

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 1 September 2015 at 8.00 pm**

Present: *Councillors T. Barker (Chairman); K. Gilder; R. Lay; S. Rahmouni;
D. Stares*

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

Also present: *Councillor R. Dolinski
Mr D. Provins
1 member of the press
12 members of public*

10. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

11. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

12. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 JUNE 2015**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 2 June 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. **WOODFORD PARK**

Mr David Provins, a local resident, addressed the Committee. He said that he had visited the Garden of Remembrance in Woodford Park in the spring of 2015 and had been disappointed by its appearance. He had subsequently contacted the Town Council and had asked for permission to help to keep the Garden of Remembrance tidy. As a result Mr Provins had done some work in the Garden of Remembrance.

Mr Provins asked Members whether it would now be possible to extend this help to other areas of Woodford Park. He thought that other members of the local community would be willing to volunteer to help improve the appearance of the park and asked the Committee to consider this proposal.

The Service Support Manager informed Members that local residents had set up a similar scheme several years earlier, which had not been successful as there had not been a sufficient number of volunteers; however he felt that community involvement in the upkeep of the park could be accommodated alongside the work of the grounds staff and would provide an opportunity for the Council to engage with the public.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the Service Support Manager and Mr David Provins meet to discuss arrangements for setting up a group of volunteers to help with the upkeep of some areas of Woodford Park.

14. At this point in the meeting the Chairman invited local residents present to address the Committee.

Members of the over 50's tennis club voiced their disapproval that the number of tennis courts at Woodford Park would be reduced from four to one when the 3G pitch was constructed and the associated redevelopment was completed. They complained that one tennis court would not be enough for their club. They were also concerned that there would be insufficient tennis courts in Woodley for the size of the population and that without sufficient tennis courts available it would not be possible to encourage children into the sport. The tennis players also complained that they had not been made aware of the redevelopment plans before they had been approved by the local planning authority, Wokingham Borough Council.

The Leisure Services Manager replied that the usage data showed that the existing tennis courts were not well used, except for Wimbledon fortnight and the school summer holidays. He explained that the Council had run coaching sessions for tennis in the past, but that there had been very low uptake. Unsuccessful approaches had also been made to the Lawn Tennis Association to try to get them to run coaching sessions at Woodford Park. The tennis courts previously doubled as netball courts, but all netball was now played inside resulting in the tennis court being unused for most of the time. In contrast, all the football pitches were well used. With regard to the lack of consultation while the plans were being developed, the Leisure Services Manager replied that notices had been on display in the leisure centre and he had personally spoken to some members of the over 50's tennis club to make them aware of the proposals before these had been approved.

The Leisure Services Manager reported that he was investigating the possibility of tennis courts in other parts of the town being made available for the over 50's tennis club to use.

The Chairman concluded by noting that the 3G pitch project was already underway, following consultations and the granting of planning permission by the planning authority. He thanked the members of the over 50's tennis club for coming to the meeting and making their views known and said that the Council would continue to monitor tennis usage at Woodford Park and would explore the opportunity for a second court should demand for tennis facilities increase.

15. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. 14/15.

Members were pleased to note that the income from Woodford Park Leisure Centre had already reached 57% of the budget estimate for the year and thanked the Leisure Services Manager and his staff for the marvellous job they were doing to raise income.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. 14/15.

16. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORT AND ACTIVITIES**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 15/15.

Members were informed that the Football Development League had made it clear that in order to make their Saturday morning booking viable, which included paying marshals to manage the traffic, they needed to be able to use five pitches. With construction of the 3G pitch due to start shortly there were only four pitches available so it had been agreed with the Head Groundsman that a pitch would be marked out on the Memorial Ground for the league's use, with the goals being put up after Parkrun had finished and taken down again on the same day.

Members were pleased to hear of the success of the summer holiday activities at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and congratulated the Leisure Services Manager and his team for working hard to make 2015 the busiest year so far. Members commented that this showed that the Council was investing in the future of local children by supporting a broad range of sports and activities for them to take part in.

The Committee was pleased to note that their decision to ban smoking in the paddling pool area had been well received by users of the pool with only a couple of negative comments being made.

The Leisure Services Manager reported on the discussions that had taken place with Visual Learning UK and Woodley United about setting up a football scholarship programme for 16-18 year olds at Woodford Park Leisure Centre from September 2016. It was hoped that the Council would know whether its submission to run the football scholarship programme had been successful before the next meeting of the Committee.

In addition, Members were pleased to note progress on the 3G pitch project, the formation of a Gaelic football club based at Woodford Park for under 6 and under 8 year olds and the list of events planned in conjunction with local schools. Members also noted that Woodley Sports Week 2016 would take place from 16 to 20 May.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 15/15.
- ◆ To support the potential introduction of a Football Scholarship Programme at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

17. **WOODLEY 10km ROAD RACE**

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 16/15.

Members were pleased to hear that the Woodley 10km road race and the junior 3km race would be returning in 2016 and would take place on Sunday 8 May, starting at 9:30am. Members considered the request from Barnes Fitness, who would be organising the event, that the Council allow free use of the facilities at the Oakwood Centre from 8am to 2pm on the day of the race. The estimated cost of the facilities was £150. Barnes Fitness had indicated that they would make a donation to the Mayor's charity. Members noted the need to establish in advance what the donation would be, or on what basis it would be calculated, and also which Mayoral charity would benefit, given the election of a new Mayor in the same month.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To provide free use of the Council's facilities at the Oakwood Centre for the annual Woodley 10km and 3km road races, under the new arrangements.

18. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. LS 17/15.

Members were informed that the notice board in Coppice Road had been vandalised and had been repaired by the Maintenance Team. On being questioned about the number of times notice boards were vandalised and whether they were fit for purpose the Service Support Manager agreed to investigate and report back at the next meeting.

The Service Support Manager reported that, following a complaint from a resident who had experienced problems while walking her dog during a Parkrun session, the Parkrun organisers had suggested the installation of small signs to show the route of the run. Members considered the installation of the signage, which would be at no cost to the

Council and the positions of which would be agreed with the Head Groundsman. Members asked if they could see a plan of the proposed locations before the signs were installed and the Service Support Manager agreed to provide this at the next meeting.

The Service Support Manager reported that the winner of the Woodley Garden Competition competition for 2015 was Mr Reginald Hayward, who would be invited to the Council meeting on 29 September to be presented with a trophy by the Mayor. It was noted that entry numbers had been very low this year and Members asked that the future of the garden competition be discussed at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 17/15.
- ◆ To permit the installation of signage showing the route of the Parkrun, subject to the location of the signs being approved at the next meeting.

19. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

The Committee noted that, at its meeting on 16 June 2015, the Strategy and Resources Committee had agreed that it was necessary for the Council to identify which new activities it wished to provide at Woodford Park Leisure Centre before proceeding to fund further development of a scheme and therefore resolved to suspend the decision to fund works to develop a scheme at Woodford Park Leisure Centre to 'cost confidence'.

The Committee also noted that the Strategy and Resources Committee had agreed that a Woodford Park Leisure Centre Regeneration Task and Finish Group should be set up to look at these matters, consisting of 4 members from the Strategy and Resources Committee and 3 members from the Leisure Services Committee, with a member from the Strategy and Resources Committee taking the chair; and resolved to appoint the following Members to the Task and Finish Group:

Councillors Baker, Brindley, Cheng and Mills from the Strategy and Resources Committee. Councillors Barker, Lay and Stares from the Leisure Services Committee.

It was further noted that the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee would be considering also appointing the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee, Councillor Soane, to the Task and Finish Group.

20. **WOODFORD PARK REGENERATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 18/15 of the Woodford Park Regeneration Task and Finish Group meeting held on 4 August 2015.

21. **2016/17 BUDGET**

The Chairman invited the committee to consider items to be included or excluded from the 2016/17 budget, which would be investigated and reported back to the Committee.

The items suggested for inclusion were:

- Costs and income resulting from the provision of the 3G pitch.
- Costs and income resulting from running the Football Scholarship Programme.

22. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chairman invited the Committee to suggest future items for consideration by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the following be included as future agenda items:
 - Consideration of the position of the Parkrun signage.

- The future of the annual garden competition.
- Proposals for community involvement in the maintenance of Woodford Park.
- Tennis provision in Woodley.

23. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To publicise the following:
 - The new 3G pitch.
 - Community involvement in Woodford Park – when the details of this have been agreed.

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm
