



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28TH JUNE 2022

SUBJECT: MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP FEES – REGISTRATION SERVICE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Scrutiny Committee prior to a further report to Cabinet in relation to proposed increases to the fees charged for the administering of wedding and civil partnership ceremonies by the Registration Service.

2. SUMMARY

Ceremony fees are set on a cost recovery basis and have not been reviewed since 2019/20. A recent assessment of the cost of providing the service indicated a need to increase fees and proposals are presented within the report. It is also proposed that in future ceremony fees are routinely reviewed every 2 years, or sooner should there be a significant change in circumstances, to ensure that a reasonable level of costs are recovered.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That members of the Scrutiny Committee provide views on the proposed increase in ceremony fees and the proposal that ceremony fees be reviewed routinely every 2 years prior to consideration by Cabinet on the 13th July 2022.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To recover a reasonable level of costs incurred in administering wedding and civil partnership ceremonies by the Registration Service.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Marriage and Civil Partnership fees are set nationally at £46 where a “commissioned” ceremony room is used. Every local authority has to offer a ceremony in a statutory

room at this fee. However, this national fee does not cover the costs of the statutory attendance levels of Registration Officers. Consequently many Registration Services, including Caerphilly, also offer ceremonies in de-commissioned rooms where the chargeable fees are discretionary. Craig Penallta is Caerphilly's de-commissioned ceremony room. Additionally where marriage and civil partnerships are conducted at approved premises across the county borough the chargeable fee is again discretionary.

- 5.2 Ceremony fees have not been reviewed since 2019/20. The Authority compares its fees with the cost of providing the service and with those charged by other authorities in Wales. Analysis indicates that the Registration Service is not recovering the whole cost incurred in providing the service. It is therefore proposed that fees for 2022/23 are set as per the table below.

Craig Penallta

	Current Fees	Proposed Fees	Increase	Percentage
Mon – Friday	£221	£228	£7	3.2%
Saturday	£300	£320	£20	6.6%
Sunday/BH	£300	£320	£20	6.6%

Approved Premises

	Current Fees	Proposed Fees	Increase	Percentage
Mon – Friday	£286	£297	£11	3.8%
Saturday	£410	£435	£25	6.1%
Sunday/BH	£410	£435	£25	6.1%

- 5.3 As the Authority takes provisional bookings for ceremonies up to three years in advance it is currently not possible to inform couples at the time of booking what the actual fee for a future ceremony will be. Couples are told the current fee, that it is subject to change, and that exact fee information will be confirmed in writing nearer to the time.
- 5.4 Some Registration Districts in Wales have different pricing structures depending on the day of the week, size of the room, number of guests attending etc. so it is not always possible to make direct comparisons or collate the average fee. The table below summarises the highest and lowest fees charged across Wales and those proposed for CCBC. The table indicates that CCBC fees even with the proposed increases are very reasonable and in the lower levels of fees charged.

5.5 All Wales Ceremony Fee Comparison

Decommissioned Room

Monday – Friday	Lowest	£136
	Highest	£495
	CCBC Proposed	£228
Saturday	Lowest	£148
	Highest	£495
	CCBC Proposed	£320
Sunday	Lowest	£214
	Highest	£550
	CCBC Proposed	£320
Bank Holiday	Lowest	£300
	Highest	£697
	CCBC Proposed	£320

Approved Premises

Monday – Friday	Lowest	£297
	Highest	£524
	CCBC Proposed	£297
Saturday	Lowest	£376
	Highest	£595
	CCBC Proposed	£435
Sunday	Lowest	£410
	Highest	£756
	CCBC Proposed	£435
Bank Holiday	Lowest	£410
	Highest	£765
	CCBC Proposed	£435

5.6 Conclusion

Ceremony fees are determined on a cost recovery basis and current fees do not meet the cost of delivering the service. Fees have not been increased since 2019/20 and any delay in implementing an increase now will lead to higher increases in future years. The proposed increases are modest and still leave the authority reasonable

and competitively priced when compared with other districts. It is also proposed that in future ceremony fees are routinely reviewed every 2 years, or sooner should there be a significant change in circumstances, to ensure that a reasonable level of costs are recovered.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has identified mainly neutral impacts as the proposed fee increases apply equally to everyone. Ceremony fees are overdue for a review, any further delays in increasing fees will lead to higher increases in future years. The proposed increases are based on cost recovery and are reasonable when compared with other Welsh Districts. Not increasing fees leads to a higher burden on CCBC rate payers. The link to the IIA is detailed below.

[Link to Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 If the proposed increases are implemented it is estimated that there will be an increased income of £6,900 per annum based on current ceremony numbers. Fees are determined on a cost recovery basis and current fees do not meet the cost of delivering the service. Fees have not been increased since 2019/20 and any delay in implementing an increase now will lead to higher increases in future years. It is also proposed that in future ceremony fees are routinely reviewed every 2 years, or sooner should there be a significant change in circumstances, to ensure that a reasonable level of costs are recovered.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Jacqui Morgan, Trading Standards, Licensing & Registrars Manager
Morgaj4@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Councillor Philippa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection

Councillor D.T Davies, Chair Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny
Councillor Adrian Hussey, Vice Chair Environment & Sustainability
Scrutiny
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
willims@caerphilly.gov.uk
Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure
Services
Hartsr@caerphilly.gov.uk
Christina HARRY, Chief Executive
harrhc@caerphilly.gov.uk
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Trantrj@caerphilly.gov.uk
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Donovl@caerphilly.gov.uk
David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager
Roberda@caerphilly.gov.uk
Della Mahony, Superintendent Registrar
Mahond@caerphilly.gov.uk

Background Papers: None