

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29th January 2024, 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), Eamonn Bobey, Janette Bobey, Tony Coughlan, Maggie Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Donna Fuller, Michael Holland, Luke Louis, D'Anne Mordecai, Deanna Norris, Liz Simpkins, April Rennie, Alan Williamson.

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)
Marta Sobis (Responsible Financial Officer)

In attendance:

Two (2) members of the public.

FC 01/24 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell)
Cllr Penny Glasgow (unwell)

AGREED

FC 02/24 Declaration of interests:

The were no declarations of interest

NOTED

FC 03/24 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th December 2023 were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Proposed by Cllr Smith. Seconded by Cllr Scott. Unanimous vote to accept.

FC 04/24 Chair's Announcement(s)

There is a 'Use it or lose it' campaign for local bus use, following the buyout of Arriva by another company.

Storms, winds and floods recently have not affected the parish too badly – some minor damage from winds, some minor flooding and one issue with more significant flooding from a burst water main (the Chair thanked the Landscape Team who assisted the resident in question).

Please can everyone report missed waste collections as the contractors don't appear to be catching all the issues.

Please also report pot holes as there is 'more money than pot holes' currently. It was noted that whilst size matters, depth is the key indicator for repair work.

Councillors were reminded that the leaving 'do' for Mr Brian Barton takes place on Friday evening.

NOTED

FC 05/24 Questions from the public:

There were a number of questions from the public that were presented by Cllr Holland, referring mainly to outstanding issues of public realm within the Eaglestone estate.

NOTED

FC 06/24 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr Simpkins requested clarity regarding the assisted collections scheme as several residents have experienced difficulties with where and when waste should be collected from.

The SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) work continues on Netherfield, but it was suggested that this was slower than anticipated and communication around the process has been poor at times.

NOTED

FC 07/24 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllrs Fuller and Smith updated council on activities and pressures. Potholes, housing, poverty, cost of living all relatively constant issues which are being dealt with. It was noted that there is some support available for people experiencing hardship, including owner occupiers – councillors and residents were encouraged to contact the Ward Councillors if necessary and that they will '*always find some money*'.

The recent period of cold weather has brought some of these issues to the fore, with heating costs being a major concern. The weather may also have delayed some of the SHDF work (noted above).

Cllrs requested that blocked drains be reported as we approach the key time for flooding, based on historic rainfall. Preventative work may help ensure that impact is kept to the minimum. Cllr Maggie Ferguson reported significant issues with a drain near the church on Broadlands which the ward councillors will investigate as remedial work appears to be of short term benefit.

FC 08/24 Estate updates from councillors

Following agreement at the previous meeting that space would be made on the agenda to enable 'estate updates', the following was stated from each estate:

Beanhill (Cllr Williamson) – reporting dog bin issues, waste and other issues which impact the estate.

Coffee Hall (Cllrs Scott, Norris, Fuller and Mordecai) – trees continue to be an issue, with Cllr Scott collecting information with a view to an estate wide approach. Lots of reporting of public realm issues (fly tipping, street furniture, etc). Cllr Norris was congratulated by Cllr Scott for the way she has approached being a councillor.

Eaglestone (Cllrs Holland, Simpkins, Louis and Coughlan) – Cllr Holland ran through a list of reports submitted, covering a range of public realm issues, including further attempts to address the flooding at the pond, as well as flytipping, litter, highways issues, etc. Cllr Simpkins said that it appears that the work needed on Harrier Court *may* be starting soon, as there is now a tender document and some residents moved out in preparation. This was welcomed.

Tinkers Bridge (Cllr Rennie) – an increase in fly tipping has been noted. There have also been a number of incidents of dogs off lead, which can cause anxiety. Cllr Rennie stated that residents have been good at reporting issues, which is a positive step. The Community Food projects continue to be very busy. Work to support vulnerable residents has provided some positive outcomes.

Netherfield (Clls Bobey, Bobey, Ferguson and Ferguson) – significant issues with waste bins in the park, following the removal of bins following allegations of vandalism. This has led to the only bins being those provided by the Residents Association, meaning that they are collecting, removing and disposing of significant amounts. Concerns about the disappearing footpaths and impact on people using them, with health and safety concerns. A further request for a schedule of works from SUEZ, the waste contractor which the Council Manager will try and obtain.

Peartree Bridge (Cllr Smith) – Replacement roof programme has restarted, with leaseholder properties now the focus. Canal and River Trust are planning a clear up along the length of the canal through the parish, which people may wish to get involved in.

FC 09/24 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

- a) Woughton Welfare Trust - **Cllr Maggie Ferguson – contact has been made and an annual meeting is being investigated.**
- b) MKALC - **Cllr Ruth McMillan & Cllr Sue Smith – Next meeting end of March and looking to get Highways involved.**
- c) Parishes Forum - **Cllr Ruth McMillan & Cllr Sue Smith – due on March, where the focus will be on buses and the Accessibility Fund.**

FC 10/24 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

- a) Planning, Licencing & Development - Monday 8th December 2023
Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Williamson
- b) Operations & Resources - Monday 11th December 2023
Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Michael Ferguson

Agreed

FC 11/24 Council Manager's report:

The Council Manager explained that given the pressures of time and the relative lack of update, that this item was ignored. Weekly updates to councillors on Fridays and monthly updates via Facebook will cover all essentials.

FC 12/24 To propose co-option of applicants to the two (2) vacancy Beanhill seats.

Following a discussion prior to the meeting, the following was proposed and agreed:

(a) That Lorna Webb is co-opted onto Council to represent Beanhill, and

(b) that Charmain Marsh is co-opted onto Council to represent Beanhill.

There were two votes with the outcome of 12 in favour and 2 against for both.

Proposed (via paper) and RESOLVED that Lorna Webb and Charmain Marsh are co-opted onto council.

FC 13/24 Budget and Precept for 2024/25.

The Council Manager spoke to the paper written in partnership with the RFO and including feedback from discussions that have taken place over the past 4 – 5 months, especially within the Operations Committee. The changes that have been made were explained and, alongside explanations of deficits, reserves, impacts of inflation and the unknowns for the coming year. The real costs to residents were also detailed at each Council Tax band.

Proposal (via paper) – that Council agrees to the budget, as detailed in the attached paper. 10 in favour, 4 against. RESOLVED

It was acknowledged the budget will continue to evolve over the coming months, as further information and work around organisational efficiencies become clearer.

There was further discussion around precept levels, the importance of prudent fiscal management and the need to try and overcome some of the issues around low level increases during the current year, the impact of that in reserves and the need to be realistic about the coming year. The recommendation from the Council Manager, Responsible Finance Officer and the Operations Committee was a 15% precept increase, in line with the budget noted above.

Proposal (via paper) – that Council agrees to a 15% precept increase for the 2024/25 financial year. 10 in favour, 4 against. RESOLVED

Following the vote, Cllr J Bobey requested a further option be considered, but due to the vote having already taken place, further amendments were not possible under the Standing Orders.

FC 14/24 Defibrillator subsidy paper.

Following an application for a free defibrillator, the Council Manager reported that whilst this was not successful, that a 'half price' option was offered. This provided an option to provide a machine, with a heated cupboard, for £750 plus VAT, with an additional cost of installation (needs an electricity supply) or around £150 plus VAT. This equates to a cost of around £900 per site.

Council referred to previous discussions around defibrillators and a view that whilst there is a value in them, access, maintenance, distance, etc. are all barriers that mean that they can be limited in their value. There are around 10 machines within the parish, based at places such as schools, businesses and shops. Many of these are NOT accessible, due to opening hours. In addition, the issue of bleed kits was also noted – access to these is also helpful, but there is currently no national 'map' of these, as there is with defibrillators.

As has previously been discussed, provision of First Aid training was felt to be important, as this covers a wider range of situations.

Proposal from Cllr Scott, seconded by Cllr Norris that:

‘Woughton Community Council provides first aid training across the parish, to those within their communities’.

RESOLVED – Unanimous.

FC15/24 Waste Services update – December 24.

The Council Manager spoke to the presentation that was included within the paper pack for this meeting, covering waste, recycling, street cleaning, landscaping, play parks and cemeteries.

There were concerns that the presentation was not representative of the experiences of those in the room, with a level of missed collections that didn't feel aligned to the report. Similarly, issues around assisted collections were noted.

As a result of these views, the report encouraged all councillors, residents and officers to report any issues, using the online portal where possible, so that the contractors and MKCC are able to address any issues, have a full understanding of the situation on the ground and reports reflect this situation.

NOTED

FC16/24 External training options.

The Council Manager presented two training offers:

Modern Slavery, offered by DWP via an online portal and

Bystander Intervention Training, offered through MKCC via online presentations and videos.

Community Speedwatch training was also mentioned – this is going to Services in February, including information about requesting 20mph limits.

Cllr Scott stated that he has undertaken the Bystander training and had found it very useful and encouraged others to take part, especially as it is free. The Council Manager suggested that he could arrange sessions that could take place in Chambers where they could be undertaken together.

Proposal (via paper) – that councillors consider whether the training is suitable and relevant for them and / or officers of the council and that the Council Manager arranges sessions in Chambers if suitable numbers are interested.

RESOLVED – Unanimous

Date of next meeting:

Monday 26th February 2024, 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 7:56PM

Chair _____ Date _____