



## **AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held remotely on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 which commenced at 7.45pm.

### **Present**

Chair – Councillor A Newton

Councillors: A Bassett, G Bhangra, N Brock, M Eastwell, D Hare, D Ireland, A Long, S Matthews and K Yabsley.

In attendance: E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), G Hawker (Senior Park Ranger), A Prior (Park Ranger), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), Councillor C Jones and Councillor A Mickleburgh.

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The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council. There were no members of the public present.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.
- 3.2 In response to a member's question (Minute 76.2) the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the annual testing of the Penstock valve had not yet been undertaken due to social distancing issues, but as Government advice on this had now changed, it would be scheduled for the end of July 2020.
- 3.3 Councillors were pleased to note that work had started on Centrepoint and that some re-decoration had been completed (Minute 77.1).
- 3.4 Members were informed that the further repair work on the BMX Track at Paddick Drive (Minute 78.2) had not been carried out.
- 3.5 The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the official opening of the Susan Smith Memorial Bird Hide (Item 76.1) had been postponed due to Covid-19.
- 3.6 Councillor Bassett asked if there had been any update on the community request (Minute 75.1) and the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council had not received any further communication from the Aisha Mosque.
- 3.7 The Committee requested that other items in the minutes such the Scarecrow Trail and Ali's Recycling are not forgotten. The Deputy Clerk said that she would contact the organisers for an update, following the Covid-19 situation.

**4. FISHING SEASON 2020/2021**

The Deputy Town Clerk updated the committee on the 2020/21 fishing season, which commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Members noted the changes in the administration of fishing permits due to Covid 19, how well the process was working and the continued popularity of fishing at Maiden Erlegh Lake. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Water Bailiffs are carrying out their duties and that they have reported a few incidents of people fishing without permits.

**5. DEFRA RESERVOIR EMERGENCY ONSITE FLOOD PLAN CONSULTATION**

Councillors noted that a draft response to DEFRA's reservoir emergency onsite flood plan consultation was being worked on and were pleased to note that an emergency plan was already in place. The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the ameliorative work since the last update in 2015 and the proposal to run a mock test to ensure the effectiveness of the plan.

**6. COMMUNITY AND YOUTH CENTRES**

6.1 The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the works undertaken in the Community Centres whilst they had been closed to the public, due to Covid 19. This work consisted of deep cleaning, redecoration and general maintenance.

6.2 Members were updated by the Deputy Town Clerk on the recent Government announcement regarding the opening of Community Centres. Councillors were informed of the Government guidance that had been provided so far and the advice not to allow indoor sports and fitness activities, which apply to many of the current hall hirers. There are also still restrictions in relation to social distancing and number of people meeting indoors, only meetings between two households being permitted, therefore the town council's community centres will not be opening yet.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that playgrounds would re-open on 4<sup>th</sup> July, and that posters would be displayed in line with current government guidance. Members were pleased to note this re-opening.

6.3 The committee received a verbal report from the Deputy Town Clerk on the installation of electric gates by Maiden Erlegh School, and the impact on the Silverdale Centre. Members noted the lack of prior consultation and expressed concern as to how this would impact hirers. The Deputy Town Clerk reported she had met with the site manager and a further site visit was scheduled for next week to consider how access to the Silverdale would be managed.

**7. MAIDEN ERLEGH NATURE RESERVE BOOKLET**

Councillors noted the Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve booklet which has been produced by the Earley Environmental Junior Group and which will be published on the town council's website. Members wished to express their appreciation to the Junior Environmental Group for their efforts and requested that the Town Mayor write to thank them.

**8. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION**

Members noted the consultation being carried out by Wokingham Borough Council in preparation of the re-opening of Library Services, when Government guidance allows and that details of the consultation have been published on the website.

*A.Prior left the meeting*

**9. RADSTOCK SOCIAL CLUB**

Councillor Newton presented her report following the Radstock Social Club Working Party's virtual meeting, setting out the scope and reporting structure. The committee noted that consideration had been given to the use of space, and potential hirers, both commercial and charitable. Members discussed the potential restrictions on use due to the proximity of the school and parking limitations, as well as the limitations faced due to Covid 19. The committee were reminded of financial considerations, both of the costs associated with the asset, and the need for it to generate income. Members were minded to investigate potential expressions of interest and consult the community. It was recommended that the working party should consider the issues raised at their next meeting, and that either the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk should be invited to attend.

**10. WOODCHIP BIN**

It was noted that no further progress had been made on the siting of a second woodchip bin in Earley, due to the current Covid-19 situation and the prioritising of work. The Senior Park Ranger advised on the construction of the woodchip bin located on Instow Road and the costs involved installing it and suggested that he investigate further siting options.

**11. MELDRETH WAY ROUNDABOUT PLANTING**

The Deputy Town Clerk informed councillors of the potential challenges involved in planting on the roundabout at the end of Meldreth Way. Councillor Jones provided some background on the initial installation of the roundabout. Members discussed possible options for improving the appearance of the roundabout, noting that the roundabout was the responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council. The committee requested that the Deputy Town Clerk contact WBC to ask for an update on the repair work which was still to be undertaken and the future plans for the roundabout's maintenance.

*Councillor Brock left the meeting*

**12. PUBLICATIONS**

The Committee noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing in the Council Chamber.

Maiden Erlegh Residents Association:	Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
BRAMM:	Spring 2020 Newsletter

**13. PRESS RELEASES**

No press releases were requested.

**14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

There were no members of the public or press present. It was agreed that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

**PART II**

**15. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**16. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.11 pm.

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee