



Subject:	Request for use of the City Hall Grounds – Belfast Mela Festival Carnival
Date:	18th February, 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present a request from ArtsEkta for the use of City Hall grounds on 20th August, 2022 to host a Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to grant approval for the City Hall grounds to be used on 20th August, 2022 for the Belfast Mela Carnival Parade Party, with ArtsEkta being required to submit an event management plan and risk assessments to ensure the delivery of a safe public event.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background Information</u>
3.1	Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using

criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally, however, it is necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the request set out below falls into this category.

Key Issues

3.2 A request has been received from the organiser of the Belfast Mela to host a flagship event in the grounds of City Hall. Mela is produced by ArtsEkta, a multi-award-winning cultural organisation that works to develop intercultural relationships at the heart of the community and transform communities through shared creative experiences.

3.3 Over the last decade, ArtsEkta has grown dramatically in size and scope and is now recognised as one of the region's leading arts charities and a pioneer in the development of intercultural arts for Northern Ireland.

3.4 Belfast Mela began in 2007 and takes place annually in Botanic Gardens and is one of Northern Ireland's largest arts festivals bringing together music, dance, arts and food from across the world to celebrate our city's proud cultural diversity. Mela is now one of four signature cultural events supported by Belfast City Council under the *A City Imagining* cultural strategy and is an 8 day festival.

The Proposed event

3.5 In 2022, ArtsEkta will launch a new event as part of the festival titled '**Mela Carnival**'. This event will act as a spectacular opening to the festival and begin a series of 50 events across a full week which will culminate in the traditional event at Botanic Gardens.

3.6 The 800-participant carnival parade will begin at Writers Square, proceed onto Royal Avenue into Donegal Place and end at City Hall grounds. Following the parade ArtsEkta request the use of the City Hall grounds for a free to access carnival party and celebration event for the participants, family/friends and wider audiences. The carnival party would be similar in size and scale to the Lord Mayor's Day previously organised by Belfast City Council City Events Team.

The proposed event would include the following elements:

- Stage based family entertainment
- Street performers
- Craft and workshop marquees
- Food traders (*subject to securing a market licence*)
- Outdoor aerial and music show

3.7	<p>A key feature of the Carnival Party is the performance by outdoor arts group Fidget Feet to be hosted on one of the front lawns. 'A Handful of Dreams' is an outdoor show that combines aerial and circus arts with live Irish traditional music and dance. The show features 5 aerial dancers performing on an outdoor rig accompanied by 2 live musicians and is inspired by the poem The Stolen Child by Irish poet William Butler Yeats.</p> <p><i>(See attached visuals of the show)</i></p>
3.8	<p>The Function Team will work closely with Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts Unit and Corporate Communications to promote the event and work closely with Corporate Health and Safety Unit to review the Event Management Plan, logistics for the outdoors rig and event risk assessments to ensure delivery of a safe, entertaining and free event in the grounds of City Hall.</p>
	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>There are no direct resource implications in terms of staff time or additional costs associated with this request and hosting this carnival party. The normal event support in the form of electrical provision in the grounds will be provided.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.10	<p>There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	A Handful of Dreams images