

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford held on Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 7.30 pm at Newton Leys Pavilion

ATM2024-1

Welcome

The Chair of the Town Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Milton Keynes City councillors and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council councillors present. It was noted that Thames Valley Police sent their apologies but could not provide a representative due to operational reasons. TVP has also offered to provide written answers to any questions raised at the meeting.

ATM2024-2

Minutes

The minutes of The Annual Meeting of Electors in 2023 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

ATM2024-3

Review of the work of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

The Chair introduced the Annual Report and draft Accounts of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council hard copies of which were available at the meeting. Chairs from each of the town council's standing committees highlighted aspects of work undertaken during 2023-24 and slides from their presentations are appended to these minutes. It was noted that soft copies of the annual report were available on the Town Council website, social media and from the main office.

ATM2024-4

Review of the Work of Milton Keynes City Council

Cllr Ed Hume (Bletchley East Ward) reported on work including connecting communities by building a new red way through the blue lagoon linking up Newton Leys with the Lakes Estate off Water Eaton Road. A further footpath from Eaton Leys had improved connections from the development to central Bletchley. Work to reduce the smell from the landfill has been undertaken and the pressure to keep this at bay will continue.

Cllr Waqas Ahmed (Bletchley Park Ward) gave an update on casework undertaken and noted that working with local resident associations was continuing to help improve issues in the area.

Cllr Mohammed Khan (Bletchley East Ward) shared an update about concerns he is working on including the parking in the town centre and invited people to attend Spotlight on the Lakes for his councillor surgery each Thursday at 10am.

Cllr Emily Darlington (Bletchley East Ward) reported on strategic priorities and highlights over the past year including work finally starting on the Lakes Estate with almost 200 new homes being built. Rowlands Close had parking spaces put in and the tranquillity community garden was now open. Bletchley Pathfinder was up and running to help integrate the different health providers and create a Team Bletchley approach to health and wellbeing. Cllr Darlington ended by saying that she would be building on the White Ribbon initiative which was so important both in the wider city and in Bletchley.

ATM2024-5

Presentation from John Cove, Chair of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board

John Cove gave a presentation on aspects of the Town Deal which is appended to these minutes. John shared information about how the £22.7m awarded to the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal was being spent. The nine projects that form the core of the Town Deal were explained in detail and attendees were able to ask questions on the delivery of the programme. John shared news that a

public consultation on proposals affecting Bletchley town centre would take place over the summer from July to September 2024.

ATM024-6

Parking and traffic management in Bletchley

Simon Willison from the consultancy AECOM gave a detailed presentation on a Bletchley parking capacity study which had been commissioned by Milton Keynes City Council. Simon shared slides highlighting the key findings on current provision and usage of car parking both in Bletchley town centre and in Fenny Stratford. It was confirmed that the data and options for improvements were being considered by MKCC as was the funding needed to implement changes.

A statement from MKCC was also provided to the meeting as follows:

“In addition to the local parking issues in Bletchley and Fenny that the study has helped to identify, the (MKCC) team has heard the clear message about parking enforcement and the Council’s seemingly lax approach to illegally parked vehicles that has been delivered by the community in their responses to this parking study – and indeed to many other transport consultations and engagements we have undertaken across MK recently.

Consequently, the City Council will review its entire approach to parking controls and enforcement across the Council administrative area, commencing with a major public consultation exercise starting next month.

This engagement exercise will seek stakeholders’ views on whether they would support a stricter approach to parking enforcement across MKCC, an expansion of our civil enforcement officer numbers, the introduction of tow-aways for pavement parking, the creation of a council car pound, the introduction of camera enforcement for some moving traffic offences and a number of other changes to how we deal with illegal parking. We would urge those residents and businesses who would be supportive of such changes to respond to our consultation, and we will share the URL when the survey goes live.

Obviously, a change of parking strategy in this direction will require political approvals, as it will clearly not be popular with everyone and would represent a significant change of our approach, but the engagement exercise will be important to inform us of the depth of feelings on this issue.

We would therefore urge you to give us your views when the survey goes live early next month.”

Members of the public were able to ask questions and make observations though there was insufficient time for all the potential contributions. Overall residents were very concerned about parking issues in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford including on residential roads as well as in the town centres and several highlighted concerns about safety and accessibility.

ATM2024-7

Feedback from community organisations working in Bletchley and Fenny Stratford during 2024

A report was given by a representative from Friends of Bletchley Station who explained how a grant provided by the Town Council was used to benefit Bletchley train station and the local community by producing informative posters.

ATM2024-8

Questions or proposals from electors

The Chair shared questions and answers that were sent before the meeting. These are appended to these minutes and copies were made available at the meeting.

ATM2024-9

Date of next Annual Meeting

The Chair noted that the provisional date for the next meeting was 13 May 2025, he thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

**Annual Meeting of Electors
of
Bletchley and Fenny Stratford**

Tuesday 14 May 2024

Questions received from residents in advance of the meeting with written answers.

Q1 For Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) and Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council (BFSTC)

What is being done to support businesses in Bletchley high street (ie Queensway/Chandos Place) to thrive while all the development works are happening and to reduce disruption to trading during building works and construction?

MKCC response: We are still finalising plans for this construction works. However, we will explore all options to ensure that businesses are supported during the construction programme. This will include continued promotion of businesses, retaining access and exploring phased works so that any disruption to individual businesses is reduced as much as possible. Further information will be available as plans are firmed up.

BFSTC response: At this stage it is too early to say what arrangements will be made to minimise disruption to use of the town centre when construction of projects begin. However, the town council will be notified of plans by MKCC and will work with that authority to both influence the arrangements and publicise them. Meanwhile the town council continues to promote local businesses via its local directory, regular articles in our newsletter and website and social media posts.

Q2 For MKCC

How will the next phase of consultation ensure it is accessible for the widest possible demographic of the community?

MKCC response: MKCC are planning a programme of summer consultation between July and September. Exact dates are being confirmed and will be shared with the community soon. This consultation will take place both in-person at community events such as the West Bletchley Carnival and the Bletchley Big Street Eat, as well as a series of pop-up consultation events, taking place across both Bletchley & Fenny Stratford. We will also be undertaking a series of online consultations, using our CommonPlace platform. To ensure we are reaching the widest demographic possible, we are looking to work closely with the Advisory Group, Councillors and Town Councils to help disseminate relevant information and encourage as many people as possible to attend events and provide feedback. This will include a comms campaign and sharing of information by various tools (including leafletting).

Q3 For MKCC and BFSTC

It is great to see new pathways and Redways are going in to better connect Bletchley, this is very welcome. What is being done to raise awareness of the new paths and Redways available for residents, is there a new map available for example?

BFSTC response: The town council has raised awareness of the new Redways and paths. For example, the town council's recent video showing the Redway from Newton Leys to the Blue Lagoon received 53,000 views. Now the city council has provided a new path at Eaton Leys the town council has publicised this locally via social media and in the current edition of its newsletter. The town council also has an objective in its current delivery plan to produce a local map/leaflet for residents to encourage use of the developing Redway network and we will be liaising with MKCC about this in the future.

MKCC response: MKCC will work with B&FSTC to help raise awareness and promote use of these new pathways. This will include joint comms and working with B&FSTC to produce a new local map / leaflet. Separately, we will update our website and mapping to ensure these new routes are reflected, and through our summer consultation which will also provide information on the projects that have been delivered.