

Annual Parish Council Report 2016/2017

Precept

Due to budget cuts Milton Keynes Council have scaled down their activities and will eventually only support their statutory duties which do not include landscaping or street cleansing. They have already reduced weed spraying to once per year. The Parish Council therefore took the decision, that to keep our Parish clean and tidy, we would take over these duties from 1st April 2017 and take the offer of a grant from Milton Keynes Council from the council tax raised by them from our parish. Unfortunately due to certain contractual constraints we were unable to take up this offer. Ongoing negotiations will result in our coming to an arrangement regarding extra works in the parish to keep us tidy and safe. To facilitate this we put up the precept by £1.19 per month on a band D property which is prorated on other bands. We have worked hard to trim our budget, but do not wish to have to cut back on our services to the Parish, and therefore reluctantly took the decision to fund the extra works by increasing the precept.

Over 60's Clubs

The Diamond Club organised by Pat Morris has been meeting for some time on Wednesday's in the Parish Council meeting room. The club has proved so popular that to accommodate all those wishing to attend we have started a second club organised by Karen Wheeler on Thursday's which has been called the Emerald Club. Both clubs are busy with games, quizzes speakers and outside trips and the organisers take suggestions from their members and set their timetables accordingly.

Emerson Valley Community Centre

The centre owned by the Parish Council goes from strength to strength and is almost fully booked with regular user groups and birthday parties etc. Following the repairs and refurbishment undertaken in the first year the centre is in a good condition and now has efficient heating and air conditioning.

Neighbourhood Action Groups

We have one Neighbourhood Action Group in the Parish at Shenley Lodge and Furzton, they help members of the public who come to them with problems including litter and parking. The times and dates for their meetings are on the Parish Council website and they would welcome new members from within their area. The other grid squares are covered by a Specific Incident Action Group which was set up when the Neighbourhood Action Group folded due to lack of support. This group can be implemented to deal with specific issues and then dissolved again once those issues are dealt with. Therefore there are no regular meetings.

Parish Council Office Premises

We moved into our new building at the end of July 2016 and the building was officially opened in mid-September.. It has been a great success and much more suitable for our requirements. The first floor is only used for storage at the moment but it gives us room for future expansion as Parish Council's are expected to take on more and more of the local services. It will be a valuable asset for the community and fit for our purpose, which is to help the council become more accessible to the public. One immediate change is that as a service to the community we are now able to distribute pink recycling sacks.

Parish Councillors and Officers

Parish Councillors have again this year been supported in a very professional manner by our officers, and we owe them a vote of thanks for their hard work.

- Sharon passed her exams in June 2016 and was promoted to Parish Manager and Rebecca is our Facilities and Administration Officer, both work hard to keep our office running smoothly.
- Karen joined Oliver on the Warden team at the beginning of the year. Tony unfortunately had to take ill health retirement. In January we employed two further wardens AJ and Paul, one to replace Tony and the other to boost the team for the extra work they now need to undertake.
- Andy and his youth team have worked hard with the young people of the parish and he is currently recruiting to bring the team back to full strength following Helen recently leaving us.

- One Councillor left us during the year, David Livingstone. David served as a councillor for almost thirteen years and was Chairman for eight years of those. We thank David for all his work on behalf of the Council and wish him all the best for his retirement.
- In the past we were supported by Carole McMillan who joined us in 2008 as administrator, then following passing her exams she became our Parish Clerk from 2012 until 2014. In February this year we had the sad news that Carole had passed away and we send our condolences to her husband and family

The Future

- **South West Milton Keynes (SWMK)** – This development was proposed some time ago by Aylesbury Vale District Council. The plans were stalled as further work was being commissioned following representations and responses from the consultation undertaken last summer. Aylesbury Vale are now taking this to the next phase by discussing at their Strategic Development Management Committee in June
- **Milton Keynes at 50.** We have been involved in various events the latest of which is an insert in our June Newsletter of the history of our parish researched by one of our Councillors
- **Tattenhoe Park facilities** Plans for a new sports/community/leisure facility for Tattenhoe Park and the development of the grid square have been delayed for various reasons. Outline planning permission extension for the whole of Tattenhoe Park has now been submitted and it is hoped that discussions will start and work get underway in the near future.
- **Garthwaite Sports/Community Centre** The open space designated as a sports ground adjacent to the allotments in Garthwaite Crescent is owned by the Parish Council and we have for some time been discussing how best to make use of this. We have had plans drawn up to use the land for a multi use sports and community facility and build a small Sports/Community Centre. **We will be holding a Public Consultation event on Tuesday 4th July at our offices in Westcroft from 3.30pm until 7.30pm when members of the public can view the plans and talk to Councillors and the Architects before we apply for Planning Permission.** Neighbouring properties will be notified by letter nearer the time.

Finally a **personal** thank you to Councillors and Officers for their support, they have all worked hard this year to keep the Parish Council running efficiently and to serve the residents of our Parish.

Chairman Cllr Jean Nicholas,

May 2017