



Subject:	Request for the use of Parks for 2024 Events
Date:	14 January 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet and OSS

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual.2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained.6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction.7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note that Council has received a number of requests to hold events across Belfast Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Mela – Botanic Gardens • Belfast Marathon Half & Full – Victoria Park, Ormeau Park & Waterworks Park • St Patricks Day Festival – Cathedral Gardens • Wellfest – Boucher Road Playing fields • Bench to Beside Run – Ormeau Park • Circus Vegas – Boucher Road Playing Fields
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to grant authority to each of the applicants for the proposed events on the dates noted and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following:</p>
2.2	<p>Where appropriate negotiate a fee which recognises the costs to Council, minimises negative impact on the immediate area and takes account of the potential wider benefit to the city economy, in conjunction with the Councils Commercial Manager;</p>
2.3	<p>Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' & take down' periods, and booking amendments, ensuring the organisers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. resolve all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; II. meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and III. shall consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.
2.4	<p>The fee for the use of Boucher Road playing is detailed in the departmental pricing schedule and is subject to change as part of the annual pricing review.</p>
2.5	<p>Please note that the above recommendations are taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which is currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>If agreed, the event organiser or promoters will be required in advance of the event to submit an event management plan for approval by the Council and all relevant statutory bodies. This will include an assessment of how the event will impact upon the surrounding area and measures to mitigate these impacts.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Belfast Mela – Botanic Gardens</u></p> <p>Over the past number of years, the Council has established a successful partnership with</p>

ArtsEkta, the organisers of Belfast Mela. This type of event is well-received by audiences and significantly adds to the attractiveness of the Council's parks and open spaces. This year the Council has received a request from the Director of ArtsEkta to use Botanic Gardens for the Belfast Mela on Saturday 26th & Sunday 27th August 2023. The event requires the closure of all or substantial areas of the park at times to allow for the safe set up and de-rig. Advice from Corporate Health and Safety over the past few years has been to seek approval for temporary park closures during the build to be managed effectively between OSS and the event organisers. Where possible disruption to other park users will be kept to a minimum.

3.3 The keys dates required are as follows:

Site Build - Sunday 17th August 2025 to Saturday 23rd August 2025

Main Event - Sunday 24th August

De-Rig - Monday 25th August - Wednesday 27th August 2025

3.4 In addition, since 2013 the Mela has been engaged with a highly successful strategic partnership with Belfast City Council in relation to enhancing cultural provision in council's parks and open spaces. With this strategic partnership there has been an annual funding award of £20,000 offered in support of the event in terms of promoting one of the city's key outdoor spaces – Botanic Gardens as an accessible, welcoming and shared space. The organisers have requested this financial support again this year which will be considered at SP&R at a later date.

3.5 In order to make future planning of this event easier the organisers have also requested that the Council give consideration to a multiple year approval for the event to take place in 2026 & 2027 as well as next year. The indicative dates are:

Belfast Mela 2026 – 23rd August to 2nd September

Belfast Mela 2027 – 22nd August to 1st September

3.6 **Belfast Marathon Half & Full – Victoria Park, Ormeau Park & Waterworks Park**

Council has received a request from Belfast City Marathon to use both Ormeau Park and the Waterworks to deliver the full marathon event in May and the use of both Ormeau Park and Victoria Park to support the delivery of the half Marathon event in September. The Belfast Marathon was awarded World Label status in 2024 making it the only full marathon on the Island of Ireland to be awarded this. The event organisers have recruited 15,000 volunteers to help officiate the marathons and in 2024 the full marathon generated over £12 million for the city and the half marathon generated £8 Million with around 70,000 spectators attending the event annually.

3.7 The event has been shown live on BBC which allows the city to be showcased to a worldwide audience as it covers North, South, East & West showing the diversity of the city.

3.8 The full Marathon will take place on 04th May and will be celebrating its 43rd year of running in Belfast and will incorporate a 26.2 mile course that will cover all areas of the city. The route for this year's full Marathon will take participants through the Waterworks and once again the organisers have requested permission to have the finish line at Ormeau Park. In previous years this has included an entertainment zone in Ormeau Park to allow food trucks, sponsors and other activities to be placed on site for the participants and spectators to partake in the celebration with friends & family completing the marathon. The key dates for the full marathon are:

Set Up – Saturday 3 May 2025 – 9am

Main Event – Sunday 4 May 2025 – 9am to 6pm

De Rig – Monday 5 May 2025 – 6pm

3.9	<p>The Half Marathon will take place on 21st September 2025. The event organisers have requested permission for the race to begin in Ormeau Park with the route taking the race through Victoria Park and finishing again in Ormeau. Like the full marathon there will be an entertainment zone set up at the finish line in Ormeau Park. This will include sponsors stalls along with food traders. The key dates for the Half Marathon are:</p> <p>Set up – Saturday 20 September 2025 – 9am Main Event – Sunday 21 September 2025 – 9am to 6pm De Rig – Monday 22 September 2025 – 6pm</p>
3.10	<p><u>St Patricks Day Festival – Cathedral Gardens</u> Belfast TradFest is delivering the St Patrick’s Day weekend musical showcase programme on behalf of Belfast City Council from 14th – 17th March 2025. The main focus of activity will be the creation of a St Patrick’s Day village around the Cathedral Quarter between 2pm – 5pm on Sunday 17th March.</p>
3.11	<p>The festival village will include a live outdoor music stage, family fun activities and a food village in Cathedral Gardens, an open-air acoustic music and dance stage in Saint Anne’s Square and an ongoing afternoon Céilí in the Mac.</p>
3.12	<p>The key dates required are as follows:</p> <p>Set Up – Sunday 16th March 2025 – 9am Main Event – Monday 17th March 2025 – 2pm to 5pm De-Rig – Monday 17th March 2025 – 9pm</p>
3.13	<p><u>Wellfest – Boucher Road Playing fields</u> Council has received a request from Wellfest to bring their Wellness event to Boucher Road playing fields in 2025. Wellfest is an alcohol-free festival that is designed to inspire those who attend to better their own health & wellbeing. The event brings together leading names in health, fitness & wellness to deliver live workouts, educational talks and create memories that will inspire those who attend for the long term. The event is a two-day event will open at 9am and close at 6.30pm.</p>
3.14	<p>There will be a charge for those who are attending the event with the price of tickets being set at the following:</p> <p>Weekend early bird - £68 Saturday/Sunday early bird - £47 Weekend final release - £75 Saturday/Sunday final release - £58</p>
3.15	<p>Each ticket purchased includes free entry for up to two children under the age of 12 as it is designed to be a family friendly event. Once a ticket is purchased it will allow the attendee to have access to all work shops and classes with the only additional costs being for food and drinks.</p>
3.16	<p>The event will have five different designated areas within the event space.</p> <p>Main Stage – This stage is designed to allow the headliners for the event to deliver movement based classes to the attendees such as HITT workouts, high intensity cardio dancing, Yoga & accessible low impact mobility classes.</p> <p>WellTalk – This stage is designed to discuss topics such as the importance of gut & skin health alongside mental wellbeing and infestation. Those who will be presenting at this are fully qualified to discuss the topic they are leading.</p>

WellYoga – This area is mat based and sessions will be designed to bring the mind and body together through a series of movement and breathwork, allowing the attendees to have a feeling of balance and support.

WellKids – This is a warm space for those with children to relax and allow kids to take part in yoga and dance classes.

WellVillage – This is a market style trading zone for local business to showcase and trade their products.

3.17 The key dates are as follows:

Set Up -Tuesday 20TH May 2025, - Friday 23rd May

Main Event – Saturday 24th May & Sunday 25th May 2025 - 9.30am to 6pm

De-Rig – Monday 26th - Tuesday 27th May 2025

3.18 This is the first time this organiser has applied to Council to deliver an event at a Belfast Park location. The events team have received a portfolio of work from the organisers which includes the success of this event in Park Locations in Dublin. The portfolio of work can be found at Appendix 1.

3.19 **Bench to Beside Run – Ormeau Park**

Council has received a request from Leukaemia & Lymphoma NI to host a charity run at Ormeau Park on the 28 September 2025. The event is designed to raise money and awareness for the charity with researchers in the illness encouraged to wear lab coats and members of the public to wear Pyjamas to signify the bedside element of the event. The proposed route for the event will begin at the Cancer centre moving through Queens university and finishing by using the 5km park run route around Ormeau Park finishing at the bandstand.

3.20 The event organiser has requested permission to be allowed to collect charity donations in the park during the event and to place banners in the park highlighting the early symptoms of Leukaemia and Lymphoma to the public to help raise awareness. They have their own volunteers who will marshall the course to ensure that all participants follow the route. They also hope to have a small bed at the finish line for photo opportunities.

3.21 The group have highlighted that 100% of the proceeds will go to the charity and have provided us with their charity number.

The key dates are as follows:

Set Up – 10am Sunday 28th September 2025

Main Event – 11am to 1pm Sunday 28th September 2025

De- Rig – 2pm Sunday 28th September 2025

3.22 **Vegas Circus on Wheels – Boucher Playing Fields**

Council has received a request from Circus Vegas to host a circus big top experience at Boucher Road Playing Fields. This event visited Boucher Road for the first time back in 2023. The organisers produce a one-of-a-kind performance, featuring the most talented dare devil performers and extreme acts from across the globe, merging Las Vegas traditions and contemporary styles with extreme stunts and classic clown escapades, audiences will be amazed by the jam-packed production with show-stopping performances that will have you on the edge of your seat.

3.23 The organiser wishes to host the Circus at Boucher Road Playing Fields over the Easter period delivering two shows on each day for a total of 26 shows over 13 days. They expect to have around 500 attendees at each show.

3.24	<p>The key dates for the event are as follows:</p> <p>Set Up - Sunday 06th April – Wednesday 09th April Main Event - Thursday 10th April – Sunday 27th April De-rig - Monday 28th April - Tuesday 29th April</p>
3.25	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no known implications.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no known implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - WellFest portfolio of work</p>