
DETERMINATION MADE IN RELATION TO THE RALLY FOR LIFE PARADE NOTIFIED TO TAKE PLACE IN BELFAST ON SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2019.

INTRODUCTION

1. Section 8(1) of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, provides that:

"The Commission may issue a determination in respect of a proposed public procession imposing on the persons organising or taking part in it or on any persons supporting it such conditions as the Commission considers necessary."
2. The Commission has noted the details provided on the Form 11/1 submitted on 26th July 2019 concerning the Rally for Life parade in Belfast on Saturday 7th September 2019. The Commission has considered whether a determination under section 8 should be made in respect of this parade.
3. In considering whether to exercise its power under Section 8, the Commission has taken into account its previous determinations in relation to this parade. It has also considered all other aspects of the parade notified by the organisers, including its nature and purpose, and has considered all other information received in relation to it. The Commission has concluded that, in the particular circumstances, it should exercise its power under Section 8 to make a determination in the terms outlined in the following paragraphs.

BACKGROUND

4. The notified purpose for the parade is *"Families coming together to celebrate life."*
5. The notified route is *"Custom House Square, High Street, Castle Place, Donegall Place, Chichester Street, Donegall Square East, May Street, Donegall Square West, Chichester Street, Donegall Place, Castle Place, High Street, Custom House Square."*
6. The number of notified participants is 4,000. The number of notified supporters is 4,000.
7. The parades notified timing, as amended by the organiser on the 28th August 2019, is to commence at 3.00pm from Custom House Square, returning to Custom House Square for a religious service/public meeting at 4pm. The finishing time is notified as 5.00pm.
8. This annual parade has been held on alternate years in Belfast and Dublin, until last year, when the organiser withdrew the parade notice for Belfast and instead held a static rally at Stormont.

9. The Commission has been required to consider this Rally for Life parade as it has been notified to take place along a similar route and with overlapping timings to a second parade in the city on the same day. The second parade, by Rally for Choice, is notified for 1,500 participants and 50 supporters.
10. The Commission has received representation from the organisers of both parades that their occurrence on the same day and in the same vicinity is coincidental, and that the events have not been arranged to conflict with each other.
11. The Commission has discussed with the organisers of both the Rally for Life parade and the second parade, the Rally for Choice parade that they need to amend their timings and/or route so that both parades can be facilitated.
12. As a result of these discussions, the organiser of the Rally for Choice parade has brought forward the completion time of their parade, from 3.30pm to 3pm, and has omitted a stretch of the route. The determination on the Rally for Choice parade is available on the Commission's website. The organiser of the Rally for Life parade has delayed their starting time from 2.00pm to 3.00pm.
13. The Commission has highlighted, to the Rally for Life parade organiser, the concerns of Belfast city centre retail and commercial bodies that Saturday trading is adversely impacted by parades, especially during the peak retail hours of 12 noon to 6pm. The Commission has encouraged the organiser to engage with these retail and trade bodies, and to listen to their concerns.
14. The Commission has considered the representations by retail and commercial bodies regarding the adverse impacts of parades on Saturday trading, including the potentially adverse impact on trade of the parade by Rally for Life. The Commission has discussed with trade body representatives the distinction between retail organisations promoting and encouraging parade organisers to take steps to reduce their parade's impacts on the city's trade, and the obligations of the Commission, including its requirement to protect freedoms of assembly and expression in public spaces that are normally accessible to a wide range of users, and also the desirability of not imposing what may amount to a 'blanket ban.'
15. The Commission has had regard to its statutory Guidelines in its considerations of the parade's potential for public disorder and the potential impacts upon community relations and community life. The Commission has considered all relevant human rights issues. The full determination is set out below.

16. The Commission has concluded that it is critical that the Commission's Code of Conduct is strictly adhered to, and that the parade strictly observes its notified timings, including its notified starting time of 3pm. The full determination is below.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

17. The Commission has had regard to the Guidelines issued under Section 5 of the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 ("the Guidelines"). The Commission has also been alert to its duties as a public authority under Section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998. From the perspective of the parade organisers, the Convention rights engaged are those protected by Articles 9 and 10 and, in particular, Article 11. None of these rights is absolute.
18. Those who live, work, shop, trade and carry on business in the affected locality enjoy rights under Article 8 of the Convention and Article 1 of the First Protocol. Again, none of these rights is absolute. The Commission has also been mindful of the provisions of Article 17 and its obligations under Article 2 of the Convention.
19. It is not possible for all of those who would claim the benefit of the Human Rights Act 1998 to exercise and enjoy their Convention rights to the fullest extent where rights are in competition with each other. The Commission has therefore undertaken a balancing exercise, consistent with its statutory Guidelines, to make a determination that is fair and proportionate in all the circumstances.
20. As required by the statutory Guidelines, the Commission has had regard to the seven North principles. One of the seven fundamental principles identified by the North Report is that all those involved should work towards the resolution of difficulties through local accommodation.
21. As stated in paragraph 4.5 of the Guidelines, the Commission takes into account any communications between parade organisers and the local community or the absence thereof and will assess the measures, if any, offered or taken by parade organisers to address genuinely held relevant concerns of members of the local community.
22. Having considered all the evidence, information and advice available to it, the Commission has determined that conditions should be placed on the parade. In imposing these

conditions, the Commission pursues the legitimate aims laid down in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of seeking to prevent disorder and to protect the rights and freedoms of others. The conditions are not such as to affect significantly the individual's right to assemble.

23. Having regard to the factors set out above the Commission considers that the conditions it now imposes are necessary and proportionate to the aim pursued and strike a fair balance between the needs of the community and the rights of the individual. The legal, factual and human rights issues are of considerable complexity and require, ultimately, the formation of a carefully considered and finely balanced judgement on the part of the Commission.

DETERMINATION

The Parades Commission's determination is that the following conditions are placed on the organiser and participants in the parade by Rally for Life, in Belfast on Saturday 7th September 2019.

- A. The parade shall commence at its notified time of 3.00pm and will process without stoppages or delays.
- B. The parade organisers shall ensure that the parade begins and disperses promptly.
- C. The parade organisers shall ensure that all participants including any marshals, band leaders and band members are given written details of the conditions.
- D. The organisers and all participants in the parade shall comply with the conditions set out in the Code of Conduct. For ease of reference, these are reproduced below.
- E. As shown at Appendix A of the Code of Conduct, the Commission re-affirms that all participants in this parade must behave with due regard for the rights, traditions and feelings of others in the vicinity; refrain from using words or behaviour which could reasonably be perceived as intentionally sectarian, provocative, threatening, abusive, insulting or lewd; obey the lawful directions of parade organisers and stewards at all times, from assembly to dispersal and comply with police directions and in accordance with legislation.
- F. The Commission further re-affirms the importance of respectful behaviour in the vicinity of interface areas, namely that there shall be no singing, chanting, or loud drumming and that marching should be dignified. More generally, no paramilitary-style clothing is to be worn at any time during the parade and flags, bannerettes and symbols relating to a proscribed organisation shall in no circumstances be displayed.
- G. The parade organisers shall arrange for the presence of an adequate number of stewards to ensure that all parade participants act in an orderly manner.

H. The parade organisers shall ensure that all stewards and participants obey any direction given by the police in relation to this parade.

Signed: Ane Henderson
(On behalf of the Commission)

Date: 28/8/19

APPENDIX A

Guidance for Anyone Participating in Parades

A Behaviour

All participants in parades should:

- behave with due regard for the rights, traditions and feeling of others in the vicinity,
- refrain from using words or behaviour which could reasonably be perceived as being intentionally sectarian, provocative, threatening, abusive, insulting or lewd,
- obey the lawful directions of parade organisers and stewards at all times, from assembly to dispersal,
- abide by the conditions of this Code of Conduct,
- comply with police directions and in accordance with legislation.

B Dress

No paramilitary-style clothing is to be worn at any time during a parade.

C Parade

Whenever possible, the parade should be positioned on one side of the carriageway so as to allow for the free flow of traffic, or as otherwise stipulated by police.

D Route

Participants should keep to the designated route as directed by the police.

E Alcohol

Alcohol should not be consumed immediately prior to, or during a parade. An organizer or steward, who believes a participant to be under the influence of alcohol, should take the necessary measures to remove that person from the parade.

F Bands and Music

Each band must clearly display its name. Restrictions on the playing of music will be in accordance with the conditions as set out in Appendix B of this Code. No musical instrument will bear any inscription or mark of a proscribed organisation.

G Flags etc.

Flags and other displays often have a legitimate historical significance, but in no circumstances should such items relating to a proscribed organisation be displayed.

H Stewards

The names of stewards will have been notified to the police and the Parades Commission at the time of notifying the proposed parade.

Stewards should:

- be properly trained
- be briefed by the organisers prior to the parade
- carry proof of their status at all times during the event, and provide this information to police on request
- be fully aware of their responsibilities and role
- be highly visible by means of jackets, singlets, armbands, etc.
- not consume alcohol before or during the parade
- co-operate with the police
- be prepared to identify to the police any persons in the parade who may be committing any offence against criminal law.

I Policing

Organisers of parades must co-operate with the police from the time of submission of the notice of intention to parade until the parade disperses.

J Dispersal

When a parade has concluded, all those taking part must disperse immediately. It will be the responsibility of the organisers to ensure compliance with instructions in this regard.

K Abiding by Conditions

Organisers must ensure that all participants in any parade have been informed of any conditions imposed. As a general principle, the organiser is responsible for the behaviour of all participants and for ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct.

APPENDIX B

Guidance for Anyone Participating in Parades in the Vicinity of Sensitive Locations

A Places of Worship

Only hymn tunes should be played.

When church services are taking place, no music should be played.

There should be no irreverent behaviour.

Marching should be dignified.

B War Memorials and Cemeteries

Only hymn tunes should be played.

Behaviour should be respectful.

Marching should be dignified.

C Where the Majority Population of the Vicinity are of a Different Tradition, and in Interface Areas.

Behaviour should be respectful.

There should be no excessively loud drumming.

Participants should refrain from conduct, words, music or behaviour which could reasonably be perceived as intentionally sectarian, provocative, threatening, abusive, insulting or lewd.

Marching should be dignified.

