

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre  
on Tuesday 14 January 2020 at 8:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors D. Bragg (Chairman); K. Baker; K. Gilder; A. Heap;  
S. Rahmouni; R. Skegg; A. Swaddle*

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

**Also present:** *Councillor M. Doyle  
Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity  
2 members of the public*

39. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M. Green.

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

41. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2019**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 19 November 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. **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 during November and December, Woodley had generally been very quiet in the evenings, with only a few young people out and about. JAC had added some additional sessions to their detached work to ascertain when and where young people were congregating. Members also received an update on some of the specific cases that had been mentioned in previous reports.

43. **COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP**  
Councillor Gilder presented Report No. LS 1/20 of the Community Youth Partnership meeting held on 8 January 2020.

Sam Milligan informed Members that two possible weekends had been identified for the Art Project at Loddon Mead, as the scheduling was dependant on the availability of the artists. It was hoped that the Art Project would take place in February or May.

Councillor Gilder reported on the discussion that had taken place regarding youth provision in Woodley and the lack of provision for the 15+ age group. Members noted that Councillor Al-Sanjari had agreed to design a questionnaire for this age group, with the aim of determining what facilities and activities the young people would like provided for them. The questions would be asked in such a way that hard to reach young people would also complete the survey. Councillor Gilder informed Members that Councillor Al-Sanjari was aiming to have the questionnaire ready by the February half term and it was hoped that Waingels College and The Bulmershe School would allow their students to complete the survey at school. The survey would be available online. Sam Milligan reported that JAC

had designed an online survey for young people, which had not yet undergone testing, and he suggested that JAC could liaise with Councillor Al-Sanjari.

Members noted the information provided in the report regarding the aim of setting up more parents' self help groups for dealing with anxiety in young people and the possibility of making contact with parents through local schools.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 1/20.

The Chairman thanked Sam Milligan for coming to the meeting.

44. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 2/20 and reported that overall the income was well above the expected level for this point in the year.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 2/20.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 3/20 and reported that the Christmas charity open day at the leisure centre on 23 December had raised £850 for the Mayor's charity, Prostate Cancer UK. Members noted the recent Facebook promotions: offering three free Christmas themed Mini Movers sessions to generate interest in the January sessions, and running a competition to name one of the Christmas holiday camps as a way of promoting the holiday activities.

Members thanked the Leisure Services Manager for providing information about the number of incidents relating to the use of the 3G pitch £2 Turn Up by various age groups. The reported incidents included abuse of staff, using without booking, using without paying, ignorance of pitch rules and not showing up for a booking. The number of incidents by each age group would be reviewed again at the April meeting.

The Leisure Services Manager informed Members that the Council had been awarded a grant of 75% of the cost of new grass football goalposts, up to a maximum of £2,400, which would allow two pairs of new goalposts to be purchased and would improve the quality of the 11 a side football facilities. Members were also informed that the annual service of the trampolines at the leisure centre had identified necessary repair work totalling £1,500 to one of the trampolines. The trampoline was over 30 years old and would be replaced with a new model.

Members noted the information provided in the report about new pilates classes and exercise classes that were being launched at the centre, and the redecoration of the foyer and reception area and the upstairs committee rooms that had been undertaken by the Maintenance Team.

Members considered a provisional request from the Berkshire Youth Development League (BYDL) for Woodford Park to host a summer football league on Saturday mornings for about 12 weeks starting in April. The amount of extra traffic this would generate, and the effect on residents in Haddon Drive, was discussed and it was agreed that BYDL would need to provide car park marshals to control the situation as much as possible, as they currently did for the winter leagues.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 3/20.
- ◆ To agree to the request from the Berkshire Youth Development League (BYDL) for Woodford Park to host a summer football league on Saturday mornings, should they require the centre as a venue, and to ask BYDL to provide two car park marshals for the duration of the booking.

46. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 4/20. He informed Members of work that had been undertaken at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, including the redecoration of the foyer, reception area and committee rooms, the extension of public wi-fi to cover the gym, improvements to the lighting in the car park and repairs to the 3G pitch goals. He also reported that an electrical survey had been carried out at the leisure centre and had shown that there were no safety issues, but that the system needed updating to comply with the latest regulations. The Chairman informed the meeting that he had recently been shown around the leisure centre by the Leisure Services Manager and he reported that the newly decorated committee rooms looked magnificent.

Members noted that more than 50 potholes had been repaired in Woodford Park by the Maintenance Team and several areas of uneven pathway had been cut out and re-laid. The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that officers would be meeting with landscape architects and play companies over the coming weeks to develop a design brief for the Woodford Park Play Area project, focussing on inclusivity and natural play, and designs would then be developed for consultation and would be reported back to the Committee. Members were also informed that the Green Flag application for Woodford Park would be submitted in January.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on matters relating to the allotments, including the proposal to install new locks at the site to improve site security. In order to prevent unauthorised copying of the keys, the new keys would have a profile that could only be copied with authority from the Council. This would be included in the proposals for the 2020/21 Capital Programme.

Members were informed of the grounds work that had been carried out recently, including the repair and maintenance of sports pitches, machinery servicing, clearance of waste from the grounds yard, planting of crocuses and daffodils, and tree works. In reply to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk said that the two dead trees that had been removed from the Garden of Remembrance would be replaced, and the dead trees had been kept for use as a bug hotel.

Members noted the minutes of the Friends of Woodford Park Liaison Meeting held on 19 November 2019 and the information provided on the Council's wildlife and environmental initiatives.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 4/20.

47. **ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT IN WOODLEY**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 5/20, which provided Members with information on the condition and inclusivity/accessibility of the play equipment across the Council's sites. The report concluded that overall the current provision and accessibility of inclusive play equipment across the sites was poor. The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the new play area proposed for the Memorial Ground would be a high quality play area with inclusivity designed into the scheme. The report concluded that Malone Park and Woodford Park had potential for improvements to site accessibility and the provision of inclusive play equipment to supplement the equipment already installed.

In reply to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the play areas were checked each week, with monthly equipment checks carried out by the ROSPA qualified Maintenance Manager and annual checks carried out by ROSPA. When asked about the ongoing costs of the proposed destination play area for the Memorial Ground, the Deputy Town Clerk said that the play equipment would be serviced in-house, as the Maintenance Manager had the required qualifications.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 5/20.

48. **CHARGES 2020/21**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 6/20 and explained that the increase in charges for the hire of rooms at Woodford Park Leisure Centre reflected the improvements due to the redecoration and refurbishment of the rooms. The proposed charges for sports activities took into account the rates charged by other local sports providers.

In reply to a question about the costs of gym membership, the Leisure Services Manager replied that he was waiting to see what the membership rates would be at the new Bulmershe Leisure Centre before making any changes.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 6/20.
- ◆ To recommend that the proposed charges for 2020/21, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

49. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2019/20**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 7/20 and explained that the Committee's original budget expenditure was expected to decrease overall.

Members were informed that staff costs had been lower than anticipated due to the Maintenance trainee post becoming vacant and a replacement not currently being required. A water rebate at Coronation Hall had reduced costs and there had been lower amenities costs than anticipated. Delays in installing and opening the new public toilet in the town centre had resulted in lower than estimated running costs for the year, although the rates charged by Wokingham Borough Council were higher than expected. There had been increased staff costs at Woodford Park Leisure Centre, due to additional classes for gym members, water rates for the bowling green were higher than expected due the very hot weather and the certification costs were higher at Chapel and Coronation Halls because they had not been invoiced the previous year.

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 and courses at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and higher than anticipated income from Coronation Hall and from fair and circus visits. Income from Chapel Hall, the public toilet and the Garden of Remembrance was likely to be lower than the original estimates.

Members thanked and congratulated the Leisure Services Manager and his team for achieving an excellent profit at Woodford Park Leisure Centre for the second year running.

**RESOLVED:**

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

50. **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2020/21**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 8/20 and explained that a reduction in income from that achieved in the current year had been planned for, due to the possible impact of the opening of the new Bulmershe Leisure Centre.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 8/20.
- ◆ To recommend that the Budget Estimates for 2020/21, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

51. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

An item looking at what contribution this Committee could make towards the Council's aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 was requested. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that this policy would be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee, but agreed that this Committee should also provide input.

52. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To publicise the following:
  - The four walks in and around Woodley that had been documented by the Woodley Walks Project.

The meeting closed at 9:35 pm

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