



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Parks and Leisure Committee |
| Subject: | Free use of a room for Grove Dance School |
| Date: | 13 September 2012 |
| Reporting Officer: | Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure |
| Contact Officer: | Paula Irvine, Community Parks Outreach Manager |

| 1. | Relevant Background Information |
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| | <p>The Parks and Leisure department has received a request from the Friends of Grove Park (FOG) for free use of a room in Grove Bowling Pavilion, on a Friday evening for three hours from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, for thirty seven weeks during the period 14 September 2012 to 20 September 2013.</p> <p>The FOG formed in 2008 and, over the past 4 years has secured substantial internal and external funding to deliver a wide range of activities in the park such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• annual fun day events• annual Christmas tea dance for the older community• the construction of a community garden• the formation of a weekly dance school for local youths. <p>The dance school commenced approximately 1 year ago and was specifically aimed at engaging young people who were involved in antisocial behaviour and vandalism in the Park. The dance school takes place on a Friday evening between 6:00pm and 9:00pm over a thirty seven week period during the academic year. Given that a room is currently available in Grove Bowling Pavilion at the times needed by the dance group, an informal arrangement has been operating during the bowling season extended opening hours, to assist the group for an interim period.</p> |

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| | <p>The dance school attracts a core weekly attendance of twenty young people, which is regularly supplemented by a number of other young people who attend less frequently. Successes include the group entering several dance competitions and performing dance demonstrations at community events that have taken place in the Grove Park and the surrounding area. Additionally, Council antisocial behaviour statistics demonstrate that antisocial behaviour in relation to youth behaviour in the area has decreased.</p> <p>To date the dance school's primary funder has been the Crescent Arts Centre, through direct financial grant aid and contributions in kind by way of free dance coaching.</p> <p>FOG have identified to Council officers that funding the dance school is becoming increasingly difficult and have been organising fund raising activities to raise much needed funds to assist in sustaining the dance school . Given this, a request for assistance has been submitted to the Council for free use of a room for three hours on Friday evenings.</p> <p>Free use of a dance space will contribute greatly to ensuring the sustainability of the dance school and Council officers will continue to work with the FOG to indentify future relevant funding sources.</p> |
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| 2. | Key Issues |
| | <p>Free use of the bowling pavilion would result in a potential loss of income to the park whilst incurring expenditure for overheads including staff, electricity and heating. However, the bowling pavilion would otherwise be closed on a Friday evening and allowing this use would ensure a positive community activity taking place in the premises.</p> <p>Council officers have considered the option to manage this request and have identified that the total cost to the Council for thirty seven weeks free use of the facility would be £4,728.60.</p> <p>Council officers have explored the availability of suitable accommodation in Grove Health and Wellbeing Centre during the times requested however no appropriate rooms are vacant.</p> <p>Discussions have occurred with the FOG regarding key holding responsibilities for the bowling pavilion, which would alleviate the cost of overheads to the Council. Similar arrangements exist across the city with other partners and friends groups. Upon completion of the appropriate health and safety and other relevant training, the FOG are content to assume key holding responsibilities for the Grove Bowling Pavilion.</p> |

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| 3. | Resource Implications |
| | <p><u>Financial</u> Approving free use of the bowling pavilion would incur a weekly loss of income of £54.00. Additionally a cost of £73.80 a week for overheads, including salaries, would be incurred which would have to be absorbed by the Parks operational budget. The total cost to the Council over a thirty seven week period would be in excess of £4,728.60.</p> <p>Approving free use of the bowling pavilion with key holding responsibility would incur a loss of income to the Park of £54.00 per week. The total loss of income over a thirty seven week period would be £1,998. Excluding salaries additional costs for overheads such as additional heating and lighting would have to be absorbed by the parks operational budget.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Officer time and salary will be required to accommodate additional opening hours on a Friday evening if key holding responsibilities are not delegated to FOG.</p> <p>If key holding responsibilities are delegated to FOG there will be no human resource implications.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Facilitating the request ensures that the community are actively using our bowling pavilion during a period when it is usually left empty.</p> |

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| 4. | Equality and good relations implications |
| | There are no equality or good relations implications anticipated. |

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| 5. | Recommendations |
| | <p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report • Approve the FOG dance group's request for free use of the bowling pavilion, with delegated key holding responsibility, for 3 hours each Friday evening for a thirty seven week period commencing on 14 September 2012 and expiring on 20 September 2013. |

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| 6. | Decision Tracking |
| | A report updating Members will be presented to Committee in August 2013 by Paula Irvine, Community Parks Outreach Manager. |

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| 7. | Key to Abbreviations |
| | FOG - Friends of Grove Park |

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| 8. | Documents Attached |
| | None |