

Proposed agreement between Woughton Community Council (WCC) and Tinkers Bridge Residents Association (TBRA)

1. Objective

Due to the overlap of interests between the two parties with respect to the Tinkers Bridge area of Milton Keynes, we want to develop and enhance the way we work together to achieve our mutually shared aims.

2. Mutually shared aims

Both Parties have the following aims and values

- a) To represent all sections of the community living on Tinkers Bridge
- b) Specifically to avoid discriminating on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, faith, disability, sexual orientation or any other aspect
- c) To promote social and community collective responsibility
- d) To adopt a caring philosophy to those who need help, are vulnerable, and others in greater need
- e) To care for the environment
- f) To promote a cohesive and vibrant community
- g) To promote community safety where all residents are and feel safe at all times
- h) To promote the principles of decisions being taken at the lowest practical level
- i) To promote an approach that responds to local needs
- j) To champion local people having an increasingly larger say in local decision making, in democratic participation, and participatory activities
- k) Except where proper confidential business may be involved involving (for example the discussion of individuals, individual employees or volunteers or matters where commercial confidence is required), to conduct its business in public.

3. Structure of agreeing bodies.

It is recognised that the two bodies have different structures, and such structures will not be changed by this agreement. This clause seeks to limit expectations of either body to that which is compatible with their structure, size, and any legal requirements.

3.1. Identification of these differences

WCC is a statutory body and its procedures including elections, financial regulations, audit etc are a product of statute. For example we can only spend money on matters where it has statutory powers and must do so through regulated processes around transparency of decision making and statutory audit processes (on us). It also has fiduciary duties.

WCC agrees to

- a) wherever possible consult with the Residents Association on all matters specifically affecting Tinkers Bridge including those matters such as Licensing and Planning decisions where it is itself only a consultee
- b) identify an Officer who shall act as point of liaison with the Residents Association

TBRA is a non-statutory body, established under the guidance of MKC, and with a formal constitution available at http://tinkersbridge.org.uk/tbra/legal_docs In order to facilitate this agreement and the responsibilities upon the other party, TBRA agrees to

Hold annual elections as required by its own constitution

Provide transparency of its accounts, by regular reports to the TBRA meeting, and the availability of an annual summary of the accounts within 3 months of the close of the accounting year

Endeavour to keep WCC informed and involved in its activities both through the link officer and the local member for Tinkers Bridge (currently Cllr Pauline Prop)

Co-operation areas

The areas where it is hoped that this agreement will form the base for improvements in service are listed in this section, with a suggestion of the kind of specific agreement that may be possible. Such specific agreements will need to be processed by both bodies according to their procedures before they can be implemented. Details of the outcomes of such procedures are to be added as appendixes to this agreement, until such time as it becomes appropriate to revise and update this main agreement.

Grant Aid Budget.

Woughton Community Council has a Grant Aid budget with currently 60% of the budget identified on a formula basis to each estate. WCC propose to devolve the decision making on the allocation of that grant ring fenced to Tinkers Bridge to the Residents Association, and, subject to satisfactory audit arrangements being in place, will allocate the funding in two half yearly instalments to the Residents Association itself

Tinkers Bridge Residents Association proposes to report at least twice yearly to WCC on the use and application of such monies, in a summary form not exceeding two sides of A4 paper. Suitable safeguards will be implemented to ensure that monies are being spent appropriately and can be tracked and are transparent, which may be based on the requirements for public bodies with a turnover of less than £25,000, who are allowed to dispense with audit per se under a transparency code.

As TBRA is not a public body, this transparency code will not directly apply, but could form the base for a workable arrangement

Environmental and landscaping

The authority for landscaping plans and projects often rests with Milton Keynes council, but has been effectively delegated to WCC. WCC will support an effective means of delegating this on to TBRA. Other land is managed by The Parks Trust.

Woughton Community Council proposes to consult on landscaping plans and projects affecting the estates, and will seek to meet the priorities identified by TBRA

Woughton Community Council proposes to consult on such matters as the location of dog bins and other similar matters and seeking the views of TBRA on project priorities before making any determinations

Woughton Community Council proposes to allocate a sum per annum from an existing budget for environmental improvements specifically to the estate, and seek the views of TBRA on the use of this money before making any determinations. The amount allocated is suggested as £1000, but it should be noted that grant WCC get from MKC is likely to decrease, resulting in a squeeze on resources.

TBRA proposes to encourage, and seek to establish, local residents (either directly, or as part of the Association) taking responsibility for the upkeep and development of areas of open spaces on the Tinkers Bridge estate.

Woughton Community Council proposes to welcome and prima facia agree to the responsibility for the maintenance of any open space under its control or management transferring to the TBRA or to a non-incorporated local body (eg a group of residents). This could include land for allotments, community orchards, flower beds, recreation etc. Such a transfer will continue unless that open space becomes an eyesore, when WCC reserves the right to directly intervene

Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place

Woughton Community Council proposes to work with TBRA to provide local Tinkers Bridge Residents with much greater influence on the use of the Meeting Place, including a key for access to the building, storage facilities for the TBRA, and agree a number of hours each week where the facility is exclusively reserved to the TBRA and other organisations supported by the TBRA (this being subject to an annual agreement).

WCC proposes to make available to TBRA booking information and data, and to consider the feasibility of providing TBRA with on line booking facilities. WCC will

consult with TBRA on a regular basis on such matters as hire charges and other policies affecting the meeting place.

Both parties recognise the meeting place has limitations at present, such as only one usable room, limited electrical power points, and limited storage, and will work together towards improving the facilities as grants or other funds are obtained for this objective.

Open Spaces

WCC proposes to make available to TBRA the use of Open Space for events and activities free of charge provided these are of community value and for local community benefit (ie specifically excluding commercial events)