

Northby NorthEast



Local Community News

www.great-linford.gov.uk

Growing your way to the Good Life



SUMMER OF FUN

Try something new, with our best-ever programme of activities for all the family. See the pull-out guide and book your places now! *Pages 5-8*

PARKOUR

The free-flowing, street-wise sport of free-running that even the most sports-shy kids will be keen to learn. *Page 4*

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, YOUR PLAN

New powers to improve the district you live in. *Page 10*

contacts

Below is a list of GLPC parish councillors, the wards they represent and their contact details.

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Vacancy - please contact
Parish Manager if interested

Parish Manager

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Parish Council Office

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Neath Hill MK14 6JY
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summer 2012

councillor comment

What's the point?

I was quite shocked that only 22 residents out of 21,000 attended the Annual Parish meeting in June. You might think it doesn't matter – it's only a parish council. But the point is that Britain is changing. The government's new Localism agenda means that your parish council is getting more powers than ever before, and unless we, the councillors, gather ideas, opinions and views from you, the residents, we cannot make the best decisions on your behalf.

At the same time, the government's austerity measures mean that funds for Milton Keynes Council services are being cut. In this climate we will all see a real reduction in services traditionally provided by the MK council.

On the positive side, local people now have the power to prepare a new Neighbourhood Plan. It will cover all aspects of life in the Parish, including social, physical and environmental developments. During its preparation it is essential that we find out what you want and build it into the Plan.

Another challenge is the sheer size of the Parish. Although we are the size of a small town, we have no High Street, and no focal point. Therefore to encourage more residents to get together, and engage in local matters, we are looking at opening a café at Neath Hill, as the main hub, and opening "satellites" in other districts. For example, we could open drop-in centres in Great Linford, Giffard Park, Downs Barn or Conniburrow, to improve face-to-face contact.

Also, we have recently re-launched this Parish magazine. The new format is already sparking more feedback, and offers of involvement. Next, we are working on the website and social networks to open as many communication channels as possible.

I certainly hope these efforts pay off, because it is essential to hear the opinions of many more of the 21,000 residents in North East Milton Keynes. Otherwise, we, as local councillors, cannot be confident of making the right decisions on your behalf.



Ray Yeates

Chair of GLPC Localism Group

www.great-linford.gov.uk



FAR LEFT: The lush patchwork at Neath Hill Allotments; one of six sites owned by the parish.

Photo by Linda Inoki

LEFT: Alan Senior takes on 'A bit of a jungle' at Gifford Gate Allotments.

GROWING YOUR WAY to the Good Life

With the economy stalling, and interest in healthy eating rising, more people are discovering the good life down on the allotment. In a national survey, a staggering six million people say they would like an allotment, and in London waiting lists stretch for up to 40 years.

Luckily, Milton Keynes has some excellent allotments. Some date from Victorian times, when workers relied on allotments to put affordable produce on the table. Others were created in recent years, as part of the new city's extensive green landscape.

It only takes a brief visit to see why local residents are keen to roll up their sleeves. Just behind busy Overstreet, the Neath Hill allotments are a surprisingly tranquil oasis. Blackbirds sing, bees bumble, and the air smells as fresh as a summer morning. Walking through the lush patchwork of plants, dotted with wheelbarrows and potting sheds, is simply delightful. Especially for a visitor with no spadework to do!

Some people set out neat rows of blackcurrants and beans. Others prefer a pretty jumble of cornflowers and cabbages. But everyone has good words to say about allotment life.

The Johnson family recently took on a plot at Neath Hill, and although it is hard work, even their toddler Myla enjoys it. "She loves digging little holes and picking raspberries, strawberries, or anything that's going!" says her father. "It's a good way for children to know where their food comes from."

It's also a good place to meet your neighbours. Alan Senior, who took on "a bit of a jungle" last year, has had a lot of help from more experienced allotment holders at Gifford Gate, and enjoys being part of "a pleasant little community".

A recent study in the north of England highlights the benefits for retired people, who report "a strong sense of achievement, satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure from their gardening." While in Holland, older allotment gardeners scored significantly higher on measures of health and well-being than those without.

A hard-won heritage

By Alan Senior

Allotments are a hard-won part of our heritage. As landowners steadily enclosed millions of acres of common land, landless peasants began to rebel. In 1649, the "Diggers" protests were put down by the army, who drove them off the land, destroyed their crops and burned their huts to the ground. Two hundred years later, in the 1830's, protesters were punished by transportation to distant lands. However, fearful of widespread revolt, Parliament finally agreed to provide allotments.

The Labourers' Friend Society did a lot in Victorian times to promote "domesticity" and keep workers out of the ale-houses. However the clergy demanded regular church attendance in return for a plot!

During World War 11 the "Dig for Victory" campaign involved 1,500,000 plots producing 20% of the nation's food. We still have some of these wartime "diggers" in our community in Great Linford.

After half a century of decline, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio boosted wildlife and local food production via a renewed allotment movement.

Allotments are deeply traditional in many ways. We still measure in rods, poles and perches. We recycle, improvise and "make do and mend". We share plants, seeds, knowledge and jokes as well as the trials and tribulations of a demanding hobby.

BLAKELANDS | BOLBECK PARK | CONNIBURROW | DOWNHEAD PARK
DOWNS BARN | GIFFARD PARK | GREAT LINFORD | NEATH HILL
PENNYLAND | REDHOUSE PARK | TONGWELL | WILLEN PARK

Why kids love PARKOUR

Put a bunch of modern ten year olds in a gym on a hot summer's day and you might expect a few glum faces. But at a recent Parkour class I attended, the youngsters couldn't wait to run, jump and tumble round the room.

Parkour, or Free Running, is a sport that relishes obstacles. It started in France in the 1920's, was taken up by the military, and, with the help of videos and computer games, the sport has gone international.

Ruel Dacosta, or 'Ninja', is a local expert with hundreds of students in Milton Keynes. One of the great things about Parkour, says Ruel, is that it appeals to kids with little interest in traditional sports.

As the youngsters warm up with "Monkey drop downs" and "Lizard Walks", a parent explained its appeal.

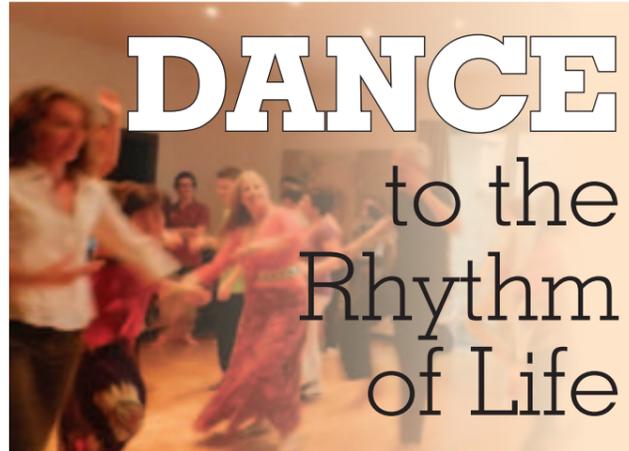
"Josh, my son, is not keen on football and gets demoralised if he loses," says Dawn Dickinson from Newton Longville, "but he loves this. Children thrive on a touch of danger, but the teachers are very careful. The children smile for the whole two hours! It gives them a lot more confidence."

Another striking thing is the discipline. The kids readily obey the class rules which include "No swearing and no fighting." While beginners practise breaking their falls, the more experienced youngsters go for high flips, scrutinising each other's performance.

Ruel says "The whole point of the sport is to overcome one's own mental and physical obstacles. To know your self better, the better to deal with life."

During a break I ask one young fan if he has ever had any injuries. "No," he says. Then hesitates; "I fractured my arm once. But that was falling off my friend's bunk bed!"

Why not try Parkour or Biodanza for just £1 in this year's Summer of Fun activities? See pull-out guide for details.



Latin America has given the world some wonderful dances, from the sultry Tango to the sizzling Samba. Now, a relatively new dance from Chile is winning fans in Britain. It has no fixed steps. Anyone can do it, nimble or creaky. And you don't need a partner, in sequins or otherwise!

The dance that welcomes everyone with open arms is called 'Biodanza', and this summer you can give it a try. The 'Summer of Fun' classes at Great Linford Memorial Hall will be led by local resident and Biodanza teacher Ingrid Slack

I met Ingrid at her peaceful studio in Simpson, where she works as a counselling psychologist. "Biodanza brings all of my favourite things, together," says Ingrid, "A love of music, dancing and people, together with teaching, spirituality and personal growth."

According to Ingrid, all you need to bring to the session is "the wish to enjoy yourself, and an open mind."

With that, she put on some music and began. Sometimes we strutted round the room, lightly holding hands. Sometimes we swayed, or peered at each other through fingertips. Once we cradled an imaginary creature in our arms. The exercises were fun, but also surprisingly moving.

As Ingrid puts it, "Through the dance, you connect with something greater than one's self." In the stressful, busy world we live in, anything that helps us relax, enjoy and dance to the rhythm of life has to be worth a try.

Photos courtesy of Paramount Parkour



Summer of Fun 2012

Something to do Every Day



Great Locality Proud Community



Great Linford Parish Council see our blog... glpcsummer.wordpress.com



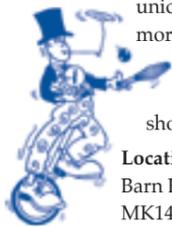
JUGGLING & CIRCUS SKILLS

ONLY £1

www.thegreatgappo.co.uk

Age range: All ages welcome. 30 maximum per session.

Join The Great Gappo for laughter and fun as you learn a range of circus skills; from plate spinning, juggling, diabolos, to riding a unicycle, and much, much more.



Dress code: loose clothing – trainers or soft-soled shoes.

Location: Cross & Stable, Downs Barn Boulevard, Downs Barn MK14 7RP

PARAMOUNT PARKOUR

ONLY £1

www.paramountparkour.com

Age range: Suitable for 10 to 16 year olds. 30 maximum per session.

At Paramount Parkour Academy free running classes, learn the art behind this extreme sport in a safe environment.

Starting with a warm up then the emphasis will be on learning techniques that translate directly to the street. Expect lots of vaulting, precision work, rolling, foot placement, stealth, balance drills, space awareness games, and near the end of the class before warming down, an obstacle course will be set up enabling everyone to put the techs they've learned, into practice.

Dress code: loose clothing – trainers or soft-soled shoes.

Location: Gt Linford School, St Leger Drive, Great Linford, Milton Keynes MK14 5BL



THE SMALL PRINT

Parents will be asked to provide contact details and sign a disclaimer for each child taking part in any paid activity.

Some events require small children to be accompanied by a parent, grandparent or guardian.

All instructors and staff at events are fully insured and CRB checked.

First Aid trained staff will be on-hand at every event.

SPORTS FOR ALL

FREE!

www.mkdonsset.com

Age range: Suitable for 9 to 15 year olds.

Join the MK Dons Sports & Education Trust trainers every afternoon from 1pm to 3pm on 30 July to 31 August (except 27 August)

Sports activities will including: Football, basketball, rounders, kwik cricket & street hockey.

Just turn up and play, girls or boys can join in all the activities.

Dress code: outdoor activity clothing to suit the weather – trainers.

Location: Pannier Place Downs Barn Sports Ground and Pavilion, Pannier Place Downs Barn MK14 7QP



KARUNA YOGA

ONLY £1

Stretch, strengthen and de-stress

Age range: Adults only over 18 years old. 25 maximum per session

Karuna Yoga classes soothe the nervous system, sharpen focus and help promotes strength, flexibility, healthy breathing, to restore physical injuries and create emotional balance, leaving you nourished and restored.

Dress code: wear something you feel happy and comfortable in.

Location: Gt Linford Memorial Hall, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX

DANCE & DRAMA

ONLY £1

www.centrestagemk.co.uk

Age range: Suitable for 6 to 10 year olds. 25 maximum per session.

Fun creative drama classes, lead by a professional drama teacher.

Including improvisation, drama games, mime - followed by jazz based dance classes – great for all abilities. It will be lots of fun!

Dress code: loose clothing – trainers or soft-soled shoes.

Location: Cross & Stable, Downs Barn Boulevard, Downs Barn MK14 7RP

www.great-linford.gov.uk

BUG HUNT – BTCV

FREE!

The Conservation Volunteers

www.btcv.org.uk

Age range: Suitable for 6 to 10 year olds, please bring your parents or grandparents.

Search for insects, snails, butterflies and bugs in the Greta Linford Millennium Wood. Identify them, what they do and build mini-beast homes.

Dress code: outdoor activity clothing to suit the weather – trainers, sturdy shoes or wellingtons.

Location: Marsh Drive sports ground, near the tennis courts, Sports Ground & Pavilion, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX

BOOKING REQUIRED



BIODANZA

ONLY £1

Dance to the rhythm of life

Age range: Adults only over 18 years old. 25 maximum per session.

Bring happiness, health and confidence to your life with lovely people. Relax and enjoy an enchanting system for personal development of mind, body and spirit, through movement and dance to the emotional power of beautiful and diverse music

- No steps to learn
- No partner required
- Move at your own pace
- Bring a friend or come alone

Dress code: wear something you feel happy and comfortable in.

Location: Gt Linford Memorial Hall, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX



SKATE & STREET ART

ONLY £1

www.mac-uk.org/a/2/Milton-Keynes

Age range: Suitable for 13 years to adult. 35 maximum per session.

Skateboarding - learn basic skills in to build your confidence on a skateboard and develop your skills by learning tricks.

Street Art - with the guidance of talented artists, practice the techniques of lettering, characters, stencil making and spray can skills to create a design to paint.

Dress code: outdoor activity clothing (you may get paint on) to suit the weather – trainers.

Location: Pennyland play area to the rear of Angel Close, Pennyland MK15 8AQ

Access: via redways from Neath Hill, and Great Linford and the along the canal broad-walk from Bolbeck Park, Willen Park and Giffard Park.

Note: NO PARKING AVAILABLE.



STREET DANCE

ONLY £1

Learn the moves for a routine.

Age range: Suitable for 10 upwards and adults. 25 maximum per session.

Street Dance is one of the fastest growing and changing contemporary dance forms.

So come and try the latest street dance & hip hop dance moves and routines – these dance sessions are for children and adults – beginners to professionals.

We encourage attendance each week so that you can learn a routine.

Dress code: loose clothing – trainers or soft-soled shoes.

Location: Great Linford Memorial Hall, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX



MILTON KEYNES PLAY ASSOCIATION

FREE!

www.mkpa.co.uk

Age range: Suitable for 6 to 14 year olds, please bring your parents or grandparents.

Try your hand at craft, bouncy castle, and other activities; join in the fun and games led by a team of qualified play-workers.

Sessions include:

- Sports – cricket, rounders and football.
- Games - including treasure hunts, rope bridge building and team games.
- Bouncy castle or slide.
- Lots of practical crafts
- Fun for everyone

Dress code: outdoor activity clothing to suit the weather – trainers or shoes.

NOTE: All sessions are open access and children remain the responsibility of parents at all times.

Locations:

Tuesday afternoons on 31 July & 14 August:

Conniburrow Mallow Gate, Conniburrow Boulevard Local Park, Junction of Mallow Gate and Conniburrow Boulevard

Tuesday afternoons on 7, 21 & 28 August:

Pannier Place Downs Barn, Sports Ground and Pavilion, Pannier Place, Downs Barn MK14 7QP

Thursday afternoons on 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 August:

Marsh Drive sports ground, Sports Ground & Pavilion, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX

NO BOOKING REQUIRED.



SPECIAL OPS MK

£2 for 4 hrs

www.specialopsmk.com

Age range: Suitable for 8 to 14 years old. 25 maximum per session

Ex-army Sgt. Mack has experience in recruit training, survival and bush craft to offer kids a specially devised program based on survival skills, problem solving and team building. You will learn how to build an all-weather shelter, safe fire starting methods, wild food collection and the importance of a positive mental attitude, self-worth, confidence and responsibility.

Dress code: outdoor activity clothing (you may get dirty) to suit the weather – trainers or sturdy shoes.

Location: Marsh Drive sports ground, Sports Ground & Pavilion, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX



BUG HUNT – THE PARKS TRUST

FREE!

www.theparkstrust.com

Age range: Suitable for 6 to 10 year olds, please bring your parents or grandparents.

Join The Parks Trust rangers in exploring the world of creepy crawlies at Linford Manor Park. We will go bug hunting and you will be able to make bugs of your own to take home and keep!

Dress code: outdoor activity clothing to suit the weather.

Location: Linford Manor Park, Great Linford Manor, The High Street, Great Linford, MK14 5AX



Don't miss out...

book your place!

Some events have limited places, so to guarantee a place buy your tickets in advance from;

The Parish Office
10 Tower Crescent
Neath Hill MK14 6JY

You can pay on the door but to avoid disappointment please check for availability, tel: **01908 606613**



see our blog: glpcsummer.wordpress.com

date	activity	time	place
JULY			
MON 30th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Juggling & Circus	2.00 – 4.00	CS
TUES 31st	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Karuna Yoga	10.30 – 11.45	MH
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	CMG
AUGUST			
WEDS 1st	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Street Dance	2.00 – 4.00	MH
	Dance & Drama	2.00 – 4.15	CS
THUR 2nd	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	MD
FRI 3rd	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Skate & Street Art	2.00 – 4.00	PD
MON 6th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Juggling & Circus	2.00 – 4.00	CS
TUES 7th	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Karuna Yoga	10.30 – 11.45	MH
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	PP
	Biodanza	2.00 – 4.00	MH
WEDS 8th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Street Dance	2.00 – 4.00	MH
	Dance & Drama	2.00 – 4.15	CS
THUR 9th	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	MD
	Biodanza	2.00 – 4.00	MH
FRI 10th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Skate & Street Art	2.00 – 4.00	PD
MON 13th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Juggling & Circus	2.00 – 4.00	CS
	Bug Hunt BTCV	1.00 – 4.00	MD
TUES 14th	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Karuna Yoga	10.30 – 11.45	MH
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	CMG
WEDS 15th	Bug Hunt, Park Trust	10.00 – 12.00	LM
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Street Dance	2.00 – 4.00	MH
	Dance & Drama	2.00 – 4.15	CS
THUR 16th	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Special Ops MK	10.00 – 3.00	MD
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	MD
FRI 17th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Special Ops MK	10.00 – 3.00	MD
	Skate & Street Art	2.00 – 4.00	PD
MON 20th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Juggling & Circus	2.00 – 4.00	CS

date	activity	time	place
TUES 21st	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Karuna Yoga	10.30 – 11.45	MH
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	PP
WEDS 22nd	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Street Dance	2.00 – 4.00	MH
THUR 23rd	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	MD
FRI 24th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Skate & Street Art	2.00 – 4.00	PD
TUES 28th	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Special Ops MK	10.00 – 3.00	MD
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Karuna Yoga	10.30 – 11.45	MH
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	PP
	Biodanza	2.00 – 4.00	MH
WEDS 29th	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Street Dance	2.00 – 4.00	MH
	Juggling & Circus	2.00 – 4.00	CS
THUR 30th	Paramount Parkour	9.30 – 11.30	GLS
	Special Ops MK	10.00 – 3.00	MD
	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	MKPA	2.00 – 4.00	MD
	Biodanza	2.00 – 4.00	MH
FRI 31st	Sports for All	1.00 – 3.00	PP
	Skate & Street Art	2.00 – 4.00	PD
	Bug Hunt BTCV	1.00 – 4.00	MD

Where are the activities being held?

- CMG** Conniburrow Boulevard, Mallow Gate Local Park
- CS** The Cross & Stable Community Centre, Downs Barn Boulevard MK14 7RP
- GLS** Great Linford Combined School, St Leger Drive MK14 5BL
- LM** Linford Manor, High Street, Great Linford MK14 5AX
- MD** Sports Ground, Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5HH
- MH** Memorial Hall, off Marsh Drive, Great Linford MK14 5AX
- PD** Play Area, behind Angel Close, Pennyland MK15 8AQ
- PP** Pannier Place Sports Ground, Downs Barn MK14 7QP



Meet the artists

In late June, local residents came along to a 'meet the artists' workshop at the parish offices in Neath Hill. It was all part of the interesting challenge of spending a £60,000 arts grant on new public art beside the Grand Union Canal. The four themes are all linked to the area: the History of the Canal, Japanese Connections, Fish and Fowl, Insects and Invertebrates.

There were intense discussions about the type of art that people would like to see, and close examination of pieces that several artists had brought along. The samples included mosaics, wood carvings, and creative metal work using the ancient skill of the blacksmith. Several residents were concerned about the security

of artworks left in the open landscape.

Linda Johns is a Northamptonshire artist who understands this challenge well. The first time she hung one of her web-like sculptures in the Salcey Forest, an indignant birdwatcher crushed it, convinced it was a bird-trap. "It was a very complex piece," says Linda, "and had taken me three months to make. He wanted to apologise but I couldn't speak to him at the time. Now, I'm more philosophical!"

Another, more creative, challenge is to work with the natural beauty of the setting. Linda is particularly interested in the Japanese theme of dragonflies, which seems a natural subject for a floating, ethereal sculpture.

She describes her sculptures as "there, and not there. Lots of people will walk past my work and not see it. But I love it when people discover the sculptures, and respond."

Later this year, the project team will be ready to commission a number of artworks. But for now, both residents and artists are mulling over fresh ideas. As project consultant Liisa Clark explained, "You can become very insular as an artist. So it's always good to get out there, show people your work, and hear exactly what they think."

TOP LEFT: One of several ethereal sculptures by Linda Johns in Salcey Forest.

Uneasy Peace over Willen

The recent decision by MK Council to bring Willen into the neighbouring parish of Great Linford was overturned in the High Court this April, when MK Council lost the case on a technicality. This means that Willen residents will remain in the Campbell Park Parish district, and Bolbeck Park and Willen Park residents will continue to have no say in local amenities, which they typically share with neighbouring Willen.

Campbell Park Parish Council took MK Council to court in spring in a last-ditch attempt to hold on to the Willen grid square. This includes the right to raise parish council taxes from its residents.

While this outcome will suit some [delete residents], the majority are likely to be

dissatisfied as it does not reflect the results of the official MK Council consultation.

Local resident Alan Wright thinks that "Willen residents have been dealt a disappointing blow." Since MK Council lost the case due to a procedural error, Mr Wright adds, "Far too many examples of bad judgment are made by our authorities that eventually finish up costing [taxpayers] large amounts of money. I do, however, blame the Campbell Park Parish Council for creating a situation where we, the taxpayers, have to pay for the challenge they made against a decision they did not agree with."

In total, the legal and administrative costs of re-issuing council tax notices will cost MK Council around £60,000.

Looking ahead, Alan Wright also points out

that "Willen residents will be paying much higher Parish council charges by remaining with Campbell Park Parish Council."

Eirwen Tagg, Parish Manager of Great Linford Parish Council, says "We were never involved in this costly legal dispute, but the six-year parish boundary review itself has taken up a lot of time. To have the decision overturned at the last moment is very unfortunate. It means that a natural community remains split in half, and since we had already committed our budgets for next year, we will now have to make a small adjustment to the precept, or parish taxes, charged to our existing residents."

Photo by Linda Inoki

NEW Eco-fest & dog show



Where? Marsh Drive playing fields, Great Linford.

When? 29 July, 10am – 4pm

Refreshments? Of course! Or bring a picnic and stay the whole day.

Kids activities? Bouncy castle, face painting, arts and crafts.

For a close encounter with bee-keepers, bat-fanciers and star-gazers, why not head down to a new festival in Great Linford on 29 July? GLPC parish administrator Ruth Panther had the bright idea of organising a local eco-festival after visiting a similar event in Ampthill last year. "It was brilliant," says Ruth, "with all sorts of stalls, crafts and good ideas about ways to reduce our carbon footprint."

Ruth was not sure if she could find enough people to take part here in MK but she has had a good response.

"One of the stalls will be run by the Milton Keynes Astronomy Society with information on protecting the natural

views of the night sky. Plus there will be organic food growers, Mercedes electric cars, eco-design consultants, the North Bucks Bat Preservation Society, North Bucks Beekeepers, conservation volunteers and several talented craftspeople."

On top of that there's the annual Dog Show for local pets, which is growing in popularity every year.

"Hopefully there will be something for everyone at the eco-festival, which will also be raising funds for Willen Hospice," says Ruth.

Stalls are still available so please contact Ruth at the parish office on 01908 606613 if you too are active in a green and earth-friendly way, and would like to join in.

Blueprinting your neighbourhood

If there's one thing that's guaranteed to bring out the placards it's a controversial planning application to tear down a local landmark, block out a vista, or simply build the right development in the wrong place.

However, new laws have given local people the power to create a new "blueprint" for their district. Not only will this defuse the planning process, it should also give residents more of what they want.

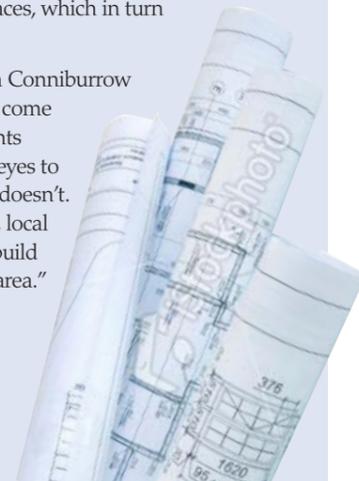
The "blueprint" is called a Neighbourhood Plan, and hundreds of towns and villages all over the country are taking up the challenge. Here, in Milton Keynes, the Great Linford Parish Council has won a £20,000 grant from central government to kick-start the process.

GLPC has brought in local architect Stuart Turner to help. Creating the plan could take 12 – 18 months, and when complete, Stuart says "It should lead to

safer, more attractive, and better connected places, which in turn improve the quality of daily life."

The parish covers a large and varied area, from Conniburrow to Redhouse Park. Stuart is confident it can all come together but stresses the importance of residents getting involved. "The first step is to open our eyes to what we already have. What works, and what doesn't. As we analyse the open spaces, bridges, roads, local centres, facilities and so on, we can gradually build up to a realistic, joined-up plan for the whole area."

Finally, there will be a residents' referendum. If passed, the Neighbourhood Plan will go into planning law, where it will have a real impact on the map of NE Milton Keynes as it continues to evolve.



letters

your opportunity to share your views on local issues

"Graffiti: criminal damage or art?"

We welcome your views. Please send your letters to:

POST

Parish Council Offices
10 Tower Crescent
Neath Hill Local Centre
Neath Hill
MK14 6JY

EMAIL

info@great-linford.gov.uk

THE NEW MAGAZINE

In these times of austerity, the new magazine, North by North East, can only be described as a self-congratulating puff. The information it contains could just as easily be disseminated by way of the local papers for free! I think you should start by getting your priorities right. Not wasting our money on multi-coloured top dressing.

Graham Parry,
Gt Linford

Lindsay Campbell, chair of GLPC Communications Group, replies:

Fortunately, many people have told us they like the new magazine, with comments on the quality of its articles, their clarity, and relevance to the local community. We also send information to the local media, but there is no guarantee that any of it will be published (or even delivered). Please rest assured that it costs very little extra to publish in colour, and we work hard to obtain good value for our residents. Effective communications are increasingly important, and the next plan is to improve the parish website.

PLANS TO CREATE A NEW ARTS TRAIL IN THE PARISH

Public Art placed almost anywhere in MK will be vandalised and spoilt. Part of the answer is to provide

premises and occupations to keep young people busy (as in "A Question of Youth"). The most I would like to see would be a special place for graffiti and more planting of bulbs. I have absolutely nothing against Public Art as such but does Nature really need improving upon?

Barbara Saunders,
Willen Park

David Stabler Chair of GLPC Finance & Planning Committee, replies:

The generalisation about Public Art being vandalised, linked perhaps to this being the fault of young people, is not my experience of how Public Art fares in Milton Keynes. Yes, some is neglected and requires restoration but this simply needs commitment and funds. Regarding "a special place for graffiti", this is a good point. The difference between criminal damage and "art" is permission!

DOWNSBARN PAVILION

I am writing to you after seeing an article about the Downsbarn pavilion in North by North East. I am very familiar with the pavilion, having watched its renovation in 1987. Such was the care with which it was restored that I thought it was a listed building. If it is not, it still has historic significance. So I am very concerned about the possibility suggested in

the article that it might be knocked down and started again. In my view the pavilion and its sports facilities are excellent, and the parish is to be congratulated on the recent changes to what were the tennis courts, which now seem to be used quite frequently by football players. If the indoor facilities need improving for the use of sports players I am sure that can be done without changing the structure. The youth club is a little too isolated, and should be somewhere else.

Ms G.B.,
Downsbarn

Ray Yeates, Chair of GLPC Recreation and Environment Committee, replies:

MK Council owns Downsbarn pavilion, but GLPC is currently looking at acquiring the property, with a view to refurbishing it and improving it for local community use. Interestingly, several local teenagers, who contacted us following the "Question of Youth" article, said the location was not a problem; they just needed the right mix of activities. This is something we are now working on with MK Council youth services.

"...the parish is to be congratulated on the recent changes..."

BELOW: "Albatross" sculpture by Ptolemy Elrington.



and finally...

a calendar of local events to look out for

JULY

Conservation Volunteers Fridays, July-September

Join your friendly local Conservation Volunteers and have fun helping restore wildlife and heritage sites. Every Friday in July, August and September, 10.30 am - 3 pm. Also Saturday 7 July, Sunday 26 August, Sunday 23 September. Contact Monique van Assouw on 01296 330033 or email m.vanassouw@tcv.org.uk for info.

Poetry Competition entry deadline 3 July

3 July, deadline for GLPC kids poetry competition on the theme of "Rubbish!" Part of the parish-wide Big Tidy Up campaign run in conjunction with local schools. MK's very own Poet Laureate Mark Niel is the judge so please have a go!

Eco-Festival & Dog Show 29 July

10am - 4pm Fun for all the family at the new Eco-Festival and community Dog Show, Great Linford, Marsh Drive fields.

Dragon's Den, 30 July

4 pm deadline for Dragon's Den applications. Why not bid for grants of £50 - £2,000 for a project to benefit the local community? Contact the Parish Office for details.

Summer of Fun 30 July - 31 August

See the pull-out programme of activities in this issue.

AUGUST

Mystery Walk, 12 August

Local architect Stuart Turner, and Paul Woodfield, historic buildings expert, invite you to a Mystery Walk to discover some of the hidden gems, and maybe horrors, of your local area. Meet at 11am at

the Parish Office, Neath Hill local centre. The walk will take about an hour. Please call the office if you can join in.

Dragon's Den - The Final 15 August

The 'Den' or decision making day. From 2 - 4pm residents can see posters of the proposed projects at the parish office. The 'Den' itself, where bidders present their ideas, is in the office meeting room at 7.30 (doors open at 7.00).

Don't worry about presenting to the 'dragons'. We're not expecting anything fancy. Just a simple explanation of who you are, what you'd like to do for the community, and why you need funding. Bidders can also put up a poster for residents to view at the Neath Hill parish office.

Voting commences after the bids, closes at 8.30, and the results will be announced as soon as possible on the night. Residents may vote at either event - but only once! And children aged eight and over may vote too. Refreshments provided at both events.

Willen Park Tidy-up Day 15 August

Join your Neighbourhood Action Group for litter picking and a general spruce-up of the area. Contact GLPC for details.

SEPTEMBER

Tidy-up Days

At Neath Hill, the Scouts tidy up "The Mound" and Grafham Court residents will have a Giffard Park Tidy up Day. Dates to be confirmed. Contact GLPC for details.

Annual Produce Show 2 September

Great Linford Allotment Association annual show. Visit www.great-linford-allotment-association.co.uk

OCTOBER

Community Orchard Apple Day, 12 October

Come and see how the young fruit trees in the Community Orchard in Downhead Park have been doing since they were planted last year.



Community funds up for grabs in our very own Dragon's Den!

entry deadline 30 July



Great Linford Parish Council

www.great-linford.gov.uk

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