



Minutes of the meeting of the PARISHES ASSEMBLY held on THURSDAY  
2 September 2004 at 7.00 pm

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor I Wilson (Chair)	-	Milton Keynes Council
	Councillor I Fraser	-	Milton Keynes Council/Campbell Park Parish Council
	Councillor D Hopkins	-	Milton Keynes Council/Wavendon Parish Council/Woburn Sands Town Council
	Councillor K Wilson	-	Milton Keynes Council/Woughton Parish Council
	Councillor C Loak	-	Bow Brickhill Parish Council
	Councillor D Kesterton	-	Bow Brickhill Parish Council
	Councillor T Fraser	-	Campbell Park Parish Council
	Councillor C Cheney	-	Emberton Parish Council
	Councillor D Stabler	-	Great Linford Parish Council
	G Stimpson	-	Haversham cum Little Linford Parish Council
	Councillor P Buckle	-	Newton Blossomville and Clifton Reynes Parish Council
	Councillor R Griffiths	-	Stantonbury Parish Council
	Councillor J Buxton	-	Stantonbury Parish Council
	Councillor A Dnes	-	Stony Stratford Town Council
	Councillor P Hughes	-	West Bletchley Council
	Councillor M Galloway	-	Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council

**Officers:** M Small (Parish and Locality Services Manager), C Godfrey (Parish Liaison Manager), M Jones (Head of Legal and Property Services), and R Townend (Parish Projects Officer - minutes).

**Apologies:** Councillors J Geary (Hanslope Parish Council), T Holden (Bow Brickhill Parish Council), J Jeffreys (Woburn Sands Town Council), E Thomas (West Bletchley Council), D Rumens (Wavendon Parish Council), M Burke (Stantonbury Parish Council), T Armstrong (Campbell Parish Council) and J McLinton (New Bradwell Parish Council).

#### **42.0 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Assembly received the Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 July 2004, and agreed them as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor D McCall (Milton Keynes Council) in the list of attendees.

The Assembly also noted the following matters arising:

1. C Godfrey (Parish Liaison Manager) referred to Minute 33.0 regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMO) and advised the Assembly that R Cooper (Senior Environmental Health Officer)

would be attending the Parishes Assembly on 2 December 2004 to discuss HIMOs.

2. Referring to Minute 40.0, regarding the Community Safety Partnership the Assembly noted that Cllr I Fraser (Milton Keynes Council/Campbell Park Parish Council) had not yet written to all Parish and Town Councils but would do so shortly and would provide a verbal update to the Assembly.

Cllr I Fraser reported that the Community Safety Partnership had undergone an Audit that was now complete and all Parishes and Town Councils were to be asked what their priorities for the Community Safety Partnership were.

The Assembly noted that Parish Liaison could provide Cllr I Fraser's contact details to any Parish wishing to put forward their suggestions.

Cllr K Wilson (Milton Keynes Council/Woughton Parish Council) queried the distribution of the £160,000 Performance Reward Grant that Milton Keynes Council were to receive and whether the Performance Reward Grant would be distributed to those Parishes that helped achieve a reduction in crime and community safety.

The Assembly noted from Cllr K Wilson that Parish Councils had significant outlays to reach the targets and should get money to compensate for their input.

The Chair stated no decision regarding the Grant had been made and officer recommendations were awaited.

3. Cllr R Griffiths (Stantonbury Parish Council) referred to Minute 34.0 and advised the Assembly that the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had stipulated that playing fields would be used for building houses as a last resort. Cllr R Griffiths queried whether Milton Keynes Council would reconsider the use of playing fields as potential land for development.

The Chair stated that any guidance from the ODPM would be taken account of.

4. Cllr I Fraser referred to the previous minutes and questioned why those in attendance from Parish and Town Councils were not referred to as Councillors and that the Parish Liaison Team did not recognise Parish and Town Councillors as Councillors.

C Godfrey advised the Assembly that the Parish Liaison Team did recognise Parish and Town Councillors as Councillors and that the attendance list format was historically a Committee Section document and the title could be used from now on.

**STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND**

The Chair welcomed and introduced D Prince (Chief Executive, Standards Board) and M Pratt (Board Member, Standards Board).

D Prince and M Pratt delivered a presentation, attached to these minutes as **Annex A**.

Key areas included in the presentation were:

- An introduction to the Standards Board
- Considering 'pre-enquiry'
- What is investigated
- What isn't investigated
- Local investigations, the procedure
- Bullying
- Complaints beyond local government
- Casework - statistics
- What allegations are made
- Adjudication Panel

Following the presentation the Chair invited questions, whereby these queries were raised:

- The relationship between the Standards Board and the Ombudsman?
- That more complaints were made against Clerks than Parish Councillors and complaints against Clerks would double the work of the Standards Board.
- Tiny Councils are overwhelmed by rules and regulations and in many cases new councillors don't know their training needs.

In response to the issues raised, the Assembly noted the following:

- That the Ombudsman dealt with injustice issues by Councils and did not investigate individual actions, however, the Ombudsman and Standards Board had a close working relationship.
- That there were a number of statutory bodies with an interest in Councillor behaviour.
- That the Standards Board through current legislation is responsible for investigating Councillors behaviour and not officers, however, the issue of officers and elected members is being discussed with the ODPM.

- That some aspects of bullying by Clerks could be eradicated by Town or Parish Councils changing the way they act and undertake certain practices.
- That any comments or questions were welcome and a large amount of background was available on the website: [www.standardsboard.co.uk](http://www.standardsboard.co.uk), alternatively Parishes could contact the helpdesk who will try to help via 0845 078 8181.

Following the discussion, the Chair thanked D Prince and M Pratt for their attendance and presentation.

#### **44.0 ITEMS RAISED BY PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

The Assembly noted that following comments by the Assembly at the previous meeting, items raised by Parish and Town Councils would be included on Parishes Assembly agendas.

C Godfrey advised the Assembly that a template would be distributed with the minutes to allow Parish and Town Councils to put questions to the Assembly, request presentations and Items for consideration. The Assembly also noted that deadlines would also be included for future meetings.

#### **ACTION –**

**Template to be developed by Parish Liaison (Attached to these minutes as Annex B)**

#### **45.0 STREETCARE**

M Small (Parish and Localities Manager) provided an oral update on STREETCARE.

The Assembly noted that the process of STREETCARE was being developed and that system of maintenance and the feasibility of integrating the STREETCARE system had been explored.

The Assembly also noted that a landscape contracts evening had been arranged for 23 September from 6.00pm and invitations had been sent regarding the event.

Cllr P Hughes (West Bletchley Council) queried whether Housing Land that had fallen into disrepair would be included and utilised as the open spaces were landscape. The Assembly noted that examples of such land included garage blocks.

M Small advised the Assembly that it had been identified that STREETCARE should co-ordinate better with Housing. The Assembly also noted that it would be investigated as to what could be done to assist.

Cllr R Griffiths queried when the pathway at New Bradwell Cemetery would be completed and requested Parish Liaison investigate how the issue develop.

**Action –**

**Parish Liaison to acquire an update regarding the work on the pathway at New Bradwell Cemetery.**

Cllr T Fraser (Campbell Park Parish Council) stated that Campbell Park Parish Council would be attending the National Association of Local Councils Conference in Scarborough and a coach had been booked. The Assembly noted that anyone wishing to travel in the coach should contact Cllr I Fraser.

Cllr I Fraser stated that because the Parishes Assembly Agenda did not have Any Other Business, there should be an Item titled Announcements, included.

The Chair advised the Assembly that the Parish and Town Council Newsletter was distributed to all Parish Clerks and Chairs and could be used by Parish and Town Councils for this purpose.

The Assembly agreed that an Item allowing announcements be introduced to future Parishes Assembly Agenda, this will be developed as part of the template previously mentioned in Minute 44.0.

Cllr C Cheney (Emberton Parish Council) queried the staffing levels of the planning department and that the Enforcement Officer had not been out to investigate an issue reported.

M Small advised the Assembly that recent appointments had been made in Planning.

The Assembly noted concerns that developments across Milton Keynes were being produced at standards lower than expected and thus developers were not honouring agreements.

The Chair advised the Assembly that the subject be considered at a future meeting of the Assembly.

**Action –**

**Development Agreements be considered at a future meeting of the Assembly**

**46.0**

**DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee noted that the next meetings of the Assembly would be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, as follows:

- (a) Thursday 2 December 2004 at 7:00 pm
- (b) Wednesday 3 March 2005 at 7:00pm
- (c) Wednesday 2 June 2005 at 7:00pm