



Shareholders Committee

Thursday, 27th February,
2025

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey (Chair), and Councillors Jen Snape, Jane Spilsbury, Monica Stringfellow and Ian Woodall

Also Present:

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

Officers:

Peter Carpenter

Democratic Services Officers:

Jo Gresham

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker and Hartnett with Councillors Stringfellow and Spilsbury as named substitutes respectively.

Members were informed that Councillor Matthew Dormer had been invited to attend the meeting as a leader of a political group, in line with the terms of reference for the Committee. Councillor Dormer had advised that he was hoping to attend the meeting, but he was due to attend another Committee meeting the same evening. In the event, that meeting had not finished by the time that the Shareholders Committee meeting concluded and therefore he was unable to attend.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J. Spilsbury declared an Other Registerable interest in that her son worked at Arrow Valley. Councillor Spilsbury remained

Chair

in the room for consideration of Minute Nos. 18,19, and 20 and took part in the vote thereon.

Councillor M. Stringfellow arrived at the meeting at 18:41. On arrival, she declared an Other Disclosable Interest in that her husband was a volunteer at the Palace Theatre in Redditch. Councillor Stringfellow remained in the room for consideration of Minute Nos. 18,19, and 20 and took part in the vote thereon.

There were no further Declarations of Interest.

15. COUNCIL FUNDING AND SUPPORT - UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer presented the Council Funding and Support – Update report for Members' consideration.

In doing so, it was highlighted that the Council had delivered its budget in two tranches this year, as it had done previously. The second tranche had been approved at the Full Redditch Borough Council meeting held on 24th February 2025. Included in the approved budget had been a significant number of Capital bids which related to Rubicon. These included:

1. Refurbishment of the Abbey Stadium Roof (£250,000).
2. Refurbishment of Abbey Valley Stadium indoor Changing Rooms & Toilets (£300,000).
3. Installation of a new outdoor Kiosk and Toilet refurbishment at Forge Mill (£90,000).
4. Refurbishing the Male changing rooms and 2nd Green at Pitcheroak (£90,000).
5. Upgrade of the Athletics Track Surface (£300,000).

The Council had now closed their accounts for the financial year 2023-2024 and the draft accounts 2024-2025 were required by 30th June 2025. Rubicon's draft accounts were required earlier than this to form part of the draft Council submission. It was noted that the Council's closed accounts had 'Disclaimer Options' attached to them. This might prove to be a problem for external auditors in terms of the backstop and for trading entities such as Rubicon. It was however reported that there were many Councils across the country in the same position.

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Following the presentation Members expressed that it was good to see that investment in Rubicon's assets was underway. It was noted that this was important in order to increase revenue in the future and continue to provide good services throughout the Borough. It was noted that this investment was ongoing and that there would be additional areas that required investment such as sports hall conversion / fitness extension at the Abbey Stadium and Community Centre redevelopments.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Shareholders Committee held on 2nd December 2024 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

17. 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 18 – Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2024 2025

Minute Item No. 19 – Rubicon Leisure Limited – Business Plan 2025 - 2026

Minute Item No 20 – Rubicon Leisure Limited – Budget report 2025 – 2026

18. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 3 2024/25

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The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited presented the Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter three for the 202/25 financial year.

The Committee was advised that Rubicon Leisure Limited continued to report a strong position for the year with income, performance and risk being monitored carefully.

Members queried when some of the activities that had been developed at the Arrow Valley Country Park would be up and running, such as the swan pedalos. It was noted that a jetty was being prepared at the park with a view to commencing the swan pedalos for the Easter period. In addition to this, it was reported that there would also be row boats, paddleboards and kayaks available during the season. These were seasonal activities however they would be available from Easter to the end of the summer holidays of 2025.

Members felt that all services and activities were positive for the residents of Redditch. However, these successes needed to be celebrated more widely, and communications provided so that all activities were promoted effectively. The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited reported that there had been some recent investment in marketing including the recruitment of a marketing manager. The reach for social media had also increased to between eight to ten thousand followers for each site. The website now provided information and showcased activities across the Rubicon Leisure Limited portfolio in one place.

Members were also encouraged to communicate such events to their networks, if they were not already doing so. Some Members explained that they did provide residents within their wards with 'dates for the diary' which included events across Rubicon. It was noted that currently there were no specific roles within Rubicon that managed the development of community centres and that caretakers managed the sites.

RESOLVED that

the report 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)).

19. RUBICON LEISURE LIMITED - BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26

The Managing director of Rubicon Leisure Limited presented the Rubicon Leisure Limited - Business Plan 2025/26.

Members were advised that there were priorities and themes that underpinned the Plan for 2025 - 2026. Several themes were also included that would provide structure and focus over the coming twelve months.

Members queried whether there were any opportunities as part of the Business Plan to increase collaborations with key partners such as the NHS or Public Health England to help improve health and wellbeing across Redditch. Rubicon met monthly with the NHS and Public Health partners through the Redditch District Collaborative.

It was reported that there were a large number of volunteers who supported Rubicon Leisure Limited who were an extremely valuable part of the organisation.

RESOLVED that

The Rubicon Leisure Annual Business Plan 2025/26 be approved.

(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)).

20. RUBICON LEISURE LIMITED - BUDGET REPORT 2025/26

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The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited presented the Rubicon Leisure Limited - Budget Report 2025/26 for Members' consideration.

Members were informed that overall, this was a good budget, and Rubicon was in a good position going forward.

RESOLVED that

The Rubicon Leisure Budget Report 2025/26, and its underlying assumptions be approved.

(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 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.31 pm