

Portfolio Holder Decision

Kingsbury Fishery Fees and Charges

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate & Culture
Date of decision	20 December 2024
	Signed

1. Decision taken

- 1.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture approves the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 for Kingsbury Water Park Fishery as set out in Appendix A to this report.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 The County Council's constitution requires approval of fees and charges by the relevant Portfolio Holder prior to their application. This report sets out the proposed Kingsbury Water Park Fishery fees and charges for 2025/26.
- 2.2 Appendix A sets out the proposed fees and charges and compares them to the current year with percentage increase/decrease shown. As can be seen, the proposal is not to increase the cost of the majority of fishing tickets and permits. A decrease in price of 5.1% is proposed for the specimen night fishing annual permit for new permit holders and a decrease of 9% for existing permit holders. New night fishing tickets are also introduced to extend the offer.
- 2.3 The current financial year has seen a drop in sales for annual permits and day tickets and the proposed pricing is intended to attract new customers and extend the existing customer base whilst remaining competitive.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Kingsbury Water Park is recognised as a good natural fishing venue in the Midlands, attracting experienced anglers as well as providing an accessible gateway for newcomers into the sport.
- 3.2 Angling is valued as a sport that supports the health and wellbeing of anglers, and the Fishery is a valuable asset within the wider Country Parks portfolio. It is important that the Fishery remains accessible and provides value for money,

whilst continuing to generate income to support delivery of the Country Parks service.

- 3.3 This year the Specimen Carp Night Fishing Annual Permit has only sold 50% of available permits. Therefore, to drive interest and remain competitive in the market, it is proposed that the price of a permit is decreased by 5.1% (from £522.00 to £495) for new applicants and decreased by 9% for existing permit holders wishing to renew (bringing the price for renewals down to £475.00).
- 3.4 For 2025/26 a new night fishing ticket is proposed for specimen carp fishing on two lakes; Pine Pool and Gibsons pool. These will be priced at £27.50 and £22.50 respectively. There will also be an additional option for specimen carp night fishing permit holders to purchase guest night bookings at £25.00 per night. This will add to our offer and cater for a different sector of the market, with the prospect of attracting new permit holders from those introduced as guests.
- 3.5 These proposals have been set following competitor benchmarking, customer feedback and assessment of in-year figures. Benchmarking has consisted of the evaluation of competitor sites (including other local authority managed fisheries), looking at fish stock species, numbers and weight, facilities, type of angling and setting. All these factors are important when benchmarking.
- 3.6 With respect to the annual night fishing permit, our research has indicated the proposed price reduction, alongside being able to promote our prices at the start of the calendar year will put the fishery in a more competitive position with the aim of selling all the night fishing permits.
- 3.7 Alongside the pricing review, work is ongoing to increase revenue though the fishery. This includes the introduction of an established, third party national online booking system for angling, which will advertise and promote the fishing offer at Kingsbury to a wider, national audience as well as stimulating further local demand. This will help improve the customer experience and gather valuable data and insights into our customers.
- 3.8 Work continues on habitat management around the fishing lakes, restoring marginal plants and removing overgrown shrubs from the banks. The Council has received a grant to install new accessible fishing platforms and there have been a series of events and competitions bringing new and experienced anglers to Kingsbury.
- 3.9 Appendix A sets out the proposed fees and charges to take effect from 1 April 2025. Being able to sell permits from 1 January, to start on 1 April 2025, will ensure that sales are maximised as many other fisheries advertise and sell permits very early in the year.
- 3.10 Income generated from the fishery at Kingsbury helps pay for ongoing habitat and maintenance work that it is required across the site. Our fish stock is substantial, including a specimen carp, 44lb in size, and this along with other sizeable fish are a key attraction of the fishery. As the fishery is managed naturally, the stock will

continue to grow over the coming years and attract anglers, many of whom are keen to catch the larger specimen fish.

- 3.11 Through 2025, our angling offer will be developed and marketed, including through the new booking platform. Further day tickets and permits, whole lake and event bookings, seasonal promotions and other offers are all expected to come forward next year.
- 3.12 As commercial opportunities are developed within the fishery there may be the need to alter certain fees and charges, for instance promotional offers, or offering permits priced on a prorated basis. Future proposals will be subject to the Council's governance and Portfolio Holder decision as required by the Constitution.
- 3.13 This decision on fees and charges has been brought to the Portfolio Holder for determination ahead of the collective fees and charges process due to the commercial need to agree prices and start advertising and selling permits from January 2025 for the 2025 season which starts on 1 April 2025.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Revenue generated from the fishery in 2023/24 totalled £65k. Based on sales so far, the current financial year is forecast to deliver a £20k shortfall compared to previous years. The proposals seek to ensure we increase our competitiveness, retain existing permit holders, attract new permit holders, and maximise day and night ticket sales. It is anticipated that the lower-priced permit fee will generate an increase in sales and bring the fishing income back to expected levels.
- 4.2 There is no financial cost to the Council to list the fishery on the third-party platform. The model charges a small monthly subscription fee or pay as you go booking fee to the end user. This has been factored in when determining pricing.
- 4.3 Introducing a new booking platform, revised pricing structure, and other marketing measures, are expected to increase the customer base for the fishery, increasing income and further contribute to the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) savings targets for the service.
- 4.4 Officers have modelled the likely impact of the proposed changes to the pricing structure on sales to customers and can confirm that based on the anticipated increased take-up, the service will be able to address the current trading deficit and meet both its budget and MTFS commitments in 2025 / 26. These changes will not impact income for the 2024/25 period.
- 4.5 The below table summarises projected income compared to current following these price changes.

Annual MTFS income target	Current income projections	Projected income resulting from price changes
£65k	£45k	£71k

5. Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Engagement in our green spaces through angling helps stimulate interest in the environment, water quality and biodiversity.
- 5.2 By operating a competitive natural fishery and offering affordable permits and tickets we are encouraging people to enter and/or continue this sport which has a positive impact on people engaging with the environment and their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 5.3 All revenue generated through the fishery contributes to the running costs of the fishery and the wider Country Parks Service. The service manages substantial areas of green space in a way that maximises our contribution to mitigate the impacts of climate change and deliver environmental education programmes to increase awareness and participation in looking after our natural environment.

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Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No

Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?

No

List of background papers

Appendix A - Kingsbury Water Park Fishery Fees and Charges 2025 / 26

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Heather Timms

Corporate Board – Monica Fogarty, Rob Powell, Mark Ryder, Nigel Minns, Becky Hale

Legal – Nic Vine, Head of Legal and Governance

Finance – Andrew Harper, Liz Firmstone

Equality – Delory Madden

Procurement – Mark Baker, John Hopper

Democratic Services – Nic Conway

Councillors – Chair and Party Spokespersons for Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Local Member(s): Councillor Andy Jenns, Councillor Martin Watson