

Christchurch and East Dorset Partnership

Park Homes Fees Policy

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Mobile Homes Act 2013 (The Act) received royal assent on 26th March 2013. The Act introduces important changes to the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 which directly affects the way the Council licenses park home sites (also known as “relevant protected sites”). Amongst a number of changes from the 1st April 2014 fees may be charged on site owners for new site licences, annual fees for existing sites and fees for amendments or transfers of existing licences. The Council is required also to publish a fees policy, Table 1 summarises the fees which are set out in more detail in Section 3 and Appendix 1 of this document.

Table 1 Park Home Fees (Relevant Protected Sites only)

New Park Home Licence (per licence)	Sites of 35 units or less = £324 Thereafter an additional £40 per multiple of 30 units
Annual Licence Fee (per site)	1- 30 units = £148 Thereafter additional £40 per multiple of 30 units
Transfer of a Licence	£29
Amendments to site licence conditions	£164
Deposit of Site Rules (per set of rules)	£40

1.2 Sites that are for holiday use only or are only allowed to have units stationed on them at certain times of the year and are not relevant protected sites are exempt from these licensing fees.

1.3 The Council will charge fees if costs are incurred in carrying out enforcement activities, such as service of an improvement notice (if site conditions are breached) however they will be calculated on a case by case basis and therefore no set fees apply.

1.4 Site owners have 1 calendar year from 4th February 2014 to propose and agree new site rules prior to depositing them with the Council. Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council will publish and update a register of new site rules for which a deposit fee will be charged.

1.5 The Act also makes provision in the future for site owners to meet a “Fit and Proper Persons” test and for Local Authorities to keep a register. Fees and procedures for maintaining a register will be added as an addendum to this policy should regulations appear enacting this part of the legislation.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 came into force on 29th August 1960. Part one of the Act introduced a licensing system, to be operated by Local Authorities to regulate the establishment and operation of caravan sites. The Mobile Homes Act 2013 (“The Act”) amends this primary legislation.
- 2.2 The Mobile Homes Act 2013 received royal assent on 26th March 2013. Implementation of the Act was phased and introduces important changes to park home site licensing. These changes include the ability for Local Authorities to charge site owners a fee for applying for a site licence, for transfers of an existing licence, revising site licence conditions and for an annual fee. Site owners may recover the annual fees through an increase in pitch fees if they choose to do so.
- 2.3 There are currently 12 sites within East Dorset and 3 within Christchurch that are defined as park home sites or ‘relevant protected sites’ as they are defined in the Mobile Homes Act 2013. The total number of park homes on these sites is currently 988 and 58 respectively.
- 2.4 Section 10A (2) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 as amended by the Act requires a Local Authority to publish a Fees Policy for the licensing of park home sites. This policy has been developed to enable the Council to charge appropriate fee. All fees are calculated on a cost recovery basis and represent the true cost of procedures and formalities. Relevant considerations when calculating the fees include; administering applications, issuing licences, officer time, annual inspections, stationery costs, postage, time spent consulting with other organisations, legal advice, licensing software.
- 2.7 As this is new legislation, the fees will be reviewed after 12 months and thereafter on a three year basis with the fees being adjusted up or down accordingly.
- 2.8 The Act also introduces the ability for Local Authorities to serve enforcement notices and to carry out works in default to remedy breaches of site licence conditions from 1st April 2014. A charge for any enforcement activities will be made on a case by case basis based on full cost recovery.
- 2.9 The Act also introduces changes to how site rules are administered. Site rules are not the same as the site licence conditions but are an agreed set of rules between the site owner and residents. Regulations came into force on 4th February 2014 which set timescales (12 months from that date) within which site owners will need to replace any existing site rules with new ones that should be deposited with the Council. A fee for depositing and publishing the site rules is also set out in this policy.

- 2.10 Regulations regarding a register of fit and proper persons for managing relevant protected sites have yet to be published and will therefore be added to this policy as an addendum if and when they are enacted. This will include details of how the Council intends to administer Section 8 of the Mobile Homes Act 2013 (fit and proper person test).

3. Fees Policy

3.1 Fees

3.1.1 New Licence

The Council will charge a fee based upon a size banding with a minimum cost of £324 for sites of 30 units or less, and an additional £40 for each multiple of 30 units in excess of this number will be applied.

3.1.2 Annual Fee

The Council will charge site owners in respect of each existing relevant protected site licence an annual fee based upon a size banding with a minimum cost of £148 for sites of 1 to 30 units inclusive and an additional £40 for each multiple of 30 units on site in excess of this number will be applied. The number of units on the site will be that which exist on the site at the time the annual inspection is carried out.

3.1.3 Transfer or Amendment of a licence

The Council will charge a fee of £29 where an application to transfer the licence to another person/organisation is received and £164 for alterations to licence conditions where these are requested by a site owner.

3.1.4 Site rules

The Council will charge a £40 fee to deposit site rules and to publish them on the Council's website.

3.2. Exemptions from paying fees

3.2.1 Holiday / Caravan sites

Sites that are for holiday use only or are only allowed to have units stationed on them at certain times of the year are exempt from licensing fees.

3.3 Fees: General

3.3.1 Cost Recovery

Fees are calculated on the basis that they will recover the costs incurred by the Council in administering licences which includes both the fixed costs and officer time spent inspecting the sites. Costs taken into account include IT, staff and management costs (including administration, site visit / inspection, report writing and correspondence, liaison with site owners) and travel to sites. Details of how fees have been calculated are set out below in Appendix 1.

3.3.2 Review of Fees

Site fees will be reviewed after 12 months of introduction and thereafter on a three year basis which will take into account any surplus or deficit in costs that may have built up.

3.3.3 When Fees are payable

- Annual Fees

For existing sites fees are payable on the **1st September 2014** and then on each anniversary.

- New Site Licences

Where a new site licence application is received payment of the New Site Licence fee will be required as part of the application. If granted the annual fee will be payable on **1st September** the following year.

3.3.4 Enforcement costs are not included in annual fees

Annual site licence fees do not include any costs incurred in relation to enforcement activities, such as serving compliance notices, emergency action, and works in default as these costs will be recovered on a case by case basis. Costs incurred in enforcement activities will be calculated on a full cost recovery basis.

4. Depositing of Site Rules

4.1 Site rules will be accepted and published by the Council if the correct fee is paid and the site owner can provide evidence that the rules have been correctly consulted and agreed and that there are no outstanding appeals.

4.2 Site rules which have been duly deposited with the Council will be published on the Dorset For You web site and available to view or download.

Appendix 1 Licence Fees

New Park Home Licence

New Park Home Licence (per licence)	Sites of 30 units or less = £324 Thereafter an additional £40 per multiple of 30 units
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Annual Licence Fee

Annual Licence Fee (per licensed site)	1- 30 units = £148 Thereafter an additional £40 per multiple of 30 units
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Transfer of a Licence

Transfer of a Licence	£29
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Amendment of a Licence

Amendments to site licence conditions	£164
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Deposit of Site Rules

Deposit of Site Rules (per set of rules)	£40
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