

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 27 MAY 2008

SUBJECT: GANGA AND THE SHARK – REQUEST FOR SUPPORT BY HEARTSTONE

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To consider supporting an arts, culture and educational event which is linked to the 150th anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A48 of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to matters which fall within the remit of more than one Committee.
- 1.3 This report is submitted as a matter of urgency due to the applicant's need to establish whether funding is available by the end of May 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee consider the request from Heartstone to support an event in Buckie which will mark the 150th anniversary of the RNLI.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Heartstone, a non-profit organisation which produces photodocumentaries, exhibitions and events, approached Councillor Gordon McDonald seeking interest and assistance to run a three day event in Buckie in Autumn 2008. The proposal was subsequently discussed with the Convener.
- 3.2 The event is described in the enclosed submission and consists of two separate elements :-
 - a three day exhibition entitled "Ganga and the Shark" , and
 - a photo-documentary of the work of RNLI to co-incide with their 150th anniversary
- 3.3 It is planned that the event will be staged at three locations in Scotland in the Autumn. At this stage it is likely that one event will be staged in Argyll and Bute, one in a major city and Heartstone are seeking to stage the third event in Buckie.

- 3.4 The event is estimated to cost £28,000 to stage and £20,000 has already been raised leaving a balance of £8,000 to be found. It is possible that some funding might be available from the Buckie Common Good Fund.
- 3.5 The event is likely to have a high profile due to its connection to the 150th anniversary of the RNLI. Heartstone understand that there will be further coverage from the BBC as the date of the event approaches.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) **Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

The exhibition has the potential to attract visitors to Buckie in the Autumn of 2008 which accords with the Council's priority of supporting and promoting tourism.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

Heartstone have been supported by the Scottish government under the One Scotland Campaign and the aims of the project as regards social inclusion and community cohesion are in agreement with the Council's aim to promote equalities.

(c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

There is no budget for this event and members may wish to consider whether the tourism potential of the exhibition would merit supporting the event from the economic development budget.

(d) **Consultations**

This request has been discussed with Councillor Gordon McDonald and also the Convener who would be supportive of the event subject to funding from the Council being matched from the Buckie Common Good Fund.

5. CONCLUSION

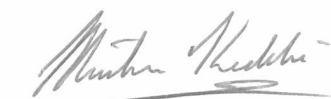
- 5.1 **The request from Heartstone for financial support to stage an event in Buckie has the potential to both attract tourists to Buckie and promote the aims of the Council.**

Author of Report:

Background Papers:

Ref:

Signature:



Designation: **Chief Executive**

Name: **Alastair Keddie**

'Ganga & The Shark' in Moray

Introduction

Heartstone is a non-profit organisation producing photodocumentaries, fictional and historically based stories which are presented in exhibitions, events and publications. Larger-scale Heartstone events incorporate speakers, storytellers, workshops and stage performances. The follow-on education project reaches children and young people of all ages from 8 upwards and professionals who work with them. All Heartstone stories have the following common threads:

- they present the similarities of people, rather than their differences
- they demonstrate that the same stories can have different meanings dependent upon cultural, historical and other perspectives
- they demonstrate the need to look beyond prejudice and stereotypes and see individuals

As such, Heartstone's core purpose is to celebrate cultural diversity, build greater contact, communication and understanding across cultures and nationalities, challenge all forms of prejudice and intolerance and demonstrate the need for co-operation, hence the coverage of both social and environmental topics.

In this project, we would like to apply for costs to present the new Heartstone story for 2008/9 titled 'Ganga & The Shark' as an exhibition in Moray. The exhibition opens with a launch day incorporating a dance-drama performance and press event and can lead into an education project following on from the exhibition. A substantial part of the costs for this project have just been secured as a result of the events with which this is connected as described below. This will allow the exhibition to stay with the authority permanently and provides the education project alongside at no additional cost.

This exhibition is being launched in the autumn of 2008 to coincide with the 150th Anniversary of the launch of the first RNLI lifeboat in Scotland. One section of this new exhibition incorporates photodocumentary work currently being undertaken by Heartstone with the RNLI. Special access has been provided by them to lifeboat stations and crews in different parts of Scotland specifically for this purpose and it is this event which has allowed Heartstone to raise the balance of funds necessary for this project. We are now in the process of setting up a programme of exhibitions to be staged at relevant locations throughout Scotland from September – February 2009 to connect with this event.

'Ganga & The Shark' is an exhibition of photographs and documentary coverage telling the story of the oceans from a new angle. It presents through the images and accompanying text several stories incorporating the underwater/on water/above water natural world from a global and multicultural perspective demonstrating how the seas have gripped and fascinated people from every part of the world, stories of people who are closely connected with the oceans and stories of shipwrecks which have a particularly poignant and relevant message in the Heartstone context. It raises environmental awareness through its presentation of some of the most recent findings of those involved at the forefront of marine research in the key universities in this field. Thus, modern-day conservation, climate change and sustainable development issues are all incorporated.

The exhibition is being launched this year as described above, as a result of a new partnership between Heartstone and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Heartstone is currently in the process of undertaking an extensive photodocumentary with the RNLI with the purpose of adding in a specific section to the exhibition which will cover the organisation, their work and the people involved. All lifeboat crews are volunteers which is what makes this such an excellent Heartstone story – presenting one example where all differences are put aside and people work together on a common cause for the good of all regardless of culture, background, race or nationality.

The Exhibition

The photographs within the exhibition have been gathered by Heartstone photographer/writer, Nick Sidle. Special access has been provided to the RNLI and other agencies/organisations for this purpose. It is designed to provide a breathtaking visual experience which is both inspirational and informative giving the audience a unique view of the world of the oceans. This is a 65 image exhibition including several 44" width images, and as such it is designed to have strong impact and generate a strong level of interest and excitement. It includes examples of underwater life in Scottish waters, and creatures connected with the oceans including seabirds. Access to locations has been facilitated by and text has been put together with the assistance of the foremost experts in the field of marine biology and conservation issues from Scottish universities incorporating the latest observations and findings. The story content presents how the seas have been viewed by people from different parts of the world over the centuries. The exhibition thus raises awareness of the population to an aspect of their environment which few may have detailed knowledge of but which affects us all.

The exhibition has come into being as a result of funding provided by SNH in 2007 to enable Heartstone to add in for the first time Scottish wildlife / environmental material. This provided the starting point for 'Ganga & The Shark' and the pilot 10 locations where a mini-exhibition was staged proved to be highly successful presentations. This year is building on that start and new funding has been secured for the further acquisition of original material.

The quality as well as the content of the exhibition has already led to BBC interest and preliminary coverage as they are keen to assist with all aspects of publicity of this programme in Scotland.

Each exhibition stays with the authority ensuring long-term use by all populations within the area and thus, good value for money.

Issues covered within the exhibition include sea temperatures and climate change, the effects on plankton levels and the marine food chain upto and including the effect on sea birds as observed this year in Scotland, items in the news such as sharks and Scottish waters – myth or fact. Combined with the global story content this exhibition is a unique concept designed to not only raise awareness of a population towards the seas, but also to broaden horizons and facilitate understanding of how local issues fit into a wider picture ie. it brings together environmental themes with social inclusion and cultural diversity. It also provides a natural platform for local speakers / experts to provide additional input and help further raise awareness.

It will occupy a space of approximately 15 display boards 1m wide x2m high.

The Launch and Training Days

Each exhibition opens with a launch day. Heartstone will set up the exhibition on day 1 and Day 2 and 3 will involve two groups working with Sitakumari to prepare the performance items for presentation on Day 4. Each group will present one dance item in the performance which will form part of the launch presentation in the afternoon or evening of Day 4.

The workshop session will involve ideally one group of primary and one of secondary age children / young people or young people with dance expertise drawn from the local area. They will be provided with a basic language of Indian classical dance from which they will be able to choreograph their own pieces to present within the overall performance. This element is drawn from Sitakumari's own dance background thus giving them an alternative cultural input but particularly of relevance in the context of storytelling presentation.

The groups participating in this performance will be left with a CD Story Module produced by Heartstone titled 'Chandra's India' which will give them all a complete background to the dance and additional dance mudras (hand gestures) / poses which they can go on to incorporate into their own work from this point on.

The launch event itself is designed to highlight the exhibition and would take place later in the day or early evening. This is an ideal point to invite local dignitaries to officially open the exhibition through which press coverage can be achieved. This would be followed by the performance bringing to life some of the stories told in the exhibition as the stage event. The performance component of Heartstone exhibitions have always been extremely popular. They are colourful, exciting, and allow involvement of local young people as described above. A launch event would last approximately 2 hours.

After this, the exhibition remains in the location for as long as it is felt would be viable for local audiences and the venue itself and the authority and can continue to involve speakers within it or include other presentations. Once taken down from the location where it is first presented, it can then go on tour to other parts of the authority and then finally become a permanent resource.

In the last two years, performances connected with other exhibitions staged by Heartstone have taken place for example, at the RAF Hendon Museum in London, and at the Chapel Royal, Stirling Castle. The method adopted in these large-scale events is always the same – Sitakumari worked with senior students of the Laban Contemporary Dance School for the former and with a similar group drawn from Ballet West in Scotland for the latter so that the performance reflected different styles of dance – Indian classical dance technique combined with western Contemporary and Ballet styles to produce an innovative dance form through which to tell the story. Local young people were then recruited from secondary schools and colleges/organisations with specific dance connections to perform alongside the professional core. This can also be done as part of the preparation for the exhibition launch day albeit at a smaller level ie. local semi-professionals can be incorporated into the workshop session earlier in the day alongside a primary/secondary school group.

The Project

In this year, Heartstone has been able to raise funding to allow the addition of 15 Story Modules of 'Ganga & The Shark' which provide all the exhibition images and their connected stories and much more as a CD version enabling schools / youth groups to use this as the basis for extensive project work. These allow participating groups to download images and text and use for the purpose of discussion / debate and production of their own exhibition section at their own venues thus providing a further local connection.

This is an optional add-on to the concept and Story Modules can be provided either in advance of the exhibition allowing some schools / groups to produce a contribution to be incorporated into the main exhibition when it is launched, or after the exhibition launch so that a project follows out of it. The Story Modules contain all the images, stories and leaders notes providing enough background for teachers / leaders to undertake a project which can stretch upto two terms if they wish to do this. All Heartstone stories have been connected with the new Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland making this a valuable tool particularly for teachers. Heartstone stories are used to (1) raise discussion/debate on the issues covered; (2) produce art and written work expressing feelings, experiences, ideas; (3) create a Heartstone Charter – a document produced by the children/young people as a result of their discussions setting out what they feel is a 'code' for their ideal future. These items can form the basis of a further exhibition in 2009.

Partners, Audiences and Venue

This project is being carried out in partnership with the RNLI and the other organisations who are assisting Heartstone with access to locations for the photography/photodocumentary. The RNLI are located throughout Scotland and the staging of this exhibition allows the involvement of local volunteers and others connected with the oceans who can provide input alongside the exhibition. Involvement of other speakers in this way would be left to each authority. The exhibition is therefore a flexible concept allowing the involvement of all age groups.

Other partners who have been involved in the production of this exhibition include Scottish Universities as already referred to, the RSPB, the Aigas Field Centre, the Scottish Sea Bird Centre and numerous other centres have assisted and continue to assist Heartstone in gathering the material for the exhibition.

A venue which can host the exhibition would need to be identified in each authority – this may be an arts centre, library location, town hall or similar.

As the exhibition remains with each authority in perpetuity, this allows multiple stagings and eventually it will become a permanent resource for use by local groups.

Benefits to Moray

There are several benefits in bringing an exhibition and project of this type to the authority area but in particular the following are worth noting:

1. The staging of this exhibition will bring a considerable level of national promotion / publicity and interest as well as resources in terms of both funds and expertise to the local authority as a result of its presentation in 2008, the time of the 150th Anniversary – this project will draw attention and interest which is difficult to replicate at any other time;
2. The project will reach the local population, helping to raise awareness of the many different issues related to the oceans and how we all impact upon it, comprising children, young people and their families over the period from September onwards. In addition to the exhibition, the Story Modules which are being provided at no cost within this project should reach approximately 1500 children / young people and families in each week (15 groups with approximately 100 children/young people/families connected with each location) post the event. Each group as part of their project will produce their own exhibition which will subsequently reach all the people within their own community;
3. It will provide new creative opportunities for local young people on several levels and provide schools with a practical route through which to fulfil many of their requirements under the new 'Curriculum for Excellence' approach in Scotland – pointed out by those involved in last year's project as one of the most valuable outcomes from the project;
4. It will inspire, motivate and engage with especially children and young people of a wide range of backgrounds and identities, including those who are new to the area who have recently arrived using themes which they have identified as being the most important and interesting – this is incorporated into the story content within the exhibition which provides global connections;
5. The project is designed to build baseline literacy and communication skills as well as develop skills in using IT;
6. It will lead local populations to recognise a common focus which links all groups – the oceans – and recognise the many ways in which seemingly disparate groups and communities are connected and that it is possible to empathise with those you may feel are very 'different' to yourself – enhanced by the RNLI connection who are all volunteers and who work for the good of all communities. This is essential in building more cohesive communities, but also to broaden the outlook and experience of a local population;
7. it will help bring different groups into contact with each other to build greater contact, communication and understanding and the need for co-operation;

8. it will demonstrate to all those who visit the event the power of the creative arts in being able to bring about the above and play a key role in helping to build greater social inclusion and community cohesion;
9. it will educate those who visit on different cultural artforms which they have never experienced before and which they will find provides them with a new route through which to feel and understand a story;
10. It has a long-term legacy – the project which is being delivered with the local schools / groups can continue for several years since it is based on the Story Module version of the exhibition which is provided to the groups to be used in their own settings and for many years to come. The exhibition remains with the authority allowing multiple stagings. As such, it is very good value for money.

Budget

1. Exhibition:

Photoassignments for production of original material: (2 @ £5k + 5 @ £1k)	15000
60 photographs @ £50 (foamboard mounted and velcro backed)	3000
1 Large format title @ £200	200
4 Large format prints @ £200	800
6 W44 prints @ £100	600
Small captions for photographs + story text panels	300
SUB TOTAL	19900

2. Project:

Story Module production	5000
Story Module packs – 15 @ £50	750
SUB TOTAL	5750

3. Launch day:

Sitakumari – 4 days on site (set up day + training days + launch day/evening)	1200
Preparation - 3 days @ £300 (choreography/rehearsal, preparation of CDs etc.)	900
Administration – 5 days @ £100 (by central Heartstone team to liaise with local authority and organise event)	500
Marketing / publicity – provision of scans for posters + flyers + Photographs, press release etc.	500
SUB TOTAL	3100

TOTAL COST OF PROJECT £28750

Heartstone Contribution: £20750

Balance requested: £8000

NB: These costs do not include costs of venue for staging of the event although it is hoped that a civic venue can be found for the first presentation.