



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Request for use of Botanic Lower: Polo in the City
Date:	15 March 2012
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Lynne McCreery, Community Parks Outreach Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the free use of Botanic Lower for a charity fundraiser “Polo in the City” event in August 2012 by Mencap NI.</p> <p>The first-ever Polo In The City event took place in August 2011 when more than 600 people enjoyed a day of sport and entertainment on Stranmillis Embankment in the lower Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>The event in 2011 was run by and in aid of Mencap in Northern Ireland and raised almost £10,000 for the charity. All the money raised by the charity is spent supporting both children and adults with a learning disability living here in N.I</p> <p>The event secured a high level of brand sponsorship and involvement from Charles Hurst, Veuve Clicquot, House of Fraser, CBS Astor Buller, AirCore and Walker Communications and received high media coverage.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>This event brings together sporting enthusiasts, Mencap supporters and groups of friends from all across the city and provides a platform for a new sport (Polo) to be enjoyed in the heart of Belfast city.</p> <p>The 2012 event will take place on 25 August from 2pm-12pm and the organisers are aiming to sell 1000 tickets for this year’s event. The build for the event (marquees) would need to start from Tuesday 21 August and</p>

the deconstruct would take place on Sunday 26 August. The exact finishing time of the event will be determined by the requirements to the entertainments licence.

There will be approximately 20 horses at the event, accompanied by the teams (this will require a small holding area)

Sponsorship has already been secured from a range of interested businesses.

Mencap have confirmed that they will undertake to do the following in order to make the event as safe and successful as possible;-

- employ a security firm (EventSec) to provide security cover during the build stage and during the event
- employ a waste management company to ensure the grounds are kept clean throughout the event and that clear up is complete by 12 noon on Sunday 26 August.
- ensure that the local residents are informed about the event one month prior to the event and that on the day the event will not cause a nuisance or be inconvenient to those residents

Entry for the event is proposed to be set at £65.00 and tickets will be on sale from 1st March 2012 (subject to Council approval) and they hope to attract a bigger audience this year (1000 people).

In addition Mencap NI wish to sell alcohol from the start of the event at 2pm and have committed that the bar supplier (Drinksology) would ensure the enforcement of a strict bar policy ensuring that the amount of alcohol to patrons is limited and served in plastic bottles/glasses.

Mencap NI propose that the event will run from 2pm-12.00 midnight, subject to the requisite approval being obtained for both entertainments and licensing.

Officers are also planning to organise a free family fun day in the park in conjunction with Friends of Botanic and Mencap NI, to take place around the date of this planned event.

It is anticipated that damage to the grass areas will occur during the event from the marquees and the polo matches. A legal agreement and a bond of £10,000 will guarantee that the site is suitably reinstated at the organisers expense. Mencap NI will ensure that the cost of the ground repair is paid in full to Belfast City Council prior to the event so it can commence on Sunday 26 August.

This event is in line with both Council objectives around economic development and Parks and Leisure departmental objectives in terms of animating the city's parks and increasing community activities and access to the parks.

3	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> This request is for free use of the site as the event is for charity fundraising and the organisers have agreed to carry the cost of reinstatement of the grounds as outlined above at section 2.9.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Some additional human resources were required to facilitate these requests – all managed within the current resources.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> As outlined above at section 2.9.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	There are no known equality or good relations implications in relation to this request.

5	Recommendations
	<p>It is recommended that Committee grant approval for the free use of Lower Botanic Gardens for the Polo in the City event on condition that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The event organisers liaise with the Council’s Health and Environmental Services Department and ensure that all health and safety requirements are met to the Council’s satisfaction including an event management plan and risk assessments. 2. Resolve all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction. 3. Pay the stipulated bond. 4. Complete an appropriate legal agreement and meet all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing.

6	Decision Tracking
	N/A

7	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8	Documents Attached
	None.