



Subject:	Official recognition of the “White Stone on Cave Hill”
Date:	8 th November 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department Paula Irvine, Community Parks Outreach Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	This paper seeks approval from the Committee for the installation of a granite plaque to recognise the importance of the white stone situated on Cave Hill.
1.2	Cave Hill Conservation Campaign have put forward a formal request for official recognition of the historic landmark to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and it has been confirmed that the stone is in fact a historic landmark and the location of the stone will be added to the new historic environment map viewer.
1.3	Cave Hill Conservation Campaign would therefore like to mark the stone with a plaque detailing the role it played during World War II.
1.4	The wording for the plaque can be found at Appendix 1 and the material suggested for the plaque is granite so as to blend in with the natural surroundings.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the recent acknowledgement by NIEA of the white stone on Cave Hill as a historic

	landmark and approve the installation of a plaque that details its importance and historical facts.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The Cave Hill Conservation Campaign group act as a Friends group for Cave Hill and works closely with the Council to promote Cave Hill Country Park as a free accessible and valuable open space for the citizens of Belfast and tourists from further afield. They work tirelessly to preserve the natural environmental and historical aspects of the country park. Following some public interest regarding the origin of the white stone, the friends group set out to substantiate the story of why the stone was painted and more recently has been restored to white.
3.2	The tale was that during World War II a man named William Caulfield was entrusted by the then “War Department” with painting the stone white. He was to keep it as such for the duration of the war. This was for the purpose of establishing a navigational landmark for aircraft coming in to land at Nutts Corner airfield and Langford military airbase. William was paid £5 for his services but it’s unclear if this was a one off or yearly payment. William was a postman who lived with his wife Ellen (Nelly) and family in “Cave Hill” cottage which stands today just beyond where Upper Cave Hill Road ends.
3.3	Members of the friends group contacted the Caulfield family who confirmed the story and so with the family’s oral history evidence and extensive other research the story of the “White Stone” unfolded.
3.4	Evidence shows the White Stone of Cave Hill was albeit a silent witness to the events that took place over Belfast in World War II. These facts are a reminder of the role played by the stone and attributed to it in this the 75 th year after the bombing of Belfast.
3.5	Looking at the stone it appears as one, when in fact it is three slabs of basalt rock. They were formed some 60 million years ago and welded together by volcanic action. The stone can be seen most days from areas in the North and East of the city, shining bright in all its former glory.
3.6	The Conservation Campaign are keen to recognise the historical importance of the stone and have been working with McAdams Memorials to design a plaque that will be in keeping with the natural landscape. All designs and wording will be agreed by Council officers before installation.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> It is estimated that the cost to erect the granite plaque will be no more than £200.00 and this cost will be met by the revenue that the friends group generates through their good work on Cave Hill

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p>	<p>and neighbouring area.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <p>There are no human resource implications with this request</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>The plaque will provide a historical note for those visiting Cave Hill as to why the stone is painted and maintained white. Cave Hill Conservation Campaign are keen to improve methods of information sharing on the hill therefore bettering the visitor experience.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications with this request</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Wording for the plaque.</p>