

Committee: Open Spaces

Date: 6 February 2023

Title: Schedule of charges

Purpose of Report

To consider and recommend the Schedule of Charges to Full Council including the proposed football and cricket club.

Recommendation:

Members resolve to recommend to Full Council the proposed Schedule of Charges outlined in Appendix 9B including any variations proposed at the meeting.

Background:

1. In February 2023, the Open Spaces Committee agreed the Schedule of Charges for 1 April 2023. This is a requirement for all councils to do so ahead of the new financial year.
2. The fees that the council resolved to be charged for the financial year 2023/24 are shown on **Appendix 9A**.
3. For the financial year 2023-24 the Office for National Statistics gave a Consumer Price Index increase of **6.7%** for the 12-month period ending 30 September 2023. It is worth noting that the Retail Price Index at the end of September 2023 was **8.9%**. This figure tends to be used in contractual arrangements.
4. Where appropriate any increases have been rounded up or down to the nearest pound.

Report:

5. Under Agenda Item 6, Minutes of the Recreation Ground Users Group, the group considered the three options, and their recommendation to the Open Spaces committee is to use the calculation of pitch fees that are shown for Option 2 (**Appendix 9C**).
6. Any further decisions that were made in the course of a debate will be applied to the finalised Schedule of Charges a draft of which has been included as **Appendix 9B**.
7. The photocopying fees would include the actual cost plus a nominal amount for administration (staff time, electricity and paper) costs.
8. Room hire at North Street is no longer relevant as the Town Council are vacating the building on 31st March 2023. may not be for much longer.
9. The last change in Market Fees was agreed at Town Council at their meeting held on 21 February 2017 (Minute No. 185A) with a start date of 1 April 2017.

Despite this it is proposed to Members that there not be an increase in fees for the forthcoming year. We have seen an increasing amount of interest in the market and this has included some vendors wishing to use the Market House on days other than Thursday.

10. In the past, the Town Council has also allowed Market Traders to operate for no fee for a set period during the months of January to March which was called 'kipper week'. Members may wish to consider setting a period of no fees for some point between January to March 2023. This week could be used not only to thank the existing stall holders but to also be used to try and attract new ones.
11. A fair usually visits Ilminster twice a year around June and October. The current fee is £500.00 per visit, which includes the use of water and electricity, and a £500.00 deposit charged and Members resolved to continue at this rate for the current financial year.
12. The Human Circus fee of £150.00 (£50.00 per day) with a £500.00 deposit and Members resolved to continue at this rate for the current financial year. The organisers of this have indicated they are unlikely to attend this year but would like to make a final decision later in the year. A suggestion has been made that a small charge of £10 per caravan be made.
13. It is proposed that any market or retail fairs be charged at the same rates as apply to the Market House and if there are any events that require access to utilities this would be considered on a case by case basis.
14. Members have already agreed that the tennis courts remain free of use to the community. Members may wish to consider a charge for commercial businesses operating on the tennis courts in which case this can be added to the Schedule before it goes to Full Council.
15. As identified last year, officers receive requests for the use of the open spaces on the recreation ground, Britten's Field, Winterhay play area and West Crescent. As a result of the debate that took place in 2022, delegated authority was given to Officers to manage the day-to-day operation of the council's services, buildings, land and all other assets for which the council has responsibility, in line with the budgets and policies approved by Members. This is to include the overseeing of all events and activities that take place on the council land.
16. As a result of this delegation, officers have on a number of occasions informed Members of requests to use council property in order to seek their opinions. A decision has then been made taking these opinions into account. This has led to a more efficient method of operating and has increased the reputation of the council. It is recommended to add a time limit of 4 hours to the fees.
17. With regards to cemetery charges, it is proposed that the charges be increased around 8.9% and then rounded up or down to the nearest pound. The

AGENDA ITEM 9

Administration Officers have looked at charges in the surrounding area and Ilminster Town Council's compare favourably to them.

18. Members resolve to recommend to Full Council the proposed Schedule of Charges outlined in Appendix 9B including any variations proposed at the Open Spaces meeting.

Julie Earp
Deputy Town Clerk
February 2024