

Committee/Meeting: King George's Fields Charity Board	Date: 30.03.11	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: (KGFCB 006/1011)
Report of: Corporate Director Communities, Localities and Culture Originating officer(s) Michael Rowan Director of Mile End Park	Title: Licensing the Ecology Pavilion as a venue for marriages and civil partnerships Ward(s): Wards Affected: n/a		

Lead Member	n/a
Community Plan Theme	A great place to live
Strategic Priority	Support vibrant town centres and a cleaner safer public realm

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1. As part of a strategy to increase revenue from the use of the buildings within the park the Ecology Pavilion was adapted to operate more effectively as a venue for wedding receptions etc.
- 1.2. An increasing number of enquiries from potential clients ask if the Pavilion is licensed for holding marriages and civil partnership ceremonies.
- 1.3. It is anticipated that by having a licence for the holding marriage ceremonies the Pavilion will be more competitive in the market place and will potentially increase the number of bookings or the duration of the bookings.

2. DECISIONS REQUIRED

That the King George's Fields Charity Board –

- 2.1 Agree that an application is made in the name of the charity to licence the Ecology Pavilion as a venue for marriage and civil partnerships

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 If the application is successful it is likely that there will be a positive rise in bookings and the amount of revenue raised from each booking

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 To continue to offer the Ecology Pavilion as a venue for receptions only.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Since April 1995, it has been possible to arrange for civil ceremonies to take place at certain venues other than a register office. These other venues are officially known as approved premises but are more commonly known as licensed venues. Buildings such as hotels, castles, stately and country homes can now be licensed to allow civil marriage ceremonies to take place on their premises.
- 5.2 The marriage ceremony at a licensed venue is a civil ceremony. No religious content whatsoever is allowed. However, the ceremony can be more romantic and leisurely than in a register office and it can be as formal or casual as desired by the participants.
- 5.3 The legal requirements for getting married at a Licensed Venue are the same as those for getting married by civil ceremony at a register office but with the added requirement of having to arrange for a registrar's attendance at the venue.
- 5.4 The cost of applying for the license is £800.00 and is valid for three years.
- 5.5 The venue has been visited by the registrar and it was felt that should an application be made it would be highly likely to be successful.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 6.1 This report seeks the King George's Fields Charity Board approval for an application to be made for a licence to allow the Mile End Park Ecology

Pavilion to hold marriages and civil partnership ceremonies. As outlined within the report, if the Charity Board agree to this and the application is successful it is anticipated that bookings for the facility will increase as will the amount of revenue raised. This would contribute to sustaining the overall financial position of the park.

7. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 7.1 The Marriages Act 1994 introduced the power to licence premises other than Churches or register Offices for the celebration of marriages. The registration is governed by the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005. The Ecology Pavilion will need to satisfy the requirements of the regulations and planning permission may be required for a change of use depending on the number of days the activity will take place.
- 7.2 The application must be made in the name of the Trustees and will be subject to public consultation. A notice has to be placed in a local newspaper giving details of the application for registration and inviting objections to the registration.
- 7.3 Any income and expenditure made from the activity will belong to the Trust and not the Council.

8. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The use of the building for those people wishing to take part in a none religious ceremony is part of the equalities agenda, particularly the ability to hold civil partnerships which currently is only available to same sex couples.

9. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 9.1 The Ecology Pavilion was designed and built to a specification directed towards sustainability e.g. the natural insulation surrounding the building.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no significant risks identified within this report.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no crime and disorder reduction implications arising out of this report.

12. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

12.1 There are no relevant efficiency issues arising in the context of the board's decision.

14. APPENDICES

15. None

**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)
List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

Brief description of "background papers"

Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.

None

N/A