

**Agenda item: FC 36/22**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update the council on activities and delegated decisions made since the previous meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That council notes this report.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The end of the financial year, plus the start of the new council year, is always a busy but useful period to reflect on what has been and what is to come. After yet another year of disruption, which continues to impact on the council through absence, illness, and safety measures. Whilst things do seem to be improving, this last week has seen significant disruption caused by staff absences – I remain hopeful that the summer will see these issues reduce further still.

Easter saw some brilliant events take place across the parish and showed how essential the community and resident groups are in delivering these activities. Brilliant to see so many people, so many activities and so much chocolate. Some of this came through a very generous donation from the MK Dons SET, which was shared with Moorlands, youth, the fridge, and others.

A reminder about the need for biographies and photos and thank you to those of you who have sent something through.

Alongside Easter, other things have been happening – the Arts and Heritage event on Netherfield was well attended and well received, with lots of feedback, ideas and historical discussion (it still seems strange that Netherfield is old enough to have ‘history’, but the stories of people who moved there are an essential part of the ‘Story of Milton Keynes’).

There was some disability awareness training that took place in the Chambers, attended by officers, member and volunteers. This session was hybrid (some attending remotely) but lent itself much better to the in person approach. Attendees found it useful, aimed at the right level to meet the diverse needs of the attendees. More will take place and we did record the session if members are interested.

Officers and members also attended the Community Iftar, commemorating the breaking of the fast during Ramadan. The Islamic Centre in Coffee Hall welcomed us, plus other members of the local community, showing round the centre and then

sharing the meal (which was delicious). Huge thanks to them all for the friendship and welcome we received.

Carole Burslem, the County Officer for BMKALC finally retired and her leaving event was held in Aylesbury, attended by the Chair and Council Manager. It was very pleasant and the leftover food came back to the Café, where attendees enjoyed sandwiches and snacks that would otherwise have been wasted.

Chairs Awards happened and went down well, despite some issues with catering. Jordan hosted with panache, Samone provided technical support with the environment team managing the catering and community team covering photos and general duties. There was lots of positive feedback from attendees, nominees and winners so thank you to everyone involved. An excellent way to recognise the impact of people across the parish that support the work WCC does, as well as building communities that reflect the positivity of Woughton.

Delegated powers have been used to agree to roofing repairs at Tinkers Bridge (immediate action was needed, due to rotten boarding, damaged rubber, broken roofing felt and water incursions that threatened to cause more internal damage. As the building that is owned by WCC, this work ensures the safety of the building, whilst also building additional insulation.

A couple of other notable events, with Cllr Yvonne Tomlinson retiring prior to her move to the seaside – this means a casual vacancy will be declared in Leadenhall, where there has been considerable interest in standing from a number of people.

And sadly, another vacancy as a result of the really sad news that Cllr Carole Baume, Ward Councillor for Woughton and Fishermead, passed whilst on holiday last month. Cllr, Baume, Carole to most of us, was someone who was positive, friendly, encouraging, supportive and very much focused on the needs of her communities. She will be sadly missed.

And finally, we hosted our first Work Experience student for a while, with a student from MK Academy spending a week within the council, covering all aspects of the work. The change in the student was noticeable, with increased confidence and 'banter' at the end of the week. A very positive experience on the whole, suggesting that we can (and should) continue to offer placements to local schools as and when they are needed.

Here is to a positive council year, as we finish the current 'term of office' for Woughton.

## **AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: FC 38/22

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To update on Lead Member roles, following the Annual Meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council considers lead member roles, considering the information in this paper.
2. That Council decides on which Lead Member roles are suitable.
3. That Council considers decision process in the event that more than one member requests any one role (i.e. voting, submission of reasons why, etc.)
4. That Council considers any length of time allocated – is there a set term for each role.
5. That Council agrees the following:
  - a. That Lead Members are elected in each future year as part of the annual meeting.
  - b. That for this year, members are ‘elected’ via vote at Full Council.
  - c. That in the event of more than one member wishing to hold a specific role, that each interested member submits a supporting statement for consideration, in advance of the vote.
  - d. That Lead Members are ‘elected’ for a period of one year, renewable at each subsequent Annual Meeting.
  - e. That there is no maximum number of terms that a member can hold a specific post.
6. That lead members will provide written reports at either Full Council or relevant committees at least quarterly or when requested.
7. That members are invited to consider which, if any, lead member roles they may wish to undertake and submit their preferences to the CMSO for formal agreement at the Full Council meeting in June 2022.

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The issue of ‘Lead Members’ was discussed at the Annual Meeting, where it was felt that this would be a useful addition to the council, providing focus and dedication to specific areas. This would be supported by the wider council, but with Lead Members providing ongoing feedback and commitment to specific areas of work.

The Council Manager has collated a list of possible Lead Member areas, based upon other organisations, the principal authority and the needs of the local community, as well as Woughton Community Council. It is not envisaged that all these areas will be covered, but this list is intended as a good place to start the decisions on what areas should be prioritised. Some of these areas are currently covered by existing roles (i.e.

Chair, Leader, Ambassador) so there may also be some consideration of what is outstanding and / or what is a large enough commitment to need a specific role.

In no particular order:

- Council Strategic Plan(s)
- Neighbourhood Plan
- Communications
- Partnerships / External Relationships
- Safeguarding (Adults and / or Children)
- Housing
  - o Repairs and maintenance
  - o Social housing stock and development
  - o Private sector housing
- Homelessness and rough sleeping
- Health (physical and / or mental, plus public health)
- Renewal and regeneration
- Finance and budgets
- Procurement, tendering and contracts
- Property and facilities
- Human Resources
- Waste, recycling, fly tipping, bins, etc.
- Community safety, police liaison, crime, ASB
- Equality, diversity, reducing inequality
- Education and learning
- Leisure and sports
- Schools, family centres, youth services
- Transport and transport infrastructure
- Environment, bio-diversity, climate action, etc.
- Quality and improvement
- Addressing poverty
- Public realm
- Early years/education
- Elderly issues
- Public health

This is not a comprehensive list and may include elements that are not wanted. Many aspects are covered already within various committees, groups or TAF's but this should not exclude the potential for additional support via lead members.

### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

It may be helpful for there to be a staff member that is allocated to support each lead member, depending on the specific nature of the role (e.g. Council Strategic Plan = Council Manager, Waste and recycling = Environment Manager, etc.).

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Member roles brief.

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

Agenda item: FC 38/22 (FC 09/22)

## WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### Annual Meeting

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To review and update information relating to the Lead Member roles and consider the option of further 'Lead Members' for specific areas of work.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Council notes this report and attached papers.
2. That the Council agrees to the definitions of the roles within the '*Lead Member Roles 2022-23*' document.
3. That the Council notes the explanations relating to the specific roles as detailed within '*Members Roles explanations 2022-23.*'
4. That the Council considers whether lead members for specific areas of work (e.g. transport, housing, public realm, etc.) would be suitable for the coming council year, with a view to a formal decision being taken at Full Council in June 2022.
5. That the council considers the role of the Ambassador and the future of this role, with a view to further discussions within Full Council in June 2022.

#### MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:

As part of the annual review, reflecting on the lead member roles, detailing the role for all members and considering whether any change is needed is an important element.

The attached papers reflect the changes proposed to the committee structures, consider some minor changes to the roles of the senior members (moving some elements to within committees, passing the liaison with the Local Association of Councils to the Chair) and review the roles within the council more widely. The attached document, *Member Role explanations 2022-23* aims to bring some clarity to the expectations of all the roles within the council, with a shorter 'crib sheet' with the *Lead Member Roles* document.

A further item for consideration is a proposal that has been made to implement a 'Lead Member' programme that allocates key areas to specific councillors to lead on. The proposal, included towards the end of the *Members Role Explanations*' paper, suggests that key areas such as transport, housing, education and similar could have a named member who leads on this area on behalf of WCC. This could include liaison with external agencies, collection of views and ideas, tabling papers or motions within the council meetings and should include regular written reports to the council (via committee or Full Council) updating on the work undertaken. Alongside ensuring a robust approach to these issues, this programme would also potentially

be helpful in the professional development of members, bringing added value to the council.

***It is recommended that members consider whether this is something that would bring value to the council and be prepared for a formal discussion and potential motions at Full Council in June.***

The other query that has been raised with the Council Manager and is therefore included for consideration and discussion, is the role of the Ambassador. This is the WCC 'ceremonial' role (we are unable to have a Woughton 'mayor', so the ambassador was in lieu of this) and has played a varying role in terms of attendance at and engagement with the community. Whilst the past couple of years has significantly reduced opportunities for the current Ambassador, consideration of the future of this role, what form this may take, any duties and responsibilities that should sit within and / or whether this would sit within a 'lead member' programme instead are all issues to be discussed.

***It is recommended that members consider the Ambassador role and the future for this, in preparation for a formal discussions and potential motions at Full Council in June.***

More generally, members are encouraged to consider the roles within the council and any changes that they would like to see in terms of the papers provided. This is key for clarity within the membership, helpful in terms of any elections or interest from residents in the democratic process and can help WCC in preparing support, training and other resources that can assist in the development of councillors.

#### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

#### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

*Lead Member Roles 2022-23.*  
*Members Roles explanations 2022-23.*

#### **AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

## **Agenda item: FC 38/22**

### **MEMBERS ROLES**

#### **CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Constitutional matters, Human resources, Standards, Internal communications, Neighbourhood Plan, Regeneration/Renewal (with chair of planning) Events, Full council agenda, Appraisal of Council manager (with chair of ops/finance) Kevin Wilson trust.

#### **LEADER**

Budget, press/media external communications, corporate strategy, External relations with NALC, MKC etc, Policy development (with chair & committee chairs) Financial strategy, relationship building, member/officer relations, events, review of strategic plan, Kevin Wilson Trust.

#### **CHAIR OF SERVICES**

Youth, Environment, Landscaping, Environment, Community services, Community development, Advice and Wellbeing, Communities and Environment grants, Liaison with Residents Associations and Community groups.

#### **CHAIR OF OPERATIONS AND FINANCE**

HR, Appraisal of Council manager (with chair of council) Training and Development, Internal comms, Grievance and Disciplinary, Policy implementation, Capital programme, Investments, Audits, Asset management, Banking arrangements and all processes related to, Insurances and risk register

#### **CHAIR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Regeneration/renewal, Neighbourhood plan, Planning/licensing applications, Training (with O&F chair) Housing and future development overview.

#### **AMBASSADOR (if agreed)**

Representative of WCC, attend civic events and functions with or without other members, represent WCC at community and charitable events, forge links with local organisations including schools, faith groups, businesses and others. The role will be supported by a nominated member of staff. The ambassador will be a non-controversial, cheerleader for WCC and represent WCC with the highest standards.

#### **LEAD MEMBERS (if agreed)**

WCC should encourage members to self-select, allowing them to utilise and build on their knowledge/interests. In the case where more than one member expresses an interest in the same subject, other members will be asked to vote. Subjects to include but not exclusive to

- Addressing poverty
- Transport
- Public realm

- Community safety
- Early years/education
- Elderly issues
- Environment
- Public health

Lead members will be expected to provide written reports to committees where appropriate ie findings of investigations or proposals for future consideration but not to undermine chairs.

Lead members will be supported to become more familiar with their subject via training opportunities etc.

They could also provide a key link between relevant agencies.

Lead members do not enjoy enhanced voting rights but may as part of their role make recommendations to council as appropriate.

## **Agenda item: FC 38/22**

### Members Roles

#### **Section A All Members**

(N.B. These suggestions will require explanation and examples prior to publication)

#### **Roles**

- 1) To act as a local Community Leader for the Ward represented
- 2) To advocate on behalf of individual constituents where appropriate
- 3) To bring to the Councils attention issues of concern from the Ward represented and the parish as a whole, acknowledging and liaising with ward members if outside your specific estate
- 4) To act as a consultee on all matters affecting the Ward in particular (e.g. Planning applications, service reconfiguration etc)
- 5) To attend meetings of local community groups and organisations covering the Ward represented
- 6) To attend meetings of the Council and committees appointed to
- 7) To liaise with and from Officers of the Council in relation to local Ward matters and those affecting the whole parish
- 8) To act collectively to further the best interests of the Parish as a whole

#### **Responsibilities**

- 1) To Attend meetings of the Council, local Community groups and organisations as appropriate and as best able
- 2) To ensure the highest levels of probity and standards at all times
- 3) To act both as a Ward representative and in the best interests of the Parish as whole, acknowledging and liaising with ward members if working outside your specific estate
- 4) To ensure that no conflicts of interest are perceived or could be perceived
- 5) To take up relevant training opportunities whenever possible and to explore personal developmental needs
- 6) To provide a voice for the community represented and to communicate with local ward residents as appropriate, using a variety of techniques
- 7) To act in the best interests of all Ward residents equally
- 8) To submit (for publication in the Gazette and on the Council Website) a quarterly report on activities and relevant issues considered

#### **Rights**

- 1) To be able and facilitated to communicate with the electorate represented, and with officials of The Community Council, Milton Keynes Council, statutory bodies and other agencies
- 2) To be able to submit items and motions for consideration at any Committee of the Council or the Full Council (with proper notice)

- 3) To be able to attend and speak at any committee or working group of the Council of the Council, whether a member or not, on any item up for discussion.
- 4) To reasonable support to enable members to perform their community leadership role subject to budget
- 5) To have access to IT facilities (subject to budgetary provision) and a Council E Mail address
- 6) To have their vote recorded on any matter being determined by the Council or Committee on which they are a member as detailed in Standing Orders
- 7) To All Agendas and reports of all Committees on request
- 8) An opportunity to raise specific Ward related issues at all meetings of the Council provided notice is given in advance of the meeting and provided that no decision of the Council that affects the finances or resources of the Council shall be considered on such occasions unless notice has been given via a motion

Additional Roles, Rights and Responsibilities affecting Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

## **Section B All Chairs**

### **Roles**

- 1) To provide a point of liaison with specific senior managers relevant to the Committees term of reference and to weekly or fortnightly (as agreed) liaison meetings
- 2) To act as the spokesperson of and for the Council in respect of the business and services covered by the committee terms of reference
- 3) To provide leadership on matters relevant to the Committees terms of reference
- 4) To meet with other agencies relevant to the committees' terms of reference as appropriate

### **Responsibilities**

- 1) To Chair meetings of Committees with fairness and to guide committees to successful resolutions and decisions
- 2) To provide a point of reference for senior managers of the Council and to become familiar with the operations and services of the Council relevant to their committee
- 3) To ensure that Standing orders and all constitutional type issues affecting the Council are adhered to
- 4) To provide strategic leadership to the Council in relation to the committee's terms of reference

### **Rights**

- 1) To be consulted on all significant service and business issues arising within the committees' terms of reference

- 2) To be consulted in advance of the agenda and whenever possible the reports for all committees and Full Council and to be able to request additional items/determine order of business of their committee
- 3) To be provided with all relevant and key information relating to their roles and responsibilities

Nb The role of Vice Chairs is relevant only in the absence of the Chair, but they need to be facilitated to perform this role in a seamless way

Role of Leader, Ambassador and Chair of the Council

### **Section C Ambassador**

- 1) The Ambassador shall perform the Civic Functions of the Council. Represent the Council at Civic Functions of other authorities, represent the Council at Community and charitable events within the Parish, which are of a non-political or noncontroversial nature (e.g. Fun Days, Charity Fundraising, Social Events)
- 1) The Ambassador shall be regarded as first Citizen meeting and greeting VIPs and dignitaries of a special nature
- 2) The ambassador shall be supported in his/her role by Officers of the Council

### **Section D The Chair of the Council**

The Chair will of course Chair meetings of the Full Council, ensuring that standing orders are adhered to, and shall have a casting Vote in the event of any vote which results in a tie. The Chair will ensure that meetings are orderly and kept to a reasonable timetable and shall determine speaking order and ensure the effective running of such meetings

The Chair will sign the minutes of meetings of the Council as approved by the Council.

The Chair will ensure in consultation with the Council Manager and other Officers that all statutory duties of the Council are performed, and all matters required by statute to be brought before the Community Council or its committees on a timely basis. Such matters include but are not restricted to Budget setting, Audit Reports, Statements of Community Governance, Annual Meeting of the Council, Annual Meeting of the Parish.

The Chair, in consultation with the Council Manager and Officers, will ensure that all statutory and similar requirements on the Council are being adhered to including but not limited to Register of Interests, Record of Hospitality, Publication Scheme, Risk Assessment, Statement of sufficiency, Code of Conduct, Review of Financial regulations, Standing Orders and the like

The Chairs role in the matters mentioned in the previous two paragraphs is to ensure that these matters are performed in a timely way, and that where necessary are brought before the Council or its committees in a proper way. The Chair would be expected to be consulted on the contents, but this is not the primary role

The Chair will be consulted on all matters of constitutional propriety, calendar of meetings and arrangements for special meetings and whilst it is recognised that, except where allowed for in Standing Orders, the Chair does not have Executive Authority, they will be regarded as being the constitutional 'head' of the Council in a similar way to a Speaker or Presiding Officer of the UK Parliament or devolved assemblies.

The Chair shall provide stewardship to ensure probity and high standards by members

The Chair and the leader will provide line management to the most senior officer of the Council

### **Section E The Leader**

The Leader will be responsible for tabling before the Council or its committees, in consultation with the Chief Executive and other Officers the Budget and key policy initiatives, without undermining the role of Committee Chairs.

The Leader will act as the Chief External spokesperson of the Council in consultation with Officers, Chairs and other members as appropriate

The Leader will provide the key interface between the Council and external bodies

The Leader will ensure that all Members and Officers of the Council are kept abreast of significant events, issues and concerns that arise and provide direction to the Council

The Leader will consult on and recommend Lead members for appointment by Council

### **Section F Lead Members**

The Council has determined that from time to time it may appoint Lead Members. This is still an embryonic process.

Lead members will be appointed annually in May.

Lead Members should be carefully selected to ensure that the position adds value to the issue. Relevant roles should be selected that are tangential and relevant to the work of the Council, but so as not to undermine the role of Committee Chairs and others.

Lead Members will be expected and will be supported in becoming familiar with the issue in hand.

They will provide a key link between the Council and relevant organisations in relation to that issue.

Lead members will be expected to keep the Council abreast of any relevant considerations that arise in their work by written report to Council, and shall be a champion of the cause or issue concerned.

Lead members do not enjoy any decision-making rights, but may as part of their role make recommendations to the Council and Committees as appropriate

**Agenda item: FC 39/22**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To propose the reminder of and signing of the Code of Conduct and related policy documents.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That Council notes this report and associated papers.**
- 2. That Council considers the reason for these documents and the impact on their role.**
- 3. That Council decides whether annual review and signing of these documents is suitable and, if so, makes arrangement for this to happen.**

**MAIN ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

The issue of standards in public life is a 'hot topic' with both local and national government currently, with a focus on improving standards. As a result of this, a suggestion was made that this meeting and this council reviews the Code of Conduct and other documents that impact upon standards, with a view to all councillors signing an agreement that they have read, understood and will abide by these policy documents.

**STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

None.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Code of Conduct  
Social-Media-Policy

**AUTHOR**

Steve McNay – Council Manager

## **Agenda item: FC 39/22**

### **Code of Conduct for elected, co-opted and appointed Members of Woughton Community Council**

#### **I. Purpose of the Code**

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Woughton Community Council has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its Members and co-opted Members whenever they conduct business of the Council, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council. The code is based on the principles of:

##### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

##### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

##### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

##### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

##### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

##### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

## **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **II. Member obligations**

When an elected or co-opted member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations:

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
4. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
5. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

### **Registration of interests**

6. Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/she shall register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B.
7. Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register any interests in Appendices A and B.
8. A member shall register with the Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.
9. A member need only declare the existence but not the details of any interest which the Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest is one which, if disclosed on a public register could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.

### **Declarations of interests**

10. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A or B the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He/she only has to declare what his/her interest is if it is not already entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the monitoring officer.

11. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A or B which is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. If it is a sensitive interest which has not already been disclosed to the monitoring officer, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.
12. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, close relative or close associate (other than an interest in Appendix A), the member shall disclose the nature of the interest and not vote on the matter. If it is a 'sensitive interest' the member shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.

### **Dispensation**

13. On written request made to the Council's proper officer, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting he/she has an interest in Appendices A and B if the Council believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part at the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

### **General Expectations of Conduct**

14. Members shall base their conduct on a consideration of the public interest, avoid conflict between personal interest and the public interest and resolve any conflict between the two, at once, and in favour of the public interest.
15. Members shall at all times ensure that their use of expenses, allowances, facilities and services provided from the public purse is strictly in accordance with the rules laid down on these matters, and that they observe any limits placed by the Authority on the use of such expenses, allowances, facilities and services.
16. Members shall 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 and never undertake any action which would bring the Authority, or its Members or officers generally, into disrepute.

### **III. Public Duties of Members**

1. Members have a duty to uphold the law, including the general law against discrimination and the requirements of the Localism Act, and to act on all occasions in accordance with the public trust placed in them.
2. Members have an overriding duty to act in the interests of the Parish as a whole, but also have a special duty to represent the views of the residents and communities of their ward.

### **IV. Principles of Conduct**

7. The Localism Act 2011 required that the Authority must adopt a Code of Conduct to apply to its Members and co-opted Members, which is
  - (a) consistent with a set of prescribed principles described and
  - (b) includes provisions in respect of the registration and disclosure of
    - (i) pecuniary interests, both
      - (1) 'disclosable pecuniary interests' required as a minimum under the Localism Act and
      - (2) other pecuniary interests; and
    - (ii) interests other than pecuniary interests
8. In carrying out their duties in exercising the functions of their Authority or otherwise acting as a councillor or co-opted member, Members will be expected to observe the provisions of the Code and appreciate that the Code is based on the general principles of conduct identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its First Report as applying to holders of public office, which will be taken into consideration when any allegation is received of breaches of the provisions of the Code.

***Selflessness***

***Integrity***

***Objectivity***

***Accountability***

***Openness***

***Honesty***

***Leadership***

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**VII. Duties in respect of the Milton Keynes Council Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer**

15. The application and guidance on this Code shall be a matter for Milton Keynes Council Standards Committee and, as appropriate, the Monitoring Office, to assist parish (town or Community) Council's to promote and maintain high standards of conduct acting in accordance with their terms of reference or duties as set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.
16. Members shall co-operate, at all stages, with any investigation into their conduct by or under the authority of those persons and shall not seek to intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be a complainant, a witness or involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings in relation to an allegation that a member has failed to comply with his or her authority's code of conduct.

17. No Member shall lobby a member of the Milton Keynes Council Standards Committee in a manner calculated or intended to influence their consideration of a complaint of a breach of this Code otherwise than in accordance with the arrangements laid down by the Authority.

### **VIII. Criminal offences in relation to Conduct**

18. The Code and associated arrangements are prepared pursuant to the Council's and Members' duties under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

19. The following are criminal offences relating to the registration and disclosure of interests created under the Localism Act 2011.

- (a) Where the Member fails, without reasonable excuse to
- (i) notify the Milton Keynes Council monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests which the person has at the time when the notification is given, which is required to be given before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which the person becomes a member or co-opted member of the authority; or
  - (ii) notify the Milton Keynes Council authority's monitoring officer of an interest before the end of 28 days of an event where a Member is present at a meeting of the authority, or is discharging an executive (Cabinet) function, and is aware that he or she has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered, and that interest is not entered in the authority's register or is not the subject of a pending notification
- (b) Where a Member notifies the Milton Keynes Council authority's monitoring officer of such an interest, but the person provides information that is false or misleading and the person—
- (i) knows that the information is false or misleading; or
  - (ii) is reckless as to whether the information is true and not misleading.
- (c) Where a Member is present at a meeting of the authority, is aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered, or being considered, at the meeting, and either
- (i) participates, or participates further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting, or
  - (ii) participates in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting,

20. Offences also exist under the Bribery Act 2010, which includes the situation where a Member requests, agrees to receive or accepts a financial or other advantage intending that, in consequence, any function of a public nature, any

activity connected with the Authority or any activity to be performed by or on behalf of the Authority or others should be performed improperly.

<b>Last review date:</b>	May 2021
<b>Next review date:</b>	May 2022
<b>Lead:</b>	Council Manager
<b>Overseeing Committee:</b>	Full Council
<b>Approved:</b>	Full Council
<b>Review cycle:</b>	Annually



## **Agenda item: FC 39/22**

### **Woughton Community Council**

#### **Social media policy 2021**

##### **Introduction / Overarching aims**

The use of digital and social media now has a clear and compelling impact on all areas of local government, enabling better and more direct contact between the Council and the people and organisations that it serves and works with.

This Social Media Policy aims to describe how the Council will use social media to improve and expand the ways in which it communicates with its local residents, local businesses and the various government (local and central) agencies that it deals with. It sets out what is and is not acceptable usage of social media and complements the general rules in the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

##### **Policy**

##### **Scope**

Social media describes a range of websites and online tools which allow people to interact. This includes blogs and postings on a wide range of platforms including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, Instagram and Snapchat.

Social media is all about sharing information and people use social media platforms to give opinions, create interest groups and to build online communities and network which encourage participation and engagement.

This policy relates to any social media communication published by or on behalf of the council or any individual in their capacity as a councillor.

##### **Key Principles**

Any communication is capable of being misinterpreted. The immediacy of social media and the lack of face to face contact can magnify any problem<sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub>

Information and comments made can be broadcast to a large number of people more quickly than other media.

The same rules apply to social media that govern other behaviour as a councillor – but extra care needs to be taken given the immediacy and ease of dissemination

Although social media is conversational in tone, it is recorded, and it is permanent, so content and comment must be accurate, informative and thought through.

## **Responsibilities and accountabilities**

The Council Manager is responsible for all formal communication between the council and members of the public and will be responsible for maintaining the Council website, Facebook pages and any other Council social media.

However, it is understood that there will be times when individual councillors and officers may be communicating on social media.

## **Policy**

### **Social media Use**

Social media communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- be civil, tasteful and relevant
- not contain content that is unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive
- not contain content copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright
- not contain any personal information, other than required basic contact details

It is not a requirement for councillors to have a personal Facebook or Twitter account or to use other forms of social media to engage with parishioners or otherwise fulfil their role, but this will often be the case.

Councillors should always spell out clearly whether they are communicating on social media in their capacity as a councillor or as a private individual. Councillors are encouraged to create specific social media accounts for their work as councillors, although this remains a personal choice.

Councillors should ensure that they comply with the Code of Conduct for Councillors whenever they act or appear to act in an official capacity on social media in the same way as with any other form of communication.

Whilst independent communications with parishioners are important in order to engage and be approachable, the overarching rules are that councillors should not make commitments on behalf of the Council, not bring the Council into disrepute and always respect confidentiality.

### **Social media guidelines**

Treat others with respect – do not use social media to make personal attacks or indulge in rude, disrespectful or offensive comments.

Comply with equality laws – do not publish anything that might be seen as racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic or anti-faith.

Never bully or harass anyone – do not say anything, that might be construed as bullying or intimidation.

Do not bring the council into disrepute – do not publish anything that could reasonably be perceived as reflecting badly upon or lowering the reputation of you or the Council.

Do not disclose confidential information – do not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature.

Consider keeping your personal and councillor profile on social networking sites separate.

Check you have the appropriate privacy settings for any private blog or networking site

Be aware that you will be seen as acting in your official capacity if you publish information that you could only have accessed by being a councillor.

### **Potential legal issues**

**Libel** – If an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation is published, they may consider it as defamatory and consider legal action.

**Copyright** – Using images or text on social media from a copyrighted source (for example extracts from publications or photos), without obtaining permission, is likely to breach copyright laws.

**Data Protection** – Personal data of individuals must not be published unless you have their express permission. Personal information in an email or personal exchange should not be presumed to imply any consent to pass it on to others.

**Bias and Predetermination** – Councillors should not say anything on social media (or indeed anywhere) that suggests they have made up their mind on an issue that is due to be formally decided. While your likely view on a particular application may be well known, you need to be able to show that you attended the committee or hearing prepared to take on board and weigh all the evidence, and were genuinely persuadable to a different view, or the decision may be later challenged as invalid.

### ***WCC Social Media pages***

It is our intention that the Woughton Community Council Facebook pages will provide timely information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our Parish and a vehicle for constructive comments & suggestions from residents and local organisations. This is also the case for our Twitter and, to a lesser extent, our Instagram account.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Woughton Community Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Councils mission and goals, contributors must follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged,

but personal attacks on anyone, including Council members or staff, will not be permitted.

- Share freely and be generous but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.
- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the WCC Facebook page for commercial purposes or to market products.

Sending a message/post via Facebook will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and the Council is not obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through the Facebook channel.

Woughton Community Council will remove any comment or content that includes:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements
- Plagiarized material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam

**Linked policies (i.e. to be read in conjunction with).**

These include, but are not limited to:

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Communications Policy
- Data Protection

<b>Last review date:</b>	May 2021
<b>Next review date:</b>	May 2023
<b>Lead:</b>	Council Manager
<b>Overseeing Committee:</b>	Operations Committee
<b>Approved:</b>	
<b>Review cycle:</b>	Two yearly