

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 5 September 2017 at 8:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors W. Soane (Chairman); T. Barker; K. Gilder; M. Green; S. Rahmouni; D. Stares*

**Officers present:** *D. Mander, Town Clerk; K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; E. Whitesmith, Leisure Services Manager; L. Matthews, Committee Officer*

**Also present:** *Andrew Dawe, former Woodley Town Council Sports Officer  
Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity  
David Provins, Friends of Woodford Park*

14. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B. Franklin.

15. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

16. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2017**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 6 June 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

At this point in the meeting the Town Clerk informed Members that Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity, had sent apologies for lateness as he had an earlier meeting to attend and it was

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To defer agenda item 4, Just Around the Corner, until later in the meeting, when Sam Milligan would be present to give his report.

17. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 19/17 and Members were pleased to note that the overall expenditure was currently below the budget forecast and the income was above.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 19/17.

18. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 20/17 and informed Members that the FA Respect presentation, for players, parents and coaches of the four partner clubs using the 3G pitch, was currently taking place in the Oakwood Centre theatre, at the same time as this meeting. He explained that the FA Respect campaign promoted a safe and positive environment within which to play football and the focus of the presentation was on awareness, respect and the rules of the game, with the aim of preventing negative incidents within grass roots football.

Members were pleased to hear that the success of the Gym on the Park, had necessitated an expansion of the group exercise timetable at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, as the

included exercise classes were one of the primary reasons that residents were taking out gym membership. There were now 24 regular adult classes each week, compared to 9 weekly classes before the gym opened.

The Leisure Services Manager informed Members of a number of staff changes at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, most significantly the loss of Andrew Dawe, who had worked for the Council since September 2011 and played a key role in the development of the children's holiday programme. Andrew Dawe was present at the meeting and the Chairman thanked him for all his input to the success of the leisure centre and wished him every success in his new role at Southlake Primary School. The Leisure Services Manager reported that the Sports Officer position vacated by Andrew had been filled by Aaron Hedgecox, who had completed a year-long leisure operations apprenticeship at Woodford Park Leisure Centre during 2015/16.

Members were pleased to note the success of the summer holiday programme and to learn that the leisure centre had successfully teamed up with a number of external companies to run additional holiday camps. FAB Academy and Reading FC Community Trust both ran holiday camps on the 3G pitch and it was hoped that they would do so again during the October half-term holiday.

In reply to a question about the condition of the paddling pool, the Leisure Services Manager informed Members that the pool liner was quite worn and would need to be replaced fairly soon. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the condition of the liner was currently being assessed and it would be replaced if found to be necessary.

Following a question about the use of the tennis court in Woodford Park, the Leisure Services Manager reported that the usage of the tennis court had been approximately 10 hours a week through the summer, which was the same as before the number of courts was reduced. Members were satisfied that this indicated that one tennis court was sufficient to meet the demand.

The Leisure Services Manager then asked Members to consider the Christmas opening hours for Woodford Park Leisure Centre, as recommended in his report.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 20/17.
- ◆ To approve the proposed opening arrangements at Woodford Park Leisure Centre over the Christmas and New Year period, as follows:
  - Open as normal Friday 22 December
  - Closed Saturday 23 December – Tuesday 26 December
  - Open as normal Wednesday 27 December – Friday 29 December
  - Open 10am – 5pm on Saturday 30 December and Sunday 31 December
  - Closed Monday 1 January
  - Open as normal Tuesday 2 January

19. **JUST AROUND THE CORNER (JAC)**

Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity, had now arrived and was able to present his report to the meeting. He informed Members that in general the atmosphere around Woodley was very good and the groups that had been causing some problems earlier in the year had mainly dispersed. He also highlighted some of the methods JAC is using to engage with young people around the town and reported that they were building good relationships.

Members questioned Sam Milligan about the help that JAC could give to young people and whether they ever called on expert help. Sam Milligan explained that JAC could provide a

low level of intervention to help young people who were having difficulties and had recently employed a psychotherapist to provide a higher lever of intervention.

Sam Milligan reported on the progress of the arrangements to provide a container café at the Loddon Mead site. He also informed the Committee of JAC's plans to purchase a house in Woodley to provide a home for young people in need of support.

The Chairman thanked Sam Milligan for coming to the meeting.

20. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 21/17.

Members were informed of the measures that were being considered to prevent travellers setting up illegal encampments in Woodford Park, as had occurred in July. There were a number of difficulties to be overcome as access to the park and leisure centre had to be maintained for legitimate users.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Woodley Pre-School had submitted a planning application for the proposed modular school building to be located in Woodford Park. He explained that the proposed location of the new pre-school building would require the relocation of the workshop used by the Maintenance team, and proposals for a new workshop, office and toilets at the existing Grounds yard were being developed. In reply to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the relocation of the Maintenance team's workshop would go ahead regardless of the outcome of the pre-school's planning application, as this would provide much needed improvement to conditions for the Maintenance and Grounds teams.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that there had been a number of reports of antisocial behaviour in the Garden of Remembrance, and as a result one of the seats in a secluded area at the back of the garden had been removed, as a temporary measure to discourage groups of young people from congregating there. JAC had been made aware of the problem and would keep an eye on this area in the future. David Provins, Friends of Woodford Park, who was present at the meeting, was asked if he had any comments to make on this problem and he suggested that raising the profile of the Garden of Remembrance might encourage greater numbers of genuine users to visit the garden and thereby discourage youths from congregating there. He also reported that much of the foliage in this area had been removed to make the area more visible.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the ongoing work being carried out as part of the lake project in Woodford Park, including a survey to identify individual trees that required work or removal, and also gave an update on recent work undertaken at the allotments. Members noted that there were currently 19 people on the waiting list for an allotment and asked whether there were plans to make more plots available. Councillor Stares informed Members that most of the uncultivated areas were not suitable for use as allotment plots, but by removing brambles at the edges of the site it might be possible to provide a small number of extra plots.

Members were pleased to hear that, following a request that the grass on the bowling green be cut shorter, the Bowling Club had contacted the Council to say how happy they were with the condition of the playing surface. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Head Groundsman was monitoring the condition of the green to make sure that the shorter grass was not making the green vulnerable to disease.

Councillor Barker commented that the appearance of Woodford Park was much improved recently due to the work of the Friends of Woodford Park and the Grounds team and he asked that the Committee's thanks be passed on to the Grounds team. Members also

noted that park users seemed to be taking better care of the park and the amount of litter had reduced.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 21/17.

21. **COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 22/17.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 22/17.

22. **COLEMANS MOOR ROAD OPEN SPACE**

Members considered an offer from Wokingham Borough Council for the Town Council to take over the maintenance and management of the Colemans Moor Road Open Space under a community asset transfer.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the Town Council did not wish to take over the maintenance and management of the Colemans Moor Road Open Space as a one-off measure, but to notify Wokingham Borough Council that if it intended to consider the transfer of several open spaces to the Town Council, along with funding, the Council may be interested in considering this.

23. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE REGENERATION TASK & FINISH GROUP**

Members reviewed the membership of the Woodford Park Regeneration Task & Finish Group, which consisted of 4 members of the Leisure Services Committee and 4 members of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ Councillors Barker, Soane and Stares would remain on the Woodford Park Regeneration Task & Finish Group.
- ◆ The Chairman would contact Councillor Lay to determine whether he was able to remain on the task & finish group.

24. **TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC TOILET UPDATE**

Members noted the update provided in the agenda and hoped that the lease with Wokingham Borough Council could be signed soon, allowing the unit to be ordered.

25. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No additional items were suggested for inclusion in future agendas.

26. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To publicise the following:
  - The Garden of Remembrance.
  - The Christmas and New Year opening times at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.
  - The work of Just Around the Corner charity.

The meeting closed at 9:25 pm