

# Council to look at rebuilding Ross Bandstand

The council's Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee considered this morning whether to proceed with plans to renew the much-loved, but now rather historic Ross Bandstand in West Princes Street Gardens.



Edinburgh Ross Bandstand – credit City of Edinburgh Council

City hotelier Norman Springford who runs Apex Hotels has come forward with an offer to be the major benefactor for the development working in partnership with the council. The ambition is to renew the gardens and run the area for year round benefit of communities and visitors. There will have to be some fundraising and the council plans to consult heritage bodies, festival producers and residents.

The bandstand was built in 1935 with a capacity of 2,400 and was a gift to the city by William Henry Ross who was Chairman of Distillers Company Ltd.

The bandstand is deemed no longer fit for purpose, and might be better equipped with 21st century technology to allow it to be used more easily for events in future. An independent steering group was set up to look at the way this could be externally funded. The council will have to lodge a private bill at Holyrood to amend the 1991 District Council Act as the site is 'inalienable Common Good land'.

Councillors discussed the feasibility of the project and approved moving forward with a further report with a timetable for the rebuilding programme and of course the details of it will be considered in June.

Council Leader Andrew Burns, Convener of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, said: "Connecting the Old and New Town halves of our UNESCO World Heritage Site and in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, West Princes Street Gardens offers one of Scotland's most beautiful and iconic locations.

"Scores of famous acts have graced the Ross Bandstand stage and while it remains a key venue for the city's famous Festival Fireworks and Hogmanay Concert in the Gardens, it is more than 80 years old and is nearing the end of its useful life. It has been a long held ambition of the Council to create a new facility as part of major renewal of the Gardens but is not, in the current financial climate, a project we could undertake alone.

"We are extremely grateful to Mr Springford for his personal commitment to the project. Princes Street Gardens are a major source of residents' pride in the city and it is important that we get any changes to the park right. There are a lot of considerations, from the fact the area is Common Good land to the implications of building in public parks, and so there is still much work to be done."

Norman Springford said: "Whilst it has been a personal ambition to see redevelopment, the opportunity for this to become a reality arises from a real spirit of public/private co-operation. I'm sure we are all looking forward to being given the chance to deliver a project which the city can have pride in. "



Ross Bandstand during Edinburgh's Hogmanay  
2015 – credit Chris Watt