

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25th September 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber, The Local Centre, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Nick Scott (vice-Chair), Jeanette Bobey, Maggie Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Donna Fuller (until 6:47pm), Penny Glasgow, Luke Louis, Ruth McMillan, D'Anne Mordecai, Liz Simpkins, April Rennie, Alan Williamson.

Also present:

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

In attendance:

Four (4) members of the public.

FC 75/23 Apologies for Absence:

None.

NOTED

FC 76/23 Declaration of interests:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

FC 77/23 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on:

- Monday 24th July 2023

Were **AGREED** and signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

FC 78/23 Chair's Announcement(s):

MKALC are holding a planning conference on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 to be held at the Milton Keynes Christian Centre Conference Centre on Oldbrook.

B&MKALC are holding their Annual General Meeting followed by an awards ceremony on Tuesday 17th October 2023.

Thanks was expressed to those who helped on the recent Apple Day event.

The next Community Meal on Tinkers Bridge will be held on Thursday 5th October 2023.

The Boxing Club is held every Thursday at 6:30pm at the Eaglestone Activity Centre.
NOTED

FC 79/23 Questions from the public:

There were no questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

FC 80/23 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr Micheal Ferguson – Flytipping issues on Netherfield.

Cllr Penny Glasgow – There are no rubbish bins on Leadenhall.

Cllr Liz Simpkins – Increase in parking issues on Eaglestone due to nearby hospital construction, areas mostly affected are Golden Drive and Hawksmoor.

Cllr Alan Williamson – Parking issues on Beanhill.

NOTED

FC 81/23 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Donna Fuller – Teething problems with the new Suez recycling contract due to the roll out of wheelie bins please let Cllr Donna Fuller know if residents report any issues. Changes to bus routes looking to find a solution.

Cllr Maggie Ferguson and Cllr April Rennie have had complaints from their residents on Netherfield and Tinkers Bridge, about assisted collections that have not took place, Cllr Maggie Ferguson has copied in Cllr Donna Fuller to all the emails, Cllr April Rennie will email Cllr Fuller with further details.

NOTED

FC 82/23 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Maggie Ferguson – No report.**

b) MKALC – **Cllr Ruth McMillan, Cllr Liz Simpkins, Cllr Sue Smith – Planning Conference will be held on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at the Milton Keynes Christian Centre Conference Centre on Oldbrook. To remove Cllr Liz Simpkins as a Woughton Community Council delegate to the MKALC.**

c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Ruth McMillan, Cllr Sue Smith – Presentation by the Milton Keynes Play Association, LCTRS grant will continue for the 2024 / 2025 financial year, no changes to the Warm Spaces Grant of £150,000 to be distributed among Parish & Town Councils, Anti Social Behaviour Team 3 sites in the north and 3 sites in the south of Milton Keynes chosen for a Community Speedwatch scheme.**

NOTED

FC 83/23 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

a) Planning, Licencing & Development – Monday 3rd July 2023

b) Operations & Resources - Monday 10th July 2023

c) Services & Communities - Monday 17th July 2023

NOTED

The meeting agreed to consider the following agenda item for consideration earlier on in the meeting:

FC 92/23 To facilitate the co-option process and applications for the six (6) currently vacant seats:

Following the elections in May 2023, there were six (6) unfilled seats on the council.

After advertising the vacancies the following submitted an application:

- Eamon Bobey
- Tony Coughlan
- Alisha Ebanks
- Michael Holland
- Teresa Keeves
- Jo Alexander Murickan
- Deanna Norris
- Geoff Woolmore

Applicants had made their preference known for which ward they wished to represent if co-opted.

Each applicant was given an opportunity to speak about their background / experiences and why they wanted to be a Councillor.

Afterwards a vote took place for each candidate and the following were co-opted:

- Eamon Bobey - Netherfield Ward
- Tony Coughlan – Eaglestone Ward
- Michael Holland – Eaglestone Ward
- Deanna Norris - Coffee Hall Ward

All co-opted members signed their Acceptance of Office Form.

There are still two (2) Beanhill Ward vacancies that will need to be filled.

RESOLVED

1. That Council notes the report.
2. That Council agrees to co-opt the following candidates:
 - Eamon Bobey - Netherfield Ward
 - Tony Coughlan – Eaglestone Ward
 - Michael Holland – Eaglestone Ward
 - Deanna Norris - Coffee Hall Ward

Cllr Donna Fuller then left the meeting at 6:47pm.

FC 84/23 Council Manager's report:

- At the start of the summer, some changes were made to the community café at Coffee Hall, with a new menu and some clearer expectations.

- The Youth and Community Teams have been trialling a new information management system.
- The new Landscape contract started, with interviews for new officers taking place in late July 2023. Two (2) vacant posts have now been filled.
- The new waste contract started on the 4th September 2023 with mixed results.
- The Eaglestone Community Café celebrated a year of operation.
- Meetings have taken place with representatives from the Electra Community Boat (with an offer of a project), Milton Keynes City Council around installing some benches and a secure bike store (to be agreed at a meeting of the Operations & Resources Committee), and with the Open University who is hoping to provide funding to explore the impact of the work that Woughton Community Council and other community groups has had on residents.
- Some officers and councillors gathered in the Chamber for a session on 'Action Planning'.
- The trailer was delivered to Milton Keynes Pride to once again act as a 'safe space'. Former Councillor Jordan Coventry was hosting on what was a scorching hot day.
- The following day there was significant rainwater and wind, leading to several issues including some minor flooding in a few properties and some major trees falling over / coming down. Thanks as always to those who were around to help out, the flood container was opened and hopefully made a small difference to those affected.
- A final engagement event was held to try and ensure everyone who wanted information was able to get it regarding becoming a councillor.

Delegated decisions

Purchased a washer / dryer (now installed at the Community Fridge kitchen) which should help ensure that tablecloths, t-towels and similar can be laundered. It also provides further potential where a washer / dryer would be useful.

RESOLVED

That council notes the report and the delegated decisions made.

FC 85/23 To inform the Council of the outcome of the External Audit:

Following the submission of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, have now provided their external audit report.

The external audit report did not highlight any areas of concern, with one exception the new Landscape team vehicle was not included in the figures used for the asset section of the return. This was due to the Asset Register being ratified in February 2023, in preparation of year end, with the vehicle then being purchased the following month.

This was an oversight which, whilst not a risk (the vehicle is insured and has since been added to the asset register), it does mean that there is an 'except for' on the external audit report.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the council notes the report and auditors report.**

2. That the Parish Manager ensures that variations are monitored and adjustments made prior to next years AGAR submission.
3. That the committee thanks the Accounts Officer for the work done in the absence of the Responsible Financial Officer for a successful audit and AGAR.
4. That the further steps, as detailed in the report, now take place to ensure all is completed in line with regulations (i.e. published on the website by 30th September 2023).

FC 86/23 To propose the appointment of an external HR company, to replace the 'ad hoc' agreement currently in place:

The Council Manager proposed the appointment of an external HR company, to replace the 'ad hoc' agreement currently in place, which has had mixed results in service, Councillor expectations and various delays to outcomes.

The Council Manager has provided various quotes, the Operations & Resources Committee meeting agreed that option 2 should be considered at this Full Council Meeting, which is a five (5) year contract costing £3,400 per annum. A specialist local councils approach, run and provided by a former Solicitor / Town Clerk and supported by others with personal experience within the sector. The company will undertake a review of contracts of employment, bespoke staff handbook and unlimited support on HR issues. The company also offer governance support and reviews. Additional (paid for) options for other elements, such as training, investigations, etc.

RESOLVED

1. That the Council agrees to the appointment of an external company to provide HR oversight, support and insurance, in line with the recommendations of the Operations Committee, as outlined in the report as option 2 which is a five (5) year contract at a cost of £3,400 per annum.
2. That this appointment starts as soon as practicable.

FC 87/23 To propose the commencement of the annual survey to direct planning, budgets and proposals for the coming council year:

The annual budget survey is due.

This has been prepared in a similar way to previously, but with a broader focus than last year which was predominantly around the cost of living crisis.

The survey questions were circulated with the report.

Members were asked for their views on the survey.

Members suggested that the budget sheet is produced in a larger print format, when printed off, and the trailer could visit each estate with refreshments provided.

RESOLVED

1. That Council agrees to the annual survey starting.
2. That the survey is published, running until the end of December.
3. That the feedback is used to direct planning, budgets and proposals for the coming council year.

4. That the budget sheet is produced in a larger print format, when printed off.
5. That the trailer to visit each estate with refreshments provided.

FC 88/23 To update Council on the now agreed timeline and full plan for the Barista Park, Coffee Hall project:

Motus are funding a multi-disciplinary Arts project, incorporating Dance, Music, Physical Art and Street Art. Motus agreed to the Youth Manager's proposal that the project focus around the Barista Park on Coffee Hall, with the main outcome to repaint the four walls facing out onto Jonathans.

The landscaping work will take place during the autumn.

The timeline for the project is as follows:

- Open Day. Friday 27th October (half term) 12:00pm-3:00pm Community event.
- A minimum of eight (8) two (2) hour workshops with the Dance Artist – February / March 2024.
- Community Day on Saturday 20th April 2024. Another community based day.
- 4th May 2024 or 11th May 2024 (to be confirmed), will be the public and publicised unveiling of the walls with the main event: Performances: dancers, local performers, beat boxers and HIP HOP music specialists, with a fun day / picnic in the park type event for the community to celebrate.

RESOLVED

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee is fully updated about the project, proposed timeline and stages.
3. That every Woughton Community Council Councillor can be made aware of their opportunities as individuals to meet and speak to the artist / team prior to the walls being painted.

FC 89/23 To update council on the Gazette and publication:

The Council Manager had received an email suggesting that Bespoke Media (publisher for the Gazette) is currently not working (it is unclear why, but appears that there has been some difficulty).

XLpress contacted The Council Manager to say they are now taking on the work that Bespoke Media had been doing.

The Council Manager has sent messages to both Bespoke and XLpress asking for clarification on this situation. It would seem the offer is genuine.

The meeting agreed to go with the alternative provider XLpress to produce and print the Gazette.

RESOLVED

1. That council notes the report.
2. That council agrees to go with the alternative provider XLpress to produce and print the Gazette.

FC 90/23 To update the council on a White Ribbon campaign event:

Members were encouraged to send any ideas to the Council Manager.

It was suggested that the Community Fridge sessions could become safe space locations.

Stickers could be collected and displayed in windows.

Members can email the Youth Manager & Safeguarding Lead if interested in training to become an MK ACT champion.

NOTED

FC 91/23 To agree nominations to the Milton Keynes Play Association board of trustees:

At the last Parishes Form meeting the Milton Keynes Play Association said that they had two (2) trustee vacancies on their board, please let the Chair know if interested.

NOTED

Date of next meeting:

Monday 23rd October 2023, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, The Council Chamber, the Local Centre, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:30PM

Chair _____ Date _____