



LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY

DECISIONS to be made by the Lead Member for Communities and Safety,
Councillor Bill Bentley

THURSDAY, 21 JUNE 2018 AT 10.00 AM

COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNTY HALL, LEWES

AGENDA

- 1 Decisions made by the Lead Cabinet Member on 24 May 2018 (*Pages 3 - 4*)
- 2 Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all Members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Members regard the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
- 3 Urgent items
Notification of any items which the Lead Member considers urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda.
- 4 Alterations to non-statutory ceremony packages at Lewes Register Office at Southover Grange (*Pages 5 - 14*)
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
- 5 Any urgent items previously notified under agenda item 3

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent
LEWES BN7 1UE

13 June 2018

Contact Simon Bailey, Democratic Services Officer,
01273 481935
Email: simon.bailey@eastsussex.gov.uk

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LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Communities and Safety, Councillor Bill Bentley, on 24 May 2018 at County Hall, Lewes

Councillor Sylvia Tidy spoke on item 4 (see minute 3)

1 DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 26 APRIL 2018

1.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2018.

2 REPORTS

2.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

3 PROVISION OF AN ON-STREET ADVISORY DISABLED BAY IN ALDERVALE COTTAGES CROWBOROUGH

3.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, together with a copy of the County Council's property terrier circulated at the meeting.

DECISION

3.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to (1) note the concerns of the objector; and
(2) authorise the provision of a disabled parking bay at Aldervale Cottages, Crowborough.

Reason

3.3 The need for the bay was identified by the site assessments undertaken by the Traffic Safety Officer and supported by the information in the initial application. The requirements of Policy PS 5/11 have all been met.

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Report to: Lead Member for Communities & Safety

Date of meeting: 21 June 2018

By: Director of Communities, Economy & Transport

Title: Alterations to non-statutory ceremony packages at Lewes Register Office at Southover Grange

Purpose: To make changes to a number of the ceremony packages available at Lewes Register Office in order to make them more flexible for the customer.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended:

- (1) To approve the alterations to the existing packages available at Lewes Register Office for introduction from 1 August 2018;**
 - (2) To approve the introduction of additional package options, making the packages more flexible; and**
 - (3) To approve the changes in the prices charged for the ceremony package options at Lewes Register Office.**
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1. Background

1.1. The Registration Service re-opened Southover Grange in Lewes on 30th April 2017 following extensive renovations to the building. Southover Grange houses the Lewes Register Office and is used as a venue for ceremonies including weddings and non-statutory ceremonies, and more recently funerals.

1.2. As part of this re-opening, the Registration Service introduced non-statutory ceremony packages to complement the wedding and celebration ceremonies, making the best use of our resources.

1.3. In the financial year 2017-2018 we carried out 273 ceremonies in the Lewes Register Office, of which 20 (7.33%) opted to have an additional package. 14 of these were VIP packages (the cheapest option), 4 were Premium packages and 2 were Exclusive packages. The total gross amount raised from these additional packages in 17/18 was £14,340. The packages in their current form are outlined at Appendix A.

1.4. In the financial year 2018-2019 we have 277 ceremonies booked at Southover Grange. Of these 25 (9%) have opted to have a package in addition to their ceremony. 20 of these are VIP bookings, 4 are Premium bookings and 1 is an Exclusive booking.

1.5. It is clear that the packages as they currently stand are not performing to the level anticipated when they were introduced. Feedback from staff, through contact with the potential market, is that the packages themselves could be adjusted to meet people's needs more flexibly, and that viewing the venue plays an important part in selling the additional non-statutory offer to our customers.

1.6. As a result, we have recently recruited to the fixed term position of Events Co-ordinator at Southover Grange in order to improve the sales of these additional packages.

1.7. Further to feedback from the staff (as above), and from our customers (via a telephone survey carried out earlier this year), it is also apparent that the packages as they currently stand are too inflexible, and in some cases, too costly to be an attractive prospect for potential customers. The feedback we have received has included:

- The VIP package is by far the most popular, however some clients would like to have the option to have the Premium and Exclusive packages without the VIP due to the restrictions on children attending and/or not wanting to have refreshments both before and after their ceremony.
- The Premium package (which currently allows for two glasses of Prosecco per person) is often rushed and customers want to drink what they feel they have paid for, making it difficult to decant them from the building in time for the next celebration.
- The Exclusive package, which is designed to appeal to those who would like an intimate reception for close friends and family, is considered to be a little expensive for the market to which it should appeal.
- There is a gap in our services for a catering option suitable for parties of more than 30 people - those who would use the Ainsworth room (the larger ceremony room) for their celebration.
- Furthermore, members of staff have agreed that the format of the current Premium package could be changed to improve timing, reduce our costs, and reduce the price paid by the customer, without affecting the overall feel of the offer, all of which should contribute to increasing sales of this package.

2. Proposals

2.1. To slightly increase the cost of the Bronze package (previously called VIP) in line with the increased cost of providing the service (due to increases in the price of the refreshments supplied as part of the package, and of the staff to provide the service).

2.2. To introduce the additional options of having the Silver (previously called Premium), Gold (new) and Platinum (previously called Exclusive) packages without the Bronze package so that we can be more flexible to the needs of the customer, particularly in relation to children taking part.

2.3. To reduce the cost to the customer of the Silver package, increasing its appeal to potential customers, by way of reducing the offer from two glasses of Prosecco per head to one drink per person. This will also ensure that the package works better within the timeframe available, improving customer service, and reduce the number of staff required. Proposed prices have been calculated to ensure minimal impact on the surplus resulting from this service.

2.4. To introduce the Gold package – an extended drinks toast with canapés – to appeal to those who:

- Have opted for the informal village hall (or equivalent) option for an evening buffet and dancing but would like a formal drinks reception for their ceremony guests first *and/or*
- Would have considered the Platinum package but have more than 30 guests so the exclusive sit-down dinner is not an option due to the capacity of the Newton Room.

- 2.5. To reduce the cost of the Platinum package by reducing the margin achieved on room hire with the express aim of increasing the appeal of this option to the potential market by making it more affordable, thus increasing sales.
- 2.6. An overview of the proposed new packages is available at Appendix B.
- 2.7. A summary of the proposed pricing structure is available at Appendix C.
- 2.8. It is recommended that the new packages and pricing structure are introduced from 1st August 2018 because:
- It will give us time, following Lead Member approval, to replace existing promotional material and paperwork to reflect the changes before their introduction
 - Of the existing bookings for packages, the imminent bookings for Premium (Silver) packages and the one Exclusive (Platinum) booked will be completed by the end of July. The remaining packages are predominantly VIP (Bronze) (12 currently booked between 1st August 2018 and 23rd August 2019) with 2 Premiums (Silver), both booked in June 2019. The VIP (Bronze) customers have paid £11 less than the proposed new prices but we would waive the increase for these specific customers, and the 2 Premium (Silver) customers can be offered the choice to opt for the new format of the package (with one drink per person) and a small refund, or to keep the service as booked.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The alterations to the current non-statutory ceremony packages on offer at Southover Grange will enhance the service offering for customers by allowing them more flexibility in their choices, and improve the opportunity to upsell ceremony-only bookings to include an enhancement.

3.2 The adjustments to prices will improve the appeal of the other add-on packages by making them a more affordable option for the target market whilst maintaining our current returns.

3.3 The addition of more options to the range of packages available will further increase flexibility allowing our customers to personalise their celebrations and fill the gap in our services left by the limited capacity of the Newton Room for sit-down reception catering.

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Communities, Economy & Transport

Contact Officer: Anna Goddard
Tel. No. 07734 301730
Email: anna.goddard@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

None

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APPENDIX A

Southover Grange – Non-statutory packages

The current packages on offer at Lewes Register Office are as follows:

VIP Suite

Bride and/or groom and their guests (up to 6 adults in total) enter the building via the Life Events entrance 45 minutes before the ceremony and are guided upstairs to the VIP suite where there will be a glass of champagne waiting for each of them 'to calm their last minute nerves', alongside wall length mirrors for last minute touch-ups to make up and appearance. The registrar will conduct the pre-ceremony interview in the VIP Suite. The couple's photographer is able to take photos in the tastefully decorated room, along the landing and on the grand staircase leading down to the ceremony suite. This package is available to adults only due to H&S considerations regarding the staircase and because we are unable to monitor who drinks the alcohol. Staffing is conducted by a Ceremonies Host. (A non-alcoholic alternative is made available.)

Drinks Toasts post-ceremony

This package includes the VIP as above, and a drinks toast that takes place after the legal ceremony, where guests are invited to cross the Grand Hall and enter the Newton Room where a glass of Prosecco will be waiting for them (there will be sufficient for two glasses for each guest). We oversee this with Ceremonies Hosts who are tasked with upholding the terms of our alcohol licence. We allow 45 minutes for this service but it is sold on the basis that it is for 30 minutes so that we can ensure the stragglers are corralled into the Gardens in good time for the next ceremony. (A non-alcoholic alternative is made available.)

Exclusive Hire for Receptions

This package includes the VIP as above, and exclusive hire of the Newton Room. The grand hall, access to the gardens (dawn until dusk as per LDC by-laws), fully equipped caterers' kitchen and facilities are also made available to the couple and their guests for an exclusive period of 5 hours. An approved caterers list is provided and must be used by customers who wish to use this service, and the T&Cs of hire stipulate no dancing, loud music or boisterous partying, and an end time of 9pm latest (due to the residential area). The package here is just for the hire of the room and the exclusive use of the building for 5 hours. The building is supervised by a staff member who will provide security as well as overseeing the alcohol consumption laws. This person also locks up the building at the end of the event and sets the alarm etc. We also receive a 10% commission on the invoiced total of services rendered by the approved caterer to the couple.

Current fees:

	Non-VAT'able alone	Everything becomes VAT'able if any package bought, including the ceremony		
Packages 2018/19	<u>Marriage Ceremony</u>	<u>VIP Package</u>	<u>Premium Package</u>	<u>Exclusive Package</u>
<i>Whats included?</i>	<i>Marriage Ceremony Only</i>	<i>Champagne VIP Lounge & Marriage Ceremony</i>	<i>Champagne VIP Lounge, Marriage Ceremony & Drinks Toast</i>	<i>VIP Lounge, Marriage Ceremony & Exclusive Reception Room Hire</i>
Evelyn Room (Capacity 30)				
Mon-Thu	£300.00	£459.00	£829.00	£1,459.00
Fri-Sun	£425.00	£629.00	£1,029.00	£1,629.00
Bank Holidays	£550.00	£799.00	£1,219.00	£1,999.00
Ainsworth Room (Capacity 60)				
Mon-Thu	£350.00	£519.00	£1,159.00	N/A
Fri-Sun	£475.00	£689.00	£1,359.00	
Bank Holidays	£600.00	£859.00	£1,639.00	

APPENDIX B

Southover Grange – Non-statutory packages

The proposed packages for offer at Lewes Register Office from 1st August 2018 are as follows:

Bronze

Bride and/or groom and their guests (up to 6 adults in total) enter the building via the Life Events entrance 45 minutes before the ceremony and are guided upstairs to the VIP suite where there will be a glass of champagne waiting for each of them 'to calm their last minute nerves', alongside wall length mirrors for last minute touch-ups to make up and appearance. The registrar will conduct the pre-ceremony interview in the VIP Suite. The couple's photographer is able to take photos in the tastefully decorated room, along the landing and on the grand staircase leading down to the ceremony suite. This package is available to adults only due to H&S considerations regarding the staircase and because we are unable to monitor who drinks the alcohol. Staffing is conducted by a Ceremonies Host. (A non-alcoholic alternative is made available.) Ceremony included.

Silver

A drinks toast that takes place after the legal ceremony -guests are invited to cross the Grand Hall and enter the Newton Room where a glass of Prosecco (or soft drink alternative where required) will be waiting for them to toast their newlyweds (one drink supplied per person). We oversee this with Ceremonies Hosts who are tasked with upholding the terms of our alcohol licence. We allow 45 minutes for this service but it is sold on the basis that it is for 30 minutes so that we can ensure the guests are shown into the Gardens in good time for the next ceremony. Ceremony included.

Silver plus

The Bronze and Silver packages above combined into one. Ceremony included.

Gold

An extended drinks toast that takes place after the legal ceremony -guests are invited to cross the Grand Hall and enter the Newton Room where a glass of Prosecco (or soft drink alternative where required) will be waiting for them to toast their newlyweds (up to two drinks supplied per person). We oversee this with Ceremonies Hosts who are tasked with upholding the terms of our alcohol licence. We allow 2 hours for this service (including the ceremony) and customers will contract for the Canapés directly with one of our approved caterers. This service will allow large parties to have a reception at Southover Grange within the capacity limits for the Newton Room. We will receive a 10% commission on the invoiced total of services rendered by the approved caterer to the couple. Ceremony included.

Gold plus

The Bronze and Gold packages above combined into one. Ceremony included.

Platinum – available for up to 30 guests only

Exclusive hire of the Newton Room. The grand hall, access to the gardens (dawn until dusk as per LDC bye-laws), fully equipped caterers' kitchen and facilities are also made available to the couple and their guests for an exclusive period of 5 hours. An approved caterers list is provided and must be used by customers who wish to use this service, and the T&Cs of hire stipulate no dancing, loud music or boisterous partying, and an end time of 9pm latest (due to the residential area). The package here is just for the hire of the room and the exclusive use of the building for 5 hours. The building is supervised by a staff member who will provide security as well as overseeing the alcohol consumption laws. This person also locks up the building at the end of the event and sets the alarm etc. We receive a 10% commission on the invoiced total of services rendered by the approved caterer to the couple. Ceremony included.

Platinum plus – available for up to 30 guests only

The Bronze and Platinum packages above combined into one. Ceremony included.

APPENDIX C

Proposed package prices

New service New service New service New service

	Non-vatable alone	including VAT	Everything becomes vatable if any package bought, including the ceremony						
Packages 2018/2019	Marriage Ceremony	For calculations only	Bronze	Silver	Silver Plus	Gold	Gold Plus	Platinum	Platinum Plus
What's included	Ceremony only	Ceremony only	Champagne for 6 (soft drink alternatives available), VIP lounge, stairs for photos, marriage ceremony	Drinks toast, marriage ceremony	Drinks toast, marriage ceremony + VIP	Extended drinks toast with canapes*, staff to serve both, marriage ceremony	Extended drinks toast with canapes*, staff to serve both, marriage ceremony, VIP	Exclusive reception room hire**, marriage ceremony	Exclusive reception room hire**, marriage ceremony, VIP
Evelyn room (30)									
Mon-Thu	£300.00	£360.00	£470.00	£680.00	£790.00	£820.00	£930.00	£1,060.00	£1,170.00
Fri-Sun	£425.00	£510.00	£640.00	£850.00	£980.00	£1,010.00	£1,140.00	£1,260.00	£1,390.00
Bank Hol	£550.00	£660.00	£810.00	£1,020.00	£1,170.00	£1,320.00	£1,470.00	£1,650.00	£1,800.00
Ainsworth room (60)									
Mon-Thu	£350.00	£420.00	£530.00	£960.00	£1,070.00	£1,100.00	£1,210.00	N/A	
Fri-Sun	£475.00	£570.00	£700.00	£1,150.00	£1,280.00	£1,310.00	£1,440.00		
Bank Hol	£600.00	£720.00	£870.00	£1,345.00	£1,495.00	£1,620.00	£1,770.00		

LM decision:

To be approved To be approved To be approved To be approved To be approved To be approved To be approved

* Charged on top of package cost, with commission to us as with catering for exclusive. See ** below.

** Approved caterers contract directly with the customer (as per current arrangement) and we get commission at 10% of total invoiced by the caterer.

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