Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 10th April, 2014

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor McKee (Chairman);
Aldermen Robinson and Rodgers;
Councillors Beattie, Convery, Corr, Cunningham, Haire, Hanna, Hendron, Hussey, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín, Mallon, McCabe, Ó Donnghaile, Mullan, Thompson and Verner.

Also attended: Councillor Kelly.

In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McNamee.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading 'Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council' which, at the request of Councillor Kelly and with the permission of the Council, had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Whiterock Leisure Centre – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Background Information

At its meeting on 13th February 2014 Committee approved an application from Cumann Spoirt an Phobail to hire facilities on Saturday 29th March 2014. The request was to facilitate a community celebration event with presentations to local people who had contributed to the development of the

Whiterock community in the fields of sport, culture and development. .

On 30th March 2014 a number of Councillors contacted the Director of Parks and Leisure regarding images which had been circulating on social media and their concerns around the nature of the event and the displays within it, posters which were displayed on the walls within the leisure centre and the promotional material which had been prepared to advertise the event. The Director reviewed the information provided to him and initiated an investigation into the circumstances around the event and potential breaches of the Council's Parks and Leisure events policy, the conditions for hire and the neutral and harmonious working environment policy.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

In conducting the investigation the Director:

- **Reviewed information provided by staff in relation to the event;**
- **Sought legal advice on breaches to the events policy and the conditions of hire;**
- **Met with the event organiser;**
- **On legal advice, asked the PSNI to review the available information relating to the event to establish if any unlawful activity had taken place; and**
- **Reviewed all documentation associated with the event including the application form and the occasional licence.**

Investigation findings:

<u>General</u>

- **Cumann Spoirt an Phobail was the applicant and event was organised in conjunction with a number of other organisation including Gortnamona Historical and Cultural Society and Sliabh Dubh Public House for the event.**
- **The elements of the event agreed by Committee i.e. the Community Awards appear to have formed the main part of the event. As far as can be ascertained the displays which included one to commemorate to 100th anniversary of the formation of Cumann na mBan (League of Women) were staged by the Gortnamonagh Historical Society.**
- **No promotional material was displayed within the leisure centre prior to the event.**

- **No event programme regarding the event was provided or requested by staff prior to the event. Staff were under the impression that this was a community based event.**
- **No permission was requested for the display of posters within the main hall.**
- **The centre closed at 4pm and the organisers were given access to the facility at that time after the other bookings had finished.**
- **No staff members were involved in the set up of the event.**
- **No complaints have been received from staff or customers regarding the event.**
- **An occasional licence was in place for the event, applied for and granted to the Sliabh Dubh Public House from 7.30pm to 1pm. The licence indicates that the organiser of the event was Gortnamonagh Historical and Cultural Society.**
- **The facility hire form was completed and a formal letter of application was submitted. The applicant was provided with a hire agreement and the conditions of hire.**
- **A fee of £700 to include staff costs was charged for the event.**

<u>The Hire Agreement</u>

- **The agreement confirms the use of the facility for the purpose of the event described in the application.**
- **The agreement sets out the hirer's obligations and requires the hirer not to display flags or emblems (except for the use of with a historical significance), to run the event in such a manner as not to injure the reputation of the centre or to undertake anything which would be unlawful. It also requires the hirer not to assign the benefit of any application without consent and that all attachments and decorations are subject to the prior approval of the centre manager.**
- **There is a requirement that publicity and promotional material will be subject to the approval of the centre manager.**
- **The agreement refers to the Council's Section 75 obligations and the requirement to promote equal opportunities and good relations between and with the protected groups.**

Conclusions

1) In this case there were a number of breaches of the conditions of hire:

a) There were a number of different organisations involved in the organisation of this event, not only the applicant who was granted permission of the Council. This breaches the conditions of hire unless consent has been sought and approved, which did not happen in this case.

b) The organisers did not seek the approval of the centre manager in relation to the type of promotional material used on for the erection of posters or banners within the centre.

2) In the application to the Council the event was described as a community celebration event to showcase success within the community with an emphasis on presentations to local people who have contributed to the development of the community in the fields of sport, culture and development.

It would appear that this was the main focus of the event. However, there were clearly other elements planned for the event which were not disclosed to the Council either at the time of the application or subsequently.

3) Once the event had been given permission by the Council and the application form submitted, which at this current time only requires basic information to be provided, the process for vetting the application was not as robust or searching as it might have been.

4) There is a requirement for those hiring the facility not to act in a way that would offend the Council's legal obligations under Section 75. The Council also has a policy to provide a neutral and harmonious working environment for staff who work in the facility.

The Centre is a place of work and a facility that all sections of the community should feel free and welcome to visit. The Centre was not open to the

general public at the time of the event but the portrayal of images on social media and the press is unlikely to be viewed as sitting comfortably with the Council's legal duty under Section 75.

The display of banners, emblems and flags in the centre during the event also creates difficulty for the Council in complying with its policy to create a neutral and harmonious working environment for all staff.

5) An oral update will be given to the Committee on the investigation that the PSNI are currently undertaking.

3. <u>Recommendations</u>

To agree that the Director:

- **Reviews the application process for use of Leisure Centre facilities to ensure that sufficient and appropriate information is provided by applicants to enable better considered decisions on hiring to be made by committee.**
- **In conjunction with legal services review and amend the agreement for hire to clarify and simplify the hire obligations regarding the issues raised by the investigation.**
- **Submit a further report to committee in due course."**

The Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and clarified a range of issues thereon.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and adopted the recommendations.

<u>Reconsidered Item - Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council</u>

Pursuant to the decision of the Council of 1st April, the Committee reconsidered the minute of the meeting of 13th March under the above-mentioned heading, a copy of which is set out hereunder:

"The Director reported that a request had been received from the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council seeking financial support to assist in the costs associated with sending the Northern Ireland team to the 20th Commonwealth Games, which would be held in Glasgow in July and August. He pointed out that over seventy countries would be participating in 2014 and reminded Members of the significant achievements of Belfast competitors at previous Games.

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council had, in 2002, 2006 and 2010, agreed to provide financial assistance to the Commonwealth Games Council to offset the costs associated with bringing the team to the Games. Such expenditure had been authorised under the specialised expenditure powers as set out within Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to make a contribution of £5,000 to the Commonwealth games Council.

Accordingly, it was

Resolved – That the aforementioned expenditure in respect of the Council's contribution to the Commonwealth Games Council be approved under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, it being the opinion of the Council that the expenditure would be in the interest of, and would bring direct benefit to, the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefit so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made."

The Chairman reported that Messrs. S. Tosh and C. Heatley, representing the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council, were in attendance and with the permission of the Committee they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Heatley stated that the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council would, subject to the securing of adequate funding, be sending a record 114 athletes to the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. He provided an overview of the costs associated with the preparation, travel and accommodation for the team. He reminded the Committee that local athletes had excelled at recent Games, particularly in 2010 at Delhi. He pointed out that a majority of local competitors who had been awarded medals had been from Belfast. He requested that the Committee reconsider the amount of funding which it had endorsed at its meeting on 13th March. The deputation then left the meeting.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Councillor Hanna and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to rescind its decision of 13th March and agrees further that the Director re-examines the Department's budgets for 2014/2015 to identify a sum of £15,000 to be allocated to the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council; and agrees that such expenditure be authorised under Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, it being the opinion of the Committee that the expenditure would be in the interest of and would bring direct benefit to the District and the inhabitants of the District, with the Committee being satisfied that the direct benefit so accruing would be commensurate with the payment to be made.

Burial Land at Dundrod

The Committee considered the undernoted report.

"1 Background Information

Members will be aware that as part of the approach to cemetery and crematorium development we have been engaged in a process to identify a site for development as a new cemetery and that discussions have been ongoing around a potential site at Dundrod.

The site at Dundrod came to the Council through an expression of interest exercise which the Council initiated. This site was put forward by an agent acting on behalf of a business man who holds an option on the site. Officers from the Parks and Leisure Department, Legal Services and the Estates Management Unit have held a number of meetings with the party who holds an option on the site along with their agent. The Council is aware of who the landowners are but at this point have had no direct dealings with them.

2 Key Issues

At its meeting in January 2014 the Committee agreed the following:

- **Agree to commission an expert to do detailed drawings of the sight lines and to determine what options for a viable secondary access exist at the site;**
- **Subject to the findings of the above, commission additional ground investigations at the site including deeper trial pits and bore holes across the entire site; and**
- **Authorise the Director, under the Scheme of Delegation, to award the successful tender in respect of the ground investigations and in respect of the access arrangements should these exceed quotation limits.**

Officers are currently in the process of commissioning the first set of tests and we would hope to bring a report detailing the findings to Member in June 2014.

The option holder has also commissioned work around the site suitability. A letter has been received from Strategic Planning, on behalf of Carston Undertakings Limited requesting the opportunity to make a presentation to the Committee at its June meeting. In summary Strategic Planning have asked permission for a delegation to attend the meeting to make a 10 minute presentation, to inform the Members of the rationale behind the project and the possible

options going forward. They have also indicated that they will be happy to respond to any questions that Members may have. It should be noted that officers are in discussion with the option holder to clarify his relationship with Carston Undertakings Limited. The delegation would be made up of representatives from the various consultancies that the option holder has commissioned to work on this project, including Strategic Planning, MRA Traffic Consultants, Park Hood Landscape Architects and PwC.

3 Resource Implications

Financial
The development of a new cemetery is currently a Stage I emerging project in the Council's capital programme.

Asset and Other Implications
None at this stage although the final phases of the project will inevitably increase the Council's land ownership and associated liabilities.

4 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are currently no equality or good relation implications however this will continue to be reviewed as the project is developed.

5 Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the request and determine whether they want to accede to the request from Strategic Planning.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to accede to the request from Strategic Planning and agreed that Members of both Councils would be invited to attend.

Potential Flood Alleviation Measures at the Musgrave Park

The Director reminded the Committee that there had been a series of flooding incidents in the City over the past number of years. He pointed out that the area of the Upper Lisburn Road, within the vicinity of Sicily Park and Marguerite Park, had been affected severely, particularly on the evening of 27th June, 2012. The Director indicated that Northern Ireland Water was in the process of developing a medium to long-term strategy to address the issue and one if its proposed alleviation measures under consideration might include the creation of an outlet flow pond adjacent to the Musgrave Park Playing Fields. Such a measure, he reported, would act to retain excess rainwater and enable it to be directed away from residential properties.

The Director indicated that the creation of the pond would not impact on the pitches within the park and he drew the Committee's attention to a number of issues which would need to be considered prior of any firm recommendation being placed before the Members in respect of the creation of the outlet pond.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and noted that a further report in this matter would be submitted for its consideration in due course.

Procurement of Supplies and Services

The Director sought and was granted approval to undertake procurement exercises for the undernoted supplies and services for 2014/2015:

The Director indicated that the duration for each contract would be for three years, subject to satisfactory performance and annual review and that all tenders would be evaluated on both cost and quality.

Tenders	Annual Cost
• Supply and delivery of fruit and vegetables at the Belfast Zoo;	– £110,000
• Supply and delivery of haylage, meadow hay and barley straw;	– £40,000
• Supply and delivery of ground maintenance plant and machinery;	– £100,000
• Cash collection at leisure centres and parks properties;	– £18,000
• Parks Education Programme;	– £20,000
• Supply and delivery of topdressing sand, topsoil and sand/soil mix;	– £114,000
• Supply and delivery of outdoor seating	– £50,000
• Supply and delivery of fertilisers, grass seed and miscellaneous supplies	– £110,000
• Maintenance and removal of hanging baskets.	– £33,000

The Committee noted that, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the Director would award the contracts to the most advantageous tenders received.

(The Deputy Chairman, Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín, in the Chair.)

St. Patrick's Day Operations 2014

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

In the last number of years the Council has been working closely with its partners to coordinate resources to effectively tackle any antisocial behaviour occurring during St. Patrick's day (and where appropriate the days around it) across the city.

This year, as before, preparatory meetings were held with the PSNI, NIFRS, Ambulance Service, Queens University and Ulster University and a comprehensive operations plan was drawn up to support effective communications during the St. Patrick's holiday weekend.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

The aims of the St. Patrick's weekend operations were to:

- **Communicate with local communities, elected representatives and revellers about the St. Patrick's weekend operation.**
- **Provide a safe environment for residents, communities and revellers to enjoy and partake in St. Patrick's celebrations across the city.**
- **Tackle crime, on-street drinking and antisocial behaviour.**
- **Enforce breaches of local bye laws and other legislation.**
- **Improve the public image of Belfast as a safe city to socialise in.**

The principal areas given attention over the period included the Holylands, the City Centre (during the St. Patricks Day parade and concert) and the parks throughout the city over the St. Patrick's bank holiday weekend.

The Parks and Leisure Department ensured officers were contributing to the development of a city wide plan for the St. Patrick's weekend operations. The coordinated operations in parks began at 7:30am on Saturday 15 March and ended at 7:30pm on Monday 17 March 2014. The St Patrick's Weekend Operations Brief – March 2014 which outlines the operations is attached as appendix 1.

Parks operations were based at the City Hall Emergency Co-ordinating Centre on 16 and 17 March from 7:00am and continued until 7:30pm. Hourly updates on the situation in parks were gathered and collated by two City Parks Managers. These updates were shared amongst the agencies and informed decisions on where to deploy resources were taken using this information.

The mobile CCTV van was accompanied by a Park Manager and deployed throughout parks across the city on 15, 16 and 17 March. This resource provides a highly visible representation of authority and is very effective in identifying

and quantifying antisocial behaviour at hotspots within park areas.

Evidence collated from previous years indicated where groups would consume alcohol in parks and leisure facilities across Belfast. There were over 150 people carrying alcohol, who were denied access to parks and therefore not given an opportunity to settle, drink or attract further groups of drinkers. The early coordinated intervention of council officers was extremely effective in keeping parks free from drinkers gathering.

Following reports from the public or Councillors, the mobile CCTV van was deployed to a number of parks to broadcast live images or provide verbal reports back to the Emergency Co-ordinating Centre in the City Hall. The CCTV resource provided an extremely versatile asset, as council officers and PSNI could make decisions on deploying a response using 'real time' information and images to assess and respond to any reports of antisocial behaviour.

As a result there were a number of successful responses which utilised the coordinated resources of Park Wardens, Safer Neighbourhood Officers, Get Home Safe Officers and the PSNI to tackle drinking across the city.

3. <u>Resource Implications</u>

Finance: The mobile CCTV was supplied under a contract sourced by the Community Safety Unit and jointly resourced department's Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial behaviour programme budget.

4. <u>Equality Implications</u>

Much of the ASB programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions or responding to community concerns. All of the programme work is in line with the Council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

(The Chairman, Councillor McKee, in the Chair.)

<u>Environmental Based Youth Development Camps</u>

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

A trial Youth Development Project was held last year in West Belfast which was based on an environmental theme for young people. The aim was to provide youths with an opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge in an outdoor environment. The project included organised visits to various Council Parks properties, River Lagan, Bog Meadows and the Colin Glen Forest. Parks staff, along with various community partners delivered 2 separate weeks of summer camps. Each camp lasted for five days and each day had a different environmental or geographical learning theme relating, for example, to the environmental aspects of the Lagan Valley Regional Park. The project was very favourably received by both parents and young people who stated it was a very enjoyable and challenging week.

2. Key Issues

Following the success of the trial project, it is proposed to provide 4 summer camps for children and young people in North, South, East and West of the City during the period July and August 2014.

The camps will last for five days and will be aimed at various age groups with a maximum of 15 per camp. Each camp will have the following objectives;

- **to develop skills and knowledge of the local environment**
- **to develop personal development skills and complete different adventurous activities**
- **to build new relationships, both within a team environment and across the City.**

Each camp will have different aspects and projects based both on local opportunities and options to visit and experience other parts of the City and develop and learn new skills. A typical day of activity may include the following;

A walk through a forest or up a glen or mountain and an opportunity to learn new skills such as compass reading, basic navigation, lunch on a mountainside, learning about the local fauna and the natural local history.

Parks Officers are keen to promote the Parks and open spaces across the whole of the city and to make our parks a focal point for leisure, education, adventure, physical and mental well-being along with youth engagement activities.

It is intended this type of youth development camp will;

- **Increase participation in leisure activities and assist in reducing childhood obesity.**
- **Reduce the potential of anti social/community behaviour by engaging and educating the youths of Belfast on the positives that our parks and open spaces have to offer.**
- **Increase the awareness of our youth on the importance of enhancing biodiversity in our city and surrounding area.**
- **Encourage young people to become 'Young leaders' by developing leadership skills, decision making skills, team working skills and hazard awareness/avoidance skills.**

The camps would be subject to the preparation of an in depth event management plan including health & safety, child protection and relevant risk assessments.

If this project is supported by Committee, staff will engage with local schools and youth groups to devise a registration/selection process. It is anticipated that age groups may vary from 10 – 17 years old, dependent on the local area needs.

3. <u>Resource Implications</u>

<u>Financial</u>

Each camp will have different requirements based on local need and availability and it is estimated each camp will cost £9,000. This cost will include the hire of buses, facilities at various sites including Belfast Activity Centre, purchase of camp uniform (clothing) food costs and the hire of specialist environmental consultant/contractor to facilitate the events.

<u>Human Resources</u>

Community Parks Outreach Managers will be required to be involved in the camps and at times Park staff may be needed to assist with delivery of projects at parks sites.

4. <u>Equality Implications</u>

There are no equality implications as the project is aimed at providing a positive environment for all children to enjoy and learn about their natural surroundings.

5. Recommendations

To Grant approval to proceed and organise 4 summer camps during period July and August 2014 in East, North, west and south Belfast.

Discussion ensued in respect of the costs which would be incurred in the hosting of the summer camps and concern was expressed that they seemed to be somewhat excessive. Members expressed concern also that the anticipated age-range for participants was too wide-ranging and requested clarification in respect of the criteria which would be utilised in choosing the young persons who would participate in the camps.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed in principle to grant approval for officers to proceed with the organisation of the summer camps, subject to the Department undertaking a re-evaluation of the costs associated with delivering the initiative and clarification being provided on the issues which had been raised by Members.

Alexandra Park – Future Management Arrangements

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Background Information

Under the Peace III Programme, Groundwork NI was awarded funding to deliver the Reconciling Communities through Regeneration programme. In consultation with the Council and the local community, Alexandra Park was chosen as a specific project with a budget allocation of £50,000 towards physical regeneration work. Parks and Leisure Committee formally endorsed the project in June 2009.

The formal arrangement for Groundwork NI to facilitate meetings of the Alexandra Park steering group ended in March 2013. Since then, the group has continued to meet on an interim basis with meetings chaired by Ciaran Shannon from Groundwork NI (in his role as Chair of the Duncairn Community Partnership).

Subsequent to the end of the funding period, Committee agreed in August 2013 to undertake a review of the management arrangements. The terms of reference for the independent review are agreed as:

1. **To independently review with relevant stakeholders the successes and areas of improvement for the Alexandra Park regeneration process**

2. **To scope a management structure, business planning and management approach, which balances community ownership and public accountability, based on good practice elsewhere**
3. **To make recommendations going forward for consideration by Parks and Leisure Committee.**

Julie Harrison was appointed as an independent consultant to undertake the review.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

In reviewing the contextual materials and a series of one to one conversations, the consultant observed the following:

- **All stakeholders were supportive of the substantial work that has been delivered to date by the steering group in partnership with the Council to re-vitalise and regenerate Alexandra Park;**
- **Steering group members indicated that Groundwork NI has provided a valuable role in chairing meetings to date and securing the initial grant-aid from SEUPB;**
- **All participants were open and positive in their engagement with the review process, recognising that this was a useful point to review progress and plan for the next phase of development.**

In reviewing progress, it was noted that:

a. **While there was good involvement from local people on the steering group in its initial stages, attendance is now more from paid community workers and statutory agencies;**
b. **There was a genuine effort in 2010 to connect with local people on proposals for the park. The response rate to the survey is in keeping with what would be expected of a neighbourhood survey of this type, but attendance at the consultation events appears to have been limited;**
c. **Some participants expressed concern over the traditional 'Friends of' model as too prescriptive and needed adaption for the local context, especially to address the particular good relations issues in the locality;**
d. **Related to this, there was a need for an intensive outreach resource to sustain the relationships around the regeneration process and to be able to respond to any good relations/community safety issues quickly;**

e. **While elected representatives were invited to the steering group, there was less structure/regularity in the formal reporting mechanism back to the Council's Parks and Leisure Committee. This meant that progress on the development plan did not have the visibility it deserved or needed and there is a need for greater clarity in relation to decision-making processes between the Council (as owner of the park) and local engagement mechanisms;**
f. **On an informal basis, North Belfast Memorial Orange Hall raised issues in relation to the quality and safety of fencing between the Hall and the park which could be improved;**

In conclusion, the consultant highlighted that every participant demonstrated commitment from all parties to the ongoing regeneration of Alexandra Park and to adjacent communities. The issues highlighted above demonstrate the importance of a clear strategy for the park and a mechanism for ensuring a balance between local voice, community ownership and the Council's strategic role as a provider of community and leisure services across Belfast.

On the basis of the review, the consultant made the following recommendations, for the consideration of Committee:

1. **<u>Consultation and community engagement</u>**
   Council may wish to consider the frequency of consultation that is appropriate for its parks and public spaces, what standards are set for community engagement work by external partners such as Groundwork NI and how this might fit with current and proposed governance arrangements.
2. **<u>Reconnecting with local residents</u>**
   The steering group and elected representatives should be encouraged to reach out to local residents who no longer attend and encourage their involvement again to ensure that local experience and aspiration is fed in to planning and management of the park.
3. **<u>Improving connections with neighbouring properties</u>**
   Given practical considerations such as the nature and upkeep of fencing for properties adjacent to the park, consideration should be given to extending steering group invitations to the North Belfast Memorial Orange Hall and Elim Church.
4. **<u>Involvement of elected representatives</u>**
   In relation to concerns over information flow in relation to the opening of the pedestrian gate adjacent to Dunmore Avenue, it is recommended that elected representatives are

invited to quarterly meetings of the steering group and that minutes of meetings are circulated by email.

5. **<u>Structure of steering group</u>**
   It is recommended that Council consider working with the current Alexandra Park steering group and local residents to review the existing terms of reference and formalise a locally-appropriate 'Friends of' group. This would help to clarify relationships and could attract local people back into discussion in relation to the park. It could also facilitate external funding opportunities and begin to create greater consistency across the city.
6. **<u>Chairperson</u>**
   It is recommended that consideration is given to rotating the Chair between members, perhaps on a quarterly basis, so that capacity and ownership of the process is enhanced. This may require investment by Council for administrative support to ensure that meetings are scheduled and minutes circulated accordingly. Such a change may best be facilitated as part of discussion on the potential establishment of a 'Friends of' group for the park.
7. **<u>Looking to the future</u>**
   It is recommended that following the establishment of a 'Friends of' structure potential funding streams for capital works in the park are identified. Future funding could be a catalyst for a refreshed structure and engagement process around the park. When thinking about the future of the park a review of relevant policies including specific initiatives by DSD and OFMFDM may offer opportunities for Alexandra Park and surrounding communities.
8. **<u>Connecting to the formal decision-making process of Council</u>**
   As part of the structural review to create a version of a 'Friends of' group, it is important that this is within the public accountability frameworks of Council, as the asset-owner. There needs to be greater regularity in formal engagement with the Council in the planning and implementation process for the park.

<u>Benefits to Council</u>
There are a number of key benefits to the Council in continuing to work collaboratively with local stakeholders in this way:

- **Encourages local civic stewardship in Alexandra Park, to protect the Council's asset and local biodiversity**
- **Links the Council's programme of work to established existing networks e.g. with schools**
- **Potentially draws down additional external funding for capital and revenue proposals**

- **Fulfils Green Flag standard principles for 'good' community engagement**
- **Connects to wider government good relations and regeneration priorities**
- **Contributes to wider strategic outcomes related to promoting good relations, healthy living, protection of the environment and vibrant, safe neighbourhoods.**

It is expected that a representative working group would present a refreshed steering group structure and a development and consultation plan to Committee by October 2015.

3. Resource Implications

Financial
Community engagement expenditure within revenue budgets.

Asset and Other Implications
As asset owner, any further asset-related developments will be presented to Committee for its consideration, prior to implementation.

4. Equality Implications
There are no equality and good relations implications at this stage. Screening of any emerging development proposal and annual plan will be undertaken in the future which is likely to include positive good relations impacts.

5. Recommendations

- **Consider the recommendations outlined above, provide any feedback and endorse the final recommendations;**
- **Based on the recommendations, authorise officers to convene a representative working group to review the existing terms of reference, develop a locally-appropriate structure and initiate planning for the next year, for consideration by Committee in autumn 2014."**

After discussion, during which a number of Members welcomed the steps which had been taken to enhance the levels of community engagement in the future management of the park, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Willowbank Park and Clarendon Playing Fields - MUGA Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. **Relevant Background Information**
Committee is asked to note that Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 24 January 2014 agreed a MUGA programme.

2. **Key Issues**
Phase 1 of the MUGA Programme is broken down into two strands – refurbishments and new builds. The sites and investment have been agreed are as follows

MUGA PROGRAMME – PHASE 1		
Phase 1A – Refurbishments - £275,000		
1	Clara Street	Completion by end of March 2014
2	Victoria Park	Completion by mid April 2014
3	Finlay Park	Completion by mid February 2014
4	New Lodge	Completion mid March 2014
5	Willowbank	Completion mid March 2014
6	*Dover Street*	Complete December 2013
Phase 1B – New Builds – approx £815,000		
7	Springfield Av Site A	New build. Preparatory work to commence now. Due for completion March 15* *(Costs to be confirmed)*
8	Annadale	New build. Preparatory work to commence now. Due for completion March 15*
9	Clarendon Playing Fields	New build. Preparatory work to commence now. Due for completion March 15*

***Dependent on planning permission etc.**

MUGA Refurbishment
Members will be aware that there is already a very successful rolling programme of improvements in place for the Council's playgrounds which is based on robust independent condition surveys. A similar process will be put in place to assess the remaining existing MUGAs and the results of this assessment will form the basis of a rolling programme of refurbishments for the Council's MUGAs going forward.

Members will also be aware that a number of MUGAs are transferring in under the Local Government Reform (both from

DSD and from Lisburn/Castlereagh) and these will be included in the inspection programme.

New Builds
It has been agreed that officers progress the development of a policy framework in relation to the provision of new MUGAs. This will be carried out in parallel to the work being progressed on the condition surveys and will be brought back to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at the same stage to allow Members to consider an overall Programme.

Work is also ongoing on re-base lining the Pitches Strategy and looking at Facilities Management Agreements. The work on development of a rolling MUGA programme will be looked at in the context of these.

3. Resource Implications

Financial
Phase 1A will be financed through non-recurrent underspend and the new builds will be progressed under the Capital Programme.

Human Resources
Staff from Parks & Leisure and Property & Projects will deliver the MUGA programme.

Asset and Other Implications
The MUGA Programme will enhance facilities for local people

4. Equality and good relations implications
There are no equality implications.

5. Recommendation
Committee is asked note the report."

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and noted further that an update report in this regard would be submitted in due course.

Knocknagoney Linear Park

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

The Knocknagoney Area Forum (KAF) was formed as a result of the *Living on the Edge* report, undertaken in January 2011 by the Council and East Belfast Community Development Agency. This report highlighted Knocknagoney as an area

with high levels of social deprivation, unemployment, low levels of self-esteem and academic achievements.

KAF represents an initiative developed in response to the needs highlighted in the above report, drawing on several stakeholder organisations and groups with a view to positively challenging these statistics. Their committed and collective work has had a significant impact on this local community.

The groups involved include Knocknagoney Primary School; Knocknagoney Community Centre; Knocknagoney, Orchardville and Garnerville - a community group for the area; Glenluce Group - set up for care of the elderly (dissolved in July 2013); Residents; Church of Ireland; Aslan Centre - Church of Ireland Youth Club; Presbyterian Church; Tesco; Parks Management Team; Police Service of Northern Ireland; and Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

KAF has four key areas of focus:

- **Community cohesion**
- **Environment**
- **Health and well-being**
- **Education and youth**

Following a Green Flag quality standards inspection in 2011 Knocknagoney Linear Park was reported as being the lowest scoring park in East Belfast and in need of significant improvement.

Members may be aware that the Council has made investment in Knocknagoney Linear Park over the last two years in preparation for Greenflag:

1. **Park lighting**
2. **Ongoing woodland thinning**
3. **Woodland outdoor classroom**
4. **Forest School Project**
5. **Removal of trees and shrubs in the bullring area**
6. **Removal of fly tipping**
7. **Community garden**
8. **Kickabout area**
9. **Children's cycle and skills development area**
10. **12 week summer activity programme**
11. **Tree planting**
12. **Arts projects to reimage the viewing towers**
13. **Ongoing community engagement**

Community involvement and ownership within Knocknagoney Linear Park has been significant since the community garden

opened in May 2013. Council officers have observed large numbers of young people who may have otherwise been involved in ASB engaging positively and respectfully in the community garden and newly refurbished kickabout area.

Council officers have been working closely with KAF to develop Knocknagoney Linear Park in line with the aspirations of the local community. The parks management team have been in discussions regarding possible solutions and concepts for the disused bullring area.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

Through discussions with park management it is envisaged that this natural amphitheatre could be transformed into a Land Base Activity Zone (LBAZ). This LBAZ would have the potential of providing challenging, enjoyable and educational recreational zones where young children, teenagers and adults can discover a variety of different activities in a cross generational environment.

The options below may be considered when developing a concept plan for the bull ring area;

- **Anti vandal material will be used to ensure a longer life span for equipment and activity areas**
- **Council officers would work with KAF in order to create changeable audio, visual platforms and interpretation panels**
- **The development of a centre stage in this natural amphitheatre to encourage performances and shows.**
- **Capacity building and skills development with the community working alongside a variety of training/ employment agencies.**

If Committee are in support of the concept, KAF and Parks management will work to develop the scheme and together with the departments Funding and Monitoring officer identify potential funding streams.

3. <u>Resource Implications</u>

<u>Financial</u>
It is estimated that the funding required to develop a LBAZ could be in the region of £150,000. Council officers are keen to develop the LBAZ with the community and various agencies that have capacity to provide training or employment opportunities which could reduce overall costs.

Human Resources
There would be additional human resource implications attached to this report for inspection regime for this LBAZ. It is envisaged that the ROSPA team could inspect this area similar to playground inspections.

Asset and Other Implications
A LBAZ within KLP represents a use of disused space as well as delivering on key Council outcomes such as helping people become healthier, active, and more involved in their local communities and neighbourhoods. Once installed, the LBAZ will form part of the departmental asset portfolio and the department will assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the area.

4. Equality Implications
This LBAZ would have positive implications in terms of the promotion of equality and good relations and will be undertaken in an inclusive manner.

5. Recommendation
It is recommended that authority is granted for officers to investigate further the feasibility of this LBAZ working in partnership with Knocknagoney Area Forum; and officers and Knocknagoney Area Forum to identify potential funding streams.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Container at the Waterworks Park

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th March, 2013, it had granted permission for the erection of a container for use by a local fishing club within the Waterworks Park, the costs for which had been met by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure.

The Director pointed out that the fishing club had been permitted to use the Upper Pond of the park as part of a facilities management agreement with the Council. He indicated that, in order to permit the fishermen to use the container, it would necessitate a variation to that agreement to afford them key holding responsibilities for the container.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

Marrowbone Millennium Park – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

The Committee is reminded that the Council secured funding from Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and Department for Social Development (Belfast Regeneration Office) to support the delivery of a 3rd generation artificial turf pitch at Marrowbone Millennium Park. Members will be aware that the Council has also contributed towards the project. The project is now complete and management arrangements are now in place.

As recipient of the funding the asset will remain under Council ownership and will be managed by Council staff. However, Members are asked to note that within the terms and conditions of the funding from Sport NI, the Council is required to work with representatives from the Community, in this case the Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum, and to review the management model after 18 months to determine whether a more community based delivery model could be developed and an appropriate legal agreement entered into. At this time it is not clear what this arrangement would be, whether it would be in the form of a lease or some other management arrangement, the actual mechanism will be determined through the review and will require further discussion with Sport NI and the Forum.

There are several elements to the management of a facility such as Marrowbone. These include:

1. **Routine and operational maintenance of the surface and ancillary structures such as the fencing and floodlighting;**
2. **The opening and closing of the facility**
3. **The management of bookings including taking of payments; and**
4. **The development of a sports development programme to maximise the use and of the asset and its benefits in terms of participation levels**

2. Key Issues

The key issues for the Committee to note is that the Council is required as part of the terms and conditions of funding from SportNI to review the management arrangements in relation to Marrowbone 3G artificial turf pitch and to work with the

Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum to help support the Forum to build their capacity in relation to the potential management of the asset in the future. To meet the requirement Officers will form a small group to support the Forum over the next 18 months.

The Department will take the lead in the management of the asset at this time. The purpose of this report is to outline to the Committee the approach to be taken over the next 18 months in advance of a review of the management model in relation to this facility.

Preliminary discussions have been held with representatives from the Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum including local sports clubs from the area. It is proposed that a capacity building group comprising Council Officers; representatives from the Forum; and a representative from Sport NI will form the core of the group moving towards a review in 18 months. Local elected representatives will be invited to attend meetings. The purpose of this group will be to build the necessary capacity to enable community management of the asset.

At this time it is anticipated that primary focus of this work will be to deliver a sports development plan as required by Sport NI within the terms and conditions of the funding agreement. Active Communities Coaches will engage with local sports clubs; youth clubs; schools and other organisations particularly those involved with underrepresented groups to promote the facility, encourage its use and develop the capacity within the community to deliver and sustain a wide ranging programme of activities around this new asset. The Youth providers Forum will have a key role to play in this process.

Members are assured that the future transfer of any responsibilities associated with this particular asset must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and will require an appropriate legal and monitoring framework to be in place.

3. <u>Resource Implications</u>
While there are no additional human resource implications Members are asked to note that this will require ongoing Officer involvement from Parks and Leisure as well as officers from other Departments.

<u>Asset and Other Implications</u>
The approach outlined will promote greater responsibility for the asset within the Community and will help develop the

capacity and confidence of the local community. It will also support higher levels of use of the asset from a range of groups.

4. <u>Equality Implications</u>
There are no equality implications.

5. <u>Recommendations</u>
The Committee is asked to note the report."

Arising from discussion, the Director agreed to clarify for a Member the Council's current position regarding the charging for the use of public toilets on parks managed properties.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

<u>Review of Grave Digging Posts</u>

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. <u>Background Information</u>

Currently within the Parks and Cemeteries Services Section there are 9 x Gravedigger posts (Scale 3) and 15 x Cemetery Operative posts (Scale 4). At the February 2014 meeting members were made aware of the resourcing issues within the section and advised that a review of the post of Gravedigger was being conducted. The Cemetery Operative posts were introduced in 2008 following committee approval.

It has been identified by management that the posts within the cemeteries, and in particular Roselawn, are not providing sufficient operational flexibility to meet today's demands, service standards and health & safety requirements. At Roselawn there is a growing requirement that staff must be flexible in order to deal with the increasing number of burials on this expanding site, associated increases in ground maintenance requirements, the introduction of memorial safety and the provision of operational back-up cover at the Crematorium. It is within the job description of the Cemetery Operative to provide this required level of operational flexibility, but not all the required aspects are covered within the job descriptions of the current Gravedigger posts.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

In order to ensure that the staff's job descriptions are suitably flexible to provide the full range of operational requirements within the cemeteries, it is recommended that the current post

of Gravedigger is replaced by that of Cemetery Operative. The requirement to dig graves will remain the primary focus of the post holders however the move to Cemetery Operative provides much needed flexibility and the ability to vary resource allocation as demand requires.

The review has also considered equipment needs and it is proposed that a contract hiring 2 mechanical diggers at Roselawn which is coming to an end is not retendered and that replacement equipment is acquired and operated by Cemetery Operatives. Mechanical digging is carried out by Council staff at Dundonald and City Cemetery and this brings the practices at Roselawn into line with this. It is recommended that staff undergo refresher training for mechanical digging.

3. <u>Resource Implications - Financial</u>

The current contract for 2 diggers is £80,000 per annum. The cost of acquiring new equipment is approximately £80,590 in year 1 and £14,720 in subsequent years giving a total running cost of £139,470 excluding fuel over 5 years. These costs consist of x 2 mechanical excavators and x 2 tractors for transportation throughout the site as is currently practised in the City cemetery and Dundonald cemetery. This would also equip the site better to deal with adverse weather conditions as experienced in 2013. The cost of 9 posts moving from Grave Digger (Scale 3) to Cemetery Operative (Scale 4) is £18,000 approximately. This cost can be offset by the savings from buying rather than hiring our own equipment by year two. Therefore savings over 5 years amounts to approximately £171,000.

<u>Human Resources</u>

The proposed changes provide much needed flexibility in the section. Staff and Trade Unions have been engaged throughout the review and all are in agreement with the recommendations.

4. <u>Equality and good relations implications</u>

There are no equality implications.

5. <u>Recommendations</u>

The Committee is asked to agree to the recommendation to replace the post of Gravedigger with that of Cemetery Operative and to the acquisition of two mechanical diggers to be operated by staff."

After discussion, during which the Director undertook to provide further information in respect of the costs incurred annually by the Department through hire agreements, together with an outline of the potential savings which might be realised through outright purchase of plant or equipment, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Belfast Zoo – Bat Flight and Release Enclosure

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.1 The Zoo has worked closely with the Northern Ireland Bat Group for many years. The Northern Ireland Bat Group, with whom the Zoo has long standing relationships, has successfully applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to construct a bat rehabilitation and release enclosure in the zoo. The Zoo site lends itself well to such an enclosure, and is envisaged that the enclosure will be a valuable addition to the Zoo's suite of native species facilities, and provide for excellent visitor information and education opportunities.

1.2 Following consultation with the HLF, once the build is complete, the NI Bat Group would like to transfer ownership of the enclosure to the City Council. The Committee is asked to consider allowing for the construction of the bat enclosure in the zoo, and that ownership, which includes liabilities such as maintenance, insurance, and reinstatement at the end of the useful life of the enclosure, to be transferred to the Council.

1.3 The NI Bat Group attend many of the zoo's native species events, including our native species weekends, and representatives from the group lead the 'bat evenings' that take place throughout the summer. The zoo provides access to facilities for the Bat Group's committee meetings and for the junior Bat Group evening events.

1.4 As well as their education and community roles, the Bat Group provides a rescue and rehabilitation role that rescues bats, both displaced adults and spring/summer born infants that require hand rearing, for eventual release.

1.5 The Bat Group has identified that permanent facilities for the flight training and rehabilitation of these rescued bats is needed, usually during the late spring and summer period, and reasoned that such a facility should be on a safe site, ideally where bats are already known to live, where access is good for servicing the facilities and managing the bats, and perhaps where the enclosure might be somewhat discrete but where significant numbers of visitors might be able to learn

more about bats in Northern Ireland and the work of the Bat Group.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

2.1 In discussion with the NI Bat Group, it became clear that the Zoo was uniquely positioned to provide a site for such a facility.

2.2 The enclosure will be designed for the short term holding of native species of bats, and will allow sufficient space for the rescued bats to recuperate and undergo rehabilitation prior to release. It is currently planned that the enclosure will be of weld mesh construction, approximately 8 x 4 x 3m high. It is also confirmed that planning permission is not required in this instance, as the potential build falls within permitted development.

2.3 Subsequently, the NI Bat group made a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for grant funding of a bat rehabilitation and flight enclosure.

2.4 Further, a suitable site has been identified for the enclosure within the zoo. Situated near the Lion's Den Restaurant, and near enclosures for other native species kept in the zoo, i.e. red squirrels and barn owls, there is space for the enclosure to be positioned a little distance from the main visitor path, but with the production of high quality signage, significant numbers of zoo visitors could learn and understand more about the Bat Group's and the Zoo's work with native species.

2.4 It is proposed that access to the enclosure for NI Bat Group members for caring for any bats kept in the enclosure will be made available during normal working hours, and access to the zoo site itself will be provided and managed via normal established procedures. The NI Bat Group will undertake all day-to-day care of the bats whilst the enclosure is in use.

2.5 The NI Bat Group have discussed ownership options of the enclosure itself with HLF, and consider that once the build is complete, ownership of the enclosure should be transferred to the Council. The specification of the proposed bat enclosure will be subject to approval by the Council.

2.6 It is envisaged that a form of licence will be drawn up with the NI Bat Group that will allow for the construction together with appropriate legal agreement for the subsequent transfer of ownership to the Council, and the Council will then enter a management arrangement with the NI Bat Group.

2.7 There are good indications that such a facility will be extremely useful to the valuable rescue and rehabilitation work of the NI Bat Group, and provide visitors with another example of the Zoo working closely with local wildlife and wildlife groups.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications during the build phase, as this will be covered by the grant. If ownership of the enclosure is transferred to the City Council, there will need to be some allowance for annual maintenance, though there will be few other costs as we will not pay rates on the enclosure, and there are no utilities (electric, water, gas) in the enclosure.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to note the above report and it is recommended that;

- **Permission is granted to proceed**
- **Appropriate legal agreement is drawn up with the Northern Ireland Bat Group**
- **Ownership will transfer to the Council once the build is complete"**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and, in accordance with Standing Order 60, noted that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would be requested to grant formal approval for the acquisition of the enclosure on its completion.

Feile an Phobail

The Committee was informed that a request had been received from the organisers of the annual Feile an Phobail seeking permission to the use of the Falls Park and the City Cemetery for a range of events which would form part of the West Belfast Festival in 2014. The Director reported that the Festival would take place from 1st till 10th August, however, the actual dates for the events indicated had yet to be finalised:

- Carnival Parade – the Falls Park;
- Teddy Bears' Picnic – the Falls Park;
- Feile Family Entertainment Day – the Falls Park; and
- Guided Historical Tours of the City Cemetery - for which a charge would be levied to participants by the tour operator.

The Director reported also that occasional licences would be sought by the organisers for the sale of alcohol, together with an entertainments licence for the period

of the Festival. In addition, it was anticipated that further requests would be received to host additional events in other departmental facilities, such as the Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

Accordingly, the Director recommended that the Committee grant approval for the use and hire of the Council facilities for the events, as set out, and agree also to delegate authority to him to consider and approve, if appropriate, any further requests received in relation to Feile an Phobail 2014, subject to the undernoted conditions:

- that the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the satisfaction of the Council;
- that an appropriate legal agreement be prepared by the Town Solicitor; and
- that the event organisers meet with all the statutory requirements.

The Committee granted the approval sought and granted also delegated authority to the Director as outlined.

Leisure Centre Activity Price – Active Travel

The Committee agreed to reduce the price of the use of shower and changing facilities within leisure centres to £1 per person, or 50 pence concession rate. It was noted that such a reduction would be for a trial period ending on 31st October, 2014, and would seek to increase the use of the facilities by casual joggers and cyclists across the City as part of the Active Travel initiative.

Tennents Vital

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Background Information

1.1 The Department has received a request from MCD Productions to use the playing fields at Boucher Road for a minimum of two and maximum of three shows between 21 and 25 Aug 2014. MCD are the promoters behind a number of UK and Ireland top music festivals and held a similar event in the playing fields in August 2012 and 2013.

Although the acts for the concerts have not yet been confirmed it is proposed that they will be top international acts. It is estimated that each concert will have a capacity of 45,000 plus staff.

2. Key Issues

The Council wishes to promote the city and the use of its parks and open spaces and in line with the council's events policy will permit the use of these

facilities for large events and concerts. A review of the event in August 2013 has been carried out to assess delivery and to identify areas for improvement. The review was attended by Council officers, the promoter and all agencies involved in the delivery of the event.

The noise issues which arose in 2012 were significantly reduced in 2013 due to improvements in noise management and stage set up. Given the scale and nature of the events proposed it cannot be guaranteed that noise disturbance will be completely eliminated and in this regard it is important that all concerts finish by 11.00pm.

The promoter will require 12 days before the first concert for set up and 5 days after the final concert to take down and tidy up. The promoter is proposing to protect grass surfaces with industry standard covering as used at Croke Park and Aviva Stadia. The promoter will be required to carry out proper reinstatement of the grounds therefore a bond of reinstatement will be paid by the promoter prior to the event.

It is estimated that each concert will have a capacity of 45,000 plus staff, traffic management and flow of people to and from the concert will be a key aspect of planning the event. Discussions between the promoters, MCD Productions and council officers has highlighted the potential need to use the car park at Olympia Leisure Centre as a taxi pick up point after the concert and to use the grounds around Strangford Playing Fields as a contingency for overflow parking.

The promoter will be required to liaise with the Community Parks Manager, the Events team, Building Control, Environmental Health, PSNI, Roads Service and emergency services to produce an Event management plan for council's approval.

A fee of £20,000 per concert has been offered by the promoter to be paid in advance. Officers have assessed the offer and consider it to be value for money based on market rates and the indirect income this will generate for the city in terms of hotels bookings, taxi hire and restaurant use. The event will disrupt bookings of pitches however it is anticipated that these bookings can be accommodated at other sites.

3. Resource Implications

Finance

- **a fee for the use of the site - £20,000 is proposed per concert;**
- **a bond of intent to be paid to the council which would be retained in the event of a concert being cancelled; and**
- **full ground reinstatement cost to be met by the promoter, subject to a bond.**

Human Resources
It is envisaged that any additional staff costs will be met by the fee charged. This is an important event that will add to the profile of the city. Measures will be taken by the organiser to protect the grounds and any damage to grounds will be reinstated within specified timescales.

4. Recommendations

To grant authority to MCD to hold up to 3 concerts at Boucher Road Playing Fields between 21 and 25 Aug 2014, subject to satisfactory terms in line with the above being agreed with the Director and on condition that:

- **the event organisers resolve all operational issues to the council's satisfaction;**
- **an appropriate legal agreement is completed, to be prepared by the Town Solicitor; and**
- **the organisers meeting all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing."**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that the Director would review the use of Council staff at the event and in particular liaise with the Health and Environmental Services Department to establish if any Community Safety staff had been deployed to last year's event.

Irish Football Association – Junior Coaching Sessions

The Director reported that the Irish Football Association had requested permission to host a number of junior football coaching sessions at the Cherryvale Playing Fields between Monday, 18th and Friday, 22nd August. He outlined the arrangements which would be put in place to facilitate the sessions, which would be subject to the submission of a satisfactory event management plan which would address all issues to the Council's satisfaction. The Director pointed out that, given that the sessions would take place on the training area of the playing fields and not on the actual playing pitches, no charge would be levied on the Association. However, he requested that the Committee note that a charge would be levied by the organisers on the participants.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval for the hosting of the coaching sessions as outlined and noted that a charge would be levied by the organisers on the participants.

Cremation and Burial Conference

The Director informed the Members that the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management would be hosting the above-mentioned event in Stratford-upon-Avon from 7th till 9th July. The Committee was provided with an overview of the relevance of the conference programme, together with a summary of the range of exhibitors who would be in attendance. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee authorise the attendance at the event of the incoming Chairman and the incoming Deputy Chairman, together with the Director (or their nominees). The total costs associated with attendance at the event would be approximately £675 per delegate.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Rose Trials – Glasgow

The Director reported that the Glasgow International Rose Trials would be held on 21st and 22nd August. He pointed out that the event was considered to be one of the most prestigious in the international rose trial circuit. The Council had been invited to participate by Glasgow City Council in trial judging and participation at the event would enable joint learning and discussion of future developments. He reported that costs associated with attendance at the event would be £325 per person and he recommended that the Committee authorise the attendance of the incoming Chairman, the incoming Deputy Chairman and the Director (or their nominees).

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Love/Hate – Request to film at Belfast Zoo

The Assistant Director reported that the Department had been approached by DNS Five Film Productions Limited seeking permission to film scenes from the RTE Television drama 'Love/Hate'. She outlined the popularity of the show and provided the Members of an overview of the content and details of the scenes which would be filmed at the Zoo.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

Request for the Use of Wedderburn Park

The Director reported that a request for the free use of the soccer pitch at Wedderburn Park Playing Fields had been received on behalf of the Taughmonagh Youth Football Club. He indicated that the club would host, between 14th and 18th April, a series of coaching sessions for approximately 70 local children which would be delivered by coaches representing the Glasgow Rangers Football Club. He pointed out that the loss of income to the Council, should the Committee accede to the request, would be in the region of £248.

The Committee agreed to grant the free use of the pitch to the football club for the purposes outlined.

Chairman