



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	St. Patrick's Day Operations 2014
Date:	10 April 2014
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The following report outlines detail of the actions and activities over the St. Patrick's weekend and bank holiday in relation to keeping our parks and leisure spaces safe and free of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>In the last number of years the Council has been working closely with its partners to coordinate resources to effectively tackle any antisocial behaviour occurring during St. Patrick's day (and where appropriate the days around it) across the city.</p> <p>This year, as before, preparatory meetings were held with the PSNI, NIFRS, Ambulance Service, Queens University and Ulster University and a comprehensive operations plan was drawn up to support effective communications during the St. Patrick's holiday weekend.</p>

2.	Key Issues
	<p>The aims of the St. Patrick's weekend operations were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate with local communities, elected representatives and revellers about the St. Patrick's weekend operation.• Provide a safe environment for residents, communities and revellers to enjoy and partake in St. Patrick's celebrations across the city.• Tackle crime, on-street drinking and antisocial behaviour.• Enforce breaches of local bye laws and other legislation.• Improve the public image of Belfast as a safe city to socialise in.

	<p>The principal areas given attention over the period included the Holylands, the City Centre (during the St. Patricks Day parade and concert) and the parks throughout the city over the St. Patrick's bank holiday weekend.</p> <p>The Parks and Leisure Department ensured officers were contributing to the development of a city wide plan for the St. Patrick's weekend operations. The coordinated operations in parks began at 7:30am on Saturday 15 March and ended at 7:30pm on Monday 17 March 2014. The St Patrick's Weekend Operations Brief – March 2014 which outlines the operations is attached as appendix 1.</p> <p>Parks operations were based at the City Hall Emergency Co-ordinating Centre on 16 and 17 March from 7:00am and continued until 7:30pm. Hourly updates on the situation in parks were gathered and collated by two City Parks Managers. These updates were shared amongst the agencies and informed decisions on where to deploy resources were taken using this information.</p> <p>The mobile CCTV van was accompanied by a Park Manager and deployed throughout parks across the city on 15, 16 and 17 March. This resource provides a highly visible representation of authority and is very effective in identifying and quantifying antisocial behaviour at hotspots within park areas.</p> <p>Evidence collated from previous years indicated where groups would consume alcohol in parks and leisure facilities across Belfast. There were over 150 people carrying alcohol, who were denied access to parks and therefore not given an opportunity to settle, drink or attract further groups of drinkers. The early coordinated intervention of council officers was extremely effective in keeping parks free from drinkers gathering.</p> <p>Following reports from the public or Councillors, the mobile CCTV van was deployed to a number of parks to broadcast live images or provide verbal reports back to the Emergency Co-ordinating Centre in the City Hall. The CCTV resource provided an extremely versatile asset, as council officers and PSNI could make decisions on deploying a response using "real time" information and images to assess and respond to any reports of antisocial behaviour.</p> <p>As a result there were a number of successful responses which utilised the coordinated resources of Park Wardens, Safer Neighbourhood Officers, Get Home Safe Officers and the PSNI to tackle drinking across the city.</p>
--	--

<p>3.</p>	<p>Resource Implications</p>
	<p>Finance: The mobile CCTV was supplied under a contract sourced by the Community Safety unit and jointly resourced by the Parks and Leisure departments Safer Neighbourhoods Antisocial behaviour programme budget.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	Much of the ASB programme work spans activities related to reducing interface tensions or responding to community concerns. All of the programme work is in line with the council's equality and good relations policies and procedures.
5.	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note the contents of this report.
6.	Decision Tracking
	None.
7.	Key to Abbreviations
	PSNI: Police Service for Northern Ireland NIFRS: Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service ECC: Emergency Co-ordinating Centre CCTV: Closed Circuit Television ASB: Antisocial behaviour
8.	Documents Attached
	Appendix one: St. Patrick's Weekend Operations Brief March 2014