

This report will be made  
Public on 15 September  
2023

# Hythe Town Council

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Report number **F&GP/23/08**

To **Hythe Town Council**

Date **15 September 2023**

Status **Non-Exempt**

Responsible officer **Town Clerk/RFO**

Subject **SCALE OF FEES REPORT F&GP/23/08**

**SUMMARY:** This report asks the committee to review the council's charges for facilities provided in preparation for the new budget calculations 2024-25 in accordance with good practice.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The Committee is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because;-

- a) The Council is committed to control and manage its financial affairs in accordance with The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidelines.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. To receive and note the report F&GP/23/08.**
- 2. To authorise the Responsible Financial Officer to add any recommendations to the new budget calculations for 2024/25.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

A local council is a corporate body, a separate legal entity from its members, and a local authority.

Therefore, its decisions are the responsibility of the whole council, and all the councillors share collective responsibility for the financial management of the council.

Local councils have been given statutory powers by government including the authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to

spend public money. Financial rules and procedures set by government through various statutes and regulations are designed to protect the council and ensure that it takes no unacceptable risks with public money.

The financial accounting year for a council runs from 1 April to 31 March in line with the government and other public authorities.

Local councils are not subject to income, corporation or capital gains tax.

The preparation of the annual budget is one of the key statutory tasks undertaken by the council. The budget results in the council setting the precept for the year and gives the clerk and other officers overall authority to make spending commitments in line with decisions of the council.

It also enables progress monitoring during the year by comparing actual spending against planned spending.

Nalc (2018)

Each year in October, Hythe Town Council reviews its current budget and spending, and a draft budget is prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer for councillors to discuss and amend before a final detailed budget is brought to full council in December.

Just before that, in September of each year, members are asked to submit their ideas for projects they wish to undertake in the new financial year. Working groups are asked to recommend budget items or any changes to cost centres that provide funds to them, such as community engagement, communications strategy and allotments.

At the same time the council's income from assets is reviewed.

The councils **Scale of Fees** (available on the council's website under the heading facilities) are reviewed each year. Income received from hiring out the councils' venues and providing sports facilities help reduce the amount of precept the council requests each year from the District Council to run its services annually.

Expenditure such as running costs are taken into account when calculating how much income from assets will be required to cover the council's costs.

This year the Tennis and Bowls costs have been highlighted by residents and councillors alike as needing to be addressed.

The current fees are;

- Tennis Adult, per hour per person £6.00
- Tennis Junior, per hour per person £2.50
- Tennis Family per hour £10.00

When four adults wish to book a court the total cost for one hour play is £24 for one court.

In comparison Folkestone and Hythe District Council charge **per court** rather than per person. For instance, for four adults wishing to book a court for one hour the total cost would be a discounted rate of £7.30 (or £4.00 per half hour).

The difference between Folkestone's charges and Hythe's is £16.70 per hour.

Historically, income from Tennis and Bowls has been as below;

2017.18 £2,267

2018.19 £2,479

2019.20 £4,180

2020.21 £4,883

2021.22 £5,283

2022.23 £5,482

2023.24 £5,725 YTD

The cost of supplying staff to cover 10am to dusk from April through to September has always outweighed the income received as it has always been considered a service to the community and not for profit. But as you can see the income is increasing.

2020.21 £12,614 (opened after easter school holidays and closed beginning Sept) 2 x staff. (paid minimum wage)

2021.22 £11,157 (opened after easter school holidays and unfortunately closed at beginning of season due to staffing issues) 3 x staff (paid minimum wage)

2022.23 £21,258 increase due to a number of different reasons (longer hours worked, earlier opening agreed from 01 April and lengthen season to 30 September) 3 x staff (paid national living wage from hereon) (pension also payable from hereon)

2023.24 YTD £18,805 3 x staff

NB (September due October payroll: season ends 30.09.23)

Fluctuations can be caused by opening times and closing times and rain stop plays. Also, an increase in National Living wage each year.

Folkestone's opening hours are 9.30am to 6pm, whereas Hythe is open 10am to dusk. This could also be reduced in line with Folkestone to save on staff costs.

Although users do like to use the facilities in the evenings.

Hythe Town Councils Bowling Green rate remains competitive as Folkestone charge £8.40 per game per person whereas Hythe charge £7.00.

## **SUMMARY**

The committee members are asked to review the scale of fees for the forthcoming budget reviews and make their recommendations to the Responsible Financial Officer who will include them in the new budget calculations for 2024-25.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **A summary of the perceived risk follows;**

Perceived Risk Council does not set a robust budget and the council runs out of funds to provide services to the residents of Hythe.

**Risk** High

**Likelihood** Low

Preventative Action Responsible Financial Officer to draw up and monitor performance against the budget.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

If you have any queries about this report, please contact The Town Clerk/  
Responsible Financial Officer of the Council

Tel: 01303 266152 or email [clerk@hythe-tc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hythe-tc.gov.uk) prior to the meeting.