

**Agenda item: FC 74/21**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Full Council**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the council on delegated decisions and other items of note.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That council notes this report.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The summer has been a busy one, with a variety of activities undertaken alongside the day-to-day work of the council. There are some activities / actions take that need reporting to the council and other elements of this report that are for information and update.

**Staffing** – new staff members have been appointed to the vacant positions of Advice Worker, Café / Fridge Coordinator, Landscape Operatives and Youth Operatives. In addition, an additional short term contract is in place for additional landscape support to enable a ‘catch up’ process, to address the concerns that have been made clear over the year.

**Council Meetings** have recommenced and are ‘in person’, with the option of hybrid when legally allowed. This is as a result of new equipment being in place – we were one of the earliest adopters of this technology and this enables us to continue broadcasting meetings too, building and supporting the public involvement that has been so positive over the last 18 months. Please note that whilst restrictions have been lifted, our risk management processes remain, so some changes to venues and procedures are in place.

Additionally, one meeting was moved (the Operations Meeting) due to staffing, other demands, and the pressures on meetings in September. The meeting took place one day earlier than previously noted on the calendar.

The **trailer** is due to be wrapped with WCC specific designs on 9<sup>th</sup> September (between the writing of this paper and the meeting). Thank you to the designer and the ‘wrappers’ for making this happen – it will be an excellent advert for WCC at the events coming up over the coming months and years. This cost was built into the service planning but will need some additional level due to the complexities of the job – within delegated levels.

A number of **events** and activities have taken place since last time we met:

- Flood resilience day took place in the car park at Coffee Hall. This included the Flood mobile and was visited by local residents to get info and advice on managing flooding. It should be noted that this approach suggests that flooding is inevitable and was about preparing for them and mitigating the impact. Continuing work will be done to manage the situation in terms of structural imperfections leading to surface water flooding.
- Alison from MK Hospital visited to discuss what we do and how we work – there may be some joint approaches to take with the parishes largest employer to help us all be ‘good neighbours’ and support residents.
- Michael Bracey (CEO) and Mac Heath (Head of Children’s Services) had a meeting following an initial contact as part of a ward councillor induction. Lots of discussions around a variety of issues, including how to manage investment in regen areas, the potential for a library in Woughton, how our services support the wider delivery across the city and how we can ensure that parishes (especially WCC!) are supported and cherished.
- Beach Party, as part of the Play Rangers provision over summer, was a great success with hundreds of people in attendance and a day where the sun actually shone.
- The Mears Repairs surgeries have started, with Coffee Hall, Peartree Bridge and Netherfield having happened already, with Beanhill, Eaglestone and Tinkers yet to come. This has been appreciated by Mears and we aim to have feedback in terms of numbers once the tranche has finished.
- RA’s have also held events which we have supported in various ways, from face painting to stage management to general runabouts! Congratulations to all the RA’s for positive events in difficult circumstances – all quite different and all quite brilliant.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None perceived.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None perceived.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None perceived.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None.

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

**Agenda item: FC 75/21**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Full Council**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To propose minor changes to the meetings calendar to ensure fairness with regard to access and involvement.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That council notes this report.**
- 2. That council agrees to move alternate Full Council meetings to a Wednesday to enable those who are unable to attend on a Tuesday to continue to be involved.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

Following discussions at the end of the last council year and discussions around trying to ensure that attendance at meetings was maximised, we moved meetings from a default Monday night to a mixture of Tuesdays and Wednesdays. This included Full Council, the most important of the meetings, which it was agreed would remain static on a Tuesday.

This decision has meant that there are councillors who are unable to attend the Full Council meetings as they have prior commitments that cannot be moved. The same is true in terms of Wednesdays. To try and ensure that ALL councillors are able to play a full role in the democratic functions, we will continue to broadcast meetings, encourage questions and queries in advance and, where possible and in compliance with our Standing Orders, enable public participation.

To further ensure full and active involvement, this proposal suggests that we alternate Full Council between Tuesdays and Wednesdays. This would mean the following dates for Full Council:

September 14 <sup>th</sup>	-	Tuesday
October 13 <sup>th</sup>	-	Wednesday
November 9 <sup>th</sup>	-	Tuesday
December 8 <sup>th</sup>	-	Wednesday
January 11 <sup>th</sup>	-	Tuesday
February 9 <sup>th</sup>	-	Wednesday
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	-	Tuesday
April 13 <sup>th</sup>	-	Wednesday

This would enable the council to reconsider what actions may be necessary for the 2022/23 council year to promote attendance and ensure as many members as possible are able to attend as many meetings as possible.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: FC 76/21

## WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### Full Council

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To explain the findings of investigation into CCLA property fund investment scheme.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the council notes the report.
2. That the council agrees to transfer £100,000 of the £200,000 from the CCLA deposit fund to the CCLA property fund.
3. That the council is prepared to assume this with the view of a long-term view on the investment (minimum of 5 years).
4. That the council agrees to review year on year (after year end) our reserves level which is readily available and review whether to deposit any more into this investment scheme.
5. That the Resources & Finance Committee at its meeting held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 resolved to fully support this proposal.

#### MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The Council Manager and I met with our account manager from CCLA to discuss the risks and benefits of investing in the CCLA property fund. The salient discussion points were as follows.

They suspended the property fund for 6 months when lockdown was announced to assess the situation, they therefore did not want to onboard new clients during this time, they reopened the fund end of September. No clients left the scheme during the pandemic, and they still have a portfolio of 250 clients and 1.25 Bn fund value.

#### Risks

**Retail units** – This is something they had been assessing prior to covid and I was happy they reported that less than 2% of their fund is secured in retail units, which therefore becomes less of a risk with the current nature of the high street and rents being paid.

**Office spaces** – All tenants in the scheme in terms of office spaces have paid up and CCLA have managed to re-let office space during Covid19 at increased rates. While it looks like the general direction of the nation is that most organisations are moving towards 'hybrid' working office spaces are still valuable, although on their radar and being assessed. With the risk associated they are investigating planning permissions to make office spaces they do have residential and sell on – and therefore there is contingency in place should the market value/demand for office spaces deplete.

**A long-term view on investment** – This should be recognised as a minimum of five (5) years investment meaning we should be willing to leave the investment money sat in the fund without needing access to see a valuable return. The investment is not easily accessible meaning if we wish so to, deduct some or all of our investment this can only be sanctioned on valuation day (always month end) and there may be a notice period for the investment to be paid back to us.

**There is no guarantee we will receive all our investment back** – It is to be noted, as with any high return investment there is a risk, we will not receive the whole investment back, this will depend on valuations, market value's etc. at the time of wishing to recuperate our investment, a loss or gain will only be realised when we so choose to leave. However, I believe if we hold the investment with a view of keeping this in the fund over a long period of time, and choose wisely when to release this should not be a problem.

### **Pros**

No clients have left the scheme during potentially one of the hardest years for the property market in a long-time.

They were still able to meet +4% yield for the whole of last year (2020/21) and are currently at 4.1% net all dividend yield. (This means the 4.1% accrued is NET of CCLA fees) if you compare this to our deposit fund where we are currently occurring interest on 2 basis points circa **(0.017% as at 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021)** the property fund is a significant increase in return for our money.

We would only be investing circa 20% of our overall reserve fund that we have in place currently, this should be noted as a smaller risk, as we will still have funds to the value of circa 345,000 readily available should we need to use them. We should view the property fund investment as a **core** reserve to invest back into our community when the fund is at a suitable level.

### **AGAR and year-end**

It should be noted our current figures will look different at the end of the year should we wish to transfer from the deposit fund into the property fund. The investment we choose to input into the scheme will move from (box 8) short-term investments and cash, to long-term investments and fixed assets (box 9). A 'loss' or 'gain' is not realised until we choose to leave the scheme, and therefore the figure amount will remain the same until we so decide to recuperate our investment.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Reserves** – our current reserve level is £444,649 (£202,768) of which are currently sat in the CCLA deposit fund.

**Fees to join** – A suitability report must be completed before applying for the investment scheme, the costs associated with this is £795.00. CCLA's fees equate to around 0.65% for auditory fees etc. The aforementioned (current) +4% yield is the return-on-investment NET all fees associated with the fund.

***Using delegated powers, we have applied for, and completed the suitability report to ensure we are able to enter the fund.***

I am recommending that we look to transfer £100,000 from the current £202,768 we have in the CCLA deposit fund to the property fund with a view of not looking to recuperate our investment for a **minimum** of five (5) years, but with a strong intention to view this even longer term of 10-15 years' worth of investment. We can review our reserves at every year-end and decide how best to account for the funds.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None Perceived.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None perceived.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None.

**AUTHOR**

Samone Winsborough  
RFO

**Agenda item: FC 78/21**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Full Council**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To propose inclusion of the Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy, plus addendum to the Code of Conduct, within the policies for councillors.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That council notes this report and the attached papers.**
- 2. That council agrees that the Anti Bullying and Harassment policy becomes part of the agreed suite of policies for councillors.**
- 3. That the addendum to the Code of Conduct is NOT a formal policy, but an explanatory note to help ensure clarity.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy was adopted for officers at the Operations Meeting earlier this month. Following this, a suggestion was made that this policy should also include councillors. To this end, some minor adjustments (in italics) have been made and it is recommended that this policy be agreed and shared with all councillors as part of induction / ongoing agreements.

In addition, an additional document has been created to help address some confusion with regard to the Code of Conduct. Whilst the Code remains the same, this addendum can be considered as an additional resource to try and ensure clarity. It is recommended that the council agrees to include this within the policy suite for councillors, as an appendix.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy  
Code of Conduct Addendum – Sept 2021

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager



## Woughton Community Council

# Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy (Councillors) 2021

## Anti-Bullying and Harassment

Woughton Community Council is committed to providing a working environment, free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. We aim to ensure that all staff *and councillors* are treated and treat others with dignity and respect. This policy covers bullying and/or harassment which occurs both at and out of the workplace, including work trips or other work-related events/social functions. This policy should also be related to any communications outside of work hours including social media or messaging apps. We will always work to ensure nobody is treated less favourably based on the grounds of any protected characteristics, please see our Equal opportunities and diversity policy for more specific guidance on this.

## Policy Principles

This policy relates to all our employees regardless of employment terms or rank. *This includes volunteers and councillors.*

## Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". Harassment also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past. It is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 to harass a person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It also includes conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment). Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- unwanted physical conduct including touching, pinching, pushing, and grabbing.
- unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour.
- offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content or the display of offensive materials.
- unwanted jokes, banter, mocking, mimicking, or belittling a person

## Bullying

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or

misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, belittle, or injure the recipient. Bullying can include the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority. Bullying may be physical, verbal, or non-verbal. It can include conduct that is not face-to-face, including via text message, email and social media. Examples of bullying include:

- physical or psychological threats.
- overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision.
- inappropriate derogatory remarks about a person or their performance.
- shouting at staff or consistently speaking to them disrespectfully.
- persistently picking on people in front of others or in private.
- blocking promotion and training opportunities.
- regularly and deliberately ignoring or excluding staff from work activities or work-related social events.
- setting a person up to fail by overloading them with work or setting impossible deadlines.
- regularly making the same person the butt of jokes.

Legitimate and reasonable criticism of a staff member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable management instructions, do not amount to bullying.

The above lists are not exhaustive, and any other unreasonable behaviour may be deemed to be harassment or bullying.

### **Procedure and reporting**

Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in our ~~workplace~~ *organisation*. All staff, *volunteers and councillors* are required to treat each other, residents, external partnerships and ~~councillors~~ *others* with dignity and respect. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary procedures (*staff and volunteers*) and *within the Code of Conduct for Councillors*. For employees and volunteers, serious or persistent instances of bullying or harassment may amount to gross misconduct which would lead to your dismissal. Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure / *Code of conduct*.

If you feel you are being harassed or bullied you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible first, to be clear about your concerns. However, if you do not feel an informal approach is appropriate, or a previous attempt has been unsuccessful you should raise the issue formally in writing to your Line manager, as per our grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance procedure. If we consider there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been harassed or bullied, we will take action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure and initially undertake an investigation into the matter which will then potentially result in disciplinary action being invoked. Whether or not

your complaint is upheld we will consider how to best manage any ongoing working relationship between yourself, and the person concerned.

*Four councillors, any formal reports should be made to Chair of Council and / or Council Manager. If unable to resolve internally, the council will consider a referral to the Monitoring Officer / Standards Committee, if the situation is considered serious enough to warrant this or in the event that any actions continue.*

### **Linked policies**

Equal Opportunities and Diversity  
Employee Code of Conduct  
Staff Handbook

### **Relevant legislation**

Equality Act 2010  
Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999  
Race Relations Act 1976 and (Amendment) 2000  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment 2004)  
Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003  
Sex Discriminations Act 1975 and (Amendment) 1986  
The protection from Harassment Act 1997

<b>Last review date:</b>	<b>August 2021</b>
<b>Next review date:</b>	<b>August 2023</b>
<b>Lead:</b>	<b>Operations manager</b>
<b>Overseeing Committee:</b>	<b>Operations</b>
<b>Approved:</b>	<b>31/08/2021</b>
<b>Review cycle:</b>	<b>2 yearly</b>

## **Addendum to the Code of Conduct (Sept 2021)**

The Code of Conduct is the principal policy covering the expectations on Councillors, both at Woughton Community Council and more widely with the local government sector. This addendum does not form part of the policy, but aims to clarify some aspects of the document that may be open to interpretation.

The Woughton Community Council (WCC) Code of Conduct is based on the Milton Keynes Council (MKC) document of the same name, as the oversight of councillor behaviour is managed by MKC through the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee. This is also considered 'best practice'.

The document is under review nationally at the moment, especially with regard to the potential sanctions that can be enforced on councillors who behave in a manner that is seriously damaging to either organisations or individuals (e.g., defamation, bullying, harassment). Some of these are covered in the separate policy (Anti bullying and Harassment policy (Councillors) – to be agreed at Full Council in Sept 2021), but there will be a national approach taken, through work with a wide range of individuals and groups.

There are some elements of the Code of Conduct that may be unclear. This document aims to help with this with some additional definitions:

1. **Purpose of the Code.** This section discussed 'the principles' – these are often described as the '*Nolan principles*' or '*Seven Principles of Public Life*'.
2. **Member Obligations.** This section speaks about 'when acting as a councillor' there are expectations regarding behaviour. It is worth noting that many people consider that councillors are councillors at all times, so these standards should be constant. It later speaks about '...at all times conduct themselves in a manner which will tend to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the Authority'. The expectations are that people act in a decent way, so this should not be too hard to manage.

Also, worth noting that this section mentions a 'reasonable person' – this is a legal definition that is around an average person ('the (man) on the Clapham Omnibus') believing something to be reasonable\*.

3. **Public Duties of Members.** Simply a reminder that councillors act in the interests of the parish, its residents and communities. It is essential in Woughton to remember that this includes the diverse communities that make up the parish, all of whom should be treated with respect and value.
4. **Principles of Conduct.** This section covers the need to disclose (I.e. tell people) about anything that might be seen to influence you. For example, a 'pecuniary' interest (this basically means a financial interest – something that you may make / lose money from, dependent on a decision made). This is one of the most important aspects, as failure to comply with the rules around disclosure can result in legal action being taken. Please do declare

even if you aren't sure.

- 5. Duties to the Monitoring Officer.** This section covers the responsibilities of and to the Standards Board and Monitoring Officer. It is expected that you will cooperate fully and behave in a reasonable way.
- 6. Criminal Offences.** This section covers the various laws that may lead to more significant action being taken against you if you are in breach of said laws. This includes disclosure rules, bribery and false information being provided to the Monitoring Officer / standards Board.

**If you have any questions / queries regarding this document or the Code of Conduct, please contact the Committee and Member Services Officer, Council Manager or Chair of Council.**

**Agenda item: FC 79/21**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Full Council**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the meeting on the Demand Responsive Transport Scheme.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That council notes this report and the associated papers (to follow / on the night).**
- 2. That council agrees to compilation of feedback to go to MKC with regard to the removal of the bus route / impact of the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) system.**
- 3. That the council agrees to representatives attending any parishes feedback sessions with MKC.**
- 4. That council agrees to supporting the delivery of a ‘Public Meeting’ where residents are able to put points to those in positions of power regarding public transport in the parish.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

Following a ‘consultation’ process last year / early this year, MKC made a decision to remove and subsidy from bus routes and provide instead a ‘demand responsive transport’ offer – known as DRT or as MK Connect. This is, in essence, a system where you register and then book journeys using an app, or a phone. This new service is in addition to the commercial bus routes which continue in a similar way as previously.

This issue was discussed at length at Services Committee and then at Full Council where a number of concerns were raised, including those of excluding anyone without technology and the impact on older, disabled and other people with additional needs.

Following the introduction of these changes, an agreement was reached that there would be a review of how things were going at six months. We are approaching that time and have had significant feedback regarding the challenges for some residents. This became a larger issue where it was agreed that we would provide an ‘open access’ session for residents to pass their views on – these sessions were held in Chambers on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Sept and feedback will be provided at this meeting (this paper was written prior to those sessions taking place).

There appears from early indications and the 300 signatory petition (approximate numbers), that the community is unhappy with the changes that have been made. This has been compounded by the bus company continuing to use the route as a training route, with regular Arriva busses coming through. Additionally, there have

been rumours that this change was not due to any loss of revenue or lack of use, but challenges around travelling through the estate due to inconsiderate parking and a lack of suitable traffic management. However, the Number 1 route has now been fully changed and no longer comes anywhere near the estate. There are other routes that could, if there was a will, be diverted to enable access – No 4 route, No 5 /6 route are both possible.

There have been communications with MKC regarding this and there is a plan to hold a parishes engagement session to get feedback regarding this – it is likely that we would not be the only parish unhappy, as the Council Manager has heard that others are also unhappy. However, it may be that this council would like to also push for a public meeting where residents can talk directly to the decision makers so the true impact of these decisions can be heard by both officers and elected representatives from MKC.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None directly, but impact on residents has been suggested as significant.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None perceived.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

SC137/21 – Initial paper for Services Committee re DRT provision.

DRT Feedback – Appendix 1.

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

## DRT service

It works for a few but not for the many. I have found it complicated difficult and uncomfortable. I am adding the duration of the calls so that you can consider those who do not have contract phones and rely on pay and go and can only afford £5 or £10 a week. most may need to call often for appointments etc. as our bus used to take us close to docs and outside hospital, remembering that these estates house the sick, disabled, retired, low income etc. and cannot afford the calls and now are restricted to how often they can go out. When I try booking on the app it sends me to the 6 bus stop which took me hours to figure out. Some people also now tied down as they will not use cabs due to fears some also have fears of using this service. Some are nearly blind and death. There are many circumstances that I feel have not been addressed. Those in wheelchairs cannot use this service as u need steps to get in, I struggle so much getting in and out of the minibus. I have reduced how much I go out now as the freedom of being able to get a bus easily has removed this freedom for me and many others, my mum will not use this service unless I am with her and there are many people like this due to lack of trust.

This is a diary of my personal experiences with using the DRT service where I would normally use service 1 through Coffee Hall, I feel I have lost freedom of movement as u will find in this diary. I stay home so much more now.

**13<sup>th</sup> April '21 called at 10.56am - 52 second call then 11.15am 6 minute 20 second.**

I called first to register on the phone with my bus card took ages but nice man on the phone helped then I tried to book on the app but kept telling me to go to the 6 bus stop on Saxon street so I had to call back on the phone took time taking my name finding my account managed to get it booked for robins hill which was better than the 6 stop it may not be far but when u have a muscle problem its difficult up and down underpasses with bad terrain- paths are in bad condition and the underpasses are not always safe the driver was new unaware what my pass meant I have a disabled pass he was nice though helped me with my shopping trolley I had trouble getting in the van due to it being high managed in the end and he dropped me off ok

**then at 14.26 was 5 minute 43 second call.**

I first tried booking on the app again but was sending me to the buses again and they no good as don't come into the estate so had to call again had difficulty with finding my details again got that sorted then told the lady I was on albert street but driver was sent to the bottom of queens way which was some distance from me and not even visible to where I was albert street is top queens way where the public toilets are luckily the driver came up to albert street passing through queens way looking for me as he had local knowledge I did try calling him but saw him coming so I hung up he was nice and polite helped me with trolley I struggled in but he had a handle to pull upon dropped me off no problem

I had noticed from these first 2 uses that wheelchair users would find it impossible there's no straps to strap down trolleys or walkers etc., so they fly about in the back the biggest frustration is having to call all the time rather than the app

**15<sup>th</sup> April '21 10.10am – 10 minutes 4 seconds**

Managed to register my mum and book trip was made complex as she had to book under her own name one gets booked at a time and I fear it's going to mean separate vans at some point and my mum won't use on her own which stops her going out. Driver came on time polite and helpful difficult for me and mum getting on the bus no handles bus is high again the shopping trolleys weren't strapped down as no straps are provided in the vans they need to be strapped down like walkers etc. or they can break these shopping trolleys to us are walking aids as well and are not cheap so they need to be cared for – if we had our bus we would walk on and we would hold them so they would be secure.

**12.27 1 minute 4 seconds 12.30 12 minutes 16 seconds**

Booked for going home cant book on app still was a bad line and was in a que for a long time on hold took ages to book as my details wasn't coming up mum had to book separately then we had to wait a while the call the driver to confirm where we are as wasn't showing on booking form apparently when driver came we had another passenger who was on board who informed me they were on way to Kingston with him needing to get to work for 1.30pm start was already 1.05pm driver was going to take me and mum home first I said no get this fella to work u should have done that before picking me up as he was close to Kingston when he came back to pick us up then the driver never acknowledged we are already all on he went looking for my mum who was already on bus with us driver was nice he said apparently when they are booked they have to go get next person which don't make sense if they not on route to where they are already heading wastes time money and very inconvenient for passengers. Again, no straps difficult to get in and out and we had to do that twice on this ride as he had to go in the back and the seats have to be lifted for this as the doors do not open far enough.

Today I felt stressed and unheard I have needs and there's people worse than me they will find this service nearly impossible to book or use I do not feel it's been thought up well at all being on hold is frustrating then having trouble finding account then trouble with location then trouble with passenger number etc. was a nightmare without my local Councillors helping me I wouldn't be able to cope.

**23<sup>rd</sup> April '21 10.12 was engaged 10.12 6 minute 26 seconds.**

On hold a long time managed to book was going for my covid jab you're not allowed to be early risk missing appointment if late so was in a bit of panic as time closed in on me had another pic up on route, but passenger never showed up got to my appointment 5 min late luckily was still seen if I wasn't the panic attacks, I suffer would have happened I felt the anxiety building on me. For simplicity I got a cab home. I do wonder how a deaf person would manage as you still can't just book on the app, I don't see how booking a 6 bus would work

### **29<sup>th</sup> April '21 8 minutes 6 seconds**

Managed to book had to wave it down as it stopped down the road on Robins hill luckily I was at a point where I could see him as it's a bendy road and he wouldn't have seen me he was nice I struggled again to get in but get there in the end took me to Bletchley where I was meeting my mum and we both had done frozen food shopping and trolleys were very heavy so we felt it was best not to expect the drivers to attempt to lift the trolleys so we were forced to get another bus home which luckily was able to have us on as buses can get very busy and was our side of the road we got off although it was detrimental for both but more mum walking up them hills is so difficult whereas if we had it coming through the estate it would have been a simple more flat and downhill terrain when we use the stop at our local centre.

**30<sup>th</sup> April** – I saw a friend who is close to being blind who was not aware of this system I tried explaining how it works but she doesn't know how to use internet and can barely hear ppl on the phone she struggles physically as well coming on to 80 she was dependent on the bus service I advised her to visit WCC for help I just hope she did. Using the buses out on the main road may look simple on the maps but u need to take account of the state of the paths, weather, daylight, safety, hills and how confusing it can be as I find the paths confusing as to where I am and which road or stop to go to as it looks odd. My mum will not use this at all after being robbed twice burgled once she has a lot of fears.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> May '21 at 12.28pm 6 minutes 6 seconds**

Managed to get through easily today I got booked no problem but booking my daughter on was difficult I had help from someone to get her account sorted on her phone which luckily, she has one or she wouldn't be able to ride on at all remembering children over 5 must pay not sure how this works for those who have young children or kids with no phone, and everyone needs account to ride. All passengers need booking individually so if I had 3 children, I would need to attempt to book all on bus when the seats can go while you're on the phone this has happened many times seats being taken while on phone I mean. I put her mk1 bus card on, but she normally would pay £1 on the trip that was impossible and adding another card is very difficult drivers don't take cash we can't pay by card on phone as card needs to be on account driver was only expecting me not my girl as well but driver understood once I explained he wasn't happy about taking her as well but he did I had usual trouble getting in.

### **15.31pm 7 minutes 11 seconds**

Got through after short hold time had more trouble booking her on with me as this individual thing again driver again only expected me and same difficulty paying driver don't take cash. he dropped us at Robins hill bottom bit rather than driving just a minute up the road we had to walk rest which took 10 mins for me and because where he dropped us, we had to walk in the road as no path I felt he was cross.

### **7<sup>th</sup> may '21 at 13.43 7 minutes 50 seconds**

After being on hold got through took details and I was told there is no cars and to call back in 10 minutes

### **14.00 5 minutes 44 seconds**

I was told it would be at least a 30 minute wait and mum would have to go separately so today we again was forced to use the bus that dropped us at main road which is extremely difficult to walk from as u will read previously these paths are terrible and dangerous luckily was our side of the road so today this service cost me time, stress, and pain with nothing but inconvenience remembering we would have simply got on the 1 to our estate no stress no bother.

### **11<sup>th</sup> may '21 at 16.23 10 minutes 34 seconds**

Booked for me had trouble again booking my girl but man told me how to put card on (so after the call I did now I don't know if it will charge £1 or the full fare for her also its forced me to put my card details on her phone which now I'm worried she could buy things without realising as my daughter has minor learning and understanding things accidents do happen with her) had trouble getting on again as is then driver said he had another pick up from what I could understand he said 3 ppl and I said I'm sure your only allowed up to 3 on and there's already 2 on remembering the trouble I'm having booking her on driver was not happy but he dropped us where we wanted to go and was ok.

I really do hope what I have taken note of is really thought about seriously I'm sure there's other problems which I haven't addressed here but everyone has different needs and opinions when I need to use this service for appointments I will leave an hour or so just in case it's not reliable not sustainable and I don't think it works for enough people we can't pre book so have to be available in case it can pick me up in 3 minutes or forced to wait over 30 minutes as it becomes more popular it's going to get worse the conditions I have can't tolerate stress so using this service is making me ill just having to get in a bus with a stranger is hard enough without all the bother that goes with it on a bus its safer there's other people on and off there's room to move as difficult as that can be sometimes it's still easier than this service. Really hope this makes sense.

**Agenda item: FC 80/21**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Full Council**

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To propose opening hours and staffing agreement for Christmas 2021.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That council notes this report.**
- 2. That council agrees to:**
  - a. Closure of the offices at lunchtime of Christmas Eve**
  - b. Reopening of the offices on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022**
  - c. That the three (3) days between Christmas and New Year that are not considered as ‘public holidays’ be considered as the two ‘special’ days allocated, with an additional day awarded at the discretion of the council.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

Christmas this year falls on a Saturday, with Christmas Eve being a Friday. This means that Christmas Day and Boxing Day are both weekend days, so the two holidays are Monday and Tuesday (27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> December).

New Year’s Day also falls on a Saturday, which means that the holiday falls on the following Monday (3<sup>rd</sup> January).

This means that there are three (3) days, the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December that are NOT public holidays. In previous years, there has been very limited public demand on the council – fewer than 2 people each year. There is limited evidence to support the opening of the offices over the festive break.

Part of the contract for our staff is 2 discretionary days (usually used over Christmas), leaving one day uncovered.

The options are:

- Council agrees to allow an additional day so that all are able to have the festive period off
- Council encourages officers agree to take a days annual leave to cover the days shortfall
- Officers can choose to work on one of the three days to cover the hours expected. This will mean ensuring suitable safeguards in place.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

Noted above.

**OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

**AUTHOR**

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