

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	11 September 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Management of events in Aberdeen's Parks and Open Spaces
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/145

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Committee of various issues related to the management of events within Council owned parks and open spaces and seek their approval for recommendations aimed at improving the future management of such events.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note the current arrangements in place within City Events to manage Aberdeen's Parks and Open Spaces.
2. To approve the current pricing structure in place and acknowledge the agreed working relationship between City Events and Environmental Services that ensures that Aberdeen's Parks and Open Spaces are maintained to the highest standard for ongoing event use.
3. To agree that the Castlegate is the only recognised location within Aberdeen that can be used for political party and pressure group events
4. To note the ever increasing disruption to Aberdeen's programme of events due to unauthorised Traveller encampments.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Monies totaling £468,000 were secured from the E P & I revenue budget and the Common Good Fund to deliver a dynamic but compact programme of City Events for Aberdeen in 2012-13 including the management of our parks and open spaces and staffing.

A report EPI/12/146 is being submitted to Committee to support the proposed 2013 – 2014 City Events programme including staffing costs

and associated budgets and will take into account the recommendations outlined in this report.

The implications associated with charging event organizers for the use of parks and open spaces is dealt with in the Main Issues section of this paper.

The only other financial implication for the management of parks and open spaces is event officer costs which is covered within existing staffing budgets.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Staffing

In relation to safe event delivery, specialist skills that individual officers in City Events have been attained under the City Council's requirement to meet the standards expected within current Health and Safety legislation and also The Event Safety Guide – A Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Similar Events, commonly known as "The Purple Guide".

The management of parks and open spaces is delivered by 1 events officer within the City Events team. This officer has lead responsibilities to deliver the management of the parks and open spaces within the City Events programme and there is no capacity within current staffing levels for officers to double up should this officer be unable to carry out their duties due to long term absence. Should this happen our ability to ensure safe management of events within our parks and open spaces would be at risk, unless we were able to recruit a similarly skilled person to take on this role on an interim basis.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Management of Parks and Open Spaces

Traditionally, our public parks and open spaces have been used to host a wide variety of mainly open air events, and Aberdeen is no different in that respect from the rest of the UK.

Each year, the parks and open spaces in Aberdeen host a wide range of events and these can range from the large traditional Highland Games to smaller-scale community organised galas and charitable events.

In 2011/12, there were 90 individual events hosted in the City's Parks and Open spaces, all of which directly or indirectly involved the City Events Team. The breakdown of these are as follows:

11 – Directly managed and supported by City Events;

17 – Directly supported by City Events;
62 – Externally managed but overseen by City Events

The Management of the City's Parks and Open Spaces is facilitated through the City Events Service in partnership with the City's Grounds Maintenance Management Team and Environmental Services.

This is an historical agreement, with Service approval being reached in 1997 between the then Arts and Recreation services of Community Recreation and Grounds Maintenance to ensure a co-ordinated approach to Parks and Open Spaces Management.

All applications deemed as an "Event", i.e. an occurrence happening at a determinable time and place, are assessed, consultation is carried out with all interested parties and involved Agencies, and relevant permission or refusal is given by Events Officers, in each individual case striving to achieve the Council target of acknowledgement of application within 3 working days, and permission or refusal within 15 working days of receipt of application.

Permission is given after stringent background investigation and consideration, usually involving Partner Agencies such as Grampian Police, and there are relatively few refusals on the basis that most applications enhance the vibrant Parks and Open Spaces Programme.

On the rare occasion that refusal is determined, the Event Organiser is given, in writing, a full and detailed explanation of the grounds of refusal.

However, ever growing demand for use of the City's Parks and Open Spaces has taken a toll on the maintenance of these areas, and it agreed to introduce a pricing structure from 1 April 2012, to contribute to daily maintenance costs.

Each stand alone event incurs a minimum daily hire charge of £250, regardless of status - charity, corporate, private or otherwise.

A copy of the 2012/13 pricing structure is included as Appendix 1, along with details of all Parks and Open Spaces managed under the auspices of the City Events Team.

The rates quoted were arrived at after consultation with other Councils on their procedures and the fees charged for use of Parks and Open Spaces.

Any regular Bookings deemed as "commercial" lets, such as keep fit outdoor classes, kayaking in Duthie Park boating pond, bungee trampoline activities etc, are managed under the auspices of Environmental Services, as they are not deemed to be "events".

Requests by Political Parties/ Pressure and Protest Groups

Applications on behalf of political groups/pressure/protest groups are currently treated in the same equitable way as any other requests for use of Parks and Open spaces. However, there have been recent examples of where Political events have caused some concern.

It is therefore recommended, in consultation with Grampian Police, that a single venue approach is followed, to more effectively manage such activities, and that all political organisations be held in the Castlegate only. This will also facilitate any associated marches on Union Street, since a template is already in place to allow such marches with no added costs to the organiser (starting at the St Nicholas Kirkyard and travelling up Union Street to Castle Street and the Castlegate).

However, where a parade/march application involves using the whole length of Union Street, the event organiser will be required to pay the full costs for a complete road closure.

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments are carried out on proposals for parade/march/events applications, which have the potential to be controversial, to ensure equalities and human rights issues are taken into account when officers and/or elected members are making decisions.

Unauthorised Traveller Encampments

In the case of unauthorised encampments by Gypsies/Travellers on Parks and Open Spaces, the Council policy on the Management of Unauthorised Gypsy/Travellers is implemented. This means that immediate action will be taken as these sites are deemed to be unsuitable locations for encampments in Aberdeen City.

Examples such as unauthorised occupancy of the Hazlehead football pitches (to be used for Highland Games parking) two days before the Games, as well as severe disruption to visiting shows such as the Circus and the Ladyboys of Bangkok at the Links, have created a great deal of extra work for Council Officers and related Agencies.

At such a busy time, there are resource implications for staff managing this increased workload during a period of peak staff holidays.

6. IMPACT

Corporate

Aberdeen – the Smarter City

- We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.

- We will ensure that Union Street regains its position as the heart of the city and move cultural activity centre-stage through re-invigorated cultural leadership.
- We will challenge inequalities wherever they exist and bring our communities closer together.

Smarter Living (Quality of Life)

- We aspire to be recognised as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.

Smarter Economy (Competitiveness)

- We will work with partners to promote the city as a place to invest, live, work and export from.

Community Plan

- Work with other organisations, agencies and groups, including Visit Scotland and Visit Aberdeen, to encourage tourism and the provision of facilities for tourists.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

See Appendix 1

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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EP&I Committee Report Ref EPI/12/145

APPENDIX 1

Charges for Events held in ACC Parks and Open Spaces, Streets, Roads and Squares 2012/13

All event applications will be considered using the criteria and descriptors below. Each event will finally be awarded A, B or C status and a rate applied to all days the event is occupying the area.

The charge for each event will be on a daily basis as follows:

Grade A event will be charged £1000 per day

Grade B event will be charged £500 per day

Grade C event will be charged £250 per day

Descriptor	A	B	C
PROFILE	High	Medium	Low
IMPACT	Large impact	Medium impact	Low or minimal impact
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPANTS	Large numbers expected. (Over 2000)	Small to medium numbers expected (500 to 2000)	Small or low numbers expected. (Up to 500)
EVENT DELIVERY LEVEL	Requires a full multi agency approach with event and contingency plans produced and agreed	City Events Officer input plus SEWG and other Council Departments	Single City Events officer input with support from appropriate Parks/Open Spaces Officer
TYPE	Multi faceted and disciplined	2 – 3 disciplines/activities	Single discipline/activity

The following factors will be taken into consideration when grading an event

PROFILE

International / national / regional / city wide / local community / local group

Level and profile of any VIP involvement. Royalty/government/overseas

Artists and Entertainers

Economic benefits to the city

Alcohol at the event

TV and media interest

IMPACT

Level of disruption to the local infrastructure, other users, businesses and residents

Road Closures/Restrictions/Diversions

Public Transport and Car Parking

Set up/de rig times

Access/egress for all

Accessibility

Day v evening v night

Moving v static event

Time of year

Fireworks/carnival or fun fair/motor sport/helicopters/parachute display

Noise pollution

Financial viability of event (insurances, ticket sales, entry fees)

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPANTS	<p>Over 2000 v 500 to 2000 v up to 500</p> <p>Standing/seating/mixed</p> <p>Family groups v young adults v elderly v children and teenagers v rival factions</p>
VENUE(S)	<p>Indoor v outdoor</p> <p>Confined single location v widespread location v multi locations</p> <p>Temporary structures</p>
LEVEL OF EVENT DELIVERY	<p>Full multi agency approach to single Events Officer involvement</p> <p>Event and contingency plans with full risk assessments, health and safety, traffic management, command and control, Event Safety Co-ordinator, on and off site meetings, professional stewarding, medical and welfare</p>
NATURE AND TYPE OF EVENT	<p>Multi v 2-3 v single disciplined event. This can cover locations, stages, performances, activities and days</p> <p>High Rating - Music festival/large concert/aviation/marine/motor/large shows/New Year celebrations/large demonstrations/large parades and processions/political/large fireworks displays/10k and upward runs/highland games/camping element</p> <p>Medium Rating – Galas/markets/smaller parades and processions, shows, walks, sponsored activities</p> <p>Low Rating – very small walks/fun days/sponsored activities</p>

There are no plans to introduce any charges for those events that encompass very small numbers (up to 50) that want to use our areas for sponsored walks/toddles/ educational uses.

City Events Staffing Charge

It is recognised that as part of our standard delivery of supporting non ACC events, there are elements within our work programme that should not be charged back to events organisers. These elements are outlined below:

- Sending out application form
- Receiving application form
- Checking application form and if required, contacting event organiser for further information
- Adding event to events list, ACC What's On, Festival websites
- 1 or 2 face to face meetings on or off site, telephone contact, email contact to discuss event and agree level of City Events involvement and cost. These meetings will also determine what paperwork is required and agreed to be submitted.
- Sending letter of permission

Over and above these elements, there will be a charge of **£40 per hour** for any City Events Officer that is required to support the delivery of non ACC events. This is inclusive of mileage costs.

City Parks and Open Spaces Audit 2012

Park	Size	Availability	Parking	Toilets	Power	Access/Egress Enclosed or open	Other criteria information
Duthie Park (inc Bandstand)	19.43 hectares	All types of public Events year round (NOT private/corporate unless Committee approval) Monday to Sunday all year round (except for Saturdays April to September)	Free parking both surrounding and within the Park at lower level (Disabled parking in main Event arena by prior arrangement)	Yes m/f/disabled NB (pay as you go)	Yes both in Bandstand and in main park	Open	Flat ground

Highland Games Field	54,587 sq m	All types of public and private/corporate Events year round (except first three weeks in June)	Free parking in and around Hazlehead Park (NB parking in the Games Field by prior arrangement)	No	No	Enclosed	Cambered ground
Beach and Queens Links	60,000 sq m approx	All types of public Events year round (except for QL July/August – Circus)	Yes – Free parking surrounding the area	Yes – Free (lower Promenade)	No	Open	Flat and Camber – lower Prom popular with keep fit activities
Seaton Park	26.71 hectares	All types of public and private/corporate Events year round	Free parking both surrounding and within the Park	Yes m/f/disabled NB (pay as you go)	No	Open	
Victoria Park	5.26 hectares	All types of public Events year round	No	Yes - free	No	Enclosed	Flower garden
Westburn Park	10.11 hectares	All types of public and private/corporate Events year round	Yes – Free parking in Park	Yes - Free	No	Enclosed	Flat ground – due for redevelopment to make fit for purpose Sport Aberdeen
Allan Douglas Park	N/K	All types of public Events year round	No	No	No	Enclosed	
Rubislaw/Queens Terrace Gardens	1.13 hectares	All types of public Events year round	No	No	No	Open	
Johnston Gardens	1.06 hectares	All types of public Events year round	No	No	No	Enclosed	Popular with special occasion photography

Allan Park Cults	2.63 hectares	All types of public Events year round	No	No	No	Enclosed	
Union Terrace Gardens	1.15 hectares	All types of public Events year round	No	Yes – Portaloos	Yes – In main Gardens and also pocket park upper level	Enclosed	Flat ground – usage currently under review due to City Gardens Project
Bon Accord Terrace Gardens	1.83 hectares	All types of public Events year round	No	No	No	Enclosed	
Stewart Park	6.31 hectares	All types of public Events year round	Yes – free parking in and around the Park	Yes – Free opened by prior arrangement	Yes – accessed by prior arrangement	Enclosed	Regular cricket Programme
Walker Park Torry	3.45 hectares	All types of public Events year round	Yes – free parking in and around the Park	No	No	Enclosed	
St Fitticks Park Torry	28.44 hectares	All types of public Events year round	Yes – free parking in and around the Park	No	No	Enclosed	
Central Park Dyce	10.01 hectares	All types of public Events year round	Yes – free parking in and around the Park	No	No	Enclosed	Mainly used for Community purposes
Riverview Drive Dyce	16.24 hectares	All types of local Events year round	No	No	No	Neighbourhood park	
Stoneywood Road walkway	0.93 hectares	Limited availability	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Auchmill Road walkway	3.86 hectares	Limited availability	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Millhill Brae	1.67 hectares	All types of local Events all year round	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	

Fairview Street Danestone	3.23 hectares	Community Group organized Events	Yes	Yes	Yes – by prior arrangement	Open	
Persley Wall Garden	1.47 hectares	All types of local events all year round	No	No	No	Enclosed	
Kingswood Drive Kingswells	4.19 hectares	Community group usage	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Kettlehills Crescent	5.84 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Heatheryfold Circle	4.04 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Manor Walk	1.72 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Laburnum Walk	0.67 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Mid Stocket Road	3.08 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Fernilea Road	12.00 hectares	Large public space	No	No	No	Open space	
Ashhill Drive	1.31 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Powis Crescent	1.58 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Cromwell Road	0.34 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Broomhill Road	1.62 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	cambered
Garthdee Road	2.89 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Riverside Drive	4.38 hectares	Open all year for a variety of riverside	No	No	No	Open space	Sometimes used in conjunction with

		orientated events					Duthie Park Events
Kincorth Circle	3.29 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Community space	Gala venue
The Meadows Milltimber	3.46 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Cults Wood	9.37 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Open space	Underused flat venue
Loirston Green	5.32 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Open space	Gala venue
Catto Park Cove	1.02 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Leggart Terrace Gardens	0.24 hectares	Small public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Springhill Park	9.22 hectares	Large public space	No	No	No	Open space	Underused cambered venue
Hilton Woods	2.44 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Walker Dam	3.38 hectares	Public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	
Coronation Gardens	0.92 hectares	Small public space	No	No	No	Neighbourhood open space	

CITY OF ABERDEEN MAIN PARKS & OPEN SPACES AUDIT 2012

Introduction

Aberdeen has three main Parks and one large Open Space area which can be used for major Events. The Parks are without exception the Pride of the City, winning both British and European Bloom competitions over many decades. These Parks are also highly used by both citizen and visitor alike, and the average footfall over peak periods, especially summer months, can be measured in the thousands.

Despite their capacity to absorb large scale events, it needs to be recognised that, due to the largely soft infrastructure of parks, they are also vulnerable to damage caused by over-use, such as compaction and surface wear. Accidental damage through carelessness or lack of awareness by event organisers can also cause damage to surfaces and features e.g. gateposts, fences and rutting of grass surfaces.

Strategic Factors

The Aberdeen Parks and Greenspace Strategy 2005 contains the following objective in relation to events within the Economy section of the strategy.

EC5 Support the city's open-air events strategy through identification of infrastructure needs and extension of the events programme.

The aim will be delivered through the following tasks:

EC5.1 Improve the infrastructure and access to selected sites to accommodate events with minimal disruption and damage.

EC5.2 Develop new events which promote the positive use of parks and green spaces.

Event Policy Statement

1 Location

Events will be dispersed throughout the main parks which are considered suitable for such use. The individual characteristics of a park such as its capacity in terms of spectator/participant numbers, parking and other ancillary requirements will determine its suitability for a particular event.

2 Frequency

The frequency of events in parks will be controlled to protect the fabric and infrastructure of the park from repeated and intensive use. In general terms, there should be an interval of two weeks between events using the same area of a park as more frequent use may cause damage to the park's infrastructure. It is recognised however that events may take place more frequently during the summer months and that the use of parks for events in the winter months is more limited.

3 Priority

Priority will be given to hosting events which absolutely require a large outdoor venue. Events which are related to open space recreational use and are free to the public at point of entry will be of highest priority. Secondly, public events for which a charge is made e.g. Highland Games and the lowest priority to those which are purely private in nature e.g. Corporate Events.

4 Timing

Public events must finish by 9.00pm Monday – Sunday especially where amplified music and/or announcements are being made. Exceptions may be made with Committee approval.

Private events such as dinner dances, where they are being held in an enclosed space such as a marquee, can take place no more than twice a month and no more than six times a year in any given park. All events must be finished by 12.00 midnight on Friday and Saturday and by 9.00pm, Sunday to Thursday. The preferred venue for such events will be the games field at Hazlehead.

5 Amplification

It is recognised that amplification is an essential part of many events through PA announcement, amplified music and entertainment and also has an essential role in making health and safety announcements to large audiences, should the need arise. Amplified music however, will only be permitted where it is integral to the nature of the event and must satisfy the Council's policy on noise abatement. The decibels of the music or other noise must be measured at the perimeter of the park nearest the residents. The dB(A) must not exceed that set done by the Council or the existing legislation (whichever is the lowest).

6 Management

The event organiser will be required to sign a management agreement with the Council detailing the conduct and operational constraints which will apply to the event. The Council will supply detailed and supplementary information in support of the management agreement as it sees fit. This will include arrangements for residents parking where necessary. Should the organiser fail to conduct their event within the constraints outlined, future permission for use will not be granted.

7 Charging

There will be a scale of charges laid down by the Council for the use of the Park which will be dependant on the nature of the event. Added to this will be a cost, where required, for the Council's time in managing the event to ensure that all stages of the event are implemented as per the agreement with the organiser.

8 Indemnification

The event organiser will be required to have the necessary insurance in place to meet any public liability arising from their event.

9 Reinstatement

Event organisers will be liable for the reinstatement of any damage or loss to the park facilities as a result of their event. In the case of large public or private events, a bond will be required to be deposited with the Council in advance of the event taking place which will be retained if there is damage to the park facilities.

**Park no 1
DUTHIE PARK**

Location: Riverside Drive, Aberdeen

Size: 19.43 Hectares

Suitable for: Large scale public Events, and with Committee approval Private and Corporate Hire

Availability: Monday to Sunday all year round, except Saturdays April to September (cricket programme)

Pricing structure for hire: Currently under review

Duthie Park was gifted to the City by Elizabeth Crombie Duthie in 1881. The first turf was cut on 27 August 1881, and the Park took 2 years to layout and made fit for purpose. It was officially opened on 27 September 1883 by Princess Beatrice. The Park hosted a major Event to celebrate it's 125th Anniversary in September 2008.

A major attraction is the David Welch Winter Gardens, which were built in 1970. These Gardens hold some of the rarest and exotic plants in the Country, and as well as the main Park area, are available for hire.

Duthie Park has been developed extensively over the centuries, with major work planned for the Summer of 2012.

Vehicle parking is widely available surrounding and within the Park, free from charges.

**Park no 2
HIGHLAND GAMES FIELD (HAZLEHEAD PARK)**

Location: Hazledene Road Aberdeen

Size: 54,587 sq m

Suitable for: Large scale Events, including public and private/corporate

Availability: Monday to Sunday all year round except the first three weeks in June (City of Aberdeen Highland Games)

Pricing structure for hire: Currently under review

The Highland Games Field is immensely popular as a major Event venue. It is situated to the west of the within the grounds and Policies of Hazlehead Park, which is the largest park area of Aberdeen, extending to 180.49 hectares.

The Highland Games Field can accommodate most medium to large scale Events, and has capacity (based on historical evidence) of upwards of 10,000 footfall.

The Field plays host to the City of Aberdeen Highland Games on the third Sunday in June each year, a major Event in the Scottish Highland Games calendar and an historically hugely popular and well attended attraction.

**Park no 3
SEATON PARK**

Location: Seaton, Aberdeen

Size: 26.71 hectares

Suitable for: Large scale Events, including public and private/corporate

Availability: Monday to Sunday all year round

Pricing structure for hire: Currently under review

Seaton Park is the “hidden jewel” of Parks available for hire in Aberdeen. It extends to 26.71 hectares, has good traffic infrastructure and is much underused. The Park has large areas in close proximity to the Student life of the City, and is an ideal Venue for Concerts and similar style Events.

The Park was purchased by the Council in 1947

**OPEN SPACE
KINGS/QUEENS LINKS – BEACH AREA**

Location: Sea Beach Aberdeen

Size Variable dependant on availability and parks/open space maintenance

Suitable for: Large scale Events, including public and private/corporate

Availability: Monday to Sunday all year round (except Queens Links at tram lines July /August – Annual visit of the Circus)

Pricing structure for hire: Currently under review

The Links, Promenade and Esplanade areas of Aberdeen are hugely popular and play host to a large number of small, medium and large scale Events.

Already planned for Summer Festival 2012 are return visits by the Moscow State Circus, the Ladyboys of Bangkok, and the City of Aberdeen Official Fireworks Display. The area is surrounded by a multitude of attractions, including fun fairs, cinema multiplexes, restaurants, bars and café's, and is an ideal location for Venue hire.