
**DECISION MADE IN RELATION TO THE MACOSQUIN FIRST FLUTE BAND PARADE ON
SATURDAY 8TH AUGUST 2020**

1. The following is the decision of the Parades Commission in relation to the Macosquin First Flute Band parade notified to take place on Saturday 8th August 2020.
2. 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 such conditions as the Commission considers necessary.”
3. The Commission has noted the details provided on the 11/1 form submitted on 4th July 2020 concerning the Macosquin First Flute Band parade notified for Saturday 8th August 2020.
4. The Commission has given careful consideration as to whether to exercise its power under Section 8. It has done so within the relevant legal and statutory framework, constituted in the main by the 1998 Act, the various instruments made thereunder (in particular the “Guidelines” and the Human Rights Act 1998).
5. This is one of 2 notified parades, 5 minutes apart, along the same route from Union Street in Coleraine town centre to Waterside and returning to Ballycastle Road, via Union Street. The other notified parade is by Pride of the Bann Flute Band.
6. Each of the parades is notified over a 3 hour period, to 2.00pm, with 30 participants and no supporters.
7. The organiser of the Macosquin First Flute Band has not engaged with the Commission regarding their proposed parade.
8. The Commission has received representation from political representatives, including an MLA. A representation has stated that *‘Both bands will have 30 participants in line with the current guidelines and will start their parade 5 minutes apart. Members are extremely mindful of the current environment and plan to ensure that there is strict observance of the guidelines. The representation references ‘the responsible and positive leadership shown by Coleraine bands.’* Further political representation is that there are *‘no difficulties with these cultural events.’*

9. The Commission notes that in addition to the 2 parades by Macosquin First Flute Band and Pride of the Bann, there are a further 2 parades in Coleraine on Saturday 8th August 2020. The organisers of these parades must be aware of the potential disruption to the life of the town over an extended number of hours, from 8am to 2.00pm. Such parades may be perceived as more disruptive than before the pandemic, reflecting fears about the spread of infection. Organisers must take into account these potentially heightened community sensitivities, in the circumstances of the pandemic.
10. The Commission has received no objections to the forthcoming parade by Macosquin First Flute Band, at this stage. The Commission, however, alerts the organiser to the potential for parades which intend to gather more than 30 people at the same location to generate community objections due to the potential to cause disruption to the community life to those in the locality of the processions. Organisers must be aware of this potential.
11. The Commission further advises the organiser to consider his responsibilities to alert the local community in Coleraine to the parades taking place in the town, enabling other users to respond as appropriate, during the pandemic. The community of Coleraine may reasonably expect that parades passing through its town centre and residential streets adhere to the current Covid-19 Regulations, and do not unduly disrupt the life of the community, including other users of the town.
12. The Commission has considered all aspects of the proposed parade.
13. The Commission has considered the need to issue a determination as outlined at paragraph 2 above against the factors outlined in its statutory Guidelines, including the potential disruption to community life.
14. The Commission has decided that the imposition of conditions on this parade is not necessary nor proportionate at this time.
15. Further to this decision the Commission advises that the organiser consult with the relevant authorities regarding the requirement to perform a risk assessment of their parade/parades, in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Public Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions (No 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, part of which is reproduced below:

5. Restrictions on gatherings

5(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (5) a person shall not participate in an indoor or outdoor gathering which consists of more than 30 persons.

(3) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to a gathering which is organised or operated for cultural, entertainment, recreational, outdoor sports, social, community, educational, work, legal, religious or political purposes, and which fulfils the conditions in paragraph (4).

(4) The conditions referred to in paragraph (3) are that the person responsible for organising or operating the gathering –

(a) has carried out a risk assessment which meets the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (b), whether or not that person is subject to those Regulations; and

(b) takes all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus, including implementing the preventive and protective measures identified in the risk assessment undertaken in accordance with sub-paragraph (a) and complying with any relevant guidance issued by a Northern Ireland Department.

The Commission further advises that the requirement to perform such a risk assessment, and to implement its preventive and protective measures, in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (b) may be relevant to multiple parades of 30 persons moving off in quick succession of each other, as is the situation with these parades. Responsibility for compliance with all Regulations rests with the organiser and the participants of the parade.

16. The Commission reiterates the responsibilities incumbent on all parade organisers regarding public health considerations, at this time.

17. A copy of this decision has been provided to the PSNI.

Signed: 
(On behalf of the Commission)

Date: 30th July 2020