



Annual Parish Public Meeting

Chair's Report 2023-2024

As I near the end of my first year on the Parish Council, and after almost eight months as Chair, I am delighted to be writing my first annual Chair's report in advance of the Annual Parish Public Meeting on 18 April 2024. What follows is a summary of our activity over the last twelve months, including our financial position, plus an overview of some of the things we have planned for the coming year.

None of this would have been possible without the support of my fellow Councillors and our Clerk, who all work hard to make a positive difference through their various areas of responsibility. I also want to thank Councillor Turnbull for taking on the role of Chair at the start of the year, and when he decided his hearing challenges made it difficult to fulfil, I was willing to take on the role at the request of the team. I also want to show gratitude to former Councillors English and Parkes-Brincat for their support over my first year and was saddened that both have recently resigned for personal reasons.

Review of 2023/2024

Parish Logo – As it is right at the top of this page, I will start by thanking Thom Boddington, owner of Fern Media, for volunteering his time to design our Parish Council logo earlier in the year, which we hope you all like as much as we do.

Neighbourhood Plan – one of the most significant achievements this year was the completion of our Neighbourhood Plan, which successfully passed referendum on 22 July 2023, with 88.3% voting 'Yes' across a high turnout of 43.78%. Whilst the plan was in force from that point, it was formally 'made' by Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) at a meeting of full council on 13 September 2023.

A huge thanks to all the current and former Councillors and residents who worked for many years to bring this plan to fruition. In particular, to former Councillor Williams who led the development of the plan and helped us in the final stages of completion prior to the referendum.

The plan has already had a material impact on development in the Parish, most notably in the refusal of the proposal for 584 dwellings at Linford Lakes, where a number of the Plan's policies were cited as reasons for the dismissal at the appeal stage.

Planning Applications – as well as participating in the Public Inquiry for the Linford Lakes development, the Parish Council has considered and provided representations on a further 15 applications over the last year. Most of these applications have been within the Parish, although we have provided representations on a number of applications outside the Parish, including the proposal for the Furtho Pit warehousing and distribution centre near Cosgrove/Old Stratford.

Highways and Road Safety – this has been a priority over the last 12 months, with notable success. After a number of years lobbying, we finally managed to get MKCC to undertake repair work on Brookfield Road. We have also managed to get MKCC to implement 'no stopping' and 'no parking' lines outside Haversham School, which were missed as part of the work when the school was enlarged and that several residents had requested. We believe this scheme is a real improvement, although we are aware of some concerns that MKCC are currently considering.

Perhaps the most important items are the proposed 20 mph zones and the part-funding we have received for two more Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) - more on both of these initiatives below. We were disappointed that the School was not successful in its application for a School Crossing Patroller Grant

and that a zebra crossing on Wolverton Road is not deemed feasible by MKCC, but we will continue to press for solutions on this matter and also hope the new speed limits will improve road safety.

Flooding has been at the forefront in the last two or three months. A couple of areas in the Parish have been quite badly affected and we are working with the impacted residents as well as both MKCC Highways and the Lead Local Flood Authority to try and find solutions, which we hope will be implemented soon.

Engagement with MKCC – the Clerk and I have been working really hard to improve the engagement between the Parish Council and MKCC – sometimes with the ‘carrot’ and sometimes with the ‘stick’! We have taken a step forward in this regard and that has helped to get some of the solutions we requested to be implemented and more broadly increased both parties understanding of what is both needed and feasible. This has been particularly the case with the Highways team, but extends more broadly to Planning, Community Safety and other MKCC departments.

We were fortunate to have the CEO of MKCC visit last August; together with former Councillor English, and Ward Councillor Andrews, we spent two hours walking and driving around the Parish highlighting both our successes, such as the defibrillators and SIDs, plus our various challenges – some of which have since been dealt with and others are being progressed. We now have regular meetings with key MKCC Officers and we are finding this has started to improve our collective ability to get things done.

Allotments – we have an active community of tenants on the allotments and are pleased to have maintained an occupancy rate of around 90%. We are just completing the annual renewal season, and have a small number of vacant plots, so if you fancy growing your own produce and are looking for a way to spend time outdoors, whilst getting a bit of exercise, then reach out and we can tell you more. We have slightly increased the charges this year, as due to the increasing costs of utilities, we have added a £3 water surcharge per plot. Thanks to former Councillor English for steering the allotments over her four years on the Parish Council.

Community Speedwatch and Community Litter Pick – we continue to run both these initiatives on a regular basis and thank the volunteers who help out on one or both activities. Without you, these things would not happen, and of course we would really welcome more people to join the teams.

Over the year we ran a total of 24 Speedwatch sessions logging a total of 5578 vehicles of which 288 (or 5.2%) were speeding. Over 100 of the speeders were exceeding 40mph and three were at 50mph. Thank you to Councillor Langham for her stewardship of the CSW team.

We also ran a total of 6 litter picking sessions during the year, supported by an average of 9 volunteers and collecting an average of 12 bags each pick - although the most recent one collected 23! Thanks to Councillor Turnbull for overseeing the litter picking team and we welcome John Clifford on board who will be helping to run this going forward.

Grass Cutting Contract – having used the same grass cutting supplier for many years, the Council made the decision to run a competitive tender across a number of suppliers, to ensure we could continue to deliver a quality service at good value for money. We received tenders from five different companies, and after a comprehensive evaluation process, we contracted with TOVE landscaping for the next three years with an option to extend for a further two.

The contract has brought a level of price reduction and is subject to an annual performance assessment, as well as agreed inflation-based price increases so we can better predict our future costs. We are confident that they will do a great job for us as they do already for other local parishes.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – Councillor Turnbull continues to be the ‘eyes and ears’ across the extensive networks of footpaths and bridleways we have within the Parish. As well as working to get either MKCC or the relevant landowner to maintain these important routes, we continue to look for opportunities to enhance the network by, for example, filling in some of the gaps that would enable the Parish to be better joined up. If you are a local landowner and are interested in allowing for a permissive route across your land to help our walking and riding communities, then we would be interested in hearing from you.

Community Book Exchange – we launched our book exchange in July 2023 and after a couple of teething problems this has become a much loved and well used asset. Feel free to pop along and have a look. We encourage you, if able, to bring a book too! It is located just inside the Rec off Manor Drive.

Trees in the Rec – sadly, after the planting of a number of trees in celebration of the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, the dry summer of 2022 meant that despite Peter Dunn’s attention to watering, a couple of them did not survive through 2023. We were able to apply for replacements from MKCC, as they were removing trees from Station Square, and we were fortunate to be awarded two replacements that were planted a few weeks ago. If you live locally and as the weather hopefully improves, I am sure the trees would welcome the odd bucket of water to drink as they establish themselves.

Finance Report – based on preliminary unaudited figures as at the end of March 2024, the Parish Council had reserves of £66,032.87, including ring-fenced funds of £7,148.48 for the maintenance of the defibrillators, £20,855.79 for the Playground refurbishment and £6,300 of grants we have received to be spent on specific community safety and community recreation projects in 2024/25.

Our general reserves of £31,718.60 have increased by around £1,500 over the year, but in part this is due to a small number of maintenance and other expected costs not being incurred prior to year-end – so once paid, this will reduce our reserves. We budgeted to spend c.£11,000 of our general reserves this year across the new SIDS and the Playground project which will reduce them further.

In terms of the budget for 2024/25, the Parish Council agreed a slightly higher Precept amount than in the previous year equating to a 10p increase per week for a Band D household. Due to the cost increases we are seeing from suppliers, this small increase is necessary to secure many of our services including landscaping, magazine printing, dog waste bin emptying and insurances. The Parish Council kept the increase as low as possible by some procurement decisions such as the grass cutting tender and the recent change of printer for the Parish magazine – both reducing the costs going forward. Like last year, we have also identified certain costs such as the maintenance of the skate ramp and the two projects mentioned above to be funded from reserves.

We include as annexes at the end of this report, our budgeted and actual income and expenditure figures for 2023/24 and our signed-off 2024/25 budget which may be of interest.

[Looking Ahead to 2024/2025](#)

As well as maintaining our services in the coming year, we have a number of other projects and initiatives we are planning to progress in the coming months, all with the aim of improving the Parish.

New City Plan – a key focus for the Parish Council is the development by MKCC of the New City Plan or NCP, which includes discussions related to the development of up to 16,000 houses in MK North that would absorb the Parish into an urban settlement. Whilst at this time it is not clear whether the area is being included in the plan, we will continue to remain watchful. Even if the area is not included in the draft that will be issued for consultation in around July, the area could be brought back into the plan at a later stage, so we must remain vigilant.

The Parish Council resolved in February that it would make strong representations to MKCC regarding the potential development of MK North to ensure that any site allocation was appropriate in terms of scale and location and aligns with the ambition of our Neighbourhood Plan to maintain the Parish as a predominately rural Parish. Furthermore, the Parish Council resolved to work collaboratively with neighbouring Parish Councils, Ward Councillors and elected MPs to help achieve this outcome. I am sure many of you will have seen my recent update in the Parish Magazine which provides more details.

Road Safety Projects – a continued focus for the year ahead. Firstly, MKCC have agreed to implement 20pmh limits on both the Wolverton Road in the new village and, alongside new traffic calming measures, on the High Street in the old village. Both these schemes are currently being designed and will need to pass through a statutory consultation before they can be implemented. We had hoped that the new village scheme would have been in place by now, but a requirement for additional surveys related to possible changes in the 60mph limit from Wolverton Roundabout, meant consultation could not be completed prior to the local election ‘purdah’ period, but we remain hopeful that both schemes will be implemented this summer.

Secondly, we applied to the MKCC Community Infrastructure Fund last summer for 50% funding of two SIDs along Wolverton Road. We are pleased to have received confirmation that we will receive this funding and once we have it, we will start work with MKCC to install these new SIDs later on in the year.

We also have made progress on a long-standing issue regarding the level of Anti-Social Behaviour along the gated road at Stanton Low, which has been a significant nuisance to the residents of the old village. Working with both the MKCC Community Safety Team and Highways, a proposed solution is now being designed to restrict vehicular traffic on that road and, subject to agreement through a statutory consultation post-election, we hope that the scheme will be in place in early summer.

Outside of these projects we will continue to push MKCC for various repair and renewal works to be carried out across the Parish road network, as well as hopefully conclude on the flooding issues.

Playground Project – we have raised over £20,000, mainly from the National Lottery, towards the £100,000 we need to replace the old and worn-out play equipment. Thanks to former Councillor Parkes-Brincat for her work on this huge project, in both applying for funds and also organising the fundraising Pig Roast and raffle held at the Greyhound last August. We continue to seek grants from various organisations and hope that in the coming year we will be closer to starting the implementation work.

Parish Magazine – in October Lesley Gilbert is retiring from her role as editor after 30 years and we are still seeking a volunteer to take over the role, as well as someone to manage the advertising currently looked after by Harvey Gilbert. If you are interested in either role, please do get in touch as we want to continue this much valued aspect of Parish life and without support that may not be possible.

Haversham Social & Community Centre (HSCC) Charity – we have strengthened the relationship between the HSCC charity and the Parish Council and, alongside Councillor Clift, I now sit on the Board of Trustees, helping with the governance and commercial aspects of the charity. Sadly, the charity is not currently making enough money from the Social Centre bookings and events to be sustainable.

We are now all collectively focused on making the changes necessary to ensure the charity’s survival so that we continue to have access to the Social Centre, which was funded by the community in the mid-1960s. The alternative is that the facility could be returned to MKCC, and we would likely lose any access, which I am sure none of us want to happen.

We are also looking to try and obtain grants to help improve the Social Centre and make it more attractive to hirers, for example by improving the acoustics of the hall. To run more events and thus raise funds, the HSCC needs more people to volunteer to support and to bring new ideas. Can you help?

Parish Council Technology – to meet new guidelines from central Government, we have recently set-up a new email and web domain of [havershamlittlelinfordpc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@havershamlittlelinfordpc.gov.uk). This change has also given us the opportunity to provide better digital records storage and document management to the Council team, that makes us more efficient. We have also recently bought an accounting package designed specifically for Parish Councils, to help the Clerk in her role as our Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), which will free up time for her to help on other Parish matters.

Parish Vision – whilst we have a number of initiatives underway as discussed above, now we have our Neighbourhood plan in place, it seems a good opportunity to think about how we would like the Parish to develop outside of planning related matters. We have initiated some work to lead the development of a Parish Vision that will set out ideas for possible services and facilities we would like to explore and how we want to see the Parish evolve. This is something that we feel should involve residents as well as the other core organisations within the Parish such as the School, Social Centre and Church.

We have had some initial conversations with each of those organisations, as well as some residents and hope that we can progress this further in the coming year. Many ideas have been mentioned, including a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), bringing back football to the Rec, a Community Orchard, improving the Public Rights of Way and several others. But to make these ideas take shape we do need more help.

Engaging with Residents – some of you will have noticed we have been much more active on Facebook in the last year and we see this as one of the ways we can share information with residents on Parish Council news, upcoming meetings, roadworks, consultations and other Parish Council activities.

We recognise not everyone uses Facebook, and whilst we value the magazine and hope it will continue, we feel we need a way to share information in a more timely manner but printing and distributing leaflets is both costly and time consuming to deliver. We are considering if we should create an email distribution list through which we could share information periodically, like some other Parish Councils do. To make this worthwhile we need to get most residents to register so would welcome your views.

Parish Council Composition – after the (non-contested) election in May 2023, we only had six of our possible seven councillors. Most recently, that number has reduced to four and we are currently looking for residents to join the Parish Council. If you would like to consider joining us, please contact the clerk for more information or to formally apply. Outside of the Councillor roles, both the Parish Council and the HSCC charity are always on the lookout for volunteers, as mentioned above, so please think about how you could spare a few hours and help the Parish and the community.

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I would like to end by re-iterating my appreciation and thanks to my co-Councillors and former Councillors who I have worked alongside during the last 12 months and of course to our hard-working Clerk, Maria. I have enjoyed my first year as a part of the team, debating some of the trickier decisions with my colleagues, and I hope I speak for all of us in saying I believe we do make a difference.

I have taken a number of opportunities over the last year to say hello to a fair few of you who I did not already know and whilst I know not everything is perfect and it is hard to please everyone, it is appreciated when we get feedback on what we have done as well as suggestions for things we could try and address. I am very much a believer that it takes more than just a small group of Councillors to change and improve the Parish, and we would all welcome any support you feel able to provide.

If you have any feedback or questions on anything in this report, then please do contact us, either via Facebook messenger or email the clerk at clerk@havershamlittlelinfordpc.gov.uk

Councillor Richard Pryor

16 April 2024

Annex A – Income and Expenditure Summary 2023/24

Income 2023-24			
Title	Budgeted	Actual	Variance
Precept	£ 25,220.00	£ 25,220.00	£ -
Interest Received	£ 250.00	£ 1,234.16	£ 984.16
Magazine Advertising	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,565.00	£ 565.00
Allotment Rental	£ 1,600.00	£ 1,600.00	£ -
Allotment Security Deposit	£ -	£ 50.00	£ 50.00
Allotment Key Deposit	£ -	-£ 15.00	-£ 15.00
Sailing Cub Dog Bin	£ 270.00	£ 270.00	£ -
S106 Income	£ -	£ -	£ -
Playground Donations and Grants	£ -	£ 20,936.38	£ 20,936.38
Other Grants and Donations	£ -	£ 7,420.00	£ 7,420.00
Other Income	£ -	£ 3.45	£ 3.45
NET TOTAL	£ 28,340.00	£ 58,283.99	£ 29,943.99
V.A.T.		£ 1,800.69	£ -
GROSS TOTAL		£ 60,084.68	£ -

Expenditure 2023-24			
Title	Budgeted	Actual	Variance
Clerk Salary (incl Pension)	£ 14,500.00	£ 14,495.35	£ 4.65
Parish Council Grant Expenditure	£ 400.00	£ 106.80	£ 293.20
Other Grants and Donations Expenditure	£ -	£ 1,120.00	-£ 1,120.00
Office and Admin	£ 500.00	£ 627.36	-£ 127.36
Hall Hire	£ 140.00	£ 70.00	£ 70.00
Audit Fees	£ 410.00	£ 331.00	£ 79.00
NALC/BMKALC Subscription	£ 115.00	£ 131.53	-£ 16.53
ICO Registration	£ 35.00	£ 35.00	£ -
Chairs Report	£ 40.00	£ -	£ 40.00
Training	£ 330.00	£ 270.11	£ 59.89
Council Insurance	£ 800.00	£ 723.24	£ 76.76
Rec and Crescent Cutting	£ 3,650.00	£ 4,133.26	-£ 483.26
Village Signs Planting	£ 420.00	£ 280.00	£ 140.00
Dog Bin Emptying	£ 1,080.00	£ 979.20	£ 100.80
Fixed Asset Repair and Renewal	£ 830.00	£ 1,025.46	-£ 195.46
Defibrillators Maintenance	£ 830.00	£ -	£ 830.00
Skate Ramp Maintenance	£ 290.00	£ -	£ 290.00
Allotment Cutting	£ 1,600.00	£ 1,105.16	£ 494.84
Allotment Water and Drainage	£ 600.00	£ 510.07	£ 89.93
Allotment Repairs and Renewals	£ 450.00	£ -	£ 450.00
Magazine Printing	£ 3,120.00	£ 3,513.00	-£ 393.00
Accounting Software	£ -	£ 149.00	-£ 149.00
.GOV.UK Domain Fees	£ -	£ 150.00	-£ 150.00
Website Fees	£ 125.00	£ 90.00	£ 35.00
Neighbourhood Plan	£ 825.00	£ -	£ 825.00
Playground Rejuvenation	£ -	£ 183.63	-£ 183.63
S106 Funded Projects	£ -	£ -	£ -
NET TOTAL	£ 31,090.00	£ 30,029.17	£ 1,060.83
V.A.T.		£ 1,495.96	
GROSS TOTAL		£ 31,525.13	

Annex B – Budget 2024/25

Budget 2024-25		
Title	Income	Expenditure
Precept	£ 27,045	
Interest Received	£ 750	
Magazine Advertising	£ 1,070	
Allotment Rental	£ 1,775	
Sailing Cub Dog Bin	£ 290	
Clerk Salary (incl Pension)	£ -	£ 15,682
Parish Council Grant Expenditure	£ -	£ 400
Office and Admin	£ -	£ 300
Hall Hire	£ -	£ 200
Audit Fees	£ -	£ 420
NALC/BMKALC Subscription	£ -	£ 150
ICO Registration	£ -	£ 35
Chairs Report	£ -	£ 50
Training	£ -	£ 300
Council Insurance	£ -	£ 800
Rec and Crescent Cutting	£ -	£ 3,940
Village Signs Planting	£ -	£ 280
Dog Bin Emptying	£ -	£ 1,430
Fixed Asset Repair and Renewal	£ -	£ 830
Defibrillators Maintenance	£ -	£ 375
Skate Ramp Maintenance (£622 from reserves)	£ -	£ 1,000
Allotment Cutting	£ -	£ 1,100
Allotment Water and Drainage	£ -	£ 700
Allotment Repairs and Renewals	£ -	£ 420
Magazine Printing	£ -	£ 2,400
Office Software	£ -	£ 465
Accounting Software	£ -	£ 345
Website Fees	£ -	£ 95
Playground Rejuvenation	£ -	£ 5,000
Additional Dog Bin	£ -	£ 210
SIDS on Wolverton Road	£ -	£ 6,250
NET TOTAL	£ 30,930	£ 43,177
From Reserves		£ 12,247
Net budget excluding reserves		£ 30,930
Budget Figures exclude VAT		