programme will incur direct costs in the region of £25,000 which will be offset by a grant award of £5000 from the Scottish Arts Council (to be confirmed), a grant award of £1500 from Leader+ (to be confirmed), and an anticipated ticket revenue income of some £2,500.

The estimated balance of £16,000 will be met from the Leisure Services Revenue budget for 2003/4.

It has been agreed that a financial contribution of no greater than £10,000 will be made from the Angus Ahead Campaign budget to cover the marketing and promotion costs including print and distribution. The costs involved will be finalised subject to agreement of the Economic Development Manager and authorised under the delegated budget for Angus Ahead.

4. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

5. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

JOHN R ZIMNY
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.