

Wisbech Castle – Investigating Options

Activity	Comments
School visits/lessons	<p>Schools have limited / no budget activities that are not linked clearly with curriculum or part of planned cultural / learning outside of the classroom experiences. There is great competition for this small school budget with residentials, outdoor learning, museums, large scale parks and other national events.</p> <p>Previous numbers of use by schools via the CEES were low making it difficult to forecast a viable income stream from this. The activity was heavily subsidised by CCC in the past.</p>
Educational visits/lessons	As above.
Music Hub	<p>Cambridgeshire Music is not interested in being a tenant.</p> <p>CCC cannot financially support retaining the building for Cambridgeshire Music.</p>
<p>Weddings</p> <p>The castle has previously been used for weddings and is a lovely venue</p>	<p>This appears to be the option with the most potential to be commercially viable, although a lot of work would need to be done. WTC would have to carry out a more detailed analysis of this option and forecast its financial viability. Due to the very low number of weddings carried out in the past, it would not be financially viable on those figures (10 in the last year).</p> <p>It is worth noting at this stage that the previous usage of the Castle was not marketed for weddings and only delivered some wedding events when approached. More active marketing and setup of the building to host such events may see better usage. We have been unable to ascertain figures from the Registration Service regarding where people from Wisbech are going to get married that would allow us to make a demand projection. This is because the system they use is a national database that does not allow for this data to be extracted. Further market analysis and surveying of citizens, especially those giving notification of marriage, could be undertaken.</p> <p>We have looked into the possibility of using a semi-permanent marquee to expand capacity. To date, we are yet to receive any responses from the marquee companies but will forward necessary details upon receipt. FDC has been unable to provide any information about planning permission; stating that they would only be able to respond to a planning application and not give any speculative information.</p> <p>Given the state of the kitchens. Outside catering should be explored as an option if taking this forward. The venue would need to be updated and heavily marketed.</p> <p>If this option was to be investigated further by WTC, consideration should also be given to its use for other functions e.g. parties, wakes, events, garden visits etc.</p>

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Public access to the Castle and Gardens as a tourist attraction	Unable to forecast this as a financially viable standalone option due to limited data on footfall and tourist numbers in the area. Query limited passing trade. Would tourists pay enough per visit or via a membership to cover operational and maintenance costs (circa £12k-15k using data from 2015/16 and 2016/17 NB this does not include staffing and material costs)
Tourist Information Centre	As above, felt unlikely due to location and footfall/traffic. WTC would need to investigate this option further.
Exhibition space Arts/photography/crafts	Unable to forecast this as a financially viable standalone option. Query limited passing trade and impact / relationship required with the nearby museum.
Lilian Ream	Unable to forecast this as a financially viable standalone option. Query limited passing trade.
General hire of rooms/space for learning/counselling/advice sessions	There is a possibility that this could be an additional use for parts of the castle if its main use was as a wedding venue. Note that general hire of rooms was the mainstay of the previous model alongside two other centres in Cambridgeshire. The Castle was subsidised heavily by the other two centres in Trumpington and Huntingdon due to lack of use/interest.
Hire of specific rooms for organisations to be based in.	See above.
Traditional Victorian Tea Room	Unable to forecast this as a financially viable standalone option. Query limited passing trade. More data is needed to understand whether this is a reliable option. The business would need to fund current operational and maintenance costs in addition to staff and material costs, relevant certification, food safety, etc. It is felt at this time that due to location, the lack of footfall traffic and immediate parking may result in low trade. Note that other cafes or public space in other buildings, eg, Boathouse, are not reaching the desired level of custom.
Themed banquets/dinners	There is a possibility that this could be an additional use for parts of the castle if its main use was as a wedding venue.
Location for filming	This option was discounted in our initial meeting with Cllr Hoy and Terry Jordan.
Continued use, and development, as a Heritage Centre, as well as inclusion within	There is a possibility that this could be an additional use for parts of the castle if its main use was as a wedding or destination /events venue.

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heritage tours/walks of the town	
Craft events and fairs	There is a possibility that this could be an additional use for parts of the castle if its main use was as a wedding venue. Consideration needs to be given as to the frequency of events and fairs to pay for the 365 days a year costs.
Events in the garden	There is a possibility that this could be an additional use for parts of the castle if its main use was as a wedding venue.
Gift shop	Unlikely. WTC would need to investigate this option further. However, there is a possibility that this could be an additional use for parts of the castle if its main use was as a wedding venue.
Residential accommodation	This option was discounted in our initial meeting with Cllr Hoy and Terry Jordan.
Tours of dungeons	This option was discounted in our initial meeting with Cllr Hoy and Terry Jordan and not relevant to phase one.
Holiday Accommodation	This option was discounted in our initial meeting with Cllr Hoy and Terry Jordan.