

Woodley Town Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 27 August 2013 at 8.00 pm**

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

Also present: *Councillor C. Lawley*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Service Support Manager; A. Bunn, Leisure Services Manager*

Apologies: *Councillors P. Challis; N. Cox*

10. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

11. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MAY 2013**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 28 May 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Chairman presented the report No. LS 16/13 and responded to questions regarding the presentation of the comparison figures from the same period in the previous financial year. The Chairman drew Members' attention to the decrease in deficit from the same period last year and thanked the Leisure Services Manager and his team for their work in achieving this.

The Service Support Manager responded to a question regarding an insurance claim at Chapel Hall and explained what this item was for.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 16/13.

13. **LEISURE CENTRES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 17/13.

GP Referral

In response to a question about the GP referral programme the Leisure Services Manager stated that the scheme had been slow off the ground and, although the Woodley leisure centres were included, as there is no gym facility at either centre some people may prefer to go to Loddon Valley Leisure Centre. He also confirmed that the cardio-rehab referral scheme would start in September and he would be following up on this with the coordinator at Wokingham Borough Council.

Christmas hours

Members noted that both centres would be closed from 24 December 2013 to 2 January 2014 as this is a quiet time and would enable essential maintenance works to be carried out.

Active Celebration Woodley Sports Week

The Leisure Services Manager confirmed that funding had been secured to run this event in 2014 between 19 – 23 May. 2,200 local young people had been involved in the 2013 event.

Healthy Habits

The Leisure Services Manager reported that 504 people had signed up to the Healthy Habits membership card. In response to a question the Leisure Services Manager explained that the Healthy Habits card would eventually replace the Passport to Leisure scheme and that he would provide information on the membership numbers of both schemes to the next meeting.

Racquet Attack

The Leisure Services Manager reported that 214 people had taken up places on the Racquet Attack scheme which had run at both centres through summer holidays. The scheme offered badminton, tennis, short tennis and table tennis sessions for £1 per person for under 16s.

Free Swimming

The Leisure Services Manager informed Members that the Council would receive £5,000 funding to provide free swimming for under 18s. 1820 people had taken up the scheme this year. An additional £5,000 will be received for the over 60s free swimming scheme at the centre. Wokingham Borough Council was responsible for all publicity regarding the scheme which had also operated at Loddon Valley and Carnival pools.

Swim School

Members were pleased to note that the number of people signing up for the Swim School had increased again and that the current income figure was £68,323. Members noted the letter of endorsement from the Amateur Swimming Association recognising the work done at Bulmershe Leisure Centre to encourage swimming in Woodley.

Summer Holiday Activities

The Leisure Services Manager reported that the intensive 3 and 5 day sports camps run through the holidays at both centres had been successful and provided a greater variety of activities than previous schemes including swimming, football, trampolining, kwick cricket, ducklings swimming lessons and a pre school camp. Most camps had been filled to capacity. The management team is looking to introduce the multiskills and racquet sport activities to the children's side of the Healthy Habits programme following the success of the summer camps.

Swimathon

The Leisure Services Manager reported that the second annual swimathon held on 27 and 28 May at Bulmershe Leisure Centre and had been a success and raised £2182.50 towards the £1.6 million raised nationally for the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity. The event will run again next year.

Pitches

The Leisure Services Manager reported that pitch 1 at Woodford Park had been converted to a 9 a side pitch due to demand for junior games in this format. The centre can now cater for 11, 9 and 7 a side matches. The provision for 9 a side football should also support the Council's case in any funding applications to the Football Foundation for the proposed 9 v 9 3G artificial grass pitch. Bookings already taken for the new size pitch would bring in £2,782 annually.

Redevelopment – Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The Leisure Services Manager reported that he had met with the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Challis, Sports Solutions and the Woodley Football Forum to discuss the plan to install a 3G artificial pitch at the centre. The clubs had shown support for the project and indications were that all evening slots and some weekends would be booked by the clubs involved in the forum. Local schools have also been contacted to gain an indication of their potential usage of the facility.

Members passed on their thanks to the Leisure Services Manager and his team for their efforts in delivering ongoing improvements to the sports provision in the town and the increased income to the Council.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 17/13.

14. **BOOKINGS SYSTEM**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 18/13.

The Service Support Manager reported that there are currently different systems being utilised at the leisure centres and the Oakwood Centre for managing booked facilities.

Limitations of the current systems were identified as;

- Systems are not linked between buildings – not able to check availability of other hireable rooms.
- Difficult to provide useful reporting information which could inform business and marketing decisions.
- Course bookings by phone e.g. swimming. Large numbers of customers calling to book places at the same time which is difficult to manage at the centre and frustrating for customers who are unable to get through.
- Manual paperwork systems and spreadsheets still used to collate information and manage bookings.
- No integrated management of membership e.g. Healthy Habits Card (formerly leisure passport)

Potential benefits of a new system were identified as;

- Recording and reporting of data for operational use and to inform business decisions.
- More effective administration of the centres.
- Improved customer experience – online enquiries / bookings / payments.
- Management of Healthy Habits Card membership details and usage.

Members discussed the potential improvements to the service that a new system would bring and the requirement for any system to be fit for purpose and cost effective. The need for a business plan and a detailed specification for tendering purposes was discussed and it was noted that the Council would need to engage a third party to carry out this work.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 18/13
- ◆ To recommend that the Strategy and Resources Committee allocate £30,000 from the general reserve for the production of a detailed specification and the purchase and installation of an appropriate software management system for leisure and facilities bookings.
- ◆ That a fully costed business plan is provided to the Strategy and Resources Committee providing estimated savings and benefits that the software management system would bring to the Council.

15. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 19/13.

Members noted that there had been an attempted break in at the grounds depot and 2 small fires in litter bins around Woodford Park.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The Service Support Manager reported that that initial sketch designs for possible improvements to the front of the centre had been received from Helen Palmer and that these would be considered at the next meeting of the working party.

Members were pleased to note the installation of a new sign on the side of the sports hall.

Tree Works

The Service Support Manager reported that tree thinning works had been carried out along the boundary between Woodford Park and residences in Haddon Drive. Works have also been scheduled to remove the remaining fir trees in the play area adjacent to the paddling pool.

Malone Park

The Service Support Manager reported that the following repairs had been carried out;

- Repair of wet pour safety surfacing
- Repainting of play equipment
- Replacement of chain link fencing
- Replacement of swing seats

Members noted that £14,000 of Section 106 funding is currently available for new play equipment in Malone Park and that officers will be seeking costed designs and carrying out consultation with users of the park.

Memorial Ground

Members noted that Beech's Funfair had operated on the ground on 2 – 4 May.

The Service Support Manager reported that a sign had been erected by the Woodley War Memorial Project group over the top of the existing Woodford Park sign, to help raise awareness of the project.

The Service Support Manager reported that the next stage of the design work for the civic space was underway and that a topographic survey had been completed. It was noted that the next stage of designs had taken longer than expected to be produced and that a meeting of the Civic Space/War Memorial group would be arranged as soon as these were received. The aim of the group was for the memorial and civic space to be complete in time for the anniversary of the First World War in August 2014.

Coronation Hall

It was noted that the Maintenance Team had decorated the hall.

Chapel Hall

It was noted that the fencing along the boundary with Ladbroke Close had been replaced by a contractor due to its poor condition and damage caused by high winds earlier in the year.

Oakwood Centre

It was noted that the emergency lighting in the theatre had been upgraded.

Woodley Garden Competition

The Service Support Manager reported that Mrs Latham of Kingfisher Drive had won first place in the 2013 competition. It was noted that there had been 12 entries for the competition this year and the Mayor would present the winner and runner up trophies at the Full Council meeting on 24 September.

Maintenance Database

The Service Support Manager reported that the database had been updated to improve the recording and management of maintenance jobs. Training had been carried out at all sites on the use of the system.

The Chairman reported that this was an ongoing improvement in the process of managing the maintenance of several buildings which are in a generally poor state of repair and would require significant works soon.

Garden of Remembrance

Members considered whether the Council should offer a free of charge memorial plaque in the Garden of Remembrance to the families of honorary townspersons who have passed away, at a cost to the Council of approximately £75. It was noted that the status of honorary townsperson had been bestowed on four Woodley citizens since 1981, most recently Fred Willis who was awarded the honour in 1996.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 19/13
- ◆ To offer a free of charge memorial plaque in the Garden of Remembrance to the families of honorary townspersons who have passed away.

16. **WORKING PARTIES**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 20/13.

The Service Support Manager reported that the Tournaments Working Party had fulfilled its brief in overseeing arrangements for the Sid Hopkins Football and Trembath Kwick Cricket tournaments. It was noted that the working party no longer needed to meet and that these events are now running well with high attendance and participation.

The Service Support Manager also reported that the Woodford Park Leisure Centre Entrance Improvements Working Party would continue to meet until it had fulfilled its brief in allocating the £10,000 identified in the 2012/13 capital programme.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 20/13
- ◆ To terminate the Tournaments Working Party and that the matters it would usually cover be presented to the committee for consideration in the future.

17. **2014/15 BUDGET**

The Chairman invited the committee to consider items to be included or excluded from the 2014/15 budget, which would be investigated and reported back to the Committee.

Items suggested for inclusion were;

- Desilting and refurbishment of Woodford Park Lake
- Provision of a 9v9 3G artificial pitch at Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The issue of ownership of the access track from Western Avenue into Woodford Park was raised and suggested as a possible future budget item. The Service Support Manager reported that he had delivered letters to the houses in Western Avenue with access to the rear of the properties via this track in order to see if any householders had information in the deeds for their property that would identify the owner of the land. No response had been received to date. The Service Support Manager reported that he was engaging Shared Legal Solutions to provide advice on what legal steps are available to the Council with a view to taking ownership of the land and that this would be reported back to the Committee.

18. **SPORTS AWARDS CEREMONY OF THE YEAR 2013**

Members noted that nominations were being sought for the 2013 awards. It was agreed this could be publicised at the leisure centres and on the Town Council website and that any suggestions for nominations should be sent to the Leisure Services Manager.

19. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chairman invited the committee to suggest future items to be considered by the committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To include the following future items for consideration by the committee:
 - Update on the Sports Awards Ceremony of the Year 2013.
 - Update on the entrance into Woodford Park from Western Avenue.

20. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To publicise the following:
 - Sports Awards Ceremony of the Year 2013
 - ASA letter of commendation

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm
