

COUNCIL MEETING – WEDNESDAY 4 JULY 2018

NOTICE OF MOTION

Supporting our Little Leagues

Organised sport is a vital resource for the children of our borough to support their continued good health and development. The government childhood obesity plan from January 2017 outlined that nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are now overweight or obese and younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer. Organised sport is seen as a vital part of tackling childhood obesity and this is also reflected in Merton's own plan.

However, Merton's long running and popular volunteer-led Little Leagues that provide free football to local children are potentially facing new charges for use of our public parks. These charges will put pressure on volunteers and could lead to charges for parents that could discourage participation in organised physical activity outside of school.

This council notes that:

- The Merton council report in March 2017 'Tackling childhood obesity together' outlined the importance of organised physical activity for the children of the borough.
<https://news.merton.gov.uk/2017/03/13/tackling-childhood-obesity-together/>
- The Raynes Park Little League is a voluntary organisation that has been serving the residents of Merton, providing free organised football based solely on voluntary contributions and is this year celebrating 50 years as part of the lifeblood of this borough.
- The volunteers for all our Merton Little Leagues past and present do an important job and should be supported by the London Borough of Merton and its elected representatives to continue their work.
- That the contractor IDVerde is proposing new charges for Little Leagues to use our parks that are yet to be confirmed and charges for the Raynes Park Little League could be as much as £4000 a year with the potential for additional charges for use of the pavilion.

This Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet member to:

1. Agree the principle that our volunteer-led Little Leagues should be able to use our parks without charge and for the benefit of the borough of Merton in any future contract.
2. Confirm with the current contractor IDVerde any charges to Little Leagues that will be due for use of parks and related facilities (such as the Pavilion in the St Joseph Hood memorial playing fields) in each year of

the contract. These details should be provided to Little League no later than 18th July 2018.

3. To ensure Little Leagues do not incur any financial penalty from any new charges for our parks and related facilities and can continue to run on the basis of voluntary contributions during the current contract period, Merton council will pursue one or more of the following routes:

- Negotiate with IDVerde a zero rate charge for Little Leagues for use of our parks and related facilities for the duration of the contract.
- Meet the cost of any charges for the use of our parks and related facilities directly through council funds for the full duration of the contract.
- Secure through the council sufficient sponsorship for Little Leagues to cover all costs incurred through the IDVerde contract for the full duration of the contract and meet any shortfall through council funds if the council is unable to secure sufficient sponsorship.

4. Ensure that before any further charges are implemented for the use of our parks anywhere in Merton or if our parks are monetised in any other way, that those proposals and details of the amount of any charges are brought to councillors and are scrutinised and debated either at full council or through the appropriate scrutiny committee at least a year in advance of implementation.

Councillor Hina Bokhari

Councillor Carl Quilliam

Councillor Eloise Bailey