

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons	13 January 2014
Subject: Epping Forest Licence and Produce Charges	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest	For Decision

Summary

This report updates your Committee on the charges levied for the management of various Forest licences and produce sales at Epping Forest and seeks approval for the proposed charges for 2014/15.

The licencing of activity on Forest Land has raised a total so far in 2013/14 of £9,898. Produce sales have generated £1,132 and Horse Riding Licences a further £10,524. Charges for licences have been raised by a figure of 3% with the exception of Horse Licences charges, which have remained fixed since their introduction in 2003,

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposed charges for 2014/15
- Approve the delegation to the Superintendent of discretionary powers to set terms and conditions and impose deposit arrangements for licences, and to set charges in the case of unusual licence requests.

Main Report

Background

1. Requests are received for various services requiring the temporary use of Forest Land from the many properties that border, or are enclosed by, the Forest. These properties often have no direct access to the rear of their curtilages or space to place skips; site scaffolding or temporarily store building materials during repair or development works. The Conservators normally levy a charge on activities. When a request is received an inspection is carried out by a Forest Keeper to ascertain if a licence should be granted for use of Forest Land.
2. Consideration is always taken as to the Conservators' duties under the Epping Forest Act 1878 and whether any damage to Forest Land may occur and if that is the case; either a refundable deposit or bond is taken to cover any repairs to damage of Forest Land, or in some cases the licence request is refused.

3. Land Management activities at Epping Forest have traditionally generated a range of timber arisings including logs, poles, brush and chippings. In recent years a significant proportion of the material has been left on the Forest floor to support wood rotting fungi and invertebrates with most surplus chippings being disposed of through compost and land improvement schemes. The new Management and Operational Plans will seek to minimise the 'production of arisings and market only surplus. In the meantime, in line with previous custom and practice, staff are able to purchase both cord wood and logs at discount price.
4. As a result of the necessity to cull deer on the Forest, the Buffer Lands and in the Deer Sanctuary, venison is available for wholesale. Most of the venison produced is sold as carcasses direct to game dealers, with a small amount being processed and made available for sale to staff.
5. Charges for the use of Forest Land have been benchmarked by comparison with charges levied by surrounding local authorities. The charges are shown on the Epping Forest website.

Current Position

6. The additional byelaws for the regulation of Horse Riding were introduced at Epping Forest on 20 June 2003. The fees that can be charged for horse-riding licences are set out in the byelaws, and are the only charges that have remained static since introduction. Prices for licences are set having regard to matters set out in the byelaws, can be reviewed from time to time, and can only rise by the Retail Price Index from the period that the prices were last reviewed. Based on the Bank of England inflation calculator a full year Riding School licence would now cost in the £54.73 £56.32 range (based on the precise RPI indexation).
7. The charges levied under Horse Riding licence scheme were designed to realise 50% of the costs of maintaining surfaced and posted rides which are the only available access for horses during the closed riding season. The future level of Horse Riding licence fee will be discussed in the forthcoming Management Plan consultation.
8. Logs and cord wood are sold at approximately 50% of the cost that the general public can purchase it for at local outlets.
9. Venison joints, sausages and burgers are sold to staff at average whole sale prices. Whole larder dressed carcasses (skin on) can also be purchased at the current game dealer price. 10. The income generated from log sales, venison sales and miscellaneous charges provides a regular, steady income for very little outlay or risk. At the time of writing this has amounted to £760 for logs, £372 for venison, £9,898 for local licences (excluding filming and photography) and £10,524 for horse riding licences, a total of £21,554 so far in 2013/14. The total raised by licenced activity in Epping Forest in 2012/13 was £17,398.22 (excluding filming). Horse riding licences generated £14,255.22 while income from local licences I was £3,143 + VAT.

Proposals

11. It is proposed that the charges for 2013/14 are increased by 3%. This reflects the current rate of inflation (RPI 2.6% Oct 2013).
12. A list of proposed charges for 2014/15 is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

ITEM		PROPOSED CHARGES 2014/15 Inc. 20% VAT unless otherwise stated	CHARGES FOR 2013/14 Inc. 20% VAT unless otherwise stated
<u>Horse Riding Licences</u>	Public		
	Full Registration Year	£40.00	£40.00
	Weekly Registration	£5.00	£5.00
	Riding School Full Registration Year	£50-00	£50-00
<u>Skips</u>	1-4 weeks	£51.50 (VAT exempt) per week	£50.00 (VAT exempt) per week
	4-12 weeks	£41.50 (VAT exempt) per week	£40.00 (VAT exempt) per week
	12 weeks +	£36-00 (VAT exempt) per week	£35-00 (VAT exempt) per week
<u>Hire of car parks for events or contractor compounds</u>	Large (i.e. Bury Rd)	£515.00 per day	£500.00 per day
	Medium (i.e. Fairmead Oak)	£310.00 per day	£300.00 per day
	Small (i.e. Earls Path)	£103.00 per day	£100.00 per day
	Compounds/storage on Forest land	£0.42 per M ² per day	£0.40 per M ² per day

<u>Events and Activities</u>	Fitness Training Running, walking & cycling events Horse Riding Events	£10.50 per session (VAT exempt) +£51.50 Administration Fee £77.50 event fee +£1.55 per entrant £77.50 event fee + Horse Licence	£10 per session (VAT exempt) +£50 Administration Fee £75 event fee plus £1.50 per entrant £75 event fee plus Horse Licence
<u>Scaffolding</u>		£0.42 per M ² per day	£0.40 per M ² per day
<u>Logs (for fuel)</u>		£26.00 per M ³ + 5% VAT (£1.30)	£25.00 per M ³ Inc. VAT @ 5%
<u>Cord wood (for fuel)</u>		£41.50 per tonne + 5% VAT (£2)	£40.00 per tonne Inc. VAT @ 5%
<u>Venison</u>	Burgers Sausages Diced Haunch Saddle	£0.95 each (VAT exempt) £6.20 per bag (9) £7.25 per kilo £12.40 per kilo £16.50 per kilo	£0.90 each (VAT exempt) £6.00 per bag (9) £7.00 per kilo £12.00 per kilo £16.00 per kilo

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. The issuing of licences for the use of Forest land supports the City Together Strategy theme 'A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment. This is linked to the associated Open Spaces Strategic Aim "Provide safe, secure and accessible Open Spaces and services for the benefit of London and the Nation".
13. The sale of wood and venison supports the City Together Strategy theme 'A World Class City which protects, promotes and enhances our environment. **This is linked to the associated Open Spaces Departmental Objective "Ensure that measures to promote sustainability, biodiversity and heritage are embedded in the Department's work"**

Implications

14. **Finance:** The City's Financial Regulations require all departments to recover full costs when setting charges to persons or external organisations, or submit reason to the appropriate service Committee when that objective is not met. It is, therefore, at the discretion of individual spending Committees to determine the actual level of fees and charges relative to the services that provide, after taking into account local considerations and priorities.
15. The total raised by licenced activity in Epping Forest so far in 2013/14 is £21,555 (excluding filming). Horse riding licences generated £10,524 while income from local licences was £9,898 + VAT.

16. The income from the sale of produce for 2013/14 is to date £1,132 comprising £760 through the sale of firewood and £372 through the sale of venison to staff.
17. Licence Charges and fees have been raised by 3%. This reflects the current rate of inflation (RPI 2.6% Oct 2013). The licensing of filming and photography are the subject of a separate corporate report made to the Open Spaces Committee.
18. **Property:** Licensing various 3rd party temporary activities that the City is willing to permit upon the Forest should ensure that the City retains full and proper control of the Forest and able to prevent misuse.

Conclusion

19. The licensing of activities on Forest land is necessary to ensure no possessory rights are conceded and that the use of Forest Land is properly regulated and recognised through a standard charge wherever possible.

Appendices

- None

K French
Head Forest Keeper

T: 02085325310
E: keith.french@cityoflondon.gov.uk