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| **MINUTES** | **MEETING:** | RMBC and Local Councils Joint Working Group |
| **DATE:** | 6th September 2023  |
| **VENUE:** | Todwick Village Hall  |
| **CHAIR:** | Cllr Sarah Allen |
| **MINUTE TAKER:** | Catherine Oxtoby |
| **In Attendance**  |
| Cllr. Sarah Allen | RMBC, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods |
| Martin Hughes | RMBC, Head of Neighbourhoods |
| Catherine Oxtoby | RMBC, Parish Council Liaison Officer |
| Monica Carroll | Woodsetts PC |
| Mick Elliott | Aston PC |
| Malcolm Brown | Bramley PC |
| Richard Swann | Woodsetts PC |
| Rebecca Thompson | Hellaby PC |
| Peter Blanksby | Wales PC |
| Clive Jepson | Anston PC |
| Kate Butler | Aston cum Aughton PC |
| **Apologies**  |
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| **Item** | **Subject / Discussion**  | **Action**  |
| **1.** | **Welcome & Introductions**Cllr SA welcomed all to the meeting. |  |
| **2.** | **Standards & Ethics Committee Update**Monica Carroll, Chair of Woodsetts Parish Council, is one of 3 Parish Council Representative on the Standards & Ethics Committee. Standards & Ethics Committee meetings are scheduled quarterly but are frequently cancelled. The board is made up of 8 Ward Councillors, 3 Parish Councillors and 5 independent members. Their role is primarily to scrutinise and challenge decisions and ask questions for clarification. All decisions brought to the board are made by sub committee’s prior to the board meeting. These decisions are then brought to the board for discussion and to be ratified. KB stated that she knows of clerks that have put complaints in and the length of time for a response can be months and months. 3 qualified clerks have already left Rotherham and if this is not resolved more could leave.CJ stated that his experience is also that the complaints process is too long, it took 15 months to complete a complaint he was involved with. MC worried that the board isn’t meeting often enough to deal with complaints. Queries 1. Clarification of why meetings are cancelled. MC got the impression that it was because there were not enough issues for an agenda but it is worrying to hear that complaints have been submitted but don’t appear to be actioned.
2. Need a standard response time, need to check if there is one. Even if the complaint isn’t resolved it would be useful to have updates.
3. Where is the scrutiny for Standards and Ethics
4. Suggested we invite Cllr Rose McNeeley to a future meeting – agreed Cllr SA to contact.
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| **3.** | **Notes from last meeting**Correction to item 7 register of interest amended to dispensation.**CO to liaise with SC/AC and arrange meetings with Parish Councillors via wards to discuss Children’s Capital of Culture** – e-mail sent to SC/AC with a list of all Parish Councils who expressed an interest. No response received yet, chased 24.07.**ACTION: CO to chase again****CO to contact YLCA re be a Parish Councillor sessions they run.** Response received from YLCA “Unfortunately we don’t run any sessions for members of the public to encourage them to be councillors.  I wish we had the time to do so, but we don’t.  The National Association of Local Councils provides documentation such as posters and flyers that parishes can use on their notice board/websites/social media etc to encourage people to stand for election.  It just saves reinvention of the wheel by all parishes and I think that the NALC resources have been well used by parishes in recent years.”**CO contact Nigel Hancock to find out what the definitive line is on 5g masts.** Response attached.A 5g mast in Woodsetts would be welcomed but the proposed site is not ideal. The Parish Council has been working with Planning and the Company planning to put up a 5g mast in Woodsetts, 5 other sites have been put forward but the company has not made any contact since.CJ also mentioned that there could be issues with Solar Farms coming up. Local Councils can refuse permission but if the decision is appealed then the Secretary of State can overrule. Planning have been invited to the next Network Meeting so this will be added to the list of discussion points.**Police Update**MH and Cllr SA met with representatives from a number of Wards and SYP, the results of that meeting are currently being worked through. Parish Council’s should be invited to CAP’s and getting the quarterly data. This data can only be shared within the Parish Council and not with the public. **Register of interest – CO to raise at Clerk Meeting**Response received from Clerks that it is not their responsibility to be chasing Register of Interests. It is up to the Parish Councillor to complete and declare any pecuniary interests.**Independent appeals panel**CO raised at Clerk Meeting. It was agreed that this was an excellent suggestion. Cllr SA has contacted the Monitoring Officer and he has said that this can be set up. This will be done via elections run by YLCA after the Parish Council Elections in the future.  | **CO** |
| **4.** | **JWG Workplan Approval**A draft workplan was issued. Due to time constraints this could not be discussed. Participants were asked to read the document and direct any comments or queries CO by 18th September.MC asked for clarification on the differences between JWB and Network MtgJoint Working Group Comprised of elected Councillors and Clerks supported by council officers to complete core business. Writing and updating of JWA, discuss issues and trends coming through from Parish Councils and identifies topics for Network Meeting. Network MeetingOpen to all Parish Councils. Speakers are invited to present to Parish Councils on topics identified by Joint Working Group. Excellent opportunity for partners to consult with Parish Councils and for Parish Councils to network with each other. |  |
| **5.** | **Forward Plan**Items suggested for future meetings include:-Grass and verge cuttingStandards & Ethics – Cllr Rose McNeeley |  |
| **6.** | **AOB**CJ stated that Anston Parish Council has written to Rotherham Council about grass and verge cutting. Several other participants also expressed displeasure about this topic. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to invite an appropriate Officer to the next meeting for discussion. **ACTION: CO to invite relevant Officer** | **CO** |