

Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services

Garden Waste Subscriptions

- 1.1.1 The current charge for an annual garden waste subscription is £42 with a second or third bin discounted to £27. 28,270 households are currently signed up for the service representing a take up of approximately 50%. This level of take up represents the highest level in the County.
- 1.1.2 Cabinet will be aware that the service was suspended from 26 July 2021 to 14 March 2022 due to a national shortage of HGV drivers. Subscribers were not charged during the period of suspension, and their renewal dates were adjusted accordingly.
- 1.1.3 At the November 2021 meeting of the Street Scene and Environment Advisory Board it was recommended to Cabinet that the charge be increased to £44 from the 1 April 2022 with a second or third bin increased to £29. These were not agreed by Cabinet and were removed from the scale of charges for 2022/23. Due to the significant increases in the contract cost linked to the indexation that came into effect from April 2022 it is now felt appropriate to review this decision and the increase to £44 with a second or third bin increased to £29 be applied in year from 1 January 2023.
- 1.1.4 It is anticipated that this proposal will generate additional income of £50,000 per annum (£2,500 in 2022/23).
- 1.1.5 Charges for garden waste subscription across local authorities in Kent are as follows:
- Ashford BC - £42.50, Canterbury CC - £45, Dartford BC - £44.00, Dover DC - n/a as provide a sack service, Folkestone and Hythe DC - £48.40, Gravesham BC - £48.50, Maidstone BC - £45, Sevenoaks DC - £50, Swale BC - £40, Thanet DC - £55, Tonbridge and Malling BC - £42, Tunbridge Wells BC - £56.
- It can be seen that charges range from £40 to £56 with an average County charge of £46.95.
- 1.1.6 Fees and charges income to the Council from the garden waste subscription scheme is significant [second only to income from parking] and uptake across the borough since its introduction has been extremely good.
- 1.1.7 With regard to 2023/24, consideration has been given to a number of factors including contract indexation. It is proposed an increase of £5.50 to £49.50 is applied and an increase to £32.50 for a second or third bin.

1.1.8 It is anticipated that this proposal will generate additional income of £135,000 per annum (£100,000 in 2023/24).

1.1.9 It is felt that there is a low risk in increasing the charges on subscription levels for the reasons outlined above. An increase of £2 for the current financial year has already been agreed by Cabinet but to date has not been applied.

1.2 Household Bulky Refuse & Fridge/Freezer Collection Service

1.2.1 In April 2016, a two-tier fee was introduced with a price for up to six items of bulky refuse and a lower price for up to two fridge/freezer only collections. The new fee structure also included a concessionary charge for those receiving Council Tax Support.

1.2.2 While Councils are not able to make a profit from the collection of a “prescribed” household waste (such as a bulky collection service), the legislation does allow Council’s to recover the associated collection costs together with reasonable administration costs.

1.2.3 At the Cabinet meeting on the 7 September 2022 Bulky Collections charges were reviewed with the following recommendations being approved:

- the concessionary fee for those in receipt of Council Tax Reduction be reduced to £12 and the level of concessionary collections be reduced to two per year and implemented within 2022/23; and
- the subsidy fee levied should be increased in line with the projected contract indexation, as per inflation, levels from 1 April 2023.

1.2.4 In accordance with the above an in-year reduction from £17 to £12 was implemented on the 1 October 2022 in regard to the concessionary fee.

1.2.5 The current fee structure of our neighbouring authorities is outlined below, with each authority having different arrangements in place:-

Maidstone B.C.	Sevenoaks D.C.	Tun. Wells B.C.
1-4 Items £26 5 - 8 items, £36 Fridge Freezer, £21	1 item - £18 2 items - £30 3 to 4 items - £40 5 to 10 items £52 White goods - £18 each Large American style fridge freezers - £42 each	1-4 items - £47 5-10 items - £96 with a maximum of 1 fridge or freezer.

Council Tax Reduction - £16 for up to 4 items	No Concessions	Council Tax Reduction - 1 free collection per quarter
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1.2.6 It is proposed to increase this authorities existing full and concessionary prices as set out below. Demand for this service has increased over the last year and is expected to continue to be high in 2023/24 which is reflected in the estimated income.

Service	Current Full Charge	Proposed Full Charge 2023/24	Current Concession Charge	Proposed Concession Charge 2023/24	Est. Income 2023/24
Household Bulky Refuse Collection (up to six items)	£58.00	£65.00	£12.00	£13.50	£146,700
Household Fridge/ Freezer Collection (up to two items)	£35.50	£40.00	£12.00	£13.50	

1.2.6 Current annual income is estimated at £135,000 and based on the current level of participation, the proposed increases highlighted above would generate £11,700 of additional income in 2023/24.

1.2.7 It is felt that there is a low risk in increasing the charges on uptake levels. As detailed above an in-year change to the concessionary charge has already previously been agreed and implemented.

1.3 Refuse collection charge

1.3.1 On occasion the Waste Services Team receive requests from customers to empty wheeled bins where the customer has not placed their bin out and has missed the collection. On these occasions the Team are occasionally asked by the customer if they can pay for a “one off” return collection.

1.3.2 A collection charge to cover these circumstances was introduced in April 2015. It covers the contract cost of returning and includes a small administration fee. To date there have been no concerns raised by customers. Although the number of

requests is low, it does allow our Waste Services staff to offer an alternative solution.

- 1.3.3 Taking inflation into consideration, it is proposed to increase the current charge of £20.00 as highlighted in the table below.

Service	Current Charge	Proposed Charge 2023/24	Est. Income 2023/24
Refuse Collection Charge	£20.00	£22.00	£110

1.4 Stray Dog Redemption fee

- 1.4.1 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 prescribes that a person claiming to be the owner of a dog seized as a stray by the Council shall not be entitled to the return of the dog unless all the expenses incurred by reason of its detention, and such further amount as is for the time being prescribed, are met. The Environmental Protection (Stray Dogs) Regulations 1992 set down a prescribed redemption fee of £25 and provides for local authorities to recover its other reasonable expenses, in addition to any other expenses incurred, such as kennelling costs.
- 1.4.2 Where a dog is taken to kennels the Council charges the owner for the other reasonable expenses, associated with the costs of providing the Dog Warden contract and admin costs. This is presently set at £75. The total fee charged by the Council is therefore £100. It is proposed that the contract & administration fee be increased to £82.50 with no formal waiver or discount, but the Council will continue to exercise discretion to allow payment by instalments. Daily kennelling costs are paid direct to the kennels by the owner when collecting their dog.
- 1.4.3 The number of stray dogs being claimed by their owners has been declining in recent years and this is reflected in the estimated income for 2023/24.

Service	Current Charge	Proposed Charge 2023/24	Income Full Year 2023/24 (assuming consistent number of claimed /returned)
Stray Dog Redemption Fee - Return Direct to owner	£25 (Statutory fee)	£25 (Statutory fee)	£100
Stray Dog Redemption Fee - Kennelling required	£100 (including statutory fee, but not including daily kennelling costs).	£107.50 (including statutory fee, but not including daily kennelling costs).	£4,450

1.4.4 The proposed total charge of £107.50 is comparable to charges applied by neighbouring Councils. At present, where the Dog Warden returns a stray dog to the owner without the need for kennelling, a charge is made at the prescribed fee of £25. No change is proposed to this charge.

1.4.5 Current annual income is estimated at £4,150 and based on the current level of fees, the proposed increases highlighted above would generate £400 of additional income.

1.5 Pest Control

1.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to inspect the borough for the incidence of rats and mice and to take action where an infestation is found. This function is supported by statutory powers to serve notice on owners of land to take action to destroy rats and mice and/or prevent conditions likely to provide harbourage for pests.

1.5.2 The pest control service is delivered as a joint contract with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The service provides a free treatment of rats, mice, cockroaches, and bedbugs to those on Council Tax support only.

1.5.3 The contract was recently retendered and awarded to Monitor Environmental Services starting in November 2020.

1.5.4 In all other pest related cases, customers may be referred to Monitor Environmental Services to carry out a charged treatment. Alternatively, customers may arrange treatment direct with an alternative pest control company.

1.5.5 Numbers of service requests from those on Council Tax support are very small, with an estimated overall cost to the Council of £3,500 per annum. This is offset by a referral fee of £2,500 paid by Monitor. In the interests of public health and with very small numbers of service requests, it is not considered appropriate to change the current arrangement.

1.6 Car Parking

1.6.1 Members will recall that the parking charges in many car parks were reviewed last year with the revised charges being introduced earlier this year. Due to the current economic climate careful consideration needs to be given to level of charging in the Borough's main car parks.

1.6.2 An in-year increase has been considered but due to the length of the formal consultation process required is not feasible.

1.6.3 In reviewing fees and charges for 23/24 Cabinet is invited to consider the option of no increases or an increase in line with inflation. The key issues to consider are the current economic climate, the potential of an increase negatively impacting the recovery of parking income following the pandemic and the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Recovery to date since covid has been below budgeted income levels which might suggest a cautionary approach may be more appropriate.

1.7 Leybourne Lakes and Haysden Country Park

1.7.1 Members will be aware that charging is in place for car parking at both of the Council's Country Parks. The last increase was applied in April 2022 with charges rising to £1.80 for up to four hours and no change to the charge for over four hours (£4.00).

1.7.2 With regard to Leybourne Lakes the management of the site (including the setting of car park charges) transferred to the Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust on the 1 November 2021. On the 1 April 2022 the Trust also implemented new charges in accordance with Council Members previously agreed increases as highlighted above.

1.7.3 In addition to the above an annual season ticket can also be purchased which previously provided parking at both Country Parks. The season ticket was introduced in 2008 at an annual charge of just £25 and is currently £60. It is proposed that the Season Ticket charge be increased from £60 to £65. Reflecting the change in management of Leybourne Lakes Country Park, the Season Ticket administered by the Borough Council would only cover Haysden Country Park. There are currently 376 season tickets.

1.7.4 Members may be interested to note that the current charging structure in relation to Kent County Council's (KCC) Country Parks is:

- £1.20 to £2.30 (park dependent) flat rate Monday to Friday
- £1.70 to £3.30 (park dependent) flat rate weekend and Bank Holidays
- £57 season ticket (covers nine sites across Kent)

1.7.5 For Haysden Country Park, the existing charges, together with charges proposed for 1 April 2023, are detailed below. The proposals take into account the charges at the KCC Country Parks and general inflation.

Haysden Country Park

Period	Current Tariff	Proposed Tariff
0-4 Hours	£1.80	£2.00
4+ Hours	£4.00	£4.50
Annual Season Ticket	£60.00	£65.00

1.7.6 Current annual income at Haysden Country Park is estimated at £67,000 and based on the current levels, the proposed increases highlighted above would generate £6,500 of additional income.

1.7.7 Liaison has been undertaken with the Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust with regard to future charges at Leybourne Lakes Country Park. The Trust has advised that they are currently reviewing charges though, in setting theirs, will be mindful of the Council's proposed charges at Haysden Country Park.

1.7.8 It is felt that there is a low risk in increasing the charges on parking income for the reasons outlined above. An in-year increase is not feasible due to the length of the formal consultation process required.

1.8 Tonbridge Allotment Charges

1.8.1 Allotments in Tonbridge are managed on the Council's behalf by the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association. The Council was previously advised that the Association had considered a future charging structure that was approved at their own annual general meeting in October 2021. The proposed future charging structure raises annual rents per rod by one pound through to 2024/25.

1.8.2 The proposed charging structure was considered and approved by Members of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board on the 16 February 2021. A typical full allotment plot is measured at 10 rods, with half plots (5 rods) also available. The table below shows the agreed charging structure through to 2024/25.

Approved Annual Charges (10 rod plot)

2021/22	£60
2022/23	£70
2023/24	£80
2024/25	£90

- 1.8.3 Whilst no direct income is received by the Council, it is expected that there will be no increase in management fee paid by the Council to the Association, rather that the Association will offset their increased costs (including utilities) through the proposed increases highlighted above.

1.9 Tonbridge Cemetery Charges

- 1.9.1 On the 9 November 2021 Members of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board undertook a strategic and comprehensive review of charges at the Cemetery. The review specifically took into consideration the significant subsidy applied in relation to site management and maintenance costs. The Board, and subsequently Cabinet, approved the following recommendations:

- The approach to pass the increase in material costs directly on to the purchasers to ensure the subsidy currently provided did not increase, be agreed; and
- Option 3, to apply a one-off increase to eliminate the entire subsidy and allow fees and charges to cover the full management and maintenance costs of the Cemetery site, which would need an 89% increase to be applied across all charges based on the 2021/22 Original Estimates, be agreed.

- 1.9.2 Charges were implemented on the 1 April 2022 in accordance with the recommendations highlighted above.

- 1.9.3 Below at **APPENDIX 1** is a list of existing charges for the cemetery compared where possible with charges applied by other Kent councils. Members will note that the charges do vary significantly across each local authority.

- 1.9.4 Members will note that there are no fees for burials of under 18's. This policy decision was recommended to and approved by Cabinet through a Supplementary Report considered on the 14 February 2019. Cabinet resolved that: "*the existing charges for child burials at Tonbridge Cemetery be amended, with future burials for all under 18 year olds being free of charge with immediate effect*". Members may wish to note that on average only one to two burials for under 18s have been undertaken in recent years, and the Council is able to seek reimbursement of an element of the costs for these burials.

1.9.5 In bringing forward the proposed charges for Tonbridge Cemetery a number of specific key principles have been taken into consideration:

- The Council's overall financial position.
- The need to cover the costs associated with the management of the Cemetery.
- The need to compare costs with other local authority cemeteries in Kent. It should, however, be noted that direct comparison with other cemeteries is difficult as pricing brackets, services and available grave space differ.
- The need for the charging strategy to support the management of the remaining capacity in the Cemetery.

1.9.6 An in-year increase has been considered but is not suggested due to the need to monitor and review the implications of the previous increase applied in the current financial year. It is proposed that a 10% increase is applied from the 1 April 2023 to take into consideration the current level of inflation and contract indexation. Current and proposed charges to be implemented from 1 April 2023 are shown at **APPENDIX 2** below.

1.9.7 It is anticipated that the proposal highlighted at 1.9.6 above will generate additional net income of £11,000 to be reflected in the 2023/24 budgets.

1.9.8 There is some risk that fees could be perceived as cost prohibitive to relatives and an alternative arrangement may be sought. This will need to be closely monitored.

1.10 Events of Public Open Spaces

1.10.1 A new Policy for events undertaken on Council owned land was approved and adopted in 2021 that included a new charging structure. In accordance with this Policy the new charges were implemented on the 1 April 2022. A review of the Policy and charging structure was recently considered by the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee on the 19 October and an inflationary increase of 10% was recommended to this meeting of Cabinet. The recommended increase has been included, as shown at **APPENDIX 3**.

1.10.2 An in-year increase is not considered appropriate due to the low number of events taking place in the remainder of the financial year.

TONBRIDGE CEMETERY CHARGES 2022/2023
COMPARISON WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

		Maidstone	Medway	Dover	Gravesham	Ashford	Sevenoaks Town	Thanet	TMBC ¹ Current
Purchase (£)	Baby	0.00	0.00	0.00	To 1 yr 0.00	0.00	23.00	To 1 yr 0.00	To 1 yr 1.00
	Child	To 18 yrs 0.00	To 18 yrs 0.00	To 12 yrs 0.00	1 – 17 Yrs 540.00	To 18 yrs 0.00	To 5 yrs 24.00	1 – 12 Yrs 175.00	2 -18 yrs 1.00
	Adult	1,740.00	1633.00	775.00	1,230.00	1,400.00	1050.00	760.00	1,974.00
Single grave	Adult	1,740.00	1633.00	775.00	1,230.00	1,240.00	666.00	760.00	1,021.00
Interment (£)									
Interment (£)	Baby	0.00	0.00	To 6mth 64.00	To 1 yr 0.00	0.00	159.00	To 1 yr 0.00	To 1 yr 0.00
	Child	To 18 yrs 260.00	To 18 yrs 0.00	6mth - 12 yrs 277.00	1 – 17 Yrs 430.00	To 18 yrs 0.00	0mth - 5 yrs 159.00	1 – 17 Yrs 0.00	2 - 18 yrs 0.00
	Adult	750.00	785.00	1,130.00	1,050.00	664.00	710.00	1,385.00	1,295.00
Single grave	Adult	630.00	785.00	925.00	1,050.00	664.00	528.00	830.00	1,295.00
Combined Interment and Purchase (£)									
Combined Interment and Purchase (£)	Baby	0.00	0.00	64.00	0.00	0.00	182.00	0.00	1.00
	Child	260.00	690.00	277.00	970.00	0.00	183.00	175.00	1.00
	Adult	2,490.00	2418.00	1,905.00	2,280.00	2,064.00	1,760.00	1,710.00	3,269.00
Single grave	Adult	2,370.00	2418.00	1,905.00	2,280.00	1,904.00	1,376.00	1,510.00	2,316.00
Period of Lease (years)		60 years	50 years	50 years	60 years	30 years	75 years	50 years	60 years

Memorial Permit (£)	Small	165.00	220.00	206.00	260.00	205.00	175.00	194.00	284.00
	Large	330.00	526.00	437.50	410.00	410.00	350.00	303.00	567.00
Chapel (£)		290.00	93.00	175.00	175.00	0.00	170.00	85.00	293.00
Search Fees (£)		£0 - 10	£20 (per name)	£62.00 (over 1hr)	20.00 (per name)	£36.00 (per 3 names)	N/A	£23.00 (per name)	104.00 (per 5 names)
Interment of Ashes (£)		250.00	176.00	216.00	353.00	£515	90.00	165.00	312.00
Memorial Wall Plaque (£)		N/A	N/A	103.00	N/A	NOT LISTED	137.00	NOT LISTED	312.00

¹ 2022/23 charges

* Price includes memorial permit

NOTE: Costs are based on comparable services where available. **All charges shown are exempt of VAT**

APPENDIX 2

Section 1:

Exclusive right of burial in a grave for 60 years

- (a) Stillborn – 1 year (inclusive) Children’s Plot only
- (b) 2 – 18 years (inclusive) – Children’s Plot / Adult plot
- (c) Over 18 years
- (d) Plot 15 – single graves

	2022/23	2023/24 10% 1 Apr 2023
	Current (£)	Proposed (£)
(a)	1.00	1.00
(b)	1.00	1.00
(c)	1947.00	2142.00
(d)	1021.00	1123.00

Section 2:

Interment (including digging of grave)

- (a) Stillborn – 18 year (inclusive)
- (b) Over 18 years

(a)	NIL	NIL
(b)	1295.00	1425.00

(c)	Ashes (Memorial Wall or Grave, where exclusive right has been granted)	312.00	343.00
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Section 3:

**Permits for Monuments,
Memorials & Inscriptions**

(i)	Memorial not exceeding 1 metre in height and occupying an area not exceeding 2' x 4'	284.00	312.00
(ii)	Memorial larger than specifications in (i)	567.00	624.00
(iii)	For each additional inscription after the first	189.00	208.00

Section 4:

Memorial Garden

(i)	Memorial tablet and vase block (to include plaque, inscription, 20 year lease and scattering of ashes if required)	1077.00	1185.00
(ii)	Double Underground Vault, Memorial Tablet and Vase Block. (To include plaque, inscription, 20 year lease and interment of up to 2 urns)	2079.00	2287.00
(iii)	Double Overground Vault, Memorial Tablet and Vase Block (To include plaque, inscription up to 80 letters, 20	2022.00	2224.00

	year lease and interment of up to 2 urns)		
(iv)	Additional Inscriptions Sanctum Panorama Vault and Memorial Tablet (To include plaque, inscription up to 80 letters, 20 year lease and interment of up to 3 urns)	378.00	416.00
(v)	Optional bronze vase container	2022.00	2224.00
	Photo plaque or design on plaque for Sanctum 2000 Overground Vault or Sanctum Panorama	70.00	77.00
(vi)	Additional cost for inscriptions for Sanctum 2000 and	Individually priced	Individually priced
(vii)		2.85	3.14

Panorama over
80 letters

per* gilded letter	

Section 5:

Chapel Area – Memorial Wall

- (i) Memorial Plaque.
(Includes supply and installation of plaque, 20 year lease and scattering of ashes if required)
- (ii) Additional Inscription.
(Includes new plaque, installation and scattering of ashes, if required)

312.00	343.00
312.00	343.00

Section 6:

Miscellaneous

- (i) Use of Chapel
- (ii) Transfer of Burial Rights/admin fee
- (iii) Entry in Book of Remembrance For up to and including five searches for names by one applicant
- (iv)

293.00	322.00
170.00	187.00
At Cost + Admin Fee	At Cost + Admin Fee
104.00	114.00

Notes:

- (i) Other services/options may be available and charged on an "at cost" basis plus an administration fee. Please discuss any items with the Cemetery Registrar

- (ii) A copy of the Cemetery Regulations is available free of charge from the Cemetery Registrar
- (iii) For the repurchase of burial rights for unused graves by T&MBC the Council will pay: The current purchase price times the remaining duration of the exclusive right less the Council's administration fee ruling at the time

All charges shown are exempt of VAT

* Price set by external contractor

EVENT CHARGING

ADMINISTRATION FEE

When inviting applications for events to take place on Council owned land, it is important to consider the Officer time involved in assessing the applications. An administration fee will be charged based on particular criteria which is set out below:

Type of event	Maximum attendees (at once)	Administration fee	Proposed Admin Fee 2023/24 (10% increase)
Commercial	Less than 100	£50	£55
	Less than 500	£50	£55
	Between 500 and 1,499	£300	£330
	More than 1,500	£600	£660
Charity or community	Less than 100	£25	£27.50
	Less than 500	£25	£27.50
	Between 500 and 1,499	£50	£55
	More than 1,500	£100	£110

Where events or activities require the production of bespoke legal agreements the Council will charge legal fees based on a rate of £217 per hour.

CHARGES

In addition to the administration fee, the following charges will apply to one-off events taking place on Council owned land:

Type of event	Maximum attendees (at once)	Charge	Proposed Charge 2023/24 (10% increase)
Commercial	Less than 100	£500	£550
	Less than 500	£500	£550
	Between 500 and 1,499	£1,000	£1,100

	More than 1500	£1,500	£1,650
Charity or community	Less than 100	£0	£0
	Less than 500	£100	£110
	Between 500 and 1,499	£100	£110
	More than 1500	£100	£110

Additional charges may apply where events require use of Council equipment, car parks or buildings. These charges will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In the event of a car park needing to be closed, the charge would equate to the loss of car parking income.