

## SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS



Having delivered Aberdeen Christmas Village for the past 9 years, John Codona's Pleasure Fairs Ltd (JCPF) recognises the responsibility of the company to consider the environmental impact of the event and implement practical steps to minimise waste and resource usage.

Given the size and impact of our own business, JCPF have an Environmental Policy Statement, detailed as follows:

- John Codona's Pleasure Fairs Ltd recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and are continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our strategy and operating methods.
- We are committed to ensuring that the disposable 'single use' packaging we use is more environmentally friendly. We work with local packaging suppliers Grampian Packaging and Travelstock Packaging Ltd and have already moved the majority of our single use packaging to alternatives that are recyclable, compostable or biodegradable. These products now include straws, paper cups, food trays, napkins and carrier bags. We also made sure materials are from sustainable sources.

As part of this commitment, we continue to develop our Environmental Policy. Identify and determine objectives for the short, medium and long term, deliver strategies in line with the company's policy and evaluate our performance. We recognise this will assist JCPF to further improve sustainability and waste management at key external events we are involved with including Aberdeen Christmas Village. Within this section, we explore specific areas where we can demonstrate steps to improve sustainability and waste reduction.

### **Transport and Travel**

Aberdeen Christmas Village is located in the heart of Aberdeen City on Broad Street and Upperkirkgate. Taking into consideration the additional sites proposed in our plan, the event has good public transport links into the city, with the majority of visitors able to access the event via bus or train. Many out-of-town locations, such as Ellon and Kingswells offer park and ride opportunities to ease congestion into the city and reduce environmental impact. For those travelling on bicycle, racks are available on Broad Street outside of Marischal College.

JCPF staff for the build and running of the event are predominantly local with most able to access public transport.

### **Catering – Food and Drink**

As event organiser, JCPF are very aware of the impact food waste bears on the company, both financially and environmentally. Food and drink supplies are sourced via local companies. As an example of this, our handcrafted beers, gins and cocktails are sourced directly from local producers

based within the city and shire. Meat and vegetables are sourced directly from local butchers McWilliam and Aberdeen Larder.

JCPF have been working with local companies Grampian Packaging and Travelstock Packaging Ltd for some time now and have already moved the majority of our single use packaging to alternatives that are recyclable, compostable or biodegradable. Relevant to Aberdeen Christmas Village, these include products such as paper cups, food trays, napkins, carrier bags and PLA straws. We actively look for materials made from sustainable sources.

As a business, our ultimate aim is to reduce the amount of waste created in the first instance. However, any food or produce close to expiry, but perfectly edible and safe to eat, is offered to local homeless charities such as the soup kitchen located in close proximity to Aberdeen Christmas Village. Food waste and oil waste is collected via OLLECO. Further information on waste management is addressed later in this document.

### **Event Dressing & Theming**

JCPF have delivered Aberdeen Christmas Village for the past 9 years. Consideration is always given to re-using items and props used for dressing the event including all lighting, garland, catering equipment, 9m Christmas trees, signage and more. These are stored within Aberdeen city and any items deemed no longer of use, sold via gumtree Aberdeen or given to charity to minimise waste.

### **Energy Efficiency**

JCPF carefully plan energy usage to minimise/ reduce our carbon footprint. Where generators are used, these are shared across the site and only used when/where absolutely necessary. A recommendation moving forward would be to use mains electricity for the Ice Rink chillers. We would also be keen to explore other areas within Aberdeen Christmas Village where access may be available to mains electricity.

The style of Aberdeen Christmas Village is in keeping with traditional Christmas Markets found throughout Europe, therefore the event is predominantly all outdoors, and heating is only required in the Ice Rink Skate Exchange.

### **Waste Management**

JCPF contracts waste management to local company EIS Waste Management. These bins include mixed recycling and general waste. Oil and food waste from catering units is recycled and turned into renewable energy via OLLECO.

We efficiently manage waste to avoid littering the event. Any litter is collected and disposed of by our operating staff using PPE to prevent injury. In accordance with our agreement, all waste generated by the event is removed by JCPF during and after the event.

### **Community Benefits**

- JCPF are a local business, established 50 years ago, with strong local roots and knowledge and understanding of the local community and businesses throughout the city and shire. We attract visitors to the city from throughout Scotland, UK and beyond and offer procurement opportunities for local businesses and employment for local people.
- JCPF employ local staff to operate Aberdeen Christmas Village. There are always opportunities for further employment with JCPF after the close of the Village. As an example, one of our managers started work with us as a temporary staff member during Aberdeen Christmas Village in 2015.

- JCPF draw upon local business expertise and experience to successfully deliver Aberdeen Christmas Village using as many local suppliers as possible to support the local economy and people.
- 90% of food and drink for the operation of the event is sourced locally.
- The event attracts visitors both locally and further afield to Aberdeen and raises awareness of Aberdeen as a cultural destination.
- Aberdeen Christmas Village provides an opportunity to showcase local community projects, initiatives and groups such as performing arts, choirs etc through the space at Marischal Square.
- The official opening of Aberdeen Christmas Village is always an ideal opportunity to bring together amateur performance groups, bands and community groups to celebrate the start of the festivities. Robert Gordons College Pipe band and Highland dancers, the Arts Centre panto cast and ice-skating performance group 'Ska8tastic' have all been involved in previous years.
- We continue to work alongside Aberdeen Inspired and Charlie House for Curated In The Quad. We build, decorate, wire and manage the market, free of any expense to the charity. Charlie House curates the market and receives all the rental income from the traders. In 2023 this raised in excess of £20,000. We wanted to expand on this with Charlie House and we added 15 additional huts for them; this increased their final income figure to more than £32,000 for 2024. The market provides a fantastic platform for local producers and makers to showcase their high quality locally produced goods.
- An exclusive ice-skating session is hosted with Charlie House, for their supported families before the event opens that day, to the public, allowing families a quieter environment to experience the ice rink. We donate this event to Charlie House as they continue their work to help families in the North-East through challenging times; a large part of their work is through their family activity sessions which help families make memories together.
- As in previous years, we hosted a Festive Fun Day, designed to engage with charitable organisations and school groups across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire; with the aim of including those who may ordinarily, not be able to attend the village. This was free of charge to those attending and provides access to all the fairground rides and ice rink. This year saw more than 600 guests invited throughout the day. Attendees were from various schools and charities including Aberdeen Lads Club, Befriend A Child, We Too!, Charlie House, Team Jak Foundation, Greyhope School, Heathryburn Primary, Inspire, Bramble Brae Primary.
- The 2024 event saw our 8<sup>th</sup> year of relaxed ice-skating sessions with local charity We Too! These exclusive events, before we open to the public, allow no music, or flashing lights. The number attending is also capped to create a calmer session and experience. Funds raised from the We Too! ticket sales go directly to the charity; this helps them continue their work in the community. We expanded on our partnership working with We Too! and committed to offering fortnightly relaxed sessions at the ice rink. With We Too!'s ethos of, inform don't adapt in mind specifically for these new sessions, they were available at quieter times when we were open to the public, bringing people into an inclusive environment.
- Continuing our partnership working with We Too!, a sensory space was created within the village. This provides a quiet space, for anyone who may benefit from using it, away from the main area of the Village. The We Too! team have also provided Sensory Borrow

Backpacks which include items such as ear defenders, fidget toys and sunglasses; these items can be used by guests to support their visit.

- In collaboration with We Too! a visual guide has been created for guests; we have copies available in the village and it has also been made available online, if people are looking to plan their visit in advance. The guide shows various aspects of the village, including accessibility of the rides, accessibility of the ice rink and where the accessible toilet facilities are. The guides are available and accessible to everyone, ensuring that inclusive practices are available to anyone who would benefit from them while visiting the village. This includes when English may not be a first language to residents of the city and visitors.
- The addition of the Giant Christmas Decoration Light Up Trail gave us the opportunity to dedicate each of the 12 decorations to a local charity; the display we put next to each one provided a space for the charity to highlight their objectives as well as a QR code which directed people to their online presence and an optional donation link. It also created the drive of footfall to Union Terrace Gardens and through the city centre past some of the city centre's businesses and architectural highlights such as His Majesty's Theatre. The 12 charities for the 2024 trail were: AberNecessities, The Russell Anderson Foundation, Home Start Aberdeen, Friends of Anchor, Aberdeen Cyrenians, MHA (Mental Health Aberdeen), Team Jak Foundation, Charlie House, Befriend A Child, We Too!, Social Bite and Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust.