

Appendix 3

From:

Sent: Tuesday, April 9, 2024 12:16 PM

To: Christina Black <BlackChristina@BelfastCity.gov.uk>; Jim Hanna (Chief Exec) <HannaJim@BelfastCity.gov.uk>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Finaghy festival

Dear Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources committee My name is [REDACTED] vice-chair of Finaghy Residents Group, who are one of the groups who organise, and volunteer at, the Finaghy Festival. I am writing to you as I have been deeply saddened to hear of the objections to the Finaghy Festival being held at Wedderburn Park. To my knowledge the past two festivals have happened without any issues with people of all backgrounds in attendance. As the vice chair with a mixed race family, this has always been very important to me. I am deeply upset that people would think that I would take part in a racist or sectarian festival. We have previously held a multicultural day which included local residents from eight different nationalities and was a huge success and was attended by Cllr Sarah Bunting. Cllr Bunting supports most of our community activities, festivals and she was a big support when we ran the food bank during Covid. Cllr Lyons has never attended any of our events, nor did he lend support to our food bank. Cllr Lyon's mentioned the spray painting of a man's house in Finaghy while talking about the festival. I'm not sure if that was meant separately or in relation to the festival but our group would never condone such acts. We welcomed this man to the area and also supported him as he settled in with his children.

I would be really saddened if Cllr Lyons was trying to insinuate that we are in any way racist. I'm not sure what the term blood and thunder band means or why it was mentioned but the band parade on Finaghy Road South is not related to the festival as we try our utmost to keep it neutral.

I would appreciate if this information could be shared at the committee meeting as we as a group are extremely disappointed in the accusations which seem to be being levied against us. Kind regards [REDACTED]