

Amenities, Leisure and Community Services

Thursday 15th January 2026

The Trinity Centre

18:30pm

Present:

Cllrs Cummins, Cooper, Mosson and Wood.

In Attendance:

Olive O’Sullivan – Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Steve Hollingworth (SH) – Head of Open Spaces and Environment, Jessica Johnson (JJ) – Project Manager Communities.

34 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr’s Griffin, K Ward and Yip.

Resolved accept the apologies.

35 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Wood declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 39 as an allotment plot holder at the Boulevard Allotment site.

36 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee held on 11th November 2025 be signed as a true record of the meeting.

37 Matters arising

38 Questions from Members

None.

39 Petition

The CEO reported that as set out in the minutes of the November Committee meeting the Town Council had received objections from residents whose properties border the Donegal Road Allotments site regarding the proposal to place fencing along the boundary of the site on allotment land and that a petition had been

received on 10 November which was outside of the time for it to be considered at the November Committee meeting. The petition requested that the Town Council paused the installation of the proposed fence and for the Council to engage with residents before proceeding further.

SH reported that as a result of the objections and petition residents from properties adjacent to the Donegal Road Allotments were invited to attend a meeting with Council representatives on Thursday 8 January 2026, to discuss the matter and that residents from 11 properties attended the meeting.

Residents were advised at the meeting that Officers would feedback their comments to the Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee on 15 January 2026 along with the petition, for consideration, before proceeding.

At the 8 January 2026 meeting with residents, it was outlined that the 11 allotment sites in Sutton Coldfield are or have been transferred from Birmingham City Council (BCC) to the Town Council and that due to BCC's financial difficulties the sites require a lot of investment. As a result, the Town Council has initially prioritised safety and security and fencing has already been installed on sites where there was either no barrier or a poor barrier in place, between the neighbouring properties and the allotments and, the Town Council wants to fully secure all its sites.

It was reported that the proposal to fence the Donegal Road Allotments site has been prioritised as safety concerns have been highlighted in an independent health and safety inspection Report and by the Allotment Association, i.e. that residents from neighbouring properties with gates, are accessing the allotments directly onto the allotment driveway, in front of moving cars.

As a result, there have been some reported near misses.

BCC was also made aware of this risk and the unauthorised access through these gates and so wrote to residents of the properties in 2022, that were known to have gates at the time, asking residents to close the gates permanently with immediate effect. Some residents complied and some did not.

In addition, some plot holders, although aware of the 5mph speed limit on site, continue to speed along the driveway even after being reminded by the Allotments Association of the speed limit.

Given the risk and the fact that other actions have not resolved the problem, it was agreed to install the security fence, first, at Donegal Road Allotments along the driveway to stop unauthorised access.

Residents were shown pictures of the proposed fence, a v mesh wire fence 1.7m tall, which is lower than a normal garden fence, so that it will not be visible from residents' gardens who have their own boundary fence.

It was also reported at the 8 January 2026 meeting that the Allotment Association, when requested, have kindly allowed residents to access their gardens through the allotment land, when they have received a delivery of bulky goods that may not go through the house, and, to maintain their own fence and that it is proposed to continue with this practice and install a fence with removable panels, which can be removed on request, to enable access on the occasions outlined above.

In addition, it was confirmed at the meeting that the Council will maintain wildlife highways through or under the fence.

Residents at the 8 January meeting were advised that if residents believe they have secured prescriptive rights to enter the allotment site and they can prove it, that the Council would remove the fence from their gate.

At the residents meeting on 8 January 2026, the following issues were also raised: -

1. Some residents felt the whole site should be secured, as residents next to the driveway felt picked on.

SH suggested to Committee that this could be brought forward and pursued.

2. One person at the 8 January 2026 meeting said they nearly got hit last week, as a result of accessing the site from their garden onto the road, highlighting the problem.

3. Many people said the problem was speeding vehicles by allotment holders and so this should be tackled first.

SH advised Committee that while the Council could look at further measures, such as speed bumps and more signage, that Council should still secure the site.

4. Residents said they would have no means of escape at the rear of their property in an emergency if a fence was erected.

SH advised Committee that this is also true for the many properties that have not fitted a gate and have not felt the need to do so.

5. Emergency services have accessed the site through a resident's garden in the past to put out a fire on the allotment site and that a fence could restrict emergency services to the site

SH advised Committee that there is vehicle access to the site via a locked gate, which the emergency services could remove in such an emergency. The Fire Service have confirmed since the meeting that they have powers to enter premises by force to take the most direct or quickest route to a fire.

6. Some residents asked why a carpark by the entrance could not be built to stop people driving down the driveway or why can't the Council move the road, so it is away from the back gardens. SH advised residents at the 8 January meeting that these options would be costly, and that the Council would still want to secure the site.

7. Some residents felt the approach is heavy handed by the Town Council and it was incurring unnecessary expenditure. They also said that it was upsetting the community, and each allotment should be treated differently based on public opinion.

SH repeated that that Council wanted to secure all its sites.

SH concluded that he believed this to be a fair summary of the meeting.

Cllr Wood commented that he understood why residents who have been accessing the site would not be happy with the access being stopped.

However, he added that it is private land and if unauthorised access continues, it would mean that the site is not secured and that the liability of any accident on site through unauthorised access, would fall on the property owner i.e. the Town Council.

Cllr Wood responded that that the Town Council had listened to the resident's feedback from the 8 January 2026 meeting and that the proposal to install fencing that could be removed to enable access for deliveries and maintenance was reasonable and accommodating.

Committee discussed the need to proceed with the works to ensure that it is made secure and safe given that Donegal Road Allotments has now transferred from BCC to the Town Council.

After careful consideration of the petition and the feedback from the 8 January meeting Committee: -

Resolved to instruct officers to proceed with the installation of fencing and to extend the fencing to secure the whole of the site; to progress the installation of additional measures to reduce speeding on the site; for this expenditure to be approved using delegated powers and for the use of the delegated powers to be reported back to Committee in March.

Resolved that if any resident believes that they have Prescriptive Rights to access the site they should produce this evidence to the Town Council by Friday 13th February.

40 Falls Prevention Health Talk

The Project Manager Communities reported a Falls Prevention Talk took place on 10th December 2025 at Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall. The talk was in partnership with Good Hope Hospital to aid in NHS Winter Pressures and the higher risk of falling.

The talk focused on ways to prevent the likelihood of falls, what to do if it happens and raise awareness on available support, services and activities. Delivered by physiotherapists and occupational therapists, the presentation covered topics such as bone health, nutrition and general health advice. Health professionals also delivered an exercise session to improve strength and balance, videos for residents to follow along and practice at home were shared with attendees after the meeting.

Attendees reported that their key takeaways from the talk included increased confidence, practically how to support yourself and others who may be at risk of falls, how to get up safely if you do fall and guidance on mobility aids.

The Project Manager Communities added that it was important to recognise the impact of direct interaction with health professionals for residents, that they may not otherwise have had access to.

The CEO reported on an application to the NHS Fairer Futures Fund, discussed at the December Full Council meeting. The application for £236,850 focuses on Healthy Ageing with an emphasis on falls prevention. Much of the funds will be used towards a platform that includes a self-assessment tool as well as highlighting advice, guidance and local services. This assessment can be completed by residents or by family members and friends on their behalf.

The application is supported by Good Hope Hospital, as well as Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust, Birmingham CCC Public Health and community

organisations. The Town Council will be the accountable body but will passport funds to other organisations.

The application will be considered by the Fairer Futures Programme Board on the 19th before being reported to the Birmingham Place Committee.

Cllr Wood commented that given the demographics in Royal Sutton Coldfield, it was important for the Town Council to be involved in these projects and to support older adults to be independent in their own homes for longer.

Resolved to note the report.

41 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be 10th March 2026, 18:30pm, Trinity Centre

The meeting ended at 18:53 pm

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Signed

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Date