

**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 8:00 pm**

Present: *Councillors D. Smith (Chairman); D. Errawalla; M. Firmager; 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: *Councillor D. Bragg;
1 member of the public*

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Town Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Horskins, seconded by Councillor Firmager, and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That Councillor Smith be appointed to the position of Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote: 0

It was proposed by Councillor Horskins, seconded by Councillor Lewis, and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That Councillor Firmager be appointed to the position of Vice Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote: 0

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received from Members.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest raised by Members.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 APRIL 2024**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 2 April 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

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

7 November 2023 – Minute 34

In relation to the transfer of ownership of Wheble Park, the Town Clerk updated Members to advise he had received a reply from the Deputy Leader of Reading Borough Council who had indicated she would seek to progress a response on the matter.

16 January 2024 – Minute 56

A query was raised as to why it was listed that the introduction of a directory of Community & Charity Groups would take until the end of 2024, the Deputy Town Clerk advised this was due to the fact other projects were taking precedence but it was hoped this would be achieved sooner. Members noted Wokingham Borough Council have a similar directory for the wider Borough, which would include organisations working in Woodley, which could be harnessed. It was also suggested the Council might seek to bring charity and voluntary groups together to better assist joint working by holding a meeting, hosted by the Mayor, to which they could be invited.

6. BUDGETARY CONTROL

Members reviewed the Budgetary Control report.

A query was raised as to why the expenditure figure relating to Amenities for the same period in 2023 was £-344. The Town Clerk advised he would look into this and advise Members.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 19/24.

7. WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 20/24.

Members noted the dip in membership experienced in the past couple of months usual at this time of year, but the Leisure Services Manager advised the dip was less than expected, which was positive.

Members noted that the Leisure Centre's facebook page had seen a strong increase in followers and interactions, and that this was now the primary marketing tool for the centre.

The Leisure Services Manager advised that the team at the centre had made significant efforts to get responses to the Development Survey being conducted, and that, to date, around 925 responses had been received. Members congratulated the team on these numbers.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 20/24.

8. PARKS AND BUILDINGS

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 21/24.

Members noted the Amenities Team had successfully utilised the Council's polytunnel to grow on plug plants used for planting in the parks this year at a fraction of the cost of buying more mature plants. It was also highlighted this provided members of the team with good development opportunities.

The Town Clerk advised that the Allotments Waste survey had been delayed by a week, but was due to be released shortly. This would be publicised at the allotments site using posters and QR codes.

Councillor Jewell raised an issue with one of her neighbouring plots, and the Town Clerk asked for her to provide him with more details and he would investigate.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 21/24.

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

Councillor Gilder, as Chairman of the working group, advised that Berkshire Youth had developed a very good survey, to be distributed amongst children and young people in local schools shortly. It was noted that results were split by postcode area, and that it had been agreed to share results between Woodley and Earley Town Councils depending on where children live to save on duplication. The Town Clerk also noted this saved a number of hours of work for Berkshire Youth which could then be put towards the subsequent outreach activities. It was expected the results of the project would be provided by September.

Members considered the recommendation of the working group regarding considering whether to set up a Woodley Youth Council. Following discussion, it was suggested this await the outcome of Berkshire Youth's youth consultation project before proceeding, noting it would be helpful to receive feedback from young people as to whether they would be interested in a Youth Council. It was commented that the success of any Youth Council would be reliant on good preparation and training.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 22/24 of the Youth Support Service task & finish working group meeting held on 30 April 2024.
- ◆ To await the outcome of Berkshire Youth's youth engagement project before further considering setting up a Youth Council.

10. **YOUTH GRANT APPLICATION**

Members discussed the youth grant application, submitted from ABC to Read, for £1,000 to recruit and train three volunteers to support primary age children to read in the Woodley area. It was noted the organisation's website indicated each volunteer works with up to three children, providing two, half hour sessions each week.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To recommend to the Strategy & Resources Committee that they award a Youth Grant of £1,000 to ABC to Read

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote: 1

11. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK UPDATE**

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

Councillor Horskins, the Town Council appointed representative to the FoWP, highlighted that the new reinforced path across the Memorial Ground had appeared to have bedded in well.

12. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

It was recommended that the Committee consider both the matter of introducing a directory of charity and community groups, and setting up a Youth Council, at the next meeting due to be held in September.

13. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

There were no publicity or website items raised by Members.

The meeting closed at 9:06 pm