



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Events in Parks 2010-2013
Date:	8 August 2013
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Caroline Wilson, Neighbourhood and Development Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>At its meeting in June 2013 the Committee requested information on the number and location of events which had been held in Council parks over the past five years.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>Over the course of the past five years a large number of events have been held in parks and open spaces across the city. This includes a number of large-scale, well attended cultural events that have since become an established part of the annual calendar of events in Belfast. Park events are related to the Council's objectives in regards to the environment and creating vibrant neighbourhoods across the city. They are also beneficial for local communities as they attract visitors and boost the neighbourhood's economy.</p> <p>To provide a better understanding of the type of events that are held in our parks, the department developed an events database in late 2009. The information in this paper provides a summary of the events recorded in this database in the period January 2010 (when the database was introduced) to the end of June 2013.</p> <p>It should be noted that this type of data collection is still in its first phase and work is ongoing to ensure that the data captured across the city is accurate, timely and useful for planning purposes. Officers are still developing the formats for this information to be presented to Members.</p> <p>During the period January 2010 – June 2013 a total of 327 events were recorded as being held in our parks and open spaces. The following summarises this data:</p>

Breakdown by year:	
2010	13
2011	137
2012	122
2013	55 (to date)
	327

Of these 327 events, nearly half (161) were facilitated by external organisations and a significant number (114) were events held by external organisations who receive funding from Belfast City Council. Events hosted by the Council only account for 16%. The location of these events are spread across the city:

Breakdown by Parks Service operational area:	
North	70 (21% of total events in parks)
East	87 (27%)
South/West	144 (44%)
Multiple areas	26 (8%)

Most popular sites:	
Ormeau Park	62 (19% of total events)
Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park	30 (9%)
Botanic Gardens	25 (8%)
Falls Park	19 (6%)
Barnett Demesne	15 (5%)
Victoria Park	12 (4%)
Bridges Urban Sports Park	12 (4%)
Cave Hill Country Park	9 (3%)
Alexandra Park	8 (2%)
Waterworks	8 (2%)

There is a wide range of events held, that fit well across the Council's strategic objectives, particularly related to addressing health inequalities and creating attractive, vibrant neighbourhoods:

Most popular types of events:	
Fun Day	29
Cross Country	23
Sports Tournament/Activity	22
Fun Run	18
Cycling	17
General Event	17
Nature-Themed Event	17
Watch this Space	16
Sponsored Walk	15
Picnic/BBQ	13
Others (cultural events; conservation; orienteering; community; fairs; rambling; photography; etc.)	140

	<p>These events are organised by a range of charities, community groups, schools and sports clubs.</p> <p>The Department will continue to develop the events database to ensure that the full range of events that are held in our parks and open spaces are recorded and to help us develop events across the city.</p> <p>Next steps Commercial events located in our parks and open spaces, such as Tennants Vital, Polo in the City and Funderland, are not captured on this database. In the past, commercial operators have tended to opt for locations in the south of the city, mostly Boucher Road Playing Fields and Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>In order to strengthen and diversify the range of events, as well as build a commercial market for alternative locations, it is proposed that the Council proactively establishes a number of strategic arts partnerships, to deliver high-quality, large-scale (5,000+), family-orientated cultural events. This would allow the Council to showcase a range of its open spaces to attract commercial operators to parks and open spaces across the city.</p> <p>A proposal on this will be brought to Committee later in the autumn, in order that it is in place for the budget planning cycle for 2014/15.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial:</u> None</p> <p><u>Human Resources:</u> None</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications:</u> None</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	The Parks Events policy was previously screened and no differential equality impacts were identified.

5.	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to note this report.

6.	Decision Tracking
	None

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	None

8.	Documents Attached
	None