

## Woughton Community Council

### Operations & Resources Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, the Council Chamber, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.**

**Present: Cllrs Jordan Coventry (Chair), Donna Fuller, Liz Simpkins, Sue Smith.**

**Also present:**

Brian Barton (Committee & Member Services Officer).

Steve McNay (Council Manager).

Samone Winsborough (Responsible Financial Officer/Operations Manager).

**In attendance:**

**Cllr Elina Apse (Vice Chair).**

Ian Tegerdine (Landscape and Environment Manager and Health and Safety Lead).

Tash Darling (Youth Manager and Safeguarding Lead).

**OC 15/22 Apologies:**

Cllr Luke Louis (meeting)

Cllr Maggie Ferguson (meeting)

Cllr Ruth McMillan (unwell)

Cllr Amber McQuillan (meeting)

**AGREED**

**OC 16/22 Declarations of Interest:**

There were no declarations of interest.

**NOTED**

**OC 17/22 Chairs Announcements:**

The Chair informed the meeting that there had been Positive feedback received for the landscaping team, which was lovely to read. The Chair congratulated the team.

**NOTED**

**OC 18/22 Questions from the public (Max. 10 minutes):**

There were no questions from the public.

**NOTED**

**OC 19/22 Minutes of the previous meeting:**

The minutes of the Operations & Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022 Were **AGREED** as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **OC 20/22 To update the committee on Health and Safety issues:**

Ian Tegerdine (Health and Safety Lead) talked through the report, explaining the incidents, one significant (hand damage re: hedge trimmer).

HAVS (Hand and Arm Vibration) report also made, relevant changes made to working practices (battery operated tools). There is a budget in place to provide specialist equipment that measures the amount of vibration operatives are exposed to, but it is likely that the move to battery powered equipment has reduced the level of vibration by a significant amount.

CDS, the fire company that Woughton Community Council uses, have undertaken safety checks on all buildings and are undertaking remedial works.

Cllr Fuller suggested mental health checks, as well as the physical health checks that are in place. This links to the 'Mindful Employer' statement that the council has in place. A report will be provided to this committee at the July or September meeting.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That a similar report is presented to committee on a half yearly basis, or wherever there is a significant issue that committee needs to be aware of.**

### **OC 21/22 To update the committee on planning and preparation towards a Youth Council for Woughton:**

Significant discussions, including comments from the Milton Keynes Council YCAB worker via the Facebook feed. Update from the Council Manager on steps up to this point:

- Discussions with the Milton Keynes Council Youth Cabinet worker
- Discussions with other parishes that are considering a Youth Council

Suggestion that the work continues with an aim to have this in place for May 2023, in line with the council elections.

Schools to be involved, but with a view to make sure young people who aren't at local schools can still be involved. Questions also raised about whether young people who are educated in the parish but live outside, are eligible to stand (and if so, which area do they represent?).

Age range proposed to be secondary school age, with peer mentoring as part of the wider process. If the makeup of the Youth Council is two (2) representatives from each estate, this could include a younger and older young person. In addition, councillors from Full Council can also act as mentors. Further discussion took place around terms (2 years vs 4 years) and the 'cut off' age – when do people need to step down. It was felt that a two year term was more appropriate and that 19 was the cut off (allowing people elected at 17 to fulfil the two year term).

The Chair suggested that the Youth Council should reflect the Full Council make up, with opportunities to attend the Full Council and committees, be 'co-opted' on to

committees where this is possible within the framework of legislation whilst acknowledging that they will be unable to vote. This also included that 'administration support' (producing minutes and agendas for example) is provided.

It was suggested that the Youth Council would be able to submit requests for funding for programmes, in the same way as committees can, as part of the service planning / budgeting process.

A training and development budget should be in place for the first year to enable the Youth Council to understand the project planning process, as well as lots of other elements that will help ensure that the Youth Council is able to play a full part in the council.

A question was raised about whether there was a need for additional officer resource to support the Youth Council. The Council Manager explained that at the current time there was no proposal for additional officers to be employed and that the Council Manager and Youth Manager were comfortable with the current proposal. It was also suggested that there should be a limit on the input of officers, with councillors taking an active role in this process too. All agreed that a review in a years' time, having had time to evaluate the initial engagement and support that is needed, would be useful.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the committee considers the issues of co-option, budgets, and influence of the Youth Council, to enable open and honest engagement with young people, with a view to formal agreement at the July meeting of this committee.**
- 3. That the Council Manager and Youth Manager continue to develop training and development routes, engagement with young people, discussions with schools, youth groups, etc. with a view to the timeline noted in the report.**

#### **OC 22/22 To update the committee on any amendments made to the budget:**

The Responsible Financial Officer talked to the report that was provided. It was explained that there are likely to be further changes and adjustments over the coming months, but that this was the situation currently.

The Responsible Financial Officer also suggested that a half year update in September would be better placed to provide an overview.

The largest cost variance is the roof repairs at the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place, this is proposed to come from reserves, so no direct impact on the budget.

The other change is how mobile phones are coded on the budget, with different cost centres now covering the costs linked to their provision. The Responsible Financial Officer explained that these are fixed costs, each connection is £18 per month, with data, minutes and texts included.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Committee notes the report.**

2. That the Committee notes that works on the Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place roof are kept as unbudgeted and therefore deducted from any reserves at year end (£17,285) plus additional payment of (£9,049) Ex VAT.
3. That the Committee notes mobile phones are all coded to headquarters now, with relevant deductions being made from each directorates services budget to cover the costs of connections.

**OC 23/22 To explore options for 4G access on Surface Go's for Councillors:**

The hardware provided does not allow for sim cards, so they cannot connect directly with the mobile network.

The Responsible Financial Officer will look at other options, including 'dongles', these are at varied costs and the Responsible Financial Officer will investigate further and provide an update for the July meeting.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee notes the report.
2. That the Committee agree that at this moment in time, 4G access is not a necessity and instead pilot the use of the equipment for a year before making any decisions on any further costs.
3. That further options will be presented at the July meeting, for a 'preferred' option in case additional coverage is needed. This to include the options of Wi-Fi provision on the trailer.

**OC 24/22 To agree the May 2022 Bank Reconciliations, list of payments and receipts:**

The Chair has signed off eleven (11) random invoices and the committee was happy to confirm that these were signed and in order.

**NOTED**

**OC 25/22 To consider the issue of childcare provision during council meetings:**

The Council Manager gave some background to the issues, with local councils unable to offer allowances for childcare / dependency allowance. There were a variety of suggestions of how Woughton Community Council *may* be able to support people who have dependents including:

- Provision of a 'creche' within the council Hub
- Employment of a team of childminders / carers who can work within homes, on a 'bank' basis (sessional workers)
- Simply paying allowances and letting this situation play out, this is linked to the idea that this policy (non-payment of allowances) is discriminatory and by paying them, Woughton Community Council would support all within our communities be able to play a full role.

This is *specifically* excluded in law Woughton Community Council would be in breach of the law if they were to proceed with the final option.

There was also discussion around whether any provision should be put in place for officers during evening meetings. This was felt to be different, as officers can join remotely and are employed.

The Council Manager stated that whatever decision this committee came to, Full Council would need to make the final decision, due to the potential controversy. The Council Manager also stated that some of the ALC's have stated that they would support a change to this ruling.

It was also suggested that NALC, BALC, MKALC to be informed, if Full Council is in agreement that Woughton Community Council chooses a route which may cause controversy. Also MP's to be contacts and parishes across the city, to see if there is support.

**RESOLVED**

1. That committee notes this report.
2. That a paper is presented to Full Council with the following options:
  - a) Provision of a 'creche' within the Hub during council meetings
  - b) The employment of a bank of sessional workers to provide 'at home' support to councillors with childcare or dependent commitments
  - c) To provide childcare and dependency allowances in breach of legislation
  - d) That all of the above are considered with a view to enabling participation from all sections of the community
3. That if the outcome is that Woughton Community Council offers support of whatever form, that NALC, BMKALC, MKALC, MP Iain Stewart and other local parishes are contacted to garner support.

**Date of next meeting:**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022, 6:30pm at the Woughton Community Council Hub, 60, Garraways, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes, MK6 5EG.

**THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 7:56PM**

Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_