



Basingstoke Canal: Pricing, Charges and Fees Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Basingstoke Canal Authority [BCA] is committed to ensuring that pricing and charging structures, including concessions and refund practices planned in a fair and consistent way, and conform as far as possible with the Pricing, Charges and Fees Policy of its host Authority – Hampshire County Council [HCC] and the Canal Strategy.

This document defines the BCA's approach to creating a pricing and charging schedule to be included with the Annual Budget.

KEY PRINCIPLES

This policy follows the HCC CCBS Charging and Pricing Policy - Principles, in that, the fundamental standards followed for decision making and recommendations for price and charges setting:

- Comply with HCC financial policies and procedures, and other statutory requirements;
- Utilise a consistent, equitable and transparent approach that is applied ;
- Incorporate benchmarking with appropriate competitors, particularly with local providers, to establish strategies for positioning charging levels;
- Encourage opportunities that maximise earned income and reduce cash limits, while continuing to ensure the provision of affordable and high quality services.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

Prices, charges and fees will be reviewed annually by the BCA and HCC Finance officers and a schedule of alterations to prices, charges and fees will be reported to the Canal Joint Management Committee at annual budget setting.

This policy will be reviewed **every third year** and any changes sought will be brought to the Joint Management Committee for decision. As this policy is closely matched to the HCC Countryside Service pricing policy particular account will be taken of major revisions of the HCC Countryside policy.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, prices and charges have been defined as follows:

- **Prices:** admissions and memberships;
- **Charges:** ticket prices for events and guided/staff led activities, parking, room hire, field hire, angling and other licences
- **Fees:** payments for services provided (eg; recharge of time spent on official record searches, recovery of officer time from third parties).

SCOPE
This policy applies to all sections of Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council land forming the Basingstoke Canal and associated countryside under the management of the BCA.
APPROACH
This document provides direction across the Service on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Price Setting• Event Charging and Fee Setting• Concessions• Refunds and Cancellations

PRICE SETTING POLICY GUIDANCE
The approach to setting prices is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote pricing levels that take account of market demand, competition from other service providers and comparisons with prices set by comparable local authorities;• Ensure an equitable and consistent methodology is used;• Support justifiable prices, set at a level that is fair to users and contributes to corporate priorities for social inclusion;• Encourage appropriate deposits be paid on booking with regard to large groups and room/facility hire;• Prices should be quoted at current rates however, unless payment is made at the time of booking, the customer cannot be protected against future price uplifts;• Price increases should initially take account of cost pressures applied to BCA budgets with a recommendation of a minimum 5% annual uplift, unless a clear business rationale is provided;

CHARGING & FEE SETTING POLICY GUIDANCE

The approach to setting charges and fees (not applicable to those governed by statute) is as follows:

- Demonstrate, through the use of the Full Cost Recovery Model, that an appropriate level of income can be generated that reflects at a minimum, the direct costs incurred of the service provision, unless an alternative business case can be demonstrated.

Guidance when Applying the Full Cost Recovery Model:

- All direct costs (such as materials, uniform, travel, printing, equipment hire or any other costs not normally incurred) should be realistically quantified for each income generating activity;
- Staffing costs include on-costs (those incurred by HCC related to payment of salaries), based on grades A-G at the top of the scale;
- Staff Time reflects all time associated with the preparation, planning and delivery of the event or service;
- A universal overhead charge is applied based on 25% of direct costs (the current proportion of cash limit to premises/utilities cost);
- Volunteer time should be included (although a decision may be taken not to pass this cost onto customers, particularly if the volunteer time would not be used on other tasks) based on the HLF guidance for cost of day work, currently as follows:
 - ▶ Unskilled tasks at up to £50/day (gardening, stewarding etc.)
 - ▶ Skilled tasks at up to £150/day (construction tasks, leading a workshop etc.)
 - ▶ Professional tasks at up to £350/day (creating plans, providing technical drawings etc.)

With regard to events

- a minimum attendance level for each activity is agreed at the outset;
- A 'cut-off date' is determined in advance, on which a decision is made as to whether ticket sales are sufficient to recover costs and if not, the event is cancelled.

Further Considerations:

- Competitors and other local authority rates as well as general market trends,
- General viability of service provision,
- The types of customer and price differentiation/affordability for different user groups (if applicable) such as schools, the general public, seniors etc.,
- Statistics e.g. visitor numbers, historic up-take,
- When outsourcing services, the cost benefit of a flat fee vs flat fee plus profit share should be considered and assessed with the higher income generating method given preference.
- Prices should take account of the geographic area and local economy

CONCESSIONS POLICY GUIDANCE

The approach for providing concessions to various service user groups has been detailed below. It should be noted that concessions should be applied to **all Charges**, and consideration should be given to concessions when setting charges levels when possible and/or appropriate, concessions may not be appropriate where a specific age range is the target market for an event.

Age Related Concessions	Children and Young People up to 16*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals in this bracket are in compulsory education and not financially independent, therefore a concessionary rate should apply.
Status Related Concessions	Essential Carers*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it is necessary for a disabled individual to be accompanied by an essential carer a concession of a minimum of 10% should be applied.

For disabled visitors, the blue badge car parking scheme encompasses a principle of entitlement to proximity parking for ease of access. There is currently no discount for members of the Armed Forces or Foster Carers; however, this may be reviewed in the future.

*These concessions will be made on an honesty basis, no evidence will be requested.

REFUNDS & CANCELLATIONS POLICY GUIDANCE

(Not Applicable to Fees)

The approach to providing refunds and managing cancellations has been detailed below. A more robust refund policy may be required in certain circumstances where it is the industry norm for a particular event or activity.

Less than 14 days Notice of Cancellation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When payment has been made in full, no refunds are available when less than 14 days notice of cancellation is given (regardless of weather). Deposits are non-refundable when less than 14 days notice of cancellation is given.
Notice of Cancellation Received 14 days or more in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When payment has been made in full, a 10% admin surcharge (Minimum of £5) will be deducted from the refundable amount if the booking is not rescheduled. When a deposit has been paid, a 10% admin surcharge (Minimum of £5) will be deducted from the refundable amount if the booking is not rescheduled. The admin surcharge is waived if the booking is rescheduled to a date within 30 days of the original booking. The Service will not be responsible for the waiver of a surcharge where an appropriate alternative date is not available.
Cancellation by Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A full refund will be provided in the event that a Service Provider cancels a booking.
In Addition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice of Cancellation must be made in writing; The date of cancellation is that the notice is received by the Service Provider.