

City Matters



Belfast City Council - looking after your city

Spring 2004



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Belfast City Council

City Hall, Belfast BT1 5GS

Tel: 028 9032 0202

Textphone: 028 9027 0405

Visit our website at www.belfastcity.gov.uk



We are committed to making sure that our services are available to all sections of the community. City Matters is now available in Braille and audio and we will consider providing it other formats if requested. Please call 9032 0202 ext 2356.

City Matters is produced by Belfast City Council and delivered by Royal Mail to 124,000 addresses in Belfast at a cost of 21p per household.

This publication is printed on environmentally friendly paper.



Pictured above: Thompson Dock Pumphouse

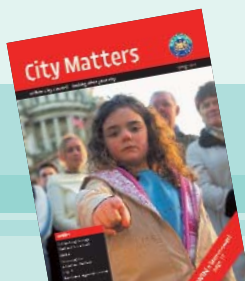
Editorial

Welcome to the spring 2004 edition of City Matters. Once again, thanks for all your comments about the autumn edition and your suggestions of what you'd like to see this time round.

Our main feature focuses on the rates (pages 4 and 5). Here we'll tell you about the recent increase and explain where we'll be spending the money. You'll find other articles, which will explain some of the main areas of expenditure in greater detail, such as our anti-litter campaign on the opposite page.

If you're looking to see what's happening in Belfast, go to page 9 for some of our events. And on the back page, you'll find details of the Titanic festival.

Don't forget to enter our free competition on page 17 for your chance to win a lawnmower and send us your thoughts by filling in the 'Your views' section. ●



Front cover: A still from the anti-litter campaign 'Don't Drop It - Stop It'. "City Matters" is produced by Corporate Communications, Belfast City Council.

Don't Drop It – Stop It!

Belfast currently spends twice the national average of similar cities on keeping our streets clean and collecting household waste. And a major publicity and advertising campaign is underway to encourage citizens to change their behaviour with a view to reducing the cost of cleaning up.

Street cleaning figures for 2001-02 for a group of 18 similar councils show that Belfast spent £26.85 per head of population compared to the average of £12.19. Figures for refuse collection per household for the same period show the Belfast expenditure at £51.73 compared to the average of £26.06.

It is startling to consider that if the city centre was only cleaned first thing in the morning and last thing at night we would be walking around ankle deep in litter.

Every home discards around one tonne of rubbish each year, amounting to almost 140,000 tonnes of rubbish across the city. If it was compressed to one tonne per cubic metre, it would be 500

metres wide, 50 metres high and 5.5 metres deep - enough to hide the City Hall if it was dumped at Donegall Square.

Research has indicated that around 60 per cent of people in Belfast admit to littering at some time, whether dropping paper or fast food packs, spitting out gum, stubbing out cigarettes, emptying car ashtrays or allowing dogs to foul on the streets.

We are spending £2 million, £1 million in the coming financial year on top of the £1 million already spent, on a major campaign to create a cleaner and more attractive Belfast.

Our campaign includes a series of television advertisements aimed at reducing the amount of litter in our streets. The ads, which have already started appearing, communicate the key message 'Don't Drop It - Stop It'.

We will also focus on other issues which detract from the overall look of our city such as fly-posting (posters displayed illegally on buildings and street furniture), graffiti and chewing gum.



And to help create a more positive environment, we will be carrying out major environmental schemes on our main roads in to the city - maintaining green areas and planting more flowers.

Our campaign aims to encourage people to take pride in their city. We want people to recognise the role they can play in making Belfast a cleaner and more attractive place to live. ●

Litterbug brings Belfast to a halt

Early on a cold Sunday morning in February, an extraordinarily busy Belfast City Centre was literally brought to a standstill.

About 200 people walking across the front of the City Hall and a large fleet of cars and buses suddenly stopped and all attention was focused on a young man who had just discarded a fast food wrapper.

But the presence of cameras and people shouting instructions through megaphones would have assured visitors to the city - surprisingly numerous - that this was not normal behaviour! It was the set of our anti-litter television advertisement 'Don't drop it - Stop it'.

Star of the show was six-year-old Lauren McDonald, who attends St Bernard Primary School in Rosetta and

is fresh from her success in the BBC's critically acclaimed drama 'Holy Cross', in which she played Aoife.

Lauren, who features on the front page of City Matters, has become the face of our anti-litter campaign and will be watching over us from advertising posters around the city during the coming months.

The other two professional actors in the piece were Belfast based actors Damien Hannaway, originally from Newry, and English-born Linda George. Let's hope Damien doesn't get typecast as a litterbug for the sake of his future career!

The welcome surprise was the number of tourists in the city centre - especially for the time of year - not to mention the earliness of the hour.

A group of Germans approached a

member of our staff and asked what was happening. When we told them about the ad, they were surprised that we needed to get the litter message across as they unanimously declared Belfast to be a clean and beautiful city. Music to our ears!

The city's sense of humour is never too far away on these occasions. A group of Welsh visitors seemed to be getting very excited as they viewed proceedings. It transpired that one of our street cleaners had told them Liam Neeson was in town making a movie. After a few minutes a sympathetic member of the advertising agency team told the real story and they were greatly amused at how they had been taken in.

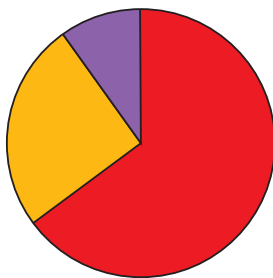
All in all it was a good day for the city. Let's hope the advertising campaign itself will be as successful. ●

Striving for a better Belfast

This year's domestic rate rise of 5.94 per cent reflects our efforts to strike a balance between keeping the increase down as much as possible while continuing to provide and improve our range of services.

The domestic rate, set by the council, is used to meet the cost of providing services such as refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning, parks and recreation grounds, cemeteries and crematorium, leisure centres, environmental health services and community centres.

The regional rate, which is set by central government is set to rise by 8.8 per cent. It funds services such as education, housing, social services and sewerage.



Belfast City Council Income 2004/2005	
■ Grants	£12m
■ Fees & Charges	£26m
■ District Rates	£77.9m



Together, the increase represents around £35 per year in the average domestic rates bill - or less than 70p a week. The total spend for Belfast City Council for the year 2004/2005 will be £115.9 million which is made up of district (domestic and business) rates (£77.9m), grants (£12m) and fees and charges (£26m).

We aim to make sure that the city's ratepayers get value for money and hope that our residents and visitors will see the difference we can make on the streets and in our communities.

The people of Belfast have told us they want to enjoy living in a safe, clean and attractive city and these things are also a must in attracting investment and visitors to strengthen our economy.

We believe in a better Belfast and the initiatives outlined here will help us achieve that aim.

£1m for clean and attractive city

For 2004 - 5, we have committed an investment of an extra £1 million to our Brighter Belfast campaign to create a clean and attractive city.

Its emphasis will be on increasing awareness of littering and focusing on as the removal of fly-posting, graffiti and gum, which detract from the overall look of our city.

The campaign also aims to improve the appearance of the main roads into Belfast by sprucing up shop fronts. We will be providing more flowers and maintaining green areas to create an attractive environment.

There are also plans to spend an extra £400,000 to target vandalism and anti-social behaviour at parks and cemeteries.

Brighter Belfast also underpins a number of our other priorities, such as neighbourhood renewal and our efforts to create a safe and healthy city.



Tackling waste

The rates increase reflects the real issue facing all local authorities - waste disposal.

Costs in this area are set to rise dramatically during the next 10 years to meet the targets set by EC law. We need to budget for it now to avoid even steeper rises in the future.

Recycling can play a key role in this area and we have a number of major initiatives for this year. New recycling centres will open at Alexandra Park in north Belfast, Blackstaff Way in the west and Palmerstown Road in the east by April, costing a total of £4.5 million. A fourth centre will open at Park Road in south Belfast early next year.

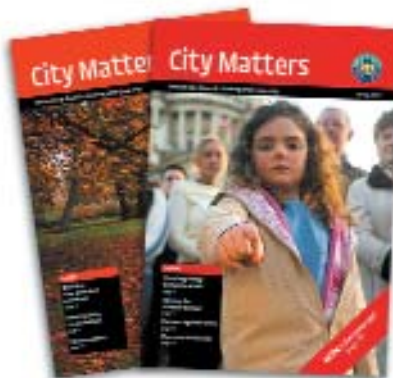
At present 18,000 households either have a blue recycling bin for paper or are in the process of having one delivered to their homes. From April 2004 an additional 18,000 households will receive one and a further 22,000 will receive them during 2005.

During 2004, around 50,000 homes, which have limited storage space for multiple bins, will receive a weekly recycling collection service using a specially produced box.

Investment in leisure and communities

Our commitment to leisure and to local communities will continue in the coming year.

Our aim is to provide the city with leisure and sports facilities fit for the 21st century. We are currently rebuilding Falls Swim Centre, which is due to open by January 2005, while Ballysillan Leisure Centre will also be upgraded.



Plans for a ground-breaking Health and Well Being Centre at Grove in north Belfast are well underway. This integrates leisure facilities, health services and learning facilities on one site.

Our community safety strategy work continues to make progress and while we believe the issues should be tackled in a strategic way, we are also looking at a number of short term initiatives such as dealing with abandoned cars.



Our Good Relations Unit is now set up and the Good Relations Grant Aid Fund will provide £220,000 worth of support for community relations and cultural diversity projects in the city.

Another £100,000 will be invested in our Children and Young People's Action Plan.

Access to services and information

One of our main commitments is to place you at the heart of the service we provide, giving you easier access to information and services.

For people with disabilities, work is planned on all council buildings during the next three years to make sure we meet accessibility standards.

We are committed to improving communications with residents. City Matters was recently commended by the Plain English Campaign for being 'so well written it gives a positive image of Belfast City Council'. And we've been encouraged by your comments and suggestions, which we use to improve the content and look of the magazine.

Economy is key to city's future success

Promoting the economic development of the city is key to a better future for Belfast.

We face a number of challenges on this front and research has shown a number of issues such as:

- Decline of traditional industries
- Low business birth rates
- High long term unemployment
- Skills gaps
- High costs
- Increased competition

are all barriers against economic growth.

We will continue to work with business leaders to highlight the support we can give, particularly through our Local Economic Development Plan. This will provide £11 million over the next three years to support economic development in the city. ●

For more information on rates, please contact, Fred Maguire, Head of Financial Services on 9027 0255 or email: maguiref@belfastcity.gov.uk. Or log on to www.ratecollectionagencycni.gov.uk

Community spirit in action

Residents of four areas in the city are at the forefront of a drive to clean up their neighbourhoods to make them a much more pleasant place to live. Finishing touches are now being put to 'Greencare' environmental improvement schemes in Turf Lodge, Ligoniel, Tiger's Bay and Inverary.

Greencare is a partnership between Belfast City Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Groundwork Northern Ireland.

Community involvement is at the heart of Greencare, adopting the principle that local people are best at finding local solutions to local problems. Greencare encourages local people to put forward their ideas on how they would like to see their neighbourhood improved. Residents of all ages have been involved in projects including murals, planting schemes, clean-up events, community gardens, multipurpose sports facilities and play facilities.

Communities can attend Groundwork's training courses to gain new skills in networking and accessing funding. Support between groups encourages good relations between communities and with the statutory partners. These relationships place the community in the driving seat when decisions are being made in their areas.

The Greencare pilot project began over four years ago in the communities of Mount Vernon, New Lodge, Sandy Row and the Markets areas. Residents are very pleased with the work and there are plans to expand the Greencare project to other Belfast communities. ●

If your community would like to get involved, please contact our Sustainable Development Manager on 9027 0460.



Michael Longley

The test of time

A new book to mark the restoration of one of Belfast's most distinctive landmarks, the Albert Clock, was launched at the beginning of this year. The publication, 'The Albert Memorial Clock', looks at the £2.4 million project which was completed in spring 2002.

At the launch Michael Longley, the Belfast poet, recited his poem 'The Albert Clock'.

Michael had written the poem, when the Belfast composer, Elaine Agnew asked him to write something which could be set to music for the 2002 Belfast Festival at Queen's.

Michael Longley said, "I needed to take into consideration that the words would be sung, so I choose simple, clear words."

His poem is reproduced here with kind permission. ●



'The Albert Memorial Clock' book, by author Lyn Gallagher (pictured), is available to buy from City Hall, Belfast during normal office hours. Cost £8.

The Albert Clock

Belfast owns a grandfather clock
Made out of sandstone: standing there
It makes our town a living room,
Timepiece for every citizen.

In silence the pendulum swings

Although its roots are tree trunks
Rotting in watery darkness
Among sewage-pipes and cables,
The city's leaning tower still stands.

In silence the pendulum swings

Outside are flying buttresses,
Gargoyles, lions with shields: inside,
Pinions, spindles, a train of wheels
Keeping the time since Albert's time.

In silence the pendulum swings

Winds that puff the approximate
Dandelion clock of childhood,
Buffet the hour and minute hands:
But not one second's lost or gained.

In silence the pendulum swings

Floodlit in nineteen forty-five
And after thirty years of troubles
Stabilised, may the Albert Clock
Be a timepiece for peacetime.

In silence the pendulum swings.



Getting married in Belfast is now easier

Go green with compost bin



If you're a keen recycler, a budding gardener or just want to help the environment, here's your chance to 'do your bit' in your very own back yard.

Instead of putting garden and kitchen waste into your household bin - adding to the mountains of waste in landfill sites - you can now recycle it in a home compost bin. Make your own rich garden compost from tea bags, vegetable scraps and fruit peelings.

You can buy a home compost bin at a discounted price of £5* (normal retail price £30-£40) - complete with a kitchen caddy and user guide. To get your bin, simply send your name and your full postal address, together with a cheque or postal order for £5 made payable to Belfast City Council, to:

**Home Compost Bin Offer
Waste Management
Cecil Ward Building
4-10 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP**

If you'd rather pay cash, you can do so at the Cecil Ward Building only. Delivery will be free or arrangements can be made for you to collect your compost bin. ●

*Note: This offer is only open to Belfast City Council residents and is subject to availability.

For more information on composting or recycling in the Belfast area contact the Recycling Hotline on 0800 0328100.

New laws are icing on the wedding cake

Couples planning a civil marriage can now get married at home, in a hotel, or somewhere more unusual! It follows the introduction of the Marriage Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 at the beginning of this year.

Intending couples can now pick their own location - within reason.

The main requirements are that:

- the premises or location are appropriate and dignified;
- health and safety regulations are met; and
- public liability insurance is provided.

The new order makes it much easier for people to get married, firstly by making the preparations simpler and secondly by giving them more choice.

In the past, you had to give notice of a civil marriage in person at a local registrar's office no earlier than three months before the event. Under the new legislation, notice can be given in person or in writing up to one year in advance of the date of the marriage.

Now local authorities can license other venues so that weddings can take place there.

The two categories of approval for a licence are:

- a 'Place Approval' covers civil ceremonies at designated premises and is valid for three years;
- a 'Temporary Approval' is valid for one event on a specified date and location.

The fee for both is £300.

Other changes include:

- an extension to the hours during which ceremonies can be conducted, allowing 250 extra civil weddings to take place each year;
- couples from outside Belfast can now make their vows inside the city's boundaries;
- special licences will no longer be required for religious marriages outside churches; and
- registrars will be responsible for the registration of all marriages, both civil and religious, in Northern Ireland. ●

If you're thinking of getting married and need more information, please contact the Registrar on 9027 0274 to discuss your plans. You can also visit our website: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bdm/ where you can download marriage forms and find out about civil marriages in a registry office and approved venues.



Consumer advice

Our Consumer Advice Centre, based in the heart of Belfast, offers help and advice on consumer-related problems to both traders and consumers. Advisers will make you aware of your legal rights and are happy to act as mediators on your behalf if you are unable to sort out your problem. All enquiries are treated seriously and no complaint is considered too trivial. Here we look at buying on credit. ●

Q Last year I paid £800 cash for a computer which was to be delivered the following week. Unfortunately the shop ceased trading that Friday and I was eventually told that not only would I not get the computer but also that I had lost my money. A friend of mine had also arranged to buy the same computer from the same shop. He had paid a cash deposit of £200 and was to pay the £600 balance through a credit agreement. He too was told he was not getting the computer but he does not have to pay the other £600 and he also got his £200 cash back. Why did I lose all my money and he didn't?

A This is exactly the sort of situation when buying on credit can give you extra rights. Under the Consumer Credit Act 1974 when you arrange to buy goods costing over £100 on a credit agreement and the shop ceases trading and you do not receive the goods, you then have a claim against the finance company. If the finance company cannot supply the goods, the agreement is cancelled and the finance company has to refund any deposit paid. You can also get this added protection if you pay by credit card.

Buying on credit gives you extra protection if goods are faulty and the shop has ceased trading. This is because you also have a claim against your finance company for faulty goods.

You do not get this extra protection if you pay by Switch or by debit card. When you pay by cash, Switch card or debit card your contract is only with the retailer and if the retailer disappears you do not have anyone else to claim from. The disadvantages of buying on credit is that unless you have an interest-free period in which you can clear the account at the cash price you may end up having to pay quite high interest charges. ●

If you have a consumer problem and would like some specialist advice, simply visit the Consumer Advice Centre at 6 Callender Street, Belfast.

You can pick up leaflets and information on consumer information issues from here.

Opening times:

Monday	9.30am - 4.30pm
Tuesday	9.30am - 4.30pm
Wednesday	9.30am - 2.00pm
Thursday	9.30am - 4.30pm
Friday	9.30am - 4.15pm

You can also telephone 9032 8260 or e-mail your query to consumer.advice@belfastcity.gov.uk

What's on



The handy guide, **whatabout?** gives details of events taking place throughout Belfast - from theatre and exhibitions to comedy and festivals. Pick up your free copy of **whatabout?** from the Belfast Welcome Centre at 47 Donegall Place or call 9023 9026. You can also go online at www.gotobelfast.com and click on 'Events' for an up-to-date listing or email events@belfastvisitor.com to request a copy of **whatabout?**

You'll find full details of the Titanic Festival (see back page) in April's **whatabout?** or you can go online to www.titanicmadeinbelfast.com to see the eighteen events.

Pick up a copy of **Performance**, the Belfast Waterfront Hall magazine at venues throughout Belfast or call our box office on 9033 4455 or visit our website at www.waterfront.co.uk



For events at the Ulster Hall, call 9032 3900 or visit www.ulsterhall.co.uk

■ April

World Irish Dancing Championships

4 - 11 April
Belfast Waterfront Hall

Tickets will be sold on the day at the Waterfront. Adults £10, Children & OAPs £5.

Tel: 9024 6609



City of Belfast Spring Fair

24 & 25 April
Malone House

12.30pm-6.00pm each day
Annual fair and flower show, with arts and crafts workshops for all the family.

Tel: 9027 0467

European Exhibition

27 April
St. George's Market

Multi-cultural festival of food, crafts and style from the European Union.

Tel: 9032 0202 ext 3326

International Street Theatre Festival

29 April - 3 May

With Belfast Community Circus School
www.belfastcircus.org
www.foolsfestival.com
Tel: 9023 6007

Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival

29 April - 9 May

Comedy, music, literature and more!
www.cqaf.com
Tel: 9023 2403

International Rose Week

19 - 25 July
Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park

Enjoy a stroll among some of the finest roses to be seen anywhere.

Tel: 9027 0467



■ May

BBC Music Live

1 May **City Hall**
9.30pm

This pop event will be linked to a parallel concert in Dublin.

Tel: 08700 100 123

Belfast City Marathon

3 May **City Hall**
9.30am

(Team, Relay and Fun Run)
This year's nominated charity is Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Tel: 9027 0345

Festival of Champions

9 May
Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park

Champion bands perform in the first of a series of summer-long 'Music In The Park' concerts across Belfast.

Tel: 9027 0467

Belfast Week of Dance

15 - 23 May

A wide range of dance classes, workshops and displays across Belfast.

Tel: 9027 0345



Continental Market

28 - 30 May
City Hall (Front Lawn)

Traders from Italy, Germany, France and Holland. Continental food and crafts.

Lord Mayor's Show

29 May
City Centre

12 noon

A parade of civic festivity.

■ June



Week of Cycling

12 - 20 June

Tel: 9027 0345

Summer Fair

19 & 20 June

A weekend of food and craft with live jazz band playing and activities for children.

Tel: 9027 0467

■ July

Opera in Botanic Gardens

13 July
Botanic Gardens

'Tosca' beamed live from the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.

Tel: 9024 6609

Council events listed are **FREE** unless otherwise stated. All details correct at time of going to press.



Members of Belfast City Council

(showing political affiliation as elected in June 2001)

■ Balmoral Electoral Area

(Comprising Blackstaff, Finaghy, Malone, Musgrave, Upper Malone, Windsor Wards)



Cllr Margaret Crooks
UUP- Deputy Lord Mayor
Tel: 078 7656 2502



Cllr Thomas Ekin
ALL
Tel: 028 9020 1714



Cllr Carmel Hanna
SDLP
Tel: 028 9068 3535



Cllr Catherine Molloy
SDLP
Tel: 028 9020 1768



Cllr Ruth Patterson
DUP - High Sheriff
(until 31 December 2004)
Tel: 078 1012 0553



Cllr Bob Stoker
UUP
Tel: 028 9032 1472

■ Castle Electoral Area

(Comprising Bellevue, Castlevew, Cavehill, Chichester Park, Duncairn, Fortwilliam Wards)



Cllr David Browne
UUP
Tel: 028 9077 1757



Cllr Patrick Convery
SDLP
Tel: 028 9028 9380



Cllr Ian Crozier
DUP
Tel: 077 7165 7704



Cllr Nigel Dodds OBE
DUP
Tel: 028 9077 4774



Cllr Danny Lavery
SF
Tel: 028 9074 0817



Cllr Alban Maginness
SDLP
Tel: 028 9022 0520

■ Court Electoral Area

(Comprising Crumlin, Glencairn, Highfield, Shankill, Woodvale Wards)



Cllr Frank McCoubrey
IND
Tel: 079 7104 8650



Cllr Chris McGimpsey
UUP
Tel: 028 9031 9430



Cllr Elaine McMillen
DUP
Tel: 028 9077 4774



Cllr Eric Smyth
DUP
Tel: 077 7423 1477



Cllr Hugh Smyth OBE
PUP
Tel: 028 9032 0202

■ Laganbank Electoral Area

(Comprising Ballynafeigh, Botanic, Rosetta, Shaftesbury, Stranmillis Wards)



Cllr Jim Clarke
UUP
Tel: 028 9045 7009



Cllr Alex Maskey
SF
Tel: 028 9024 3194



Cllr Patrick McCarthy
SDLP
Tel: 077 1164 4275



Cllr Michael McGimpsey
UUP
Tel: 028 9024 5801



Cllr Peter O'Reilly
SDLP
Tel: 028 9064 6622

■ Lower Falls Electoral Area

(Comprising Beechmount, Clonard, Falls, Upper Springfield, Whiterock Wards)



Cllr Máire Cush
SF
Tel: 028 9050 8989



Cllr Tom Hartley
SF
Tel: 028 9050 8989



Cllr Francis McCann
SF
Tel: 028 9050 8989



Cllr Marie Moore
SF
Tel: 028 9050 8989



Cllr Margaret Walsh
SDLP
Tel: 078 0188 3532

ALL - Alliance **DUP** - Democratic Unionist Party **IND** - Independent **PUP** - Progressive Unionist Party
SDLP - Social, Democratic & Labour Party **SF** - Sinn Féin **UUP** - Ulster Unionist Party

Oldpark Electoral Area

(Comprising Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Cliftonville, Ligoniel, New Lodge, Waterworks Wards)



Cllr Billy Hutchinson
PUP
Tel: 028 9077 2307



Cllr Nelson McCausland
DUP
Tel: 028 9039 1804



Cllr Margaret McClenaghan
SF
Tel: 028 9071 3272



Cllr Martin Morgan
SDLP- Lord Mayor
Tel: 028 9024 7700



Cllr Carál Ní Chuilín
SF
Tel: 028 9074 0817



Cllr Eoin Ó Broin
SF
Tel: 028 9074 0817

Pottinger Electoral Area

(Comprising Ballymacarrett, Bloomfield, Orangefield, Ravenhill, The Mount, Woodstock Wards)



Cllr Margaret Clarke
UUP
Tel: 078 7656 2505



Cllr Sir Reg Empey OBE
UUP
Tel: 028 9065 8217



Cllr David Ervine
PUP
Tel: 028 9022 5040



Cllr Joseph O'Donnell
SF
Tel: 028 9045 5892



Cllr Harry Toan
DUP
Tel: 077 5206 7808



Cllr Sammy Wilson
DUP
Tel: 028 9045 9500

Upper Falls Electoral Area

(Comprising Andersonstown, Falls Park, Glencolin, Glen Road, Ladybrook Wards)



Cllr Alex Attwood
SDLP
Tel: 028 9080 7808/9



Cllr Michael Browne
SF
Tel: 028 9080 8404



Cllr Paul Maskey
SF
Tel: 028 9080 8404



Cllr Chrissie McAuley
SF
Tel: 028 9022 3000



Cllr Gerard O'Neill
SF
Tel: 028 9080 8404

Victoria Electoral Area

(Comprising Ballyhackamore, Belmont, Cherryvalley, Island, Knock, Stormont, Sydenham Wards)



Cllr Ian Adamson OBE
UUP
Tel: 028 9042 1005



Cllr David Alderdice OBE
ALL
Tel: 028 9073 8703



Cllr Wallace Browne
DUP
Tel: 028 9065 8301



Cllr Alan Crowe
UUP
Tel: 078 0188 2469



Cllr Naomi Long
ALL
Tel: 078 1039 6566



Cllr Robin Newton
DUP
Tel: 0028 9045 9500



Cllr Jim Rodgers OBE
UUP
Tel: 078 0188 2478

Belfast Electoral Areas

- Balmoral
- Castle
- Court
- Laganbank
- Lower Falls
- Oldpark
- Pottinger
- Upper Falls
- Victoria



Directory of Key Council Services

Council Venues and Buildings

Belfast Castle	9077 6925
Cecil Ward Building	9032 0202
City Hall	9032 0202
City Hall (textphone)	9027 0405
City Hall Tours	9027 0456
Consumer Advice Centre, Callender St	9032 8260
Duncrue Complex	9037 0334
First Stop Shop Business Enquiry Service	9027 8399
Group Theatre	9032 3900
Malone House	9068 1246
Smithfield Market	9032 3248
St George's Market	9043 5704
Ulster Hall	9032 3900
Waterfront Hall	9033 4400
Zoological Gardens Information line	9077 4625

Leisure and Recreation Centres

Andersonstown Leisure Centre	9062 5211
Avoniel Leisure Centre	9045 1564
Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre	9045 8828
Ballysillan Leisure Centre	9039 1040
Beechmount Leisure Centre	9032 8631
Belfast Indoor Tennis Arena/ Ozone Leisure Complex	9045 8024
Grove Leisure Centre	9035 1599
Loughside Recreation Centre	9078 1524
Maysfield Leisure Centre	9024 1633
Olympia Leisure Centre	9023 3369
Shankill Leisure Centre	9024 1434
Whiterock Leisure Centre	9023 3239
Outdoor Pitch Hotline	9039 2211

Some other services for which the council is not responsible

Water

Department for Regional Development (DRD) Water Service Customer Service Enquiries ..08457 440088 Leakline(water mains only) ..08000 282011	
Department of the Environment (DOE) Environmental Health	9027 0428
Water Pollution	0800 807060

Libraries

Belfast Education & Library Board	9056 4000
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Planning

Department of the Environment Planning Service	9025 2800
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Public Housing

Northern Ireland Housing Executive	9024 0588
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Rates Collection

Rates Collection Agency	9025 2252
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Roads DRD Roads Service	9054 0540
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Schools

Belfast Education & Library Board	9056 4000
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	9042 6972

Street Lighting (Fault Reporting):

DRD	9025 3051
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A-Z

A

Abandoned Vehicles	9027 0656
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B

Bin/Container sales	9027 0656
Births - Registration	9027 0274
Building Control 24 Hour answer phone	9023 6672
Technical Helpline	9027 0432
Licensing	9027 0287
Bulky Household Waste/ Special Collections	9027 0230

C

Cemeteries Office Mon-Thur 8.30am-5.00pm (Fri 4.30pm) Sat 8.30am-12.30pm	9027 0296
City Cemetery	9032 3112
City of Belfast Golf Course	9084 3799
Civic Amenity Sites/Dumps	9027 0297
Community Services	9027 0505
Complaints Central Helpline	9027 0270
Consumer Safety Division	9027 0464
Crematorium	9044 8342
Culture and Arts	9027 0461

D

Dead Animal Removal	9027 0297
Deaths - Registration	9027 0274
Dog Warden Service	9027 0431
Dundonald Cemetery	9048 0193

E

Equality Officer (Freefone)	0800 0855 412
Events Belfast Welcome Centre	9024 6609
Events Hotline	9027 0222
Leisure and Sporting	9027 0345
Parks and Amenities	9027 0467

F

Fly Poster Removal	9027 0297
Fly Tipping (Illegal dumping)	9027 0230
Food Safety Division	9027 0468
Forest of Belfast Officer	9027 0350

G

Good Relations	9027 0663
Graffiti Removal	9027 0297
Grounds Maintenance	9037 3031
Group Theatre Administration	9032 3900
Box Office	9032 9685

H

Health & Environmental Services Emergency (after hours) Mobile number	078 5049 9622
Health Promotion & Training	9027 0469
Home Safety Division	9027 0469

J

Jobline	9027 0481
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/jobs	

L

Landfill Site	9037 0301
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N

Noise Hotline	9037 3006
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P

Pest Control	9027 0428
Pollution Control	9027 0428
Port Health	9035 1199
Public Conveniences	9027 0230
Public Health & Housing	9027 0428

R

Recycling Hotline ..	0800 0328 100
Refuse Collection	9027 0230
Commercial/ Trade Accounts	9027 0298
Commercial/ Trade Operations	9032 3190
Customer Contact Centre	9027 0230
Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages	9027 0274
Regulatory Services	9027 0464
(Enforcement of alcohol, street trading and sale of tobacco and Sunday trading bye-laws)	
Roselawn Cemetery	9044 8288

S

Smoke Hotline	9027 0420
Street Cleansing Enquiries/Complaints	9027 0297

U

Ulster Hall	9032 3900
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W

Waste Disposal Accounts	9027 0298
Industrial/Hazardous/ Special waste	9027 0656
Complaints/Enquiries	9027 0297
.....	9027 0230
Waterfront Hall Administration, Box Office and Enquiries	9033 4400
Credit Card Bookings	9033 4455
Weddings	9027 0274



Children develop many skills through play

It pays to play

Parents at a Belfast play centre have been praising the council's commitment to supporting play. Several thousand children are benefiting from facilities such as the one based at Avoniel Play Centre.

Eileen Scates' son attends Avoniel after-school club. She said, "As a child William was very quiet and reserved but when he started going to the centre he really came out of his shell. Every child needs to play - that's how they learn about sharing, patience, winning and losing."

"William wouldn't have mixed before he started going to the group. Through

play the staff and volunteers helped him to get over his inhibitions to the point now where he's doing extremely well at school."

Play provides children with the opportunity to learn, develop and to interact with other children. Through 22 community and six play centres, we provide playgroups, after-school clubs and summer schemes. We also offer grant aid to community groups to help with running play schemes.

Events such as play days bring children from across the city together. 'Play for All' helps children with disabilities to take advantage of their local playing facilities.



Practical training, such as child protection and games workshop training, is available to staff and volunteers in any community-based play project in Belfast. ●

Further information on play opportunities is available from Blanche Thompson, Play Development Officer on: 028 9032 0202 ext 3524 or email: play@belfastcity.gov.uk

Recycling centres of the future



Three new household recycling centres are nearing completion and will be open by April 2004. These are designed for ease of access and to maximise the recycling of rubbish that is normally thrown away. The centres will be located at Alexandra Park Avenue, Blackstaff Way and Palmerston Road.

Previously sites had to close temporarily for safety reasons, while our skips were emptied. Now the improved facilities will stay open constantly during their opening hours.

Staff will be on hand at the centres to help you to recycle and to explain how all the materials are treated.

With your support, over 70% of all that we normally throw away could be recycled into a valuable resource. You can help by pre-sorting your recyclable items such as paper, cans, bottles (glass and plastic), cardboard and wood.

You'll soon see mini recycling centres for glass in and around your local area to make recycling easier for you.

If you think you know of a suitable location for a mini recycling centre in your neighbourhood, please call the Recycling Hotline free on 0800 0328100. We will take your suggestions on board and try to answer all of your recycling questions. ●

Partners against crime



A partnership dedicated to tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime has been set up recently. The Belfast Community Safety Partnership aims to help combat these problems through pooling the resources and knowledge of a number of organisations.

Community safety tries to take into account the issues which affect people's daily lives. These aren't always reflected in official statistics - anti-social behaviour and fear of crime are sometimes overlooked.

And to help local communities and groups, we have recruited a dedicated Community Safety Team. This team

will initially try to find out what difficulties people are facing. This will enable us to identify who needs our support so that we can direct funding where it is needed. Some of the projects already underway include:

■ **a contact and advice line for the elderly from the Bridge Centre in Ravenhill** - Using volunteers to provide support and daily contact with isolated older people.

■ **the Night Owl rough sleepers project** - This project has a mobile team working seven nights a week throughout the city. The team provides food, clothing and blankets and, where possible, helps to find beds for people who have nowhere to sleep.

■ **the 'red coats' in Belfast city centre** - Providing support for visitors and residents in need of help or advice.

Belfast Community Safety Partnership is looking forward to working with communities and organisations throughout the city to help make a real difference. You can get actively involved in improving your area and groups can work together on common problems. ●



The scheme provides support and daily contact with isolated older people

For further information contact the Community Safety Team on 9032 0202 ext 3258 or email bremnere@belfastcity.gov.uk

Pictured:

- 1. The Halifax Centre in the Gasworks.
- 2. The cranes of Harland and Wolff overlooking the Lagan.
- 3. The Seacat at Belfast docks.



The state of our city

A major conference will take place in Belfast at the end of April to look at how key organisations can work together to further the regeneration of the city.

The aim is to get everyone involved to agree on a 'to do' list of actions that can contribute to making Belfast a success not just as an investment location, but also as a welcoming city where people want to live.

We have performed reasonably well as a city during the past 10 years and we need to be able to compete continuously against other cities throughout Europe and the world in order to attract investment - and ultimately jobs.

The conference will look at how we compare against those cities and look

at ways in which we can become more competitive, including through our training and education systems, public transport and the way the city is planned and governed.

We also commissioned research by leading competitiveness expert, Professor Michael Parkinson, director of the European Institute of Urban. He identified issues on which Belfast 'could do better' - a high percentage of working age population with no qualifications, low levels of innovation and fragmented city governance.

Among our strengths is the fact that we are much more productive per person

than most UK and European cities. We have an extremely well educated workforce, with nearly a quarter of people having a university degree.

To further this aim, we have developed a 'master plan' for the city, which outlines new development plans for the city.

Belfast: State of the City will examine the research and the master plan in making its decisions on ways forward. ●

To find out more about this work visit the 'Belfast: State of the City' exhibition in the foyer of City Hall during April or visit our website at: www.belfastcapitalcity.com/stateofthecity or email: development@belfastcity.gov.uk

'Red Card' for dog fouling

We're blowing the full-time whistle on those people who allow their dogs to foul in our streets and parks.

Your feedback from previous editions of City Matters tells us that many of you are fed up with people not cleaning up after their dogs. Not only is dog fouling unpleasant to look at, but it can actually cause illness. Children are most at risk from toxocarasis, a disease which can lead to sight damage and allergic asthma. People with disabilities and visually impaired people are also particularly vulnerable.

You may have noticed our new 'Red Card for Dog Fouling' advertisements which have been appearing on buses since Christmas. They feature a referee holding up a 'red card' to an offender who has just let his dog soil the footpath, informing him of his penalty. The fixed penalty fine is currently £25, but this will soon increase to £50.

The campaign includes radio advertisements on Citybeat and we have special patrols out to detect offenders. Dog wardens will give out red cards



containing information on the problem and how we can put a stop to it. ●

To support the campaign, we've produced a leaflet giving more detailed public health information for both dog owners and non-owners. If you'd like a copy of the leaflet, please contact the Dog Warden Service on 9027 0431. Support us in giving a 'Red Card' to dog fouling.



Support for sport

An annual tournament at Belfast's indoor tennis centre is helping to raise the profile and create a positive image of the city. It's one of the events which has attracted grants from our 'Support for Sport' scheme.

The Belfast International Wheelchair Tennis Tournament takes place each September and players have already started to sign up for the 2004 competition.

"Without this financial help, we wouldn't be able to run the tournament to such a high standard," said organiser, Ivor Jess of the Spokes in Motion wheelchair tennis club. "It's really professionally organised and the athletes come from all over England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic".

Our ongoing grant scheme, Support for Sport, recognises the benefits that sport can have for individuals, communities and the city. Funding is

open to all recognised sports clubs and organisations based in Belfast and hundreds of groups have benefited so far.

What is funding available for?

We aim to promote and develop sport in the city of Belfast. There are four areas of funding:

- **Sponsorship** - available to high profile Belfast sports clubs which have a high economic impact, spectator appeal and generate good publicity for the city.
- **Events** - for high profile sporting events which are being held in Belfast.
- **Hospitality** - for competitors and officials visiting Belfast for major events, and also to celebrate achievement by Belfast competitors.
- **Development** - for clubs aiming to develop services and encourage participation. This funding can also help to set up new clubs or develop existing clubs.

Applications for sponsorship, hospitality and development can be made at any time and are currently being considered on a monthly basis.

Applications for events support are considered twice yearly in April and September. ●

Why not help your club?

The application process is straightforward. All you have to do is complete an application form stating what you need funding for. You can get more information about the scheme by calling 9027 0661.

Guidance notes and application forms are available at:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/supportforsport



New Europe, New Faces

We're running a programme of events called New Europe, New Faces - together with the European Commission and other partners from the business, education and government sectors in Belfast. The programme is to celebrate the enlargement of the EU and will explain the whys and wherefores behind enlarging the European Union and what it means to Belfast and the region.

The New Europe, New Faces programme runs from 27 April to 5 May at various venues around Belfast. The showpiece

will be an all day European Fair at St George's Market on 27 April where you will be able to experience the sights and sounds of the 10 European countries, try their local foods and learn more about their history and culture. Other events include a seminar on business opportunities in the new Europe, a major photographic exhibition at the Waterfront Hall, a schools debate and a community awareness roadshow. ●

For further information, please contact our European Unit on 9032 0202 Ext 3326.

WIN a lawnmower



John, Michael and Lorraine from B&Q, Boucher Road show off the competition prize.

To help you on your way to a perfect lawn, enter our free competition to win a Mountfield lawnmower.

Simply tick the box beside the correct answer and return the coupon to:

Belfast City Council, FREEPOST BEL4010, Belfast BT1 5BR (no stamp required).

And the winner is...



Janice Crowe (right), Assistant Sales and Marketing Manager from Belfast Waterfront Hall, congratulates Tom Murphy and his daughter Terri on winning the City Matters competition.

In our autumn edition, we asked "What is the name of Belfast Waterfront Hall's events magazine?". The correct answer was of course **Performance**. The winner, Tom Murphy won a meal for two, courtesy of the **arc restaurant**. He and his daughter, Terri also enjoyed free tickets to see Puccini's Madama Butterfly at the Waterfront. Congratulations to Tom!

Q What should you put in a compost bin?

- 1. Paper waste ?
- 2. Tea bags, fruit and vegetable peelings?
- 3. Glass ?

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Post code:

Telephone Number:

This petrol-powered, push lawnmower with an engine power of 4.0hp is supplied courtesy of B & Q Boucher Road.

Terms and Conditions

Only one entry per household. No Belfast City Council employees may enter the competition. You must live within the Belfast City Council electoral area to enter the competition. Competition entries must be received by 10 May 2004. The winner will be notified by 17 May 2004. There is no cash alternative to the prize. The council's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Full terms and conditions are available on request.

Your views

We hope you have enjoyed reading City Matters and welcome your comments.

Please spare a minute or two to let us know what you thought about this issue.

Please tell us what type of stories and features you would like to see in future issues of City Matters.

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think. Now return your completed questionnaire to:

Belfast City Council,
FREEPOST BEL4010,
Belfast BT1 5BR
(no stamp required).

Or, you may email your comments to **corporatecommunications@belfastcity.gov.uk**

Tops for taste buds



A sample of the award-winning produce

St George's Market has been voted the third best food market in the UK by the Observer Food Magazine's Waitrose Awards. The magazine was particularly impressed with the Friday market which, with its 23 seafood stalls, is the leading fish retail market in Ireland.

The Saturday Farm and Speciality Food Market was also praised for its wide variety of high quality local and imported produce.

Our Markets Development Officer, Andrew Irvine said, "It's a unique place in that you can taste before you buy and get cooking advice while chatting and bantering with the actual producers and growers."

St George's underwent a major refurbishment in 1999. It is open from 6am to 1pm on Fridays and from 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. ●

Take to the streets



Things are gathering pace for the 23rd Belfast City Marathon, which takes to the streets this coming May Day Bank Holiday (Monday May 3).

Already the biggest sporting event in Northern Ireland, the Marathon very soon could find itself in the Guinness Book of Records - as the biggest relay race in the world. Last year, more than 1,200 teams took part - that's an amazing 6,000-plus

runners. Marathon organisers are expecting verification any time now.

The marathon, relay and walk start from City Hall at 9.30am, with the fun run starting at 10am. All events finish outside Maysfield Leisure Centre. ●

Further information is available by calling 9027 0345 or logging on to www.belfastcitymarathon.com



Frequently asked questions

Q I'm a person with a disability and am unable to leave my bin out for collection. Is there any way the council could help me with this?

A Yes - we provide a service for people who are unable to take out their bin, or have no-one at home who can do this for them. This service is called an assisted lift. Firstly you need to get a letter from your doctor to say that you are unable to do this. Then you need to send the letter to:

**The Operations Manager
(Waste Collection and Fleet)
Belfast City Council
Duncrue Complex
Duncrue Road
Belfast BT3 9BP**

The refuse collectors will then bring your bin out for collection and return it to the same spot for you. If you want to speak to someone about the assisted lift service, please call our Cleansing Hotline on 028 9027 0230.

Q What is the council doing about removing unsightly posters?

A Fly-posting is the display of advertising material on buildings and street furniture without the consent of the owner and in breach of advertising regulations. Although we may remove or cover up posters or signs, the Department of the Environment's Planning Service is responsible for enforcing the laws. We spend approximately £60,000 per year removing fly-posting throughout the city

and have a team of people dedicated to tackling the problem seven days a week. We are currently looking at the best ways to address the issue in the future.

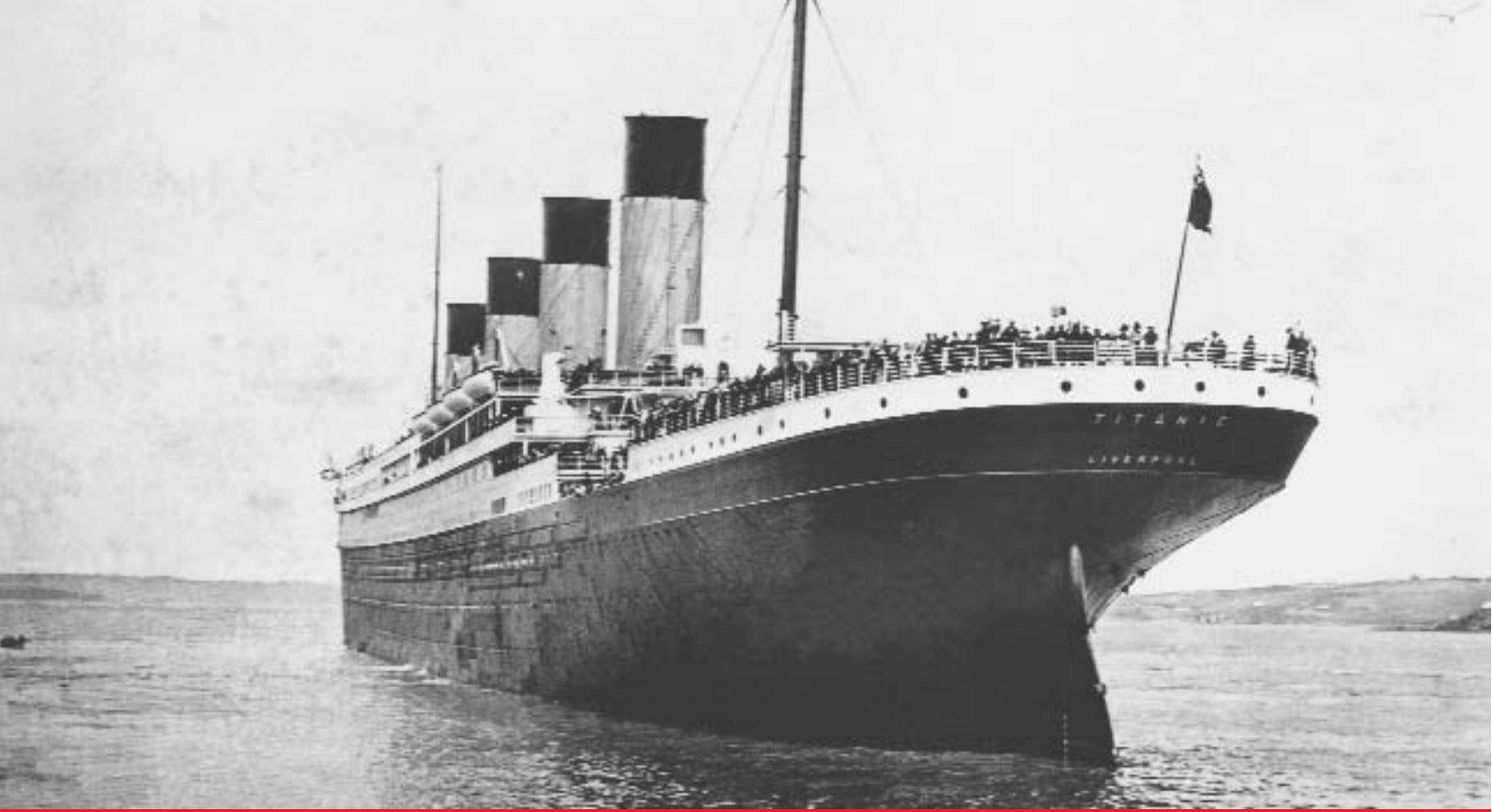
Q Why can't you put envelopes and cardboard into the blue bins for recycling?

A Sometimes envelopes contain plastic windows and glues. These aren't suitable for recycling as they could contaminate the end product. Although cardboard is made from the same raw materials as paper, its structure is less refined and therefore unsuitable for reprocessing into paper products. To make the blue bin scheme work as effectively as possible, cardboard and envelopes should not be thrown into these bins.

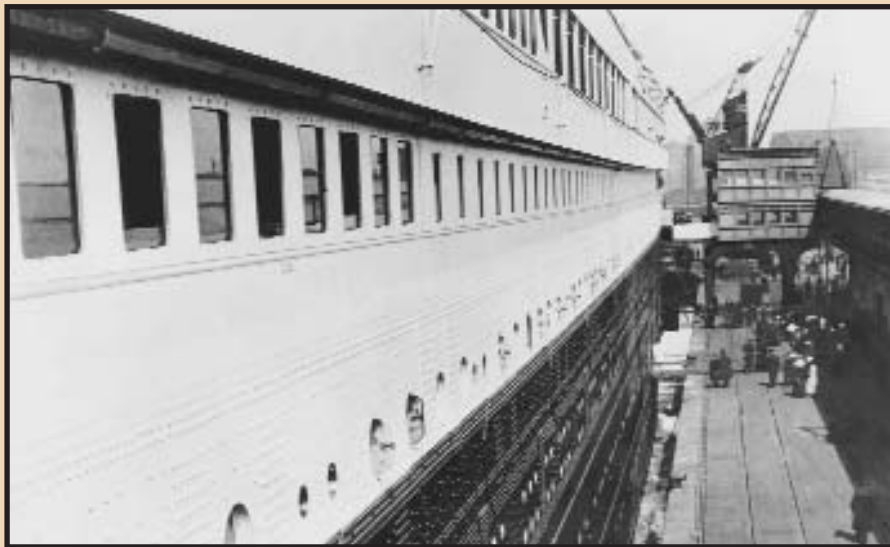
Q What is the council's role in town planning?

A If you are making a planning application, it should be submitted to the Department of the Environment's Planning Service. As part of the statutory process the Planning Service then consults with a number of organisations, including the council, regarding each planning application.

The Planning Service's final recommendation is based on all the views put forward and brought before the Council's Town Planning Committee which meets twice a month with representatives of the Planning Service in attendance. More information on the planning process can be found at the Department of the Environments website: www.planningni.gov.uk



Titanic: Made in Belfast



The Titanic story continues to capture the imagination of people across the world. The week-long **Titanic: Made in Belfast** programme takes place from 10 - 18 April 2004. There'll be tours, talks, drama and music plus a number of firsts:

- the first showing in Belfast of the complete Father Browne pictures taken on the ship. (Frank Browne, a young clerical student in 1912,

boarded the new liner on 10 April in Southampton for its final port of call, Queenstown, now Cobh (Co.Cork) before the ship set sail for its final destination, New York).

- artefacts from private collections that have not been seen outside America;
- the first showing of a specially commissioned 5.5m model of the Titanic, based on Harland & Wolff's original drawings, from Titanic - The Exhibition, Orlando.

Last year's Titanic events attracted nearly 30,000 people with most ticketed events being booked out well in advance. So get your tickets early and remember to keep your Easter holiday diary clear for the biggest Titanic event that Belfast has ever seen. ●

Tickets are now on sale. For full details of the events and other information contact the Tickets and Information Hotline on 9024 6609 or email: tickets@belfastvisitor.com

Photographs shown are from the Father Browne Titanic album.

For further information please visit the website at www.titanicmadeinbelfast.com