

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest and Commons	18 November 2019
Subject: The Commons, licences, sports, filming and miscellaneous charges	Public
Report of: Andy Barnard	For Decision
Report Author: Hadyn Robson – Business Manager	

Summary

This report updates Committee on charges for licensed activities, sports and miscellaneous charges in the last full financial year 2018/19.

In 2018/19 the licensed activity raised a total of £6,645.00.

Charges for sports across 2018/19 raised a total of £299.00.

Proposals are presented for a price increase of 2.6% in line with the Retail Price Index figure (August 2019).

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the proposed charges for 2020/21 as itemised in Appendix A.
- Approve the additional sentence added to The Commons Events Policy – Part 2, page 12 - '**Some charges will be subject to VAT**'. Appendix B.

Main Report

Background

1. This report concerns activities on The Commons for which there is a charge. The charges made, generally seek to recover expenses incurred by the City of London in administering and enabling the activity and for reinvestment into the management of The Commons in accordance with the City of London financial regulations.
2. In some instances, the use of the open space for siting of equipment or for certain activities requires a licence. Licences are administered through the Superintendent of The Commons and the Head Ranger of the site to ensure there is an equitable and transparent decision-making process for the customer.
3. All activities are regulated with due regard to the Open Spaces Acts of 1878 and 2018 and any other relevant statutory provision.

4. The By-product of land management, and relevant to this report, is timber, processed in different formats. Income received from sales is invested into the management of The Commons.

Current Position

5. Licensing activity on The Commons raised £6,645.00 in 2018/19
6. The income from timber and charcoal for 2018/19 has provided an income totalling £1035.00
7. City of London employees currently pay £27.00 per ton for green cord wood and £105.00 for 3 tons of split logs.

Produce	Income
Timber	£ 610.00
Charcoal	£ 425.00

8. Filming charges brought in an income of £55,112.00.
9. Event charges received an income of £250.00-. The Events Policy was introduced following the Epping Forest and Commons Committee meeting dated 19 November 2018, with very few events in the remaining reporting period triggering the Events Policy charging protocols
10. The football season for 2018/19 achieved a total income of £299.00 for pitch hire on Coulsdon Common. A commercial rate for the football pitch has yet to be agreed, as reported in March this year, however, negotiations continue and until then propose to increase the charge by 2.6% for the 2020/21 season.
11. Room hire realised a total income of £769.50

Options

12. Two options, outlined in Appendix A are for Committee's consideration:
 - 12.1 To increase licence and event fee charges at the Retail Price Index figure of 2.6%, (August 2019). It is proposed to increase licence, sports and events fees and charges for 2020/21 by 2.6% in line with Retail Price Index (RPI) as at August 2019 with rounding to aid cash handling. Consequently, this may represent higher or lower percentage uplifts. **Recommended.**
 - 12.2 To maintain current levels of charges. This would have the effect of a price cut as inflationary increases would still apply to our own expenses. **Not recommended.**

Proposals

13. To increase licence, event, sport and miscellaneous fee charges at 2.6% in line with RPI (August 2019).

Additionally, to confirm that some charges will be subject to V.A.T within The Commons Event Policy – Part 2.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The proposals in this report support the Corporate Plan 2018-23:

Contribute to a flourishing society

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Shape outstanding environments

- We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable environment
- Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.

The proposals in this report also support the Open Spaces Department Business Plan:

A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible.

1. Our spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe

B. Spaces enrich people's lives.

2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing
3. People feel welcome and included

C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

4. Our practices are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable

Implications

Financial

15. Increasing the charges by 2.6% will ensure that costs are recovered for the provision of sports facilities, licensing and miscellaneous items for the 2020-21 period and an increased contribution is made to income beyond that point.

Charities

16. Ashtead Common, Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common and West Wickham & Spring Park and Coulsdon Commons are registered charities (numbers 1011510, 232987, 232988 and 232989). Charity Law obliges Members to ensure that the decisions they take in relation to the Charity must be taken in the best interests of the Charity.

Conclusion

17. It is proposed that charges for the sports pitch and miscellaneous items are increased by the amounts shown in Appendix A and still provide value to the customer and continue towards recovering costs for services provided.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Current and proposed charges
- Appendix B – Confirmation of V.A.T charges

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