**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NORMANTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday 12th March 2019 at 6.30pm at Normanton Town Hall**

**Present:** Councillor D. Appleyard

Councillor Mrs E. Blezard

Councillor Miss J. Botterill

Councillor Miss J. Farrar

Councillor J. Hepworth

Councillor S. Hudson

Councillor F.D. Jones – Mayor

Councillor Mrs L. Masterman

Councillor Mrs A. Moran

Councillor R. Seal

Councillor A. Wassell

Councillor K. Wilson, JP

**Councillors Absent:** Councillor R. Best, Councillor G. Croft, Councillor Mrs H.W. Jones, Councillor B. Mayne, Councillor Mrs P. Mayne, Councillor Mrs C. Moran, BEM, Councillor E. Moran, Councillor Mrs A. Wood.

**Public:** There were 14 members of the public and 8 children present.

**Guest Speakers:** Ruth Unwin – Clinical Commissioning Group

Debra Bagley – Combined Authority

**139. Mayors Welcome and Announcements**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked members to stand for a minute’s silence to honour the life of Councillor Mrs Mary Vickers, Deputy Mayor of Normanton who had passed away recently.

The report on the Mayors engagements were received.

The Mayors chaplain led the Council in prayers.

**140. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor R. Best.

Apologies were received and reasons approved on behalf of Councillor Mrs H.W. Jones, Councillor B. Mayne, Councillor Mrs P. Mayne, Councillor Mrs C. Moran, BEM, Councillor Mrs A. Wood.

**141. Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations were received:

Councillor Mrs E. Blezard

Non-pecuniary interest

Planning

Maternity Services

Councillor J. Hepworth

Non-pecuniary interest

Planning

Maternity Services

Councillor A. Wassell

Non-pecuniary interest

Planning

**142. Members of the Public**

There were 14 members of the public present with 8 children. All were in attendance to listen to the presentation from the Combined Authority on the School Transport Consultation.

**143. Minutes – Council**

Minute 122 of 12th February 2019 - Councillor Mrs E. Blezard requested an amendment as she had also declared a Non-pecuniary interest in the Small Grant for the Alice Bacon Trust.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment set out above, the minutes of a meeting of Normanton Town Council held on Tuesday 12th February 2019 (Minute Numbers 120-138; Pages 37-46) be received as a true record and the contents contained therein be approved.

(Proposed by Councillor Mrs L. Masterman / Seconded by Councillor K. Wilson, JP)

**144. Minutes – Special Projects**

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Special Projects Committee held on Wednesday 13th February 2019 (Minute Numbers 35-38; Pages 35-38) be received as a true record and the contents therein be approved.

(Proposed by Councillor Mrs E. Blezard / Seconded by Councillor D. Appleyard)

**145. Minutes – Town Hall Sub Committee**

The minutes could not be proposed and seconded and would be adjourned to the next meeting of Council.

**146. Minutes – Leaders Group**

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Leaders Group held on Wednesday 6th March 2019 (Minute Numbers 1-5; Pages 1-2) be received as a true record and the contents therein be approved.

(Proposed by Councillor A. Wassell / Seconded by Councillor Mrs E. Blezard)

**147. Minutes – Allotments Committee**

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Wednesday 6th March 2019 (Minute Numbers 32-36; Pages 23-27) be received as a true record and the contents therein be approved.

(Proposed by Councillor A. Wassell / Seconded by Councillor R. Seal)

**148. Provision of Subsidised School Transport Services**

Debra Bagley was in attendance from the Combined Authority to discuss the consultation on the subsidised school transport services which affects St Wilfrid’s School and two bus services in Normanton and Altofts.

Debra reported that the Combined Authority was funded by the five district councils in West Yorkshire and they had to make some budget savings in the coming years. They were looking closely at what can be done and where savings can be made.

All affected schools were contacted and asked to share information with parents to enable them to take part in the consultation which ends on 15th March 2019. Once the consultation closes, the Combined Authority would look at the information and analyse the results with a view to presenting a report to Committee in May.

Issues for consideration in the consultation would include:

**Distance from school –** Subsidised school bus services will not normally be provided where pupils are attending a school that is more than four miles (6.5 km) from their home address. It will be assumed in these cases that this is a matter of parental preference. We have developed an online map which shows the area around schools that would normally be served. It is expected that pupils living outside this area would be provided transport on a commercial basis (see below) or would have longer public transport journeys. Discretion will be applied where schools are located in rural or semi-rural areas or where services serve rural or semi-rural communities.

**Requests to serve new areas -** Subsidised school bus services will not normally be introduced where currently no public transport link exists. As information on school services is publicly available, it will be assumed that parents have chosen a school in the knowledge that there is no direct public transport link and already have alternative transport arrangements in place.

**Walking or cycling to school –** Subsidised school bus services will not normally be provided for pupils who live less than 1.5 miles (2.4km) (30-minute walk) from their school. Pupils who live within this distance may be expected to walk or cycle to and from school. The online schools map also provides an indication of acceptable walking distances for each school.

**Commercial school bus services** – Subsidised school bus services may be withdrawn where commercial bus operators are willing to provide a service on the basis that parents meet the whole cost of the service (typically £500-£700 per child per year). It is expected that this would only apply to current services that fall outside of the new criteria.

**Selective schools** – Subsidised school bus services will not normally be provided where the school admissions policy is based on academic selection. It is expected that these would be replaced by commercial services as described above.

**Post-16 –** Subsidised school bus services will not normally be provided for young people in the 16-18 age group. In practice, many students in this age group do not travel at fixed times to and from school and are usually confident public transport users.

It was reported that the Combined Authority were not expecting to make any changes to the services at St Wilfrid’s. They would be pragmatic in their approach and acknowledge that they can’t make changes in a semi-rural area where the walking routes to school are unsafe.

It was confirmed that changes were unlikely, but this could not be confirmed until after the review was completed.

Members were then offered the opportunity to ask questions and it was agreed that Standing Orders would be suspended for this item to enable the public to ask questions for a maximum of 15 minutes.

* It is unlikely that changes will be implemented but how unlikely is it and what will happen moving forward – will we be in the same position next year?

The current guidelines have been in place since 2014 and they do have to be reviewed. The current services are provided by WMDC and the CA and should a service be withdrawn, the CA would look for a commercial operator to take on the service with support from the CA.

* The timescales for consultation have been poor with most parents finding out at the end of February leaving only two weeks to respond.

The Schools were initially notified that a consultation would take place in 2018 but an official consultation was circulated to schools on 6th February. St Wilfrid’s were expected to share this information with parents and feeder schools. GDPR prevents the CA from having access to feeder school parents.

* The walking routes to St Wilfrid’s are dangerous and include a dual carriage way, poor lighting and a lack of footpaths in some places.

Children would only be expected to walk if the walking route is safe and suitable and it would be looked at on a case by case basis and all issues taken into consideration.

* Is there a minimum notice period if a service was to be cut?

There is no statutory guidance but if a service was cut because it was underutilised then it would normally take 8 weeks to de-register, but they would always engage with schools and this course of action is unlikely.

* There is disappointment that St Wilfrid’s had not informed parents earlier in the process.

It was reported that St Wilfrid’s had not been inactive in the consultation and had met with the CA in the previous week to voice their concerns.

It was suggested that the Town Council should write to the Combined Authority and to Councillor Peter Box to raise the concerns of parents.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the contents noted and that:

1. A letter be sent to the Combined Authority and Councillor Peter Box.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and many of the members of the public chose to leave the meeting.

**149. Maternity Services in Wakefield District**

Ruth Unwin was in attendance from the Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss the consultation on Maternity provision in the district.

It was reported that Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust provided the maternity services and the CCG were tasked with engaging with the public.

The consultation primarily impacts on Pontefract Hospital and follows on from the consultation last summer about the future of services at Pontefract Hospital.

Women were choosing to use Pinderfields as opposed to Pontefract and it was felt that it was not a good use of resources having Pontefract open 24 hours a day when there were only 3 or 4 births per week.

There were some clinics available at Pontefract to make effective use of staff time including breastfeeding clinics.

The Maternity Unit at Pinderfields is very busy, and the CCG is not convinced that the closure of Pontefract Hospital is the right one at this stage. The staff at Pinderfields are less able to provide a high standard of care if the department is busy. This is why they are engaging with the public through the consultation, social media and talking to new and expectant parents.

Pontefract is a freestanding midwife led unit but is only suitable for women with low risk pregnancies. Any complications would result in the mother being transferred to Pinderfields. Each mother is assessed all the way through the pregnancy to establish the risk level. Factors such as age, weight, previous complications and the need for C-sections would all make a mother high risk.

People are choosing Pinderfields over Pontefract due to the safety of Pinderfields if there are complications. Mothers with high risk factors are encouraged to use Pinderfields.

Members felt that new mums would be scared before they start and would feel safer at Pinderfields.

It was suggested that low risk births from elsewhere in the district should be encouraged to use Pontefract to balance out the demand at Pinderfields. It could even be used for mums closer to Barnsley or Selby.

Concern was raised about the closure of the Pontefract maternity unit and that people had been turned away from their prenatal appointments. It was reported that the unit was closed for six weeks.

The six-week closure was due to staff sickness and training and is not normal.

Staff were being taken away from Pontefract to support the services at Pinderfields which has then led to a closure at Pontefract.

It was reported that some perfectly healthy, low risk mothers were being turned away from Pontefract.

It was suggested that research should be conducted to establish why this was happening.

Members felt that there was a management issue that midwifes are referring people to Pinderfields and staff are being removed from Pontefract to support shortfalls in staffing which was resulting in the unit being closed for long periods. It was important to provide certainty and a reliable service for new mothers.

It was suggested that community midwives should be available to visit babies born at home by ambulance staff rather than having them transported to hospital.

Members made some generic points about waiting times for A&E and cancer treatments which are not good enough. It was felt that all services were being focussed at Pinderfields, but Pinderfields could not deliver.

Ruth finished by saying that the CCG is not convinced that the closure of Pontefract Maternity Unit was the right decision and that the consultation was important to help evidence people’s concerns.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the contents noted and that:

1. The Town Councils comments be fed back to the consultation

**150. Correspondence**

RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence be received and noted:

1. Inner Wheel Club – Overseas Service Meeting Invitation.
2. WMDC – Crossing request at Church Road, Altofts – unable to progress at this time due to limited need.
3. WMDC – Winter Fuel Campaign Request for funding – Referred to Finance Committee.

**151. Citizens Advice Bureau**

The report on CAB usage was circulated but some data was missing. This would be shared with members in this week’s post.

RESOLVED that the report be received and that:

1. The CAB grant of £3000 be agreed.

**152. External Organisations**

There were no reports.

**153. Outside Bodies**

There were no reports.

**154. Accounts for payment**

RESOLVED that the list of accounts for payment totalling £6,088.39 and the list of card payments totalling £1,410.18 be received and approved.

**155. Planning**

The planning applications received since the last meeting were circulated and no objections had been received by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED that the planning lists be noted, and no objections be made.

**156. Lease of Normanton Town Hall**

The final lease was circulated with a recommendation from the Town Hall Sub-Committee for approval.

An update was provided on sub metering and insurance rent.

RESOLVED that the report on the lease be received and that:

1. The lease for Normanton Town Hall for a period of 99 years be approved;
2. The Town Council authorise the lease to be signed by Councillor F.D. Jones and Councillor Mrs C. Moran, BEM;
3. The lease be witnessed by Proper Officer of the Council, Donna Johnston (Town Clerk).

In the absence of any further business, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.