









in question, Dark Skies Gigha Stargazing Festival, is a new event and seeks to take advantage of the fact that the Isle of Gigha is uniquely placed as a recognised Dark Sky Discovery site of Milky Way Class. The organisers have stated that it is proposed to grow this event over the next few years to attract visitors from across the UK and possibly beyond however for the first year the focus is on the community of Gigha with only a very small number, 10 in total, indicated as coming from outwith the local area. The event in its current form cannot therefore be classed as strategic as it will not have the capacity to attract people from outwith the area, nor will it have a focus on national and international visitors, nor generate significant economic benefits for the local community. It has therefore not been possible to score the event against the key criteria such that it would allow this to be put forward for approval. This is not however to say that this event is not a good event and it is very much hoped that as the event grows and is able to reach a wider audience that it will be able to be considered for support from future SEF Rounds.

- 4.4 It is fully appreciated that strategic events and festivals are still facing an unprecedented set of extraordinary and challenging circumstances brought about as a result of Covid and that this has put a strain on the financial stability of many of the organisation however it is hoped, given the relaxation of all restrictions, that the outlook for Argyll and Bute strategic events in 2022, is looking much more positive at this point.
- 4.5 The impact of SEF Round 4 funding is fully recognised in assisting in the economic recovery of the area and the sustainability of the event organisers. To further aid recovery the Council previously agreed to earmark underspend to augment future rounds up to Round 5 2023/24, and to partial release of up to 75% SEF Grant to support legitimate and eligible expenditure incurred in relation to cancellation of events.
- 4.6 Whilst all restrictions have been lifted and the situation is looking much more positive for events and festivals it is appreciated that there is still a risk that things could change. It is therefore proposed that the support outlines above continues for cancelled events as previously agreed. Also, that any underspend from SEF Round 4.1 2022/23 is earmarked and used to augment a future SEF round for 2024/2025 Round 6. The current estimated underspend based on Round 4 and round 4.2, which cannot be clarified until events have taken place, is circa £25,064
- 4.7 Event Scotland continue to support events through industry support funds and fully recognise the fragility of the sector and the need to assist recovery. It has

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 Round 4 SEF 2022/23 application and assessment process has been completed as per the guidance. Between Round 4 and round 4.2 call a total of 21 applications were received and a total of 16 events supported leaving an unallocated budget of £25,064 to be carried over to support Round 6. It is really encouraging to see the amount of applications received across Round 4 and also the amount of strategic events that the SEF Round 4 funding will be able to support during 2022. Many of those that applied are strategic events that had previously applied pre Covid and many are long standing events and it is excellent to see these being able to take place this year. Whilst the sector is still fragile it is hoped that the events sector will be able to start to rebuild itself this year and begin its recovery and there is no doubt that the continued support to the sector via future SEF funding will play a key part in this recovery.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy - festivals for their positive impact on the economy
- 6.2 Financial - SEF Round 4 2022/23 budget is £150,164. Between SEF Round 4 & 4.2 calls 16 applications totaling £125,100 are being supported. This leaves a balance of circa £25,064 to be earmarked for augmenting SEF Round 6 2024/25.
- 6.3 Legal - Award letters and grant contracts will be issued as and when a decision is made and confirmation has been received that the event will go ahead.
- 6.4 HR - Resourced from existing staff
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty - The Fund seeks to support the economic growth of areas.
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: None
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: The Fund seeks to support the economic growth of areas including a positive contribution to fragile areas.
- 6.5.3 Islands: The Fund seeks to support island economies by encouraging increased levels of visitors.
- 6.6 Climate Change - As part of the application process events have to demonstrate net zero and this is part of the scoring process.
- 6.7 Risk - The full effects of the impact of Covid is still unclear however we have seen the cancellation of events over the past two years and understand that the sector is extremely fragile.



## APPENDIX 1

Table 1 - SEF Round 4.2 Eligible Grant Applications Received April 2022

Event	Recommended Funding Award
<b>£2,500 - £5,000 Fund</b>	