

March 2019

Dear Resident

*As Leader, I recognise that it is a great privilege to work on behalf of residents. Whilst I and my fellow councillors have a strong vision for the future of Woodley, it relies on a whole host of individual residents and organisations to help us turn that vision into a reality. Every day, including weekends, a host of silent volunteers work to make Woodley even better. Many residents are completely unaware of their efforts ranging from planting in Woodford Park through to litter picking in a road near you. Can I take this opportunity to thank them all for their huge contribution in making Woodley a great town.*

*I am pleased that there will be no change in the Town Council precept for the third year running. The precept is still 7% lower than when political control changed and you have to look back to 2007, 12 years ago, to see a lower precept than we have today. It is amazing that the Town Council has absorbed so much extra costs around staff such as the enforced pension enrolment and significantly higher national insurance rates.*

*At the same time as holding our Town Council tax rates to 2007 levels, we have been busy investing large amounts of capital on a number of projects. The most visible is the complete refurbishment of the lake in Woodford Park, which will provide an even better experience for those wanting to simply walk around it or children doing "pond dipping".*

*We continue to provide funds to key charities, a total of £12,820 will be distributed this year to the Citizens Advice Bureau, Keep Mobile and ARC. This is on top of £44,326 on service level agreements with JAC and Readibus and £13,000 to the Town Centre Management Initiative. That is a total of £70,146 to volunteer organisations to provide that extra level of support, especially for the more vulnerable.*

*At this point I would like to publicly thank all the staff, both full and part time, for all their hard work during the year.*

*Finally, may I thank you, the residents, for the continuing support you give the Town Council through your participation in everything we do. We will never forget that this is your money that the Council is spending so it is important that we know how you feel about this and would welcome any feedback you might have.*

Councillor Keith Baker, Leader of the Council



The Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley RG5 4JZ

0118 969 0356 [www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk)

The Town Council precept is the part of your Council Tax bill that funds the services provided by Woodley Town Council. This year, the precept (annual charge) for a Band D house will remain at £106.71, with no change to last year's charge.

Woodley Town Council is your local council providing local services to you. The Town Council offices are based at the Oakwood Centre, and we are always happy to hear from our residents and customers. Contact us on 0118 9693056 with any issues or enquiries you have, or go to our website at [www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk) for more information.

### **Over the last year we have been working on several projects to improve our services and range of activities including:**

In June 2018, the Council was awarded Green Flag status for its management and stewardship of Woodford Park and the Memorial Ground, the first such award to be made to a park in Wokingham Borough. The international award is a sign to the public that our park boasts the highest possible environmental standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities. Our thanks go to our past and present members of our Grounds Maintenance team and to the Friends of Woodford Park who all have contributed to creating a wonderful green space in the our town. Flagpoles flying the Green Flag and the Town Council logo were installed in December.

Sunday November 11 2018 saw the commemoration of the centenary of the end of WW1 at the War Memorial at the Memorial Ground, attended by over 2,000 people. A video of the event can be viewed on our website ([www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk)). Panels, giving the history of some of the Woodley men who fought in the war

were installed by the memorial – these can also be viewed on our website if residents aren't able to visit the ground.

The Gym on the Park, our fitness gym at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, now has a "Sunshine Membership" rate for people using the gym at off peak times. In addition, we have increased the number of classes available free of charge to gym members.

Also at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, we have installed new ladies' toilets which were opened earlier this year. The new toilets were funded from a loan approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for this purpose.

A conference in 2018 provided parents and local practitioners (mainly teachers/GPs/ youth workers) working with young people a better understanding of the local provision available to support young people experiencing anxiety. Following on from that, the Council's Community Youth Partnership is launching a parents' self-help group for families dealing with anxiety. The group will be assisted by volunteer facilitators, who have received training to support the group.

In our parks and open spaces, regular maintenance and work on trees damaged by winds has been undertaken throughout the year.

The town centre's new public toilet was delivered on 17 February 2019 and should be operational in March, once the connections have been completed. The unit is a semi automatic single toilet and should be fully accessible.

The Council has continued to support Woodley Business Club and its activities.



The Mayor, Cllr Sam Rahmouni (right), and Deputy Mayor, Cllr David Stares, were appointed at the Annual Meeting on 8 May 2018.



The Mayor, councillors, staff team and friends of Woodford Park celebrate the Green Flag Award.



The 2018 Citizens Awards winners with the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Jenny Cheng. Norman and Beryl Freeman were recognised for their support to the British Legion and Marc Surtees for his commitment to women's football in Woodley.



The Annual Mayor's Award went to Shelagh Flower whose son, David, collected it on her behalf at the awards evening.

### Future projects in the coming year are:

At Woodford Park Leisure Centre, we plan to improve the reception area and create better office space for the sports and admin teams.

We will be refurbishing the toilets and carrying out repair works at the Oakwood Centre this year.

With the demolition of the former horticultural society shed (used as a base for our Maintenance team) and the installation of the new building for the Woodley Pre-school at the entrance to the park, the Council will be building a workshop at the depot site from which its maintenance teams can operate. We hope to start construction of the new building this year.

Last year, Wokingham BC approved a bid from the Town Council for £200,000 of funds from contributions made by developers relating to the building of new homes in Woodley. We plan to provide a new play area to replace and extend the existing play ground behind the Oakwood Centre and designs and consultations for this will be worked on later this year.

The Council has suspended all charges in 2019 for the use of the Centre Stage in the town centre, to help encourage local groups and organisations to run sales and provide entertainment in the town centre through the warmer months of the year. If you are a member of a musical group/band, choir or drama group and would like to use the space to entertain shoppers please give us a call – we look forward to hearing from you – call 0118 9690356 or email [admin@woodley.gov.uk](mailto:admin@woodley.gov.uk).

The project to improve the lake in Woodford Park is now well underway with tree works and clearance of overgrown areas having taken place over the winter months. Our contactor Ebsford Environmental will be working with us on the project, which includes the creation of a wildlife area, habitat for insects, amphibians and reptiles, repairs to the bank edges, planting of native flowering species, redistribution of silt and a boardwalk

with pond dipping platforms for children to explore and learn about the environment and improved pathways and seating for people to enjoy this important feature in the park. The Council is using loan funds, approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to make these improvements. The plans for the project and progress on the works can be viewed on the Town Council website.

The Town Council's Community Youth Partnership will continue with its project to provide activities for young people at Loddon Mead and the area underneath the A3290 on Loddon Bridge Road. With the help of the Just Around the Corner charity (JAC) and a group of artists we hope to work with young people on an art project at this space and to develop Parkour (or Freerunning).

Over the next year, members of the Town Council's Woodford Park Leisure Centre Regeneration group will be considering plans for the refurbishment of the centre and its facilities.

For more information on our planned projects see our website and newsletter – the Woodley Herald delivered to your door three times a year.

### Summary of the services the Town Council provides:

#### Meeting places

The Oakwood Centre on Headley Road is home to the Town Council offices as well the Alan Cornish Theatre, a café (run by Brown Bag), a base in the town for the neighbourhood police and a popular venue for business meetings, parties, other social and community events.

Coronation Hall and Chapel Hall are also available for hire. A large number of community groups meet in our halls.

Discounted rates for hall and room hire are available for Woodley residents.

### Open spaces

Parks and open spaces – 28 acres of parkland at Woodford Park, play areas at Malone Park, the Memorial Ground and Wheble Park, as well as open spaces at Loddon Mead and Bulmershe Park.

The Garden of Remembrance in Woodford Park is a peaceful place, valued by many who wish to remember their loved ones. To find out about having an inscribed plaque in the garden, call the Town Council offices.

### Friends of Woodford Park

The Friends of Woodford Park, a voluntary group of residents, continues to grow and their projects over the last year included new flower beds and planting crocuses in the park. The group is also engaging with SAGE, based in Winnersh Triangle to provide volunteers on specific days through the year, to carry out work in Woodford Park. If you would like to find out more about the Friends of Woodford Park email [fowp.woodley@mail.com](mailto:fowp.woodley@mail.com).

### Allotments

Over the past few years the Council has opened up 100 new plots at the Reading Road site in response to the increase in local people wanting to grow their own produce. If you are interested in renting an allotment contact the Town Council offices or complete an online form available on our website.

### Representation

The Town Council speaks for Woodley on many matters and in response to consultations – national and local. Our Planning Committee also lets residents know about planning applications near them and we pass comments from these meetings to Wokingham Borough Council, where the decisions on planning matters are made.



The Memorial Ground gates refurbished to mark the commemoration of the centenary of the end of WW1.



Woodley remembers on 11/11/2018.



Panels giving the history of some of the men and families during WW1 now installed at the War Memorial.

All Woodley residents are very welcome at the Town Forum, held before each meeting of Full Council. This is an opportunity to meet your councillors in person and ask questions or make representations on issues of importance to you. The meetings in 2019/20 will be held at 8.00pm on the following dates:

14 May, 25 June, 1 October, 10 December and 4 February (2020).

### Sports and recreation

Woodford Park Leisure Centre – fitness gym, 3rd generation artificial grass pitch, badminton courts, tennis, bowling green, grass football pitches, cricket field (artificial and grass wickets), keep fit courses, holiday sports camps, children's parties and function and committee rooms for hire.

At the Gym on the Park the monthly membership fee is £24.99 for Woodley residents and £26.99 for those living outside the town. A new "Sunshine" membership, valid between 8.30am and 3pm, has been launched this year – £19.99 for Woodley residents, £21.99 for others. The price includes free of charge access to a variety of fitness classes which run throughout the week, as well as use of the gym equipment. For more information see the Woodford Park Leisure Centre pages on our website.

We continue to welcome small groups of under 16 year olds (5/6) to pay and play for £1 per person on the 3G pitch at holiday times and weekends. Please ring 01189 216969 to check availability.

### Our young people

The Council provides support to young people and outreach youth work in the town through funding the work of the Just Around the Corner charity, and ARC, a youth counselling service, which operates locally from the Oakwood Centre. We also have a Community Youth Partnership bringing organisations working with young people together to pursue youth centred projects – our project to help support families dealing with anxiety through parent self-help groups.

### Grants

Woodley Town Council will be supporting Keep Mobile, ARC (youth counselling service) and Citizens' Advice in Woodley. We also have a three year Service Level Agreement with Readibus to support the provision of their services to Woodley residents.

Grants of up to £250 to organisations and community groups and grants of up to £100 for individuals under 21 who are excelling in sport or cultural activities and bringing credit to the town are considered twice a year – see our website for information on qualifying for a grant and application forms to download or apply online.

### Local economy

The Town Council is a partner in the Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative which promotes the centre and organises the Farmers' Markets, the Winter Extravaganza, Saturday Music in the summer and the popular Saturday Market.

As your local council our aim is to provide services that are valued in the town – in our most recent Residents' Survey we found that 59% of households thought our services excellent or good and respondents thought our parks, community halls, grants to local organisations and indoor sports facilities were important to local people. The survey results are available to view on our website: [www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk).

Find out more about your town and your council at [www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk) and in the newsletter published three times a year and delivered to all households.

The Town Council's Financial Statements and Auditor's report for 2017/18 are available on our website or printed copies can be provided by calling into our offices at the Oakwood Centre.

## Woodley Town Council

The Oakwood Centre  
Headley Road, Woodley RG5 4JZ  
0118 969 0356

[www.woodley.gov.uk](http://www.woodley.gov.uk)  
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Budget Estimates 2018/19				Budget Estimates 2019/20		
Income	Expenditure	Net Exp		Income	Expenditure	Net Exp
229634	841455	611821	Strategy and Resources	237734	884995	647261
445251	620198	174947	Leisure Services	478908	652440	173532
	31662	31662	Planning		31581	31581
	307428	307428	Capital and Projects		316610	316610
674885	1800743	1125858	Total Revenue Exp/Income	716642	1885626	1168984

Budget Summary 2019/20	
Estimated opening balance 1 April 2019	448375
Precept	1123528
Precept support grant*	8644
Less: Net Expenditure Budget 2019/20	1168984
Budgeted balance as at 31 March 2020	411563

\*The precept support grant is funding from Government via Wokingham Borough Council to mitigate the impact of changes to the council tax benefit arrangements which were introduced from 1/4/13.