

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 5 January 2016 at 8.00 pm**

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

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

**Also present:** *Councillor R. Dolinski  
1 member of the public*

32. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received From Councillor B. Franklin.

33. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Soane	Agenda item 7, Charges 2016/17, in relation to proposed charges for the Memorial Ground and hire of halls and meeting rooms.	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest: Councillor Soane is vice chairman of the Carnival Committee, which hires the Memorial Ground and meeting rooms in several Council-run locations.
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Councillor Soane took no part in the discussion or voting on agenda item 7.

34. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2015**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 3 November 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 1/16.

In reply to a question about whether the unanticipated extra fair visit, which had increased the income from Woodford Park, was likely to be an annual event the Town Clerk reported that one particular fair had returned to Woodford Park in 2015 after an absence of several years, but it was not known whether that fair would return annually.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note report No. LS 1/16.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 2/16.

Members were informed that since the last meeting the Leisure Services Manager had investigated further options for the relocation of the remaining tennis booking at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and had identified two tennis clubs with suitable availability. This information had been passed to the tennis players and Members were pleased to note that

the Council had discharged its obligation to look for alternative provision. The Town Clerk informed Members that demand for tennis courts at the leisure centre would continue be monitored and further options would be investigated if demand was high.

The Leisure Services Manager updated Members on the progress of arrangements for the Woodley 10km Road Race and reported that Barnes Fitness were currently seeking quotes for the traffic management required during the event.

The Leisure Services Manager reported that during the last week of November Woodford Park Leisure Centre had hosted a Badminton 4 Macmillan Week, which was a nationwide event aimed to inspire people to take up badminton and also raise funds for the Macmillan charity. Following a successful week, Badminton England and Macmillan hoped to make this an annual event. Woodford Park Leisure Centre had collected £55 during the week and with longer to plan for future events it was hoped that the amount raised would be increased.

Members were informed of some concerns regarding the possibility of running a Football Scholarship Programme, which had arisen following receipt of the service level agreement and further programme material. The Council's responsibility in running the programme appeared to be much more heavily education focussed than had originally been suggested and the Leisure Services Manager had learned that only 50% of the new sites set up go on to run the programme, with the majority being run by colleges or professional football clubs. Potential ways in which the programme could work and be successful were being investigated.

Members also received an update on operational matters relating to the 3G pitch, for which bookings by partner organisations have almost been finalised, a report on new courses starting at the leisure centre in January and an update on the badminton sessions at local secondary schools that were being run as satellite clubs.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 2/16.

37. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 3/16.

The progress of refurbishment works to the flat at Woodford Park Leisure Centre was reported. It was anticipated that the flat would be ready to let out from February 2016 and local letting agents had been contacted. In reply to a question the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the flat would be let as a residential property as there was high demand for residential property in Woodley, whereas some similar commercial properties in the area were currently vacant.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that ground works for the 3G pitch were anticipated to start in January. The start of construction had been delayed due to the need to submit additional information to the planning officer regarding planting, landscaping and drainage, but this had all now been submitted. Construction was expected to last 12 weeks, but would be dependent on the weather.

Members were informed of maintenance work that had been carried out to trees in Woodford Park and work that was scheduled for the future, including the planting of six new trees as part of the 3G pitch project. Repair work that was due to be carried out in the play area was reported and Members were also informed of two new sponsored seats that had been installed by the Grounds Team, one on the Memorial Ground near Coronation Hall and one adjacent to the football pitches near St. Dominic's School.

The Deputy Town Clerk also reported that prices were currently being sought for a consultant to give advice on the work that needed to be carried out to improve the quality of the lake in Woodford Park.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 3/16.

38. **CHARGES 2016/17**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 4/16 and explained that the proposed charges for 2016/17 had been drawn up taking into account the increase in the Retail Price Index (RPI), comparative charges by other local providers and any other relevant factors.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the proposed increase in charges for the committee rooms at Woodford Park Leisure Centre were above the RPI increases as the charges were low in comparison with other nearby providers and also to reflect the recent redecoration of these rooms.

Members were also informed that the work required to the outer cricket field and the comparative costs at other local cricket pitches had given rise to a higher increase for cricket matches, apart from evening matches, which included a surcharge for grass wickets being prepared mid-week.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 4/16.
- ◆ To recommend that the proposed charges for 2016/17, as presented, be approved.

39. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2015/16**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 5/16 and explained that the largest expenditure increase over the original estimates related to the loan payment made in December for the new loan in respect of the 3G pitch project. Funding from the general reserve had been agreed to cover this cost.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 5/16.
- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that the Revised Budget Estimates for 2015/16, as presented, be approved.

40. **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2016/17**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 6/16.

In reply to a question the Town Clerk informed Members that potential income from the area that had formerly housed the Inn on the Park had not been included in the budget estimates as the future use of this area, and therefore the future income, was not yet confirmed.

When asked about the anticipated running costs of the 3G pitch the Town Clerk explained that costs had been allocated to cover the necessary increased use of the leisure centre, some additional equipment that would be required for the pitch, and any additional league fees and inspection costs. Energy costs also included an estimate for pitch lighting. The maintenance of the pitch would be undertaken by the Grounds Maintenance team and leisure centre staff.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 6/16.
- ◆ To recommend that the Budget Estimates for 2016/17, as presented, be approved

41. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH SPORTS COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Members noted that an invitation had been received to attend the Wokingham Borough Sports Council Annual General Meeting on 26 January 2016. Councillor Gilder informed Members that she would be attending the meeting as she was a member of the Borough Sports Council and it was agreed that Councillor Gilder would also represent the Town Council at the AGM.

42. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items.

43. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To publicise the following:
  - The progress of the 3G pitch project.
  - The new courses running at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.
  - The rooms and facilities that are available for hire at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, the Oakwood Centre, Coronation Hall and Chapel Hall to be publicised more effectively on the website and in the Woodley Herald.

Under this item Members discussed how to encourage community involvement in Woodford Park. Following a request from Mr David Provins, a local resident, that a group of volunteers be set up to help with the upkeep of some areas of the park [*Leisure Services Committee, 9 September 2015, minute number 13*], an article had been published in the Woodley Herald calling for volunteers, but there had been no response. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that he and Mr Provins had discussed various options for raising the profile of Woodford Park and it was hoped that there would be more community involvement when the future plans for the lake were finalised and publicised. Members suggested that, as a first step, it might be possible to get a small group of volunteers together for a specific project, such as a flower bed or small area of the park, and that this work could also be carried out in commemoration of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The meeting closed at 8:57 pm

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