



Title	Park Exercise Permits
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Wards of the District directly affected	All parks and open spaces
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A
Background Papers	Parks Exercise Policy for WDC Parks and Open Spaces

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes – Ref No. 1,145
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	24 th July 2020	Chris Elliot/Andrew Jones
Head of Service	24 th July 2020	Rose Winship
CMT	28 th July 2020	Chris Elliot/Andrew Jones/Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	28 th July 2020	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	28 th July 2020	Andrew Jones
Portfolio Holder	3 rd August 2020	Councillor Mrs Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
The policy has been drafted following on-going discussions with a number of providers of such services, who have approached the Council to be allowed to use the Council's parks.		
Final Decision	Yes	

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 In 2018 the Council implemented its first test process for the use of parks, to help us monitor the use of parks and open spaces. This was intended to be used to monitor the usage of parks and open spaces by organisations and individuals such as fitness groups and personal trainers. The report seeks approval for a formal policy to replace the informal process currently in place. By introducing fees and charges within the new policy we would have a more effective monitoring system as well as being able to generate some limited income.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members approve the Park Exercise Policy shown as Appendix A to this report and instruct officers to implement the policy as soon as possible.
- 2.2 That Members approve the prices shown in Appendix A to this report for the period of time between the implementation of the policy and 1st January 2021.
- 2.3 That Members instruct officers to review the Park Exercise Policy and charges on an annual basis as part of the annual review of fees and charges.

3 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Recommendation 2.1

- 3.1.1 This Policy is recommended because it will encourage more park users to enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle and use our parks and open spaces to do so.
- 3.1.2 Rangers will be checking on exercise groups in the parks, groups will be asked to show their pdf permit on a phone, or a paper permit if a mobile version is not possible. This will be issued by Cultural Services when the organisation applies for a permit with us.
- 3.1.3 The Parks Exercise Policy is based on similar policies and charges set by other councils around the UK, making sure we are in line with other areas. It allows us to fully monitor the usage of our parks and open spaces as well as making some income when issuing the permits.
- 3.1.4 Having this policy will also enable officers to monitor the activities and behaviours of groups using the parks. Any mis-use of the parks or the trees, ecology or equipment within them can be more easily connected to a particular group and the mis-use stopped.

3.2 Recommendation 2.2

- 3.2.1 The Draft Policy shown in Appendix A shows proposed prices to charge the various groups and organisations. It is intended that these charges will apply from the implementation of the Policy until the annual Fees and Charges review in January 2021. Prices have been set with reference to charges in similar authorities and on our own view of the market for this service. Any annual permit allocated to a group will apply for 12 months from the time of allocation.

3.3 Recommendation 2.3

- 3.3.1 An annual review by Cultural Services allows us to update the Policy and the charges when necessary. Updates will be based on market conditions and will also consider any feedback from groups using the permits. This annual review will take place as part of the wider Review of Charges undertaken by the Council each year.

4 **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit. Amongst other things, the FFF Strategy contains Key Projects.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The Council's Service Area Plans are the programme of work fundamental to the delivery of the strands described in the table below.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Becoming a net-zero carbon organisation by 2025 Total carbon emissions within Warwick District are as close to zero as possible by 2030 Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and Anti-Social-Behaviour	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/ productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
Impacts of Proposal		
This policy will encourage people to lead active lives	The policy will encourage people to use our open spaces for exercise Exercising outdoors can use less carbon than exercising indoors	The policy will help exercise professionals to develop sustainable business models with confirmed bookings for our parks
Internal		

Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
Staff will have a method of controlling and regulating exercise in our parks	This will be a valued service for residents, especially due to the current focus on outdoor physical activity	The policy will generate a small income from our parks

4.2 Supporting Strategies

Whilst this policy complies with the Council's FFF Strategy it is not directly relevant to any of the supporting strategies. It is not currently covered by the Playing Pitch Strategy but if the implementation is successful, the activities it covers will be referred to in future revisions of the Playing Pitch Strategy.

4.3 Changes to Existing Policies

This report does not change any existing policies, but implements a new one.

4.4 Impact Assessments

If the policy is adopted by members, an Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out within the first year of the policy's existence, in order to assess any positive or negative impacts on equality.

5 BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The proposed Parks Exercise Permits will follow the pricing structure below from the present time to the end of this financial year, when the charges will be reviewed:

1-3 Sessions Per Week	Monthly	Annual
Groups of 5 or less	£30.00	£310.00
Groups of 6 or more	£75.00	£760.00
4 or More Sessions Per Week	Monthly	Annual
Groups of 5 or less	£50.00	£510.00
Groups of 6 or more	£125.00	£1260.00

**Numbers in table exclude the trainer themselves or any staff member of the organisation.
Warwick District Council has established that these charges are exempt from VAT.*

With the size and number of groups using our test process before lockdown, we would expect to get £450 per month. We currently do not charge for groups smaller than 5. Therefore, we would expect more groups and individuals to be issued permits with the new policy, so income could exceed £450 going forward.

- 5.2 The only costs we would have when implementing the new policy is new signage in the parks to inform users of the new policy. By adding new information to existing signs we expect this to cost a maximum of £250 across our parks and we could use the initial income to pay for the new information.
- 5.3 This policy applies to:
- A company Limited by Guarantee
 - Sole Traders
 - Self Employed Coaches/Trainers
 - Any individual or company seeking to make commercial gain from the use of the above open spaces
- 5.4 If an individual or organisation meets the criteria below they will be exempt from the charges and will be issued with a permit that highlights this:
- A Registered Charity
 - A fully constituted Not for Profit Organisation where any surplus is reinvested directly into the organisation
 - School/Educational Establishment
- 5.5 The above two lists are not exhaustive and the Council will consider each request for use of the parks on its merits and reserves the right to waive charges for certain events that address key Council priorities.
- 5.6 Before being issued with a permit the individual or organisation will need to provide a risk assessment for the activity taking place and a copy of their £5m public liability insurance, although Warwick District Council reserves the right to request a higher level of cover.

6 RISKS

- 6.1 There is a risk that Rangers would accidentally miss groups when checking for permits. Officers believe that this will not occur often and so it is not seen as a significant risk.
- 6.2 There is also a risk that other park users may dislike the amount of groups using the parks. However, the new policy will help officers monitor park usage and avoid over use of popular parks or areas within parks.
- 6.3 There is a risk that some current groups will dislike the pricing being introduced. Officers expect this to be a very small number as most groups already get in contact with us to see what the current policy is before training and know that the policy is currently being reviewed.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The Council could have chosen not to propose the Parks Exercise Policy and continue without a formal policy and without charging users. However, the current informal system is not effective and the lack of groups using it doesn't allow us to fully monitor the usage of the parks or generate any income from the current users.

8 BACKGROUND

- 8.1 The Council's test process for the usage of parks was introduced in 2018 due to our parks becoming more popular for fitness and personal training sessions. This, however, has not been effective and hasn't allowed us to monitor the sessions taking place. By introducing fees, a new formal policy will be a more effective monitoring system. By having mobile issued permits, it will be easier for Rangers to carry out random checks of groups.