

U3a Railway Group

Non-Confidential

Report by: Elaine Atkin

Date: 01/07/26

Report to: Parish Council 07/2026

U3a Railway Group have been using one of the old changing rooms in the Station Road pavilion since 2024. Originally this was just for storage purposes, but they now use it for working on their railway layouts.

The group does not pay for use of this space. When council reviewed the schedule of fees & charges for 2026-27 in December 2025 it resolved (minute 175/M/25) that the u3a Railway Group usage of the Station Road pavilion would be revisited following the outcome of the Fire Risk Assessment.

The hire agreement originally put in place needs review/updating. This just refers to storage of the layouts and also needs updating in line with our other hire agreements, which now include further information on fire procedures, insurance, out of hour contact details etc. Conditions will also need adding about keeping the room clean and tidy.

Council staff have had reservations about the use of some equipment/materials in the changing room, the use of a trailing extension lead and the general state the room was left in and the mess trailed into the corridor.

At a meeting with the Railway Group held last August, they asked if they could have additional electrical sockets and a lock on the changing room door. The Full Council meeting in September decided (minute 095/M/25) to defer any decision on this, pending a new Fire Risk Assessment being arranged.

As per the Fire Risk Assessment which took place in April 2026, no matters of concern were raised in relation to the use of the changing room by the Railway Group, other than a general risk at all our sites related to the use of lithium-ion batteries. The group will need to comply with the new Lithium-ion Battery Safety Policy which Council will be adopting (although at the meeting in August 2025, the Group stated that all power tools would be removed when not in use).

For consideration

- Is Council still happy to permit the use of this room for this purpose?
- Is Council still happy to allow free use of the room or does it want to introduce a charge?

- Is Council happy to permit the installation of additional electrical sockets and a lock on the door? If so, who will fund this? Would Council require these to be installed by a contractor of its choosing (as opposed to the Group themselves)?
- A new hire agreement (even if there is no charge for the use) will need to be produced and agreed with the Railway Group.

Appendix A – HMRC mileage rates

Approved mileage rates from tax year 2026 to 2027

Vehicle type	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	55p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

Approved mileage rates from tax year 2011 to 2026

Vehicle type	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

Passenger payments — cars and vans

5p per passenger per business mile for carrying fellow employees in a car or van on journeys which are also work journeys for them. Only payments specifically for carrying passengers count and there is no relief if you receive less than 5p or nothing at all.