

Urgent Item

General Meeting of the Council: 10 March 2022.

Lighting up St Magnus Cathedral.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider lighting up St Magnus Cathedral in yellow and blue to express solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

2. Recommendations

The Council is invited to note:

2.1.

That, in July 2019, the Council approved a policy for lighting up St Magnus Cathedral for special events and charitable campaigns, as detailed in section 3.2 of this report.

2.2.

That national and international buildings have recently been lit up to show humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine.

2.3.

The proposal, following enquiries from the general public and the local media, to light up St Magnus Cathedral to demonstrate Orkney's solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

2.4.

That the proposal, detailed at paragraph 2.3 above, is in breach of a number of the conditions of the policy for lighting up St Magnus Cathedral for special events and charitable campaigns.

It is recommended:

2.5.

That the existing policy for lighting up St Magnus Cathedral be suspended to allow St Magnus Cathedral to be lit up in yellow and blue over a period of three nights to demonstrate Orkney's solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

2.6.

That the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should undertake a review of the policy for lighting up St Magnus Cathedral, to include consideration of additions relating to humanitarian grounds, and thereafter submit a report to the Council no later than September 2022.

3. Background

3.1.

After consulting with groups associated with the Church Session of St Magnus Cathedral, a policy for lighting up St Magnus Cathedral for special events and charitable campaigns was presented to the St Magnus Cathedral Sub-committee on 3 April 2019.

3.2.

The Sub-committee recommended that powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Sub-committee, to determine requests from organisations wishing to light up St Magnus Cathedral, where the following conditions were met:

- Lighting up is part of a national charitable campaign, where the charity or its aims are relevant to Orkney.
- Lighting up is for a local charity as part of a wider local awareness raising or specific local targeted campaign.
- No political element to the activity.
- No commercial element to the activity.
- Lighting up is for a maximum of 24 hours.
- The charitable organisation provides and installs the coloured gels required, in liaison with the Traditional Stonemason or the Visitor Services Officer.
- No cost implication to the Council.
- No inappropriate clash with another activity, event or service taking place in St Magnus Cathedral.
- No physical impact or damage to the building.

4. Proposal to Light Up St Magnus Cathedral

4.1.

The Council has received a number of informal enquiries from members of the public and local media regarding lighting up St Magnus Cathedral in support of the people of Ukraine.

4.2.

Various charitable bodies have sought to raise awareness for particular charitable campaigns across the world through requesting that significant buildings are lit in a particular colour.

4.3.

Locally requests are regularly received to light up St Magnus Cathedral as part of local and national events, including lighting up the Cathedral purple for CLAN.

4.4.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, buildings, including the Brandenburg gate, Paris City Hall, Wallace Monument and the Empire State Building, have been lit up in yellow and blue in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

4.5.

Although the Council has not received any formal requests to light up St Magnus Cathedral in support of the people of Ukraine, following enquiries from members of the public and the local media, it is proposed that consideration be given to lighting up St Magnus Cathedral in yellow and blue to express solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

4.6.

Unfortunately, the proposal is in breach of several of the lighting up conditions detailed at section 3.2 above, the most significant being no political element linked to the lighting up. Therefore, should the proposal be approved, an exception to policy would have to be made on humanitarian grounds.

4.7.

In light of this proposal, it is further suggested that the policy be reviewed to include consideration of additions relating to humanitarian grounds. This review should be reported to the Council no later than September 2022.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with governance and scrutiny and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial aspects relating directly to this report.

7. Legal Aspects

There are no significant legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

8. Contact Officers

James Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2431, Email james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk

Frances Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, extension 2177, Email frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk

Garry Burton, Leisure and Culture Service Manager, extension 2440, Email garry.burton@orkney.gov.uk