



The Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 4JZ
www.woodley.gov.uk

To: **Members of the Leisure Services Committee**

Councillors: D. Smith (Chairman) K. Charles Bey; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla; M. Firmager; K. Gilder; R. Horskins; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis;

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee is to be held at the Oakwood Centre at 8:00pm on Tuesday 5 September 2023, at which your attendance is requested.

The Town Council reserves the right to record and broadcast this meeting. Anybody attending the meeting will, by virtue, consent to having their image and audio recorded for this purpose.

Kevin Murray
Acting Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members on agenda items.
3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2023**
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held on 6 June 2023 and for the Chairman to sign them as a true and accurate record. *(These minutes were provided in the Full Council agenda of 27 June 2023)*
4. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**
To note **Report No. LS 13/23.** Page 3
5. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES**
To receive **Report No. LS 14/23.** Page 5
6. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**
To receive **Report No. LS 15/23.** Page 7

7. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK UPDATE**
To receive the report, set out at **Appendix 7**, from the Friends of Woodford Park. Page 10
8. **3G PITCH STEERING GROUP SUB COMMITTEE**
To note **Report No. LS 16/23** of the 3G Pitch Steering Group Sub Committee meeting held on 15 June 2023. Page 12
- Members are asked to consider the following recommendation/s made at this meeting:
- i. That the Leisure Services Committee consider the following;
- Applying to Wokingham Borough Council for a variation to the planning consent to allow the pitch to operate to 9.30pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week.
 - That the Committee consider the method of consultation with residents.
9. **YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES**
- a) Youth Support Service Grant Award Fund – 2023/24**
At the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023, it was resolved (SR Mins 13 June 2023 – Minute 7):
- To place the £27k youth support fund and the £3k Community Youth Partnership grant fund budgeted in the 2023/24 budget into an earmarked reserve and made available on a grant award basis to organisations supporting young people in Woodley, as set out in the report.
 - That the criteria for grant awards be considered by the Leisure Services Committee, with a recommendation made to the Strategy & Resources Committee for approval.
- Members are asked to consider the proposed youth support service grant award guidelines and criteria, set out at **Appendix 9a**, with a view to making a recommendation to the Strategy & Resources Committee for their adoption. Page 15
- b) Youth Support Service Provision – 2024/25 and beyond**
At the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023, it was also resolved (SR Mins 13 June 2023 – Minute 7):
- To disband the Youth Service Task & Finish Working Group.
 - That the Leisure Services Committee be tasked with revisiting, reviewing and establishing an appropriate SLA for the provision of Youth Services in Woodley by November 2023.
- Members are asked to consider **Report No. LS 17/23**. Page 17
10. **MIXED RECYCLING BINS IN WOODFORD PARK**
To receive an update from the Acting Town Clerk regarding the potential for using mixed recycling bins in Woodford Park.
11. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
To propose future agenda items for the Committee’s consideration.
12. **PUBLICITY & WEBSITE**
To consider which items to publicise.

LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

BUDGETARY CONTROL

<p>Month 4 33.33%</p>

2023/24

Report No. LS 13/23

EXPENDITURE	Revised Budget 2023/24	Actual Exp as at 31/07/2022	Actual Exp as at 31/07/2023	Actual Exp as % of Budget 2023/24	
Woodford Park LC & 3G pitch	438,369	116,715	132,794	30.29%	
Grounds Maintenance	48,323	12,799	14,139	29.26%	
Football	22,710	5,136	8,599	37.86%	Seed purchased - over 33%
Cricket	14,655	3,237	4,372	29.83%	
Bowling Green	14,655	3,237	4,372	29.83%	
Woodford Park	48,540	13,287	15,719	32.38%	
Garden of Remembrance	8,403	2,367	2,692	32.04%	
Play areas and open spaces	15,975	3,556	4,930	30.86%	
Coronation Hall	36,032	7,614	8,290	23.01%	
Chapel Hall	26,838	5,104	6,309	23.51%	
Allotments	22,550	4,393	6,594	29.24%	
Amenities	5,891	1,009	2,056	34.90%	Repairs over 33%
Events	15,655	1,095	3,908	24.96%	
Public toilet	4,221	2,305	1,496	35.44%	Utilities over 33%
Youth Services	35,000	0	0	0.00%	£30k grants / £5k survey
TOTAL	757,817	181,854	216,270	28.54%	

LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE
BUDGETARY CONTROL

<p>Month 4 33.33%</p>
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INCOME	Revised Budget 2023/24	Actual Inc as at 31/07/2022	Actual Inc as at 31/07/2023	Actual Inc as % of Budget 2023/24	
Woodford Park LC & 3G pitch	373,329	125,951	168,598	45.16%	Gym, courses, sports hall, counter sales all above 33%
Grounds Maintenance	430	215	286	66.51%	Invoiced grass cutting at Bulmershe
Football	9,390	4,621	4,556	48.52%	
Cricket	5,900	4,315	5,138	87.08%	
Bowling Green	7,966	8,404	501	6.29%	Annual invoice not yet processed
Woodford Park	6,756	2,153	1,330	19.69%	
Garden of Remembrance	1,300	1,730	553	42.54%	
Play areas and open spaces	0	0	0	0.00%	
Coronation Hall	35,000	15,104	15,247	43.56%	
Chapel Hall	30,000	12,971	13,186	43.95%	
Allotments	14,665	618	158	1.08%	Annual rent income in January
Amenities	0	0	0	0.00%	
Events	0	0	0	0.00%	
Public toilet	500	81	90	18.00%	
Youth Services	0	0	0	0.00%	
TOTAL	485,236	176,163	209,643	43.20%	
NET	272,581	5,691	6,627	2.43%	

WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES

REPORT OF THE LEISURE SERVICES MANAGER

PURPOSE OF REPORT

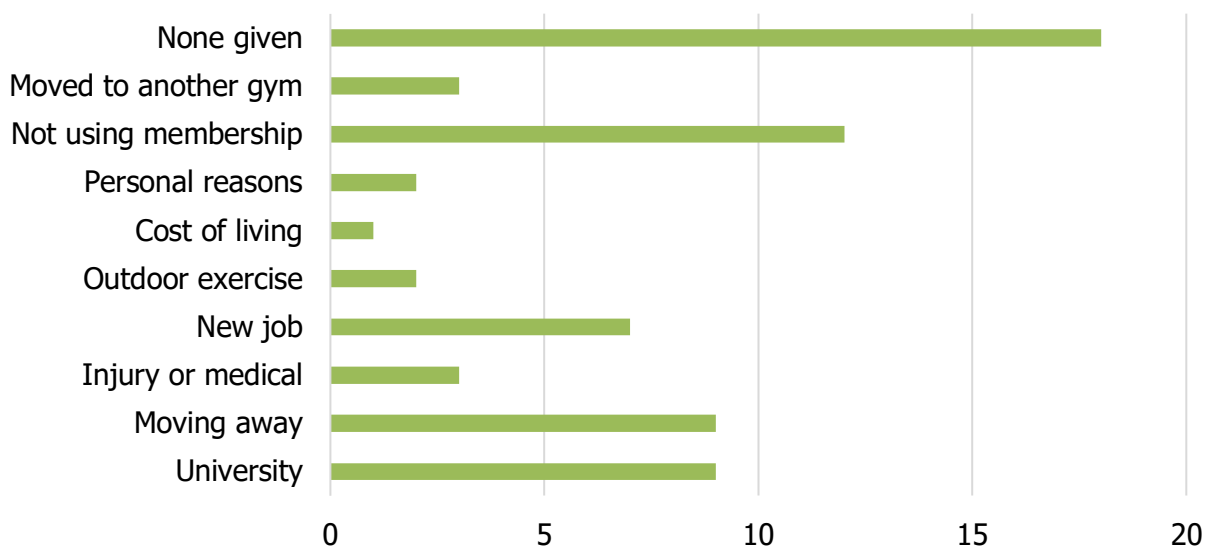
To inform and update Members on developments at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

The Gym on the Park

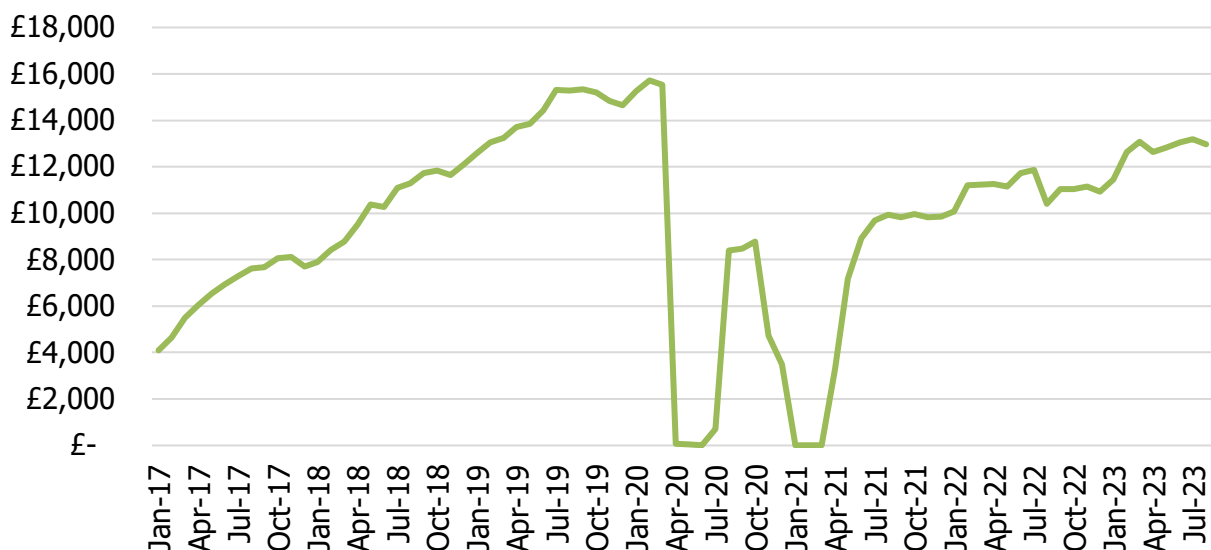
Member Turnover

Through the period 6 June to 23 August, we welcomed a total of 76 new members (70 ongoing memberships, 5 short term memberships and 1 prize winner). Through the same period 66 members cancelled their memberships, the reasons for which are presented below.

Membership Cancellation - Reasons Given



Monthly Membership Income



Woodford Park Leisure Centre

Family Racket Attack

Throughout the school holidays Woodford Park Leisure Centre runs a promotional offer allowing families to play badminton, tennis or table tennis for £1.00 per person per hour.

A total of 760 individual transactions have so far been recorded through the summer holidays for Family Racket Attack (601 badminton, 95 tennis and 64 table tennis). A final total covering the full summer break will be reported to members at the meeting.

Paddling Pool

The paddling pool has been quiet compared with previous years as a result of the poor weather throughout the summer. Original plans were in place to close the pool by Sunday 10 September, however if the weather improves we will keep the pool open a little longer.

Gym Tender

The tender for the gym equipment lease went live on Friday 9 June with a submission deadline of Wednesday 26 July. A total of 13 submissions were received and then evaluated and scored against key criteria. A final recommendation is due to be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee at their meeting on Tuesday 12 September.

The current lease expires on Wednesday 22 November 2023.

Optalis Summer Pool Party & BBQ

The paddling pool opened early on Thursday 13 July to allow us to host an Optalis community fun day. Clients from across the Optalis community made use of the paddling pool and Optalis staff operated a BBQ on the patio outside the front of the Leisure Centre.

Children's Parties

We have had to make significant changes to the way in which children's parties now operate at Woodford Park Leisure Centre. This is a result of some changes to the way our insurance cover works which will be explained in further detail within the Acting Town Clerk's report.

The new format will place more focus on the idea that the Leisure Centre is a venue with party equipment available to hire. Parents will have to take on more of a supervisory role throughout parties with Centre staff only in attendance to help set up and take down equipment and to offer general assistance where needed.

To support this, £6,500 of new party equipment has been purchased, including a significantly larger and more modern bouncy castle, additional soft play blocks and new safety mats. The new bouncy castle will also allow us to offer "Disco Bouncy Castle Parties" in the future.

In addition, the Leisure Centre has formed partnerships with three external private party providers who can offer a similar party format to that previously offered prior to these changes. The three companies are uSports (who offer sporty and nerf gun parties), Kids n Karts (who offer go kart parties) and Tutus and Tiaras (who offer princess themed birthday parties).

An update on the general feedback and success of the new party format will be provided to members when the committee meets again in November 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **That Members note the contents of the report.**

PARKS AND BUILDINGS

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

Purpose of Report

To inform Members of matters concerning the Town Council's buildings and maintenance of the facilities.

Woodford Park Leisure Centre

Insurance

Some changes to the insurance cover available in relation to the operation of inflatables has necessitated a different approach to their use as part of party bookings in the centre. Going forwards the equipment will essentially be hired to the client rather than being operated and supervised by Council staff. This change also simplifies the party offering in terms of staffing. The Leisure Services Manager has also engaged with a number of external party operators which means more variety and quality can be offered to customers, at different price points.

Function Room Kitchen

A new kitchen has been installed by the Amenities Team providing new cupboards, worktops, plinths and sink, and the area has been fully decorated.

Flat boiler

A new heat exchanger has been installed on the boiler in the rented flat above the centre.

Woodford Park

Green Flag

Woodford Park has been awarded the Green Flag for a sixth year. Feedback from the judging and management plan submission will be circulated to the Committee for information, once it is received. The Council's scoring against the specific assessment criteria has increased year on year and this feedback provides us with a basis for continuous improvement.

Love Parks

The Love Parks initiative is organised by Keep Britain Tidy as a way of celebrating public open spaces and encouraging community use. Love Parks week ran from 28 July to 6 August and The Town Council took part by running a biodiversity quiz for children and giving away seed cards.

Antisocial behaviour

Graffiti has been a problem over recent weeks throughout the park area. The play area, seats, trees, walls, windows and toilets of the Oakwood Centre have been graffitied. Graffiti in the building was able to be removed immediately and the Amenities Team are working to remove the graffiti in other areas.

A group of young people gained access to the boiler room of Coronation Hall overnight on Monday 7 August, causing damage to the doorframe and damage to a boiler pressure gauge. A resident called the police who attended along with the Fire service to check that the area was safe. Repairs were carried out and the boiler checked for safety and returned to use. £180 damage was caused to the boiler and the police have established the identity of one of the people involved.

The Garden of Remembrance was temporarily closed in the evenings following incidents of groups of young people (up to 15) on bikes, damaging planting and obstructing access. Staff were able to disperse them on some occasions but issues have persisted. The garden will be open as usual from September as children return to school.

Tree works

Various tree works are scheduled for September. These works are largely removal of deadwood and preventative maintenance to trees in front of the Oakwood Centre and near the access from Haddon Drive.

Knee rail fencing

Installation of the replacement knee rail timber fencing at various locations around the park will commence in October.

Benches

More than 40 benches in the park have been renovated by the Amenities Team. The work included sanding down all timbers and recoating with protective stain.

Signage

New signage has been installed on bins and at various locations around the park – encouraging users to use the bins provided for litter and dog waste, and not to pick the flowers from the planted beds.

Funfair

Beaches Funfair visited the Memorial ground for two weeks in July.

Bowls Green

A new maintenance regime for the bowls green, following professional advice, will commence in shortly. The work will include deep scarifying, moss killing and hiring in specialist equipment for seeding and top dressing.

Unauthorised Encampment

An unauthorised encampment set up on the sports fields on the evening of Thursday 17 August. Access was gained through the locked gate from Western Avenue. Wokingham Borough Council and the police were informed immediately and bailiffs engaged to issue an eviction notice and oversee the clearance of the site. An eviction notice was served on 18 August and the site was cleared that evening.

A further unauthorised encampment set up on the lower field near the skate park on the afternoon of Wednesday 30 August. Access was gained by cutting the lock on the Memorial Ground gates. Bailiffs were engaged immediately and attended site, serving an eviction notice within 4 hours. The site was clear and re-secured that evening.

Evictions were facilitated by a professional company – engaged through Wokingham Borough Council. Costs for both evictions are likely to be around £8,000. Officers are looking at options for upgrading the security of all open space sites.

Amenities Team

Following approval from the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Council is currently recruiting an additional Maintenance Officer to join the Amenities Team in looking after the Council's buildings, parks and assets. Appointment to this role will free up the Amenities Manager to focus on compliance and safety matters while continuing to deliver high quality, in-house maintenance services and project delivery.

Allotments

The waiting list is currently 40 prospective tenants. Officers continue to meet regularly with the Tenants Committee to discuss ways to improve the running of the site.

Works are ongoing to install concrete pads beneath all water tanks at the site.

A meeting date for the Allotments Task and Finish Working Party will be circulated shortly. This group is tasked with considering amendments to the tenancy agreement which will be reported back to the next meeting of the Leisure Services Committee.

Community Halls

Both halls have been decorated through the quieter summer holiday period, along with the replacement of numerous emergency lights which had failed testing. Additional sensor controlled exterior lighting has been installed at Chapel Hall to address the issue of very dark areas in the car park. The lights have been installed in such a way as to avoid impact on neighbours.

Recommendations

- ◆ **That Members note the contents of the report.**

Friends of Woodford Park

Points for consideration September 2023

Whilst we continue to be busy maintaining our flower beds and the Rotary Garden the matter we would like to bring to your attention at this meeting is the discussion we are having about our name.

Our volunteers feel that the group is seen by most people solely as a gardening group and it is not seen as a true 'Friends of the Park' operation.

We receive lots of feedback about the park whilst working and we always encourage the public to report this directly to the council. We are however conscious that many approach us simply because we are visible and they are reluctant to go to the trouble of visiting an office situated at the rear of the Oakwood.

We feel that to be a proper 'Friends' group the Leisure Committee should have a formal procedure to address feedback given to us from the public. The results could then be made known via the website or Herald etc so that we can tell people where to look for council responses . We feel that this would ensure our group can operate more in line with our constitution.

As it stands we feel it is not appropriate for the council to report that the park has a 'Friends' group, when most see us as a gardening group. We are often not aware of park events, particularly those organised by the council, and when asked by the public we have to say we have no details etc. This is not in the interest of the council in promoting such events and would be a normal function of most 'Friends' groups.

We wonder if due the turnover of councillors few now understand our original function or indeed know of the presence of our group and so we have included a short history for reference.

History

'Friends of Woodford Park' were established following agreement given at a Leisure Committee meeting in September 2015.

'Friends' groups had been established throughout the UK and indeed many countries worldwide with the aim of providing a voice for the local community directly to the park owner, in most cases the local council. 'Friends of Woodford Park' drew up a constitution following this national format.

The constitution recommends public meetings at which the users of the park can voice opinions/comments and listen to plans or actions that the owner (WTC) plans in the future etc.

At the initial meeting where the Leisure Committee agreed our formation a councillor suggested our first task could be to commemorate the Queens 90th Birthday with a dedicated flower bed. This is how we came to recruit people with an interest in gardening. The flower beds we maintain today were created by funds raised from local companies. Volunteers dug them out and planted them in time for our local MP Theresa May to perform an opening ceremony.

With agreement from WTC, 10 more flower beds were added in the following years and the neglected area known as the Rotary Sensory Garden was enlarged and planted. We also did work in the Garden of Remembrance and surrounding area.

Alongside this, bi-monthly meetings were held for the public and these attracted over 20 people on average. A full range of topics were discussed ranging from dog issues to the lake. These continued until the pandemic halted proceedings. Minutes were provided to the Leisure Committee and onward to the Town Council however we saw a drop off in attendees when people saw little feedback or action from the matters raised. We felt we had no powers to influence subjects such as the lake, paths, dog control, cycling, litter bins, the Garden of Remembrance, lighting etc which the matters the public were raising and we could only pass on public feedback and await council responses. We felt a little helpless as people were expecting us to solve things we could not move forward. For this reason the meetings have not recommenced. Nobody expects immediate results but ongoing communication would be helpful.

The average age of volunteers is now 'past retirement age' although we have had assistance on a number of occasions from volunteers from Sage the locally based software company. We need to think about our role going forward and what type of people we recruit, do we look for people interested in gardening or people interested in the park as a whole.

The future

In summary, the group is not dependant on council funding but we believe it represents a real benefit to you in cost saving. We have raised over £4500 through sponsorship, donations, selling duck food, greeting cards etc. WTC has contributed a further £1750 which we are very grateful for. We believe that for the benefit given to the community this represents a cost effective benefit to tax payers. Accounts are available.

We ask that this committee and WTC consider the future of our group and the role they would like us to play. We would also like a formal procedure put in place in terms of public feedback. The latest councillor appointed to represent the group is not a member of the Leisure Committee which does not help in the functioning of our group.

It was the council who requested the formation of the group and we believe both the council and wider community have seen the benefits of having us, however, the council does not appear to recognise our status as a 'Friends' group. Maybe we should cease to be such a group and just maintain our gardens under a new name. This will require the council to stop stating it has a 'Friends' group in the future.

We look forward to hear the views of the committee and are happy to answer any questions.

Thank you.

Committee members and volunteers of 'Friends of Woodford Park'.

Woodley Town Council

Report of a virtual meeting of the 3G Pitch Steering Group held on Thursday 15 June 2023 at 6pm.

Present: *Councillors M. Firmager (Chairman); D. Bragg; J. Taylor;*

Officers present: *K. Murray – Deputy Town Clerk;
E. Whitesmith – Leisure Services Manager*

Other representatives: *M. Rozzier – Woodley United
R. Rodway – Woodley Wanderers
K. Sutton – Berks & Bucks FA
D. Evans – Reading Football Club Community Trust*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Lewis.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Bragg proposed, seconded by Councillor Taylor, and it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To appoint Councillor Firmager as Chairman of the 3G Steering Group for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.

4. UPDATE FROM THE LEISURE SERVICES MANAGER

Ed Whitesmith - Leisure Services Manager - provided an update on the current status of the pitch. He advised that the annual condition inspection of the pitch surface had been carried out the previous week. The pitch is considered to be in very condition for its age and usage level, however there are some minor wear and tear repairs required. The 9v9 goals are currently being repaired to increase their lifespan before replacement is required and the nets have also been replaced. The dividing curtain clips are being replaced every 6 months. The pitch remains very well used and an important facility for Woodley.

A question was asked in relation to insurance cover for usage of the pitch. Ed Whitesmith advised that in terms of pitch damage there is an allowance within the maintenance contact for a certain number of small repairs. Kevin Murray confirmed that the Council's insurance covered the pitch in the same way as the Council's other facilities.

5. PITCH OPERATING HOURS

Mark Rozzier advised that the pitch could be well utilised outside of the current operating hours, and in keeping with the current opening hours of the leisure centre. Kevin Murray advised that this had been looked at in 2021, although the matter had not been progressed. It was noted that a variation to the original planning consent would be required, along with a noise survey. It was noted that the issue of consultation with residents would need to be considered carefully as there may be concerns from residents in Farriers Close. It was suggested that residents could be invited to come and see the pitch in use and be provided with information about its value to the community. It was agreed that the Leisure Services Committee should consider the proposed changes to opening hours and the consultation with residents.

RECOMMENDED:

- ◆ That the Leisure Services Committee consider the following;
 - Applying to Wokingham Borough Council for a variation to the planning consent to allow the pitch to operate to 9.30pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week.
 - That the Committee consider the method of consultation with residents.

6. SATURDAY MORNING PARTNER CLUBS

Mark Rozzier advised that the partner clubs in Woodley have grown and that there was a demand for more pitches. He advised that this was hampered by the use of the 3G pitch by the Berkshire Youth Development League from 10am on Saturday mornings, although there was an understanding that the pitch is an important source of income and there is demand from other users. Ed Whitesmith advised that he had spoken with the BYDL and that they are reluctant to relinquish their slot, although there might be some room for movement if there were more grass pitches available on a Saturday morning. It was noted that this would cause more problems with car parking, which is already a significant issue, and that the leisure centre already does not take bookings in the centre at these times due to the car parking and traffic issues, particularly in Haddon Drive. This is compounded by other users of the park, such as Parkrun and the normal casual use of the open space.

It was suggested that the Leisure Services Committee could consider the potential for increasing available grass pitch provision, given the implications of increased traffic to the site. It was noted that the traffic marshalls provided by the BYDL do a good job in managing this.

A question was asked regarding the direction of traffic leaving the site. Ed Whitesmith advised that the marshalls/staff are not permitted to direct traffic on the highway so this was difficult to manage. It was noted that the parking and traffic situation was a significant issue for residents in Haddon Drive as well as those attending the site.

7. OTHER MATTERS

Kelly Sutton asked that the Usage Plan (timetable), pricing structure and development plan be circulated as this will help with questions from the Football Foundation.

Mark Rozzier advised that the partner club allocations had not been reviewed since the initial agreement when the pitch was opened. It was noted that there had been some changes within the partner clubs which involved Woodley Zebras being amalgamated into Woodley Wanderers – leaving two partner clubs i.e. Woodley United and Woodley Wanderers. It was noted that the initial allocations were made on the basis of a meeting which involved some compromise between the partner clubs in order for the process to be fair. It was noted that the main issue is that demand for pitches exceeds the facilities available and that although this presented issues, it was very positive that so many kids are involved in football in Woodley. It was agreed that the allocations would be discussed with the partner clubs.

It was suggested that the Memorial Ground could be considered to provide additional grass pitches. It was noted that the ground was not considered to be suitable and that this would not address the issue of car parking and traffic. Kelly Sutton advised that there was potential funding for grass pitch improvements through the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund, which is available to Town & Parish Councils.

Dave Evans enquired as to availability during school holidays – Ed Whitesmith agreed that he would contact him after the meeting to look at possibilities.

Meeting closed at 6.55 pm



GRANTS TO GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN WOODLEY



Youth Grants are available to assist and facilitate projects that reach, engage and support young people in Woodley and provide them with better life chances.

Organisations are welcome to apply for an amount which will normally be capped at £3,000.

The Council will prioritise the following areas:

- Financially assist services that meet the needs of our vulnerable young people
- Funding initiatives that tackle crime and anti-social behavior through supporting young people
- Funding initiatives that assist young people in gaining employment, education and training

In considering the applications preference will be given to:

- Locally organised organisations/groups, rather than national groups (local branches of national bodies will be counted as locally organised).
- Groups/organisations where Woodley residents are the primary beneficiaries of the group/organisation's activities.
- Requests for grant funding that identify specific items or projects, rather than request for a contribution to running costs.
- Requests where the Council's contribution would make a significant impact on the gross income of the organisation/group.

The Council will not normally award grants for costs that:

- could reasonably be expected to be funded from other sources
- could reasonably be expected to be funded from members' subscriptions
- seek to promote or oppose a party-political viewpoint

Successful recipients will be expected to attend a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee to provide feedback on how the grant funds have achieved the project aims.

Successful applicants will be required to:

- keep an accurate record of the way in which the funds are spent
- provide proof of purchase of a specific item to be funded, where requested

Organisations receiving a grant will be required to explain in their application how they will inform their organisation's membership about Woodley Town Council's contribution.

Applications can be made by filling in a Youth Grants form which can be found on the Town Council's website: www.woodley.gov.uk.

Grant applications must include the following information for your organisation:

- mission statement, constitution or set of rules signed by the chairman (if you are not able to do this please explain why in the form).
- a copy of the most recent statement of annual accounts

- a recent bank statement
- a statement of income and expenditure for the current year

Youth grants may be considered by the Leisure Services Committee at its scheduled meetings throughout the year, with a recommendation made to the Strategy and Resources Committee for final approval of all grant awards.

Applications must be returned to:-

The Town Clerk
Woodley Town Council
The Oakwood Centre
Headley Road
Woodley
Berkshire
RG5 4JZ

or by email to admin@woodley.gov.uk

or by pressing the submit button if you are completing the form electronically

The Council will not award youth grants in excess of the annual budget allocated for this purpose. All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application once the relevant Committee has made its decision. Unsuccessful applicants will be given the reason(s) for no grant being awarded. The payment of grants will be made electronically.

YOUTH SERVICE PROVISION

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

Purpose of Report

To ask Members to review the Council's youth support provision and make recommendations to the Strategy and Resources Committee on the way forward.

Background

The Town Council does not have a statutory duty to provide youth support services, but has, for many years, sought to provide support that compliments the statutory services provided by Wokingham Borough Council, in addition to those provided by other organisations in our community.

Historically this has been achieved through participation in, and facilitating meetings of, the Community Youth Partnership, and through a service level agreement (SLA) for outreach work with a specialist provider of youth support services.

Back in 1992 the Town Council also invested funds in the Airfield Youth and Community Centre, under an agreement to support the youth services being provided at the time by the then Berkshire County Council and subsequently Wokingham Borough Council. Over time, the services provided from the centre reduced to nothing and the Town Council took steps to dissolve the agreement and recoup its investment. In 2019 the Council received £89,400 upon the dissolution of the agreement and these funds were placed in an earmarked reserve – "for capital expenditure for the benefit of young people in Woodley".

The Council had an SLA with Just Around the Corner (JAC) for many years, which ended in 2021 when JAC withdrew from the agreement – although they have continued to carry out youth support work in Woodley. In 2021, the Council developed and adopted a 'Strategy for Youth Services 2022-27' which set out a framework for the basis of support service provision going forwards, identifying the approaches that were achievable and of most benefit given the Council's resources.

The Strategy and Resources Committee appointed a working group to develop a specification for a new SLA and carry out a tendering exercise to find a service provider. In 2022, following meetings with potential service providers, the Council went out to tender but, unfortunately, this was unsuccessful and no tender submissions were received. This resulted in the budgeted funds for youth support going unspent in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The Strategy and Resources Committee, held on 13 June 2023, considered that a new service level agreement would not be achievable in the current financial year and resolved the following;

- To place the £27k youth support fund and the £3k Community Youth Partnership grant fund budgeted in the 2023/24 budget into an earmarked reserve and made available on a grant award basis to organisations supporting young people in Woodley.
- That the criteria for grant awards be considered by the Leisure Services Committee, with a recommendation made to the Strategy & Resources Committee for approval.
- To disband the Youth Service Task & Finish Working Group.
- **That the Leisure Services Committee be tasked with revisiting, reviewing and establishing an appropriate SLA for the provision of Youth Services in Woodley by November 2023.**

Proposal

It is proposed that the Committee appoint a Youth Support Services Task & Finish Working Group to consider how the Council can achieve its aims to provide support to young people in Woodley – in line with the Council's Strategy for Youth Services 2022-27

This will likely include the following;

- review of the services provided previously
- review of the service level agreement unsuccessfully tendered in 2022
- identifying the target groups to be supported
- information gathering and discussion with Wokingham Borough Council, Community Youth Partnership and other organisations providing youth support in Woodley and the surrounding area
- consideration of how support will compliment services provided by others and/or fill gaps in service provision
- consideration of suggestions from Councillors and identifying areas that may need further investigation/costing etc
- consideration of any required amendments to the Strategy for Youth Services

More detail on the tasks and purpose of the working group are contained in the proposed Terms of Reference attached at **APPENDIX A**.

Recommendations:

- ◆ **That Members note the contents of the report.**
- ◆ **That Members consider appointing a Youth Support Services Task and Finish Working Group to review the Council's youth service provision and make a recommendation to the Strategy and Resources Committee on the way forward.**
- ◆ **That Members consider the Terms of Reference for the Youth Support Services Task and Finish Working Group.**

YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES (YSS)

TASK AND FINISH WORKING GROUP

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED?	COMMENTS
0.0	29/08/23	No	Draft

1. TYPE OF COMMITTEE => Task and Finish Working Group

2. PARENT COMMITTEE => Leisure Services Committee

3. 6 MONTH MEETING RULE VALID (see 6.1.k) => Yes

4. SIZE => 4 Councillors

5. DUTIES AND POWERS

5.1 OVERALL PURPOSE

- a. In line with the Council’s Strategy for Youth Services 2022-27, and in recognition of the Council unsuccessfully being able to secure a youth service provider against an agreed SLA to date, the working group’s role is to consider how best to further and achieve the Council’s aims to provide youth support services to children and young people in Woodley, in line with the priorities set out in the aforementioned Strategy for Youth Services, and to make a recommendation to the Leisure Services Committee as to how to achieve this within a prescribed timescale.
- b. To understand the current demand for youth support service provision in the Woodley area so as to help inform the Council’s decisions and ensure its own youth support service compliments and adds to the existing provision.

5.2 MEETINGS

- a. The first meeting of the working group will take place within one month of the Leisure Services Committee meeting at which the committee is formed. Further meetings will take place as and when required in order to best achieve the stated purpose within any timescales prescribed by the working group.
- b. Members of the Community Youth Partnership will be invited to attend meetings of the working group to provide advice and insight, but will not be voting members of the committee.
- c. Officers will be in attendance at all meetings.

5.3 TERMS OF OPERATION

- a. To engage with Wokingham Borough Council to understand their targeted youth service provision; in particular, to understand how the identification and referral of children and young people in the Woodley area currently takes place, and to ascertain if the methods of identification and referral are sufficient.
- b. To compile a list of organisations and providers currently supplying youth support in the Woodley area in order to understand the provision available.

- c. To appropriately engage and communicate with children and young people in Woodley to gauge their needs and help inform Council service provision.
- d. To engage an organisation with appropriate expertise to carry out a survey of young people in Woodley, to gauge needs and inform Council service provision. Survey to be funded outside of the SLA.
- e. To undertake a short survey of Members to capture current suggestions for potential youth support services the Town Council might wish to consider providing in the area.
- f. To compile a list of possible youth support options, including those raised by Members and local young people in relevant surveys; to investigate those options in order to consider initially their appropriateness / effectiveness against the priorities set out in the Youth Strategy, along with their potential feasibility and cost; to provide the outcomes of these investigations in an appropriate pro-forma which effectively demonstrates how each potential option meets or does not meet the priorities set out in the Strategy, the current estimated cost, and a list of pros, cons and potential issues.
- g. To make a recommendation to the Leisure Services Committee as to which youth support activities / options should be progressed, and how this may best be achieved.
- h. To consider possible activities to give young people stronger voices at local community and local government levels, including the possibility of setting up a Woodley Youth Town Council, and to make a recommendation to Leisure Services as to how this should be progressed.
- i. To involve the Community Youth Partnership in discussions to help advise and inform decisions.
- j. To consider whether the Council's Strategy for Youth Services 2022-27 is fit for purpose and, if changes are required, to make a recommendation, via Leisure Services, to Full Council to approve amendments to the Strategy.