

**BRIDGNORTH TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

15th February 2022

RCW/2022

9th February 2022

REPORT TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

AGENDA ITEM 12 – TOWN COUNCIL FEES

AIM

1. To consider the fees 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.

DISCUSSION/ COMMENT

3. The standard charges have been reviewed for this meeting.
4. In considering the level of fees our starting point has been for all fees to be increased by the same % as the precept ie: 6.5%. From this starting point we have considered:
 - a. the actual cost of the service, previous increases, prices of raw materials, services and wages. For example, where a service might be predominately administrative then it is more likely that an increase in line with wage inflation is appropriate, or
 - b. where the cost of the raw materials is increasing by above average inflation eg: gas, then a higher increase should be considered.
 - c. Furthermore, we have given some consideration with regard to the impact on reduced usage should fees increase significantly.
 - d. And noting that the above criteria might well have competing demands.
5. The attached report gives information on the service charges that can be looked at. It shows current rates, rates with an increase of 6.5% (in line with the precept increase) and the RFO's recommended increase.
6. The fees have been 'rounded up or rounded down' for ease.
7. 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.

SEVERN PARK CAR PARK

8. It is intended at this stage to discuss Severn Park car parking fees in more detail than other fees:
 - a. The fees, for the car park, have not increased since FY 2018/2019.
 - b. The changing of these fees incurs additional costs.
 - c. A change to the fees requires formal public notice that can take 2 – 3 months.

- d. An analysis of usage has shown a relatively even split between the time pay bands.
- e. The cost of maintaining the car park and access road is significant.
- f. It is not considered appropriate, or cost effective, to change the fees each year.

Therefore, an increase significantly higher than inflation seems appropriate.

9. The proposed fees for car parking on Severn Park are set out below:

<u>Pay Bands</u>	<u>Current charges</u>	<u>Recommended charges</u>	<u>% increase</u>
<u>Upto 2 hours</u>	<u>£1.65</u>	<u>£1.90</u>	<u>15%</u>
<u>2 to 4 hours</u>	<u>£2.20</u>	<u>£2.80</u>	<u>27%</u>
<u>All day</u>	<u>£2.75</u>	<u>£3.75</u>	<u>36%</u>

Had the Town Council applied annual increases with annual inflation over each of the past 3 years the current fees would be:

Upto 2 hours	£1.80
2 to 4 hours	£2.40
All day	£3.00

We are of the view that we should be encouraging short to mid term stays so there is a steady churn throughout the day for visitors to enjoy the facilities that the park and its' surrounds have to offer. We have therefore, weighted the fees towards the shorter stays. We should probably set a level of fees that might sustain us for several years so we do not continually incur the associated costs each year of new signage, public consultation etc.

- 10. The 'charging day' for the car park is 7.30am – 4.30pm (1st October – 31st March) and 7.30am – 8.30pm (1st April to 30th September).
- 11. The intention of this meeting is to confirm the final draft of the level of fees to be charged with effect from 1st April 2022, other than those being proposed for the car park, as the increase date would be governed by a period of consultation and notice.

RECOMMENDATION(s)

12. It is recommended that:

The Town Council review the summary document of fees provided by the RFO (enclosed) and confirm or amend the individual levels of fees proposed.

(RFO's note: The fees discussed and agreed at the meeting on the 15th February 2022 should be ratified at the Town Council meeting in March 2022).

Ros Williams
Deputy Town Clerk

