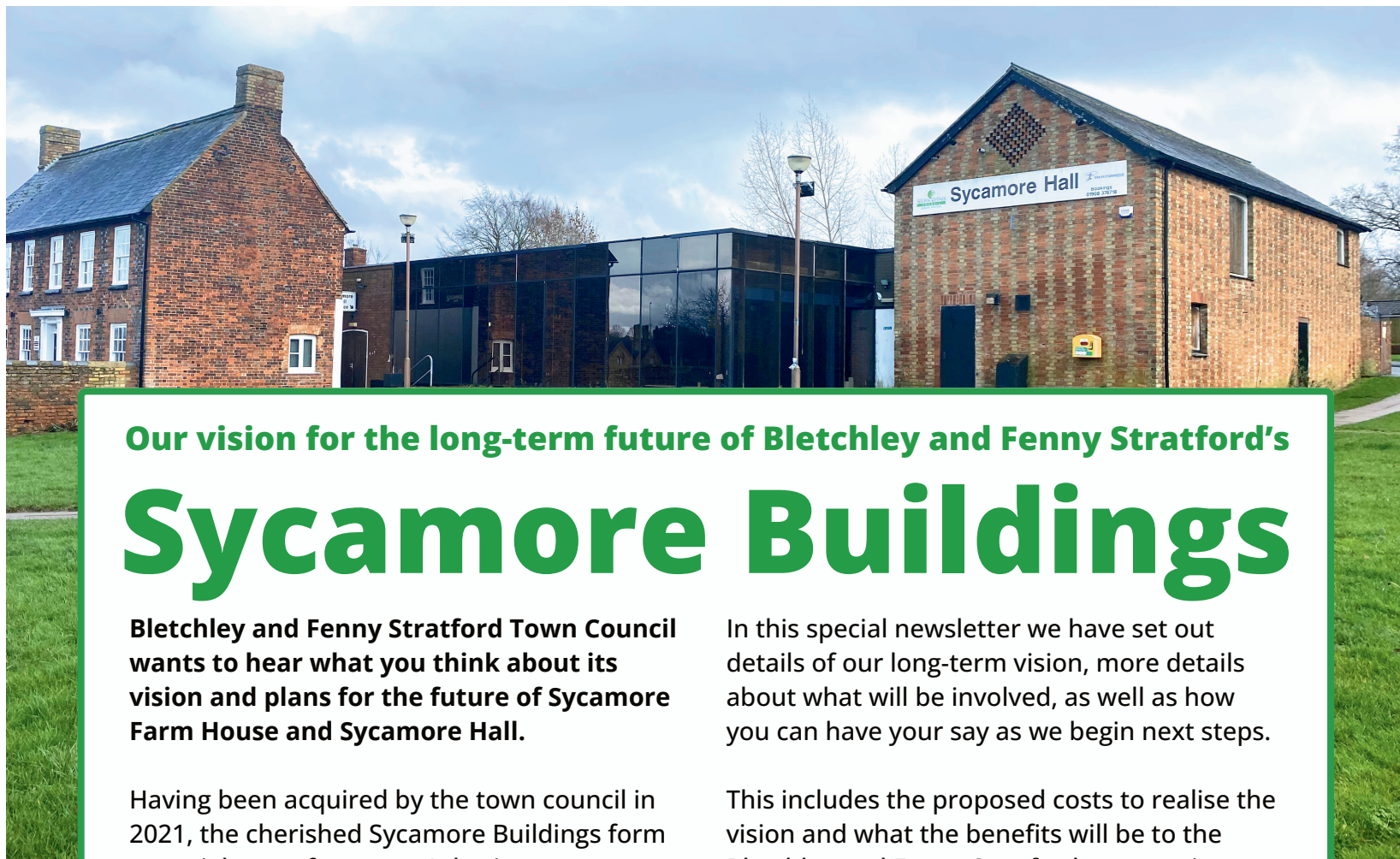


The Neighbour SPECIAL EDITION



Sycamore Buildings Update and Consultation - Spring 2024



Our vision for the long-term future of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford's

Sycamore Buildings

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council wants to hear what you think about its vision and plans for the future of Sycamore Farm House and Sycamore Hall.

Having been acquired by the town council in 2021, the cherished Sycamore Buildings form a crucial part of our town's heritage.

As well as serving as the town council's offices, the council has worked with the community to develop a plan for how the buildings could become a sustainable hub at the centre of our community. Our vision includes physically joining the buildings to create an inclusive venue that supports social, recreational, cultural, youth and educational activities.

In this special newsletter we have set out details of our long-term vision, more details about what will be involved, as well as how you can have your say as we begin next steps.

This includes the proposed costs to realise the vision and what the benefits will be to the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford community.

Discover more about our plans by visiting www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk. You can also scan the QR code below to hear a message from Cllr Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson, Chair of the town council, who sets out the council's long-term vision for the Sycamore Buildings.



ALSO IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- Community Awards 2024
- Digital Heritage Trail
- Become a town councillor
- Community Contacts
- Dates for your diary
- Councillor contacts

The Neighbour CONTENTS

Page 2 - History of our
town's Sycamore Buildings

Page 3 - Bringing the
Sycamore Buildings back
into use

Page 4 - An accessible,
inclusive venue that's fit
for the future

Page 5 - The renovation
plans so far

Page 6 - What's involved
and how to have your say

Page 7 - The Bletchley and
Fenny Stratford
Community Awards 2024

Page 8 - Dates for your diary

Page 9 - Digital Heritage Trail

Page 10 - Town Council
elections 02 May 2024

Page 11 - Local contacts and
community updates

Page 12 - Bletchley & Fenny
Stratford Town Councillors



History of our town's Sycamore Buildings



Sycamore Farm House is a mid 18th Century Grade II listed building in the centre of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.

Designed by the prestigious architectural partnership of Faulker-Brown, Hendy, Watkinson, Stonor, (who also designed the former iconic Bletchley Leisure Centre), Sycamore Hall visually links the house with the old barn on the farm site via a community building boasting a smoked glass façade, exposed brickwork and other features popular in the 1970s and 1980s.

Though the two buildings are physically separate, the community building was the home of the Sycamore Club and provided a venue for various community and social activities. Many residents will remember attending wedding receptions, parties, awards ceremonies, sports activities and even pre-school in the building.



*The Rockets play
Sycamore Hall 2002 -
Bletchley School 1953-
56 reunion. Photo
credit: Living Archive*

*Sycamore Hall (formerly
Sycamore Farm) Water
Eaton 1978. Photo
credit: Living Archive*



How the town council has worked to bring Sycamore Farm House and Sycamore Hall back into use...

Sycamore Farm House is a charming Grade II listed gem from the 18th Century, that sits right in the heart of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.

Purchased by the town council in 2021, this historical site has now become the home and offices of the town council, safeguarding an important part of our local heritage.

At the same time, the town council also acquired Sycamore Hall, next door to Sycamore Farm House, through a community handover from Milton Keynes City Council.

While the farm house is holding up well for its age, the limited disabled access and strict listed building rules make it difficult to make the building wheelchair-friendly.

At the time of the acquisition of Sycamore Hall this building was in minimal use by the public and needed substantial renovation. It is a building of its time with virtually no insulation in the walls or roof,



an unusable heating system and a single glazed glass wall which is draughty and insecure. It also has no disabled toilets.

Since taking on the two buildings, the town council has worked with the community to explore ways to rejuvenate the Farm House and Hall to once again put them at the centre of community life in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford.



Cllr Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson picks up the keys to Sycamore House back in November 2021.



We believe Sycamore Hall can once again be a thriving venue at the heart of our community



Extensive renovation work is still required to make Sycamore Hall fit for the future.

Our long-term vision and plan: An accessible, inclusive venue that serves our community every day

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council's vision is that the two Sycamore buildings will be physically joined together, in order to become a hub at the centre of the community for decades to come.

This hub can then accommodate a wide range of locally-based social, recreational, cultural, youth and educational activities.

Joining the buildings will allow for the creation of a new entrance and reception area with disabled access throughout the Hall and the ground floor of Sycamore House.

The combined buildings will be modernised to enhance the flexibility of use and to improve the carbon footprint of the building, making it more sustainable. The building will also support delivery of vital local services, such as the Foodbank collection point, information and advice services, youth activities and community events. The location of the Sycamore Buildings in the centre of our area means it is accessible for all residents.

In recent years Bletchley and Fenny Stratford has lost community meeting spaces at Bletchley Library and the Warren. In the near future the Spotlight building at Serpentine Court will also be demolished as part of the Lakes regeneration.

Although a new community space is planned, this will not replace all the lost space and information about its planned use is not available to the town council at the present time.

Meanwhile the number of households in our area has increased over the past 10 years, with the population for our town now standing at 21,500 (2021 census data) and our current community buildings are already well used on a daily basis.

Following consultation with the community, planning permission for the proposed alterations to the building was sought and granted by Milton Keynes City Council in October 2023 (Application no: 23/01793/FUL).

The town council is now consulting with residents and the wider community on next steps.



**Plans for the future:
The town council has engaged consultants to create detailed plans for the future of the much-loved Sycamore Buildings.**



What the Sycamore Buildings renovation plans include so far...

All of the space will be available to the wider community and to organisations working in our area to provide local services and support for our residents. Plans for the new building so far include:

- **Construction of a physical link between buildings with an accessible entrance and reception area**
- **Refurbishment of a café / bar area and kitchen**
- **Small meeting/counselling rooms**
- **Multi use community hall suitable for physical, social and general activities**
- **Hybrid meeting room and training facilities in barn**
- **Four office rooms for council staff on the first floor of Sycamore House**
- **Raising of the roof of Sycamore Hall to allow introduction of insulation and insulation of the barn**
- **Replacement of the single glazed glass façade with double or triple glazing**
- **Strip out of asbestos, obsolete electrics and gas heating system and replacement with electric heating**
- **New disabled toilets**
- **Reconfiguration of common spaces**

What local groups and others have to say about our plans

"This new community building with its cafe and multipurpose community space is not just a want, but a necessity for our area. It will be a place where residents can come together, share stories, support one another in health and wellbeing and make use of valuable services needed for the area. We're excited to see the project complete and become an immediate resource for all residents"

– **Locals of the Lakes Community Group**

"There is an urgent need in the area for a central venue where young people can get together during their leisure time for clubs and projects. For many years there has been no suitable venue with a community hall and kitchen that can provide a safe place for young people to regularly socialise, play sports and games, take part in creative activities and learn new skills. We've been waiting for such a venue for a number of years and it can't come soon enough for the needs of local young people"

– **Youth Network Project**

Likely costs, what's next and how to have your say on the future of our Sycamore Buildings

Why is the town council doing this now?

We are soon losing the Spotlight community building, from where we currently deliver services. As a result, there is an urgent need to find alternative, long-term provision to deliver a range of community services.

The council took on the Sycamore Buildings back in 2021 knowing that it would require renovation. The council has taken time to carefully assess what is necessary to make the Sycamore Buildings into a cherished community asset that our area needs.

Planning and conservation teams have also been consulted to ensure we treat the project with care and sensitivity, whilst seeking to protect and enhance the buildings. The council has looked at phasing the refurbishment of the building over a longer period but after studying high level costings for the work has determined that this would add considerably to the overall cost.

What are the likely costs involved?

The estimated cost of the Sycamore Buildings Project is £1,562,295. The town council has allocated £650,000 from its capital programme and general reserve and plans that the balance of the project will be funded by a combination of grants, fundraising and borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board. It is very common for local councils to borrow funds in this way to help deliver projects such as renovating the Sycamore Buildings.

It may be necessary to borrow up to £750,000 over a period of up to 35 years depending on how much funding can be raised by other means. It is planned that borrowing will be kept to a minimum and, based on interest rates at the time of writing, it is not planned to increase the precept (the council's share of council tax) to meet the loan repayments.



What happens if the council does 'nothing'?

Since the town council acquired both Sycamore Farm House and Sycamore Hall back in 2021, we have engaged with the community to develop a long-term vision and plan to bring the buildings back into wider community use. We believe the Sycamore Buildings, which sit at the very heart of our town, can become a sustainable, inclusive community asset that everyone can enjoy.

If the council fails to act, and to act in a way that is fit for the future, the buildings will continue to fall into disrepair, which will saddle the council with an even larger financial liability in the longer term.

How can I have my say on the plans?

To discover more and to have your say on the consultation, please visit the council's website at <https://www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk/>. Alternatively you can drop into any of the council's information sessions over the coming weeks. See our website for more details or call us on 01908 649469. The consultation runs until 24 March 2024, so please ensure you have your say before then.

**Have your say on our plans for the Sycamore Buildings at:
www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk**



Community Awards 2024

These awards are our way of thanking exceptional people, groups and businesses for the tremendous work they do within our community.

There are 8 categories and the judging panel is made up of town councillors. **Nominations close: 30th May 2024, 5pm**

Culture Award

- For those people who have made a contribution to artistic or cultural projects

Sport Award

- For those people who have made a significant contribution to sport

Customer Service Award

- For those businesses in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford who offer the best customer service

Climate Champion Award

- For those whose actions contribute positively towards a carbon-neutral future, reduced energy use or greater environmental resilience

Volunteer or Charity Award

- For those people who work incredibly hard for the community with little recognition. Nominations need not be for volunteering only

Young Volunteer or Charity (under 21)

- This is for young people who deserve recognition for volunteering regularly or have raised money for charity

Lifetime Achievement Award

- For those people who have gone that extra mile for our local community during their life

Best Allotment - one from each site

- All allotments across the community awards are inspected monthly and will be shortlisted. This shortlist will be visited by our judges in June for a winner to be selected

The awards will be presented at:



Nomination form can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/BFSTCAWARDS2024>

Or downloaded and printed from

<https://www.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk/>

Dates for your diary



Join us for Easter fun on Stanier Square.

Saturday 30th March from 11am.

Hunt the clues along Queensway to solve the puzzle and win a chocolate easter egg (vegan and gluten free options available).

Meet the Easter Bunny, take part in free easter crafts and collect your clue pack from the bandstand on Stanier Square.

Its going to be very *egg-citing*! Free to attend and take part. Event runs from 11am to 2pm.



Saturday 27th July 2024

The Big Street Eat summer festival is back for the third year.

This time we are celebrating the spirit of the Olympics and the wide range of food, sports and countries that are part of it.

With lots of free entertainment for the whole family.

Thursday 31st October 11am -3pm

Join our new autumn event at Leon Recreational grounds, Bletchley

Free to attend Halloween Pumpkin Patch with games, fancy dress, craft, food, drink and treats plus celebrate autumn with our apple day theme.



Saturday 7th December

Festive fun returns to Queensway. Join our annual Santa dash, ride the train, meet Santa and lots more.

Save the date!

Join us in crafting Bletchley & Fenny Stratford's Digital Heritage Trail!



What's the Project About?

We're embarking on an exciting journey to create a Digital Heritage Trail that will guide locals and visitors through the fascinating history of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford. Your involvement will be crucial in identifying significant places of interest and finalising the perfect route.

How Can You Contribute?

Local Knowledge: Your familiarity with the area is invaluable. Help us uncover hidden stories, historical facts, and noteworthy landmarks.

Route Finalisation: Join us in mapping out the trail, ensuring it captures the essence of our community's heritage.



If you are interested in taking part please contact:
info@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



CALLING ALL COMMUNITY HEROES



**BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD TOWN COUNCIL
NEEDS CANDIDATES FOR ELECTIONS IN MAY 2024!**

MAKE A CHANGE
BECOME A COUNCILLOR

TO FIND OUT MORE, CONTACT:

Delia Shephard - Town Clerk on 01908 649469 or
at clerk@bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk

Nomination papers must be delivered to Milton
Keynes City Council by 4pm on 5 April 2024

Local Contacts and Updates



Community Noticeboard

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

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



Milton Keynes City Council Ward Councillors



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 Waqas Ahmad
email: waqas.ahmad@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



Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Councillors

Newton Leys

Chair

Cllr Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson

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



Cllr Ismail Hussein

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



Cllr Uche Osumili

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



Central Bletchley

Vice Chair

Cllr Richard Graham

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



Queensway & Denbigh North

Cllr Ron Haine

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



Cllr Jay Joshi

jay.joshi@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Manor South

Cllr Keith Ely

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



Cllr Ayesha Khanom

ayesha.khanom@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Terry Stephens

terry.stephens@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Granby

Casual Vacancy

Manor North

Cllr Liz Campbell

liz.campbell@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Manor North & Eaton Leys

Casual Vacancy

Eaton North

Cllr Samantha Browne

samantha.browne@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Andrew Palmer

andrew.palmer@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Ed Hume

ed.hume@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Fenny Stratford

Cllr E'Amonn O'Rourke

eamonn.orourke@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Axel Segebrecht

axel.segebrecht@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Othelia Fernandes

othelia.fernandes@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Eaton South

Cllr Mariee Wymer

mariee.wymer@
cllr.bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk



Cllr Gavin Bedford

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



Casual Vacancy



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.



Please recycle me when you've finished reading

