

Minutes

Parishes Forum

18th March 2021

19.00 –21.00hrs

Via Zoom

In Attendance

Cllr Emily Darlington	Chair and Cabinet Member
Cllr Sue Smith	Vice Chair
Cllr John Durden	Astwood & Hardmead PC
Cllr Ed Hume	Bletchley & Fenny Stratford TC
Gill Long - for Clerk	Bletchley & Fenny Stratford TC
Cllr Caroline Godfrey	Bradwell PC
Cllr Terry Baines	Campbell Park PC
Cllr Crispina Odunewu	Campbell Park PC
Cllr Phil Ayles	Castlethorpe PC
Cllr Rebecca Kurth	CMK TC
Robin Thomson	Gayhurst PM
Eirwen Tagg - Clerk	Great Linford PC
Cllr Peter Widdowson	Great Linford PC
Gillian Merry - Clerk	Hanslope PC
Cllr Carol Langham	Haversham cum Little Linford PC
Cllr Steve Axtell	Lavendon PC
Cllr Ann Kelcey	Lavendon PC
Philip Compton – Clerk	Loughton and Great Holm
Cllr John Hamilton	Moulsoe PC
Cllr Alan Francis	New Bradwell PC
Germain Newnham - Clerk	New Bradwell PC
Cllr Phil Winsor	Newport Pagnell TC
Cllr Binta Bah-Pokawa	Newport Pagnell TC
Sheila Bushnell -Clerk	North Crawley PC
Cllr Mary Major	Old Woughton PC
Andrea Vincent - Clerk	Olney TC
Cllr Malcolm Messenger	Olney TC
Cllr Chris Williams	Shenley Brook End & Tattenhoe PC
Cllr Michael Cato	Shenley Brook End & Tattenhoe PC
Cllr Steve Weller	Shenley Church End PC
Cllr David Tunney	Shenley Church End PC

Cllr David Pye	Simpson & Ashland PC
Cllr Muhammad Abid Anwar	Stantonbury PC
Cllr Chris Letts	Stoke Goldington PC
Lynne Compton – Clerk	Stony Stratford TC
Cllr Amanda Taylor	Walton Community Council
Cllr Veronica Belcher	West Bletchley Council
Cllr Ernie Thomas	West Bletchley Council
Cllr Brian Stainton	Weston Underwood PC
Cllr David Hopkins	Ward Cllr and Woburn Sands TC
Steve McNay - Clerk	Woughton Community Council
Cllr Donna Fuller	Woughton Community Council
Officers	
Sarah Gonsalves	Director of Policy, Insight and Communications
Kay Pettit	Programme Manager – Parish & Town Councils
Heather Baker	Partnership Officer – Parish & Town Councils
Jeremy Beake	Corporate Policy & Equality Manager
Apologies	
Cllr David Monk	Broughton & MK PC
Vicky Mote - Clerk	Broughton & MK PC
Delia Shepherd	Bletchley & Fenny Stratford TC
Cllr Len Greenwood	Clifton Reynes and Newton Blossomville PC
Cllr Linda Morgan	Stantonbury PC
Reps	Whitehouse CC
Cllr Paul Alexander	Ward Councillor

Unfortunately, as we were using Zoom, I may not have all the names of those in attendance. If I have missed you off, please accept my apologies and let me know, so that I can add you to the attendee list. Thank you – Heather Baker.

2	Minutes from last meeting	Action
	<p>Minutes from the 10th December 2020 meeting were agreed</p> <p>Cllr Tunney said he was asked to come up with a revised sentence regarding asset devolution. Cllr ED thanked him and said she appreciated his input his words were now included in the Together We Can document.</p> <p>Cllr ED said that many of the words for the new Together We Can document were written by the parishes; this is a living document to be updated. Final version will be sent out.</p> <p>Cllr ED introduced herself and the officers in attendance saying it has been agreed that the agenda will have one main item that we can get our teeth into with a chance for parishes to give presentations on what they are doing.</p>	

3	Supporting Families	
	<p>SG introduced the item saying that we are all trying to do our bit in MK and thanked everyone for looking at this. She passed to Jeremy Beake who has been working hard for the last 18 months on this.</p> <p>A long report was developed 10 years ago on Child Poverty, but we are in a different place now</p> <p>JB gave a presentation – see attached</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just because you have a job doesn't mean you are not in poverty • The Commission involved a wide variety of people; new people that have an interest including residents and people in MK • Difficult topic and all need to work flexible • Trying to find a sustainable long-lasting solution • Dame Rachel D'Souza (Children's Commissioner for England) has said that there is a need nationally for a conversation – looking at why families are struggling and wants children to be top priority in the government's plans • Different agencies and politicians are committed into looking at this • MK is unique for deprivation and a challenge • We can all play our part • Many parishes are already doing a lot and hope to encourage more • Some ideas already in action and change the way we do things • Found stark and disturbing evidence, a lot in MK could be down to housing costs, need to ensure people get more support 	
	<p>Q. Is there anything in the play strategy and integrate the importance of play – is there anything in the report</p> <p>Q. How can councillors play their role</p> <p>Q. Support for groups providing pre-school and school governors saying it's a problem with children who move frequently</p> <p>Q. Have you done additional mapping, MKC housing, private housing associations etc. localities were originally 60 / 40 owner / rental split. MKC has closed youth centres – it was vulnerable households that usually attended – how has this helped?</p> <p>Q. What are the demographics of people questioned?</p> <p>Q. Housing for Fishermead, Oldbrook, Springfield residents unable to settle and since the Springfield youth centre has closed the situation has get worse</p> <p>The report is now dated, and the situation will only get worse with the pandemic</p>	
	<p>A Play Association is very important – children need places to play together and also for parents to mix.</p> <p>Looking for a challenge – the Child Poverty Trust to provide things on a wider basis</p> <p>Councillor can get involved</p> <p>Churn is a big issue- Local Housing Allowance rate hasn't kept pace with private rents Creates tension and difference which can bridged but remains a tension - lowly paid and not secure in jobs in MK / zero hours contracts.</p>	

	<p>Increase local housing rate would be ideal but not within our gift Decisions on child poverty and struggling families Demographics – changes being looked at Good diversity of feedback</p>	
	<p><u>Woughton Community Council</u> Cllr Donna Fuller told the forum some of the things that Woughton CC are doing Woughton tops the list in child poverty Child poverty is a broad term and Woughton are very committed Onus not just on youth team but also LGBT, young mums etc. Play rangers encouraging people to play together in school holidays Housing is a problem – bigger issue than Woughton CC can deal with – sense of not belonging and try to stay where they are. Woughton has been successful in some cases Academic achievement – schools with housing churn Woughton has the lowest teenage pregnancy and knife crime Listen to young people Clothing bank and no-one goes hungry Relationships with children and get involved with more complex issues, young carers, mobility etc need a different kind of support. Sure-start services Constantly asking of ways to engage Young people are the future</p> <p>Thanks, were given to Cllr Fuller</p>	
	<p><u>West Bletchley Council</u> Cllr Veronica Belcher informed the forum that what West Bletchley are doing is not too dissimilar to Woughton CC She picked up on the clothing bank and will take that back Have a dedicated resource centre there is someone there all day every day so residents can go Foodbank is open, and people can go when they need to IT / internet access is available and there are people there to help if needed Want to develop a breakfast club and a homework club after lock down Consult with residents all the time asking what they / residents want Liaise with the play association – they even managed a Father Christmas last Christmas with presents Give benefits advise and tap into other organisations</p> <p>Thanks, were given to Cllr Belcher</p>	
	<p><u>Simpson and Ashland PC</u> Cllr David Pye told the forum that they are a smaller council and have a hall that has been closed since the pandemic started. They have no budget to support.</p>	

	<p>MK hides its deprivation very well, as a teacher years ago a 16-year-old said to him 'you can always tell the poor areas as they plant more trees'.</p> <p>Innovative and support children and family's holistic approach.</p> <p>They purchased activity packs for children</p> <p>Buy in services – support from Woughton CC who provide information, advice and highlight routes for support</p> <p>Summer school activities made a difference</p> <p>Can't do it on own</p> <p>Book swaps and make do and mend clothes.</p> <p>Share energy and internet access and proportion of precept goes into food banks in a way to support the most vulnerable in our society.</p> <p>Cllr ED thanked Cllr Pye</p>	
	<p>Cllr Tunney told how he is a member of the Lions Club who have a food club and MKC refer people to them.</p> <p>There are good hearted people all over MK. Challenge is perhaps for it to be more co-ordinated and how it can be made more efficient</p> <p>Olney appears prosperous but for many people, the distance from Olney to MK city is great and people find it difficult to get advice, so Olney TC have Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) go to Olney once a week. The clerk had not heard of the Child Poverty Commission.</p> <p>It is only getting worse</p> <p>CPPC is a larger council but had to buy in advice service from Woughton CC and this is available to other parishes, they would love to have a resource centre. They have activity packs for Easter which have been well received</p> <p>It's been 40 years of kids moving around in we are still in the same position – kids without identity - more work needs to be done.</p> <p>Cllr ED thought people might be interested in Hopeful Towns – understanding community resilience in our towns published as part of the Hope not Hate Charitable Trusts Hopeful Towns Project</p> <p>http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Understanding-community-resilience-in-our-towns.pdf</p> <p>Another thought – are we coming from the wrong way? Go back and encourage better parenting to have an impact on children. MKC policies may not be helping with poorly maintained homes and other fundamental issues. Authorities need to look inwardly at poor housing.</p>	
	<p>Cllr ED said that important issues had been raised looking at maintaining housing. If you have a council tenancy you are not moving around all the time and if you have a private tenancy is usually 6 months and then people have</p>	

	<p>to move on – major cause of homelessness – what can we do? Be tougher with private tenancies. Looking at hosting a housing company – really driving housing related issues looking at a private tenant’s group. Officers can take action on private owners (landlords), but residents have no protection</p> <p>Cllr C Godfrey said that we have been facing this for years and MKC have never been able to solve. Need to target those areas of most need. Parishes are the cornerstone to make things happen- not all one size fits all. If a steering group is set up, she would be happy to join voluntary</p> <p>Parishes have a role to support children. Approach groups to see if children are being denied activities and parishes see where they can help Statement - Churn isn’t just about housing, its domestic abuse, neighbours and lots of other things – changes in children’s behaviours could be around domestic abuse.</p> <p>SG said that there had been an interesting discussion – so many areas are affected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an action plan • Problem and solution focused on parishes who can help • MKC not the only people involved – there are many other partners who need to think how they can help i.e. NHS, Police, Parishes etc. • It will take all agencies involved to solve – look at outcomes • Foodbanks – seen a huge increase through the pandemic – safety net – all groups work together. • Parents – support parents • Commission was cross party and a collective effort to solve • Many questions are answered in the report which are living documents – want to develop, not imposing a structure, instead wanting to keep a dialog going. Contact JB after reading the report with questions / ideas and keep the dialog going and give children the best opportunity Jeremy.beake@milton-keynes.gov.uk <p>Huge thanks to JB and parishes for sharing and all the work that is being done</p>	
4	Good News and Hot Issues	
	<p>Covid 19 – update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MKC rates are reducing – was 68.3 per 100,000 now 67.8 • Reducing in all age groups • Plateau a little • School age children testing – it does bring out more cases. Keeping an eye on schools and employment. • Vaccination – same as rest of East of England – there are no specific issues in MK • PCC testing and regional centres – there are lots of slots and would encourage people to be tested. Anyone over 16 can be tested you can also go to the Central Library for rapid testing and lateral flow tests • 90% attending schools since they have opened – high percentage 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCR test station in Newport Pagnell (Q do we need so many PCR testing A. Once closed they are gone, they are provided by the NHS rather keep in case of need) • Good news libraries will be re-opening • Re-opening of the High Streets can have an impact – pick up the issues 	
	<p>Elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish elections - meeting held for all parishes with parish meetings this year • 24 – 28 March nominations • Polling stations will be safe – a lot of work is being done • 11,000 additional have registered for postal votes • We need presiding officers and poll clerks for 6 May information will be sent out. • Cllr Tunney said he lives in a village and sure he would be able to find people who could help out 	
	<p>Planning Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further announcements from the government • Robust response from across the country • Responses by 27 March to a further consultation • Both MP's are against the paper • MCHLG say it's the highest response to a consultation that they have received – there is concern about local impact. 	
	<p>Zoom / Online meetings</p> <p>Parliament changed rules to allow meetings online. This legislation is due to expire on 7 May</p> <p>General view is that each council should decide how to hold their meetings rather than being told what to do.</p> <p>Unless change in the law / legislation extended, meetings will have to revert to 'in person'.</p> <p>Case being brought to the High Court and will be heard before 6 May</p> <p>Andrea Vincent – written to MP to ask for clarity as there is no way she can have meetings covid safe (as they are public meetings and she cannot predict numbers) and would be concerned if the legislation is not extended.</p> <p>Cllr Williams- Is it work MKALC and MKC could do jointly and tell MPs its worth resolving before elections on 6 May. If no new legislation having meetings in public – most would struggle making them Covid safe we want the ability to use Zoom or combination of on-line and in person in future.</p> <p>Parishes are in a difficult position.</p> <p>Cllr ED asked if Cllr Williams would like to take a stab at writing a letter.</p> <p>Cllr Baines wrote to both MP's and the reply was encouraging, both MP's are on side and written to Chloe Smith MP (Minister of State for the Cabinet Office)</p>	

	<p>Cllr Smith - it's not just about being Covid safe also about being transparent – we are getting huge number of residents attending the on-line meetings – much more than in person meetings</p> <p>Cllr Ayles lobbied Ian Stewart MP at the Lobby Day – it's about larger participation, quite a number of MP's are supportive.</p>	
	<p>Next meeting 17 June hopefully on Zoom after the elections</p> <p>Huge thanks to everyone and a good conversation. Hope something good comes out of it.</p>	

Dates of future meetings

- 17th June 2021

Further suggested dates

- 16th September 2021
- 9th December 2021
- 17th March 2022