



Subject:	Request for loan of the Young Citizen Volunteers (YCV) flag
Date:	24 th March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar – Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	George Wright – Head of Facilities Management

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	Members may be aware that occasionally requests are received from outside bodies to borrow an individual piece of art or an artefact item from the City Hall collection. Most requests are relatively straightforward and are dealt with by the relevant officers, and most items are loaned subject to the proper loan agreement and insurance arrangements being in place.
1.2	However a request has recently been received from a Mr Gilbert Ossieur, President of the Friends of Flanders Field Museum in Ypres, Belgium for the loan of the Young Citizen Volunteers (YCV) flag for a commemorative event taking place on the 7 th June 2017 to mark the 100 th anniversary of the Battle of Whytschaete.
1.3	This flag is not on general display in the City Hall and is not intended to form part of the new Exhibition Area and visitor attraction, and is in fact only displayed once each year during the Somme commemorations. It is obviously a valuable historical artefact which could not be replaced, and will require professional handling and protection.
1.4	Officials from the Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres will cover all necessary insurance and transport costs. A comprehensive loan agreement would also need to be completed before the flag is released.

2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the request as outlined above by the Friends of Flanders Field Museum
3.0	Main Report
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p><u>Relevant Background Information</u></p> <p>Research, recently undertaken, has apparently shown that the YCV flag currently in the City Hall collection was in fact itself raised at Whytschaete Ridge at the taking of a well-known German position known as ‘Jump Point’ during the battle.</p> <p>On the 7th June 1917 the YCV flag was carried by a number of young soldiers, including 19 year old 2nd Lieutenant Brian Boyd who attended Belfast RBAI school. After he was fatally wounded the flag carrying was taken up 2nd Lieutenant Sydney James Downey who came from Rugby Road and studied at Methodist College. He too was later killed and the flag carrying was taken up by another soldier who was also badly wounded before finally being raised at ‘Jump Point’ by Lieutenant John Dwyer O’Brien from Skibbereen in County Cork. This battle was particularly significant in that it involved the 16th Irish Division fighting alongside the 36th Ulster Division. During the battle William Redmond, a Nationalist MP at the time, was fatally wounded and carried from the battle-field by medics from the 36th Ulster Division. The battle was subsequently won and has been remembered as marking a moment of reconciliation in Ireland’s troubled past when, in the face of a common threat, religious and political differences were set aside.</p> <p>Mr Ossieur has asked if the flag could be borrowed for a remembrance service at the exact spot (see Appendix 1) where the flag was flown 100 years ago. The service will be part of a walk following the route of the battle. It is held each year in recognition of the sacrifice made by both the 16th and 36th Divisions. This year will be the final year during which the walk will take place.</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The key issue is whether the Committee is minded to approve this request to loan the YCV flag to the Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, Belgium.</p> <p>The loan period will be for a maximum of 1 week and the flag will be returned in time to allow it to be on public display for the Somme Commemoration event in the City Hall on the 1st</p>

<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>July 2017. The loan will be subject to taking legal and conservation advice and getting reassurances around packaging, transport and insurances. A loan agreement for the item will also be drafted and signed off prior to release.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>In terms of the loan there would be no costs for the Council as the museum in Ypres will bear all of the costs outlined in 3.5 and the piece would be fully insured throughout the loan and transportation period. There are no concerns from an asset management point of view.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>Liaison has taken place with the Good Relations Unit in respect of request. The advice received is that, as Members will be aware, Council is delivering a programme of events on the Decade of Centenaries and the proposed loan falls within this historical context. Any further requests for the loan of flags or artefacts should also be assessed on this basis. As set out above, preservation of the artefact will be of paramount importance.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Photograph YCV Flag Flying at Whyschaete Ridge</p>