

**FULL SIZE ALL WEATHER PITCH CHARGES REVIEW**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the current charging position for Argyll & Bute Council's synthetic pitches and makes recommendations to standardise these within the Council's Fees and Charging policies.

1.2 At present, there is no common charging policy for the six full size all-weather pitch sites as the current charging arrangements have developed historically on an ad-hoc basis related to local circumstances, and require rationalisation in order to ensure equitable charges and access for customers across Argyll and Bute.

1.3 The proposed new charging policy would consistently offer and apply the following criteria

- A 50% discount for under 17's
- VAT exemptions on advance block bookings of 10 or more sessions, as in VAT Notice 742, section 5
- Changing facilities and floodlights included the price

1.4 The new policy will mean that in 15/16, the cost of a junior session in a multiple booking should not increase at any site. Also, by 18/19, the maximum cost increase for a junior based on 22 players using a full size pitch would be 55 pence.

1.4 It is proposed that there be a phased introduction of a common charging policy across the Council area. All the income generated is retained within the Leisure service.

**1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.6 Members are asked to approve the introduction of a common charging policy for letting of full size all weather pitches.

1.7 Members are asked to approve that letting charges are altered in the phased approach shown Appendix 1.

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**2. Introduction**

- 2.1 This paper makes recommendations to standardise all weather pitch charges within the Council's standard Fees and Charges schedule.
- 2.2 The access and charging policies for all the leisure centres, pools and halls is consistent and the booking of community facilities has been improved through a recently implemented Customer Management project which re-designed the booking arrangements for community lettings.
- 2.3 However, there is no common charging policy in the Council's Fees and Charges schedule for the six all-weather pitch sites as the current charging arrangements have developed historically on an ad-hoc basis related to local circumstances, and require rationalisation in order to ensure equitable charges and access for customers across Argyll and Bute.

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members are asked to approve
- a) the introduction of a common charging policy for letting of full size synthetic pitches, and
  - b) that letting charges are altered in the phased approach shown in Appendix 1.

**4. DETAIL**

- 4.1 Currently synthetic pitch facilities in different areas are priced in a variety of ways depending on the basis on which the facility was developed and the charging arrangements which were in operation at the time the pitch was opened. For historic reasons pitch charges in Dunoon, Helensburgh and Rothesay vary from those in Oban, Mid Argyll and Campbeltown in terms of price, categories of let and concession charges. All Argyll and Bute synthetic pitch charges are lower than the national average.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 shows the current and proposed pricing structure.
- 4.3 The current charges for Helensburgh reflect the historical arrangement from the previous Hermitage Academy where the synthetic pitch had a volunteer management committee who set charges. As the NPDO operated pitch was a replacement for an existing all weather pitch at the school site the existing charging arrangements that had been set and managed by the original voluntary group were continued.

- 4.4 Charges shown for Dunoon and Rothesay reflect historical charges for blaes sports pitches at the old Dunoon Grammar and Rothesay Academy sites. As the cost of the new pitches was included within the NPDO model for the school in both cases no change in pricing was introduced at the time as there was no direct cost pressure on the service.
- 4.5 In contrast, the charges being applied for Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown reflect current practice and lie within the median charge range across Scotland.
- The Oban pitch was built as a new community facility within the high school grounds and as it was a stand-alone development the local management committee at the time calculated a charging schedule in relation to operational and maintenance requirements for a new facility.
  - The Lochgilphead pricing was linked to the financial model for the NPDO development that included the costs of the replacement for the only Council operated Sports centre in the Council and took account of a nominal per head additional charge levied on all users of the centre.
  - The Campbeltown facility was only opened in Sept 2012 and the price was based on the Lochgilphead overall cost and was seen as a fair charge by Sportscotland and the local Community Sports group who were fully involved in the pitch planning and development process.
- 4.6 Accurate benchmark charges for synthetic pitches are difficult to obtain but the undernoted figures in Table 1 provide recent comparisons available for individual authorities.

**Table 1**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Full Pitch hourly rate</b>
North Ayrshire Council	£31.00
Dundee City Council	£53.00
West Lothian Council	£49.50
Inverclyde Council	£57.00
Midlothian Council	£66.00
West Dumbartonshire Council	£46.24
Borders Council	£75.00
Orkney Council	£38.00
Perthshire Council	£65.63
Clackmannan Council	£60.10

- 4.7 It is recommended that a policy should be introduced to ensure all parts of Argyll and Bute have the same charge for the hire of synthetic pitches. The implementation of charge increases should be undertaken in a phased approach to allow clubs and individuals time to make the necessary financial adjustments in more than one year as shown in Appendix 1. Examples of the indicative impact of the price changes on individual users is shown in Appendix 2.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The current charging practice for all weather pitches is not in accordance with the Council's commitment to provide fair and equal access to similar facilities across all areas of Argyll & Bute. The opening of the Campbeltown pitch in September 2012 ensured that all the major townships in the area now have a full size synthetic pitch. The agreed pricing structure for the pitch was reached on the basis of widespread consultation and benchmarking and created the appropriate opportunity to introduce a common policy across the area. Whilst there will be an increase in costs for the use of some facilities, the new policy which is proposed in this paper will ensure all our customers are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy** The proposal would be an alteration to the current variations in pricing structures for synthetic pitches and introduce a consistent and equitable policy across Argyll and Bute.
- 6.2 Financial** It is anticipated that there will be no reduction in overall income as some prices will increase and some decrease in the short term. The phased introduction will allow customers to plan for any increase in costs.
- 6.3 Personnel** There are no personnel issues.
- 6.4 Equal opportunities** This proposal is consistent with the Council's policy on Equalities
- 6.5 Risk** There is a risk that income may be reduced as some groups or individuals are unwilling to pay the increased charges.
- 6.6 Customer Service** The centralised booking system, inclusion of changing facilities in the core price and equalisation of charges represent improvements in the current service to customers.

**Cleland Sneddon**  
**Executive Director, Community Services**

**Cllr Robin Currie, Policy Lead**  
**5.2.2015**

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## Appendix 1

### Full pitch Adult prices per hour

Full Pitch	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Oban	£57.95	£45.00	£45.00	£50.00	£55.00
Aqualibrium	£49.35	£45.00	£45.00	£50.00	£55.00
MASC	£49.35	£45.00	£45.00	£50.00	£55.00
Hermitage	£23.70	£30.00	£38.00	£45.00	£55.00
Dunoon	£15.27	£25.00	£35.00	£45.00	£55.00
Rothesay	£15.27	£25.00	£35.00	£45.00	£55.00

\*1/2 pitch will be charged at 60% of the above charges from 15/16

\* 1/3 pitch will be charged at 40% of the above charges from 15/16

### Third pitch prices per hour

Third Pitch	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Oban	£23.20	£18.00	£18.00	£20.00	£22.00
Aqualibrium	£25.00	£18.00	£18.00	£20.00	£22.00
MASC	£23.70	£18.00	£18.00	£20.00	£22.00
Hermitage	£ 7.90	£12.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00
Dunoon	£ 7.60	£10.00	£14.00	£18.00	£22.00
Rothesay	£ 7.60	£10.00	£14.00	£18.00	£22.00

50% concession charge for under 17's will be consistently applied

## Appendix 2

Indicative examples of cost changes for individual services users

If we take the proposed full pitch cost for an hour hire for juniors, with the VAT exemption, and with 22 children using the pitch the following cost per child would apply.

Full Pitch	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Oban	£1.09	£0.85	£0.85	£0.95	£1.04
Aqualibrium	£1.36	£0.85	£0.85	£0.95	£1.04
MASC	£1.36	£0.85	£0.85	£0.95	£1.04
Hermitage	£0.57	£0.57	£0.72	£0.85	£1.04
Dunoon	£0.58	£0.48	£0.67	£0.85	£1.04
Rothesay	£0.49	£0.48	£0.67	£0.85	£1.04

If we take the proposed third pitch cost for an hour hire for adults, with the VAT exemption, and with 10 adults using the pitch the following cost per adult would apply.

1/3 Pitch	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Oban	£1.93	£1.50	£1.50	£1.67	£1.84
Aqualibrium	£2.09	£1.50	£1.50	£1.67	£1.84
MASC	£1.98	£1.50	£1.50	£1.67	£1.84
Hermitage	£0.66	£1.00	£1.25	£1.50	£1.84
Dunoon	£0.64	£0.84	£1.17	£1.50	£1.84
Rothesay	£0.64	£0.84	£1.17	£1.50	£1.84