

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 2 April 2024 at 8:00 pm**

Present: *Councillors M. Firmager (Deputy Chairman); Y. Edwards; K. Gilder;
R. Horskins; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis*

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

Also present: *1 member of the public*

58. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Errawalla and Smith.

59. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest raised by Members.

60. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2024**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 16 January 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

61. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the update on the actions and follow ups from previous meetings, as provided in the agenda.

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With regards to the action to add the potential re-installation of a 'graffiti wall' on the Council's projects list, the Town Clerk advised that the intention is to engage with a suitable youth service provider first to consider this before adding to the list.

62. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

Members reviewed the Budgetary Control report.

It was noted that expenditure was as expected at this stage of the year, although staffing and energy costs are a little higher due to increased costs as previously reported.

With regards to income, it was noted this was above expected, at around 119% of that budgeted by the end of February 2024. The Town Clerk advised this was, in part, due to the changes on VAT charged on sports facilities, but also due to high usage and membership levels at Woodford Park Leisure Centre.

With regards to VAT changes, it was noted this would only affect 2023/24 financial figures, with VAT not included in the charges approved for the 2024/25 year.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 10/24.

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

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 11/24.

It was noted that, of the 156 new members who signed up between 10 January and 20 March 2024, most had joined in January. One of the leavers had cited difficulty booking onto exercise classes as a reason for leaving.

The Leisure Services Manager advised Members that there was currently an issue accessing the full media features on some of the new cardio equipment in the gym. Investigations had shown this was not an issue with the television aerial, and so further investigations were ongoing with the equipment provider to find a solution.

Members noted that the new flexi exercise class option had been received well by gym members, and that this would increase class capacity by around 40 people per week.

In relation to the usual drop off in membership following the January spike, the Leisure Services Manager advised this hadn't been as noticeable as previous years, likely, in part, to the procurement of new gym equipment. He continued to state that there was still expected to be a drop off as it moves into sunnier months, when people decide to cancel membership to exercise outdoors.

Members noted the desire from Woodley Cricket Club for the Council to fund improvements to the facilities, including the provision of separate team and umpire changing, toilet and showering facilities. The Leisure Services Manager advised that these facilities, amongst others, were now a requirement of the Berkshire Cricket League and that, were they not to be available at the leisure centre from 2025, the club would not be able to play league matches there. It was highlighted that this would be fed back into the discussion of the WPLC Development task & finish working group. The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that, at present, there has been no demand from other clubs for the provision of separate team changing facilities at the leisure centre. Any costs associated with the refurbishment of the existing football changing rooms, or the provision of such facilities, would need to be considered in the context of potential income, and it was highlighted that cricket is already heavily subsidised by the Council.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 11/24.

64. **PARKS AND BUILDINGS**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 12/24.

It was highlighted that the rotating swing in the play area in Woodford Park was currently out of action. Following investigation, this had been linked to an issue with the bearing unit due to heavy use, with the manufacturer working to provide a replacement.

It was noted that a number of people at a recent car boot sale in the town centre had encountered issues accessing the public toilet. The Town Clerk stated that he had been advised of this at the time, and staff had investigated this promptly but found no issues. Members noted the Town Clerk was continuing to look into the matter to see what might have happened. He also advised that he would be looking to add the Council's emergency contact number onto signage on the toilet.

With regards to the potential project to install pathways around the sports pitches, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Council would be reviewing this in light of improvements to all pathways in Woodford Park, some of which he was acknowledged encountered issues with flooding.

In relation to improving the roadways at the allotments site, it was confirmed the Council would also be attempting to resolve the issue of flooding by the gates. It was noted that flooding also impacted a small number of plots to the left of the gate; one option to resolve this was to migrate those plot holders to other plots elsewhere on the site, but it was noted this would require further investigation and discussion.

Following queries, the Town Clerk confirmed that further information was being sourced in relation to the banning of bonfires at the allotments site, due to come in from January 2025, and that the matter would be re-considered in light of this. He advised that consultation with tenants was being planned to understand how many bonfires were taking place, and what waste was being burnt at the site, and that the Council would fully investigate potential alternative solutions, including the offsetting of carbon release from bonfires if it was deemed a ban should not be introduced.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 12/24.

65. **YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP**

It was highlighted that it was good to see two young people had attended the last meeting of the working group to feed their ideas into discussions. Members noted they had indicated that, should a youth venue be considered, siting this in an existing Council building might discourage attendance from certain young people due to its perceived connection with authority. It was also highlighted that they suggested any setting should be perceived to be informal, and that were more formal, organised youth work to be predominant then this again might discourage attendance.

The Deputy Town Clerk highlighted that the working group had also determined at the meeting to engage Berkshire Youth to conduct a youth engagement project on behalf of the Council, which would include a survey distributed via schools, a number of outreach sessions in the town, and two summer holiday activities. All information gathered from these activities would be fed back to the group to aid in their decision making.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 13/24 of the Youth Support Service task & finish working group meeting held on 26 February 2024.

66. **COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP**

It was commented that there appeared to be a lack of actions emanating from meetings of the Community Youth Partnership in recent times, although it was noted that only two voluntary sector representatives had been available to attend this meeting.

Members noted the partnership's terms of reference allowed up to ten voluntary sector representatives as members. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, following a discussion which took place after the last meeting, he had agreed to correspond with all known youth organisations in the area try to try and increase the number of representatives. He also advised that Thames Valley Police were now being invited to these meetings, along with members of Wokingham Borough's Youth Council.

It was highlighted that one of the actions of the Youth Support Service task & finish working group was to consider increasing young people's engagement in local democracy, and that they would be considering whether setting up a Youth Town Council could achieve this. If this took place, it was noted that the roles of, and links between the potential Youth Town Council, the Leisure Services Committee, and the Community Youth Partnership would likely evolve.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 14/24 of the Community Youth Partnership meeting held on 14 March 2024.
- ◆ To approve the updated terms of reference, provided at **Appendix A**.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 0

67. **3G PITCH STEERING GROUP SUB COMMITTEE**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the new 3G Pitch Management and Development Plan had been developed to capture all the information needed to evidence to the FA that the Council is complying with the original funding agreement in relation to the pitch.

With regards to the placing of £12k annually into an earmarked reserve for the replacement of the pitch surface at the end of its life, it was noted this amount would need to be reviewed, with up-to-date quotes for replacement being sought to inform this decision.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 15/24 of the 3G Pitch Steering Group sub committee meeting held on 19 March 2024.
- ◆ To approve the updated terms of reference, provided at **Appendix B**.
- ◆ To approve the 3G Pitch Management & Development Plan 2024-25, as provided in the agenda.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 0

68. **WPLC DEVELOPMENT TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 16/24 of the Woodford Park Leisure Centre Development task & finish working group meeting held on 26 March 2024.
- ◆ To approve the procurement of a structural survey of the sports hall, prior to proceeding with any required remedial works.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 0

69. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK UPDATE**

Members noted the report from the Friends of Woodford Park (FoWP), as set out in the agenda, highlighted the following concerns raised through the group's work and interactions with the public:

- Lack of decent paths across some areas of the park, including in front of Coronation Hall, access from Keane Close, and alongside St Dominic's School, some of which are also prone to flooding
- Lack of planting in the Garden of Remembrance
- Abandoned beds at the leisure centre

Members noted that regular communication took place between FoWP and the Council's appointed representative, with issues raised promptly to the Town Clerk, hence why a number of issues have already been considered earlier in the agenda.

It was noted that the improvement of paths in the park had been discussed earlier in the meeting. The Town Clerk confirmed that planting in the Garden of Remembrance was being considered, and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ For the Deputy Town Clerk to respond to the Friends of Woodford Park to acknowledge their report, and respond to the concerns raised.

70. **CORONATION SEATING PROJECT**

Members considered the indicative Coronation Seating Orchard design, presented in the agenda, noting the design was indicative, indicating the general location and design.

Members requested the possibility of stone seating be considered due to its durability, although the Town Clerk advised that staff are able to maintain wooden seating to a high standard across the park.

A suggestion was made that sculpture could be incorporated into the design. The Town Clerk advised that the provision of a sculpture trail across the town was being considered; if this were to proceed, then this location could be suitable for inclusion.

A comment was made that the inclusion of herbs might not be the best form of planting, as many die back in winter, with aromatic plants possibly better. The Town Clerk advised that the grounds team would review and adjust planting over time depending on what works, with the team enthusiastic about taking this on as a pet project.

It was also suggested that some tree stumps from the felling of the poplar trees by the maintenance yard could be moved to this location as well to provide habitat for insects.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 17/24.
- ◆ To approve the design of the Coronation Seating Orchard, as provided in the agenda.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 0

71. **OUTDOOR SPORTS HIRE RATES**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 18/24.

RECOMMENDATION:

- ◆ That the Strategy & Resources Committee approve the introduction of the following outdoor sports hire rates, as set out in Report No. LS 18/24;
 - (3G Pitch) Partner Club rate = £73.00 per hour
 - (Football & 3G Pitch) Mini-pitch rate = £13.00 per hour

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 0

72. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items raised by Members.

73. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

There were no publicity or website items raised by Members.

The meeting closed at 9:17 pm

COMMUNITY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED?	COMMENTS
1.0	25.08.20	No	Original Version
1.1	15.11.22	Yes	LS (15/11/22) approved to increase no. of Councillor members from 4 to 5.
1.2	28.02.23	Yes	Membership increased from 5 Councillors to 6 at FC (28.02.23)
1.3	16.05.23	Yes	FC approved the reduction of places from 6 to 4
1.4	02.04.24	Yes	LS approved removal of reference to Youth Project Fund – 5.2 d) / 5.4 d) & addition of 5.3 d) – (02.04.24)

- 1. TYPE OF COMMITTEE =>** Partnership
- 2. PARENT COMMITTEE =>** Leisure Services Committee
- 3. 6 MONTH MEETING RULE VALID (see 6.1.k)**
 - a. NO
- 4. SIZE =>** 4 Councillors; up to 10 representatives of Voluntary Sector organisations who work with young people.
- 5. DUTIES AND POWERS**
 - 5.1.VOTING RIGHTS**
 - a. All members of this Partnership have equal rights to vote.
 - 5.2.OVERALL PURPOSE**
 - a. To provide an opportunity for the exchange of information on youth services and activities in Woodley Town.
 - b. Engender good working relationships between providers of youth services and activities in Woodley Town.
 - c. To enable and / or be involved in joint projects and plans to improve services and support to Woodley's young people.
 - d. To consider and make recommendations on funding for ad-hoc youth projects, as and when they arise.
 - e. Chairmanship of the partnership will be held by a voluntary sector representative. The Vice Chairman will be held by a town Councillor. Agendas for meetings of the partnership will be set jointly by the Chairman and Vice Chairman.
 - 5.3.MEETINGS**
 - a. Meetings of the working party shall take place at least quarterly.
 - b. Representatives from other organisations working with or providing services and activities for young people in Woodley and other interested parties, as agreed by the working party, will be invited to each meeting of the working party.

- c. Officers will be in attendance at all meetings.
- d. After apologies and declarations of interest, the first item on the agenda will always be given over to discussions with any non-partnership members who have been invited to attend the meeting.

5.4. TERMS OF OPERATION

- a. To liaise with organisations and bodies providing services and activities for young people in Woodley.
- b. To receive information on activities and services to young people in the town from youth service providers.
- c. To receive and consider representations and proposals from young people and representatives providing services and activities for young people and make any recommendations to the Leisure Services Committee, Council or any other relevant Committee or organisation, as appropriate.
- d. To consider the provision of funding for ad-hoc youth projects by the Town Council and make any recommendations on those to the Leisure Services Committee.
- e. To be part of a network of providers of youth services and activities and encourage exchanges of information and joint working, where appropriate.
- f. To take part in joint projects to make provision for and support young people.
- g. To take any relevant matters forward, as agreed by the working party, to the appropriate body or organisation.
- h. To consider any other matters relating to young people in Woodley.
- i. To make any recommendations outside the working party's remit to the Leisure Services Committee.
- j. To provide reports of meetings held to the Leisure Services Committee.

3G PITCH STEERING GROUP SUB COMMITTEE

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED?	COMMENTS
1.0	25.08.20	No	Original Version
1.1	20.01.22	Yes	Re-titled 'Sub Committee'
1.2	10.05.22	Yes	Change to frequency of meetings – from three times per year to once per year.
1.3	28.02.23	Yes	Membership increased from 3 Councillors to 4 at FC (28.02.23)
1.4	02.04.24	Yes	LS approved reference to new Management & Development Plan document (02.04.24)

1. TYPE OF COMMITTEE => Sub Committee

2. PARENT COMMITTEE => Leisure Services Committee

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

a. NO

4. SIZE => 4 Councillors;

It is also a requirement of the Football Foundation that the membership include one representative of the Berks and Bucks FA, one representative from the Reading Community Trust and one representative from each of the Partner Clubs.

5. DUTIES AND POWERS

5.1 OVERALL PURPOSE

a. The steering groups role is to monitor and review delivery of the financial, usage and football development performance of the 3G AGP at Woodford Park Leisure Centre and to provide this information to the Football Foundation.

5.2 MEETINGS

a. The steering group shall meet at least once each year. Additional meetings may be organised, as appropriate and necessary.

b. Meetings of the group shall be chaired by one of the Elected Members from Woodley Town Council as the grant holding organisation.

c. Members from the partner clubs may send a representative if they are unable to attend a meeting.

d. Officers will attend the meetings of the working party, as appropriate.

5.3 TERMS OF OPERATION

a. To monitor and report on the financial performance of the 3G pitch in line with the business plan, usage plan, football development plan, as contained within the Council's 3G Pitch Management & Development Plan, and partner clubs service level agreement.

- b. To monitor and report on the football development in relation to the 3G pitch, in line with the business plan, usage plan, football development plan, as contained within the Council's 3G Pitch Management & Development Plan, and partner clubs service level agreement.
- c. To report the minutes of each meeting to the Leisure Services Committee and the Football Foundation.
- d. To ensure that the 3G AGP remains on the FA register and is maintained in accordance with the Football Foundation Guidelines.
- e. To ensure that the required annual monitoring and evaluation questionnaires are completed and returned to the Football Foundation.