

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 4 September 2018 at 8:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors T. Barker (Chairman); D. Bragg; J.J. Ellis; K. Gilder; S. Rahmouni (chairman for part of the meeting); D. Stares*

**Officers present:** *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; L. Matthews, Committee Officer*

**Also present:** *Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity  
3 members of the public*

14. As Councillor Barker was unable to be present for the start of the meeting it was proposed and

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That Councillor Rahmouni would chair the meeting until Councillor Barker arrived.

15. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Franklin, M. Green and B. Soane.

16. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

17. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JUNE 2018**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 5 June 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18. **JUST AROUND THE CORNER (JAC)**

Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity (JAC), was welcomed to the meeting and presented the JAC report. He informed Members that the atmosphere in Woodley had been relatively quiet over the summer period. Woodford Park had been very busy, with quite a few groups of young people coming from other areas, such as Earley and Twyford. In the past this had been a cause of tension, but recently the various groups had been getting on and large numbers had been playing football together. The small number of disturbances had quickly been resolved.

Sam Milligan reported that there seemed to be a perception of anti-social behaviour locally due to young people riding bicycles in the town centre, but that a recent survey had shown that there were just as many older people cycling in the town centre, and it appeared that the public were prepared to view the actions of older people more leniently.

Sam Milligan informed Members that JAC would be starting their work with the local schools again the following week, after the summer break.

19. **COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP**

Report No. LS 17/18 of the Community Youth Partnership meeting held on 29 August 2018 was tabled at the meeting as it had not been available when the agenda was issued. Sam Milligan presented the report to the Committee

Members noted the progress of the Partnership's project to set up parent self-help groups and parenting courses to support parents dealing with anxiety in children, and considered the recommendation from the Partnership that a request be made to the Town Council for free use of the theatre in the Oakwood Centre on the evenings of Wednesday 3 and Thursday 4 October to run parenting workshops provided by ARC.

Members were also pleased to note the Partnership's ideas for re-launching the project to provide a free running area at the Loddon Mead site, as the project had lost momentum. Suggestions for reigniting interest in the project included installing a mural at the site and making a video to help promote the project.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 17/18.
- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee that free use of the Alan Cornish Theatre in the Oakwood Centre be given on the evenings of 3 and 4 October for parenting workshops run by ARC.

Councillor Rahmouni thanked Sam Milligan for coming to the meeting.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Barker took over as chairman.

20. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

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

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 18/18.

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

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 19/18, which had been prepared by the Leisure Services Manager. The Leisure Services Manager was unable to attend the meeting due to staffing issues at the Leisure Centre and had sent his apologies.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the two vacant part-time receptionist posts at the Leisure Centre had now been filled. He also reported that the gym membership currently stood at 520 and the gym was at its maximum capacity. Members were pleased to note the success of the summer holiday camps and the family racket attack promotion, which had been used 428 times throughout the summer holidays. Members also noted the information given in the report regarding proposed new classes at the Leisure Centre for adults and children and the bookings for the 3G pitch.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the paddling pool had remained open for all but three days of the summer and had been much busier than in previous years. The pool closures had been due to essential repairs to the pool liner. Members noted that work would need to be undertaken to the pool plant in preparation for the following summer and this would be scheduled for the winter months.

At the previous meeting of the Committee, on 5 June 2018, Members had considered a request for nationally recognised young sports people to be allowed free use of the Gym on the Park and had asked for a detailed proposal to be submitted (minute number 7). Members now considered the detailed requirements outlined in the report. The age limit that should be applied to the scheme was discussed at some length and it was proposed that the suggested age limit of 16 years should be amended to allow anyone in full-time education, and who also met the other requirements, to apply for the scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 19/18.
- ◆ To implement a free pass scheme for the Gym on the Park for nationally recognised young sports people meeting the following requirements:
  - In full-time education.
  - A resident of Woodley.
  - Accompanying application form detailing sport, level of competition, team etc.
  - Supporting letter/statement from coach/trainer.
  - Meeting/interview with Leisure Services Manager.
  - Requirement to provide feedback relating to experience and use of the gym.

**22. PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 20/18. He reported that the works to install new ladies toilets at Woodford Park Leisure Centre were progressing well and were scheduled for completion by the end of September. The next stage of the regeneration work would be the redesign of the office and reception area, but the scheduling of this work would be affected by the need to appoint a new Maintenance Manager, as the post was currently vacant.

Members were very pleased to note that Woodford Park had been awarded Green Flag status, and noted that it was the first park in Wokingham borough to achieve this. The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that an application for planning permission to erect a flagpole near the war memorial had been submitted so that the flag could be displayed. The Chairman thanked and congratulated everyone who had been involved in making the application for Green Flag status and thanked the Council staff and Friends of Woodford Park who worked so hard in the park.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the paths to the Rotary Garden had been resurfaced by the Grounds Team and new shrub beds had been planted out by the Friends of Woodford Park. New fingerpost signage and destination/notice boards had been installed in June and a new sign would shortly be installed at the entrance from Haddon Drive.

Members received an update on the progress of the lake project and were informed that the specification and tender documents for the silt work, bank repairs and boardwalk would be sent out in September and it was intended that works would be carried out before the end of March 2019. In-house work had continued with the removal of the hedge on the mound at the eastern end of the lake and preparation for the installation of a retaining structure at the base of the mound. A notice board would be installed shortly to keep residents informed with up to date information about the project.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the Friends of Woodford Park were taking on a more formal structure and a committee had been elected. He said that the way the group was organised was a credit to all those involved and the future of the group looked very positive.

Members noted that a small group of travellers had set up an encampment on the green at Malone Park at the beginning of August and had been moved on by police the following day. Wokingham Borough Council had installed earth mounds as a temporary measure to prevent further illegal encampments and was liaising with Town Council officers regarding longer-term measures. The Chairman noted that a group of travellers had also gained access to Ashbury Park in August and had been moved on by the police very quickly.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that road repairs to the Reading Road allotments site had been carried out over the August Bank Holiday weekend by a group of 35 allotment tenant volunteers using materials supplied by the Town Council. The Tenants

Committee was continuing to carry out plot inspections and there were currently 7 people on the waiting list for a plot.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 20/18.

23. **TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC TOILET UPDATE**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that construction of the public toilet unit had been completed but that the contractor had not yet obtained the necessary licences from Wokingham Borough Council for the installation to take place. Members asked for an explanation for the delay to be posted on the Town Council website.

24. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No items were suggested for inclusion in future agendas.

25. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To provide the following information on the website:
  - An explanation for the delay in the installation of the public toilet unit.
  - Measures being taken to try to alleviate the problem of illegal encampments set up by travellers.

The meeting closed at 8:47 pm

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