

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Monday 29 April 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Deputy Mayor Councillor Brooke (in the chair), Councillors C. Cowmeadow, M. Geddes, D. Hopkins, J. Jeffreys, J. Rae, P. Skelton, P Farrant
Clerk L. Stapleton

Also Present: 2 members of the Police and 14 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr. Temple, Mrs P. Biggs and Mike Smith

The Chairman welcomed everyone and made introductions.

Minutes

It was proposed and seconded by 1 member of the public who agreed the minutes of 29 April 2018 to be a true record. The Chairman then duly signed the minutes and copies were available to members of the public.

Police Report

PCSO Dabnor reported on number of crimes for Woburn Sands for Thames Valley.

No figures for Bedfordshire were forthcoming.

Which included 14 Assaults, 19 without injury, 15 Burglaries, 5 Business shop lifting, general damage 21, 1 drug dealing, 7 harassment, & thefts, 137 offences in 1 Year.

Residents raised concerns regarding parking on the highways outside the vets; Police can only deal with obstruction which is all 4 wheels on the path/verges.

Concern that drug dealing and use seems to be increasing. Police advised if anything is suspected to telephone 101. There was an issue of cross boundary, ringing this number when a resident lives in Bucks but reporting a crime on the other side of the Road in Beds.

To receive the Annual report of the Council.

Deputy Mayor read the report that Cllr. Temple had prepared, mentioning the continuous expansion of Milton Keynes on our borders with constant threat of additional developments with many implications for schooling. The route of the Oxford Cambridge Expressway remains a concern with all 3 options affecting Woburn sands and the upgrade of the East West Railway. The Town Council support as many community events as possible, including, The Community Market, Summer Fayre organised by The Woburn Sands Band, Music Festival, Over 60's monthly outings, Christmas Fayre, Remembrance Sunday. Many of these activities rely on volunteers, the Council are extremely grateful to residents for their help. The A5130 which includes Station Road & High Street has now been downgraded to a B road and a 7.5 ton restriction.

PLANNING

Cllrs Jeffreys reported that there had been 45 planning applications mainly residential, normally we have no comment unless it has an impact on neighbouring properties or parking, extension policy is generally not to object where reasonable side and rear extensions are applied for unless they substantially affect a neighbouring property. The street scene aspect is looked at more closely.

An outline application for 13 apartments had been approved on the land accessed off Asplands Close, Council thought this application preferable to the large bungalows taking up the least land but residents had raised concerns about construction vehicles on local streets, the proposed footpath and wildlife.

Tree work policy is determined by our Conservation Status.

Resident from Downham Road explained the problems that residents were having regarding the illegal parking at the junction to the High Street, and if MKC continue to pass these business premises they would need to have the infrastructure in place. Cllr Jeffreys agreed and although the Town Council always raises these concerns, nothing seems to happen.

HALLS

Cllr Geddes reported that it had been a busy challenging year for the halls, including a major water leak between the meter and the Library building during the winter, original pipework had disintegrated and had to be replaced. The Library remains popular and well used, including craft activities and storytelling for the children. Thanks were given to our excellent Librarian and volunteers who keep the Library running. The Memorial Hall continues to be used for smaller events, but a problem of a water leak under the stage is causing some concern and trying to source the leak.

The Summerlin Centre is extremely popular with income of just over £22,000 including £3,000 income from Solar Panels. He took the opportunity to thank Mike Smith who is the caretaker.

We are currently renovating The Old Fire Station and extending it, the car park will be extended and resurfaced, and the cost of these works is about £120,000 being met by S.106 funds.

We are currently finalising the details of The Sports Hall adjacent to the Summerlin Centre, which could possibly be complete 2020.

There has been no progress on the Greens Community Rooms, as not all the flats have been sold to form a management committee.

All this would not be possible without the help of Lynne and Pauline in the office and Mike out and about and sincere thanks were given to them.

Edgewick Farm

Cllr Skelton reported on the valuable work that the volunteers do to help keep this area maintained and pleasant for everybody. The volunteers meet monthly and carry out routine jobs.

We lost part of a very large Ash Tree which needed major work.

It is planned to extend the Boardwalk in the following year which will be funded by S.106 funds. He also asked if there were any volunteers that could help to contact him.

It is planned that a possible Heritage Trail around Edgewick will take place sometime in the future.

There was a lot of planting of mini saplings in the Spinney, however the Spinney is attracting litter and evidence of drug use.

He gave his thanks to The Greensand Trust who manage the site and support the volunteers and to Val Russell.

To receive the observations of the Ward Councillor for the Division in which the Town is situated.

Cllr Hopkins reported that we are still waiting a decision on Wavendon Properties. The route of the Expressway had still not been decided and that Milton Keynes Council were refusing large planning applications until the exact route has been confirmed, including the development between Bow Brickhill, Woburn Sands, Tilbrook and Browns Wood. The Inspector had given the green light to Plan MK.

The A421 dualling has commenced but the overnight closures has resulted in large lorries coming through Woburn Sands even though there is a weight restriction, unfortunately, Sat-Navs are mostly to blame for most of this especially HGV drivers using personal Sat Navs. Milton Keynes Council are investigating more signage regarding the HGV restrictions. Some 20mph speed restrictions have been applied for by residents including Theydon Avenue. He had met with Downham Road residents regarding the illegal parking and given a petition and letter regarding the lack of traffic wardens, there had been a request for bollards on the pavement to stop vehicles parking. He also mentioned the consultation on Fulbrook School to become a Secondary School. He also thanked Lynne and Pauline for their support during the year. A resident requested that Milton Keynes Museum needs to be advertised where it is.

Accounts and future Expenditure

Cllr. Cowmeadow presented audited accounts for year ending 31 March 2018.

In common with all Councils at all levels operated in difficult times. Increasing costs and changes to employment law regarding salaries and pensions mean expenditure grows faster than income. Due to this to continue our service provision and cover any unforeseen events the increase to the precept for the following year will be 5%.

The total cost of salaries of the three members of staff is around £47,000, representing just under 40% of the total expenditure of the Council and as such is very good value for money. We have long established extremely effective members of staff who all go well beyond their expected duties in the work that they do. The responsibilities of the Clerk in particular have increased enormously in the past years.

The major expenditure apart from salaried include £9,400 on grounds maintenance, £6,500 on other works for recreation Ground and open spaces, £6,000 maintaining the Shoppers Car Park and £13,000 on the provision of the W.C. There will be some consultation on this regarding this provision.

Every year the Council award small grants to local organisations in the current year nearly £2,000 was awarded. Including the installation of the Centenary plaque on the War Memorial and the Tommy silhouette, now on the Library wall.

It costs the Council about £1,400 install and dismantle the Christmas column displays which the Christmas Fayre generously donate 50%, but have been informed that this will be about £2,700 next year as not been increased since 2004

Our income comes from various grants such as Parish Partnership Fund this year £2,800 for LED lights at the Summerlin, and hall rents £33,000.

S106 funding of £14,000 towards supply of boardwalk and £120,000 for extension of The Old Fire Station. Current projects will be to replace the notice boards, upgrading the website and looking into the provision of a PA system.

Accounts undergo a rigorous audit process, including internal audits, an annual appointed internal auditor and an official external Audit. These audits have become increasingly complex and we are greatly indebted to the work that the Clerk does to ensure compliance in her role as RFO.

To consider Resolutions of which written notice has been received

None received.

To Deal with Any Other Business

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking Councillors and everyone for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m