

Chairman's Report 7th April 2008 Achievements and Work in Progress

1. We have increased the precept by 6.5% which is an increase of £1,096 or £2.20 per Band D household (i.e. 4p a week increase) bringing the total precept per Band D household to £38.88. This precept is roughly in the middle of the range of precepts set by other MK parishes and below the average.

The precept is £17,561 and will be used for
£11,660 Mostly non-discretionary expenditure (Insurance, audit, cost of clerk and number of smaller items)
£2,000 Buildings maintenance mostly village hall (note village hall committee, through CPC, will spend a similar amount internally from its own 'ring fenced' funds)
£2,500 for matching grants for traffic calming and improving access at the sports ground
£1,400 for general maintenance of the sports ground other and above that covered by the income from the bond and miscellaneous other sports ground fees.

2. There has been a major review of the sports ground not least because it was becoming unaffordable and preventing the parish from other projects.

The council has decided that it will maintain the recreation ground as a general facility but not subsidise the cricket or football clubs. This involves maintaining the buildings, insuring them and keeping the grass cut, hedge trimmed and generally keeping the ground tidy.

The council expects the two clubs, cricket and football, using the ground to do any work necessary to raise the standard from a general recreation ground to a specific sports facility such as marking out the pitches, preparing the wicket and paying for any additional grass-cutting.

This has given a balanced budget achieved primarily through a lower cost grass cutting service and by moving specific cricket wicket preparation to the club. The council also intends a competitive review of buildings insurance when it falls due.

The clubs may undertake some fund raising and we hope that residents will support them.

3. Separately, CPC has also fenced off a footpath either end of the sports field so that dogs need no longer need to be taken onto the field as we had received numerous complaints about fouling especially of the football field. New notices are being erected and CPC will be entering discussions with MKC and the police about enforcement.
4. A new constitution has been agreed for the Village Hall. The main change is that the council will be responsible for the finances both in invoicing and collections and for expenditure. This will not only be more efficient in collecting charges but it will remove the grey area as to who is responsible for certain aspects of expenditure. The village hall accounts will be kept separately identifiable in the

overall parish council accounts.

Again, the Village Hall Committee will engage in fund raising and we hope that residents will support them.

5. The village shop continues to flourish but will Udi and I will speak more about that later on the agenda.
6. We welcome our first PCSO Kirsty Barnes to the village and we also have a new PC Andy Perry. Representations have been made to the police about speeding especially at the village entrances and about illegal parking and I hope Kirsty will speak on this later on the agenda.
7. Thames Valley Police and MKC have formed a Neighbourhood Action Group and a small group of Cllrs and residents will attend. Next meeting is on Monday 14th April at VH. All welcome. Details from Clerk.
8. Traffic calming status – a number of Cllrs met with Trevor Dove from MKC on 10th March. The primary purpose was to discuss installation of traffic calming. We were disappointed to find that the consultants, due in January, have not yet been to the village. Trevor undertook to install speed measurement tubes ‘within 2 months’ and he will commission a design for traffic islands. He will also arrange for a stop line to be painted at the junction of Fox Covert Lane and for the hatched area on nearby North Street to be repainted.
9. Council has been in regular discussions with MKC about the cycle track to Wolverton which was the biggest issue raised with Cllrs last May. I will read a letter from Ceri Griffin, Cycling and Walking Development Officer at MKC, later in the agenda but work is about to start.
10. Council has been in regular discussions with MKC about a number of Highways issues and met with Ian MacGregor, MKC Highways, on 3rd April. A major issue was flooding in Station Road where MKC committed to send a letter immediately to the responsible farmer.

We also discussed parking in Station Road because CPC simply does not have the funds to improve that parking. MKC will investigate a site improvement programme but this will not be budgeted until 2009/10. However, MKC have funded the installation of granite kerbs in North Street opposite Bullington End Road where lorries are eroding the verge. The kerbs on the church bend will also be strengthened at the same time which will be in this financial year.

A new officer has been appointed to assist Ian MacGregor for the villages and he will do a survey to pick up other road and footway damage. Faded road signs at Thrupp Close will be passed to the appropriate department.

Finally, we also looked at flooding risk in Bullington End Road and ended viewing Devils Dip.

11. Improvement of A508 junction - status. Andrew raising with Mark Lancaster who in turn will discuss with Tim Boswell, the MP for Cosgrove.

12. Parish Plan. A first meeting of the Parish Plan Committee was held on 10th March and was very well attended by 28 people. Apart from general background, the main output from this meeting was a draft of a Village Questionnaire which will provide facts and opinions from the village as a whole which will be reflected in the Plan. The Plan will then be used to support the development of the village including funding applications and development.

The draft questionnaire has been extensively circulated to attendees for further comment. The level of commitment measured by the amount of change suggested has been very high. The questionnaire will be reviewed later this evening by the PC for its comments. There will be a further meeting of the PP Committee on 17th April at 19.45 in VH. All are welcome. After this, we hope to finalise the questionnaire ready for distribution. A standard MK Housing Survey will be circulated at the same time.

Thank everyone for their support, which has been quite remarkable, and to encourage all to attend these meetings which will be mentioned at PC meetings, posted on the Notice Board and individually notified, generally by email, to existing participants.