

Woughton Community Council

Operations & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th October 2024, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Deanna Norris (Vice-Chair), D'Anne Mordecai, Cllr April Rennie, Cllr Penny Glasgow, Cllr Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)
Sean Perry (Operations Manager)
Marta Sobis (Responsible Finance Officer).

OC 147/24 Apologies:

Cllr Eamonn Bobey
Cllr Tony Coughlan

These were individually accepted as apologies.

OC 148/24 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

OC 149/24 Chairs Announcements:

- Parks Trust Apple Day takes place in the Community Orchard on Woughton on the Green on Saturday.
- 7th November there is a table top sale
- 15th November is Disco Bingo as a fundraiser for the Blue Light Hub
- 10th November is the Sunday Remembrance Ceremony
- 11th November (Monday) is the Children's Parade for Remembrance

OC 150/24 Questions from the public:

No questions received.

OC 151/24 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 9th September 2024 Were **AGREED** as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Smith. Seconded: Cllr Glasgow

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 152/24 To agree the List of Payments, Bank Reconciliations for the months of August and September 2024:

Cllrs Sue Smith and Deanna Norris have examined the paperwork, are satisfied that they are a true and accurate record and will sign them. This was agreed by all present.

Proposed: Cllr Smith. Seconded: Cllr Mordecai

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 153/24 To agree signatories for the bank account with Unity Trust

The RFO spoke to the paper, explaining that Full Council had agreed to move to Unity Trust and delegated the decision regarding signatories to this committee. The paper provided made suggestions around the specific roles, which were agreed as:

- Council Manager
- Responsible Finance Officer
- Operations Manager
- Chair of Council*
- Leader of Council*
- Chair of Operations and Resources*

*In the event of any of those roles being held by the same person, the Deputy / Vice position would step up. For example, the Chair of Council is also Chair of Operations, so it is proposed that the Vice Chair of Operations is included.

The Council Manager explained the reasoning behind the second proposal, in so far as councils have previously been found to have signatories that are no longer councillors and, in some cases, councillors who have passed on. The annual check will ensure that everything is up to date.

PROPOSAL:

1. *That council agrees to the named officer and councillor roles being the agreed signatories on banking and related accounts for Woughton Community Council.*
2. *That these signatories are reviewed annually as part of the financial systems checks, ensuring removal and addition as individuals move in / out of roles.*
3. *That support is offered to the current role holders to ensure smooth transition to the new banking provider and with any other accounts held that require signatories.*

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Willamson

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 154/24 To review the half year budget

The RFO spoke to the paper, explaining that spending at the half way point was less than 50%, despite some challenges in terms of building repairs, which remains the biggest challenge, due to the unpredictability of this area. Queries were raised with regard to preventative maintenance and the Council Manager explained that whilst this does take place, it is not a fail safe for everything, that the buildings are now around 50 years old and things are failing.

Other issues noted were the new buildings insurance recharge from MKCC – the RFO clarified that this would be an ongoing cost.

Whilst this paper was 'to note' only, the following proposal was made:

Proposal

That the annual Chairs Awards event takes place after April 2025, to prevent two events within one financial year'.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by Cllr Mordecai

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 155/24 To consider the budget for 2025/2026.

The Council Manager (CM) and RFO spoke to the paper, explaining that the comments made by the CM were to promote discussion, clarify some smaller updates and explain the situation with regard to some key areas (non replacement of officer posts, likely uplift in Landscape payments, etc.)

RESOLVED - noted

OC 156/24 To review and agree the following policies

- **Lone Working**
- **Absence and Leave**

The Operations Manager spoke to the paper, explaining that there were no changes that were needed on the Lone Working policy and minor changes in the Absence and Leave, to reflect the

additional days leave that was agreed as part of pay award settlement two years ago and to update details of software used.

Proposal

That the policies are agreed as written, with the changes noted, with reviews in line with the agreed dates.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 157/24 To update the committee on the new NALC website, following official launch and provide information on how to sign up.

The Council Manager shared information and a video explaining how to sign up for the new website, alongside information about what is included within. It was suggested that this also be shared at Full Council.

RESOLVED - noted

OC 158/24 To update on responses to the annual priorities survey

The Council Manager provided an update on the responses received to this point – 27 in total at time of writing the paper. There is a centre spread in the Gazette (due to be delivered end of October) which should help, but it was noted that to have a reasonable number of responses is important to form a balance decision. All present agreed to continue to push for additional responses.

PROPOSAL

- *That the committee notes the content of this report, the feedback offered and considers this as part of decisions relating to budgets, services plans and precept levels.*
- *That the committee continues to promote the consultation to provide a more demographically accurate response level from the parish.*

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Glasgow

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

OC 159/24 To ratify agreement for new mobile phone provision

The Operations Manager spoke to the paper, explaining that the contract was expiring and new options had been explored, reducing the monthly cost from a currently level of £315 per month to a new rate of £55 per month. This is based upon a reduced level of data and some replacement handsets but meets operational needs.

PROPOSAL

That the committee agrees to the new arrangement, with a 2 year contract as detailed.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Glasgow

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

Date of next meeting:

Monday 11th November 2024, 6:00pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 6:43 PM

Chair _____ Date _____