

Administration Committee

Lighting Big Ben for World Aids Day

A note by the Director General of Facilities

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to seek the views of the Committee on a proposal to light the Clock Tower red on World Aids Day 1 December 2010.

Background

2. From time to time Parliament is approached to support campaigns of various kinds and occasionally it has done so. For instance, we have participated in various 'lights out' initiatives promoting climate change awareness which have had wide ranging support and were entirely non political. But such circumstances are rare and when declining last year to join the 10:10 Carbon Campaign the House of Commons Commission decided that, as a matter of policy, the House should avoid lending its name to particular campaigns, in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

The World Aids Day Campaign

3. This campaign is designed to raise awareness of the continuing AIDS epidemic by lighting famous iconic landmarks red on World Aids day, 1 December 2010. The All Party Group on HIV/AIDS is proposing that the House joins the campaign by altering the lighting on the Clock Tower for a period of time that evening. Other landmarks around the world are already signed up.
4. Technically, this would involve placing red film over the existing lighting. Installing the necessary mounting plates would incur a cost of at least £500.
5. The Serjeant at Arms advises that there are no security implications, although the Metropolitan Police Service should be informed if the Committee agrees to support this campaign.

Action for the Committee

6. The Committee is invited to consider whether or not the World Aids Day initiative is of such exceptional nature that the House should support it and absorb the cost involved.

*John Borley
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