

Woughton Community Council

Planning, Licensing & Development Committee

Minutes of the special meeting held on Monday 11th May 2020, 6:20pm via Zoom call and Facebook Live.

Present: Cllrs Shammi Akter, Janette Bobey, Donna Fuller, Brian Hepburn, Luke Louis, Ruth Macmillan, John Orr, Nick Scott, Sue Smith.

Also present: Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer), Steve McNay (Council Manager).

Cllr Sue Smith presided in the Chair.

LD 01/20 Election of Chair for the Council Year 2020/2021:

Cllr Smith asked for nominations.

Cllr Brian Hepburn proposed either Cllrs Donna Fuller or Sue Smith for Chair of the committee for the Council Year 2020/2021.

Cllr Smith declined her nomination.

Cllr Fuller accepted her nomination, which was seconded by Cllr Sue Smith.

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Donna Fuller is elected Chair of the committee for the Council Year 2020/2021.

LD 02/20 Election of Vice-Chair for the Council Year 2020/2021:

Cllr Smith asked for nominations.

Cllr Janette Bobey nominated herself for Vice-Chair of the committee for the Council Year 2020/2021, which was seconded by Cllr Nick Scott.

There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Janette Bobey is elected Vice-Chair of the committee for the Council Year 2020/2021.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 18th May 2020 at 6:00pm venue to be confirmed.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 6:23 pm

Chair _____ Date _____

Woughton Community Council

Planning, Licensing & Development Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th May 2020, 6:00pm via Zoom call and Facebook Live.

Present: Cllrs Donna Fuller (Chair), Janette Bobey (Vice-Chair), Brian Hepburn, Luke Louis, Ruth Macmillan, John Orr, Nick Scott, Sue Smith.

Also present: Steve McNay (Council Manager).

In attendance: Four (4) members of the public.

LD 03/20 Apologies:

There were no apologies given.

Cllr Shammi Akter was not in attendance or gave any apologies.

NOTED

LD 04/20 Declarations of Interest:

There were declarations of interest.

NOTED

LD 05/20 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):

A member of the public was concerned about the lack of consultation, the letter to residents was unsatisfactory, there were no public notices in the area until recently, which had the incorrect street name written on it, it has been impossible to get through to a planning officer on the phone, and there had been problems with the portal, a letter has now gone in along with other residents with their objections, do Milton Keynes Council think this application will be approved without proper democratic process?

Another member of the public asked how the committee felt about this planning application at the moment?

The Chair responded that although she cannot speak on behalf the committee, especially as the debate will occur when the agenda item comes up, the committee will go with the majority of residents views, although the committee can see the benefits of technology to the area, there are concerns about the lack of consultation by Milton Keynes Council to residents, and the Chair has asked the Council Manager to look into a few matters to seek clarification, residents were reminded that any objections have to be relevant to planning laws and not on personal views, another concern is the marina site, whose residents will be closer to where the mast is proposed to be located.

A resident expressed a concern that the proposed location of the mast is in an area that the public use which is a large attractive green open space, and also the

position of the proposed mast is near to the roundabout on the V8 Marlborough Street and will be one of the first thing motorists see as it will be over 22 feet, which would be a distraction, when drivers are trying to get in the correct lane.

NOTED

LD 06/20 Chairs announcements:

There were no chairs announcements.

NOTED

LD 07/20 Minutes of previous meetings:

Date of next meeting:

To delete "Monday 22nd June 2020" and replace with "Monday 18th May 2020".

With the above amendment the minutes of the Planning, Licensing & Development Committee's special meeting held on Monday 11th May 2020 were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

LD 08/20 To consider planning application: 20/00876/FULR3

Address: Telecommunications Site, Waterside, Peartree Bridge, Milton Keynes.

Proposal: Erection of one 5G communication mast 22.4m in height with associated cabinets:

Cllr John Orr asked if the planning documents indicated the wattage and power that would be emitted from the proposed mast, the Council Manager replied the documents did but that he had no idea what it meant but would investigate this and let Cllr Orr have a more clearer explanation.

Members debated the planning application and decided to object on the following grounds:

To ask Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate what benefits are there to Peartree Bridge residents and the wider Milton Keynes area of having access to 5G?

That the committee regrets the lack of consultation by Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate with the Peartree Bridge residents.

That consideration should be given to a better and more appropriate location for the proposed mast.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee notes the response from Full Council regarding the above application.**
- 2. That the committee agrees to the Council Manager submitting the attached response to the Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate.**
- 3. That the Council Manager to provide Cllr John Orr with a clearer explanation of the wattage and power that would be emitted from the proposed mast as stated in the supporting documents of the planning application.**

4. To ask Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate what benefits are there to Peartree Bridge residents and the wider Milton Keynes area of having access to 5G?
5. That the committee regrets the lack of consultation by Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate with the Peartree Bridge residents.
6. That the committee objects to the proposed siting of the mast and asks that Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate instructs the applicants to consider a more appropriate location.

LD 09/20 To consider planning application: 20/00903/FUL

Address: Bridge Academy Central, Jonathans, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5DE

Proposal: Single storey extension to existing Construction Skills Classroom:

After some discussion, the committee objected to the planning application on the following grounds:

The inaccuracies / queries of the planning application that:

- The applicant states that the development is not in an area of flood risk, also stating that it would not increase the flood risk anywhere else. Given flood events over recent years, the committee is unclear as to whether this is accurate or not and would welcome the Milton Keynes Council Flood Management teams view on this.
- The application states that surface water will be managed via the existing sewerage system.
- Foul sewerage is stated as being disposed of via the 'main sewer', but it also states that they are not proposing to connect to the existing system. Clarity on this matter would be welcomed.
- The application states that employment will be affected by the development, but then goes on to state that the number of employees will remain the same. Clarity on this matter would be welcomed.
- The application states that there will be no hazardous substances or industrial or commercial processes. Given the nature of this proposal (construction), can this be further confirmed.

That the committee is concerned about the lack of consultation by Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate with the residents of Coffee Hall on this planning application.

RESOLVED

1. That the committee considers the application and associated documents.
2. That the committee agrees to object to this planning application on the following grounds:

The inaccuracies / queries of the planning application that:

- The applicant states that the development is not in an area of flood risk, also stating that it would not increase the flood risk anywhere else. Given flood events over recent years, the committee is unclear as to

whether this is accurate or not and would welcome the Milton Keynes Council Flood Management teams view on this.

- The application states that surface water will be managed via the existing sewerage system.
 - Foul sewerage is stated as being disposed of via the 'main sewer', but it also states that they are not proposing to connect to the existing system. Clarity on this matter would be welcomed.
 - The application states that employment will be affected by the development, but then goes on to state that the number of employees will remain the same. Clarity on this matter would be welcomed.
 - The application states that there will be no hazardous substances or industrial or commercial processes. Given the nature of this proposal (construction), can this be further confirmed.
3. That the committee is concerned about the lack of consultation by Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate with the residents of Coffee Hall on this planning application.
 4. That the Council Manager to provide a written response to Milton Keynes Council's Planning Directorate.

LD 10/20 To consider the various Street Trading applications:

The committee was informed that the current applications are:

- MK Ices (Reg DG10 HCV) on 01/05/2020 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 14:00 to 21:00.**
- Mister Softee (Reg J192 NVV) on 07/05/2020 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 16:00 to 20:00.**
- Mr Softee (Reg T402 POA) on 07/05/2020 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 14:00 to 20:00.**
- Soft99Whip (Reg S99 WHP) on 07/05/2020 for 1 ice cream van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: **Monday to Sunday 15:00 to 20:00.**

Milton Keynes Council has placed the following conditions:

- No more than 20 minutes trading in any 100 metre part of any one Consent Street on any one day (mobile traders).
- Street Trading is prohibited within 250 metres of any school's entrances and/or exits, during main school hours and 30 minutes following a school's normal closing time (all traders).

The committee in principal have no objections to ice cream vans trading in the area, and therefore there was no need to bring to the committee any future applications for consideration.

RESOLVED

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee has no objections to ice cream vans trading in the area, and therefore there was no need to bring to the committee any future applications for consideration.

LD 11/20 To clarify the name, role, purpose, and remit of this committee:

Members felt that the remit of the committee should be expanded to cover existing housing and planned maintenance and to have more of a consultative role speaking on behalf of residents to Milton Keynes Council.

This change to the remit would have to be agreed at the next Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee agrees to be named the Planning, Licencing & Development Committee.
3. That the committee agrees to the over-arching aims which will be expanded to cover existing housing and planned maintenance and to have more of a consultative role speaking on behalf of residents to Milton Keynes Council.
4. That this addition to the remit would have to be agreed at the next Full Council meeting.
5. To ensure that papers and investigations into applications are undertaken prior to each meeting, with any queries passed to the Council Manager in advance, where possible.
6. To ensure that all Members undertake the B&MKALC or the Milton Keynes Council Planning Training as soon as is practicable (usually within six (6) months, but due to Covid-19, this may be longer), if not already undertaken and that it is repeated within each Council cycle (e.g. every four (4) years maximum, due to changes in legislation).

Date of next meeting:

Monday 22nd June 2020 at 6:00pm venue to be confirmed.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:31pm

Chair _____ Date _____

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update council on proposed actions re: CV-19.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council notes the report.**
- 2. That Council agrees to the proposed actions noted below, specifically:**
 - a. Changes to the layout of the Council Hub, implementing a 'one way' system.**
 - b. Provision of a plexi-glass screen in reception to reduce risk of infection**
 - c. Provision of hand sanitiser stations at key points around the Hub, plus additional provision at No 95 and Community Centres**
 - d. Continued flexibility in working from home for officers, to prevent having too many people within the office**
 - e. A gradual re-opening of the Hub, with reduced opening hours**
 - f. Provision of the trailer across the parish, offering access to officers / councillors and basic services (e.g. dog bags)**
- 3. That Council agrees reasonable costs can be incurred to ensure safe return to work, including equipment noted above (screens, hand sanitiser) and additional signage as necessary under Health and Safety legislation, to a maximum of £2,000.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The council closed its offices and buildings on 17th March 2020 in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This was a sensible and considered approach, taking a proactive stance, and protecting officers, councillors, and residents. Since that time, other organisations and buildings followed suit, both as a response from them and due to legislation passed by the government. That legislation remains in place, but we have seen a gradual relaxation of the rules over the past few weeks.

The rules remain in force with regard to the opening of Community Centres. This is still prohibited, excepting where they are being used for essential services (e.g. CHMP for food deliveries).

There is still encouragement for people to work from home where possible. This remains the case for the majority of our officers and the majority of our service provision. Most of what we do can continue to be provided via home working.

Despite these restrictions, it is likely that over the coming weeks or months, these restrictions will reduce further and, at some point, community facilities will re-open,

people will return to work and things will begin to move back to a sustainable way of delivery. It is unlikely to be a return to 'normal' as the impact of CV-19 has been significant and, in the opinion of the Council Manager, likely to mean ongoing changes to practice (e.g. hygiene, distancing, group gatherings, etc.). This will include (in the short term, at least):

- Reduced numbers of people within the main office. To maintain safe distancing, we will need to significantly reduce the number of desks in use. Whilst the Council Manager and RFO have separate offices, the main office currently houses 10 officers. This number will likely drop to no more than 3.
- Additional use of other spaces (e.g. Wellbeing Room, CHMP, chamber) to provide additional space where necessary. This has already happened in terms of Community Team basing themselves in CHMP (additional space for distancing) and use of Chamber for 1:1 and small team meetings (sufficient space to distance).
- Need to avoid spaces where distancing isn't possible. To enable this, the proposal is that there is a 'one way' system put in place within the Hub offices, using the fire exit by the photocopier as an exit, with the door by the Community Fridge as an entrance and the corridor being made one way. This will reduce the risks and provide access to kitchen / toilet facilities in a safe manner.
- Provision of hand sanitiser stations. Currently, hand sanitiser is provided at the Community Fridge and within the CHMP kitchen. In addition, small bottles have been provided to those working in the community, where requested. Additional stations will be needed at key points, including reception, outside the toilets, at entrances to all community centres, etc. Access to hand sanitiser remains a challenge, but various options have been investigated and local breweries are one option.

Additional considerations have been given to issues such as 'touch points' – foot operated door handles are very cost effective and reduce the risk. Pedal operated / sensor bins to be provided. And similar considerations for wherever adjustments can be made.

Once these measures are in place, we would be looking to recommence public access from early July. This would include opening the office (with suitable safety measures in place, including a halt to the 'open door' policy, restricting access to reception, etc.) and looking to utilise the trailer to enable people to access basic services and make contact again. This would be on a short term basis, to raise awareness of the council being open again, to enable people to make contact with officers / members if necessary (although this has been possible throughout the pandemic) and to enable us to move back towards reopening the offices more fully.

Access to the offices will be restricted. For anything other than basic interactions (picking up dog bags, etc.), an appointment will need to be made – for example, for advice, wellbeing session, etc. an agreed time would need to be set in advance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The major financial impacts have been discussed within another paper provided to council by the RFO. However, this preparation will have a cost implication.

Perspex screens are expected to cost around £200 each. Hand sanitiser pumps are around £40 each and we will need 10+. Foot operated door openers are around £12 each and we will want 10+. Pedal bins will cost between £50 - £120 each, depending on style and size. A budget limit of £2000 is realistic at this point and council is asked to agree to this.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Whilst there is no rush to return, we do need to start considering how we can do this over time. Staff can continue to deliver services from home where appropriate (e.g. if public transport is the only option for travel and risk remains high) and a rota can be agreed to enable all to access what is needed on a regular basis.

The current situation has shown that we can operate quite effectively without being office based. The Landscape team and Environment Team continue to deliver outside, which will be fine to continue during the better weather of summer. This will need reviewing in Autumn.

Advice and Wellbeing continue to provide virtual support and are looking at how this may change and what could be delivered safely as things change.

Youth is exploring distanced activities for the summer period and are preparing suitable risk management processes and assessments.

Back office provision can work from wherever but will start to move back to the Hub for at least part of the week, to improve communications and efficiencies.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

As stated, we have continued to deliver all essential services throughout the pandemic. The move back MUST be with safety at the forefront of decision making, promoting and ensuring the wellbeing of all involved.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the committee on the impact of CV-19 on the Service Plan and review items that fall within the purview of this committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee agrees to the following recommendations regarding the specific elements relating to this committee oversight, namely:
 - a. Changes to the layout of the Council Hub, implementing a 'one way' system.
 - b. Provision of a plexi-glass screen in reception to reduce risk of infection.
 - c. Provision of hand sanitiser stations at key points around the Hub, plus additional provision at No 95 and Community Centres.
 - d. Continued flexibility in working from home for officers, to prevent having too many people within the office.
 - e. A gradual re-opening of the Hub, with reduced opening hours.
 - f. Provision of the trailer across the parish, offering access to officers / councillors and basic services (e.g. dog bags).
3. That Council agrees reasonable costs can be incurred to ensure safe return to work, including equipment noted above (screens, hand sanitiser) and additional signage as necessary under Health and Safety legislation, to a maximum of £2,000.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Following the Coronavirus pandemic, the closure of WCC offices and buildings, shops, schools, etc. and the ongoing impact of the restrictions relating to the pandemic, the service plan that was agreed for delivery this year is in need of review to reflect this impact.

The service plan has 21 items on it, of which 10 sit within the Services Committee. Some are unaffected, some will need adjusting and some will not be met this year. Briefly, this breaks down as:

1 – Woughton on the Road. The trailer is up and running and the wrapping should happen, if somewhat later than anticipated. Usage will need to be managed more carefully (ensuring social distancing, etc.) and many of the larger events that were planned will NOT happen, so the trailer will not be used at these.

2 – Community Allotments. Transfer is progressing. Planning being considered. Big Lottery have halted ALL non-CV-19 funding for six months, so progress will be slowed by this. However, alternatives will be investigated, and work can start once land transfer is agreed and planning permission given. *Decision needed on financial commitment.*

3 – Community Engagement – limited to online currently and the big events where feedback was going to be encouraged are not taking place. This will impact significantly.

4 – Play Park Assessment. This will take place as planned.

5 – Community Led Housing. On hold currently, but investigations and research will continue. *Saving made through placing 'on hold'.*

6 – Increase the equipment library. Due to MKC refusing permission for additional storage, the 'hold' on the community growing space and the need to reduce spending, we will replace broken but not increase the number of items this year. *Saving made through placing 'on hold'.*

7 – Woughton Business Forum. Waiting for a councillor lead for this and on hold until such time as able to meet. However, once team is in place, can commence with contact and relationship building.

8 – Resident Skills Development. No face-to-face training at the current time, but potential for some 'online' options. To be discussed in RA Forum.

9 – Long Term Planning. Will continue as planned but will also include an element of 'recovery' planning, post pandemic.

10 – Waste, recycling and the environment. Difficult currently and impact on summer plans likely. Building understanding, volunteer teams and similar restricted by situation, but work is continuing, nevertheless. Significant work to do to promote Woughton cleanliness.

11 – Training and Development (Internal) – halted by current restrictions but plans for later in the year / 2021 ongoing. *Likely to see a reduced spend this year.*

12 – Community Development – continuing, but in a different way. Some good work started (e.g. Beanhill Comm Garden, online Res Association Forum) but restrictions limit significantly.

13 – Events. Some have taken place online, but most of the big ones will not happen.

14 – Partnerships, collaborations and clustering. Work ongoing and hopefully will see some impact this financial year.

15- Accreditation – will take place as planned.

16 – Improvements to website / communications. Will take place as planned.

17 – Youth Council. Unlikely in 2020, but potential for early 2021 for new council year / new school year (either May or September). *Saving made through placing 'on hold' but may be needed in early 2021.*

18 – CCTV. Decision to make on spend, given impact of CV19 on budgets. *£8k minimum commitment (6 months) – should this wait until 2021/22?*

19 – MK Storehouse. Decision to make on spend, given impact of CV19 on budgets. *£6k budgeted. Should this be placed 'on hold'? Still awaiting update from MK Storehouse following pause due to CV19.*

20 – Policy and Procedure – will continue as planned.

21 – IT systems and processes. Will continue, but with some items less likely to happen due to costs (e.g. new database). Potential for work to be undertaken to integrate new finance system with data management and existing systems.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This paper links directly to the paper regarding the financial impact of CV-19, meaning a likely loss of income of up to £100k this year. There are items within the Service Plan (e.g. events) that, due to the impact of CV19 will lead to reductions in spending. There are other items where a decision is needed with regard to whether we progress with items or postpone until full impact is understood. These include:

- Any spend other than legal and planning on Community Growing (Item 2)
- CCTV – commitment or not?
- Storehouse – commitment or not? Would still go to Services Commitment for agreement with regard to suitability of application.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None at the current time.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None noted

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Financial paper provided by RFO.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update council on remit for Planning, Licencing and Development Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That council notes the report.**
- 2. That Council agrees to the extended remit for the committee.**

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Following the agreement for a new Planning Committee within this years committee regime, this committee has now met and there has been a suggestion that the remit is extended to cover certain aspects that were NOT included within the first version of the Terms of Reference.

This remit is specifically:

- To include all aspects of housing repairs, maintenance and associated developments, in particular where related to social housing stock.
- To provide oversight with relations to the use of Housing Revenue Account proposals where Woughton Community Council's opinion is sought, bringing proposals to Full Council as and when necessary.

To this end, it is proposed that the following be added to the Terms of Reference.

- The committee shall be responsible for monitoring and responding to issues relating to the provision of social housing within the parish, including (but not limited to), repairs, maintenance and use of Housing Revenue Accounts money.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

None.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

These issues are not specifically covered elsewhere, so this would ensure suitable oversight.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Terms of Reference – Planning, Licensing and Development Committee.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the meeting on the work and activities of the Community Development Team.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the meeting notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Community Fridge / Food Delivery Network

After the Community Fridge closed in mid-March, we began working with a local surplus food charity (Sofea) to deliver parcels to residents who were not eligible for government food parcels but were unable to obtain food for themselves. This included residents who were anxious about leaving their homes, and others who had previously relied on friends and family to deliver their food for them. We also receive regular donations from local BP / M&S service stations, and local food manufacturers.

Starting on April 6th, we have worked with Residents Associations, Councillors and the Woughton Ecumenical Parish to provide weekly food parcels across the seven estates on our Parish. We are delivering over 700kg of food every week, and passed the 1,000 parcel / 5,000kg milestone at the end of May.

We were previously working on a Community Larder project, which has now stalled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we will soon have the use of the e-cargo delivery bikes and electric delivery van to assist with parcel collection and delivery. This will help us gain experience of using the cargo bikes in preparation for when the project restarts.

We have carried out a risk assessment in preparation for re-opening the Community Fridge, but at present we feel that the risks of having groups of people gathering and handling food outweigh the benefits of the service.

Community Development

Beanhill Community Garden – we are currently trialling a no-dig raised beds garden in conjunction with the Beanhill Residents Association, to encourage people to grow food which will then be used by the local community. We plan to involve residents and local schools in the project, which can be expanded to other estates if successful.

Big Lunch

This was due to be a community gathering in early June, which had to be cancelled as a result of Covid-19. We have taken the Big Lunch online, and have been running a series of media posts, big lunch, res ass meetings, engaging with residents

Advice Service

One of the hurdles we had to overcome when the Hub closed in mid-March was how to maintain our advice service. Our Wellbeing Advice Officer lives outside Milton Keynes, and with the office closed there was no practical way of having face to face sessions with local residents. We developed an online contact form to allow staff members to take basic details from residents during phone calls, which could then be passed on to the relevant team. This has proved particularly useful for the Wellbeing Advice Service, and we have managed to engage successfully with residents.

Our benefits Advice Officer now has printing/scanning facilities at home and has been given postal supplies. This means he can continue to support residents who need help with benefits appeals, form-filling etc. We are also able to carry out remote face to face sessions via Zoom/Facetime, so that we can continue to offer advice. Since the office closed in mid-March, our Advice Service has been able to gain over £20,000 in benefits for local residents.

We are making regular check-in calls for vulnerable residents and have set up an online version of the Chatter & Natter group, which normally meets weekly in the community hall. We are looking at ways to extend this service to other user groups, such as Busy Bees and the Craft Group.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Staff time on implementing the activities as listing in the main body of the report.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None perceived.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Sean Perry
Community Services Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update on Landscape and Environment provision.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council note the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

We decided to suspend all Landscape operations after Boris Johnson announced a countrywide lockdown on 23rd March 2020. We re-introduced operations on 27th April as we were able to put in place suitable safety measures, following the initial break. These included social distancing measures, such as staggering start and finishing times and one person per vehicle. This also limits staff at the depot at any one time.

We have so far completed two cuts of grass throughout the parish and have started the third, with two ride-on mowers, one pedestrian mower and strimmers in operation. We are also carrying out any sightline or overhanging vegetation works, which is proving tricky with more than one operator required, but this seems to be working ok for now.

We welcomed the Community Payback Team back the week commencing 1st June, they are also limited how they operate now with not being able to utilise their vehicle. All their 'clients' must meet on site and follow Government guidelines on social distancing. Their team have been doing some good work clearing sightlines and alleyways in Coffee Hall and will continue to do so in coming weeks. We currently have them coming in Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. This is more than usual as they have an obligation to complete hours before they expire. The coming Autumn/Winter could be challenging if social distancing measures are still in place however, I will keep you informed of any procedural changes closer to the time when more information is given by the government.

Fly tipping has not been as bad as we thought it might have been due to the recycling centres being closed for several weeks. Many of the usual hotspots have continued to have excessive amounts of rubbish dumped, especially in Netherfield. We did have a pile of rubbish/soil cleared in Tinkers Bridge on the 3rd June but, at the time of writing this report (8th June) I have been informed that more rubbish has been dumped in the same place. This has since been reported to MKC.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None currently.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Staff time.

AUTHOR

Ian Tegerdine – Landscape Manager

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update the meeting of Council on the various governance issues since the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Government issued lockdown.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the meeting of Council notes the report.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

Parish, Town & Community Councils before the Covid-19 Pandemic were not lawfully able to meet online, although the 1972 Local Government Act was amended to allow members of the public to record meetings, and for the first tier of local Government to record and or livestream meetings on social media.

The statutory requirements for meetings are mainly contained in the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ("the 1960 Act").

In recognition of the problem of holding and attending meetings, the Government included s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020. This section gave the Secretary of State the power to make Regulations to make provisions for the holding of meetings. The 2020 Regulations set out those provisions.

Discussions between the Committee & Member Services Officer and the Council Manager before the office was closed, was to start in the new Council year, livestreaming meetings onto the Woughton Community Council Facebook page.

Some Parish, Town & Community Councils in the UK were doing this already, and it was hoped that Woughton Community Council would be the first to do so in Milton Keynes.

No doubt a proposal as regards the live streaming of meetings will be tabled at a future Full Council meeting once meetings can again be held at the Hub and open for members of the public to be able to attend.

The Government after imposing lockdown revised Local Government legislation, which incorporated the following changes to the regulations:

Regulation 6 (c) removes the requirement for a Parish / Community & Town Council to hold an Annual Meeting in May 2020.

Regulation 4 (2) carries the current appointment of Chairman on until the Annual Meeting in May 2021 although Parish / Community & Town Councils may elect a Chairman at an earlier meeting should they wish to do so.

This could also apply to the position of Leader of the Council.

At the last Full Council meeting in May 2020 it was agreed to not to hold an Annual Meeting, and that the appointment of Chair, Vice-Chair and Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Ambassador will be postponed until the May 2021 Annual Meeting of Council.

All Woughton Community Council meetings for technical reasons have been held via Zoom and not via Microsoft Teams for the first time since the organisation turned 125 years old this year.

Members are reminded that the new committee structure (which was approved at a meeting of the Full Council held on Monday 11th November 2019 (minute number FC 98/19 refers) was implemented and with the membership agreed at the Full Council meeting held on Monday 11th May 2020 (minute number FC 144/20 refers).

The new committee structure is as follows:

- Operations Committee
- Planning, Licencing & Development Committee
- Resources & Finance Committee
- Services & Communities Committee

The Terms of reference were also revised and adopted at the May 2020 Full Council meeting.

Standing Orders have also been revised to take on board the new Government legislation about the holding of meetings online and the deferment of holding an Annual Meeting in May of this year.

It is implied by the Government that the revised legislation will be effective temporarily until May 2021, in which case the meeting requirements will revert to previous legislation, meaning all meetings having to be held in public at the Woughton Community Council Hub, and therefore Members and Officers will not be able to meet online as at present.

Also it would mean that members of the public would not be allowed to ask questions online either.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

The Committee & Member Services Officer has been working from home without any problems from the laptop and phone provided by Woughton Community Council.

The only very minor issues are that the law has not changed as regards agendas for each meeting having to be displayed on notice boards, but B&MKALC advice on this is as long as the agenda is on the website then that is sufficient notice.

In addition to this the Committee & Member Services Officer uploads the agendas onto the Woughton Community Council Facebook page.

The Committee & Member Services Officer has also listed the dates onto the website of all the Full Council and Committee meetings for the new Council year and has taken out the cancelled meetings to save any confusion.

Meeting dates have been circulated to Members by the Committee & Member Services Officer.

A list has been made and regularly updated of the agendas and minutes of meetings that will need to be printed off and signed by the Chair of the Council and all committee Chairs, the Committee & Member Services Officer will arrange this for when it is safe to return and is working back at the Hub.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Since the Woughton Community Council Hub has been closed to Councillors and the public the following meetings were held via Zoom and streamlined live on the Woughton Community Council Facebook page.

- Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 20th April 2020
- Full Council Meeting held on Monday 11th May 2020
- Planning, Licencing & Development Committee meeting held on Monday 18th May 2020.

The Policy and Resources Committee meeting received:

- Twelve (12) likes
- Five (5) comments
- Two Hundred & Twenty-Six (226) views

The Full Council meeting received:

- Eight (8) likes
- Seven (7) comments
- Three Hundred & Three (303) views

The Planning, Licencing & Development Committee received:

- Nine (9) likes
- Twenty-Six (26) comments
- Three Hundred & Thirty-Three (333) views

The following meetings have been cancelled in consultation with the appropriate Chairs due to a lack of business:

- Services Committee meeting for Tuesday 26th September 2020
- Operations Committee meeting for Monday 8th June 2020

The above figures do show that there has been an increase in the amount of residents reached and interacted with at each meeting, however this is still a fraction of the amount of Woughton residents but nevertheless an improvement to when meetings were held at the Hub.

When there was a controversial agenda item mostly relating to planning, there would usually be a high attendance at meetings by members of the public wishing to ask questions, this would still appear to be the case as the Planning, Licencing & Development Committee considered a contentious planning application on Peartree Bridge which could account for why that meeting had the most views and comments.

Another first for Woughton Community Council was that members of the public were on the Zoom call to ask questions to the Chair of the Planning, Licencing & Development Committee.

It is too early to tell if the amount of interactions and views will go down or up as more meetings are held online and are accessible by Members of the public.

Consideration may need to be given to how the hard of hearing community can follow and interact in meetings, as normally they can use the loop system when in attendance at the Hub, although the person accessing the meeting may be using software on their device that will assist them.

So far all three (3) Zoom meetings have taken place without too many hitches thankfully no meetings have had to be abandoned due to connectivity issues, there has been the odd sound and frozen picture and one or two Members have had difficulties getting into meetings, but this was quickly rectified.

No doubt the Council Manager and Health & Safety Manager will at the appropriate time bring back proposals to a meeting of the Full Council as to how to conduct meetings safely, following any Government guidelines for when returning to the Hub, it maybe that a form of hybrid meeting (such as happens in the House of Commons) is held where shielded members can attend via video link and a core of members at the hub socially distancing are in attendance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 paper.

AUTHOR

Brian Barton
Committee & Member Services Officer

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

Introduction

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) come in to force on 4 April. Broadly speaking, the 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings (including by video and telephone conferencing) for a specified period until May next year. They also remove the requirement to hold an annual meeting. The 2020 Regulations apply to local council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings in England. Separate legislation is anticipated for Wales.

The term “local council” is used to refer to Parish Councils, Town Councils and Community Councils.

Background to the 2020 Regulations

The COVID-19/ Coronavirus pandemic and the unprecedented in peacetime Government measures in response to the crisis (e.g. prohibitions on gatherings, social distancing, self-isolation and shielding of those deemed to be the most vulnerable) have meant that the requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place cannot be met. The statutory requirements for meetings are mainly contained in the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (“the 1960 Act”).

In recognition of the problem of holding and attending meetings, the Government included s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020. This section gave the Secretary of State the power to make Regulations to make provisions for the holding of meetings. The 2020 Regulations set out those provisions.

What are the main provisions for local councils?

The relevant Regulations for local authorities are as follows:

Regulation 2 – the 2020 Regulations apply to local authority meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7 May 2021. The date could be brought forward if Government rules are relaxed.

Regulation 3 – Parish Councils in England are included within the definition of “local authority” in the 2020 Regulations. Parish Meetings are not included within the definition and, as such, there is nothing permitting them to meet remotely. the current Government guidance means that Parish Meetings should not take place in person, including the Annual Meeting of the Electors.

Regulation 4 – this provides that where an appointment would otherwise be made or is required to be made at an Annual Meeting of a local authority, the appointment

continues until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine (Regulation 4 (2)). This would apply to the election of the Chair, the first business at the Annual Meeting of Council. Therefore the current Chair will remain in place until an annual meeting is held (possibly next year) unless the council decide to elect a replacement earlier.

Regulation 5 – this permits the holding of remote meetings. The effect of the Regulation is that persons attending a local council meeting do not need to be in the same place. “Place” means more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers (Regulation 5 (1)). To attend a meeting remotely a member in remote attendance must meet specified conditions (see below). Regulation 5 (6) also enables local councils to make standing orders to specify (i) how voting will be carried out, (ii) how members and the public can access documents and (iii) how remote access of the press and public by electronic means will take place. Councils should make these decisions based on their own needs and capacity. Local factors such as broadband strength may also determine what methods they use.

Regulation 6 – confirms that being present at a local council meeting includes being present through remote attendance. The Regulation also disapplies paragraph 7 of Schedule 12 to the 1972 Act. This means there is no requirement for a Parish Council to hold its Annual Meeting although a Council may do so if they so choose. However paragraph 8 of Schedule 12 has not been disapplied. Paragraph 8 requires a local council to hold in a year not less than three (3) meetings in addition to the Annual Meeting.

Regulation 13 – s.1 (4) (a) of the 1960 Act has been amended so that public notice of the time and place of the meeting is deemed to be given if published on the relevant principal authority’s website.

Regulation 17 – confirms that a local council complies with Regulation 8 of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (decisions and background papers to be made available to the public) by making the written record and any background papers available for inspection by publishing them on their website; or by such other means that the council considers appropriate.

What are the specified conditions to enable local councils to meet remotely?

Regulation 5(2) of the 2020 Regulations provides that a member in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time if the member is able at that time:

- a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other members in attendance,
- b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
- c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting. All of the above conditions must be satisfied.

These conditions allow members to join via a video link system or by telephone so long as every member can be heard by every other member and the public.

All members, clerk and other staff, and any members of the public will be in attendance for the purposes of the 2020 Regulations if they are in remote attendance. The provisions in Regulation 5 will apply notwithstanding any standing orders or any to the contrary.

Existing provisions that have not been specifically disapplied still apply, including the notice requirements in Schedule 12 of the 1972 Act.

Summary

- The 2020 Regulations permit the holding of remote meetings, with conditions.
- Local councils can decide the methods they will use to facilitate the holding of remote meetings.
- There is no requirement to hold an Annual Meeting.

WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Full Council

Monday 15th June 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To update Council on the situation with Harrier Court repairs.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council notes the report.
2. That the Planning, Licencing and Development Committee continues to pressure MKC to undertake repairs and improvements.

MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The flats at Harrier Court have been in a state of disrepair for a number of years. They remain covered in scaffolding and are considered by many residents to be an 'eyesore'.

There have been a number of conversations regarding the current situation, including contact with Resident Associations, Milton Keynes Council and local residents and information suggests that there were steps being taken towards getting the situation resolved which appear to have paused during the current pandemic.

Despite requests for updated information, nothing has been forthcoming from MK Council at time of writing. It is recommended that the Council Manager continues to push for action and reports to the Planning, Licencing and Development Committee, who have responsibility for this area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Officer time only at this stage.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

None noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

AUTHOR

Steve McNay – Council Manager