

**Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at the  
Parish Office, 6 Wimborne Crescent, Westcroft, on Monday 14 December 2009.**

**Present:** Councillor D. Livingstone – in the Chair  
Councillor Ms. DeMyers-Robinson  
Councillor N. Leonards  
Councillor Mrs. J. Nicholas  
Councillor K. Perkins  
Councillor G. Small  
Councillor I. Stewart  
Councillor K. Thomas  
Councillor Mrs. M. Walton  
Councillor T. Wylie

**Also present:** Anne Wilson – Locum Clerk  
Councillor Sam Crooks – Leader Milton Keynes Council  
Councillor Stuart Burke – Ward Councillor Emerson Valley MKC  
Simon Batchelor – Neighbourhood Specialist Police Officer TVP

**1. Apologies**

**RESOLVED** to receive apologies from Councillor D. Edmonds, Councillor C. Osler and Councillor C. Williams.

**2. Declarations of interest**

**RESOLVED** that there were no declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest.

**3. Public time.**

There were no issues raised.

**4. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2009 and to receive reports on any matters arising which are not included elsewhere on this agenda.

- The Locum Clerk would investigate whether the cheque for the Howe Park NAG had been sent. Cllr. Livingstone raised the issue of whether the NAG had changed name as it was hoping to and the cheque should therefore be made out to the correct name.
- Cllr. Stewart asked for an update on Kilkenny House and noted that the minutes said no further action had been taken. It was agreed that this matter should be raised again.
- Cllr. Thomas reported that Members welcomed the revised drawings for Westcroft pavilion and it was hoped that the project would move fairly quickly from this point.
- The Locum Clerk would liaise with Carole McMillan about the tree order for Shenley Brook End Park and confirm the order had been placed and the grant of £303 made.

## 5. Reports

**RESOLVED** that Members received and considered reports, recommendations and/or proposals from:

- The Clerk

Cllr. Livingstone explained that as the Locum Clerk had only been in post three weeks that there was no report but there would be one written for the next full council.

- Police

Cllr. Livingstone welcomed Simon Batchelor to the meeting. He circulated the crime figures for the parish and outlined several areas of the statistics. Particular attention was drawn to theft from non-dwellings and theft from vehicles where there was a group using mopeds throughout the area as an easy means of escape. Simon was also pleased to announce that there are now five special constables working in the parish who have the same powers as regular officers. There was also a new sergeant and the police were now staying in the parish at weekends rather than being moved to MK central as before.

Cllr. Livingstone had attended the Police Parish Liaison Meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. He said that TVP were reviewing their use of discretion on whether to prosecute or not to prosecute people. He also reported that in the parish the statistics for the number of crimes per 1000 of the population was 49.4 per 1000 where as in the borough of MK it was 69.8 per 1000.

- Ward Councillors

Cllr. Small reported that he was disappointed in the small turnout for the Westcroft Park plans consultation but he had received several apologies from parents. Before the meeting he had been to a meeting at the Emerson Valley Rugby Club where there are still concerns about the water lying on the filter lane. There were six wooden bollards broken by the shops and no one was accepting responsibility for the damage.

Cllr. Stewart spoke about the planning at Oxley Park for four dwellings. He expressed concern about the drainage ditches at the Tattenhoe Bear Farm not being as they should be and that he felt that a conversation was needed between MK officers and the land owner. The site was near a bridleway and the drainage ditches could impact it.

- Planning & Environment Committee

Cllr. Thomas reported that Mr Hollis had addressed the meeting about what was essentially a neighbour dispute about a hedge line that had been removed. He accepted that the Council could not do anything to assist.

He was disappointed at the turnout for the Killerton Close play area plans consultation although a reasonable amount of feedback had been received from those who attended. Concern was expressed about the possibility to move the MUGA on the site although this may be to the furthest point away from the neighbouring dwellings

Cllr. Wylie would be setting up a meeting of the Allotments Working Party in the New Year.

Cllr. Livingstone confirmed that the issue of rats on the allotments had been resolved. It appears that a nest had been disturbed by a tenant digging and the pest control company that attended had felt that as the rats had dispersed when disturbed that no further action be taken. He did point out that it was not uncommon to have rats on allotment sites.

- Community Committee

There was no member present that was able to update the meeting on the work of the Community Committee.

Cllr. Small reported that Morrisons had kindly agreed to allow a Community notice board to be put up in the store. Members were pleased at this response from Morrisons.

- Newsletter

Cllr. Stewart reported that bundles of the newsletter had been found in bushes in the parish and had therefore not been delivered. Several Councillors had not received a copy of this edition. Cllr. Thomas would follow these matters up.

- Other matters:

Cllr. Livingstone reminded Members that because there was no Community Committee in December that the reports of the Youth Leader and the Parish Warden came to this meeting instead.

*Report of the Youth Team*

Members noted the report and agreed that the amount of work that the youth team was carrying out was increasing each month and was of a good standard. Members were very appreciative of the quality and quantity of work being executed by the Youth Leader.

*Report from the Parish Warden*

Members noted the report and were very appreciative of the pro-active attitude and hard work shown by the Parish Warden. He also works closely with the Youth Leader on a regular basis.

**RESOLVED** that the Parish Council agree to replace the dog bin at Howe Park Wood, replace the bin at Furzton Lake near the car park opposite the bowl and install a new bin at Howe Rock Place Tattenhoe.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that these purchases would be made from budget heading 340 under Cost Centre 7 Community Activities.

## 6. Finance:

- Review expenditure for the year to date against budget

Members noted the financial information. Councillor Livingstone explained to members that although some assumptions had been made there could be as much as a £67,000 surplus on the 2009/2010 budget.

The Locum Clerk explained that much of this money could be placed in an ear marked reserves list that forms part of the Council's accounts with ring fenced money for specific projects and also enabled the Council to save up for larger projects. Some of this money could then be used to underwrite some cost centre budget headings for the 2010/2011 budget or remain in the ear marked reserves until needed. This would be favourable with the auditors. The Council would need to revisit its Financial Regulations which would be brought to the next Full Council meeting for amendment.

**RESOLVED** that the Council would ear mark its surplus budget in reserves and that amended Financial Regulations be brought to Council for consideration at its meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Concern was expressed that the heading where the most money had not been spent was Community Activities. It was agreed that engaging and encouraging parishioners to get involved was difficult although the community events held had been well received.

**RESOLVED** that an article about community activities and the availability of funds to help run them be placed in the next edition of Community News and that Cllr. Livingstone and Cllr. Thomas meet to discuss possible new activities around the parish.

- Consider the monthly report and approve payments

**RESOLVED** that Members agreed the monthly report and approved the payments as per the schedule.

The Locum Clerk asked that members approve the holding back of the invoice for Nu-Swift who she was meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009 to discuss their work and the proposals for additional work received by the Council. This was agreed by those present.

- Consider a preliminary draft budget for 2010/2011

Members discussed various elements of the budget but agreed that a full discussion would take place at the Parish Council meeting in January. Members were encouraged to look at the budget in detail before this meeting.

- Consider an inflationary increase on the Members Allowance for 2010/2011

This item was deferred to the meeting of Full Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and would be discussed as part of the budget process.

- Update on bank interest rates and the movement of town council monies

Councillor Livingstone explained that the Locum Clerk had obtained information on the possible interest rates on deposit and fixed term deposit accounts from banks where Council accounts were accepted. The Irish Permanent Bank stood out with an exceptional rate of interest and the Irish Government standing as Guarantor. The Locum Clerk was investigating this further and was contacting other Councils to see if they had accounts with them. She would also contact BALC/NALC.

Cllr. Ms Walton suggested that the Clerk contact Judy Ruddick at MKC Treasury Department. This was agreed by members.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. Nicholas and the Locum Clerk arrange the sweep between the Council's Lloyds bank accounts as agreed at previous meetings.

*The meeting was adjourned to enable Cllr. Sam Crooks, Leader of MKC to listen to Members comments or issues.*

Cllr. Livingstone spoke about some relationship issues with officers at MKC and felt that part of that was due to a lack of understanding by them about the role of parish councils. Cllr. Walton felt it was not able to tell whether you are talking to a Mouchel employees or an MKC employee. Cllr. Livingstone did not believe this to be the case. Cllr. Crooks felt that training would be the best option.

Cllr. Livingstone explained about the new office/police/community building planned and whilst the land had been bought and planning permission obtained the funding of such a project was proving harder. Cllr. Crooks offered to meet with Cllr. Livingstone to discuss this further.

Cllr. Stewart made comment on the direction of travel in the localism agenda and noted that devolution was coming at a pace. He asked Cllr. Crooks about the proposals by MKC to enable assets to be transferred and services to be delivered at a very local level. Cllr. Crooks said that the Parish Charter was the beginning of this process and often parishes could take on the day to day service delivery without owning the assets. Members hoped that funding would follow the devolution of the service and information given to the parishes on the resource implications. Cllr. Perkins expressed concern that this could lead to cherry picking by MKC and members wondered about whether in some cases this could lead to double taxation.

Cllr. Thomas felt that there had been a much better relationship with regard to planning applications over the past few years. It appeared that the parish is invited to be involved more frequently and much earlier in any planning process. This was much appreciated by Members. Cllr. Livingstone felt that this helped the Council to make an informed and positive contribution in the process.

Cllr. Livingstone asked about the un-adoption of a significant number of roads in the borough and for an update on the work of the task force set up to deal with the problem. Cllr. Crooks would contact the Locum Clerk with an update for Members.

## **7. Allotments**

**RESOLVED** that Members noted the comprehensive report from Carole McMillan with regard to the allotments and agreed it was a useful document.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Locum Clerk should seek legal advice with regard to the issue of back gates leading from private properties onto the allotments. Concern was expressed about future owners of the properties that may not have allotments, their access to the site and possible liability on the Council.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Council make an application to the Land Registry with regard to the ownership of the land between the allotment boundary and the adjoining gardens before any decision is made with regard to the overhanging tree at Mayer Gardens.

Members noted the issue with the moving of the fence lines by residents and agreed that this should be monitored.

**8. Correspondence**

**RESOLVED** that Members noted the list circulated.

**9. To agree and note events/meeting dates:**

**RESOLVED** to note the following meeting dates.

Planning & Environment Committee	4 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
Community Committee	11 January 2010
Parish Council	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2010

**10. Committee in Private Session**

Exclusion of Public and Press

**RESOLVED** in terms of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore **RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

Signed ..... Date .....

Parish Council Chairman