

## Woughton Community Council

### Operations Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 6:00pm via Zoom Call and Facebook Live.**

**Present: Cllrs Jordan Coventry (Chair), Alan Williamson (Vice-Chair),** Elina Apse, Margaret Ferguson, Liz Simpkins, Sue Smith.

**Also present:** Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer), Steve McNay (Council Manager), Samone Winsborough (Financial Responsible Officer / Operations Manager).

**In attendance:** Cllr Donna Fuller.

**OC 61/20 Apologies:**

Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell)

**AGREED**

Cllr Tina El-Shabrawry was absent and gave no apology.

**NOTED**

**OC 62/20 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**NOTED**

**OC 63/20 Chairs Announcements:**

There were no Chairs announcements.

**NOTED**

**OC 64/20 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):**

There were no questions from the members of the public.

**NOTED**

**OC 65/20 Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The minutes of the Operations Committee meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

**OC 66/20 Budget Update:**

The Responsible Financial Officer give an update on the stance of current year's budget as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

The total income is showing at 46%, and are still due 50% Precept of £287,455 and 50% LCTS grant of £77,806. 100% of the landscape funding, which is usually receive quarterly. Therefore hall hire, and additional income need to become high priority to assist in mitigating the effect of the Sales Ledger tidy.

A far more robust forecast can be given as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, at this point there should be a clear indication of the Meeting Place bookings and expected income for the rest of the year.

The forecast for six (6) months of 'normal' hire plus, the nurseries is sat at around £80,000 which would significantly assist in finishing in a strong position given the uncertainty and restraints afforded to the Community Council by Covid-19 this year.

There is a significant strain on the intended income for this year due to Sales ledger tidy and the closure of all of the Meeting Places from March 17<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

There is also a significant drop in spend, due to the unlikely nature of events and service plan items due to Covid-19.

**RESOLVED**

**That the committee notes the report.**

**OC 67/20 Training budget update:**

The Responsible Financial Officer give an update on the training budget as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

Due to the strain that Covid-19 has put on the budget, and the social restrictions put in place, the training budget was amended from £15,000 down to £10,000 for this Financial year, the intention is for it to sit at £15,000 again in next year's budget (subject to agreement by Members during the budget setting process).

As it stands £439.00p has been used for homelessness law training (£70.00p) and tuition fees that were paid earlier this year for the Landscape Apprentice (£369.00p).

This leaves a total of £9,561.00p in the budget.

Training opportunities and requests are being discussed during officers one to one's, for professional development. Due to Covid-19 this has not been a priority as social restrictions have been put in place. There should be some uptake in areas that it is felt that training is needed in due course.

There is a proposal offering mental health first aid to Councillors, and any training Councillors may feel is beneficial should be sent in an email to the Operations Manager.

A training agreement has also been drafted for officers which documents any pay back clauses, and gives an audit trail of training given.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Committee notes the report.**

### **OC 68/20 Woughton Business Forum:**

The Woughton Business Forum was one of the items on the Service Plan for 2020/2021, but with the current pandemic, limited actions have been possible. This has been discussed in previous years as well, but nothing has come from these discussions.

Cllr Maggie Ferguson suggested a consultation survey to find out what local businesses want, and to consider advertising opportunities in a booklet format.

Members wanted to include Milton Keynes College, local academies and small businesses based on each estate either in residential properties or units in Local Centre's including the Netherfield Enterprise Centre.

Members also wanted to support start up businesses in kind and not financially.

Members felt there is a need to consider what constitutes as a business, that the proposed Woughton Business Forum provides training and support to local businesses.

The Council Manager said that he would arrange to set up a small working group to consider draft Terms of Reference and come back to the next meeting with proposals for consideration.

The Council Manager will contact Cllr Elina Apse as a small business owner for her views and advice.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the delay.**
- 2. That the committee nominates a Councillor representative to Chair the forum.**
- 3. That a plan is created for early engagement whilst managing the current situation, with a longer-term view on delivery in 2021 (pandemic dependent).**
- 4. To set up a small working group to consider draft Terms of Reference and come back to the next meeting with proposals for consideration.**
- 5. That the Council Manager to contact Cllr Elina Apse as a small business owner for her views and advice.**

### **OC 69/20 Staff Handbook:**

The Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting that the Woughton Community Council staff handbook has been revised and published onto the Brightpay system for staff access.

All policies have also been uploaded onto the Brightpay system and all staff have access.

A system has now been put into place for a regular review of all the policies, and to ensure that they are uploaded onto the website on a timely basis.

There will be more comprehensive Health and Safety policies written by the Health and Safety Officer, the policies will be uploaded onto the website and onto the Brightpay system once complete.

All policies have been printed out and put in a folder and left in the Landscape Depot.

The Operations Manager will set up a Sharepoint folder for Councillors to access any policy documents relating to their work and duties.

The Operations Manager will also arrange training for Councillors on how to access Sharepoint.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to the amendments made to the handbook and policies which have been reviewed.**
- 3. That the Committee agrees ALL officer/organisational policies and handbook are published onto Brightpay to give all staff robust access.**
- 4. That the Operations Manager to set up a Sharepoint folder for Councillors to access any policy document relating to their work and duties.**
- 5. That the Operations Manager to arrange training for Councillors on how to access Sharepoint.**

#### **OC 70/20 Policy updates:**

- a) Driving to Work
- b) Lone working
- c) Training & Development
- d) IT Security

All the above policies as tabled were **AGREED** by the meeting.

#### **OC 71/20 Update and overview on the changes to facilities due to Covid-19:**

The Operations Manager updated the meeting on the operational changes put in place to support the reopening of the Meeting Places due to Covid-19.

The Meeting Places reopened for public use on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 (in line with the latest Government shielding advice).

The Coffee Hall Community Centre will be reopening to the public during the first week of September 2020 once the Community Fridge is moved back to its original location.

A number of changes have been put into place to facilitate the safe use for officers and residents.

Firstly a Covid-19 pack was issued to all hirers, and to any new hirers who have requested hiring any of the Meeting Places. This includes:

- A special circumstances Covid-19 terms and conditions document to be signed.
- A Risk assessment for all the Meeting Places.
- A Frequently Asked Questions page answering questions on all procedures and circumstances.

The periods in between bookings have been extended from fifteen (15) minutes, to forty-five (45) minutes, this is to ensure that the Caretakers can deep clean all touch points and areas of concern.

One way entrance and exits have been implemented at all Meeting Places reducing the risk of cross contamination, hand sanitisers are fitted at each point of entry and exit. Toilets have been reduced to one (1) person at a time, with 'vacant'/in use' slide signage put on each door. Signage has been implemented for groups and hirers to abide by the two (2) metre social distancing rules.

Due to the two (2) metre distancing rule the capacities have also been amended to thirty (30) persons, with the exception of Tinkers Bridge which is reduced to twenty (20) persons due to its size. Smaller meeting rooms are restricted to six (6) persons.

The provision of and or preparation of food is strictly not permitted at this moment in time, the kitchen may be used for drinking facilities, but groups must use and provide their own disposable cups.

It is outlined in the disclaimer that the responsibility to follow these guidelines and to keep up to date with latest government advice is that of the hirer (every effort will be made to inform hirers of any updates that may affect their bookings) failure to comply will lead to cancellation of bookings.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Committee notes the report.**

**OC 72/20 Operations 2020/2021 Service Plan update:**

The Council Manager updated the committee on the Service Plan for 2020/2021.

This year has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has prevented some elements of the plan being undertaken and delayed others. This remains an uncertain time and some elements of the plan may or may not be achievable within this backdrop.

The specific element that relate to the Operations Committee are:

**Item 3 – Community Engagement.** with a specific target of having 800 responses during the council year. This remains a possibility, as long as clarity is reached around what we are consulting on (budgets, but also a wider 'priorities' element?). Work is continuing with the Community team to focus on this work, now that demands of immediate support have reduced.

**Item 7 – Woughton Business Forum.** Work has not started on this, but can be planned for early next year, specifically around the need to look at recovery and

where Woughton Community Council can support this. Additional planning is needed to define the purpose and overall aims of this forum.

**Item 11 – Training and Development.** Solid plans were put in place to work around this area, with agreement for monthly sessions for officers, work within the appraisal system to identify need and work with councillors and the wider parish sector to provide a range of options to elected members. These have all ceased during the recent situation and any face-to-face training is unlikely this calendar year.

**Item 15 – Accreditation as a ‘Quality Council.** On track for Silver to be achieved this year.

**Item 16 – Website / communications improvements.** Some work has been undertaken, but not sufficient to meet the targets stated. Further focus is essential over the coming months, both for the website and to ensure that tendering takes place for the Woughton Gazette, alongside other elements which are outstanding.

**Item 21 – IT systems and processes.** Links to the training elements, with no face to face having been possible. There is a clear need for further work with both Councillors and Officers to maximise the benefits of the infrastructure in place. Further work is planned and will take place as soon as is possible.

Any ideas for items to be included in the 2021 / 2022 Service Plan can be emailed to the Council Manager or the Chair of the Operations Committee, residents are also invited to make contributions as well.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee agrees to the proposed new priorities.**
- 3. That the committee receives further updates in January and March 2021.**
- 4. That the committee begins consideration of items for the 2021 / 2022 Service Plan.**

#### **OC 73/20 Mental Health First Aid training:**

The Council Manager proposed the provision of Mental Health First Aid training for Officers and Councillors.

Mental Health First Aid is a course that provides an overview of the main mental health conditions, treatments, and ways that support can be offered by ‘non-professionals’. There are a range of options that are available, and all are managed and accredited by Mental Health First Aid England, the umbrella body that ensures training is to a sufficient standard.

The Council Manager suggested that for most, the Mental Health Aware course would be sufficient, with the two (2) day course only for those that are working regularly with people experiencing mental ill health.

The costs will be dependent on numbers, but likely to be around £200 to £300 per attendee for the full course, or about half that for the Mental Health Aware course.

The Committee & Member Services Officer was asked to email all Councillors making them aware of this course and to indicate if they wish to attend.

The Chair suggested getting training via Milton Keynes Mind to ensure the use of local providers so that they could possibly provide more in house training. The Council Manager will explore this with Milton Keynes Mind.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the committee agrees to the provision of this training.
2. That the Committee and Member Services Officer liaises with councillors who wish to attend.
3. That the Operations Manager liaises with officers who wish to attend.
4. That once attendance is agreed, a session is booked with maximum attendance possible.
5. That the Council Manager to explore with Milton Keynes Mind any additional training that can take place in house.

**OC 74/20 To discuss the potential and logistics of reopening the Hub:**

The Council Manager updated the committee on the Hub re-opening proposals.

The main Woughton Community Council offices (the Hub) of Woughton Community Council (WCC) have been closed to the public since 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since 14<sup>th</sup> July, the Community Fridge has been open, allowing members of the public to access key elements (Community Fridge, dog waste bags, etc.) and the council as a whole has continued to deliver all services in different ways.

The trailer has been out daily across the Woughton Community Council area throughout July and August 2020 and there has seen a steady level of engagement, mainly around water bottles and information, with some dog bags also distributed.

The meeting felt that this should be reviewed at the October Full Council meeting and at the November Operations Committee subject to any amended Government guidance.

The Chair of Council suggested also that there should be a review on how services are being delivered to residents, and arrangements for working in partnership with local community groups and other public bodies / agencies.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the committee notes the report.
2. That the committee agrees to the following recommendations:
  - a. That the Hub remains 'closed' to the public during September 2020 and is kept under review.
  - b. That access to relevant resources (dog waste bags, recycling bags (if restarted), information leaflets, etc. can be accessed via the Community Fridge provision.
  - c. That the Community Fridge remains open between 10:00 to 2:00pm Tuesday to Thursday, with consideration for an additional 'out of hours' session to also be held.
  - d. That the situation is reviewed within a council meeting (either the Operations committee or, if necessary, Full Council) on a monthly

basis, linking to infection rates, government guidance and safety concerns.

- e. That the Operations Manager / Council Manager review staffing attendance to ensure officers are sufficiently engaged, involved, and supported during this time, with a 'rota' for accessing the Hub, enabling 1:1's, team meetings and similar where necessary.
- f. To review how services are being delivered to residents, and working in partnership with local community groups and other public agencies.

**Date of next meeting:**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, via Zoom Video Call and Facebook Live.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:42PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT