



## **CABINET – 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

**SUBJECT: MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP FEES –  
REGISTRATION SERVICE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND  
ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To determine the fees charged for the administering of wedding and civil partnership ceremonies by the Registration Service for the next two years.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 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 is recovered.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Cabinet consider the content of this report and recommendations made by the meeting of the Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the 28th June 2022 as detailed in section 11 and approve the proposed increases in ceremony fees effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve a two-year ceremony fee review cycle subject to any significant change in circumstances. Also, that ceremony fees will be considered annually in the light of any generic increase in non-pay inflation (fees and charges) approved by full Council when considering budget proposals each year.

### **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 and be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022.

### 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

<b>Monday – Friday</b>	Lowest	£136
	Highest	£495
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£228</b>
	Median	£229
<b>Saturday</b>	Lowest	£148
	Highest	£495
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£320</b>
	Median	£268
<b>Sunday</b>	Lowest	£214
	Highest	£550
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£320</b>
	Median	£356
<b>Bank Holiday</b>	Lowest	£300
	Highest	£697
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£320</b>
	Median	£356

### Approved Premises

<b>Monday – Friday</b>	Lowest	£297
	Highest	£524
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£297</b>
	Median	£430
<b>Saturday</b>	Lowest	£376
	Highest	£595
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£435</b>
	Median	£465
<b>Sunday</b>	Lowest	£410
	Highest	£756

	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£435</b>
	Median	£522
<b>Bank Holiday</b>	Lowest	£410
	Highest	£765
	<b>CCBC Proposed</b>	<b>£435</b>
	Median	£525

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Members of the Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee considered the proposed increases at a meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June and supported the proposed increase in ceremony fees and the proposal that ceremony fees be reviewed routinely every 2 years. Cabinet is asked to note the comments and recommendations from Scrutiny and approve the proposed increases in ceremony fees for the administering of wedding and civil partnership ceremonies by the Registration Service.

## 7. ASSUMPTIONS

- 7.1 No assumptions have been made within this report.

## 8. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 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 IIA

## 9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 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.

- 9.2 Ceremony fees will also be considered annually in the light of any generic increase in non-pay inflation (fees and charges) approved by full Council when considering budget proposals each year. 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.

## **10. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

## **11. CONSULTATIONS**

- 11.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.
- 11.2 Members of the Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee considered the report and proposed fees at a meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June. Members enquired why the fees were to be reviewed every two years rather than every year, particularly in view of rising costs. The committee was advised that the fees are set on a cost recovery basis and cover costs such as salaries and electricity. It was felt that a 2 year review would be a reasonable approach, however if Members felt that it should be done annually this could be taken into account. Members were informed that there is also an annual increase built into the budget report which takes into account inflation. The scrutiny committee supported the proposed increase in ceremony fees and the proposal that ceremony fees be reviewed routinely every 2 years.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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Consultees: Councillor Philippa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection  
Councillor D.T Davies, Chair Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny  
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Background Papers: N/A

Appendices: N/A