

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th October 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Local Centre, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Elina Apse, Jeanette Bobey, Maggie Ferguson, Brian Hepburn, Ruth McMillian, John Orr, Terri Parish, Nick Scott, Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson.

Also present:

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer)
Steve McNay (Council Manager)

FC 105/22 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Jordan Coventry (unwell)
Cllr Donna Fuller (holiday)
Cllr Amber McQuillan (meeting)
Cllr Lauren Townsend (personal)

AGREED

FC 106/22 Declaration of interests:

There were no declarations of interests.

NOTED

FC 107/22 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26th September 2022 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

FC 108/22 Chair's Announcement(s):

The Chair informed the meeting that there will be a remembrance service to be attended by local School children to be held on Friday 11th November 2022 at 10:00am.

Today is World Mental Day.

An app is being launched by the Open University on Wednesday 12th October 2022 which connects communities to enable to help out with tasks and look out for each other.

There will be a Games Night on Wednesday 12th October 2022, 6:30pm-8:30pm at the Coffee Hall Community Centre.

The Chair asked Councillors to let their residents know about the online budget options consultation survey, paper copies can be supplied, and to encourage everybody to fill it in.

NOTED

FC 109/22 Questions from the public:

There were no questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

FC 110/22 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr Brian Hepburn – Would like to see an arrangement between Woughton Community Council and the Youth Service, to encourage the use of the multi-use courts by local residents, Cllr Hepburn was advised that this matter will be considered at a meeting of the Services & Communities Committee.

Cllr John Orr – dogs and cats are getting ill on Tinkers Bridge, some pigeons have been found dead, and wondered if the landscaping service were clearing weeds and using pesticides.

It had been suggested that there could be cases of bird flu in the area, and concern was expressed whether this could be passed on to humans.

The meeting was informed that the DEFRA website says that humans can catch bird flu, and any incidents need to be reported either via the website or by telephone on: 03000 200 301 immediately.

NOTED

FC 111/22 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Sue Smith was the only Woughton & Fishermead Ward Councillor present, who informed the meeting that casework is constantly increasing mainly on due to the cost of living crises.

Cllr Smith attends the Community Café on Coffee Hall and is available for any resident who wishes to speak to her on any issue.

Cllr Smith said that if she cannot help then she will ensure anyone is signposted to the correct agency.

Cllr Janette Bobey enquired about the meeting with a senior Housing Officer regarding the maintenance programme, The Chair said that she chase the matter up.

NOTED

FC 112/22 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Elina Apse – Nothing to report, but clients are being assisted with any applications.**

b) MKALC – **Cllr Sue Smith, Cllr Pam Wilson – Meeting to take place on Wednesday 2nd November 2022.**

c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith – The next meeting will be held on Thursday 13th October 2022, and Cllr Sue Smith said that she will report back at the next meeting.**

NOTED

FC 113/22 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

Planning, Licencing & Development Committee – Monday 5th September 2022.

NOTED

FC 114/22 Council Manager's report:

The Council Manager updated the council on activities and delegated decisions made since the previous meeting.

- The community café on Eaglestone has took place.
- There was also support offered by Woughton Community Council for the Tinkers Bridge Resident Association breakfast club that was held throughout the summer holidays.
- The first part of the Woughton Trail was launched, with a walk of approximately 3kms, starting and ending at Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place.
- The new appraisal system, with a '360' approach is now in place.
- The strategic planning group met again at the end of July.
- A range of events have taken place; beach party on Netherfield, Beanhill and Tinkers Bridge Fun Days, many Woughton Community Council funded coach trips, Woughton Community Council Cinema and Apple Day.
- The CIF proposal that was agreed and has been submitted, including provision of solar at Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place and improvements to facilities at the Coffee Hall Community Centre, Netherfield Meeting Place and the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place (to include disability access).
- Supported Pride:MK, by delivering the trailer and (possibly) stage to the event.
- Other events attended include an Urban Design and Historic Conservation training session, the SLCC Finance Summit, the Transition Town MK Social: Minimising Food Waste - Community Solutions (to talk about the fridge, larder and café) and a couple of Neighbourhood Planning sessions.
- A small event was held at the memorial, as the Queen flew over (due to changes around travel being made) and Woughton Community Council complied with all the relevant elements of the period of mourning. Overall, the planning and preparation in place worked well.
- Other activities included several meetings around working collaboratively with external agencies, especially around the cost of-living stuff. This included Hedgerows new manager, the Revenues and Benefits Team at Milton Keynes City Council, and Milton Keynes City Council officers around the Library of

Things. This also led to an event being held within the Community Café, focusing on the support that is available from Milton Keynes City Council, which appeared to go well.

- Met with representatives from both the Citizens Advice Bureaux and Just Us (housing charity) to look at advice options for the future.

RESOLVED

That the Council notes the report.

FC 115/22 To update council on budget planning for 2023/2024:

The Council Manager updated council on budget planning for 2023/2024.

As council is aware, there are considerable financial pressures currently, leading to increased costs at a time where increased services are being requested. These costs include:

- A higher than anticipated 'cost of living' increase from the NJC (£20,000 more than budgeted)
- Expenditure on emergency and unplanned activity, such as IT equipment and roof replacements (£26,000 for the roof, £11,000 for IT)
- Additional staffing costs due to absences and the need for cover (likely to be around £25,000 in total, during this financial year, with most in the 2023/2024 financial year)
- Inflationary pressures due to energy bills and increased costs
- A number of initiatives that have been on the 'back burner', slowly starting to come to fruition (e.g. community garden, new multi-purpose depot, etc.), whilst money is allocated for these projects and grants will also contribute, this is still expenditure that is significant.

These pressures combined mean a total of around £83,000 of 'unplanned' expenditure, plus additional unknown amounts for inflationary impacts which will hit during the 2022/2023 financial year.

More pertinently is the ongoing impact into the 2023/2024 budget year. With increased staffing costs coming in during this financial year, the impact next year continues to be somewhat unknown.

Inflationary pressures have continued to impact on the value of each scale point and this is likely to continue into the 2023/2024 financial year, so whilst an additional 5% has been added, this may or may not be sufficient.

Other significant increases include energy costs, specifically around electricity and gas for all council owned buildings.

Income remains unclear, with some significant sources yet to be confirmed. This includes:

- Precept - this is the big decision for council to make, but difficult at this point, due to the various budgetary pressures

- Landscape contract payment - this is linked to the new contract that is due to be awarded early in 2023, to start in September 2023. Without this information, continuing to deliver the landscape service must be considered highly risky
- LCTRS - this is undoubtedly going to reduce and potentially be removed. This budget reflects what is thought to be a realistic approach the removal of £70,000 of funding, whilst expecting the principal authority to maintain a level of support, given the work being undertaken in Woughton.

LCTRS is currently approximately £170,000 per year. Which has been budgeted for £100,000 next year.

The Landscape contract is currently approximately £156,000 per year. Which has been budgeted for £180,000 next year but will probably require more than this for it to be cost effective.

Balances and reserves are the big concern based upon current projections.

Staffing is also, by far, the biggest cost for the council, with around 70% of expenditure on staffing. With the pressures already noted, if the choice of the council is to make savings through service change, this may have an impact.

Members made the following observations and suggestions:

- To undertake a separate exercise on staffing costs.
- To consider adding to the landscaping contract the maintenance of alleyways on Beanhill as they are overgrown.
- Should not increase the precept, consider the use of reserves alongside savings.
- To review all services to ensure value for money.

The Chair encouraged residents to fill in the budget options survey to ensure all views and suggestions are able to be taken into account.

RESOLVED

1. That council notes the report and budget sheet.
2. That council notes the significant financial pressures that Woughton Community Council is facing.
3. That council notes that there are several areas where clarity is needed around costs and income.
4. That council begins to consider a preferred approach
 - a. Reduction in costs through reduced service provision
 - b. Reduction in costs through ceasing service provision
 - c. Subsidy through use of reserves
 - d. Balance through increase of precept to an agreed level
 - e. That the council agrees to a combination of the above.
5. That council begins to consider any areas for focus next year, to enable costed proposals to be developed.
6. That further versions and clarifications are presented to council at both Full Council and Operations & Resources committee meetings between now and January 2023, where ratification is needed.

7. To provide a breakdown of the costs of all services provided to see what savings could be made.

FC 116/22 To propose actions to engage potential candidates for the upcoming elections, due in May 2023:

The elections planned for May 2023 include all wards within Woughton Community Council being included.

It is likely that some current councillors will not continue.

Woughton Community Council is unusual in having a fully elected council (no co-options).

At the last elections, some work was undertaken to engage new councillors.

NALC has various resources online and Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council have Councillor job descriptions, myth busters and other information on their website.

Some officer time, both for any roadshows and for the development and sharing of resources will be needed, but this is likely not to be that much.

Members felt that Woughton Community Council should be non political.

Members were also encouraged to let Officers know if residents require any further information.

RESOLVED

That council agrees to:

- a. Council officers creating a specific webpage with a range of information about becoming a councillor**
 - b. That councillors and officers explore 'roadshows' where residents can access information and advice about what being a councillor means, expectations, benefits and impact**
 - c. That information is collated on the impact local (town, parish and community) councillors have had, both locally and nationally, to show the value and importance of this tier of local government to contribute to the above**
 - d. That councillors and officers work to provide a range of engagement resources, including podcasts, videos, social media posts, etc. to drive engagement**
- 2. That these engagement tools include and work alongside the work already planned around the provision of a Youth Council, engaging people at all ages within our community.**

FC 117/22 To begin consideration of service planning for 2023/2024:

Council was requested to begin consideration of service planning for 2023/2024.

To commence this process, consideration from councillors and committees in terms of the perceived priorities for the parish is needed, with a request that ideas are submitted for consideration and financial planning.

It is also suggested that to enable sufficient time for consideration, individual committees take a level of responsibility for the development of actions relating to their areas of responsibility.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council considers priorities for the next council year (commencing May 2023).**
- 2. That council agrees to discussions for additional oversight, with committees feeding back to the Council Manager.**
- 3. That proposals are offered based upon ongoing discussions around budgetary pressures.**
- 4. That the Council Manager presents a first draft Service Plan for the November Full Council meeting, based upon feedback from councillors and officers.**

FC 118/22 To consider a policy on provision of services to people outside the parish:

Over recent months, there have been concerns expressed about people from outside the parish accessing services that are provided by Woughton Community Council. This includes attendance at the community café, access to the advice and wellbeing services and use of community buildings.

Members discussed the matter and generally felt that those services that were provided by the precept should be free to Woughton residents and a levy charged to those residents living outside the area, and services that are provided by Woughton Community Council at a nil cost both residents living in and outside of Woughton Community Council should access those services for free.

The Council Manager will provide a written report with suggestions for a policy on residents living outside the Woughton area accessing services, for consideration at a meeting of the Services & Communities Committee.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council considers who should be considered 'resident' in terms of service provision and support.**
- 2. That council considers whether support should be limited to those who are considered 'resident', whether this is service specific, and what considerations should be included.**
- 3. That following discussions, a more formal 'report' is taken to the Services & Communities committee for discussion and creation of a policy that covers the issues raised.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 14th November 2022, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:45PM

Chair _____ Date _____