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| **MINUTES** | | **MEETING:** | RMBC and Local Councils Joint Working Group | |
| **DATE:** | 25.05.23, 1.45-12.45 am | |
| **VENUE:** | The Centre, Brinsworth | |
| **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 | | |
| Abi Cobb | | RMBC, Children’s Capital of Culture | | |
| Malcolm Brown | | Bramley PC | | |
| Richard Swann | | Woodsetts PC | | |
| David Smith | | Dinnington TC | | |
| Peter Blanksby | | Wales PC | | |
| Clive Jepson | | Anston PC | | |
| Kate Butler | | Aston cum Aughton PC | | |
| **Apologies** | | | | |
| Mick Elliott | | Aston cum Aughton PC | | |
| Rebecca Thompson | | Hellaby PC | | |
| **Item** | **Subject / Discussion** | | | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome & Introductions**  Cllr SA welcomed all to the meeting, all participants were asked to introduce themselves. | | |  |
| **2.** | **Children’s Capital of Culture**  This project aims to give opportunities to local children and young people and enable them to gain skills and qualifications and improve their health and wellbeing.   Last year the project worked with over 99,000 participants, 57 schools and colleges and worked with 340 local artists.  In 2025 there will be 365 days of festivals, arts and culture designed and delivered by ages 0-25 with activities for all ages to enjoy.  Activities will take place throughout all 25 wards and include all of Rotherham’s country parks and urban parks.  Most of the activities during the pilot phase of activity took place in the Town centre. The delivery team recognised that this is not always accessible a lot of Rotherham residents.  Therefore the focus this year is on taking activities to smaller towns and villages throughout the borough.  KB suggested working with Parish Councils as many have their own halls and recreation grounds.  Cllr SA enquired if the organisations already worked with have been plotted on a map to identify the gaps.  AC confirmed that this work has been done.  MH stated that Neighbourhood Co-ordinators are aware of the project but it would be a very good idea to work with Parish Councils.  AC confirmed that the project is also working with schools to create a toolkit to encourage children in school to get involved with democracy.  MB said that Bramley have a Junior Parish Council and they would be a good group to work with.  Cllr SA asked if there is any funding attached to this project?  AC would need to check with Sarah Christie, Programme Manager.  CJ said if we have advance notice then Parish Councils may be able to put some of their budget to one side to support activities.  The JWG confirmed that Parish councils would be interested and want to get involved, they may also potentially have some money available.  Would welcome conversations with the various groups in all 31 Parish Council areas.  What would be needed from Parish Councils?  AC – If Parish Councils could talk to their groups etc about the Children’s Capital of Culture.  Handing out leaflets.  Would welcome the opportunity to be invited to groups to talk to them about the opportunities available.    **ACTION: CO to liaise with SC/AC and arrange meetings with Parish Councillors via wards.** | | | **CO** |
| **3.** | **Be a Parish Councillor Sessions**  The Leader and Deputy Leader are championing a “Be A Councillor” campaign. Three sessions for those interested in becoming a Councillor are planned for the end of June.  A suggestion has been made around running something similar for Parish Councils. Is this something that would be welcomed by Parish Councils? Suggested timescale if a positive response would be September time.  It was agreed that this would be a good idea. YLCA already run a similar session so it would be worthwhile speaking to them about it.  **ACTION: CO to contact YLCA** | | | **CO** |
| **4.** | **Notes from last meeting**   * YLCA offers training on website accessibility regulations and how councils should present information on their websites. They also advise on the documents that Councils must have on their websites to comply with legislation. * Louise Preston and Kimberley Roll-Baldwin were invited to the Clerk meeting due to be held in July. At the last Clerk meeting it was decided that it would be better for them to be invited to a separate meeting to be held for Parish Councils with a specific interest in Climate Change and Ecology. * Bramley have tried to access recycling bins but having difficulty, KB advised that Aston use RMBC, she will contact RT to advise.   **ACTION: KB to contact RT**   * Carbon Literacy training is currently in the pilot stage, sessions will be arranged once they are available. * There are many planning applications being made for 5g masts and some of these are causing issues i.e. blocking line of sight on a busy road. The proposed mast in Woodsetts has been refused planning permission. The PC have suggested alternatives but not heard anything back from the company.   **ACTION: CO contact Nigel Hancock to find out what the definitive line is on 5g masts.**   * MH has enquired whether RMBC would like to work with Parish Councils on Yorkshire Day but has not received a response yet. He has chased and will update accordingly. | | | **KB**  **CO**  **MH** |
| **5.** | **Police Data Updates**  ME requested this agenda item. He is concerned that Parish Councils do not get any police update prior to their monthly meetings.  KB clarified that there is a lot of ASB around the Parish Hall, also lots of vehicle thefts but the Parish Council are not getting any feedback on these issues. KB has now contacted the Police Officer for Aston area and they have agreed to have a bi monthly meeting.  Cllr SA the entire borough has issues with Police communicating. CAP meetings are attended very hit and miss. In pursuit of improvement MH and Cllr SA will be attending a meeting soon with the Police to look specifically at the issue of attendance at meetings.  DS said it is very frustrating that you see the Police attending community events such as litter picks etc but they won’t go to Parish Council meetings.  KB mentioned that they had a shooting in the car park, only found out about it because the Police contacted the Parish Council to look at their CCTV.  CJ was concerned that they don’t know who the police or PCSO are that cover Anston. We had a meeting last year with them when somebody threatened to burn down the Parish Hall but was not a productive meeting.  It was noted that Parish Councils are invited to CAP meetings. However, the JWG felt that this doesn’t really hold the Police to account by local people. Martin mentioned that the police are keen to look at how better they can engage with communities. This will be discussed at a session planned with the Police and a number of council services in July.  KB mentioned that Parish Councils are not receiving the CAP data  **ACTION: MH and Cllr. SA to encourage closer working with Parish Councils at the session.**  **ACTION: MH to clarify circulation of data to Parish Councils.** | | | **MH/Cllr SA**  **MH** |
| **6.** | **RMBC Website**  Changes to Parish Council information on the RMBC website are now complete. Clerks have been sent a link and asked to confirm their details are correct. CO now has editing rights so can make amendments as required. | | |  |
| **7.** | **Register of Interests**  CJ would like clarification about Councillors not completing Register of Interests.  It can be a criminal offence if Parish Councillors do not complete a register of interest but it is unclear how this would be dealt with. It is stated it is a legislative requirement in the Localism Act 2011.  After clarifying with a PC Clerk it would make sense that Parish Councillors without a dispensation would not be able to vote during meetings as it is unclear if they have a pecuniary interest. The Clerk would be responsible for chasing up the Register of Interests.  **ACTION: CO to add to next Clerk meeting as a reminder.** | | | **CO** |
| **8.** | **Parish Councillor Non Attendances**  The Local Government Act 1972 states that when a Council Member fails to attend any meeting for six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, they cease to be a member of the authority, unless the Council accepts a reason for the failure to attend before the six months period expires.  KB – If you accept the reason for absence on the minutes then you cannot do anything. If you do not accept the apologies then the above is the case.  DS need to be strict about apologies. Councillors are summoned not invited, we do not accept apologies for holidays, birthdays etc. The Chair needs to decide what apologies are acceptable. | | |  |
| **9.** | **RMBC and PC Working Relationships**  CJ asked for progress on the Hillcrest School matter. Cllr SA replied that she had raised the matter with Asset Management and was still awaiting an update on the latest position.  CJ tabled his worries about relationships with his local Ward Councillors. He was advised that an observation of behaviours at the last Anston PC meeting had been made and may result in some mediatory action. Cllr Allen also reminded him that he can use the RMBC website to complain about particular Councillors if necessary. | | |  |
| **10.** | **AOB**  CJ stated that Anston PC are looking for funding for a project and would welcome any recommendations for funding streams. Advised to visit SYFAB or contact YLCA for advice.  Recently a PC had an instance where they had to hold a disciplinary for a staff member who is married to a Parish Councillor. The staff member has now gone to appeal, the 3 Cllrs originally involved cannot be on the appeal committee. They have struggled to find others due to personal relationships. It was suggested that a panel of Cllrs be set up from around the Borough that could deal with this type of situation. It was agreed that this would be an excellent idea.  **Action: Cllr SA to check with Monitoring Officer that this is possible.**  **If possible CO to add to Clerk meeting agenda for discussion.**  KB explained that as part of the internal audit, PC’s have now got to have 5 AGARs on the Council website. The majority of Clerks were not aware of this and therefore may receive a no for this section. | | | **Cllr SA/CO** |
| **11.** | **Next meeting**  5.15pm – 6.15pm on 6th September 2023 at Todwick Village Hall, Todwick | | |  |