

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

08 January 2020

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 During 2019 Tonbridge Castle has undertaken a Customer Service Review, which had three main parts (Review of the opening hours of the Gateway; Review of the opening hours for the Tourist Information Centre / Meeting rooms and the Management and Supervision of staff to support a seven day a week operation. As a result there has been a number of staff changes to support the Castle operation.
- 1.1.3 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.
- 1.1.4 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.
- 1.1.5 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.
- 1.1.6 The main revenue streams from the Shop, Attraction (Castle Tours), Ceremonies, Council Chamber Hire, Castle Room Hire and Schools.
- 1.1.7 During 2018-19 Tonbridge Castle branding and social media was enhanced to reflect the quality of this historic Castle.

1.2 Social Media and Marketing Activity


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/>

Instagram [Log In](#) [Sign Up](#)






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21 posts 396 followers 99 following

Tonbridge Castle
Please note that this account is monitored Wed-Fri..
Reputedly England's finest example of a Motte and Bailey Castle. Visit our website at:
www.tonbridgecastle.org

POSTS TAGGED

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

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 for 2016 - 2019 (not including the Tourist Information Centre) are set out below.

	Description	Number LY 2016 - 2017	Number 2017 - 2018	Number 2018 - 2019
1	Benefit	4,674	4,642	3,889
2	Parking	3,736	3,834	4,006
3	Self Help Kiosk & Computers	1,110	2,153	1,839
4	Council Tax	1,803	1,829	1,712
5	Housing	2,037	1,754	1,512
6	Toilet	746	1,275	2,065
7	Bus & Train Timetables	749	652	489
8	Bus passes	204	359	273
9	Cross referrals	229	355	481
10	Waste Enquiries	405	302	321
	Planning	255	229	107
	Electoral Roll	269	97	63

	Description	Apr – Nov 2018 - 2019	Apr – Nov 2019 - 2020
1	Benefit	2,965	1,591
2	Parking	2,938	2,565
3	Self Help Kiosk & Computers	1,307	1,349
4	Council Tax	1,185	1,403
5	Housing	1,153	726
6	Toilet	1,632	2,144
7	Bus & Train Timetables	399	234
8	Bus passes	201	167
9	Cross referrals	385	102
10	Waste Enquiries	268	935
	Planning	88	47
	Electoral Roll	47	71

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.

1.4 Main revenue streams at Tonbridge Castle

1.4.1 The main revenue is shown by category.

1.4.2 In autumn of 2019 there has been a focus on marketing the venue at a Conference / Meeting venue which has started to result in bookings for meetings where we are charging a day delegate rate, which includes coffee and refreshments etc.

YTD (Apr - Nov) - £				
Category	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	%
Shop	5,116	7,174	2,058	40.23%
Castle Tours	13,996	19,535	5,539	39.58%
Guide Books / Books	1,388	1,605	217	15.63%
Ceremonies	10,200	10,010	-190	-1.86%
Council Chamber Hire	2,645	7,064	4,419	167.07%
Castle room hire	1,500	2,100	600	40.00%
Paranormal events	1,400	1,400	0	0.00%
Teas Coffee		380	380	
Schools	6,006	7,166	1,160	19.31%
Sub total	42,251	56,432	14,183	33.57%

Partner Income (Gateway)	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	%
Partner Income	6,693	5,331	-1,362	-20.35%
50% TMBC	3,347	2,666	-681	-20.35%
50% KCC	3,347	2,666	-681	-20.35%



Castle Shop

1.5 Tonbridge Castle – Type of 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 The three levels of fees at Tonbridge Castle:

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 	<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 / Council Chamber (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.
- 1.5.4 During this financial year we have had an Exhibition running by Rochester Bridge Trust within the Gatehouse. Various promotions and marketing activity have been generated to promote interest. The Bridge Trust have been funding up to 50% discount on the Castle Tours to draw additional people in. The exhibition runs from May 2019 to March 2020.
- 1.5.5 There are many different Castles open to the public in Kent with varying admission prices

2018/19	Tonbridge	Rochester	Upnor	Hever	Leeds	Dover
Adult	£9.00	£6.40	£6.40	£17.75	£26	£20.90
Concessions	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	Free to £15.60		£18.80
Student	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	£15.60	£24	£18.80
Child 5 – 15	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	£9.95	£17.50	£12.50
Senior 60+	£5.85	£4.00	£4.00	£15.60	£24.00 (over 65)	
Family Ticket	£25.00	£16.80	£16.80	£46.85	£80.00	£54.30
Season Ticket Adult	£25.00	As part of English Heritage Membership	As part of English Heritage Membership	£42.25		As part of English Heritage Membership
Season Ticket Concession	£16.00					
		No increase for last two years	No increase for last two years	No increase for last two years		

1.5.6 Proposed pricing for Castle Tours for 2019/20

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult	£8.50	£8.90	£9.00	£9.00	£9.00
Concessions Jun/Senior/Student	£5.00	£5.50	£5.85	£5.85	£6.50
Family Ticket 2 adults 2 children	£23.00	£24.00	£25.00	£26.00	£28.00
Season Ticket Adult*	£20.00	£20.00	£25	£26	£28

Additional Tour fees

Item	Cost	Comment
Castle Tour Guide – Commercial	£25.00 + VAT = £30	One off - charge per tour guide

Number of visitors to attraction

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2018/19	295	193	232	328	348	199	215	117	84	190	190	114	2,505
2019/20	292	211	228	289	467	262	418	241					2,408

Year to date numbers for April to November 2019 are tracking 481 ahead of last year, being a 25% in visitors to the attraction.

YTD (Apr - Nov) - £				
Category	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	%
Castle Tours	13,996	19,535	5,539	39.58%

Attraction (Castle Tours) Exhibits

- 1.5.7 Last year I proposed that 50p from 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.
- 1.5.8 I can report that we have started the process of replacing broken exhibits and have ordered 6 baskets, 1 Helmet and 2 Mace.
- 1.5.9 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

- 1.5.10 **That the new pricing model for the Castle Tour at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.5.6 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
2018/19	269	283	194	0	0	60	31	137	0	39	53	381	1,447
2019/20	0	241	224	149	20	78	59	225	0				1,011

Total Revenue School Children Education workshops

YTD (Apr - Nov) - £				
Category	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	%
School	6,006	7,166	1,160	19.31%

1.6.1 Proposed fees for schools

1.6.2 Costs for School Visits does not include VAT.

1.6.3 The key difference between the normal entrance fee which is charge inclusive of VAT, is that you have the audio tour guide included with the price of the ticket.

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult	£8.90	£9.00	£9.00	8.50
School Children	£5.50	£5.85	£5.85	6.00
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)	£70.00	£75.00	£76.00	90.00

1.6.4 Each school group normally has between 3/4 adults

Additional Tour fees

Item	Cost	Comment
Castle Tour Guide – Educational, if they just want to tour the Castle and not book the Educational Workshop	£25.00	One off - charge per tour guide

Recommendation

1.6.5 That the new pricing model for Schoolchildren Educational workshops at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.6.3 above.

1.7 Ceremonies

	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	2	2	3	1		1					11
Gatehouse 19-20		1			1						1		3
Total 2019-20	1	2	2	2	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	14

1.7.1 With all Ceremonies payment is made in two parts, deposit and full amount payable 6 weeks before the wedding. As a result payments for Ceremonies do not match perfectly within any fiscal year, some, being paid in the previous year.

1.7.2 Ceremonies revenue

YTD (Apr - Nov) - £				
Category	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	%
School	10,200	10,010	-190	-1.86%

1.7.3 Ceremonies - fee model – Chamber

1.7.4 The fees for 2020/21 were agreed at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 9 January 2019

	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

1.7.5 Ceremonies - fee model – Gatehouse

1.7.6 The fees for 2020/21 were agreed at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 9 January 2019

	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

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

Additional Ceremony fees	Cost	Comment
Window Advertisement Location – Bay window in corridor to Chamber	£50.00	Monthly
Castle Photo Opportunity – buy 30mins in the Castle 4-4.30pm	£50.00 + VAT = £60	One off
Wedding Fair Table	£25.00	One Day
Wedding Fair Table	£50.00	Weekend
Corkage Table	£50.00	One off for a wedding who wish to have tea/coffee drinks/nibbles following the ceremony

1.8 Council Chamber bookings – Concessionary Users

As agreed at the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on the 3 January 2018 the level of fees for Concessionary Users was been referred to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee which was discussed on the 20 June 2019 and agreed to end concessionary fees for future Castle bookings, which was approved by Cabinet.

1.8.1 Current fee model – Council Chamber

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

1.8.1 Chamber and room hire revenue

YTD (Apr - Nov) - £				
Category	2018-19	2019-20	+/-	%
Council Chamber Hire	2,645	7,064	4,419	167.07%
Castle room hire	1,500	2,100	600	40.00%
Paranormal events	1,400	1,400	0	0.00%
Teas Coffee		380	380	

1.8.2 Teas and coffee sales only started in the Autumn of 2019

1.8.3 New model of fees for 2020/21 for Chamber and meeting rooms

Venue	Cost	Comments
Chamber Half Day	£100.00	Monday to Saturday
Chamber Full Day	£200.00	Monday to Saturday
Chamber Full Day	£125.00	Sunday
Chamber Evening*	£100.00	Monday to Friday *Plus Caretaker Charge
Chamber Evening*	£200.00	Saturday *Plus Caretaker Charge
Castle Board Room (Shared Space) Half	£75.00	Monday to Saturday
Castle Board Room (SS) Full Day	£150.00	Monday to Saturday
Castle Board Room (SS) Full Day	£125.00	Sunday
Castle Board Room (SS) Evening*	£75.00	Monday to Friday *Plus Caretaker Charge
Castle Board Room (SS) Evening*	£200.00	Saturday *Plus Caretaker Charge

1.8.4 The Castle Board Room is currently known as the shared space area.

1.8.5 Additional Conference fees (For information only)

Item	Cost	Comment
Tea/Coffee	£1.00	1 x serving
Tea/Coffee	£1.75	2 x serving
Tea/Coffee	£2.50	3 x serving
Tea/Coffee Biscuits	£1.50	1 x serving
Tea/Coffee Biscuits	£2.25	2 x serving
Tea/Coffee Biscuits	£3.00	3 x serving
Tea/Coffee Cake	£2.00	1 x serving
Coffee by Jug	£5.00	Internal charge only
Day Delegate Rate	£25.00	To be confirmed

1.9 Recommendation

1.9.1 That the pricing model for hiring out the Council Chamber and meeting rooms at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.8.3 above.

1.10 Great Hall Charges

- 1.10.1 The Great Hall is a great asset for Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and is currently used to generate revenue through weddings.
- 1.10.2 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.
- 1.10.3 In December 2018 and 2019 we have hired the Great Hall for people to have the opportunity to have breakfast and afternoon tea with Father Christmas.
- 1.10.4 In addition we have also booked out the Great Hall to Paranormal groups who stay all night to carry out paranormal investigations.

1.11 Legal Implications

- 1.11.1 None

1.12 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

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

1.13 Risk Assessment

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

1.14 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.14.1 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.

1.15 Policy Considerations

- 1.15.1 Community
- 1.15.2 Young People

1.16 Recommendations

- 1.16.1 Recommendations are laid out within the report are:
- 1.16.2 **That the new pricing model for the Castle Tour at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.5.6 above.**

- 1.16.3 **That the new pricing model for Schoolchildren Educational workshops at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.6.3 above.**
- 1.16.4 **That the pricing model for hiring out the Council Chamber and meeting rooms at Tonbridge Castle be approved as set out at paragraph 1.8.3 above.**

Background papers:

contact: Anthony Garnett

Nil

Adrian Stanfield
Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer