

Dear Residents,

It has been a great honour and privilege to serve the council as Chairman for the past three years. On 5th May 2016 seven existing councillors were re-elected and the remaining nine positions were filled by new councillors. All councillors existing and new have a wealth of knowledge and life experience, which has enabled us to progress and refine our aims and objectives.

The Town Council aims to achieve and maintain high standards in delivering its services in the parish, but this is only achievable if there is a committed and dedicated team of staff and councillors and I am pleased to say that we are very fortunate to have both.

In order to be proactive the Town Council set a plan for the next three years of what they would like to achieve for the parish. The Council regularly review their plan to ensure their aims and objectives are on track.

Set out in this report are the Council's achievements for the past year and projects for the coming year.

The Council's Achievements for 2016/2017 are as follows:

- In June a Twinning visit took place with a group which included councillors, local residents and members from the Youth network to commemorate Albert French in Ploegstreet our Twinned town.
- Hodge Lea Meeting Place has been extensively refurbished and was officially opened on 11th May 2017. Urban Grilla provided us with a BBQ for the opening which also coincided with our Annual Town Meeting.
- The Town Council supported the Age UK outreach service by funding it for a further twelve months.
- Citizens Advice Bureau was funded by the Town Council to provide service one day a week in Wolverton.
- Britain in Bloom was awarded the 'Silver Gilt' award a remarkable achievement for all those involved.
- In November our Fireworks display was held at the Wolverton Recreation Ground which attracted the largest ever crowd.
- The Town Council funded and assisted with organising the following events, 'It's in The Square music, The Dog Show and the Lantern Festival.
- Funding by the Town Council was granted for a PCSO to assist us to tackle crime within the Parish.
- Faith Gyimah – The Council's first ever apprentice successfully achieved her level 3 NVQ in Business Administration.
- All contracts were reviewed to ensure best value for money was achieved.
- Installation of the 'Blower' was completed with the support of MK Museum and Knorr Bremse.
- First railway Town' Signage was installed to Wolverton gateways '.
- The Town Council provided grants to support community activities and services.
- A clean-up day was held to tackle the littering in Wolverton alleyways as a result of owners not picking up after their pets. 50 volunteers attended the event which was the highest number ever to have supported a clean-up day. Another is shortly planned
- The Town Hall tenants offices and the Council meeting room were rented out to continue the income to support the running of the building. This initiative has increased the Town Hall income by over £3k in this financial year.
- The Town Council continues to support and is recognised as a living wage employer.
- The speed Indicator devices have been instrumental in helping reduce speeding within the parish areas.
- A revised and new plan was produced for the council for the next three years to continue improving all areas across the parish.
- The Town Trail App was launched as part of the celebrations marking 50 years of Milton Keynes.
- The food fair in Wolverton was supported by the Town Council.
- Discussions were reopened with Milton Keynes Council with new ideas to improve parking within Wolverton; this is led by Cllr Hepburn.
- The recycling reward scheme was awarded 1st position, thanks to Cllr Fensome's work on publishing and promoting the scheme for residents to take part in, thus reducing our landfill sites.
- A new environmental working group was established to look at how the council can improve its energy efficiency and work with the clean-up volunteers and Britain in Bloom to improve our streets.
- The Town Council continues to produce the newsletter and seek to make improvements by trialling new design companies.

→ A defibrillator was awarded to the Town Council through the British Heart Foundation. This life saving equipment is now installed on the Town Hall car park wall and is accessible anytime of the day to the public. The Clerk has also delivered the British Heart Foundation 'Call Push Rescue' CPR training for all council staff and will soon be opening up this training free of charge to all councillors and residents.

Projects to look forward to in 2017/2018

→ Plans for the re-development of the Agora are being produced by TOWN and the Council will begin discussions with them as soon as they are ready.

→ A new post office is to be housed in one of the two prospective retail stores in Wolverton.

→ Old Wolverton allotments will have a new site entrance and improvements are also to be made, so additional plots can be created for local residents.

→ Raised beds are to be developed on Stacey Hill allotments to enhance the facilities for potential plot holders with disabilities. All thanks due to the hard work of the allotment representatives, volunteer allotment holders and work through Brunnings.

→ Raised beds are to be developed on Hodge Furze allotments by utilising money provided by the developers of the EMEB site.

→ New volunteering opportunities are arising with events and activities in the parish.

→ MK50 to have more events linked, including Music in the park on the 25th June 2017 at Wolverton Recreation Ground.

→ Fireworks display to take place on 5th November at Wolverton Recreation Ground.

→ Wolverton Library to be revamped with new seating for a café, a children's area for 5 to 15 years old and an improved study and PC area. All thanks to Stantonbury Parish Council and the developer from the former EMEB site for providing funding towards this project.

→ Greenleys Community Garden to be designed and replanted.

→ Friends group for Wolverton Library are to assist with events and activities to turn the Library into a community hub for all ages to enjoy and benefit from.

→ Communication to be improved by using social media through the new appointment of Olivia Mckee as our Communications Officer.

→ Clean-up event to be held on 24th June 2017 and posters to be designed by local school children to discourage the dropping of litter and dog fouling.

→ Twinning visit by Belgians to take place on 1st and 2nd July 2017.

→ Consultations to begin with residents on designs for creating a Central Play Area in Greenleys which was once one of the priorities from the survey conducted with Greenleys residents at the end of 2011.

→ The Town Council will work closer with local schools so they can be involved with community activities. The Project Officer will be assigned to this task.

→ The Town Council will continue to support the food fair in Wolverton.

→ Improvements are to be made to the Old Wolverton/Stratford Road roundabout through Milton Keynes Council.

→ Official opening on the Children's trail and guided tours as part of MK50.

→ Lots of community events and activities to take place, including Lantern Festival, Fireworks display and Britain in Bloom planting.

→ As Milton Keynes Council continues to cut services the Town Council will be keeping abreast of any changes and considering the impact on the community. This could involve services being delivered locally in the future.

Appointment of a Town Mayor and reinstating the Regalia.

In April 2017 the Town Council approved the appointment of a Town Mayor. The decision to have a Town Mayor was based on the heritage and historical value of Wolverton and the significance it has in Milton Keynes. We are not only growing in size but we have people from different backgrounds living within the parish which includes residents who are multi-cultural and multi-faith. Having a Town Mayor would be greatly beneficial and would aid in building bridges between communities and moulding community cohesion. Further to this the Mayoral position could be used to stimulate community pride and encourage business. The other point to mention is that no public funds have been used to reinstate the Mayoral protocol including the use of the Regalia.

Without doubt success depends on both the co-operation and engagement of Councillors and office staff who are committed and resilient. The results that can be achieved in this instance are much greater and rewarding than having a team who is not committed. As Chairman of the Town Council, I acknowledge that all the Councillors, office staff and the caretaking team have worked extremely hard and to the best of their abilities, therefore I would like to thank each and every one for all their efforts and commitment.

Our bi-monthly newsletter continues to develop each issue and is delivered to every house/business within the parish. The newsletter has articles about activities held locally, details of forthcoming events, adverts from local businesses and groups, updates from the Town Council and contact details of Councillors. All this information can also be found on our redesigned and redeveloped website. We are also interactive on social media via Facebook and Twitter.

We hope that the new Council year will also be a good one, with new challenges, successes and achievements. As always we will make it our priority to continue delivering our services to you in the most efficient and professional way possible and our aim is to accomplish the best for all communities in the Parish.

Report produced by Ansar Hussain, Chairman of Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council May 2017