

Barrier lifts on street markets

Way is opens for more town attractions

HELENSBURGH looks set for a brighter future, thanks to new moves to boost the town's attractions.

The Helensburgh Partnership — the body behind regeneration in the Burgh — has finalised plans which look set to ensure the town benefits from street attractions and events such as farmers' markets.

Costs involved with closing roads on Colquhoun Square had proved a barrier to holding major events in the town centre.

Organisers of events like Sunday's Christmas lights switch-on would have been forced to stump up hundreds of pounds to pay for road closures, had they held the festivities in the main thoroughfare, rather than the Sinclair Street car park.

The costs involved meant that the town had no feasible way of attracting retailing delights such as continental or Christmas markets to the Burgh.

But thanks to the efforts of staff at the Helensburgh Partnership, who have reached a compromise with council road chiefs at the Argyll and Bute authority, the costs have been

By Tracy-Ann Carmichael

lowered and such events can now go ahead.

Instead of making individual applications for closures for each event, Partnership bosses will make a year-long application for road closures on specified dates, which costs the same as an individual application.

Roads bosses have agreed to remove costs associated with their staff erecting cones and signage, by training specified individuals to carry out the works themselves.

The Partnership board have approved moves for the organisation to fund the costs of applying for the closures — which now sit at £1,200 — meaning a list of dates for major events can be drawn up.

Derek Anderson, Chief Executive at the Helensburgh Partnership, is now compiling a list of dates and has been in talks with companies behind farmers and continental markets, as well as Helensburgh Retailers' Association and the organisers of the Lomond and Clyde Springfest.

Mr Anderson said: "We have drawn up a list of dates when we will apply to have the road

closed to accommodate farmers and continental markets. The people behind them are very keen to come to Helensburgh and we have been in touch with the Retailers' Association, who are drawing up dates to add to the list.

"We really want any other organisations, who will benefit from having the roads closed so they can hold their event in the town centre, to get in touch and we will add those to the application."

Mr Anderson added: "We have worked with the council on this one and there has been extensive work going on behind the scenes. It will mean that it's a fresh start for Helensburgh in the new year and should give the town a boost."

The news comes just months after retailers staged a crisis meeting over fears for the future of retailing in the Burgh. Amongst their top concerns were the lack of events to bring tourists and day trippers to the area.

Any organisations interested in adding their dates to the closure application can email details to derek@helensburghpartnership.co.uk, or by calling the partnership on 01436 679495.

The deadline for applications is December 14.