



TOILET CHARGING IN LOOE – QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q1 - What does my 20p pay for?

Entry fees are a **contribution** towards the costs of providing toilets which includes cleaning the premises, rubbish disposal, building maintenance, providing equipment (such as hand driers, soap dispensers, toilet roll holders, baby changers, etc), supplies of toilet paper and soap, and the cost of power and water at the site.

Q2 - Why do I have to pay at all to use a toilet?

Looe Town Council's budget for running the 5 sets of public toilets in the town in the year 2023/24 is £128.5k. This is 28% of the 'precept' income which comes from our proportion of the Council Tax paid by residents and is equivalent to around £31 per resident per year (based on an electorate of 4,157 people in Looe). This is clearly a significant portion of our expenditure for a facility which, arguably, benefits visitors more than those paying Council Tax locally.

Q3 - The toilets have always been free – why do they cost more to run now?

The public toilets in Looe were devolved from Cornwall Council in 2015 and many of the buildings and fittings were in a poor state at that time. The toilets would have been closed then if the Town Council had not taken on their management. The running costs have always been a significant part of Council expenditure to the point that we are not able to maintain them to a reasonable standard without additional income. Council believes that the fairest way to pay for necessary improvements and increased operating costs is to ask users of the facilities to pay a nominal charge.

Q4 - Doesn't the Council get enough money from parking fees to pay for toilets in the car park?

Looe Town Council do not own any of the main car parks in the town and do not receive any portion of the income from parking fees.

Q5 - What happens to the income the Council get from toilets?

The income we receive contributes to our ongoing spending on public toilets in the town (e.g. cleaning, maintenance, supply of power, paper, soap, etc.), as well as helping us to fund refurbishment of our 5 toilet sites.

Q6 - Does it really cost me more than 20p with card fees?

No, users pay just the 20p fee to enter our toilets. All card fees and administration costs are then taken from this before income is paid to the Council.

Q7 - Do I have to pay to use the Disabled toilet facilities?

No. There is an accessible toilet at each of our 5 sites which are free to use for those with a RADAR key and, unlike some other Cornish towns, we have no plans to introduce charges for these facilities.

Q8 - Why can't I just pay cash?

We've chosen a card/contactless payment system so that we don't have cash on the premises (which increases the risk of break-ins and vandalism) and don't have the additional expenses of collecting, counting and banking cash. Residents of Looe who use our facilities regularly can purchase a pre-paid card from the library which provides 30 entry credits per month – see further information below.

Q9 - Can I get a Residents Card?

If you live in Looe you can buy a Residents Card from Looe Library or the Council offices at the Millpool. You will be asked to show proof of your address and that you live within our 'parish' i.e. you pay Council Tax to Looe Town Council

Q10 - Do Residents Cards work at both the Millpool and the Seafront toilets?

Yes, the cashless system is the same at both of our charging toilet sites.

Q11 - How much is a Residents Card?

Cards cost £5 which covers the card and administration fees – we don't make a profit on these. Cards are supplied with 30 entry credits and then automatically re-set for another 30 entries at the beginning of each calendar month. Unused credits do not roll over at month end but there are no further charges after the initial £5 purchase fee.

Q12 - How did you decide on the fee of 20p?

We looked at the fees being charged elsewhere and particularly in other Cornish seaside towns. Where fees are being charged, this varied from 20p to 50p and Looe Town Council agreed to introduce charges at the lower figure. We continue to run some free-to-use facilities at less busy sites and to provide Accessible Toilets at all our sites for those with RADAR keys.

Q13 - How much do the Council earn after paying card fees and the cost of the entry system?

Looe Town Council purchase the entry gates and software that is used at paying toilet sites. Based on implementation at the Millpool site, the income from entry fees recovers the cost of equipment and installation within around 18 months. Running costs to Looe Town Council for the card payment system are a £30 fee per month plus 8% of sales. Our net monthly income varies significantly according to season with the highest at Millpool being £3,238 in August 2023 and the lowest £172 in December 2022.

Q14 - Do I have to pay at all the toilets in Looe?

No. We charge to use the Ladies and Gents at the Millpool car park and will be introducing the same entry charges at the seafront toilets in East Looe in 2024. Our facilities at the Guildhall, West Looe Quay and Hannafore are currently free to use. Councillors may reconsider charging at other sites in the future, particularly if operating costs continue to rise. Accessible toilets are free to use at all five of our sites by those with RADAR keys and there are no plans to opt out of this scheme as some other Councils have chosen to do.