

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

Head of Service/Contact:	Amardip Healy, Chief Legal Officer
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	Annex 1 - Fees and Charges for Events on Epsom & Walton Downs 2019 – 2021 Annex 2 - Fees and Charges for Memorial Items on Epsom & Walton Downs 2019 -2021
Other available papers (not attached):	Event Management Strategy agreed on 27 June 2011 Charging Policy for Events agreed on 28 June 2012 Review of Events on the Downs agreed on 23 January 2014 Review of Fees and Charges For Events agreed on 20 January 2016 Memorial Policy For Epsom & Walton Downs agreed on 5 October 2016 Review of Fees and Charges For Events on the Downs 18 January 2017

Report summary

This report details a review of the Fees and Charges for Events on the Downs, Metal Detecting Licences and Memorial Items.

Recommendation (s)

That the Conservators:

- (1) Approve the Fees and Charges for Events on the Downs at Annex 1.**
- (2) Approve the Fees and Charges for Memorial Items on the Downs at Annex 2.**

1 Events Background

- 1.1 On the 14 October 2009, the Conservators agreed an Event Management Strategy for the Downs. This was reviewed on 27 June 2011.

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- 1.2 On the 28 June 2012, the Conservators agreed to the introduction of a new charging policy for events on the Downs and that a review of the policy would be reported back in January 2014.
- 1.3 At the meeting of the Conservators on 17 October 2013, it was agreed that a working party would meet to review the current Events Management Strategy and the Fees and Charges policy in light of the rise in the number of sportives occurring on the Downs.
- 1.4 On the 23 January 2014, the Conservators agreed to changes in the Fees and Charges Policy to help address the issues related to an increase in sportives on the Downs.
- 1.5 On the 20 January 2016, the Conservators agreed to minor changes in the Fees and Charges Policy.
- 1.6 On the 18 January 2017 the Conservators agreed that the level of hire charge was to increase from £1 to £1.50 per participant across all relevant categories subject to a 50% discount for charitable and community events. The cost for using car parks on the Downs increased from £100 to £150 for those events that require 50 car parking spaces or more. The minimum charge for filming on the Downs for larger scale projects increased from £250 per day to £300.
- 1.7 On the 19 April 2017 the Conservators considered a policy to regulate small group sessions on the Downs. Following consideration, the Conservators expressed the view that small group activities should not be permitted on the Downs due to their potential negative impact upon the condition of the Downs and existing activities. Accordingly, the Conservators refused to approve the proposed policy to regulate small group sessions on the Downs.
- 1.8 Over the past 2 years The Downs Manager has continued to receive a number of requests from various clubs, organisations and individuals asking if they can use the Downs for a small scale one-off event. The existing policy does not specifically cover small groups wishing to use the Downs on an adhoc basis.
- 1.9 Following a review of the existing policy, this report proposes some changes to the Fees and Charges for Events on the Downs.

2 Metal Detecting Licence Background

- 2.1 At the Conservators meeting on 17 October 2013, a decision was agreed to increase the annual charge of a metal detecting licence from £20 to £35. This reflected the fact that there had not been any increase for a number of years and the demand for permits remained high.
- 2.2 At their meeting on 20 January 2016, the Conservators agreed to increase the number of licenses available from 20 to 25 with a review in October 2016 to see how this increase had impacted the Downs.

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- 2.3 At the same meeting the Conservators decided to increase the annual charge of a metal detecting licence from £35 to £40 for the calendar year 2017.
- 2.4 At their meeting on 05 October 2016, the Conservators received a review of the Metal Detecting Licences and agreed to keep the number of licenses available at 25.
- 2.5 In 2017 and 2018 the number of Metal Detecting Licences purchased was 25. Officers are unaware of any person that wanted to purchase a licence but was unable to do so as there were none available. In light of this there was no need for a waiting list in either year suggesting that the fee and the number of licences available is probably about right.
- 2.6 Following a review of the existing policy, no changes to the fees and charges are proposed for Metal Detecting Licences.

3 Proposals to the Events Fees & Charges

- 3.1 It is proposed that the level of hire charge for events on the Downs is increased from £1.50 to £2.00 per participant across all relevant categories subject to a 50% discount for charitable and community events.
- 3.2 The cost for using car parks on the Downs is proposed to be increased from £150 to £175 for those events that require 50 car parking spaces or more.
- 3.3 The minimum charge for filming on the Downs for larger scale projects is proposed to remain at £300.
- 3.4 In order to potentially charge small groups that wish to host one-off events on the Downs, it is proposed that the minimum number of participants within category A is reduced from 30 to 10. This will allow a charge to be made if the Conservators approve an application for a small event as part of the existing events process.
- 3.5 Annex 1 details the new proposed fees and charges for Events on the Downs.

4 Proposals to Memorial Items Fees & Charges

- 4.1 A Memorial Policy for Epsom & Walton Downs was agreed by the Conservators on 5 October 2016. The policy referred to the provision of a range of items that may be purchased by the public in memory of a loved one, namely rustic benches made by local coppice workers, bird boxes and bat boxes.
- 4.2 Since the start of the new policy, the uptake of memorial items has been modest, with just three benches purchased.
- 4.3 The fee for a memorial bench is currently set at £300, which has remained unchanged since the introduction of the policy.

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- 4.4 Although the current price of a bench includes a small charge for the administration and installation, a recent review of this element of the charge has indicated that it no longer meets current costs and it is therefore proposed to increase this by £50 to make the total bench price £350.
- 4.5 It is recommended that the price of bird and bat boxes are increased as set out in **Annex 2**, to reflect current purchase costs. Whilst a small addition has been made to contribute towards administration and installation, it is felt that these items should be kept affordable to encourage the public to support nature conservation and biodiversity on the Downs.

5 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 5.1 The Fees and Charges have been unchanged since January 2017.
- 5.2 The associated costs for processing an event application form, the additional involvement of the Downskeepers, the cost of maintaining and general upkeep of the Downs and the use of facilities such as car parks and toilets has increased over the past two years.
- 5.3 As a result the Conservators budget is under increasing pressure.
- 5.4 The annual income generated from events on the Downs fluctuates from year to year. In addition to smaller events, one annual large-scale charity event, can bring in approximately £2,000 a year. The increase from £1.50 to £2.00 per participant is likely to generate approximately £1,900 in additional income per annum based on the similar number and type of events applying as in 2018/19.
- 5.5 Whilst the income generated by memorial items is minimal, the donation of these carefully selected items add benefit to the enjoyment and conservation of the Downs.
- 5.6 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** The fees and charges have not been increased since April 2017. The proposed increase in hire charges, car park charges and memorial items will take effect from April 2019 if approved. The next proposed review following this report will be in October 2020. These increases should not impact demand as they are small, in cash terms. The anticipated increase in fee income is reasonable. The current memorial policy aims to achieve full cost recovery for any memorials provided and the recommended fee increases aim to achieve this.

6 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.
- 6.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** There are no comments arising from the contents of the report.

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7 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8 Partnerships

8.1 None for the purposes of this report

9 Risk Assessment

9.1 The increase in charges may deter organisations from submitting an application for an event on the Downs. This could have a negative effect on the income generated from Events on the Downs.

9.2 There is risk that the increase in price of memorial items will reflect in fewer donations to the Downs.

10 Conclusion and Recommendations

10.1 The Conservators are requested to consider and approve the revised fees and charges policy for Events on the Downs found at **Annex 1**.

10.2 The Conservators are requested to approve the increase in memorial items as set out in **Annex 2**.

Ward(s) Affected: College Ward; Woodcote Ward;