



The Neighbour

Newsletter from
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Happy New Year! The start of 2023



Photo credits L-R: Kerriann Crossman, Natasha Borrelli, Aina Zulficar and Duncan McLellan

Thank you to everyone for sending in your wonderful snowy photos.

Look inside this edition of the newsletter where we are sharing a range of cost of living advice and support to help you and your families see through the winter. This includes dates for upcoming money saving workshops and the start of a new Brunch Club and Movie Mondays at Spotlight Community Centre.

We are also sharing town council updates and how we can continue to care for our environment and make greener choices in 2023.

Message from our Chair

Dear Resident,

I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas period, and I wish you a prosperous New Year.

I know that 2022 has been a difficult year for all as recover from a global pandemic and moved into a recession and inflation crisis. Our Town Council has worked with partners to deliver services that help to improve our residents' health, wellbeing and safety during this period. We have provided counselling for residents that need it, we have seen record numbers attending free swimming at Bletchley Leisure Centre and we've worked with Water Eaton Community Larder to provide a service to help people access cheaper food and reduce food waste in our community. The town council is working to help residents throughout the Cost of Living crisis, including hosting drop-in sessions this month. Read more on pages 3-4.

Over the last year, we have moved to new offices in Water Eaton at Sycamore House. This was purchased using reserves, which are savings made over a number of years for a specific purpose. The purchase did not directly have an impact on our council tax precept.

We were lucky enough to obtain the neighbouring Sycamore Hall from Milton Keynes City Council through a community asset transfer. This building has been underutilised for many years, has not had any major changes since opening almost fifty years ago and requires redevelopment. It also has poor accessibility for those residents who may have a disability. Our council believes that we should be providing the very best facilities to you and whilst being responsible regarding costs, we want to redevelop Sycamore Hall to provide a community hub that is accessible for all for the next generation. As our community has lost community spaces at Bletchley Library, The Warren and Spotlight will be eventually demolished, Sycamore Hall will be central to serving the Lakes Estate, Water Eaton and Eaton Leys.



We held consultation meetings with the community in November 2022 and we received extremely positive feedback about our development plans for Sycamore Hall. We have now submitted a planning application to Milton Keynes City Council for the changes we have proposed to the building.

The redevelopment of Sycamore Hall will involve a substantial investment which will leave a legacy for the future. The investment will be funded by multiple sources. We are exploring the use of grants, planning gain (section 106) monies but we will also need to use lending to pay for the redevelopment over a period of a time.

We are continuing to invest in events in our town centres. The Bletchley Big Street Eat, Fenny Poppers and Christmas on Queensway brought record numbers of people into the town in 2022 and it was delightful to see so many happy people having fun. We are looking forward to welcoming you to more of our events throughout 2023.

We would normally ask you in this edition of The Neighbour to let us have your feedback as part of residents' survey. However, we will ask for your feedback later in the year, so we can close the gap between your feedback and our planning and budgeting process. This will mean in the future we are able to make even quicker decisions on how to continue supporting you and the whole community.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Ethaniel



Cllr Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson
Chair of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Cost of living advice and support from local councils, organisations and charities



Working with Milton Keynes City Council, the town council are helping to host the following free Money Saving Advice events:

- **Wednesday 18 January 2023 - Fenny Stratford Community Centre - 4pm - 7pm**
- **Thursday 26 January 2023 - Spotlight Community Centre - 3pm - 7pm**
- **Tuesday 31 January 2023 - Water Eaton Church Centre - 12pm - 4pm**
- **Thursday 2 February 2023 - Newton Leys Pavilion - 3pm - 7pm**

The following events are also taking place locally, organised by Water Eaton Church Centre (Drayton Road, MK2 3RR):

Monday Lunch Club

Hot meal, drinks and a warm welcome in a warm space for over 65s. £4 per week food served from 12.30pm. Just turn up or for more information email Keith on tempstc@hotmail.com

Soup for the Soul Church Café

Every Tuesday 12.30pm to 2pm free light lunch, tea/coffee, warm space, Wi-Fi and suitable for all ages including children's play area. Opportunity to hear from organisations to strengthen your mind, body and spirit including healthy eating, energy discounts and money advice. Welcome to turn up or email watereatonlarder@gmail.com if you have any questions

Water Eaton Community Larder

Every Tuesday 2pm to 4pm. Provides surplus food from the supermarkets that would otherwise go to waste. It's a membership model open to everyone (no means testing) and for a small fee from £3.50 you can access healthy and nutritious food up to 10 items, plus fruit and veg, chilled and extras. (Equates to about £12-£15 at supermarket pricing). Please pop in for a visit or please email watereatonlarder@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Tea and Toast

Every Sunday 4.30pm to 6pm. Free toast, cake, tea/coffee and an informal warm space suitable for all ages to meet people, chat and includes a short talk about spiritual matters, health and wellbeing.



Get help with bills and other costs

As the cost of living rises, many people are struggling to find the extra money for essentials. **Help is available.** It's best to ask for help early before you get far into debt. Follow these tips and find contact details for the council at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/cost-living-support

1. Get what you're entitled to

Up to 7 million people in the UK are missing out on income-related benefits.

Visit www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/benefits to check if you're eligible for Housing Benefits or a reduction in Council Tax.

Visit www.gov.uk to check eligibility for:

- Universal Credit
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Tax Credits

Check your bank account to make sure you've also received these national payments:

- **Winter Fuel Payment** up to £300 for people born on or before 26 September 1955.
- **Cold Weather Payment** – £25 payment for people on certain benefits every week of very cold weather between November and March.
- **Warm Home Discount** – £140 discount for some people who get Pension Credit or are on a low-income.
- **£150 Disability Cost-of-Living Payment** – if you are entitled, you should receive this by end October

Crisis support from your council

Apply for these current schemes at:

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/cost-living-support

- Emergency funds for essential living costs eg food, repairs, school uniform (apply under **Household Support Fund**)
- Essential household goods, crisis food vouchers and fuel (apply under **Local Welfare Provision**)
- Extra help if you're on Housing Benefit and behind on your rent (apply under **Discretionary Housing Payments**)

Follow us on social media or look on our website for other ways we're supporting local people



3. Apply for extra allowances

If you care for someone at least 35 hours a week, and they get certain benefits, you may be entitled to £69.70 in Carer's Allowance. www.gov.uk/carers-allowance

If you have a disability severe enough that you need someone to help look after you, Attendance Allowance can help with extra costs. www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) can help if you have a long-term physical or mental health condition or disability or find it hard to do certain tasks. www.gov.uk/PIP

4. Get a water bill discount

If you're on a low income you could get a discount of up to 50% by switching tariffs. www.anglianwater.co.uk/account-and-bill/tariffs-and-charges/lite/

5. Talk to your energy supplier

Many energy companies offer help schemes and you don't always need to be their customer. Ask about being put on your suppliers' Priority Services Register, a free energy support service if you are vulnerable.

www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households has a list of help schemes, as well as energy saving tips. charisgrants.com and turn2us.org.uk list current fuel grants.

Food, clothes and other items

These local schemes can help:

MK Food Bank

Contact the helpline on **0300 303 4933** or text HELP to **07874 964 505** if you're struggling to afford food. Also offers a top up shop – 10 items for £2 cash.

MK Community Fridge

Saves quality food from going to waste. Visit www.mkcommunityfridge.org to find out when and where the food sharing fridges are open to donate or receive.

SOFEA community larders

Get £15 of food for just £3.50 – find out more and become a member at www.sofea.uk.com

Children and Family Centres

We have 17 Children and Family Centres in MK and they're hubs of activities and services for local families. Find out what's on at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-s-centres

Baby Basics MK

Offering essential items including clothing, toys, sleeping and feeding equipment, toiletries and baby food/formula. www.babybasicsmk.org.uk

MK Store House

Provides free donated clothing for adults and school age children to people who are struggling financially. www.mkstorehouse.org

2. Help with childcare costs

Use www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator to check if you could receive free childcare for children aged between 2 and 4 or help if your child is under 16 (or under 17 with a disability).

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. Find out at www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Need someone on your side?

If you're in a vulnerable situation, someone at the Citizens Advice Extra Help Unit could take on your case. The Citizens Advice Energy Help Unit will also raise issues with energy suppliers. Call **0808 223 1133** or use online webchat. For textphone, dial **18001** first.



MK Food Bank organises new Top Up Shop

The shop is a service run by MK Food Bank and it will run at Leon School Car Park on Thursdays 10am till 11.30am starting on 19 January. The service is designed for anyone who lives in Milton Keynes who is currently in financial hardship. There will be a variety of store cupboard items and cooking ingredients available to buy.

Find out more on the MK Food Bank website: www.mkfoodbank.org.uk

Strep A Infections including Scarlet Fever

Strep A is a common type of bacteria. There are currently more Strep A infections than usual in our area, here is some helpful advice.

Common symptoms of strep A include:

- Flu-like symptoms, like a high temperature, swollen glands or an aching body
- Sore throat (strep throat or tonsillitis)
- A rash that feels rough, like sandpaper (scarlet fever)
- Scabs and sores (impetigo)
- Pain and swelling (cellulitis)
- Severe muscle aches
- Nausea and vomiting

Most Strep A infections are mild and can be treated with antibiotics. On rare occasions, these infections can cause serious problems. This is called invasive group A strep (iGAS).

To reduce the chance of catching or spreading an infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Bin used tissues as quickly as possible

Check your symptoms on [111 online](https://www.nhs.uk/111), get an urgent GP appointment or call 111 if your child is:

- Unwell and is getting worse
- Feeding or eating much less than normal
- Peeing less than usual, has fewer wet nappies, or shows signs of dehydration
- Experiencing a high temperature
- Very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if your child:

- Is having difficulty breathing - making grunting noises or sucking their tummy under their ribs
- Pauses when they breathe
- Has a blue or grey tint to their skin, tongue or lips
- Is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

[nhs.uk/strep-a](https://www.nhs.uk/strep-a)

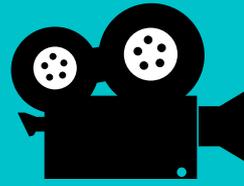
Sourced from UKHSA and NHS England, 9 Dec 22

From Public Health at Milton Keynes City Council

New weekly Brunch and Movie Mondays at Spotlight Community Centre

Organised by the town council with Cllr Mariee Wymer, Spotlight Community Centre (MK2 3QR) will be hosting a weekly warm brunch from 10am-12pm on Wednesdays as well as family-friendly Movie Mondays from 5pm-7pm where board games will be played and hot refreshments served.

Everyone welcome.



Upcoming Town Council Meetings



7.30pm on Tuesday 24 January 2023 - Full Council (Precept)

7.30pm on Tuesday 7 February 2023 - Community Committee

7.30pm on Tuesday 21 February 2023 - Employment Policy Committee

7.30pm on Tuesday 28 February 2023 - Finance & Governance Committee

7.30pm on Tuesday 14 March 2023 - Environment & Planning Committee

7.30pm on Tuesday 28 March 2023 - Full Council

7.30pm on Tuesday 4 April 2023 - Community Committee

7.30pm on Tuesday 18 April 2023 - Finance & Governance Committee

7.30pm on Tuesday 25 April 2023 - Full Council

At time of writing, meetings are taking place at Newton Leys Pavilion.

More information, including the full meetings calendar, can be found on the Town Council's website:

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

A Quick Interview with Cllr Ismail Hussein

An Introduction About You

I am 30 years old and I have lived in Bletchley for just over 6 years. I am a Civil/Structural Engineer, working within the construction industry

Your Priorities and Focuses

- The needs of the constituents of my ward and the wider civil parish
- engaging with the youth on issues that matter to them
- construction work
- preservation of green spaces,
- futureproofing the local area to give the best available prospects for the generations to come
- making sure our local council does whatever it can to reduce our impact to the environment and carbon emissions, with a particular interest in preventing greenwashing



Why Did You Become A Councillor?

As a Civil/ Structural Engineer, I wanted to use my knowledge and experience to help the local community out by ensuring they are getting the best value out of the upcoming projects in our area. I want to make sure that local developers and contractors are fulfilling their obligations to the community and I want to make sure that everybody in my ward has a say and is represented on town council matters. I am not affiliated to any political party, I simply became a councillor to allow the town council and my ward to benefit from my experience and skillset. It is an exciting time for the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford council for the development of the area and I urge anybody who wants to get involved and have a say to get in touch and drop me an email.

Do You Have A Favourite Part/Feature Of Our Area?

The Grand Union canal through Waterhall Park; this was an amazing feat of civil engineering that has stood the test of time. It is also brilliant for cycling and walking. The diversity of wildlife that it attracts is amazing.

Tell Us Something We Might Not Know About You.

I have 6 hens and 2 cats. This takes up a lot of time but I get fresh eggs every day! The cats and hens get on very well.



Welcome to Cllr Uche Osumili

Welcome to new councillor Uche Osumili who is representing the ward area of Newton Leys. All councillor details and contact information can be found on page 16 of this newsletter.

Planning permission requested for Sycamore House and Sycamore Hall

In 2021 the Town Council acquired Sycamore Hall (formerly the Sycamore Club) under a community asset transfer from Milton Keynes City Council. The town council's vision is to bring this well loved building back into regular public use and create a sustainable community hub from which we can deliver services, hold meetings and provide space for community activities and events at the centre of our area.

We have now submitted a planning application requesting permission to connect Sycamore House (our office building) and Sycamore Hall with a physical link and improve disabled access to both buildings, to replace the roof and insulate the building and to refurbish the space inside so that it can be used flexibly by as many members of the community as possible.

We are still at a preliminary stage with this project and if planning permission is granted we will then be able to obtain more detailed costings about this project. It is planned to fund the project from a combination of our reserves, borrowing and grants and we will be consulting with the community as we progress. No decisions about capital spending on the hall have yet been made but the town council knew when it took on the building that investment would be needed to bring the building up to a modern standard and to provide the community with the sort of community facilities it deserves. For more information, please view the applications (22/03106/FUL and 22/03107/LBC) on the MKCC Planning webpage.



Community Grants Available

Community Grants



We work in partnership with residents to support community action and services which contribute to local well-being. As well as helping with community spaces and buildings, staff expertise and publicity, we can also provide community grants to local organisations.

Applications for community grants are invited all year round and details of our grant criteria can be found on our website. However, we encourage all applicants to contact us by phone first and talk to an officer so that we can help with the process. Please contact our office on 01908 649 469 for an initial conversation.

All applications are carefully assessed by our councillors and the town council will provide feedback on any unsuccessful applications. If you are undertaking a community project and don't need any funding, please still tell us about your project as we may be able to help with publicity. Find out more on our website: www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford
Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plan Update

by Chair of Steering Group Gavin Bedford

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has made good progress over the last few months. A Neighbourhood Plan is a document that gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape development and growth. Following a successful consultation survey with residents, we have held two popular and productive scoping sessions with members of the public and local experts. These sessions have built on the local priorities first identified in the survey, providing us with a greater focus and an idea of the issues we are seeking to address.

The upcoming months will be equally important. We are at an exciting stage in the project's development, and we are looking for members of the public to help us by:

- Joining one of our two new task force groups. These groups will help gather the evidence needed locally to help shape the Plan. For more information, please come along to our orientation session on 17 January 2023 from 7.30pm at the Fenny Stratford Community Centre or please contact us to get involved beyond this date.
- Becoming a member of our Steering Group. This is composed of local people and businesses set up to steer the preparation of the plan and to seek the views of local people.

For more information on joining our task force, the Steering Group, or the Neighbourhood Plan in general, please visit our website: www.bfsnp.org.uk, email info@bfsnp.org.uk, or call 01908 649 469. The Neighbourhood Plan gives our community the once in a generation opportunity to have our say in how our local area should look and feel. I hope you can help in this by either taking part in future public consultations or joining our groups.

Congratulations to Fenny Stratford Residents Association on their accreditation

Message from FSRA: 'We would like to thank those who have supported FSRA throughout the community and further afield for their continued support. Recently we achieved our official bronze accreditation from Milton Keynes City Council. The process ensures that we follow guidelines set by the resident engagement team. We aim to meet the gold standard in the next year and we definitely need you to be a part of this.'

We all have been through tough times with Covid and now a cost of living crisis which has no doubt impacted the people of Fenny Stratford. FSRA is an organisation of volunteers whose sole purpose is to support the community in any way we can, whether that be housing, parking, social issues or simply community events the spectrum of our scope is broad. We have an experienced committee and we welcome all with open arms. It is important for us to engage with the you all and we would like to invite you to our monthly meetings held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. For latest info on what's going on please join our Facebook group and be a part of FSRA: www.facebook.com/groups/Fennystratford/ - Chair's email address: johnmorton68@gmail.com



Message from Fenny Stratford Community Association

Residents of Fenny Stratford are informed that the committee appointed in 2021 to oversee the Fenny Stratford Community Association has regretfully decided to dissolve the Association. The committee agreed that small amount of money held by the Association should be passed to the Water Eaton Community Larder.



Fenny Stratford Community Centre is an attractive space which is available to hire for different activities. Fenny Stratford Community Centre is currently used on weekdays throughout the day by a local pre-school, however, the main hall is available for hire.



The Community Centre has two halls for hire, the Main Hall (sitting capacity of 100) and the smaller Bowden Room (sitting capacity of 35). They are serviced by a well-equipped kitchen and table and chairs are available to suit your layout and needs. Fenny Stratford Community Centre is ideal for parties and private functions as well as meetings, classes and community activities.

Website:

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Email:

bookings@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Phone:

01908 649 469

FENNY STRATFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE

13 George Street, MK2 2NR

Please contact us for more information about booking the Main Hall and the Bowden Room.



Inside:
The Community Hall



NEWTON LEYS PAVILION

Furzey Way, Newton Leys, MK3 5SP

A fantastic community facility including a community hall, sports hall and meeting rooms.

There is ample parking and excellent kitchen facilities making it ideal for parties and private functions as well as meetings, classes and community activities.

Please contact us for more information about booking rooms at Newton Leys Pavilion.

Website:

www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Email:

bookings@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Phone:

01908 649 469

Thank you for supporting Christmas on Queensway

Watch our highlights video from the day on our website on our YouTube Channel.



Christmas Lights Online Feedback

We want to hear your feedback about this year's Christmas lights. Please leave feedback online by scanning this QR code. Thank you.



Looking forward - Local events in 2023

Bletchley Vegan Market in Queensway hosted by The Vegan Market Co. -
Saturday 21 January 2023 10.30am-4pm

Bletchley Food and Craft Market in Queensway organised by the town council -
Saturday 25 March 2023 10am-4pm

Easter Event in Queensway organised by the town council -
Saturday 8 April 2023 Timings TBA

Bletchley Food and Craft Market in Queensway organised by the town council -
Saturday 24 June 2023 10am-4pm

Eid Celebration organised by the town council -
Saturday 1 July 2023 Timings TBA

Bletchley Big Street Eat organised by the town council -
Saturday 29 July 2023 Timings TBA

Fenny Stratford Canal Festival organised by the IWA Milton Keynes -
August 2023 Timings TBA

Fenny Poppers organised by the Fenny Festival Community Group -
Sunday 13 August 2023 Timings TBA

Bletchley Food and Craft Market in Queensway organised by the town council -
Saturday 23 September 2023 10am-4pm

Halloween Event organised by the town council -
Saturday 28 October 2023 Timings TBA

Diwali Celebration organised by the town council -
Saturday 10 November 2023 Timings TBA

Christmas on Queensway organised by the town council -
Saturday 2 December 2023 Timings TBA

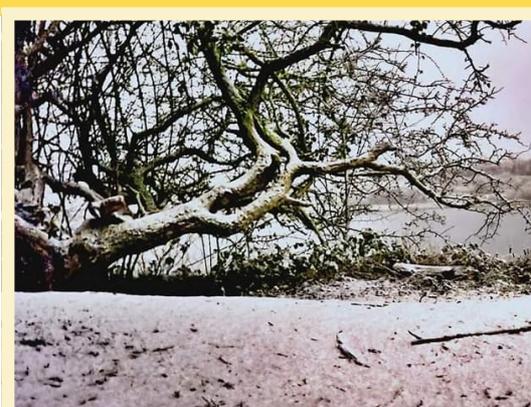


Photo Credit: Jordan Jjd Garner



Photo Credit: Drew Webb Photography



Photo Credit: Bella Jayne

Making Greener Choices

Article by Cllr Axel Segebrecht

As I am looking out over my frosty garden at the time I am writing this in December 2022, I can empathise with people thinking this Global Warming thing is a myth. Sadly, 2022 has shown us that weather is becoming more unpredictable, sometimes rapidly and with little warning. The forecast for 2023 is more unsettled weather, with unexpected cold or hot spells caused by a change in global climate for which we have to take responsibility.

While we have limited say in planning regulations as a town council, we actively try to shape the developments in our city to affect positive change in our shared environment. We are highlighting the concerns of our constituents about traffic, pollution and sustainable local transport to the city's council and working to hold them to account for their carbon-neutral promise.

We are making a difference through our reshaped Environment and Planning Committee and Climate Change task force. Later in 2023, we are also taking back control over our green spaces with the introduction of our own team of landscape engineers and gardeners.

We are working hard to identify and put in place a clear plan of action on combating the effects of climate change. Watch this little corner of our newsletter grow, just like a spring flower punching through the snow.

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Green Gym Volunteering for a greener community!

It's been a great year for the Green Gym, with new members joining us and great progress on our community allotment site in Fenny Stratford. The allotment became our focal point back in October 2021 as the volunteer group sought an area where they could experiment with food growing and create a green community hub to develop as an ongoing project. This year we have learned to build raised wooden growing beds from scratch, grown and harvested a range of crops and we are now creating a wildlife pond and nature garden, not to mention there will soon be a willow arch to construct! As well as the allotment, the team are still visiting other nearby green spaces to help the council with maintenance tasks. This autumn found us pruning fruit trees in Bletchley Orchard and volunteers recently planted an incredible fifty hedgerow saplings to create a wildlife corridor in Saffron Gardens.



Staying physically active and learning new skills can really help to improve mental health and wellbeing, especially in a relaxed and supportive environment. It's also a great way to have fun, keep fit and meet likeminded people. We have a wonderfully diverse volunteer group of all ages and backgrounds who are always brimming with ideas and enthusiasm. New volunteers are always welcome to come out and get involved in our Thursday morning projects, which run every week throughout the year.



If you think the Green Gym could be your New Year's resolution, then please do come along and give us a try. Call Jen on 07740 899633 or email Jennifer.zwetsloot@tcv.org.uk for further information or an informal chat. We also have a very active Facebook Page 'Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Green Gym' where you can follow our progress and see our upcoming Events! Article by Jennifer Zwetsloot.

The town council thanks the Green Gym for all their continued hard work.

Supporting local businesses and charities

Save money whilst saving the planet at Twice Boutique!

Every issue we like to give local businesses a chance to talk about the positive impact they have in our community. In this issue we spoke to Kerrie from Twice Boutique, a pre-loved and gift shop based on Stanier Square, Queensway.

Kerrie, who owns the shop with her husband Peter, started their business with a market stall selling second hand items in Central Milton Keynes after having her son at 18. The stall allowed Kerrie to have flexibility and bring in an income around her son and two years later, a shop in Bletchley high street became available and with the support of her family, Twice Boutique opened in 2017. The shop has evolved since it opened from selling pre-loved clothes, to venturing into gifts and homeware items based on the positive feedback Kerrie receives about the décor of her shop. New customers as well as regulars visit and support the store and Twice Boutique has a steady stream of visitors every day.

Kerrie says that Bletchley is the perfect place for a shop like hers. The shop caters to people looking for great value and also people who are conscious of the impact fast fashion and want to make a difference. Since the Covid pandemic, the number of people who are shopping for pre-loved items has increased and Kerrie has seen this first hand through her store and online. "The stigma around purchasing pre-loved items has definitely shrunk in recent years. People are excited to enter a shop and find clothes that might be from a few seasons ago. They know when they go out, people won't be wearing the same thing." says Kerrie.

Kerrie, who has lived in Bletchley all her life, has a number of initiatives running alongside Twice Boutique to help the local community. During lockdown she raised £900 for Young People vs. Cancer. She also runs a clothing scheme which gives people 5x more cash back for their clothes than other local cash for clothes schemes and an Amazon Wishlist for period products so that Twice Boutique can be a free pick-up point. Twice Boutique has also helped local families by running a uniform donation scheme which has predominantly helped parents in Bletchley.

Twice Boutique is open 9.30am – 4pm Monday to Saturday every week. 56 Queensway, Stanier Square, Bletchley. Find out more on the Twice Boutique MK Facebook Page.

Amazon Wishlist for period products:

www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1G5506OOLKE1R?ref_=wl_share



News from community boat Electra



Photo credit: Gill Prince Photography

Electra's second year of electric cruising has been a busy one, carrying over 2,500 guests on 264 cruises, which is double the number compared to our first year. Along with her 45 active volunteers and helpers, she is now taking a well-earned Christmas break, except for maintenance, recruiting, training, marketing and planning for 2023!

We have vacancies for volunteer Cabin Hosts, to greet our guests, look after them in the saloon, and serve a range of food and drinks. It's a great way to meet people and enjoy being out and about on the canal. If you know someone who might like to do this, they can get in touch through the website:

<https://www.bmkwaterway.org/electra/volunteering/>

Our website also gives details about other ways to help with other aspects of running the boat, from social media to bookings to fundraising, on a short or long-term basis. It's a great new project for Milton Keynes to be involved in, and new volunteers are always very welcome.

Looking ahead ... Electra will start cruising again from May 2023, with a wide range of public cruises, and regular charter slots on Thursday and Saturday mornings, afternoons, and summer evenings. If you'd like to plan a charter for a special occasion in 2023, email us at bookings.electra@bmkwaterway.org and we will "Hold The Date", confirming details in February, once our new booking system is in place.

Start 2023 with our Environment and Recycling quiz and craft ideas



1. Which of these is an example of a greenhouse gas?
a. Nitrous Oxide b. Argon c. Oxygen
2. Which greenhouse gas is released from landfill sites?
a. Carbon dioxide b. Methane c. Nitrous oxide
3. Which of these is a negative impact of climate change that will likely affect the UK as time goes on?
a. More accidents due to ice b. Heating bills will increase c. More extreme weather
4. What can you do as an individual to reduce greenhouse gases?
a. Recycle your waste b. Cycle or walk, rather than drive short distances c. Have a bath rather than a shower
5. Which of the following items can you put in your Milton Keynes City Council recycling sack?
a. Envelopes b. Clean tins c. Plastic bottles with pumps and triggers
6. Which of the following items can you NOT put in your Milton Keynes city Council recycling sack?
a. Wrapping paper with glitter, foil, plastic, velvet, or lined with plastic b. Bubble wrap c. Metal pans

If you want more information on what you can and cannot recycle please visit Milton Keynes City Council on www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/what-can-i-recycle-mk

Crafty ideas to up-cycle wrapping paper and cardboard

- A. Store away any wrapping paper that can be used for smaller presents next year
- B. Damaged wrapping paper can be used as packaging, to store away those precious Christmas decorations, for next year
3. Use colorful strips of wrapping paper to decorate a small cardboard box to store away jewelry and precious items. Larger boxes could be decorated for stationery or schoolwork
- D. Do you have a diary? Spruce it up by covering it in your favourite wrapping paper
- E. Or do you have a favorite Christmas photo that needs a frame. Cut cardboard to size, and decorate with Christmas wrapping paper to match
- F. How about making personalized paper planes, for a flying competition?



Answers: 1. a 2. b 3. c4. A, b and cv 5. A, b and cv 6. A, b and c

White Ribbon Update



Photo credit: Steve Hallett

White Ribbon is a global campaign that encourages people, and especially men and boys, to individually and collectively take action and change the behaviour and culture that leads to abuse and violence. The town council gained White Ribbon Accreditation in early 2022.

A Torchlit Vigil was held at MK Rose on White Ribbon Day (25th November), organised by the Voices of Women MK Network, Community Action:MK, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council and Milton Keynes City Council. This Vigil included a range of powerful speeches and readings by the following speakers: Nana Oguntola, Cllr Emily Darlington, Det Supt Kelly Gardner, our Chair Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson, Lisa Lovell, MK Youth Cabinet Members, Halimet Sharifat, Cllr Shery Delfan, Frozan Marofi and our Town Clerk Delia Shephard.

You can watch the full video of the Vigil on the town council's YouTube channel.

The town council also arranged for White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions to speak at Water Eaton Community Larder's Soup for the Soul Café.

Thank you to everyone who has attended and supported the recent White Ribbon Campaign.

A message from Guide Dogs

Most people have heard of Guide Dogs and the gorgeous four-legged guides we train. But did you know we also recruit two-legged guides?

Here at Guide Dogs we run a national service called My Sighted Guide. It's a volunteer led service where a volunteer is partnered up with someone who has a visual impairment, in order to get people out of their homes, engage with their local community and increase confidence and wellbeing. It's a fabulous service to be part of and we receive great feedback from our volunteers.

Since Covid, the interest in our service from visually impaired customers, has doubled and we are now looking for new volunteers.

We ask for a couple of hours per week or fortnight from a volunteer and it is not essential to be a car user. Full training will be given in Sight Loss awareness and Sighted Guiding.

As a volunteer you can expect:

- The satisfaction in knowing you are first handily supporting people with sight loss to live actively, independently, and well.
- To have fun socialising and interacting with others.
- The health and wellbeing benefits of getting out and about in your local community.
- A new passion and hobby to get involved with in the future, that can spark from your partnership.



To find out more please visit www.guidedogs.org.uk/volunteering where there is also an online application, call our GuideLine on 0800 781 1444 or email us at MidlandsMSG@guidedogs.org.uk.

Thank you.



Is **YOUR** child short-sighted?

Shortsightedness (Myopia) is becoming increasingly common because children spend more time on close work, reading and using device screens, and less time outdoors.

Early onset Myopia can continue to progress until your child stops growing, and potentially means stronger, thicker lenses and higher risk of sight problems as an adult.

If you have myopia, your child is likely to develop it too.

The good news is - **the progression of myopia can be slowed down using specialist treatments:**

Specialist glasses

Specialist contact lenses

Ortho-K bespoke overnight contact lenses

To find out more about the available Myopia Management treatments, visit www.dwroberts.co.uk or call us on the number below:



DW Roberts Opticians, 63 Queensway, Bletchley, MK2 2DR

www.dwroberts.co.uk

01908 373131

bletchley@dwroberts.co.uk

REASONS to  **your local independent optician ...**



What we offer:

- ★ Price match guarantee
- ★ 12 months FREE aftercare
- ★ Unrushed, relaxed eye examinations
- ★ Great quality products giving value for money
- ★ Friendly, professional staff who know their stuff
- ★ Extensive choice of frames & high quality lenses
- ★ Sunglasses, sports eyewear, contact lenses & safety specs

Specialist services:

- ★ SchoolVision Assessments
- ★ Dry Eye Clinics
- ★ Myopia Management
- ★ Ortho-K bespoke overnight lenses
- ★ Retinal Photography

Bletchley East Ward



Councillor Mohammed Khan
email: mohammed.khan@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Councillor Emily Darlington
email: emily.darlington@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Councillor Ed Hume
email: ed.hume@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Bletchley Park Ward



Councillor Nigel Long
email: nigel.long@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Councillor Nabeel Nazir
email: nabeel.nazir@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Councillor Mohammad Imran
email: mo.imran@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Local MP - Iain Stewart

Phone: 01908 686 830

Email:

iain.stewart.mp@parliament.uk

Letter: Suite 102,

Milton Keynes Business Centre,
Foxhunter Drive, Linford Wood
MK14 6GD



The next Active Communities Forum will take place on CONFIRM DATE.

Your Neighbourhood Policing Team Central Bletchley and Fenny Stratford



Inspector James RAVENALL Sergeant Thomas NEILSON PC David SMITH PC John HAYLE PC Nazia HUSSAIN



PCSO Louise BAILEY PCSO Nathan BALL PCSO Mandy BEARE PCSO Ashley CLARKE



PCSO David NIXON PCSO Chelsea PRESTIGE PCSO Clare WALTON

Your neighbourhood policing team are working on issues identified by the local community and the police.

To contact them call: 101

This is a non-emergency number

Alternatively, email them on:

MKBletchleyCluster@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

www.thamesvalley.police.uk



Neighbourhood Policing
Working in partnership to make our community safer

Community Noticeboard

Citizens Advice MK – Free confidential advice on subjects including debt and housing
Freephone 0808 278 7991

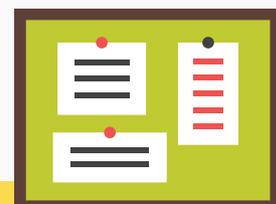
Age UK MK – Support for Older People -
01908 550 700

MK Money Lifeline – Call 0300 1235 198

MK Act – Domestic Abuse Charity - 0344 375 4307

Samaritans - Mental Health Support -
Call for Free 116 123

Carers MK - Supports the health and wellbeing of carers - 01908 231 703



Newsletter dates for 2023

Alongside our quarterly newsletter, The Neighbour, we send out our monthly e-newsletter (which you can subscribe to via our website). If you would like to have an article or share an update about local events in either The Neighbour newsletter or our e-newsletter, please contact Ruth Kent, our Projects and Media Officer. You can get in contact by emailing: ruth.kent@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk, calling 01908 735 114 or via Facebook Messenger.

Delivery Date	Deadline Date to send in content to be included in the newsletter
April 2023	Friday 10 March 2023
July 2023	Friday 9 June 2023
October 2023	Friday 13 September 2023

Head over to our new website where you can sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter updates about local events, support available and the ongoing work of the town council. Simply sign up with your email at the bottom of our website's homepage: www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Advertising in our newsletter

We will now be including two advertisement pages in our quarterly newsletter. We deliver our newsletter to over 8000 households.



The cost charges for advertisements are the following:

Full page advertisement - £172.80

Half page advertisement - £90

Quarter page advertisement - £49.20

Please note all prices include VAT.

There will be space for two pages of advertising in each newsletter, with up to one page available for commercial advertising and up to one page for community and/or charity advertising.

Non-profit organisations, supported by a copy of their constitution/rules plus a set of accounts, and registered charities may qualify for free advertising but this is not guaranteed.

Advertisers from within Bletchley and Fenny Stratford will receive priority and the editor's decision on advertising inclusion will be final.

If you would like to advertise in the next edition of The Neighbour, which will be delivered to our residents in April 2023, then please do contact Ruth, our Projects and Media Officer. You can get in contact by emailing:

ruth.kent@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk, calling 01908 735 114 or via Facebook Messenger.

There is more information, including our Advertising Policy, on our website: www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Councillors

Newton Leys

Chair
Cllr Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson

ethaniel.kellywilson@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Ismail Hussein

ismail.hussein@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Uche Osumili

uche.osumili@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Central Bletchley

Vice Chair
Cllr Richard Graham

richard.graham@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Queensway & Denbigh North

Cllr Ron Haine

ron.haine@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Shay Elhasoglu

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cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Manor South

Cllr Keith Ely

keith.ely@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Ayesha Khanom

ayasha.khanom@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Terry Stephens

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cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Granby

Cllr Mohammad Imran

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cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Manor North

Cllr Liz Campbell

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Manor North & Eaton Leys

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Eaton North

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Cllr Axel Segebrecht

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Cllr Michael McDonald

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cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Gavin Bedford

gavin.bedford@
cldr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Contact Us

Phone 01908 649 469

Website: www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Email: info@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

The Town Council's main office is based at Sycamore House, Drayton Road, Water Eaton, Bletchley, MK2 3RR
These offices are currently open to the public between 9am-1pm on Mondays and 9am-4pm on other weekdays.

The best way to keep up to date is by following us on our social media channels.

