

May 2023

Good evening residents, members and officers. Welcome to the Annual Parish Meeting.

It has been an honour and a challenge to preside as Chair of the Council since taking over from Cllr Cox in September of last year.

Of all the work the council has undertake in the last 12 months, seeing the results of providing more visible services to the community has been a highlight. Decisions to employ a part-time warden, host weekly fitness classes and provide an outdoor community cinema event have given the Parish Council a more visible presence in the community and will hopefully lead to even greater engagement.

The key driver for the Parish Council is to listen and pay attention to the needs of the community. Whilst following its protocols and rules any issue brought to our attention will be heard and, although progress can appear slow, we always try our our best to help.

The past year has had its ups and downs not only for the parish but for the county as a whole.

The community came together to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II reign of 70 years, marking the Jubilee with a well attended outdoor cinema event. Our thanks go all Councillors who help organise and attend this event as well as Monkston School for hosting us on their playing fields.

It was with sadness that later in the year the Parish learned of the death of her majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Another outdoor cinema event to celebrate and mark King Charles III Coronation was due to be held in Monkston School. Unfortunately, this was postponed due to poor weather. The Parish council will endeavour to reschedule this event later in the year,

This past year saw the council take a greater step towards improving our natural environment by planting new or replacing dead trees throughout the Parish. Further planting is under constant review. We also saw a big increase in interest for our allotments plots and I have particularly welcomed seeing new faces at Monkston Park allotment site during the Spring.

The council is always looking to increase it presence and assist where it can in the community. Councillors have worked hard over the past year and were able to increase output in many areas over 2022-2023 financial year.

Highlights of the past year include:

- Providing free Weekly fitness classes for those needing to start getting fit or recover from illness or injury.
- Providing Children's climbing sessions for those with physical or learning disabilities as part of our youth outreach.
- Continued Funding Citizen's Advice Bureau sessions at Kingston library.
- Following the successful installation at Kent Hill Church the Council funded the installation of a defibrillator located at Monkston Community Centre.
- The council funded and is awaiting installation of Play area improvements to Lanercost in Monkston.
- Improved access and security at allotments with hedge pruning and a new fences.

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- Replaced litter and dog bins and provided new bins within increased bin emptying.
- Ordered and planted more new trees to replace dead ones.
- Provided litter picking equipment to support community led litter picks and organised our own litter picking events.
- Employing a part-time Warden. The wardens work not only involves assisting the Clerk with the allotments but also being the eyes and ears on the ground, inspecting council assets and also informing relevant authorities of issues within the parish.

Our Parish is keen to work with Milton Keynes Council, as they themselves under go a transition, one that may result in our Parish taking over more functions that may be dissolved from their responsibility, such as landscaping and Asset Transfers. Discussions on which are at a very early stage.

It is fantastic to see Councillors' commitment and enthusiasm for their roles. Councillors are without a doubt fantastic assets to the Council and community.

I would like to thank outgoing Cllr Bounou-Pouaty for spearheading the fitness class and for his long service to the council. I wish him well for the future.

Thanks go to Cllr Chandra for bringing community matters, including parking issues, to the council attention and also providing his experience to ratify council procedures.

I would like to thank Cllr Cox for fulfilling the role of Chair up until September of last year and continuing on as Vice-chair. He has helped organise, amongst other things, the youth outreach climbing sessions, defibrillator installation and meetings relating to the potential CAT transfer.

I would like to thank to Cllr Ferrans for her incredible commitment and work undertaken over the past year. Not only has she spearhead some of our projects and been the point of contact dealing with MKC, she is also Chair of the HR committee in what has been a challenging year. Her work alongside the Clerk in analysing and preparing the council budget has been very much appreciated.

I would like to thank the other members on the HR committee, Cllr Dersley and Cllr Fisher, for their valuable input throughout the year and also Cllr Dersleys' work in organising the community cinema events which is greatly appreciated by all Councillors and community alike.

This year saw elections within our parish council. It is great to see that for the first time in a few years all councillor position are filled. I would like to welcome the new councillors to the Council. One of them is returning once again to serve the Parish and others for the the first time, who I am sure will bring experience that will greatly improve our ability to communicate with our residence.

Finally, thanks go to our Clerk and RFO Cliff Schraibman who has ensured all aspects of running the Council have been completed and despite many pressures has maintained a professional and measured approach.

It is hoped that this year sees even more community engagement and the Council invites all to engage and attend its meetings, events and activities.

Councillor Paul Grindley