

21<sup>st</sup> May 2025

Dear members,

Féile an Phobail is Irelands biggest community arts festival and summer school, holding 3 festivals a year as well as a range of year-round community engagement and youth arts events. Our August Féile is our flagship international festival, attracting upwards of 80,000 to Belfast each year, and includes:

- approximately 600 events in 30+ venues citywide, including iconic venues such as Clonard Monastery An Chulturlann, Shankill Road, East Belfast, Duncairn Arts Centre, Linen Hall Library, PRONI, Ulster Museum, Belfast City Hall, St Marys University College, Conway Mill, Milltown and City Cemeteries and the Falls Park.
- 18 music concerts, including 5-6 12,000 capacity concerts in the Falls Park
- Féile Dance night (2024) resulted in NO Bonfires across the entire City– a significant achievement
- 4 International comedy concerts,
- 40+ exhibitions from artists worldwide,
- 70+ discussions and debates events as part of 'Irelands biggest Summer School',
- 24 youth events,
- 12 literary events,
- 9 drama / theatre productions,
- over 100 family, outdoor and community events, street performances,
- an internationally themed carnival parade,
- international food fayre,
- an event celebrating Pride week,
- 30+ sporting events, and,
- 20 various tours and walks
- A Health and Well Being Festival (Sat 26<sup>th</sup> July)
- Approximately £4m contributed to local business as a result of August Féile events!

Féile an Phobail, literally means Festival of the People, and really is a festival for all the people of the City and beyond, with a community ethos at the heart of our events. The event has grown over the years from being held for 2-3 days to a full 11 day internationally acclaimed festival offering an eclectic mix of arts and cultural events, ranging from headline music concerts, comedy, tours and walks, debates and discussions, exhibitions / visual arts, theatre, youth and community and sporting events.

This year's festival will run from Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July to Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August, with preliminary events, including a new initiative 'HappyFest' being included in this years programme and held in the Falls Park on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July, with a dfocus on health and wellbeing events and activities.

In previous years, we had requested a license for, and operated between 8 and 11 headline music concerts in the Falls Park. Following significant consultation with the local community,

and with our main stakeholders, and having successfully operated on the new event space since 2018, we are maintaining this year's headline events to 5 - 6.

This year we would request that the Committee consider permitting us to operate this year's headline music events in the Falls Park from Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>, with events taking place on the 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> August.

We would request that entertainment license be granted to 1am. It is envisaged that only one/two of these nights, Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August & Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August will go to 1am, due to the diversionary nature of the event, which receives the support of the wider community and statutory agencies, including the PSNI and is funded by Belfast City Council. Féile has also agreed to limit / mitigate against any sound issues on this evening by introducing the main acts on stage at an earlier time, an initiative that has been well received in previous years.

This will allow us to develop our plans around some of the diversionary activities we are proposing to do to help with the ongoing antisocial behavior issues that exist within the Falls Park and surrounding areas.

This year Féile will also act as a lead partner for diversionary events on the 8<sup>th</sup> August (and the lead up the 8<sup>th</sup>) right across the City, with events taking place and partnering with Féile in Ardoyne, New Lodge, the Market, Short Strand and the Ormeau Road, a significant cross City project aimed at reducing intra and inter community tension, not to mention the anti-social behavior on this date often associated with 'unwanted' bonfires.

Féile has committed alongside local political and community reps to conduct a number of community consultations around this year's events in the park, specifically engaging with local residents and addressing any issues / concerns. Indeed, we have already engaged in meetings with BCC Officers, the PSNI and local residents. We will continue to work alongside the park team and building control in this respect in the lead up to and throughout the festival.

We are currently finalising the acts for this year but have already lined up a range of headline artists that will appeal to all age groups. We would hope to have the running order completed in the next couple of weeks and will forward this to Building Control when completed.

As well as holding two operational meetings already with stakeholders, we've provided a draft copy of our proposed Event Management Plan and Site Plan but wish to highlight that these are subject to change but can assure the Committee that we will continue to work with Building Control and provide them with regular updates as work progresses in this regard.

As in recent year's we have been in regular contact with the PSNI regarding the event to agree the policing, traffic and transport measures, including parking. The PSNI have always been very helpful and are happy with the plans we have discussed with them. The PSNI are also involved with the diversionary activities we are implementing for the event and the

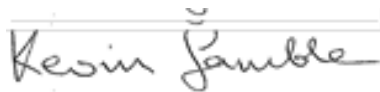
underage activities to resolve the issues of anti-social behavior, etc. currently being experienced in the area.

We've also been held discussion with the Council's Parks Unit regarding the event and the relevant access and egress arrangements along with the timeframe available in order to gain access to start the site build.

If you require any additional information in relation to this year's events, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Kevin Gamble Director  
Féile an Phobail

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Gamble". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below a horizontal line.

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