

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 26 November 2013 at 8.00 pm

Present: *Councillors K. Baker (Chairman); P. Challis; J. Cheng; L. Hayward; C. Lawley; S. Outen; E. Rowland*

Also present: *Councillor M. Holmes*

Officers present: *D. Mander, Town Clerk; K. Murray, Service Support Manager
L. Matthews, Committee Officer*

35. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Haines and D. Mills

36. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Holmes	Agenda item 10 Community grants	Prejudicial – Councillor Holmes is a member of St James Church
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Councillor Holmes did not participate in the discussion regarding St James Church.

37. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 September 2013**

Item 26: Section 106 developers' contributions

Councillor Rowland noted that she had not received notification of when the consultation regarding the proposals for new equipment in the play area at Malone Park would take place. The Service Support Manager reported that the consultation would take place in the new year. He would include the schools and local residents as well as displaying the options at the Oakwood Centre and leisure centres.

Item 34: Oakwood Centre Flooring

Councillor Rowland reported that the public report had not been circulated to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, as agreed at the last meeting, prior to receipt of the agenda. The Town Clerk apologised for this oversight; preparation of reports for the meeting had been tight.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 10 September 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38. **FINANCE**

a) **Budgetary Control**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 33/13.

b) **Payments**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the following payments:

	Current account	Imprest account
August 2013	£81,846.65	£58,605.87
September 2013	£181,069.83	£54,090.56
October 2013	£87,504.26	£50,491.73

39. **INVESTMENTS WORKING PARTY**

The Chairman presented the report of the meeting held on 8 November 2013. The Council's investment portfolio had done well over the past year. Members considered the recommendations from the working party and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 34/13.
- ◆ That the CCLA Public sector Investment Fund, Santander and the Nationwide Building Society be approved institutions for the temporary investment of surplus funds, subject to their having an A rating at the time of the investment.
- ◆ That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15 include the requirement that the Council continue to allocate an annual sum of £80,000 to the investment portfolio in 2014, 2015 and 2016

40. **CREDIT AND DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS TO THE COUNCIL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 35/13 and Members considered whether a charge of 50p should be introduced on all credit card payments to offset the higher charges and encourage the use of debit cards, which are less expensive to process. Concerns were expressed regarding the legality of the proposed charge and it was suggested that this could be a percentage of the transaction and that a minimum transaction amount could be considered. A concern was expressed that the introduction of this charge would lead to much additional administration, particularly associated with bank reconciliations.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To defer a decision on whether to introduce a charge for credit card payments until the meeting to be held on 4 February 2014 to enable more information to be obtained regarding the legality of the proposed charge, how much extra administration would be caused by its introduction and possible alternative ways of imposing a charge.

41. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Following further consideration by the Community Services Committee, Members considered the recommendation that:

The Strategy and Resources Committee allocate additional funding of £680 to the Community Services Committee's Amenities budget for the provision of a refuse amenity vehicle, once a month for three hours, at the Airfield Centre, Hurricane Way, from December 2013 to March 2014.

Councillor Rowland expressed concern that all three refuse amenity vehicle sites were in Loddon ward and it was agreed that the use of the new site would be monitored until the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To allocate additional funding of £680 to the Community Services Committee's Amenities budget for the provision of a refuse amenity vehicle, once a month for three hours, at the Airfield Centre, Hurricane Way, from December 2013 to March 2014.

42. **CATERING PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PANEL**

- a) The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 36/13 of the meeting held on 4 October 2013, which had been inquorate, and tabled a chart showing the actual income achieved and the estimated income for the year 2012/13 and for the current financial year to October.

- b) The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 37/13 of the meeting held on 15 November 2013, which had been inquorate. It was noted that the date of the meeting was incorrectly stated in the report.
- c) Members considered appointing two further members to the panel to ensure that future meetings would be quorate, however, it was felt that if the meetings were scheduled at a different time, more panel members would be able to attend. Following discussion the Service Support Manager agreed to schedule future meetings for 4:15pm on the first Friday of each month.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 36/13.
- ◆ To note Report No. SR 37/13.

43. **PUBLIC TOILETS WORKING PARTY**

Councillor Holmes presented Report No. SR 38/13 of the meeting held on 3 October 2013. She reported that the public consultation on the site of the new toilet had taken place in the town centre on four days from Thursday 7 November to Sunday 10 November. The results of the consultation had been collated and were presented to Councillor Holmes at the meeting, who reported these verbally; a copy would be sent to all members of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Holmes expressed disappointment that the issue of the site for the new public toilet would not be included in the Residents' Survey, which would be sent out to all residents in December with the Woodley Herald. The Town Clerk explained that the working party would need to progress matters before the results of the Residents' Survey were available.

As further consultations were not being undertaken Members suggested that comments on the proposed sites could be sought on the Council's website with a link to the Town Centre Management Initiative's website. The Town Clerk agreed to set this up and collect results up until the next meeting of the working party.

Members discussed the merits of the three possible locations and how the decision would be made. The Chairman confirmed that the working party would analyse the consultation results and also take the views of the Town Centre Management Initiative into consideration, as well as the varying costs of each location; and would then make a recommendation to the Committee.

It was noted that several respondents had been from Earley and, on Sunday, some had been attracted to the town centre for the first time by the car boot sale.

Councillor Holmes thanked all Members who had taken part in the public consultation.

44. **COMMUNITY GRANTS**

Members considered the eleven grant applications received as set out in Report No. SR 39/13 in line with the community grants criteria and:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To award grants to the following:

St James Church Centre	£250	Towards the cost of supporting the community work of the Church.
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Woodley Adopt a Street Project	£250	Towards the cost of promoting this initiative.
Woodley Volunteer Centre	£250	Towards the cost of providing transport to hospitals and doctors surgeries for the elderly and disabled.
1 st Woodley Boys Brigade	£250	Towards the cost of replacing equipment used for the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.
Woodley Saints FC	£250	Towards the cost of increasing the level of participation of girls in football by further involvement in local primary schools.
Music Spectrum	£250	Towards the cost of providing weekly music making sessions in Coronation Hall for young adults with learning disabilities. This grant is made subject to clarification that the young people are properly supervised.
Woodley Festival of Music and Arts	£250	Towards the cost of providing the Festival of Music and Arts in 2014.
Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band	£250	Towards the cost of funding a training band.
Cruse Bereavement Care Thames Valley Berkshire Area	£250	Towards the cost of providing counselling to bereaved children and adults.
Berkshire County Blind Society	£250	Towards the cost of providing transport and offering a range of events and activities to enhance the lives of the visually impaired.
Woodley United FC	£250	Towards the cost of increasing the level of participation of girls in football by further involvement in local primary schools.

45. **OAKWOOD CENTRE FLOORING**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 40/13, which set out the actions taken in relation to the problems with the Oakwood Centre flooring and the associated costs.

In reply to a question the Town Clerk confirmed that the report was not confidential but the amount of the settlement remained confidential and should not be disclosed.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 40/13.

46. **WAR MEMORIAL / CIVIC SPACE**

The Service Support Manager presented a report on the progress of the war memorial and civic space project. In reply to a question he reported that the war memorial liaison group would not meet until more information had been obtained regarding the possible alternative sites for the memorial.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 41/13.
- ◆ That, under the provisions of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 and subject to receiving satisfactory references and terms, the Council commission the specified war memorial from Harvey Stone stonemasons at an estimated cost of £26,500.
- ◆ That a deposit sum of £10,000, funded from the special projects earmarked reserve, be paid to Harvey Stone, with any donation received towards this cost refunding that reserve.

47. **BULMERSHE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Chairman presented Report No. SR 42/13, which set out proposals for an arrangement for the Council to take over the management and running of the former youth and community centre upstairs at the Bulmershe Centre.

Members discussed the report and were in general agreement that the Council take over the management of the area on the terms proposed. As transitional funding was being made available to organisations taking over former youth service premises it was suggested that the Council should not have to bear the costs of refurbishment to bring the premises to a reasonable standard and that this be included in the terms. The Chairman informed the meeting that transitional funding was available for which a business case should be made.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 42/13.
- ◆ That the Council seek to take over the management of the former youth and community centre at Bulmershe Centre on the terms proposed in the report and to seek funding towards redecoration and furniture upgrading costs from Wokingham Borough Council.

48. **FRIDAY NIGHT YOUTH CLUB AT BULMERSHE CENTRE**

The Chairman presented Report No. SR 43/13, which outlined actions taken since the Council's decision to use best efforts to re-open the youth club and a proposal that the Council support the Vineyard Church in running the club. In doing so he thanked the Town Clerk for her work on this matter.

Concern was expressed that the club should consider closing later than 9:30pm and that young people's needs may run counter to a church run club. The Town Clerk agreed to discuss the opening times with the Church's volunteer youth team and confirmed that the team did not intend to make the club faith based. The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Council already funded youth work from JAC, a Christian charity, which did not appear to have had issues with young people not engaging with their volunteers.

In response to a question about a charge the Town Clerk said she did not know whether the clubs in Twyford or Earley would be charging but that the view of the Church's youth leader was that this gave some value to the activity. The Town Clerk did not anticipate the

name of the club including any reference to the Church, and confirmed that a club name had not yet been discussed.

It was noted that funds had been allocated by the Community Services Committee towards this year's costs of supporting the club from the unallocated community events budget. Members asked that the Youth Leader be invited to make a report to the Community Services Committee once the club was up and running.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 43/13
- ◆ To approve the proposed arrangements for a youth club to be run in partnership with the Vineyard Church at Bulmershe Centre on Friday nights, with the intention that it run until the end of the Council's lease on the leisure centre premises and that the club be reviewed during this period.

49. **READING ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE**

At this point in the meeting Councillor Outen informed the meeting that his wife was on the waiting list for an allotment.

a) **Lease rent review**

Members noted that, following further negotiations with Reading Borough Council, the annual lease rent would be increased by £500 to £6,500 per annum until the lease expires in 2018.

b) **Allotment rent review**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 44/13, which provided a review of charges at the site and proposed that Members consider including a charge for water and a reduction in the discount for over 60s as well as an increase in allotment rents in line with the Retail Price Index.

In response to a question the Service Support Manager explained that the table showing the effect of a progressive reduction on the discounted allotment rents were examples to show the impact on income and not what was being proposed in the report; such a matter would be for the Council to decide year on year, if it wished.

Councillor Challis suggested there could be an alternative to the proposal in respect of discounts that maintained the discount but year on year raised the age at which the discount could be claimed. The Town Clerk reported that the effect of this would be difficult to assess because although date of birth was now required from applicants, the Council did not hold this information for all tenants.

Concern was expressed at pensioners having to pay more for an allotment, particularly those on a state pension, and some Members supported the suggestion that the age at which tenants received the discount should be raised to the state pension age, which would address this concern.

On the proposal to make a charge for water use there was a view expressed that when not paying for water tenants would self-regulate, whereas a charge would encourage higher use of water.

In response to a question the Service Support Manager reported that a meeting of the Allotments Working Party was scheduled for 13 December and, given the withdrawal of co-operation from the Tenants Committee and the illness of its chairman, the proposals had not been discussed with the allotment tenants'

representatives. There was a view that this may not necessarily be representative of tenants' views.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 43/13
- ◆ That the rent be increased by 3.2%, in line with the September 2013 Retail Price Index, and take effect in January 2015.
- ◆ That proposed charges in respect of water and a reduction in the discount for over 60s be reconsidered along with alternative proposals in respect of allotment rents, and that the Council engage in discussions with tenants before presenting these at a future meeting.

50. **BAR MANAGEMENT**

The Town Clerk reported that, following ongoing problems at the Inn on the Park with dogs frightening children and causing hygiene problems, and with some dog owners failing to comply with requests to control and supervise their dogs, the Council and LT Pub Leasing had taken the decision to not allow dogs in the pub or on the patio area in front of Woodford Park Leisure Centre. Notices to this effect were displayed outside the pub and there was a hitching post where dogs could be left. The police were liaising with the Council to provide support following the introduction of the new rules.

51. It was proposed by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

- ◆ That as the business was unlikely to be completed by 10pm the meeting continue in order to complete the business set out in the agenda.

52. **COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2014/15**

RECOMMENDED:

- ◆ That the schedule of meetings for the 2014/15 municipal year, as attached at Appendix A, be approved.

53. **WOKINGHAM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the minutes of the meeting of the Wokingham District Association of Local Councils held on 18 July 2013.

54. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS / PLACES / STATIONS**

Members noted that the Council had been consulted as part of the review of polling stations and, after contacting all councillors for their comments, the Town Clerk had replied on behalf of the Council, stating that no concerns had been raised by councillors about the existing arrangements. The Town Clerk thanked those councillors who had replied to the consultation.

55. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No items were identified.

56. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

No items were identified.

57. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted in relation to legal matters, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press were temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw for the following two agenda items.

58. **URGENCY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman reported that a vacancy in the maintenance team had given the opportunity to restructure the team. The newly appointed Maintenance Officer is a Woodley resident and will start in post on 23 December 2013.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the decisions of the Urgency Committee on 1 October 2013 in respect of the maintenance team restructure.

59. **PERSONEL SUB COMMITTEE**

The Chairman presented Report No. SR 45/13, of a meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 13 November 2013. Members considered the recommendations and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 45/13.
- ◆ That Post No. 9215 be regarded to Scale 5/6 and that progression beyond scp 25 be dependent on a review of the postholder's competence and performance.
- ◆ That Post No. 4272 be regarded to Scale 5 plus one scp and that progression beyond scp be dependent on a review of the postholder's competence and performance.
- ◆ That a post of Venues Supervisor be added to the establishment on the terms set out in the job description provided and appointed to as soon as possible.
- ◆ That a bonus payment of £750 be paid to the postholder of Post No. 9367 in recognition of their performance and commitment displayed over the past four years.

The meeting closed at 10:12pm

TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS - 2014/2015
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Plans Committee meetings start at 7.45pm. All other Council and Committee meetings start at 8 pm (unless otherwise notified) and members of the public are welcome to attend.

PLANS COMMITTEE	LEISURE SERVICES	COMMUNITY SERVICES	STRATEGY & RESOURCES	FULL COUNCIL
2014 20 May 17 June	2014 27 May (SH)	2014 3 June	2014 10 June	2014 Annual Meeting 13 May 24 June
15 July 19 August (SH) 23 September	2 September (SH)	9 September	16 September	30 September
21 October 18 November 16 December	4 November	11 November	25 November	9 December
2015 20 January	2015 6 January	2015 27 January	2015 3 February	2015 Budget Meeting 13 January 10 February
17 February (SH) 17 March 21 April 26 May (SH)	24 March	31 March	14 April (SH)	Town Electors 3 March Annual Meeting 19 May

(SH = School Holidays)

SCHOOL TERM DATES

2014 Tuesday 7 January to Friday 4 April
 Tuesday 22 April to Wednesday 23 July
 Wednesday 3 September to Friday 19 December
 (NOTE: *Training days - to be agreed*)

Half Term: 17 - 21 February
 Half Term: 26 - 30 May
 Half Term: 27 - 31 October

Good Friday: 18 April
 WBC Elections: 22 May 2014

2015 Tuesday 6 January to Thursday 2 April
 Monday 20 April to Wednesday 22 July
 (NOTE: *Training days - to be agreed*)

Half Term: 16 - 20 February
 Half Term: 25 - 29 May

Good Friday: 3 April
 WTC & WBC Elections: 7 May 2015