

## **NICSSA AGM – APRIL 2025 – SUBSCRIPTION INCREASE**

**Explanatory note on the proposal to increase membership subscription rates by £1.80 per annum (24p per month) to £6.89 per month with effect from 1 July 2025. The £20 annual rate for junior membership in the 16-18 age category will remain unchanged. The £10 subscription for under 16-year-olds will remain unchanged.**

### **1. Background**

At its February 2014 meeting Council agreed the principle that annual subscription increases linked to CPI, would be the way forward.

This policy was developed against a background of generally increasing overhead and service delivery costs, a slow-down in membership growth and the ending of the annual grant from DFP.

The last increase was the 32p (3.6%) per month increase approved at the 2024 NICSSA AGM. The inflation factor for that year was 3.9%. However, Council decided that an increase of 3.9% was too much in one go, particularly as pay in the NI Civil Service had fallen significantly in real terms over several years. High inflation post Covid added to the financial difficulties faced by our members. The war in Ukraine then significantly increased gas and electricity costs.

It is important to note that the ongoing membership subscriptions essentially keep NICSSA in existence. In 2024, these subscriptions represent 35% of our total income.

It is therefore necessary to ensure that this vital income continues to remain strong and broadly maintains its value in real terms i.e. allowing for inflation. This paper therefore calls for an increase in the membership subscription rate from 1 July 2025. Every 1% increase in the membership fee generates around £4,000 per annum.

### **2. The increase in July 2024 (prior year)**

NICSSA last increased the subscription rate in July 2024. The increase was approved at the AGM in April 2024. The 3.6% increase was effective from July 2024. Inflation for that year was 3.9%. See footnote below for further historical information.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to the July 2022 (4.3%) increase, NICSSA last increased the subscription rate in July 2019. That increase was approved at the AGM in March 2019. increase was effective from July 2019. Because of Covid, no increase occurred in 2020 and 2021. The inflation rate (CPI) for the 36-month period ending November 2021 (inflation in November generally determines the increase) was 7.0%. If inflation (7.0%) was the sole factor in determining the subscription increase, there would have been a 41p per month increase in 2022. In March 2022, it was noted that inflation was likely to remain over 5% during 2022. It was agreed by Council in March 2022 that an increase of 41p (7.0%) was perhaps too much in one go. Council agreed (and the AGM ratified) that the rate increase by 25p (4.3%) per month from 1 July 2022 – to £6.12 per month. In 2023 and 2024 Council agreed to a below inflation increases of 30p 5% per month and 32p 3.65% respectively.

### **3. CPI inflation**

The inflation rate (CPI) for the 12-month period ending November 2024 (inflation in November determines the increase) was 2.6%. If inflation (2.6%) was the sole factor in determining the subscription increase, there would be a 17p per month increase in 2025. Looking ahead inflation is likely to increase to slightly above 2.5% by the end of 2025. Pay in the NI Civil Service is likely to increase in 2024/25 by around 6% for most staff.

In my view, given the below inflation increases in membership subscription rates during the period 2020-2024 consideration should therefore be given to increasing the 2025 subscription rate by 3.6%, broadly in line with the rate of inflation in November 2024 (2.6%) i.e. an increase in 2025 of 24p per month. This would bring the main membership rate to £6.89 per month or £82.68 per year.

### **4. Proposal**

Subject to approval by Council, the AGM will be asked to agree there should be an increase of 24p per month in the NICSSA membership subscription rate from July 2025.

Junior membership in the 16-18 age category was decreased in 2019 to £20 per annum to encourage clubs to attract more young people in sport and this subscription, along with the £10 subscription for under 16-year-olds, will remain unchanged.

**Michael Carson**

**NICSSA Treasurer**

**February 2025**