# **Events – A Financial View**

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For an event, there are 4 aspects to the financial side of things which should be considered:

1. Budgeting
2. Reservations
3. At the Event – collecting money and paying expenses
4. After the Event - completing the event report

This article is intended to give guidance and some hints and tips based on my experience of doing the above for a number of events.

Please do also reference the Event Resources provided by Practical Drachenwald, such as the Budget Builder online Google Sheet.

# **Budgeting**

The starting point for any budgeting should be the aim that your event breaks even, or a small surplus. The SCA is an event-based economy.

It’s best to take a pessimistic view on the number of attendees, initially and base your budget around a worst case scenario - if you get lots of bookings you can expand the scope but if you aim too high and only get a handful of people then you end up cancelling or losing money, both of which are bad. Events often set their break-even attendee number too high, trading affordability against the risk of losing money.

If the event is something that runs every year, then base your initial estimate of attendee numbers on the previous 3- or 4-years numbers.

If it is a new event, then see if you can find out the number of people who have attended similar events in the past – talk to people you know who have run events, or to the regional or Kingdom exchequers who keep records of reported numbers of attendees at all the events. In Insulae Draconis, there is an Events Council available to help advise you.

For Kingdom level events such as Coronation or University, good assumptions to make are 60-80 for University and 80 -150 for Coronation, 80-120 for Crown Tourney. More local events may only get 20-40 attendees. Of course numbers will vary depending on location (period locations are always more popular), whether Royalty is attending, whether something is going to happen (e.g. a knighting or similar), and the theme of the event.

Once you have found your site (See the Venue Finder if you are looking for a site) and confirmed costs and booking conditions (if possible get written confirmation of the charges), you have the basis for working out your budget. Remember to NOT agree a contract with the venue before your finance committee has agreed to the event. This also applies to deposits. This creates a time pressure so make sure you know when you can get agreement for your event.

There are two types of cost to an event:

Fixed costs – e.g. your venue hire cost. These are costs that will remain the same no matter your attendance number, that £2000 hire will still be £2000 if you have 40 people attend or 80 people attend.

Variable costs – e.g. the food budget. These are costs that will change depending on your attendance. E.g. if your feast is £10 per head and you need to make sure everyone is fed, 40 people will be £400 on your budget, 80 people will be £800.

To get site costs per person take the costs of the site and divide this by the minimum number of people you expect to attend. Note that for scout camps very often there is an element of cost for the site, then an additional charge per person which varies depending on whether that person is using a bunk or camping.

This charge per person needs to be included in the site cost per person. Also remember that for Coronation and Crown Tourney you must charge a non-member surcharge of £2/3Euros minimum for each non-member who attends. It is polite to present this as a member discount.

Now you need to consider what meals you are going to provide and the costs associated with them. As a rough guide, I would allow £1-£2 per person/meal for Friday night meal, breakfast on Saturday/Sunday and Saturday lunch and £6-£10 for the feast depending on how elaborate it is. This gives an overall allowance for food of

£10 - £18 per person. Discuss this with your cook-in-charge as local food costs will vary, and with inflation, can increase sharply.

Lastly you need to consider what other expenses may be involved. For example have you decided to hire a marquee for the feast because the hall isn’t big enough; are you

hiring showers/toilets because the site has no facilities etc – remember also that you may need to buy toilet paper, cleaning items, rubbish sacks, string, rope and other bits and pieces. Whatever figure you come up with here, also needs to be divided between your minimum number of attendees to get a cost per person.

The Practical Drachenwald Budget-Builder has the ability to model high, medium and low budget costs, providing you with a range of ticket prices.

# **Reservations**

The Reservations Steward Guide is now available.

For each event a reservation steward should be appointed to keep a record of who is registered for the event and to collect the money.

From my own experience, I have found it easier if the reservations steward is also the Shire Exchequer, as they can then pay any cheques for registrations straight into the Shire bank account. Payment for events is now primarily electronic, but you can expect some attendees to pay cash on the door, or more rarely, cheque. The Reservations Steward Guide overs this in detail, and there are policy clauses embedded in the Insulae Draconis Finance Policy.

Once you start receiving registrations make sure you keep a record of all the people who have registered and who has paid what amount, and also all the expenses paid out, including the receipts for these. The Practical Drachenwald Reservations tool helps with this.

If you are using Excel for this which makes it a very quick and easy task. Think carefully about what you may need to know for the event and set up columns in Excel to make it easy to get the data. For example do you need to know how many beds have been reserved? If so have a column into which you can enter a “Y” or an “N” for bed reservations. I have found the following information to be useful for most events:

1. SCA name – if you plan on doing sign-in based on a list in alphabetical order of SCA name then DO NOT put in people’s titles.
2. Mundane name, surname first so that it’s easy to generate an alphabetical list for sign-in
3. Whether a bed is reserved
4. Whether person is camping
5. Whether a person has booked meals/feast
6. Any allergies
7. Email address
8. Payment made
9. Member or non-member

It’s very useful if you know w few tricks with Excel for counting and sorting, because it saves a lot of time! Excel can count up specific entries for you – e.g. the number of entries with a “Y” against beds for example (use the “COUNTIF” function), and can sort data into order for you (select all the data in your spreadsheet, then use the menu option Data -> Sort and then select the column on which you want the data sorted)

It is strongly recommended that you use a disposable gmail or similarly-provided email account to receive, and correspond in regard to, booking queries. This can be linked to the PD Event Tools. The Reservations Tool uses a Google Form to directly enter information into your reservations spreadsheet. Alternately, services such as Eventbrite can handle private communication.

If you need to contact people bear in mind that people may not like others to see their email address. If you send out an email to many recipients you can stop the list of addresses being visible by using the “BCC” option – send the

email to yourself and put all the other email addresses as “BCC”. To do this in Outlook, choose the menu options View -> BCC Field. One consideration if you choose to use this, though, is that if the recipient of the message does a “Reply to All”, rather than just a “Reply”, then all those you sent the message to will see the response!

You can generate bulk correspondence from your google sheet following the instructions here: <https://bit.ly/40RL1vv>

Alternately, contact the Practical Drachenwald Team who can help set you up.

If you are using Microsoft, the Office suite has integrated its systems, and you can auto-generate and sending messages in Microsoft Word. Word now has Mailings as an option, and is easy to follow, including the ability to generate email lists on the fly.

# **At the Event**

There are advisory notes in the Reservations Steward Guide, but it is worth reading the following, and advising the reservations team on the door.

Make sure you have a sign-in sheet with all the names of those who have reserved! It’s easier to find people to mark them off if this list is in order (e.g. alphabetic by either SCA name or mundane surname).

Make sure you know who has paid in advance, and who still has to pay, and how much they have to pay! You need to get all attendees to sign the waiver. **This can be done via your sign-in sheet so long as the waiver text is included on every page**. The text is available at <http://www.sca.org/docs/waivers.html> . Also make sure you have printed lists for everything – bed allocations, pickups/drop-offs, food allergies etc.

It is also imperative that a copy of the Code of Conduct is available and visible at the sign-in desk.

Keep a note of how much each person actually pays on the day so that you can check how much money you have collected against what you thought you had collected. Pay the money into the bank as soon as possible after the event, and make sure that the money is kept in a safe place during the event.

During the event, make sure you get receipts from anyone who has paid out for items for the event such as food or other supplies. Money should be reimbursed by cheque from the Shire bank account so that you have a record of the payment. If the payment has to be made in cash from event funds (this should only be done if there are no alternatives) make absolutely certain it is recorded in the event records, and that the recipient signs a receipt to say he/she has received the payment.

# **After the Event**

When the event is over, you need to complete an event report. This details all the money you have received from attendees and all the expenses associated with the event. The form is available at [http://www.drachenwald.sca.org/files/exchequer/index.html.](http://www.drachenwald.sca.org/files/exchequer/index.html) It is an Excel form, and there are two parts to it. The first sheet should be completed to show your income and expenses for the event. The second sheet should be completed to show the number of attendees (members and non-members). The event report should be completed within 30 days of the event if possible, and definitely within 60 days.

Once completed it should be signed by the event autocrat and the shire exchequer (or seneschal if the exchequer is unavailable) and sent to your regional exchequer and/or Kingdom exchequer. The shire exchequer should retain a copy along with all the receipts relating to the event.

Remember for Crown Tourney, Coronation and Kingdom University events 50% of the profit must be given to the Kingdom. For Crown Tourney and Coronation events held outside Aarnimetsä and Nordmark £2/3 Euros per non-member attendee must be paid to Kingdom so that Drachenwald’s commitment to pay the non-member surcharge to SCA Inc once per year can be met.

For Insulae Draconis, a similar arrangements is made for the Coronet Tournaments – either one or two a year due to the nine month reign, as well as bespoke Principality-led, or sponsored events such as the Big Summer event (formerly Raglan Fair, now OrmÞthing) or joint- with another branch.

That’s all there is to it! From my own experience, I have found that it is relatively easy to sort out the financial side of the event and complete the event report, so long as you keep records as you go along.