

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 27 August 2013

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnership and Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Community Use of the Brunton

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Council of ongoing work to support community use of the Brunton venues in Musselburgh.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to approve the proposal to amend the scale of charges previously reported through a Members' Library report, Ref: 265/12, dated 15 November 2012. A summary of the proposed charges showing comparison with the 50% discount charge currently being used for community and voluntary groups and the commercial rate is provided at 3.21.
- 2.2 In addition to the options for professional catering services associated with venue bookings, Council is asked to approve the proposal to allow community access to the bar servery area in venue 2 to make teas and coffees for small scale community events.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Council approved funding to refurbish the Brunton as part of the capital plan and a tender report to appoint the main contractor was approved by Cabinet on 8 March 2011.
- 3.2 Members' Library Report, Ref: 265/12, dated 15 November 2012, advised the proposed scale of hire charges for the refurbished facility which was available for lets from November 2012.

- 3.3 This report was based on research undertaken by consultants appointed to advise on the re-launch of the facility following its full refurbishment.
- 3.4 Following concerns expressed about the scale of charges introduced from November 2012, officers undertook a review which has included a change to the percentage discount for community and voluntary groups from the proposed 20% to 50%.
- 3.5 A motion on the community use of the Brunton was presented to the Council at its meeting 23 April 2013.
- 3.6 Following a tendering process in July 2012 to award the concession, Appetite Direct was identified as the preferred contractor for the main catered events contract.
- 3.7 The Brunton Bistro was identified as the preferred contractor for the supply of teas and coffees and light refreshments for smaller scale events at the Brunton.
- 3.8 Following discussion with Appetite Direct and the Bistro, the contracts for each company are being amended to allow the Bistro to offer a service for local events where Appetite Direct agrees that the catering needs of the client are more suited to the Bistro offer.
- 3.9 The refurbished kitchen at the Brunton is available for use by the professional caterers only (currently Appetite Direct and the Bistro) with responsibility for managing the kitchen and covering the cost of annual maintenance and repairs to be covered through the contracts with Appetite Direct and the Bistro.
- 3.10 To further support community and voluntary events, officers have explored the proposal to enable teas and coffees to be provided by local groups for their own events using the bar servery facilities in venue 2 (formerly the supper room). The costs associated with re-design of the servery area to support this proposal have been assessed by Property Services and are in the region of £5,000. The bar areas currently have secure access as licensed premises and re-design is required to restrict access to optics, etc. when event organisers enter the bar area.
- 3.11 Following a review of the Brunton charges undertaken by officers between October 2012 and June 2013, a revised charging model is now presented for approval.
- 3.12 The following is a summary of the pricing factors impacting for event bookings at the Brunton:
 - Venue hire charge: hour rates / day rates
 - Technical requirements: use of equipment
 - Technical requirements: staff time
 - Stewarding
 - Security
 - Access to licensed bar

- Catering requirements
 - Overhead costs (electricity, maintenance, administrative)
- 3.13 Where previously a discount of 50% on the commercial rate was applied for community and voluntary groups, it is now proposed to introduce a basic community and voluntary group rate.
- 3.14 Where charging rates have previously been based on the need for technical support and stewarding, this cost will be removed from the basic hire charge for community and voluntary groups and will only be added where the particular needs of the event make this necessary.
- 3.15 A summary of the proposed scale of charges is contained at 3.21.
- 3.16 The capital investment of circa £4 million has resulted in a first class facility capable of hosting a wide range of events with professional level retractable seating, banqueting facilities, sound, lighting and AV equipment. Where community and voluntary organisations wish to make use of these facilities there will be an additional charge to reflect the additional costs to the Council of providing this.
- 3.17 For community and voluntary organisation events requiring only minimal technical support (e.g. use of a microphone), it is proposed that these events can be provided with basic technical equipment without the need for a technician to be in attendance. However, any technical needs in addition to this would be recharged.
- 3.18 For large scale community and voluntary organisation events requiring a licensed bar there is scope to offset some of the bar income against the costs of these events where officers deem this to be appropriate.
- 3.19 Risk assessment for a large scale public event may require event organisers to meet the cost of security staff in addition to stewarding staff and costs of this would be met by the event organisers.
- 3.20 The figures at section 3.21 show the commercial rate, the community & voluntary group 50% discount rate currently in use and the proposed new basic rate for community & voluntary groups for comparison.
- 3.21 Table of charges showing commercial rate, current community & voluntary rate (50%) and proposed community & voluntary rate for approval.

Room	Off peak hire with technical support (Mon to Thurs)	Off peak hire without technical support (Mon to Thurs)	Peak hire with technical support (Fri, Sat, Sun.)	Peak hire without technical support (Fri, Sat, Sun.)	Added charge per hour after midnight	Proposed Community/ Voluntary rate (without addition of staff, equipment as required)
Main Hall (venue 1) half day	£576 50% £288	£476 50% £238	£676 50% £338	£576 50% £288		£188
Main Hall (venue 1) full day	£975 50% £487.50	£775 50% £387.50	£1100 50% £550	£900 50% £450	£150 Proposed Community/ Voluntary £75	£376
Supper Room (venue 2) half day	£345 50% £172.50	£285 50% £142.50	£445 50% £222.50	£385 50%£192.50		£94
Supper Room (venue 2) full day	£470 50% £235	£395 50% £197.50	£570 50% £285	£495 50% £247.50	£117 Proposed Community/ Voluntary £58	£188
Main Hall (venue 1) 4 hour hire	£305 50% £152.50	£ 245 50% £122.50	£380 50% £190	£320 50% £160		£94
Supper Room (venue 2) 2 hour hire	£105 50% £52.50	£75 50% £37.50	£155 (£65) 50% £77.50	£125 50% £62.50		£47

3.22 The table below indicates the impact of the charges on a variety of community and voluntary groups.

3.23 Total costs for a sample range of community and voluntary events

Event	Total cost using current 50% discount rate	Total cost using proposed new discount rate incl technical, stewarding and security staff costs as required	Total inclusive charge pre-refurbishment
Youth Groups (venue 1)	£463	£410.60	£277 without technical recharge

Community Council (venue 2)/Citizen of the Year Awards	£183.30	£158.80	£154
Local Societies display	£626	£590.80	£359 (no stewards recharged)
Community Council gala dinner	£367 (Plus security staff)	£339 (Plus security staff)	£337 (no security staff)

- 3.24 It should be noted that health and safety is a priority for all events at the Brunton. Risk assessment post-refurbishment has assessed the needs for staffing to ensure safe use of the building (fire evacuation, security, technical support, etc.) at a higher level than was the case prior to refurbishment.
- 3.25 It is envisaged that these actions would provide continued support to the local and voluntary sector whilst recognising the need to remain within budget.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals will result in additional grant funding in kind for local community and voluntary groups.

The scale of charges for The Brunton will be available online and included in future versions of the Council's annual hall letting charges.

Further work is ongoing as part of the partnership approach to develop the criteria under which organisations would qualify for the reduced rate.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken but no negative impacts have been found.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The proposals will result in a loss of income to the Council. It is anticipated that this can be accommodated within the existing budget. However, it should be noted there is a risk that this may not be possible if anticipated activity levels change significantly.

The £5,000 required to meet the costs of re-designing the servery area to introduce tea/coffee facilities in venue 2 will be contained within the current budget for the Brunton.

6.2 Personnel - There are no personnel implications.

6.3 Other – There are no other implications.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Cabinet report for the main project and AKP's tender (approved 8 March 2011).

7.2 Members Library Report on proposed charges, 15 November 2012

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