

## **SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

Minutes of the Special meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.00pm.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Councillor Arun M. Chandran (Chairman)**

Eddy Adam, Lindsey Aston, George Gray, Ian Gray, Phillip Hawkins, Andy Hill, Neville Jones, Sandra Kirby, Carl Robinson, Ken Robson, Michael Stead, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

### **OFFICERS**

Mr. Dan Austin (Town Clerk)

Mrs. Tracey Woodhead (Finance Manager)

Mrs. Sharna Stretch (Senior Administration Officer)

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

One member of the public.

A minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect for the passing of former Councillor Maureen Shelton.

### **71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Martin Ashcroft, Jim Atkinson, Peter Bergg, John Clark, Sandra Haigh, Jed Hillary, Wendy Hillary, Joanne Jones and John Moore.

### **72. MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS**

No dispensation requests had been received.

### **73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Carl Robinson declared a pecuniary interest in the golf fees section of Agenda Item 5 as a member of the Oak Leaf Golf Club.

### **74. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

A member of the public stated that it was a poor turnout for the meeting and it was the same Councillors who seem to attend meetings.

The Chairman pointed out that members attendances are submitted at the AGM and can be viewed on the Town Council website.

## 75. COUNCIL FEES AND CHARGES

The Finance Manager submitted a report to provide information to support the annual review of the fees and charges levied for services provided by the Council and for members to consider any proposed changes to those fees and charges for the 2024/25 financial year.

The proposed charges, as recommended by service managers, were set out in Appendix 1 with full explanation in the report, and were broken down into the following service areas:-

- Cemeteries
- Football Pitches
- Pre-School
- Allotments
- Sports Complex
- Golf Complex
- Caravan Site
- Special Events

For comparison purposes a schedule of the existing 2023/24 charges were attached at Appendix 2.

Members agreed to consider each set of charges and recommendations in turn.

Councillor Eddy Adam thanked the Finance Officer for the comprehensive report and stated that the fees and charges proposals needed to be considered in the context of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Adam proposed that Standing Orders be waived in regard to the consideration of the allotments charges to enable the increases to be reported to the Allotments AGM and comply with allotments law. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Hill. This was agreed by all.

It was proposed by Councillor Eddy Adam and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and;

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- a) Cemeteries fees for 2024/25 are increased by 5%;

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and;

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- b) Football pitches fees for 2024/25 are increased by 5%;  
c) Pre-school charges for 2024/25 are increased by 25p;

Councillor Lindsey Aston proposed that the allotments fees recommendations be taken in a block and agreed. This was seconded by Councillor Sandra Kirkby.

- d) Allotments rent charging bands for 2025 are increased by 5%;  
e) Pigeon site rents for 2024/25 are increased by 5%;  
f) Poultry site rents for 2025 are increased by 5%;  
g) Beekeeping plots for 2025 are increased by 5%;  
h) Raised plots for 2025 are increased by 5%;

- i) The rent band for a large allotment is implemented for use of the land at Clarence Chare Allotments for use as a Gardener's Guild after the first full year of operation.

Councillor Lindsey Aston queried the Sports Complex annual membership for the juniors and proposed that the junior membership fee be frozen, this was seconded by Councillor Sandra Kirkby.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- j) The Sports Complex annual membership is increased from £25.00 to £26.50 for adults and increased from £17.50 to £18.50 for senior citizens and the junior membership fee be frozen at £17.50 for 2024/25;
- k) A Group Membership fee is introduced for invoice and block bookings at £40 per year:
- l) The proposed Indoor Bowls fee is updated for:
- Members – Adult and Senior Citizens from £3.20 to £3.40 for 2024/25;
  - Non-Members - Adult and Senior Citizens from £4.20 to £4.50 2024/25;
  - Junior Members – Freeze at 2023/24 fee of £2.00 for 2024/25;
  - Junior Non-Members – Freeze at £3.00 for 2024/25;
- m) The Sports Complex Sporting Activities be increased as shown below:

**Members:**

Activity	Category	Member 2023/24 Rate	Member 2024/25 Rate
Badminton	Adult /Senior	£6.20	£6.50
	Junior (freeze)	£3.60	£3.60
Squash	Adult /Senior	£6.20	£6.50
	Junior (freeze)	£3.60	£3.60
Table Tennis	Adult /Senior	£6.20	£6.50
	Junior (freeze)	£3.60	£3.60
Five a Side Football	Adult /Senior	£37.00	£39.00
	Junior	£22.00	£23.50

**Non-Members:**

Activity	Category	Non-Member 2023/24 Rate	Non-Member 2024/25 Rate
Badminton	Adult /Senior	£7.80	£8.20
	Junior (freeze)	£5.20	£5.20
Squash	Adult /Senior	£7.80	£8.20
	Junior (freeze)	£5.20	£5.20
Table Tennis	Adult /Senior	£7.80	£8.20
	Junior (freeze)	£5.20	£5.20
Five a Side Football	Adult /Senior	£45.00	£47.50
	Junior	£28.00	£29.50

- n) The Sports Complex deposit for hire of equipment and facilities is frozen at £5.00 and the hire charges be increased from £1.20 to £1.30 per hour;
- o) The Sports Complex bowls locker hire be increased from £7.00 to £7.50 per annum.
- p) The Sports Complex shower fee be increased from £1.20 to £1.50 per use;

- q) The hourly function room hire for members both with and without a buffet be frozen, with an increase for non-members of:
  - Non-Members Function Room hire (no buffet) from £12.00 to £13.00 per hour;
  - Non-Members Function Room hire (with buffet) from £5.00 to £6.00 per hour;
- r) The Activities and Commercial Use function room rate be removed;

It was further agreed that all fees and charges for the Sports Complex be implemented from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 in order to provide for any problems updating the fees on the till system over the bank holiday weekend.

There then followed a debate on the Golf Complex proposed fees and charges.

Members were asked to advise and agree the preferred options for the increases in relation to green fees.

Councillor Eddy Adam added that the golf course and driving range are making strides in the right direction and the Council needed to take a sensible approach to any fees increases so as not to turn people away.

Councillor Adam proposed that the officers recommendations be accepted and that the recommendations from (s) – (x), (z) (ac) and (ad) be taken in one block and accepted and at recommendations (y), (aa) and (ab) Option 1 be accepted.

This was seconded by Councillor Ian Gray.

The Chairman then asked members to agree on the recommendations from (s) – (x), and all were agreed by a majority decision.

**RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:**

- s) The golf core membership prices for adults and over 60s, be frozen and the £2 National and County Affiliation Fee increase be added;
- t) The golf membership prices for 19 to 25's be reduced from £290 to £152, which incorporates the £2 increase in the National and County Affiliation Fees;
- u) The golf membership prices for the Junior 15 to 18 category be frozen and the £2 National and County Affiliation Fees be added;
- v) The membership fee for the Junior 14 and Under category be frozen and the £2 National and County Affiliation Fees be added;
- w) The replacement membership card charge be frozen;
- x) The 14 months for the price of 12 months membership from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024 for new members to continue;
- y) The green fees for 2024/25 be increased to £19.00 for a weekday and £22.00 for a weekend/Bank Holiday;
- z) The winter green fees be frozen at £10.50;
- aa) The cost of the County Card for 2024/25 be increased from £12.00 to £14.00;
- ab) The cost per round for visiting party green fees for 2024/25 be increased from £14.00 to £16.00;
- ac) Both the member and non-member charge for golf buggy hire be increased by £1;
- ad) The golf trolley hire fee be increased by 50p;

There followed a lengthy discussion regarding the driving range fees.

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson that a further increase be applied to driving range prices, increasing the price for a driving range large basket to £7.25 and for the driving range loyalty card to £58.

This was seconded by Councillor Andy Hill.

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- ae) The driving range baskets for 2024/25 to be increased £4.00 for a small basket and to £7.25 for a large basket.
- af) The driving range card be increased to £58;

It was proposed by Councillor Carl Robinson and seconded by Councillor Andy Hill and;

**RESOLVED** – that it be recommended that:

- ag) The use of the caravan site be increased to:
  - £1 for casual use per night
  - £1 for rallies per night (up to 10 vans)

**CHAIRMAN.**