

## Parkrun

### Summary

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a consultation on conserving the free use of public parks. The government are proposing to introduce legislation which would put it beyond doubt that local authorities, including parish councils, cannot charge parkrun or junior parkrun for the use of public parks. The link to the consultation paper can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/running-free-consultation-on-preserving-the-free-use-of-public-parks> .

### Context

Parkrun organise free, weekly, five kilometre runs in local parks every Saturday morning. Junior parkrun is for children aged 4-14 and takes place every Sunday morning in local parks. Parkrun is free to participate in and is run by volunteers. The government believe parkrun to be an excellent example of communities organising events on a voluntary basis and enabling the public to enjoy healthy exercise.

Whilst the government consider it legitimate for local authorities to charge for the exclusive use of a facility or a ticketed event, they do not consider it appropriate for a local authority to charge a community entry to a free weekly event. They have noted the case of Stoke Gifford Parish Council, which voted to impose a charge on parkrun for use of Little Stoke Park and state it runs contrary to their objectives on health and voluntary community action. Consequently the government are seeking to prevent other local authorities from following Stoke Gifford Parish Council's example.

The government are therefore proposing that the Secretary of State would be able to exercise his powers under section 151 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to make regulations to prohibit, limit or repeal powers for a local authority to make a charge. This would inform any future proposals to exercise his powers under section 5 (3) of the Localism Act 2011 to prevent local authorities in England from using the General Power of Competence to charge parkrun or junior parkrun for the use of a public park. The government are also looking at whether the legislation should be extended to other types of use of public parks.

## Main Areas Of Interest-

The government is seeking responses to the following questions:

- 1. Do you agree that local authorities should not be able to charge parkrun or parkrun junior for the use of public parks?;**
- 2. Is there any specific activity, in addition to parkrun or junior parkrun, that takes place in a public park, that does not require exclusive use of the park or a part of the park, that should be considered for inclusion in provisions to prevent local authorities charging for that activity, and if so why?; &**
- 3: Are there any activities that involve a financial charge to a client or clients by a professional or business, but do not involve exclusive use of a public park or part of the park, that should be considered for inclusion in provisions to prevent local authorities charging for that activity, and if so why?**

## Provisional Position of NALC

Councils currently have the power to levy charges for use of recreational facilities which may include a park. **NALC believes that the decision as to whether to levy such charges for use of such recreation facilities should be made by parish councils themselves.**

NALC is also hugely supportive of parks and open spaces as integral to the health and wellbeing agenda and of the concept of parish councils being the custodians of green spaces in their areas (and encouraging their residents to use these spaces) – whether the parish council owns or maintains such parks.

## Your views

Please e-mail your responses to this consultation to [Jessica.Lancod-frost@nalc.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.Lancod-frost@nalc.gov.uk) by **17:00 on Wednesday 28 June, 2017.**

Recommended Circulation:	County Associations
	All Member Councils