



Minutes of the meeting of Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council held on Monday 15/07/19 at 7.30pm at the Community Centre, 87 Kensington Drive, Great Holm MK8 9AY.

Councillors present: Councillors Todd (Chair), Altieri-Douglas, Bailey, Nayee, Dyer, Howe, Feeney, Sargent, Nolan (Vice-chair) and Hoyle (late)
Officers present: Bev Field (Parish Clerk)
Members of the public present: 8

The meeting opened at 7.32pm due to a delay from the preceding training for Councillors on the Code of Conduct.

FC53/19 Public participation: All the members of the public attending indicated that they were concerned with the planning application for 3 Pinks Close, Loughton. The Chair explained the role of the Parish Council in commenting on planning applications, and that it is not the decision-making authority but can request that the application is considered by the Milton Keynes Council Development Control Panel (DCP). Any objections need to comply with national and local planning policy.

Resident 1 – has lived at 1 Pinks Close since it was built in 2000 and 4 original residents remain. They like the current plot layout and want to object. Their two concerns are the boundary which was illegally moved by a previous resident. Secondly, the driveway is to be moved to other side of house and this changes the landscape layout. The developers (English Partnerships) notified them of a covenant stating they were not allowed to change the existing landscape. Residents do get on in Pinks Close, and objecting has been a difficult thing to do.

Answer: Councillor Todd answered that a restrictive covenant might not be a planning matter, as planners would expect private legal action if developers are not entitled to alter land. Residents should get legal advice on this matter if they wish to pursue it.

Resident 2 - from 2 Pinks Close. No.2 is on a lower elevation and might be overlooked by the development. They would like the DCP to consider it. It might be overbearing and exaggerate the effect to their property. There is a 60% increase of first floor windows, the development is closer to their property and near to their kitchen, and the garage will be demolished which removes some screening. Their boundary is different to what is on the application. Nobody objects per se, they are asking the applicant to please just alter it.

Resident 3 lives at 10 Pinks Close and read a letter out from no.4 Pinks Close. No.4 have concerns about the roof terrace which is close to the fence line and this might affect their privacy, please refuse the application. No.10 Pinks Close thinks the original house was set back as part of the design. This proposal brings the house forward by 4.5 metres and facing directly onto the road. In addition, two large bay windows will look onto their children's bedrooms. The elevation difference influences the impact of overlooking. It will remove the current open view and they will only see the wall and garage. The property will move forward and disrupt the street scene. The planning advice on parking would not work; any guests will park on the street, which is tight and narrow, and will cause disruption to neighbouring properties. 3.5 years ago, no.10 tried to get planning permission and asked for help from the Parish Council, but was refused because they had not consulted the neighbours. They asked for support on this basis for this application.

Answer: Councillor Todd said the planning authority do encourage consultation with neighbours. It is difficult for the Parish Council which seeks to support its residents, when there are residents both for and against an application.

Resident 4 Mr & Mrs Stanton (the applicants) were represented by their architect. The application in outline needed to address issues for planning policy. The boundary line is from the land registry. The pre-existing one was a rough boundary by the developers, and we have no knowledge of the covenant. For the neighbours to the left there is only one first floor window. This is the only house with a gable-end, and it needed a new frontage. With parking, the cars can turn in the development. Obscure glazing is used; one bedroom does face no.10 at an angle over 22 metres away, which is OK with the planning standards. We have done lots of consultation with the planning department. Mrs Stanton said they love living in Pinks Close and get on with their neighbours, they have a young family and want to make a forever home; to be a lovely, extended place to grow up in.

Answer: Councillor Nolan encouraged the applicants and architect to consult the neighbours and seek agreement.

The public participation session closed.



FC54/19 Apologies: Councillor Hoyle sent his apologies that he will be late.

FC55/19 Declarations of interest: None

FC56/19 Planning and licensing applications: Representations to be made to Milton Keynes Council on the following planning applications were considered:

- a) **3 Pinks Close, Loughton MK5 8FF** application 19/01685/FUL to remodel and extend an existing detached dwelling to provide additional accommodation over two floors.
Councillor Sargent suggested the Parish Council objects on the grounds that the development is bulky and overbearing (D4), the terrace will create noise pollution from conversation carrying over and infringe the privacy and amenity of the neighbours. The turning circle is hard to understand and moving the garage closer will add vehicle noise to no.4.
In addition, the street scene will be affected. The applicants were encouraged to consult with the neighbours.

Resolved: To object to the application on the above grounds and request a referral to the Development Control Panel.

- b) **7A Davy Avenue, Knowlhill MK5 8HJ** application 19/01645/FUL for a 79-space car park
The car park is legitimate and necessary, but the countryside officer's query should be resolved before they go ahead.

Resolved: to comment on the application and request that an assessment of the environmental impact regarding great crested newts is undertaken prior to work commencing.

- c) **The Old Coach House, Pitcher Lane, Loughton MK5 8AU** application 19/01601/FUL for a single storey rear extension to replace a conservatory

Resolved: No objection

- d) **1 Thorwold Place, Loughton MK5 8BH** application 19/01566/FUL for a proposed conservatory

Resolved: No objection

- e) **3 Westwood Close, Great Holm MK8 9EE** application 19/01590/FUL for a rear single storey wrap-around extension and side two storey extension.

Resolved: No objection

FC57/19 Planning Applications: No further applications were validated since the publication of the agenda.

FC58/19 Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 17/06/19 were approved and signed as an accurate record, with the addition of the word "adjoining" to the comments in the public participation session of resident 4 in line 5 of that paragraph.

FC59/19 Matters arising: The "Picnic on the Green" event run by the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) was a success, with £300.00 collected as a donation for the Fire & Rescue Service.

FC60/19 Committee minutes: The draft minutes from the Premises Committee meeting on 08/07/19 were received and it was noted there will be an official opening of the Grumpy Cook Café at the Pavilion at 2.00pm on Tuesday 13th August.

FC61/19 Recommendation from the Premises Committee: The recommendation of the Premises Committee to resurface the footpath in front of the Pavilion, Loughton because the potholes revealed by recent weeding are a safety hazard was considered. The Premises Committee is limited to authorizing up to £1,000.00 expenditure. The work should be done quickly for safety reasons and co-ordinated with the tenant. It is not part of the red route and the whole area between the Pavilion and the sports pitch is owned by the Parish Council.
Councillor Bailey said this type of expenditure should be planned into the budget as part of the medium-term planning. The next budget should be more realistic about renovation and maintenance, because historically the budgets show low awareness of this type of potential spending.
The Clerk confirmed that the Financial Regulations do not require expenditure less than £10,000 to be advertised on the Council website.

Resolved: To obtain a second quote and to delegate to the Parish Clerk and the Chair of the Premises Committee the decision to choose the most suitable quote with a maximum cost of £1,200.00+VAT as soon as possible.

FC62/19 Finance report: The income and expenditure report of the RFO was received and noted.

The 2019/20 budget has some nominal codes with a zero budget, for example, Pavilion security (nominal code 4315) and repairs (code 4310). The Parish Council is overspending. The income and expenditure figures provided by the RFO are accurate, but the budget planning needs to be more realistic and focussed. Expenditure should consider which budget heading the money will come out of. However, the 2019/20 budget planned for an overspend of £5,956.00 in addition to further unplanned expenditure. In practice, the budget is not stuck to rigidly as it can be a responsible decision to diverge and respond as issues come up during the year.

The RFO confirmed that the Pavilion refurbishment was an unplanned expenditure.

The RFO agreed to circulate the 2019/20 budget in both the new and old formats along with the business plan.

Councillor Hoyle arrived at 20.38pm

FC63/19 Payments: The payment schedule was authorised and includes payments for August. Two MKPA invoices have been added and the petty cash cheques need signing by two signatories. Two Councillors should sign the payment schedule in accordance with the decision. Electronic bank payments have previously been authorised by Councillors Todd and Howe, and Councillors Bailey, Sargent, Hoyle & Nayee are also signatories. Councillor Altieri-Douglas cannot be a signatory because she is the Chair of the Finance Committee, and Councillors Dyer, Feeney, Nolan are not signatories.

Resolved: To authorise the payment schedule; Councillor Nayee to authorise the electronic transfers.

FC64/19 Grant application: An application by the YMCA for a grant of £2,500.00 was considered. The agenda had noted an incorrect figure.

YMCA are a national organisation who do excellent work. It is a large request for the Parish and grants usually focus on groups working in the Parish, although this is not specified in the grant policy. Is this city-wide request local enough for the Parish precept to be spent on it? Inaccuracies could be resolved by requesting a financial report to support the application.

Proposal: by Councillor Howe to move to a vote, seconded by Councillor Nayee.

Proposal: by Councillor Nolan to award a grant of £1,000.00, seconded by Councillor Todd,
7 against, 2 in favour, 1 abstained. Motion failed.

Proposal: by Councillor Todd to award a grant of £250.00, seconded by Councillor Altieri-Douglas
7 in favour, 3 against

Proposal: by Councillor Altieri-Douglas to request a financial breakdown. No seconder. Motion failed.

Resolved: To award a grant of £250.00 to the YMCA towards furnishing the new YMCA development.

FC65/19 Allotment landscaping: A quote from Serco for landscaping works at the Jubilee allotment site was considered. During the Spring review it was identified that the Jubilee site had an overgrown boundary. The Parish Council paid to clear the vegetation from a footpath running between Pitcher Lane and School Lane in 2018, which was almost impassable. However, the other side of the same hedgerow remains overgrown and completely overshadows one of the allotment plots, which is unworkable. The allotment representative (also the church warden) has been consulted about the quote and agrees that the severe pruning is the best option.

The allotment income is low and does not provide enough income for maintenance, which is economic madness. The work could be delayed to the next budget cycle, but should be undertaken in the Autumn season and a severe prune will be more effective. The plot holders should be asked to continue to maintain the boundary.

Resolved: To approve the Serco quote for £500.00 to restore the hedge to a proper height, leaving three trees. To clear around, remove all the low branches to allow the light through and to tidy the new growth from last year.

FC66/19 Allotment Security: The Fire Service were called to a fire in a shed on the Greenhill Close allotments on 08/07/19. To access the site the gate lock was damaged, and the fire was dealt with quickly. The Fire Service stated that the fire was arson. A quote was sought to replace or repair the gate; however, this has been withdrawn at the request of the allotment representative, because he and other plot holders have dealt with the repair. The Police are investigating, and the Neighbourhood Policing team have been informed by the Clerk and have visited the site on their patrol.

Noted.

FC67/19 Paperless administration: The resolution to work towards paperless administration (FC46/19) aimed to help the environment and reduce the Clerk's workload, but it was amended to immediate implementation instead of September. 4/10 Councillors do not feel ready or able to support the Council resolution yet, and so at this stage it is not saving much paper and has increased the Clerk's work tasks because different people now have customised ways of being sent the documents. Over the coming months members are asked to aim to work electronically and contact the Clerk if there is any obstacle that can be addressed to support the resolution of Council.

To facilitate members reading their supporting documents and agenda at meetings, reasonably priced tablets and laptops have been investigated, to provide equality of access, since Councillors are unpaid. Once a price range and options have been agreed, members could request a device from the Parish Clerk if desired and two spare tablets could be prepared as backup for meetings, much like a spare set of papers.

Some members are opposed to buying devices or installing Wi-Fi. It will provide a saving over 2-3 years and could save money for the Parish. Milton Keynes Council now encourage their paid staff to use their own devices. Councillor Sargent may be interested to have a Council tablet.

Resolved: This item was deferred to the next meeting.

FC68/19 Solar panels: Councillor Nolan proposed to seek specialist advice on the feasibility of fitting solar panels to the Pavilion in Loughton and the Community Centre in Great Holm, including the potential costs, disadvantages and benefits for further consideration by this Council. Councillor Nolan said that the Parish is not responsible for the electricity at the Pavilion, but it fits with the green agenda of Milton Keynes Council and will save the Parish money. The Clerk should do the work. We need to get good advice at no cost.

It could take 8-10 years for the Parish to get a return on the investment, it is a big expenditure some members don't agree with. Councillor Hoyle has recently investigated domestic solar panels and can share his findings, he noted there may be grants available towards a feasibility study and will work with the Clerk. Renewable energy is generally supported but a cost benefit analysis is required, and the Pavilion is not a justifiable public expenditure, since it is the tenant's responsibility. The panels need to be robust and withstand footfalls. The size of a battery is around 2x3ft. The Parish Council should use local knowledge and expertise and a specialist report will be needed.

The Clerk confirmed that renewing the electric light fittings at the Great Holm Community Centre has been completed, and the lights are brighter and safer as a result.

Resolved: The Parish Clerk will work with Councillor Hoyle in September to gather information on installing solar panels at the Great Holm Community Centre, for the Parish Council to consider commissioning a feasibility study.

The Chair declared the following items should be deferred to the next meeting, due to the length of the meeting.

FC69/19 Parish Clerk report: This item was deferred.

FC70/19 Reports from members: This item was deferred.

FC71/19 Thames Valley Police: This item was deferred.

FC72/19 MKPA report: This item was deferred.

FC73/19 Get Sorted! Recycling campaign: This item was deferred.

FC74/19 Items for the next agenda: Items FC69-73/19.

Date and time of next meeting: Monday 16/09/19 at 7.30pm at the Community Centre, 87 Kensington Drive, Great Holm MK8 9AY

The meeting closed at 10.13pm



Signed:

Date:

16/9/2019