

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 5 September 2023 at 8:00 pm**

Present: *Councillors D. Smith (Chairman); D. Errawalla; K. Gilder; R. Horskins;
C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis;*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; E. Whitesmith, Leisure Services Manager;
M. Filmore, Committee Officer*

Also present: *3 members of the public*

12. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Firmager.

13. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

14. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2023**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 6 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

Members reviewed the Budgetary Control report.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 13/23.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 14/23.

An updated was provided on the final Family Racket Attack numbers for the summer holidays, with a total of 1,066 transactions being recorded. Members noted this was an all-time high for this period, in excess of the 826 recorded in 2021.

Following an unseasonably wet and cold summer, the paddling pool was due to be closed on Sunday 11 September. However, the recent return of hot weather, and the closure of other local pools for winter, had led to increased use of the pool in recent days, and the Leisure Services Manager advised the pool would remain open for a short while longer, until the hot weather has subsided.

Members noted that new inflatable play equipment had been purchased for the leisure centre. The Leisure Services Manager explained that the centre was moving to a new format for providing children's parties, focussing on hiring the venue and equipment. It was noted that leisure staff would no longer be provided to operate equipment, such as inflatables, at children's parties, with the onus of the hirer to supervise the use of such equipment. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was due to the inability of the Council to obtain insurance for operating the equipment, but that it was possible to obtain cover for the hire of the equipment, with hirers signing to confirm they had read the appropriate user guidelines.

Following a query, the Leisure Services Manager advised that the success of the new play equipment would be measured using a feedback form, returned by hirers, as well as by comparing income figures.

It was noted that the tender for new gym equipment had received 13 submissions, and that a recommendation for accepting the preferred tender was due to be considered by the Strategy & Resources Committee at their next meeting, due to be held on 12 September. In response to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the tender scoring was not solely based on cost, but also took into consideration the equipment and service provided.

Members noted that there had been a net gain of 10 new gym memberships during the period covered by the report, which was recognised as being good as membership usually decreased during the summer period. Members requested that, for future meetings, a net gain / loss chart might be provided, displaying previous years as a comparison.

Following a query, the Leisure Services Manager confirmed there was no official age limit for use of the paddling pool, but that it was designed to be used by toddlers and families.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 14/23.

17. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 15/23.

The Deputy Town Clerk highlighted that Woodford Park had been awarded the Green Flag award for the sixth year in a row. He acknowledged that this was mainly due to the hard work of both the Council's grounds team and the Friends of Woodford Park group.

Members noted the cost associated with engaging bailiffs to remove the two unauthorised encampments who had forcibly gained access to the park during the summer. It was queried whether the Council would be able to get money back for this and the criminal damage caused by those when gaining access to the park, but it was acknowledged that this was unlikely. The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that the Council would be looking at any vulnerable access points in Woodford Park and considering the options for providing extra security, which include the possibility of installing new bollards, a ditch or new locks. Members noted their thanks to Officers for the speed with which both unauthorised encampments were removed from the site.

Following the increased incidents of graffiti in the park, noted in the report, it was suggested whether the option of installing a graffiti wall had been considered. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that one had previously been installed by Just Around the Corner (JAC) in excess of 15 years ago, which had been successful. It was noted that JAC had also used the wall as a location to meet and talk to young people, however the wall fell into disrepair and was removed sometime ago. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed the idea of reintroducing a wall could be added to the projects list for consideration.

Following a suggestion regarding using an Allotments and Garden Association template tenancy agreement, it was highlighted that the current agreement had been based on such a document, and the convening of the Allotments Task & Finish Working Group was to consider minor changes to the existing agreement, which had already been reviewed in the past two years, and not to review it from scratch.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 15/23.

18. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK UPDATE**

Members noted the report from the Friends of Woodford Park (FoWP), as set out in the agenda.

The FoWP representative attending the meeting explained that historically the group held regular meetings, with a representative then attending meetings of the Leisure Services Committee to provide feedback. However, he advised that the Committee often did not discuss or respond to the feedback. During the pandemic FoWP meetings ceased, and these had not been re-instigated since. As members of the group are very visible in the park when working on flowers beds, it was acknowledged that they often receive comments and queries from members of the public.

The Chairman stated that the Committee were very open and willing for the FoWP to provide reports to meetings of the Committee as and when they had information to pass on, and that the Committee would welcome their input.

It was suggested that the FoWP might consider looking into, and contacting Chesham Town Council who, instead of a 'friends of' group, had a 'user group' for one of their parks. It was noted that this 'user group' had a slightly broader remit than normal for a 'friends of' group, engaging with all users of the park and even having the option of membership and subscription, the money for which was fed back into park improvements.

Members noted that the current Town Council representative appointed to the FoWP, Cllr Soane, was not a member of the Leisure Services Committee, and it was acknowledged that this was not ideal. It was agreed to speak to Cllr Soane to see if he would be amiable to being replaced, with Cllr Horskins putting his name forward for consideration. The Committee Officer advised that this change would need to be noted at a meeting of Full Council.

19. **3G PITCH STEERING GROUP SUB COMMITTEE**

In the absence of Cllr Firmager, Chairman of the sub committee, the Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 16/23.

Members noted that extending the operating times of the 3G pitch had been previously considered, although not progressed, and the Deputy Town Clerk advised that, in order to do so formally, a noise impact assessment would need to take place.

It was acknowledged that the local teams using the pitch currently felt that extending the operating hours by 30 minutes on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening, would make a significant difference, and the Leisure Services Manager estimated this would lead to approximately an extra 30-40 adults using the pitch each meet, with an estimated additional income of around £2,000 to £3,000 per year, depending on uptake.

Members were concerned regarding the impact the extension of the operating hours would have on residents of Farriers Close, and that the potential income may not justify this impact. Following a query, the Deputy Town Clerk also advised that the noise impact assessment was likely to cost in the region of £2,000.

Members concurred that, before considering whether to progress a planning application regarding extending the operating hours of the pitch, the Council should write to residents of Farriers Close to seek their views. It was also suggested that, if possible, these should be hand delivered by a Councillor, potentially Cllr Bragg as a resident of Farriers Close, to allow for personal, face to face conversations to also take place.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 16/23 of the 3G Pitch Steering Group sub committee meeting held on 15 June 2023.
- ◆ To draft a consultation letter regarding the potential extension of the operating times of the 3G pitch by 30 minutes on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and for the letter to be delivered to residents of Farriers Close, by hand if possible by an appropriate Councillor.

20. **YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES**

20.1 **Youth Support Service Grant Award Fund – 2023/24**

Members considered the proposed youth support service grant award guidelines and criteria, as set out in the agenda.

Members noted that the guidelines and criteria were similar to those used by the Council when awarding other grants. Whilst a £3,000 maximum grant award limit had been included in the guidelines, it was noted that the wording stated that grants would normally be capped at this level, leaving scope for the Committee to consider awarding grants in excess of this amount if they wished. It was requested that an additional line be added to confirm that all grants, even those for amounts in excess of £3,000, would be considered on their own merits.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend that the Strategy & Resources Committee adopt the youth support service grant award guidelines and criteria, as set out at **APPENDIX A**.

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 No Vote: 0

20.2 **Youth Support Service Provision – 2024/25 and beyond**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 17/23.

Following a query as to why the Youth Service Task and Finish Working Group was recently disbanded, only for a new Youth Support Service Task and Finish Working Group to be considered, it was explained that the previous working group reported to Strategy & Resources and had a specific remit to tender for a Youth Service provider against an agreed SLA, which they had been unable to achieve. The new working group was being tasked to review, more broadly, the Council's future youth support service provision, and would be reporting to Leisure Services.

A concern was raised that some of the proposed terms of operation were not specific as to how they would be achieved. The Chairman confirmed that it would be up to the working group to determine how to achieve these.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that, in reference to undertaking a young persons survey as included in the terms of reference, £5k is already budgeted for this.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 17/23.
- ◆ To set up the Youth Support Services Task & Finish Working Group in line with the terms of reference, as set out at **APPENDIX B**.

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 No Vote: 0

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Firmager, Gilder and Kennedy as the Conservative group members on the working group, with agreement that the Labour group member can be appointed after the meeting, by notification via email.

21. **MIXED RECYLING BINS IN WOODFORD PARK**

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members to confirm that the Council would be trialling new mixed recycling bins in Woodford Park in the near future. Bins would provide segregated general waste and mixed recycling, with an additional recycling skip based at the Council's maintenance yard. He also confirmed that the Council's new waste carrier would also be able to undertake separation of recyclable items during processing to additionally increase the levels of recycling. Members noted that the processing of recyclable materials was also cheaper by the tonne than general waste, which would benefit the Council.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Officers were yet to select the final bin design, which would need to be robust, and it was suggested that the Council may wish to review the mixed waste bins currently used in Elms Field as an option.

22. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chairman requested that a report be provided to the next meeting of the Committee with details of possible improvement and beautifying works which could take place at Wheble Park.

23. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

It was recommended that the Council write to all schools in the area to notify them of the incidents of anti-social behaviour and graffitiing which has taken place on Council's grounds during the summer period, especially in the Garden of Remembrance, and to ask them to highlight this to their students.

Following a suggestion to advertise the new kids party provision being offered at the leisure centre, the Leisure Services Manager confirmed he was currently reviewing appropriate marketing plans.

Following a request for the Council to advertise for comments from young people as to what youth service provision they'd like to see in Woodley, the Chairman confirmed that this would be a matter for the new working group to consider and undertake.

The meeting closed at 9:14 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. However all applications, including those for amounts in excess of this, will be considered on their own merits.

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 SUPPORT SERVICES (YSS) TASK AND FINISH WORKING GROUP

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED?	COMMENTS
0.0	29/08/23	No	Draft
1.0	05/09/23	No	Approved by LS Committee – 5 Sep 2023

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.