

Full Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29th April 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, Margaret Ferguson, Michael Ferguson, Penny Glasgow, Michael Holland, Luke Louis, Charlie Marsh, Deanna Norris, Ruth McMillan, D'Anne Mordecai, April Rennie, Liz Simpkins, Lorna Webb, Alan Williamson

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)

Tash Darling (Youth and Community Manager)

FC 54/24 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies received from:

Donna Fuller (joined remotely)

RESOLVED – Noted and accepted.

FC 55/24 Declaration of interests:

There were no declarations of interest declared.

NOTED

FC 56/24 Minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25th March 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

RESOLVED

Proposed by Cllr Sue Smith Seconded by Cllr Nick Scott.

FC 57/24 Chair's Announcement(s)

- A reminder that all meeting places are closed next Thursday (2nd May) due to polling station usage. This includes the community café.
- It's a Bank Holiday on Monday 6th, so offices will be closed and no meeting that evening, but...
- Annual Meetings will take place on Tuesday 7th May, with Parish Meeting at 5.30pm and then Annual Meeting at 6.30pm

FC 58/24 Questions from the public:

There were no questions submitted.

FC 59/24 Ward Matters arising:

Cllr E Bobey noted that the bin is missing from ABC Park in Netherfield and since the change of contract, general cleansing and litter picking, etc. is not as good. This will be passed to MKCC for information.

Cllr Maggie Ferguson noted work was needed on play parks as they are not the best and investigation into funding for improvements would be good. It was noted by the Chair that this is on the Service Plan for discussion later in the meeting.

RESOLVED - noted

FC 60/24 Milton Keynes Council Ward Councillors report:

Cllr Sue Smith deferred this matter, due to the 'Pre election period of sensitivity' (previously known as purdah).

RESOLVED - noted

FC 61/24 Estate updates from councillors

BH – nothing of note.

CH – parking remains an issue and cabinet members have been invited to attend an RA meeting, as have SUEZ, the new waste contractors. The new RA is doing some events and planning activities.

ES – issue with flats on Forest Rise has been resolved, with bins now provided.

LH – Concerns around new build at St Pauls overlooking properties and parking issues around Palace Square causing some issues.

NF – SHDF problems the biggest issue. Pavement parking is also troublesome, with a petition having been created as no action from MKCC or TVP.

PB – New topsoil and seeding has taken place where work was taking place.

Pathway to rear of Waterside being addressed and nice results so far. Anglian Water are working on the car park near the marina.

TB – meeting with TVP re: ongoing issues (ASB, drugs, etc) took place. Lots of dog waste being bagged and dumped. Safer MK also attended as drinking outside the meeting place has led to vomit and urination on the centre.

The Chair commented on the work being undertaken, congratulating all involved.

RESOLVED - noted

FC 62/24 Feedback from meetings with Outside Bodies:

a) Woughton Welfare Trust – meeting took place and proposal for potential for £400 per year to be passed for councillors to access for help with cost of living issues.

b) MKALC – Financial updates, street trading review in Buckinghamshire and member services products all discussed.

c) Parishes Forum – next meeting planned for June.

RESOLVED - noted

FC 63/24 To note the minutes from the following Committees:

b) Operations & Resources - Monday 11th March 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Rennie

RESOLVED

c) Services and Communities - Monday 18th March 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Mordecai

RESOLVED

FC 64/24 Council Manager's report:

The Council Manager gave a verbal report, noting the current challenges around staffing and the resulting 'busyness' of the remaining officers.

RESOLVED – Noted

FC 65/24 To discuss options for provision of dog waste bags for the parish

The Council Manager ran through the four (4) options, with the major decisions being whether to a) continue to provide dog waste bags and b) if so, whether to continue with the branded ones or move to generic bags, which are considerably cheaper.

There was discussion around the value of the bags, whether buying from supermarkets was a better option, that branding was unnecessary as nobody can remember seeing one anywhere (as they go in the bin!) and how the dog bags are distributed and paid for. Donations, charges and 'minimum donations' were also discussed, as was the contribution made from third parties who are supplied with the bags.

Proposal

'That Woughton Community Council continues to provide dog bags on a donation contribution basis'

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Norris

Tied vote (9 for, 9 against)

RESOLVED by way of casting vote from the Chair.

Proposal

'That Council agrees to the purchase of 100,000 generic dog waste bags from supplier 4'

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

FC 66/24 To formally agree the budget for 2024/25, with updated figures and accurate precept levels included.

The Council Manager provided updated figures and budget for the coming year, specifying the precept rise, the precept level for Band D and the overall precept income, as well as other clarifications around contracts and costs.

Whilst the agreement with regard to the precept and budget has already taken place, these changes do alter the overall picture and as such, it was felt pertinent to revisit the agreement.

Proposals

1. That Council agrees to the proposed 2024/2025 budget as presented in the spread sheet.

2. That Council agrees to a 15% rise in the precept, a total of £813,612.

3. That Council when preparing future budgets, continue to look for further efficiencies.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Scott

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

FC 67/24 To review the WCC Investment Strategy

The Council Manager spoke to the policy, explaining the minor changes (legislation stated and change of language).

Proposal

'That council agrees to the Investment Strategy for 2024/25'

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Scott

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

FC 68/24 To update the preparations for the Annual Meetings and review relevant documentation for agreement.

The Council Manager ran through the proposed changes and updates to the policies due for review at the Annual Meeting, as detailed in the paper and thanked the Councillors who have contribute to these reviews.

Concerns were noted around the suggestion of changes to committee terms of reference around voting and restricting to one vote per estate. Whilst there was some support for some votes being treated this way, there was also suggestion that where there are more councillors, this is due to representing more residents and as such, more voting clout should be allocated. It was also requested that Standing Orders should reiterate the need to table questions through the Chair.

The final document agreement will take place at the Annual Meeting on 7th May.

RESOLVED – Noted

A separate proposal was made regarding broadband allowances, as it had been suggested that with the increase in general allowances, that this would (if following the MKCC policy) cover broadband. However, with the lower level of allowance at parish level, this was considered important for many, especially those who have been co-opted and therefore cannot receive allowances.

Proposal:

'That WCC retains the broadband allowances for all councillors and the policy reflects this'.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Scott

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

FC 69/24 To review the meeting schedule for the coming year.

Provision of the draft calendar of meetings for the coming council year, to ensure suitability in advance of the annual meeting.

RESOLVED – Noted

FC 70/24 Update on legal advice sought regarding MKCC Service Charges

The Council Manager updated the council on advice offered via BMKALC, which was that as a corporate body, that WCC should not get involved in the issues around MKCC service charges. Councillors can, if they so wish, access independent legal advice via the NALC line or other means and the Council Manager agreed to share details with members.

It was also suggested that the MKCC representative who is down to attend the Operations Meeting (having been postponed, due to 'purdah'), attends the next Full Council meeting instead, with questions to be sent in advance where possible. The Council Manager will check with MKCC to see if this is possible.

RESOLVED – Noted

FC 71/24 Provision of declaration for councillors regarding allowances

Paper copies of the declaration regarding tax liabilities for allowances, following agreement at previous meeting.

RESOLVED – Noted

FC 72/24 Information regarding consultation on Accountability within public bodies

The Council Manager shared details of the consultation being undertaken by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

RESOLVED – Noted

FC 73/24 Ratification of the Service Plan for 2024/25

The Council Manager spoke to the plan, explaining that this was the former plan, but with the addition of item 18, covering skill sharing as previously suggested by Cllr Maggie Ferguson.

It was also suggested that the Play Park item (item 16) include a passage clarifying that it will cover a wider group and not just under 5's / disabilities.

Proposal:

'That council agrees to the proposed Service Plan, with the inclusion of the underlined passage within item 16 to read 'Refreshing play parks and looking at settings that are suitable for both younger children (e.g. under fives) and those with disabilities as well as general use and spaces for older children', as the overarching plan for the coming council year.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr E Bobey

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

FC 73/24

Date of next meeting:

To be agreed at the Annual Meeting on Tuesday 7th May, but likely to be Tuesday 28th May 2024.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8.27PM

Chair _____ Date _____