

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**16<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

LJ/2021

9<sup>th</sup> November 2021

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 10(i) – **TOWN COUNCIL FEES**

AIM

1. To consider a recommendation for the level of fees as part of the budget process for the financial year 2022/ 23.

BACKGROUND

2. The Town Council has an approved set of fees for many of its services (including hall hire, allotments and cemetery fees) and these are usually reviewed annually as part of the budgeting process to help predict levels of income.
3. The Town Council can review its fees at any time.
4. Fees are only a portion of the Council's Income.

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

5. The past 18 months or so has seen income levels fail to reach levels that might have reasonably been presumed due to the pandemic and income has been affected in some circumstances. As part of the budget officers estimate income based on a combination of factors local knowledge, past experience and an attempt to understand the current economic climate. Predicting the income for some areas can be relatively broad; flooding of Severn Park in the winter, a poor summer and the decision by more people than usual to holiday abroad next year might have a detrimental impact on the current level of income; conversely, a dry winter and a hot summer and a mindset of staycations might do the opposite and have a significant positive impact on income.
6. Fees have been reviewed in recent years and there have been some substantial increases (e.g. cemetery fees) along with some rather modest increases (e.g market fees). In setting recommend levels of fees officers attempt to identify the costs directly associated with services but with an appreciation that some fees are set at what might be consider low commercially, because the service or facility offers some less-tangible wider community benefit or to encourage more regular use and create a solid customer base.

7. Setting an across-the-board increase in all fees e.g. to match the level of the precept increase is not recommended as there are some very wide ranging fees from those of a few pounds to in some instances fees of over £1000. Fees are recommended to be set in some thoughtful relation to their direct costs.
8. There are a number of income streams that are not part of the standard fees for the Council, including the concessions on Severn Park (ice cream van and hot refreshments van) which are subject to annual tender process – these can fluctuate but they have provided in recent years a significant amount of income to Severn Park (circa £10k per annum). In addition, there are a number of long-term leases that have increases or rent reviews built into them and these do not require approval as part of the annual review of fees. We receive some income from events including the Christmas Light switch-on however these fees are set by the Events & Christmas Committee and it is felt that some consideration should be given to increasing/restructuring the fees here in future years to contribute more to the cost of that event.
9. In the case of the cemetery, the cemetery doubles up as a location for burials and as a parkland/ open green space (albeit with some limitations) – there is some much wider community benefit than to those that are buried in the cemetery. It is considered that the current level of fees are appropriate to cover the direct costs of interments. With hindsight, it would have been helpful to have decided many, many years ago for a small percentage of the cemetery income each year to be redirected to an Earmarked fund which over time might have become sufficient enough to pay for ongoing routine maintenance of the cemetery rather than rely on in year income to pay for the costs.
10. Similarly current levels of parking fees (in Severn Park) are considered to cover the direct costs associated with the car park, repairs to the internal road network, furniture, boundary fencing and much of the light touch routine grounds maintenance. A change of fees would require signage to be changed (at a cost) and a significant percentage of any increase would be taken by the contractor that manages the payment system.
11. Castle Hall hire – The level of fees are probably at the low end of where they might be and while the Hall appears to operate at a loss there is not financial acknowledgement of the value of the community benefit that it offers (e.g. free of charge for: a Christmas event, The Lions prostate cancer screening, hosting an after Remembrance Service buffet and refreshments, discounting significantly the cost to the senior citizens group that use the hall most Thursdays, being a venue for council meetings, etc). As we appear to be coming out of the worst of the pandemic bookings are beginning to increase but we are not confident what the market might accept as a reasonable (if any) increase. There seems little point in putting fees up by 10% for us to find that bookings drop by 50%. We are mindful in the current climate to recommend retaining the current level of fees for the time being and until bookings have picked up significantly. We are conscious that a number of our regular users have persevered with us over the past 18 months when others might have folded.
12. Allotment fees – The level of fees charged here are considered adequate to cover the direct costs of the Council and it is felt inappropriate to raise fees here to fund potential shortfalls, new services or cost increases elsewhere.

13. College House Annexe – Through some proactive discussions and the identifying of opportunities we have been able to significantly increase the level of use of the Annexe with annual income to date already at £2k against a total of only £1.3k in the previous 5 years combined. The current levels of fees here appear to be satisfying the marketplace, with the room being regularly used, costs of operating relatively minimal and the offering being relatively basic.
14. Should Town Council operating costs increase significantly, and demand appear to be improving from April 2022, then the Council might wish to reconsider some of its fees early in the next financial year (or even towards the end of the current financial year).

## SUMMARY

15. Any increase in fees, unless it is significant and provided it does not damage demand, is unlikely to materially affect the level of the precept next year.
16. Generally, fees should look to cover the costs of the service that they are charged against and much of any profit be redirected to the improvement of that service.
17. Income for the Town Council will likely increase through contract works and pre-agreed increases (e.g. leases) that are not standard fees.
18. Estimating income from fees (that are reliant on ad-hoc or seasonal bookings) is not a precise science.

## OPTIONS

### 19. Options Include:

- a. Consider each line of the fees table and agree an amount for each service.
- b. Apply a straight-line inflationary increase across all fees (e.g.3-5%).
- c. Maintain the current level of fees (no increases) for the FY 2022/23
- d. Maintain the current level of fees and consider reviewing the fees again in the spring of 2022.

## RECOMMENDATION(s)

### 20. It is recommended that the Town Council RESOLVES:

To Maintain the current level of fees and consider reviewing the fees again in the spring of 2022.



Lee Jakeman  
Town Clerk

## **BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL FEES**

**WEF 1 April 2022**

**(Fees are subject to change and will be confirmed at time of booking)**

A number of fees offer discounts depending on the service provided. Some, but not all, discounts are available by being a resident of the parish of Bridgnorth (generally the cemetery fees) and others are by qualification e.g. a Bridgnorth registered charity or community group, for room hire charges and some fees are discounted for regular users who pay in advance (again generally room hire)

### **CASTLE HALL HIRE CHARGES**

		<b>Standard Fee</b>	<b>Discounted Fee</b>
<b><u>Main Hall</u></b>			
Main Hall & Stage	Minimum 2 hours	£22.50 per hour	£16.00 per hour
Main Hall after Midnight		£46.25 per hour	£33.00 per hour
Main Hall & Stage booked with Bar & Bar Lounge	Minimum 2 hours	£41.00 + VAT per hour	£22.50 + VAT per hour
<b><u>Bar &amp; Lounge</u></b>	Minimum 2 hours	£22.50 + VAT per hour	£11.50 + VAT per hour
<b><u>Kitchen</u></b> (including use of crockery)	per booking	£16.50 + VAT	£11.50
<b><u>Meeting Room</u></b>		£15.50 per hour	£11.00 per hour
<b><u>Full day's hire of whole venue</u></b>		£285.50 + VAT	£175.00 + VAT
<b><u>Morning, afternoon or evening hire of whole venue</u></b> (9-1, 2-6, 7-11) or other 4 hour intervals around these times		£97.50 + VAT	£70.00 + VAT

### **Special rates:**

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<b>Upper Floor</b>	By negotiation
<b>Senior Citizens Day Centre</b> Wednesday & Friday mornings	£1845.00 per annum
<b><u>Booking Fee</u></b> – with booking confirmation (non-refundable)	25% of hire charge

*(Full payment to be made at least fourteen days prior to the date of the function)*

### **TOWN HALL**

<b>Council Chamber (during normal working hours)</b>	£31.00 per hour	£20.00 per hour
<b>Court Room (during normal working hours)</b>	£41.00 per hour	£27.00 per hour
<b>Wedding Ceremony – Entire Hall</b> <b>(2hrs hire one hour before and one hour after ceremony)</b> (Double charge for Sundays and Bank Holidays)	£465.00 + VAT	£385.00 + VAT
<b>Hardstanding Area under the Town Hall (entire area)</b>	£205.50	£77.00*

*(\*Bridgnorth registered charities and community groups)*

**MAYOR'S PARLOUR & THE ANNEXE, COLLEGE HOUSE**

	<b>Standard Fee</b>	<b>Discounted Fee</b>
Annexe (during normal working hours)	£21.00 per hour	£14.00 per hour
Annexe (outside of normal working hours)	£25.00 per hour	£16.00 per hour

**MEMORIAL BENCHES**

**Maintenance fee (Annual rate)** £50 plus VAT

<b>Standard Fee</b>	<b>Discounted Fee</b>
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**SPORTS PITCHES**

<b>CROWN MEADOW</b> (football)	£20.50 per game	n/a
<b>SEVERN PARK RUGBY PITCHES</b> (grass cutting)	£47.25 per cut	

**MARKETS**

<b>HIGH STREET MARKET STALLS</b>	£2.50 per foot	n/a
<b>CHARITY STALL</b>	£12.60 per hire (pitch 5 under Town Hall)	
<b>MARKET UNDER TOWN HALL</b> (including VAT (service charge))	£12.60 per pitch	

**PARKING**

**SEVERN PARK CAR PARK**

Cars:	
Up to 2 hours	£1.65
2 hours - 4 hours	£2.20
All day	£2.75
Annual Pass:	
non- resident fee	£80.00
resident fee –(proof of residency required)	£35.00

**SEVERN PARK RUGBY CLUB SEASON TICKETS**

Club Members (for half year pass 01/10/19-31/05/20)	£18.00
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### **ALLOTMENTS**

Size A - 7m x 11m	£1.50 per week	£1.65 per week
Size B - 5m x 10m	£1.25 per week	£1.40 per week
Size C - 4.8m x 5.5m	£1.00 per week	£1.10 per week
Use of the storage shed		£16.50 per annum plus VAT

### **USE OF TOWN COUNCIL LAND**

#### **Severn Park:**

Commercial	-	£230.00 per day 10% discount for 3 or more days
Bridgnorth based Community Groups and not for profit	-	£100.00 per day

#### **Castle Grounds and other open spaces (e.g. Bandon Lane):**

Commercial	-	£300.00 per day
Bridgnorth based Community Groups and not for profit	-	£120.00 per day

### **ADVERTISING ON TOWN COUNCIL PROPERTY**

#### **Town Hall**

£41 booking fee (to put up and take down by Council staff)

Plus £5.50 per week rental (up to maximum of 3 weeks)

#### **Severn Park**

£10.50 booking fee (not put up by Council staff)

£25.50 booking fee (put up and taken down by Council staff)

Plus £5.50 per week rental

### **ADMIN**

#### **PHOTOCOPYING**

£0.50 pence per copy plus VAT

#### **CCTV EVIDENCE TAPES**

£22.50 plus VAT

## CEMETERY

### Notes

Some cemetery fees will attract a **Concessionary rate**. Concession fees will be charged where the person to be interred qualifies for residents' fees under the residency rule as described below. Those not entitled to the residents' rate will incur the standard charges.

**The residency rule will apply** where the person to be interred was at the time of death, or had been during the 12 months preceding, a resident of the Parish of Bridgnorth.

### SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES      *WEF 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020*

<u>Interments</u>	<b>Concession Woodland/ Lawned</b>	<b>Standard Lawned</b>	<b>Standard Woodland</b>
	£	£	£
<b>Single Depth Grave</b>	577.00	1176.00	1763.00
<b>Double Depth Grave</b>	751.00	1525.00	2290.00
<b>Single Depth Cremated Remains</b>	164.00	336.00	504.00
<b>Double Depth Cremated Remains</b>	189.00	362.00	520.00

<u>Exclusive Rights of Burial</u>	<b>Concession</b>	<b>Standard</b>
	£	£
<b>Lawn and Woodland Area Graves</b>		
Seventy five years in a lawn area earthen grave 9 ft x 4 ft (2743mm x 1219mm)	952.00	1941.00
Seventy five years in a woodland area earthen grave 9ft x 4ft (2743mm x 1219mm)	1425.00	4272.00
<b>Cremated Remains Plot</b>		
Seventy five years in a lawn area	524.00	1067.00
Seventy five years in a woodland area	762.00	2300.00
<b>Transfer ownership of Exclusive Right of Burial</b>	41.00	41.00

**Cemetery Chapel**      £  
Hire of the Cemetery Chapel (1.5 hours)      161.00

**Monuments Gravestones and Tablets**  
*(in respect of which the exclusive right of burial has been granted)*  
For the right to erect or place on a grave or vault      143.00

Kerbstones or border stones (where permitted)  
enclosing a space not exceeding 7ft x 6 ft 6 ins (2134mm x 1981mm)      308.00

Replacement memorial *(including an additional inscription if applicable)*      144.00

For an additional inscription on a tablet      93.00

Memorial vase      33.00

### **Memorial Garden**

	<b>Concession</b>	<b>Standard</b>
	£	£
Scattering of Ashes in the Memorial Garden	46.00	92.00
Plaque on Memorial Wall	Price on Application	Price on Application
Written entry in Memorial Book	Free of Charge	Free of Charge

### **(E&OE)**

**The Council reserves the right to review fees at any time or refuse or cancel bookings**