



9 March 2018

To: Electors of the Parish of Leighton-Linslade
Members of Leighton-Linslade Town Council
Principal Authority Ward Councillors for Leighton Buzzard and Linslade

Notice is hereby given that the
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Will be held on **Monday, 19 March 2018 at 7.30 pm at Astral Park.**

Councillor S Rahman
Town Mayor

***THIS MEETING MAY
BE RECORDED ****

AGENDA

1. WELCOME

Welcome - Town Mayor, Councillor Syed Rahman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 March 2017.

4. TOWN COUNCIL

- (a) a brief presentation will be given by the Town Clerk and Cllr E Wallace, Leader of the Council.
- (b) Town Councillors will be present to answer any questions from the public regarding areas within the remit of the Town Council (parks, allotments, cemeteries, community events, community grants, street market).

5. FINAL REMARKS

FINAL REMARKS – meeting closes at 2100 hours.

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LEIGHTON-LINSLADE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD AT PAGES PARK PAVILION

MONDAY 13 MARCH 2017 AT 1930 HOURS

Present:	Councillors	S Cotter - Town Mayor and Chair R Berry A Brandham D Bowater C Chambers A Dodwell K Ferguson J M Freeman S Jones F Kharawala T Morris C Palmer C Perham G Perham E Wallace
	Officers	M Saccoccio (Town Clerk) S Sandiford (Corporate Governance Manager – interim) I Haynes (Head of Grounds & Environmental Services) V Cannon (Head of Cultural & Economic Services) C Cummins (Finance Officer)
	Members of the Public	17
	Member of the Press	0

1. WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Cotter, welcomed all those present to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Councillor Cotter explained the format of the meeting and thanked representatives of the Leighton Buzzard Society for attending to present information.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors K Cursons, S Cursons, J Davies and B Spurr.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 March 2016 were approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

AGREED that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14 March 2016 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Maurice Crowe, Chairman of The Leighton Buzzard Society, gave a brief explanation of the Society and its objectives. Formed in 1965 by Sir Gilbert Inglefield and Sir Frank Markham, initially the Society had had a struggle to be recognised as it considered and campaigned on matters relating to conservation, development, transport and events. In its 50+ year history the Society had pursued the objectives in its Constitution and continued to work in the same spirit today, for example campaigning for the preservation of the Green Belt. The Society was also Trustee for the St. Andrews Clock in the Library and was currently seeking a new representative to attend periodic meetings at Parliament.

In recent times, the Society had campaigned against the development of land at Valley Farm, campaigned for improvements to the unsightly and potentially dangerous paving issues in the High Street and was focussed on two key areas of concern: the provision of infrastructure and transport developments.

The Society currently had 152 members and met on the fourth Thursday of each month at The Gables in Linslade.

Mr Crowe was thanked for his presentation and for attending the meeting with other representatives of the Society.

5 COUNCIL ACTIVITY

A brief presentation was given by Town Clerk Mark Saccoccio and Leader of the Council, Councillor Ewan Wallace, on recent projects undertaken by the Town Council, a summary of services and funding and an indication of future objectives.

The meeting was advised that the majority of funding for Town Council projects and services was obtained through the precept, collected by the local authority as part of the council tax charge. The precept had remained unchanged for the last four years, with the Town Council achieving increased efficiencies in order to continue to deliver services and projects such as the refurbishment of the public conveniences at Parson's Close Recreation Ground.

Residents were advised that the 21 Town Councillors were volunteers and an overview of the committee structure overseeing projects and services was given. Recent successes included the achievement of a Gold Quality award as well as three Green Flag awards, indicating the standard of services being provided by the Town Council. The town market was a key priority and the focus of a current improvement project. Other key projects included the Astral Park Sports and Community Centre, improvements to Linslade Recreation Ground and continuing to influence decisions taken at local authority level.

Town Mayor Councillor Steve Cotter gave a brief update on other recent events including the presentation of the 2017 Honorary Burgess award to two local volunteers and a number of fundraising activities undertaken to benefit this year's three chosen charities (CLIC Sargent, the MS Society and CHUMS).

6 QUESTIONS

The Chair invited attendees to ask questions or make comments.

Q. *Is the Town Council aware of a planning application for development on the junction of Old Road/New Road?*

A. *Councillors would look into this further after the meeting and provide a response. Alternatively, it was suggested that the planning or enforcement department at Central Bedfordshire Council be contacted.*

Q. *Can anything be done about the row of bins outside the historic Old Fire Station, which are unsightly and often overflowing?*

A. *The Town Council shares this frustration and we are trying to work with the local authority and land owner to address this, possibly with the creation of some kind of screen.*

Q. *In respect of the threat of two out-of-town retail parks, which will increase pressure on the town centre and market and represent a challenge to keep the town going, is there any guidance on how "dual-hatted" councillors (elected to both the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council) represent the town?*

A. *Councillors are elected to represent the views of residents within their wards, both for the Town Council and CBC. Potentially "dual hatters" might be representing different groups of residents in different parts of the town or with differing view points, but councillors would always be seeking to support the town's best interests.*

Q. *In respect of climate change, given the successful production of 4% of clean green energy locally by one wind turbine, would LLTC be using its influence to support the application for a second local wind turbine?*

A. *This was a complex issue and councillors were aware of differing views within the local community. It was understood that a planning application was yet to be submitted. While the application would fall outside the parish of Leighton-Linslade, it was likely that the Town Council would be consulted.*

Q. *In your presentation you referred to fibreoptic broadband – can you explain further?*

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- A. *This related solely to the Town Council and its increasing reliance on digital media for communications and daily operations – not to the question of wider fibreoptic provision within the parish.*
- Q. *In your presentation you referred to composting toilets – could you explain further?*
- A. *The Town Council's two allotment sites had no facilities and the installation of composting toilet facilities seemed the best solution to this. The initiative was fully supported by the Allotment Association.*
- Q. *Thank you to Town Councillors for your work on behalf of the town. Given the budget cuts at local authority level which may then impact at parish council level, what is the Town Council's priority for the buildings it manages – income generation or the support of local community groups?*
- A. *The Town Council is keen to deliver the best community benefit but there is always a balance to be achieved. There is a subsidised community rate for hire of Town Council facilities.*
- Q. *Why has no progress been made with the creation of a hardstanding pathway at Adams Bottom park? This is often a quagmire during wet weather.*
- A. *Committee approval and budget allocation is in place – the difficulty has been in securing a contractor to undertake the work. The project will be delivered as soon as a contractor who can meet requirements has been secured.*
- Q. *What can be done about the empty units in the Waterborne Walk shopping centre, some of which have been empty for a long time?*
- A. *This is in private ownership and it is understood that the unit rental costs may deter some businesses.*
- Q. *What is being done about the proliferation of taxis in the High Street?*
- A. *This is a long standing issue and the Town Council continues to try to influence the local authority to arrive at a solution.*
- Q. *In respect of the retail park applications, can Town Councillors assure us that they will try to ensure any Section 106 monies are earmarked to benefit the town centre – for example, by reducing car parking charges?*
- A. *The Town Council continues to seek greater participation in Section 106 discussions with the local authority.*

- Q. *Thank you to the Town Council for supporting the extension of the Dash Direct bus service to the Astral Park centre. Views have been expressed about parents not wishing to use Astral Park for children's parties due to the cost of catering. The original report for Astral Park was based on a community model, is this worth revisiting?*
- A. *Yes – there is a development plan for Astral Park which includes consideration of catering options for private hire functions.*
- Q. *Not a question but a comment, to raise awareness of the new local Voluntary Patient Transport group – this will use volunteer drivers to provide transport to and from hospital appointments for those in need – free of charge but voluntary donations welcome.*
- Q. *Thanks were expressed to all Town Councillors for their time spent on a voluntary basis working towards improvements for the town.*

The Mayor ended the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance and for participating. Any further questions could be raised by contacting the Town Council by phone or email.

The meeting closed at 2100 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2017.

Chair

19 MARCH 2018

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