

PARKWOOD LEISURE SERVICES WORKING GROUP

Monday 11 March 2013

Present:-

Councillors Morris, Sheldon and Shiel

Also Present

Darren Parrott, Assistant Regional Director South West
Stephen Hughes, Exeter Contract Manager

Also Present

Assistant Director Economy, Member Services Officer (HB) and Leisure Facilities Manager

Also Present

Phil Roebuck, Wonford and Northbrook Golf Centre Manager

7

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mitchell and James Coulton.

8

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2013 were agreed.

9

WONFORD SPORTS CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Phil Roebuck, the Wonford and Northbrook Golf Centre Manager, updated the group on the progress with the improvement plan for his facilities. A tour of the refurbished changing and toilet facilities had preceded the meeting.

Signage - Foliage partially hiding current signs at Liddles and at the Bus Stop would be cut back and the County Council requested to provide additional signs in Heavitree and along Topsham Road.

Cleansing regime - The recent Quest review had praised the revised and enhanced regime with additional cleaning now undertaken on weekends.

The online booking facility was up and running and a Facebook page had commenced in January. Update reports were provided on web bookings.

Lights had been replaced in the Sports Hall.

Football, martial arts and badminton groups were keen to join Clubmark and were liaising with Michelle Murrery, the Sports Development Manager.

Part and full time staff contributed towards the centre's business plan objectives.

Regular monitoring and patrols were undertaken of the outside, particularly the rear of the Centre, with the Police and CPSO also participating given the possibility of challenging behaviour from local children and teenagers.

Staff had been on refresher courses between January and December. Staff appraisals were valuable and the next round would occur over the forthcoming months. Parkwood Leisure undertook these on a six monthly basis.

Attrition rates in membership reduction had fallen from 9.9% before Christmas to 6.8%, the target being 7.5%.

The gym would be refurbished in June/July with input from a Customer Focus Group meeting at Wonford on 15 April 2013.

In response to a Member, Stephen Hughes advised that both Clifton Hill and Wonford gyms were to be refurbished in June/July and that centre members were being targeted with invites to Customer Focus Groups on gym usage at Wonford on 15 April 2013 and Clifton Hill on 17 April. Facebook would also be utilised. For more specific, subject based Focus Groups, the relevant clubs would be invited as with the 6 March 2013 "Clubs and Club Bookings" Forum at the Pyramids (see below).

Few comment cards had been returned, the majority of feedback being verbal and through the website, the latter being monitored by head office where a 24 hour response was expected.

Nick Neale, the Quest Inspector, visiting on 26 February 2013, had been pleased with the results and his written report would follow. An upturn in performance had been evident and it was hoped that the assessment would be raised from 'satisfactory' to 'good'. The updated improvement plan incorporating the comments, would be circulated once revised.

Facebook was used as a marketing tool, although a Member remarked that the new Riverside Facebook did not appear to possess a facility for the public to respond. This would be checked as it was an important feedback mechanism. It was noted how many companies were becoming cautious in their use of social media as a disproportionate level of negative public views could lead to a downward spiral in perception not reflecting reality with the tendency for individuals to post negative experiences and not to record positive comments.

A taster spinning session was to be held at Wonford in the week commencing 18 March 2013, a programme to be launched thereafter. It would be incorporated into the Expressions Membership Scheme.

Snagging work to the changing rooms would be undertaken within the current week and a watching brief kept on the condition of the hall floor as there had been some reports of slippery conditions.

Northbrook Golf Course

The course opens between the end of March until the end of September with training for two new staff to commence shortly. The facility would operate from 9:00 am to dusk, seven days a week and the Legend booking facility would be used. Use was influenced by weather conditions, 2012 having been particularly poor with eight of the 18 holes unplayable for a number of weeks during the poor summer weather, due to waterlogging. Such conditions also hampered grass cutting.

It was noted that 'excellent' was an unrealistic target as this standard was normally attained at national sporting facilities which could also offer other attractions and

facilities. Even Exeter Arena, which had been judged as a top scoring athletics arena in the country, had not registered as 'excellent'.

Progress at all centres would be monitored with improvement plans to play a key role. These were to be regarded as on-going documents to be regularly consulted and updated and not regarded as tick box exercises. Satisfaction surveys were a key part of this process the content to remain broadly the same to facilitate benchmarking.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer Focus Groups

The Customer Focus Groups were subject based relating to the site, e.g. swimming, bowls, fitness, aerobics, children's' activities. The first had taken place on 6 March 2013 at the Pyramids, the focus being 'Clubs and Club Bookings'.

Given the subject, Parkwood had chosen not to circulate all individual members but had contacted the clubs who hire the facilities. Considering the previous old style customer forum attracted no attendees at the Pyramids last time, this meeting had been very successful. Nine people had attended, all representing a widespread of clubs who use the facilities including Badminton, Volleyball, Waterpolo, Street Running, Synchronised Swimming and Athletics. There were some notable absentees including the Exeter Swimming Club and the Exeter Harriers but hopefully the success of this Group would escalate. The meeting had been very positive and some interesting issues raised with some excellent networking and co-operation between the clubs using the facilities had been evident throughout the discussions.

Recurring issues were requests by clubs to have greater usage of the facilities during peak times. There had been reference to busy Friday evenings at the Riverside with large changeovers and differing requirements regarding noise levels. The ability of the booking system to identify "music courts" would be investigated. Reassurance had been sought that the Pyramids would not close before a new pool was opened. Other issues raised included floor conditions, lighting and VAT and some clubs had sought the provision of notice boards to advertise their club events within the relevant sites and this would be explored. Club representatives had generally found staff to be helpful and polite. The minutes would be published, including display on notice-boards.

It was felt that the Customer Focus Groups were a very positive step in the right direction and, hopefully, the future planned meetings would be as successful and rewarding. The next one would be on 8 April 2013 at the Riverside, Wonford and Clifton Hill to host subsequent ones. A copy of the programme of Focus Groups was presented to Members for the first half of 2013, the second half would be reviewed based on success.

Customer Comments

Issues raised included air conditioning handling units at ISCA and heating, lockers, the gym floor and staffing in respect of the Riverside. It was reported that the gym floor had been completely re-laid and would be open by Friday 15 March 2013. 75% of lockers had been replaced. Comments received over the December and January, although slightly higher than the corresponding months in the previous 12 months, were down on previous months as these were generally quieter periods.

It was noted there was also an unofficial Facebook page for the Riverside. Councillor Sheldon commented that both Facebook and the website had not shown a change in opening times for the main Pyramids pool on a Saturday afternoon when it had been booked for a children's party. Staff had advised that both should have recorded the change but this had not been the case. The learner pool, rather than the main pool was used for parties so this would be investigated. It was recognised that insect problems in the men's changing rooms had been reported and this was being monitored and addressed.

12

MEETING DIARY FOR 2013

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The next meeting would be at 2.30 pm on Monday 13 May 2013 at the Northbrook Swimming Pool, Lee Golding, the Senior Duty Manager at the Northbrook Swimming Pool and Simeon Lewry, the ISCA Centre Manager to attend to present their Service Improvement plans.

(The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and closed at 3.45 pm)

Chair