



Shareholders Committee

Thursday, 22nd August,
2024

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey (Chair), Councillor Bill Hartnett (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joe Baker and Jen Snape

Also Present:

Ben Clawson-Chan (Managing Director, Rubicon Leisure Limited)

Officers:

Peter Carpenter

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Ian Woodall.

Officers advised that, in line with the terms of reference for the Shareholders Committee that had been agreed at the Annual Council meeting in May 2024, the leader of the opposition group, Councillor Matthew Dormer, had been invited to attend this meeting, although the group did not have any members sat on the Committee. Members were advised that he had also had to give his apologies for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shareholders Committee held on Thursday 4th April 2024 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

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4. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that:

Under S100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the said act, as amended.

**Minute Item No. 5 – Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Report 2024/25 (Including Year End 2023/24 Update)
Minute Item No. 6 – Council Funding and Support Update**

5. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2024/25 (INCLUDING YEAR END 2023/24 UPDATE)

The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited presented the Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Report for 2024/25, which included an update on the year end performance for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Committee was informed that performance in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year had been positive. The Abbey Stadium and Pitcheroak Golf Course were performing well. In particular, customers were attracted by the food and beverage offer at Pitcheroak, especially the carvery, which had developed a good reputation locally. There had been a Beer Festival held at the venue, as part of efforts to make further use of the site.

The Arrow Valley Countryside Centre was performing well and attracting a lot of customers. The Community Centres were also performing well. Oakenshaw Community Centre in particular was benefiting from the number of Council and Committee meetings that were taking place at the site during the works on the Town Hall Hub. Other Community Centres were benefitting from Members holding surgeries within their wards.

Many events had been successfully held at Forge Mill Needle Museum and the venue was attracting far more customers than had been the case in previous years. It was suggested that this was partly due to investment in additional facilities, such as a play area, which were helping to attract more customers.

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The Rubicon Leisure Limited branding and logo had been updated. This was helping people to identify what services Rubicon Leisure Limited delivered and what the company was. This would have a beneficial impact as the brand for Rubicon Leisure Limited continued to grow.

A customer satisfaction scoring system had been launched. Any score above 0 was considered to be good, above 50 was considered to be excellent and above 70 was “top class”. The final score represented the average feedback received from multiple customers. A similar system was used by lots of companies, including multinational firms such as Netflix. In this context, the Managing Director for Rubicon Leisure Limited was pleased to report that four of the facilities managed by the company had been rated “top class”.

The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited asked for it to be noted that the performance of the company’s services was a testament to the hard work of the staff.

Once the report had been presented, Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The number of people who had attended the Beer Festival and how this compared to target customer numbers.
- The significant number of followers for Rubicon Leisure Limited on Instagram and how this had been achieved. Members were informed that the Marketing team had been very active on social media.
- The information provided in the report in respect of exploring opportunities for the community centres to be used in relation to health and wellbeing initiatives and what this would entail.
- An update was requested on the progress that had been achieved since the previous meeting of the Committee in respect of getting the water wheel at Forge Mill Needle Museum to be operational. The Committee was informed that works were continuing and it was anticipated that volunteers would be able to operate the waterwheel in due course.
- The valuable contribution that was made to the operation of both the Palace Theatre and Forge Mill Needle Museum by volunteers. Members asked for their thanks to be communicated to the volunteers for their hard work and support.
- The benefits arising from enabling Forge Mill Needle Museum to develop greater links with local schools.
- The additional capital investment referenced in the report and how this would be funded. The Section 151 Officer clarified

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that this referred to funding from the Council's capital programme to invest in facilities at the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre. The proposed funding was due to be considered at a forthcoming meeting of Council.

RESOLVED that

the update be noted.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

6. COUNCIL FUNDING AND SUPPORT UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented a report focusing on the support, including financial support, provided by the Council to Rubicon Leisure Limited.

Members were reminded that there had been some actions requested at the previous meeting of the Shareholders Committee. This had included a request to explore the potential to install lighting around the Arrow Valley Lake to enhance customer safety. Members were advised that it was not possible to install power around the lake, therefore, the potential for solar lights to be installed was being explored.

An update was provided with regard to progress with the preparation and submission of the company's audited accounts for 2023/24. The Committee was informed that the Rubicon Board had established an Audit Committee, which had already held some meetings. It was anticipated that the audit of the 2023/24 accounts would commence in September 2024. It was anticipated that the accounts would be submitted by December 2024, in line with requirements from Companies House.

Following the presentation of the report, Members noted that the Committee had previously requested an opportunity to hold joint meetings with the Rubicon Board. The first of these meetings had taken place and Members reported that they felt that this had been a constructive meeting. The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited advised that the Board had also found this meeting to be useful and it was proposed that in future they should occur on a quarterly basis.

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RESOLVED to note the position in terms of:

- a) The lighting round the Lake.**
- b) The potential additional funding available to Rubicon.**
- c) Progress in relation to the closure of the 2023/24 Accounts.**

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

The Meeting commenced at 3.00 pm
and closed at 3.34 pm