

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 6 September 2016 at 7:30 pm**

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

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

Also present: *Councillor M. Walker
Darrell Gale, Public Health Consultant Wokingham
Sian Wide, Wokingham Borough Council
Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity
David Provins, Friends of Woodford Park
Martin Aust, Friends of Woodford Park*

13. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Lay.

14. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

15. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2016**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 31 May 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16. **BULMERSHE LEISURE CENTRE CONSULTATION**
The Chairman welcomed Darrell Gale, Public Health Consultant Wokingham, and his colleague Sian Wide from Wokingham Borough Council, to the meeting.

Darrell Gale explained that Wokingham Borough Council was looking at possible options for improving the facilities at Bulmershe Leisure Centre, which included either major refurbishment or the rebuilding of the leisure centre and improving general site issues, such as car parking. The Borough Council had been consulting local residents on the future of the leisure centre and wished to seek the views of the Town Council.

Darrell Gale spoke about the constraints of the site and what they were hoping to achieve, including the provision of a 6 or 8 lane swimming pool with spectator facilities and a separate teaching pool. He presented indicative schemes for the refurbishment and rebuild options and informed Members of the advantages and disadvantages of each option. Members were pleased to learn that alternative pool provision was being investigated to ensure that children could continue with swimming lessons while the work was undertaken and stressed the importance of providing a pool that would be used for swimming, rather than a "fun" pool. Darrell Gale hoped that during the works at the site there might be some assistance from the Town Council to provide space for displaced clubs currently using the centre.

The Chairman thanked Darrell Gale and Sian Wide for their presentation and said that there would be a lot to think about, whichever option was chosen. Darrell Gale asked Members to contact him if they had any further questions or comments.

Members then discussed the options presented and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To support a project to rebuild Bulmershe Leisure Centre.
- ◆ That, where possible, the Town Council would seek to assist in providing space for clubs displaced during the building works.

17. **JUST AROUND THE CORNER**

The Chairman welcomed Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity (JAC), to the meeting. Sam Milligan presented the JAC report, which had been included in the agenda, and then, at the request of the Chairman, spoke at more length about the Loddon Mead project.

Sam Milligan informed Members that the Community Youth Partnership (CYP) had received a variety of suggestions for the use of the land at Loddon Mead. Many of these ideas had come from pupils at the local schools in Woodley and the CYP was keen to ensure that the project didn't fail due to suggestions being too expensive and had given some guidance on the types of activities that could be provided. The CYP felt that the area should be developed gradually so that young people could give input to the project as it went along. The provision of a Parkour area had been mentioned by young people in Woodley for many years and had been a popular suggestion during the Loddon Mead consultation. Sam Milligan reported that the young people who had helped at the recent Parkour event at Loddon Mead had been very excited about the possibilities and had wanted to help with the design of the area so that there would be a storey behind the development, rather than it being designed by a consultant.

Following discussion of the Parkour event, the Chairman mentioned the recent application to open a restaurant in the town centre and asked Sam Milligan whether the arrival of other restaurants in the town centre a couple of years ago had affected the incidence of trouble in the town centre. Sam Milligan said that it was not possible to say whether the opening of restaurants had reduced the amount of trouble in the town centre as the numbers of young people out on the streets had generally reduced across the whole borough and was thought to be due to the increase in online activities and the use of social media, as well as an increase in meeting up at each others' homes.

The Chairman thanked Sam Milligan for taking the time to come to the meeting.

18. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 14/16.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 14/16.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 15/16 and explained that the report had concentrated mainly on the use of the 3G pitch as this had been the major focus of developments over the summer.

The Leisure Services Manager reported on the 3G pitch opening ceremony in June and the Woodford Park 3G Football Festival, held on the same day, and informed Members that it was hoped that the Football Festival could become an annual "end of season" event.

Members were pleased to hear that the 3G pitch had been used by Manchester City FC Women's squad for a training session before their match against Reading FC Women in August, and had also been used to hold a coaching session for students from the USA, run by EPL Sports, a leading international company who organise sports tours for students to the best facilities across the world.

Members were given an update on the bookings taken for the 3G pitch, which will be fully booked by the Council's partner clubs on weekday evenings during the football season and will be used by the Berkshire Youth Development League on Saturday mornings, in addition to three grass mini pitches. The 3G pitch had also been used by FAB Academy to run two successful football camps over the school summer holidays and another was planned for the October half term.

The Leisure Services Manager also informed Members of the success of a scheme to allow under 16s to play on the 3G pitch for an hour for £1 per person over the summer holidays. At the time of reporting there had been 2,295 visits by children and ways of continuing the scheme into term time, and launching a community focussed football scheme, were being investigated.

Members were also pleased to note the information provided on the summer holiday activity camps, the I am Team GB campaign, a week of taster sessions to celebrate the return of Great Britain's Olympic heroes, and the popularity of the paddling pool, which had enjoyed one of its most successful years with the number of visitors unaffected by the closure of the Inn on the Park.

The Chairman thanked the Leisure Services Manager for his hard work and success throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 15/16.

20. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

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

Members received an update on the project to provide a fitness gym at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and were pleased to note that the refurbishment work to the former Inn on the Park area had started and that completion was expected in the first week of December.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Woodley Pre School, which operated from the function room in the leisure centre, had asked the Council to consider a proposal for the installation of a new, modular building within Woodford Park, from which the pre school could operate. The proposal had been considered by the Urgency Committee on 26 August 2016 to enable the pre school to meet the time constraints of the funding submission. The Urgency Committee had agreed to support the proposal in principle, subject to a suitable site being found and other issues being resolved.

Members noted the update provided on matters at the allotments. This included the repairs to the roadways carried out by allotment tenant volunteers using road planings obtained from the car park and driveway resurfacing work at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, the clearance of brambles from a small number of plots to enable them to return to use and the streamlining of the administration process for dealing with unworked and neglected plots. It was noted that there were currently around 20 people on the waiting list for a plot.

Members were informed that the draft ecology report had been received following the survey carried out at the Woodford Park lake and were pleased to note that the silt

contamination was within Environment Agency guidelines for reuse on or off site. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the full report would be provided to the Committee once the final version was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk also informed Members of the closure of the paddling pool for three days in August due to contaminants introduced into the water by the exceptionally high number of visitors this summer, and the works planned by the Friends of Woodford Park to create a small flower bed and shrub bed to complete the Queen's Birthday Garden.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 16/16.

At this point in the proceedings the Chairman asked if the representatives from the Friends of Woodford Park who were present would like to address the meeting.

21. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK**

Martin Aust informed Members that as a responsible dog owner he was very frustrated by the amount of dog mess in Woodford Park and had decided to try to quantify the problem. The Friends of Woodford Park had therefore carried out a dog mess survey during August 2016 and the results of the survey had been circulated to the Committee at the meeting. 497 items of dog mess had been counted, bagged and binned, so that they were not counted twice. Mr Aust reported that the majority of the dog mess was found around the lake and in the areas of long grass and he thought that it was possible that many people believed it was acceptable not to pick up dog mess in these areas. He suggested that a poster campaign in the park might help to re-educate some of the offenders and informed Members of posters that were available from Keep Britain Clean.

Following discussion by Members it was agreed that the Council had a duty of care to residents and users of the park and should take action to try to improve matters.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To purchase 10 large posters at £25 and a number of small posters at £5 to be displayed around Woodford Park.

The Chairman thanked Martin Aust and David Provins for all the work that the Friends of Woodford Park had undertaken on this and other projects.

22. **GREEN FLAG AWARD**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 17/16.

Following discussion about the work that would be involved in working towards a Green Flag Award for Woodford Park it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 17/16.
- ◆ That the Council work towards achieving Green Flag Award status for Woodford Park.
- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that £5,000 be allocated from the Capital Programme for costs associated with the application for Green Flag Award status for Woodford Park.

23. **VOLUNTEER PARK WARDEN**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 18/16.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 18/16.
- ◆ That the Council seek Volunteer Park Wardens for Woodford Park and the Council's other open spaces.

24. **COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 19/16 of the Community Youth Partnership meeting held on 20 July 2016.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 19/16.

25. **PARKOUR EVENT**

Members noted the information provided in the agenda regarding a proposed Parkour fundraising event, which it was suggested could be held at the Loddon Mead area under the A3290 on a weekend day in November. This would be a free event with a collection made on the day. The Town Clerk was investigating the permissions required to enable the event to go ahead.

26. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH SPORTS COUNCIL SPORTS AWARDS 2016**

Members noted that nominations were being sought for the Wokingham Borough Sports Council Sports Awards 2016.

27. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items.

28. **PUBLICITY & WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To publicise the following:
 - The success of the 3G pitch.
 - The search for Volunteer Park Wardens.
 - The problem of dog fouling in Woodford Park.
 - To encourage nominations for the Sports Awards 2016.

The meeting closed at 9:35 pm
