



Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 21st May 2018 opened at 7:30pm.

Present: Councillors: Bedford, Calverley, El Zamek, Foskett, Heale, Hyacinthe, Macaulay, Neate, Phillips, Stabler, Ward and Widdowson (Vice Chair), one TVP PCSO, Cllr Brackenby, 2 GLPC staff, 2 members of the public, 10 third party organisation representatives and the Parish Manager.

Apologies were sent from the Chair, Cllr Panes, who was unable to attend so Cllr Widdowson, Vice Chair, provided the annual report.

The Vice Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all present.

Report from the Vice Chair

“Under Cllr Panes’ chairmanship we have improved the policies and procedures of the council and have continued to provide the services such as planning advice and the community programme with which you are familiar and for which you have given much support. Our ranger service has been increased and now two Rangers work to keep the parish looking tidy and well-kept. It is good to see that many parishes have adopted the idea of a ranger service.

But this evening I want to concentrate on two main themes: the body of councillors and the relevance of this building to the community.

When I joined the council 7 years ago we had only a small band of councillors and a lot of vacancies.

This year, and I think this reflects the greater awareness of the public of the existence of and the relevance of the parish council, we have a full complement of councillors for the first time. Not only that but the range of ages, abilities and experience of the councillors brings a fresh input to the thinking and, I think, what is very important too, the southern half of the parish is fully represented. We have been accused by some of being too concentrated on the northern part of the parish but now we have the ability to bring a better balance to the work we do.

In 2019 there will be elections to the parish council (they come around every 4 years) and I hope that we shall see a full complement of councillors returned to carry on the work of the parish. It is important to recognise that the time and effort of the councillors is entirely voluntary.

What is essential to the councillors is that the money which is provided by the public through the precept on the council tax is well spent. That means that we have to be enterprising in delivering new and better services to the public but ensuring that the money is giving maximum value.

And that leads me to my second theme for the evening which is the activities that take place in this building. When we moved the office from the small premises in Neath Hill, there were some who thought that the expense of obtaining this building and kitting it out was over the top. I believe that in this last year the importance of the existence of this building as a base and a reference point for parishioners has really come to the fore.

The range of questions that our staff field from the public has grown considerably and the ability of the staff to either arrange for problems to be addressed or to point people in the right direction is a great asset. The range of problems and their volume has increased as the existence of the parish office becomes ever more widely known.

The relationship between the Milton Keynes Council and this parish council is still not understood by many but the staff are able to explain who is responsible for what when enquiries are received. The staff members

like to think of themselves as signposts to the services offered by the many organisations with which the parish council has connections.

The strength of the parish council is in its connections to a myriad of other organisations which provide services of all sorts from care of the environment to special interest groups, charities and enthusiastic volunteers. We shall illustrate that in a few minutes when we hear from three of the organisations who work with the council or benefit from the council.

While services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Food Bank have become regular features of the weekly timetable, the activities in this room during the last year have been experimental in reaching out to offer help, inspiration and fun to a variety of groups. Some of these will be successful and others not so and as councillors we are keen to see that these activities are assessed for their value for money as well as their contribution to the well-being of their participants. We also want to hear from you, the public, about the relevance and worth of the activities that are initiated here.

It is important for social cohesion that there is cooperation and partnership between the many organisations which offer services of all varieties to the public and the parish council, in operating from this base, is keen to be the enabler.

Now, I have talked about a year of consolidation of the use of these premises in the north of the parish. It is now important that in the coming year we develop a stronger presence in the south of the parish. Now that the Big Local in Conniburrow has secured premises from which they can deliver services, the parish council will be seeking to work closely with BLC to replicate what has been achieved here. A start has already been made with a meeting of the Community Forum but there is much more to do and with a strong contingent of councillors in the south we can expect to achieve success in the coming years."

Following the report the Chair then invited the Parks Trust representatives to present the next steps for the heritage work being carried out at Linford Manor, followed by Great Linford (St Andrews) Scout Group and Healthwatch Milton Keynes.

Parks Trust – an update was provided on the progress of the project and the next steps. Questions were invited from the floor and further information will be posted on GLPC's website and Facebook page about future events. A decision is to be made in June about the next stage of the lottery grant.

Scouts – a lively presentation was provided by five Scouts from Great Linford (St Andrews) Scout Group about the benefits they had gained from the purchase of their new Duke of Edinburgh Award equipment. Not only had they received new tents from the grant awarded by GLPC, but the opportunity to go out and learn things for themselves shone through their presentation.

Healthwatch – this group has been in existence for 5 years and is an active group who listen to the views and experiences of people who use health and social care services. Healthwatch Milton Keynes uses this feedback to help improve local services, incorporating ideas into how services are planned, provided and delivered. They also help people to find the right person to talk to and can be the public's representative at meetings where decisions about NHS and social care are made.

The Vice Chair closed the meeting with the following thanks

"I would like to extend some thanks of my own and, I hope yours too, to the following

- To Keith Panes for his leadership of the Council – Keith is standing down next week
- To our staff who have coped well with the changes and additional work over the last year. We are fortunate that they are such a good cohesive team.
- I particularly want to extend our thanks to the many volunteers we have in the parish; those who turn out on the organised "tidy up " days but perhaps more so to the many unsung volunteers whose pride in their environment means that they pick up litter; mow the grass in front of their houses and tend the garden areas in their neighbourhoods. Very well done all of you.
- Eirwen Tagg who has been part of this organisation for 10 years "

After these Thanks the Chair invited everyone to stay for refreshments and informal conversation.

Chair



Date

11/06/18

