

**ANNUAL PARISH/VILLAGE MEETING
21 APRIL 2010**

Present: Mrs C Porter (Chair), Mrs J Underwood, Mr A Morley, Mr D Tomkins
Mrs E Gillies (Clerk), Miss M Franklin (RFO)
Cllr D Brock & Cllr P Geary
Police: Julian Kendall and Andy Perry
Apologies: Mrs B Shaw [Vice-Chair], Mr J Edwards

1. The Chair welcomed everyone and apologies were noted. The Chair began by doing a presentation from the Parish Councillors, Clerk and RFO to Mrs Peggy Butler, who retired from the Parish Council after a great many years.
2. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 22 April 2009 were resolved.
3. **Reports for the year 2009/10**

Chairs Report

We have a new councillor, John Edwards who replaced Andrew Skinner. The council now have two vacancies and would all be pleased to chat with anyone interested in giving some time to the village.

Thank you all those serving refreshments. I'll follow with some other important people in no particular order: Gerald Stapleton, who although not as sprightly these days still lends his expertise at the cemetery, Tony Collins, Rich and Neil Green, Nigel Stickells, our new webmaster and Brian Morton, with his planning expertise. Ade Furniss, who is constantly trying to save the Parish money both down at the allotments and more recently at the Pavilion. Mr Colin Wright for the planter coming in on the Olney Road. Mr Brian Johnson, groundsman, secretary and champion of the Lavendon Sports Football Club until it's demise last summer and their team managers Matt Lothian and Neil Griffiths. Our continued thanks to the Cony family for again donating the Christmas tree, always on display outside the Old School each Christmas.

Thank you to our Ward Cllrs Debbie Brock and Peter Geary for supporting the Parish Council and village, plus assistance in recent months with planning issues.

As I've already mentioned we have with us tonight members of the Safer MK team at MKC. They do have a lot of input into our daily lives although you may not realise it. I would like to make a special mention here and that is to Rob Lawrence, their team leader and champion of most causes. He is also the liaison officer for the Rural East NAG at which he excels and those attending those meetings will appreciate how much he does for the villages involved.

A lot has happened in the village since last April, but I would like to mention one event that has had a big impact on the lives of a lot of our residents and that was the very sad passing of Dave White in November. Although he resigned as a Parish Councillor a while ago due to health concerns he attended most of our meetings and influenced a lot of our decisions! Apart from being a champion of our local hostellers he was also our first webmaster extraordinaire. He is greatly missed.

Moving on: A very quick round up of the Parish Council's activities since last April.

Accomplishments:

1. We have been for some months now the proud owners of new village entrance signs. We are very pleased with them and hope that the residents of our village are too. I would like to thank Debbie and Peter for their contribution from the ward councillors budget towards this project.
2. This year we continued the process of acquiring the land for extension of the cemetery, which should be finalised in the next few months. The planning application for Change of Use has been submitted to MKC and we look forward to a favourable outcome shortly.
3. The council have also been busy with the lengthy process acquiring more land for allotments on Olney Road. The draft lease has now been received and will hopefully be finalised shortly.
4. Last year I mentioned the VAS signs and TVP speed camera, this year the villages in the Rural East Neighbourhood Action Group, of which we are one, have been spending Government money on a Community Speed-watch kit. There will be a demo of this shortly by TVP officers.

As always the ever ongoing issues:

1. New planting on the Playing Field which was expected to be done during late summer/autumn last year was postponed until we could make a decision on the use of the Pavilion and also financially, money was sidelined in other areas. Planting is still planned but in abeyance for now.
2. The Pavilion we have decided to retain as a village amenity. Initially this will be for the use of Stay and Play sessions, daytime private hire and possibly a new Pre-School in the future.

The Pavilion again suffered from a burst pipe in the very inclement weather in January. This year it managed to be contained in the Football Club end and made good use of the showers! Following this we are now looking at the possibility of converting the Changing Rooms into a Parish Council Office to provide a more engaging point of contact with our community.

3. Cycle Path – It seems a long time ago since our hopes were dashed on a possible cycle path from here to Olney. Recently our hopes have been rejuvenated and we hope to have more promising news in the future.
4. Following this year's bad winter, we have applied for more grit bins for the village but it will be July before we hear if we have been successful.
5. The Parish Council are again sponsoring a trophy for the newly named Lavendon Gardens of the Year competition, to be presented at the Village Show. The competition enjoyed it's inauguration last year and after reviewing it was decided to bring the judging forward to earlier in the year before our weather has chance to decimate floral displays. The application forms and details are now available from the Parish Council; ask at the Shop, on the website and in the Olney Phonebox and also from the Lavendon Show Committee. A Best Kept allotment award will be judged in the summer months and will not be dependant on the prize marrow; also presented at the Village Show.

6. Planning issues: This last year brought a few contentious planning applications and I'll try and cover them briefly. The 1st was 74 Olney Road which although we didn't object to the houses in principle, we did feel the number was too great. The developer was unwilling to compromise on the number and did win at appeal. However it didn't end there, the last issue being the gates at 74 Olney Road, which actually are in need of planning permission. As I know this affects a number of residents in Lavendon this will be continued. The 2nd was the ongoing proposal for the land adjacent to 26 Castle Road, which also went to appeal and won in favour of the developer. The battle there continues on conditions that can be imposed on the development. And finally, the 3rd and major one was for the land opposite the cemetery. Despite the first battle being won last February we did expect another battle this year and decided to put money aside for legal expenses in our budget. This was well timed and meant we were able to employ a planning consultant for this years' objection on behalf of the village.

However, should the applicant lodge an appeal the council do need to know from the village how you expect, as residents, to be represented at the hearing. Are you prepared to ride on the coat tails of MKC or should we have our own legal representation to conjoin with MKC, which undoubtedly will cost a lot of money that currently we don't have. We are hoping that you will share your thoughts with us on this tonight so that we can get our 'ducks in a row' now.

7. Dog fouling – still an ongoing problem. MKC continue support with letter drops, but we still have one or two irresponsible residents. We hope to be visited by the MKC team with their 'Dog Pit Stop' during the summer to educate dog owners into better habits! A supply of free dog poo bags were available at the meeting.

In the absence of Nigel and Chris Stickells the latest BLOT update on the Nunn Wood Wind Farm front was been printed out and available. Mr Ralph Hipkin and Mr Graham Harrison were available to try and answer any questions.

Police Report

It was again stressed that Lavendon is a safe area to live in, with 43 reported crimes in 08-09 and only 38 in 09-10; 26 of which were detected. Theft from vehicle crimes had risen. The Speed-watch device use was explained. It is used by residents in conjunction with a PCSO present to record data of traffic speed, which is used in traffic calming to reduce speeding through villages as a priority. Volunteers from villages are required to sign up to the scheme, working in other villages if preferred. A demonstration will be done after refreshment break.

Q. How often is the device used?

A. Used by several villages on a rota system, about twice a day in ½ hourly slots.

Ward Councillors Report

Cllr Brock explained that the Core Strategy, which is a main planning document for the whole of Milton Keynes and has been under discussion for several months. The document shows a limited impact on Lavendon with regard to new housing.

The cycle route is still being fought for, along with helping to get pot-holes sorted out. Continued support on the traveller site will be given.

Financial Report - This was supplied on the tables. There were no questions.

Jan Phillips on Village Appraisals

Ms Phillips explained that a steering-group made up from village residents would need to collate the information on what the village would need in coming years; for example, refurbishment of the village hall, playing equipment for the children. The steering group would need to work with the Parish Council to do the Parish Plan/Appraisal, which could take 6-9 months to prepare. The benefit of the final document is that it can be used to obtain funding from Milton Keynes and other sources, as it is evidence of a need for the village for what is contained within. The document helps the Steering Group obtain grant funding towards projects that cannot be gained by the Parish Council due to their limited Powers, and would open the village up to more being done in the future.

A break for refreshments, then a chance for residents to approach the councillors, speakers and presenters to discuss any points or issues, and see Speed-watch demonstration.

There were stands from the following, with information sheets and giveaways of bus timetables and MKC recycled shopping bags, BLOT leaflets, information from the Safer Communities Team and Waste Team from Milton Keynes Council. The Rural Transport Officer, Mr Simmonds, also spent time talking to residents about their concerns.