

Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 24 March 2015 at 8.00 pm

Present: *Councillors W. Soane (Chairman); T. Barker; P. Challis; B. Franklin; S. Outen; S. Rahmouni; D. Stares*

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

Also present: *Councillor K. Baker
R. Thompson, RPT Consulting
T. Fairey, Alliance Leisure*

52. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Downes and K. Gilder.

53. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

54. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2015**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 6 January 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

55. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted in relation to commercial matters, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press were temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw for the following item.

56. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Robin Thompson, of RPT Consulting, and Tom Fairey, of Alliance Leisure, to give a presentation on the feasibility study and business case for the potential development of activities and sports at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

Mr Thompson explained that the key outcomes to be achieved would be to improve conditions, increase the sport and leisure provision, provide facilities that would be complementary to Bulmershe Leisure Centre and to deliver a facility that would financially break even, as a minimum requirement. He informed Members of the outcome of discussions held with Badminton England and Bulmershe Gym Club to determine their requirements and the level of funding that each had secured. Mr Thompson then outlined the recommendations for facilities that could possibly be provided at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

Mr Fairey and Mr Thompson informed Members of the options for redevelopment of the leisure centre and detailed the facilities that each could provide. Finally, they explained that the next step forward would be for the Council to agree to funding a scheme design to allow more accurate costings to be determined.

Members questioned Mr Thompson and Mr Fairey on financial matters and how construction or refurbishment would impact on current activities at the leisure centre. There was discussion about the level of fees that would need to be incurred to enable sufficient work to be undertaken to allow an informed decision to be taken on the two options.

The Chairman thanked Mr Thompson and Mr Fairey for attending the meeting and giving the presentation.

Members then discussed how to proceed with this project and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that funds of up to £5,000 be allocated from the Special Projects earmarked reserve to fund work to establish more accurate costings and the viability of extending and refurbishing Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

57. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 7/15 and informed Members that the figures for Bulmershe Leisure Centre were still draft figures, but would be confirmed shortly.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 7/15.

58. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 8/15.

General Matters

Meetings with Wokingham Borough Sport Development Team and 1Life

The Leisure Services Manager informed Members that since the last meeting he had twice met with the Sport and Leisure Manager for Wokingham Borough to share ideas and discuss possible joint projects, and that these meetings would now take place once a month and would also include 1Life.

Easter opening hours

Members considered the proposed Easter opening hours for Woodford Park Leisure Centre, which were as follows:

Friday 3 April	9am – 5pm
Saturday 4 April	9am – 5pm
Sunday 5 April	9am – 5pm
Monday 6 April	9am – 5pm

UK Active

The Leisure Services Manager reported on a recent meeting with UK Active and explained that it was a not for profit body comprised of members and partners from across the UK active lifestyle sector. He explained that UK Active provided services and facilitated partnerships for a broad range of organisations including operators of fitness facilities, local authority leisure centres, leisure trusts, outdoor fitness providers and public health, education and training providers, and he outlined the benefits that membership would bring. Members then considered the purchase of an annual membership at a cost of £455.

Sports Development

Woodley Sports Week, 18 – 23 May 2015

Members noted the timetable for Sports Week.

Orienteering

Members were pleased to note that Woodford Park was to be used as the orienteering site for the Wokingham schools level 2 competitions. The event would be funded by the Wokingham School Games Organiser and training would be given to Woodford Park Leisure Centre officers and teachers from Wokingham schools to enable them to run the event. Following the event it was planned that Woodford Park would be promoted as a venue for local schools to run orienteering days in the summer.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

3G artificial football pitch project – update

Following the granting of planning permission and borrowing approval for the project, an Expression of Interest application had been submitted to the Football Foundation for the remaining 50% of the costs and the Football Foundation had allocated a Technical Project Officer to the Council to advise on the work necessary to carry out the Foundation's framework agreement works. This work would provide a technical overview of the project in readiness for the preparation of a detailed specification, and would allow a more accurate estimation of the project costs to be calculated before submitting the final grant request. Members noted that the £4,029.38 cost of this work formed part of the project costs and would therefore be covered by the grant funding, should the Council's application be successful.

New artificial cricket wicket – Woodford Park

Members were informed by the Leisure Services Manager that three quotes had been obtained for the replacement wicket and these had been passed to Last Man Stands, who would be making the application for funding from the English Cricket Board (ECB), as they had a better chance of receiving funding due to their participation in grass roots cricket initiatives.

The Leisure Services Manager explained that, should the funding application be successful, in recognition of the support received from Last Man Stands it was proposed that they would be permitted to hire the new wicket at a reduced rate. Members considered the proposal that in the first season following installation of the new wicket Last Man Stands would be charged £25 per game, rising to £30 per game in the second year, and subsequently increasing annually until it was in line with the normal rate charged for the artificial wicket (£72 for adults and £30 for under 18s).

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 8/15.
- ◆ To approve the proposed Easter opening hours.
- ◆ To approve the purchase of an annual membership with UK Active at £455 for 2015/16, funded from Woodford Park Leisure Centre's budget estimates.
- ◆ To approve the special charging structure to Last Man Stands for the use of the artificial wicket, should this be installed as a result of a successful funding application submitted by Last Man Stands.

59.

PARKS AND BUILDINGS

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 9/15.

Vandalism

Members were informed that there had been some minor damage to the allotment fencing and some minor offensive graffiti on the graffiti wall in Woodford Park.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

The Service Support Manager reported that refurbishment of the Ladies changing rooms was complete and refurbishment of the Gents changing rooms would commence shortly. The Committee asked for their thanks to be passed to the Maintenance Team for the work they had done.

Members noted that the windows in the function room and the tea room had been replaced by a local contractor at a cost of £5,850.

Woodford Park

The Service Support Manager reported that the fir trees along the boundary of the bowling green and the main car park had been removed as previously agreed. The old, damaged railings would shortly be replaced by new fencing, and hedging would then be planted in front of the fencing to act as a windbreak and a deterrent for unauthorised access.

Members were pleased to note that officers had arranged with Wokingham Borough Council for a quantity of road planings from resurfacing work in Oak Drive to be deposited at the Western Avenue entrance and that this had been spread and compacted by the Town Council's Grounds Team to provide a temporary repair to the surface along most of the length of the track.

Members noted that donations had been received from two residents who each wished to sponsor a memorial seat in the park. These would be installed in the next fortnight.

The Service Support Manager informed Members that costings had been obtained for the provision of a single flagpole and flag, and the total cost for a 10m fibreglass pole with internal halyard, a 3 yard sewn woven Union Flag and the installation of a concrete foundation would be £1,882.50. He also reported that guidance was available from the Department for Communities and Local Government and from the Flag Institute regarding the flying of flags, and that the Council would need to agree a protocol for the flying of flags.

In reply to a question regarding the work that was to be carried out to alleviate flooding problems in the park, the Service Support Manager reported that the only area where there was still a problem was in the car park, in the vicinity of the play area at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

Mollison Close play area

The Service Support Manager reported that he had contacted Wokingham Borough Council to enquire about the future of the Mollison Close play area and had been told that the borough council did not intend to remove the play area. The question of the ownership of the land had not been resolved.

Beat the Street

The Service Support Manager informed Members that Woodley would be included in the Reading Beat the Street campaign, running from 29 April to 24 June. Electronic registration boxes would be put up around the town, with one located in Woodford Park. These would register when they were touched by the Beat the Street fobs and would record the total distances travelled by each fob being carried from box to box. Every school child in Woodley would be given a fob and the total distances registered by each school would be calculated. Other organisations would also be encouraged to take part in teams of 25 or more. The aim of the campaign was to increase levels of physical activity.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 9/15.

60. **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.

61. **PUBLICITY & WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To publicise the following:
 - The Easter opening times at Woodford Park Leisure Centre
 - Woodley Sports Week
 - Progress of the 3G pitch project to be reported on the website
 - Beat the Street to be publicised on the website and by posters on the Council noticeboards

The meeting closed at 9:35 pm
