

8th January 2013

Agenda Item: 8

**REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & REGISTRATION
REGISTRATION SERVICE FEES FOR 2013/2014 AND 2014/2015**

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise the Committee on the process for the setting of Registration Service fees and to seek approval for fees for 2013/2014 and for 2014/2015.

Information and Advice

Introduction

2. The fees for statutory registration services are set nationally, and are listed in this report at **Appendix A**. These include the fees for giving notice of the intention to marry or form a civil partnership, and fees for the related ceremonies when taking place at a Register Office. The level of these statutory fees does not cover the full cost of service delivery, and this places a financial pressure on the service. However, the fees for non-statutory services can be set to off-set the cost of providing the statutory services.
3. The non-statutory services offered by the County Council include conducting civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies at premises other than the Register Office, plus a range of 'celebratory ceremonies' including naming ceremonies, renewal of vows, civil funerals and individual citizenship ceremonies. The fees for these services must be charged on a cost recovery basis, and most are subject to V.A.T.
4. Registration Service fees for the financial year 2013/2014 have been approved previously. This report updates these, and advises on fees for the following year, plus new charges that can be introduced with immediate effect including some that can be introduced following recent legislative changes.
5. The Community Safety Committee has authority to approve the fees set out in this report at **Appendix B**. In some cases, these cover the next two financial years as bookings may be requested up to two years in advance. It is possible that during the year the Registrar General or Home Office may change the nationally set fees for marriages, civil partnerships and citizenship ceremonies. Consequently, it is proposed that should this occur then local fees will be re-set to a new figure directly commensurate with the change.

Modifications to existing fees

6. It has been found during the current year, that the fees set last year for ceremonies on a Sunday (higher than those on a Saturday) have met with adverse reactions from the public. Saturday is the day of choice for ceremonies and with the ending of double-time payments to staff it cannot be justified on the basis of extra costs for conducting ceremonies on a Sunday. It has therefore been concluded that the cost of Sunday ceremonies should be harmonised with those on Saturdays.
7. It has further been concluded that due to the increasing overall number of ceremonies being conducted, it is unnecessary to increase fees for 2014-15 beyond those agreed already for 2013-14. Also, as Nottinghamshire is now a one Registration District, and due to improvements to Registration Office facilities, it is possible to standardise our fees for enhanced ceremony at the level already agreed for The Hall in West Bridgford.

Removal of restrictions on time of marriage and civil partnership

8. The recently introduced Protection of Freedoms Act included a provision to remove the time restrictions on marriage and civil partnerships. Previously, these could only take place between 8 am to 6 pm. Now, they may take place legally at any time of the day or night.
9. This change is permissive: there is no obligation on local authorities to provide services outside the traditional hours. However, the change offers the opportunity to provide these services at other times if the County Council wish to do so. Key factors include:
 - Costs and benefits, financial and non-financial.
 - The views of approved venues, customers and staff.
 - Health and safety considerations.
 - Whether to offer ceremonies whenever couples may want them, extend existing hours, or to offer particular notable occasions only.
 - Whether to offer extended ceremony times on a seasonal basis, to avoid dark nights.
 - Whether to offer extended hours at registration offices as well as at approved venues.
 - Whether to offer statutory fee ceremonies during extended hours.
10. Regarding costs and benefits, consideration has been given to setting new fees for new times so that these charges are sustainable and justifiable. Most local authorities have a sliding scale of fees and charges made for attendance at venues. The County Council's policies on working times and pay and conditions, govern the staffing costs.
11. In respect of health and safety, an acceptable risk assessment has been prepared for each of the specific proposals detailed below. In particular, the arrangements preclude lone working on any occasion. Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies will take place only at Registration Offices or Approved venues. Also, the arrangements will not require registrars to return registers and certificate stock to their offices during unsocial hours. Alternative arrangements will be made involving other locations with the required levels of security.

Specific Proposals

12. The following proposals are consistent with feedback from consultations with staff and approved premises. This suggests that there will be only modest availability of ceremonies

at Approved Premises and that the service has sufficient staff to meet the anticipated level of public demand.

13. Therefore, it is proposed to extend enhanced ceremonies in Registration Offices on Saturdays to 7pm from May to September each year. Also, it is proposed that there should not be a general offer for the public to request a ceremony at any time of the day or night. Ceremonies in Registration Offices and Approved Premises will continue at the traditional times, except by special arrangement. If a couple wishes to book a ceremony during the evening, they will only be able to do so if an Approved Premise is willing to take their booking and if the service has no doubt that registrars will be available to officiate.

Civil Partnership Ceremonies in Religious Premises

14. Religious premises in Nottinghamshire that wish to be approved for the formation of Civil Partnerships must apply to the County Council for a license. A public notice must be published, and the premise would be added to the list of approved venues for civil partnerships (indicating that they are religious premises), however registrars are not required to inspect the premises. The County Council is able to recover costs involved in issuing a license, but is not expected to require the fees currently set for the approval of secular premises for marriages and civil partnerships.
15. In Nottinghamshire we have received only one enquiry on this topic, which came from a Unitarian Chapel. The church concerned had not been approached by anyone wishing to have a Civil Partnership formed in the premise, but they have been encouraged by their national organisation to determine what arrangements will be in place if and when they do.

Fees for Saturday Notice Taking

16. It is proposed to introduce a non-refundable appointment fee for taking notices of marriage or civil partnership on Saturdays. This is a service that normally only takes place during the working week, and a statutory fee is charged. However there is public demand for Saturday appointments and so an additional charge is proposed to cover the additional staffing and other service costs for the service on a Saturday.

Other Options Considered

17. The County Council has discretion over the type and level of non-statutory Registration fees.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. The recommendation is made to gain approval for fees that will enable the Registration Service to off-set the cost of statutory services and provide the public with a choice of options at fees they are prepared to pay.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such

implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that approval be given for:

1. The proposed Registration Service fees, noting that these may need to be adjusted in response to any imposed changes to national fees, and;
2. Extending the availability of enhance ceremonies in Registration Offices to 7pm on Saturdays from May to September.

ROBERT FISHER

Group Manager, Emergency Management and Registration

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Robert Fisher

Tel: (0115) 977 3681

Email: Robert.fisher@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (NAB 14.12.2012)

20. The Community Safety Committee has authority to consider and approve the recommendation set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (NDR 13.12.2012)

21. The financial implications of the proposed fee changes are set out in the appendices to the report.

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CS18

General Register Office Fees payable to Registration Officers

Part 1 - Fees payable to registration officers - Births, Deaths and Marriages

1. General Search

Superintendent Registrar

A general search in indexes in his/her office not exceeding 6 successive hours **£18.00**

2. Certificates

Superintendent Registrar

Issuing a standard certificate of birth, death or marriage **£10.00**

Issuing a certificate of birth, death or marriage for certain statutory purposes **£10.00**

Issuing a short certificate of birth **£10.00**

Registrar

Issuing a standard certificate of birth, death or marriage

At the time of registration	£4.00
After the time of registration	£7.00

Issuing a certificate of birth, death or marriage for certain statutory purposes

At the time of registration	£4.00
After the time of registration	£7.00

One short certificate of birth issued at the time of registration **NIL**

Any other short certificate of birth

At the time of registration	£4.00
After the time of registration	£7.00

3. Marriages

Superintendent Registrar

Outside his/her office to be given notice of marriage of a house-bound or detained person

£46.00	Housebound
£67.00	Detained

Entering a notice of marriage in a marriage notice book **£35.00**

Entering a notice of marriage by Registrar General's Licence in a marriage notice book **£3.00†**

Attending a marriage at the residence of a house-bound or detained person

£82.00	Housebound
£93.00	Detained

Attending a marriage by Registrar General's licence **£2.00†**

Attending with a registrar a marriage on approved premises

As set by the local authority

Registrar

Attending a marriage at the register office **£45.00**

Attending at a registered building or the residence of a house-bound or detained person
£84.00 registered building
£79.00 Housebound
£86.00 Detained

Attending a marriage by Registrar General's Licence **£2.00†**

4. Certification for worship and registration for marriage

Superintendent Registrar

Certification of a place of meeting for religious worship **£28.00**

Registration of a building for the solemnization of marriages **£120.00**

†Fee payable by the Registrar General; to be retained by registration officer and not paid to Council

Part 2 - Fees payable to Registration Authorities – Civil Partnerships

1. Certificates

For a certified copy issued by a registration authority

at the time of Registration **£4.00****

after the time of the registration **£10.00****

For a certified extract issued by a registration authority

at the time of Registration **£4.00****

after the time of the registration **£10.00****

For a certified copy or certified extract issued by the Registrar General **£9.25****

2. Notices

Attestation by an authorised person of the necessary declaration **£35.00***

Attendance of an authorised person at a place other than one provided by the registration authority, for the purpose of attesting the necessary declaration in accordance with the procedures for house-bound and detained persons

£46.00* Housebound

£67.00 Detained

Attestation by an authorised person of the declaration under the special procedure **£3.00†***

Application to shorten the waiting period **£28.00***

Issue of Registrar-General's licence **£15.00***

On giving notice to a registration authority under the Civil partnership (Registration Abroad and Certificates) Order 2005, article 17(2) (certificate of no impediment) **£35.00****

3. Registration

Signing by the civil partnership registrar of the civil partnership a schedule **£45.00***

Attendance of the civil partnership registrar for the purpose of signing the civil partnership schedule for house-bound or detained person

£79.00* Housebound
£86.00 Detained

Attendance of the civil partnership registrar in whose presence the Registrar General's licence is issued. Civil Partnership Act 2004, as amended **£2.00†***

†Fee payable by the Registrar General; to be retained by registration officer and not paid to Council

*Fee specified by the Registration of Civil Partnership (Fees) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/1996),

**Fee specified by the Registration of Civil Partnership (Fees) No.2) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/3167),

***Fee specified by the Registration of Civil Partnership (Fees) (Amendment) Order 2012 (S.I. 2012/761),

Registration Service Fees (new proposals shown in **bold**)

SERVICE	FINANCIAL YEAR	MON- THU	FRI / SAT / SUN	BANK HOLIDAYS
Marriage / Civil Partnership / Naming ceremony / Renewal of vows / Memorial Service at an approved premise (Deposit = £150). Note: Refunds will be given to couples who have booked Sunday ceremonies for 2013/14 and paid the full amount	Current 12-13	£345	£395	£465
	Agreed 13-14	£365	£395	£495
	Proposed 14-15	£365	£395	£495
Standard Marriage / Civil Partnership Ceremonies in decommissioned rooms (collectable in advance)	Current 12-13	£65	£65	Not available
	Agreed 13-14	£100	£100	
	Proposed 14-15	£100	£100	
Enhanced Marriages and Civil Partnerships at the Registration Offices in Rushcliffe, Newark, Mansfield, Worksop and Retford (Deposit = £100) Note: Ceremonies already booked and paid in full will not be charged the increase in fee where this has occurred.	Current 12-13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushcliffe • Newark • Mansfield • Bassetlaw 	MON- THU	FRI / SAT	SUN / BANK HOL
		£175	£265	£345
		£165	£245	£320
		£165	£245	£320
	£165	£255	£335	
	Proposed for 13-14 and 14-15	MON- THU	FRI / SAT / SUN	BANK HOLIDAYS
		£185	£280	£360
Naming ceremony / Renewal of vows / Memorial Service at register office	Current 12-13	£175	£225	£250
	Agreed 13-14	£175	£225	£250
	Proposed 14-15	£175	£225	£225
Civil Funerals	Current 12-13	£150	£150	£205
	Agreed 13-14	£150	£150	£205
	Proposed 14-15	£150	£150	£205

Individual Citizenship Ceremonies	Current 12-13	£95	£125	£145
	Agreed 13-14	£100	£140	£160
	Proposed 14-15	£100	£145	£160

APPROVED PREMISE LICENSING	INTRODUCTORY FEE / GENERAL FEE FOR NON- COMMERCIAL BODIES.	CURRENTLY £1350, PROPOSED TO REMAIN AT £1350 FOR 2013-2014 AND 2014-2015
	GENERAL RENEWAL FEE.	CURRENTLY £2150 PROPOSED TO REMAIN AT £2150 FOR 2013-2014 AND 2014-2015
	SUITABILITY VISIT	CURRENTLY £100 - NO PROPOSED INCREASE

Civil Partnerships in religious premises - £200 administration fee

Notice taking on Saturdays – Statutory fee, plus £10 per person non-refundable booking fee for Saturday opening

Other fees proposed to continue at the current levels:

- Double ceremony (e.g. joint marriage and naming ceremony / marriage plus renewal outside) = Marriage fee, plus £150
- Certificates
 - Standard service (postal applications and non-urgent personal callers – for despatch within no more than 4 working days) = £10.00
 - Premium service (available to personal callers – for despatch by post no later than the following day) = £15.00
 - Express service (when possible - for personal callers – immediate production, and despatch) = £20
- Change of name deed £40
- General administrative charge (amendments to ceremonies or any extra administrative tasks relating to a booking) = £20
- Prior payment of statutory fees