

Woughton Community Council

Policy & Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th April 2020, 6:00pm online via Zoom and Facebook Live

Present: Cllrs Sue Smith (Chair), Jordan Coventry (Vice-Chair), Elina Apse, Janette Bobey, Donna Fuller, Luke Louis, John Orr (from 6:20pm), Liz Simpkins, Alan Williamson.

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

PR 40/20 Apologies:

Cllrs Ruth McMillian and Nick Scott.

AGREED

PR 41/20 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED

PR 42/20 Questions from the public (maximum 10 minutes):

There were no questions from the members of the public.

NOTED

PR 43/20 Chairs announcements:

The Chair informed the meeting that this will be the first of many meetings that will be broadcast online.

NOTED

PR 44/20 Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 10th February 2020 were **AGREED** and will be signed by the Chair when it is feasible to do so.

PR 45/20 To agree the Accounts Sub Committee recommendations from the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2020:

The Accounts Sub Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2020 was inquorate and therefore could only propose recommendations which could only be ratified by a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

The meeting agreed to adopt the minutes of the meeting and all of the Accounts Sub Committee's recommendations.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee agrees to adopt all the recommendations from the minutes of the Accounts Sub Committee held on Wednesday 11th November 2020 due to the meeting being inquorate.**
- 2. To approve the bank reconciliations for the January 2020 period.**
- 3. To agree the minutes of the Accounts Sub Committee held on Wednesday 11th March 2020.**

PR 46/20 To agree to hold the next Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021:

The Leader of the Council informed the meeting that the Government had recently changed the legislation to allow Parish & Town Councils to hold meetings online and for the Annual Meeting of Council to be postponed until May 2021 the regulations that apply are as follows:

Regulation 6 (c) removes the requirement for a Parish / Community & Town Council to hold an Annual Meeting in May 2020.

Regulation 4 (2) carries over the current appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair on until the Annual Meeting in May 2021 although Parish, Community and Town Councils may elect a Chairman at an earlier meeting should they wish to do so.

This could also apply to the position of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED

- 1. To not hold an Annual Meeting of Council in May 2020 as per regulation 6 (c).**
- 2. To carry over the current appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair until the Annual Meeting of Council to be held in May 2021 as per regulation 4 (2).**
- 3. To carry over the current appointment of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council until the Annual Meeting of Council to be held in May 2021 as per regulation 4 (2).**

PR 47/20 To agree to revise the current Standing Orders:

New Government guidelines allow for meetings to be held online, the current standing orders needs to reflect this and other powers to ensure the continued functionality of Woughton Community Council whilst the office is closed to the members of the public.

The meeting was requested to agree the following form of words to add to the current Standing Orders:

“Under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 the following regulations will be adopted:

Regulation 6 (c) That the Annual Meeting of Council will be postponed this May 2020 and will instead be held in May 2021.

Regulation 4 (2) That the current appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair and Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to continue until the Annual Meeting to be held in May 2021”.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the following form of words to add to the current Standing Orders:
2. “Under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 the following regulations will be adopted:
3. Regulation 6 (c) That the Annual Meeting of Council will be postponed this May 2020 and will instead be held in May 2021.
4. Regulation 4 (2) That the current appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair and Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to continue until the Annual Meeting to be held in May 2021”.

Cllr John Orr entered the meeting at 6:20pm.

PR 48/20 To agree the Calendar of Meetings for the Council Year 2020/2021:

The meeting was informed that the draft calendar of meetings for the 2020/2021 Council Year has incorporated the newly agreed committee structure. Along with monthly meetings of the Full Council.

The Leader of the Council requested that there is an additional meeting between June and September 2020 for the Finance & Resources Committee, as otherwise it would mean that it would be a long time before the committee met again.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the Calendar of Meetings for the 2020/2021 Council Year.
2. That the Committee & Member Services Officer to add an additional meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee between June and September.

PR 49/20 Committee Memberships:

The meeting agreed to keep the same Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and membership of the old committee structure, but instead incorporate the membership onto the new committee structure, where the new committees takes on the same functions / duties of the previous committees.

There will instead be elections for the Chair & Vice-Chairs and membership of each of the committees at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021.

Members can if they so wish ask to change their membership of each of the new committees if they so desire.

In the case of the Planning, Licensing & Regeneration Committee the suggested membership would be the Chair of the Council, Leader of the Council, and a representative from each of the estates covering the Woughton area.

Ward Members were asked to agree who to nominate, amongst themselves, to be appointed onto the Planning, Licencing & Regeneration Committee by informing the

Committee & Member Services Officer, so at that the next Full Council meeting to be held on Monday 11th May 2020, the membership can formally be ratified and then the committee members can elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Leader of the Council said that there will be an obligation for each member of the Licencing, Planning & Regeneration Committee to ensure attendance at each meeting, and to consult with their Residents Association when planning and licencing and regeneration matters arise, and in the case of one Member Wards such as Leadenhall and Tinkers Bridge if the Member cannot attend the meeting that they should be consulted on any matters relating to their ward which can then be fed back to the meeting, as she had concerns that resolutions could be agreed in their absence.

RESOLVED

- 1. To keep the same Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and membership of the old committee structure, but instead incorporate the membership onto the new committee structure, where the new committees takes on the same functions / duties of the previous committees.**
- 2. That Ward Members to agree who to nominate, amongst themselves, to be appointed onto the Planning, Licencing & Regeneration Committee by informing the Committee & Member Services Officer, so at that the next Full Council meeting to be held on Monday 11th May 2020, the membership can formally be ratified and then the committee members can elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.**

PR 50/20 To note actions taken under delegated powers by Officers:

The Council Manager updated the committee on the Delegated Power decisions that had been made.

These decisions were mainly made following discussion with the Chair, Leader of the Council and Chairs of the Committees (in line with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other associated policies), but these decisions need to be reported to council as soon as possible after they have taken place.

The decisions were as follows:

- To close the offices to the public (Tuesday 17th March 2020) alongside community centres and No 95 Jonathans, Coffee Hall (Youth Centre). The exception was the Eaglestone Activity Centre which was allowed to remain open for the nursery only until Friday 20th March 2020, to enable time to find alternative options.
- To transfer staff to working from home from the closure of the offices on Tuesday 17th March 2020. Officers were enabled via laptops and the new phone system to continue to work remotely.
- To close all public facing services on the same day – this included the Community Fridge, Community Café, youth services and face to face appointments for the Woughton Advice Service. Options were put in place to continue to offer support remotely. This included provision of a printer

/scanner for the advice service home worker (delivered to the house, but remaining Woughton Community Council property).

- The Environment and Landscape services continued *within the agreed guidelines* until close of business on Monday 20th March 2020, as did the caretakers. Woughton Community Council continues to offer an *emergency only* landscape service response (i.e. where there is a danger to the public – sightlines, etc.)

In addition, due to the final Services Committee not meeting, the Council Manager agreed the following Communities & Environment fund applications:

- Netherfield Residents Association – funding of £1,209.00p for four (4) trips throughout the year (on the understanding that in the event that trips are unable to happen, the money is returned).
- Tinkers Bridge Residents Association – funding in kind for the use of the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place to provide a pilot scheme for a yoga session. To the value of £200.00p, but no direct costs.

The immediate financial impact is likely to be significant – all income from the community centres, the rental of the Woughton Community Council Hub and No 95, Jonathans, Coffee Hall Youth Centre has ceased. This is likely to be equivalent to a loss of around £20,000 over three (3) months (assuming that services are able to fully recommence at the end of June 2020).

At the current time, all staff continue to be employed on the same terms and conditions as previously, with the majority continuing to work remotely. The exceptions are caretaking staff and the landscape operatives, who are unable to work currently. It is being investigated for the potential to ‘furlough’ those staff members to enable government support but looks like this is not an option for local authorities. The Responsible Financial Officer will continue to monitor and update the budget headings and to continue budget forecasting / planning on a regular basis.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee accepts the decisions made and that this is recorded.**
- 3. That the Council Manager provides additional detail of decisions made during the current closure of offices and remote working conditions.**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 6th July 2020, meeting location to be confirmed.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 6:20PM

Chair _____ Date _____