

MOUNTSORREL MEMORIAL CENTRE**DRAFT CONSIDERATIONS RE: PRICING**

The current pricing structure was, in the main, set around 2 years ago, when the building opened. The Memorial Centre itself is a large, modern building, which replaces the old Village/Memorial Hall. It is a hybrid building, in the sense that it continues to be a community centre/hub, whilst also having the capability and potential for growth, both in its benefit to the local community and its ability to generate increased income/self fund.

The operational 2 years has given the opportunity to receive varied feedback, which may be considered helpful in reviewing the current price list and identifying the direction and goals of The Centre. The feedback sources are:-

1. Social media
2. Face to face comments to staff/body language of customers during quotes
3. Email enquiries and feedback
4. Enquiries that do or do not turn into bookings.
5. Types of booking the Centre is capable of booking, but enquiries not forthcoming.

It is difficult to compare the Memorial Centre to other 'buildings' per se, because of the Centre's wide and varied capabilities and, on occasion, its limitations (see Weddings/porterage charges/kitchen capabilities). It is simpler and more helpful to compare 'type of booking', identify the type of venue that would normally host such a booking and build our price list accordingly and separately. Classes and birthday parties would often be held at church halls, so the price comparison lies there. Weddings at hotels, some more corporate, some Period properties in beautiful grounds/restaurant staff/hotel bedrooms – there are a host of options re type of wedding venue and the prices vary hugely.

Charges for other venues vary from

village halls accommodating 50 people (pre covid) at £10 per hour for local residents (more for non-residents)

rooms that accommodate 150 people (pre covid) for £200 per function

conference venues that accommodate up to 150 people (pre covid) from £35pp + VAT

parking charges vary from nil to £5 per vehicle

The current price list contains individual room hire charges, with some separate categories for children's parties and wedding receptions.

There is a further (newer) price list for business conferences, which can either be charged at room hire prices (higher than the generic room hire charges) or, by price per head for attendees. The prices per head vary, depending on levels of refreshments required i.e. tea/coffee/water/biscuits could be supplied by the MMC or the customer could organize this themselves.

It has become apparent that The Memorial Centre is not widely known about. Even residents of Mountsorrel have said they did not realise it was there – or had never visited before. Raising the profile of The Centre generically, would be beneficial.

The potential for this building to serve its community is limitless. It is possible to widen the relevance of the building to the local community, by increasing the variety of activities and times when those activities are available and consideration re age groups/work etc.

Wedding Receptions and Wedding Related Parties

Room Hire for Weddings has its own hire rate. The Billson Room (up to 75 guests) £600, to include 1 bar staff and The Whole Auditorium, up to 160 seated guests = £800 or, £900, to include 2 bar staff – is very reasonable.

Weddings are incredibly expensive and it is an area where people expect to pay significant amounts of money.

During the arranging of the recent Wedding Fayre, one of the participants said that The Centre was “a budget/corporate venue”. If that is our identity re weddings, we could embrace that and make our attractive prices more well known. Weddings do generate a profit and attracting more of them would be very beneficial.

In some respects, we are a ‘dry hire’ venue and there are add on charges re table cloths/corkage/rubbish removal etc. It is highly likely that tables and chairs will be required for a large party and the basic hire charge could be increased, so that it includes the portorage charge and the ‘dry hire list’ contain items that are genuinely optional and not necessary. Psychologically, a package price that includes the essentials and a dry hire list for genuinely optional items, avoids potential customers becoming disappointed and switching off and not proceeding to booking. People respond better to clarity and are put off by ‘hidden costs’.

The Centre also charges additional charges per table cloth (£5 each – there is a laundry cost of £3.50 each). £5 per tablecloth often raises customer eyebrows and they often elect to provide their own – more so in relation to Birthday Parties. It may be better to include the cost of tablecloths in a package price, with the option to remove? Or, that a simplified and relevant booking form includes it as an optional uplift for the customer to consider at a cost of £5.

The corkage charge for a bottle of wine is £6.00 and sparkling wine/champagne £11. Soft drinks are charged at 20p per can, £3.50 for large bottles of soft drinks/water and £1.60 for cartons. There is no charge allocated for beer/lager/spirits. Generally, when people have enquired about bringing their own drinks, they have looked surprised/cross/disappointed when hearing about the corkage charge. (This has been more in relation to birthday/private parties, but the principle applies).

In terms of weddings, it is commonplace for a welcome drink (prosecco/bucks fizz/orange juice) and perhaps for a bottle of red and white wine to be placed on each table. The Centre could have a ‘drinks package’ price for those optional extras? A package price that lies between the cost and the current 60% markup.

The Centre could:-

- retain a corkage charge in its current form,
- remove the charge and not allow drinks to be brought into the building, or
- charge a flat fee for supplying own drinks, at the point of booking.

Tables and chairs do seem to be a given but having a bar does not (recent enquiries re Asian wedding parties evidence that). Suggestion – take out the inclusive bar staff from wedding prices and swap in the portorage charge. Keep the Auditorium below the 4 figure ceiling at £950, to include layout of required tables and chairs. For smaller weddings/wedding parties, in the Billson room, a booking fee of £650, that included table and chair set up, but not bar staff (who would appear on the additional item list).

On this basis, rather than retaining a heading of ‘Wedding Reception’ and then generic room hire charges – a change of heading to ‘Wedding Receptions and Wedding Parties’ – would allow the Centre to charge the appropriate and yet still very reasonable amount, for such a booking. (Charging generic room hire prices, in this area, loses potential income.)

The more ‘private bookings’ The Centre attracts, the better the overall income will be to lessen the impact on the precept. These price points make wedding bookings very attractive and introduces wedding guests to the venue – increasing it’s profile and word of mouth enquiries.

With the increased enquiries re Asian wedding parties, it is noticeable that there is more interest in the use of the stage. Currently, ‘assembly of stage’ is priced at £85. Suggestion – change heading to ‘hire of stage’, with a fee of £100-£200. The stage modules were expensive and increased wear and tear will reduce their longevity.

Having done some research re prices of dry hire venues, for Asian weddings, it seems that the hire prices can be as high as £3000, but these are for venues that can accommodate 500+ guests. Our maximum is 160 if all are to be seated. Suggestion – that we have a 2nd and perhaps 3rd option re layout, with less tables, in order to accommodate more guests. (Brodman's to advise?). The enquiries so far have related to engagement and mendi parties, rather than Wedding, so it may be that our maximum occupancy is not large enough for 'the main event'? Working out a layout option that offers a higher number of guests, may widen our appeal. However, it seems that the larger venues do not have the car parking capability to match their guest capacity and that can be problematic. We could offer, as an additional hire option, the Little Lane carpark. It could be opened for hire for any large function, adding flexibility and appeal to our venue. It would not seem unreasonable to allocate a charge of £100-£150 for that service/facility.

Currently, if the Auditorium was booked for a large party, the Billson would be opened as the bar. During events, we have had feedback that a downstairs bar would be preferable. Although we have lifts, many people use the stairs and look rather precarious negotiating the stairs whilst carrying a tray of drinks. As the matter has not arisen in practise, it is not clear whether a customer would be charged for the Billson room, if a bar was required for the Auditorium. That would seem unfair, if we do not offer a ground floor bar to serve the Auditorium.

Post lockdown note:- clearly many weddings have been deferred this year and many venues will already be booked for up to 2 years ahead. This would be a good opportunity to start taking bookings for early next year onwards and build and establish The Centre as a wedding venue.

In summary, for wedding parties, to consider:-

- a slight price increase,
- include set up,
- remove free bar staff,
- make 'garden' suitable for photos and naked flame catering
- advertise/raise profile of Centre as a wedding venue
- charge for options of stage hire and overflow carpark (Little Lane).
- decide whether to retain corkage, or change to flat fee or bar only (price up drinks packages)
- ensure all optional extras are priced and included in wedding party booking form (sweet cart, banner frames, Bluetooth speaker, stage hire, bar staff etc)
- create customer wedding folder, with links to wedding providers, building our networking. E.g. Robin is our 'house DJ'. Preloved for wedding dresses would fit with a USP of a budget/reasonably priced wedding. Building stronger links with wedding providers would also benefit filling the spaces at our Wedding Fayres. (Also sourcing and building relationships with providers of Asian Weddings).

Adult Birthday/Anniversary Parties

Currently, the Billson Room is the most used for this type of booking. The Billson is charged at £18 per hour. The rate charged for half the room being used for a class is £10 per hour. Suggestion – whole room hire rate amended to £25-£30 per hour which is more in line for the size of the room.

Set up (portage) does not require the same level of work as the much larger Auditorium. Generally the room is hired for 6 hours (5 hour party plus 1 hour set up and clean up.) At £25 ph, this would be £150 (or £120 for locals) or at £30ph - £180 (or £144 for locals). A bartender would add £72 to the customer's bill.

The Bluetooth speaker is regularly 'borrowed' for parties – we currently have no hire charge for it and it would seem reasonable to add it to an 'optional extras list' at a nominal charge. E.g. £10-£15.

Equally, the large banner frames (we have 3) are huge and take a couple of man-hours to assemble and are neither advertised nor have a hire rate. £10 per frame is a reasonable charge.

Children's Parties

The majority of enquiries re children's parties requested bookings for Sundays. The Centre is not generally open on a Sunday and so would be opened solely for the party. The wage and utility cost would barely be covered. Children's parties do not tend to generate much rubbish and generally the customer takes it away with them.

Suggestion – change price to £95, but apply residents discount (evidencing that parish residents benefit = £76).

Consider uplift re Saturday afternoons – e.g. - £120, but for parish residents £96. Sunday uplift £150, but £120 to residents?

Miscellaneous Bookings and room hire rates

The current room hire rates are clearly very competitive for some types of bookings and less so for classes/private parties.

The rates have remained the same for around 2 years. It may be prudent to consider a slight raise, across the board, for the new financial year.

Items that do not currently have a hire charge

There are several items that do not currently feature on the dry hire options list. It seems that charging a nominal fee for appropriate items, would contribute to their wear and tear and future replacement.

The Bluetooth speaker £10-£20. The sweet cart £25. The banner frames £10 each?

Items on the list include the portable projector £10. Auditorium large projector £35.

Also, stage set up £85 (mentioned above re change to stage hire £100-£200). Porterage £120 (mentioned above re not viable for customer to choose setting up themselves – health & safety issues arise – so incorporate into package price of booking, rather than have a separate price and charge separately for bar staff instead.)

Tablecloths charged at £5

Summary

Agree on pricing that is competitive and increases use/footfall of the building.

MOUNTSORREL MEMORIAL CENTRE (MMC)

FEES AND CHARGES (including VAT) until April 2020

Fees and Charges per hour including VAT

Room	rate	max. occupancy pre covid
Richardson Room	£15.00	19
Committee Room	£12.00	19
Small ½ Auditorium including kitchen	£21.00	100
Large ½ Auditorium (no kitchen)	£25.80	100 – 150
Whole Auditorium including kitchen	£45.00	275 – 360
Billson Room	£18.00	75
Bar staff	£12.00 per member of bar staff per hour	

Charities that are registered with the Charities Commission may request a 20% discount on the standard rate on application to the Parish Council

Discount of 20% available for individual bookings to residents on proof of entitlement

MOUNTSORREL MEMORIAL CENTRE

Maximum occupancy to be covid-19 compliant

ROOM	HOURLY CHARGE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS
GROUND FLOOR		
Large half auditorium	25.80	48
Large and small half auditorium used in combination where access and escape are entirely available to each area	45.00	69
Small half auditorium	21.00	20
Kitchen		1
Reception area		9
FIRST FLOOR		
Richardson Room	15.00	9
Meeting / committee room	12.00	5
Billson Room (the area nearest to the bar when the partition is closed) – Billson Bar	10.00	15
Bar		1
Billson gathering lobby (furthest from the bar and with the partition closed)	10.00	21
Billson room as a whole with the partition open	18.00	30

Balcony A		3
Balcony B		3

CHILDREN'S PARTY INC. VAT	UP TO AGE 12	AGE 13 – 18
The Richardson Room for 2 hours	50.00	70.00
The Billson Room for 2 hours	50.00	70.00
Large half Auditorium for 2 hours	70.00	90.00

½ hour before and after party for set up and clean up included in price

18th and 21st parties not permitted at present

WEDDING PACKAGE

It is recommended that bookings for weddings are only accepted between the hours of 12 noon and 12 midnight to allow for set up and clearing away. This will be particularly relevant if the rooms are booked on Friday nights for other events.

Only drinks, except for Champagne, provided by the Centre will be allowed. However, if a particular type or brand of alcohol or variety/vintage of wine is required, the centre will endeavour to obtain the necessary supplies and advise the customer of the proposed cost. If the centre is unable to provide the necessary requirements, the customer will be permitted to purchase their own supplies but corkage charges of £6.00 per bottle will be applied.

EXCLUSIVE USE OF CENTRE TO INCLUDE STAFF	£1500.00 + VAT
BILLSON ROOM ONLY TO INCLUDE BAR AND 2 BAR STAFF	£500.00 + VAT
AUDITORIUM ONLY TO INCLUDE BAR AND 2 BAR STAFF	£750.00 + VAT
ASSEMBLY OF STAGE	£85.00 + VAT
CORKAGE CHARGE FOR A BOTTLE OF WINE	£6.00 + VAT
CORKAGE CHARGE FOR SPARKLING WINE/CHAMPAGNE PER BOTTLE	£10.00 + VAT
CHARGE FOR SOFT DRINKS PER CAN	£0.20 + VAT
LARGE BOTTLES OF SOFT DRINKS /WATER	£3.50 + VAT
CARTONS EACH	£1.60 + VAT

There is no charge allocated for beer/lager/spirits.

Additional Charges (exclusive of VAT)

Projector hire	£10.00 per session
Auditorium large projector	£35.00 per session

Flip Chart etc	£10.00 per session
Tea/Coffee/Juice	£1.00 per cup/glass
Water (Jug)	Free
Bottle (Still/Sparkling)	£1.00 per bottle
Biscuits	£0.70 per person
Buffet Prices	On request
Tablecloths per item	£5.00