

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Wards affected:	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote Ward;
Appendices (attached):	Appendix One – Fees and Charges for Events on the Downs Appendix Two – Fees and Charges for Memorial Items on the Downs

Summary

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

Recommendation (s)

The Conservators are asked to:

- (1) Approve the Fees and Charges for Events on the Downs as set out in Appendix One.**
- (2) Approve the Increase in Fees for Metal Detecting Licences as set out in section 3 of this report.**
- (3) Approve the Fees and Charges for Memorial Items on the Downs as set out in Appendix Two.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Fees and charges for the Downs have not been subject to a review since October 2018.

2 Background

- 2.1 On the 14 October 2009, the Conservators agreed an Event Management Strategy for the Downs. This was reviewed on 27 June 2011.
- 2.2 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.

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- 2.3 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 sporting events occurring on the Downs.
- 2.4 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 sporting events on the Downs.
- 2.5 On the 20 January 2016, the Conservators agreed to minor changes in the Fees and Charges Policy.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 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 to negatively 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.
- 2.8 On the 8 October 2018, Conservators agreed a review of fees and charges for events, memorial items and metal detecting licences which now form the basis of our current charges.
- 2.9 Following a review of the existing policy and recommendations set out in the Events on the Downs report also on this agenda, this report proposes some changes to the Fees and Charges for the Downs in line with inflation and increased costs associated with administering events, memorial items and metal detecting licences.

3 Metal Detecting Licence Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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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- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Following a further review of the existing policy in October 2018, no changes to the fees and charges were proposed to the Metal Detecting Licences.
- 3.6 During the last four years, requests for metal detecting licences has remained consistent. The maximum number of requests received in one year has been 27.
- 3.7 It is proposed to remain at 25 licences issued per annum and increase the cost of a licence to £46 per annum.

4 Proposals to the Events Fees & Charges

- 4.1 It is proposed that the level of hire charge for events on the Downs is increased from £2 to £2.30 per participant across all relevant categories subject to a 50% discount for non-profit organisations.
- 4.2 The cost for using car parks on the Downs is proposed to be increased from £175 to £200 for those events that require 50 car parking spaces or more.
- 4.3 The minimum charge for filming on the Downs for larger scale projects is proposed to increase from £350 to £850 per day to bring it in line with other sites in the borough.
- 4.4 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed fees and charges for Events on the Downs for all events held after 1 April 2022.

5 Proposals to Memorial Items Fees & Charges

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Since the start of the new policy, the uptake of memorial items has been modest.
- 5.3 It is recommended that all memorial items are increased by 15% to encourage uptake and public support for nature conservation and biodiversity on the Downs.
- 5.4 The proposed table of charges is set out in Appendix 2.

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6 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

6.1 Impact Assessment

6.1.1 Increasing charges, particularly after the financial pressures of the pandemic, may cause some groups to consider whether they can afford to hold events on the Downs. However, the proposed increases are considered reasonable and so are not expected to adversely impact demand.

6.2 Crime & Disorder

6.2.1 All event organisers are required to have risks assessments in place to mitigate the risks which may cause crime and disorder.

6.3 Safeguarding

6.3.1 All event organisers are required to have risk assessments in place to ensure measures are in place to ensure safeguarding at their event.

6.4 Dependencies

6.4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 The Fees and Charges have been unchanged since 8 October 2018.

7.2 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 has increased over the past four years.

7.3 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

7.4 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** This report sets out proposed increases to fees and charges for events, memorial items and licences on the Downs. All income derived from fees and charges feeds into the Conservators' budget and helps to recover costs associated with the activities and maintenance of the Downs.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 None for the purpose of this report.

8.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purpose of this report

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9 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

9.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:

9.1.1 Safe and Well – the ability to hold events on the Downs ensures our community has the opportunity of leading healthy and fulfilling lives.

9.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

9.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None

9.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

9.5 **Partnerships:** None

10 Background papers

10.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Fees and Charges on the Downs – 8 October 2018

Other papers:

- Events on the Downs report contained within this agenda