

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 12th January, 2012

MEETING OF PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairman); and
Councillors Kelly, Humphrey, Rodgers, Austin,
Cunningham, Haire, Hargey, Hendron, Kyle, Mallon,
McCabe, McKee, McNamee, Mac Giolla Mhín, Mullan,
Newton, O'Neill, Robinson and Thompson.
- Also attended: Councillor Maskey.
- In attendance: Mr. A. Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks
and Leisure; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th December were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th January.

Peace Wall within Alexandra Park

The Director reminded the Committee that, as part of the Alexandra Park Regeneration Project, a cross-community and multi-agency steering group had been formed to assist and ensure delivery of the project. As a result of the ongoing work, the steering group had identified a community interest in the possibility of providing an access gate within the Peace Wall which divided the communities that surrounded the park. He explained that, following community consultation, the Committee had approved a pilot scheme to open the Peace Wall for a period of three months from Friday, 16th September, 2011, Monday to Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. The access gate had been supported and funded by the Department of Justice and a pathway connecting the two sides of the park had been funded by the Council.

The Director of Parks and Leisure reported that the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Park Rangers and the Community Safety Team had monitored the success of the pilot scheme, recording all interface tensions and directly associated anti-social behaviour. The three months of the pilot scheme had ended in mid-December with no incidents having been recorded by either the Council or the Police Service. The feedback which had been received by the steering group had been very positive and had indicated that the new access arrangements had enhanced the enjoyment of park users. The current arrangements had been maintained in order to keep the wall open

and pending an update presentation to the Members. In accordance with its decision of 10th November, the Committee was advised that a deputation from the Steering Group was in attendance and accordingly Ms. K. Clarke and Messrs. M. Waddell, S. Cochrane and B. Caskey were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Waddell advised the Committee that the Group had been formed following the award of funding to Groundwork Northern Ireland under the Regional Development Fund Peace III Programme under Priority 1.1 Building Positive Relations at a Local Level to deliver the Reconciling Communities through Regeneration programme. In consultation with the Council and the local community, Alexandra Park had been chosen as a specific project with a budget allocation of £50,000 towards the physical regeneration work. He outlined the objectives of the Group and the key outcomes which it had hoped to achieve in relation to the Alexandra Park and the work which had been undertaken to develop the area. He informed the Members that, in February, 2011, Groundwork Northern Ireland had carried out consultation sessions to gauge opinions and install an access point in the Peace Wall running through Alexandra Park. The consultation had been positive and the pilot scheme had been introduced in September.

The members of the deputation then outlined the work which had been carried out, details of the launch event and a fun day and the additional work which had been undertaken. It was reported that no incidents had taken place in the park which required to be dealt with by the Police Service since the opening. The deputation then outlined the next steps regarding the work which would be undertaken in order to have the opening hours at the park extended.

The deputation then answered a number of questions from the Members and the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked them for attending and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee approved the:

- (i) continued opening of the Peace Wall within Alexandra Park, subject to a review after a period of twelve months; and
- (ii) revision of the access gate opening times to align with the park's opening and closing times, subject to further community consultation.

Financial Estimates and District Rate 2012/2013

The Committee considered a report, which had been prepared by the Director of Finance and Resources, in respect of the Estimates of Revenue Expenditure for the Financial Year 2012/2013. A copy of that section of the report, in so far as it applied to the Parks and Leisure Committee, is set out hereunder:

2.7 Parks and Leisure Committee

A spending limit of £23,166,040 is recommended for the Parks and Leisure Department in respect of the financial year 2012/13. This represents an increase of 1.14% on the previous year. The main items for expenditure for the department are outlined at Appendix 1 and the key priorities for the department for 2012/13 are summarised in Appendix 2.

The main budgetary intentions of the Department for next year are set out below:

	£
Leisure Services	8,220,108
Parks and Cemetery Services	12,177,746
Directorate	2,768,185
Total Net Expenditure	23,166,040

There are a number of areas where change has occurred from last year.

- 2.8 The Parks and Leisure improvement programme is a work in progress. Costs of £50k have been included to support the development of community engagement and community events within Parks as part of this programme.
- 2.9 The department is also involved in delivering the Olympic legacy programme which relates to pre games training and events. Approximately £20k is required for these activities.
- 2.10 Leisure Development annually under take a programme of health development initiatives and a number of them are to be completed in 2011/12. Approximately £36k has been released for other initiatives such as the growth within the cardiovascular rehabilitation programme of £27k.
- 2.11 At Parks and Leisure Committee on 11 August 2011 it was agreed that the management arrangements for the Hammer pavilion would transfer from Community Services to the department. An increase cost of £13k has been provided for this.
- 2.12 At Parks and Leisure Committee on 13 October 2011 it was agreed that the maintenance arrangements for the new MUGA at the waterworks would be undertaken by the department. An additional amount of £10k has been included to provide for this.

- 2.13 Additional costs of £255k must be borne by the department in respect of superannuation increased provision.
- 2.14 Increased gas and water charges have been provided based on current projections of costs which have added £104k to the budget.
- 2.15 There was a loss of income due to the partial closure of two leisure centres for essential maintenance during 2011. The 2012/13 estimates show an increase in income from fees and charges to provide for a full years trading at these centres. However the leisure centres as a whole will not experience any growth in income for 2012/13.
- 2.16 Belfast Castle and Malone House have both reflected a loss of income through fees and charges of £25k each. However the new franchise agreements for each site provide additional income of £15k and £40k respectively in the 2012/13 year.
- 2.17 Increases in charges to the public for the Zoo has increased by only 1% as it is felt that the throughput will not grow. The Cemeteries and Crematorium income is up by 6% to reflect the increased income in relation to charges for non residents as per the committee decision in February 2011. These fees and charges will raise an additional £134k income and will be reviewed and proposed in a separate report to January's Parks and Leisure Committee.
- 2.18 The Department will make a contribution of £169k to the efficiency programme in 2012/13. Efficiency savings will be made in the following areas: - review of overtime and agency costs, review of marketing and communications, playground/sports equipment tender review, and procurement contract savings. Further savings of £30k will be made in energy consumption with new cremators and a review of the purchase of uniforms.

3. **Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and agree cash limits for the Parks and Leisure Committee for 2012/13 of £23,166,040.

APPENDIX 1

PARKS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MAIN ITEMS OF ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2012/13

	Net Expenditure 2011/12 £	Net Expenditure 2012/13 £
<u>Leisure</u>	8,044,473	8,220,108
Leisure Centres	7,485,961	7,670,865
Leisure Development	558,512	549,243
<u>Parks and Cemeteries</u>	12,120,535	12,177,747
Parks and Open Spaces including cemeteries and crematorium	7,230,486	7,273,925
Zoo	865,622	794,549
Landscape Planning & Development	1,750,254	1,847,757
Estates Management including Belfast Castle/Malone House	298,929	252,215
Parks & Cemeteries Development	201,618	177,906
Parks & Cemeteries Services	1,275,637	1,284,501
Open Spaces and Active Living	497,989	546,894
<u>Parks and Leisure Directorate</u>	2,740,739	2,768,185
Directorate	2,490,755	2,514,640
Anti Social Behaviour	249,984	253,545
TOTAL	22,905,747	23,166,040

APPENDIX 2

**Summary of Priority Actions for the
Parks and Leisure Department for 2012/13**

The department is currently developing the full detail of its Departmental Plan for 2012/13 which will be presented to Parks and Leisure Committee in March.

Highlighted below are some of the key actions

- Agree the new Active Belfast and Open Spaces (ABOS) strategy and deliver year two actions
- 8 new outdoor/‘green’ gyms to be installed in ‘community activity hubs’ across the city
- Develop and Deliver 4 community gardens across the city as Part of the Growing Communities Strategy
- Carry out essential work on the Orangefield Cycle Track
- Deliver year two actions in the pitches strategy including the pitches improvement programme
- Develop programmes to increase participation in connection with 2012 Olympics to maximise the Olympic legacy
- Deliver Active Belfast consortium work programme to include: Active Communities
- Implement Replacement programme for Leisure Centre Cardiovascular equipment
- Develop a robust plan for the development of new crematorium facilities in Belfast and continue to manage the ongoing cemeteries development project.
- Improve the customer experience at Parks and Leisure venues through our New Customer Charter and implement our customer service standards
- Continue to roll out customer care training for all staff
- Implementing other service improvement pilots
- Complete a Green Flag standard site assessment across the department’s parks and green spaces: retain Green Flag in the 7 parks that currently hold it; and apply for Green Flag in three additional parks and open spaces – Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon, Waterworks and Victoria
- Make arrangements for the management and maintenance of phase 1 of the Connswater community Greenway
- Conclude works on the Dunville and Woodvale park development programme
- Develop with partners an annual programme of parks and leisure focused citywide events across the city
- Facilitate the delivery of community programmes and activities

- **Work in partnership to develop and deliver the Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Programme**
- **Deliver and evaluate the Presence in Parks initiative**
- **Deliver phase two of the People in Parks (youth) initiative with Challenge Youth**
- **Deliver improvements in Dog control in our parks**
- **Develop and deliver year two actions in an 'Active Belfast Plan' together with the Belfast Health Development Unit and other partners**
- **Deliver sports development activities at the Urban Sports Park**
- **Deliver a range of health and well-being programmes and activities**
- **Agree and implement the revised business/ commercial model for the Zoo**
- **Develop a city wide participation plan, including a review of the departmental grants schemes**
- **Through operational reviews identify and deliver improvements and efficiencies in our services."**

The Committee agreed that its cash limit for the Financial Year 2012/2013 be set at £23,166,040 and approved the allocation of resources as set out in Appendix 1.

Scale of Charges for Parks and Leisure Services 2012/2013

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to the scale of charges for Parks and Leisure Services for the period 2012/2013 to enable them to be considered at a special meeting, the date of which was to be held before the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th January.

Playing Pitches Strategy

The Committee agreed to defer until its meeting in February consideration of a report on the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment of the Playing Pitches Strategy and Action Plans. The Committee agreed also to receive at the special meeting which had been agreed earlier by the Committee a presentation on the proposed locations of the synthetic pitches and changing facilities at those sites which had already been approved by the Committee for years 1 to 3 of the Playing Pitches Strategy.

Review of Support for Sport

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to the review of Support for Sport and requested that it be included within the arrangements for the monthly Political Party briefings.

Development of a Boxing Strategy for Belfast

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 Boxing has traditionally been a very successful sport for Northern Ireland with many successes at local and international levels. Boxing was Northern Ireland’s most successful sport at the most recent Commonwealth Games in Delhi and Northern Ireland was the most successful Commonwealth boxing team at the Games.

1.2 The Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC) with the support of Sport NI want to develop a four year plan to identify how UPBC proposes to implement the Irish Amateur Boxing Association’s (IABA) Strategic Plan in Ulster for the period 2011-16. IABA’s strategic plan is currently in draft, however it is envisaged that the IABA’s strategic plan will cover the following 4 key areas:

- pathways – participation and performance focussed;**
- coach education and development;**
- club support and development; and**
- governance.**

1.3 The sport of boxing is recognised as having made a significant contribution to local communities in Belfast. Although many of the clubs are in locations which are generally deemed to have a high social need and in areas associated with a single tradition, they also often have a cross community focus and membership.

1.4 There are 26 boxing clubs in Belfast. A map showing the geographical spread of the clubs in the city has been circulated to Members.

1.5 At a recent meeting with representatives from boxing clubs in the Ulster Hall it was considered important that the council works in partnership with UPBC and Sport NI to develop a complementary boxing strategy for the city.

2. Key Issues

2.1 There are significant issues with club capacity and facilities available to clubs:

- Many clubs do not have the officials/senior members with the skills or experience to enable them to administer their club or to gain access to public funding.**

- Whilst there are examples of good facilities there are many clubs where facilities are poor or inadequate to support the needs of the club. Many clubs reside in ageing buildings with limited ancillary facilities.
 - The condition of clubs is not considered attractive to young people and inhibits growth in membership.
 - Many clubs do not have the accommodation to support their current membership or growth in membership.
 - Many clubs do not have changing facilities for females.
 - Many clubs operate in other organisation's buildings and have to erect/dismantle equipment for each session.
 - Many clubs that do not own their premises have fairly loose tenancy arrangements which means capital funding opportunities cannot be accessed.
- 2.2 It has been agreed as part of the Active Belfast and Open Spaces Strategy (ABOS) that the Active Belfast approach should provide opportunities for increased participation in health enhancing activities to all. The framework recognises the importance of both the built environment and the social environment in creating an active city.
- 2.3 It is therefore proposed that the council commits to working in partnership with UPBC and Sport NI to develop a strategy to support the sport of Boxing in the city.
3. **Resource Implications**
- Any proposed future resources required as a result of the strategy development will be presented to committee in due course.
4. **Equality and good relations implications**
- The boxing strategy will be subject to equality impact screening.
5. **Recommendations**
- The Committee is asked to support the development of a boxing strategy for the city. A further report will be brought to committee providing the proposed approach and time scale for the development of the strategy."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Refurbishment of Playgrounds

The Director of Parks and Leisure submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

1.1 Pitch and Mitch

At the August 2010 committee, Members agreed improvements and the allocation of budget for playground refurbishment for the year 2010/2011. The report singled out the Pitch and Mitch facility in North Belfast as it was rated a 10 meaning it was rated as being in very poor condition and that the council needed to consider the future use of the space.

1.2 In January 2011 a further report on Pitch and Mitch was presented to Parks and Leisure Committee. At this point work with local residents had begun and some progress made with minor works being undertaken to repair the existing bitmac surface to enable football to be played.

1.3 At the August 2011 committee proposed improvements and the allocation of the budget of £649,200 for the year 2011/2012 was agreed.

1.4 Committee agreed to continue to work with the residents in Ardoyne to reclaim the Pitch and Mitch facility and to receive a proposal regarding the future development of the site at a later date. Since then:

- the facility has been reopened;
- local school children took part in an arts based project to develop a sign for the park incorporating its name as a symbol of the communities' commitment to reclaiming the facility; and
- design options have been developed with residents – the preferred option costing in the region of £130k.

1.5 Cavehill Country Park Adventurous Playground

The Adventurous Playground was first opened in 1991 and offers a wide range of playground apparatus for 3 to 14 year olds. Since its opening there has been no major refurbishment work undertaken. The last piece of equipment to be replaced was in 2006 when the large multi play unit located in the upper section of the playground was installed. Following this a much needed permanent toilet facility was built within the grounds of the playground.

- 1.6 A subsequent independent inspection of the Adventurous Playground in December 2011 has identified a steady decline in the condition of the equipment due mainly to heavy usage and significant degrading of the wooden steps and surrounding wooden retaining walls which is predominantly made up of railway sleepers. Some minor replacement work was done on the retaining walls around the large space net in 2011 but the remaining walls need to be replaced.
- 1.7 The Adventurous Playground is the only playground that levies a charge for admittance to users.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 A funding application was made to DSD to support the development of the Pitch and Mitch playground. Following an economic appraisal DSD has confirmed that £182,817 will be provided to support the total cost of the scheme.
- 2.2 The Adventurous Playground at Cavehill Country Park was not included in the priorities for the refurbishment programme reported to committee in August 2011 on the basis that it is a standalone site which required enhancement of the facility and landscape setting.
- 2.3 At that time the replacement of 8 of the 18 pieces of playground equipment was estimated to be £150,000.
- 2.4 The inspection carried out in December 2011 indicated that the sleepers are starting to break up and have caused the inspector to recommend the immediate closure of the playground on health and safety grounds. On this basis the playground has been temporarily closed.
- 2.5 The estimated cost of replacing the wooden steps and retaining walls is in the region of £80,000.
- 2.6 Members are reminded that the public are asked to pay an entrance fee of £2.20 to use these facilities.
- 2.7 Members are therefore asked to consider the Adventurous Playground as a priority within the allocation of playground refurbishment budget in 2012/2013. It is estimated that works could be commissioned and completed by May 2012 in time for peak usage over the summer period.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 The £182,817 grant from DSD will cover the cost of refurbishing the Pitch and Mitch playground.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the urgent work required to reinstate the Adventurous Playground at Cavehill Country Park is made a priority and the £150,000 required to purchase equipment is funded from the underutilised corporate fund. The balance of £80,000 for the steps and wall will come from the 2012/2013 playground refurbishment budget.
- 3.3 The reprioritisation of the underutilised funding will reduce the impact on the refurbishment budget available for 2012/13.

4. Equality and good relations implications

None.

5. Recommendations

Committee is asked:

- (i) to note the provision of funds from DSD to support the development of the Pitch and Mitch playground scheme
- (ii) to note the temporary closure of the Adventurous Playground; and
- (iii) to consider the Adventurous Playground at Cavehill Country Park as a priority within the programme of playground refurbishment for 2012/2013.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Facilities Management Agreements - Review Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th October, it had agreed to hold a workshop to discuss the findings of the Review of Facilities Management Agreements. The aim of the workshop, which had taken place on 19th December, was to provide details on the current position in relation to the Agreements and to consider future options.

The Director of Parks and Leisure reported that nine Members had attended the workshop and had discussed the current system which was in place, the historical decision-making and the wider context of the development of the playing pitches strategy. It had been suggested that a scoring matrix to determine viable partner agreements might be the best approach in the future as a consistent approach for the Council to apply in order to support partnership working effectively. The following issues had been raised during the discussion:

- a general acceptance that the existing system for managing partnership arrangements would require to be changed;
- the review should continue to develop an approach inclusive of a scoring matrix which would equitably manage partner requests which were received;
- Council officers should continue to explore further strategic partnership working with leagues/governing bodies in terms of sporting need;
- any future scoring matrix should include areas like partnership working; inclusivity, participation, social value/benefit, investment; scale of proposal or site; value-for-money; financial contribution and Members would seek for a weighting to be applied; and
- all those in attendance had agreed that there was a need to manage partner requests effectively to ensure value-for-money and equitable support to the sporting community.

It had been determined that the best way to proceed was to provide briefings to the Party Groups and prepare a discussion paper, including a draft matrix for consideration by the Members. In this regard, the matter had been progressed through the new arrangements for Party Group briefings and would be included as an agenda item in the February round of briefings.

Noted.

Charity Abseiling Event at Belfast Castle

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Northern Ireland Hospice to hold a charity abseiling fund-raising event at the Belfast Castle in September. The Director reported that the main issue of concern was the health and safety aspect of the event. However, the abseil would be organised and carried out by Outdoor Concepts (NI) which had been running charity abseil events for over ten years. That organisation used the highest standard of equipment and highly qualified instructors and would provide all the necessary risk assessment documentation and provide a £10 million public and employee liability insurance policy which would be applicable to the event. Outdoor Concepts (NI) would be required to undertake a risk assessment and ensure that all health and safety requirements were met to the satisfaction of the Council.

Accordingly, the Committee granted authority for the charity abseiling event to be held at the Belfast Castle, subject to the satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:

- (i) the event organisers met all operational and health and safety issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- (ii) Northern Ireland Hospice entered into an appropriate legal agreement to be drafted by Legal Services; and

- (iii) the event organisers ensure that all health and safety requirements were met to the Council's satisfaction, including risk assessments, safe systems of work and equipment inspection information.

**Barnett Demesne - Request for Use by the
County Grand Lodge of Belfast**

The Director of Parks and Leisure reported that the County Grand Lodge of Belfast had written to the Council requesting the use of the Barnett Demesne for its Belfast demonstrations on 12th July, 2012. He reminded the Committee that the Council had granted use of the site to the County Grand Lodge for the 12th July demonstrations in previous years and had worked closely with the Grand Lodge to ensure that the venue had facilitated the holding of a satisfactory event. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to accede to the request received from the County Grand Lodge to hold its Belfast demonstration at the Barnett Demesne site, subject to the organisation adhering to the Council's conditions and requirements and to the completion of an appropriate legal agreement to be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Redevelopment of Belfast Zoo Playground

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Tourism Development Scheme (TDS) is the programme devised by Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to allocate capital funds made available from the Executive budget to tourism related capital projects. The TDS is a competitive process and requires applicants to make bids for funding from the scheme.**
- 1.2 Members will recall that a successful application to this fund for £250,000 grant support in 2006 resulted in the building of the new entrance, visitor centre and shop facility at the zoo in 2008.**
- 1.3 The NITB TDS for 2011-2013 was launched at the end of November 2011. Applications to the scheme close on 06 January 2012. Preference will be given to projects that can be completed by 31 March 2013.**
- 1.4 In order to be eligible, applications have to come from facilities within one of the NITB's 9 key destination areas, which include Belfast. Further, the NITB has identified priority products which will be developed to meet with increased visitor expectations and market need, and the scheme guidelines specifically mention play areas as part of a wider theme park or visitor attraction, for which funding will be provided to support.**

- 1.5 Successful applications will receive up to a 50% contribution from the TDS towards the capital cost of the project.
 - 1.6 Members will recall the Committee report of 12 August 2010 regarding the Parks Playground Improvement Programme. The report highlighted the poor condition of the zoo's playground, which needed a wider range of play activities to reflect the visitor numbers, and recommended: 'The Zoo is a major tourist and visitor attraction and should provide a play area consistent with its status as a major attraction. '
 - 1.7 During 2011, staff from the Parks Landscape Planning and Development department designed a new scheme for a proposed playground at the zoo. The plan presents an enhanced facility, which will better cope with increased visitor numbers now attending the zoo, provide a wider range of play equipment suitable for a variety of ages and abilities, and which creates better links and learning opportunities between play and the key themes of the zoo, ie animals, habitats and biodiversity.
 - 1.8 It is proposed that a strategic outline case be developed for this project to be considered for inclusion in the capital programme.
2. **Key Issues**
 - 2.1 The NITB TDS 2011-2013 opened recently and applications to it have to be received by 06 January 2012.
 - 2.2 The TDS is a competitive process and offers up to 50% grant funding for eligible projects.
 - 2.3 The need for redevelopment of the playground at the zoo has been a priority since the Committee report of June 2010. A plan for a new playground has been developed during 2011. The new scheme has a budget cost of £430,000.
 - 2.4 The redevelopment of the playground at Belfast Zoo is eligible for TDS funding and the project provides a close match with TDS criteria.
3. **Resource Implications**
 - 3.1 Should the application to the NITB TDS for a 50% grant towards the cost of a new playground at the zoo be successful, it is anticipated that, with Members support, the remaining 50% costs (i.e. £215,000) for the project will be made via a financial contribution from the council.

- 3.2 Members should also be aware that the Development Committee agreed that the council would make three other applications to the NITB TDS, for conference facilities at the Waterfront Hall, for the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre (BWC) and for Belfast Titanic/Maritime signage.
- 3.3 Depending on the success of the 4 projects and thus the total potential council funding commitment, a further process of review of ongoing support for the 4 projects may be required.
4. **Equality and good relations implications**
- 4.1 The provision of an enhanced playground at the zoo will provide improved play facilities to a greater number of visitors, of a wider age and ability range than is currently available.
5. **Recommendations**
- 5.1 Members are asked to consider supporting the application to the NITB TDS for an enhanced playground facility at the zoo, and to agree in principle to meeting the council contribution from the council's capital programme for the purposes of this application.
- 5.2 Any commitment by the council would be subject to the zoo project being awarded the TDS grant funding, and subject to further consideration of priorities depending the success of the 3 other council applications for TDS funding."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Fields in Trust Challenge - Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th February, 2011, it had been advised that the National Playing Fields Association (Fields in Trust) had launched the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. The challenge was an officially endorsed legacy initiative to mark the two landmark events scheduled to take place in the United Kingdom in 2012, that is, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics. The programme aimed to permanently protect 2012 playing fields in communities all across the country ensuring access to outdoor sport, play and recreation both now and for future generations.

Subsequently, at its meeting on 9th June, 2011 the Committee had considered a number of sites and based on Legal Services advice only two sites had been considered eligible to participate in the initiative and were subsequently nominated, that is, Orangefield Park and Lagan Meadows. A "Save a Space for Me" online campaign

had been launched in October, 2011 encouraging people to support their outdoor spaces to be protected as part of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. Over 20,000 people had shown their support for the Parks, with over 10,000 web visits recorded on the day of the launch alone. It had been a close contest but in the end Orangefield Park had won by three votes from Lagan Meadows.

The Assistant Director advised the Members that work would now proceed with Fields in Trust and the Council's Legal Services and Estates Units to draft the deed of dedication. There were estates and legal issues which would have to be considered by Fields in Trust and the Council as a result of Orangefield being part of the Connswater Community Greenway Project and flood alleviation scheme which would result in significant work to the park with funding from the Big Lottery. The Council needed to ensure that entering into a deed of dedication at this time would not compromise its ability to deliver the necessary development work in the park required by the aforementioned scheme.

It was envisaged that a number of events would be arranged to engage the local community in celebrating the dedication and that that work would be done in consultation with the East Belfast Partnership Board as part of the Connswater Community Greenway programme. A further report on the events would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a deed of dedication be drafted, subject to the legal and estates issues being addressed.

Closures for Public Holidays and Maintenance 2012/2013

The Committee considered a report which provided information in relation to proposals in respect of the opening/closing times and dates due to public holidays and maintenance agreements during the forthcoming financial year for Council-owned facilities which fell under the remit of the Parks and Leisure Committee, that is, the Cemeteries and Crematorium sites and offices and Leisure Centres.

The Committee approved the closure arrangements in respect of the facilities outlined.

Quay Vipers Motorcycle Rally – Boucher Road Playing Fields

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Council has received a request from Mr Michael Montgomery on behalf of Quay Vipers Motor Cycle Club to secure the Boucher Road Playing Fields site to hold their annual rally/festival from Friday 10 August to Sunday 12 August 2012 (inclusive). This event has been running for**

many years at Benone caravan complex and has steadily increased in size. Organisers now feel that due to its central location and close proximity to the motorways Boucher Road Playing Fields is their preferred option.

- 1.2 Council officers have been informed that it is customary within motorcycle organisations to each hold an annual event in their home country and to invite other host clubs and locals to attend with the aim to change the stigma associated with these types of events from a 'bad boy' image generated in the 50's and 60's to a fun family orientated event for any motorcycle enthusiast.
- 1.3 The event is expected to attract around 1,800 motorcycle enthusiasts over three days from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and mainland UK, many of whom will either camp on site or stay at local hotels/B&Bs.
- 1.4 As well as hospitality the event generates income for local business from petrol stations to restaurants.

The event is made up of:

- a camping site for approximately 900 people;
 - large floored marquees containing various traders selling motorcycle related items;
 - an entertainment marquee with stage and live music set to run through the three days with the final night being by invite only;
 - a licensed bar and seating area – also contained in a marquee; and
 - a custom motorcycle show – also contained in a marquee.
- 1.5 The event is scheduled to take place over three days with two days prior to build and one day after to take down.
 - 1.6 Organisers plan to sell tickets prior to the event and access will be strictly ticket only. Tickets will be available up to two weeks before the event, with a ticket office available on site to sell additional tickets on each of the days. Ticket holders will be issued with a wrist band which must be worn at all times while in attendance.
 - 1.7 In previous years organisers have donated any profits to local charities once event costs have been covered and the nominated charity this year is the NI Children's Hospice.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The event will require the entire site being secured by the organisers to include:

- use of the hard standing area for marquees for entertainment, food and traders stalls;
- two soccer pitches and one gaelic pitch for camping; and
- use of the changing pavilion for showering facilities for campers, additional toilet facilities will be provided in the form of portaloos.

2.2 The organisers will provide their own security for the event and access will be strictly ticket only.

2.3 The organisers will comply with all appropriate aspects of the council's events policy. This will include:

- A detailed event management plan will be required. An entertainments licence and application for liquor license must also be sought by the organiser prior to the event.
- No fly posting is to take place for this event.
- The council's events policy places responsibility for appropriate management of waste associated with an event with the event organiser. Officers will ensure that the organiser is in receipt of our events policy – 'Handbook for Applicants' which outlines clearly that arrangements must be in place for litter collection and gives guidance on appropriate steps, based on the scale of the event proposed.
- The organiser will be required to provide appropriate risk assessments and adequate public liability insurance to cover all activities on site. Certification for any electrical, gas, food preparation and marquees which are to be erected on site will also be required.
- The organiser will be required to liaise with the local PSNI and fire authority and comply with any issues or recommendations they may have.
- The organiser will work with council officers to ensure all health and safety issues are addressed.
- Organisers will require connections to utility services – water, electricity and sewerage to facilitate catering, toilets and power to entertainment location.

- No machinery is to be placed on the grass areas or pitches, pitches are only to be used for camping. It is felt that camping may discolour the grass but will have no long term effect on the condition or have any impact on the beginning of the soccer season in September.
- Based on last year's usage of the pitch the event will cause disruption to around 7 Gaelic football bookings. It is anticipated that these bookings can be accommodated at Cherryvale, Falls Park or City of Belfast playing fields.
- An appropriate legal agreement will be provided by Legal Services.

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial

There is an average potential loss of income of £260.04 from the Gaelic pitches which will be charged to the organisers along with a charge for utilities used. A bond of intent to the value of £2,000 will also be applied in the event of any reinstatement costs to the council.

The normal charge for such events is £100 per day, however as the organisers have informed council officers that any profits from the event will be given to charity, Members are asked to consider waiving the fee in this case.

Human Resources

There are no human resources issues with this event as it will be staffed by the organiser.

Asset and other implications

None.

4. **Equality and good relations implications**

None.

5. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that permission is granted for this event to take place subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on condition that:

1. appropriate documentation is in place prior to commencement, to include event management plan, public liability documentation, risk assessments, certificates for electricity, gas and marquee erection, legal agreements, liquor license and building control approvals;
2. the event organisers meet all statutory requirements;
- 3 no further hire charge is applied other than covering the Department's costs as proceeds are give to charity;
4. liaison takes place with relevant council departments and other organisations, (health and safety, PSNI, fire service)."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Cliftonville Football Club – Access Arrangements

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 11 November 2010 it had received a report in respect of the use of the laneway by Cliftonville football club. At the meeting the Committee agreed to defer consideration pending further discussions between council officers and the football club.
- 1.2 In the interim, the club has submitted further proposals regarding their requirements for access to the laneway. These requirements were passed to Legal Services. A draft agreement has been prepared and issued to the club. The club has responded to the draft and outlined a number of concerns regarding the content of the agreement. A response has been issued by officers and there has been a preliminary meeting between council officers, the club's chairman and several elected representatives. At subsequent meetings progress has been made on a number of points of detail within the agreement itself. However, there are two main issues outstanding which are delaying the bringing of this matter to a conclusion. A further meeting is scheduled to be held in January 2012 to further consider these issues.

2. Key Issues

2.1 As Members will be aware the key issue is the need to regularise the access arrangements in respect of the laneway and to ensure that there is adequate provision within it to safeguard the council's interests. In the interim officers have been working with representatives of the club to permit and provide access on a case by case basis where the Club accepts liability. Whilst there has been progress it has not been possible to enter into the easement owing to an inability to reach an agreement on two main issues:

- 1) the need for a security gate to control and manage access to the laneway during match days to and from the park itself; and**
- 2) the provision of lighting in the lane to meet health and safety requirements for use at night time.**

2.2 The Committee is reminded that the football club has received a substantial grant from Sport NI, this grant covered the construction of a new spectator stand and turnstiles for access to the ground; a condition of grant related to the provision of spectator access via the laneway. In essence, if the laneway is not in use for spectator access Sport NI may withhold a portion of the grant. It is therefore important to the club to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

2.3 There are a number of issues outstanding which are required in order to make the laneway usable for spectator use. These requirements are, as outlined previously, the provision of a security gate to manage and control access to and from the laneway to the park on match days and the provision of lighting for use during evening games. The former is a requirement to satisfy PSNI whilst the latter is a health and safety requirement. The provision of both is required to make the laneway usable and would have cost implications. It is the view of officers and the PSNI that the gate is required to ensure segregation of park users and football supporters on match days for a period of time during and after the game. In discussions the club to date has referred to its inability to meet these costs.

2.4 The council has no operational need for either the additional security gate or the lighting at this time. The club has stated that in its view there is no need for the gate. The full costs are not known without an appropriate specification of the works but it is likely that they would be in excess of £10,000; however, the actual cost could be significantly higher.

This relates only to the capital cost and does not take account of any ongoing revenue implications. Officers have contended that these items should have been included as part of the original capital scheme.

2.5 It is intended to bring a further report to Committee later in the year to set out final details of the agreement for approval. The Committee is asked to consider three options:

- Option 1 is to continue as at present which is to permit access to the laneway on a largely unregulated basis with no easement in place;
- Option 2 is similar to option 1 in so far as we permit access to enable the club to take delivery of fuels to run the generator and provide heating etc merchandising etc while seeking agreement on the easement issue;
- Option 3 is to refuse further access to the laneway for any purpose until an agreement is in place;
- Option 4 is similar to option 3 but provides a deadline, i.e. no further access will be granted if agreement cannot be reached within a 6 month period of time; and
- Option 5 is for the council to agree to make a contribution, not exceeding 50% of the total cost of the work.

2.6 Options 1, 2 and 3 are discounted at this time owing to the already lengthy period of time taken to reach the current position. Therefore Members are asked to consider Options 4 and 5 in an attempt to bring the matter to a conclusion. For the reasons outlined in the report, the recommendation of officers would be for option 4. Officers are of the view that the expenditure is required to meet the needs of the club and not of the council and that the works are required to meet the condition of grant from SNI. However Members may wish to consider option 5 although no provision has been made for this within the estimates and it is not clear where the money would be found.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Financial implications have yet to be determined and Members need to consider whether they wish to agree in principle to provide financial support. It is recognised that the club operates on a semi-professional basis and in order

to sustain and develop the club it generates income from a number of sources such as ticket sales, advertising and TV rights. The council may wish to keep this commercial element in mind in any future arrangements with the club where such arrangements are likely to be to the commercial benefit of the club or any other commercial organisation/individual. Currently no provision has been made in the revenue estimates to cover any expenditure regarding this.

3.2 Human Resources

No additional human resources employed at this time. The possibility remains that overtime or additional security costs might arise as a result of any arrangements which may be arrived at between the council and the club.

3.3 Asset and Other Implications

Action is needed to prevent the development of unregulated rights, particularly of a commercial/semi-commercial nature, across council owned land.

4. Equality and good relations implications

None.

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the issues outlined and determine whether they wish to follow Option 4 or Option 5 as outlined above.”

After a lengthy discussion, the Committee approved a combination of options 4 and 5, that is:

- the Council agrees to make a contribution, not exceeding 50% of the total cost of the work required to be undertaken, with the stipulation that no further access would be granted if agreement could not be reached within a six-month period of time; and
- that the matter of the withholding of funding to improve the facilities be raised with Sport NI.

Mary Peters Track

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in relation to the progress on the refurbishment of the Mary Peters Track.

Belfast Mela 2012

The Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure advised the Committee that a request had been received from the Director of ArtsEkta in relation to the use of the Botanic Gardens for the Belfast Mela 2012 event. She reported that the Mela was a large multicultural festival which had attracted in excess of 15,000 people to the 2011 event in Botanic Gardens. The event had developed a shared, culturally rich inclusive space which connected minority ethnic and local indigenous communities and had been successful in raising cultural awareness, encouraging civic identity and promoting a positive image of the City.

She advised the Committee that the organisation had indicated that it wished to use the Botanic Gardens on 26th August from 12.00 p.m. till 6.00 p.m., with a total number of six days required from set up to take down. Due to the economic climate, the Director of ArtsEkta had requested permission to charge an entrance fee of £2 for attendance at the event, depending on funding. As part of the event, alcohol might be sold within one element of the overall activities but would not be used in the promotion to maintain the main focus of the Belfast Mela. The event would be subject to the preparation of an event management plan which would cover all aspects of management, including health and safety and access and would comply with the Council's current events policy.

Accordingly, she requested that the Committee grant authority for ArtsEkta to hold the Belfast Mela event at the Botanic Gardens, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of Parks and Leisure and on the condition that:

- (i) the event organisers resolved all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction;
- (ii) an appropriate legal agreement would be prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive/Town Solicitor; and
- (iii) the event organisers meet all statutory requirements.

In addition, the Assistant Director requested the Committee to authorise, if necessary, the charging of an admission fee of £2 to the event.

The Committee granted the authorities sought.

Outdoor Gyms - Criteria for Selection of Potential Sites

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details in relation to the process and scoring criteria for those sites which had been identified for the installation of outdoor gym equipment.

Placing of an International Peace Garden
Rock in Botanic Gardens

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the Friendship Circle for the Council to host a "Peace Rock" in the Botanic Gardens. The rock would be one of a number to be placed in an International Circle of Friendship within an International Peace Garden which had been established in 1932 and straddled the United States and Canadian borders of North Dakota and Manitoba.

The rock, which was four tonnes in weight, would be placed in several locations around Britain throughout 2012 before being transported to Canada. It was proposed that it be placed in Botanic Gardens in February/March, 2012, with definite dates still to be confirmed, and sited on an open grass space near the pedestrian entrance at the Stranmillis Road. The organisation would have responsibility for transporting, loading and off-loading the rock, with the necessary insurance to cover the process. Since the purpose behind the placing of the peace rock in public locations was to get people to touch it, there would be no fencing surrounding the rock and it would be fully accessible to the public.

The Committee agreed to accede to the request, subject to the necessary legal agreements and public liability insurance being in place and to no cost being attributed to the Council.

Tri-cities Golf Challenge

The Director advised the Committee that, in September, 2002, Edinburgh City Council had hosted the first Inter-City Golf Challenge between Edinburgh, Dublin and Belfast City Councils and that it had become an annual event which had been rotated between the three Cities since that time. The event had provided an opportunity to build positive relations between the three Councils and had led also to the establishment of valuable networks at both Member and officer level.

He reported that the 11th Tri-Cities Golf Challenge was due to be held in Belfast during September, 2012 and was a competition between Elected Members and officers from each of the City Councils competing in an eight-man team competition. All of the competitors travelled at their own expense and met their accommodation needs. No subsequent allowance or expenses of any kind would be paid to any of the participants. However, each year the host City met the cost of green fees for the visitors, provided suitable prizes and a meal in the clubhouse after the competition. It was also normal practice for the Lord Mayor to host a dinner in the City Hall on the evening prior to the competition for all the competitors. The anticipated cost associated with the event would be approximately £2,500 and he recommended that the Committee agree to host the event during September, 2012 and approve the appropriate hospitality in connection therewith.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Installation of Artistic Seat at Cave Hill Country Park

The Committee was reminded that the Cave Hill Conservation Campaign had been founded in 1989 and acted as the official friends for the Cave Hill Country Park. The Group had a membership of approximately eighty enthusiasts whose mission was to preserve the Cave Hill in as natural and unspoilt state as possible and to encourage its public use in an environmentally sensitive manner. The Group carried out annually various conservation activities which included tree planting, elimination of invasive species, the erection of nest boxes, clean-ups and a series of guided walks for members of the public.

The Director reported that the Group had applied recently to the Landscape Partnership Programme of the Belfast Hills Partnership seeking funding to design and install a stone seat at a natural viewpoint within the Cave Hill Country Park. The Group had also approached the Council with a request to install the new seat in an area adjacent to the main walking trail. The area was already used as a resting and gathering point by visitors walking on the Hill, however, there was currently no seating available and the area was suffering from a small amount of localised erosion as people stood to rest and congregate.

He advised the Committee that the Friends Group had engaged two schools from the area, that is, Cave Hill Primary School and St. Therese of Lisieux Primary School, to become involved in the project. Through partnership and cross-community working, the pupils would decide the theme of the stone art piece and, through a series of art workshops facilitated by a local artist, design the seat. Council officers from the Landscape and Planning Unit would adopt an advisory role.

He reported that the Group had been notified that its funding application had been successful and had secured £3,750, which was representative of 75% of the funding required to deliver the project. Therefore, in addition to seeking permission to install the new artistic seat, the Group was requesting a financial contribution to the project not in excess of £1,500. It was anticipated that that could be met from within the existing Departmental Budget.

The Committee approved the location of the proposed artistic seat and the provision of funding to the project in a sum not to exceed £1,500.

Chairman