



## Information Governance

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Please contact Information  
Governance  
Direct line 024 7697 5408  
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Dear Sir/Madam

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) Request ID: REQ06545**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Christmas decorations costs.

Your request and our responses are outlined below:

**Please could you provide the costs incurred by the council, where relevant, for the following across the authority. Please provide all this information for the following years: Christmas 2015 – 2019. Please only confirm Council costs.**

- 1. Christmas lights**
- 2. Christmas decorations**
- 3. Installation of lights and decorations**

In response to Questions 1, and 3, we can confirm that the Council Costs for Christmas lights and decorations were as follows:

2012-2013: £122  
2013-2014: £100  
2014-2015: £102  
2015-2016: £95  
2016-2017: £350 includes tree for Holy Trinity Church  
2017-2018: £117  
2018-2019: £118

For 2019 Council costs, we can confirm that we do not hold this information and are advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act. This is because the supplier information and financial reconciliation has not yet been fully completed.

In order to assist you, we anticipate that this information will be available in the next financial quarter (January to March 2020) should you wish to raise a new request at this time.

Please note that in Coventry, Christmas lights and decorations are also paid for by the Coventry BID Team. To assist you, please find the following link to Coventry BID:

<https://www.coventrycitycentre.co.uk/about-the-bid>

#### **4. Light switch on events, including celebrity appearances**

#### **5. Christmas events**

For Question 4 and 5, Coventry City Council has not paid for any celebrities at Christmas 2017, 2018 and 2019. Since 2017, all artists at Christmas events are paid for by the Coventry BID Team and not Coventry City Council.

In 2019-20, there was no expenditure on celebrities for the 2019 Christmas lights switch on event because the lights were turned on by the Lord Mayor.

In 2015 and 2016, the Christmas events artists' fee were also paid for by Coventry BID. However, during that period, the BID team was still within Coventry City Council.

As such, for Christmas 2015, 2016 and for other events where celebrities or famous people have been employed by the Council in 2016 -2019, the Council confirms that it holds this information, but that it is exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that: "Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it)". In this case, disclosure of the information would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the artists for the amounts they charge for their events.

As a result, we are satisfied that the exemption applies. This exemption is subject to the public interest test as detailed below:

There is an inherent public interest in ensuring that there is openness and transparency in the spending of public money. Transparency is likely to increase confidence in procurement procedures and purchasing decisions made by the Council. It will also enable the public to understand whether the Council is getting value for money from its purchasing decisions.

However, disclosing fees paid to individual artists are commercially confidential and releasing them would breach trust with the agent with whom the fee is negotiated. This could impact their ability to negotiate with other venues and therefore damage the Council's reputation when attempting to secure artists in the future.

Having considered the public interest and the arguments for and against disclosure outlined above, the Council have decided to withhold the information requested relating to the spend.

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

Should you wish to make any further requests for information, you may find what you are looking for is already published on the Council's web site and in particular its FOI/EIR Disclosure log, Council's Publication Scheme, Open Data and Facts about Coventry.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk).

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**