
RAYLEIGH WINDMILL: CIVIL CELEBRATIONS/WEDDING TERMS & CONDITIONS OF HIRE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with suggested changes to the Terms & Conditions of Hire for Weddings and Civil Celebrations at the Rayleigh Windmill, following the meeting of the Executive Board of 9 January 2008 which sought further consultation between the Board Member for Leisure, Tourism and Heritage, Councillor Mrs M J Webster, and the Head of Community Services.
- 1.2 The report also seeks to gain approval to the suggested charges for the hire of the Windmill for weddings/civil ceremonies.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members are aware, approval was given at the meeting of the Executive board on the 19 July 2007, for Officers to apply to Essex County Council for a wedding licence. This was subsequently awarded in November 2007.
- 2.2 Following significant market research and investigation, Officers drafted a full set of Terms and Conditions of hire, which included access to the Windmill from 9.30 on the day, prior to the event, for decoration by the hirer.
- 2.3 Members' view was that booking times should be limited to two hours per event, to maximise the potential usage of the Windmill and that the District Council could include floral decoration within the terms and conditions.

3 WAY FORWARD – TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF HIRE

Floral Table Displays

- 3.1 Further research has been undertaken with local florists in respect of floral arrangements, with a typical table display (similar to that shown in Appendix A) estimated to cost between £100 - £150 which would have a significant effect on the hire charges.
- 3.2 If a contract was to be awarded, florists have advised that flower arrangements need to be changed on a twice a month basis and that during their peak season they may not be able to offer this service. They have also suggested that many brides wish to co-ordinate colour schemes, which would be an added complication. Similarly, they may also wish to use the floral arrangements as part of table decorations at a reception venue.
- 3.3 In view of the above, it is therefore suggested that provision of floral arrangements by the Council should not be included within the terms and conditions of hire. The operation of the wedding service at the Windmill is to be carried out by the Leisure Development Team, in addition to their existing

roles and duties and, therefore, the time required to coordinate this part of the service could potentially have a large impact on staff time.

Booking Allocation Times

3.4 Further discussions have been held with Essex County Council (ECC) on the optimum timescales per event so that when required, more than one event per day could be booked. ECC have suggested the following based on their experience of other venues and any specific minimum requirements:-

- Setting a time limit of between 3 to 4 hours to allow couples to meet with the Registrar prior to the service (approximately 45 minutes). This would allow time for separate interviews to be held with the bride and groom, as these meetings will be held in the same room as the ceremony, rather than a separate room as in a Registry Office.
- The timescale would also provide for up to 40 minutes for a service (includes time for readings etc), and additional time for photographs to take advantage of the stunning backdrop of the Windmill.

3.5 It is, therefore, suggested that access times and booking times be amended to reflect the above on a booking-by-booking basis, with the “automatic” access from 9.30 the day before removed. This would then potentially allow for more than one event per day to be booked.

4 HIRE CHARGES

4.1 Officers have carried out research and discussions with various organisations to ascertain the typical charges for a venue of this nature. They have taken into account the size of the venue and the fact that our maximum numbers are limited to 20. Also, that there are no other reception facilities directly on that site, although Virgin Active’s management at the Mill Arts & Events Centre have been involved with putting together a discounted package for people getting married at the Windmill.

4.2 The advice received from the Registration Service Business Development Manager at Essex County Council has also been taken into account and has been particularly useful due to the extensive involvement and knowledge that he has of this service across the region.

4.3 Information on hire charges was gathered from a number of different venues, particularly those catering for the customers that have smaller guest lists. Within these venues there were also two other windmills, whose charges were £490 and £600. However, with both of these venues this also included the hire of an area for the reception as well as for the ceremony itself. Other venue prices ranged from £240 to over £6,000, although some of these also included all the reception costs etc.

4.4 From the information gathered, and in particular the County Council advice, the suggested hire charges are £250 if the event is to take place Monday –

Friday and £350 if it is to take place on a Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holiday. This price would only include the hire of the room and provision of chairs.

- 4.5 It should also be noted that this wedding hire service is only one part of the overall “Windmill offer” and needs to be developed and managed closely in order to smoothly integrate it with the other uses such as visitors to the “museum”, museum accreditation process, exhibitions etc. At this stage it is obviously impossible to forecast what level of enquiries we will receive and so a reasonably flexible approach will need to be adopted and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If the Leisure Team were to take on the additional booking arrangements for floral decorations, as well as the already increased workload of managing the bookings, viewing and hiring of the Windmill, this could have a negative impact on the resources available within the section.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Board **RESOLVES**

- (1) To consider the above information and agree that any floral decorations for Civil Celebrations at the Windmill be arranged by the hirer and not be included as part of the terms and conditions of hire, or hire fee.
- (2) To give approval for each Civil Ceremony to be set a time limit of between 3 – 4 hours, as part of the terms and conditions of hire, therefore negating the need for access from 9.30 on the day prior to the event.
- (3) That the hire charges for the Rayleigh Windmill for Weddings/Civil Ceremonies be set at £250 where they take place Monday to Friday and £350 where they take place on a Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holidays.

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Background Papers:-

None

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