

Chairman's Report 6th October 2008 Achievements and Work in Progress

1. There has been considerable effort by the village as a whole in preparing a Parish Plan. A questionnaire was prepared and circulated to the village together with a Housing Needs survey. The response rate of 46% for the questionnaire and 41% for the Housing Needs survey was outstanding. Milton Keynes looks for a return rate of 25-30% and some parishes are around 11-12%.

The results of the survey have been put on the Noticeboards and a number of follow up meetings have been held with most village organisations contributing a section to the Parish Plan.

The Parish Plan is important because it will improve our ability to get grants and it will improve the attitude of MKC to the Parish Council if it has a Plan to back up its decisions.

There will be further reviews of the Plan in November when the final sections have been written and all members of the public are invited to attend. It is hoped that the Plan will be formally adopted by the end of the year.

2. The first major project that the Parish Plan will support will be the refurbishment of the Village Hall. There has been a lot of feedback from using organisations about the need for improvements including a new entrance porch, zoning the central heating, the toilets, deep cleaning the floor, decorating and outside gates. We are making an application for a grant from WREN which we expect to submit in January – only once a quarter and we are still trying to get various quotes in.
3. Roads.
 - the granite kerbstones have been laid in North Street and the road edge is much improved there.
 - the Parish Council is actively looking at traffic calming at all three remaining entrances. The traffic survey mentioned at the last Parish Meeting has been done and shows substantial speeding at all three remaining village entrances with Hanslope Road being particularly bad. Traffic calming was favoured by residents in the questionnaire and will be discussed on tonight's CPC agenda.
 - we are also trying to get the speed limit moved about 100m down Wolverton Road and a stop line painted on Fox Covert Lane.
 - MKC have said that they will pipe the ditch in Station Road in 2009/10 and put in a parking scheme there in the following year. They are also commissioning a consultant to look at options for dealing with the flooding in Devil's Dip.
 - the A508 remains on our agenda. The latest situation is that NCC have said they will do a survey to understand exactly what options are available as previously, and we believe wrongly, they have said that various utilities and a pipeline would make any alteration prohibitively expensive. 89% of respondents to the village questionnaire favoured improvements at the junction.
4. The cycle track from the Wolverton bridge has been properly surfaced. This was the stretch where it was subject to being washed away. Although it took a lot of pushing, we appreciate that MKC have responded. It would be nice to get the rest of the track upgraded to the same standard!

However, the track from the railway up to Wolverton road has been very badly overgrown for most of the summer despite frequent calls to MKC.

5. This leads into the state of grass cutting and weed control over the summer which has been very bad. Again, constant pressure has meant we have had the roads sprayed – as they should have been in the spring. We have complained vigorously but, if any comfort, this has been a big issue for many parishes especially the rural ones.
6. A Neighbourhood Action Group was established earlier this year for Rural West and we are represented by two residents, John Earp and John Sweetland, and two Cllrs, Sonal and me. The NAG has representatives from TVP and MKC as well as residents and councillors. Most actions have related to speeding and parking. The police have taken action on both.

Sue Usher, the Rural Sector Inspector at Newport Pagnell, tells me that Kirsty Barnes will shortly be tutoring a new PCSO, Christina Lewington. When this Officer is 'up and running', the plan is that she will take over the Rural West beat and Kirsty will run the mobile police station so we continue to see Kirsty.

7. One of the recommendations from the village questionnaire that has been taken up by CPC before finalisation of the plan is the creation of a village website. There is a pilot site now running and we hope that this will soon be generally available.
8. One of the really nice things that is returning, after a short absence, is community spirit, villagers prepared to do things for the village and not just leaving it to others or the council. Thanks are due to those villagers who have repainted the bus-shelters, planting up and keeping the Triangle tidy, similarly the War Memorial and the planters around the village and for developing our website. I'm sure I have left a lot of people out. But thank you and we hope that the spirit will continue.