



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Request for use of Botanic Lower: Polo in the City
Date:	9 May 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Cailín Lynn, Community Parks Project Coordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Following on from the success of Polo In The City in 2011 and 2012 this report is seeking to seek Committee approval for the free use of Botanic Lower for a charity fundraiser "Polo in the City" event in August 2013.
1.2	Polo In The City is a one day social and sporting event run by Mencap in Northern Ireland. The event has the overall aim of raising awareness and funds for the learning disability charity. 2013 will see the event enter its third year at Botanic Lower playing fields.
1.3	Building on the success of the past events, Mencap are confident that they will sell 700 tickets at £65 each and secure 8 VIP pod sales at £2200 each. Gross income is estimated at £70,000. All money raised by the charity will be spent supporting both children and adults with a learning disability living here in Northern Ireland.
1.4	The event this year has secured a high level of brand sponsorship and involvement from Veuve Clicquot, AirCore, House of Fraser and CityBeat Radio. The 2012 event generated media coverage in excess of £250,000 spanning across radio, web and print media. It is envisaged media coverage for 2013 event will be as substantial with 100% positive coverage.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	This event brings together sporting enthusiasts, Mencap supporters and groups of friends from all across the country providing a platform for Polo to be enjoyed in the heart of Belfast City.

2.2	The event will take place on Saturday 31 st August from 2pm-12 midnight, subject to entertainment licence and alcohol licence. The organisers hope to attract a larger audience this year of 850 people and tickets will be on sale from Tuesday 4 th June 2013.
2.3	The build for the event is scheduled to begin on Sunday 25 th August with the deconstruction being complete on Sunday 1 st September 2013
2.4	There will be approximately 20 horses at the event, accompanied by the teams and a veterinary physician.
2.5	Mencap have confirmed that they will undertake to do the following in order to make the event as safe and successful as possible;- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a security firm to safeguard participants, equipment and the marquees. • Employ a waste management company to ensure grounds are kept clean throughout the event and that clear up is complete by Sunday 1st September 2013. • Ensure local residents are informed about the event one month prior to the event; ensure that there is no inconvenience or nuisance caused to residents on the day of event.
2.6	In addition Mencap wish to sell alcohol from 2pm at the event and are committed that the bar supplier Drinksology, will ensure the enforcement of a strict bar policy ensuring that the amount of alcohol to patrons is limited and served in plastic bottles / glasses.
2.7	Mencap propose that the event will run from 2pm – 12midnight, subject to the requisite approval being obtained for both entertainments and alcohol licensing.
2.8	Based on past events, some damage to the grass areas will occur during the event from the marquees and the polo matches. A legal agreement and a bond of £5,200 between Mencap and BCC will guarantee that the site is suitably reinstated at Mencap's expense if damage occurs. Mencap would ensure that the cost of the ground repair is paid in full to BCC prior to the event so it can be reinstated on Monday 2 nd September 2013.
2.9	An event management plan will be completed and forwarded to the Council 14 days in advance with the final risk assessments being completed 24hrs before the event begins.
2.10	This event is in line with both the Council's 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
3.1	<u>Financial</u> This request is for free use of the site as the event is fundraising for charity and

	the organisers have agreed to carry a cost of reinstatement of the grounds as outlined above in section 2.8.
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> Human resources will be required to facilitate these requests – all managed within the current resources.
3.3	<u>Asset and Other Implications</u> As outlined above in section 2.8.

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

5.	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee grant approval for the free use of Lower Botanic Gardens for the Polo in the City event on condition that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event organisers liaise with the Council’s Health and Environmental Services Department and ensure that all health and safety requirements are met to Council’s satisfaction including an event management plan and risk assessments. • Resolve all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction. • Pay the stipulated bond. • Complete an appropriate legal agreement and meet all statutory requirements including entertainment licensing. <p>It is recommended that Members authorise the Director, under the Scheme of Delegation for future Polo in the City events to take place in Lower Botanic Playing Fields.</p>

6.	Decision Tracking
6.1	All actions will be completed by the Community Parks Outreach Manager and Project Coordinator.

7.	Key to Abbreviations
7.1	BCC – Belfast City Council

8.	Documents Attached
8.1	None