

Policy & Resources Committee

Date:	9 April 2019
Title:	Fees and Charges
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the proposed Schedule of Charges for 2019-20 for the hire of the Meeting Room, the Upper Chamber and Southern Road Recreational Ground.

Background

2. The hiring fees for the Meeting Room, the Upper Chamber and Southern Road Recreational Ground (SRRG) were last reviewed in April 2018. It makes sense to appraise these charges at the start of the financial year for the forthcoming year as all hiring fees should be reviewed annually to comply with good financial management.

Meeting Room

3. The Meeting Room offers coffee and tea making facilities, a flip chart, a wipe board and free Wi-Fi access making this an attractive space for hire. It was previously agreed by Council to hire this room out at a separate hourly charge to the Upper Chamber, at a flat rate for all groups i.e. charitable or non-charitable which includes all the amenities as detailed above.
4. It is proposed that the hourly hiring fee remain at £12 as this charge is in line with other local organisations with venues of a similar size.

Upper Chamber

5. The Upper Chamber is available for hire to commercial and non-commercial hirers at an hourly fee of £27 and £14 respectively. A review of local organisations has shown that local venues hire out their facilities at a similar hourly charge. The Barns Centre, for example, hires out the large hall which is of a comparable size at a cost of £25 per hour that reduces to £24 after the first hour.
6. It is noted that the Barns Centre has kept its hire charges the same for 2019-20 and that there is potentially increased competition from the new Cricket Pavilion.
7. It is proposed that the hourly hiring fee for the Upper Chamber remains the same to ensure the Council offers a venue at an hourly fee which is competitive with other local establishments. The current offer of a 10% discount to hirers who block book and pay for at least ten separate bookings in advance should remain.

Southern Road Recreational Ground (SRRG)

8. The Changing Rooms are in need of refurbishment and this year no sport hirers used the facilities. This building has a potential to become a future Youth Café/Centre venue.

9. A review of hiring costs of other football pitches has been undertaken and the results yet again are inconclusive as football venues vary so much e.g. Oxford City Council charge £42 per hour pitch hire, Long Crendon charge £25 per game plus £16 for cleaning (£41) whilst Didcot Town Council charge £58 per game.
10. Currently there is a two tier charging system in place to encourage local clubs to hire the facilities at SRRG i.e. local clubs are charged a cheaper fee per match whilst clubs from outside of Thame are charged a higher fee.
11. This season the facilities have not been hired out. It is proposed not to increase the hiring fees for the football season 2019-20 whilst the future refurbishment of the facilities is considered. It should also be noted that the hire of the football pitch is offered as a community facility and not as a commercial enterprise.

Proposed Hiring Fees Football Season 2019-20

Hiring Charges (Inclusive of VAT)	£32 Local Teams	£35 Teams Outside Thame
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Resource Appraisal

12. There are no resource implications other than the day to day administration costs associated with the hiring of the facilities.

Risk Assessment

13. The fees and charges must be reviewed annually to ensure good financial management of Council assets.

Legal Powers: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s 19
Local Government Act 1972, s144

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- i) The charge for hiring the Meeting Room remains at £12 per hour***
- ii) The charge for hiring the Upper Chamber remains at £27 and £14 per hour***
- iii) The charge for hiring SRRG football pitch remains at £32 and £35 per game (inclusive of VAT)***