

WOBURN SANDS  
TOWN COUNCIL

# WOBURN SANDS TOWN COUNCIL

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

[www.woburnsands.org.uk](http://www.woburnsands.org.uk)  
(see privacy policy)

Dear Resident,

Time is running short if you have not yet made a response to the proposed development of approx. 3000 new homes in South East Milton Keynes (SEMK). A summary of the Town Council's comments is in this newsletter and we urge you to write yourselves as Covid restrictions have made it impossible to hold any meetings or exhibitions of the plans but they will affect us all.



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Cover photo by Madeleine Jordan



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## SOUTH EAST MILTON KEYNES STRATEGIC URBAN EXTENSION

Here is a summary of the Town Council's comments. Our full response can be found on our website. Milton Keynes Council have a webpage about SEMK **South East Milton Keynes Strategic Urban Extension - Milton Keynes Council** ([milton-keynes.gov.uk](http://milton-keynes.gov.uk)) and there are two hard copies of MK Council's framework document which can be viewed at the Town Council office by contacting the Clerk on **01908 585368** or at [a.jordan@wstc.org.uk](mailto:a.jordan@wstc.org.uk)

### INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, Milton Keynes developments were always undertaken with the mantra I before E, Infrastructure before Expansion. Sadly that has not happened this time. There has been no strategic road transport survey nor is there any clear thinking on how and where the railway which runs through the middle of this development will be crossed, nor, crucially who will pay for the bridges/underpasses. Such

uncertainties are partly due to East West Rail's failure to come up with its final plans for the Bletchley to Bedford and beyond to Cambridge route, and partly due to indecision by the Government about the Oxford Cambridge Expressway before this framework was published. We now know, however, that this latter project has been abandoned.

Since the publication of the framework document, MK East has also got the go ahead with up to 5,000 homes, so the need for a rush to provide 3000 homes in SEMK is decreased and the Town Council's view is that no development should take place here until a strategic transport study is carried out, East West Rail plans are published and the impact of MK East is properly assessed along with the impact of the 3000 homes currently being built north of Wavendon.

***Woburn Sands Town Council therefore***



would like to see a second draft framework produced with full public consultation without Covid restrictions and taking into account the changed circumstances above.

## VISION

There are sections of the Vision which the Town Council supports like the need for a “green” development which emphasises pedestrian and cycle routes, is linked into the grid road system to the north, respects the integrity and identity of Woburn Sands, Bow Brickhill and Wavendon and avoids coalescence with these existing settlements. *The detail which follows, however, fails to deliver some of these aims, in particular with respect to protecting Woburn Sands.*

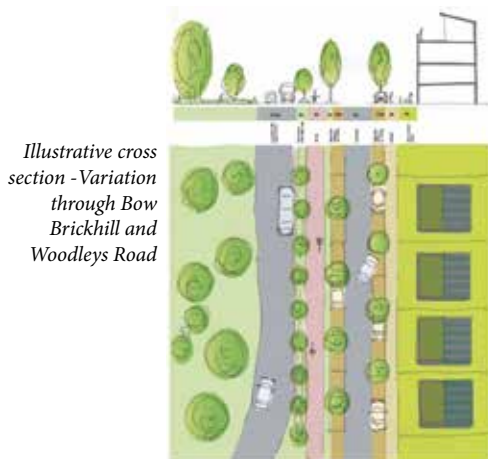
## LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

The buffer zones are welcome and essential. The area around the lake to the west of Woburn Sands should become a **Country Park** as originally envisaged by the Town Council in its unsuccessful Millennium Project bid. This must include the withdrawal of the private fishing rights to Vauxhall Club. **Playing fields** to the south as in the fig 4.4. are particularly welcome to Woburn Sands which is lacking in such facilities at present.

However, the housing in the Swan Hill area north of Woburn Sands railway station means the loss of the only green space separating this existing settlement to the north with the expanding Milton Keynes. It is unacceptable and against the aims in the Vision.

The linear parks along the railway line and the Browns Wood linear park creating wild life corridors are welcome but an **additional linear green buffer** is needed along the southern edge of the development to protect the hedgerow on the northern side of Bow Brickhill Road.

## MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK



*Illustrative cross section -Variation through Bow Brickhill and Woodleys Road*

This is the most worrying part of the framework and where the Town Council objects most strongly. Proposals to extend the grid road system through the estate linking to the Bow Brickhill Road and effectively making this country road into an H11 is totally unacceptable. The character of this area bordering the Greensand Ridge AONB must not become a busy thoroughfare. The proposed grid road extension, Woodleys Road (see fig above) along the eastern side adjacent to the buffer zone will destroy the natural green buffer and potentially substantially increase traffic entering Woburn Sands from the Bow Brickhill Road into The Leys, Hardwick Road or Theydon Avenue, none of which can cope with additional



traffic. Similarly, the extension of the V11 through the estate and linking to Bow Brickhill Road is equally unacceptable. **Grid roads should form the access to, not through, this development.**

The proposed H10 extension to the Newport Road is also unacceptable since it will potentially increase the traffic on the Newport Road. This road should be a B grade road only as is the Newport road itself.

Woburn Sands Town Council sees **no good reason to move the Railway station** which is an integral part of our heritage to be moved further west and it should remain in its current position with a redway/bus only link route through to the new estate as in the MOVEMENT FRAMEWORK diagrams.

The speeds of traffic through the new development must be **limited throughout to 30mph** and less by physical restraints to any greater speeds. The proposals for roads supporting speeds between 40mph and 60 mph as in Fig 4.2 in the Framework document are incompatible with the aims of sustainability.

The pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the estate and linking through to existing settlements is a positive element of the Movement Strategy.

## LAND USES

The Town Council **cannot see the justification for a Travellers site** with 7 pitches in this development. If one has to

be included it should be in the extreme west of the site as close as possible to the proposed Industrial site being developed south of Caldecotte.

We welcome the provision of **two primary schools and a secondary school** but these should also take into account the local schools, which happen to be in Central Beds, but that serve Woburn Sands as well as the new schools in the Glebe/Eagle Farm areas. Early Years provision is not mentioned but it is vital that this is provided locally.

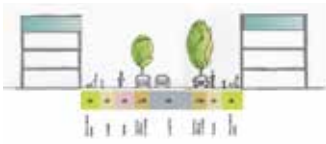
**Medical Facilities are also missing** from the Framework but clearly these must be considered in association with Asplands Medical Centre and other neighbouring surgeries.

Woburn Sands Town Council supports the proposal to provide complementary facilities to those which already exist in the town. At the same time, provision should be made for community cohesion within the new development. Additional funding for facilities which are in Woburn Sands and which will be utilised by residents in the new development must be made available and included in any Section 106 agreements.

## CHARACTER

Woburn Sands Town Council cannot accept the relatively high densities of housing proposed in this framework. Densities proposed range from 100 dwellings per hectare (dph) in the core hubs, 35-50 dph along primary streets, 25-35 dph in most of the rest only falling





Illustrative Cross  
Section through  
Primary Street



to densities more compatible to the rural surrounding settlements of 10-25 dph on the southern fringes. The density approved for MK East is 10.84 dph whereas this framework proposes an average of 15.15dph.

To achieve these higher densities along with the essential green spaces, 3 and 4 storey houses and blocks of flats occupy considerable areas and even 6 storey flats in the central hubs. No way is this respecting the rural communities which surround this development and which the Vision stated would be protected. Fig. above illustrates these three storey blocks alongside Primary Streets. Most of the south east segment of SEMK will be in the parish of Woburn Sands and should have densities commensurate with our town.

*SEMK is the southernmost estate in Milton Keynes bordering on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the Greensand Ridge to the south and it should, therefore, reflect the increasingly rural nature of this southern edge of*

*Milton Keynes by much lower densities of housing than those proposed.*

The Town Council would want to see very strong “green” features in all housing in SEMK including solar panels, water butts, electric charging points in car parks and private drives, and tree planting along all roads.

**Email your own response to SEMK@[milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:milton-keynes.gov.uk)** or write to MKC Development Plans, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ. Please try to use the same headings as in the Framework Document and that we have used above.

**Deadline: 5pm 19th April 2021**



We are sure everyone would want to join the Town Council in a huge **THANK YOU** to all the **staff at Asplands Medical Centre** and the **army of volunteers** who have helped them in the highly successful and smooth operation of the roll out of Covid 19 vaccines to our community.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated team in charge of our health and well-being.



# DRT (DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT)

This new transport system started on 1 April and Milton Keynes promised to deliver leaflets about it to you all before it started, so hopefully you have one! It replaces our 301 and 17 bus services. The service is run by MK Connect and works like a minibus which you can book using a smart phone, tablet or computer by downloading the MK Connect app from the App store or Google Play store. You can also phone **01908 252526**. The minibus will pick you up, usually within 30 mins of booking, from a point near your home and drop you off close to your destination. You can use your senior or disabled concessionary bus pass after 9.30am or pay with a debit or credit card on booking, or with a MOVEMK card which you can buy at the machine in the High Street by the bus stop outside the Memorial Hall.

Costs are £3.50 in peak times and £2.50 at all other times. **The service runs from 6.00am-10.00pm Mondays to Saturdays**

## NEWS FROM ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

We were delighted to be able to reopen St Michael's Church in time for Easter for services on Sundays and private prayer on Saturdays. However, we are also continuing to produce an online service each week. All of our services are available through the link on our new website [www.stmichaelsws.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelsws.org.uk) or via St Michael's Facebook page. Alternatively, do contact me if you would like to be added to our email mailing list.

We have a number of ongoing projects in the church and the churchyard. Someone asked me the other week whether our bell had been 'locked down.' It has not, but the

**and 9.00am-6.00pm on Sundays.**

About one third of the vehicles will be wheelchair

accessible and most are electric so this is a greener method of transport than the traditional buses. The vehicles hold up to 7 people, so you may be sharing your ride with others wanting to go on the same route as you. Places for children under 14 need to be booked for and accompanied by an adult. Whilst Covid restrictions are in place, all passengers must wear a face mask. You are asked not to carry any bags that do not fit on your lap as space may be limited if your vehicle is full.



**This service is only available for journeys within Milton Keynes and where there is no normal bus route.**

clock needs mending and we're currently getting quotes for this. If you have been walking up and down Church Road you may also have noticed the frost damage to the churchyard walls which will be repaired in due course.

As things open up (we hope) over the coming weeks we look forward to being able to resume many of our other regular activities. Do look out for the signs on our noticeboard and in our porch, and do come in when we're open.

*From Revd Diana Young, Vicar,  
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The brief blast of ‘Beast from the East 2’ in January already seems a distant memory and the arrival of spring was announced by the appearance of frogs’ spawn on the 6th of March – the second earliest date for the last 13 years, close behind 2019’s record. By the way, **please do not collect frogs’ spawn – leave it where it is!** Sadly, for some years a nasty fungal skin disease has been decimating amphibians across the world, and has been detected in this country. Moving spawn from one pond to another is one way in which it can be transmitted.

Indeed, the spread of disease is one unfortunate consequence of our interactions with wildlife. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) recently reported that greenfinches are among the latest candidates for being at risk of extinction in this country, with over a million disappearing during the last 15 years, largely due to the potentially fatal throat infection trichomonosis. You may have noticed their sharp decline in our gardens over the last few years, though fortunately they can still be seen and heard at Edgewick. One possible explanation is people not regularly washing and sterilising their bird feeders, which can thus become focal points for infection.

Meanwhile, the combination of more long



hot dry spells in summer and stronger winds in winter has led to more falling trees and branches. A recent victim was one of the fine old sweet chestnuts at the edge of Wavendon Woods, which collapsed over the fence onto our top field – and we are most grateful to the Bedford Estate for promptly clearing it.

Although volunteer sessions have of course been on hold for much of the last year, some socially distanced activity was possible from time to time, including continued laying of boardwalk on the southern boundary path, cutting back gorse and brambles, apple picking, pond clearing and planting hedge saplings. We hope to re-start our regular volunteer sessions (first Sunday morning of each month, 10.00 am) in late spring/early summer, as conditions permit. Meanwhile, the Greensand Trust will be independently replacing old fence-posts.

The sheep and lambs are already back in the fields: so dog-owners, take special care to prevent your dog disturbing them, and please be sure to bag any dog poo and take it to a dog poo bin (at the bottom of Woodland Way, for example).

Lastly, thanks to a generous donation from a local resident we’ll be installing a new kissing gate in the far (top) field giving direct access into the woods without having to negotiate the sometimes boggy entry in the bottom, south-west corner of the field.



## SNIPPETS

**New clerical assistant.** Welcome to Sam, our new clerical assistant, who takes on Pauline's job of hall bookings as well as generally assisting Alison.

**Town Council meetings.** During the Covid restrictions, the Town Council has continued to meet this year every month via zoom meetings. It is a far from satisfactory means of conducting meetings and meaningful discussions. The Covid restrictions have sadly stopped us all from having a formal presentation to thank Lynne for her services as our Town Clerk for 33 years, but the Town Council will be making their own presentation to Lynne at the socially distanced Town Council meeting at the Summerlin Centre on 17 May before our Town Council meeting. Covid restrictions also prevent us from having an Annual Town Meeting to report to the public on the past year's work, but we will publish our Annual reports on our website during April.

**Council Tax.** You will have seen that Milton Keynes has kept the increase in Council Tax to just 2.5%, one of the lowest in the country, and the increase in your whole bill for a Band E property amounts to just 8p per month. Our own precept represents about 5% of the total, whilst the Police is over 11% of the total and has increased its demand by over 11% since last year.

**Opening of Sports Hall and reform of the Recreation Ground.** We are sure you will appreciate that these two projects have been slowed due to the Covid restrictions, but we are hopeful that the Sports Hall will be ready in the next couple of months and that work can begin on the Recreation Ground soon. Before the Sports Hall is finally completed, we would like a meeting of all groups who may be interested in using this exciting new facility. Please contact the Town Clerk, asap, if you want to be involved in this meeting.

**Community Centres and Halls reopening.** Our halls are reopening on 12th April 2021 for certain groups and activities in line with government Covid19 guidance. From 21st June 2021, the Town Council look forward to welcoming private functions back into our halls, so if you've been holding off on a special celebration, now's the time to get in touch and book your date! There will be a new Sports Hall too and we are managing bookings for the Community Room at Greens Court. Please email all enquiries about halls to Sam on [s.townend@wstc.org.uk](mailto:s.townend@wstc.org.uk) or call her on **01908 585368 Mon-Fri 10:00 – 13:00**.

**Bowls Club Open day.** Bowls England are having an "Open weekend" to promote the sport on 29-30 May. Woburn Sands Bowls Club are having their Open Day on Sunday 30 May. Further details will be published on their website [www.wsbowls.co.uk](http://www.wsbowls.co.uk)

**Guided Walk:** History of Fuller's Earth Workings Around Woburn Sands. Don't miss this popular guided walk with a local expert on Saturday 15th May 2021 14.00 to 17.00. There *is no charge for tickets but places must be booked in advance by calling Sam on 01908 585368 or email [s.townend@wstc.org](mailto:s.townend@wstc.org)*

