

TINTWISTLE PARISH COUNCIL

8 JULY 2025

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SUBJECT: Tintwistle Bowling Club (TBC) & Tintwistle Parish Council (TPC) – Cost Agreement

PURPOSE: To consider the level of future financial contributions to be made by TBC for the use of TPC's facilities on Sexton Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council considers the information within the report and decides on its preferred option.

1. Background

- Since TPC purchased the lease to the bowling green from United Utilities in 2016, no monies have been paid by TBC to TPC for the use of the council's facilities which include the green, the surrounding area (including car park) and community centre (including office for sole TBC use, kitchen and toilets).
- In July 2024, TPC and TBC signed a licence agreement which allows TBC to use the above TPC facilities subject to a number of conditions including maintenance of the bowling green by TBC and payment of £1 p.a. by TBC to TPC. This is significantly lower than charges paid by any private hirers using the council building (currently £10 for two hours, £10 per hour thereafter) and lower than the rate of £3 per hour charged to 'community' groups hiring the building.
- When assessing if changes should be made to the current financial agreement, the following should be considered:
 - TBC increases TPC's bills ('normal' water usage, electricity & sundries) by an estimated £150-200 p.a. Other bills i.e. internet, cleaning and insurance are unaffected by TBC.
 - TBC pay £2000 approx. p.a. to maintain the green to the required league standard. If TBC were not on site, TPC might still be expected to maintain the green (to a lower standard) at an additional cost to TPC. This cost could outweigh the £150-200 p.a. that TBC currently adds to TPC's bills.
 - Additional costs are incurred by TPC for 'exceptional' water usage by TBC during dry periods within the bowling season e.g. an additional £100 was incurred by TPC March-June 2025.
 - TPC pay £650 p.a. approx. for the maintenance of the hedges around the bowling green. It is likely however that TPC would still want to maintain these hedges if TBC were not on site so this factor should be set aside.
- A recent county survey of parish councils with bowling greens revealed no consistent approach to charging:
 - Council A – charge £100 p.a. with green maintenance paid for by the club
 - Council B – charge £1000 p.a. with green maintenance paid for by the club, though this is under review and is expected to be reduced
 - Council C – charge £37 per match but also pay to maintain the green.

2. Options for Council

Option 1) - TBC to be charged in line with current 'private' or 'community' hire rates

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Considerations:

- TBC would be expected to pay TPC between £468-£1040 p.a., a figure which TBC have already indicated it cannot support and one which is likely to threaten the club's viability. This would mean the loss of a club which:
 - has been part of village life for decades and brings life to the Sexton Street area
 - provides a leisure facility for members (who pay membership fees) and non-members/social bowlers (who can use the green for free). The club therefore contributes towards the health and wellbeing of local people.
- TBC's circumstances are different to others that hire the premises as its facilities are on TPC property. TPC's & TBC's finances are also intertwined as TBC pays a significant sum each year to maintain TPC's green.

Recommendation – that this option is NOT supported.

Option 2) - TBC to be charged £1 p.a. in line with the current licence agreement

Considerations:

- Whilst it is not possible to calculate the cost/benefit of TBC to TPC with 100% accuracy, it is probable that many local taxpayers would expect TBC to contribute more than £1 p.a. to TPC bills.

Recommendation – that this option is NOT supported.

Option 3) - TBC to be charged for SOME or ALL additional costs to TPC

- a)** Bills (£150-£200 p.a.) and extra for 'exceptional' water usage, a minimum total of £150 p.a.

Considerations:

- TBC have already indicated that they would find it financially challenging to contribute more towards TPC's bills in addition to the £2000 p.a. approx. already paid for green maintenance.
- Should this extra financial pressure mean TBC is no longer viable, the considerations as per Option 1) would apply. TPC's expenses could also increase by the cost of maintaining the green in TBC's absence.

Recommendation – that this option is NOT supported.

- b)** 'Exceptional' water usage only (to be assessed quarterly by TPC's Clerk & RFO). TBC have indicated they support this option and would like to contribute towards higher than usual water bills

Recommendation – that this option IS supported.

3. Reason for Recommendation

Option 3b) will:

- Remove the threat of TPC having to pay potentially higher bills if responsibility for green maintenance transferred back to the council.
- Ensure local taxpayers do not have to bear the cost of exceptional water usage by TBC in dry periods.
- Provide greater financial certainty to TPC as any unexpectedly higher water bills would be covered by TBC.
- Help ensure the future viability of Tintwistle Bowling Club, a community facility that can be accessed and enjoyed by all local residents.

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4. Expected Benefits

As per 3. Above.

5. Implications

5.1 **Legal** – If agreed, a small amendment to the current licence agreement would be required.

5.2 **Risks** – n/a

5.3 **Financial** – Increased financial predictability for TPC

5.4 **Timescales** – Immediate, upon acceptance by TBC.

5.5 **Stakeholders** – TPC, TBC and its members, local residents

5.6 **Contracts** – n/a

5.7 **Crime and Disorder**- n/a

5.8 **Biodiversity** – n/a

5.9 **Data Privacy Impact** – n/a

5.10 **Equality and Diversity** – n/a

5.11 **Climate Change** – n/a