

CHELMSFORD HOCKEY CLUB (CHC) – PITCH USAGE POLICY

IMPACT OF POLICY

Occasional use of the club's pitch by members

Background

1. This policy relates to the use of Chelmsford Hockey Club's (CHC) artificial pitch at Chelmer Park which was laid in August 2017. It has no application to the use of the adjacent pitch, which is owned by Chelmsford City Council (CCC), the use of which is solely by prior agreement with the council.
2. CHC's pitch is the sole responsibility of the club and has been paid for from club funds. The club has the responsibility to keep the pitch clean and in good condition in line with the warranty provided by Lano Sports. Currently, cleaning is undertaken by CCC at a weekly cost of £40 plus VAT.
3. The pitch has an expected lifespan of 10 years. Since hockey is the only sport played, it may last an additional 2/3 years provided maintenance regimes are maintained and players observe the guidelines for acceptable footwear. CHC plans to place £25000 pa into a sinking fund to ensure that, after allowing for inflation, there are sufficient funds in place to pay for the pitch's replacement.

Pitch usage

4. The pitch is used throughout the year for formal matches, training, coaching, hiring to third parties and on an ad hoc basis.
5. During the season from September to early April the pitch is used intensively for senior league games on Saturdays; senior training on 4 weekday nights; junior training and games on Sundays together with some week night training. From late April to September, summer hockey runs on 4 weekday nights with junior training every Friday evening. All

formal pitch use is recorded on the on line booking form by the bookings secretary who also raises invoices for outside hires by schools, ECHA etc.

6. The pitch is also used for new initiatives such as Rush Hockey, informal training and one off use by individuals who have been able to gain access by borrowing gate keys

Payment by members for use of the pitch

7. The general policy adopted by the club for many years is that “those that play, pay”. This has usually been achieved by the relationship between membership subscriptions and match fees. Everyone pays the same subscription according to their age; but members who play more often effectively pay more in match fees in the course of a season overall than those who play less often.

8. The club has recognised the importance of training and encourages participation by including the cost of training for all ages in their subscriptions. Effectively, those members who don't train get less benefit from their subscription than those that do. It also follows that those who train most e.g. the 1st XIs get relatively more benefit. A further incentive introduced relates to the mixed side which plays on Sundays. Recognising that it is largely younger players who play mixed, those who have already played and paid a match fee on the previous Saturday do not have to pay a mixed team fee on the Sunday. In return for this, normal teas are not provided and the players have to provide these themselves.

9. With the advent of the new pitch, and the ease of its use because no watering is required, more members are using the pitch on an occasional use. This might be for ad hoc games or perhaps for practising skills. Some of this activity is booked, but much of it is not raising questions about security and proper use of the pitch; and whether this sort of usage should involve a fee of some kind.

New policy

10. The “those that play, pay” principle has historically only been applied to organised games and training. The concept pre-dated “occasional usage” which first arose in 2017/18. Consciously, or otherwise, the calculation of subscriptions and match fees does not take account of occasional use or the cost of it to the club – particularly outside the Winter season.

11. Every time members play on the pitch there is a cost to the club – either in maintenance, wear and tear or the amortised cost of the pitch. With outside hires this is covered by the hire charge (£70ph for adults; £50ph for juniors and schools). It follows that if this cost is not factored into subscriptions and match fees, those that use the pitch on an occasional basis should contribute to the cost. If they used the council pitch or some other facility they would have to pay a hire fee.

12. There is already a clear and established precedent for charging members a “match fee” when participating in organised summer activities including Rush Hockey, summer camps and summer hockey (both adult and junior) for many years. The same principle should apply to those members who use the pitch on an informal, occasional basis.

13. A further point concerns identifying use of the pitch. With the proliferation of pitch keys (including those informally copied) we have no way of knowing who is using the pitch outside of organised club events. And while it is hoped that all club members can be trusted to use the pitch properly, we have no guarantee that it is just club members using it occasionally. This has serious implications for the club’s insurance cover.

Charging and other arrangements

14. The following arrangements will apply:

- No “occasional use” (defined as usage which is not an approved competitive CHC fixture, or formal coaching session or initiative

e.g. Rush hockey) of the pitch will be allowed without a prior booking of the pitch

- Any occasional use will be subject to a playing fee: £4 for adults and £2 for juniors (each membership category as defined at the AGM)
- The amount collected should be the lesser of the total fees collected or £50 for each hour of use
- No occasional use will be permitted without an identified CHC member being present who will take personal responsibility for opening and closing the pitch, collecting the playing fees and accounting for them to the club treasurer.
- Collected fees should be paid directly into the club's account: Chelmsford Hockey Club, Lloyds Bank, Sort code: 30-91-85, Account: 00997139 and with member's name and date

15. These arrangements will come into effect on 1 September 2018, except for the 1st bullet in paragraph 14 which comes into effect immediately.

CHC Management Committee
August 2018