

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Tuesday 10 May 2016 at 7.00pm in Arlesey Village Hall

Present:

Town Cllrs:	M Holloway (Chairman)	C Gravett
	J Want	H Frost (retired after Agenda item 6)
	J Randall	P Chillery
	C Ferris	A Ward
	J Wallace	

Unitary Cllrs: Cllrs Wenham, Dalgarno and Shelvey (late arrival)

In attendance: Ms S Foulkes - Town Clerk, Mrs J Bailey-Administrative Assistant, and Nicola King (Aragon Housing/Arlesey Youth)

Members of Public present: 10

1 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Sarll, Stanbury, Bains, Livermore and Page and Unitary Cllr Shelvey for late arrival.

2 Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 March 2015.

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 9 March 2015 were approved and signed by the Chair.

3 Report – Arlesey Youth Development

Work has been carried out with 167 young people from Arlesey via:
Detached work – Youth Workers on foot to locations where local youths meet
Employment -one to one assistance
Group work
Half Term/Summer holiday groups

Work is ongoing with 5 children.

A positive response had been received to the tenancy of a second allotment plot allowing engagement with parents and children and an expansion into a Health and Wellbeing project later this year.

Project McKenzie helps to create employment support for 16 – 24 year olds and will continue in the coming year.

A Community café project is being explored, as the current provision in Shefford is working well.

“Shine 2016” summer project is scheduled with an increased number of activities planned for this year.

Arlesey Youth Club will be put to extended use. Once a suitable day of the week is agreed, plans will be finalised and the initiative started.

2 youth workers currently at NVQ level 2 & 3 standard, are being trained as youth worker assessors. It is the intention to introduce them to ATC at future meetings and they will be involved with the Youth Centre also.

4 **Annual Report - Town Council Chairman & Mayor:** Cllr Mick Holloway summarised his written statement which was taken as read. Key points to note include:

- During 2015/16, 24 meetings had been held compared to 15 in 2014/15.
- Councillors and staff were thanked for continued commitment
- Working parties are open for residents to assist/support – contact the Town Clerk if interested.
- CBC Communications – positive actions are being and will continue to be taken with CBC endeavouring to convey the wishes of both residents and Arlesey Town Council
- Grants are available to groups/projects via application forms available online or in the Town Council office.
- Mounting pavements – several reports have been received of vehicles mounting pavements in Arlesey. The Chairman urged drivers to stop this before a serious accident/injury occurs
- Dog waste – dog owning residents were requested to “bag it” and “bin it” and reminded that dog waste is dangerous to children. Dog waste bags are issued free of charge from the Town Council offices.

5 **Annual Reports – Town Council Committees:**

5.1. **Finance & General Purposes Committee** - In the absence of the committee Chairman, Cllr Mick Holloway highlighted main points from the report of the committee:

- 2014/2015 audit – concluded and approved
- 2015/2016 audit – accounts are subject to audit
- IAC had been appointed as auditors
- Policies – policies for the Purchase of Land, Annual Investment policy and a Grants policy were considered and approved in 2015/16
- Significant expenditure included: IT upgrades in the office with fully supported software, and Legal Fees arising from holiday settlement and personnel issues.

5.2. **Public Land & Highways Committee – Cllr Jon Want reported:**

- Highway Enforcement – CBC enforce parking restrictions, Bedfordshire Police enforce other traffic violations
- Church End parking restrictions – CBC had taken on board concerns raised by Arlesey Town Council during the consultation. Latest report from AMEY stated that Chase Hill Road was to be removed from the scheme. No update had been received on a date of implementation.
- CBC and Bedfordshire Police have been lobbied regarding continued traffic issues. Residents were urged to report non-urgent issues to 101, and serious incidents by calling 999.
- Playing field – ATC acknowledge alterations are needed to improve access to the recreation ground following the fencing of Gothic Mede Academy land and highlighted that continued dog fouling had been a significant contributing factor to the fence being erected by BEMAT.
- Community Centre – Cllr Livermore had been formulating plans for the Village Hall/Community Centre regarding access and improvements to the MUGA pavilion were also being considered, particularly during peak school drop off/collection times.
- Funding – Match Funding and that from other sources is being explored/sought

5.3 **Public Relations Committee – Cllr Andrew Ward reported**

- Arlesey Town Council had made a key decision to be more transparent. Standing Orders were amended in July 2016.
- Website - the Town Council Website had been improved with addition of uploaded policies and documents. Potential remains, with the intention to maximise this in the near future.

- Town Council Facebook page – regular updates now posted on the Facebook page to engage with the public
- On the Button – Editorials have replaced the Town Council newsletter, and in the short term will continue to do so
- Communication with Public – recommendations were invited and welcomed on how communications with the public can be improved

5.4 Personnel Committee – Cllr Chris Gravett summarised:

- Ms Susan Foulkes had been appointed as Town Clerk had now been in post since November 2015. She was welcomed and thanked for her efforts to date
- Staff contracts, entitlements and working hours had been addressed and adjustments applied where necessary
- A personnel issue is ongoing and cannot be discussed due to confidentiality

6 Reports from Outside Representatives:

6.1 Bedfordshire Police Liaison – Cllr Jeremy Wallace stated key points:

- PCSO's will no longer be attending Town Council meetings
- The Town Council delegated the new role of Police Liaison to Cllr Jeremy Wallace who is working on building relations with Sergeant Gary Kidd and Kathryn Holloway, the new Police & Crime Commissioner
- 3 schemes are crucial to the Parish Constables Plan to police rural areas:
 - Neighbourhood watch
 - Street watch
 - Speedwatch
- Residents were requested to report any crimes/incidences to 101 or via email to the Town council or direct email to Jeremy Wallace or bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk
- Kathryn Holloway is keen to see improvements in policing rural Bedfordshire

6.2 Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Jon Want

The Neighbourhood Plan is a key document which will enable the community to influence the area in which they live; residents are encouraged to get involved. More than 30 residents are currently active within the group. The Neighbourhood Plan area was agreed in 2014 and will affect Local Planning Policy.

- An encouraging level of response was received to the latest questionnaire issued
- Engagement meetings have been held between Telereal Trillium one of the developers working on the Eastern side, CBC. To date these meetings have been positive and it is hoped that they will continue.
- Four working parties have been formed: Housing & Heritage, Environment and Traffic
The draft plan is in the final stages, and is due to be submitted to Arlesey Town Council for approval in June 2016.
- A 6 week consultation period will take place before the plan is submitted to CBC, CBC then commence a formal consultation period, following which examination of the plan will take place prior to the referendum in 2017.
- If approved the neighbourhood plan will become part of Planning Law and as such future development proposals must comply with the plan.
- Once a Neighbourhood plan is in place a greater proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy monies are available to Arlesey.
- If passed, the plan will remain in place for 10 to 15 years.
- The Neighbourhood Plan group will have a stall at the Summer Fete.

6.3 Arlesey Events Group – In the absence of Cllr S Sarll, Cllr Holloway reported.

Cllr Sarll was thanked for her assistance in establishing this group which now had a formal structure. Additional residents interested in joining the group were encouraged to approach Cllr Sarll or Dr Samantha Ward

A Facebook page was now active and a group website was currently under construction.

6.4 Arlesey Cross Masterplan- Cllrs Want and Gravett

Cllrs Want and Gravett had been delegated to represent Arlesey Town Council.

A meeting had taken place with CBC Planning to raise profile of Arlesey Town Council – to achieve proactive involvement.

Eastern relief road – The Town Council believe that the application conflicts with the Masterplan, as construction of the Eastern side alone would adversely impact on traffic using the High Street. Proposals put forward by both Arlesey Town Council and Ward Councillor Dalgarno had been rejected.

Written commitments had been received from Telereal Trillium stating that access to development would be via the A507 until the proposed roundabout on the High Street is created.

A roundabout onto the A507 will be created when the eastern relief road opens.

A507 crossing – Arlesey Town Council will monitor; at present a bridge appears to be the most favoured method of crossing. A condition of the Masterplan stipulated that a Grade 7 crossing is provided. Resident representations on the most appropriate crossing were welcomed.

Arlesey Town Council to engage with the Principal of Etonbury Academy regarding the proposed crossing of the A507

A resident stated that “if an underpass crossing is created there will be flooding concerns”
Mr Savoury stated, “This is a disaster for Arlesey the traffic concerns are ill conceived”

White Horse Field – a formal response to planning application for 56 new houses and a portion of relief road on this site will be finalised at the next full Town Council meeting. An application for 38 houses had also been submitted. Attendees were also made aware that more applications were imminent. Both applications have been “called in” by Ward Councillors, on basis that access on to the High Street is not compliant with the Masterplan.

6.5. Community Safety Group- Cllr Frost

Currently this group remains inactive, but are eager to relaunch.

A contact list of volunteers remains in place to contact should it be required.

Additional volunteers were welcome

6.6. Archive Group – Cllr Randall

Archive group meetings currently take place quarterly during the afternoon.

Evening meetings are being considered to make more accessible to possible new members.

The Archive Group website is currently in development, with the intention of making material more readily available to residents.

An exhibition is planned for 22nd October 2016 and artefacts were being sought/requested.

Any volunteers wishing to help were welcomed.

6.7. Arlesey Nursery – Cllr Gravett

This year has seen numerous changes for the nursery

- Cost cutting
- Change to Academy Status - now part of Gothic Mede Academy
- Personnel with specialist skills had left the nursery

Staff were praised for their response to changes and there had been no negative impact on children who attend. Resident applications for places on the Nursery Management Committee were invited.

7. RFO unaudited financial report 2015/2016 - Main points to note

Funds of £15,634 had been transferred from the Barclays Play Area Account, to the Current Account this year on the recommendation of the internal auditor, to make this account available for the sole use of Mayor Charity donations and payments.

The VAT Control Account had reduced from £18,391 to £5,000 at 31st March 2016.

Creditors were higher than previous year end at 31st March 2016 mainly due to 4 large invoices received just before year end –

- £14,400 Legal fees
- £4,764 CBC Service charges
- £4,566 for new street lighting and installation
- £3,925 IT upgrade
- £3,461 other creditors.

£16,040 of S106 money had been used to purchase new play equipment and football goals

A grant of £5,658 for the Neighbourhood Plan had been transferred to an Ear Marked Reserve.

£11,553 overall reduction in Earmarked Reserves during the year due to transfers to offset expenditure during the year.

The General Fund balance was £75,553 at year end, £14,031 less than last year.

8. Ward Councillors – Open Forum Cllr Dalgarno addressed those present

North End Highways Traffic Management Order involving Ringway Jacobs will be followed up to determine when it will be published and implemented

Community Safety Group & Streetwatch – Cllr Wallace was advised that funds were held by the Community Safety Group which could be used for local projects and Street watch, and he was advised to liaise with Hugh Harper to utilise this money.

Pendelton Sports Centre at Etonbury Academy – The centre is scheduled to open in August 2016 with the Official opening to take place in September 2016. The 3G pitch is near completion and gym equipment ordered. Both Arlesey Town Youth Football and Stotfold had arranged for 2 nights of youth football training a week on the 3G pitches leaving Friday evenings free for hire from 5.15pm onwards.

Masterplan – busy times were ahead, Ward Councillor Dalgarno will continue to support and help communicate thoughts with Central Bedfordshire Council and noted his disappointment that they did not agree to join the group.

Planning Enforcement Issue - 197 Hitchin Road

Works being carried out on this land had been reported, whilst they are not currently contrary to planning policy, residents and Councillors were urged to continue reporting any concerns as soon as possible.

Ward Councillor Wenham reported:

Arlesey Cross Masterplan Stakeholder Group – next meeting scheduled for 14 June 2016.

A follow up of CBC's Development Management Meeting would be dependent on Telereal Trillium. The decision and written commitment to start work from A507 end had been significant. West side development compliance with the Masterplan had been questioned. The issues arising from multiple land owners and associated problems posed was discussed and it was stated that compulsory purchases would be a last resort, as they are costly and the processes involved lengthy. Cllr Wenham believed that the recent applications should be rejected but could go to appeal.

Cllr Dalgarno agreed to investigate the lack of parking facilities which was restricting the number of football pitches available for use at any one time from total number available at the site opposite Etonbury Academy - used by Stotfold Football club.

Safety Group – initially created to address matters connected to the Blue Lagoon. The group has a constitution in place, but group is currently inactive, Cllr Dalgarno highlighted the importance of ensuring this group re-establishes itself. An enquiry as to whether the Safety Group could address the issues recently being noted regarding traffic issues and the matter of vehicles mounting pavements in Arlesey was raised and Cllr Dalgarno stated that the possibility of sign campaigns could be explored – speed limit stickers for dustbins or “Roads for cars – pavements for kids” were discussed Cllr Wallace was invited to join the Safety Group to explore the possible use of funds available.

9 Other matters relating to Arlesey - Open Forum

Chairman of Arlesey Residents Association, Mr Hugh Harper, enquired as to why insurance had not been used to cover legal fees of £13,500 in relation to defending a councillor.

Cllr Gravett explained that a breach in confidentiality had resulted in a court case being created. A resolution had been previously agreed by the previous council that Council would support such an occurrence. Cllr Gravett also confirmed that he had personally made a substantial payment in legal fees and publically stated his regret for the situation arising.

The resolution of the previous council to protect councillors in the event of litigation was recently reviewed by Council and remains unchanged.

The more recent payment of £12,000 legal fees was also raised, however Cllr Gravett advised that this matter could not be discussed at present as it surrounds an ongoing legal matter. Arlesey Town Council will comply with the law and only provide full disclosure when the case has concluded.

Residents were reminded that there is currently a vacancy for a Councillor, and that Co-option packs could be collected from the Council offices.

All present were thanked for their attendance.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Chairman

Date