

Setup Services at Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council

To: Meeting of the Town Hall Committee

From: Clair Helen Davis, Deputy Town Clerk & Tom Hope, Community Engagement Officer

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Introduction

This report addresses the concerns regarding the costs associated with the setup services for hirers and the challenges related to staff availability. It examines the practice of paying staff overtime or providing time off in lieu (TOIL) for these duties, why this approach is offered, and its implications on the Council.

Reason for Report

To consider ending the setup service.

Financial Implications

Overtime and Time off in Lieu (TOIL)

If Maintenance Officers are required to work outside their regular hours, it affects the entire team. For example, if a Maintenance Officer is asked to work additional hours, it becomes challenging to find time for them to take TOIL without disrupting their ongoing scheduled tasks. This imbalance can lead to increased costs, as another staff member must be paid at an overtime rate to cover their absence.

Examples of this are:

- The Amenities Supervisor is on annual leave but is coming in for two hours to set up for the Country Market. This setup costs the council a set amount for Tim's time. However, the setup fee charged is significantly lower than the industry standard and does not cover the staff wages, resulting in a loss. This has been happening regularly and the costs are accumulating.
- The Caretaker works a full week when covering annual leave, incurring overtime costs for the council. The only reason for him working additional non-work days is to cover setup for hirers, which is usually one hirer per day. This brings in significantly less than the wages required to cover the setup.

Staffing Availability Issues

A challenge in the setup process is the availability of staff. Regular staff are not always available due to:

1. **Regular Working Hours:** Most setup operations need to be done outside regular working hours to avoid disrupting regular hirer activities.
2. **Work-Life Balance:** Staff may be unable to work additional hours due to personal commitments. Maintenance Officers, like all staff members, need a work-life balance, and we have a duty of care to ensure they achieve this.

Venue Hire Industry Standards

It is also important to note that it is not standard industry practice for venues to manage setup; typically, venues are rented as a "dry hire," with the responsibility for setup falling to the hirer. It could be argued that a significant increase in the current set up fee would cover the staff wages required to make it possible, however, this doesn't solve the staff availability and TOIL issues.

Recommendations

The Town Hall Committee should evaluate whether continuing this costly service is a prudent use of public funds and consider discontinuing the setup service. While the Council has provided this service as a gesture of goodwill for many years, it is ultimately resulting in unnecessary expenditure and is not a sustainable business practice.