

Community Engagement and Wellbeing  
222 Upper Street  
N1 1XR

Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of: Voluntary and Community Sector Committee

Date: 20 March 2023

Ward(s): All

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## Islington Council Venues Community Free Hires Scheme Round 2: Summer 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 2023

- 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. 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. The application window for Round 2 was offered over January and February 2023 for hall hires June to August.
- 1.9. As Islington Faith Forum deferred their free hire until Summer 2023, only three slots are available in this round (one for free hires of the Islington Assembly Hall and two for the use of Town Hall rooms).
- 1.10. Seven applications for free hire were received for the Assembly Hall and three for the Town Hall, Round 2 2023

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That this organisation be offered a free hire use of the Assembly Hall between June and September
- Britain's Got Reggae / Cally Connects
- 2.2. To hold the following applicant in reserve, in case of inability of the above applicants to negotiate appropriate dates and timings:
- Head Held High
- 2.3. That these two organisations be offered a free hire use of the Town Hall Committee Rooms between June and September
- Stonewall Housing
  - The Sapphire Community Group
- 2.4. To hold the following applicant in reserve, in case of inability of the above applicants to negotiate appropriate dates and timings:
- Eritrean Community in UK

## Background

- 2.5. 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:
- 2.6. 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).
- 2.7. 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.
- 2.8. The second round of the 2022-23 scheme was launched on 9 January 2023 and was promoted during 4 weeks through LBI Communications on the council external website, as well as through Voluntary Action Islington news group, to the 11 by 11 partnership of cultural organisations and the wider sector via LBI departments.
- 2.9. The scheme received 10 applications from organisations supporting a range of events (see Appendix 1).
- 2.10. Applications have been assessed against the published criteria (see Appendix 2) which requires applicants to 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:
  1. community cohesion
  2. children and young people
  3. diversity
  4. creative ways of engaging local residents and, in particular, those who might otherwise miss out on cultural opportunities.
  5. Have a borough-wide impact
  6. Demonstrate a commitment to good practice (events that are viable, of high quality, well managed and evaluated)
  7. 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
- 2.11. **The scheme does not support:**

- Groups that are not based in the borough of Islington
- Events or activities from commercial organisation
- 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

2.12. Wherever possible, unsuccessful applicants will be supported, to secure alternative premises for their work.

2.13. The following organisation and event most closely meet the criteria and are recommended for free use of the Assembly Hall.

<p>Britain's Got Reggae / Cally Connects-US</p>	<p>A celebratory event for International Reggae Day and a Windrush Celebration. Events for the whole family, including a Reggae Choir and live band, African Drumming Workshop, Windrush Play, stalls and food. The event aims to bring community cohesion and understanding of culture in Islington.</p>
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2.14. The following two organisations and events most closely meet the criteria and are recommended for free use of the Town Hall rooms

<p>Stonewall Housing</p>	<p>Our mission is ensure more LGBTQ+ people have safe places to live. Our first ever house for vulnerable LGBTQ+ service users was set up in Islington with the support of the local Council. We want to recognise and celebrate our rich history and strong meaningful ties with the borough of Islington by hosting our "40th Birthday Reception" in the Town Hall Committee Room.</p>
<p>The Sapphire Community Group</p>	<p>BIY(Believe in Yourself) is a summer school where we provide young people and children with skills education and food. We have been running for 4 years now. A programme where we challenge and support them to be the best version of themselves. The programme aims to bring young people together build relationships in the community and address social issues that young people face. The holiday programme is open to all school-age children and places will be prioritised for children eligible for free school meals.</p>

2.15. The following organisation and event met the criteria and are recommended to be **held in reserve for the Assembly Hall**, in case of inability of organisations recommended for free hires listed in 3.9 to negotiate dates and timings with Assembly Hall management.

2.16.

Head Held High	Head Held High want to put on a highly motivational and interactive evening for young people and staff working with young people, particularly those at risk of exclusion and/or affiliated with knife crime and/or lacking in motivation. We will have motivational speakers, inspiring footage, music, live performers, "Shocka" the rapper, we will have speakers from partner organisations such as The Ben Kinsella Trust.
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2.17. The following organisation and event met the criteria and are recommended to be **held in reserve for the Committee Rooms**, in case of inability of organisations recommended for free hires listed in 3.10 to negotiate dates and timings with Town Hall management.

Eritrean Community in UK	We aim to hold our AGM and community get to know us event, engaging with our members in the Eritrean community and discussing needs and improvements.
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### 3. Implications

#### 3.1. Financial Implications

3.1.1. 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

#### 3.2. Legal Implications

3.2.1. 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.

#### 3.3. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

3.3.1. There are no environmental implications.

### **3.4. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 3.4.1. 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. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 3.4.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report, because the proposed events serve a wide range of communities and support the Council, Voluntary Community Sector and Cultural Enrichment Team priorities. They target local residents from diverse communities and children and young people, particularly those from low-income households, to engage in range of creative and cultural activities that celebrate the diversity of Islington's communities, as well as giving residents an opportunity to feedback on provision.

## **4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1. 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:**

- Appendices:
  - Appendix 1 - Table of all applicants, 1st Round 22-23
  - Appendix 2 - Eligibility Criteria and Guidance Notes Round Two, 22-23
  - Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed it must be listed here and submitted alongside the report.

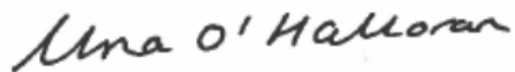
**Background papers:** None

**Final report clearance:**

Signed by:

**Executive Member for Homes and Communities**

Date: 28/02/2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Una O'Halloran". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signed by: Una O'Halloran

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## APPENDIX 1

### Islington Council Venues Free Community Use Scheme

All Applicants VCS Committee 20 March 2023

Organisation	Event Title	Event Description	Expected Audience	Recommended
<b>Baluji Music Foundation Ltd registered chariy</b>	Inner Vision Global Sounds	Inner Vision Orchestra of blind musicians perform a variety of music from India Iran Kosovo, Nigeria Sri Lanka, Japan, America, Lebanon and British Isles.	110	<b>NO</b>
<b>Britain's Got Reggae / Cally Connects-US</b>	International Reggae Day/ Windrush	A celebratory event for international Reggae Day and a Windrush Celebration. Events for the whole family, including a Reggae Choir and live band, African Drumming Workshop, Windrush Play, stalls and food. The event aims to bring community cohesion and understanding of culture in Islington.	500	<b>YES (Assembly Hall)</b>
<b>Eritrean Community in UK</b>	AGM	AGM and community get to know us event, engaging with our members in the Eritrean community and discussing needs and improvements.	100	<b>RESERVE (Town Hall Rooms)</b>
<b>Freightliners City Farm</b>	Freightliners 50th	A celebration of 50 years of Freightliners City Farm and its community. Event includes exhibition, story recording, entertainment, have a go creative activities, community plants and produce show and a party.	250	<b>NO</b>
<b>Head Held High</b>	"It's cool to be kind"	Motivational and interative event for for young people and staff working with young people, particularly those at risk of exclusion and/or affiliated with knife crime. Includes performances including "Shocka" the rapper.	150	<b>RESERVE (Assembly Hall)</b>



<b>Wency Lam (Independent artist)</b>	Dance Theatre Workshop with Wency	Dance workshop providing a safe and inclusive space for anyone to explore their creativity. Free and open for people from all educational or socioeconomic backgrounds.	30	<b>NO</b>
<b>Islington Borough Ladies FC</b>	IBLFC End of Season Presentation	Annual end of season presentation, to gather all players and staff together to celebrate their achievements of the 22/23 season.	200	<b>NO</b>
<b>Islington Refugee &amp; Migrant Forum (IRMF)</b>	Refugee Week celebration	Celebratory event for Refugee week for 24-28 June, including performances, speeches and a art competition by primary school	200	<b>NO</b>
<b>Stonewall Housing</b>	Stonewall Housing's 40th Birthday Reception	Organisation who support LGBTQ+ people to have a safe place to live. Celebratory event for 40th Birthday, inviting key stakeholders, supporters, partners and volunteers	65	<b>YES (Town Hall Rooms)</b>
<b>The Sapphire Community Group</b>	BIY Summer School	Summer school to provide children and young people with skills, education and food. Prioritising CYP from low income households.	45	<b>YES (Town Hall Rooms)</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### Islington Council Venues Free Community Use Scheme

#### Eligibility Criteria and Guidance Notes - Round 2 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](mailto: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 (1<sup>st</sup> round) and June to mid-September 2023 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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 (1<sup>st</sup> Round) and 1 June to 21 December 2023 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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 as 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 2 only** to [culture@islington.gov.uk](mailto:culture@islington.gov.uk) by **12pm on Friday 10 February 2023**. The Council will contact all applicants from week commencing Monday 27 March 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)