

### **Registration Fees to be set by Cheshire East Council for Financial Year 2014/15 (Ceremony fees having been agreed in last year's review)**

#### **Background**

Arrangements for ceremonies, particularly at Approved Premises, are made up to three years in advance. Couples are constantly reminding Ceremonies Officers of their need to budget for the ceremony and as such are very anxious to know the level of fee they will be charged. Publishing fees this far in advance, will also help the registration service to more accurately predict income levels.

The majority of fees collected by the registration service are set by central government. The Council sets fees for non statutory services including:

- § Ceremonies at Approved Premises
- § Grant of Approval for Approved Premises
- § Naming Ceremonies\*
- § Renewal of Vows Ceremonies
- § Civil Funerals\*
- § Nationality Checking Service
- § Private Citizenship Ceremonies
- § Administration Fee for booking ceremonies
- § On demand certificate service

*\* These ceremonies are no longer being marketed*

#### **Power to set fee levels**

Statutory fees for the Registration Service are set by central government and are currently under review. The fees listed below do not come within that remit.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **Administration Fee for booking ceremonies**

The Administration fee is non refundable but deductible from the final balance of charges for ceremonies at Approved Premises. This currently stands at £100 and it is recommended that it stays the same.

In 2013/14 a second stage payment of £100 was introduced, paid at six months prior to the ceremony and deductible from the final balance. This was to clarify with couples whether their ceremony was to go ahead or not as they often forget to cancel their booking, only remembering when asked for the final payment. This enables the Registration Service to remove any cancelled ceremonies from their diary at an earlier stage, thus freeing up appointments for other couples. It is therefore recommended that this remains at £100 for a further year.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the Administration fee and second stage payment for ceremonies each remain at their current level of £100.**

### **Marriage/Civil Partnership ceremonies in the Mayor's Reception Room (Municipal Buildings) and the Silk Room (Macclesfield Town Hall)**

Cheshire East Council is required by law to provide a statutory ceremony room for use of its residents at a statutory fee set by the Registrar General. The current statutory fee is £45.

The rooms provided in both the Municipal Buildings and the New Town Hall at Macclesfield only cater for small parties of 12 people; the statutory obligation being a room for the couple and two witnesses.

The Registration Service offers enhanced ceremonies on a Friday and Saturday for up to 50 people in the Mayor's Reception Room in Crewe and the Silk Room in Macclesfield. In 2013/14, this has brought in income in the region of £10,000.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the fees for ceremonies in the Mayors reception Room and the Silk Room be set at £210.**

### **Fees for Licensing a Building for Marriage/Civil Partnership**

This fee is charged for a three year licence. The latest fee increase came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and because of the duration of the licence it is recommended that this fee is not increased for the 2014/15 financial year.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the fee for licensing a building for Marriage and Civil Partnership remains at the current £1550.00.**

### **Nationality Checking Service**

The last fee increase was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The current fee is on a par with neighbouring authorities and it is therefore recommended that no further increase be made.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the fees for the Nationality Checking Service remain at their current level of:**

**Adult - £60; and  
Child under 18 - £30**

## **Private Citizenship**

When a person is granted British Citizenship they are required by law to attend a citizenship ceremony. This is the final part in the process of becoming a British citizen. Each local authority is required to provide a group ceremony and is given an allowance per citizen from the Home Office to cover the cost. However, new citizens may choose to have a private ceremony if they wish to and local authorities are permitted to make a charge for these.

The last fee increase was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The current fee is on a par with neighbouring authorities and it is therefore recommended that no further increase be made.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the fees for a Private Citizenship ceremony remain at their current level of:**

**Adult £100;  
Additional adult in same family £75; and  
Child under 18 – nil**

## **On Demand Certificates**

This is a priority service for same day issue of duplicate certificates.

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the fee for the production of On Demand certificates remains at £20.**