

## Questions

- 1 Why are all the Town Council's meetings held at Newton Leys Pavilion? Why can some of them not be held in the Community Centre in George Street?**

***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:***

The decision about when and where to hold meetings is made by councillors. Since the meeting room at Bletchley Library became unavailable for public use the town council has held meetings at Newton Leys Pavilion, Fenny Stratford Community Centre, Sycamore House or Spotlight. Most regular meetings have been held at Newton Leys Pavilion because there is a suitable room of sufficient size which can accommodate full council plus a reasonable number of residents and there is good parking and disabled access. Our meeting room at Sycamore House is only suitable for small committee meetings. Spotlight is also not suitable for the configuration required for large committees or full council. Parking near Fenny Stratford Community Centre can be difficult for those who cannot access the building on foot so Newton Leys Pavilion was preferred.

Councillors considered alternating meetings between Newton Leys and Fenny Stratford. However, to maximise revenue and promote local use of the community centres it is more beneficial to use just one for regular council meetings rather than alternating venues. This allows block bookings on Tuesday evenings to remain available for the community at Fenny Stratford Community Centre.

The town council's future plan is to hold its meetings at Sycamore Hall once the building has been refurbished. Meanwhile arrangements have been made to record and webcast council meetings via YouTube which take place at Newton Leys Pavilion starting from the annual meeting of the council in May 2023. This will allow residents to observe or participate remotely if they are unable to be physically present.

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- 2 Exactly which areas will the Town Council be responsible for when it takes over landscaping from Milton Keynes City Council? Will the Town Council receive any money from the City Council, or will the full cost have to be met by residents through the parish precept?**

***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:***

The Town Council will be responsible for landscaping maintenance of all areas owned by Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) and currently maintained by their landscaping contractor with the exclusion of

- the Blue Lagoon
- Manor Road cemetery
- Lakes estate regeneration sites
- grid road verges.

Privately owned land including public open space which has not been adopted by the city council or the town council will not be included..

The town council will receive an annual financial grant from MKCC equivalent to the payment that would be made to the city council's contractor if they were to undertake the same work. The town council will then be responsible for any costs above the amount of the grant.

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- 3 When the Neighbourhood Plan currently under preparation is finalised, what standing will the plan have when Milton Keynes City Council considers planning issues relating to the parish? Will the City Council have to abide with what is set out in the plan, or will the document merely be one which it will need to 'take account of' (that is, ignore when it clashes with something the council wants to do or see done)?**

***Response provided by Milton Keynes City Council:***

Following a successful 'yes' vote at referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan would become part of the Development Plan for Milton Keynes, alongside other documents including Plan:MK, the Site Allocations Plan, the Minerals Local Plan and the Waste Plan Development Plan Document. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict - unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently (e.g. in a review of Plan:MK).

- 4 What plans are in place for resident consultation about the latest Neighbourhood Plan with support from resident associations? Could there be an opportunity to use a unit in the Brunel centre for wider engagement activity to raise awareness?**

**Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council**

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has overseen an extensive programme of community engagement to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan at different stages of development. Details of this are provided on the Neighbourhood Plan website

<https://www.bfsnp.org.uk/>

along with the current project plan for the neighbourhood plan itself. At the time of this meeting the steering group is focussing on collection of evidence and policy development. There will be further community engagement at later stages of the plan the next being most likely to take place in September 2023. The detailed form and timetable for this engagement will be informed by the outcomes of the current stage as will the location of events. A unit in the Brunel Centre could be used if practicable.

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- 5 I believe that some years ago, the Town Council agreed to contribute towards the cost of PCSOs operating in the area. Does the council still do so? If it does, how much does it make available and on what basis is the funding made available, and does the council believe it receives value for money?**

***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:***

No, the Town Council does not contribute towards to the cost of PCSOs operating locally and has not done so during the last 7 years at least.

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- 6 There often feels like an invisible divide between residents in East and West Bletchley due to the division of the town into 2 Council areas. How are the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council working collaboratively with West Bletchley Council to ensure all local residents are kept well informed of development projects across the town in an accessible and inclusive way?**

***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:***

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is aware of perceptions of a “divide” between residents of West Bletchley and our area which is not always helpful. The railway line also encourages a sense of physical separation.

We recognise there are some significant differences between the communities of West Bletchley and those of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. Our primary role is to act in the best interests of our own residents. This means our position may not always correspond with West Bletchley Council’s position.

Nevertheless Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council works collaboratively with West Bletchley Council in several ways and we enjoy a positive and friendly relationship. Both councillors and officers of the two councils meet and liaise formally and informally on a regular basis. This may be on specific projects or on general matters of principle. Recently issues of mutual interest have included responses to MKDP’s acquisition of local sites in the town, work on the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford neighbourhood plan, approach to the proposed Milton Keynes Southern bypass and others. However each council will always undertake its decision making independently and separately.

The councils also have independent approaches to their publicity, communications and community consultation. Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council notifies its residents of development projects across the town (including significant sites outside our boundary) via our website, newsletters, social media posts, council agendas and public meetings which may also involve invitations to developers or planning authority officers.

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**7 What proactive measures is the Council taking to entice new and diverse businesses into Queensway high street and to promote wider Bletchley & Fenny Stratford as a tourist destination, capitalising on visitors to Bletchley Park?**

***Response provided by Milton Keynes City Council:***

Milton Keynes City Council are currently working on promoting Bletchley and Fenny Stratford as a place to do business, through one of nine projects within the Town Deal regeneration. The ‘Marketing Bletchley’ project (Active Marketing of Vacant Sites) aims to attract more businesses to locate in the area by actively promoting the regeneration programme and showcasing the commercial opportunities arising from the Town Deal. So far, MKCC have undertaken over 100 business engagements and moving forwards, we are planning on creating and developing a narrative for Bletchley and Fenny Stratford, to support in marketing the area. MKCC are working closely with Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council in delivering this project.

For further information regarding the Town Deal visit:

<https://groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk/>

Should you wish to discuss or share an idea please contact:

[info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk](mailto:info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk)

To subscribe to the Town Deal newsletter

email: [info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk](mailto:info@groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk)

***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:***

The town council has a history of seeking to attract visitors to the town centre. Recent proactive measures include provision of regular specialist markets and community events in the town centre such as the Big Street Eat, Christmas lights event and others which encourage footfall and economic activity. We hope this will lead to more interest in our town centre.

We are currently working on a digital trail project in the town centre and a range of environmental and infrastructure projects which would make the town centre more attractive and improve public realm facilities.

The town council has consistently supported policy initiatives and planning documents which would lead to the “opening up” of Bletchley town centre and improved visibility of the town centre from the railway and bus stations. The town council also seeks an eastern entrance for the railway station which could encourage rail visitors to Bletchley Park use the town centre.

The town council has worked with Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal and with officers and members of Milton Keynes City Council to influence the short- and long-term development of the town centre with the intention of making it more appealing to new businesses. Recently we offered funding to help develop a new business association and we are considering local businesses as part of our developing neighbourhood plan.

However the town council is not a landowner in the town centre and has no statutory powers which would enable it to directly “entice new and diverse businesses” into the high street.

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**Following multiple safety incidents on Queensway due to unsafe driving and parking, what action is the Council taking in the short-term to escalate and remediate this issue to ensure resident safety?**

***Response provided by Milton Keynes City Council:***

Please be assured that Milton Keynes City Council is fully aware of the concerns you have raised regarding vehicles driving and parking on the footways in Queensway.

I have checked the Council's accident data records, which show that in the past 5 years, there has been no reported accidents (collisions between vehicles and pedestrians) on the footways in Queensway. This data has been verified by the Council's Senior Road Safety Engineer.

I can confirm that under Section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 (as amended), it is an offence to drive onto a pavement or footway (to park or otherwise), which at present can only be enforced by the Police. However, the Council is able to issue a penalty charge notice to any vehicle that is parked on the footway where waiting or loading is prohibited (through a traffic regulation Order and associated signs and/or road markings). Unfortunately, at present there are sections of Queensway where the footways are unrestricted and therefore, the Council does not have any powers to currently enforce when vehicles are parked there.

The Council has increased its level of parking enforcement on Queensway, which is patrolled more frequently than any other road in Bletchley and between October 2022 and February 2023 the Council issued 96 penalty charge notices in Queensway, which was more than any other road outside of Central Milton Keynes.

The biggest challenge that we face with parking enforcement in Central Bletchley, is that many of the offending motorists (parked on the footway) are keeping a look out and drive away when they see a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) approaching. This prevents the Council from issuing a PCN. When issuing a penalty charge notice, the CEO is required to gather sufficient evidence to prove that the vehicle was in contravention at the time the PCN was issued, this includes photographs of the vehicle parked on the footway.

We are also working with the Town Council to install large (heavy) concrete planters along those parts of the footway (in Queensway), in order to physically prevent vehicles from being able to access the footway in the first instance. The planters are due to be installed this year.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Central Bletchley and issue penalty charge notices to any vehicle that we come across contravening the parking restrictions.

***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council:***

The town council, working in partnership with Milton Keynes City Council, will be co-funding three projects during 2023-24 which may contribute to remediation of these problems. The projects include

- provision of additional signage directing motorists to the Bletchley Leisure Centre multi storey car park

- provision of concrete flower planters in part of Queensway to deter pavement parking
- acquisition and deployment of speed indication devices to mitigate speeding in parts of our area.

The town council is not the highways authority; it has no parking enforcement powers and there is a limit to its influence in achieving a safe town centre. We have consistently advocated with Milton Keynes City Council at the most senior levels for a multi-pronged approach to our parking problems. We have also engaged with Thames Valley police on this matter. It is hoped that future developments in the town centre especially the outcome of longer-term Town Deal investment plan projects will facilitate a more integrated design-led approach to parking and safety.

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## **Proposal**

**Being made aware that West Bletchley Parish Council has a “Parking Education Officer”, I am proposing that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council considers establishing a similar post.**

### ***Response provided by Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council***

The town council is always willing to consider proposals and ideas put forward by residents of the area. On the assumption that this proposal will be supported by those attending the annual meeting of electors the clerk to the council will ensure this suggestion is considered by the town council at the earliest practicable opportunity.