

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD AT THE LIBRARY THEATRE, LEIGHTON BUZZARD

23 MARCH 2009 AT 1930 HOURS

Present :	Councillors	G Rolfe – Town Mayor and Chair D Bowater A Brandham K Cursons A Fahn J M Freeman S Freeman A Guess D Hopkin G Perham G Rolfe M Rolfe B Sadler P Sadler K Sharer P Snelling	
	Officers	P M P Kingsnorth (Town Clerk) B Wardle (Assistant Town Clerk)	
	Others	Cllr T Turner (Leader – Central Bedfordshire)	
	Members of the Public	(14)	
	Member of the Press	(0)	

1. WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor G Rolfe, welcomed all those present to the meeting and explained the format of the meeting which involved presentations by Town Councillors and then questions from the public. The Mayor thanked everyone who had participated in the many functions that had been held and their contributions to his mayoral charities.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors R Berry, D Breen, K Pughe and P Record, M Rolfe, P Snelling and Mr T Birch (Leighton Buzzard Society)

3. MINUTES

Councillor B Sadler proposed that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17 March 2008 be approved as a correct record. Seconded by Councillor D Hopkin.

AGREED that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17 March 2008 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4 PRESENTATIONS

Councillor D Hopkin, Chair of the Town Development Committee, gave a presentation on the work of that Committee including details of its' membership, terms of reference and achievements during the past municipal year. Particular reference was made to the successful bid to become a Cycling Town, measures being taken to secure more Green Infrastructure and a forthcoming review of The Big Plan.

Councillor A Brandham, Chair of the Leisure and Community Committee, gave a presentation on the work of that Committee. The meeting was given details of the parks, allotments and open spaces owned and managed by the Town Council. Details concerning new play equipment were given and reference made to the Band Concerts in the Park, Living History Day, the Canal Festival and the Christmas Lights Weekend events.

Councillor A Fahn, Chair of the TacTic (Teenage Advice Centre, Teenage Information Centre) Sub-Committee, gave a presentation on the work of that Sub-Committee and the activities of the Youth Forum. The meeting was reminded that the majority of young people were sensible, well behaved, motivated and reliable young citizens. Councillor A Fahn reminded the meeting that the Town Council had a duty to do its best for this next generation of electors and future leaders of the Parish.

5 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The Chair, invited questions and comments from members of the public.

Q. Would the new Central Bedfordshire Authority delegate any new powers or other matters to the Town Council?

A. *Negotiations were currently taking place at Officer level between the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire. It remained Council policy to seek appropriate functions with funding from the principal local authority.*

Q. What progress had been made on a hospital for the Town?

A. *It seemed that some funding was available and that present talks and research was taking place concerning the viability and need for improved Community Health Facilities.*

Q. What developments are taking place on land adjacent to the River Ouzel currently occupied by travelling show people?

A. *It was agreed that a written answer would be provided to this question.*

- Q. When will the new cycle facility on Vandyke Road Fields be complete?
- A. *Completion was expected by the end of April 2009.*
- Q. Would the Town Council campaign for a genuine working Unitary Authority with no unnecessary transfer of work to consultants and contractors?
- A. *The Mayor asked Councillor Mrs T Turner, Leader of the Shadow Central Bedfordshire Authority to reply. Councillor Turner indicated that she agreed with the question.*
- Q. Would the Town Council campaign for a truly democratic Unitary Authority with a Chairman, Committee Chairmen and regular full Council meetings and no Cabinet processes and Portfolio Holders, as these were bureaucratic and costly clutter
- A. *The Mayor asked Councillor Mrs T Turner, Leader of the Shadow Central Bedfordshire Authority to reply. Councillor Turner agreed that the new Authority would be democratic but disagreed with the remarks concerning the Cabinet and Portfolio Holders. The meeting was given details of systems used to ensure appropriate Governance was embedded within the new Central Bedfordshire procedures.*
- Q. Would the Town Council campaign for a change to the County Council allowance systems so that Councillors were just reimbursed for loss of earnings if in employment and travel, wherever possible, on public transport.
- A. *The Mayor asked Councillor Mrs T Turner, Leader of the Shadow Central Bedfordshire Authority to reply. Councillor Turner stated that she believed the existing allowance system provided best value for money.*
- Q. What developments had taken place to ensure that the new car park at the railway station did not reduce the quality of life of residents within Waterloo Road?
- A. *Details were given of talks held between London Midland Railway and local residents at the Town Council offices. The meeting was informed that appropriate and agreed mitigation measures had been agreed between the involved parties.*
- Q. What can be done about the increase in dog dirt on the green areas adjacent to Brookside Walk?
- A. *It was noted that South Bedfordshire District Council had responsibility for this matter. Councillor Turner asked the local resident to provide written details to her directly about this problem which would, after 1 April 2009, be the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire.*

Q Would the Town Council be opening the toilets adjacent to Vandyke Road Field?

A *It was stated that the Leisure and Community Committee would consider this request.*

Q Why was the Senior Citizens' Steering Group closed down?

A *It was noted that the decision had been taken on grounds of value for money.*

Q Could more parking be provided in the High Street?

A *A written answer would be provided after consultation with Bedfordshire Highways.*

Q Are parking restrictions going to be installed in Bedford Street and the adjacent roads?

A *The Town Council supported the request for such parking restrictions. It was noted that, across the County, there were hundreds of such requests and that each one was given a priority assessment by Bedfordshire Highways.*

Q What is the Town Council's view on the present unacceptable levels of disorder within the Parish?

A *The question was considered inaccurate. Members were reminded that the Parish had the lowest level of crime in South Bedfordshire and that it had seen a 9% reduction in crime in the last year.*

Q Can public houses be encouraged to pick up litter especially that associated with smoking, from outside their premises?

A *This request would be placed before the newly formed Licensees' Association/Forum which was attended by an Officer of the Town Council.*

Q What can be done about litter around the Parish?

A *The Town Council would continue to work with others to reduce the level of litter within the Parish.*

The Mayor ended the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2009