

PERFORMANCE BY THE COMBINED CHOIRS OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF ABERDEEN AND ULSTER

Executive Summary

1. Parliamentary officials have received an approach from the University of Aberdeen for their choir along with the University of Ulster's choir to give a short public performance at the Scottish Parliament on Friday 13 June. This follows on from a joint performance at Stormont in June 2013. The purpose of the performance is a reciprocal visit.

Background

2. The choirs would like to give a short public performance in reciprocation of that given at Stormont in 2013. On 10 June 2013 at the invitation of the Speaker, William Hay the combined choirs of the Universities of Ulster and Aberdeen, directed by Shaun Ryan, Choral Director at the University of Ulster gave a performance at Stormont Parliament Buildings, Belfast.
3. The Aberdeen Choir is, so far, the only group from outside of Northern Ireland to have sung at Stormont. Professor Paul Mealor, with the support of the University of Aberdeen, is now bringing the Ulster Choir to Scotland for a series of joint concerts of 'reconciliation'. The Ulster choir, composed of both catholic and protestant members, has never performed outside of Northern Ireland before.
4. The University of Ulster Choir will arrive in Edinburgh on Friday 13 June. It is intended that the performance should take place that day prior to the choir travelling to Aberdeen. The concert at the Scottish Parliament would last for about 30 minutes and would include Scottish and Irish folk music – in celebration of the Celtic histories of the two nations. The Choirs will be led by three prominent Celtic composers and musicians: Paul Mealor, Laurence Roman and Shaun Ryan.
5. The proposed concert would take place on Friday 13 June from 1.30pm to 2.00pm with rehearsals from 11.00am.

Communications Approach

6. The event has the scope for public appeal to those already visiting and in Edinburgh that day and as such, offers some opportunities to secure print and broadcast media coverage, naturally depending on competing news that day. Further, it has scope for online engagement, including demonstrating the Parliament as free to enter, open and accessible.

Resource Implications

7. Staff time to organise this event will be factored into existing workloads. All costs associated with this event will be met by the organisers.

Governance Issues

8. Discussions have taken place with colleagues in Visitor Services and Education to ensure that this event does not cause disruption to those working in and around the Main Hall.

Publication Scheme

9. This Paper should only be published after the formal announcement of the event.

Next Steps

10. If approved by the SPCB the Events and Exhibitions Team will take forward all necessary actions for the planning and delivery of this event.

Recommendation

11. The Events and Exhibitions Team recommend that this event should be approved by the SPCB to take place in the Burns Room (Committee Room 1).

Decision

12. The SPCB is invited to consider this Paper and to agree that the performance by the combined choirs of Aberdeen and Ulster Universities can take place in the Burns Room on Friday 13 June.

EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS TEAM

May 2014