



# Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

## Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Sports Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 28th February, 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Cllrs S Browne, R Graham, R Haine, E Kelly-Wilson, E O'Rourke, A Segebrecht and M Wymer

**Apologies:** Cllrs K Ely and M McDonald

**In attendance:** Delia Shephard (Town Clerk) (Clerk) and Alison Brown (Finance Manager) (Clerk)

### Min Ref

- FC22/23-59 **To note apologies for absence**  
It was RESOLVED to note the apologies listed above.
- FC22/23-60 **To note councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- FC22/23-61 **To approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the committee**  
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 13 December 2022 be approved as a correct record.
- FC22/23-62 **To note the resignation of Cllr Stevens from the committee with effect from 25 January 2023 and to elect a replacement vice-chair**  
The resignation of Cllr Stephens was noted and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Segebrecht be elected as vice-chair of the Finance and Governance Committee.
- FC22/23-63 **Public Speaking Time**  
There were no representations from members of the public.
- FC22/23-64 **To review and comment on any planning applications due for review by Milton Keynes City Council**
- FC22/23-64i **23/00279/COU - 27 Cambridge Street Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2TR - Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to 6 no. bedroom HMO (Use Class C4) (retrospective) (resubmission 22/01810/COU)**  
The Town Council RESOLVED to object to the planning application on the following grounds:  
  
Parking – the provision of 1 parking space is insufficient for a HMO dwelling with 6 bedrooms. Whilst the provision of 6 cycle spaces was considered environmentally beneficial, it did not compensate for the failure to comply with the current Parking Standards SPD.
- FC22/23-64ii **23/00179/FUL - 169 Queensway Bletchley Milton Keynes MK2 2DZ - Demolition of rear side part of extension and rebuild single-storey rear extension, Replacement of roof structure. Conversion of upper floors into 2 no residential flats (2x1 beds).**  
The Town Council RESOLVED to object to the planning application on the following grounds:



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The proposed development provided insufficient parking spaces and in an area that was already a notorious parking hotspot where there is no on-street parking available.

FC22/23-65

**To note Milton Keynes City Council's Consultation on the ambition and objectives of its New City Plan and sustainability appraisal scoping report and to consider making any comments**

The Clerk informed the committee of the short timescale available for responding to this consultation. Members discussed the need to support infrastructure before expansion and agreed that any proposed rapid transport system should focus on the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford area as a result of the large entertainment sites, for example, Milton Keynes Stadium.

It was RESOLVED that the consultation should be discussed at the Environment and Planning Committee on 14 March 2023 before any response was formalised.

FC22/23-66

**To note plans for installation of a pedestrian crossing on South Terrace, Bletchley and to consider any comments to be made to MK City Council (deadline 2 March 2023)**

It was RESOLVED that the planned provision of the pedestrian crossing at South Terrace be supported.

FC22/23-67

**To review and note a financial management information report showing income and expenditure against budget for the year to 31 January 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

FC22/23-68

**To review and note cash and investment reconciliations to 31 January 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the cash and investment reconciliations be noted.

FC22/23-69

**To review and note the council's balance sheet as at 31 January 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the balance sheet to 31 January 2023 be noted.

It was RESOLVED that the list of individual transactions over £500 for the period be noted.

FC22/23-70

**To ratify a list of payments made or due to be made to 28 February 2023**

It was RESOLVED that the list of payments made or due to be made which had been published with the agenda be ratified.

FC22/23-71

**To ratify a Schedule of accounts to be paid by direct debit during the Financial Year 2023-24**

It was RESOLVED that a schedule of regular direct debits to be paid during the Financial Year 2023-24 which had been published with the agenda be approved with the inclusion of an additional 2 direct debits as listed below:

1. British Gas – the provision of electricity to Sycamore Hall
2. George Browns – leasing of equipment for the provision of the landscaping contract.

FC22/23-72

**To note the receipt of the grant repayment from the Mill Residents' Association**

It was RESOLVED to note the repayment of an unused grant by Mill Road Residents Association in the sum of £868.00 because it had not proved possible to complete the planned project. The Finance Manager confirmed that a letter of thanks has already been sent on 8 February 2023.



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FC22/23-73

**To note increase of Basic Allowance for Parish/Town Councils agreed on 18 January 2023 and to confirm that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council will pay councillor allowances to elected councillors at the new rate of £877 per year**

It was RESOLVED to note the report of the local IR panel approved by Milton Keynes City Council on 18 January 2023 which had increased the amounts for basic allowances for Town and Parish Councillors in the area by 4.69%. and the recommendation that Parish / Town Councils who pay allowances should track the MKCC basic allowance, as follows:

- Basic: Up to 10% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Quality Parish / Town Councils = £1,169 **or** Up to 7.5% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Non Quality Parish / Town Councils= £877
- Chairs: Up to 20% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Quality Parish / Town Councils= £2,338 **or** Up to 15% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Non Quality Parish / Town Councils= £1,753.

The Finance manager confirmed that the increase to an annual allowance of £877 would be reflected in future payments May 2023 for those elected councillors claiming this allowance..

FC22/23-74

**To approve review of effectiveness of internal audit 2022-23**

A document reviewing the effectiveness of internal audit and internal controls for the financial year 2022-23 signed by Cllr Kelly-Wilson, Cllr Graham and Cllr Segebrecht was reviewed. It was RESOLVED to approve the review.

FC22/23-75

**To approve an increase in the Multipay Card credit limit**

A discussion took place and it was noted that the proposed increase in the monthly limit on the payment card had been insufficient due to increasing procurement via the internet in order to secure best value. It was RESOLVED that the monthly limit for these transactions should be increased to £5,000.

The Finance Manager requested that the £1,000 single transaction limit should be increased to £1,250, however, after discussion, it was RESOLVED that the single transaction limit be increased to £1,500.

It was further RESOLVED that for any future on-line purchase for software that was in excess of £1,500, delegated officer powers could be used (RFO or Proper Officer) in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance and Governance whose approval would be sought in advance.

The Finance Manager stated that the Financial Regulations would be updated to reflect the agreed increases.

FC22/23-76

**To review an external report on the Town Council's VAT position**

A detailed report on the council's VAT position prepared by an external consultant had been circulated before the meeting and this was discussed. It was RESOLVED to note the report.

FC22/23-77

**To approve the Option to Tax on Newton Leys Pavilion and Fenny Stratford Community centre with effect from 1 April 2023; the council absorbing the additional cost of VAT**



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Following discussion it was RESOLVED to approve the application for an Option to Tax on Newton Leys Pavilion and Fenny Stratford Community Centre with effect from 1 April 2023, with the council absorbing the cost of the additional VAT element on current hire charges..

It was agreed that the council's MediumTerm Financial Plan would need to be reviewed to take account of the loss of income as a result of the Option to Tax as would hire charges in future years.

- FC22/23-78 **To approve the Option to Tax for the Sycamore House and Hall Complex with effect from 1 April 2023.**  
It was RESOLVED to approve an application to opt to tax Sycamore House and Hall Complex with effect from 1 April 2023.
- FC22/23-79 **To review the draft medium term financial plan**  
In view of earlier decisions, this agenda item was deferred to permit review of the plan by officers and it was agreed that this item would be presented to full council on 28 March 2023.
- FC22/23-80 **To review the Asset Register**  
It was RESOLVED to note the summarized asset register which included details of premises and land only. Members requested a review of the full list of assets at the next meeting.
- FC22/23-81 **To receive a premises report and consider any recommendations therein for expenditure of building maintenance or repairs**
- FC22/23-81i **To approve expenditure on boundary marking at Newton Leys Allotments**  
Following consideration of quotations it was RESOLVED to appoint PLS as the contractor to carry out boundary marking of land beside Newton Leys allotments at a cost of £350.
- FC22/23-82 **To consider installation of a bund at Newton Leys Pitches**  
Following consideration of quotations it was RESOLVED to appoint Serco as the contractor to build bunding at the site of the football pitches at Newton Leys Pavilion at a cost of £930 plus the additional cost of 2 removeable bollards. Members felt bunding was both environmentally sound, easy to maintain and cheaper than either metal or wooden fencing.
- FC22/23-83 **To approve plans for extension of electrical vehicle charging points at Newton Leys Pavilion**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the proposed plans and to place an article in the next newsletter notifying residents of the council's plans.
- FC22/23-84 **To approve expenditure on the extension of CCTV at Newton Leys Pavilion**  
Following discussion of a report and quotations from the current provider to extend the existing system it was RESOLVED to approve the provision of 2 additional cameras to the football pitches and an additional 2 cameras mounted within the car park at Newton Leys Pavilion at a cost of £2,225.00. It was suggested, that whilst discussions continue to secure permission to mount the cameras on the electricity substation, alternative positioning should be considered eg lampposts.
- FC22/23-85 **To note withdrawal of Planning application submission to MKCC for the Sycamore and to consider limited opening of Sycamore Hall during the period**



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### **April to October 2023 and costs involved**

It was RESOLVED to note the withdrawal of the council's application for planning permission for development of the Sycamore Buildings. The clerk confirmed that the application had been submitted with an ecologist's report confirming the potential presence of bats in the barn and a possible maternity roost in the roof of Sycamore House and noting that further surveys would be undertaken when the bat hibernation season was over (end of April). It had been hoped that the local planning authority would be prepared to deal with other aspects of the application and deal with the bat issues by condition but, although MKCC originally validated the application, their decision was that this was not appropriate and so the application was withdrawn. Emergent bat surveys had been booked to start in the first week of May 2023 and it was intended to resubmit the application thereafter.

Considerable discussion took place on the merits and disadvantages of opening Sycamore Hall to the public between April and October 2023. Members' overriding concern was the disturbance that might be created for the bats, therefore, it was RESOLVED that Sycamore Hall should not be reopened to the public between April and October 2023 with the exception of its use as a polling station on the 8 May 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.24 pm