



Float Building Tips

Here are our top tips for getting involved and building the perfect float for the re-launched Douglas Carnival. It's also worth looking online; YouTube in particular has some excellent videos on how to make the perfect float.

To begin with you need to get a clear idea of what you want to do; there is no theme for the parade so you can think of something different and original.

Registration

Ok, you know the theme and you've got your idea, so now you need to register! Download an application for at douglascarnival.im.

People

It's up to you how many people you have on your float; all ages can take part and have fun!

Choosing your float

Most people don't own a 20 foot trailer; however you might be able to secure the use of one for free or for the cost of the petrol.

You can also look into using a pick-up truck, a flatbed lorry or even a trolley which you can adapt. A hay trailer is ideal for an easy to manoeuvre carnival float.

Local road haulage companies and farmers may be able to provide a vehicle for Carnival use. If you are stuck for a vehicle, let us know. We might be able to put you in touch with someone who is willing to help.

Decoration and Materials

That is where you can get creative, work within a budget and try not to go over. Look at what art materials you have around you or what you can make with things you may own. If you need a budget for your float, you could try finding a sponsor. Try your employer! You could also make an application to the Arts Council for funding as part of Island of Culture 2014 by visiting www.islandofculture.im under the 'Apply for Funding' section.

Delve into the depths of your garage or attic; old sheets, cardboard, Christmas decorations or clothes can all be used. If you have any emulsion paint then why not use that? You usually only need one coat, and it saves you spending lots of money on paint.

Have groups focussing on costume design, framework building, decorating materials and signage.

For a trailer-based float build a skirt frame for your float's trailer. The skirt frame is used to cover up the wheels and undercarriage of your trailer. Use 2-by-2-inches pieces of wood for the frame and leave 16 inches of space between the frame and ground.

Decorate the trailer skirt. You can also use fringe to cover your side skirts. You can cover the deck of your trailer with more floral sheeting or grass mats.

Chicken wire and papier mâché is a great way to build character floats!

Just remember to think about safety, keep your structure strong, and attach your decorations using staple guns, cable ties or glue. Fine detail won't be picked up, so make things big, bright and eye catching.



Power

You can use the following;

- Generator – Ideal if you want to run several sources of light or sound.
- Inverter – These can be powered from a car battery, so they might be perfect for you.
- Car battery – This is a good method if you want to attach 12v lighting to your float.

Lighting

- Rope lights – Require a little power, easy to pick up from hardware stores.
- Christmas tree lights – The cheapest way to light your float.
- Spot lights – Great for single features.
- Another cheap way to brighten up your float is using shiny materials such as foil and glitter.
- Make sure whatever you use it's going to be able to cope with the conditions, think wind, rain, sun, light – will people even be able to pick up on the lights you're using.

Safety

Top tips to remember:

- Make sure all your decorations are properly secured to your structure.
- You shouldn't have any nails/screws sticking out.
- Make sure everyone riding on the float is going to stay safe.
- Don't use naked flame or fire.
- Check that all your electrics will be protected from rain etc.
- Make sure your generators are positioned away from flammable materials.
- If you're using an inverter make sure it's connected to the car battery properly.

Have Fun!

And the most important thing of all is to have FUN! Douglas Carnival will be a fantastic event for all the community. See if your friends or a local club might be interested in getting involved.

If you have any more tips that you'd like to share let us know and we will add them to the list!