

13 March 2018

## **Grounds Maintenance Contract and Cricket Club Rental**

### **Introduction**

### **Background**

1. At the time of setting the Budget, the Council agreed to extend the current grounds maintenance contract with Broadland Tree Services to the end of 2019, subject to further discussion on the details, with a view to retendering the contract during 2019.
2. I have had further discussions with Phil Anderson from BTS who has submitted his proposals for grounds maintenance over the next two growing seasons. Mr Anderson had previously expressed some views on the required frequency grass cutting on the cricket field and the cemetery, and I asked him to put forward his suggestions with costings. His comments are as set out in the **attached** letter.
3. The impact of these proposals are in turn set out in the attached spreadsheet. This has split the grounds maintenance charges for 2017/18 across the areas of the allotments, the cemetery, the cricket field/common and the play area on the basis of the original tender from BTS in 2014. As members will recall, I also disaggregated the Grounds Maintenance budget across these headings in the budget document in January.

### **Cost implications for 2018/19**

4. The first point to note is the request for a 3% uplift in the existing contract price to allow for inflation. This is quite normal, and I have in any event allowed for 3% inflation in the budget.
5. The second point is that, whereas the original specification calls for mowing of the cemetery twice a month, but strimming only once a month, Mr Anderson a twice monthly strim gives a better finish (and BTS have in fact been doing that already). It is for members to determine whether this is worthwhile. To recognise this extra strimming would add £240 to the annual cost. One option might be to ask BTS to stick to one strim per month (as per the original specification), but to review this after two or three months to see how much of difference is noticeable.
6. The third point is the proposal to have not two, but three cuts of the cricket field during the cricket season, to enable an appropriate finish for the cricket club when playing home matches. The financial implications of this would be an extra £350 a year (based on £70 per month for the five months of the cricket season plus £175 for having a third monthly cut of the open play area on the common to "match" the finish on the cricket field. Taken as a whole, there is sufficient capacity within the budget to meet the increased costs, but the cricket field issue raises the question of the cricket club rent, which is dealt with in more detail in the next section.

### **Cricket Club Rental**

7. The Council reviews the Cricket Club Rental from time to time. The last increase was agreed in the Autumn of 2016, to the current rental of £150 a year. As can be seen from the attached table the costs to the council of maintaining the cricket field are much more than this. In fairness, given that the cricket field is open land available for anyone to use when the cricket club is not using it, it would be unreasonable to expect the Cricket Club to meet all of that cost. However, the Council is currently paying for two cuts per month in the Cricket season, and it might be reasonable to take the view that one cut a month would be sufficient were the cricket pitch not there, and the area was only being maintained as a recreation ground.
8. On that basis it would seem reasonable (now that we know the cost of maintaining the cricket field) to raise the rental by £350 to £500 a year. If, indeed, a third monthly cut is

required that would raise the rental to £850. An alternative approach would be to adjust the Cricket Club's rental to reflect the cost of twice monthly mowing, and leave them to negotiate any additional cuts required with BTS during the year.

9. I have not approached the Cricket Club on this issue at the time of writing this report, because it is important for the Council to consider the principles involved first. If the principle is agreed, then it would only be fair to give the Cricket Club the chance to respond before instituting a substantial increase in their rent.

**Recommendations:**

- a) To consider whether to agree to any or all of the following changes to the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2018/19:
  - a. An inflation increase of 3% on the 2017/18 charges
  - b. An additional monthly strim of the Cemetery, at a cost of £240 for the year
  - c. An additional monthly cut of the grass on the cricket field, at a cost of £350 pa
  - d. An additional cut of the grass on the Common (open play area) for £175
- b) To consider in principle whether to increase the Cricket Club rental along the lines set out in this report.

Trevor Wenman

Parish Clerk

Mr Trevor Wenman  
Clerk to New Buckenham Parish Council.

2018 And 2019 Grounds Maintenance Contract New Buckenham.

Dear Trevor ,

Following our meeting and our discussions I am pleased to advise you as follows:-

Cricket Pitch — during the past 3 years it has been necessary to cut the pitch more frequently than the current tender / schedule allows ,instead of the 2 cuts per month it has been necessary to cut 3 times to achieve a reasonable playing surface.This is partly due to weather conditions,growth characteristics of the grass on the pitch and the need for a good playing surface.

Due to the play area and cricket pitch being connected the play area has had the same cutting regime to ensure the same ascetic look.

Going forward the additional cost of the extra cut would be £70 +vat cricket pitch and £35+vat play area car park area.

Cemetery— the original tender specification allows for 2 cuts per month and strimming around the graves once a month ,we have for the past 3 years been strimming twice per month to ensure a good finish.

The number of cuts is ok for this area I feel.

The cost of the extra strimming per month going forward would be £30+vat

All other areas churchyard etc would remain the same cutting regime,the cutting period to be March to October inclusive.

For the next 2 years I would ask for an inflation currently 3% increase per annum to cover rising fuel ,maintenance and labour costs.

I would be pleased in 2019 to draw up a tender specification for you to be able to then go out to competitive tender for 2020 season.

I trust this is agreeable to the Parish Council and I will ensure that the New Buckenham Grounds Maintenance is carried out to a good standard for the next 2 years.

Yours sincerely

Phil Anderson





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**New Buckenham PC Grounds maintenance 2018/19**  
**13 March 2018 Item 10 Appendix B**

Contract 1 - Cemetery /Play Area		2017 charges	2018 proposed	Inflation increase	Additional cuts	Grand total 2018	Budget 2018/19
Annual cost 2014 tender %							
Cemetery	1255	76%	1,528.51	45.86	240	1,814.37	1,890.00
Allotments	80	5%	97.44	2.92	0	100.36	453.00
Play Area	315	19%	383.65	11.51	0	395.16	1,079.00
	1650	100%	2,009.60	60.29		2,069.89	3,422.00
<b>Contract 2 - Cricket pitch/Common</b>							
Cricket Pitch	1200	85%	1,461.63	43.85	350.00	1,855.48	1,497.46
Common	220	15%	267.97	8.04	175.00	451.01	274.54
	1420	100%	1,729.60	<b>51.89</b>	<b>525.00</b>	<b>2,306.49</b>	<b>1,772.00</b>
sub total grds maintenance (excluding Close 2017 charge)			<b>3,739.20</b>	<b>112.18</b>	<b>525.00</b>	<b>4,376.38</b>	<b>5,194.00</b>
<b>Contract 3 - Closed Churchyard</b>							
Area to rear	40		40.00	1.20		41.20	82.33
Churchyard prope	560		560.00	16.80		576.80	1,152.67
Sub total churchyard			<b>600.00</b>	<b>18.00</b>	-	<b>618.00</b>	<b>1,235.00</b>

Calculation of additional cutting costs		
Cost per cut / Month)	Over 8 months (March - October)	Over 5 months (April- August)
30	240	350
70		350
35		175