

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th July 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Local Centre, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Jordan Coventry (Vice-Chair), Elina Apse, Maggie Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Penny Glasgow, Brian Hepburn, Phil Hopcraft, Ruth McMillian, John Orr, Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson, Pam Wilson.

Also present:

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

In attendance:

One (1) x Member of the public
Jo Smart (Community Safety Officer – Milton Keynes Council)
James Ravenell (Inspector - Thames Valley Police)
Tony Clarke (Thames Valley Police)
Colin Cooper (PCSO - Thames Valley Police)

FC 62/22 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Jeanette Bobey (unwell)
Cllr Luke Louis (holiday)
Cllr Terri Parish (unwell)
Cllr Nick Scott (work commitment)

AGREED

FC 63/22 Representative(s) from Thames Valley Police will be in attendance to answer questions and address concerns previously raised, including community policing:

Officers introduced themselves Inspector Ravenhall explained the team structure and resources available to the community.

A member of the public spoke about the amount of traffic at the mosque on Coffee Hall when events are being held with parking also along Lloyds. Inspector Ravenhall replied that resources are limited to attend when events are held, but tickets can be issued if there is photo evidence, Milton Keynes Council deal with most parking issues.

A member of the public also brought up the anti social behaviour of taxi drivers, Inspector Ravenhall replied that all incidents should be reported, obtaining registration plates are useful but don't put yourself in any danger, and report via the 101 service or by using a form on the Thames Valley Police website.

Inspector Ravenhall spoke about resources and expectation management as the police cannot be everywhere.

The Chair showed video footage taken of the parking situation during recent EID celebrations.

The Community Safety Officer said that Milton Keynes Council has developed an app to record any noise, and advised to keep a diary.

The Highways Directorate have anti-social behaviour teams that are available to assist, public consultations will need to take place for the installation of yellow double lines and parking enforcement schemes, in the past residents had rejected parking permits.

The Chair was concerned that meetings with Milton Keynes Council on parking issues get cancelled, the next meeting is to be held on the 2nd August 2022 and will be discussing the use of barriers to prevent motor bikes on redways. Officers have been trying to catch the culprits but need addresses for tenancy breaches to be able to issue a Section 50 for anti-social behaviour.

The dangerous use of e scooters was brought up, insurance is invalid if a child uses an e scooter and causes an injury.

A spate of motor bike thefts have been reported and motor bikes causing anti-social behaviour, residents have been confronting culprits and officers are aware of two (2) main offenders, but evidence is required, ASBO's can be issued, unfortunately video evidence does not show the offenders, 300 plus stolen motor bikes have been reported, and offenders have been arrested and going through the Thames Valley Police system.

Members expressed concern about the lack of neighbourhood policing and trust with residents, they see PCSO's about but there is a lack of police officer visibility, if incidents get reported and the matter is not dealt with then residents get upset, vulnerable residents rely on the police and various agencies, but it seems nothing is getting done, Members also felt that the police need to engage with younger people and general relationship building, to raise confidence, it was suggested that officers engaged with the Woughton Community Council Youth Service, who can refer matters to other agencies, the Safer Communities Officer suggested engaging with other agencies such as social services, safeguarding, Milton Keynes Council Environmental services, Housing Associations and Milton Keynes Housing Directorate if tenants are involved, that would free up Thames Valley Police resources, there is a community trigger scheme that agencies are involved with.

Councillors were advised to be careful of residents contacting them directly by email, due to data protection issues and to advise them to ring Thames Valley Police instead.

Thames Valley Police need funding to supply the knife amnesty bin, but Inspector Ravenhall will chase the matter up, the Council Manager will pass on the email contacts.

The meeting was informed that there has been some resignations and therefore there is a need to recruit more officers, concern was expressed about losing the knowledge and experience especially regarding local issues, salary is also a factor in retention and recruitment, Councillors expressed concerns about the knock on effect on waiting times. The meeting was told that Thames Valley Police do need plenty of notice to attend community events.

The Chair thanked Thames Valley Police and the Safer Communities officer for their attendance.

There then followed a five (5) minute comfort break.

NOTED

FC 64/22 Declaration of interests:

Cllr Pam Wilson declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item FC 75/22 in case discussions take place regarding the Alderman Kevin Wilson Trust.

NOTED

FC 65/22 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th June 2022 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

FC 66/22 Chair's Announcement(s):

The Milton Keynes Community Foundation has asked if Woughton Community Council would like to be a beneficiary of their car raffle, proceeds would be split equally with the community foundation, please let the Council Manager know your views on the matter.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Penny Glasgow, who had recently won the Leadenhall by Election, to her first meeting. The Chair asked that at the next meeting there is an agenda item to ratify Cllr Glasgow's committee appointment(s).

The Chair also spoke on the recent amber weather alert from the Met Office, and asked everyone to look out for their neighbours, the Chair advised on how to take precautions in the extremely hot weather that has been forecast.

The Chair advised residents to ensure that all bins and black sacks are left out at 6:00am and not 7:00am on the day of collection, starting from this coming Sunday onwards, as the crews are starting earlier to avoid working as much as possible in the hot weather.

The Chair informed the meeting that Cllr Ernie Thomas of West Bletchley Council had recently passed away, and will be a loss to the sector and was a good friend to Woughton Community Council.

RESOLVED

To ensure that there is an agenda item at the next meeting to ratify Cllr Glasgow's committee appointment(s).

FC 67/22 Questions from the public:

There were no other questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

FC 68/22 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr Liz Simpkins – The planning application for Harrier Court, Eaglestone has been withdrawn due to objections from the Milton Keynes Forum and the Milton Keynes Council Conservation and Archeology Officer, residents are unhappy and want something done to improve their properties, the scaffolding has been up for over five (5) years now, the Chair suggested that this could be looked into at a future Full Council or Planning, Licencing & Development Committee meeting, Cllr Simpkins said that she will keep abreast with any further developments and keep the Council updated.

Cllr Liz Simpkins – wishes to step down from her role as a representative on the MKALC, the Chair suggested that there is an agenda item for the next meeting to agree a replacement.

Cllr Brian Hepburn – is working on a project with the Milton Keynes Council Heritage Directorate and the Milton Keynes Arts Centre, which will hopefully be rolled out over the summer, and will keep Council updated.

Cllr Jordan Coventry – has spoken to the Cabinet Member Cllr Lauren Townsend on the provision of salt bins and will keep Council updated.

RESOLVED

To put on the next agenda to elect a representative onto the MKALC due to Cllr Lis Simpkins wishing to step down from this role.

FC 69/22 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Sue Smith was recently elected as the third Councillor for the Woughton & Fishermead Ward, and has already starting to pick up some very challenging casework.

Cllr Donna Fuller said that the majority of her casework was due to the recent cost of living crises, there are still problems being reported about rat sightings, Cllr Brian Hepburn is pursuing this matter with his residents also, and will be putting a question to a Milton Keynes Council meeting to try and seek a solution. Cllr Fuller has already spoken to the cabinet member Cllr Lauren Townsend on how Milton Keynes Council could help residents heavily in debt.

Looking at revising how Surgeries are to be held to include the Fishermead area.

NOTED

FC 70/22 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Elina Apse – Nothing to report**
- b) MKALC – **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith, Cllr Pam Wilson – Meeting not taken place yet.**
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith – Meeting not taken place yet.**

NOTED

FC 71/22 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

a) Planning, Licensing and Development – Monday 6th June 2022.

NOTED

FC 72/22 Council Manager's report:

The Council Manager updated the meeting on his recent activities, there were no delegated decisions taken.

Discussions have continued around the Milton Keynes Communities 'app', being developed as part of the Gatekeeper project with the Open University.

Attended with Cllr Ferguson and the Community Services Manager an online session looking at how Milton Keynes Council are utilising the Old Bus Station to support homeless men.

Met with Lizzie, a wellbeing practitioner, to consider whether there is potential for her to offer sessions to residents, officers and councillors. She will be submitting a proposal.

Attended with Cllr Sue Smith a 'Reviewing Your Neighbourhood Plan' session held online this was facilitated by NALC and the session was of limited use.

The council has been significantly affected by illness; the officers who remained did an excellent job. The situation has been a useful reminder that a review of contingency planning is due and each directorate will be reviewing their plan over the coming months, with a view to having a whole organisation review in the autumn.

RESOLVED

That that the meeting notes the report.

FC 73/22 Tin Man Park and sculpture proposal:

Cllr Brian Hepburn one of the ward members for Beanhill is seeking Council's approval to support the residents of Beanhill on the restoration of the Tin Man and other works required on site up to a decent standard.

The plan is to have the tin man where needed welded and new parts added along with restoring some features of his face and enclosing damage around his feet, he will then be repainted silver and hopefully be covered with an anti-graffiti paint to protect him.

The base around the tin man concrete will be fixed and will be painted bright yellow to signify the yellow brick road and if permission is given the path will extend from the statue to about 10 meters in a wave pattern at the back of the statue which will be surrounded by a garden area that will be mainly small shrubs and bedding plants etc. This will all be to stage a bigger scene of the wizard of oz.

There could be a possibility of a mural being painted on the end of the bungalow nearest this area which will picture more characters from the wizard of oz and will once completed be treated with anti-vandal covering.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To agree to supporting the residents of Beanhill with the tin man project.**

2. To agree to change the small area directly behind the tin man from overgrown shrubbery into a Wizard of Oz themed garden to be maintained by the Moorlands School and volunteers.
3. To agree to support the residents of Beanhill on the restoration of the tin man to hopefully bring back to a decent standard.
4. To support the residents on the repainting of play equipment within the tin man park including the wooden structures in the woodland area.

FC 74/22 To agree items for inclusion on the Community Infrastructure Fund application(s) to Milton Keynes Council:

The meeting agreed the applications to the Community Infrastructure Fund for 2023/2024 which were as follows:

- Toilet improvements at the Coffee Hall Meeting Place, including auto door opening, improvements to disabled equipment and refurbishment of existing facilities at a cost of approximately £10,000 (which will be confirmed prior to submission).
- Alterations to the toilets at the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place to enable them to be used by all rather than having the disabled toilet in the main hall – widening of the door frames and automatic door openers, plus the addition of suitable equipment at a cost of approximately £10,000 (will be confirmed prior to submission).
- Addition of automatic door openers at the Netherfield Meeting Place (main door (button only and toilets) and doors to the chambers at the Hub, to enable access for all. Cost of around £600 per door opener, plus installation – approximately £3,000.
- installation of solar panels at the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place, alongside relevant 'battery' storage if possible. Costs for a 4kw system (suitable for a 4 person house) with panels, converter and battery are around £12,000, with different levels depending on what is wanted (e.g. a 6kw panels only system for roughly £7,000).
- Secure bike storage for The Hub, to support sustainable travel. Cost of around £5,000, plus VAT, installation and racking (roughly £7,000).

These items, in total, represent £40,000 worth of investment - £20,000 through the CIF with a further £20,000 needed from other sources (either from existing resources or through grant applications). Depending on the formalised costs prior to submission, some items may need to be excluded.

Cllr Pam Wilson had requested a bid for additional private meeting space for the Woughton Advice Service, the Council Manager said that would not fit the criteria but is looking into providing alternative space.

RESOLVED:

1. That council agrees to the submission of the following items for the Community Infrastructure Fund
 - a. Improvements to toilets, making them accessible and suitable (where possible) as 'Changing Places' toilets at the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place and Coffee Hall Meeting Place.

- b. To install auto door openers on the external doors of the Netherfield Meeting Place, plus the toilets and the doors to the Hub Chambers.
 - c. To provide solar panels and accessories at the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place.
 - d. To buy and instal secure bike storage at the Hub, to promote sustainable travel.
2. That if agreed, quotes are obtained, and a final submission is made to Milton Keynes Council by end of August 2022.

FC 75/22 Update on the Strategy Working Group:

The Strategy Working Group met for the second time on 27th June 2022, with an aim to clarify some of the underlying agreements that would form the basis of the plan. Whilst this wasn't achieved, there was some excellent discussion around a range of other issues:

Engagement with our diverse communities. How can we, as the local council, ensure that the traditions of other cultures are understood and respected?

People moving into Woughton get a welcome pack, that includes all relevant information. This was linked to wider discussions about the cost-of-living impact and making sure people know where they can go for help.

The group looked briefly at the previous plans.

how can we measure success? What, as a council, should we be doing to show our value? Do we need KPI's, metrics, outcomes, etc.

The meeting, whilst useful, did not produce the high level, strategic outcomes that are needed. As a result, it has been suggested to look at a more structured approach in future meetings, with a report that addresses key areas of the council's work with some suggestions of what to consider to be realistic expectations for ten (10) years' time, which can then lead to plans for how to get there.

The meeting also showed the significant value of having some space to explore ideas with councillors, so councillors may wish to consider whether a less formal session, without agendas, minutes and reports would be beneficial to promote the type of discussions that took place within this group.

RESOLVED:

1. That council notes the report.
2. That the Strategy Working Group becomes more focused, with papers provided for discussion and agreement, with an aim to concentrate on key issues.
3. That council considers whether there is a need for a less formal group discussion forum, where a more 'free flowing' conversation can take place.

FC 76/22 Consideration of whether to offer childcare / dependency support options to councillors:

The meeting considered the issue of childcare provision during council meetings.

The Council Manager informed the meeting that whilst councillors at unitary, borough and national level are all able to pay childcare (and indeed, dependency allowances) and, since 2011, councillors at parish council level in Wales have been able to do likewise (up to £403 per month), the law in England continues to prohibit the payment of these allowances. This is defined in the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, where parishes are excluded from these allowances (and covers district, county and London Boroughs only). This is an area that NALC have campaigned on very briefly in 2019.

Whilst Woughton Community Council are unable to pay expenses to councillors for childcare, there is nothing in legislation that would prevent Council from offering childcare directly – the Localism Act 2011 allows councils with the General Power of Competence.

Following a similar paper being presented at a meeting of the Operations and Resources committee, a further proposal was made that allowances are paid, as they do at principal authority level, informing all relevant parties that Woughton Community Council will be doing this. This would be unlawful, and the Council Manager cannot, as the Proper Officer, recommend this as an option.

The meeting felt that legal advice should be sought of the potential penalties involved, along with costs for the implications of paying allowances, and to review the information at the September meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council notes the report.**
- 2. That council should provide childcare / dependency support to councillors, both immediately and as part of any engagement process for the April 2023 elections.**
- 3. That council agrees to the following provision:**
 - a. Provision of a 'creche' within the Hub during meeting times**
 - b. Employment of a team of carers (adult and child friendly) that can be used by councillors within their own homes**
 - c. Payment of allowances, in line with those offered by principal authorities, to people with caring responsibilities**
- 4. That council to send letters informing others of a wish to provide allowances to include:**
 - a. Other parish councils within the city**
 - b. NALC, BMKALC, SLCC, etc.**
 - c. MPs for Milton Keynes and Cabinet / Shadow Cabinet members with responsibility for local government**
- 5. That council to seek legal advice on the potential penalties involved, along with costs for the implications of paying allowances, and to review the information at the September meeting.**

FC 77/22 To update the proposed hosting of a knife amnesty bin:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that the hosting of a knife amnesty bin as mentioned earlier in the meeting will no longer be taking place until the issue of funding has been clarified.

NOTED

FC 78/22 'Cost of Living Crisis' discussion paper and proposals, including possible budget and service plan revisions:

To meeting felt to ensure that a proper discussion can take place on the impact of the 'Cost of Living Crisis' and Woughton Community Council response to this, that an extra ordinary meeting is held instead in late July, to agree any recommendations.

RESOLVED

To hold an extra ordinary meeting in late July, to agree any recommendations on the impact of the 'Cost of Living Crisis' and Woughton Community Council response to this.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 12th September 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 8:43PM

Chair _____ Date _____