

AMENITIES & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Leisure Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Radstock Lane, Earley, Reading on Wednesday 13th January 2016 at 7.45pm.

Present

Chairman – Councillor Mrs L Chambers

Councillors Miss L K Blumenthal, Dr N Brock, T Chambers, Ms M De Jong, Ms P Dunn, G Grandison, Mrs S Matthews and Miss J Rance

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Chopping (Personal Commitment).

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46. ESTIMATES

Consideration was given to the draft estimates of income and expenditure for 2016/17 and the revised estimates for 2015/16 which had been circulated with the agenda for Councillors' consideration. Members were reminded that, following any recommendations made by this Committee, the draft budget would be forwarded to the Policy & Resources Committee for comment to assist in the preparation of the Precept Working Papers.

With regard to Laurel Park, the Town Clerk reported that the figures shown were subject to further discussion in connection with a report to be presented as confidential business in the meeting. The Town Clerk drew attention to the requirement for additional car parking facilities at both Laurel Park and Sol Joel Park. The Amenities & Leisure Manager reported to Members that potential savings were possible if the Council undertook to use a durable plastic honeycomb surface instead of grasscrete. Following discussion and on the proposition of Councillor G Grandison seconded by Councillor Mrs P Dunn it was

RESOLVED that

1. the revised estimates for 2015/16 be approved
2. the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve the draft estimates as amended for 2016/17 subject to further discussion of Laurel Park estimates in confidential session at Minute 47.2
3. the plastic honeycomb option for the car park expansions be recommended to Policy & Resources Committee for approval

47. LAUREL PARK

47.1 Community Orchard

Councillors noted a progress report from the Earley Community Orchard Group and also that the date of Saturday 13th February at 11.00am had been set for tree planting with the Town Mayor planting the first tree.

47.2 Laurel Park

Councillors were requested to consider a report prepared by the Town Clerk proposing the transfer of Laurel Park in its entirety to Earley Town Council. Copies of the report were circulated to Members only for consideration in the confidential part of the meeting.

RESOLVED

In view of the nature of the business to be conducted, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of this item.

48. **REDHATCH COPSE**

Members were advised that contractors had now started the pre-handover works which need completion prior to the Town Council being passed responsibility for managing the Copse. The Senior Park Ranger reported that tree works were taking place that were quite drastic and would leave some gaps but were beneficial long term to encourage bluebells and open glades. A team to work on clearing pathways was expected in the forthcoming week but another team to install the required fencing had not yet confirmed a start date. The Vodafone volunteers would be undertaking some planting in the area in early February. The Senior Park Ranger expected works to be completed in approximately four weeks. Whilst signs informing residents that work was commencing had been posted, a Member suggested a press release to give further information for residents regarding the regeneration works and long term benefits to the ancient woodlands be considered.

49. **COMMUNITY & YOUTH CENTRES**

49.1 Radstock Lane Community Centre

The Town Clerk presented a report to Members which outlined the current and future use of the Radstock Lane Community Centre for consideration in light of the "Primary School Planning Strategy Update" which highlighted the need for additional school places in the local area. The Town Clerk highlighted that Radstock Lane Social Club sub-let from the Council, a self-contained unit within the Centre should be treated as a separate entity outside of this report.

The Town Clerk advised that the Wendy House Preschool was the main weekday hirer and that they were currently looking to extend their hours into the afternoon. This group would experience difficulty re-locating as the other local centres are already used by existing Preschool groups. The Town Clerk pointed out that, whilst some evening bookings could be moved to other Town Council Centres, some would experience difficulties due to the pattern of existing bookings.

Following further discussion a Member stated that the report was useful contingency planning, and although no further large developments are expected in the area the future is never certain. It was also highlighted that the Centre is a Community Centre and the Town Council would be answerable to the community if this resource were to be absorbed within the school and no longer available to Residents.

RESOLVED

That the comments made in the preamble to this minute be communicated to the Policy & Resources Committee at its next meeting.

50. MAIDEN ERLEGH LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Councillors noted that an update of the Emergency Plan for Maiden Erlegh Lake, which has now been classified as a “High Risk Reservoir”, has been produced by Officers of the Town Council.

The Amenities & Leisure Manager reported that following the Lake’s re-classification as Category A, high risk and with potential to endanger life , the Emergency Flood Plan and Risk Assessments appropriate to the Lake had now been updated to reflect new procedures. It was reported that work had been carried out to ensure the reduced risk to private property by flooding the wooded area adjacent to the lake in the event of an emergency.

The Town Clerk recorded his thanks to The Amenities & Leisure Manager and other staff who had contributed to the preparation of these documents.

51. PUBLICATIONS

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

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management:	The Journal – Winter 2015, V83 No.4.
National Association of Memorial Masons:	Newsletter – October 2015. Newsletter – December 2015.

52. PRESS RELEASES

RESOLVED that the item relating to Redhatch Copse receive emphasis.

53. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 9.07pm.