

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26th September 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), Jeanette Bobey, Maggie Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Ruth McMillian, Amber McQuillan, John Orr, Nick Scott, Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson, Pam Wilson.

Also present:

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer)
Tash Darling (Youth Manager & Safeguarding Lead)
Steve McNay (Council Manager)

In attendance:

Cllr Elina Apse (via Zoom Video Call)
Sean Perry (Community Services Manager) (via Zoom Video Call)

FC 79/22 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Elina Apse (personal)
Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)
Cllr Brian Hepburn (personal)
Cllr Luke Louis (work commitment)
Cllr Terri Parish (personal)
Cllr Lauren Townsend (personal)

AGREED

FC 80/22 Declaration of interests:

Cllr Jeanette Bobey declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item FC 96/22 as she is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Netherfield Residents Association.

Cllr John Orr declared a non pecuniary interest in agenda item FC 97/22 as he is Chair of the Tinkers Bridge Residents Association.

NOTED

FC 81/22 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11th July 2022 were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

FC 82/22 Chair's Announcement(s):

The Chair welcomed back Cllr Amber McQuillan from her maternity leave.

NOTED

FC 83/22 Questions from the public:

There were no questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

FC 84/22 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr John Orr brought up the trees and general landscaping outside the Tinkers Bridge Local Centre, trees had been filled in with concrete around the bases and then removed, Cllr Orr wanted to know if the costs to undertake this work were from Tesco or the taxpayer?

Cllr Donna Fuller replied she had spoken with the Manager at Tesco about installing soft landscaping that would be low growing and low maintenance and that can be refreshed, the Manager said that she would have to further escalate the matter with her line managers, and Cllr Fuller has not heard back, but is happy to chase the matter up.

The Council Manager confirmed that Milton Keynes City Council and Woughton Community Council Landscape Managers are in communication with each other to agree the appropriate planting for the beds, and that Tesco are covering all costs not the tax payer.

Cllr Orr brought up the roadworks planned on Tinkers Bridge and wondered when they would commence, Cllr Donna Fuller said that the planned date was August 19th 2022, and has emailed the Lead Officer concerned at Milton Keynes City Council and still has not had a response.

Cllr Alan Williamson said that he had received an email from a Milton Keynes City Council Landscape Officer, confirming that twenty (20) branch conifers would be removed near to where bungalows are situated, to allay residents' fears about damage to their properties.

NOTED

FC 85/22 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Donna Fuller said that the majority of her casework was due to the recent cost of living crises, lots of meetings arranged with tenants and officers at Milton Keynes City Council due to a breakdown in past communications, to improve advice with other directorates such as housing, there are lots of barriers for tenants to access information or to report matters, the main option to go online is not useful for some people, tenants felt isolated during lockdown.

NOTED

FC 86/22 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Elina Apse – Nothing to report**
- b) MKALC – **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 87/22 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

- a) Operations & Resources – Wednesday 29th June 2022

- b) Planning, Licencing & Development – Monday 4th July 2022
- c) Operations & Resources - Monday 18th July 2022
- d) Services & Communities – Wednesday 20th July 2022

NOTED

FC 88/22 Announcement of the Passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II:

The Chair read out the following statement:

“Buckingham Palace announced the passing of Her Majesty the Queen on Thursday 8th September 2022.

King Charles III was proclaimed King at a ceremony at St James’s Palace on Saturday 10th September 2022.

Woughton Community Council now have a book of condolence situated in the reception area, which can be accessed during office hours, all residents, Councillors, staff and volunteers are welcome to make their contribution accordingly.

Woughton Community Council had also recently held a small key memorial event outside the Hub with a few words from the Chair, & the Leader of the Council laid down flowers at the Coffee Hall War Memorial on Tuesday 13th September 2022.

Flags at the War Memorial on Coffee Hall have been placed at half mast.

The office will be closed as a mark of respect on the day of the Queen’s Funeral to be held on Monday 20th September 2022.”

NOTED

FC 89/22 Returning Officers Report:

A by election took place on Thursday 7th July 2022 to fill the Leadenhall Ward vacancy the results were as follows:

Keith William John Corby 36 votes
Penny Glasgow 59 votes **Elected**

The acceptance of office form has already been filled in and witnessed by the Proper Officer.

NOTED

FC 90/22 To approve the following committee appointments for Cllr Penny Glasgow:

- a) Planning, Licencing & Development
- b) Services & Communities

RESOLVED

To appoint Cllr Penny Glasgow onto the following Committees:

- a) **Planning, Licencing & Development**
- b) **Services & Communities**

FC 91/22 To declare a vacancy following the resignation of Mr Phil Hopcraft:

Due to ill health, Cllr Phillip Hopcraft has submitted his resignation, with immediate effect.

Cllr Hopcraft has represented Coffee Hall for around six (6) years and has also been involved with the Coffee Hall Residents Association. The council would like to thank him for his contributions during this time and wish him well with whatever comes next.

As a result of this resignation, there is now a vacancy on Coffee Hall which will be formally declared after this meeting and the relevant paperwork sent through to Milton Keynes City Council and displayed within the ward. There is then a period where local electors can, if so wished, call an election. If this doesn't happen, the council *may* choose to co-opt someone onto the council, but could, given the timings, decide to wait until May 2023 when elections are due for all council seats.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council accepts the resignation of Cllr Hopcraft.**
- 2. That council thanks Cllr Hopcraft for his services to the people of Coffee Hall and Woughton.**
- 3. That council declares a vacancy, with the Council Manager sending the relevant paperwork to the Milton Keynes City Council Elections department, with a relevant date of 27th September 2022.**

FC 92/22 Appointment(s) to Outside Bodies:

To appoint a representative onto the Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (MKALC) following the resignation of Cllr Liz Simpkins.

Cllr Pam Wilson nominated herself, there were no other nominations, so Cllr Pam Wilson was appointed as the representative to the Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Pam Wilson is appointed as the representative to the Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils.

FC 93/22 To consider adopting the Milton Keynes Council Code of Conduct and to signing the NALC/SLCC & OVW Civility & Respect Pledge:

Alongside the new Code of Conduct, there is also a 'Civility and Respect' project that includes resources and a 'pledge' that councils can chose to sign up to.

This project provides a range of training courses for both officers and councillors, has developed a new 'Dignity at Work' policy and is encouraging councils to focus on this area, showing commitment to building respectful workplaces, communities and interactions within the local council sector.

By signing the Pledge, your council is agreeing that the council will treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it:

- Has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors.

- Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy.
- Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
- Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
- Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

The Dignity at Work Policy is the first major output from the work of the group and is intended to replace any 'Bullying and Harassment' policy, with a view to expanding this to include behaviours that may fall outside this but remain unacceptable.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council notes the report and the attached Code of Conduct and other papers.**
- 2. That council agrees to adopt this Code of Conduct as the applicable policy for Woughton Community Council.**
- 3. That council considers the 'Civility and Respect' pledge and, if felt appropriate, agrees to sign the pledge.**
- 4. That council agrees to councillors and officers attending the 'webinars' and training sessions that are linked to this project, using funding within the training budget.**
- 5. That if wanted, that the 'Dignity at Work' policy is discussed at the Operations & Resources Committee, with a view to having this ratified if felt appropriate.**

FC 94/22 To consider a cost of living emergency motion:

The Council Manager read the motion to the meeting which was as follows:

"This council notes with deep concern that Woughton faces the highest levels of poverty of any parish in the city of Milton Keynes and, as the 'Cost of Living' crisis continues, that residents of Woughton are most at risk. As stated by the Bank of England, 'inflation hits the least well off the hardest.

Poorer households are currently experiencing higher inflation than better off households. The rising energy costs, with seemingly endless raising of the 'cap' over the past year, impact the poor more than others, with a greater percentage of income spent on energy. Following the most recent announcement, with the 'cap' being set more than 3 times higher than April 2021, it is likely that many, if not most, residents of the parish will find themselves in fuel poverty. And for those in most need, the expected £300 per month average energy costs are greater than the entirety of a universal credit payment (currently £265.31 a month for a single person under 25). And this is compounded by other costs. Inflation is currently 10.8% and expected to increase further, potentially to levels not seen since the three day weeks in the 1970's. With income levels struggling to keep pace. Benefits increased by a paltry 3.1% this year, meaning a real terms cut of over 7%. And wages faced similar cuts,

with statista.com showing a 3% wage cut in real terms in the six months to May 2022.

Woughton Community Council is calling for a nationwide emergency to be declared, acknowledging the very real risk this crisis causes. Without a clear plan, financial support and wider help offered, the impact on citizens will be so severe as to lead to hunger, illness and death. This is not inevitable, but without immediate intervention, will become harder and harder to avoid.

Woughton Community Council also calls for support at a local level, from Milton Keynes Council, local businesses, organisations, and residents to ensure that those most in need are helped. This includes additional funding for urgent help, warm spaces, The Food Bank, and other support agencies, as well as a clear message to those with more power that urgent and lasting change is needed. We urge those in power to consider cuts to VAT, increases to income for those most in need and to provide direct funding to local councils, such as Woughton Community Council, who are best placed to offer support to residents.

The meeting requested that this motion is circulated to both Milton Keynes MP's.

RESOLVED

- 1. That council notes the report.**
- 2. That council agrees to support the motion of the declaration of a 'Cost of Living Emergency' as read out to the meeting by the Council Manager.**
- 3. That council continues to develop further approaches that build upon the existing support with an aim to support residents over the coming months.**
- 4. That information about this support and the declaration is shared via the website, social media, press releases, notice boards, The Gazette, etc. with an aim to ensure others also take relevant and necessary steps to help.**
- 5. That this motion is circulated to both Milton Keynes MP's.**

FC 95/22 To publish the Cost of Living Priorities Survey (Budget Consultation 2022/2023):

The Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting about the link to the cost of living survey, to be published as soon as possible with a view of getting some feedback from residents regarding the current economic situation. This will help when reviewing the mid-year budget in October (after the September close) but also to draft a budget that is reflective of the needs of the Parish for 2023/2024 financial year.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8JWQ6TY>

Also circulated to Members were an example of a leaflet, alongside an A3 poster which will be put in noticeboards/community centres and the hub offices.

As per the priorities survey for the budget consultation, the hope is to engage as much as possible through the community projects such as all of the community fridges and cafes taking place around the Parish, alongside the hub offices.

RESOLVED

1. That the Council notes the report.
2. That the Council approves publishing the cost of living survey to residents to assist with drafting the budget for the next financial year (2023/2024) and to assist with reviewing the current budget at mid-year point (September close).
3. That the Council agrees to push engagement of the cost of living survey through access to a QR code for online link and paper copies being readily available at projects such as the community fridge, café and at the Community Council local offices.

FC 96/22 Netherfield Residents Association:

Cllr Jeanette Bobey declared a non pecuniary interest in this agenda item.

Application received for £750 towards the cost of entry tickets and coach travel to a Christmas Pantomime at the Northampton Theatre.

RESOLVED

To award £750 towards the cost of entry tickets and coach travel to a Christmas Pantomime at the Northampton Theatre.

FC 97/22 Tinkers Bridge Residents Association:

Cllr John Orr declared a non pecuniary interest in this agenda item.

Application received for £256 towards the cost of a Halloween event.

RESOLVED

To award £256 towards the cost of a Halloween event.

FC 98/22 To agree the July and August 2022 Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts:

Members were circulated the July and August 2022 Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts for inspection.

RESOLVED

That the July and August 2022 Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts were approved.

FC 99/22 To discuss the operation and costs for the Youth Centre, 95, Jonathans, Coffee Hall:

The Council Manager updated the meeting on costs, operations and other relevant information relating to No 95 Jonathans on Coffee Hall which encompasses 'The Youth Centre' and associated youth provision.

Members raised questions which covered SEND referrals and advertising the service provision.

How hire fees are reinvested into the centre.

Access of the building apart from youth service provision, including use of the gym equipment by residents.

The Council Manager said that he will find the minutes confirming the use of the gym equipment and the terms and conditions.

Cllr Nick Scott proposed that the gym equipment is inspected to confirm the condition, the Council Manager will look into this along with the costs for adult gym equipment.

The amount of face to face time between young people and youth workers was brought up, as well as access to a quiet space and a youth worker if a young person needed it, a breakdown of attendance was requested.

The storage of equipment was raised and the setting of the rent.

The Council Manager said that he was getting from members a view that the Youth Centre finances and use should be the same conditions as the Meeting Places.

RESOLVED

1. That Council notes the report.
2. That the Services & Communities Committee looks further into the operation of the Youth Centre.
3. That the Council Manager to find the minutes confirming the use of the gym equipment and the terms and conditions.
4. That the Council Manager to look arranging a survey into the condition of the gym equipment and the costs for adult gym equipment.
5. That the finances and use of the youth centre should be the same conditions as the Meeting Places.

FC 100/22 To update the committee on the proposed Landscaping Depot:

The Council Manager informed the meeting that he has not received a copy of the lease to be signed from Milton Keynes City Council and has chased up the solicitors, along with the appropriate Milton Keynes City Council Officers, included the Ward Councillors in an email asking for their help.

There will be funding available for security of the proposed depot and flood equipment and storage.

NOTED

FC 101/22 To move, second and vote on the following motion:

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

That by virtue of the provisions of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded during discussion of the following business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

AGREED

OC 102/22 To agree the maternity pay package for the Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager:

To propose payment of maternity pay to the Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee agrees that the current level of service is sufficient to warrant a '5 years' service' approach.

2. That with this agreement, that the Responsible Financial Officer is paid at the same level as other officers with 5 years' service under this policy.
3. That the total amount due over the nine (9) month period is amalgamated and spread evenly over the nine (9) months.

OC 103/22 To agree suitable staffing cover for the Responsible Financial Officer's maternity leave:

To propose suitable cover for the position of RFO / Operations Manager during the period of maternity leave.

RESOLVED:

1. That council agrees to:
 - a. Extending the hours of the Accounts Assistant by ten (10) per week
 - b. Increasing the SCP of the Accounts Assistant to SCP 21 for the duration of her 'stepping up'
 - c. That the Accounts Assistant take over budget reporting, payroll and other duties commensurate with the post
 - d. That if possible, Woughton Community Council employs a temporary Responsible Financial Officer / Operations Manager to cover during the maternity period, within the pay range of SCP 29 – 32, hours to be agreed (no fewer than 16 hours per week, up to full time).
 - e. That these posts be covered by 'acting up' or temporary contracts for a period of 12 months (extendable if necessary)

OC 104/22 To agree the annual staffing increment:

To update the committee on the situation with pay rises for officers, delays to agreements and proposals / options for action.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee decides whether to: Award a £1,925 flat increase to salary across the board cost of living increase, with any variance on this to be resolved as and when NJC provide updated scales.
3. That the committee notes that incremental rises will be awarded and backdated to those officers who are due one, to be paid at the end of September.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 10th October 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 8:30PM

Chair _____ Date _____