

YATTON PARISH COUNCIL

Finance, Personnel & Administration Committee, 22 March 2010

Agenda item 7: Review of fees and charges

Report of the Clerk

1. Yatton Parish Council charges for (a) allotments, (b) interments and (c) the use of Hangstones pavilion and field. I consider each category separately.

Allotments

2. The rent for each allotment is set out in the attached table. The total rents more than cover the Parish Council's (small) expenditure on the allotments and I do not consider there is any justification for increasing them. The Parish Council is required to give one year's notice of any increase in allotment rents.

Burial ground

3. The current fees in respect of the burial ground are set out in the attached table. I also attach a note from the National Association of Local Councils which includes for comparison fees charged by the Church of England. Most of the Parish Council's expenditure on the burial ground forms part of the grounds maintenance contract. The current fees more than cover the Parish Council's expenditure on the burial ground and I do not consider there is any justification for increasing them.

Hangstones pavilion and field

4. The current charges are set out in the attached table. The current charges were set in 2007.

5. I deal with hall hire first. The regular users are a toddler group on Monday and Friday mornings, 2nd Yatton Guides on Friday evenings, both weekly during term times, and Cadbury Saxophone Band on Saturday mornings, approximately fortnightly. There are other occasional hirings.

6. As members can see from the income & expenditure accounts the hall charges do not come close to covering the cost of maintaining the pavilion. However this is slightly misleading since the pavilion also includes the changing rooms, which are used by pitch hirers, not hall hirers. Even so it is clear that hall charges are small in comparison to maintenance costs. On the other hand users of the hall do not of themselves give rise to much maintenance need, or other costs apart from heating in the winter.

7. I do not consider that there is much scope for an increase in hall charges (in any case the Parish Council meets the charges paid by 2nd Yatton Guides by way of a grant). The only way income could be substantially increased is if more organisations used the hall and this is unlikely to happen, at least with the current building.

8. The pitch charges are another matter. The full-size pitches are currently used by Yatton Athletic Football Club seniors under a 'block booking' and various junior teams from Winscombe Ladies' Football Club, who pay nothing (there are occasional paid-for senior bookings). The mini-pitches are used by other junior teams from Winscombe Ladies' Football Club, and by Yatton Junior Football Club, neither of whom pay anything. It follows that the only likely income is the £1000 from the Yatton Athletic block booking. The figure of £1000 has remained unchanged since 2007.

9. All of these users, including the juniors who pay nothing, cause substantial need for pitch maintenance, especially on the full-size pitches, and cleaning and other maintenance in the changing rooms, and heating costs (and, for seniors, hot water costs). Most of the time of the Parish Council grounds staff is spent on Hangstones field, especially on weekly white-lining.

10. An interesting comparison is the War Memorial Recreation Ground in Winscombe. The users pay a small rent to the Parish Council, in exchange for which the Parish Council carries out major repairs and (for example) boiler maintenance. However the users carry out all their own white-lining and other pitch maintenance and all the cleaning, and pay their own utility bills.

11. Members may wish to consider the extent to which the Parish Council should provide a large, largely hidden, subsidy to youth football in Yatton (although many of the participants are not from Yatton or Claverham). Unlike grant applicants the clubs provide no information about their activities or finances in return for this subsidy. Members may also wish to consider an increase in the amount paid by Yatton Athletic.

12. The Committee might like to ask for the Amenities & Properties Committee to discuss the matter before reaching a final decision.