



# Bryngarw House Business Plan

April 2006 to March 2008



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# Bryngarw House Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

Bryngarw House is situated in 113 acres of Country Parkland, which is located just 3 miles from the M4 motorway at the lower end of the Garw Valley within the County Borough of Bridgend. The county borough being at the geographical heart of South Wales with a population of just over 128,000 and a land area of 25,500 hectares.

Both the House and Country Park is run by Bridgend County Borough Council with responsibility for its operation lying within the Directorate for Education, Leisure and Community Services.

Bryngarw House's key role is that of a Conference and Training Centre and it offers a variety of conference/training facilities; accommodates functions and events; has a restaurant and small bar; and offers overnight accommodation.

## 1.2 History

The history of the house itself is vague but architectural evidence appears to indicate that it was originally a farmhouse, possibly dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The first recorded date of its existence so far discovered, however, is 1743. The house has been much altered throughout its history and is a mixture of period influence. It was renovated in 1830 by a Victorian industrialist who had travelled extensively in the Far East bringing back rare and exotic plants and antiques. Gradually, dry and wet rot took effect and the house fell into a state of dereliction

The house and park came into public ownership in 1961 and for several years it served various functions – additional council run accommodation, a caravan park and offices.

In 1983 work commenced to create the country park as it exists today and in 1987 the building was made completely weather-tight and part of the first floor accommodation converted into a self-contained flat to accommodate an assistant warden to the country park.

In 1993 a European Regional Development Fund grant was obtained to renovate the house and develop a conference and leisure facility for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. The facility was opened in December 1995.

## 1.3 House Facilities

The House offers the following facilities:-

- a) A range of conference/training/event facilities including a temporary marquee:-

- Traherne Suite – up to 80 theatre style
  - Conference Room – up to 12 classroom style
  - Lounge – small meetings of up to 10 people
  - Celtic Room – up to 10 boardroom style
  - Marquee – when used in conjunction with the Traherne Suite is suitable for up to 120
- b) Harlequin Restaurant serving breakfast, conference lunches, afternoon teas and a full A-La-Carte menu in the evening.
- c) A small bar for residents and non-residents.
- d) 19 en-suite bedrooms - one of which is fully accessible to disabled visitors.
- e) Parking for up to 50 cars plus access to the public car park in the country park which provides a further 120 spaces.
- f) Bryngarw House has a licence to hold wedding ceremonies.

## **1.4 Country Park**

The parkland offers an attractive and tranquil setting for the house, having a variety of features and habitats which typify a country estate of the eighteenth century - ranging from the formal gardens adjoining the house to the naturally wild surroundings.

All areas of the park are accessible by a network of footpaths which enable their features to be enjoyed at all seasons of the year. Most recently a new bridge link across the river has allowed direct access from the park to the Garw Valley cycle route and the Celtic Trail national cycle route.

Facilities offered in the park include a café, public toilets, large children's play area, a visitor centre and picnic facilities. The park is a popular tourist and day visitor destination (used by people from throughout the County borough and beyond) and is used extensively for events (such as Arts in the Park) and by schools for educational visits (a dedicated classroom facility is available). The park also attracts volunteers who assist with the conservation of the site by helping with activities such as coppicing and bulb planting.

## **1.5 Plant Nursery**

A recent addition to the Bryngarw site is the B-Leaf Horticultural Project which has recently relocated from its base at Bridgend Day Centre. A purpose built building provides opportunities for adults who have a learning disability to work in a semi-commercial setting. They produce a range of horticultural produce and undertake grounds maintenance/landscaping services on a contractual basis.

## 2. Bryngarw House Corporate Role

Bryngarw House is run by Bridgend County Borough Council with responsibility for its operation lying within the Directorate for Education, Leisure and Community Services. The Group Manager for Arts and Culture has responsibility for its operation. As a Local Authority run venue the operation complies with the relevant Local Authority Acts with regards to trading and other relevant legislation such as the Civic Restaurants Act 1947.

Bryngarw House is an excellent showcase for Bridgend County Borough Council and hosts a number of prestigious events including high profile occasions for the Mayor. In addition it provides conference and training facilities for the Council's employees and Members.

It also plays an important part in the local community, providing an ideal venue for many outside events including the popular 'music in the park' in the summer months. Those attending events can enjoy a pre-event dinner in the house which proves very popular. It is an excellent venue for family activities and regularly attracts people from outside the county borough. Bryngarw House and Park are considered a significant tourist destination within the county borough attracting 75,000 visitors per year. There are a number of superb walks within the grounds and surrounding areas and it is in close proximity to community route links and the National Cycle Network.

Bryngarw House directly supports a number of aims of the Community Strategy for the County Borough:

- **Improving quality of life** through the provision of a venue in the heart of the County borough that can be enjoyed by people of all ages.
- **Increasing prosperity** through delivery of formal and informal learning opportunities and by being an attractor to tourists.
- **More inclusive County Borough** providing fully accessible facilities and offering many free high quality events.

## **3. Staff at Bryngarw House**

### **3.1 Staffing Structure**

The General Manager of Bryngarw House, assisted by a Deputy Manager, has responsibility for the day to day running of the venue. The total staffing complement is 13 full-time and 8 part-time permanent staff, which is supplemented by the employment of up to 11 casual staff on a requirements basis. The organisation structure is shown in Appendix A.

In addition to this the General Manager is able to enlist the help of specialist functions within the local authority as and when required.

The turn-over of staff at Bryngarw House is high and it often operates with a number of vacancies. Whilst most of these posts can be covered by casual staff there are key roles, such as the Sous Chef, which cannot be back-filled in this way. The General Manager is supported in staff recruitment by the Council's Education, Leisure and Community Services' Human Resource Department.

As employees of Bridgend County Borough Council all staff at Bryngarw House benefit from local authority terms and conditions of employment.

## 4. Facilities at Bryngarw House

Bryngarw House's key role is that of a Conference and Training Centre and it offers a range of conference/training facilities at competitive rates. These facilities are complemented by a restaurant and small bar, together with provision of overnight accommodation. These facilities are also available to other users of the venue.

Bryngarw House has achieved a number of quality awards, namely:-

- Wales Tourist Board 4 star Conference Centre
- Wales Tourist Board Business Award Gold Standard
- RAC 2 Rosettes Dining Award
- Taste of Wales Fine Cuisine
- RAC 4 Diamond Guest Accommodation

Floor plans of Bryngarw House are available in Appendix B.

The accommodation provided is as follows:

### 4.1 Conference/Training Facilities (can also be used for a variety of events/functions)

#### a) Traherne Suite

Room Size: 10.4m x 6.25m

Capacity: 80 theatre style/26 classroom style

(The capacity can be increased for events/functions to 120 in the summer months through the used of an adjoining marquee.)

It is equipped with flipchart stands and a combined TV and VHS player. An overhead projector, data projector and portable screen can be provided on request.

In the summer months this room benefits from an adjoining marquee which can be used as a break-out area and/or lunch.

#### b) Conference Room

Room Size: 10.4m x 6.25m

Capacity: 35 theatre style/12 classroom style

It is equipped with flipchart stands, whiteboard and an overhead data projector which can be connected to a DVD player attached to room speakers.

c) **Lounge**

Room Size: 26' x 13'

Capacity: 10 people boardroom style

This room is used for meetings.

Flipchart stands, projectors, etc can be provided on request.

This room is on the first floor and consequently has restricted access.

d) **Celtic Room**

Capacity: 10 people

Used for small meetings and as a break-out room for users of the Conference Room and Traherne Suite.

Flipchart stands, projectors, etc can be provided on request.

## **4.2 Harlequin Restaurant**

The Harlequin Restaurant is used for conference lunches, breakfast, Sunday lunches, afternoon teas and offers a full A-La-Carte evening menu.

There is a small bar which caters for users of the venue.

## **4.3 Overnight Accommodation**

All 19 bedrooms at Bryngarw House have en-suite facilities and are equipped with direct-dial telephone, television with Sky Digital, trouser press, hairdryer and hospitality tray. One of the rooms is specifically designed to cater for individuals with accessibility problems. 14 of these rooms are located in the House and the remaining 5 in the adjacent annex. The rooms are graded:

**Standard** – offering the above facilities

**Superior** - larger room (some with Courtyard/Garden Views)

**Executive** – including canopy bed, sitting area, and with excellent views of the gardens

## **4.4 Garden and Surrounding Area**

Users of Bryngarw House have the added advantage of utilising the ornamental gardens immediately surrounding the house as well as the country park. These gardens include a small lake forming part of a series of inter-linked ponds, which are the focal point for an exquisite display of trees, shrubs and decorative stones. Other features include the bridges and Japanese style Tea Garden Pavilion.

There is ample car parking facilities at Bryngarw (up to 50 cars) and there is access to the public car park (up to 120 cars) in the country park for any overspill.

**A comprehensive list of current prices is always available on Bridgend County Borough Council's Website -**  
**[www.bridgend.gov.uk/Web1/groups/bryngarwhouse/documents/marketinq/003622.hcsp](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/Web1/groups/bryngarwhouse/documents/marketinq/003622.hcsp) .**

## **5. Activities at Bryngarw House**

### **5.1 Conference/Training**

Bridgend County Borough Council is by far the largest user of the conference and training facilities at Bryngarw House and there are plans to increase usage further over the next two years. Surplus capacity is sold to other organisations.

### **5.2 Functions**

A variety of functions are catered for including prestigious Council functions such as high profile occasions for the Mayor.

A comprehensive wedding service is provided including the wedding ceremony which offers an alternative venue to the Registrars Office in Sunnyside, Bridgend.

### **5.3 Arts Events**

The Arts and Cultural Unit of Bridgend County Borough Council utilises the gardens at Bryngarw House for a comprehensive series of outdoor arts events, many of which are free. In most cases the opportunity for attendees of arts events to link a pre or post performance dinner with their event ticket is available. Both Summer Celebration in the Park and Music in the Park are now firmly established as part of the annual programme. They provide a balanced programme of entertainment of professional and community shows. The series has seen a steady increase in audiences each year with jazz, theatre and musical events attracting the best audiences. These events also attract a great deal of people from outside the county borough with 43% of attendees living outside the area.

The first Jazz 'n' Art event, programmed as part of the Summer Celebration events, initiated the formation of Ogwr Artists. This is a joint initiative between art societies across the county borough who now take an active part by delivering painting demonstrations at Bryngarw events.

### **5.4 Park Events**

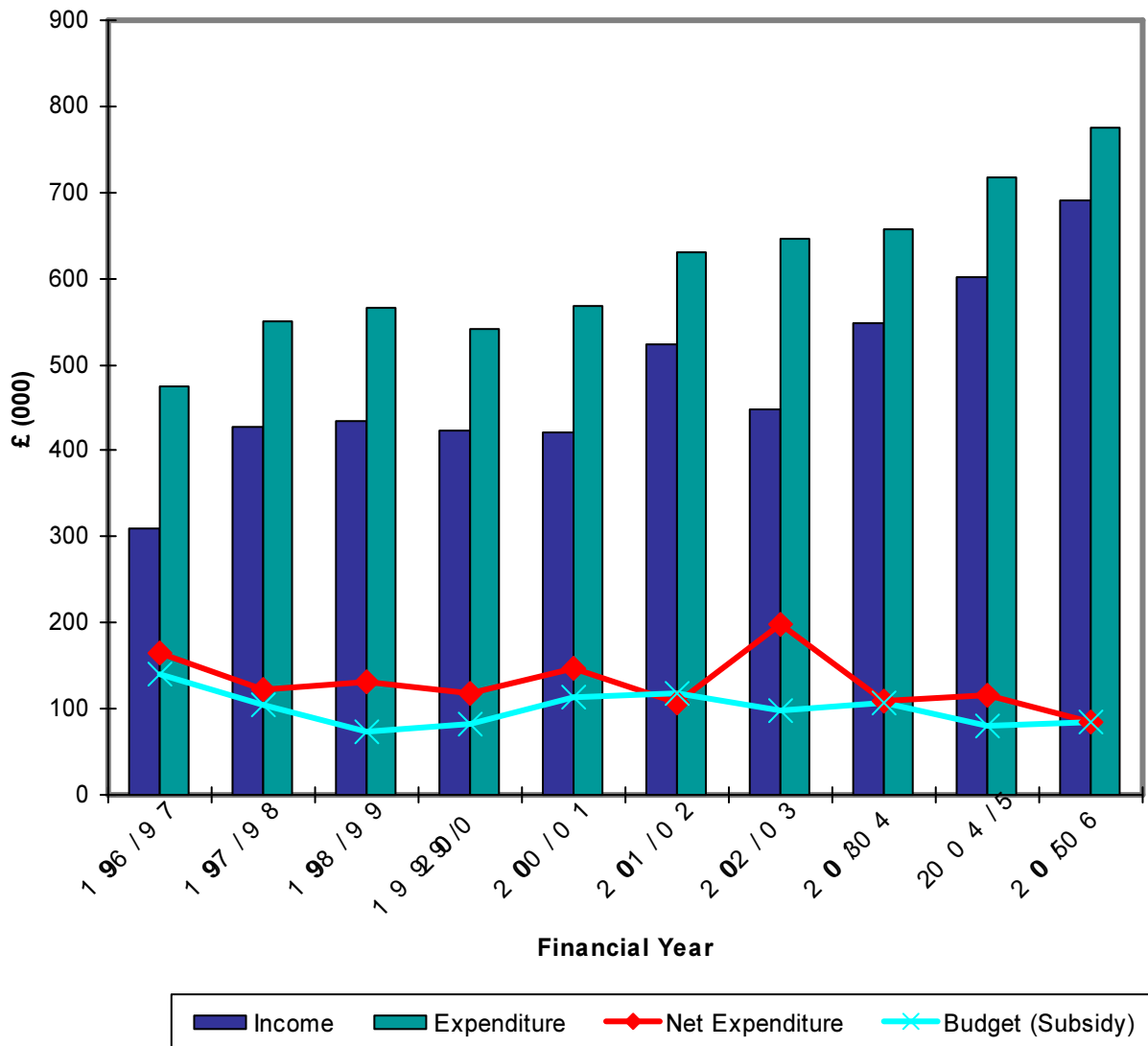
There are a series of events organised by the Rangers in Bryngarw Park such as Easter Egg Trails, Birdsong Walks and a vintage car rally and autumn fare. Members of the community can also join the Bryngarw Volunteers Scheme, which was introduced in June 2005, to learn about conservation and support the Ranger staff in their work in Bryngarw Park. Two training weekends, run by a tutor from Pencoed College, are included in the programme. Those taking part in these events can make full use of the facilities at Bryngarw House.

**Information about current events can be found on Bridgend County Borough Council's Website in the 'What's On' section - [www.bridgend.gov.uk/search\\_all.asp](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/search_all.asp) .**

## 6. Financial Profile

The financial profile of Bryngarw House during its ten years of operation is shown in the graph below. There has been a steady increase in income since 2002/03 and the projected outturn for the current year (2005/06) indicates a reduction in net expenditure of 27% on the previous year, which will bring the operation in on budget at £84.5k.

**Income and Expenditure Over 10 years of Operation**



The financial performance of Bryngarw House has been party to a great deal of scrutiny in recent years and this culminated in the formation of a cross-party review group at the end of 2004. This review group undertook a comprehensive options appraisal of a number of management options, namely:-

- i Retain the 'status quo' – current In-house operation and management arrangement
- ii Lease or franchise part of the house facilities
- iii Commercial sale of Bryngarw House
- iv Long term lease of the whole facility
- v Reconfigured In-house option

The result of the appraisal was an interim recommendation that the reconfigured in-house option should be taken forward with the role of Bryngarw House being strengthened by becoming the primary council training and development centre for the Council. It was considered that a business plan should be developed to support this way forward over an initial two year period, with an intended implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006. The total revenue costs were not to exceed those of the current operation. This was approved by Cabinet in August 2005 and has formed the basis on which this plan has been developed.

## 7. Forward Plan

### 7.1 Training and Development

The key actions for the forthcoming two years at Bryngarw House are centred on the strengthening of the venue as the primary council training and development centre. It has been identified that the delivery rooms need upgrading to meet the needs of a modern training environment and that a more flexible approach is required with regards to the catering offered. Feedback from trainers and participants has been taken into consideration in determining the changes needed, as well as comparison with other venues such as the Innovation Centre.

#### a) Training Room Changes

##### **Traherne Suite**

- i Sliding door between the Traherne Suite and adjoining bar area to be replaced to minimise noise problems current encountered.
- ii Data points to be installed to enable access to the Internet and BCBC network.

##### **Conference Room**

- i Data points to be installed to enable access to the Internet and BCBC network.
- ii Ceiling mounted data projection equipment to be installed.
- iii DVD player and speakers to be provided.
- iv Room to be redecorated and equipped with new furniture.
- v Lighting to be improved.

##### **Lounge**

- i Data points to be installed to enable access to the Internet and BCBC network.

The cost of these changes is estimated to be £19,000 and will be completed using monies available from existing budgets, (minor works capital budget and Bryngarw House repairs and maintenance budget).

#### b) Operational changes

- ii Corporate Services have made a commitment to make Bryngarw House their primary training and development venue.
- iii In the interest of reducing the current administrative burden within Corporate Services and Bryngarw House associated with the booking of rooms (and any necessary cancellations) that Corporate Services block book their requirements at three monthly intervals. This will attract a fixed fee which is 20% below the current Bridgend County Borough Council hire rate. Other block bookings from other internal hirers on a similar basis would be considered for the same discount.

- iv Changes to the food and beverages offered will be made to meet the need for a lighter lunch and greater flexibility with regards to the provision of tea/coffee.
- v The Celtic Room will be made available for use for lunches associated with training.

Based on current Corporate Services' estimates this will secure an additional £9,500 per year in room rental. Whilst this increased use will bring a greater demand for catering services, the new catering package will generate less profit. The increased demand is therefore not expected to do any more than compensate for the loss of income on previous years that the new catering package will bring about.

## **7.2 Arts Provision**

The status of Bryngarw House as an arts venue will be increased over the next two years with the introduction of cultural evenings. These will be arranged during the autumn and spring of 2006/7 on a trial basis in conjunction with the Bridgend County Borough Council's Arts Development Officers. Experience from other venues suggests that new initiatives such as these require a period of time to become established. The aim for these evenings, in the first year of operation, is therefore for them to breakeven.

## **7.3 Country Park Links**

Even greater emphasis will be placed in the coming two years on linking the activities of the country park with the house. Regular meetings are now held to ensure that opportunities to offer a combined package to users are fully explored, implemented and promoted.

## **7.4 Promotion**

Increased emphasis will be placed on promoting the activities and events catered for at Bryngarw House. This will include the full use of existing Bridgend County Borough Council channels; the Bryngarw House Website; mailings to existing users and friends of Bryngarw; mailings to arts organisations across the county borough; and publicity at other Bridgend County Borough Council and community venues.

## **7.5 Building Maintenance**

It has been ten years since the refurbishment of the property and, although essential maintenance has been undertaken since this time, there is a strong probability that maintenance cost will increase in the coming years. The maintenance budget has therefore been increased to cater for this.

A condition survey has been requested from our Property Department, as part of Bridgend County Borough Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan, to enable a planned maintenance regime to be instigated.

## **7.6 Furnishings**

A relatively modest sum has been spent to date on the replacement of furniture. Some items in particular are beginning to show the signs of age and an increased sum has been allocated in 2007/08 to replace items in the public areas. This is considered essential to enable the retention of current quality standards with the Wales Tourist Board.

## **7.7 Further Developments**

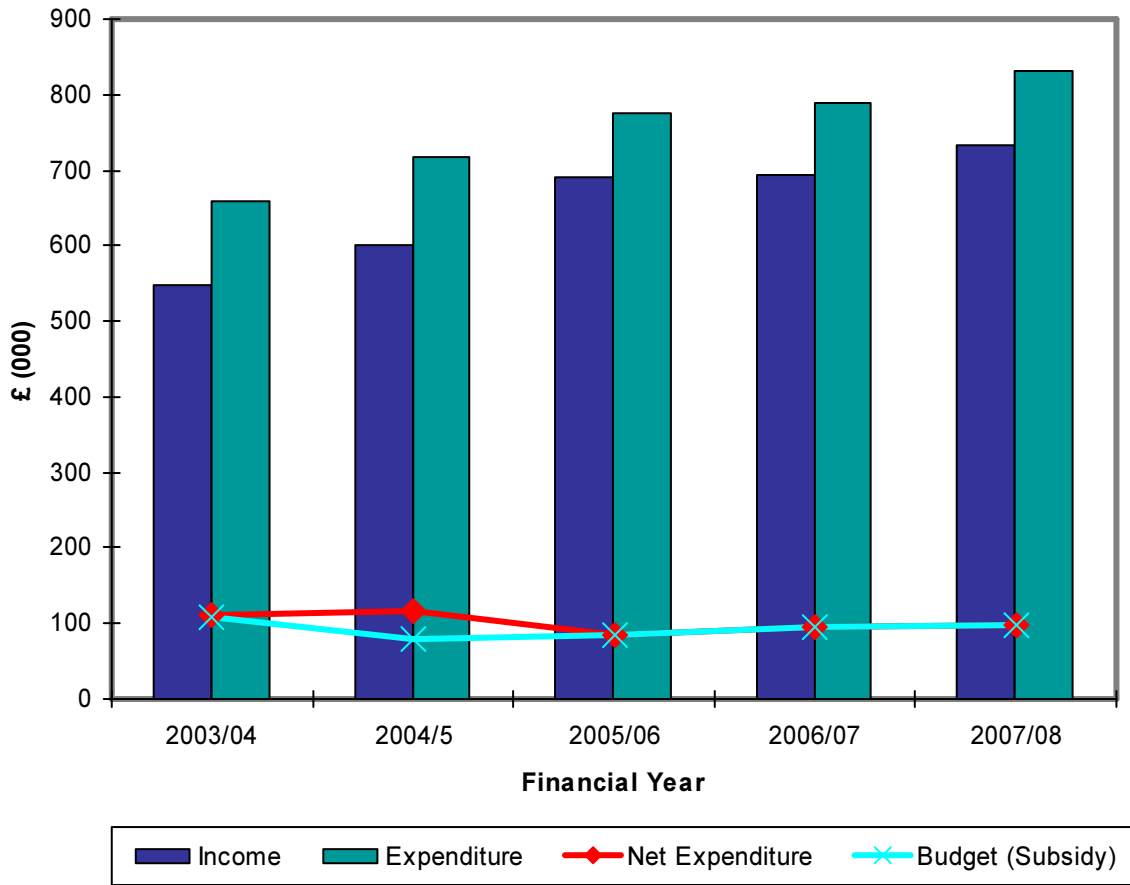
The demand for training and development accommodation by Bridgend County Borough Council exceeds that which is currently available at Bryngarw House. As approved by Cabinet in March 2006, a study will therefore be commissioned during 2006/07 to determine the feasibility of the adaptation of the house annex as a training and development centre. This development would require office accommodation, for the Bryngarw House manager and administrative staff, to be provided in the house and the conversion of the existing conference room into a fully accessible bedroom. The training and development centre would be fully serviced by the house including all catering provision.

Should this development take place within the timeframe of this business plan a revised plan will be written to reflect the consequential changes to the operation of the house.

## **7.8 Financial Projections**

The following graph provides an overview of the projected financial profile for the years 2006/7 and 2007/08. The previous three years have been included for comparison. Although the proposed additional training will result in increased revenue this has to be offset against the planned refurbishment costs. There are also a number of increases to unavoidable costs such as additional superannuation costs and utilities charges. In addition to this there will be a loss of income in 2006/07 due to the need to close the venue for a three week period to install a new kitchen ventilation system. The overall result of this is that the net expenditure for 2006/07 and 2007/08 is expected to mirror 2005/06 by coming in within budget in both years.

**Project Income and Expenditure 2006/07 and 2007/08**  
 (previous three years included for comparison)



Projected income and expenditure statements for the two years follow, together with monthly income projection statements against which the budget will be monitored.

## Bryngarw House Projected Income and Expenditure 2006/07

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Room Hire	51,300	Salaries & Wages	450,940
Functions & Events	178,500	Gas	15,000
Catering & Bar	321,000	Electricity	12,600
Accommodation	142,500	Rates (NNDR)	22,460
Subsidy	95,320	Water	7,150
		<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>57,210</b>
		Building Maintenance	25,000
		Furniture / Equipment	5,250
		Hired Equipment	2,250
		Equipment Maintenance	5,500
		Leasing Charges	6,120
		<b>Total Building/Equipment</b>	<b>44,120</b>
		Catering Provisions	108,160
		Bar Provisions	53,290
		Stock-take Fees	2,000
		<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>163,450</b>
		Cleaning Services	1,000
		Cleaning Materials	7,120
		Trade Refuse	3,600
		Laundry	15,450
		<b>Total Cleaning</b>	<b>27,170</b>
		Insurance	8,150
		Licences	2,500
		<b>Total Insurance/Licences</b>	<b>10,650</b>
		Computer Costs	1,250
		Postage	50
		Telephones	4,850
		Stationery	3,300
		<b>Total Office Sundries</b>	<b>9,450</b>
		<b>Promotion</b>	<b>8,000</b>
		<b>Artistes Payments</b>	<b>4,800</b>
		Medical Requisites	100
		Disposables	7,980
		Clothing / Uniforms	900
		Transport/Car Allowances	450
		Subscriptions	2,600
		Publications	800
		<b>Total Miscellaneous</b>	<b>12,830</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>788,620</u></b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>788,620</u></b>

## Bryngarw House Monthly Projected Income 2006/07

Operation	Room Hire	Functions & Events	Catering & Bar	Accommodation
	£	£	£	£
April	4,750	18,000	26,000	14,000
May	4,750	19,000	28,000	14,000
June	4,750	20,000	28,000	14,000
July	4,250	21,000	35,000	14,000
August	2,000	24,000	35,000	14,000
September	5,000	24,000	33,000	14,000
October	5,300	16,000	30,000	13,000
November	5,600	11,000	22,000	12,000
December	2,500	4,000	39,000	7,000
January	1,500	1,500	4,000	2,500
February	5,300	8,000	18,000	12,000
March	5,600	12,000	23,000	12,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,300</b>	<b>178,500</b>	<b>321,000</b>	<b>142,500</b>

### Notes on Financial Projections for 2006/07

1. Salaries calculated at actual cost inclusive of increments and additional superannuation.
2. Rates (NNDR) at actual re-valued cost.
3. Utilities at 05/06 spend plus inflation, with additional provision made of expected gas price increase.
4. Building maintenance increased to reflect actual current yearly spend.
5. Promotion increased by 20% on previous year spends to enable additional promotional activities.
6. Growth provided for artistes fees to trial cultural evening events.
7. All other costs are at 05/06 levels plus inflation allowance of 3%.
8. Anticipated additional income from increased room bookings for training and development (£9,500) and income from new cultural evenings (£1,800) has been included.
9. Other income expected to increase by 3% inflation.

## Bryngarw House Projected Income and Expenditure 2007/08

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Room Hire	54,400	Salaries & Wages	468,310
Functions & Events	187,450	Gas	15,500
Catering & Bar	339,200	Electricity	13,000
Accommodation	152,500	Rates (NNDR)	23,150
Subsidy	98,180	Water	7,350
		<b>Total Utilities</b>	<b>59,000</b>
		Building Maintenance	30,000
		Furniture / Equipment	8,580
		Hired Equipment	2,550
		Equipment Maintenance	6,550
		Leasing Charges	6,120
		<b>Total Building/Equipment</b>	<b>53,800</b>
		Catering Provisions	114,450
		Bar Provisions	55,770
		Stock-take Fees	2,050
		<b>Total Provisions</b>	<b>172,270</b>
		Cleaning Services	1,050
		Cleaning Materials	7,350
		Trade Refuse	3,750
		Laundry	15,900
		<b>Total Cleaning</b>	<b>28,050</b>
		Insurance	8,250
		Licences	2,550
		<b>Total Insurance/Licences</b>	<b>10,800</b>
		Computer Costs	1,300
		Postage	50
		Telephones	5,000
		Stationery	4,250
		<b>Total Office Sundries</b>	<b>10,600</b>
		<b>Promotion</b>	<b>10,750</b>
		<b>Artistes Payments</b>	<b>4,900</b>
		Medical Requisites	100
		Disposables	8,200
		Clothing / Uniforms	950
		Transport/Car Allowances	470
		Subscriptions	2,680
		Publications	850
		<b>Total Miscellaneous</b>	<b>13,250</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>831,730</u></b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>831,730</u></b>

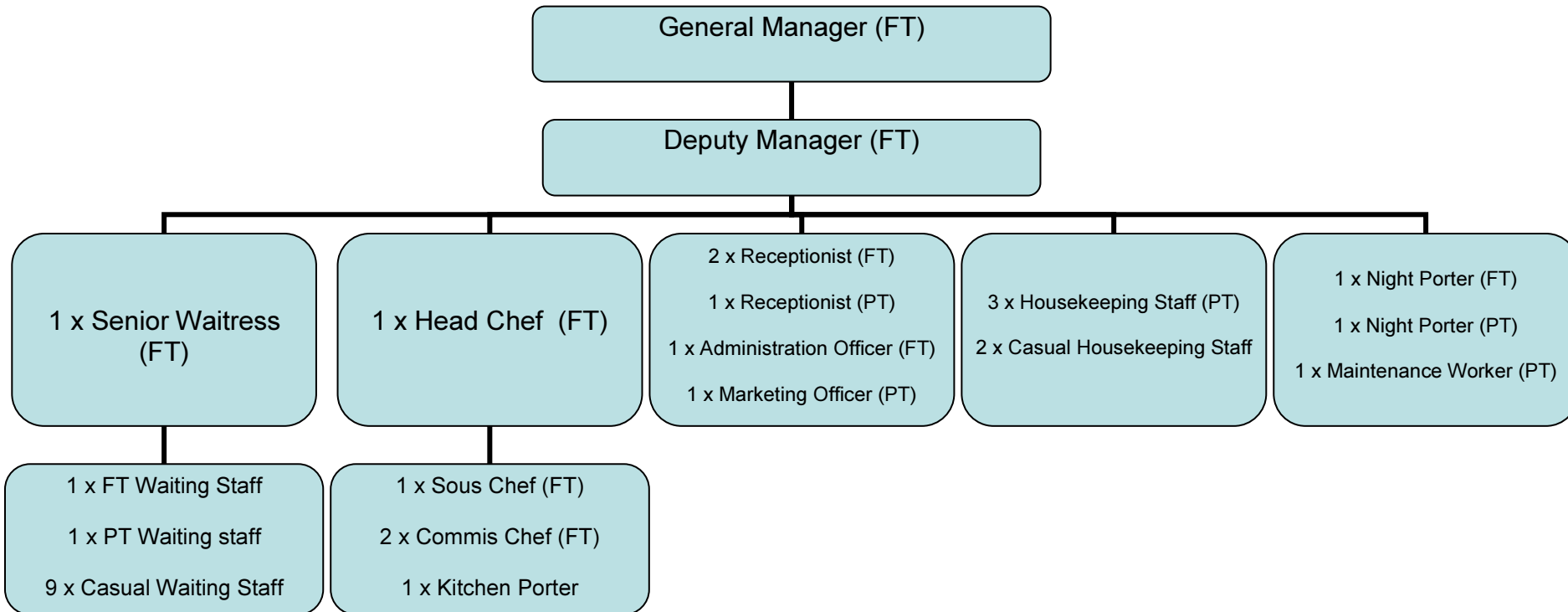
## Bryngarw House Monthly Projected Income 2007/08

Operation	Room Hire	Functions & Events	Catering & Bar	Accommodation
	£	£	£	£
April	4,850	18,500	26,750	14,500
May	4,850	19,600	28,900	14,500
June	4,850	20,600	28,900	14,500
July	4,350	21,650	36,150	14,500
August	2,050	24,700	36,150	14,500
September	5,100	24,700	34,000	14,500
October	5,400	16,500	31,000	13,400
November	5,700	11,350	22,650	12,400
December	2,550	4,100	40,150	7,200
January	3,600	5,150	12,350	7,700
February	5,400	8,250	18,500	12,400
March	5,700	12,350	23,700	12,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54,400</b>	<b>187,450</b>	<b>339,200</b>	<b>152,500</b>

### Notes on Financial Projections for 2006/07

1. Salaries calculated at actual cost inclusive of increments plus 3% allowance for inflation.
2. Building maintenance increased by 20% to enable increased maintenance regime.
3. Furniture and equipment budget increased by two thirds to enable replacement of items.
3. Promotion increased by a third to enable additional promotional activities.
4. All other costs are at 06/07 levels plus inflation allowance of 3%.
5. Income is expected to increase by 3% inflation.

## Bryngarw House Organisation Structure



FT – Full-time  
PT – Part-time