

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
FINANCE, INNOVATION and PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

09 January 2019

Report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Key Decision

1 TONBRIDGE CASTLE - REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

1.1 Executive Overview

- 1.1.1 Tonbridge Castle is used to deliver a variety of different services and functions. These include the Kent County Council funded Gateway; Tourist Information Centre; Attraction i.e. the Castle tour; Meeting Rooms; the Castle Lawn and offices (occupied by the Borough Council and Citizens Advice Bureau) which all have revenue streams attributed to them for a myriad of different activities.
- 1.1.2 Many of the different revenue streams covered in this report have long lag factors, where revenue can only be realised by ensuring there is a strong business plan which encompasses the key Marketing strategies, resulting in people interested to use Tonbridge Castle.
- 1.1.3 At the Castle the Borough Council arranges and facilitates many types of events, from music concerts on the Castle Lawn, art exhibitions in the Castle Chamber and weddings in the Castle Chamber and Gatehouse.
- 1.1.4 It is essential to have a strong working relationship between the different Directorates who manage different activities at the Castle to utilise this most valuable and historic asset. Leisure services organise many established mature events on the Castle Lawn which attract many visitors from the surrounding areas.
- 1.1.5 The main revenue streams from Tonbridge Castle are from the Attraction (Castle Tours), school visits, Ceremonies and the shop.
- 1.1.6 The target for growth in 2019 forward is to increase the number of meeting room bookings, with plans to convert the shared space into another meeting room, which will enable us to target smaller external groups who are looking for a meeting room.
- 1.1.7 During 2018-19 Tonbridge Castle branding and social media has been enhanced to reflect the quality of this historic Castle.

1.2 Social Media and Marketing Activity

This year has seen the website enhanced with the first phase of the marketing and social media enhancements.

Website	https://www.tonbridgecastle.org/
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/Tonbridge-Castle-215130582543309/



twitter	https://twitter.com/tonbridgecastle?lang=en0
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Twitter (Launch 15 June 2018)	15/11	06/12	11/12	18/12
Tweets	462	495	524	531
Following	207	238	259	264
Followers	279	318	330	337
Likes	270	270	294	296

Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/tonbridgecastleofficial/																							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Instagram (Launch 18 October 2018)</th> <th>15/11</th> <th>06/12</th> <th>11/12</th> <th>18/12</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>posts</td> <td>11</td> <td>17</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>followers</td> <td>224</td> <td>335</td> <td>364</td> <td>396</td> </tr> <tr> <td>following</td> <td>76</td> <td>96</td> <td>98</td> <td>99</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Instagram (Launch 18 October 2018)	15/11	06/12	11/12	18/12	posts	11	17	20	21	followers	224	335	364	396	following	76	96	98	99
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1.3 Visitors to the Castle

1.3.1 People visit the Castle for a wide range of services and needs seven days a week through the year.

1.3.2 The top ten customer services interactions (not including the Tourist Information Centre) are set out below:

	Description	Number 2017 - 2018	Number LY 2016 - 2017	Variance year on year
1	Benefit	4,642	4,674	-0.68%
2	Parking	3,834	3,736	2.62%
3	Self Help Kiosk & Computers	2,153	1,110	93.96%
4	Council Tax	1,829	1,803	1.44%
5	Housing	1,754	2,037	-13.89%
6	Toilet	1,275	746	70.91%
7	Bus & Train Timetables	652	749	-12.95%
8	Bus passes	359	204	75.98%
9	Cross referrals	355	229	55.02%
10	Waste Enquiries	302	405	-25.43%
	Planning	229	255	-10.20%
	Electoral Roll	97	269	-63.94%

1.3.3 One of the principle aims is to move customers to use on line channels to self-serve through digital and online forms. Self-help Kiosk and use of computers has increased by 93%.

1.4 Revenue

1.4.1 The revenue breakdown by category

Category	2017 – 2018 TYD – Apr - Nov	2016 - 2017
Shop Sale	£5,277	£5,525
Castle Tours	£14,269	£19,979
Schools	£6,301	£7,432
Guide Books	£1,469	£1,903
Weddings	£10,350	£15,560

1.5 Tonbridge Castle - proposed fees

1.5.1 For many of the activities at the Castle, particularly weddings and castle tours, the Borough Council trades in a competitive commercial market and therefore needs to attract high footfall of businesses, tourists and residents alike to ensure a healthy revenue stream.

1.5.2 I am therefore proposing three levels of fees to accommodate the commercial environment we are trading in:

Type 1 "Fixed rate"	Type 2 "Discount / commission when criteria is met"	Type 3 "Events"
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attraction Tickets (Castle Tours) • Vast Majority of Weddings • Wedding Directory (Partners can advertise their service to prospective couples.) 	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attraction Tickets (Castle Tours – e.g. discount for groups) • School parties (1 place free in 10) • Castle event partners (Partners who book Weddings / Events) 	<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events where different levels of commission or fees are negotiated between TMBC and Event Organiser for events on: • Castle Lawn and grounds (where the Chamber is booked as part of a package) • Gatehouse (Where Partners enter in to an agreement to hold functions and the income to TMBC will vary)

Attraction (Castle Tours) – Gatehouse Charges

1.5.3 The attraction has been open since 2001 and has attracted thousands of visitors with the first class tour of the Gatehouse and Castle Grounds.

There are many different Castles open to the public in Kent with varying admission prices

2017/18	Tonbridge	Rochester	Upnor	Hever	Leeds	Dover
Adult	£9.00	£6.40	£6.40	£17.75	£25.50	£20.00
Concessions	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	Free to £15.60	Free to £22.50	£18.00
Student	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	£15.60	£22.50	£18.00
Child 5 – 15	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	£9.95	£17.50	£12.00
Senior 60+	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	£15.60	£22.50	£18.00
Family Ticket	£25.00	£16.80	£16.80	£46.85	£74.00	£50.00
Season Ticket Adult	£25.00	As part of English Heritage Membership	As part of English Heritage Membership	£42.25	5 year ticket is £100	As part of English Heritage Membership
Season Ticket Concession	£16.00			£43.15 to £113.75		
		No increase in 2018	No increase in 2018			

1.5.4 Proposed pricing for Castle Tours for 2019/20

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Adult	£8.50	£8.90	£9.00	£9.00
Concessions Jun/OAP/Student/Leisure	£5.00	£5.50	£5.85	£5.85
Family Ticket	£23.00	£24.00	£25.00	£26.00
Season Ticket Adult*	£20.00	£20.00	£25	£26
Season Ticket Concession	£15.00	£15.00	£16.00	£18.00

Number of visitors to attraction

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2017/18	295	193	232	328	348	199	215	117	84	190	190	114	2,505
2018/19	228	188	166	270	424	151	210	130	36				

Attraction (Castle Tours) Exhibits

- 1.5.5 Last year I proposed that 50p form each admission price is ring-fenced to be spent on replenishing and ensuring the attraction exhibits are well maintained and refreshed with additional appropriate and interesting items.
- 1.5.6 I can report that we have started the process of replacing broken exhibits and have ordered 6 baskets, 1 Helmet and 2 Mace.
- 1.5.7 Once the existing exhibits have been repaired / replaced we will then plan to look at purchasing new appropriate exhibits in consultation with Members and by taking soundings from the Tonbridge Historical Society.

Recommendation

- 1.5.8 **That the new pricing model for the Castle Tour at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.5.4 above.**

1.6 Schoolchildren

Number of Schoolchildren and Education workshops 2017/18

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2017-18	84	225	172	30	0	60	96	103	0	32	61	254	1,078
2018-19	269	283	194	0	0	60	31	137	0				

Total Revenue School Children Education workshops

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2017/18	525	1,381	1911	1,208	0	345	650	758	0	217	489	1,723
cum	525	1,906	3,817	5,025	5,025	5,370	6,020	6,778	6,778	6,995	7,484	9,207
2018/19	1,251	1,803	1,522	0	0	476	234	1,015				
Cum	1,251	3,054	4,576	4,576	4,576	5,052	5,286	6,301				

1.6.1 Proposed fees for schools

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Adult	£8.50	£8.90	£9.00	£9.00
School Children	£5.00	£5.50	£5.85	£5.85
Education Facilities includes toys, dressing up clothes, games, paper, pens and 2 tour guides (1 teacher free per 10 children. For special needs groups, carers admitted free as required)	£65.00	£70.00	£75.00	£76.00

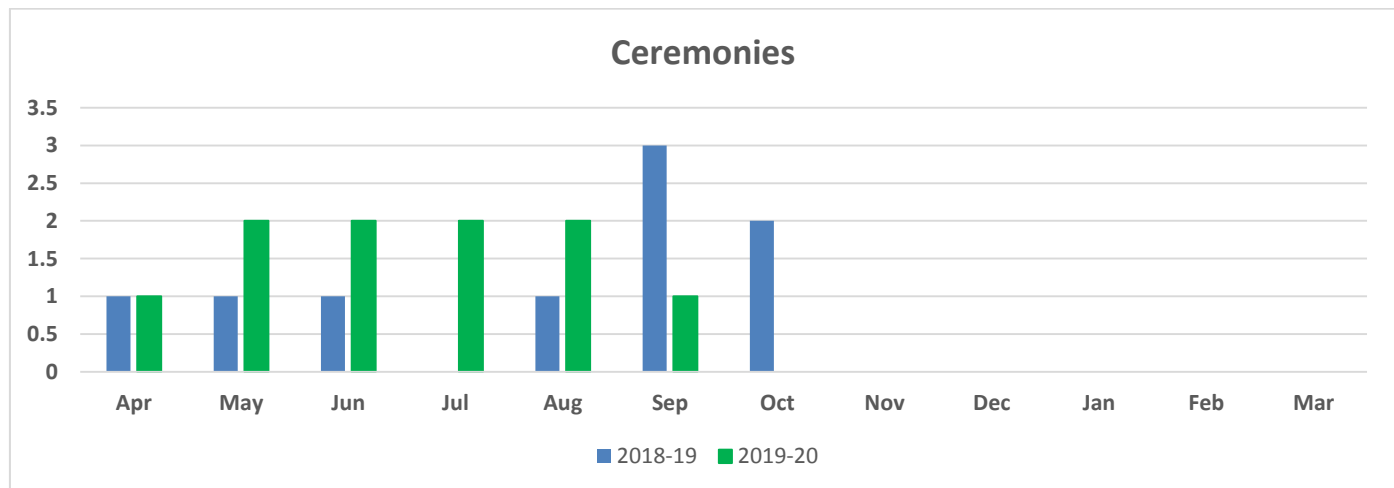
Recommendation

1.6.2 That the new pricing model for Schoolchildren Educational workshops at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.6.1 above.

1.7 Ceremonies

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	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Chamber 18-19	1		1		1	3	2						8
Gatehouse 18-19		1											1
Total 2018-19	1	1	1	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	9
Chamber 19-20	1	1	1	2	2	1							8
Gatehouse 19-20		1	1										2
Total 2019-20	1	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	10



2.1.1 Proposed new fee model - Chamber

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Weddings -			
Monday - Thursday	800	840	880
Friday	840	880	920
Saturday	900	940	980
Sunday	900	940	980
Renewal of Vows/Baby Naming -			
Monday - Thursday	300	315	330
Friday	400	420	440
Saturday	500	525	550
Sunday	500	525	550

2.1.2 Proposed new fee model - Gatehouse

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Weddings -			
Monday - Thursday	1000	1050	1075
Friday	1200	1250	1300
Saturday	1300	1350	1400
Sunday	1300	1350	1400
Renewal of Vows/Baby Naming -			
Monday - Thursday	600	630	660
Friday	600	630	660
Saturday	700	735	770
Sunday	700	735	770

A particular challenge relating to weddings is the current inability to offer a discount to prospective bookers in appropriate circumstances. It is therefore proposed that authority be delegated to the Director of Central Services to depart from the fixed fee structure above where he considers that it is in the financial interests of the Council to do so in a particular case.

Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer to have the ability to discount (Partners / last minute bookings etc.)

2.1.3 The fee model shown in 2.12 was agreed by Members at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 3 January 2018.

2.1.4 I will bring the fee charges for 2021/22 to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board in January 2020.

2.2 Council Chamber bookings – Concessionary Users

2.2.1 As agreed at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 3 January 2018 the level of fees for Concessionary Users has been referred to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee which is scheduled to discuss this issue at their meeting on the 22 January 2019.

2.3 Council Chamber bookings – other Users

2.3.1 The other users fall into the following categories:

- Tonbridge organisations which hold regular meetings in the evening for which there has been no charge.
- User Panels, such as Haysden Country Park for which there has been no charge.
- Organisations that hold events on the Castle Lawn, where the Chamber has been made available to them during the event at no additional charge (e.g. The Tonbridge Lions – Tonbridge Carnival; Illyria).
- Paying users, such as Election Services; Private family functions etc.

2.3.2 Where a commercial event is held on the Castle Lawn, organised by Leisure Services, the Castle is receiving an income for the use of the Council Chamber when it is used in conjunction with an event taking place on the lawn.

2.3.3 Proposed fee model – Council Chamber

Hire Charge	Fixed Price	
	Current 2018/19 £	Proposed 2019/20 £
Monday – Friday – AM (09:00 – 13:00)	100.00	100.00
Monday – Friday – PM (14:00 – 17:00)	100.00	100.00
Monday – Friday – PM (18:00 – 21:00) NB: outside normal caretaker hours	100.00 (plus caretaker costs)	100.00 (plus caretaker costs)
Saturday – AM or PM (09:00 – 13:00) (14:00 – 17:00)	100.00	100.00
Saturday (18:00 – 23:00) NB: outside normal caretaker hours	200.00 (plus caretaker costs)	200.00 (plus caretaker costs)
Sunday – 10:00 – 16:00	120.00	120.00
Cleaning charge *1	45.00	45.00
Weekly rate Monday - Friday	Contact Castle for pricing	Contact Castle for pricing
Weekly rate Saturday - Friday	Contact Castle for pricing	Contact Castle for pricing

2.3.4 The revenue for 2018-19 year to date is £2,895, made up from £1,850 direct bookings and £1,045 from multiple concessionary booking.

Caretaking / Security cover

2.3.5 To service the evening Caretaker cover TMBC currently has to engage a Caretaker/security provider to lock up the Castle after functions for £150 (minimum 5 hours rate). We are currently trying to recruit two casual Caretaker/security who live locally to work just the required hours for the duration of the booking.

2.3.6 TMBC will be going out to Tender for Caretaker/security services during 2019.

2.4 Recommendation

- 2.4.1 **That the pricing model for hiring out the Council Chamber at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.8.3 above.**

2.5 Great Hall Charges

- 2.5.1 The Great Hall is a great asset for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and is currently used to generate revenue through weddings.
- 2.5.2 As agreed at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 3 January 2018 we are continuing to promote the use of the Great Hall for other events in addition to Weddings.
- 2.5.3 In December 2018 we have hired the Great Hall for people to have the opportunity to have breakfast and afternoon tea with Father Christmas.
- 2.5.4 In addition we have also booked out the Great Hall to Paranormal groups who stay all night to carry out paranormal investigations.

2.6 Legal Implications

- 2.6.1 None

2.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 2.7.1 These proposals are in accordance with the guidance in the Council's budget strategy.
- 2.7.2 Feedback from customers identifies that the charging regime provides value for money for casual visitors as well as group visits.

2.8 Risk Assessment

- 2.8.1 There is a risk that excessive increases in charges could deter visitors and lead to a fall in overall income.

2.9 Equality Impact Assessment

- 2.9.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

2.10 Policy Considerations

- 2.10.1 Community

- 2.10.2 Young People

2.11 Recommendations

2.11.1 Recommendations are laid out within the report.

Background papers:

contact: Anthony Garnett

Nil

Adrian Stanfield

Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer