



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Update on the City Cemetery Decorative Arts Project
Date:	24 February 2015
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Pete Murray, Antisocial Behaviour Programme Coordinator

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>Members will be aware that there has been an ongoing project around a Decorative Arts Project in the City Cemetery. Reports were brought to Committee in August 2012 and October 2014 outlining proposals to develop a decorative art project to celebrate the diversity within the site and address antisocial behaviour issues in the City Cemetery.</p> <p>Following discussion in August 2012 it was agreed that the Committee would contribute a sum of £15,000 towards the project and groups proposing to undertake the work would seek to secure additional funding from other bodies. Should there remain a shortfall; the Committee would be requested to reconsider the matter with a view to meeting any remaining shortfall in funding.</p> <p>Following the update to Committee in October 2014, it was agreed that the scope of the project should be amended so that the focus is not solely on the City Cemetery wall and that the art piece be situated at a suitable location within the City Cemetery and the budget previously allocated for the wall, be used for this art piece. Committee also agreed that the Director in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee would approve the steering group's selection of an artist; and that officers continue to explore other sources of funding in relation to potential solutions for the anti social behaviour associated with the wall.</p>
2.	Key Issues
	<p>The City Cemetery Decorative Arts Project has followed best practice installing art in the public realm. This process has been developed by the</p>

Arts Council for Northern Ireland (ACNI) and consists of two stages:

- Stage 1 identifies the need for the work through creative consultation with stakeholders and the community, identifies a theme through the consultation report and selects an artist and artwork through a rigorous selection process.
- Stage 2 is the engagement process with community and stakeholders around the installation of the selected artwork.

This development of this project has involved cross community consultation and engagement and this diversity is represented in the Steering Group. The Stage 1 consultation targeted a wide range of individuals and organisations including the relatives of those buried in the cemetery, staff, visitors, local schools, youth groups, history groups, community, political and religious organisations and arts and cultural organisations which were built on in Stage 2. BCC and the artist led the community engagement programme which would increase the sense of ownership, enhancing the area and discouraging ASB.

Since October 2014, Stage 1 of the project development has focused on the rigorous selection of an artist and artwork under the theme of "Life and Time". Following the selection process Forget me Not by Alex Pentek has been chosen as the selected piece. An illustration of the piece is attached as appendix 1. The artist's concept focuses on the form of Forget-me-not flowers, they capture the fragility of life and symbolise remembrance, true love and memories. These two flower sculptures, fabricated from bronze coated stainless steel, will form an archway and entrance to the chosen plot, very close to 'poor ground' where many hundreds of unknown people, from diverse backgrounds, comprised of the elderly to young children and infants, are buried.

In consultation with the Falls Park Master planning group and local elected representatives, the Steering Group selected a site for the artwork situated near the centre of the City Cemetery, location map is attached at appendix 2. The site rests on a level grassed area which was a toilet block beside an old service yard called the Bell Yard. The site is also situated near the Cross of Sacrifice, a WWI monument and the "Poor Grounds". The area is a focal point for frequent antisocial behaviour such as graffiti and damage to gravestones, (around the Jewish burial ground and war graves). The antisocial behaviour also appears in the form of fire setting, broken glass and vandalism on and around the Cross of Sacrifice.

As an extension to the aims of the arts project, BCC officers are currently investigating options to tackle ASB which takes place around the Bell Yard wall. All options will consider how to reduce the impact of ASB and improve the site.

In January 2015 the Council submitted a Stage 2 application to ACNI Re-Imaging Communities fund. The application was successful and ACNI agreed to contribute £50,000 to overall project costs of £64,000.

	<p><u>Next steps</u> The next stage of the process is to develop a project implementation and communication plan. This will be circulated to the local community during this stage of the project. There is a very tight delivery timescale around the project with the artwork to be manufactured and installed and all funding claims returned by 30 June 2015. It is envisaged that the artwork will be unveiled during summer 2015.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p><u>Financial</u> ACNI agreed to contribute £50,000 to overall project costs of £64,000. BCC will contribute £14,000 towards the project costs as previously agreed by the Parks and Leisure committee in October 2014.</p> <p><u>Human Resource</u> Officers from Parks and Leisure will work with officers from Property and Projects to achieve completion before the end of June 2015</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> Legal Services will develop contractual terms to reduce any risk during installation and following handover of the finished piece</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	<p>BCC and the artist has led a community engagement programme. The selected artist has the experience and understanding of the need for community engagement and undertaking cross community workshops during planning and production. Engagement sessions were developed using the participants from stage one consultation workshops.</p>

5.	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked to note the contents of this update report.</p>

6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>An update report will be presented to the appropriate committee following the completion of this project.</p>

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>ACNI: Arts Council Northern Ireland ASB: Antisocial behaviour BCC: Belfast City Council CCDAP: City Cemetery Decorative Arts Project</p>

8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Forget me Not by Alex Pentek Appendix 2: Location of Artwork in City Cemetery</p>