



**Title of meeting:** Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 5 February 2021

**Subject:** Parks, Seafront and Events Fees and Charges

**Report by:** Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision** **No**

**Full Council decision:** **No**

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To seek approval for annual changes to the fees and charges levied for the use of Parks, Recreation and Seafront facilities for the financial year 2021/ 22.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 That the fees and charges be approved in accordance with the attached schedules (Appendix 1 - Schedule A).**

**3. Background**

3.1 In line with Audit Commission recommendations and Financial Rules the fees and charges have been reviewed and market rates applied where appropriate. In the majority of cases a CPI inflation rate of 1.5% has been applied as advised by Finance. Please refer to Appendix 1 Charges for 2021/22 for the proposed list of charges. As in previous years, this report covers a number of service areas the details of which are outlined in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Service directly manages advertising sites in the form of both Poster Sites and Entrance to City Sites located at strategic points across the city, to capture over 200,000 Portsmouth residents, 6,500 city businesses and almost 23,000 students and to connect with our tourist and visitors.

3.3 There are 34 A1 poster board sites and 7 "entrance to city" boards all of which have recently been replaced and repaired to ensure they are of a high quality and clearly visible. The proactive work with Parks and Opens Spaces services will continue to encourage the use of poster sites for advertising by actively discouraging flyposting and stickering across our parks and open spaces. This enforcement supports the promotion of the poster sites but more importantly



- helps to make the city cleaner and a more attractive environment for residents and visitors.
- 3.4 During the pandemic and for most of this year, the posters sites have been used to support public health messaging, as the commercial opportunities reduced due to the pandemic. It was important to use the sites to inform the community on the evolving national and local picture. The public health messaging this year has included NHS Rainbow posters, Hive posters and Covid-19 posters of various types as messaging changed along with government restrictions and tiering, Shop online, Portsmouth We Create Market and Go shop, Go Eat, Go Safely.
- 3.5 In support of the cultural and creative industries, the *We Believe Arts trail* project was developed for those freelance artists that did not qualify for financial support from the earliest Government Covid-19 schemes. This project, led by Portsmouth Creates, was financed through Crowdfunder and matched by Portsmouth City Council, to provide micro commissions for 20 local artists to produce pieces of work for the three arts trails in open spaces across the City, in Old Portsmouth, Milton and part of Southsea Seafront.
- 3.6 Portsmouth City Council provided over 60 poster cases and 11 entrance to the city poster sites free of charge and also administered the scheme. This use of poster cases as arts trails not only visually improved areas of the City, this was an opportunity for artists to increase their exposure to a wider audience as well as encouraging Portsmouth residents to be active by walking or cycling these trails whilst taking their daily exercise. This project also gave Portsmouth residents that do not usually engage with cultural activities, access to artwork across their City. The artwork will become part of the Portsmouth museum Covid-19 collection as a legacy and commentary on life throughout 2020.
- 3.7 However for this year and in order to support business make a bigger impact the recommendation is to increase poster charges by CPI, but for the Entrance to City boards to remain at the same price as per last year, to encourage further bookings of these sites .
- 3.8 The recommendation for Beach Huts for the financial year 2021/22 is to maintain the annual hire charging schedule and to increase annual hire by CPI only. Following the annual internal and external surveys of three beach hut sites, a maintenance programme was agreed and the more significant areas of work were delivered across all these sites.
- 3.9 The huts at Eastney had extensive work during 2020 including, replacement sides and fronts fitted on 9 huts, fascias replaced, numerous threshold repairs and 2 new doors fitted including frames. A variety of repairs were completed of general nature such as replacement of hinges and hasps on doors together with realigning and planing. Repairs to concrete hardstanding at front of huts by an outside contractor will be completed when the weather improves.



- 3.10 At the St George's site work is ongoing following the replacement of all gables which were replaced with plastic fascia to improve longevity due to weathering. Other works have included a variety of shiplap repairs to front and side elevations and new posts and 4 new doors fitted including frame and threshold repairs.
- 3.11 The Lumps Fort Beach huts were found to be generally in good order due to the completion of capital investment project last season but there has been a variety of repairs to doors including replacement hinges and hasps together with realigning and planing. A significant investment has been made of 8 doors on huts including frame and threshold repairs. Work is still ongoing at Eastney and St Georges due to delay in shiplap delivery and PAT testing of electricity sockets on all sites is due in early 2021.
- 3.12 Leisure card holder discount will remain at 40% discount, to continue to encourage use from lower income families and the weekly huts will be continue to be marketed to the Leisure Card database.
- 3.13 We have experienced a rise in the number of weekly beach huts queries, however this has resulted in only an average take up of the weekly beach huts. Understandably their use has been restricted by the national regulations at various times throughout the year. Huts have not been fully booked this year but have provided a modest level of income and income targets in the current financial year have been adjusted accordingly.
- 3.14 Following a benchmarking exercises of other similar authorities in Hampshire, Sussex and Dorset, our charges seem reasonable and have been increased by the CPI only. However, based on a cost recovery basis and due to increased cleaning costs, the proposed low season charges have been increased by 20%, which still remains in line with other regional fees and charges.
- 3.15 As agreed in the equivalent report in January 2020 Round Tower fees and charges have been successfully trialed. Following this trial we would like to suggest the following charges for hire of this space for 2021/22:-

Day hire 9am - 5pm	£150.00
Half day hire, minimum hire is 4 hrs	£ 75.00
Evening hire 5pm - 9pm	£150.00
Hotwalls Studio artist per day	£ 35.00

These rates are considered to be very reasonable and reflect the current environment of the building. If further improvements can be made to the building then these charges will be reviewed.

- 3.16 The recommendation is to increase fees and charges for hire of parks and open spaces for of 1.5% (figures rounded).



- 3.17 The city council introduced permits for commercial fitness training activities in 2016. The administration, compliance and enforcement of this permit scheme needs to be reviewed and a separate report will be presented to the Cabinet Member at a future date once sufficient benchmarking and necessary research has been completed. This may include recommendation for amendment to the approved charges.
- 3.18 Football, cricket and rugby pitch hire charges are highly competitive with neighbouring authority charges and the recommendation is to increase fees and charges by the CPI inflation rate which is 1.5% (figures rounded).
- 3.19 Restrictions applied throughout the Covid-19 pandemic that have significantly impacted on full use of some sports facilities and at times, any use at all. The necessary adjustments have been made to pavilions in accordance with Government and national sporting body recommendations so that where bookings and use is permitted, teams are able to use them in conjunction with their own risk assessments and protocols.
- 3.20 Where use of pavilion facilities are not required for a pitch booking, a 40% reduction is applied to the full hire charge. The city council need to respond to changing requirements as a consequence of Covid-19 restrictions and whilst it is not possible to foresee all of these at the time of setting the charges, it is probable that pavilion use may continue to be limited to toilet and welfare facilities only and where a sports attendant is still required to attend before and after matches. If this should be the case, it is recommended that a 20% reduction is applied to the full hire charge.
- 3.21 Great Salterns Golf Course continues to produce a net income for the council. Golfers pay for their round either by purchasing a season ticket, or by purchasing a 'pay-and-play' green fee.
- 3.22 Golf course operations and facilities have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The negative impacts have included periods of course closure and restrictions on the numbers of players allowed per tee-time once permitted to re-open. The positive outcomes have included course availability at times other sports have not been permitted due to the nature of the sport, leading to increased demand on tee-time availability.
- 3.23 Between April to December 2020, the course has been closed for a total of 76 days (just under 11 weeks). Despite this, in these 9 months, there were just 785 fewer rounds played than the whole 12 month period of 2019/20 (Apr-Mar) and 1,500 fewer rounds played than the whole 12 month period of 2018/19 (Apr-Mar).
- 3.24 The lockdown that is effective as of 4 January 2021 will now impact on the final usage figures but it is clear that demand for the sport has resurged as a consequence of Covid-19 and the course has served as a highly valued



- recreational facility when Government restrictions have allowed. It is apparent that casual player participation, using the course on a 'pay and play' basis, has seen a significant increase with this increasing by approximately 25% on the previous 2 years.
- 3.25 The course operates a 'no refunds' policy on the sale of season tickets. This was temporarily revoked where a small number of players had purchased a season ticket in advance of 1 April 2020 before the course was closed due to lockdown restrictions that applied from 24 March to 18 May. Once the course was permitted to re-open, the approved full year charges were revised to reflect that a full year's use of season tickets would not be possible and that future closure remained a possibility. All season ticket sales were made on the basis that a 'no refunds' policy would be applied thereafter.
- 3.26 Despite the reduced playing period season tickets would be valid for, sales have been strong with 63 new members joining alongside the existing member renewals, further supporting the view that the course charges represent very good value in the local golf market, despite the uncertainties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.27 Season ticket holders help support the stability of the course operations and it is in the city council's interest to retain their loyalty and payment commitment. It is recognised that the course availability has been disrupted throughout 2020 and has continued into 2021. There is currently no indication of when the current restrictions will be eased to allow play to resume.
- 3.28 It is recommended that the consequences of the most recent Government restrictions are reflected in the setting of this year's charges and that 2020/21 season ticket prices are held for this year and will apply to new season ticket applications only. Existing season ticket holders will be offered the opportunity to renew at the reduced charge that applied as of 18 May 2020. These two sets of charges are shown in Appendix A.
- 3.29 It is recommended to increase all green fees by £1 (as shown in Schedule A).
- 3.30 The course management and grounds maintenance teams involved at Great Salterns golf course have incorporated all necessary restrictions and necessary adjustments throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to meet the increased demand to play, retain high course standards and help maintain player satisfaction in as safe environment as is possible.
- 3.31 The course continues to offer a flexible booking system that is adaptable to changing outcomes of COVID-19 restrictions and maximise play (1, 2 and 4-balls) with the recommended timed spacing on the course to maintain safe distancing.



**4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 Charges have been reviewed and adjusted, where appropriate, to reflect the rates currently being charged in the market, maximising income, but also ensuring value for money and retaining discounted rates where possible to charitable organisations and Leisure card holders.
- 4.2 Site fees have been reviewed to ensure that a commercially appropriate fee for the hire of PCC land is charged.

**5. Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment report is attached.

**6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The setting of fees and charges is governed by the City Council's Financial Rules, Part 7, Rules T1 to T4. Specifically, Financial Rule T2 requires that fees and charges must be reviewed at least annually and be consistent with Council policies and strategies and in accordance with Cabinet and Council budget decisions and policies as relevant.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

- 7.1 The fees and charges have been reviewed taking into account the need to maximise income whilst ensuring that services remain competitive.

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Signed by:  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services**

**Appendices:**

- Aooendix 1 - Parks and Seafront Fees and Charges
- Appendix 2 - Integrated Impact Assessment

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:



Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/  
rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by:  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development**