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## Halloween 2020

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Dublin City Council has put a significant amount of resources into dealing with anti-social behaviour associated with Halloween over recent years. Through a combination of the proactive seizure of bonfire materials and provision of pro-social community based Halloween activities Dublin City Council has been leading a cultural change in Halloween across Dublin City. The outbreak of COVID 19 as well as the recent Level 5 restrictions severely curtailed Dublin City Council's ability to use mass participation events as an alternative to anti-social behaviour. This issue was identified at an early stage which allowed the development of a wide range of alternative and virtual activities. A particular focus was also put on the seizure of bonfire materials in advance of Halloween and a very visible Dublin City Council and Garda Síochána street presence on the day itself.

This has been a collaborative effort within Dublin City Council across the Waste Management, Parks and Housing Departments led by the Area Office's Community Development, Administration and Public Domain staff. There has also been a significant amount of support from statutory agencies, especially An Garda Síochána, with community groups across the City acting as invaluable partners in the delivery of an alternative 2020 Halloween programme. Please see outlined a brief synopsis of activities delivered as part of Dublin City Council's 2020 Halloween programme.

### Central Area

The "Big Scream" was again the focal point of Halloween activities in the North Inner City.



### 2020 Festival in Numbers

3,500	People engaged in Zoom Bingo and Play Your Cards Right.
2,300	Sweets given out by the Scream Team on Tour on Halloween night.
1,800	Treats delivered to schools
1,800	Art competition entries.
1,500	Prizes won by the community
1,030	Children took part in Zoom quizzes/story time with Dracula
1,000	Families engaged on social media each day.
800	Children in childcare services received Arts & crafts packs, face painting kits and goodie bags.

700	Big Scream face masks given to the community.
300	Boxes of chocolates and face masks distributed to senior citizens
400	People went out to 'Find the Fangs'
300	Families took part in Scavenger hunt
320	Posters featuring individual photos of people from past festivals hung around the NEIC.
250	Fairy doors/accessories installed in Mountjoy Square Park and Diamond Park
160	Young people took part in youth service bingo.
90	Participants in special effects workshops.
80	Large bags of treats distributed to homeless services.
6	Youth services took part in six weeks of scary prop making workshops.
4	Youth services produced and directed scary movies over 6 week period.
0	Reports of criminal damage on Halloween night.

#### The Cauldron of Smithfield

The Monster Mash Dance, performed by the young people from St Michan's /Greek St. was the highlight of a two hour online production viewed by 1,500 people with 40 young people representing 10 youth and residents groups appearing.

Pre-Halloween workshops had over 250 individual participants involved in:

- Music and drumming
- Dance and movement

The Area Office also delivered the following:

- Arts and crafts/activity pack for download
- Halloween decorated window/door/balcony competition
- Children's Halloween poster competition

#### North Inner City Communications/Activities plan for Halloween 2020.

Main elements included:

- Area wide lamppost banner campaign (800 posters)
- Bespoke Halloween brochure and dress your flat/house flyer delivered to all households in the North Inner City
- Dedicated social media campaign to promote City Council pre-Halloween competitions, promotion of festivals and how to report stockpiling of bonfire materials.
- The Area Office put on a series of risk assessed activities to promote family exercise on the Royal Canal Greenway protecting this newly created asset from the threat of bonfires
- A mobile Halloween convoy moved around the area displaying locally curated music and arts videos, to also promote the stay at home messaging and competitions for best dressed flat/house

#### Cabra/Glasnevin

Community groups were continuously consulted, to discourage celebrations and to discreetly advise as to the location of stockpiles of bonfire material and antisocial behaviour, during the month of October. A large stockpile of material was removed as late as 5.00 p.m. on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November, from the grounds of St. Vincent's School, Glasnevin, on the advice of the local community.

In addition, the City Council also supported activities at:

- St. Oliver Plunkett's G.A.A. Club

- Naomh Fionnbarra G.A.A. Club
- Cabra Youth Services.

2 Virtual Festivals were held and a number of limited street activities. Supports were also provided to senior citizens. A communications programme advising on the possible dangers of bonfires and fireworks was undertaken. About 750 people took part in activities in the Cabra/Glasnevin Area.



### North Central Area

Artane/Whitehall

In the lead up to Halloween Dublin City Council's Community Development staff were consistently in contact with all groups with reminders to report any stockpiling of bonfire material. This was also highlighted through the programme 'Cocoon Tunes' on Near FM.

A Light/Laser show was organised for Halloween night projected from 'The Bring Centre' on Oscar Traynor Road. This proved to be very successful with many people commenting and texting throughout the performance. There was no start or end time for this and it was not advertised to deter people congregating.

For the first time in many years there were no 'bonfires' or gatherings in Stardust Park which is a testament to the excellent work that has been done by the Parks Department and the local community in the last year.

Clontarf/Donaghmede

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health restrictions, Dublin City Council was unable to organise the annual professional Halloween Fireworks Displays on Halloween Night at Donaghmede, Kilbarrack and Edenmore, which have provided a safe, fun alternative for young people and their families at Halloween each year.

However, to continue to convey the message to young people to avoid danger and keep safe at Halloween across the Clontarf/Donaghmede Local Electoral Area, the Community and Social Development Team organised a Halloween Poster Competition for primary schools in the LEA in the lead up to Halloween inviting 37 primary schools to take part. Students were asked to design a poster with the theme '**Keep Safe at Halloween**'. There were two age categories: **4-8 years** and **9-13 years**.

Winning entries from participating schools have been submitted electronically and each participating school will receive a prize for their winner in each age category.

Dublin City Council will select the overall winner and the winning schools will be awarded a prize.

### **Northwest Area**

Finglas Fright Night 2020 set out to highlight positive Community and Cultural activity in the Finglas area. Dublin City Council, Finglas Area Office, Community & Social Development developed an online programme that featured music, magic, community messages and views of Finglas Heritage Trail.

The programme aired on Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> October at 8.00pm on Vimeo via Facebook (Finglas Fright Night) and featured Aslan, The Brilliant Trees, Martin McDonnell, Just Dave, Soundstrand and Colm Dawson.

The following groups delivered community messages to highlight positive community endeavour:

Finglas Tidy Towns, Finglas Suicide & Support Network, Better Finglas, Finglas West Family Resource Centre, Pavee Point, Finglas Men's Shed, Fairlawn/Prospect Hill Community Garden, Finglas Historical Society and Finglas Youth Resource Centre.

To date, the Finglas Fright Night page has received under 20,000 postings in relation to the event. On the night 4,700 individuals logged onto the Facebook page: this equates to around 11,750 viewers, as an average of 2.5 people per household watched at home.

The response to the event was extremely positive with viewers noting the outstanding work done by community groups in the area. The event attracted viewers from out across the globe, with people watching in Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, America, France and the UK. The link for the event will remain in place for a number of weeks and continues to attract interest.

In addition Dublin City Council, Finglas Area Office funded Halloween activities for the 10-24 age group via Finglas Youth Resource Centre and The Den Youth Club. Better Finglas received funding for the Finglas Area Office to deliver 2 programmes aimed at under 10's. This included supplying families with activity packs and a literacy event "Room on the Broom" which was delivered via Facebook.



### **Ballymun "OTHERWORLD" virtual Halloween Festival**

Our Community Development Team in conjunction with Axis programmed an online Halloween Festival, which ran from 12 noon to 10pm on the day of Halloween. A total of 12 virtual events/activities took place along with an on-line Fancy Dress Competition and a Spooky Garden Competition.

The online festival was a great success with 133 new Facebook page followers. Our Youtube broadcast had 1,348 views on the day. We can estimate that approximately 4,000 viewers watched the online Halloween programmed events across the day.

“Ballymuns Got Deadly Talent” was a talent contest run during the weeks leading up to Halloween which encouraged local young people to send in videos of their creative performances. The winner was announced at 6pm on Halloween Night. The final was viewed by 2,400 people.

### **South Central Area**

THE LIBERTIES HAUNT FESTIVAL 2020 was a huge departure from the regular large-scale festival event which took place in several locations across the Liberties last year.

The Community Development Team joined Up & Happenings Events in collaboration with local youth services, local schools resident and community organisations, were on hand once again (virtually from their homes and cars while working remotely) to plan and manage workshops, distribute materials and link in with the local community and schools in the area. Residents, schools and youth services across the Liberties area were given the opportunity to submit their entries for

- the best dressed balcony / window competition,
- their fancy dress and
- local schools were delighted to embrace the Mask Challenge which involved more than 400 young people to decorate their own mask and have their photos uploaded [www.thelibertieshaunt](http://www.thelibertieshaunt)

THE LIBERTIES HAUNT online show is now an asset for Dublin City Council and the community and stands as a great example of how a quality show can be produced featuring mostly young local talent. Whilst we were aware that we were never going to be able to have the social impact of the previous year, we have received very positive feedback so far regarding the activities and entertainment which we were able to provide. We hope this project inspired others to follow a path in the arts and to promote positive expression during a time that is particularly isolating for young people.

Although our capacity and the possibility of physical interaction was greatly reduced, We still managed to meet with residents, (while adhering to Covid 19 safety measures) in some of the target areas with whom we wanted to engage with and were able to get their support in spreading the overarching message of **Stay Home and Stay Safe** for Halloween 2020, Whilst encouraging them to partake in the online activities provided some of which are detailed below.

- Activity packs (for download and a small number of hardcopies)
- Monster mash dance
- Best dressed balcony / window
- The liberties haunt virtual festival
- Creative and performance workshops
- The mask challenge

### **Promotion**

- A social media campaign was launched with regular daily updates on both Facebook and Instagram.
- A press release was prepared and distributed to a number of media outlets and online platforms.

- The event was featured on a number of Dublin City Council platforms including Dublin City Radio.
- Posters and flyers were distributed in various locations around the Liberties area.
- The website was regularly updated.
- A trailer video was widely shared
- Promotional videos from a number of the main acts were shot and shared on multiple platforms

#### Ballyfermot / Drimnagh

In preparing for Halloween the City Council and Youth Organisations agreed the project would have 3 elements:

- Virtual initiatives
- Outdoor Events
- Publicity / Safety Campaign

#### Virtual Events

Saint John Bosco Youth Centre organized a virtual family Bingo on Halloween night that had 60 participants. Familibase organised a virtual Live Mic Music Night on Halloween night that 100 watched live and 300 viewed over the weekend. "Sing Act Dance" Drama group created a flash dance performance in Brickfield Park to share a happy Halloween message from the Drimnagh community which was shared through social media over the Halloween Weekend. This had about 600 hits - link <https://vimeo.com/470909551/be245119f0>. Spooky House competitions were held in Ballyfermot and Drimnagh with the entries uploaded on Facebook and prizes awarded for the best spooky house and for the best use of recycled materials.

#### Outdoor Events

The youth organisations wanted to hold outdoor events in Brickfield Park and Le Fanu Park to have a visible presence in the area on the day. Youth Leaders had a strong presence on the streets throughout the day and early evening in both areas and discouraged young people from congregating. The Ballyfermot Youth Service organised 3 fancy dress cycle trips throughout the day involving over 45 young people. Coaching events that included skateboard and BMX for beginners were held in the skate park throughout the day that catered for 50 young people. An outdoor barbeque took place in the Skateboard Park. 2 Street Murals and an outdoor photography project were worked on throughout the week and completed on Halloween night.

#### Publicity / Poster Campaign

2000 Halloween safety postcards were distributed to the local Primary Schools. A number of 8ft x 3ft Halloween "Think and be aware" boards were displayed prominently throughout Ballyfermot and Drimnagh.

This year activities targeted young people in small outdoor events rather than big family friendly activities. While numbers attending the outdoor events were restricted they were a distraction and deterrent for young people from more dangerous activities. Street Youth work engagement this year was very important in deterring young people from anti-social behaviour.

## South East Area

The South East Area Community Development team responded to the challenges of Covid 19 by developing a full online programme that was made available for the whole City including Dockers & Demons and also a nationwide campaign called Holding It Together Apart – A Light at Dusk. This latter event had great nationwide coverage with President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins tweeting the campaign. The Demons and Dockers event was hugely popular featuring Music, Dance, Drama, Sculpture, Cuisine, Poetry, Song, History and fun. In the Kimmage Rathmines LEA the Scary Witch Storytelling virtual event at the Dolphins Barn and Walkinstown Libraries with over 80 children accessing the live stream event was very popular.

## Seizure of bonfire material

A massive part of the success of Halloween in 2020 has been the pro-active seizure of bonfire materials in the weeks and days leading up to Halloween. This has been done by the allocation of substantial human and financial resources and through the collaboration and coordination of several Dublin City Council Departments and Sections including Waste Management, Parks and Housing Maintenance as well as Area Office Public Domain and Housing Management. Staff literally worked day and night locating bonfire material stockpiles and coordinating their removal.

Innovative methods, such as the use of drones, were developed which allowed us to be much more effective in locating materials. The



role played by the community in reporting these stockpiles must be given great credit and the support received from An Garda Síochána was invaluable in supporting DCC staff as materials were removed. Across the City thousands of pallets and hundreds of tyres were seized among other materials with approximately 550 tonnes of materials seized in total. Unfortunately, there was an increase in the overall number of fires in 2020, however most of these were very small, due to the amount of material seized, and required little intervention.

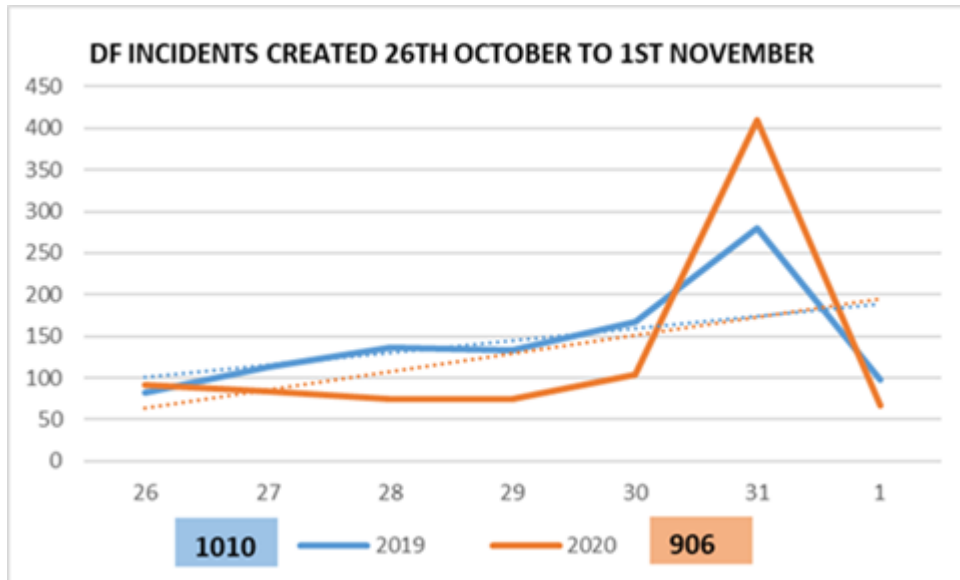
## Dublin Fire Brigade

Dublin Fire Brigade recorded its busiest night this year; with activity significantly up on normal operations. Most of this activity resulted from bonfires and other calls associated with Halloween festivities. Between 16:00 hrs on the 31<sup>st</sup> October and 07:00 hrs on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, Dublin Fire Brigade received hundreds of 999/112 calls reporting 398 fire incidents and 202 requests for an emergency ambulance. The figures for the corresponding times in 2019 were 229 fire incidents and 298 ambulance; and 292 fire incidents and 256 ambulance in 2018.

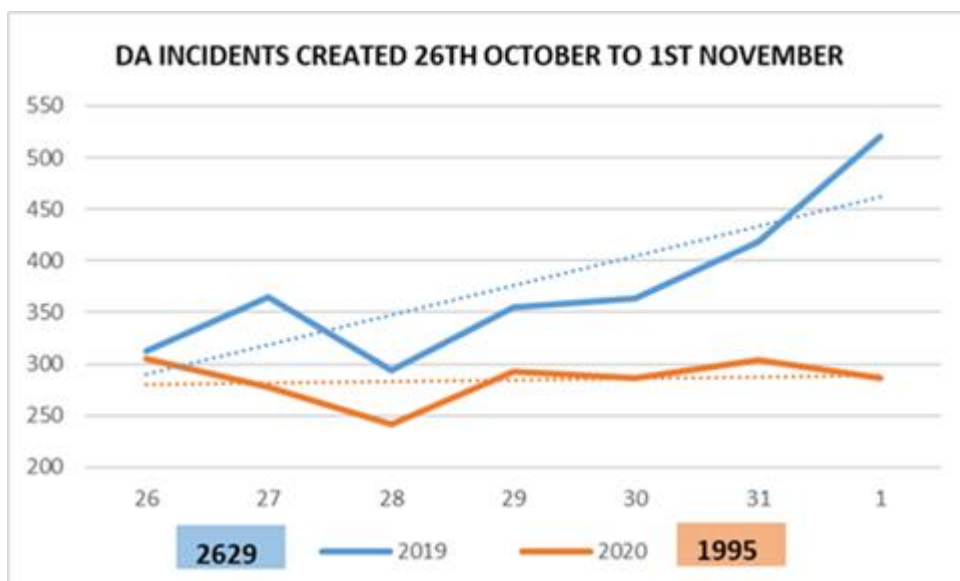
Most fires required no intervention and there was limited anti-social behaviour towards our firefighter/paramedics. None of our staff were injured. Unfortunately most of the city's

organised events had to be cancelled as a result of COVID19 restrictions, however their virtual online equivalents proved popular providing families with entertainment in a safe way. We'd like to thank those who took a responsible and socially distant approach to this year's celebrations and took heed of our safety advice over the past few weeks.

Charts below re ERCC activity over Halloween week from 26<sup>th</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November inclusive. These are incidents created as opposed to mobilised. For fire incidents Halloween night was about 45% busier than last year but for the week overall activity was about 90% of last year. This equates to 1010 incidents created in 2019 and 906 in 2020.



Ambulance incidents created continue to be well below normal including Halloween, overall incidents created over the week is 2629 for 2019 and 1995 for 2020. This puts 2020 activity for the week at approx. 76% of 2019 levels.





## **Conclusion**

There was an amount of apprehension among statutory agencies, communities and elected representatives in the lead up to Halloween due to our inability to deliver large scale public events this year and a fear of an outpouring of frustration regarding the ongoing COVID - 19 situation. Due to the innovative and diligent work of Dublin City Council staff supported by our many stakeholders this did not materialise. Hopefully we can return to our large scale public events in 2021 and continue our ongoing work and momentum to date in changing the culture of Halloween in Dublin City.

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**16<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Mary Taylor**

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