



Minutes of the Meeting of Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council held remotely on Monday 15 March 2021 at 7.30pm

Location: held virtually by zoom technology.

Parish Members present: Councillors Todd (in the Chair), Altieri-Douglas, Bailey (up to FC188/21), Dyer, Feeney, Howe, Hoyle, Nayee, Nolan, Sargent.

Staff : Philip Compton (Parish Clerk)

Members of the public present: 4, including Cllr Wilson-Marklew for item FC183/21

Cllrs were reminded all the rules about code of conduct at meetings applied to virtual meetings, and that as had been requested in September 2020 all meetings would be recorded.

FC177/21 Apologies: None had been received.

FC178/21 Declarations of interest: No interests were declared.

FC179/21 Public participation: This item, together with the presentation by Cllr Wilson-Marklew on the DRT (Demand Responsive Transport) were taken together.

Cllr Wilson-Marklew provided a summary of the project, which was followed by questions and answers. Councillors asked the following questions:

Question: Will it be available to everyone in MK or only in areas where bus routes have ceased?

Answer: This depends on where the passenger is going. On account of local governance rules which affect the provision of public money and services, the local authority cannot provide a service which competes with private organizations. This is the same across the public sector, including Parish Councils.

Q: What about if a commercial bus service has finished for the evening?

A: Yes, in this circumstance the DRT would be allowed to function.

Q: What is the approximate waiting time?

A: Cllr Wilson-Marklew explained that her understanding was that currently the wait time would be the latest given for the pick up to happen. The buses would not go on a very circuitous route.

Q: Do you always have to travel from where you live?

A: You will be able to use the DRT all over MK.

Q: Will the programme be rolled-out further?

A: This is unlikely as MKC cannot compete with a commercial service. It is a subsidised service.

Q: Where can you arrange to meet the buses? For example for elderly residents, do they have to walk to the bus stop?

A: This point was similarly made by Woughton Community Council. There would be a phone number available. Cllr Wilson-Marklew wished to take this comment back to see what the planned solutions were for the elderly accessing the service.

Q: Do people have to be picked-up from a bus stop?

A: The arrangement is that people have to be picked up from within 400 metres of one.

Q: Why is only a small part of Great Holm currently on the map as being DRT zoned?

A: The web is not active yet. It is going live at the end of March.

Q: What is the provision for the elderly who do not use apps or do not have a mobile.

A: We just started our communication strategy. Letter drops are happening in all areas where bus routes have ceased. Documents are going out to Parish and Town Councils to circulate via social media and their websites.

Q: Is there consideration that both the metric and imperial system of measurement could be included on the notices?

A: There is a large segment of society who would not know or understand what yards are, as they are not taught it in schools, and this would preclude them from using the service and create confusion.

Q: What will be the cost of this provision?

A: Approximately £1million, whereas there was a cost of £4m to £5m for the subsidised bus routes.

Cllr Wilson-Marklew was thanked for her presentation and for answering Councillors' queries.

The first member of the public, who was the Chair of the LRA (Loughton Residents Association) asked the following questions:

Q: What is the progress for the parking mitigation measures that are planned for the two Loughton schools?

A: The drawings were made-up and taken to the Parish Council for comment and were approved. Milton Keynes Council have not yet taken this to formal consultation, and have been significantly held back by staff members being diverted to anti-covid mitigation projects.

Q: Is the Parish Council considering any actions regarding the youths that congregate at the underpass between Loughton and Shenley?

A: Councillors commented that other than littering, their congregating, it was felt, did not constitute anti-social behaviour.

Other members of the public made the following comments:

Q: Prior to the refurbishment of the Ashpole Furlong Play Area there were two benches on the top of the hillock there. These have been taken away and not replaced. What is happening to replace them?

A: The play area is the property of MKC (Milton Keynes Council). It would be up to members of the public to 'report it' using the MKC website if they wished to see the benches replaced.

It was agreed the Clerk would communicate with the relevant officers at MKC and enquire about the benches. It was noted that one bench around a tree was in process of being replaced.

Q: Four or five years ago The Grove school was allowed by MKC to make an extension. Several of the conditions placed on this were to the effect that; the kerb that was removed would be re-raised, the grass verge would be replaced and the trees would be reinstated.

A: Councillors expressed concern that these were perhaps not formal conditions placed upon the planning acceptance but that it may have been a 'gentlemen's agreement'.

The Planning Committee and Clerk agreed to look into this at their next Planning Committee meeting on 06 April 2021.

Q: Members of the public commented that the two local organisations on social media, on facebook, Loughton (MK) and Great Holm Chat, seemed to be unequally represented in Councillor involvement, there being a tendency for increased Councillor feedback placed on the Great Holm ones.

A: The Clerk explained that Councillors were not acting in their roles as Councillors when posting on social media, rather as members of the public. The Parish Council social media updates were regular and were on the Parish Council facebook account. The Clerk also commented that he had been 'blocked' by the Loughton (MK) facebook site, as he was described as living or coming from Northampton, but this matter should shortly be resolved, as IT support was being considered later in the meeting (item FC191/21 refers).

All members of the public left the meeting at this point.

FC180/21 Thames Valley Police: The crime statistics report from Thames Valley Police was noted.

FC181/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2021: Minutes of the meeting had been provided prior to the meeting in the paperwork and were approved as an accurate record. The Chair agreed to sign them after the meeting, and provide them to the Clerk.

FC182/21 Committee meetings:

Action: draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting 01 March 2021 had been uploaded to the website and included in the paperwork for the meeting, and were noted.

FC183/21 Demand Responsive Transport Cllr Wilson-Marklew information provision: This had been discussed at the beginning of the meeting (see item FC179/21 above).

FC184/21 Payments: The monthly payment schedule had been compiled prior to the meeting and was included in the paperwork. All payments were approved. The current bank balance of £87k was noted.

FC185/21 Interim internal audit report: The report was noted and approved and the Clerk was commended on a very positive interim internal audit which contained no recommendations for improvements in accounting practices in local governance.

FC186/21 Parish comparative finances: The Clerk had compiled a report containing charts which showed where the Parish Council lay relative to other Parishes across the Borough. Councillors noted the Parish's precept requirement relative to all others across MKC, and relative to those with over 500 Band D paying households, noting the residents paid well below the MK average, at £39.80/band D household, whereas most Parishes residents paid significantly more. The Clerk explained Cllr Dyer had requested more financial information,

after having read in the newspaper that Parishes required in MK somewhere in the region of £108/house/year.

Action: Cllr resolved the Clerk would highlight to the residents by way of a news notification on the Parish website as to the activities of the Parish Council, and where the annual precept money was spent. Cllrs requested this highlighted the extremely low precept the Parish received relative to those across MK, and that the Parish had reduced its' precept requirement for the current year in order to freeze the amount payable per household, acknowledging there had been a reduction in Band D households eligible for council tax payments, which was a clear indication people had slipped into poverty. Cllr Altieri-Douglas requested that this did not state the Parish's position relative to other Parishes.

FC187/21 Parish Council management accounts: These were noted.

FC188/21 Grumpy Cook Cafe: It was on the agenda to review the position of rent payments from the tenant, and consider extending the rent waiver. It was noted that full re-opening would not be allowed until 17 May, with a reduction in restrictions happening in mid April. The tenant had been in communication with the Chair, and this communication had been circulated prior to the meeting. The tenant had stated April could generate little income if weather was bad, as outdoor-only service was allowed in April.

Action: It was resolved to waive rent for two further months, April and May, and to reconsider the level of rent chargeable in the May Full Council meeting, which the Clerk reminded was actually on 17 May 2021.

Cllr Bailey left the meeting at this point (9:00pm)

FC189/21 pre-recorded answers to 10 Questions from constituents: It was on the agenda To consider questions from the local community to share via the Parish website and social media, for recording an online closed meeting with Councillor representatives. A selection of questions had been compiled since the last meeting, which had been sought from Councillors and residents.

Action: The questions were agreed and the Clerk and Cllr Nolan were tasked with passing these to TVP (Thames Valley Police).

FC190/21 Fire Safety service provider: The Clerk led this item, explaining that the quality of provision had been very poor recently, and that ChurchesFire had an unreasonable mark-up of prices for equipment replacement. This had been brought to the Clerk's attention by the Caretaker, and Councillors wished it acknowledged that they were grateful for this recommendation.

Action: All three service-providers' costs were considered, and it was noted Fireandelectrical, the closest service provider, had the lowest callout charge, and was properly accredited, and so it was resolved they would be hired to replace ChurchesFire.

FC191/21 IT general support provider: Three quotes had been provided for annual support, of either £15 or £20/month.

Action: It was resolved to appoint Pericom for IT support. As with the fire services, the Clerk was requested to swiftly inform Full Council if there were any concerns over the two new providers.

FC192/21 MK Community Foundation summer basketball: It was on the agenda to consider contacting them to organise sessions at the Parish Council's basketball hoop in the summer.

Action: It was resolved to try and facilitate this, upon the condition that the hours weren't unsociable so as to provide consternation to residents living nearby.

FC193/21 Serco general waste cost increase to the Parish Council for the bin outside the Community Centre: It was on the agenda to note 5% increase in cost of general waste services. The Clerk explained this was relevant to the Parish regarding the bin which was emptied every other week outside the Community Centre, at cost of approximately £52.30/month (depending on how many weeks were in the month). Councillors noted their duty to provide value for money.

Action: It was resolved the Clerk would seek tenders for the service, in an effort to obtain value for money.

FC194/21 Street Trading licenses:

- a) **Consent Boroughwide Street Trading Consent – New, from Cafe2U for a Mobile Coffee Van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: Monday to Saturday 08:00 – 15:00 Boroughwide consents allow for no more than 20 minutes trading in any 100 metre part of any one Consent Street on any one day. 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:**

Action: Cllrs noted the propensity for litter on account of the provision of mobile street vendors, and resolved not to object to the license application but to request that litter collection by the vendor is placed as a condition upon the granting of a license.

- b) **Boroughwide Street Trading Consent – Really Awesome Coffee on 23/02/2021 for 1 mobile cafe van to trade Boroughwide for the following times: Monday to Sunday 07:30 – 16:30:**

Action: Cllrs noted the propensity for litter on account of the provision of mobile street vendors, and resolved not to object to the license application but to request that litter collection by the vendor is placed as a condition upon the granting of a license.

- c) **Street Trading Consent – Renewal We have received a renewal application on the 04/03/2021 from Mary's Kitchen Roebuck Way To sell: Hot takeaway food Hours applied for Monday to Friday 07:00 – 15:00 Please note that hours have changed from 08:00 – 14:00 Monday to Friday. The existing conditions on the consent are: A litter bin shall be provided for customers. The trading location shall be left in a clean and tidy condition.**

Action: Cllrs noted the propensity for litter on account of the provision of mobile street vendors, and resolved not to object to the license application but to request that litter collection by the vendor is placed as a condition upon the granting of a license.

- d) **Renewal application received by MKC on the 23/02/2021 by Ozzies Kebabs to sell: Hot takeaway food Hours applied for Monday to Sunday 16:30 – 22:30:**

Action: Cllrs noted the propensity for litter on account of the provision of mobile street vendors, and resolved not to object to the license application but to request that litter collection by the vendor is placed as a condition upon the granting of a license.

FC195/20 Reports from members: there were none.

FC196/20 Items for the next agenda. Councillors were reminded for items to be requested on the agenda to contact the Clerk in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Date and time of Next Meeting: Monday 19 April 2021 at 7.30pm

The Meeting was declared closed at 09:30pm.

DRAFT