

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022

To: **The chairperson and members of  
North Central Area Committee**

Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2022.

Item No.

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**REPORT TO NORTH CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE WITH REGARD TO THE  
EXPERIENCE OF THE PARKS AND BIODIVERSITY SERVICE OF THE SERIES OF  
CONCERTS HELD IN ST. ANNE'S AND FAIRVIEW PARKS, IN JUNE 2022.**

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Both series of concerts were generally well received and regarded as a positive addition to both the parks and the area. The local Gardaí acknowledged that the concerts were very well run and stewarded at each venue with few if any incidents. Parks management was happy with the interaction with the concert promoters and the management of the events and the condition of both parks after the events. Certain issues arose in the run up to and during the concerts which are addressed below.

**1. St. Anne's Park – 5 concerts over 2 weekends; 4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022.**

As this was the 2<sup>nd</sup> time the park has been used as a venue for such concerts it did allow certain lessons to be learnt permitting much less in the way of restrictions on park visitors. It is probably fair to say that when the concerts were first run in St. Anne's in 2019 the approach to security, fencing, access restrictions and timing of shutting down of the venue site etc. was somewhat and perhaps understandably overcautious. The audience demographics for both 2019 and 2022 were for 35-55 year olds which is seen to reduce the risk of problematic behaviour. During the statutory meetings planning this year's events the promoters, the Gardaí and Parks Management were all in agreement that much less fencing was necessary, that the timing of the closing down of the concert site and access routes across the park in advance of each concert could be left until later in the afternoon, and that access to both the tennis courts and the all-weather pitch could be facilitated on concert days. Other improvements following on from the review of the 2019 concerts included: an increase in audience size, minor changes to the layout of the concert site, additional bars and toilets, and the reduction of the number of entrances for concert goers from 3 to 2. For most other aspects of the Event Management Plan including stewarding, litter management, access etc. remained unchanged from the successful concerts in 2019.

Certain environmental concerns were raised after the concerts in 2019 including disturbance of wildlife by backstage pyrotechnic displays associated with one of acts. As a result no pyrotechnic displays were permitted in 2022 and acts were restricted to on-stage effects other than glitter cannons or similar that might have caused littering of the site. To further ensure that the concerts were not impacting upon the wildlife in the park the Parks Service

engaged the services of a consulting ecologist who monitored the site before, during and after the concerts and concluded that there were no negative impacts on either badgers or birds in the park due to the concerts and added that the security was very good and access to the most vulnerable areas of woodland was totally restricted during the concerts.

## **2. Fairview Park – 8 Concerts between 20<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July**

This was the first time that Fairview Park was used as a venue for such concerts. These were much smaller events with less audience numbers of less than 5,000 which meant that the events did not require a statutory licence. The promoter however did engage with the statutory stakeholders such as the Gardaí, DFB, and Environmental Health etc. with regard to the Event Management Plan on the same basis as the concerts in St. Anne's Park. The stewarding of the concerts proved to be quite a challenge for the promoter particularly getting patrons safely across the busy road with the road works in place but it did seem to work quite well. While the concerts themselves passed off without incident and the site emptied remarkably efficiently due to the good transport links nearby and the proximity to the city there were a number of complaints from nearby residents. The main issue which caused considerable upset locally was the lack of communication with the community. This failing has been previously discussed and the promoter advised that the company engaged to deliver the information leaflets to all the households within the area failed to do so. The Area Committee suggested that An Post be used for any proposed future concerts as this is considered a more reliable mechanism to disseminate such information. When the suggestion was brought to the promoter they had also come to a similar conclusion.

A small number of complaints were received regarding the noise levels. This matter was investigated by the Environmental Health Unit and sound level readings were taken at the nearest noise sensitive locations on East Wall Road and North Strand during the concerts at 15 minute intervals and all of the readings taken were within the parameters permitted in the legislation associated with such events. There also was a once off incident during set up when the sound system was being checked where the bass was briefly allowed to exceed the permitted parameters which set off some alarms locally. This was brought to the attention of the promoter and was not repeated.

As these were small events with good public transport links within walking distance of the city no provision was made for a dedicated drop off/pick up area, taxi or coach parking. This was probably an oversight as it failed to consider that a proportion of the younger age group attending some of the acts would be driven by parents or guardians and the lack of a dedicated drop off/pick up area may have caused some confusion and upset for some particularly with the ongoing road works along the front of the park. In future such an area can be dedicated on the Alfie Byrne Road which is being similarly used for coach parking for the Garth Brooks concerts in Croke Park.

The timing of the concerts during the state summer exams was an issue for a small number of complainants. This matter was discussed in detail with the promoters who advised that they would prefer to be able to hold the concerts after the leaving certificate as this would allow these students to attend however this is unfortunately not possible. The timing of summer concerts is not dictated by the venue or the promoter but by the availability of the acts. There is, we have been informed, a well-established series of summer festivals and events across Europe that attract the most popular international acts. Ireland is regarded as being somewhat on the periphery logistically but many acts choose to come to Ireland to kick off their European Tour. This is why there was an unprecedented number of similar concerts

of renowned international acts in Dublin during the month of June at venues such as Marley Park, Malahide Castle, the Aviva Stadium as well as St. Anne's and Fairview Park.

A request was received to consider leaving the access across and closing of the gates of the park until closer to the time of the concert. This is primarily a matter of crowd control and safety and really is a decision for the Gardaí but it will be discussed during the statutory planning process for next year's proposed concerts.

### **3. Plans for 2023**

The promoters have made contact with the City Council and advised that they wish to hold a similar number of concerts on similar dates in each venue next summer.

**St Anne's Park:** Series of 6 concerts in on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>, Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>, Friday 9<sup>th</sup>, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Capacity 20,000.

**Fairview Park:** Series of 9 concerts in between the dates June 13<sup>th</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> 2023. Capacity 8,000 with no more than 3 concerts in a row.

This increase in the proposed audience size in Fairview means that a licence will be required and the consultative statutory licence application process will allow for submissions and observations. It is envisaged that the target demographic for both series of concerts in 2023 will be in range of 35-55 years of age.

**Fergus O'Carroll**  
**Senior Executive Parks Superintendent**

**Telephone:** 01 222 6625  
**Email:** [parks@dublincity.ie](mailto:parks@dublincity.ie)