

17a

Kathryn Lloyd CPFA
The Clerk & RFO Oswestry Rural Parish Council
The Cooperage
28 Hillock Lane
Gresford
LL8YL

Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY2 6ND

Date: 3 January 2023

My Ref:

Your Ref

Dear Kathryn

Oswestry Leisure Centre – increased fees

Your letter dated 11th November 2022 sent to Councillor Picton regarding the fees and charges at Oswestry Leisure Centre has been forwarded to me.

Inevitably there has had to be an increase in charges across all of the leisure centres in Shropshire due to the ever-increasing operational costs. The Council's directly managed facilities will be subject to a 10% increase as of 1st April 2023 in line with the current level of inflation. This certainly isn't an action that the Council want to take, however, the current financial situation dictates this necessity to provide an element of longer-term sustainability for leisure facility provision. Shropshire Council IS committed to people's health and wellbeing and subsidise operational costs at leisure centres across the county.

Shropshire Community Leisure Trust, who operate 4 facilities on behalf of the Council, will mirror the increases set by the Council, but not for all activities. Throughout their contract, which commenced in 2012, the Trust submit their price increase proposals annually. If proposals differ significantly from Council proposals they require Cabinet/Full Council approval. This has not been the case for 10 years and is unlikely to be so going forward.

The 60+ concessionary rate at Oswestry Leisure Centre has not been withdrawn. There are 60+ concessionary rates in place for swimming, fitness suite usage and group exercise classes. I believe you are referring to the removal of the BeActive Card which was withdrawn by the Council at the beginning of the financial year in 2022. This was introduced in 2010 and became unsustainable as it allowed up to a 50% discount on all activities, even those that already benefited from a concession. Shropshire Community Leisure Trust have, however, considered the disparity in charges across the facilities they operate and will be reducing the 60+ concessionary rate for swimming in January 2023 at Oswestry in line with other centres.



The Trust will also be introducing their own concession card which provides a 40% discount for 60+, students and customers in receipt of benefits; they too recognise commitment to the health and wellbeing of all user groups. This is a really positive outcome for the communities in Oswestry, Market Drayton Shrewsbury.

We do understand the concerns that increased fees and charges bring but the Council remain committed to supporting the operation of leisure facilities and have no desire to see centres close, be that temporarily or permanently, as is the case within a number of local authorities in the UK.

Yours sincerely



PETER DAVIS
Leisure Services Manager
Shropshire Council

