

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - Abbey Pumping Station

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

You asked:

- 1. What were the savings made by closing the Abbey Pumping Station Museum for the winter period 2010/2011 and how this savings was made up.**
- 2. Also what are the expected savings being made by closing the Museum for the months of November to January 2012.**

Response:

Abbey Pumping Station was closed during the winter apart from special events and volunteer activities by winter 2004. The precise savings made were not precisely calculated and are not held. We also could not predict what extra costs may have been incurred had it been open. Therefore, this part of this letter acts as a refusal notice under section 17.1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 because, in accordance with this section of the Act, this information is not held.

However, we can give an estimate which may be of use to you, which applies to both 2010/11 and 2011/12. The best way of providing an answer is to say "if we were to reopen Abbey Pumping Station all year round from this year onwards how much extra would it cost the council per year roughly based on current prices".

The arts and museums service budget funds an operations officer and three customer service assistants based at Abbey Pumping Station all year round. When the site is open we also fund the cost of casual staff e.g. to cover sickness, holidays and additional work.

When the site is closed we use the permanent operational staff, who are employed by us all year round, to cover sickness, holidays and other essential functions and special projects etc at other sites across all the museums. (This is also our busiest time for the steam days etc. which take considerable preparation and operational staff often work longer than their normal hours).

This saves us money we would have spent on casual staff etc. and it also enables us to carry out essential work e.g. health and safety audits at other sites. It also means we are closed in winter when there are few visitors other than for the special events.

The success of this in creating efficiencies clearly depends on ensuring that the permanent staff at APS are fully utilised at the other sites. This nowadays is making a considerable difference in enabling us to operate cost effectively across the service as a whole.

It also has the advantage to us that we have a pool of people always available. When we need a casual staff member it involves ringing around which takes time. These staff are well versed in how the other sites work so they can be fully part of a team, carrying out a higher level of duties than casuals could.

If APS were open in the winter we could have to also spend about £3,000 on casual staff over the three month period. We would also lose the ability to redeploy the APS Customer Service Assistant staff to other sites during this period so they would have to buy in casual and other staff etc. which we estimate would come to another £5,000.

There would then also be additional running costs e.g. heating and lighting, materials, supplies, repairs.

Total estimated cost of reopening APS for three winter months November to January:

£3,000 x 1 = extra casual staff needed at APS
£5,000 x 1 = extra casual staff across the rest of the sites
£1,000 extra fuel, materials, supplies, repairs

Total savings c.£9,000.

Please note that this is an estimate which we are not able to verify without detailed analysis and the creation of new information. The true cost of any such reopening can also only be ascertained once it has actually happened, after several month's operation.

I hope that this information is of interest to you.

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If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request please write to:

Head of Information Governance
Information and Support
Leicester City Council
FREEPOST (LE985/33)

New Walk Centre
LEICESTER LE1 6ZG

e-mail: FOIA@leicester.gov.uk

Your request for internal review should be submitted to the above address within 40 (forty) working days of receipt by you of this response. Any such request received after this time will only be considered at the Council's absolute discretion.

You can also complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 700

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Please be aware that the Information Commissioner does not normally consider appeals or complaints until the internal appeals and complaints processes of the public authority which is answering the request have been exhausted. You are therefore advised to complain or appeal to Head of Information Governance before contacting the Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Wyeth

Head of Information Governance