



## Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

### Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at the Methodist Hall, Queensway, Bletchley on Tuesday 9 May 2017 beginning at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Cllrs Mohammed Arshad, Samantha Browne, Richard Graham, Ron Haine, Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson, Angela Kennedy, E'Amonn O'Rourke, Sean Porter, Michael McDonald, Linda Reeves, Mohammed Rohim, Rosemary Smith, Lewis Webster.

**Absent:** Cllrs Keith Ely, William Hewitt, Peter Kuling and Shirley Rolfe

**In attendance:** Three members of the public, Alison Kennedy, Regeneration Officer, Tracey Jenkins, Community Engagement Officer, Delia Shephard, Town Clerk

#### Min Ref

- FC2017/18-19      **Election of Chairman**  
Nominations for Chair for 2017/18 were invited and Cllr Kennedy was nominated and agreed to stand (Cllr McDonald declined to let his name go forward). A recorded vote was requested. (Cllr Rohim joined the meeting.)  
It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Kennedy as Chair of the Council.  
Cllrs O'Rourke, McDonald, Kelly Wilson, Webster, Arshad, Smith, Haine, Reeves Graham voted in favour of the resolution. Cllr Rohim arrived as the vote was finishing and cast his vote in favour of the resolution.  
No councillors voted against the resolution.  
Cllrs Browne, Porter and Kennedy abstained.
- FC2017/18-20      **Election of Vice-Chairman**  
Nominations for Vice-Chair for 2017/18 were invited. Cllr Graham was nominated and agreed to stand, Cllr McDonald was nominated and declined to stand, Cllr Webster was nominated and agreed to stand. Both candidates spoke about their reasons for seeking election. A recorded vote was requested.  
It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Graham as Vice-chair of the Council.  
Cllrs O'Rourke, McDonald, Kelly-Wilson, Rohim, Arshad, Haine, Reeves, Graham and Kennedy voted for Cllr Graham.  
Cllrs Browne, Webster, Porter and Smith voted for Cllr Webster.  
There were no abstentions.  
(Cllr Browne left the meeting.) Following the election Cllr Smith stated that 'this was a terrible choice' and there was an altercation between Cllr Smith and Cllr Graham. The Chairman warned that unless the meeting could be conducted appropriately it would be adjourned and all comments must be made via the Chairman.
- FC2017/18-21      **Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ely and Rolfe. Apologies for anticipated early departure had been given by Cllr Browne.
- FC2017/18-22      **Declarations of Interests**  
i      Disclosable Pecuniary interests: None



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- ii Other interests: None. Cllr Smith declared a personal interest in the grant application for funds to support a Street Party in Penn Road.

- FC2017/18-23 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**  
It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2 May 2017 as a correct record of proceedings.
- FC2017/18-24 **Public Speaking Time**  
No member of the public wished to speak at this time.
- FC2017/18-25 **Scheme of Delegations**  
The Council's committee structure, delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees and officers and terms of reference for committees were discussed and the benefits of the current arrangements explored.  
It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to maintain the existing structure and it was noted that the HR committee had responsibility for spending within its terms of reference.
- FC2017/18-26 **Appointment to committees**  
**i Newton Leys Building Committee**  
Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to maintain Cllrs Kelly-Wilson, Ely, Graham and McDonald as the four councillor members of the committee, Cllr Porter stepped down from this committee and it was further **RESOLVED** to permit co-option of three non-councillor members to the committee (and adjust the scheme of delegations accordingly).  
**ii Human Resources Committee**  
A proposal to consider extending the size of the HR committee to include all members who wished to join it was put forward by Cllr Smith. The Clerk commented that this was a decision for councillors but that NALC, SLCC, Ellis Whittam and many other sector advisors suggested that the HR Committee should be kept as small as was practicable in order to preserve confidentiality and compliance with data protection. Members also pointed out that a smaller committee allowed for a greater number of councillors to be called upon for any appeals processes. An amended proposal to increase the numbers of the Human Resources Committee to six members was not successful and it was **RESOLVED** to maintain the size of the committee at five. It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllrs Kennedy, Graham, Ely, Kelly-Wilson and McDonald to the HR Committee. It was noted that Cllrs Webster and Smith were interested in acting on any individual panels in connection with HR matters.
- FC2017/18-27 **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**  
Cllr Smith raised concerns about the Council's Standing Orders which she felt were not fully explained and referring in particular to Standing Order 11d During the discussion following Cllr Smith asserted that she considered there had been a breach of confidentiality because she knew for a fact that there had been an email sent to the staff about a confidential decision of the HR Committee. Cllrs Smith asked the Clerk if she found this funny and the Town Clerk replied by saying she



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found it astonishing and that was why she had reacted, she stated that specific instructions from the HR Committee had been followed in this matter. Cllr Smith objected to the Town Clerk's demeanour and the Town Clerk excused herself from the meeting for the remainder of discussion on this item and left the room. The Chairman confirmed that a note of what was said in the Clerk's absence would be kept.

Cllr Kelly-Wilson stated that this was not the time or place for this discussion which was not in relation to Standing Orders and was to do with an individual. Cllr Smith stated that it was in relation to Standing Orders because she believed there had been a breach of confidentiality. She reiterated that "a breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action against an employee" and she wanted the Council to explain what this meant as in her opinion a recent situation has resulted in a breach of confidentiality. The Chairman stated that whilst this might be Cllr Smith's belief this would have to be raised as a separate agenda item away from the approval of Standing Orders. Cllr Kelly-Wilson stated that this would be a matter for the HR Committee. Discussion continued and the Chairman reminded all members that this was a public meeting and they should be very careful about what was being said; members were trying to discuss a specific situation in a roundabout way and this needed to stop and a specific item which addressed it put on an agenda. Cllr Smith stated she wanted a definition of a breach of confidentiality. The Chairman stated this was anything on red paper, any breach of data protection or any breach of confidentiality regarding an employee. Members were asked if they had any other definitions and none was provided. The Chairman reiterated that confidential items such as the issue which had been alluded to should be discussed in a confidential setting and there were to be no further allusions to individuals.

The Clerk returned to the meeting and asked to be reassured that no further accusations of misconduct by members of staff should be raised during the meeting as this would make it difficult for her to continue clerking. The Clerk asked for it to be recorded that she objected in the strongest possible terms to such issues being discussed in a public meeting in front of a member of the staff team, a member of the public and all the councillors. The Chair reiterated the requirement that no individual issues pertaining to staff were brought up within the meeting or the meeting would be adjourned.

Cllr Smith queried further aspects of the Standing Orders including Order 19h on line management which she felt was very unclear because the councillors were ultimately the line managers of the staff and the Standing Orders did not mention this. The Clerk advised that the Council was the employing body and was responsible for management of the staff but individual councillors were not the line managers of staff. The Town Clerk was the overall line manager for all staff through a delegated system of supervision and the HR Committee was the line manager of the Town Clerk as laid out in the recently adopted scheme of delegations.

Cllr Smith then queried Standing Order 24a(ii). The Town Clerk advised that



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from a statutory point of view an individual councillor could not make decisions or act on behalf of the Council and this is what the standing order referred to in this case. The Council as a corporate body could only delegate to an officer, a committee or sub-committee or another authority not to an individual councillor. Discussion continued on this point and Cllr Smith was keen to amend the standing order to make it clearer but concern was expressed about making such an amendment to approved model standing orders without properly taking advice. It was **RESOLVED** to retain and approve the Standing Orders in their present form and that any proposed changes to them in future should be put forward in writing so that formal and considered advice could be taken and then decisions about individual orders could be made.

FC2017/18-  
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### **External Representation**

Representation on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back to Council were discussed. It was **RESOLVED** that the following Councillors would represent the Town Council on the following bodies:

- i Parishes Forum – Cllrs Kennedy and Webster
- ii Bucks and MK Association of Local Councils – Cllr Kennedy and Graham
- iii George Street Management Committee – Cllr Kennedy

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### **Asset Register**

The council's inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment was noted. The Chairman advised that the register was currently under review and would be returned to full council with the annual return as the page concerned with land holdings was not complete.

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### **Insurance**

A copy of the Council's current insurance schedule detailed its current cover had been circulated before the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks. The Town Clerk confirmed that insurance arrangements would be on the agenda again in the near future as the policy would expire in June.

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### **Subscriptions**

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's subscriptions to other bodies as follows

- i Bucks and MK Association of Local Councils £1,449.71 plus £855.85 for NALC
- ii Society of Local Council Clerks £300.00
- iii National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners £55.00
- iv MK Play Association £55.00
- v RAC £150.00.

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### **Complaints and Requests for Information**

The Clerk confirmed that the complaints procedure has not changed but the procedure for dealing with requests for information had been newly documented and circulated before the meeting.

Cllr Smith stated that she felt the complaints procedure was very open to



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interpretation and was not robust. Cllr Smith stated that the process was not being followed and it needed to be clarified. These points were noted by council. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the current procedure again but that any suggestions for clarification should be submitted for future consideration. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the new written procedure for dealing with requests for information. (Cllrs Porter and Smith left the meeting.)

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### **Press and Media Policy**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Council's press and media policy.

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### **Calendar of Meetings**

A calendar showing the time and place of ordinary meetings of the full council up to and including the next annual meeting of full council was discussed and discrepancies noted. It was agreed to hold council meetings on the first and third Tuesdays in the month and the Clerk agreed to bring a revised calendar to the next meeting of full council.

FC2017/18-  
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### **Financial Management**

- i Financial management reports showing detailed income and expenditure and performance against budget for the financial year to 31 March 2017 had been circulated before the meeting and these were discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to note the reports.
- ii The Clerk explained that efforts were being made to reduce the number of financial reports presented to council and so several cash books had been closed. The following cash book statements and bank reconciliations were reviewed.
  - a. Nat West Current Account/Cash Book 1 (now closed)
  - b. Nat West Reserve Account/Cash Book 2 (now closed)
  - c. Town Council Petty Cash /Cash Book 3
  - d. Junior Youth Club Petty Cash/Cash Book 4 (now closed)
  - e. Spotlight Petty Cash/Cash Book 5 (now closed)
  - f. Lakes Estate Activity Project (Sport England funding)/Cash Book 7
  - g. Unity Trust Current Bank Account/Cash Book 9
- iii It was **RESOLVED** to note the statements and reconciliations.
- iv It was **RESOLVED** to note the balance sheet as at 31 March 2017
- v It was **RESOLVED** to note the comparison of market income for 2016/17
- vi It was **RESOLVED** to approve the invoices due for payment by 30 May 2017.
- vii It was **RESOLVED** to approve the invoices up to 14 June with the exception of the NABMA annual subscription which was not considered good value for money.

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### **Grant Applications**

- i A member of public addressed the Council about an application for a grant in the sum of £3,750 to support the Fenny Poppers Festival 2017 and the application was discussed. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to make the grant in the sum of £3,750.
- ii Two members of the public addressed the Council about an application for



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a grant in the sum of £500 to support a Street Party in Penn Road. Discussion followed and members raised concerns that the event seemed to have made a surplus which had been given to charity on the last occasion it had been held. It was explained that this surplus had come from a raffle. It was **RESOLVED** to make a grant in the sum of £250 on condition that all the money was spent directly for the running of the Street Party and that any raffle at the event for the benefit of a third party must not be run by the organisers of the event (ie a raffle could be run by the organisers to support the Penn Road community but tax payers money was not to be used to support a raffle for any other third party, therefore any raffle for a charity etc should not be part of the street party accounts and should not be run by the organisers of the event).

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### **Summer Play Schemes**

A report and proposal to fund summer play scheme sessions in Leon Park, Newton Leys and the Lakes during the 2017 summer school holidays on the basis of research undertaken as part of the Council's service and activities review had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was discussed. It was noted that the summer play sessions during 2016 had cost £4.50 per child. It was **RESOLVED** to commission a programme of play scheme sessions from MK Play Association at an estimated cost of £5,440.00 on the dates and at the locations proposed in the report. As no provision had been made for this within the 2017/18 budget it was further **RESOLVED** to fund this from reserves unless there was an underspend in the 2017/18 in which case funds could be vired within the budget towards the end of the financial year.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

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Approved 16 May 2017