

Edinburgh's Hogmanay - changes to the Royal Bank Street Party Pass

The City of Edinburgh Council

19 August 2004

Purpose of report

1. To note the change in the way that the public can acquire an Edinburgh's Hogmanay Royal Bank Street Party pass and to agree to the implementation of charging the public an administration fee for a Royal Bank Street Party pass.

Main report

2. Over the past five years there has been a major decline in the use of post as the preferred method of making a transaction in terms of booking a ticket for an event. Telephone bookings and use of the Internet are much preferred by the public and promoters.
3. The system of a public ballot for street party passes was originally intended to ensure a fair distribution and is based solely on the use of post as a method of obtaining an Royal Bank Street Party pass. However, it is clear that the current system actually restricts access to people obtaining a Royal Bank Street Party pass - especially in the case of visitors to the city.
4. Therefore, for Edinburgh's Hogmanay 2005 it is proposed to change the system to a 'first come first served' basis. Allocation of passes will still be restricted to only two per applicant.
5. This change will be more consumer friendly and have a positive effect, enabling people to book Royal Bank Street Party passes by phone and Internet, the two most preferred methods, as well as face to face at the Hub box office at Castle Hill. Postal bookings will also be accepted although it is expected they will be few in number.

6. To ensure that residents of the city are given preferred treatment, quotas will be applied to the various distribution methods and publicity opportunities created to ensure that the maximum coverage is achieved of the change to the allocation system, maintaining equality in accessing passes.
7. Allied to this change, but unconnected to it, is the implementation of an administration fee to recover costs incurred in the handling of the administration of the Royal Bank Street Party pass system.
8. These cost are identified as:
 - a) printing the actual pass including the necessary security elements and associated information messages
 - b) taking the request for a pass, via telephone, e-mail, face to face etc.
 - c) inputting the request in a database system
 - d) distribution of the pass either by mail or collected in person
 - e) having staff available to deal with inquiries
9. Legal advice from the Council Solicitor has confirmed that the new general power to advance well-being in the 2003 Act means that the Council now has the power to impose an administration charge associated with the distribution of street party passes.
10. However, it continues to be the case that as is stated on the passes and literature distributed about the passes, that these passes do not guarantee access to the events arena. Control of entry remains on the basis of public safety considerations.
11. Cost (a) is outsourced to Unique Events as part of their contract and costs (b) – (e) are outsourced under a separate contract to The Hub a recognised box office facility based in Edinburgh.
12. It is proposed to set the level of the non refundable administration fee at £2.50 per pass.
13. A fee at this level is consistent with booking fees charged in the entertainment and arts sector. In addition, other cities have applied similar charges to their own New Year events, for example in 2003/04 Glasgow City Council charged £2.50.
14. In relation to similar service practices within City of Edinburgh Council, the Edinburgh Lectures apply a booking fee of £3.00 per ticket for the free tickets distributed for this event.
15. This level of fee would cover the administration charges currently met and result in a zero cost in terms of the administration of the Royal Bank Street Party pass system in 2004/05.
16. There will be no change to the status of the Royal Bank Street Party pass, which will remain free of charge.

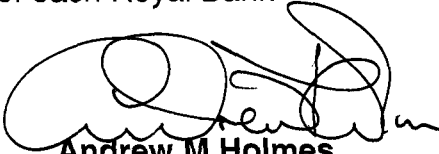
17. The Street Party's principal sponsor, the Royal Bank of Scotland, has been fully consulted in relation to the proposed developments.

Financial Implications

18. All income will be credited to City Development's main Edinburgh Winter Festivals budget to off set costs incurred.

Recommendations

1. To note the improvements to the distribution system of Royal Bank Street Party passes.
2. To agree to the implementation of a £2.50 (two pounds and fifty pence) non refundable administration fee associated with the distribution of each Royal Bank Street Party pass.


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Appendices	None
Contact/Tel	David Jackson – 0131 529 3785
Wards affected	City-Wide
Background Papers	None