

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22nd May 2023, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Liz Simpkins (Vice-Chair), Luke Louis, Ruth McMillan, Alan Williamson

Also present:

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer)
Steve McNay (Council Manager)

In attendance:

Cllr D'Anne Mordecai

Also in attendance:

Cllr Donna Fuller (zoom video call)

OC 01/23 Apologies:

Cllr Donna Fuller (personal)

AGREED

OC 02/23 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

OC 03/23 Chairs Announcements:

Disco Bingo on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at the Eaglestone Activity Centre. Various Resident Association meetings are taking place, all details are on the Woughton Community Council website.

NOTED

OC 04/23 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):

There were no questions from the public.

NOTED

OC 05/23 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 20th March 2023 Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

OC 06/23 To update the committee on various operational matters:

The Council Manager informed the committee on the following various operational matters:

- A Landscape Operative was physically assaulted whilst undertaking their duties, when a member of the public grabbed them by the lapels before running off. There appears to be no reason for this, with no precursor and, whilst there is no physical harm, incidents such as these take a toll on people. As a result of this, plus a previous incident where a member of the public was verbally abusive to both officers and members, it is **recommended that Woughton Community Council reiterates its 'zero tolerance' policy, with agreement that 'banning' people from accessing buildings and / or people within Woughton Community Council can be agreed as a last resort.**
- Both the youth and community services would benefit from some additional volunteer capacity. To support this, it is recommended that Woughton Community Council undertakes a 'volunteer drive' over the next couple of months (in the run up to summer). **It is recommended that Woughton Community Council undertakes a volunteer drive over May to June.**
- Due to health issues, one of the landscape officers is unable to continue in the role and as a result, there is a vacancy for a landscape operative. Whilst there is a lack of clarity around what the future of the landscape provision is (due to delays in Milton Keynes City Council providing basic information), it is likely that by the time any process is underway, Woughton Community Council will have this clarity. To ensure that delays are minimised, **it is recommended that Woughton Community Council advertises for a Landscape Operative, on current pay scales and on a full time basis.** If the future delivery changes, this process can, if necessary, be halted.
- The blue landscape truck is now at the end of the lease extension and as such, **it is recommended that it is returned.** This needs to happen by early June to prevent any further charges. The Chair suggested that this is subject to confirmation that the replacement truck can tow the trailer.

RESOLVED

1. **That the committee notes the report.**
2. **That the committee agrees to have a default position of taking action when officers / councillors are subject to physical abuse.**
3. **That the committee agrees to a volunteer engagement programme.**
4. **That the committee agrees to advertise for a new Landscape Operative.**
5. **That the committee agrees to return the blue Landscape Truck, in line with the lease agreement subject to confirmation that the replacement truck can tow the trailer.**

OC 07/23 To propose utilising the new Employee Assistance Programme offered as a 'member benefit' by the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (B&MKALC):

It was proposed by the Council Manager to utilise the new Employee Assistance Programme offered as a 'member benefit' by the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils (B&MKALC).

The Service Is provided by TP Health t/a Optima. B&MKALC has accessed this service through Optima's established Academies, Foundation & Voluntary Aided Schools offering, which provides the following:

- A totally confidential 24 hour/365 day phonenumber for employees and their immediate family living at the same address.
- Up to six (6) counselling/support sessions are available for employees (not immediate family).
- A confidential 24 hour/365 day phone line for managers who want guidance on how to support their employees.
- A great website with resources, information and webchat functionality.
- A pro-active app providing resources to help you with your specific health and well-being needs.

Support covering the following topics:

- Financial concerns, budgeting or debt issues
- Workplace issues
- Anxiety, stress or depression
- Physical and mental health concerns
- Emotional, relationships or family issues
- Bereavement support
- Legal issues such as disputes with neighbours, retailers, energy suppliers etc.
- Telephone Support

The charge is £8.10p per annum for each employee or sub contractor covered. This comprises the £6.75p base charge plus VAT. The full £8.10p will be forwarded to Optima. B&MKALC does not levy any service charge and only provides this service to paid up members of B&MKALC who have subscribed to the Employee Assistance Programme scheme.

The cost to Woughton Community Council, covering 31 employees (including all part time and 'bank' employees). At £8.10p per employee, this would cost £251.10p per year.

In the event that councillors are also able to be included, an additional £153.90p would be needed.

To include all officers and councillors of Woughton Community Council would cost £405 per year.

Woughton Community Council currently provides 'in person' counselling sessions for employees where appropriate. Six (6) sessions would cost between £240 - £300. The Employee Assistance Programme approach would mean that this offer could be amended and this is likely to therefore save money in the long term.

The Council Manager will find out what schemes, if any, are available for Councillors.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee agrees to join the scheme.**
- 2. That the committee agrees to fund the membership.**

3. That this is reviewed after one (1) year to assess the benefit.
4. That the Council Manager to find out what schemes, if any, are available for Councillors.

OC 08/23 To consider the priority for a funding bid towards a community centre:

There is now the potential for a further bid via the FCC Community Action Fund, this is the funding that can be accessed through the Landfill Communities Fund. Up to £100,000 with a need for some contributory funding from the applicant (in this case, Woughton Community Council by utilising existing funding for this).

This funding must be allocated to one building / site alone. The Committee was asked to consider which community centre should be the priority.

Both the Coffee Hall and Tinkers Bridge Community Centres have some funding already allocated.

The Eaglestone Activity Centre is currently in the process of being transferred so at this point, there is no agreement in place (which would exclude any application, until such time as an agreement is formalised). If this could happen quickly, an application towards the refurbishment of the 'back end', alongside the kitchen and the external spaces (e.g. nursery gardens, etc.) and installation of some solar / etc would be an excellent option.

This leaves the Netherfield Meeting Place, which would certainly benefit from a decent level of investment for external improvements, potentially linked to any further funding towards replacement / repairs of the court, 'changing places' facilities and alterations to the kitchen to make it more usable would all be possible. There is currently a lease in place until 2040 which doesn't appear to have a break clause within, which means spending is possible with some security around payback in the event that any significant change happens within the locale.

It is recommended that a preference for which building is directed by this committee, with either the Netherfield Meeting Place or the Eaglestone Activity Centre is identified as the preferred option.

If there isn't any agreement in place for the Eaglestone Activity Centre, an application will, by default, be made for the Netherfield Meeting Place.

It was suggested providing a film to go on all the windows to ensure privacy for all those hiring the Netherfield Meeting Place.

The Council Manager was requested to seek clarification from Milton Keynes City Council as to their long term plan(s) for the Netherfield Meeting Place, due to potential regeneration schemes for the Netherfield Estate, and to negotiate for a clawback in the lease for any investment costs provided by Woughton Community Council in the event due to any regeneration schemes/plans that changes the use/function of the Netherfield Meeting Place.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee considers that the Netherfield Meeting Place is the most suitable for a grant application.**
- 2. That a bid is created over the summer, for submission to the FCC Community Action Fund before the 6th September 2023.**
- 3. That if successful, the committee is informed and updated on the proposed work.**
- 4. That the Council Manager to seek clarification from Milton Keynes Council as to their long term plan(s) for the Netherfield Meeting Place, due to potential regeneration schemes for the Netherfield Estate, and to negotiate for a clawback in the lease for any investment costs provided by Woughton Community Council, in the event due to any regeneration schemes/plans that changes the use/function of the Netherfield Meeting Place.**

OC 09/23 To request additional money for the new depot site, following increased costs for fencing:

Further work is needed to ensure the new depot site is suitable with fencing being the priority.

The original cost of the fencing was £11,000. However, these costs have risen significantly since the initial quote was provided (almost 18 months ago) and this cost has now increased to £18,600. As a result, the original budget is no longer sufficient to enable all the works.

A further £7,000 is requested for authorisation to enable works to be finalised. Once agreed, the fencing can be installed and further works undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the committee agrees to a further £7,000 towards the cost of the depot.

OC 10/23 To update the committee on policy reviews, following the Annual Meeting:

The committee was updated on the policy reviews, following the Annual Meeting of Council.

The Council Manager proposed that at each committee meeting there is a maximum of five (5) policies for review, which are added to a SharePoint folder which is accessible to committee members. These are read and considered in advance of the meeting, with comments made also in advance for discussion / inclusion.

In the absence of the Operations Manager, the Council Manager will undertake the initial review of the policies noted, sharing recommendations accordingly.

It was suggested that it would be useful especially for new members to have an annual training session on the Incident Plan.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee notes the responsibility to review the policies as allocated at the Annual Meeting of Council.**
- 2. That this is undertaken in a gradual manner, to enable sufficient time for committee members to read and contribute to the policy.**

3. That existing policies are made available via Sharepoint in advance for members to comment on, to enable meetings to consider in advance.
4. To ensure that an annual training session on the Incident Plan takes place each year.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 8:43PM

Chair _____ Date _____