

Report of: **Executive Member for Community Development**

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	15 September 2022	B1	All
Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt	

SUBJECT: Islington Council Venues Free Community Use Scheme Round 1 2022-23: Request to approve summer 2022 awards for use of free hire during Spring 2023

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 Each year, Islington Council is pleased to offer eight community groups, schools and colleges, arts and cultural organisations based in Islington the chance to have free use of Islington Assembly Hall and selected Town Hall meeting rooms for five hours.
- 1.2 The scheme allows for free hire of civic space to community groups with no hidden costs/or minimal additional costs.
- 1.3 On 16 March 2020, Central Government stated that social distancing was advised to stop the spread of coronavirus Covid-19 and to protect older and vulnerable residents.
- 1.4 Therefore, at the Executive of 30 April 2020 it was agreed that the timescale for successful organisations for round 2 (2020) be changed to June to mid-September 2021.
- 1.5 On 16 March 2020, Central Government stated that social distancing was advised to stop the spread of coronavirus Covid-19 and to protect older and vulnerable residents.
- 1.6 Due to measures to deal with the Covid pandemic, Hall Hire was suspended in 2020. At the Executive of 30 April 2020, it was agreed that the timescale for successful organisations for round 2 (2020) be changed to June to mid-September 2021 and these were again deferred until Summer 2022
- 1.7 These were:

- Islington Faith Forum
- Yaram Arts CIC

Both organisations cancelled their arranged dates in as they found they were unable to proceed: Islington Faith Forum notified on 4 May of cancellation of 13 July booking due to Covid and funding uncertainty and received agreement to defer to summer 2023. Yaram Arts CIC cancelled 3 July for a 9 August booking due to sickness of main facilitator. It was agreed that due to the short notice of this cancellation, this should not be deferred and that the organisation would need to reapply.

1.8 This year an application window was offered over July 2022 as usual for Round 1 for hall hires January to March. A further round 2 will be offered in November for hires June-August

1.9 Six applications for free hire were received for the Assembly Hall and one for the Town Hall, Round 1, 2023

2. Recommendations

2.1 That these two organisations be offered a free hire use of the Assembly Hall between January and March

- Hillside Clubhouse
- Guildhall School of Music and Drama

2.2 To hold the following applicant in reserve, in case of inability of the above applicants to negotiate appropriate dates and timings:

- Arco - Music for All Ltd.

2.3 That the application window for Round 2 for 2022/23 will be from 9 January unit 10 February. This will enable consideration of all free hire applications at the VCS meeting scheduled on 20 March. This will include the deferred hire of the Assembly Hall by the Islington Faith Forum as detailed in **1.7**

3 Background

3.1 There are two different packages available to organizations depending on the nature of the event and/or number of guests and audiences. The Council reserves the right to decide on the option more suitable for events:

3.2 The Assembly Hall - for fairs, conferences and networking events with an audience of over 100 people, musical performances with a small number of performers, and other simple performances. The free hire scheme is offered on selected Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in January – February (1st round), and between June to Mid-September (2nd round).

3.3 The Town Hall rooms - for smaller conferences, workshops and collaborative networking

events with an audience between 25 to 80 people - depending on layout of the room, and whether attendees are seated or standing up. The Town Hall free hire is offered on working days Monday – Friday, between 9am and 5pm from 2 January – 31 May (1st round); and 1 June to 21 December (2nd round) subject to availability.

3.4 The first round of the 2022-23 scheme was launched on 29 July and was promoted during 4 weeks through LBI Communications on the council external website, as well as through Voluntary Action Islington news group, directly to Housing Estates and Community Centres, to the wider sector via LBI departments (Youth Services, Housing, VCS Team, BME Forum, School Improvement Service, Libraries)

3.5 The scheme received 6 applications from organisations supporting a range of events (see Appendix 1).

3.6 Applications were assessed against the published criteria (see Appendix 2)

4. Free Hire

4.1 The following organisations and events most closely met the criteria and were agreed by the Committee the free use of the Assembly Hall in 2020:

Hillside Clubhouse	A Disability Confident Job Fair to create a safe space for disabled residents who are looking for work to speak directly with hiring managers of employers and hopefully lead to a number of job offers 100-150 attendees
Guildhall School of Music and Drama	Create & Play. All Islington Schools are invited to access a composition programme curated by London Sinfonietta to create their own piece. School classes will bring these compositions to Islington Assembly Hall and perform for each other.

4.2 One application was received for free use of the Town Hall rooms from ‘New Voices Foundation’ for staff training which was accepted

4.3 The following organisations and events met the criteria and was recommended to be held in reserve, in case of inability of organisations recommended for free hires listed in 4.1 to negotiate dates and timings with Assembly Hall management.

Arco - Music for All Ltd.	Arco at the Islington Assembly Hall An extensive inclusive concert led by Arco’s Young Musician’s group
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4.4 After the uncertainty of the pandemic, the Free Hire programme will return to two application rounds each year, one for the period July-September and one

for January-March, amounting to a total of four free hires of the Assembly Hall annually.

4.5 Officers will prepare a press release announcing the free hires. Organisations will have to submit information about their events to the Council's events diary.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 There are no financial implications other than the loss of income as a result of waiving the fees for the four hires of the Assembly Hall which has been built into the business plan for the venue.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The Council can support voluntary and community sector organisations under the wellbeing power in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. This gives the Council the power to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the whole or part of its area or all or any of the persons resident or present in that area.

5.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

5.3.1 None applicable to this report.

5.4 Residents Impact Assessment

5.4.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life.

5.4.2 The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding and when considering proposals, the Executive will take relevant equalities implications into account.

5.4.3 The proposed events serve a wide range of communities and support the Council, Voluntary Community Sector and Cultural Enrichment Team priorities, providing local residents with creative ways of improving health outcomes such as through mindfulness and craft. Hillside Club House support residents with disabilities across the borough with a particular emphasis on mental health. They have a strong track record in holding similar events and plan to reach out to local employers. The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as Music Education Islington, currently works with over 50 Islington schools and this event will also provide opportunities for teachers to upskill and for whole families to enjoy high quality cultural performance from London Sinfonietta

6. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

6.1 The scheme provides an opportunity for the council to support local organisations through free use of the Assembly Hall and civic space. Applications have been assessed through a clear and transparent process.

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Table of all applicants, 1st Round 22-23

Appendix 2 - Eligibility Criteria and Guidance Notes 1st Round 22-23

Background papers: None

Final report clearance:

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Signed by: Executive Member for Homes and Communities

Date: 06.09.22

Received by: Head of Democratic Services

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APPENDIX 1
Islington Council Venues Free Community Use Scheme
All Applicants Round 1 2022-2023

Organisation	Event Title	Event Description	Expected Audience	Recommended
Hillside Clubhouse	Disability Confident Jobfair	safe space for disabled residents who are looking for work to speak directly with hiring managers of local employers and hopefully lead to a number of job offers	100-150	YES (ASSEMBLY HALL)
Guildhall School of Music & Drama	Create & Play	All Islington Schools are invited to access a composition programme curated by London Sinfonietta to create their own piece. School classes will bring these compositions to Islington Assembly Hall and perform for each other.	300-500	YES (ASSEMBLY HALL)
Arco - Music for All Ltd.	Arco at the Islington Assembly Hall	An inclusive concert led by Arco's Young Musician's group with borough-wide invitations	200	RESERVE (ASSEMBLY HALL)
The Voices Foundation	Office Staff Training on negotiation skills	Working with primary & secondary schools, music hubs and MATs to provide programmes of music and choral CPD	10	Town Hall yes
NAFSIYAT Intercultural Therapy Centre	NAFSIYATs 40th Birthday Event	Party with performances for clients and associates to celebrate intercultural therapy	200	No

Islington refugee & Migrant Forum (IRMF)	Refugee Week Celebration	Performances etc for Refugee week for 24- 28 June	150-200	Ask to reapply for next Round
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APPENDIX 2

Islington Council Venues Free Community Use Scheme Eligibility Criteria and Guidance Notes - Round 1 2022-23

Each year, Islington Council is pleased to offer eight community groups, schools and colleges, arts and cultural organisations based in Islington the chance to have free use of Islington Assembly Hall and selected Town Hall meeting rooms for five hours.

There are two different packages available to organizations depending on the nature of the event and/or number of guests and audiences. The Council reserves the right to decide on the option more suitable for your event. Therefore, it is important that the information you provide is detailed and accurate. Please read carefully the information below before completing an application form.

Option 1 - Islington Assembly Hall

The Assembly Hall is suitable for fairs, conferences and networking events with an audience of over 100 people, musical performances with a small number of performers, and other simple performances. Please note that Islington Assembly Hall is not a theatre and if you're looking to put on a stage performance with multiple acts, props, sets or other complex lighting or audio-visual effects within a limited budget, then this scheme might not be suitable for your event and other venues might provide a better and cost-effective alternative.

Please email assemblyhall@islington.gov.uk if you would like to check if this is the right venue for you.

The free hire scheme will be offered on selected **Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays between January-mid-March 2023 (1st round) and June to mid-September 2023 (2nd round)**. Two free hires of Islington Assembly Hall will be offered in each round. Successful applicants will get free hire of the main hall **for a maximum of five consecutive hours**.

The five-hour hire of the Assembly Hall Free Hire will include:

- access to Islington Assembly Hall for you and/or your suppliers for your event
- Islington Assembly Hall set up to meet your requirements as agreed in pre-event discussions
- a named events coordinator leading up to the event
- at least one duty manager throughout your event
- a small PA system that can be used without additional support from an engineer
- a sound engineer (if required) for a period of five hours
- one member of Assembly Hall security team as a standard
- use of the kitchen for caterers

All other items and services – such as hire of the hall for additional hours, use of the venue's balcony, refreshments, extra security, equipment, table linen and specialized technical support – will incur additional costs, which your organisation will need to meet. Additional costs for the use of the

Assembly Hall may include, but are not limited, to (costs below are inclusive of VAT):

- Hire of the hall for more than five consecutive hours: from £360 per hour
- Use of the balcony: £300 for a five-hour hire
- White tablecloths: £12 per tablecloth
- Additional security staff: from £156 per SIA for up to 5 hours, then £31.20 per hour thereafter
- Refreshments: costs available on request

Option 2 - Islington Town Hall rooms

The Town Hall rooms are suitable for events with an audience between 25 to 80 people depending on layout of the room, and whether attendees are seated or standing up.

The Town Hall can be booked for **workshops, collaborative working sessions, networking, and small get-togethers for residents and community groups.**

The Town Hall free hire will be offered on working days **Monday – Friday, between 9am and 5pm from 2 January – 30 May 2022 (1st Round) and 1 June to 21 December 2023 (2nd Round)** subject to availability*. Two free hires of Islington Town Hall rooms will be offered in each round. Successful applicants will get free hire of the room **for a maximum of five consecutive hours.**

The five-hour Town Hall Free Hire will include:

- access to Islington civic spaces for you and/or your guests
- setting up the room to a layout of your preference
- at least one duty facility officer throughout your event
- use of in-house furniture, tables and chairs
- jars of drinking water
- use of large plasma LED monitor
- free Wi-Fi

Additional costs may include, but are not limited, to:

- hire of additional stationary such as flipcharts, flipchart paper, and pens
- hire of additional technical equipment such projectors, etc.
- any additional services which fall outside the normal working hours will have to be charged
- refreshments: costs available on request

*Please note that the Council has a right to cancel or postpone your event at any time due to exceptional circumstances without incurring liabilities for any losses or damages incurred by the hirer as a result of cancellation. Should the Council cancel your booking for reasons other than force majeure within two weeks of the date of the event, the council will at its sole discretion endeavour to assist the hirer in finding alternative accommodation for the event.

Criteria

Organisations must demonstrate a commitment to provide events and activities that have a strategic value, and in particular a focus on at least one of the following four areas:

- community cohesion
- children and young people
- diversity
- creative ways of engaging local residents and, in particular, those who might otherwise miss out on cultural opportunities.

Applications should be able to demonstrate your event achieve the following:

- have a borough-wide impact
- demonstrate a commitment to good practice (events that are viable, of high quality, well managed and evaluated)

- promote Islington Assembly Hall as a focus for high quality events, or demonstrating good use of the civic space at the Town Hall, making best use of the high-quality facilities available in both venues

In addition, to be shortlisted for the scheme, your event you must be able to demonstrate how your organisation will cover any associated costs (if any), as the free hire scheme gives you use of the venue for free for up to five hours, but other additional costs must be covered by your organisation as indicated above.

The scheme will not support:

- groups that are not based in the borough of Islington
- events or activities from commercial organisations
- more than one usage per applicant per year
- applications from organisations who have previously cancelled a slot once accepted
- applications from departments of Islington Council

How to apply and additional support:

Please email your completed application for **Round 1 only** to culture@islington.gov.uk by **9.00am on Monday 22 August 2022**. The Council will contact all applicants from week commencing 26 September 2022 to offer available dates and issue terms and conditions of the booking, which must be completed to guarantee the free use of the venue.

If you would like more information about the scheme or if you need help completing an application, please email [culture @islington.gov.uk](mailto:culture@islington.gov.uk)