

**Agenda Item No:** 13 **Report No:** 94/14  
**Report Title:** Chair of the Council's Business Report  
**Report To:** Scrutiny Committee **Date:** 26 June 2013  
**Ward(s) Affected:** All  
**Report By:** Assistant Director of Corporate Services  
**Contact Officer(s)-**  
**Name(s):** Abi Blanshard  
**Post Title(s):** Civic Officer  
**E-mail(s):** abi.blanshard@lewes.gov.uk  
**Tel No(s):** 01273 484359

---

**Purpose of Report:**

To consider (a) the outgoing Chair's civic programme and (b) the civic programme for the forthcoming year and budget provision.

**Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 To note the Report.

---

**Information**

- 1 The role of the Chair of the Council is as detailed in the Constitution:
  - To focus his/her activities on the communities of the District (including communities of interest, as well as geographical ones) and, by focusing on the Council's priorities, strengthen links between those communities and the Council.
  - To act as an enabler and ambassador by arranging meetings between the Council and other parties for the benefit of the District.
  - To celebrate those people or groups in the District who do extraordinary things to help others in the community, and to recognise those whose everyday lives are a challenge but who succeed in spite of their difficulties.
  - To celebrate successes of partners involved in major projects with the Council, particularly projects steered by the voluntary sector.
  - To encourage activities that 'recognise' and support staff (e.g. the annual garden party).

- 2** During the year 2013/14, 90 engagements were carried out by the Chair and Vice-Chair, excluding Council meetings. It is important to note that it is not the volume of engagements that a Chair manages to attend or host during their year of office but the 'quality' of the engagements in terms of the local community that is important.

With regard to 'quality' of engagements, a 'quality' engagement is one which is in support of the Council's priorities and which takes place within the District. If the Chair is invited to attend an event hosted by a Mayor/Chairman of a neighbouring authority, unless the event is something that will enhance or support this Council's priorities and those of its residents, then the Chair is advised not to accept in an official capacity. He/she can of course attend if he/she wishes but attendance is then financed by the Chair him/herself.

It is also worth noting that this is now the third year that the Civic Office has operated on a part-time rather than full-time basis with the Civic Officer being engaged for 22 hours a week, instead of the previous 37 hours.

- 2.1 One of the first events arranged by the Civic Office was the launch of Lewes Heritage Open Days in August 2013. This was held at Lewes House and attended by 50 guests. The last event of the year that was organised and hosted by the Chair was a 'Thank you to staff' held at Southover House.
- 2.2 In January this year, Holocaust Memorial Day was marked by a ceremony of remembrance held in Southover House. Students of Lewes Old Grammar School read poems and readings to mark the Holocaust and genocides since.
- 2.3 The Chair hosted and attended events as diverse as AGMs, award ceremonies, commemorative and remembrance ceremonies, opening of new buildings, visits by international guests, special needs schools and community projects. The Chair attended several events as part of the Gentlemen of the Road Tour that took place in Lewes in July 2013. Many of these engagements were arranged as part of the Fringe events designed to encourage festivalgoers to come into the town. The Chair had the honour of attending several Royal visits to the District, including the opening of the Southdowns Youth Hostel by HM The Queen.
- 2.4 10% of the Chair's engagements took place outside the boundaries of the District, all of which were in support of Council's initiatives and included the Academic Award Ceremonies for University of Brighton students.
- 2.5 Wherever possible local caterers and/or suppliers of organic produce and fair trade were used for each event.

### **3 Year 2014/15**

Councillor Nichoslon would like the focus of his year to be celebrating local business in Lewes District.

It is not possible at this time to set out a detailed programme for the whole year; this has still to be determined. The Chair will co-host an event to mark the anniversary of the awarding of a Victoria Cross as part of the WWI Centenary Commemorations in April 2015. The following events will take place/or have taken place:

- Hosting a service of commemoration to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day at Newhaven Fort in June 2014.
- Staff summer party in August 2014.
- The annual bonfire night party at Lewes House on 5 November 2014.
- A ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2015.

#### **4 Financial Appraisal**

The total budget available to Councillor Chartier as Chair of the Council in the municipal year 2013/14 was £16,300. Total expenditure incurred to date is £7,423. In this time of financial constraints efforts were made to reduce expenditure, which was achieved.

The total budget currently available to Councillor Nicholson in the municipal year 2014/15 will be £16,300, which covers the period 7 May 2014 to 20 May 2015. The figure includes the Chair's monthly allowance.

#### **5 Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this Report.

#### **6 Sustainability Implications**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this Report.

#### **7 Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications arising from this Report.

#### **8 Equality Screening**

I have completed the initial Equality Analysis screening exercise and have identified no negative impacts arising from this Report. Therefore, a full Equality Analysis is not required.

#### **9 Background Papers**

None

#### **10 Appendix**

A list of the Chair's engagements for 2014/15 is appended for information.