



News Release

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A consistent approach to events

Until now, there has been no set policy or pricing plan for events which are held on the land owned by South Hams.

Last year, councillors at South Hams District Council, asked officers if it would be possible to prepare a policy to create a consistent approach and standardised pricing across all of the events that are held annually across the District on council land.

A large number of events are currently supported by the council, from major festivals and regattas to smaller village and community events. The way we support events, varies by event and how it is organised and whether it is organised for commercial or community gain.

Cllr Rufus Gilbert, Executive Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services said, “Reviewing how we currently do things and applying a standard tariff across the whole district is the only fair way to manage these events. There were so many deviations from any kind of existing strategy, that the existing process benefited some communities and was totally unfair to others.

“We asked officers to conduct a thorough review, including two public consultations, one between June and August 2016 and another between March and April 2017.

“We have carefully considered all of the comments raised and have now presented a policy in front of the Executive members of the council, asking them to recommend to full council that the policy be adopted and come into effect from 1st April 2018.

In simple terms South Hams are applying a £55 administration fee on booking events, a small increase of £5 that would be applied to all events across the district held on council land.

This new policy is the product of an extensive review by elected members of the council and completed in conjunction with the towns, parishes, businesses and charities.

The policy is written to ensure that the council makes the best use of tax payer money and to make sure that the council's resources are utilised fairly and consistently across all communities.

This means that where services are provided to one event or community, these services are paid for by that community and not subsidized at the expense of another. South Hams says that this new policy looks to remove ambiguity, inequality and inconsistency which currently exists.

Cllr Gilbert continues “ This policy will enable council officers to apply the policy consistently across all events, it is not a policy designed to generate a profit for the council, but to make sure that council staff can more easily support event organisers by having a clear charging system and policy to follow.”

The administration fee would apply to each event booked and would be non-negotiable. They would also remove other charges such as fees to hold an event on Council land.

"Just to be clear this means that no charge will be made for the hire of any event land, except where the right to hold the event is awarded via a formal tender process" said Cllr Gilbert.

However, the council said that if a car park needs to be closed to allow the running of an event, a fee equal to the estimated lost car park income will be charged based on data.

Where it can be proved by the council that car parking availability has not been affected in the town / parish, despite the event being held, then no loss of parking charge will be made.

The policy and guidance was recommended by the Executive and is subject to approval by full council on 27th July.

FAQs for Events Consultation – notes to editors

Q. When will this take effect from?

A. The policy will take effect from 1st April 2018. Events held in the 2017/18 financial year will be covered by the existing events policy and booking process.

Q. Why is the Council amending its policy?

A. At present, the cost incurred in supporting events is not adequately recovered due to inconsistent application of an ambiguous policy. This means that all council tax and business rate payers effectively subsidise the events held.

Q. What will be done with monies raised?

A. The monies raised aim to cover the resources used in managing and holding the events.

Q. Is this going to be consistent?

A. The aim of the new policy is to ensure consistency across all events held. Now that the new policy has been published, each event organiser will know the Council's requirements and what costs are likely to be incurred as a result of holding an event. The policy will be consistently applied across all event types and the entire Council area

Q. Can this Council do this?

A. There is no statutory duty for the Council to support events on its land and therefore services linked to the holding of events are classed as discretionary services. There are various specific statutory policies and/or regulations which allow for charging on a cost-recovery basis. The Council aims to ensure a consistent approach is applied to all events to help achieve the Council's stated aim of financial sustainability.

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