

**Queenstown Lakes District Council
Community Facilities Pricing Policy 2018
Hearing of Submissions**

Minutes of the hearing of submissions to the Community Facilities Pricing Policy 2018 held on Friday 23 November 2018 in the Supper Room, Memorial Centre, Queenstown commencing at 1.45pm.

Present

Councillors Clark, Miller, Smith and Stevens

In Attendance

Dr Thunes Cloete (General Manager Community Services), Mr Simon Battrick (Manager Sport & Recreation), Ms Deborah Husheer (Community Venues Team Leader), Shelley Dawson (Senior Governance Advisor), 1 member of the media and 2 members of the public

**On the motion of Councillors Clark and Miller it was resolved that
Councillor Stevens chair the hearing**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the hearing.

The Chair gave an explanation around the Policy and what parts of it were being reviewed noting that the leases and licences were not being reviewed at this time. He reiterated that any recommendation to Council out of the hearing would not include a recommendation to amend leases and licences. As such the Chair noted that Councillor Smith did not have a conflict in regards to the Wanaka Yacht Club submission on their lease.

There were no other declarations of conflict of interest

Mr Damien O'Connell – Wakatipu Rugby Club

Mr O'Connell commented that going forward if prices were to increase then there would also have to be a lift in the standard of the grounds and facilities. He commented that they used to have the best fields in the area however the quality had been going backwards. Mr O'Connell noted that costs could be kept under control by turning the lights off after training had finished at night for example. The Chair commented that they had heard about the quality of the grounds through the consultation and added that if groups were charged a fair fee to use the grounds then they should be in a fair condition.

After questioning Mr O'Connell commented that there was a lot of out of season use of the ground affecting the quality of the surface for rugby and the ground was not recovering in winter and summer. He questioned what events coming to town were charged for using the grounds versus what clubs were charged. Mr Battrick explained that the goal was for costs to be kept as low as possible for locals and those coming

in externally be charged more. He noted that there were also local community orientated events being held so there had to be a balance.

Ms Emma Campbell and Mr Damien O'Connell – Queenstown Cricket

Ms Campbell noted that she supported Mr O'Connell's comments. She commented that the club understood that a lot more money and time was required to maintain cricket pitches and that prices did need to increase to pay for that. Ms Campbell suggested that there should be levels of service in place with the increased fees so both parties understood what was being provided. She commented that there was an issue with season dates and the availability of fields noting that they as a club could not change the Otago season schedule. Ms Campbell commented that a level of service agreement would allow the club to do its job, grow the game and provide a good service to its members.

Mr O'Connell commented that there had been issues with the grounds since the work had been moved to contractors. He gave the example of the covers being taken off the pitch early in the morning even if it was raining so that if it kept raining before the game started then they had to cancel the game. Mr O'Connell suggested that if there was an issue with the contract that was Council's problem not the club's problem. Ms Campbell commented that they were one of the bigger users of the grounds and they were not consulted before the grounds contract was granted. She reiterated the need for a set agreement to be in place adding that if the club needed to change things such as add a game through the season they should be able to.

The Chair thanked them for their insight. He noted their understanding that the fee amendments proposed were substantial but fair if they were balanced with the levels of service. Ms Campbell added that she had been involved with the club for 5 years and had noticed the standard of the grounds had dropped. She noted that there had been increased use but also an element of lack of maintenance as well. The Chair commented that there had been good submissions but it was always good to hear comments directly and he appreciated them both taking the time to speak.

The Chair thanked the submitters for their contribution and the Panel moved into deliberations at 2.02pm.

The Chair commented that there was a similar theme through the submissions referring to levels of service in return for an increased fee. He noted that the policy had not been reviewed for seven years so the increases appeared to be a huge jump.

There was discussion around whether the grounds were overused or if maintenance was not adequate. Dr Cloete acknowledged that there were some issues but overall things were ok. He noted that many of the clubs were growing, fields were getting used more and the time between seasons was shrinking. Dr Cloete commented that there was less time to fit maintenance in between seasons but the Parks team was aware of the issue and were discussing options. Councillor Smith commented that people in Wanaka were realising that there had been a massive increase in facilities and service compared to previous years.

Mr Battrick explained that officers had worked with the sporting codes to understand their needs before the contract was drawn up and he was confident they had the

specifications as best they could. He noted that the Parks team were trying to get as much information to the contractors as possible but they also relied on getting the information from the clubs.

There was discussion on the cost of maintaining grounds and reserves versus the fees charged to the community. There was discussion on the need to balance the quality of services and levels of funding spent to the use of the grounds themselves. Mr Battrick commented that there had been no renovations budget last year so the Parks team was working hard to get conditions of the grounds and fields up to a suitable level. He noted that they had completed a sports field demand analysis that could provide data for the masterplans and strategies currently being worked on.

There was discussion on the difference between level of service for a sports ground and a reserve. It was questioned whether the policy had the flexibility to cope with a pricing issue that did not fit the model proposed. It was explained that staff had worked to create a policy that could deal with most possibilities and it was noted that the policy would be reviewed again in 3 years' time.

After questioning Mr Battrick noted the pricing was related to hours of usage not a cost per user. He explained that a game of cricket for example had few users but required the field for a long period of time. Ms Husheer clarified for Councillor Smith that Wanaka netball was being charged more than Wanaka Basketball as Netball used the outdoor courts as well. She noted that she would make it clearer in the policy the difference between the Wanaka and Queenstown court pricing.

Councillor Smith asked for a tracked changes copy of the policy be included in the report to Council to clearly show the amendments being made. He commented that it was not made clear during the consultation that leases and licences were not being reviewed. It was also suggested that the fee structure be scheduled so it was clearer what was being amended or not.

There was a discussion on the in-kind activity and that the Community Services team currently only recouped 50% of the actual cost from the Events team for in-kind support. An example was that the Marathon was granted free use of the recreation ground but the Parks team had incurred costs around that use. It was explained that going forward community groups would be charged the community rate and if they received in-kind support then the Events team would need to pay 100% of the cost to the Parks team. It was noted that this would affect budgets in the coming Annual Plan. Dr Cloete noted he would clarify this with Finance and note it in the Council report if significant.

Recommendations to Council

The hearing panel recommend to Council that the Queenstown Lakes District Council Community Facilities Funding Policy be adopted

The Chair thanked Ms Husheer, Mr Battrick and Dr Cloete for their work on the policy.

The panel finished deliberations and closed the meeting at 2.44pm.