

Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 8:00 pm

- Present:** *Councillors D. Bragg (Chairman); A. Heap; R. Horskins; V. Lewis*
- Officers present:** *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; E. Whitesmith, Leisure Services Manager; M. Filmore, Committee Officer*
- Also present:** *2 members of the public*

41. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. Al-Sanjari, K. Gilder, B. Rowland, D. Smith and A. Swaddle.
42. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest made by Members.
43. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2022**
- RESOLVED:**
- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 25 January 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.
44. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**
Members raised concerns about the lack of progress with the new Youth Strategy. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that Expression of Interest forms will be published tomorrow, 13 April, on the Town Council website and the Government's procurement website. These will also be sent to providers who have contacted the Council previously to express their interest. An initial meeting of the Youth Strategy Working Party will then be arranged to consider the responses received. Responses will also be used to help determine the information which should be sought as part of the Youth Survey which will then be issued, independently of any interested provider. Following this, further meetings will be arranged between the Working Party and interested providers, followed by the formal tendering process.
- Members noted that the Town Centre Garden has now been planted. They also noted that the Defibrillator for Woodford Park Leisure Centre has now been delivered, but that installation is pending the electrical works due to take place at the centre.
- RESOLVED:**
- ◆ To note the answers provided by the Deputy Town Clerk in response to questions raised by Members during and subsequent to the Leisure Services and Strategy & Resources Committee meetings held in January 2022, as circulated to Members via email on the 1 February 2022.
45. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**
Members reviewed the Budgetary Control report.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the final budgetary control figures for the 2021/22 financial year had been more varied than in previous years due to the effects of the pandemic and Furlough scheme, but that the 2022/23 figures should be clearer.

The Deputy Town Clerk also advised Members that there had been an error in the Budgetary Control end of year estimates for Coronation and Chapel Halls provided at the January Leisure Services meeting, but these had been corrected in these final figures.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 7/22.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 8/22.

Members noted that a replacement pump was likely to be needed soon for the Paddling Pool at the Leisure Centre. The Leisure Services Manager estimated the cost to be around £1k, and the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that it was intended for this to be added to the capital programme later in the year.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 8/22.

47. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 9/22.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that tenders for the electrical works at Woodford Park Leisure Centre have now been opened and are being reviewed. It was acknowledged that the works would take up to 12 weeks, and that this would cause some disruption to users of the Leisure Centre. However, works would be planned to keep disruption to a minimum.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, with regards to the new Woodford Park Play Area, it was hoped that installation would be complete by the end of May. The Maintenance Team have undertaken some repair and replacement works in house to fencing and the shelter which has saved money, meaning the Council has been able to afford better signage. Planning permission was required for one item of equipment, the Canopy slide. The public consultation has ended, so the outcome is expected soon. However, the Deputy Town Clerk advised members that no comments had been submitted in relation to this planning application, and pre-application advice sought from Wokingham Borough Council had previously indicated no issues with the application.

Members noted that, following concerns raised regarding potential conflict between construction traffic and park users, the fencing around the Play Area construction site has been adjusted to block off the path during the working day on weekdays, with appropriate signage implemented to guide park users around the area. Fencing is then removed to enable the path to be used during the evenings and on weekends.

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members to advise that the Green Flag judges were likely to be visiting Woodford Park towards the end of May for this year's full judging.

Following a query, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that some areas of the allotments were still deliberately kept wild, but there has been an increase in the amount of area put to allotments over the past few years. He also confirmed that, whilst a small number of tenants had more than one plot, this was a historic arrangement from when demand for plots was low. Tenants can now only have one plot.

Members requested that, with regards to the instances of anti-social behaviour and damage highlighted in the report, images of any damage should be published on the Town Council's social media pages to highlight the problem.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 9/22.
- ◆ To install a plaque into the Sensory Garden area of the new Woodford Park play area in memory of Councillor David Stares, who was previously Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee and heavily involved in the initial drive for a new play area.

Voting: For: 4 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

48. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Following a query regarding how often attendees of events at the Leisure Centre ask if there is a café on site, the Leisure Services Manager confirmed this was not often, surmising that most users of the centre are regulars and so know there is no cafe. He confirmed that refreshments, including tea, coffee, and soft drinks, are available from the Leisure Centre reception, and users looking for a sit-down option were directed to Brown Bag at the Oakwood Centre. The Leisure Services Manager did suggest that the number of centre users was probably on the cusp for it to be viable to run a café on site.

Councillor Horskins recommended the Committee consider the installation of a plaque in memory of the 3 fatalities, and 46 injured, in the Loddon Bridge disaster, which took place 50 years ago in October. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that he had been contacted by Earley Town Council, who had been in discussion with Winnersh Parish Council, regarding this matter, and he would contact both Councils to discuss what options were available for a joint commemoration.

49. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

Members requested, if possible, for the Council to publish a weekly update, each Friday afternoon, highlighting the activities and works which have been undertaken in previous week, and which are due to take place in the coming week. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the possibility of this would be looked into.

50. Prior to the end of the meeting the Chairman requested that two Councillors meet with him to consider a problem with allotment holders which has arisen, and for which he was seeking advice and assistance to try to resolve. Councillors Heap and Lewis agreed to meet with Councillor Bragg.

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm
