

Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 2 September 2014 at 8.00 pm

Present: *Councillors T. Barker (Chairman); A. Chadwick; B. Franklin; K. Gilder; S. Outen*

Officers present: *D. Mander, Town Clerk; K. Murray, Service Support Manager; A. Bunn, Leisure Services Manager; L. Matthews, Committee Officer*

13. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Challis, N. Cox, A. Downes and W. Soane.

14. **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the change in membership of the Committee approved by the Urgency Committee on 18 August 2014. Councillor Gilder had replaced Councillor Rahmouni as a Liberal Democrat Party member on the Committee following Councillor Rahmouni's resignation from the Liberal Democrat Party and his joining the Conservative Party.

15. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

16. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2014**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 27 May 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

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

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 14/14.

18. **BULMERSHE LEISURE CENTRE**

Members noted that the terms of an early surrender of the lease between the Town Council and Wokingham Borough Council were considered at an extraordinary meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 August 2014. The proposed terms of the surrender had been agreed at that meeting but were subject to approval of the final legal agreement and terms relating to statements about the future provision of a swimming pool and sports/leisure activities at the Centre beyond March 2015 and continuing work and liaison with the Town Council on the promotion of sports and health activities in Woodley. The Town Clerk explained that a provisional target date of 1 October 2014 for the surrender of the lease had been agreed, and although it was hoped that this date would be met, it might slip a little if all the handover arrangements could not be put in place within such a tight timeframe.

19. **LEISURE CENTRES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 15/14.

Christmas opening hours

Members considered the proposal that Woodford Park Leisure Centre be closed during the Christmas period from 24 December to 2 January, which would allow maintenance work to be carried out and give staff members a break at a time of year when usage is very low.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

The Leisure Services Manager reported that the Cardiac Rehabilitation sessions had been running twice a week at Woodford Park Leisure Centre since June and all sessions were well attended. Two members of staff would be funded by Wokingham Borough Council to attend a course in September to become qualified cardiac rehabilitation instructors. In reply to a question regarding the possible purchase of a defibrillator by the Town Council the Leisure Services Manager explained that the costs of providing a defibrillator and training staff to were being investigated and would be reported to the Committee.

Bulmershe Leisure Centre

Members were pleased to note that the free swimming for 18s and under had again been very popular in the summer holidays with some sessions being oversubscribed, and that the numbers attending Swim School had continued to grow year on year. The Leisure Services Manager informed Members that the fitness boot camps and boxercise classes were full to capacity despite additional classes being added to the schedule and, in order to cope with the demand, a fitness boot camp had been run outside at Woodford Park in August.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The Leisure Services Manager reported that, with the handover of Bulmershe Leisure Centre approaching, Woodley Karate Club, Aikido, Natasha Barrett Pilates and Disability Zumba had moved their classes to Woodford Park. The Leisure Services Manager also confirmed that Optalis would be moving from Bulmershe Leisure Centre to the offices vacated by the Berkshire Lawn Tennis Association at Woodford Park.

No Strings Badminton

Members were informed that, following the success of the Friday night No Strings Badminton sessions, Badminton England intended to use these sessions as a case study and an example of best practice to its members.

3G football pitch at Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The Leisure Services Manager updated Members on the progress of this project, reporting that the planning application had now been submitted. Members were informed that the funding application for 50% of the total project cost would be submitted to the Football Foundation in October and that their decision would be made in January 2015. It was hoped that the installation would begin in March 2015 and, with a 20 week construction period, the pitch could be open by September 2015.

In reply to a question the Town Clerk reported that the application for borrowing approval could now be submitted given the requirement by the Football Foundation to be confident that matched funding was available. The guidance for applications required confirmation of a project progressing.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre Development

The Leisure Services Manager reported that Alliance Leisure had produced an overview exploring the opportunities to develop Woodford Park Leisure Centre to enhance the leisure facilities on offer, provide a sporting "hub" for the local area and generate new income streams. Members discussed the development ideas suggested by Alliance Leisure,

together with the potential usage figures, and felt that this was an exciting opportunity to develop the leisure centre, noting that consideration should also be given to parking provision. Members also noted that in order to achieve the proposed new income streams a sizeable initial financial outlay would be required, but that Badminton England and Bulmershe Gym Club were keen to be involved with any new development and to contribute towards the funding.

Members considered how to proceed with this project and the Leisure Services Manager outlined the following possible options:

1. For Alliance Leisure to provide further indicative costs and drawings, based on the Council's brief, which they would do at their own risk. Although indicative, they would provide a breakdown of the build costs and an illustrative CAD drawing of the proposed development, and would consider increased commercial revenue opportunities.
2. To commission an Independent Feasibility Report, costing up to £3,500, which would provide:
 - Analysis of demographics / catchment area
 - Latent demand information
 - Competitor analysis
 - Revenue projections / financial implications of proposed new facilities
 - Return on capital investment projections

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 15/14.
- ◆ To approve the proposed Christmas closure at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.
- ◆ To recommend that the Strategy and Resources Committee approve the allocation of £3,500 from the special projects earmarked reserve in order to commission Alliance Leisure to provide an independent feasibility report on opportunities for development at Woodford Park Leisure Centre by Alliance Leisure.
- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that, subject to the above recommendation being agreed, Members of the Leisure Services Committee be included in discussions with the consultants on potential development opportunities at the centre.

20. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 16/14.

Vandalism

Members noted that a recent break-in at Chapel Hall had resulted in minor damage to a window, a door and cupboards.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The Service Support Manager reported that the offices vacated by the Berkshire Lawn Tennis Association were currently being redecorated by the Maintenance Team and would be used by Optalis. A water leak had been discovered when the carpets were lifted and this had caused a slight delay while the carpets were allowed to dry out.

Members were informed that the restriction on dogs being allowed on the patio outside the Inn on the Park had been lifted and the situation was being monitored.

War Memorial / Civic Space

Members were pleased at the success of the unveiling of the war memorial by HRH the Duke of York on 15 July and the large number of local residents who attended the event. The Service Support Manager informed Members that the remaining work to the civic space, including the installation of new gates, would be completed before Armistice Day.

Following the expression of concern by some Members about the possibility of the war memorial being the object of vandalism, the Service Support Manager explained that the memorial would be protected with a graffiti resistant coating.

Woodley Garden Competition

The Service Support Manager reported that the winner of the competition for 2014 was Mrs Rosemary Walles, who would be invited to the Council meeting on 30 September to be presented with a trophy by the Mayor. It was noted that entry numbers had been low this year.

Community Halls

Members noted that a new caretaker had been employed at Chapel Hall on a temporary contract to cover long-term sick leave and also to provide holiday cover at Coronation Hall.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 16/14.

21. **BULMERSHE PARK**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 17/14.

Members were informed of a proposal from Dominic Lawson Bespoke Planning Ltd, made on behalf of their client for land at 34 Pitts Lane and to the rear of 36 – 50 Pitts Lane, which backs on to Bulmershe Park. The proposal included the installation of paths, a sheltered seating area and sensory planting and the provision of a contribution towards maintaining the garden landscape.

Members considered the proposal but felt strongly that this land, which had been designated as a Site of Urban Landscape Value, should remain as an area of natural open space for the enjoyment of residents. The park supported much wildlife and was well used by walkers and as an informal recreation area. Members were of the opinion that the developer's wish for residents of the proposed development to be able to access outside space should be catered for within the plans for the development, rather than in a public park.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that the offer be refused.

22. **WOODLEY BOWLING CLUB**

Members considered a request from Woodley Bowling Club to erect a shed in the surrounds of the bowling green for additional storage, as shown on the plan provided to the meeting and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend that the Strategy and Resources Committee approve the request from Woodley Bowling Club to install a shed in the area around the bowling green, as proposed.

23. **2015/16 BUDGET**

The Chairman invited the committee to consider items to be included or excluded from the 2015/16 budget, which would be investigated and reported back to the committee.

The items suggested for inclusion were:

- Further improvements to the entrance at Woodford Park Leisure Centre
- Improvements to the car park at Woodford Park

24. **SPORTS AWARDS CEREMONY 2014**

Members noted that nominations were being sought for the 2014 awards. It was agreed that this would be publicised on the Town Council website.

25. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

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

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That an update on the proposals for the development of Woodford Park Leisure Centre be included as a future agenda item.

26. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To publicise the following:
 - Sports Awards Ceremony of the Year 2014.
 - The handover of Bulmershe Leisure Centre.
 - The planning application for the 3G pitch at Woodford Park.
 - The success of the summer holiday activities and the positive feedback on staff received.

The meeting closed at 9:35 pm
