

To: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member, Highways, Environment and Waste
From: Clare Saunders, Head of Country Parks
Subject: Increase in car parking charges in country parks from 1 April 2010
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary This report outlines the proposed increase in car parking charges and annual season ticket in country parks

Introduction

For a number of years, the country parks service has charged customers for car parking at a number of key sites - generally where facilities are available. Charges are reviewed on an annual basis and over recent years have increased to bring them in line with similar attractions. The table below sets out rates for 2009-2010 and proposals for increases from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Proposal for 2010-2011

Traditionally the differential in charges reflects the level of facilities available at each site. This year, due to capital improvements on some sites, and a delay in anticipated improvements at others, the reviewed charges are proposed as follows:

Country Park	Weekday Rate 2009-10	Proposed Rate 2010-11	Weekend/ Bank Holiday 2009-10	Proposed Rate 2010-11
Shorne Woods	£1.70	£2.00	£2.20	£2.50
Lullingstone	£1.20	£1.20	£1.70	£1.70
Trosley	£1.20	£1.50	£1.70	£2.00
Manor Park	£1.00	£1.50	£1.50	£2.00
Brockhill	£1.20	£1.50	£1.70	£2.00
Teston Bridge	£1.00	£1.20	£1.50	£1.70
White Horse Wood	0.70	£1.00	£1.20	£1.50
Grove Ferry	£1.00	£1.00	£1.50	£1.50

Rationale for revised charges

Lullingstone prices to be held for this year as car park improvements are still outstanding. An increase will take place once work is completed to keep prices in line with Trosley, Manor and Brockhill.

Pay and Display at Grove Ferry was introduced in the summer of 2009. It is therefore proposed to hold prices for this year. In addition, facilities on site are very outdated and basic. Improvements are due to commence in 2010-2011 and this will cause some disruption.

Charges at Teston and Manor should have increased in 2009 -10 but were held due to one objection which resulted in the need to present at the appropriate Joint Transportation Boards in the summer. There was also anticipated disturbance to the car park during the building works at Manor Park. It has been decided to propose a smaller increase in charges at Teston for 2010-2011 as there have been no major improvements on this site, compared with Manor Park.

Annual Season Ticket

It is proposed to increase the annual season ticket from £30 to £35. This is on the basis that this price will be held for the next 2 years (as this will be the second year of a £5 increase.) However the charge of £35 still represents very good value for money as it allows visitors unlimited parking at any of the KCC country park sites. Essex County Council currently charge £60 for unlimited visits to their sites. Hampshire charge £30 per annum for unlimited access to individual large sites.

For the second year, annual season ticket holders will continue to receive a discount booklet to be used at our café's and shops. This year it is proposed to introduce a regular e-newsletter to season ticket holders outlining the events and activities available in the parks.

Conclusion

The option for not increasing charges has been considered. However car parking charges provide valuable income that is needed to support the maintenance of the parks, particularly when increased income targets are being set and the revenue budget is being squeezed.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste is asked to agree the proposed increases on the basis that:

- (i) the charges represent good value for money
- (ii) the income derived is crucial to the financial sustainability of the parks
- (iii) improvements to the parks are ongoing through the planned capital programme

Background Documents – None

Contact Details

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