

Shareholders Committee

Thursday, 21st August,
2025

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sharon Harvey (Chair), Councillor Ian Woodall (Vice-Chair)
and Councillors Juma Begum, Bill Hartnett and Jen Snape

Also Present:

Councillor Matthew Dormer and B Clawson-Chan (Managing Director,
Rubicon Leisure Limited)

Officers:

Ruth Bamford and Debra Goodall

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Juliet Barker Smith and Jane Spilsbury and it was confirmed that Councillors Jen Snape and Juma Begum were attending as their substitutes respectively.

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 27th February 2025 be confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Chair

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4. TO CONSIDER ANY URGENT BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIR, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

There was no urgent business for consideration on this occasion.

5. 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 6 – Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring Outturn Report 2024/25
- Minute Item No. 7 – Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Report 2025/26

6. QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING OUTTURN REPORT 2024/25

The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited presented the Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring Outturn Report for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Committee was informed that Rubicon Leisure Limited had performed well in 2024/25, with income increasing across a range of venues. In particular, performance had been strong at the Abbey Stadium and performance had exceeded targets for the Palace Theatre. Food and Beverage offers across many of the venues operated by Rubicon Leisure Limited had attracted additional income thereby having a further positive impact on performance.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the Council's finance system which supported Rubicon Leisure Limited. There had been issues reported with this system which had

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impacted on both Council services and Rubicon Leisure Limited. Discussions had been held by senior officers at the Council with representatives of the finance system to try to identify solutions that could help to resolve this issue.

Reference was made to the community centres which were operated by Rubicon Leisure Limited on behalf of the Council. Members welcomed the online booking system that could be used to book the community centres for meetings. It was noted that this online booking system revealed whether a particular venue had already been booked on a specific date and time, although private booking details were not advertised on this system in order to comply with data protection rules.

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)).

7. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2025/26

The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited presented the Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring Report for the 2025/26 financial year.

The Committee was advised that the venues operated by Rubicon Leisure Limited had performed well during the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year. The Abbey Stadium in particular was performing well. In addition, Pitcheroak Golf Course was also performing well and it was anticipated that the good weather had had a positive impact on custom.

The offer at the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre continued to grow. A new outdoor kiosk had been introduced alongside outdoor activities on the Arrow Valley Lake. However, the discovery of blue-green algae on the lake in August 2025 had had an impact as the company had had to stop certain activities for health and safety reasons.

The number of events held by Rubicon Leisure Limited were growing. This included 'Sounds in the Grounds' which had been a

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success, although that event had taken place in the second quarter of the financial year.

Forge Mill Needle Museum had had its strongest year on record. The new food and beverage offer at the venue had had a positive impact. A new kiosk was due to be introduced at Forge Mill Needle Museum and it was likely that this would have a further positive impact.

Performance at the community centres had been driven by the number of people and organisations hiring the venues. This was having a positive impact on performance.

Members were asked to note that both Forge Mill Needle Museum and the Arrow Valley Countryside Centre and lake had been nominated for awards by Visit Worcestershire. These nominations had been welcomed in recognition of the hard work of staff and volunteers. The outcomes of the awards process remained to be confirmed by the date of the Committee meeting.

Rubicon Leisure Limited had a strategic partnership with Heart of Worcestershire (HOW) College. As part of this partnership, students from the college could secure work experience with Rubicon Leisure Limited. Some students had subsequently gone on to secure permanent employment with the company.

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

- The reasons for the maintenance works at the swimming pool and when they were likely to be resolved. Clarification was provided that some of this had been planned maintenance works which had been necessary but had resulted in the closure of the pool. Further planned maintenance would be required.
- The impact of the blue-green algae on activities held at the Arrow Valley Lake. The Managing Director of Rubicon Leisure Limited explained that the majority of activities had had to end, although the pedalo swans had continued to be available.
- The cause of the blue-green algae and how this might be resolved. Members were informed that rainy weather was needed to help clear the blue-green algae, which had occurred due to the unusually hot weather that had been experienced during the summer months in 2025.
- The performance that had been reported for the hire of meeting room facilities at the Arrow Valley Countryside

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Centre. Members were asked to note that use of the venue had increased compared to the same quarter in 2024/25.

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)).

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.02 pm