

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 15 January 2019 at 8:00 pm**

Present: *Councillors T. Barker (Chairman); D. Bragg; J.J. Ellis; K. Gilder;
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 K. Baker
Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity
2 members of the public*

37. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Franklin and B. Soane.

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

39. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 20 November 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

40. **JUST AROUND THE CORNER (JAC)**
Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity (JAC), was welcomed to the meeting and presented the JAC report.

Sam Milligan reported that things had generally been quiet in Woodley in the run up to Christmas and there was very little to report. There had been a few more young people out during the holiday period, but no particular problems or issues had occurred.

Members noted that Woodley schools continued to refer pupils for specialised sessions at Rehoboth, with Addington School recently added to the list of schools making regular referrals.

Sam Milligan informed Members that JAC were considering changing one of their vans into a "coffee van" that could be moved around and used at several venues, including the Loddon Mead project.

41. **COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP**
Sam Milligan presented Report No. LS 1/19 of the Community Youth Partnership meeting held on 9 January 2019 and reported that the Partnership was currently focussing on two projects: the formation of self help groups for parents and an art project at the Loddon Mead area for young people.

Members were pleased to note that plans were in place for the first parents' self help group to start running sessions from February.

Members also noted the Partnership had agreed that, for the time being, the use of a JAC van as a "coffee van" at Loddon Mead would be preferable to installing a more permanent container café.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 1/19.

The Chairman thanked Sam Milligan for coming to the meeting.

42. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 2/19 and reported that expenditure was below the level that would be expected at this point in the year and income was well above the expected level. In particular, the Town Clerk noted that Woodford Park Leisure Centre had achieved an excellent level of income.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 2/19.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 3/19 and reported that the leisure centre was currently very busy, as was usually the case at the start of a new year. Opening the leisure centre between Christmas and New Year had proved to be very popular and the 3G pitch had also been well used during this period.

Members were informed that the purchase of a new trampoline for the leisure centre was being investigated, as the current trampoline had been in use since 1989 and had needed frequent repair in recent years. The latest estimate for repair had been over £1,000 and the estimated cost of a new trampoline was £2,687, which would be funded from the Repairs and Renewals fund.

The Leisure Services Manager reported that the new ladies toilets at Woodford Park Leisure Centre had opened on 7 January and the old toilets were currently being removed. There had recently been a problem with a drainage back-up that had affected the whole leisure centre but this had now been resolved and the cause would be investigated. Members noted that the redecoration of the gym had been completed before the end of November with minimal disruption to gym members and the new wall art, installed in December, had received positive feedback.

Members also noted that there had been some minor vandalism to the bins on the patio at the front of the leisure centre. In reply to a question, the Leisure Services Manager informed Members that it had been too dark for the cctv to give adequate images to identify the culprits.

A question was asked about how long it would take to replace the missing letters to the signage at the front of the leisure centre and the Town Clerk replied that she was having difficulty finding replacements of the correct colour but would follow this up.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 3/19.

44. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 4/19. He reported that the new ladies toilets at Woodford Park Leisure Centre were a terrific improvement to the centre and informed Members that the next stage of the regeneration work would be the redesign of the Reception area and the improvement of the staff offices. Members were pleased to

hear that the installation of solar panels to the sports hall roof had started the previous day and was due to be completed by the end of the week.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that a new seat, sponsored by the Rotary Club, had been installed in the Rotary Garden in Woodford Park and the other seats in the garden were currently being refurbished. In reply to a question about the replacement of the seat that had been removed from the area adjacent to the football pitches, the Deputy Town Clerk said that the Council had recently received requests for several new memorial seats and it might be possible for one to be positioned in that location.

Members were informed that the tender for the silt redistribution, bank works and boardwalk to the Woodford Park lake had been awarded to Ebsford Environmental and work was scheduled to start in mid February 2019, and to be completed by the end of March to avoid the bird-nesting season. In reply to a question about birds that had already started nesting, the Deputy Town Clerk said that the work had been scheduled after taking advice from the RSPB and the Environment Agency and that the situation would be monitored daily, and the work schedule adjusted if necessary. In response to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the silt removed from the lake would be used on site, along with other materials, to create a wildlife area.

Members noted that the war memorial panels had been removed for the printed vinyl to be reapplied. This was to correct a printing error and would be carried out under warranty and was expected to take one week. The Town Clerk reported that, following a request from a local resident who's mother wanted to see the panels but was not well enough to visit the park, the war memorial panels would be displayed on the Council's website.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that at the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting on 29 April 2008 (minute number 68) it had been agreed that the Council would seek the transfer of the ownership of Malone Park from Wokingham Borough Council to the Town Council, following the expiry of the lease arrangement that had been in force at that time. After initial correspondence, no further response had been received and the Town Council had continued to manage, maintain and invest in the site since that time. Members discussed the situation and considered whether to pursue this matter.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Wokingham Borough Council had enquired whether the Town Council would be able to carry out grass cutting services around the parish, if required, from March to May 2019. He explained that the details of the proposal were not yet known but that the areas concerned seemed quite substantial. The Town Clerk pointed out that that was already a very busy period for the Town Council's Grounds Team. After consideration it was agreed that officers would request full details of the proposal from Wokingham Borough Council and then, if appropriate, discuss the matter with Councillors Rahmouni and Stares, who were delegated to make a decision on the proposal.

Members noted the update given in the agenda on matters concerning the allotments and also noted that the removal of asbestos from the roof space at Coronation Hall would take place in the week commencing 18 February.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 4/19.
- ◆ To continue to seek the transfer of ownership of Malone Park from Wokingham Borough Council to the Town Council.
- ◆ To delegate Councillors Rahmouni and Stares to consider the request from Wokingham Borough Council with regard to grass cutting in the parish when the full details of the proposal were known.

Following the presentation of the report the Chairman asked David Provins, who was present at the meeting, if he would like to address Members on behalf of the Friends of Woodford Park. David Provins said that much of the work carried out by the Friends had been destroyed by the Council's Grounds Team and he was critical of work the Grounds Team had carried out. He also said that it was difficult to arrange meetings with the Deputy Town Clerk. When asked by the Chairman whether these were fair comments, the Deputy Town Clerk said that he met every month with the Friends of Woodford Park and with regard to the specific grievances raised by Mr Provins, there were some that he was not aware of and others that he did not agree with.

45. **CHARGES 2019/20**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 5/19 and explained that the only large increase in the charges proposed for 2019/20 was for the Healthy Habits cards, which would increase from £12 to £20, but that the number of additional courses now covered by these cards meant that it remained good value for money.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 5/19.
- ◆ To recommend that the proposed charges for 2019/20, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

46. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2018/19**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 6/19 and explained that the Committee's original budget expenditure was expected to decrease overall.

Members were informed that staff costs to the Football, Cricket, Bowling Green, Woodford Park, Memorial Ground and Garden of Remembrance budgets had been lower than anticipated due to the new Grounds Person post being vacant for a few weeks before an appointment was made. There had been lower maintenance costs than expected at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and the spending on youth services had been lower than budgeted for. The installation of new lamp posts and LED lighting had led to savings and there had been a water charges rebate at the allotments. The expected expenditure on installing the new public toilet in the town centre had not occurred in this financial year. There had been increased staff costs at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, due to the additional classes for gym members, and higher costs than budgeted for at the depot.

Members were pleased to note that there was estimated to be a significant increase to the Committee's income over the original budget due to additional income from the gym at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and higher than anticipated income from Coronation Hall and from fair and circus visits. Income from the Depot and from Football, Chapel Hall, public toilet and the Memorial Ground were likely to be lower than the original estimates.

Members thanked the staff who had all worked hard to achieve these very pleasing results.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 6/19.
- ◆ To recommend that the Revised Budget Estimates for 2018/19, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

47. **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2019/20**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 7/19.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 7/19.
- ◆ To recommend that the Budget Estimates for 2019/20, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

48. **TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC TOILET UPDATE**

The Town Clerk informed Members that the town centre public toilet was expected to be delivered and installed by mid February, but would not be open for use until the utilities were connected. She reported that Danfo were working well with Wokingham Borough Council to make all the necessary arrangements.

Councillor Baker said that he had requested a review by Wokingham Borough Council into why it had taken so long to resolve the installation problems.

49. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No items were suggested for inclusion in future agendas.

50. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To publicise the following:
 - The work being undertaken at the Woodford Park lake.

In reply to a question about whether the distribution problems encountered with the last edition of the Herald had been resolved, the Town Clerk informed Members that a new distribution company would be used for the next edition.

The meeting closed at 9:05 pm
