

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held remotely  
on Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 8:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors D. Bragg (Chairman); N. Al-Sanjari; K. Baker; M. Doyle;  
K. Gilder; A. Heap; D. Smith; B. Soane; A. Swaddle*

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

**Also present:** *Mark Rozzier, Woodley United FC  
Colum Moon, Woodley United FC  
Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity  
1 member of the public*

32. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
There were no apologies for absence.

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

34. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2020**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 17 November 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. **WOODLEY UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB**

The Chairman welcomed Mark Rozzier and Colum Moon, the General Manager and Chairman of Woodley United Football Club, to the meeting to give an update on the progress of the club.

Mark Rozzier explained that Woodley United was currently in the sixth season since its formation and played out of Bulmershe Pavilion in Woodlands Avenue. It was an FA Charter Standard Community Club and had been recognised as the Get Berkshire Active Community Club of the Year 2020 and the Wokingham Borough Sports Council Community Club of the Year 2019. The club had 39 teams for all ages, from under 8s to adults, including ladies' teams and veterans' teams, and also ran twice weekly pre-school mini-kickers sessions. The aim of the club was to offer everyone in the local community the opportunity to play, develop and grow through football regardless of race, gender, age or ability.

Mark Rozzier informed Members that, in the three years since he had last spoken to the Committee, Woodley United had increased the number of teams it ran and the number of girls playing football had increased. Unfortunately the Covid restrictions in the past year had prevented the planned formation of teams for under 7s and under 9s. Over the past three years, more volunteers had been recruited to help at the club, including teenagers to coach the youth teams and parents to help with coaching. There had also been increased supporter attendance at First Team games and Ladies games.

Members were informed of the Club's plans for the future, including the increasing need to find more venues to accommodate the teams' training needs and the need to find a home

venue for the Veterans team. Members also noted that the Wokingham Local Football Facilities Plan had identified Woodley as an area in need of more football facilities.

In reply to questions, Mark Rozzier and Colum Moon spoke about how the club had kept in touch with its members during the lockdowns and restrictions of the past year, and how regular online meetings had helped to bring people together. The Club was very aware of the importance of regular contact for helping the mental health of their members, and team managers were required to contact their players at least once a week. The Club also supported the Sport in Mind charity. Mark Rozzier and Colum Moon also spoke about the Club's initiatives to increase girls' participation in football, including training Women players as coaches so that they can act as role models for girls.

The Chairman thanked Mark Rozzier and Colum Moon for their presentation and wished the Club every success when they were able to start playing again after the Covid restrictions were lifted.

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

Sam Milligan, Just Around the Corner charity (JAC), was welcomed to the meeting and presented the JAC report.

Sam Milligan informed Members that Woodley continued to be quiet, with very few young people outside. The exception to this was the skate park in Woodford Park, which had been very well-used during afternoons and early evenings.

In reply to a question about the food deliveries being undertaken by JAC during the pandemic, Sam Milligan said that these were not part of the service level agreement with the Town Council, but did enable JAC to maintain contact with families that they had helped in the past. Members were also informed that the JAC house was still occupied by the same young family that had moved in over a year ago.

The Chairman thanked Sam Milligan for his report.

37. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 1/21 and informed Members that all staff teams had worked hard to minimise spending during the pandemic.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 1/21.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 2/21. He reported that the leisure centre had been able to open for a short time in December, when the November lockdown ended, but that the leisure centre and all associated facilities had been closed again since 5 January 2021, in line with the latest national lockdown. Members were informed that plans were being made for the reopening of the leisure centre at the end of the current lockdown, in line with whichever tier of restrictions Woodley might be placed in.

Members were pleased to note that the leisure centre's role as a drop-off point for donations to the First Days Children's Charity during the November lockdown had been very successful, with a large number of donations being received.

Councillor Baker thanked the Leisure Services Manager for all the work he had done during the pandemic, as he was the officer with the most difficult job of all and he had continually come up with ideas for opening parts of the leisure centre, where possible, and ensuring that members of the public could return to the centre in safety. The Chairman echoed

these thanks, saying that the Leisure Services Manager had done a magnificent job over the past year.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 2/21.

39. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 3/21 and informed Members that essential maintenance work to the heating system at Woodford Park Leisure Centre would take place while the building was closed during the current national lockdown.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that a complete power outage had occurred to the Maintenance Depot and the footway lights in the surrounding area of Woodford Park and the problem had been identified as a cable fault beneath the ground somewhere between the leisure centre and the depot site. As the cable ran under the 3G pitch, the only viable solution would be to install a new supply cable from the substation near the leisure centre. Quotes had been received for the work and a proposal would be submitted to Full Council for funds to be allocated.

Members noted that tenders had been received from eight play companies for the new play area project in Woodford Park and were currently being evaluated. In reply to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the tender documents had stressed the importance of including accessible play equipment in the design. He informed Members that information on the submitted designs would be circulated to the Committee as soon as possible and there would be a thorough public consultation process before the final design was chosen. Councillor Baker asked any Members with contacts in organisations supporting children with disabilities to send contact details to the Deputy Town Clerk so that he could engage with these organisations during the consultation process.

Following a question about the ongoing rat problem at the lake in Woodford Park, the Deputy Town Clerk agreed that the situation might be improved if members of the public were discouraged from feeding the ducks and said that he was investigating the provision of signage to that effect.

Members were pleased to note that Woodford Park remained busy during the current lockdown and noted that the Friends of Woodford Park continued to work in the park and the Garden of Remembrance. Members also noted the information provided on the Council's wildlife and environmental initiatives.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 3/21.

40. **CHARGES 2021/22**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 4/21 and explained that, in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Town Council's income in 2020/21 and in order to keep the Council's facilities affordable for residents, businesses and other organisations, it was proposed that all charges and costs be kept at the same levels as in 2020/21.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 4/21.
- ◆ To recommend that the proposed charges for 2021/22, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3

41. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2020/21**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 5/21. She explained that the largest impact on the Leisure Services Committee's budget for 2020/21 had been the Covid-19 pandemic, with income estimated to be 27% of the original estimate for the year and expenditure 87% of the original estimate.

Members were informed that savings had been achieved during the lockdowns, including lower use of heating and lighting in all buildings and facilities, lower expenditure on consumables for washrooms and lower expenditure on stationery and other items that had not been necessary. Savings had also been made due to the cancellation of the Citizens' Awards evening and the Carnival. The renegotiation of the cleaning contract at Woodford Park Leisure Centre had also resulted in savings.

The Town Clerk reported that the lockdowns and guidance on the use of community halls had significantly reduced income. Income from Woodford Park Leisure Centre and the 3G pitch, grass football and cricket had also been greatly reduced by the lockdowns and ongoing guidance relating to the pandemic.

Members noted that staff had been furloughed, where it had been appropriate to do so, and the income from furlough payments would be included in the budget and precept reports to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 5/21.
- ◆ To recommend that the Revised Budget Estimates for 2020/21, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

42. **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021/22**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 6/21 and explained that the budget estimates for the 2021/22 financial year had been drawn up assuming that, for a significant part of the year, use of the Council's sports and community facilities would be limited because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 6/21.
- ◆ To recommend that the Budget Estimates for 2021/22, as set out in the Budget Appendix, be approved.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3

43. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The following future agenda items were requested:

- An update on the Council's climate change policies. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to include this in his report.
- A report on how past hirers of the community halls are operating and whether they still want to meet in person when restrictions are lifted.

44. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To publicise the following:
  - Woodley United as a community football club, and the encouragement of girls' participation in football.

45. **MINUTES OF THE URGENCY COMMITTEE**

Members discussed the way in which agendas were issued for meetings of the Urgency Committee, as some were unhappy that Urgency Committee agendas were not circulated to all Members. It was noted that the agendas were issued in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and that Members could formally request a review of the Standing Orders regarding this matter.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 7/21 - the minutes of the Urgency Committee meeting held on 17 November 2020.

The meeting closed at 9:41 pm

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