



Subject:	<i>Request to provide temporary GAA pitch at Lower Botanic Gardens - Update Report</i>
Date:	<i>26th February 2018</i>
Reporting Officer:	<i>Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services Department</i>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to update members regarding the information event held to obtain resident views regarding a request from local Gaelic Clubs to provide temporary accommodation at lower Botanic Gardens adjacent to the Stranmillis Embankment.
2.0	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that Members note the report and agree to the request from Bredagh and St Malachies GAC subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A restriction on the level of use during any given week and an agreed programme of use with the 2 Gaelic Clubs;• The facilities is only available to those GAA Clubs displaced at Cherryvale;• A portable toilet is provided during the period of the temporary use – September 2018;
3.0	Main report
	<p>A copy of the previous report is attached as Appendix A for convenience.</p> <p>The People and Communities Committee received a report on the request from the GAA at its meeting on November 2017 and agreed to the request subject to consultation with residents. An information session was held on 9th January at St Bartholomew's, Stranmillis Road, to provide residents with an opportunity to hear about the proposal; to ask questions, receive clarification and complete a short survey conveying their views. A note of the comments during discussions was also kept to aid the writing of this report.</p>

11 survey forms were completed. Four respondents were in favour; 4 were against it and 3 didn't mind. So it was quite a balanced view.

Nine of the respondents described themselves as users of the open space. The main uses were jogging, casual use of open space, including play; and walking the dog.

The main issues raised were:

1. The loss of the space for local residents and other users owing to the formal use for sports;
2. Increased noise from players and those watching;
3. Increased litter;
4. Potential for anti-social behaviour, the absence of a public toilet was perceived to be a problem;
5. Increased on street car parking in an already busy area;
6. Concern that temporary will become permanent;
7. Concern that other temporary uses may follow;
8. Damage to property from straying balls, particularly if hurling played;
9. Lack of changing and toilet facilities
10. Individuals playing ball games are already being redirected to the space from the great lawn – loss of facility.
11. Damage to the grounds after use, particularly if continuously used for matches
12. Lack of waste bins
13. Water level and drainage if site already an issue, will take longer to repair damage caused through continuous use.

It was clear from the open nature of the forum and the comments made that local residents value the space and have concerns that they will be excluded from the space, albeit some more than others.

In relation to the concerns, depending on the anticipated level of use by the Clubs, there will be times when the facility will not be available for use by local residents; it is also likely that there will be noise generated from the increased activity.

Council can however help mitigate some of the concerns, for example,

- Council staff will, as is in the case in other facilities, of a litter lift the morning

	<p>after use;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A portable toilet could be provided, albeit at a cost of £80.00 per month. • An assurance from the council that the temporary use will end at the end of September 2018; • Restriction on the use of the open space for Gaelic football only; and • Restrict the times when the facility could be used – this could be achieved through discussions with the Clubs and based on a maximum use of 15 hours per week. <p>Contact was made with Queens University Estates Department to make them aware of the proposal and to seek comment. To date no response has been received.</p>
	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p> <p>Appendix 1 – copy of previous report</p>