

NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD

29 June 2016

Present: Councillors Smith in the Chair.

Councillors Davey, Hayfield, Ingram, Jones, Lea Smitten, Chambers, Ferro, Lewis, Phillips, and M Stanley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bell (Substitute Councillor Lea) and Councillor Hanratty.

9 **Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared at the meeting.

10 **Public Participation**

The following questions were submitted to the Board.

Question from Andy Crow, 1 Woodside, Arley, CV7 8GH

While campaigning as a member of the KASCO action group I have had many conversations with local users of the Centre in particular on how the use of the Centre has impacted on their health, let me give you a couple of quotes:-

“Malcolm” lives in Old Arley and 8 years ago suffered a heart attack, following surgery and physiotherapy he was advised by the medical staff to continue an exercise routine. He has adhered to the exercise plan due to the ASC being very convenient to visit on his journey home from work. He is now in very good health and leads a normal life, still sticking to his exercise plan. However had this Centre not been available Malcolm admits that due to full time work and family commitments he would have found this plan extremely difficult to follow and it is unlikely that he would have continued with it. Malcolm also added that if the Centre closes he would be unlikely to use another Centre.

“Louisa” a single parent who lives in New Arley, like many others she is trying improve her diet and fitness by attending classes a couple of times a week at ASC. Louisa also works part time and would not be able to travel to Centres in other areas due to poor transport links and the increased time that would be involved. In addition Louisa has to bring her children with her to the Centre as she cannot afford extra “child care” Louisa feels that her children are safe at ASC as they can wait on the balcony and watch the exercise class and more importantly she can watch them, she doesn't think this would be possible at the other Centres!

If ASC closes, what alternative or hope is there for these and other more vulnerable members of our local community?

The response given by the Chairman was as follows;

It is acknowledged that Arley Sports Centre and the services provided through the facility have had significant benefits for its users and the wider local community. The report to the Community and Environment Board in January 2016 recognised a number of these positive impacts and Councillors have done likewise during the intervening weeks and months. The Borough Council, however, provides a wide range of services that benefit the local community. With the need to make savings of approximately £1.7 million over the next four years, the Authority is faced with difficult decisions, some of which will have an adverse consequence for certain members of our community. The Borough Council, in conjunction with other agencies, community and voluntary sector organisations and local residents, will seek to minimise these impacts, find alternatives and provide hope wherever possible. Nevertheless, through no fault of the Authority, these savings will need to be found.

Question from Roger Power, 106 Rectory Road, Old Arley, CV7 8FR.

J is 78 years old, she has spent much of the past 10 years immobilised, housebound and lonely due to a knee problem caused predominantly by her weight. Fearing she would spend the next 10 years in similar or worse condition, 3 years ago she took the brave move to contact Pat Poulton and start attending her over 50s fitness group. The welcome and understanding she received from Pat and the group has given her a new lease of life. Although she still struggles with her weight, she has lost pounds and she is now out of the house. She has formed a healthy support network and regularly walks to meet up with other members of the group. She still attends the group and she is independent again, her quality of life has soared and the cost on other services plummeted.

Arley community and the users of ASC are fitter, stronger and more resilient because of Arley Sports Centre. Is it fair to close it?

The response given by the Chairman was as follows;

The Borough Council's need to make revenue savings of the magnitude identified in answer to the previous question (from Mr Crow) will impact on a number of services currently provided by the Authority. Some of the recipients of these services may consider the consequent impacts to be unfair. Councillors, however, have the unenviable tasks of trying to be fair to all of the residents of North Warwickshire, many of whom help to pay for facilities like Arley Sports Centre, without having the opportunity to make use of its services. Despite the difficult financial challenges that lie ahead, this Administration will continue to take a fair, balanced and even-handed approach to the delivery of valued services to its residents.

Question from Kelly Shemmans, 403 Tunnel Road, Nuneaton, CV10 9PF

M is a 32 years old mum, who has just successfully completed the second year of her Psychology degree with 2:1 honours. She has suffered for many years from anxiety disorders and 7 years ago was diagnosed with depression, her doctor recommended regular exercise but although she tried independently to maintain a personal fitness regime this never became habitual and so wasn't successful.

Attending a formal structured class was a huge challenge and it took many years, quite a few panic attacks and several failed attempts to actually get through the doors but with support she began attending classes at ASC. She now attends 4 classes a week her mental health is stronger than ever, her anxiety attacks are vastly reduced and she is no longer dependent on medication. The thought of attending another centre and losing the network of support she has established locally still terrifies her.

Arley community and the users of ASC are fitter, stronger and more resilient because of Arley Sports Centre. Is it fair to close it?

The response given by the Chairman was as follows;

I refer you to my answer to the previous question from Mr Power.

Question from Jodie Gosling, 92 George Street, Gun Hill, CV7 8GP

B is 35, mum of 4 beautiful daughters, 3 surviving. She has suffered with mental health issues exacerbated by postnatal depression with her first daughter. 3 years ago the tragic loss of Clementine her 3rd daughter at 12 days old, left the family devastated. She finds being at home lonely and often feels isolated. There used to be 6 weekly playgroups run in and around our village, 3 run by NWBC, this was reduced by Surestart and NWBC and this has now been further cut by Barnardo's leaving only ASC's tumble time as the only weekly group for miles. B attends tumble time at Arley every week and has built strong support networks and made good friends.

B says 'it helps to be out and doing things and it helps to know there are people to talk to. Besides it great for the kids to get together and start learning that being healthy is fun too.'

B would like to try and work towards a postnatal exercise group at Arley Sports Centre to help new mums get back into shape and use her experience to support others with the challenges parents face.

Arley community and the users of ASC are fitter, stronger and more resilient because of Arley Sports Centre. Is it fair to close it?

The response given by the Chairman was as follows;

I refer you to my answer to the earlier question from Mr Power. I am grateful for the highlighted examples of the benefits of leisure facility provision. I have no doubt, however, that the personal circumstances of the people identified in these case studies are shared by others throughout the Borough, most of whom do not have the ease of access to a leisure centre in their town or village. In many cases, they find support through alternative means and services. The Borough Council will continue to work in partnership with other organisations to sustainably improve the health and well-being of its community.

11 **Arley Sports Centre – Consultation Feedback – Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development).**

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) informed Members that at the meeting of Community and Environment Board held on 18 January 2016 the Board identified Option 1 (Full Closure) as its preferred option in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre. At that meeting, Members also resolved to undertake Borough-wide consultation in respect of the preferred option. The community consultation period concluded on 22 May 2016 and the report provided an analysis of the responses received through this process.

Recommended:

- a) **That, consequent upon the completion of the community consultation process and the acquisition of additional related information, the Board resolves to include Arley Sports Centre within the previously approved review of leisure, health and well-being provision in North Warwickshire;**
- b) **That, in view of a) above, Arley Sports Centre remains open until the Board and Full Council have had the opportunity to consider the outcome of the review of leisure, health and well-being provision in North Warwickshire, but that the opportunity be taken to amend off-peak opening hours in order to ensure that the level of revenue saving identified in Option 3 of the report to Board in January 2016 is achieved;**
- c) **That, in view of b) above, where off-peak opening hours are amended, opportunities are taken to make the Sports Centre available for appropriate alternative / community use, provided that there is no direct increase in cost to the Borough Council in doing so; and,**
- d) **That a report be presented to the Special Sub-Group, setting out the staffing implications of the decision to**

amend off-peak opening hours at Arley Sports Centre, as identified in b) above.

Les Smith
Chairman