

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 7 January 2014 at 8.00 pm**

Present: *Councillors B. Franklin (Chairman); T. Barker; A. Chadwick; P. Challis;
N. Cox; S. Outen; S. Rahmouni; M. Willson*

Officers present: *D. Mander, Town Clerk; K. Murray, Service Support Manager;
A. Bunn, Leisure Services Manager; L. Matthews, Committee Officer;
E. Whitesmith, Sports Facility Manager – Woodford Park Leisure Centre*

Also present: *Anna Kocerhan and Rob Edwards, Sports Solutions;
Donna Fitzpatrick, Bulmershe Gym Club*

29. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Downes.

30. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2013**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 27 August 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

31. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2013**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 5 November 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

32. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

33. **3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH**

Anna Kocerhan and Rob Edwards, Sports Solutions, were welcomed to the meeting.

Anna Kocerhan thanked the Town Council for inviting them to the meeting and presented the Sports Solutions report on the proposals for installing a 3G artificial pitch at Woodford Park. She reported that a viable proposal for the new pitch had now been reached, meeting the needs of all the potential users, and giving a more accurate indication of the costs involved and how the pitch would be operated. The proposed pitch was a 3G artificial pitch, which was ideal for football. It would not be a full-size pitch, but would be appropriate for new format football (9v9), which was predominantly played by youth teams, and would be ideal for training for all ages and levels of player.

Ms Kocerhan explained that Sports Solutions had already started discussions with the Football Foundation and Sport England regarding funding, but that planning permission would need to be obtained before the grant applications could be submitted. She anticipated that 50% of the total project cost would be recoverable through grants and it was possible that Section 106 money could be available to cover part of the remaining costs. Following discussion with Members, Ms Kocerhan agreed to approach Wokingham Borough Council in the next few weeks to start discussions regarding Section 106 contributions and would liaise with the Service Support Manager about this, dependant on

Council's approval for the next stage. It was noted that further investigation would be required in respect of VAT recovery and charging structures.

Ms Kocerhan also informed Members that construction of the pitch would take 16 weeks and should be scheduled to cause the minimum amount of disruption to users. She suggested that a construction start date of May 2015 would enable work to take place during the "close season" and would not lead to displacement of users.

The next stage would be the preparation and submission of a planning application for the project. Ms Kocerhan believed that the planning authority may require surveys on noise and lighting to be carried out and provided as part of the application and suggested that any funding allocated for this stage include an amount to cover any such requirement. She agreed to speak to the planning authority on this matter and give an indication of the possible costs.

Having considered the information provided and discussed it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that:
 - The Council proceed with the project to install a 3G artificial grass pitch and associated works at Woodford Park.
 - The Council instruct Sports Solutions to proceed with the preparation and submission of a planning application for the proposed 3G artificial grass pitch and associated works.
 - The Council allocate a sum of £4,500 from the special projects earmarked reserve to cover the costs of the application and possible surveys.
 - Subject to approval of the above recommendations, the Council seek and identify funding to cover the estimated £200,000 required for the project to meet the 50% partnership funding required under the terms of potential grant funders.
 - Subject to approval to allocate funding to prepare and submit a planning application for the project, and subject to sufficient of those funds being available, officers be delegated to commission any surveys required as part of the planning application process.

34. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 1/14.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 1/14.

35. **LEISURE CENTRES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 2/14.

Healthy Habits Kids

The Leisure Services Manager introduced the Sports Facility Manager at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, who gave a short presentation on the Healthy Habits Kids initiative that would be launched at the end of January 2014. The Sports Facility Manager explained that Healthy Habits Kids would offer a large range of activities for children, with new activities including soccer skills, mini tennis, Zumbini and karate club, and would also incorporate a new children's party structure, which would widen and improve the range of parties on

offer. He reported that improved marketing techniques would be employed based around the new children's logo, which would be used for all activities. Regular hirers had been offered the opportunity to be part of the programme and were interested in taking this up.

Members congratulated the Sports Facility Manager for the introduction and development of the Healthy Habits Kids programme and thanked him for his presentation.

Healthy Habits

The Facility Manager at Woodford Park Leisure Centre reported that the total number of members was currently 743, an increase of 111 members since the last meeting. He informed members that the activity programme on offer was continually growing, with the introduction of Boxercise, Yoga and Stretch planned for January 2014.

Sports Development

Run England

The Leisure Services Manager reported that he had recently met with the regional representative from Run England, and was hoping to introduce three of their projects within Woodley. These projects were:

- Run England Groups – aimed at beginner runners.
- Run England 321 – which aimed to provide a range of permanently marked out running routes across the country for anyone to use.
- Athlefit – which combined athletics with a fitness programme and was particularly popular with older people and disabled groups.

Rounders England

Members noted that a rounders development plan had been submitted to Rounders England for a further grant of £2000 for 2014, and a decision was expected in January.

Physical Activity Work Group

The Leisure Services Manager reported that he hoped that involvement with this group would result in better support for GP referrals at the Council's leisure facilities.

Meeting with Wokingham Health Improvement Officer

The Leisure Services Manager informed Members that the targeted swimming lessons for 14 - 21 year olds from hard to reach families were to start that week, and work on the arrangements for the targeted kick-boxing classes and the healthy habits class for the elderly at Alexandra Place was ongoing. In reply to a question, he explained that it was hoped that the classes at Alexandra Place would encourage residents to make more use of the Council's facilities.

Woodley Sports Week, 19 – 23 May 2014

The Leisure Services Manager reported that the timetable for the 2014 Woodley Sports Week had been finalised and there had already been a lot of interest from local schools.

Bulmershe Leisure Centre

Free swimming for over 60s

Members noted that a total of 923 users have accessed the free swimming sessions since 1 October 2013.

Swim school

Members were pleased to note that the Swim School had achieved its income target by Christmas and there were currently 577 students enrolled, with 95% of the available spaces in classes filled.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

Cage Cricket

Following a recent meeting with a representative from Cage Cricket, the Leisure Services Manager reported that Cage Cricket had become very popular in parts of the country, with a wide range of participants from across the local communities and had the potential to help develop Woodford Park as a sporting hub within the town. He would produce a business case for the purchase of equipment.

Capital Investment

Members considered a proposal to engage in further discussions with Badminton England and Bulmershe Gym Club regarding the possibility of providing more sports hall space at the centre to help meet the growing demand for these two sports. Members discussed this and were of the view that the provision of sports opportunities could be improved by working in partnership with local sports clubs.

Apprenticeship

Following the success of the apprenticeship scheme which was currently running at Bulmershe Leisure Centre, the Leisure Services Manager asked members to consider including funding in the 2014/15 budget for an apprenticeship post at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 2/14.
- ◆ That the Leisure Services Manager hold further discussions with Badminton England and Bulmershe Gym Club regarding sports hall space at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.
- ◆ To support the inclusion of funding in the 2014/15 budget for an apprenticeship post at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

36.

PARKS AND BUILDINGS

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 3/14.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

It was reported that the reception area and the function room had been decorated by the Maintenance Team and damaged sections of guttering and some roof panels to the sports hall roof had been replaced. Decoration of the upstairs committee rooms, including replacement of the worn carpet tiles, would be undertaken by the Maintenance Team in January. Replacement of the room partitions in the function room and installation of replacement front doors would be carried out in the coming weeks.

Malone Park

The Service Support Manager reported that consultation on the items of equipment was currently underway and it was expected that the equipment would be installed in Spring 2014.

Western Avenue Access Road

Members noted that Shared Legal Solutions had been unable to establish ownership of the land and had been asked to provide information on the options available to the Council for adopting the area.

Community Orchard

The Service Support Manager reported that a suitable location for the community orchard had been identified at the rear of Coronation Hall and that it was proposed to plant approximately 20 trees. He informed Members that residents of Halstead Close would be consulted on the proposal.

Energy Contracts

Members were pleased to note that new contracts for the supply of gas at the leisure centres and the Oakwood Centre had been agreed and a price rise had been avoided by going through a broker; electricity smart meters had also been installed at all sites at no cost to the Council.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 3/14.

37. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE ENTRANCE IMPROVEMENTS WORKING PARTY**

Councillor Outen presented Report No. LS 4/14, on the meeting of the Woodford Park Leisure Centre Improvements Working Party held on 4 December 2013. He explained that there were two suggested designs for the entrance and that the working party recommended that work should start with the common elements from both design options, and that Option 2, the larger scale works, should be costed and considered at a later date, in conjunction with the 3G artificial pitch project and car park refurbishment project. Following discussion, members agreed that the improvements to the entrance would help to raise the profile of Woodford Park Leisure Centre and make it more accessible. They thanked the Service Support Manager and his team for progressing the design work.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 3/14.

38. **CHARGES 2014/15**

The Chairman presented the draft charges for 2014/15 and invited questions. He explained that the price increases were generally in line with inflation, except for the cost of the Healthy Habits card, which had been increased following a review of the scheme, and a new category of family membership had been introduced. The Chairman also explained that the discounts for 18s and under and pensioners had been standardised at approximately 15%, meaning that some of the concessionary rates had increased.

In response to a question, the Leisure Services Manager reported that although the proposed charges for adult swimming had increased by more than the rate of inflation the cost would still be less than that charged at other facilities in the local area. He also explained that the charges for the cricket nets had been increased to reflect the provision of new facilities.

The Chairman explained that an increase was proposed for the cost of a plaque displayed in the Garden of Remembrance as the price had not changed since the introduction of the plaques in 2006, and in that time the cost of the plaques to the Council had increased significantly. It was agreed that the charges for non Woodley residents be slightly increased in the proposed charges.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend that the proposed charges for 2014/15, as presented, be approved.
Voting: For: 5 Abstentions: 3

39. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2013/14**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 5/14.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 5/14.
- ◆ To recommend that the Strategy and Resources Committee that the Revised Budget Estimates for 2013/14, as presented, be approved.

40. **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014/15**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 6/14.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 6/14.
- ◆ To recommend that the Budget Estimates for 2014/15, as presented, be approved.
Voting: For: 5 Abstentions: 3

41. **WOKINGHAM SPORTS AWARDS 2013**

Members noted the information enclosed regarding the Wokingham Sports Award categories and winners.

42. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chairman invited the committee to suggest future items for consideration by the committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To include the following future items for consideration by the committee:
 - Update on the entrance into Woodford Park from Western Avenue.
 - Update on progress regarding the 3G pitch.
 - Update on progress of discussions with Badminton England and Bulmershe Gym Club.

43. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

No items were identified.

The meeting closed at 10:05 pm
