

Parks and Leisure Committee

Thursday, 14th March, 2013

Meeting of Parks and Leisure Committee

Members present: Councillor McCabe (Chairman); and
Councillors Kelly, Humphrey, Rodgers, Corr, Garrett,
Haire, Hartley, Hendron, Kyle, Mallon, McKee,
Mac Giolla Mhín, Mullan, Newton, O'Neill, Spence and
Thompson

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

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors McNamee and O' Donnghaile.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 14th and 18th February 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 March, subject to the amendment of the decision of the meeting of 14th February under the heading "High Hedges Act - Implementation Review" to the effect that a letter be forwarded to the Minister with responsibility for the Department of the Environment enquiring as to the steps which could be taken within the legislation to address the issue of High Hedges at properties for which no owner could be identified.

Declarations of Interest

Regarding agenda item 16, viz., "Barnett Demesne – Request from County Grand Lodge of Belfast" Councillor Haire indicated that he was the Belfast County Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, but pointed out that there existed no associated pecuniary or material conflict.

Flooding at Orchardville

The Committee was reminded that serious flooding had occurred throughout Belfast on the evening of 27th June, 2012, particularly in the south of the City. The Director pointed out that the Orchardville area, which was adjacent to the Woodlands Playing Fields, had been affected adversely and that one contributory factor which had been identified by the local community was the run-off of water from the playing fields. The Director reported that, since the incident, remedial work had been carried out to improve the effectiveness of the drainage on the site.

The Director pointed out that the Council's Emergency Planning Team had, in conjunction with a range of bodies and agencies, undertaken a review of the

widespread flooding and a number of recommendations arising from that exercise had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23rd November, 2012, one of which had been to undertake a review of flooding 'hotspots'. Accordingly, he reported that a request for assistance in the commissioning of a study of the Orchardville and Woodlands areas had been received from the Rivers Agency. This request had indicated that specialist consultants would be commissioned to oversee, in conjunction with the Council, the Rivers Agency and NI Water, a study which would identify sources of flooding and the steps which could be taken to manage such sources and to consider which organisation would be best placed to take action thereon. He added that it was anticipated that the report would be completed by September, 2013, and presented to the Committee in due course.

The Committee agreed to allocate £5,000 towards the undertaking of the study as outlined.

Amateur Boxing Strategy for Belfast - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Council has developed an amateur boxing strategy for the city in partnership with Co Antrim Boxing, Ulster Boxing Council (UBC), Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) and the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA).

Following approval of the draft strategy by Committee at its meeting in October 2012, a period of public consultation opened on Monday 5 November 2012. A copy of the draft strategy and a response questionnaire were available to download from the website and the closing date for responses was Friday 8 February 2013.

In addition a meeting was organised on 17 January in Ormeau Bowling Pavilion to which all the boxing clubs on our mailing list were invited. Officers also presented the draft strategy to a special meeting of the youth forum and sought their views on it. The Council's S75 Consultative Forum has also been kept informed of the development of the strategy and was notified of the consultation process.

2. Key Issues

Consultation findings

A total of 16 written responses were received to the public consultation in addition to the meetings that were held with the boxing clubs and the Council's youth forum:

- **Increasing female participation**
 - There is agreement that this is an issue that needs to be addressed but there is a lack of facilities in the majority of clubs for females
 - Suggestion was made that additional money needed to be put into target/develop female participation
 - Suggestion was made that there is a need to have more female coaches as females may feel intimidated going to classes with male coaches
 - Promote female boxers – e.g. use their photos on poster
- **Increasing participation among people with a disability**
 - The majority of clubs do not have the facilities necessary to facilitate members with a disability
 - Suggestion was made that we should look at working with special needs schools – train coaches to work with kids with special needs
- **Sport development officers/coaches**
 - There was mixed feelings from the governing bodies and boxing clubs for the appointment of 2 Sport Development Officers; unclear what their role would be and some feeling that they won't come from boxing and won't know about the sport
 - There was support for putting in additional boxing coaches or following the Dublin model
 - The possibility of the coaching training being run in Belfast rather than Dublin was raised

- Suggestion made that if each club had a qualified coach they could train others in the club
- **Volunteers**
 - Issue of getting and keeping volunteers was raised
 - Need for funding to help with volunteers expenses
 - Question was asked could Belfast City Council set up a volunteer list/bank that clubs could use
- **Financing of clubs**
 - None of the proposed funding is to help clubs with running their clubs – issue of keeping clubs running and their doors open
 - Can we examine the use of council facilities for example free/reduced hire rates for boxing clubs?
- **Events**
 - Need for funding to host events in Belfast but also need to have a balance between the money being available for the large scale and small events
 - Issue of getting funding for boxers going to events elsewhere
 - Need to work with all the partners to bring large scale international competitions to Belfast
- **Schools programme**
 - Support from Youth Forum for the schools programme but questioned if enough money being put into it
 - Not clear understanding from clubs as to how it would work

Amendments to the draft strategy

The steering group met to discuss the consultation findings and any amendments to the draft strategy that were necessary

as a result of the consultation. The following amendments (in bold) have been suggested to the action plans within the strategy:

Pathways (boxers, coaches and officials)

- Explore the potential of obtaining funding and sponsorship to support a programme of competitive fixtures, both local and international competitions, in Belfast
- Begin discussions with the education sector in relation to the introduction of a non-contact boxing programme in schools including special need schools

Coach education and development

- Work with the governing body to attract and train more females as coaches
- Work with the governing body to train coaches that can work with people with special needs

Club support and development

- Explore the introduction of one Sports Development Officer and 2 community based Coaches for Belfast, based in Belfast City Council with boxing as a priority target area

Appointment of Sport Development Officers and Coaches

Within the consultation process the action that prompted the greatest level of discussion and comment was the proposal that two SDOs be appointed to deliver the strategy. The view from across the boxing fraternity was that there was a danger that the two SDOs would not have sufficient links to boxing to be effective and that we should consider the programme that has been put in place in Dublin which aims to promote boxing and community activity and is targeted at 'at risk' young people in disadvantaged areas.

Based on the feedback and discussions with our partners we are now proposing that one SDO and two community based coaches are put in place. If Members agree to this proposal there will be a shortfall in the budget that has been allocated to staff and we will have to find additional resources for the appointment of a second coach. We are currently exploring other options such as the appointment of a coach through the Active Communities Programme. If the proposal is accepted

we will work with our partners to define the role of the two community based coaches and the programme of activities they will undertake. We will also ensure that the SDO works with the regional Club Development Manger (funded by SNI and line managed by IABA) to ensure there is no duplication of resources.

Other issues raised through the consultation

Other issues raised through the consultation included:

- Funding for travel by Belfast based boxers to competitions elsewhere – the Council through the Support for Sport Scheme’s Individual Grant helps pay for personal expenses, such as travelling abroad to train, and for participation in governing body approved competitions outside Northern Ireland and this is open to boxers.
- Funding for running costs such as affiliation fees, insurance and utilities costs – whilst many clubs (across all sports) find it difficult to keep their doors open, officers believe that giving clubs funding for running costs is a short term measure and would not promote sustainability within the sport.
- Issue of sectarianism in the support – within the action plans one of the agreed actions is for the Council to work with Co Antrim Boxing to develop and deliver a good relations programme for Belfast based clubs.

Next steps

Subject to Members agreeing the final strategy it is proposed that the Council should formally launch the strategy at an event with our partners. The details of the launch have yet to be worked out but it is likely that we would look at using the Ulster Hall because of its links with boxing and that it would be an evening event to facilitate the attendance of members of the boxing clubs.

3. Resource Implications

Financial

£200,000 per year for 3 years has been agreed for the implementation of the strategy

4. Equality and good relations implications

The strategy has been equality screened in line with the Council's equality process. The screening showed that there were potential adverse impacts on a number of groups including females and people with a disability and mitigating actions have been added to the strategy.

5. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- i. agree the final strategy subject to any comments, amendments or inputs from Members;
- ii. agree to a formal launch of the strategy with our partners; and
- iii. subject to Committee approval, agree that the Council's vetting and selection process is followed to explore the creation and recruitment of one Sports Development Officer and two community based Coaches."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Growing Strategies Update

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the programme of activities which had been formulated to oversee the Council's Growing Communities Strategy. The Members were reminded that a public consultation exercise in this regard had concluded in October, 2012, and that a report on its findings would be incorporated within the Strategy which would be submitted for consideration at a future meeting. In addition, a tendering exercise, which had sought to identify a suitable partner or consortium to deliver growing activities in community gardens, had concluded and an evaluation of the tenders submitted would be carried out in due course and the contract awarded thereafter.

Noted.

Ash Dieback - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 On the 26 October 2012 the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) wrote to the Council informing us of recent confirmed outbreaks of Ash Dieback in England, Scotland and in the Republic of Ireland. The purpose of this

report is to update the Committee on the current situation with regards to Ash Dieback in terms of how this relates to the Council's and city's tree population.

- 1.2 Ash Dieback is a serious disease affecting ash trees and is caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*. The disease can manifest itself through leaf wilting, shoot, twig and branch dieback and bark lesions which ultimately lead to the death of the tree. It is particularly destructive of young ash plants, killing them within one growing season of symptoms becoming visible. Older trees can survive initial attacks, but tend to succumb eventually after several seasons of infection.
- 1.3 This disease can spread from plant to plant, from fallen leaves via leaf mould and through wind borne spores which can move up to 30 kilometres in one year spreading the disease.
- 1.4 Ash dieback has already caused widespread damage to the ash tree populations in continental Europe and is particularly prevalent in Denmark where up to 90% of trees have been infected. If the disease became established it has the capacity to inflict on common ash what Dutch elm disease did to our elm tree population in the late 70's early 80's - that is to essentially wipe out the species as a forest, woodland, amenity and landscape tree.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 DARD has taken the lead role in co coordinating and mapping any outbreaks throughout the province and has set up a protocol for reporting any suspicious symptoms on ash trees.
- 2.2 To date there has been 26 *Chalara fraxinea* confirmed infections in Northern Ireland, all of which that have been linked to recently planted young ash trees and there has been no confirmed cases of a wider infection of the environment
- 2.3 Due to the real threat to our natural environment, DARD has introduced two new pieces of emergency legislation to prevent the introduction and spread of Ash Dieback within Northern Ireland through the movement of ash plants and seeds for planting and from the movement of ash wood and bark:

- The Plant Health (Amendment No3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012
 - The Plant Health (Wood and Bark) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012.
- 2.4 An internal working group has been set up within the Parks and Leisure Department and to date we are in the process of:
- Identifying any young ash tree planted over the past five years and inspecting these for any stem/shoot lesions, leaf necrosis and fruiting bodies associated with Ash Dieback when symptoms are most likely to be observed
 - Identifying the number and location of our ash tree population from existing and ongoing tree survey data throughout our parks
 - Installing information posters throughout our parks
 - Running toolbox talks for key staff, user groups, contractors etc on biochemical measures and good working practices if and when these are required
- 2.5 We have also banned the import and planting of all ash trees within our parks and open spaces.
- 2.6 Ash Dieback is potentially a very serious threat and we have no reason to believe that the consequences of its entering the natural environment here would be any less serious to our ash tree population as is the case in Denmark and throughout continental Europe. It is important to stress that all the reported outbreaks here are associated with young plants linked by trade imports and DARD are dealing with these infections.
- 2.7 At present we do not have any *Chalara fraxinea* Ash Dieback infections within any of our sites and it will not be until spring/summer that we will know if this disease has reached any of our ash trees. The advice received from our colleagues in DARD is to be very vigilant and if we observe symptoms of Ash Dieback, we should inform DARD immediately.
- 2.8 To enable us to report any suspect ash trees the internal working group which is made up of Parks Managers, the Council's Biodiversity Officer and Arboriculturalists, is in the process of setting up a reporting mechanism which will be managed directly by the Arboriculturalists within the Landscape, Planning and Development unit and they will be liaising directly with the DARD team in relation to any suspected outbreaks.

2.3 DARD have confirmed that if any infections brought to their attention by the Council are confirmed through their laboratory analysis, DARD would then issue a 'statutory notice' on the Council and would work closely with officers of the Council offering guidance and advice on how best to manage an outbreak.

2.10 DARD are satisfied with the proactive approach the Council is taking and have suggested working closely with their own surveyors which we recommend doing once we have all the necessary tree data compiled which will identify where our ash trees are located.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 If an outbreak of *Chalara fraxinea* Ash Dieback is confirmed by DARD, there will be costs associated to deal with the management of affected trees and their disposal however we cannot predict what these might be at this time.

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of this report and;

- Note that Council is in the process of taking all necessary steps to inform staff, user groups and the public of the possible threat of *Chalara fraxinea* Ash Dieback infection and will continue to work closely with DARD.
- Agree to resource any remedial work necessary to deal with an outbreak of Ash Dieback
- Note that Officers will undertake inspections of our ash tree stock when symptoms are most likely to be observed and will report back to DARD."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Mary Peters Track

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th September, 2011, it had requested that progress reports be submitted in relation to the refurbishment of the Mary Peters Track. Accordingly, the Director submitted the undernoted update for the Committee's notation:

Opening of the Facility

The Director pointed out that athletic clubs and individuals were anxious to commence usage of the facility. However, he reported that, in order to complete the work and to obtain the necessary approvals from

the governing bodies, it had been necessary to keep the track and in-field areas closed to avoid any potential damage. He indicated that signs would be erected to dissuade the use of the track and field areas until the end of April.

Official Opening

The Director pointed out that the facility would be opened on a date to be determined in the week commencing 25th March, provisionally Thursday, 28th at 10:30 p.m. Since this would be the first project completed under the Investment Programme, it was proposed that the Lord Mayor and the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would open the facility. It was reported that Dame Mary Peters would be in attendance and invited to make a short speech. Invitations would be extended to all Members and staff who had been involved in the project and also to representatives of Northern Ireland Athletics and a number of the clubs which would be using the facility.

Launch Event

The Director reported that an athletics event had been scheduled to launch the facility and that this would take place on 25th June. He proposed that this event would go ahead as scheduled and it would be the first major event at the track and would act as a test event for the World Police and Fire Games. He indicated that, at the time of the meeting, it was proposed that a series of track and field events would be held starting from approximately six p.m. and ending at nine p.m. The events would be wide-ranging and include athletes at all levels including schools, elite athletics and paralympians. It was intended also that the statue of Dame Mary Peters would be unveiled at this event.

Future Management Arrangements

It was reported that a tendering exercise had been undertaken in this regard and an evaluation process was ongoing with a view to awarding the contract by the end of March, 2013.

Noted.

Waterworks Park- Erection of Container

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. **Relevant Background Information**

The Committee will be aware that there is a well established and vibrant fishermen’s group operating within the

Waterworks Park. This grouping has been in existence for several years and has cross community membership. The group has recently approached Council Officers and some elected members requesting the installation of a container at the site adjacent to the upper pond. The purpose of this container would be to provide a storage facility for the equipment used by the group and also to provide a dry area. The proposal excludes the inclusion of heating, water, power and sewage.

The proposal is for a 12m long container. To keep within the constraints under permitted development the height of the container, which will have a pitched roof, must not exceed 4m. In addition the group has asked that the container be masqued as a log cabin to provide a more sympathetic structure to the surrounding environment and in keeping with a more traditional view of fishing. The estimated cost of this would be in the region of £30,000.

The Department of Culture Arts and Leisure has intimated that it may be in a position to provide the necessary funding for this within the current financial year. A proposal has been sent to the Department and is currently under consideration.

2. Key Issues

- 1. The fishermen's group is well established within the park and this proposal will help sustain the group in the future;**
- 2. There is the possibility that other interest groups in the future may approach the Council for similar accommodation;**
- 3. The container and associated security fencing will increase the maintenance responsibility, it is anticipated that routine maintenance will be minimal; however, vandalism to the fencing and / or the container would have a more significant impact, the value of the container is estimated to be in the region of £15,000 and the fencing £7,000, the other £8,000 is the cost of preparation and installation;**
- 4. The estimated time scale for the project to be delivered in approximately four months to allow for procurement, construction and installation;**
- 5. The Committee is being asked to give consent to the installation of the container and fencing and accept the associated maintenance and public liability responsibility associated with it.**

3. **Resource Implications**

Financial Implication

The cost of the container, fencing and installation will be in the region of £30,000 and will be met by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure. The ongoing maintenance will be absorbed within existing budgets.

5. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee consent to the request to provide and locate a container that the cost be met by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure; and agree to accept the associated maintenance and its public liability responsibilities.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Flora Street Walkway

The Committee was reminded that the boundary wall of Avoniel Primary and Nursery Schools abutted on to the Council-owned land at the Flora Street Walkway. It was reported that a section of the existing wall had been deemed unstable by the Belfast Education and Library Board and, accordingly, the Board was proposing to replace the unstable part of the wall with a similar-type structure. To enable this work to be carried out, the Board had sought the Council's permission to close-off an area measuring approximately 6 by 70 metres in length, for a period of ten weeks, on the Council-owned side of the Walkway. The Director reported that, if approved, the Council would enter into a licence agreement with the Board which would oversee access, insurance and re-instatement work at the site.

The Committee acceded to the request and agreed that an appropriate licence agreement be entered into with the Belfast Education and Library Board to enable the work to be carried out by its contractor and that an appropriate weekly charge would be levied for the use of the land.

Zoo Playground - Update

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th August, 2012, it had been advised that an application for assistance to re-develop the playground at the Belfast Zoo had received initial approval under the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Tourism Development Scheme. Accordingly, the Council had prepared a full business case for the project prior to it undergoing a full economic appraisal. At its meeting on 24th August, 2012, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed to include £215,000 of match funding within its capital programme to assist in the delivery of the project.

The Assistant Director advised the Committee that it had been anticipated that work on the project would have commenced by early 2013. However, the Tourist Board had received recently the draft economic appraisal for the project and it, viz., the Tourist Board, had indicated that it would require additional time to review the report. Accordingly, she reported that the commencement of the work at the Zoo had been delayed slightly and it was likely that it would not begin until September, 2013, with an anticipated completion date of springtime, 2014.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Holiday Closures 2013/2014

The Committee considered the undernoted report in respect of the above-mentioned matter:

“1 Key Issues

The following holiday arrangements are proposed for the period April 2013 – March 2014 for sites as follows:

Cemeteries and Crematorium Administration

<u>Date</u>	<u>City Hall / site offices opening hours</u>
Sunday 31 March 2013	Closed
Monday 1 April 2013	Closed
Tuesday 2 April 2013*	8.30am – 12.30 pm
Monday 6 May 2013	Closed
Monday 27 May 2013	Closed
Thursday 11 July 2013	Open normal hours
Friday 12 July 2013	Closed
Monday 15 July 2013*	8.30am – 12.30pm
Monday 26 August 2013	Closed
Tuesday 24 December 2013#	8.30am – 3pm
Christmas Day 2013	Closed
Thursday 26 December 2013*	8.30am – 12.30pm
Wednesday 1 January 2014	Closed
Thursday 2 January 2014*	8.30am – 12.30pm
Monday 17 March 2014	Closed

(*Dundonald 10am - 12.30pm #Dundonald 10am – 2pm)

Roselawn Crematorium and Cemeteries Operations

<u>Date</u>	<u>Crematorium</u>	<u>Cemetery burials</u>
Sunday 31 March 2013	Closed	Closed
Monday 1 April 2013	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 April 2013	8.00 am – 12pm	9.00am - 11.00am
Monday 6 May 2013	Closed	Closed
Monday 27 May 2013	Closed	Closed
Friday 12 July 2013	Closed	Closed
Monday 15 July 2013	8.00 am – 12pm	9.00am - 11.00am
Monday 26 August 2013	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 24 December 2013	8am – 2pm	9am – 2pm
Christmas Day 2013	Closed	Closed
Thursday 26 December 2013	8.00 am – 12pm	9.00am - 11.00am
Wednesday 1 January 2014	Closed	Closed
Thursday 2 January 2014	8.30am – 1.30pm	8.00am – 12.00pm
Monday 17 March 2014	Closed	Closed

*96 Additional cremations slots have been available since November 2012. Members are reminded that cemeteries are open to the public as open spaces 365 days a year.

Belfast Zoo:

The zoo will close on Christmas and Boxing Day only.

Leisure Services

As per the January 2012 report the majority of centres close on bank holidays however some centres remain open to facilitate the smaller customer throughput and these are chosen on a geographical basis and rotated each year. This practise will continue for 2013/14. As discussed at last month's committee specific events or programmes will be developed where appropriate to try and improve the usage of our sites at these times and this will be kept under review.

Staff training has also proven difficult operationally for mandatory training or briefing sessions on operational issues. Members are asked during December to allow a training day to be allocated per Leisure centre. Any other short closures will be delegated to the director to facilitate operational reviews and improvements.”

The Committee approved the proposed closure arrangements for 2013/2014.

Bereavement Administration

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 14th February, it had considered an update report which provided an overview of the operational reviews which had been carried out as part of the Parks and Leisure Improvement Programme. At that meeting, a Member had expressed concern in relation to the administrative arrangements which had been put in place at the Council's cemeteries and requested that a report, particularly with regard to the public office at the City Cemetery, be submitted to a future meeting. Accordingly, the Committee considered a report in this regard.

The Director pointed out that the Committee, at its meeting on 11th October, 2012, had approved the implementation of revised shift patterns to oversee the administrative management of both the Dundonald and City Cemeteries. He reported that those arrangements were still in the process of being implemented and that recruitment exercises had been completed recently in relation to the appointment of Cemetery Administrators. The Director explained that it would be somewhat premature to review the effectiveness of the revised arrangements until the amended staffing arrangements had been implemented fully.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hartley,
Seconded by Councillor Garrett and

Resolved – That the Committee notes the progress achieved to date in respect of the revised administrative arrangements at the Council's cemeteries and requests that a review on the effectiveness of the changes be undertaken six months after their full implementation.

Apprenticeships in Parks Scheme

The Committee was reminded that one of the aims of the Council's Investment Programme had been to develop opportunities for employment and skills development, one of which was the development and implementation of an Apprenticeship in Parks Scheme. The Assistant Director outlined the aims and objectives of the Scheme and indicated that steps had been taken to recruit three horticultural apprentices and it was anticipated that the successful applicants would commence their three-year placement with the Council at the beginning of July, 2013. She outlined the scope of the programme which the apprentices would undertake and pointed out that the Scheme would be reviewed half-way through its initial three-year period and, if deemed appropriate, a report would be presented to the Committee in due course.

The Committee welcomed the introduction of the Scheme and noted the information which had been provided.

Memorial Safety Process - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

In 2008, the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to the implementation of a pilot programme of work on memorial safety and inspection in the City Cemetery and an interim policy framework for improving memorial safety. The implementation of the pilot programme was carried out for approximately nine months and relied on the use of existing staffing levels at the City Cemetery.

The implementation of the pilot programme coincided with the introduction of a Departmental improvement programme. During this time an operational efficiency review of the Parks and Cemeteries Service was carried out which resulted in the restructuring and movement of some of the key staff associated with the roll out of the pilot programme. The emphasis of the initial pilot programme related to the inspection, management and maintenance stages of the memorial safety process. Data and evidence gathered as part of the pilot programme revealed the need to update and review the memorial safety process and concentrate on the installation stage as well. This report recommends the introduction of an all-encompassing dual management approach and procedures around the memorial safety process (installation, inspection, management and maintenance).

2. Key Issues

The Council as the City’s burial authority has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Northern Ireland Order (1978) to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and responsibilities towards members of the public and other contractors who visit our cemeteries.

City Cemetery pilot programme results

A basic evaluation and review of the evidence and data gathered as part of the pilot programme reveals the following results, limitation and issues;

- Detailed inspection reports were captured for eight grave sections within the City Cemetery – Grave sections L, M, N, P, Q, R, F2 and G2.

- There is the need to focus on the memorial headstone installation stage as there is currently a lack of awareness of and adherence to installation procedures by monumental masons, including the following:
 - The cemetery office not informed when headstones are being erected
 - Headstones being erected with no permission
 - The fixing method used to erect some of the 'newer' headstones does not adhere to the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Practice.
- There is a greater risk of injury to staff and the general public from the memorial headstones erected within the last 15-20 years.
- There is a requirement to allocate adequate financial and human resources to successfully carry out all the duties associated with the various stages of the memorial safety process (installation, inspection, management and maintenance of memorials).

Current position

The Council is responsible for eight cemeteries in the greater Belfast area with burials mainly carried out at three locations (City, Roselawn and Dundonald). There are currently over 358,140 burials within these sites. To date a total of 5,676 graves have already been inspected at the City Cemetery as part of the pilot programme.

Roselawn Cemetery is currently the only cemetery operating by the Council that has new burial ground available. Section W is the current new section which has just over 3,000 graves in it. With the recent development of Section Y (2,800 graves approximately) the imminent development of Section Z (1,500 graves approximately) and 28 acres of undeveloped future burial ground, the life span of the cemetery in relation to the current number of new burials per year is 30-35 years.

In 2012 there were a total of 254 new graves sold at Roselawn. This figure shows the large number of current and future memorial headstones at Roselawn Cemetery based on the assumption that 80% of all graves have a headstone erected. In addition to this Roselawn, Dundonald and the City cemeteries continue to have new and/ or replacement headstones erected on existing graves on an ongoing basis.

3. Proposed approach and next steps

Based on the current position outlined above, the Department is proposing to develop and introduce a dual management approach and procedures around the memorial safety process which will include some of the following key priority areas of work:

Approach to carrying out memorial inspection, management and maintenance

- Review and update the interim policy framework of memorial safety and inspection;
- Roll out staff training across the three main cemeteries (Roselawn, City and Dundonald) in memorial safety inspection. This will be carried out by an accredited trainer who works to the National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) and the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) Code of Practise.
- Introduce and roll out the reviewed memorial safety and inspection programme over a nine month period to a section within Roselawn and Dundonald cemeteries in order to determine financial and human resources implications. This feedback will combine with the existing data and information gathered at the City Cemetery to help inform the extent and the actual costs of a long term programme of work around the safety and inspection of memorials.
- Review the growing problem of the appearance of unauthorised memorials within the three cemeteries and to try and recover lost income either from the sculptor if known and/or the grave owner.

Approach and procedures for the installation of memorials

- In conjunction with the Policy and Business Development Unit (PBDU) and Legal Services develop a robust set of Rules and Regulations for monumental masons, which defines clearly a set of procedures right from the initial application process for monumental masons and families' right through to the compliance and monitoring stage of the erected memorial.
- Introduce a central approved list of NAMM and/ or BRAMM accredited sculptors and masons who will be permitted to carry out work around the memorial

safety process within cemeteries. All associated cemetery partners including customers, sculptors, masons and grave owners will be contacted and informed of the new procedures, outlining the subsequent implications and given the option of contacting the Council for further assistance in relation to meeting the procedural requirements.

- Sculptors and/ or masons who are unable to produce adequate evidence of being a preferred supplier will be refused entry onto Council Cemeteries to carry out any work.
- Introduce a simple sign in and sign out process for sculptors and masons within the cemeteries, which will also prompt a monitoring and compliance check on the installation of memorial headstones.

It is envisaged that a detailed plan of work around the development and introduction of the dual management approach and procedures for the memorial safety process will be developed over the next couple of months. This will realistically outline a phased approach to carrying out priority areas of work and explore any associated financial and human resources implications.

4. Resource Implications

The extent of the human resources implications will be examined in detail in order to introduce and roll out the reviewed memorial safety inspection for a nine month period within Roselawn and Dundonald cemeteries. Some of the options to be explored include the following:

- Use of Cemetery Operatives; or
- Recruit additional staff which may include seasonal staff.

There will be a financial cost attached to staff training across the three main cemeteries which will be examined over the next couple of months. Provision for the financial and human resource costs associated with the development and implementation of this approach will be reflected in site estimates for 2013/14. At this time the full extent and actual costs associated with the long term programme of work is unknown: hence the need for an additional nine months inspection regime within Roselawn and Dundonald.

Financial and human resource implications for the approach and procedures for the installation of memorials

Work on the development of the approach and procedures for the installation of memorials can begin straight away by the City Park Manager, Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager, Policy and Business Development Unit, Legal Services and the Corporate Occupational Health and Safety Unit. The financial implications in relation to IT support systems will need to be reviewed. Existing staff will be used to develop and introduce the approach and procedure but the following human resource issues would need to be more fully explored:

- Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing procedures;
- Responsibility for ensuring compliance
- Cemetery office, management and business support implications

5. **Recommendations**

- Agree to the development and introduction of a dual management approach and procedures around the memorial safety process including installation, inspection, management and maintenance.
- Note that an update report will be brought to Committee in May 2013 detailing an annual programme of work (April 2013 – March 2014) and exploring associated financial and human resource implications.
- Agree that a rigorous evaluation is carried out in January 2014 to ascertain the long term actual costs and programme of work associated with the sustainable implementation of a rigorous Memorial Safety process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Type 'C' Graves in Roselawn Cemetery

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. **Relevant Background Information**

Currently at Roselawn Cemetery there are two Grave types available, viz., Type A - full depth grave for up to four earth burials and/or cremated remains; or Type B – suitable for two earth burials and/or cremated remains.

2. **Key Issues**

Within a few of the existing sections of the cemetery there are areas of ground that cannot accommodate any earth burials. This is due either to the presence of a seam of ground rock three ft below (Section D) or close proximity to the water table four ft down (Section W). This ground is currently lying unused although as it is incorporated into the layout of the adjoining graves they do have concrete raft foundations laid.

The Memorial Tree scheme is no longer available at Roselawn Cemetery and the Manager has received requests from bereaved families for an alternative disposal option on site for cremated remains. One option is a grave to hold cremated remains only. Indications from some recently bereaved families are that they would purchase this type of disposal option.

As this unused ground is already laid out within the existing burial sections it could immediately form without any expense incurred by the Department a new type of grave that would hold cremated remains only - to be called Type C - and because the concrete raft foundation is already in place headstones can be erected immediately after purchase.

When cremated remains are buried in a traditional grave the opening is dug down to 2 ft and the urn interred. Each traditional grave is 7 feet long x 4 feet 6 inches wide. The potential Type C graves are also this size and could accommodate up to 12 sets of cremated remains. This is a good utilization of the grave and ensures sustainably and continuity for families as a family grave for generations.

3. **Resource Implications**

There are currently 25 graves identified in Section D and to date 34 graves have been identified in Section W with potentially more as the next part of Section W opens on the far side of Lake Two - the last laid out rows are close to the underlying water table and therefore unsuitable for earth burials.

The ground is already laid out in grass and is maintained to the same high grounds maintenance standard as the surrounding area. To establish a Type C grave would provide additional income for the Department in the selling of each grave, from the interment of each set of cremated remains

and from the erection and foundation fees for a headstone and would also utilise areas of unused ground.

Currently the existing 2012/13 Scale of Charges are:

Type	Belfast Resident	Non-Belfast Resident
Type A grave	£515	£1625
Type B grave	£250	£788
Fee for grant	£36	£75
Burial of cremated remains in a grave	£71	£225
Fee to erect a memorial	£58	£115
Type 111 foundation	£169	£337
Type V1 foundation	£338	£676

It is proposed to charge £150.00 for a Type C grave for Belfast Residents and £472.50 for Non-Belfast Residents - the current charging structure is treble charge plus 5% for the Non-Belfast Residents. These prices would then increase for the 2013/14 Scale of Charges effective from 1 April 2013.

5 . Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the content of this report namely:-

- To agree the introduction of a Type C grave at Roselawn Cemetery which would be for the interment of cremated remains only
- To agree the proposed cost of £150.00 for Belfast Residents for 2012/13 and £472.50 for Non-Belfast Residents. These prices would increase in line with the scale of charges increase for 2013/14."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Dog Control Orders - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011 strengthens the legislative powers available to district

councils to help them deal more effectively with a range of local environmental quality problems, including dog control.

- 1.2 Members are reminded that under Part 5 of the Act, Council's may create up to four separate orders to help manage issues associated with dogs in their area. Dog Control Orders can be made in respect of any land in the district council area, subject to certain exemptions, and can relate to the following four matters:
 - (a) Dog Fouling;
 - (b) Requiring dogs to be kept on a lead in designated areas;
 - (c) Excluding dogs from designated areas; and
 - (d) Limiting the number of dogs a person can be in control of at any one time.
- 1.3 A Dog Control Officer Group was established to consider guidance and develop proposals to implement Dog Control Orders in Belfast. The group is made up of officers from Health & Environmental Services Department, Parks and Leisure Department and Legal Services. As the enacting of dog control orders requires changes to existing practices and procedure, the development of staff capacity and effective communication with the public on the implications of the orders, it was decided to implement the orders in stages.
- 1.4 In February 2012 the Committee further agreed that implementation of the procedures for making new dog control orders would be undertaken on a phased basis and that the initial order would relate to section 40 (3)(a) of the Act (Fouling of land by dogs and removal of dog faeces).
- 1.5 At its August 2012 meeting therefore, the Parks and Leisure Committee adopted a recommendation that a Dog Control Order be made in respect of dog fouling. The Dogs (Fouling of Land by Dogs) (Belfast) Order 2012 became operative on 1 October 2012, replacing the dog fouling provisions contained in the Litter (NI) Order 1994.
- 1.6 The Order limiting the number of dogs which a person may take on to land was considered at the Health and Environmental Services Committee of 7 November 2012. The recommendation to limit the number of dogs to four was subjected to public consultation and agreement to make the order was confirmed by the Health and Environmental Services February 2013 committee. It received full Council approval on 4 March 2013 and is due to become operative on 1 April 2013.

1.7 At its November 2012 meeting, the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed the recommended approach to deciding whether or not to make a dog control order excluding dogs from cemeteries, children's playgrounds and playing fields or pitches in the city. This order was subjected to public consultation at the same time as the order limiting the number of dogs a person can take on to land.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Consultation on the proposed Dogs (Exclusion of dogs from land) Order raised a number of concerns from the public. The draft Order was widely interpreted as suggesting that dogs would be excluded from whole sites when it actually only referred to playing surfaces within sites. This was particularly an issue with park users who generally use local playing fields to exercise their dogs.

2.2 The Council therefore provided clarification on the meaning of "exclusions" within the draft Order and stressed that the exclusion from land Order was, in effect, repeating the terms of existing bye-laws whilst giving the Council stronger enforcement powers.

2.3 Issues were raised about the need for facilities to allow dogs off lead. This refers to the order requiring dogs to be kept on a lead in designated areas which was still under consideration by the Dog Control group and proposals had not been brought forward at this stage. It would appear that some confusion had arisen from this order being implemented in adjoining Councils and the perception of many people that this was also being applied to Belfast City Council sites.

2.4 Due to the public response the consultation on the exclusion from lands order was suspended to allow further clarification and consideration of the issues raised.

2.5 The Dog Control Group has considered the issues raised and recognises that clear communication on the meaning and application of the orders is essential going forward. Also, given the issues raised about designated areas for dogs on lead, consideration has been given to trialling areas for allowing dogs off lead.

2.6 To help inform the implementation of further dog control orders it is therefore proposed that a pilot project is undertaken to trial this approach in the North of the city. It is

proposed that the pilot would be in operation from June 2013 and would be monitored for a period of six months.

- 2.7 Findings and recommendations from the pilot and recommendations on the further implementation of dog control orders would be brought back to Committee in January 2014.

3. **Resource Implications**

The estimated cost of providing a designated area for dogs to run off lead is in the region of £8,000 - £10,000. This can be accommodated with existing budgets.

5. **Recommendations**

Committee are asked to note the updated position regarding the implementation of Dog Control Orders and the recommendation to pilot areas for dogs off lead.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Barnett Demesne

Request from County Grand Lodge of Belfast

The Director reported that the County Grand Lodge of Belfast had written to the Council regarding the use of the Barnett Demesne for its Belfast demonstrations on 12th July, 2013. He advised the Committee that the Council had granted the use of the site to the County Grand Lodge for the 12th July demonstrations in previous years and there had been no significant difficulties or problems reported. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to accede to the request, subject to the County Grand Lodge adhering to the Council's conditions and to the completion of an appropriate legal agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

World Police and Fire Games

The Committee was advised that the organisers of the World Police and Fire Games had requested permission to use Barnett Demesne for their holding of a middle distance orienteering race on Thursday, 8th August, 2013. It was reported that The Queen's University Playing Fields would be used for registration and changing facilities and that the race would take place within the woodland and pathways of the park.

The Committee acceded to the request, subject to the drawing-up of an appropriate legal agreement and to the payment of the appropriate hire charge.

Charity Football Match

The Director advised the Committee that an officer from within the Department had requested permission to host a charity football game at the Danny Blanchflower Stadium to raise funds for an orphanage in The Ukraine. He explained that it was anticipated that a game between teams representing Belfast and Dublin City Councils would be staged on a date to be determined, subject to Council approval and to the obtaining of appropriate sponsorship. The Director reported that the officer had requested, given that the match would raise money for charity, that the Committee would agree to waive the costs associated with hiring the Stadium for the game and permit also the use of the Council's name and, if necessary, its logo on the occasion of the game.

The Committee agreed, in this instance, to waive the fee for the hire of the Stadium and agreed further that the Council's name and logo could be used on promotional material, sponsorship forms and shirts for the event, subject to the requirements of the Corporate Communications Section.

Chairman