



Woughton Community Council

Services & Communities Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th January 2025 at 6:00pm
Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber,
60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

Present: Nick Scott (Chair), Ruth McMillan (Vice Chair), Eamonn Bobey, Michael Ferguson, Maggie Ferguson, Penny Glasgow, Luke Louis, Charlie Marsh, D'Anne Mordecai, April Rennie, Liz Simpkins, Sue Smith, Lorna Webb.

Also present:

Steve McNay (Council Manager)

Tash Darling (Youth and Communities Manager)

SC 185/24 Apologies:

Cllr Alan Williamson. All apologies were accepted by the committee.

RESOLVED – apologies accepted.

SC 186/24 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations were made.

RESOLVED - Noted

SC 187/24 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):

No questions were received

RESOLVED - Noted

SC 188/24 Chairs announcements:

- The Chair wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated that they hoped that the year would be a good one.

RESOLVED – noted.

SC 189/24 Minutes of previous meetings:

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on:

- Monday 18th November 2024.

It was noted that the minutes had the incorrect date on, despite being the correct minutes. This was changed on the minutes and, with this alteration, Cllr Marsh proposed that these were an accurate record of the meeting. Seconded by Cllr Mordecai.

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote

Communities and Environment Fund Application(s)

SC 190/24 To note exclusion of groups who have failed to report on funded activities

The Council Manager spoke to the paper, explaining that the Moorfriends group had, despite a number of 'chase up' messages, failed to report back on the expenditure from the grant awarded to

them last year (SC 138/24 – the event took place on 28th September 2024). As a result and in line with the grant agreements, the Operations Manager proposed that they should be excluded from the grants programme for a period of 12 months from the date of closure of the evaluation (9th October 2024).

The committee discussed the proposal, suggesting that compliance with the policies should be emphasised and that other previously agreed grants to be checked for the same issue. The Council Manager agreed to liaise with the Operations Manager about this (the grant awarded to the Scouts was mentioned as a possible breach).

Proposal:

That Moorfriends are ineligible to apply for funding through the Communities and Environment Fund for a period of 12 months from 9th October 2024 (six weeks from the date of closure of the evaluation)

Proposed by: Cllr Scott. Seconded by: Cllr Simpkins

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

Reports

SC 191/24 Proposal regarding ‘free’ trials at Community Centres

The Council Manager spoke to the paper that had been prepared by the Community Development and Events Officer (CDO) in 2024. The paper and a decision has been deferred due to budget setting process and decisions around the use of community centres and, with those issues now resolved, the paper was presented to committee.

There were a number of clarifications requested by councillors, including the definition of a ‘new’ group, how long any free sessions may last (i.e. a maximum of X hours per week / a maximum of X days per week), whether there was a maximum number of groups that could be offered ‘free’ trials, either at a specific centre or across the four, safeguards against a group having three months free trial, then closing and setting up another ‘new’ group to take advantage again and similar queries.

There was also a question of whether offering a free trial, with no expectation of any payment and the potential for groups to simply stop after three months was posed, with the view that there is a cost to any group using the centre (e.g. utilities, caretaker cover, etc.).

An alternative view was that these issues would be managed through the support element of the proposal, insofar as the CDO would work with groups to maximise success and identify anything that seemed to be advantage taking.

To try and clarify some of the concerns noted, it was suggested that further work be prepared for the committee, including a draft of any agreement and proposals around the possibility of this NOT being free, but that there is an expectation that the first three months are free but the group is then liable for 3 / 6 / 9 months of payments.

Proposal:

That this item is deferred for further work by the officer team.

RESOLVED – deferred.

SC 192/24 CCTV update from Crimewave and request for future sites.

The Council Manager presented the report – the situation remains much the same as in recent months with one camera having no reports and one continuing to provide ‘intelligence’. It was noted that the cameras that are paid for by WCC are mainly being used to support external

agencies and councillors were again encouraged to provide proposals for where cameras should be placed to the Council Manager.

RESOLVED – noted.

SC 193/24 Events update, including proposals for weekly bingo at CHMP, National Book Day event, Covid Remembrance event and an annual events calendar update

The Council Manager spoke to the paper, giving details of two proposals and an updated calendar of events. The committee discussed both proposals and the dates for the annual Festival, suggesting that discussion around the location for festival be deferred as previous discussions included the suggestion that the festival should move round estates, whilst officers suggested that following the success of the site at Netherfield and the potential to build upon this, the fixed site would be an alternative option.

Proposal:

That the committee agrees to support the approach from Coffee Beans Events to provide a World Book Day event on March 8th 2025

Proposed by: Cllr Scott. Seconded by: Cllr Louis

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

That the committee agrees to the council delivering an event on Covid 19 Day of Reflection on March 9th 2025.

Proposed by: Cllr Louis. Seconded by: Cllr Bobey

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

That the committee agrees to the festival taking place on 6th September 2025, but defers a decision on the location of festival for further discussion

Proposed by: Cllr Michael Ferguson. Seconded by: Cllr Maggie Ferguson.

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 194/24 Requests from outside agencies for activities and to decide on agreement or otherwise:

a) BMO Eventz Limited

b) MKCC Housing Engagement

The Council Manager spoke to the paper, explaining that there have been two approaches by external agencies for support with events and activities.

The first is BMO Eventz Ltd, a private company who requested use of council facilities to deliver a festival. As WCC has no suitable facilities and there are concerns about the viability of the company to deliver, this was not felt like a proposal that committee wanted to continue with.

Proposal:

That the Council Manager responds to the company declining to get involved

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Maggie Ferguson

RESOLVED by way of majority vote.

The second was a request from MKCC Housing Officer to hold a session within the café on Thursday mornings, to include housing officers, ASB officers and Mears. Concerns were noted about the suitability of the space, the focus on Coffee Hall, the lack of coverage of other estates and the lack of joined up approach – Cllr Ferguson has also been approached and suggested that

the café on Netherfield may be a suitable choice, but there hasn't been contact with WCC directly around this.

As a result of the discussions, a series of motions were raised and moved on from with new discussions taking place. This culminated in the following:

Proposal:

That the Council Manager responds to the Housing Officer explaining that the committee would prefer to see a parish wide approach to the proposed sessions before agreeing to them.

Proposed by: Cllr Smith. Seconded by: Cllr Scott.

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 195/24 Updates from outside agencies

a) Neighbourhood Watch

b) Community Speedwatch

c) Litter wardens / enforcement

The Council Manager shared the most recent Speedwatch newsletter whilst discussing the communication from Neighbourhood Watch (NW) and information about the Litter Warden approach from the principal authority. Cllr Simpkins noted that some residents of Eaglestone had registered for NW and would check to see what the outcome of that approach has been.

Proposal:

That the Council Manager invites both the NW group and the litter wardens to attend different Services Committee meetings to see what benefits there may be for the council to become more involved.

Proposed by: Cllr Scott. Seconded by: Cllr Simpkins

RESOLVED by way of unanimous vote.

SC 196/24 Update on Advice Service delivery and future plans

The Youth and Community Manager (YCM) spoke to the paper, giving an overview of the service, the challenges and the preparations and plans for the coming year.

- People often attend the service feeling that they need 'help' but unclear about what this may be
- Communications need to be improved in terms of publicity and making people aware of what is on offer
- Safeguarding is a growing issue, with the average safeguarding case taking 13 sessions to resolve, against an average of around 2.5 for a benefits case. The number of safeguarding cases is also rising, both with WCC and more widely in the city.
- The PLINTH data management system is helping with data, whilst continuing to be developed to do exactly what is wanted.
- Some excellent, life changing outcomes for some who have accessed the service.
- Contingency planning and building a more robust approach to the services is taking place – the addition of a new advice worker has helped and the replacement for the recently left worker will continue that work
- No 99 is now open and operating, with the first session having taken place last week. More groups are likely to start there this month, with considerable work being undertaken to further engage and deliver within the new setting.

There was discussion around the increase in safeguarding and queries as to whether this was a seasonal 'blip' or a more consistent increase. The YCM suggested that the three month period that the report covered suggested that this was something more than the Christmas period, whilst acknowledging that there are highs and low across the year, with key events often leading to

higher rates of domestic abuse in particular. Further reports where a longer period of reporting is covered may provide more detail.

RESOLVED – noted.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 17th February 2025, 6:00pm, at the Woughton Community Council Hub, Council Chamber, The Local Centre, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:05hrs.

Signed: