



WOBURN SANDS
TOWN COUNCIL

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WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021

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Dear resident,

It is difficult writing a newsletter when the rules keep changing, but some things are certain: planning matters continue to bug us, we have a new Town Clerk, and spring will come and some of us may be vaccinated soon.....read on!

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STRATEGIC ISSUES AFFECTING WOBURN SANDS

Residents will be aware that there are two inter-related issues which will have a significant impact on Woburn Sands:

• East West Rail

• **The South East Urban Expansion of MK** (known as SEMK) proposed for the area between Woburn Sands and Bow Brickhill. At the moment the proposals for an Expressway linking Oxford and Cambridge have been suspended but these may be resurrected at some point.

The long term plan for East West Rail envisaged the establishment of a rail service between Oxford and Cambridge. Currently there is an operational service between Bedford and Bletchley and a disused rail track between Bletchley and Oxford. The latter stretch is now being upgraded prior to being brought into service in the mid-2020s; at the same time a connection between Bletchley and Central Milton Keynes is being constructed. The East West Rail Company

(EWR), which has responsibility for the stretch between Cambridge and Milton Keynes, has published for consultation a suggested route between Cambridge and Bedford (which currently does not exist) and is reviewing the line between Bedford and Bletchley. As yet there are no firm plans or dates for the Cambridge to Bedford sector.

At the moment two trains per hour use the Woburn Sands crossing; this will rise to four trains per hour once the link to Oxford becomes operational. Two further trains per hour will use the line once the Cambridge section is completed (plus occasional freight traffic). The Town Council has been told that EWR will publish a consultation document covering the future of the Bedford to Bletchley (CMK) sector in the Spring of 2021. The Town Council will be holding a further meeting with EWR in January prior to the finalisation of their consultation document. At this stage we can only speculate on the future of the crossings at



both Woburn Sands and Bow Brickhill.

This uncertainty is affecting the SEMK development. PlanMK identified this area for the development of about 3,000 dwellings plus associated infrastructure; PlanMK also included the provision of seven travellers' pitches within the area. Over the last twelve months officers from MKC have initiated discussions with the adjacent parishes (including the Town Council) prior to the publication of a draft Framework Document (which, once adopted, will become Supplementary Planning Guidance which developers will have to abide by). About half of the SEMK development area is within the parish of Woburn Sands. MKC will publish this draft at the end of January and this will be followed by a twelve week consultation period.

The Town Council, in our discussions with MKC officers, have argued strongly that the area between the current built-up boundary of the town (i.e. the Groves and Parklands) should become a Country Park

accessible to the residents of both "old" and "new" WS residents. In our view it should include such features as picnic tables, a jogging track, and various wildlife areas; we have also made clear that the fishing lakes should be integrated into the Park and accessible to all residents. We have strongly objected to the proposal that the travellers' site should be located in this site (a number of other possibilities have been put forward by officers). An unresolved matter is the connectivity between Woburn Sands and the SEMK site since this could be significantly affected by the future of the railway crossing.

Residents will appreciate from the above summary that the next few months will need a very strong response from us if we are to preserve the character of the parish. Unfortunately it seems likely that the present coronavirus restrictions will make it difficult to hold public meetings. However the Town Council will publish everything we can on our website, and will also issue additional Newsletters as and when necessary.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW TOWN CLERK, ALISON JORDAN

I have lived in Woburn Sands for over seven years and my children went to Swallowfield and Fulbrook Schools. It is through fundraising for the school PTAs that I first saw the strong community spirit here with so many local businesses happy to support our local schools. We all enjoy the many events: Christmas Fayre, Summer Festival, Community Markets, Woburn Sands Band and much more.

Now, lockdowns aside, I enjoy volunteering for the library and at The Stables. Like many of us I try to keep fit and love walking in the woods. We are lucky to live here with such beautiful countryside so close by.

I am looking forward to my new role as Town Clerk although Lynne leaves "big shoes" to fill having done such a good job for so many years.

AND SO SAY ALL OF US. LYNNE WILL BE AROUND IN THE OFFICE FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS TO HELP ALISON AND WE WILL SAY A PROPER FAREWELL TO HER WHEN COVID RESTRICTIONS ALLOW.



THE RECREATION GROUND REDEVELOPMENT

The Recreation Ground Upgrade Survey – Your Response.

Over 130 residents sent their views to us in response to the Recreation Ground Upgrade Survey. A big thank you to all those who responded. We will now take the development process forward, using the findings of the survey and other considerations, to specify costed design schemes for the Recreation Ground Upgrade. In particular we will share the priorities and interests our residents have identified with Milton Keynes Council and use their expertise to detail schemes that make the best use of the site for our residents. Here are the key findings.

The top choice for Play Equipment the survey identified was a Multi-play Climbing Frame preferably with a **Natural Forest, Woodland or Wildlife theme**. **The second choice was a Zip Wire**, followed by a **MUGA (Multi Use Games Area)** and an **Accessible Roundabout or Basket Swing**.

The **Environment preferences** were for more **Seating, Trees, and Landscaping**, closely followed by a desire for a new **Circular Walk** – with a vast majority of respondents indicating that this was important to them.

In terms of **Additional Equipment** – the most requested item was for all types of **Swings** that would be suitable for all ages: babies, young and older children, adults, and accessible swings. Equipment such as a **Climbing Wall** or a **Ground Trampoline** were also requested by some respondents.

The **Sporting Activity** that most respondents to the survey would like to use the new Recreation Ground for was for **Football** with small wheeled activities - **BMX, scooter, roller skates, skateboards** also receiving several mentions, as did **Basketball** and **Netball**.

As far as the **Adult Fitness** area was concerned, although exercise machines such as **Rowing Machines, Pull-up Bars** and **Cross trainers** were mentioned, about a third of all respondents either questioned the need for the adult fitness area in the Recreation Ground or had no suggestions regarding its use.

One of the most significant findings was the willingness of respondents to offer **Other Suggestions** for the development of the Recreation Ground. Noteworthy amongst these, and in no particular order of preference, for the **Environment** and **Landscaping** there were suggestions for better **Signage** with **Information Boards** perhaps showing the History of Woburn Sands. Other suggestions were for more **Bins** and better **Lighting** (for both security and accessibility) and more **User-friendly Footpaths**. The landscaping suggestions were for more Wildlife with more **Native Trees** and a **Pond**, a woodland feel for people with **wood sculptures** with a **sundial** or a **Musical Trail**. One request was for **BBQ stones** set in to provide a community social space, with **Picnic Tables** and a **Baby Area**. Heavy duty landscaping suggestions included new **Mounds or Hills**, possibly with a **Tunnel** through, and for a raised **Flat Stage Area** for performances.



Other Equipment that people suggested were **Balance Beams**, a **Cricket Net**, **Hopscotch markings**, **Slides** or a **See-Saw**, a **Table Tennis table** or a **Tennis Court**, a **Spider Web Climbing Net**, a **large Swing Boat** for children, a **Children's Obstacle Course** around the perimeter, a **Mini Maze** or a **Running Track** and a **Pump Track for bikes**.

And lastly in terms of an overall theme for the Recreation ground, people suggested a **Castle** theme, a **Harry Potter** theme, a **Winnie the Pooh** theme, a **Transport** theme of **Railways, Trains, Cars, Planes, Fire Engines** or an **International Space Station**, an **Animal** theme of **Dinosaurs, Dragons, Unicorns** or **Elephants** and even **Pixies, Fairies & Mushroom Houses**.

WSTC now has the responsibility of achieving a scheme for the development of the recreation ground which can support a better balance of activities and consequent wellbeing opportunities for all ages, taking every opportunity to create a natural and nature centred feel across the site where possible.

Finally, the WSTC will be looking at any other ways that we could deliver on the suggestions made by our residents where it is deemed not possible to provide them as part of the recreation ground development. For instance, some items may form a better fit within the South East Milton Keynes (SEMK) area development and the potential for a green buffer zone/country park which is under discussion, or in other parts of our town.

MESSAGE FROM DIANA YOUNG

Vicar at St Michael's

With a new lockdown upon us and high infection rates we have made the difficult decision to close St Michael's church for services and for private prayer. We will keep this under review over the coming weeks. Please see our website for updates on this.

We are continuing to produce an online service each week. All of our services are available through the link on our website 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 are still busy at St Michael's working on a complete renewal of our website, and we have just appointed an architect to take forward our plans for improvements to the interior of the building.

Our Youth Group Genesis and our study groups continue to meet on Zoom. Other groups are keeping in touch online, by WhatsApp or by phone. ***If you would welcome a chat with the Vicar, do get in touch with me.***

Donations at the Food Bank deposit box in the church porch are currently suspended at the request of MK Food Bank. You can still make donations at some supermarkets. The Food Bank would still be very grateful for financial donations via their website.

From Revd Diana Young, Vicar,
revdianay@gmail.com; 07887296588; 01908 584598



WOBURN SANDS COMMUNITY MARKET

You may have read the article in the December issue of Christian News by Lynne Roberts about Woburn Sands Community Market. The idea of a market in Woburn Sands came about from discussions in the Town Council who carried out the initial processes with Milton Keynes Council to enable this to begin. The first market was held in September 2014 with a lot of the hard work to set it up done by Tony Armstrong of the Business Association and Cllr Paul Farrant. Sadly, Tony is no longer with us, but Paul continues as a key member of Lynne Robert's team in running the market. Initially the market was held every other month on a Sunday but now it is a monthly event on the second Saturday of each month, 10am-2.00pm.

Here is an extract from Lynne's article for those of you who missed it:

Woburn Sands market is run by a small team of volunteers and stall holders and is not for profit, any funds raised going back into the local community. We are proud of our local stance with all stalls being local to Woburn Sands and the surrounding area. At the first market we had 11 stalls on the Memorial Green and now we can have as many as 42 stalls spreading all around the library and on the Memorial Green with craft stalls in the Memorial Hall as well.

At the moment it is difficult to say how many stalls we'll have at a market as it totally depends on the Government guidelines that are in place at that time. The November



market was limited to 20 stalls offering food, drink and takeaways.

We have strict protocols in place during the current pandemic including a one way system, hand sanitising stations, socially distanced stalls and mostly contactless payments.

During this pandemic, we are so happy to be there for our local community...and what a great community it is – nearly 700 folk turned up at November's market in the pouring rain! Many more attended the December market.

We are very grateful to Lynne Roberts and her team for their hard work in continuing with our Community Market. Unfortunately there will be no market in January or February due to the pandemic, but we are hopeful it will start again in March.

REMEMBER

shoplocal * spendlocal *
supportlocal *enjoylocal



WOBURN SANDS LIBRARY NEWS

Customers will be pleased to hear that despite ongoing restrictions we are still able to offer our popular 'Click and Collect' and 'Pick and Mix' services. They have been extended from Saturdays only to a more accessible Winter Opening Hours schedule

Winter opening Hours:

Saturday and Tuesday: 10am until 1pm

Thursday: 1pm until 4pm

Click and Collect – Visit our library website and use your library membership card and PIN to gain full access to the stock of all 9 of our libraries. Reserve your choices and await email notification of their arrival for collection at hours as above. Up to 6 books can be selected and normal reservation fees are waived for the duration, normally £1 each.

Pick and Mix – Library staff will gather assorted books within your preferred

genre or from your favourite authors and contact you once they are bagged. Collect from your local library between hours stated above. To use this free service email or phone **Milton Keynes library** on **01908 254050** central.library@milton-keynes.gov.uk (requests will be passed straight to Woburn Sands library) or phone **Woburn Sands library** on **01908 582033** during staffed hours as above.

- Please bring your library card with you when you come to collect to provide ID and name confirmation.
- Do ensure we are notified of any changes in your contact details.
- Please observe all standard covid-secure behaviour: keep a social distance and wear a mask.
- Be assured we have rigorous safety measures in place and will be quarantining books before and after each handling.

Thank you for your continued support of our library.

SNIPPETS

Crocuses: Watch out for the crocuses in the shape of a Rotary wheel which should start to bloom soon on the roadside by Mowbray Green. These were planted by Woburn Sands and District Rotary Club on World Polio Day. Polio is now eradicated from all but two countries in the world, thanks to fundraising by Rotary clubs throughout the world.

SID (Speed Indication Device): In the past few months, our SID has been monitoring traffic speeds by Edgewick Farm on The Leys/Hardwick Road junction and on the Newport Road entrance to Woburn Sands. It is disappointing to report that many are still exceeding the speed limit particularly on entering along Newport Road. 52% of vehicles travelled at 30-35mph, a further 25% went faster and one even hit over 70mph in the middle of the afternoon. We appreciate this may not be you, but most traffic going through Woburn



Sands is people living in our community, so **PLEASE** adhere to the limits as that forces everyone behind you to comply too. When the SID was by Edgewick Farm, the results were a little better with 48% travelling 25-30mph on that bend, but 37% still over at 30-35mph and 10% higher than that.

Traffic Warden. The Town Council has looked into the possible appointment of our own part time traffic warden, but in order to comply with legislative provisions which empower wardens, wardens have to be employed by MKC as a legal body for enforcing such matters. MKC are unwilling to employ part time wardens and we are unable to afford a full time one ourselves. Unfortunately we have not been able to find another parish to share the cost of a warden so are unable to proceed at present. Once life returns to some semblance of normal, we will relook at this issue.

CCTV We have recently started a contract with a firm which supplies us with CCTV which can be moved around the town to monitor any antisocial behaviour, parking offences, traffic incidents etc. So far this camera has identified a couple of incidents which provided the evidence the police needed to take forward a prosecution, and over the next months it will be monitoring parking in the town centre so that we can gather evidence of parking violations to pass onto Milton Keynes Parking.

MESSAGE FROM Asplands Medical Centre

As soon as we have delivery of vaccines against Covid 19 we will contact patients in the priority order given to us by the Government. This means all over 80 year olds who have not already been vaccinated at MK Hospital will be contacted first, followed by those in the 75-79 year old category, then the 70-75 year olds and anyone considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable.

Please **DO NOT RING US** about vaccinations....we will contact you.

Whilst the vaccination programme continues, our Woburn Surgery will only be open for collection of medicines; all essential face to face appointments will be held at Asplands. We may postpone some routine appointments whilst we continue with the vaccinations. Online, video and phone consultations will continue as we try to maintain a high level of care for our patients.

On behalf of the team at Asplands and Woburn, we are very grateful for your support and understanding in these very difficult times.

