

Report on	Stone Mountain Highland Games
Date of Meeting	12 September 2019
Reporting Officer	Michael Browne
Contact Officer	Mary McKeown

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek permission to attend Stone Mountain Highland Games in Atlanta, Georgia, promoting the Presidential Trail that includes US Grants Homestead.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>The Mid Ulster Council Tourism strategy states that Mid Ulster has the potential to expand its tourism offer significantly. It will focus on one new tourism strand, currently under development – linked to Seamus Heaney - and two strands that are significant and prominent, relating to Outdoor Activities and to Archaeological sites, the History and Heritage of the island of Ireland, Northern Ireland and the area itself.</p> <p>These strands, or themes, will serve as the strategic core propositions for Mid Ulster, to attract visitors, encourage them to stay longer in the area and ensure that tourism contributes to the local economy.</p> <p>To assist in achieving these goals this is an excellent opportunity to promote US Grants Homestead and attract the Scots – Irish decent to Mid Ulster.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Stone Mountain Highland Games</u> Celebrating its 47th year, the Stone Mountain Highland Games is a consumer show that takes place annually in Stone Mountain Park northeast of Atlanta, Georgia. The show attracts up to 80,000 individuals of Scots and Scots-Irish descent over a two-day weekend cultural festival featuring music, entertainment, educational and sporting events.</p> <p>Tourism Ireland will again have a presence at the show, and Tourism Northern Ireland are working with TIL to shape the format of the weekend and to recruit Northern Ireland industry to attend.</p>

They have asked if a representative from Mid Ulster District Council Tourism Department would attend the show and promote the Presidential trail, which includes US Grants Presidential Homestead.

The format for the weekend will be as follows:

Thurs 17th October: Travel to Atlanta, Georgia.

Friday 18th October:

Networking lunch with US based operators; travel influencers; is normally attended by both the British and Irish Counsel Generals who are based in Atlanta and cover the Southern U.S Sites

Afternoon: Opportunity for the visiting Northern Ireland industry to present to visitors to the show on their Northern Ireland product offering. Opportunity to reach out to those of Ulster Scots /Scots- Irish descent and profile the Presidential Trail.

Sat 19th / Sun 20th October:

Northern Ireland specific stand at the Stone Mountain Highland Games, with Ulster Scots / Scots- Irish focus. Up to 80,000 visitors attend the festival.

Monday 21st October

NI delegation depart for return travel.

Attendance cost at the show is covered by Tourism Ireland, so the only outlay is flight travel, accommodation and meals.

Tourism Ireland can subsidise the cost of the trip, on receipt of documentation, but this will be post event. The subsidy from Tourism Ireland is \$800 per organisation.

Please see link below for further information:

<http://www.smhg.org/>

<https://www.tourismirelandindustryopportunities.com/opportunity-listing/usa-stone-mountain-highland-games>

4.0 Other Considerations

4.1 Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications

Financial: Attendance at the show will be free and paid by Tourism Ireland; on receipt of documentation, each organisation will receive \$800 towards flights, accommodation and meals. Council will cover the remaining balance of this.

Human: staff time to attend the show

Risk Management:
N/A

4.2	<p data-bbox="225 219 746 257">Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="225 297 794 336">Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p data-bbox="225 371 1300 481">This is an invaluable opportunity to experience and promote US Grants Homestead as part of the Presidential trail to the American market at Stone Mountain Highland Games in Atlanta.</p> <hr/> <p data-bbox="225 555 596 593">Rural Needs Implications:</p>
5.0	<p data-bbox="225 703 539 741">Recommendation(s)</p>
5.1	<p data-bbox="225 779 1402 851">Approval given for one member of staff to attend Stone Mountain Highland Games with Tourism Ireland in October 2019</p>
6.0	<p data-bbox="225 929 766 967">Documents Attached & References</p>