



Grounds & Environmental Committee

Date: 5 December 2022

Title: Fees and charges for pavilion hire, pitch hire and cemetery services from 1 April 2023

Purpose of the Report:

To consider a zero increase to the previously agreed fee structures.

Contact Officer:

Ian Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Corporate Objective/s	To provide great public open spaces with varied opportunities for sport and leisure and to exceed in delivering cemetery and allotment services.	
Implications:		
Financial	Yes	The proposal will see a zero increase in charges.
Human Resources	No	None
Operational/Service delivery	No	None
Procedural/Legal	No	None
Risk/Health and Safety	No	None
Environmental Aims	No	None

1 RECOMMENDATION

Should members be minded, the proposal is:

- 1.1 To consider no increase to the fees and charges for pavilion hire, pitch hire and cemetery services from 1 April 2023.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In December 2019, the following fees and charges for pavilion hire were approved by the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee:

Pages Park Pavilion £18.00 per hour
£12.00 per hour off-peak (Mon-Fri 1pm-4pm)
Play Café £18.00 per session

Linslade Memorial Pavilion £18.50 per hour
£12.00 per hour off-peak (Mon-Fri 1pm-4pm)
Mentmore Under Fives £18.50 per session

Astral Park Sports & Community Centre £28.00 per hour
£18.50 per hour off-peak (Mon-Fri 1pm-4pm)

- 2.2 In addition to the above, a new initiative was agreed to support the use of facilities by charities, voluntary, community and other not-for-profit organisations:

*Organisations/groups which are not-for-profit may apply for a discount of 50% on **either standard rates or the discounted off-peak rate**, subject to the following:*

- *The group must be comprised mainly of Leighton-Linslade residents*
- *The group must be a not for profit organisation*
- *The group must be able to demonstrate a clear community benefit*
- *Each group may have a maximum of one discounted session per week, other than in exceptional circumstances*
- *A maximum of 2 discounted bookings **per week, per facility** will be permitted **outside of the specified off-peak sessions (1pm-4pm weekdays) which are unlimited.***
- *Bookings are subject to availability and on a first come, first served basis.*
- *The council reserves the right to cancel future bookings if the group breaches hire terms and conditions.*

- 2.3 The new fee structure was effective from 1 April 2020 albeit the pandemic meant that facilities did not operate for many months.

- 2.4 The new fee structure has managed to operate for an entire 12 -month period. The budgeted income from pavilion hire for the financial year 2022/23 is £45,612(average £3,801 per month).

- 2.5 The emerging draft budget for the financial year 2023/24 assumes a zero increase in fees and charges.

3 UPDATE

- 3.1 Feedback from discussions with regular hirers has identified that many individuals, businesses, and groups are still struggling to resume their activities. Critical issues identified include:

3.1.1 Numbers attending are down, potentially restricting income for payable activities.

3.1.2 For previous Astral Park hirers, the need to book the entire hall rather than half or a quarter of the hall, as in the past, means an increased cost.

3.2 Hirers are keen to resume their activities for the benefit of the community. Still, the changes brought about by the pandemic are clearly having an adverse impact on the viability of doing so.

3.3 The Town Council recognises the benefit to residents of resuming community activities and seeks to support this as far as practicable.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 It is recommended that the fundamental fee structure agreed by Committee in December 2019 be retained, as this was based on a significant amount of research and consideration.

4.2 The proposed zero increase will not only help ensure that community activities can continue to the benefit of residents but also aims to ensure that regular hirers feel empowered to take the risk of committing to venue hire by reducing their financial liability whilst also ensuring that a proportion of venue hire income can be generated during this challenging period.

End.