



Belfast City Council

Report to	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	Request for the Use of the City Hall and Provision of Civic Hospitality – 70th Anniversary of the Award of the Victoria Cross to Seaman J J Magennis
Date:	20th September, 2013
Reporting Officer:	Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (Ext 6314)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The former Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 24th January, 1997, agreed that a memorial be erected within the City Hall Grounds to commemorate the late J. J. Magennis being awarded the Victoria Cross for his outstanding bravery in World War II. At its meeting on 24th August, 1999 the Committee agreed to the holding of a civic luncheon to mark the unveiling of the memorial.
1.2	At its meeting on 18th February, 2005 the Committee granted the use of the City Hall and the provision of a civic dinner for the Northern Ireland Submarines Association to mark the achievements of J. J. Magennis VC in what was the year of the centenary of the City Hall.
1.3	In June 2006 the Committee granted the use of the City Hall grounds for a service of remembrance of J.J. Magennis VC to be held in August 2006.
1.4	Members will also recall that a portrait of Seaman Magennis VC is located in the Rotunda area of the City hall building.

2	Key Issues
2.1	A letter has been received from the Northern Ireland Submariners Association requesting the Council to consider hosting a civic dinner to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the award of the Victoria Cross to Seaman Magennis in June 2015. The Association would also request permission to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph on the morning after the civic dinner.

2.2	The Association estimates that the numbers for the dinner would be approximately 200 Submariners and guests. This number, taken together with invitations to Council members and their guests and others on the civic guest list would not be able to be accommodated in the Great Hall which has a capacity of 400 seated guests and therefore, if the Committee is minded to approve the request, further negotiation would be required with the Association. The estimated cost of a civic dinner for 400 guests would be estimated at £15k - £17k.
2.3	The request would appear to fall outside the criteria for the use of the City Hall as it seeks to celebrate an anniversary which is not a major anniversary (i.e. 21st, 25th, 50th, 75th 100th etc). However, given the Council's involvement with the commemoration of Seaman J.J. Magennis in the past, the Committee is requested to give consideration to the request

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Approximately £15K - £17k which can be accommodated within the budgets set for the 2015/16 financial year.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are not any relevant equality or good relations implications associated with this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	The Committee is recommended to consider the request from the Northern Ireland Submariners Association and to take such action thereon as may be determined.

6	Decision Tracking
Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager October, 2013	