



ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

Published May 2017

TOWN COUNCIL FACTFILE

Members of the Council 2016/2017

Chairman: Mr J Want
Vice Chairman: Mr C Gravett

Mr J Auburn (Elected December 2016)
Mr G Bains (Resigned October 2016)
Mr P Chillery (Resigned October 2016)
Mr C Ferris
Mrs H Frost (Disqualified April 2017)
Mr M Gould (Elected June 2016)
Mr M Holloway
Mr C Livermore
Mrs R McGann (Elected December 2016)
Mr D Page
Mr J Randall
Mrs S Sarll
Mr S Stanbury (Resigned April 2017)
Mr J Wallace
Mr J Want
Mr A Ward

Town Council Staff

Ms S Foulkes Town Clerk and RFO to the Council
Mrs J Bailey Assistant Clerk to the Council
Miss D Rickman Administrative Assistant
Mr A Dean Groundsman
Mr M Bird Groundsman
Ms P Hector Caretaker

Resource Centre Staff

Mrs E Jackson Resource Centre Manager
Mrs K Rogers Resource Centre Assistant (Resigned February 2017)
Ms P Hector Resource Centre Assistant

Council Address: Arlesey Community Centre
High Street
Arlesey
Bedfordshire SG15 6SN

Tel: (01462) 733722
E-mail: townclerk@arleseytc.co.uk
Website: www.arleseytc.co.uk

2016/2017 Precept: £189,259

REPORT FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN 2016/2017

Much of the Council's time this year, the second of the current four year term, has been spent in dealing with planning issues. A good deal of members' time, both during and, substantially, outside of meetings spent with both the preparation and submission of the Arlesey Neighbourhood Plan and the consideration of planning applications relating to the Arlesey Cross Masterplan. Further information on these topics are contained in the separate reports on these two key planning initiatives later in this document.

For these and other reasons, the Council continues to seek to build closer relationships with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to ensure that the views of the Arlesey community are being heard. A number of Council members and the Clerk have met with a variety of officers within CBC on a range of subjects including planning, highways, parking and the maintenance of the Community Centre. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk also met with the CBC Corporate Management Committee in September.

The Council continues to seek to be as open and transparent as possible. The monthly updates in the On The Button magazine will continue and the Council has also started to publish specific Public Notices on important issues as and when necessary. Furthermore, members are keen to engage with residents face-to-face and, to that end, Councillor Surgeries have been started this year whereby two councillors are available to speak to any residents on the first Saturday morning of each month in the Resource Centre.

In January, the Council reluctantly took a decision to increase the precept for the 2017/18 year in response to a recommendation from its auditors to replenish the general reserves. These have fallen below recommended levels over the past few years due to some unexpected costs, the majority of which occurred prior to the current Council's term. The total increase in Council Tax amounts to £1.44 per calendar month for a Band D property and further information can be found in the Public Notice issued on 15th February 2017.

The work of the Council is varied, and all of it is done for the benefit of Arlesey and its residents. The following are examples from the past twelve months.

Multi-Use Games Area

The MUGA received a much needed surface refresh in the summer along with repairs to the fencing. A new anti-slip coating was added and all the lines repainted. A further project to refurbish the MUGA pavilion was approved by the Council in March to include new kitchen facilities and a new storage facility. This will be done in conjunction with Arlesey Town Youth Football Club and will be partially funded by a grant from the Bedfordshire FA.

Great British Spring Clean

Over two days of the first weekend in March, Council members were joined by local residents to take part in the Great British Spring Clean collecting litter throughout Arlesey. This was a great success and it is hoped that this can become a regular event.

Council Vehicle

Early 2017 saw the Council decide to replace its aged vehicle used by the grounds staff and purchase a replacement vehicle that is much more suited to the needs of the Council going forward. Furthermore, a number of investments in new tools and equipment have been made throughout the year to ensure that the grounds staff are able to efficiently carry out their duties throughout Arlesey.

Grants

One of the Council's key aims is to support local charities and other organisations working for the benefit of Arlesey residents. The Arlesey Community Events Group, which was set up by the Council but is run independently, has been well supported by the Council in its organisation of a number of events including the Summer Fete, the Queen's Birthday Beacon, the Christmas Lights Switch On and the Carol Service. ATC has approved a grant for the hire of a marquee for this year's Summer Fete. Other local groups that were supported this year include the Etonbury Green Wheel, Music and Arts Festival, ACORN, the Arlesey WI, Mid Beds CAB, Need Project and Royal British Legion.

Finally, I would like to thank the Council staff for all their hard work over the past twelve months. Their commitment has been excellent in what has been a challenging year.

Jon Want
Chairman of Arlesey Town Council

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016/2017

I would like to start by thanking Susan Foulkes, our Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, for continuing to provide accurate and timely reports on the Council's financial position.

This year the Council has made significant expenditure on a replacement vehicle and equipment for the Groundsmen, and in resurfacing and fencing improvements to the MUGA. Legal fees in respect of an ongoing matter continued to accrue. Where appropriate, these amounts have been taken from existing earmarked reserves, but the net effect resulted in a reduction in the Council's general reserve.

The Council achieved a saving of £5,874 through our decision not to continue to cut highway verges for CBC, and the Clerk has also made significant progress in ensuring the costs of the community buildings are fairly shared between the Freeholder (CBC), Gothic Mede Academy and Arlesey Medical Centre.

After several years of setting deficit budgets, the F&GP committee recommended to Council that a net replenishment of reserves should be budgeted in the coming year and, together with inflationary increases this has resulted in a precept rise of 17%, an average of around £17 per year per household. Arlesey Town Council will continue to look for savings wherever possible and I am confident the Council is now in a strong financial position.

I am grateful for the continuing commitment and support of Members on the Finance and General Purposes committee.

Chris Ferris
Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee

PUBLIC LANDS & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016/2017

The remit of the Public Lands & Highways Committee (PL&H Committee) is to consider issues concerning land owned by Arlesey Town Council (ATC) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) including allotments, the cemetery, the recreation ground and community centre and roads and pavements in Arlesey (although all parking restrictions and highways issues are enforced by CBC and Bedfordshire Police). All recommendations made by the PL&H Committee must be ratified at a full Council meeting. Cllr Wallace was elected Chairman and Cllr Livermore Vice Chairman in July 2016.

The main issues considered by the PL&H Committee in the past year are:

CCTV Project

Several meetings were held with various bodies and suppliers which established the costs and regulations involved with such an important project. Initial funding hopes were not realised. A cost for 3x CCTV cameras, placed in movable locations was in the region of £11,580 plus £2,215 further annual costs. Given there was no budget for this sum and the onerous legal requirement for the justification of CCTV, it was decided to shelve the project for the time being.

MUGA Court:

The playing surface of the court was cleaned, repainted and anti slip coatings applied and the fencing was repaired.

MUGA Refurbishment:

What started out as a task with Arlesey Town Youth Football Club (ATYFC) to make the most of the MUGA has become a major project to improve and renovate the building in partnership with ATYFC. Grants are being applied for internal conversions, installation of kitchen facilities and general improvements. There will also be a storage container outside the MUGA to enable the entire interior to be used as originally envisaged. Lighting of the area will also be improved. Costs of £33,000 have been approved by ATC and funding of £23,500 has been identified to-date. The project should commence very soon.

Arlesey Commuter Parking Scheme:

September 2016 saw the introduction of a significant new parking scheme in the North of the village. Many roads received new road markings and areas were designated Resident Only parking. This was designed to alleviate congestion due to commuters parking away from the railway station.

Play Area behind Gothic Mede Academy

While the play area is on Bedfordshire School Trust (BEST) owned land, ATC holds a licence to occupy and maintain the equipment. A substantial area of the surfacing was highlighted as needing attention in RoSPA inspections. The bark pits were replaced with rubber mulch surfacing and further worn areas have been replaced with rubber grass matting.

Jeremy Wallace

Chairman of Public Lands & Highways Committee

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016/2017

Committee Members

Andrew Ward (Chair), Jeremy Wallace (Vice Chair), Chris Gravett, Mick Holloway, Jon Want, Jason Auburn, Rachel McGann, Sandra Sarll

The Committee

Arlesey Town Council recognises that interaction with the community is vital to its work and the decisions it takes. An open and constructive dialogue is a key requirement for influencing and developing services, identifying needs and measuring satisfaction. Conveying information accurately and effectively is an essential factor. Public relations are crucially important as is using appropriate means to conveying information to the community.

The committee acts as the public face of the Town Council developing relationships with key stakeholders, ensuring that information is provided openly and that the public are aware of the council's strategy, programme and delivery plans. It is responsible for media relations, publications and press releases, editorials, the website, the Council Facebook page and overseeing responses to questions, issues and complaints raised.

PR Committee meetings

Meetings are typically held on the first Tuesday of alternate months. Two meetings have been held since the Annual meeting in May 2016.

ATC Website

The website provides news about what is happening in and around Arlesey and is a key place to access agendas and minutes of Council meetings. The committee recognises the website has significant potential and will be exploring this further in the coming year.

Arlesey Town Council Facebook page

The Council Facebook page makes topical posts and announcements relevant to Council activity and other matters concerning Arlesey.

Other Publications

The committee has taken up an editorial slot in the local monthly On the Button magazine. This enables the Council to reach every home in Arlesey and surrounding areas with relevant information and updates.

Councillor Surgeries

Between 10:30 and 11:30 on the first Saturday of every month two Councillors make themselves available in the Arlesey Resource Centre to meet and discuss matters with residents.

Next steps

The committee will continue to seek and explore ways to ensure the community is kept informed of matters affecting Arlesey. Suggestions from residents are of course welcomed and anyone with ideas or wishing to comment is encouraged to do so by contacting the Town Clerk, Susan Foulkes via townclerk@arleseytc.co.uk or any member of the committee.

Andrew Ward

Chairman of Public Relations Committee

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016/2017

A busy year where the focus has been on ensuring up to date and pertinent Human Resources and support processes are developed and agreed. Legacy issues have required a disproportionate amount of time for the committee but significant progress has been made.

Recruitment – appointment of Assistant Clerk and Admin Assistant were made during the year. Janet Bailey and Daniella Rickman being respectively appointed.

Attrition – there was some attrition during the year. This resulted in decisions to make some cost saving and the opportunity for existing employees to expand their roles.

Appraisals – An appraisal process was introduced ensuring staff receive and give feedback, have direction, guidance, support and recognition.

Staff contracts have been brought up to date to ensure staff receive their full entitlements under LGPS guidelines.

LGPS Workplace Pension and Auto Enrolment Options were introduced.

LGPS III Health Benefit Insurance Scheme was introduced.

The “Being a good Employer – guide for parish and town councillors” was reviewed and adopted.

There are on-going performance management issues confidential in nature.

An Employment Tribunal case brought against the Council by an ex-employee, relating to a period prior to the election of the current council, has been on-going throughout the year. This has been a massive drain on councillors and staff's time. The Council has successfully defended and won the case.

Chris Gravett
Chairman of Personnel Committee

ARLESEY ARCHIVE GROUP SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The Archive Group has had a fairly active year. We have acquired many photographs and other artefacts from village residents, which are currently stored in the ATC offices.

The principal activity of this year was an exhibition in the Village Hall on 22nd October 2016. Other organisations contributed displays to the exhibition and it was very well received, with a demand for a future exhibition. It has been agreed to hold an exhibition at the Village Fete on 2nd September 2017.

The Archive Group now has been recognised as a sub-committee of ATC and will hold formal committee meetings in April and October each year.

A recent acquisition by the group has been a large collection of photos from Duncan Cree's collection. An immediate consideration is how these photos are stored and, furthermore, how we can get these photos identified.

We have received a lot of co-operation from Steve Maddox (On the Button) and he has set up a separate section of the On the Button web-site where archive photos are displayed.

Jim Randall

Chairman of Arlesey Archive Group Sub-Committee

**ANNUAL REPORTS
OF
REPRESENTATIVES
OF OUTSIDE
BODIES**

2016/2017

Police Liaison

Meetings attended on behalf of ATC:

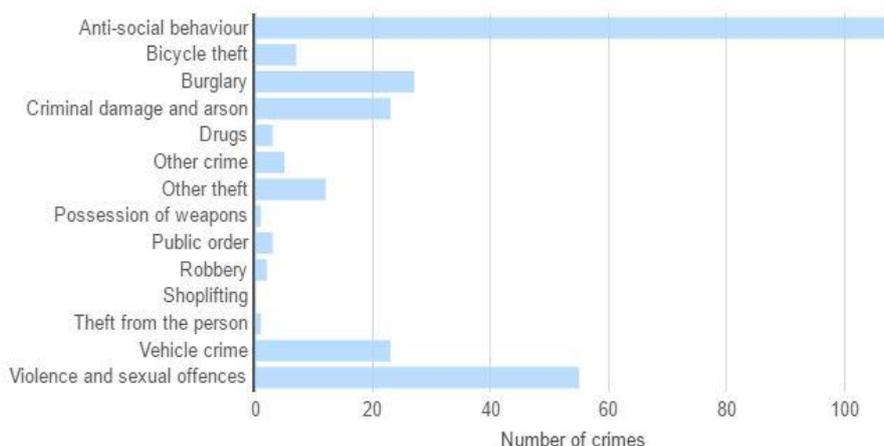
Date	Meeting
23 rd May 2016	- Sgt Kidd at ATC Offices with Town Clerk.
13 June 2016	- Community Engagement evening
2 nd September 2016	- Operation Beneke
3 rd September 2016	- Operation Salcoats
10 th September 2016	- Parish Council Forum
12 th October 2016	- Police Control Room visit
16 December 2016	- Rural Crime Conference
15 th March 2017	- Operation Beneke
24 th March 2017	- Neighbourhood Priority Setting Central Division Bi-Annual Crime Review

Arlesey is currently part of Parish Group 1 in the Rural Bedford Community Area and is currently looked after by one Inspector, one Sergeant, one Constable and 2 PCSO's.

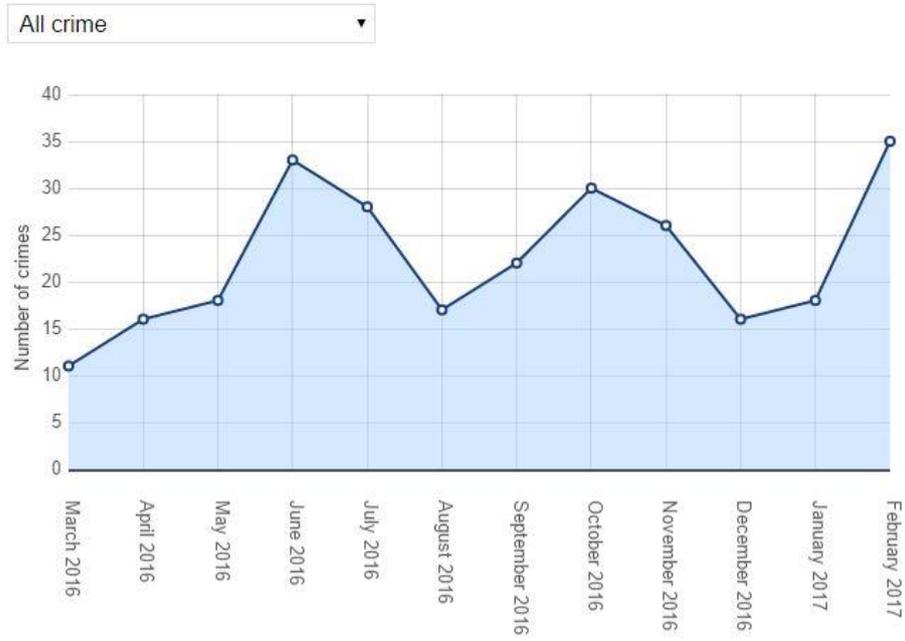
Arlesey now has a StreetWatch programme which started on 14th January 2017, to work alongside the Neighbourhood Watch and SpeedWatch programmes.

The attendance of a senior officer at a Town Council meeting has been promised on several occasions but has always been cancelled at the last moment usually due to operational reasons. Policy appears to be changing now and the idea is that Police now hold occasional meetings for council representatives to attend for briefing on latest news.

Comparison of crime types in this area between March 2016 and February 2017



Crime levels in this area between March 2016 and February 2017



Cllr Jeremy Wallace

Arlesey Neighbourhood Plan

While the Arlesey Neighbourhood Plan was an ATC-led project, much of the effort in developing and preparing the document was down to a group of local residents who worked tirelessly over a two-year period to produce a comprehensive document that will hopefully help to shape development in the parish for many years to come.

A key element in the development of the Plan was community involvement, and in addition to the volunteers who joined the project team, many more local residents gave their time to attend the numerous exhibitions and consultation events and completed the various surveys thereby providing valuable input into the formation of the Plan.

The pre-submission consultation took place during the summer with three different public events and an online survey for comments to be made on each policy. These comments were reviewed, considered and each one was given a response in the final Consultation Statement.

Changes were made to the draft plan and the final document was approved by the Council in November and submitted to CBC. The final consultation period closed in early March and the plan will shortly be subject to independent examination.

It is expected that the Plan will be the subject of a referendum later this year, and more information on this will be released in the coming weeks and months. The final document as well as further information on the project can be found at www.arleseynp.org.uk.

Cllr Jon Want

Arlesey Community Events Group

Arlesey Community Events Group now been running for over a year having held it's AGM on February 23th 2017.

2016 started off with a very successful Easter Egg Trail. Even though the weather was not good the turn out enabled not only the children to have fun but the church to raise approx. £100.00 providing tea/coffee/cakes.

Lighting of the Beacon for the Queens 90th Birthday. This event attracted over 300 people with 90 children letting off a balloon each. 90-year-old Arlesey Resident George Crouch lit the beacon.

Party in the Park was attended by a large number of residents with their children and was a fun day.

Summer Fete - This was the first year of organising the Summer Fete and in some ways presented a learning curve for us. Approximately 1000 attended and even the damp weather did not deter them from having a good time. Unfortunately, the fly-past was cancelled due to bad weather.

Christmas Lights Switch on - This was the second year Arlesey have had Christmas lights and again a child's name was pulled out of the hat to turn them on. Very good turnout.

Carol Singing - This did not have the turn out we were hoping for so the group are having a rethink on how to take this event forward.

Quiz Night - What a great night. 85 residents attended.

So now we are back to the beginning with this year's Easter Egg and Spoon Hunt that was very well attended with approximately 34 families taking part. Again, the Church raised funds with their refreshments. Eggs that had been kindly donated but were left over at the end were put in the Need Project Box and the Arlesey Community Events Group (ACEG) made money as well, so a good community event.

All the above could not have happened without the support of the many residents, businesses, ATC and the office staff. We have a full program for this year that can be found on our fb page.

The group have raised money throughout the year to make the Summer Fete this year bigger and better.

Cllr Sandra Sarll

Arlesey Cross Masterplan

The Arlesey Cross Masterplan was adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) in 2014 providing a framework for a significant growth in the size of Arlesey with proposals for a minimum of 1,000 new homes along with 10 ha of employment land and a new relief road running from the A507 across the High Street and parallel to the railway down to Five Ways. The past year has seen a number of planning applications relating to the Masterplan come forward, and the Council has spent considerable time reviewing these applications to make representations to CBC as the Local Planning Authority.

As the Masterplan is an adopted planning document, development that is in line with the Masterplan cannot be prevented, but one of the Council's key concerns is to ensure that development is brought forward in a co-ordinated manner that is sympathetic to the needs of the local community. The Council has objected to all of the applications that have come forward, with the key objection that the piecemeal nature of the proposed development is not compliant with the requirements of the Masterplan.

To date, only the following planning applications relating to Arlesey Cross have been decided upon:

CB/15/02916/REG3 – Eastern Portion of the Relief Road

This was approved in March 2016 and a revised application has since been submitted (CB/17/00492/FULL) to include additional roundabouts to serve the new developments along the road. Construction is expected to start later this year

CB/16/01420/FULL – Land West of High Street (opposite Lewis's Dairy)

This application, for housing on the most northerly site on the western side of the High St, was approved in March 2017. A condition was applied to force all landowners on the western side to agree a phasing plan for the development of the entire western relief road.

CB/16/01608/OUT – White Horse Field

This application, for housing on the land to the south and east of the White Horse public house, was also approved in March 2017 with the same condition applied as for the previous application.

Two further applications for sites on the western side are currently being considered by CBC Planning Officers and should come before the CBC Development Management Committee in the coming months.

CB/16/05513/FULL – Land at Fiveways Junction

This site previously had planning permission which has lapsed. A new plan has been submitted including the start of the southern end of the western relief road and a remodelling of the Fiveways Junction. ATC has objected to this application on various grounds.

CB/16/01211/FULL – Land West of High Street (opposite WI Hall)

This site is perhaps the most concerning on the western side given its location and size. The plan calls for 200+ dwellings and, until the western relief road is completed, the only access would be onto the High St where house numbers 137/9 currently stand. ATC has objected to this application on various grounds.

Currently, the Council is reviewing the outline application for development on the eastern portion of the Masterplan area (CB/17/01158/OUT) to provide 950 new dwellings, a new school and a new "town centre".

Cllr Jon Want

Etonbury Green Wheel Stakeholders'

The Etonbury Green Wheel stakeholders meet quarterly, and Arlesey Town Council (ATC) is represented by Cllrs Chris Livermore and Chris Ferris. The first internal draft of the Etonbury Green Wheel Plan was released early this year and was reviewed by the Council at its meeting in March. A full draft for public comment is planned to be available this summer.

Significant progress has been made this year in defining the circular route which runs to the West and North of Arlesey, to Astwick, joining the Letchworth Greenway at Norton, then through Fairfield and back to Arlesey via West Drive. Existing footpaths already exist over much of the route, and the target is to upgrade these to improve access for cyclists and the disabled.

Once the plan is approved the Etonbury Green Wheel will significantly enhance the natural environment around Arlesey and will protect the existing green spaces against encroachment by speculative development. BRCC, the main stakeholders in the EGW, are already funding small packages of work in parallel with the release of the plan, and work has already been completed on improving the walkways through Etonbury Wood, and some minor enhancements to the Hermitage pond.

Arlesey Town Council have made donations to the EGW budget for the past three years, and the expectation is that ATC's share of funding will continue whilst the project continues to make progress.

Cllr Chris Ferris

Etonbury Sports Management Group

September saw the opening of the new Pendleton Sports Centre at the expanded Etonbury Academy. The facilities, consisting of a sports hall, a fitness gym and a 3G football pitch is operated by Stevenage Leisure on behalf of the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST). The facilities were built as part of an expansion of the academy to 900 pupil places with funding from BEST, CBC Education, CBC Sports and Leisure, CBC Countryside Access and the Football Foundation. Their use is subject to a Community Use Agreement which allows academy use throughout the day and community use in the evenings, weekends and during academy holidays.

Three local junior football clubs, Arlesey Town Youth, Stotfold Juniors and Shefford Saints, have priority use of the 3G pitch and there are a range of other regular hirers. The gym has well over 500 members and the sports hall is being used for basketball, futsal and martial arts. Use in the first six months has meant that the centre has broken even well ahead of schedule.

Students at Etonbury Academy are obviously benefitting hugely from the new facilities with the PE curriculum having been expanded giving students new experiences and allowing for them to make greater progress in sport.

The new centre has so far been a huge success and is a fantastic facility within the parish benefitting residents in Arlesey and the surrounding areas.

Cllr Jon Want

Glebe Meadow Management

Maintenance work has been undertaken all year round including some of the willow trees having been pollarded. Again, the work has been carried out by volunteers of both Glebe Meadow Management and ACORN with the larger works i.e. pollarding of the willows being carried out by the Wildlife Trust.

Andy Fleckney from the Wildlife Trust has reported that an up-to-date risk assessment has now been completed on the large trees on the site under the Duty of Care banner. Andy also reported that an insect count would take place on the 13/07/2017. It will be interesting to see what insects inhabit the site. Andy further stated Natural England Countryside Stewardship Grant received payment to manage the meadow traditionally for 10 years.

Longhorn cows grazed for part of the year on the site and will be there again this year.

Permission has been sought to hold the Duck Race again this year on the 25th June. Arlesey Residents Association will be organising the event along with ACORN and the Methodist Church.

It was agreed that a good number of people are walking and enjoying Glebe Meadow.

Cllr Sandra Sarll

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2016/2017

May 2017

Arlesey Town Council Financial Summary

	2017	2016
Cash at Bank/in hand:	£	£
Barclays Current A/c	1,400	38,309
Barclays Tracker A/c	133,409	130,946
Unity Trust Bank Current A/c	19,709	0
Petty Cash A/c	105	83
Total cash held:	154,623	169,339
Other Current Assets:		
Debtors	1,176	1,314
VAT Control	5,090	5,000
Prepayments	44	98
Total current assets:	6,310	6,413
Current Liabilities:		
Creditors	17,474	31,116
Accruals	2,639	1,446
Wages Control	3,282	0
Receipts in Advance	43	575
Deposits Held	1,297	1,265
Total current liabilities:	24,735	34,403
Balance at 31st March:	<u>136,198</u>	<u>141,348</u>
Precept in year:	189,259	180,795
Other income during year:	88,567	50,639
Total Expenditure:	282,976	257,017
Transfers to/(from) EMRs	9,280	(11,553)
General Fund	61,123	75,553
Earmarked Reserves:		
EMR - Contingency Fund	0	0
EMR - Skatepark	11,899	11,899
EMR - Traffic Calming	1,600	1,600
EMR - Extra CCTV	434	434
EMR - Town Enhancement	126	126
EMR - Vehicle Replacement	3,651	10,301
EMR - Bus Shelter Refurb	1,464	1,464
EMR - Elections	1,893	33
EMR - Resource Centre	6,421	6,421
EMR - Streetlighting	5,760	8,260
EMR – Fun day	0	1,468
EMR - MUGA	4,138	10,000
EMR - Archive Group	534	500
EMR - Resource Centre	78	78
EMR - Capital (Prop) Repairs	1,472	1,472
EMR - Playground Equip Repairs	0	5,000
EMR - Neighbourhood Plan	6,300	5,949
EMR - Training	123	500
EMR - Equipment Repairs	47	291
EMR – St Johns Road Play Area	29,137	0
Total Earmarked Reserves:	<u>75,075</u>	<u>65,795</u>
Closing balance at 31st March:	<u>136,198</u>	<u>141,348</u>

(The above figures are subject to amendment prior to audit. All figures round to nearest £1)