

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Originator	Diane Robertson
Originator's Ref (if any)	
Document Title	Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership Charges – 2016/2017 Citizenship Ceremony Charges – 2016/2017

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Authorised By	Tom Shearer
Designation	Head of Comm & Partnerships
Date	01/02/16

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Head of Communities and Partnerships

SUBJECT: Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership Charges – 2016/2017
Citizenship Ceremony Charges – 2016/2017

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for an increase in charges from 1 April 2016 to couples undertaking civil marriage or civil partnership ceremonies within the East Lothian Council area.
- 1.2 Approval is also sought for an increase in charges for individual Citizenship Ceremonies.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note a change of statutory venue for ceremonies within East Lothian.
- 2.2 To approve the increase in charges for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies for 2016/2017 (Appendix 1).
- 2.3 To approve the increase in charges for individual Citizenship Ceremonies.
- 2.4 To note that fees associated with statutory Registration applied by the National Records for Scotland will increase for 2016/2017

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council currently has 4 venues identified within its public buildings where couples are able to hold their Civil Marriage or Civil Partnership ceremony.
- 3.2 These venues are: Adam Room, John Muir House, Haddington; Regent Room and Esk Rooms 1 and 2, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh and the Council Chambers, Dunbar

- 3.3 East Lothian Council currently applies an accommodation charge for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies within their designated marriage rooms in line with other local authorities.
- 3.4 There is a statutory requirement set by the NRS (National Records of Scotland) for local authorities to provide one venue within the Registration District with no accommodation charge (Monday to Friday).
- 3.5 The statutory fee is made up of £60 for lodging notices, £10 for Marriage Certificate and £55 for Solemnisation of Civil Marriage.
- 3.6 This room is currently identified as the Regent Room, Brunton Hall however it is proposed to change this facility to the Registraton room, John Muir House.
- 3.7 The Registration room, John Muir House will provide the facility for couples to hold a small intimate ceremony (4/6 persons), paying only the statutory fee applied by the National Records for Scotland.
- 3.8 By re-defining the accommodation for statutory use we will have an opportunity to maximise income potential with an accommodation charge being applied for the use of the Regent Room, Musselburgh.
- 3.9 Over 2015/2016 56 ceremonies took place or are planned up to the end of March 2016 in the Regent Room, Musselburgh. If 2015/2016 ceremony charges, Monday to Friday, had been applied to that venue over the last year, £7,000 of additional income would be been realised.
- 3.10 We wish to take advantage of the potential to maximise income and therefore change our designated venue as outlined above.
- 3.11 East Lothian Council currently applies an accommodation charge for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies within all other designated marriage rooms.
- 3.12 This paper also seeks approval for the increase in charges for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies for 2016/2017. (Appendix 1)
- 3.13 There was no increase in charges applied for 2015/2016.
- 3.14 The proposal is to increase our charges for 2016/2017 in line with inflation and taking into account charges made by neighbouring authorities.
- 3.15 Appendix 1 illustrates the current charges for 2015/2016 and the proposed increase for 2016/2017 from 1 April 2016.

Citizenship Ceremonies

- 3.16 Citizenship Ceremonies were introduced in 2004 as a requirement under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act.

The Home Office provides a fee to East Lothian Council for every individual who goes through a ceremony. However, local authorities may make an additional charge where an individual, couple or family wish to have a separate ceremony which is sometimes necessary if the applicant needs a passport in order to travel. East Lothian Council has programmed in group Citizenship ceremonies every two months.

- 3.17 The proposal is to increase our fees for 2016/2017 from £80 per individual ceremony to £85. Neighbouring local authority fees vary with the highest of the charges being in Falkirk who charge £160 for the same service.

Statutory Charges

- 3.18 The statutory fees made by the National Records for Scotland to cover the costs of the legal paperwork are generally increased each year.
- 3.19 The NRS have indicated that the statutory charge of £125 will increase for 2016/2017, however, the exact amount is not known at this time.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The report is not applicable to the wellbeing of equalities groups and an Equality Impact Assessment is not required

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Registration room, John Muir House will have dual function accommodating small intimate ceremonies and also Registration appointments for the registering of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships.
- 6.2 Financial – Increase in charges to couples for civil marriages and civil partnership ceremonies carried out by Registration staff within and outwith East Lothian Council premises as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 6.3 The NRS intend to increase the current statutory fee for 2016/2017 however the actual amount is not known at this time
- 6.4 An increase in charge for individual Citizenship ceremonies from £80 to £85.
- 6.5 Personnel - none
- 6.6 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Proposed increase for charges for Ceremonies conducted within East Lothian – 2016/2017 (Appendix 1)

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DATE	1 February 2016

Appendix 1 – Proposed charges for ceremonies conducted within East Lothian – 2016/17

	Within ELC Offices			Outwith ELC Offices		Public Holidays
	JMH Registration Room – Statutory venue Mon - Fri	In all other Council Marriage venues Mon - Fri	In all other Council Marriage venues Saturdays/Sundays	In approved venues Mon - Fri	In approved venues After 4 pm/ Saturday/Sunday	In Council offices or approved venues
Proposed charges 2016/17	No additional charge	£130	£240	£185	£240	£285
Statutory fees*	£125	£125	£125	£125	£125	£125
Total cost to couple	£125	£255	£365	£310	£365	£410
Current charges 2015/16	No additional charge	£125	£235	£180	£235	£285
Statutory fees*	£125	£125	£125	£125	£125	£125
Total cost to couple	£125	£250	£360	£305	£360	£410

*It is not known currently what increase the National Records Office for Scotland will make on the Statutory Fees however it has been confirmed there will be a fee increase this year.

Statutory Fees comprise:

Lodging Marriage Notices	£30.00 x 2	£ 60.00
Civil Marriage Ceremony	£55.00	£ 55.00
Marriage Certificate	£10.00	£ 10.00
Total		£125.00

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