



## **AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held remotely on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 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: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), G Hawker (Senior Park Ranger), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer) 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.

### **17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

19.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **20. COMMUNITY CENTRES & BUILDINGS**

#### **20.1 General Update**

Members noted that the redecoration of Maiden Place Community Centre and Radstock Community Centre had been completed, and that the redecoration of Sol Joel Pavilion was currently underway.

#### **20.2 Covid-19 Update**

Councillors noted that the Town Council's four community centres: Maiden Place; Radstock Lane; Silverdale and Centrepoint reopened to hirers from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. It was noted that this was a gradual reopening, with priority being given to regular hirers. The Town Clerk confirmed that although some hirers had resumed their activities there were others who were being more cautious and delaying their return. Members thanked officers for the work done to ensure that community centres would be Covid secure.

*Councillor Bhangra entered the meeting*

#### **20.3 Sol Joel Park**

The Committee noted that grass roots football had restarted at Sol Joel Park, with priority being given to regular hirers. In accordance with Covid-19 guidance, the Pavilion remained closed, although teams are provided with toilet facilities. Members were pleased to note that

hirers are required to produce their own Covid-19 Risk Assessments prior to bookings being accepted.

#### 20.4 Silverdale Centre

##### 20.4.1 Maiden Erlegh School – Electronic Gates

The Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the impact of the new electronic gates installed by Maiden Erlegh School. Members were pleased to note that the negative impact on the Silverdale Centre was not expected to be as significant as first feared.

##### 20.4.2 Health & Safety

Members were pleased to note the installation of the new fire alarm system had been completed.

### **21. COUNCIL OFFICES & HELPSHOP**

#### 21.1 Council Chamber

The Committee were pleased to note that the redecoration of the Council Chamber had been completed. Councillor Newton commented on how much better it looked.

#### 21.2 Helpshop

It was noted that the newly redecorated Town Council Helpshop reopened to the public on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020, and that Town Council officers continued to offer a full range of services to residents. Residents were very appreciative of this service, especially as the Borough's Shute End offices remained closed to the public. Members were keen to promote the available services to residents and were reminded that a full list of Helpshop services could be found on the Town Council website.

#### 21.3 Ali's Recycling

Councillors noted that the Helpshop was once again serving as a collection point for Ali's Recycling Scheme. Councillors expressed a desire for increased clarity on which items could be recycled, Councillor Newton agreed to contact Ali in this regard.

### **22. MAIDEN ERLEGH LAKE & NATURE RESERVE**

22.1 Members noted that, following the easing of lockdown restrictions, members of the Wednesday Volunteers had returned to the Nature Reserve, assisting the Park Rangers on a weekly basis.

22.2 The Committee were concerned to note that there had been a couple of recent incidents at the Nature Reserve where small groups of youths had either lit fires, or looked likely to light fires. Councillors were pleased to note that the Neighbourhood Police Team had been informed.

22.3 Councillors noted that the Penstock Valve had been successfully tested on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

### **23. LOCAL WALKS PROJECT**

Members considered the Earley Walks Project proposal submitted by Mary Bather, ACER Whitegates Residents' Association. The Committee were supportive of the initiative but were keen to ensure that it didn't replicate what was already available. It was agreed that Councillor Long and Councillor Ireland would liaise with Mary Bather and provide help and advice. It was suggested that Wokingham Borough would be better placed to assist the project with OS licencing support.

**24. WOKINGHAM CULTURAL STRATEGY**

Councillors considered their response to Wokingham Borough Council's request for parish/town council input into the draft Wokingham Cultural Strategy. Members were of the opinion that although a cultural strategy was important, this was not the correct time to devote time and resources to it for fear that it would be no more than a box ticking exercise without practical impact. The Town Clerk to respond to WBC and suggest that, although councillors were supportive in principle, such an exercise would be better undertaken in, say, six months time.

**25. TOWN COUNCIL YOUTH OUTREACH WORK**

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the progress of the Town Council's youth outreach work. Volunteers were excited to progress the work, and preliminary scoping had taken place over the summer. The Town Clerk had ensured insurance cover was in place, and that all necessary risk assessments had been completed. It was hoped that in a few weeks the team would be in a position to provide initial feedback to the Youth sub-committee via Zoom.

**26. MAIDEN PLACE YOUTH SHELTER**

The concerns expressed by the Borough Council in respect of anti-social behaviour around the youth shelter at Maiden Place were noted. Members were of the view that the Youth Shelter was an important amenity, and that this view was shared by the police and youth workers. The Committee understood the difficulties that had occurred over the summer, but felt that this was not surprising as schools and colleges had remained closed for some time and everyone was trying to deal with the unprecedented changes in society associated with a global pandemic. Councillors were hopeful that now schools were returning the situation would improve and the new outreach work could help this. Councillors agreed that the situation was primarily the responsibility of the WBC Localities team, as it was a WBC amenity on WBC land, and requested the Town Clerk inform WBC that the Town Council would not support the removal of this facility at this point in time.

**27. MELDRETH WAY ROUNDABOUT**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that WBC Highways Assets team currently had no plans for the roundabout, but that Councillor Jones would be meeting with the director of Highways to try and progress the matter. Members discussed the recent accident near the Cutbush Lane roundabout, and were minded to again approach WBC to improve signage and road markings.

**28. PUBLICATIONS**

The Committee noted that the following items had been received and were available for viewing from the Council Offices:

Maiden Erleigh Residents Association:	Minutes of the Executive Committee Panel 14.8.20
Me2 Club:	July Newsletter

**29. PRESS RELEASES**

Councillors requested that a press release be made promoting the re-opening of the community centres and the fact that the Town Council has continued to deliver a full range of services throughout the time of the pandemic.

**30. 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**

**31. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**32. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 9.13 pm.

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Chair, Amenities & Leisure Committee