

**Minutes of the Kents Hill and Monkston Parish Council's
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
held on Tuesday 5th May 2009 at 7.30pm
at the Monkston Community Centre, Monkston, Milton Keynes**

1. Members present and apologies for absence:

Councillors Laws, Janice Cockram, Maudsley, Barnes, Corbett and Kalunga were present. The Clerk was in attendance.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Clark, Smith, Bowker, Ferrans and Cockram. It was resolved to note these apologies and to accept the reasons for absence.

Ward Cllr Crooks advised that he would be unable to attend the meeting. There were no members of public attending the meeting.

2. Chairman's Report:

Cllr Laws read the Chairman's Report. The Chairman's Report is as follows:

'The Team

The Parish Council this year has been reinforced with extra Councillors co-opted to bring our number up to eleven. Councillors Dalgarno and Holliman have moved on and Councillors Brian Kalunga, Gwen Corbett, Colin Bowker, Robert Barnes and Graham Clark have joined. This number now reflects the number of households in the Parish and gives a ratio of about 360 households per Councillor. This is more or less in line with similar sized Parishes in MK. I must thank all our Councillors who have provided an input to the work of this second tier of the local system of governance. Our new Councillors have particularly been thrown in at the deep end. Councillors have agreed to be involved in particularly focused areas of our work, and I look forward to the fruit of this approach in this New Year. At this time last year Peter Laws was elected as Chair and Ken Maudsley as Vice-chair.

Mrs Amanda Wilmot continues to serve as our Parish Clerk. Her workload has again continued to build throughout the year. As a highly competent Parish Clerk, she is recognised for her competence and skills across the whole MK authority. Monthly workload now reaches and sometimes exceeds 60 hours. At her annual appraisal we continued to recognise the extra responsibilities and have placed her salary at point 33 on the LC2 scale. Holiday entitlement has been reset in line with this, and we plan to review holiday entitlement every 6 months as Amanda's workload hours shift. During this year we have managed to set up a joint arrangement for a pension provision through the services of an independent advisor and back dated our contributions to the time when we first agreed to provide a pension. I am indeed indebted to her diligence, perseverance and help to me in my role as Chair.

This year we have recruited our own newsletter delivery agent to provide a reliable and secure service. A number of suitable people applied but finally the choice went to David King a resident of Monkston. We pay for this service on an 'as completed' honorarium basis. This means that we have someone on tap if there is a need to deliver leaflets or flyers in between our iNFACT newsletter. David King's first delivery at the end of 2008 went really well and we received no complaints about non-delivery.

Communication

The Parish Council continues to support our Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG). It is chaired by Cllr. Graham Clark who took over from Cllr. Dalgarno. It is clerked by our Parish Clerk and is supported by at least two other Parish Councillors. The main focus of our NAG remains litter/trolleys and car parking. This group provides a close relationship with our local Community Police Officers and MK Council through its Safer Communities group. Although there are a few local residents who play a vital role, there is always space for a few more and especially people who can represent groups in our neighbourhoods.

Our Parish and NAG meetings continue to be held in the two locations in Kents Hill and Monkston and we hope that in due course we will find a new meeting place in Monkston Park. Members of the public continue to show interest in our meeting from time to time, especially when there is an agenda item which is controversial. Our Ward Councillors attend our meetings, but because of boundary differences, and four councillors being involved, our relationship is sometimes complicated, I won't say strained!

The Parish website continues to be a useful communication aid to open governance in the Parish. All our meeting minutes and other key documents are available to the public as downloads. We have up to 1000 hits per month and lots of communication from residents via 'contacts us' facilities on the web site.

Funding

At precept time in January this year we set a budget of £69,292 using £7,252 of our reserves so that we could maintain a standstill cost per household of £20. We have grown in size because of new house occupancy in Monkston Park to 3102. Our reserves reflect a very healthy level of £28,734.

Grant funding continues to be provided to organisations who are located here or who help local residents in our Parish. This year we provided grant funding valued at £1,800 in various amounts to Monkston Community Centre, The Air Ambulance Service, basketball coaching by Youth Services, and the MK Community Mediation Service. Grant funding to worthy causes is almost always available on a 50/50 project shared cost basis. We have an easy process for organisations to make applications, with forms available on the website.

Through the due diligence of our Parish Clerk the two part audit process, we have received extremely positive results, with only minor comments given. Our own local auditor, Chris Davies, gives a great service and we thank him for that work.

Risk analysis has been added to our work's scrutiny in the last year.

Projects

Some projects we planned to do and some we had thrust upon us, here is a brief update.

- **Allotments:** The Kents Hill allotment site was handed over to the Parish with little consultation and no funds and we have run into some difficulties which we didn't plan for. The site is subject to flooding because of the water run-off from the car parking area. We are in consultation with MKC landscaping and drainage specialists to provide a solution at no cost to us. The surrounding tree line may also need extra coppicing this year.

We have been working hard to get the two other new allotment sites operational for this growing season. This has been really difficult and time consuming because of other organisations' lack of urgency. We can however report that the Monkston Park site is close to being completed. The Monkston site, however, remains a very slow project and is likely to occupy lots more of our time this year.

- **Hygiene, Litter, etc:** Litter on our estates is a serious ongoing problem. It is a social disease in many ways and very costly to deal with. It has been a topic of both PC and NAG agendas. More bins are being provided for normal litter and Dog mess, especially on red way routes and in well used and populated areas, including the play areas. Another approach is to engage with the schools, which we hope to proceed with later this year.

Tesco trolleys continue to blight our landscape. We have met with them on two occasions now, together with MKC streetcare colleagues, looking for equitable solutions. Regular collections have been gradually improving the situation

- **Youth, Play sessions & Play areas:** We were unsuccessful with our Monkston Park MUGA proposal, because of local opposition and the project has been scrapped. Wisley Pound play area in Kents Hill is now being considered for improvement in its facilities by MKC leisure services. New funding is being made available for facilities such as these.

The Monkston Youth Club has been shut down because of bad behaviour and venue damage and so the Youth worker financial support has been curtailed as we search for better suited accommodation. Meanwhile, together with our MKC Youth Services partners we are investigating outdoor youth club sessions through the summer months.

The Parish Council continues to provide play sessions for the 5 -14 age group during the school holidays facilitated through the services of the Play Association, the most popular play provider in MK.

- **Parking, Streets, Vehicles and traffic:** Difficulties with car parking in our estates has been on everyone's agenda. The estates have been designed to government minimum specification which clearly is not good enough in practice. Residents in several streets insist on inappropriate parking especially on pavements. Solutions are hard to find, especially in the current low spend economy. The Parish Council have been working with the MKC Continuous Improvement team, seeking new ideas and solutions. Throughout the winter an experiment in Easby Grove, Monkston has been conducted with a view to parking on grass verges without destroying them, the jury is out on this idea at the moment. This area of our interest is set to run and run.

Heavy delivery trucks continue to service mini market outlets in Kents Hill and Monkston Park. These are inappropriate vehicles for the estate sized roads, they are dangerous and cause road damage, especially blocked paving and mini roundabouts.

Adoptions of our estate streets continues, albeit slowly. Un-adopted Monkston streets are now down to just a few. Monkston Park adoptions should be completed this year.

Street marking outside Monkston Primary school is being upgraded to comply with the current legislation and at the same time traffic direction changed.

Bedgebury Place, the ex-DeMontefort University student accommodation in lower Kents Hill, is to be demolished, pending re-evaluation of development plans for the area by HCA.

There are a number of other agenda items which will occupy our attention in the forthcoming year. These include, Cold Calling Zones, bird droppings in underpasses, devolvement of MKC work to the Parish, interaction with the Oakgrove development especially in the grid road structure, Monkston Park community centre provision and some others as they come along.

I would like to thank my Councillor colleagues for their support and their time and consideration. Each year we seem to accumulate more work and issues to deal with. What we are trying to do, is to draw our residents along with our ideas for more cohesive and caring communities and a common purpose to build socially acceptable ways of living together on the estates in our Parish. In many ways a daunting task!

I commend this annual report to the Parish Council for their acceptance.

Peter Laws
Chair, Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council
May 5th 2009'

The Councillors accepted the report. The Councillors thanked Cllr Laws for his support and guidance through the year.

3. Approval of Minutes:

It was proposed and agreed that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 12th May 2008 were a true record of the meeting and these were duly signed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45pm and was immediately followed by the Annual Council Meeting of the Parish Council.