

We're aware that the increase in membership and match fees has given rise to some concerns and comment. As a reminder here is a summary of the changes we have adopted for the 2025.26 Season:

Membership Fee Category	2024/25 Season	2025/26 Season
Adult	175	225
Young Adult (aged 18 - 25 on 1st September)	135	170
Goal Keepers (Adult and Junior)	N/A	50
Associate (up to 9 games per season)	60	120
Match Officials	N/A	50
Associate (inc training sessions)	N/A	50
Associate (non playing)	25	30
Social	15	20
Adult All-inclusive	385	510
Young Adult All-inclusive	270	365
Junior (up to and including school year 3)	90	115
Junior (school years 4 - 8)	130	165
Junior (school years 9 - 13)	135	170
Match Fee Category	2024/25 Season	2025/26 Season
Adult	12	16
Junior	8	11
<i>N.B. Goalkeepers with 100% own kit pay 50% match fees</i>		

The detailed reasons behind the need to do this have been set out already (this can be found in your Pitchero messages or on the club website) and the proposal was made knowing it was a significant increase in one year and may unfortunately cause difficulties for some of the club's members.

Overall, we believe that the club is financially secure and has the cash reserves to meet its future obligations to replace and maintain its facilities as the costs fall due. However, the club made an operating loss last year and, without change, would have incurred a more substantial loss this year. The Management Committee therefore felt it was necessary to set a prudent budget where, broadly, "playing income" (membership and match fees, summer leagues, club tournaments, pitch hire and tea hut income) matched the expected playing and annual maintenance costs. The club generates relatively little income from sponsorship, gifts or other fundraising activities and no commercial income (the Sport's Club lease doesn't currently allow for that) and while we are looking to develop these areas any such income remains uncertain. If the club operates at a loss, then the financial reserves built up over many years will rapidly disappear.

Over the next year we intend to look in detail at the club's expected future costs and the provisions held for those purposes and to establish a longer-term financial

plan. A fundamental reason for the sharp increase this year is the fact that our costs have gone up over the last five years and while we have managed to keep member's costs level over the same period the sizeable increases in past cost and this year's additional levy from England Hockey, along with other anticipated additional costs, means that is no longer a sustainable approach.

To reflect the cost increases we are also requesting that club members who previously obtained nil or discounted membership (coaches, umpires, goal keepers etc) pay a small membership fee (if not already paying for a playing membership) to reflect that the club must pay the EH, insurance and Sports Club costs for their membership. We will also add a category for non-match playing Associate members who wish to train with the club's lowest teams as part of a social membership.

In previous years we have asked members to pay membership fees in one payment in advance. This year we will set up an instalment plan in Pitchero where membership can be paid in two parts (or three for the all-inclusive option) to spread the cost. Further details will follow shortly but the aim is that we will request members register on Pitchero for next season shortly (most pre-season can start this week) and at the latest before the leagues start on 19th September. Any first payment will then be due by 30th September. For next year we will consider whether additional membership categories can be considered (such as family memberships) and we will look closely to see that the cost of membership is proportional across all the membership.

Finally, the club doesn't want to create a situation where individuals feel they are effectively unable to play hockey because of financial hardship. As in prior years, if this is the case for anyone, please get in touch with Matt Gore, (membership@chelmsfordhc.org.uk) our membership secretary to discuss whether the club can offer a bespoke membership arrangement.