



Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council

9th January 2025

An ORDINARY MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL will be held on **Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7.00pm at Monkston Community Centre, St. Bartholomews, Monkston, MK10 9FJ** and the following business will be transacted. All Councillors are summoned to attend.

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend the meeting. Subject to Standing Order 3(m), a person who attends a Council meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To 'report' means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later, or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.

Ryan Fuller
Chief Officer/Clerk/RFO

AGENDA

ITEM NO.	ITEM
FC 171/24	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.
FC 172/24	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests from Councillors and the nature of those interests relating to any agenda item.
FC 173/24	APPROVAL OF MINUTES To resolve that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 19 th December 2024 be signed as a correct record.
FC 174/24	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION Members of the public will be invited to speak and/or question the Parish Council on issues relating to this agenda or raise issues for future consideration. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders 3f and 3g shall not exceed 15 minutes, maximum three minutes per person, and will be under the direction of the Chair of the meeting. The Chair will invite members of the public to speak.
FC 175/24	COUNCILLOR AND CLERK REPORTS <ol style="list-style-type: none">To receive a report from the Clerk.To receive reports from Councillors.To receive reports from City Councillors.

FC 176/24	COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS LOG To note the Council resolutions log.
FC 177/24	CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED To note the correspondence received.
FC 178/24	FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider and approve invoices for payment. 2. To note the payments made by the Clerk using delegated power. 3. To note income received. 4. To note direct debit/standing order payments made. 5. To note internal transfers made. 6. To note the bank balances.
FC 179/24	FITNESS CLASSES To receive a report on the four-month trial of the fitness classes and to consider recommendations regarding the continuation of the project.
FC 180/24	CONTRACT RENEWAL/RE-TENDER ARRANGEMENTS To consider arrangements for the forthcoming renewal or re-tender of Council contracts.
FC 181/24	PROVISION OF BENCHES ON MONKSTON GREEN To consider a proposal from Cllr Dan Hippey recommending the provision of additional benches on Monkston Green (Blanchland Circle).
FC 182/24	2024/25 BUDGET REVIEW AND INTERNAL CONTROLS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To receive and review a year-to-date budget report on receipts and payments. 2. To consider the approval of virements to cover projected overspends in specific budget lines as detailed in the accompanying report. 3. To appoint two Members to undertake internal control checks and to review and sign bank reconciliations and report back to Council.
FC 183/24	GRANT APPLICATION To consider a grant application from Monkston Primary School.
FC 184/24	2025/26 BUDGET, MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN, AND RESERVES <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider and determine a budget for 2025/26. 2. To consider and determine a Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 – 2029/30. 3. To consider and determine the appropriate level of earmarked and general reserves.
FC 185/24	2025/6 PRECEPT To consider and determine a precept requirement for 2025/26 to be submitted to Milton Keynes City Council.
FC 186/24	NEW COUNCIL WEBSITE To consider options for delivering a new website.
FC 187/24	CONSULTATIONS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation on ward boundaries for Milton Keynes City Council. 2. To consider a response to the Government's consultation on standards in local government and the conduct framework.
FC 188/24	TRAINING To consider approving officer training.

FC 189/24	PLANNING & LICENSING To consider planning and licensing matters as per the appendix below.
FC 190/24	ANNUAL PARISH MEETING To consider arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting.
FC 191/24	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC To resolve that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as extended by s100 of the Local Government Act 1972, and by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, the press and public be excluded from the meeting.
FC 192/24	COMMUNITY CENTRES ASSET TRANSFERS To consider matters associated with the transfer of the freeholds of both Monkston Park Community Centre and Monkston Community Centre.
FC 193/24	STAFFING MATTERS To consider a confidential staffing matter.
FC 194/24	READMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC To resolve that the confidential business having been concluded, the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.
FC 195/24	DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING To note that the date of the next Ordinary Council meeting is Tuesday 11 th February 2025.

Members of the press and public are welcome.

APPENDIX

AGENDA ITEM FC 178/24 – FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS

Invoices for approval for payment:

Payee	Invoice No	Amount	Description	Power to pay
Starboard Systems Ltd t/a Scribe Accounts	7979	£2,482.80	Three-year subscription to Scribe Accounts	LG Act 1972 s111
LGRC Associates Ltd	2052	£5,496.95	Locum services Oct 24	LG Act 1972 s112
Viking Office UK Ltd	5225469	£217.06	Stationery and postage	LG Act 1972 s111
Estelle Coaching	0020241203	£130.00	Fitness class coaching – Dec 24	LG Act 1972 s137
Marcus Young Environmental Services Ltd	4453	£1,597.32	Bin emptying – Dec 24	Litter Act 1983 s5
R Fuller	08.01.25	£65.66	Reimbursement for mileage & website hosting renewal fees	LG Act 1972 s111
Renew@Kents Hill	KH01	£1000.00	Grant to support warm space initiative	LG Act 1972 s137

Milton Keynes Citizens Advice Bureau	KHMPC/01/2425/Q3	£999.50	CAB funding for outreach services	LG Act 1972 s142
Monkston Community Centre	INV5	£75.00	Room hire – Dec Council	LG Act 1972 s150
Monkston Community Centre	INV16	£90.00	Room hire – Jan Council	LG Act 1972 s150
Monkston Community Centre	INV17	£90.00	Room hire – Feb Council	LG Act 1972 s150
Monkston Community Centre	INV18	£90.00	Room hire – Mar Council	LG Act 1972 s150
Monkston Community Centre	INV19	£90.00	Room hire – Apr Council	LG Act 1972 s150
Monkston Community Centre	INV20	£90.00	Room hire – May Council	LG Act 1972 s150
SLCC	BK219251-1	£36.00	SLCC Training	LG Act 1972 s111

All invoices are available at the meeting for inspection. A list of invoices is signed by a Councillor at each meeting. Invoices and bank reconciliations are signed by two Councillors.

Invoices paid out of meeting by the Clerk using delegated power:

Payee	Invoice No	Amount	Description	Power to pay
Shurgard UK	2405803579	£138.46	Storage unit rent 07.01.25 – 06.02.25	LG Act 1972 s133
Shurgard UK	2405803433	£20.00	Late payment charge	LG Act 1972 s111
The National Allotment Society	NA101/2024	£67.00	Annual membership	LG Act 1972 s143
Officers	N/A	£3,528.93	Salaries Dec 24	LG Act 1972 s112
Buckinghamshire Pension Fund	N/A	£1,298.94	Pension liabilities Dec 24	LG Act 1972 s112
Hippey Accounting Services Ltd	INV-21931	£52.77	Monthly payroll services	LG Act 1972 s112

Income received December 2024:

Source	Bank account	Amount	Description
Cambridge Building Society	Saver Account	£650.27	Credit interest
Unity Trust Bank	Allotment Account	£5.76	Credit interest
Unity Trust Bank	Deposit Account	£1,209.71	Credit interest

Direct debit / standing order payments made December 2024:

Payee	Payment type	Amount	Description	Power to pay
Unity Trust Bank	SO	£6.45	Service charge	LG Act 1972 s111
Unity Trust Bank	SO	£0.02	Debit interest	LG Act 1972 s111
EE	DD	£44.09	Mobile phone contract	LG Act 1972 s111
Anglian Water (Wave)	DD	£52.18	Allotment water	Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908 ss 23, 26 & 42
Anglian Water (Wave)	DD	£27.05	Allotment water	Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908 ss 23, 26 & 42

Internal transfers 13 December 2024 – 9 January 2025:

From	To	Amount	Date
Deposit Account	Current Account	£20000.00	16.12.24
Deposit Account	Current Account	£5000.00	28.12.24

Bank balances:

- 1) Allotment account. £1,926.53
- 2) Instant access deposit account. £181,209.71
- 3) Current account. £8,227.99
- 4) Cambridge Building Society. £22,343.61
- 5) Cambridge & Counties Savings. £88,705.66

AGENDA ITEM FC 189/24 – PLANNING & LICENSING

Approved Planning Applications

1. **Application Reference:** 24/01939/HOU

Proposal: The demolition of the existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension with rooflights (part retrospective) at **149 Blanchland Circle, Monkston, Milton Keynes MK10 9GU**

Refused Planning Applications

1. **Application Reference:** 24/01921/CLUP

Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for the erection of a single storey rear extension with rooflights at **13 Aylesford Grove, Monkston, Milton Keynes MK10 9JE**

Street Trading Consent – Renewal

1. MKCC has received a renewal application from C&D Brothers Snack Van, Chippenham Drive, Kingston, to sell hot takeaway food.

Previous Days: Monday to Friday
Previous Hours: 08:00 – 12:30

Hours applied for: Monday to Saturday - 08:00 – 13:00

The existing conditions on the consent are:

- A bin shall be provided for customer use whenever trading takes place.
- Litter picking shall be conducted within the vicinity of the food mobile after trading has ceased.
- Must use a temporary traffic beacon and place it in front of the van to raise awareness to oncoming vehicles. The beacon can be placed on top of a traffic cone.

2. MKCC has received an application from Howe and Co for 8 Fish and Chip vans to trade boroughwide for the following times:

Monday to Sunday 12:00 – 14:30 & 16:00 – 21:00

Boroughwide consents allow for no more than 20 minutes trading in any 100 metre part of any one Consent Street on any one day.

Please note that Street Trading is prohibited within 250 metres of any school's entrances and/or exits, during main school hours and 30 minutes following a school's normal closing time. Main school hours means the normal opening times for any particular school, whilst the students are being educated including lunch breaks but does not include times when the premises are open for after school activities. The prohibition applies to all school types such as: Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary, Academy, Special, College and applies to static street traders (i.e. kebab vans) and Boroughwide street traders (i.e. ice cream vans).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

AGENDA ITEM FC 173/24 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

All minutes can be viewed at: <http://www.kentshill-monkston-pc.org.uk/meetings/>

AGENDA ITEM FC 175/24 – CLERK'S REPORT

It has been another busy month although the quieter Christmas and New Year period allowed me to work through some of the backlog of work that requires attention.

HMRC

I spent a few hours on the phone to HMRC to regain access to the Council's Government Gateway account and I have subsequently submitted the 2023/24 VAT return which had not yet been done (the refund claim was for £7,048.50). We also now have access to our online PAYE account and can move to Direct Debit payments for these liabilities in line with a previous resolution of Council.

Contact Details

I have also spent time updating login/contact/account details on supplier accounts that the Council holds with various organisations where details are still in the name of previous clerks or former councillors. This doesn't seem to have been done for a very long time as I have found accounts in the names of four different previous clerks.

Accounts and Budgeting

I have completed the migration of the Council's accounts system from Rialtas to Scribe. This required all the data on receipts, payments, transfers, suppliers, customers etc from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2024 to be manually re-entered. The existing records were not always complete or accurate, so it has required a fair amount of investigation to find missing invoices and bank statements and match transactions in the cashbook to the bank statements, but everything is now up to date and reconciled. Scribe offers much better functionality and reporting and will enable greater transparency for the Council on financial matters. The accounts software also links to the new Scribe allotments software that Council previously purchased.

Migrating the accounts software has given me a complete picture of the Council's finances and I have been able to update the figures relating to spend against the 2024/25 budget and also refine the draft budget. Both issues are covered elsewhere within the agenda.

Allotments

Cllr Michaela Hippey has given a lot of her time to bringing the allotments records up to date and entering all the information into the new software. Similarly, this has required a significant amount of investigation and piecing together various incomplete records. Some very odd and incorrect practices have been implemented in the past and putting everything right has not been straightforward. I am incredibly grateful to Michaela for this work as it has taken many hours. We are almost at the point of being able to write to all allotment holders to advise them of the recent resolutions of Council and to issue invoices.

Banking

Work on updating the various bank mandates continues but the process is complicated and slow, requiring signatories to provide certified copies of ID or attend branches 40 miles away etc.

Co-option and Register of Interests

At the last meeting, Council co-opted Cllr Dan Hippey who has now signed all the relevant documents and provided all the necessary declarations. As I needed to send Dan's completed register of interests form to MKCC I used the opportunity to review the registers for all current Members. Some Members are missing from the MKCC website altogether, and I have advised other Members of updates that should be considered. I note that the accuracy of declarations is something that is being highlighted as a potential area of interest to auditors, so it is important that we ensure everything is up to date. If you have not already replied to me, please review your register of interests and return it to me.

Monkston Community Centre

Work on the transfer of Monkston Community Centre has also continued over the last month. Solicitors have been approached to represent the Council and this will be covered in further detail during the later agenda item. Also, the outcome of the discussion at the last Council meeting has been communicated to both the trustees of the community centre and to MKCC. Communication with both parties will continue as we move towards the transfer date of 31 March 2025. Preparatory work is also being undertaken to bring some options to Council on matters such as surveys and maintenance.

Council Website

The Council's website continues to be a source of concern given its poor content, limited functionality, and frequent comments from members of the public that they are unable to access documents. Progressing the planned replacement of the website should be considered a priority. I have therefore used the Council's previously agreed specification to seek quotes for the provision of a new website and have added an item to the agenda to move this issue forward. Given all the other pressing matters the Council must deal with it would be nice to see straightforward issues such as this get progressed more efficiently. In the meantime, I have updated, corrected, and replaced a lot of the out of date or incorrect information that was on the current website.

Future Meetings

In accordance with the decision taken at the last meeting, a list of dates for future Council meetings to May 2025 has been published on the website and will be added to the noticeboards. Monkston Community Centre has also been booked for each of these meetings.

Governance Review and 12-Month Action Plan

There is a lot of activity at present with several big projects moving ahead simultaneously. There is also still a large backlog of work that I am working my way through when time allows but almost everywhere I look, historical problems are unearthed that then require resolving. However, good progress is being made but we are going to have busy agendas for the foreseeable future! With this in mind, my next priorities are to bring forward a plan for a full governance review and to propose a 12-month action plan for 2025/26 that captures all the ongoing and planned projects and initiatives. Council will then be able to use the action plan as a starting point to develop a three-year strategic plan once we are in a better position to start undertaking proper community engagement and consultation via social media, a new website, and a revived newsletter.

Clerk

AGENDA ITEM FC 175/24 – COUNCILLOR REPORTS

1. Cllr Dan Hippey – Activity Report

Although a quiet month, a number of local issues have arisen and been dealt with as follows:

- Graffiti in the underpasses between Monkston & Middleton along the H7 - MKCC672893306 & MKCC672898992. Both have now been repainted / cleaned off.
- Dumped boxes & rubbish along the H7 Monkston Redway - MKCC672895531. This was cleared the same day as reported.
- Littering and overflowing bins at Lasborough Road, Kingston - MKCC672756981. Cleared within a couple of days & bins emptied. These bins belong to MKCC and are heavily used by lorry drivers parked nearby.
- Further bus stop graffiti appeared on the H7, after some conversation over responsibilities, MKCC Highways & Transport will be arranging cleaning in due course.
- Streetlighting on the H7 near to the Broughton Roundabout has not been working for a few months now, leaving the area quite dark especially during rain. These have now been reported & mostly fixed - FS672904452. A few further down the road also need to be looked at.
- Redway lighting near Monkston Allotments now fixed - FS672757660
- One major lighting issue near to the H8 Kingston Roundabout which affects both road, Redway and footpath users is still being dealt with by MKCC. A large block of lights which covers both the junction & Redway are out. This does cause some danger to Redway users as the surface is cracked and poor in parts. Reported under FS672755954, MKCC have an update : **Current update: Cabling fault. Our engineer has visited the streetlight you reported to us and the issue appears to be with the cabling. We'll now assess where the issue is and look at what repairs are required. This type of fault can take time to fix as we may need to dig up the verge and locate exactly where the fault is. We may also need to relay cable which is an extensive job.**

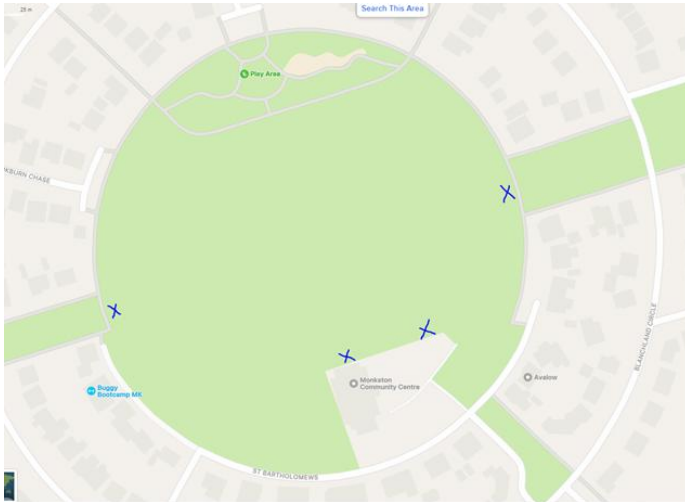
Other items:

I have asked the Bin Working Group to consider further provision of a waste bin at Kingston, near to the H8 Eastbound bus stop & Redway Underpass. Identified by the red spot, this area has a reasonable footfall from both Brinklow, Kingston & the bus users. It may be worth considering a trial of placement here and reviewing after 6 months.



This bus stop will also be served by the new Aviva Loop service to Woburn Sands.

Users of Monkston field (Blanchland Circle green) have suggested that it would be good to have some seating around the edge. Seating is provided on the northern edge of the field but this is well away from the main thoroughfares and community centre.



Having made some enquiries with the community centre Trustees who are the main users of the field, 3 areas have been identified that would not impede on field use.

Provision of 4 benches, one to the East, one to the West and 2 on the Southern side have been suggested.

I will be asking councillors to consider funding these from the existing budgets in due course.

2. Cllr Michaela Hippey - Councillors Return of Work - (December 2024 / January 2025)

Monkston Community Centre

Following the December Parish Council meeting decision, continued work on building out a more detailed business plan.

Allotments

Input all available historical data into Scribe allotments for the periods 01/04/2022–31/03/2023 & 01/04/2023–30/11/2023 along with allotment holder information and changes in plot holdings in preparation for billing in the New Year.

This has been a substantial amount of work which has left little time for much else this month.

Bin Working Group

Some further work done on the report of the state of the bins and reading reports from waste contractor to establish where our capacity needs to be improved, along with investigating different receptacle options and potential costings.

Local Issues

- Responding to an enquiry from a local resident regarding contractors accessing Kent's Hill Allotment car park via the bridleway and raising a request to the Clerk to look into further.
- Reported Dumped Rubbish (offensive & clinical waste) outside Kents Hill Allotments following notification from allotment holder – Ref: MKCC672142919. This was collected within 2 hours of report.
- Reported Block of streetlights out adjacent to H7 Chaffron Way between Colindale Street and Rayners Lane. Whole section of lamps out – F3 9MP to F3 5MP – ref: FS676157409
- Reported Dumped Rubbish in layby on Colindale Street between H7 Chaffron Way & Rayners Lane – ref: MKCC676158683. Later received response to confirm removal.

Other

Investigated options in regard to the fitness class proposals and how we might be able to have greater reach in the parish.

AGENDA ITEM FC 176/24 – COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS LOG

The resolutions log can be viewed as a supporting document at: <http://www.kentshill-monkston-pc.org.uk/meetings/>

AGENDA ITEM FC 177/24 – CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Emails received:

- MKCC. Emergency planning briefs. (Emailed: Members)
- MKCC. Councillor newsletters. (Emailed: Members)
- MKCC: Neighbourhood Watch Update. (Emailed: Members).
- MKCC: Speedwatch December newsletter. (Emailed: Members).
- East West Rail. December Newsletter. (Emailed: Members)
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. Budget consultation. (Emailed: Members)
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. December newsletter. (Emailed: Members)
- NALC. E-newsletters, including events newsletters. (Emailed: Members)
- BMKALC. End of year report. (Emailed: Members)
- MKCAN. E-newsletters. (Emailed: Members)
- MK Community Foundation. December newsletter. (Emailed: Members)
- The Parks Trust. January newsletter. (Emailed: Members)

AGENDA ITEM: FC 179/24

Subject: Fitness Class Review

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: This report evaluates the financial and practical sustainability of the weekly fitness class currently delivered by the Council as a four-month trial. Based on attendance data, cost analysis, community needs, statutory obligations, operational oversight, and available alternatives, this report recommends the project's cessation.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

1. Cease the weekly fitness class:

Discontinue the initiative effective 14 February 2025.

2. Explore alternative initiatives:

Consider more inclusive health and wellbeing programs, such as outdoor exercise equipment in parks, community walks, or working with existing providers to enable greater access to their services for residents of the parish if there is an evidenced need.

3. Engage the community:

Conduct consultation to identify residents' priorities for health and wellbeing initiatives.

4. Establish clear KPIs:

For future initiatives, develop measurable KPIs to track participation, satisfaction, and impact to ensure accountability and value for money.

Background

In September 2024 the Council initiated a weekly fitness class, on a four-month trial basis, to promote health and wellbeing among residents. The Council hires space at Monkston School and engages a fitness instructor for this purpose.

A leaflet promoting the initiative was delivered to every house in the parish at the start of the project and it has subsequently been promoted via the Council's website, social media, and at the residents' meeting.

Initially, attendance was projected at 30 participants per session; however, data provided by the fitness instructor demonstrates that weekly attendance has averaged 13 participants and varies between 9 and 18 participants.

The Council incurs a direct cost of £109.50 per weekly session (not including advertising costs), amounting to a significant average subsidy of approximately £8.42 per attendee per session. With a parish population exceeding 8,000, this initiative serves only approximately 0.001625% of residents, raising concerns about equitable use of public funds.

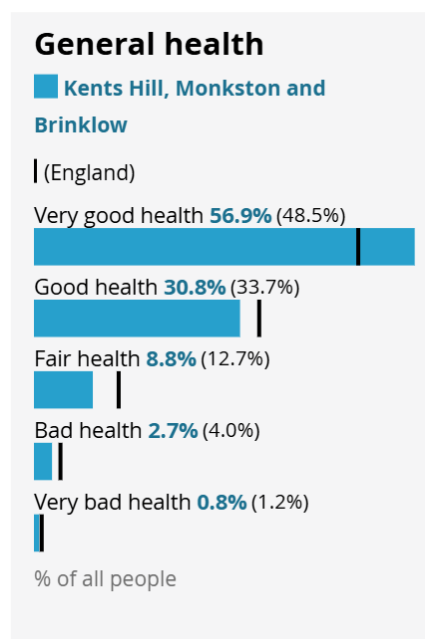
Assessment of Community Health and Wellbeing Needs

1. Identified Need:

- The fitness class was initiated to address general health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on promoting physical activity in a community setting.

2. Evidence of Need:

- There is no evidence of data being used to confirm the specific health and wellbeing challenges faced by residents of the parish prior to the initiation of the fitness classes. Without robust evidence (e.g. health surveys, resident feedback, or public health data), it is unclear whether fitness classes are the most effective intervention. Data from the Office of National Statistics indicates that residents of the parish enjoy well above average levels of general health:



Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021.

3. Effectiveness of the Initiative:

- Attendance figures suggest that the class is not meeting a significant demand within the community.
- With only an average of 13 regular participants, the initiative does not provide a substantial impact relative to the broader population.

4. Alternative Approaches:

- Community engagement is needed to better understand residents' health and wellbeing priorities.
- Alternatives, such as outdoor exercise equipment, walking groups, or partnerships with local health/activity providers, may prove more effective and inclusive.

Existing Fitness Offer in the Parish Area and Surroundings

A preliminary review of fitness activities within the parish and the surrounding areas reveals the following options:

1. Commercial Gyms:

- Several gyms and fitness centres operate in the surrounding area, offering memberships with extensive facilities and classes. Examples include PureGym in Kingston where for £23.99 a month users can access the gym and over 50 scheduled fitness classes every week.

2. Community Fitness Classes:

- Other local community centres host fitness and wellbeing classes at competitive rates.

3. Outdoor Exercise Opportunities:

- The parish is home to green spaces and parks that facilitate walking, running, and outdoor fitness activities. Nearby parks also have free outdoor gym equipment or 'trim trails' that have been provided by their parish councils.

4. Specialist Clubs:

- Local clubs/groups, such as football, netball, and yoga, provide structured fitness opportunities for various age groups.

These options demonstrate that there is a robust fitness offer in the area, catering to diverse needs. The Parish Council's initiative duplicates some of these existing services and does not appear to address an unmet need.

Legal and Operational Considerations

1. Statutory Basis for Funding:

- The Council currently cites Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 as the statutory basis for funding the fitness classes. However, Section 145 primarily allows councils to provide entertainment or facilities for entertainment purposes, such as performances or artistic events. Fitness classes do not align with the intent of this provision, as their primary purpose is health and wellbeing rather than entertainment.
- Funding could potentially be justified under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits expenditure on activities that benefit some or all of the council's area, provided the expenditure is commensurate with the benefit. However, given the low attendance and high subsidy, this justification may also be difficult to uphold.

2. Lack of Qualifying Criteria for Participation:

- The fitness classes are open to all residents without any qualifying criteria. There is no mechanism to prioritise those most in need, such as individuals with health challenges or financial barriers to accessing fitness facilities. This raises questions about whether the initiative effectively targets its intended audience. There is also no way of monitoring whether attendees are residents of the parish or not.

3. **Absence of Measurable KPIs:**

- No key performance indicators (KPIs) or measurable outcomes have been established to assess the impact of the classes. Metrics such as improved health outcomes, resident satisfaction, or increased participation have not been tracked, making it difficult to evaluate the success or value of the initiative.

Financial Implications

1. **Cost per Participant:**

- Current subsidy: £109.50/session for an average of 13 participants.
- Effective cost per participant per session: £8.42.
- If, as has been requested, the Clerk assumes administration of the classes then this would increase the effective subsidy per session to at least £164.00, or £12.62 per participant per class.

2. **Annual Cost:**

- Assuming 39 weekly classes per year (sessions are limited to school term time): £6,396.

3. **Comparison with Precept:**

- The annual precept paid by local taxpayers to the Parish Council is £65 per household.
- With a total cost of £6,396 annually, the fitness class subsidy represents an average annual taxpayer subsidy per attendee of approximately £492. This benefit is 7.5 times the value of the annual precept payment an average taxpayer pays to Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council.

4. **Equity of Funding:**

- It could be considered inequitable for the majority of taxpayers to subsidise a discretionary initiative that benefits only 0.001625% of the population. This disparity raises questions about fairness and prudent allocation of public funds.

5. **Opportunity Cost:**

- The funds and resources allocated to this initiative could be redirected to benefit a broader segment of the community or support other statutory or discretionary functions.

Community Impact

While promoting health and wellbeing is a commendable goal, the limited reach of the fitness class suggests it does not serve as an effective vehicle for achieving this aim. Additionally, the lack of evidence supporting fitness classes as the optimal intervention for community needs, combined with the absence of qualifying criteria and measurable KPIs, further undermines the initiative's justification.

At the residents' meeting that took place on Saturday 16 November 2024 at Monkston Community Centre, Councillors engaged directly with members of the public to discuss key issues and gather feedback. A large display highlighted the proposed priorities for the Council's three-year plan, and residents were invited to review these priorities and express their preferences. The results, while based on a small sample size, are as follows (from highest to lowest priority):

1. Enhanced communications from the Council – **13 votes.**
2. Pride of place (improved environment and public spaces) – **12 votes.**
3. Supporting a vibrant community (public events) – **9 votes.**
4. Improved access to the Council – **9 votes.**
5. Strong governance (updating Council policies and recruiting more Councillors) – **7 votes.**
6. **Good health and wellbeing (fitness classes and other wellbeing activities) – 6 votes.**

Working Group Feedback

The Fitness Classes Working Group was asked to provide a report for this meeting summarising the four-month trial, detailing how the group has worked to ensure that the classes operate in line with the resolutions of Council from the August and October 2024 meetings, and including supporting data such as attendance figures, benefits/outcomes vs spend per head/value for money. The Working Group has provided the following feedback and recommendations as a report:

*‘Monday class to continue 6-7 pm in two 30 min sessions
 Extra class to be added later in the week (Friday is the best contender, depending on Estelle and the Monkston Primary School availability)
 Running for another year, to be renewed in January 2026
 Add further marketing via newsletter, leaflets and FB post and add a 3rd class if the demand exceed the offer*

*We have already sent a report which was in the agenda for the extra-ordinary meeting held on 3/10/24. Since then the working group did a survey where Wednesday 6-7pm was the first choice and Friday 6-7 pm was the second choice out of 7 options
 The working group asked Estelle to share the attendance record each week, which is in place
 Dorota joined the working group on 17/10 because Lisa has childcare issues
 On 10th of December Estelle informed Wednesday was not available and Monkston School is already used on Thursday, so the 2nd hour might be on Friday as per the survey.’*

Conclusion

The weekly fitness class initiative, while well-intentioned, does not represent an effective use of public funds. Its lack of evidenced need, limited reach, high subsidy per participant, and lack of alignment with statutory powers suggests that it is unsustainable. By ceasing this initiative, the council can redirect resources to initiatives and projects with greater community impact, ensuring responsiveness to community needs, and compliance with legal obligations and best practices.

AGENDA ITEM: FC 180/24

Subject: Contract Renewal/Re-tender Arrangements

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: This report outlines the forthcoming expiry dates of existing contracts for payroll, dog and litter bin waste management, and allotment maintenance services, and proposes recommendations relating to the renewal/re-tender of contracts for these services.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

1. **Extend the existing dog and litter bin waste management contract on the same terms for a further period of 12 months from 19 March 2025.**
2. **Seek three quotes for the provision of payroll services for a period of 12 months from 1 April 2025.**
3. **Seek three quotes for the provision of allotment maintenance services for a period of 12 months from 14 April 2025.**
4. **Delegate responsibility to the Clerk to produce the operational specifications to be supplied to contractors with invitations to quote. Councillors to provide any input for consideration as part of this process.**

Background

The Council currently holds the following service contracts that are coming to the end of their terms:

1. **Dog and Litter Bin Waste Management**
 - Provider: Marcus Young Environmental Services.
 - Expiry Date: **18 March 2025**.
 - Contract Period: Three years from March 2021 with the option to extend a year at a time for a further two years subject to mutual agreement – currently in year four of the agreement.
2. **Payroll Processing**
 - Provider: Hippey Accountancy.
 - Expiry Date: **31 March 2025**.
 - Contract Period: Three years from March 2022.
3. **Allotment Maintenance**
 - Provider: RTM Landscapes.
 - Expiry Date: **13 April 2025**.
 - Contract Period: Three years from April 2021 with the option to extend a year at a time for a further two years subject to mutual agreement – currently in year four of the agreement.

Analysis

1. Dog and Litter Bin Waste Management

Extending the contract for an additional 12 months will ensure uninterrupted service while providing an opportunity to adequately plan a future retendering process in time for the March 2026 deadline beyond which the current agreement can no longer be extended. This is a large contract of such a value that Financial Regulations impose the requirement of a formal tender process that must be advertised via the Government's Contract Finder website. It is unlikely that such a process could be adequately planned and delivered within the available timescale if Council chose not to extend the current contract. Furthermore, the Council is also currently reviewing its bin provision via the bin working group and is considering a waste bin renewal/replacement programme in 2025/26. Consideration should therefore be given to the practical implications for those programmes of work of changing contractors at this stage. The existing contractor has confirmed that it is willing to extend the existing contract on the existing terms for a further 12 months:

Pricing Schedule	
Description	Price £
Price per collection per bin, valid across the lifetime of the contract (12 months) Dog waste bins.	£2.70 per bin per empty plus VAT
Price per collection per bin, valid across the lifetime of the contract (12 months) Litter bins.	£2.70 per bin per empty plus VAT

2. Payroll Processing

Hippey Accountancy's three-year contract is coming to an end, and it is standard practice to periodically review service costs and quality to ensure value for money. Hippey Accountancy has advised that it now only offers annual agreements for payroll only clients. An annual contract would also suit the Council's requirements for such a contract and align more appropriately with the Council's Financial Regulations. The value of this contract means that Financial Regulations require the Council to try to obtain three estimates.

3. Allotment Maintenance

RTM Landscapes has been providing maintenance services for the allotments for some time and the contract terms and arrangements should now be reviewed. Similar to payroll services, it is recommended that the Council moves to an annual contract rather than a three-year contract, which would give greater flexibility to the Council and allow for a more regular comparison of service offerings and costs. Given the value of this contract, Financial Regulations require the Council to seek at least three fixed-price quotes.

Conclusion

The recommendations presented in this report aim to ensure continuity of services while upholding the Council's responsibility to achieve value for money and maintain compliance with its Financial Regulations. Extending the dog and litter bin waste management contract for 12 months provides the necessary time to plan a robust tendering process. Moving to annual contracts and seeking three quotes for payroll and allotment maintenance services aligns with good governance practices, allowing the Council to regularly review and secure competitive, high-quality services.

AGENDA ITEM: FC 181/24

Subject: Provision of Benches on Monkston Green

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Cllr Dan Hippey

Purpose: This report seeks in principal agreement for the provision of four additional benches for public seating on Monkston Green.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

1. **Agree in principle to the provision of up to four benches on Monkston Green subject to the completion of the transfer of the land as part of the Monkston Community Centre asset transfer.**
2. **Agree a provisional project budget of up to £8,100.**
3. **Ascertain the current and intended future ownership status of the four existing benches near the play park.**
4. **Obtain quotes for the provision and installation of the proposed benches for Council to consider at a future meeting.**

Background

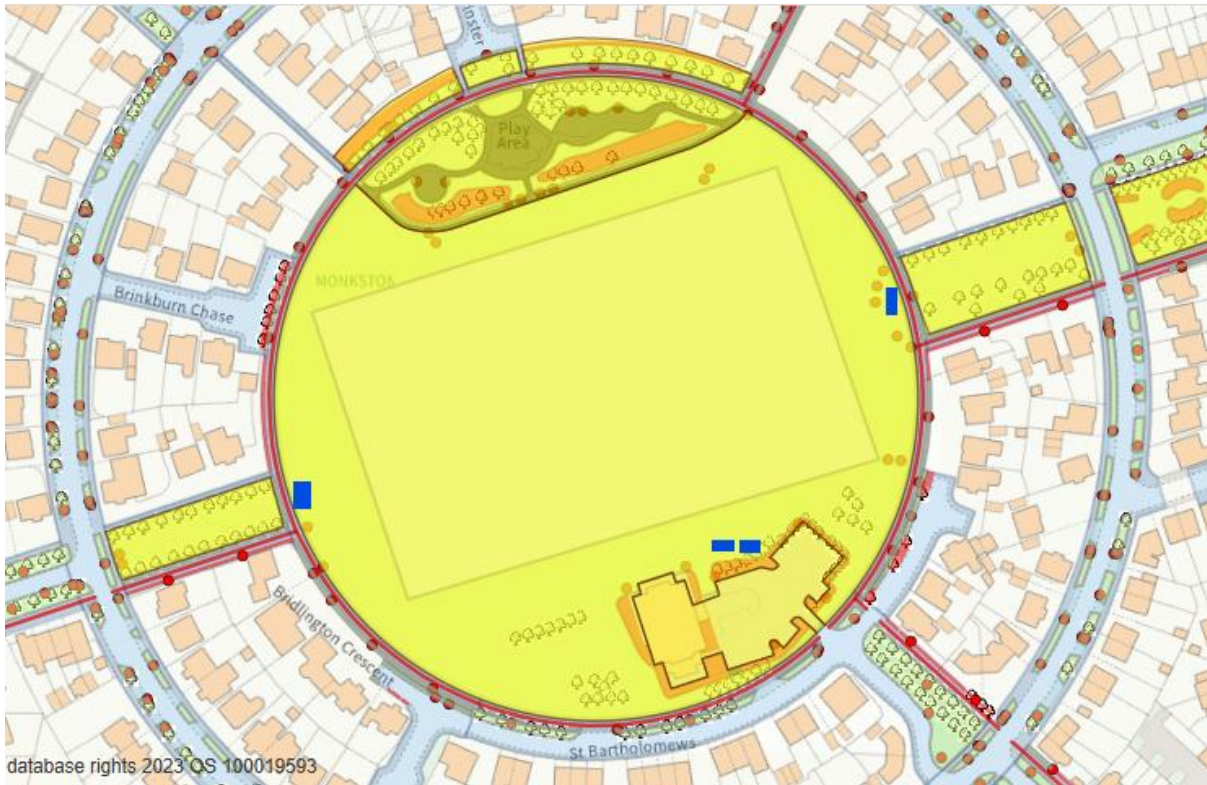
Residents have asked about provision of seating on the green at Monkston, currently there is seating at the play area but at no other point.

Monkston Green (or 'The Circle') is a maintained football field with a Redway running around the outside in a circle shape. There are 2 main throughfares running East / West with a number of minor footpaths around the circle. The play area was redeveloped a number of years ago and seating is provided for users and other members of the public.

As the play area is designed for children & teenagers, it is not wholly suitable for those users of the circle who may want to sit quietly or need to rest. Equally users of the field and amenity grass are unlikely to use these seats, purely down to location.

It is not intended to provide seating specifically for users of the football fields, we need to be mindful that the pitches are specifically for hire. However, a number of other casual field users, runners and joggers who use the Redway Circle, along with those who use the Redway more generally would find the provision of seating useful.

Whilst the bulk of the field is football pitch standard, a large part of the outside is amenity land and could benefit from seating provision. Feedback from the Community Centre has identified 3 areas which would not impede on the use of the football field, or the centre as a whole. They also would not impinge on the local residents as seating could be placed away from housing, but still be overlooked to maintain an element of safety and ambient street lighting.



The map above shows where seating would be provided (areas in blue), the darker green areas being amenity land, the light square being the football areas. At the end of this proposal are photos of the areas identified as they currently look.

Proposed seats

The seats nearest to the community centre car park are proposed to be two four-person bench seating with back rests, facing the main field. The bench seating at the East and West side of the circle are proposed to be four person bench seats without backrests. Seats without backrests can then be used for seating in either direction.

We should also look to install sustainable solutions, whether that be wooden benches that have some provenance of the source, or made from recycled materials. One manufacturer, Kedel, produces seating made from recycled plastic. If we were to purchase (at list prices) 2 bench seats with backrests and 2 benches seats without, the cost would be approximately £2100 (+VAT).



Recycled Plastic Garden Bench 4 Seater Colne by Kedel

£544.00

(£652.80 Inc. VAT)

★★★★★ (4 Reviews)

Colour

Black

✓ Please call 01282 861325 for availability.

- 1 +



Recycled Plastic Bench Tyne Bench

£463.53

(£556.24 Inc. VAT)

Colour

Black Slats

Dimensions

(L)2500 x (W)460 x (H)450 x (SH)450

✓ Please call 01282 861325 for availability.

- 1 +

Fitting

All benches would need to be fitted with permanent fixtures, to prevent unexpected movement or theft. This would either be by a concrete base being made, or stakes being sunk into the ground and the benches placed on the grass / soil. Although the latter solution would be much cheaper, the grass in the area is prone to waterlogging and the benches might either sink, move excessively or be unusable. A concrete base would provide a sound footing and prevent the area directly around the benches becoming too muddy.

Care will need to be taken on the Easterly side of the field as a number of sewer chambers are present, together with street lighting around the circle. The contractor will need to assess the area and dig the base appropriately. The Western edge of the field also has street lighting nearby, so additional checks will need to be made for the location of underground cabling.

No known underground hazards are present for the benches near to the community centre. Cost of construction & fitting has not been established, but a budget of £3000 should be allowed depending on works required. Council are asked to allow the Clerk to make enquiries with suitable contractors to quote for the works.

Budget

As already mentioned, a budget of £5100 is likely to be required for 4 benches plus fitting to a suitable hardstanding base. During a site visit on 6th January 2025, it was noted that the four wooden benches on the Northern edge of the field are in poor condition and three are likely to need replacing in the next few years. These are currently owned by MKCC and it needs to be established if these will pass to the Parish Council should the community centre be transferred via the CAT/LAT process.

If this were the case then the Parish Council should consider replacement of these benches at the same time as the works for the new proposed benches. A hardstanding is already present therefore it's likely that the fitting cost will be relatively low, potentially adding up to £3000 to the overall cost of the project. Therefore the maximum proposed budget required would be **£8100**. It would be anticipated that the actual cost would be much lower.

I would also like to propose that the final decision comes back to council once all enquiries are completed and we can decide on final location(s), base construction and seating materials.

Cllr Dan Hippey

Images of the proposed seating areas:

Eastern field side.



Western field side.



Southern field side, near to community centre.



AGENDA ITEM: FC 182/24

Subject: 2024/25 Budget Review and Internal Controls

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To provide a progress report on year-to-date payments and receipts against the approved budget for 2024/25, to highlight where budget virements may be needed, and to formalise internal control review methods in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

- 1. Receive and review the year-to-date budget report on receipts and payments.**
- 2. Approve the virements detailed in Table 1 of this report to cover projected overspends.**
- 3. Appoint two named Members (other than the Chair) to undertake internal control checks and to review and sign the bank reconciliations and report back to the Council.**

2024/25 Budget review and virements

Now that the Council's accounts have been brought up to date and migrated to Scribe Accounts, regular reporting, monitoring, and greater transparency of the finances can be achieved. The first of the new budget reports is shown at **Appendix A** – which is a Q1 – Q3 report showing spend to date. **Appendix B** highlights the projected expenditure against the budget to the end of the financial year.

The process of refining the accounts has highlighted several areas where budgets allocated for the financial year will not be sufficient to meet the predicted expenditure by year end. It is therefore suggested that to balance the projected overspends, the Council approves a series of virements from other budget lines that are to record an underspend at year end. The following table sets out the budget lines that are projected to be overspent and suggests budget lines that funds could be vired from:

Table 1 – Proposed Virements

Expenditure	Budget 2024/25	Projected spend at 31.03.25	Budget to be vired from	Amount to be vired
Contract Staff	£965	£31,500	Salaries	£30,535
WFH Allowance	-	£430	Newsletter	£430
Bank Charges	£100	£150	Newsletter	£50
HR Consultants	-	£100	Newsletter	£100
Travel Expenses	£350	£600	Newsletter	£250
IT Hardware & Software	£5,050	£5,550	Newsletter	£500
Room Hire	£600	£1000	Newsletter	£400
Bin Emptying	£16,251	£17,500	Newsletter	£1,249
Grants – s137	£3,425	£4,000	Newsletter	£575
Citizens Advice Bureau	£4,005	£4,455	Newsletter	£450

Further detail of individual budget overspends and virements is provided where necessary:

- Contract Staff:** There is such a variance within this budget line due to the situation whereby the Council had to contract a locum clerk for six months - expenditure that was not budgeted for. As a result of not employing a permanent Clerk until November 2024, the salaries budget is predicted to be underspent by £41,975 at year end meaning there is sufficient budget to vire to the contract staff budget line.
- WFH Allowance:** This seems to have been absorbed into the general staffing budget, but it is actually an administrative cost rather than a salary cost and should therefore be accounted for separately.
- HR Consultants:** No budget provision was made for the use of HR consultants, but the Council did engage a consultant for a one-off piece of work early in 2024.
- IT:** The Council has migrated both its accounts and allotments software to new providers this financial year and has paid three years costs up front for both packages. This has resulted in higher than usual costs incurred within the 2024/25 financial year.
- Bin Emptying:** Expenditure is higher than budgeted for due to late payment of an invoice from the previous financial year being included in the 2024/25 accounts.
- Grants – s137:** Council has expressed a desire to award grants totalling £4,000 this financial year.
- Citizens Advice:** Expenditure is higher than budgeted for due to late payment of an invoice from the previous financial year being included in the 2024/25 accounts.

The newsletter has not been delivered in 2024/25 and the budget allocation for the year of £10,060 remains unspent and uncommitted. It is therefore proposed to utilise part of this unspent budget to vire funds to support overspends in all budget lines other than the contract staff budget line which is suggested to be funded from the underspend in the salaries budget.

Internal Controls

Internal controls refer to the processes, policies, and procedures established by a council to ensure the proper use, protection, and management of public resources and assets. These controls are designed to safeguard against fraud, error, and inefficiency while ensuring compliance with legal requirements, promoting transparency, and supporting effective decision-making. Internal controls cover financial management, risk assessment, governance practices, and operational oversight. They include measures such as segregation of duties, proper authorisation of transactions, accurate record-keeping, regular monitoring of financial reports, and independent audits. The overarching aim is to ensure the council operates responsibly, achieves its objectives, and maintains public trust by managing its activities and resources effectively.

Councillors play a critical role in ensuring the effectiveness of a council's internal control methods, primarily through their oversight responsibilities and ensuring that the council's financial management processes are sound, transparent, and compliant with legal requirements. This includes reviewing the annual budget, ensuring that Financial Regulations are adhered to, and approving major expenditure decisions. Regularly reviewing financial reports, bank reconciliations, and budget performance enables Councillors to identify any discrepancies or areas of concern.

While operational tasks are delegated to officers, Councillors must act as a check-and-balance system, ensuring that internal controls, such as the segregation of duties and authorisation of payments, are in place and functioning effectively.

The Council's Financial Regulations also state: *'At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chair shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the Clerk/RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council.'*

It is therefore suggested that the Council appoints two named Councillors to work with the Clerk on reviewing internal controls, to verify and sign the bank reconciliations, and to report back to Council on such activities.

APPENDIX A: Year to date summary of receipts and payments – 01.04.24 – 31.12.24

APPENDIX B: 2024/25 agreed budget and projected spend by year end (31.03.25)

Appendices can be viewed at: <http://www.kentshill-monkston-pc.org.uk/meetings/>

AGENDA ITEM: FC 183/24

Subject: Grant Applications

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To present a grant application received from Monkston Primary School.

Background

At the December 2024 Council meeting Councillors considered a grant application for £3,000 from Monkston Primary School alongside another application from a different organisation for £1,000. Given that Councillors expressed a desire to support both applications but only had funding of £3,245 remaining in the grants budget it was decided to defer the application from Monkston Primary School to the January 2025 meeting and first consider viring additional funds to the grants budget.

Depending on the decisions made concerning budget virements during agenda item FC 182/24, Councillors are asked to consider the deferred grant application from Monkston Primary School and determine the amount of any grant they may wish to award. £2,245 remains in this year's budget for grants but the previous agenda item recommends a virement to increase this budget to enable the full grant of £3,000.

The application form is included below, and supporting documents will be available to Members at the meeting.

Application from Monkston Primary School for £3,000.

1.	Name: Monkston Primary School
2.	Address: Wadhurst Lane, Monkston, Milton Keynes, MK10 9LA
3.	Contact Telephone Number: 01908 671034
4.	Email Address and Website Address:
5.	Purpose of the organisation: Education Building also used by: Parish Council keep fit classes Milton Keynes Athletic Football Club Spotlights Theatre Group New City Church
6.	Organisation meeting place and frequency of meetings: Monkston Primary School, 7.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday during term time
7.	Membership numbers: 408 pupils and 55 staff

8.	Membership age range and typical age: 4-11 years
9.	Number of the organisation's membership living in our Parish: 280
10.	Number of years your organisation has been in existence 23 years

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF* (applicant):

1.	Name of applicant: Emily Winship
2.	Role within the organisation: Business Manager
3.	Address (if different to above):
4.	Contact Telephone Number: [REDACTED]
5.	Email Address: [REDACTED]

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROJECT:

1.	Purpose of the grant: To purchase and install a retractable electronic awning to external wall of one classroom. All classrooms would benefit from this but due to the expense we are only making an application for one.
2.	Details of the project: One of our classrooms had an electronic retractable awning installed using a Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council grant many years ago. This classroom is considerably cooler than other classrooms during the summer months. All classrooms within the school have large windows that face the sun during the afternoon, we use fans and blinds to cool them as best we can but the effect is minimal during hot weather
3.	Benefit of the project to the organisation's membership: To help protect children from heat-related illnesses – heat stress, heat exhaustion

	<p>and heatstroke</p> <p>Our recent Display Energy Certificate recommendation report included ‘consider applying reflective coating to windows and/or fit shading devices to reduce unwanted solar gain.’ We are planning on installing a reflective coating to lower windows but do not have the funds to install awnings to reduce unwanted solar gain.</p>
4.	<p>Benefit of the project to local community:</p> <p>Provide shade and protection for teachers, parents, community users and visitors too.</p>
5.	<p>Proposed total cost of the project and breakdown of costs:</p> <p>5m x 4m with remote operation & wind sensor £5034</p> <p>Installation cost £600-£1200</p>
6.	<p>Grant application request: £3000</p>
7.	<p>Other confirmed contributors to the project funding: school to match funding</p>
8.	<p>Fund raising activities planned to support this project if applicable (please attach evidence of these if possible).</p>
9.	<p>Any other information to support your grant application.</p>

AGENDA ITEM: FC 184/24

Subject: 2025/26 BUDGET, MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN, AND RESERVES

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To present final draft budget proposals for 2025/26, draft proposals for a 2026/27 - 2029/30 Medium-Term Financial Plan, and draft proposals for the appropriate level and allocation of reserves.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

1. **Note the projected income for 2025/26 of £31,922.**
2. **Note the projected expenditure for 2025/26 of £302,535.**
3. **Approve the allocation of reserves to earmarked reserves as detailed in Table 3.**
4. **Approve a general reserve level of £86,500 for 2025/26, equivalent to six months of net revenue expenditure, and note that there are additional general reserves of £28,525 that should be utilised over the period of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.**
5. **Approve the use of £90,000 from reserves to support the 2025/26 budget.**
6. **Approve the overall 2025/26 budget having considered all income, expenditure, and the reserves position.**
7. **Approve the Medium-Term Financial Plan (2026/7 – 2029/30) as outlined in Table 2.**

Budget Preparation Process

The 2025/26 budget has been prepared following a comprehensive review of:

- Current income, expenditure, reserves, and investments.
- Anticipated future requirements for services, projects, and operations.
- Feedback from Members during budget discussions.

This revised draft, incorporating Members' views and further confirmed information, is presented to Council, to enable a budget to be set for 2025/26.

Members are asked to consider the following proposed budget (**Table 1**) and Medium-Term Financial Plan (**Table 2**). Members are also advised to consider the Council's reserves position as detailed in **Table 3** and explicitly consider the suggested transfers between earmarked and general reserves and the overall impact of the use of reserves in setting the budget and the precept.

Parish councils have no specific right to accumulate funds via the precept. All reserves should be reviewed and justified regularly (i.e. at least annually).

Following the principles set out by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Practitioners' Guide, the accepted recommendation regarding the appropriate level of general reserves is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure.

Net revenue expenditure is effectively precept less any loan repayment and/or amounts included in the budget for capital projects and transfers to reserves. The reason for the wide range (three to twelve months) is to accommodate the variation in sizes of individual parish councils. The smaller the council, the closer the figure should be to twelve months net revenue expenditure; the larger the council the nearer to 3 months.

The proposed target general reserve figure for Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council is six months, which equates to £86,500 in 2025/26.

The proposed Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) seeks to maintain this level, making adjustments as necessary to hold six months of the Council's net revenue expenditure in general reserve. However, once this budget and the MTFP have been finalised, this position should be reviewed and formalised in an approved reserves policy and then regularly reviewed as the overall budget of the Council grows over the period of the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Council should ensure that it is not holding unnecessarily high levels of general reserves.

Earmarked reserves should also be reviewed annually and only held for the purpose of anticipated accrued expenditure and capital investment in future years.

To support the 2025/26 budget, the proposed expenditure of £90,000 from reserves reflects the Council's strategic decision to invest in key priorities while maintaining financial stability.

Table 1 – 2025/26 Budget

Heading	Actual 2023/24	Budget 2024/25	Estimated Year End Position 31.03.25	Budget 2025/26
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs				
Salaries	35,965.05	86,475.00	44,500.00	71,000.00
NI	14,514.05	-	-	8,600.00
Pensions	13,943.15	-	-	17,000.00
Contract Staff	-	965.00	31,500.00	-
	64,422.25	87,440.00	76,000.00	96,600.00
Administration				
WFH Allowance	291.00	-	430.00	145.00
Insurance	706.84	756.00	756.00	1,250.00
Bank Charges	240.00	100.00	150.00	180.00
HR Consultants	50.00	-	100.00	-
Travel Expenses	451.35	350.00	600.00	1,000.00
Payroll Processing	397.84	585.00	585.00	700.00
Recruitment	-	500.00	430.00	500.00
IT Hardware & Software	1,267.15	5,050.00	5,550.00	4,000.00
Office Equipment	-	-	-	3,000.00
Staff H&S	-	-	-	250.00
Website	-	3,000.00	3,000.00	-

Memberships	1,131.47	1,874.00	1,600.00	1,650.00
Audit	760.00	976.00	620.00	700.00
Room Hire	455.65	600.00	1,000.00	1,100.00
Newsletter Costs	2,907.00	10,060.00	600.00	10,500.00
Events	-100.00	-	-	5,000.00
Training	10.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Legal/Professional Fees	790.00	1,000.00	-	1,000.00
LAT	1,795.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	9,000.00
Office Expenses	2,357.26	3,120.00	3,050.00	-
Stationery/Supplies	-	-	-	1,000.00
Postage	-	-	-	100.00
Telephone & Internet	-	-	-	1,150.00
Data Protection	-	-	-	35.00
Storage Unit	-	-	-	850.00
Cllr Expenses	124.64	-	-	-
Chair's Allowance	-	400.00	150.00	1,200.00
Hospitality	44.50	100.00	-	-
CP Furniture	144.00	-	-	-
CP IT Equipment	643.00	-	-	-
Lone Working Alarm	-	500.00	-	-
	14,466.70	35,971.00	25,621.00	46,310.00
Services				
Bin Emptying	15,139.00	16,251.00	17,500.00	16,500.00
New Bins	-	4,815.00	-	25,000.00
Defibrillators	1,374.65	1,766.00	-	1,750.00
Fitness Classes/Wellbeing	8,525.00	8,000.00	3,200.00	8,000.00
Landscaping	6,442.90	5,500.00	-	4,000.00
Street Furniture	-	3,200.00	-	10,000.00
Grants - s137	2,745.00	3,425.00	4,000.00	3,500.00
MKCAB	3,003.75	4,005.00	4,545.00	4,725.00
MKPA Play Sessions	6,930.00	7,945.00	4,455.00	7,800.00
Older People Sessions	-	2,700.00	-	-
Young Parents Sessions	-	2,700.00	-	-
Caldecotte Xperience	-	3,200.00	-	-
Other Community Activities	-	2,000.00	1,800.00	-
CCTV Camera Service	-	9,000.00	-	-
Play areas	-	26,225.00	10,000.00	-
	44,160.30	100,732.00	45,500.00	81,275.00
Allotments				
Allotments - MP	1,203.76	-	-	2,000.00
Allotments - KH	653.81	-	-	2,050.00
Allotments - Monkston	1,934.97	-	-	1,000.00
Allotment Deposits	-	-	-	300.00
Other	1,482.82	6,464.00	6,464.00	8,000.00
	5,275.36	6,464.00	6,464.00	13,350.00
Monkston Community Centre				
Repairs and Renewals	-	-	-	50,000.00
Grounds Maintenance	-	-	-	15,000.00
	-	-	-	65,000.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE	128,324.61	230,607.00	153,585.00	302,535.00
INCOME				
Bank Interest	3,774.98	3,611.00	6,306.00	6,000.00
s106	-	-	-	17,000.00
Miscellaneous	2,335.00	-	200.00	-
Community Centre Rent	-	-	-	2.00
	6,109.98	3,611.00	6,506.00	23,002.00
Allotments				
Allotment Rent - MP	669.53	1,713.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Allotment Rent - KH	458.08	1,084.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Allotment Rent - Monkston	370.73	1,827.00	500.00	500.00
Allotment Deposits	-	-	-	300.00
	1,498.34	4,624.00	3,500.00	3,800.00
Monkston Community Centre				
Maintenance Grants	-	-	-	5,120.00
				5,120.00
TOTAL INCOME	7,608.32	8,235.00	10,006.00	31,922.00
SUMMARY AND PRECEPT:				
Net Expenditure	128,324.61	230,607.00	153,585.00	302,535.00
Net Income	7,608.32	8,235.00	10,006.00	31,922.00
Figure to Balance	120,716.29	222,372.00	143,579.00	270,613.00
Contribution to/(from) Reserves	358.71	(49,277.00)	29,516.00	(90,000.00)
Precept	121,075.00	173,095.00	173,095.00	180,613.00
Tax Base	2621	2663		2707
Band D Annual Figure	46.19	65.00		66.72
Increase		40.7%		2.6%
Increase per week		£0.36		£0.03

Table 2 – 2026/27 – 2029/30 Medium-Term Financial Plan

Heading	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs				
Salaries	78,000.00	83,000.00	85,500.00	90,700.00
NI	9,400.00	10,000.00	10,500.00	11,300.00
Pensions	18,500.00	19,700.00	20,300.00	21,500.00
Contract Staff	-	-	-	-
	105,900.00	112,700.00	116,300.00	123,500.00
Administration				
WFH Allowance	-	-	-	-
Insurance	1,315.00	1,380.00	1,450.00	1,525.00
Bank Charges	190.00	200.00	210.00	220.00

Travel Expenses	600.00	600.00	600.00	600.00
Payroll Processing	720.00	740.00	760.00	780.00
Recruitment	-	-	-	-
IT Hardware & Software	3,600.00	3,000.00	6,500.00	3,000.00
Office Equipment	-	-	-	-
Staff H&S	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00
Memberships	1,700.00	1,750.00	1,800.00	1,850.00
Audit	750.00	800.00	850.00	900.00
Room Hire	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	1,100.00
Newsletter Costs	10,815.00	11,150.00	11,500.00	11,850.00
Events	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Training	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Legal/Professional Fees	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Stationery/Supplies	750.00	775.00	800.00	825.00
Postage	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Telephone & Internet	1,190.00	1,225.00	1,260.00	1,300.00
Data Protection	35.00	35.00	35.00	35.00
Storage Unit	-	-	-	-
Chair's Allowance	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
	32,315.00	32,305.00	36,415.00	33,535.00
Services				
Bin Emptying	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,900.00
New Bins	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Defibrillators	500.00	-	500.00	500.00
Fitness Classes/Wellbeing	10,000.00	10,300.00	10,600.00	10,900.00
Landscaping	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Street Furniture	-	-	-	-
Grants - s137	3,675.00	3,850.00	4,050.00	4,250.00
MKCAB	4,900.00	5,050.00	5,200.00	5,350.00
MKPA Play Sessions	8,050.00	8,300.00	8,550.00	8,800.00
	50,125.00	50,500.00	51,900.00	53,700.00
Allotments				
Allotments - MP	230.00	240.00	250.00	260.00
Allotments - KH	350.00	365.00	380.00	395.00
Allotments - Monkston	450.00	485.00	520.00	555.00
Allotment Deposits	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
Other	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
	2,330.00	2,390.00	2,450.00	2,510.00
Monkston Community Centre				
Repairs and Renewals	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
Grounds Maintenance	12,350.00	12,700.00	13,100.00	13,500.00
	15,350.00	15,700.00	16,100.00	16,500.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	206,020.00	213,595.00	223,165.00	229,745.00
INCOME				
Bank Interest	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00
s106	-	-	-	-

Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-
Community Centre Rent	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	6,002.00	6,002.00	6,002.00	6,002.00
Allotments				
Allotment Rent - MP	1,545.00	1,591.00	1,639.00	1,688.00
Allotment Rent - KH	1,545.00	1,591.00	1,639.00	1,688.00
Allotment Rent - Monkston	515.00	530.00	546.00	562.00
Allotment Deposits	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
	3,905.00	4,012.00	4,124.00	4,238.00
Monkston Community Centre				
Maintenance Grants	5,120.00	3,430.00	3,430.00	1,690.00
	5,120.00	3,430.00	3,430.00	1,690.00
TOTAL INCOME	15,027.00	13,444.00	13,556.00	11,930.00
SUMMARY AND PRECEPT:				
Net Expenditure	205,720.00	213,295.00	222,865.00	229,445.00
Net Income	15,027.00	13,444.00	13,556.00	11,930.00
Figure to Balance	190,993.00	200,151.00	209,609.00	217,815.00
Contribution to/from Reserves	-	-	-	-
Precept	190,993.00	200,151.00	209,609.00	217,815.00
Tax Base	2730	2750	2770	2790
Band D Annual Figure	69.96	72.78	75.67	78.07
Increase	4.9%	4.0%	4.0%	3.2%
Increase per week	£0.06	£0.05	£0.06	£0.05

Table 3 – Reserves

Reserve	Actual 9.12.24	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2026/27	Budget 2027/28	Budget 2028/29	Budget 2029/30
EMR New Bins	4,500.00	30,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
EMR Street Furniture	3,000.00	25,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
EMR Play Area Improvements	17,500.00	-	-	-	-	-
EMR New Website	3,000.00	-	-	-	-	-
EMR Allotment Deposits	-	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
EMR Community Centres	20,000.00	80,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
General Reserves (6 months NRE)	74,243.00	86,500.00	93,000.00	98,000.00	102,000.00	106,500.00
Additional General Reserves	101,266.00	28,525.00	17,025.00	12,025.00	8,025.00	3,525.00
	223,509.00	253,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00
Opening Balance	223,509.00	253,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00
Projected YE contribution to/(from) reserves	29,516.00	(90,000.00)	-	-	-	-
Projected Closing Balance	253,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00	163,025.00

AGENDA ITEM: FC 185/24

Subject: 2025/26 PRECEPT

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To provide Council with the necessary information to determine a precept requirement for 2025/26.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

- 1. Note that the 2025/26 council tax base for the parish is 2,707 Band D equivalent households, as advised by Milton Keynes City Council.**
- 2. Note that based upon the approved budget and use of reserves the Parish Council's precept requirement for 2025/26 is £180,613.**
- 3. Approve submission of a 2025/26 precept demand for £180,613 to Milton Keynes City Council.**
- 4. Note that based on a tax base of 2,707 Band D equivalent households, the precept per Band D equivalent household to be paid to Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council in 2025/26 is £66.72 per annum, and that this represents an increase of 2.6% on the previous year (or £0.03 per week).**

Background

Based upon the draft 2025/26 budget that Council will consider at agenda item FC 184/24, and having taken into consideration the projected income and expenditure figures and the use of reserves, there is a requirement to set a precept for 2025/26 of **£180,613** to balance the budget.

Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) has advised that the council tax base for 2025/26 is **2,707** Band D equivalent households. Therefore, a precept of **£180,613** divided by **2,707** Band D equivalent households equals an annual Band D amount of **£66.72**. This represents an annual increase of **£1.72** or **2.6%** on the precept the Council set for 2024/25.

Conclusion

Determination of a 2025/26 precept is required to enable the submission of a formal precept demand to Milton Keynes City Council by the end of January 2025.

The council is requested to review and approve the proposed precept figure of **£180,613** for the financial year 2025/26.

AGENDA ITEM: FC 186/24

Subject: New Council Website

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To propose arrangements for delivering a new council website.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

- 1. Ask the Website Working Group to review quotes/proposals sourced by the Clerk and make a recommendation on which website provider's quote should be accepted.**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with all Members of the Council, to select and accept a quote for the provision of a new website and associated services subject to the maximum budget of £3,000.**

Background

In October 2024, the Council established a Website Working Group to develop a fully costed proposal for a new council website, and the Clerk was tasked with drafting terms of reference. These terms of reference were approved at the November 2024 Full Council meeting.

However, the working group has yet to convene, and recent discussions about integrating the website into a broader communications strategy have raised questions about whether all members still wish to proceed under the standalone remit of the Website Working Group.

The need for a new website has been identified as a priority due to ongoing issues with the current site, including:

- A problematic security certificate.
- Functional inadequacies that fail to meet the needs of the Council or our residents.

The Council's 2024/25 budget includes funds for this project, including provisions for adopting gov.uk email addresses - now considered best practice for parish and town councils.

To ensure this priority is addressed promptly, the Clerk has sought quotes from specialist providers of parish council websites, based on a previously agreed specification.

Proposal

To avoid further delays and ensure the project moves forward efficiently, the following steps are proposed:

- 1. Website Working Group Review:** The working group reviews the received quotes and assesses their alignment with the Council's needs.
- 2. Delegated Decision-Making:** The working group's recommendation is shared with all Members of the Council. The Clerk, in consultation with all Members, will then decide which quote to accept, ensuring this decision can be made between scheduled meetings if necessary.

This approach allows for timely progression of the project while ensuring accountability and transparency.

Conclusion

A new council website is essential to address security and functionality issues with the current site. The allocated budget of £3,000 provides sufficient resources to deliver a replacement website, including associated services such as gov.uk email address adoption.

The proposed approach - utilising the working group for detailed review and delegating final decision-making to the Clerk in consultation with all Members - balances efficiency with inclusivity. This ensures the Council's communication and security needs are met without undue delay.

AGENDA ITEM: FC 187/24

Subject: Consultations

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: This report outlines two current consultations that the Council may wish to contribute to.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

1. **Formulate a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission’s consultation on ward boundaries for Milton Keynes City Council.**
2. **Formulate a response to the Government’s consultation on standards in local government and the conduct framework.**

Background

There are two current consultations that the Council may wish to consider responding to:

1. **Draft recommendations for new wards, ward boundaries, and ward names for Milton Keynes City Council.**

The Local Government Boundary Commission has proposed that Milton Keynes should be represented by 60 City Councillors covering 20 wards. To accommodate these changes, the boundaries of 19 wards would change; one will stay the same.

The Parish Council area currently falls entirely within the City Council ward of Monkston which is represented on MKCC by three Councillors. Under the proposals, the Monkston ward will be divided into two new wards: Ouzel Valley and Walnut Tree. Monkston and Monkston Park will fall under Ouzel Valley, while Kents Hill, Kingston, and Brinklow will be part of Walnut Tree. This change means our parish area will be represented by six City Councillors instead of the current three.

As the Boundary Commission is also seeking to ensure that Parish Council ward boundaries are coterminous with City Council ward boundaries where possible, there is also a minor change proposed to the internal boundaries of parish wards and a change of parish ward names. There are no substantial changes to Parish Council wards, the number of Parish Councillors, or to the external boundaries of the parish.

The consultation is open until **24 February 2025** and full details of the proposals, including maps, can be accessed here: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/milton-keynes

2. Strengthening The Standards and Conduct Framework For Local Authorities in England.

The government is seeking views on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The proposals being consulted upon include:

- The introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England.

- A requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches, and publish the outcomes of all formal investigations.
- The introduction of the power for all local authorities to suspend councillors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, a power of interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations.
- A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period.
- A role for a national body to deal with appeals.

The consultation is open until **26 February 2025** and full details can be found here:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework/>

Conclusion

Both consultations are too complex to detail within the scope of this report. Links to the consultation documents/maps/surveys are therefore provided for Members to access. If Members determine that responses to either or both consultations should be submitted by the Council, then consideration should be given to how the Council's response(s) will be formulated. Members may wish to agree the principals of core responses within the meeting itself, or alternatively, choose to submit more detailed individual comments to the Clerk to collate and formulate a response outside of the meeting which can then be agreed by Members as a final submission.

Members are encouraged to review the consultation documents in advance to facilitate informed discussions during the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: FC 188/24

Subject: Training

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To present a training plan for the Clerk and seek Council approval for associated costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council resolves to:

- 1. Note that the Clerk has successfully completed the ILCA and FILCA qualifications.**
- 2. Note that the Clerk has used delegated powers to book a place on an SLCC webinar on staff appraisals at a cost of £30.00 + VAT.**
- 3. Approve the Clerk’s registration and attendance at the 11 training courses/webinars listed in this report at a total cost of £396 + VAT.**
- 4. Approve the additional subscription fee of £13.75 for the Clerk’s Student Membership of the SLCC.**

Training

In November 2024, the Council approved the Clerk’s registration for the ILCA, FILCA, and CiLCA training. The Clerk successfully completed the ILCA and FILCA qualifications in December 2024 and is registered to commence CiLCA training in May 2025.

In addition to these formal qualifications, the Clerk has undertaken or registered for several free training opportunities provided by Scribe and BMKALC. Using delegated powers, the Clerk also booked a webinar on staff appraisals scheduled for 13 January 2025 at a cost of £30.00 + VAT.

To support the Council’s operations, the Clerk has identified several upcoming training courses provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Approval is sought for the Clerk to register for the following:

Course/Event	Date	Cost
GDPR E-course	Flexible	£36.00
Allotment Management: Site Facilities and Health & Safety	10 February 2025	£30.00
Quotes, Tenders, and Contract Management	19 February 2025	£30.00
VAT: The Basics and Making VAT Digital	27 February 2025	£30.00
New Clerk Series – Webinar One	4 March 2025	£20.00
Managing Your Cyber Security	5 March 2025	£30.00
Powers and Duties	10 March 2025	£45.00
Allotment Management: Tenancy Agreements & Policies	13 March 2025	£30.00
Getting into Health & Safety (3 sessions)	20, 27 March & 3 April	£145.00

Total Cost: £396.00 + VAT

These courses are directly relevant to the Council's activities and will equip the Clerk with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage key functions, including allotments, contracts, compliance, and health and safety.

Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

The Clerk is now a member of the SLCC. Having completed the ILCA and FILCA qualifications the Clerk has gained enough Continuous Professional Development points to apply to be upgraded to Student Membership of the SLCC and join the Society's Professional Development Scheme.

Student Membership of the SLCC requires a further subscription of £13.75 (£15.00 per annum for a whole membership year) and the Council is therefore requested to approve this additional subscription as part of the annual SLCC membership fee.

Financial Implications

The total cost of the proposed training (£396.00 + VAT) and the additional SLCC membership fee (£13.75) can be accommodated within the Council's respective training and memberships budgets for 2024/25.

AGENDA ITEM FC 189/24 – PLANNING & LICENSING

Approved Planning Applications

1. **Application Reference:** 24/01939/HOU

Proposal: The demolition of the existing conservatory and erection of single storey rear extension with rooflights (part retrospective) at **149 Blanchland Circle, Monkston, Milton Keynes MK10 9GU**

Refused Planning Applications

1. **Application Reference:** 24/01921/CLUP

Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for the erection of a single storey rear extension with rooflights at **13 Aylesford Grove, Monkston, Milton Keynes MK10 9JE**

Street Trading Consent – Renewal

1. MKCC has received a renewal application from C&D Brothers Snack Van, Chippenham Drive, Kingston, to sell hot takeaway food.

Previous Days: Monday to Friday

Previous Hours: 08:00 – 12:30

Hours applied for: Monday to Saturday - 08:00 – 13:00

The existing conditions on the consent are:

- A bin shall be provided for customer use whenever trading takes place.
 - Litter picking shall be conducted within the vicinity of the food mobile after trading has ceased.
 - Must use a temporary traffic beacon and place it in front of the van to raise awareness to oncoming vehicles. The beacon can be placed on top of a traffic cone.
2. MKCC has received an application from Howe and Co for 8 Fish and Chip vans to trade boroughwide for the following times:

Monday to Sunday 12:00 – 14:30 & 16:00 – 21:00

Boroughwide consents allow for no more than 20 minutes trading in any 100 metre part of any one Consent Street on any one day.

Please note that Street Trading is prohibited within 250 metres of any school's entrances and/or exits, during main school hours and 30 minutes following a school's normal closing time. Main school hours means the normal opening times for any particular school, whilst the students are being educated including lunch breaks but does not include times when the premises are open for after school activities. The prohibition applies to all school types such as: Infant, Junior, Primary, Secondary, Academy, Special, College and applies to static street traders (i.e. kebab vans) and Boroughwide street traders (i.e. ice cream vans).

AGENDA ITEM: FC 190/24

Subject: Annual Parish Meeting

Meeting date: Full Council - 14 January 2025

Author: Clerk – R Fuller

Purpose: To provide an overview of the legislative and procedural requirements for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) and to invite Councillors to discuss and agree on the proposed format for the 2025 meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council resolves to:

1. **Determine arrangements for the 2025 Annual Parish Meeting.**

Background

The Annual Parish Meeting is a statutory meeting distinct from Parish Council meetings. Its purpose is to enable electors of the parish to discuss parish affairs and to engage directly with the Parish Council and other community representatives.

The legal framework for the APM is outlined in the *Local Government Act 1972* as follows:

- **Timing:** The meeting must be held between 1 March and 1 June each year. The proceedings at a parish meeting shall not commence earlier than 6pm.
- **Presiding Officer:** The Chair of the Parish Council, if present, must preside. In their absence, the Vice-Chair or another person chosen by the meeting shall preside.
- **Attendance:** The meeting is open to all electors of the parish, who are entitled to speak and vote on matters discussed. Non-electors may attend but do not have voting rights.
- **Notice:** At least seven clear days' public notice must be given, stating the time, place, and agenda for the meeting. The notice should be displayed on the Council's website and noticeboards.
- **Content:** While there is no prescribed agenda, meetings typically include reports from the Chair of the Parish Council, local organisations, and community representatives. Discussions on parish matters raised by electors are also encouraged.

Discussion Points

To ensure the 2025 APM is both engaging and effective, Councillors are invited to consider the following:

1. **Date and Venue:**
 - Consider a date in late March or April to maximise time to organise and promote the event.
 - Consider the use of Monkston Community Centre as the venue.

2. **Agenda and Format:**

- Should the meeting feature reports from the Chair, and Councillors representing specific roles (e.g. allotments)?
- Would Councillors support inviting guest speakers or presentations from local community groups?
- Should there be a specific theme, such as local safety/neighbourhood watch?

3. **Promotion:**

- Agree on methods to publicise the meeting to ensure good attendance (e.g. social media, leaflets etc).

4. **Refreshments and Informal Networking:**

- Should the meeting include light refreshments and an informal session afterward to encourage engagement?

Conclusion

The Annual Parish Meeting is a valuable opportunity for the Council to engage directly with residents, provide updates on its activities, and gather feedback on parish matters. By agreeing on the format, agenda, and promotional approach for the 2025 meeting, the council can ensure the event is well-organised, inclusive, and beneficial to the community. Councillors are encouraged to contribute ideas and agree on key arrangements to enable effective planning.