



Woughton Community Council

Services & Communities Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th March 2024 at 6:30pm
Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber,
60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Cllrs Nick Scott (Chair), Jeanette Bobey (Vice-Chair), Eamon Bobey, Maggie Ferguson, Penny Glasgow, Charlie Marsh, D'Anne Mordecai, Deanna Norris, April Rennie, Sue Smith, Lorna Webb.

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)
Sean Perry (Community Services Manager)
Tash Darling (Youth Manager)

SC 88/24 Apologies:

Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell) – attended online
Cllr Donna Fuller (unwell)
Cllr Liz Simpkins
Cllr Michael Ferguson (work commitment)

RESOLVED - All accepted

SC 89/24 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest
Noted

SC 90/24 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):

Cllrs Eamonn and Janette Bobey both declared an interest in SC 94/24 and SC 95/24.
Noted

SC 91/24 Chairs announcements:

The councillor training programme starts on 10th April with a Domestic Abuse session provided by MK Act.

SC 92/24 Minutes of previous meetings:

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th February 2024.

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Nick Scott

Seconded: Cllr April Rennie

Communities and Environment Fund Application(s)

SC 93/24 1st Langland Scout Group

Sean Perry spoke to the application for £1,500 towards provision of an inclusion fund, providing funding for members of the scout group that may not be able to take part without a level of financial support. This includes items such as uniform, but also other costs, such as Scout camps, membership fees, etc. A uniform costs around £65, with a week long camp costing around £120. There are around 20 beneficiaries coming from Netherfield – mostly on parish.

Cllr Smith expressed concerns about the nature of the fund – this is a ‘just in case’ fund, rather than a specific project, suggesting that there is no formal plan in place. If money was awarded, could there be some reporting and accountability, with feedback to ensure

Cllr E Bobey questioned where the amount had come from for the application – the Council Manager explained that they had spoken to him on the phone and he had suggested that £1500 was a reasonable level of application, given the end of year and the remaining fund. Cllr Bobey also questioned the value of the Scout group, suggesting that they have not delivered on the estate, citing the raised beds outside the meeting place as an example of where they didn’t maintain things that they agreed to and suggesting that they don’t deliver on the estate / for the community and wondered what the focus of the group is and whether they could be asked for details of the plans / activities undertaken.

Steve McNay explained that the policy does state that feedback needs to be provided within an agreed date after the project (42 days) – this works well when it is a specific activity (e.g. A coach trip), but that this is more difficult in a situation like this. However, requesting feedback within a set timescale, with specific reporting requests is possible and asked if the committee would like to see this, with a date from which money should be spent or returned? Alternatively, it could simply be provided on the understanding that they spend it as they see fit.

Cllr Scott asked if we would be able to ask for feedback on what it has been spent on – can a request be made on what activities they undertake on the estate / parish? Many people are unaware that there is a Scout group. It was also explained that there are 20 beneficiaries from parish, the majority from Netherfield. Cllr Scott also requested that someone from the Scouts attend to report back on what the money is spent on and what they are doing.

Cllr Norris suggested that the spending may not be spent within the period, as the nature of the fund is that it will be spent as needed.

Cllr Scott reiterated that the spending should be reported on and spent only on children from within the parish.

Proposal:

‘That the funding of £1500 is awarded to the Scout group, with additional request made for reporting back on the use of the funding and an invitation to attend a meeting to present on what the Scout group do locally’.

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 94/24 Netherfield Residents Association

Sean Perry spoke to the paper detailing an application for £895 towards a trip to Skegness. Cllr Smith stated that as usual, the application from the NRA was excellent, but requested that people who don't usually get onto the trips be prioritised. Cllr J Bobey agreed that people would be allowed to do one trip or the other. Cllr Bobey also stated that people from elsewhere on parish often wish to take part.

Proposal

'That the funding of £895 be awarded to Netherfield Resident Association'

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 95/24 Netherfield Residents Association

There was further discussion about the application for £1250 towards a trip to Weymouth.

Proposal

'That the funding of £1250 be awarded to Netherfield Resident Association'

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Marsh

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 96/24 Phoenix Arts

Tash Darling (TD) spoke to this application for support for teaching of swing dance for performance at D-Day event at a cost of £460.96, after being asked to by the Chair. TD explained that she was part of the management committee for Phoenix Arts and so had understanding of the application. The application includes both sessions to train members and staff of Phoenix in swing dance AND attendance at the D Day event to support attendees in learning swing dance moves. Despite funding being available through the events budget to support this (as explained by the Council Manager), TD stated that the organisation benefits from having successful grant applications and so the application had been made.

Proposal

'That the funding of £460.96 be awarded to Phoenix Arts'

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

Reports

SC 97/24 To update the committee on grants applied for and received.

Tash Darling (TD) spoke to the paper, explaining the purpose and updating on some successes and some disappointments. This included the award of circa £7,400 towards CCTV in buildings, and the disappointment of not being awarded the £100,000 towards the revamp of the Netherfield Meeting Place and courts.

Cllr Smith stated that she was proud of bringing in so much additional money to the parish.

RESOLVED – noted by the committee.

SC 98/24 To propose updates to the Resident Association (RA) agreement.

The Council Manager spoke to the paper, giving details of the purpose and delay in reviewing the agreement, further updating the committee on the reasons for the suggested changes. These changes are:

- a. That to receive the annual allowance, RA's must be accredited by MKCC using the agreed process, showing that they have suitable systems and controls in place,*
- b. That RA's should have an agreed 'close down' process, that details what will happen to any remaining funds or assets in the event of closure,*
- c. That the number of forums reduces to two (2) per year, reflecting attendance and demand.*
- d. That the reporting line within Appendix A be altered to include reporting to 'other agencies', rather than just to WCC officers or members.*
- e. The inclusion of 'City' where appropriate, reflecting the change of name for the principal authority.*

Cllr Bobey requested that consideration be given to extending the amount of time that RA's are given 'free' by WCC within the community venues, as he stated that once all meetings have taken place, there is insufficient time left to deliver events. He then tabled the following motion:

Proposal:

'That the amount of time given to RA's for meetings and events be increased from 30 – 35 hours per year and remove the 'maximum of 12 times'

Proposed by: Cllr E Bobey Seconded by: Cllr Smith

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

There was a further motion tabled following this that spoke to the need for the RA's on estates without meeting places to have their allowance extended too, as costs have increased.

Cllr Rennie questioned the amount of free time offered, when considering the time spent by the Tinkers Bridge RA on delivering community food approaches. It was explained that this would sit separately from the regular agreement, in the same way that the Netherfield and Eaglestone food sessions do.

Proposal:

'That the RA agreement be altered to state that estates without a community space have the allowance increased from £200 per year to £300 per year to pay for renting space'

Proposed by: Cllr Smith Seconded by: Cllr Marsh

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

There was further discussion around some of the other elements, specifically around creating a way of lending equipment – the Council manager explained that this would likely be via the Library of Things (see later item). Further discussion also took place around the

changes that have taken place within the RA's since the initial document, with the proposal that the new Coffee Hall and Beanhill Associations be recognised within this policy and the contact list of names be updated, as stated within the updated document.

Proposal:

'That the RA agreement be altered to include the following changes:

- a. That to receive the annual allowance, RA's must be accredited by MKCC using the agreed process, showing that they have suitable systems and controls in place,***
- b. That RA's should have an agreed 'close down' process, that details what will happen to any remaining funds or assets in the event of closure,***
- c. That the number of forums reduces to two (2) per year, reflecting attendance and demand.***
- d. That the reporting line within Appendix A be altered to include reporting to 'other agencies', rather than just to WCC officers or members.***
- e. The inclusion of 'City' where appropriate, reflecting the change of name for the principal authority.***

and that

That the new Coffee Hall Residents Association, the new Beanhill Resident Association and updated contact names be considered as the recognised RA for the estate, updating the list accordingly.

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Smith

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 99/24 To look at the Food Coordinator role and propose an approach for the future, prior to recruitment.

There was considerable discussion about this issue, following an introduction to the paper from the Council Manager. The purpose of the paper was stated as:

- The committee considers the role that community food plays within the council and wider community, gives a clear view on the wishes for future delivery to enable a new job role to be developed.
- That the job description creation is delegated to officers, to enable advertising the role in a timely manner, with consideration of the discussions that take place and any subsequent clarifications from committee members.
- That the job role goes 'live' for applications by the end of March, with a view to appointing a new co-ordinator as quickly as possible.

The Council Manager posed some questions, asking whether the cafes should be considered cafes or social spaces, should the role encompass a wider range of services (e.g. cafes on NF, ES, support to the food delivery at the church on NF and the TB approaches), how has the change in approach impacted since the start (e.g. waste reduction to food poverty) and where the 'pastoral' elements of the role may sit.

Cllr Smith stated that the social aspects of the cafes are essential, with some attendees only getting social contact through the cafes.

The discussion included a suggestion that there was no need for a coordinator as other areas deliver using volunteers only, that the new post should include a wider, parish wide

approach (as the view from some is that the former coordinator was the 'Coffee Hall' coordinator, rather than covering the whole parish) and that community led approaches were better. It was also suggested that seeing if a bank of volunteers and / or a charity would come in and run the food delivery projects. If the council is trying to save money, is this a role that is needed?

Other Cllrs suggested that a volunteer role was fine IF there are sufficient interest in volunteering, but that it can be difficult to manage if there is insufficient time. The Tinkers Bridge food volunteers explained that they spend upwards of 40 hours each week on the community food projects on that estate (one fridge, one larder, one café – all in one session).

Cllrs spoke about their experiences of volunteers and supporting them, with others suggesting that there is a role, but that this may need revamping. It was also acknowledged that different estates have different challenges and that in some areas, employed officer support may be needed.

There was also discussion about the provision of cafes, with comments made regarding the fact that they only run because they are supported by WCC Officers, with a query as to whether this is an effective use of time.

Cllr Scott suggested that there is a need revamping the role to include a wider remit, but that the role remains important. This was echoed by Cllr Ferguson, who spoke about the challenges at the Netherfield Café.

This was followed by discussions around the changing role. There was insufficient support for continuing the role as it stands, with further proposals suggesting:

- More community based, rather than Coffee Hall only.
- A suggestion that there may be a need for additional hours
- To explore the potential for delivery of services on Peartree Bridge and Leadenhall
- Consider that there are external factors (e.g. availability of food for any additional provision).

Tash Darling spoke about the consideration of the support offered to young people through the coordinator. This has happened with some success stories, and this should be considered in whatever decision is made. Both TB and NF also support young people (Princes Trust, DofE) and spoke about the time that this takes. There was stated support continuing the work with young people.

Cllr Smith asked the Council Manager to define what was needed. The Council Manager explained that around 26 hours would be sufficient to deliver what is happening now, plus taking on the two other cafes and liaison across the parish. However, delivery of a 1 hour session on Peartree Bridge is probably 4 hours work, so a level of flexibility will be needed.

Cllr Smith suggested prioritising the support to volunteers, working towards some of the other aspects over the coming months – 'nobody expects everything sorted by the end of April'.

Proposal:

'That the committee tasks the Council Manager with developing a new job role that takes into account discussions that took place within the committee meeting, which,

when completed will be shared with committee members via email with delegated powers to the Council Manager to then advertise and employ accordingly’.

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Norris

RESOLVED by was of unanimous vote.

SC 100/24 Update on the Library of Things and confirm an approach to charging.

The Council Manager spoke to the paper provided, which gave background on the Library of Things and progress to this point. With the service ready to launch in the new council year, agreement on a charging policy was requested. They ran through different options that could be in place, with a request that the committee give a steer on what they would like to see.

Several points were raised that were linked to the issue but not directly about charging:

- Clarity needed that loans from the library are for personal use only and cannot be used for business, to make a profit or similar.
- That whilst breakages happen, any damage that is deliberate or negligent should be chargeable, perhaps via use of any deposit.
- That different items may have different values / costs, especially where ‘consumables’ are involved (e.g. strimmer cord).
- Security with any monies must be considered under any risk management scheme – having money paid at the depot is probably unsafe so alternatives are needed (online payments are an option, but this may exclude some, so payments at the office).
- PAT testing is in place and can be done internally.
- Suggestion that donations could be utilised to increase the levels of equipment available, as well as asking companies for sponsorship.

Membership is necessary (for security purposes – knowing who people are, where they live, etc.).

Cllr Smith stated that as a deprived parish, putting a charge in place would prevent some from accessing the scheme – paying £20 in one go, may be too much. The option of having a ‘discretionary’ option, much the same as is offered by the larder, may help address this scheme. An instalment scheme was also suggested – pay smaller amounts until membership is paid and then borrowing can happen. Another option was a refundable fee – paid, and then if no issues for the year, this is refunded (as with the community centres – a refundable deposit that is returned if no problems).

There was further discussion around individual rental costs, with different items likely to cost additional monies. There are consumables (e.g. strim cord, carpet cleaning liquid) with others that are less likely to be damaged / need replacing and therefore less cost involved.

Proposal:

‘That an annual membership fee is charged, with discretionary waiving of this where necessary, and loan pricing for individual items based upon consumables and / or replacement costs’.

Proposed by: Cllr Scott

Seconded by: Cllr Rennie

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC101/24 Update on the Youth service provision

Tash Darling (Youth Manager) spoke to the paper, giving a brief overview. She also updated the committee on a delay on the event on Peartree Bridge (due to waterlogged field), with a view to delivering this on 24th July.

RESOLVED – noted.

SC102/24 To inform the committee of the Hedgehog Highways scheme and clarify whether WCC would like to provide ‘gates’.

The committee was provided with a copy of a letter sent regarding the potential to buy ‘hedgehog highways’ gateways for installation on fences, providing a route for hedgehogs to travel for food. It was suggested that these could be sold at cost price, with the money ringfenced to buy further supplies if successful.

Proposal:

‘That WCC agrees to purchase an initial batch of 50 hedgehog highway fence arches at a cost of £150, with a view to selling to residents at cost and continuing this process using the proceeds if successful.’

Proposed by: Cllr Scott Seconded by: Cllr Marsh

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 22nd April 2024, 6:30pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber, The Local Centre, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.