

VILLAGE HALL

Unitary Councillors Report – Little Brickhill - October 2026

I hope to have updates to items relating to Fly Tipping and highways issues at the meeting. On Levante Gate, Richard Stewart is managing this while Lakeisha is on maternity leave. Officers do not think there is any chance of this being determined until at least February/March 2027, and in addition, officers don't think the applicants have any contrary expectation so they would not expect them to try to have it concluded any sooner. There are (as at 2 October) 54 comments registered on the planning web site.

Former Danesborough ward councillor Tracey Bailey (from Tattenhoe) won a by election on 25th September caused by the untimely death of the previous sitting councillor in Bradwell ward. Congratulations to Tracey.



Local Plan – Inspectors Hearing

I attended the hearing on 30 September at Marget Powell House in CMK which heard representation relating to plans for housing in Wavendon, Bow Brickhill and Little Brickhill.

GS18 - Central Themes in the Inspectors' Questions on GS18 (Levante Gate)

While the exact wording of specific sub-questions is published in the Inspectors' formal Matters, Issues, and Questions (MIQs) document via the examination portal, hearings examining strategic extensions like GS18 strictly focus on the four statutory tests of soundness:

1. Landscape & Environmental Impact:

• The site sits within a proposed Special Landscape Area and serves as a transition to the Greensand Ridge.

• Inspectors heavily cross-examine whether a 1,250-home development represents an intrusive "urbanising" effect on open countryside.

2. Infrastructure Delivery ("Infrastructure First"):

• Is the site large enough to viably deliver the extensive community infrastructure, health services, and schools mandated by the policy wording?

3. Cumulative Impact with Policy GS17:

• Levante Gate is intrinsically linked with Policy GS17 (South of Bow Brickhill, proposed for 1,500 homes). Local representations and Inspectors look closely at the combined pressure of 2,750+ new dwellings on local rural networks, traffic bottlenecking around Bletchley, and environmental sustainability.

4. Transport and Co-ordination:

• Questions tackle whether development is sustainably connected to the wider Milton Keynes grid or isolated from current employment clusters.



National Scheme of Planning Delegation – Letter sent locally to government

We are deeply concerned about the planned National Scheme of Delegation due to come into effect on the 31st October and are urging you and the Government to reverse the decision to implement it.

The Government has a stated aim of devolving powers to local communities and empowering them to determine their own future, rather than it being decided from Whitehall. In your Labour Party Conference speech, you said that you wanted 'more power in the hands of people and places to set their own ambition.' Unfortunately, the National Scheme of Delegation does the exact opposite. It significantly curtails, and in some cases entirely removes, local democratic accountability from the planning process. Planning can be highly emotive, but emotions aside and dealing purely with the process, it will in some cases

leave highly sensitive and important proposals being determined by an ever-expanding central Government or unelected officers rather than local communities and the councillors they elect.

If the Government is truly committed to pushing power out of Westminster to local communities, planning and determining the future of what homes, businesses and infrastructure are built should surely be at the heart of this agenda. Placemaking should be determined by those who know their places, not a centralised system. Instead, the Government is taking away power from local communities and the councillors they elect to determine smaller applications and restrict their ability to bring larger planning applications to committee, also therefore making it significantly harder for local people to have any say at all in the process.

The removal of democratic involvement in the planning process is unlikely to lead to any potential extra efficiency in the planning system. The current system of planning decisions is not proving to be the blocker to the planning system. Councils and councillors are diligent in not unnecessarily calling in applications to planning committees. The Government's own working paper highlighted this and noted that 96% of decisions in the second quarter of 2024 were made by officers. It is only in an extremely rare set of cases that councillors call in applications.

Furthermore, the current system does not block planning applications from being successful. According to the Campaign for Rural England, in 2023-2024 86% of all planning decisions were approved and decisions were only overturned in 2.7% of cases for major applications and 1% of minor applications. Planning committees and the councillors who serve on them are not the blocker to building houses, with the overturning of decisions rare and officers deciding applications in the vast majority of cases.

Instead of staying with the current process, which is not the cause of the Government's failure on its own housing targets, the Government may be about to slow the planning process even more. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has already warned that the new National Scheme of Delegation could lead to an increase in harassment of planners. When residents do not believe that the councillors they elect to be local leaders actually have decision making power because of Government regulations, they will directly contact planning officers and increase planners' workloads rather than have their concerns listened to and explained by councillors.

When combined with the pre-existing issue of retention and recruitment, shown through the Local Councils Network's research which showed that 84% of its member councils are struggling to recruit and retain planning staff, we could in fact end up with fewer planners to make decisions. An increase in harassment could drive even more planners out of the profession and lead to more delays in planning decisions due to there not being enough officers in local authorities to make decisions. It is unfair on planners, and it is not right for local communities to not have the councillors they elect make local decisions.

If the Government is to action their promise to empower local communities rather than do the exact opposite, a change of course is needed to stop further centralisation of power to

Whitehall. If the Government is to encourage housebuilding, they shouldn't take actions which will make work harder for planners and drive them out of the profession. Therefore, we are writing to ask you Prime Minister and the Government to revoke the National Scheme of Delegation and trust local communities to elect leaders to only call in the applications in line with the NPPF which are significant to their place.

New setback for long-delayed Milton Keynes to Oxford line as rail union announces strike action

East West Rail's much-delayed MK to Oxford line is set for more controversy as union members prepare to strike over the operator's plans.

The physical track between Oxford and Milton Keynes has been ready to open since late 2024 but is currently used only for testing, freight and driver training.

More at … https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/people/new-setback-for-long-delayed-milton-keynes-to-oxford-line-as-rail-union-announces-strike-action-9233252



E-Scooter Forum meeting

Milton Keynes E-scooter Forum Update and Notes 24/09/2026

Attendees

ACTIONS from previous meeting

- Operators to:
  - Organise meeting with Julie at the Parks Trust to address issue son Parks Trust land TBC.
  - Review OU MPZs TBC
  - Ongoing - Engage with Parishes who have raised concerns about the MPZs in their area, including Newport Pagnell, Stony Stratford, Loughton and Great Holm and Wavendon
  - MPZ criteria – listed below

The criteria used for the MPZs was based on:

Journey end locations (going back 6 months)

Target parking density (ensuring MPZs are not too far apart, otherwise the scheme becomes unattractive and unviable for people.

Local knowledge provided by parishes, Cllrs and members of the public

MKCC guidance, points 1 – 8.

Key points:

1. Docks, bikes and scooters MUST NOT be placed within a Redway, footpath or leisure route.

2. Docked bikes and scooters MUST NOT overlap into a Redway, footpath or leisure route at all.

4. Racks, bikes, scooters and signs SHOULD be placed at least 50 centimetres from the edge of a Redway.

6. Only in exceptional circumstances will we accept a removal area into a Redway and this must not take up more than half of the Redway.

7. Most parks and open spaces are maintained by the Parks Trust – approval will be required directly from them.

8. MPZs should be integrated with transport interchanges, such as bus stops and train stations (where there is space to do so safely)

MKCC Update

DfT E-Scooter Evaluation

Started in June 2025. Update from the Micromobility Team – there have been a few delays, but they will be able to share some initial findings very soon.

Geofenced MPZ parking – across MK

Parish engagement is ongoing until the MPZ locations are approved.

Parishes can have access to the google map upon request and residents can see the MPZs on either of the operator apps. We welcome feedback and making changes to the MPZs locations from Parishes and the public to ensure the scheme works for everyone.

Recently reviewed:

Newport Pagnell

Stony Stratford

Tattenhoe Ward

Watling Ward (Ward encompassing; Whitehouse, Loughton, Shenley Church End, Shenley Wood, Medbourne, Oakhill, Grange Farm, Knowlhill & Crownhill) – Simon at Dott met with Cllr Marlow

Made some changes to Central Bletchley along Queensway – but there is further work to do in the area, along with West Bletchley. Both areas require a full review.

Cllr Mark Eaton – said that compliance has improved

Response times for operators to address poor parking, untidiness and obstruction will be included in the concession contract

Cllr Millie Rook said that she has been reporting issues – and the issues have been addressed. Response times are often quick but there are still issues in her area.

Ernie asked can anyone outside review bids. ACTION for HR

Send KPIs and spec for feedback from scooter forum members, ACTION HR

Cllr Millie Rook asked – what is the process once the bid has been reviewed – are cabinet involved. ACTION HR

Suggestion from the group that vehicles or the operator dashboard should self-report mis-parked vehicles.

CF- How will the new DfT regulations effect the contract, given that there could be changes when the trial ends in 2028? This will need to be considered in the tender specification

Concession contract for micromobility in MK

We have now had formal approval from MKCC CEO Michael Bracey for the micromobility tender to go on the forward plan for delegated decision – which will be in November.

Work has started on the specification for the contract, which will include a range of KPIs to address and give us more control over the issue that we are experiencing.

Having the contract in place will give us more control than we have without having a contract in place. So, a contract, will improve our ability to address and minimise the known challenges.

Purchase of private scooters are not within our control. But offering scooters for hire within a contract framework will give local residents less need to buy their own and if we use our contracts social value to repeatedly educate on the dangers of private scooters and incentivise hire scooters, we are improving on the current situation.

Mobility Hubs

Two parking corrals installed in Newport Pagnell – planters are being managed by Axiom. Agreed by Newport Pagnell Town Council.

Two sites have been identified for parking corrals in Stony Stratford – next to bus stops

A further 12 sites have been identified in Newport Pagnell – 8 of which are on adopted highway so colleagues in passenger transport are looking into these locations for potential ‘transport hubs’ – with the installation of hardstanding and Sheffield stands at bus stops. Thank you to Cllr Scott Humpries for accompanying me on a site visit and suggesting potential locations.

And I attended the E-Scooter Summit

Scooter Summit Survey | Chris Curtis MP

3pm on Friday 25th September at the New Bradwell Community Centre on Church Street, New Bradwell, MK13 0DA

Hoping to access the survey results so that we can review the public's opinions and address the concerns in our KPI's and social value elements of the tender.

Operator Updates

Lime

Lime has introduced AI age verification checks, heightened enforcement and penalties for poor behaviour.

Revenue funding from the fines has been offered to MKCC to support with funding for the introduction of enforcement cameras across the city to monitor e-scooter user behaviour. We have checked with our operators and retrospective enforcement; penalties and bans will be possible - so we don't think it will take long for our crackdown on e-scooter user behaviour to take effect.

Lime has also produced leaflets and FAQs re underage riding, which will be shared with the group, schools and TVP.

AOB

There have been some issues with the council reporting system – which have been resolved. This meant that Lime was receiving a number of enquiries all at once, but they were a week / 2 weeks old, so it was difficult for some of those enquiries to be dealt with.

TVP – have been out enforcing the use of illegal bikes and scooters. They seized 45 illegal e-scooters and e-bikes, which will be crushed.

There are ANPR cameras on Highway – to capture organised crime offences

Police are doing a lot of work around seizing scooters and bikes – example from Jane Foster – spare cameras available. ACTION HR to set up a meeting with Jane to discuss cameras and enforcement.

Actions

Ernie asked can anyone outside review bids. ACTION for HR

Send KPIs and spec for feedback from scooter forum members, ACTION HR

Cllr Millie Rook asked – what is the process once the bid has been reviewed – are cabinet involved. ACTION HR

TVP to provide data on scooter and e-bikes offences – ACTION Neil Biggs

Police are doing a lot of work around seizing scooters and bikes – example from Jane Foster – spare cameras available. ACTION HR to set up a meeting with Jane to discuss cameras.

Businesses can put MPZs on their private land – but engagement with employers required. To be included in new contract. ACTION HR



Festive Lighting: A Reminder for Parish Councils

As Parish, Town and Community Councils begin planning for this year's festive lighting, we would like to share a reminder about the removal of decorations from street lighting columns.

In previous years, there have been a number of instances where festive lights have been removed and the street light has subsequently been left not working. This has required our Highways Team to attend and carry out repairs that could have been avoided.

When removing festive lighting or decorations, please ensure that the street light is left in full working order and that no damage is caused to the column, electrical connections or associated equipment.

If you are using a contractor to install and remove your festive lighting, please make sure they are aware of this requirement and check that the street lights are working correctly once the decorations have been removed.

Any contactor working on highways electrical installations must be on the Highways Electrical Registration System (HERS registered) at the time of carrying out these works. HERS registration confirms that the engineers are certified, audited, fully competent to work safely on live electrical street furniture, at heights and are fully insured. More information can be found here. https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/highways/our-policies-plans-and-processes/working-parish-councils

Thank you for helping us to keep the street lighting network safe and operational.



Reports from the recent Parishes Forum

…….

The Forum received a presentation from Neelam Shiraz (Community Network and Engagement Officer, Thames Valley Police). The presentation focused on hate crime

awareness and under-reporting. Members were advised that hate crimes were offences motivated by hostility relating to five protected strands.

The key points included:

· Hate crime monitoring included community impact assessments following major incidents and consideration of the local effect of national and international events.

· The five monitored strands were race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender identity.

· Hate crime could include physical assault, verbal or online abuse, criminal damage and incitement to hatred.

· Under-reporting remained a concern. Reports from victims and witnesses helped the Police identify patterns and target interventions.

· Reports could be made through 999 in emergencies, 101 in non-emergencies or online.

In response to questions, it was explained that criticism of an idea, belief or religion was not automatically a hate crime; the relevant threshold involved hostility, abuse, intimidation or incitement directed at an individual or group. The Forum also discussed the effect of misinformation, support for young victims, sentencing and the importance of early intervention and trusted adults.

The Forum received a presentation from Alyson Moore (CSAS Training & Operational Lead, Thames Valley Police) on the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

The key points included:

· The Chief Constable could confer specified powers on trained employees of partner organisations.

· The scheme supported responses to lower-level antisocial behaviour and matters such as dog fouling, littering, graffiti, Public Space Protection Orders, cycling offences, event traffic management and intelligence gathering.

· Accredited personnel were not police officers and had no power of arrest. The scheme emphasised engagement, prevention and problem-solving, with limited enforcement powers where appropriate.

· Training costs had been reduced, and joint delivery or shared accredited employees could assist groups of parishes.

Discussion included parking, e-scooter misuse, nitrous oxide, partnership work with schools, grant opportunities, traffic management at events and the requirement for accredited personnel to be paid employees. It was noted that the latter requirement could present difficulties for smaller rural parishes and that possible alternatives were being considered nationally.

The Forum received a presentation from Jane Forster (Community Safety Officer, Milton Keynes City Council) on current community safety activity.

The key points included:

· Priority areas included antisocial behaviour, violence against women and girls, weapon-enabled crime and youth violence, domestic abuse, online radicalisation and Prevent, acquisitive and retail crime, and hate crime.

· Twelve antisocial behaviour case review requests had been received since April 2026; one had met the threshold and a further case had recently been approved. Forty-three referrals had been made to the multi-agency case management arrangements.

· Recent legislative provisions included higher Public Space Protection Order fines, extended closure powers, longer dispersal directions and Respect Orders.

· Summer concerns included outdoor fires, street racing, street drinking, antisocial behaviour in open spaces and water safety.

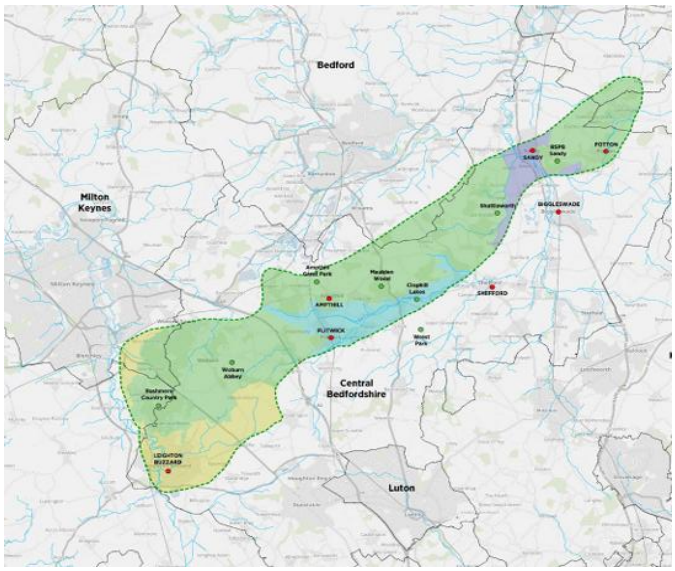
· The Alcohol Public Space Protection Order covered 15 parishes. It did not prohibit responsible drinking but enabled intervention where alcohol contributed to antisocial behaviour. Parishes were encouraged to gather evidence for the 2027 renewal consultation.

· Recent engagement activity included the Blue Light and Community Fun Day, loan shark awareness, ASB Awareness Week, crime prevention roadshows and Operation Potentiate.

Members raised concerns about the impact on local residents of large events at the National Bowl, including parking, resident access and emergency service arrangements. Officers advised that discussions were underway with licensing and emergency planning colleagues and that the concerns would inform future planning. The Forum also discussed safety advisory group arrangements, the requirements to consider implementing a PSPO in a new playground, safety of e-scooters and antisocial behaviour associated with nitrous oxide misuse.



The Greensand Ridge – Planning Protection Proposals



Conserving and enhancing landscape character of the Greensand Ridge

The Council will support the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of the Greensand Ridge. Development proposals within the Greensand Ridge landscape character area and/or that may have an impact on its setting, must conform to the below policy.

To conserve and enhance landscape character, any proposals must: - - - - - -

- Assess how they will impact the landscape character and/or setting of the Greensand Ridge and how this can appropriately be mitigated as part of any development.
- Demonstrate how natural and man-made landscape features (habitats, heritage assets, settlement and field patterns, views) will be protected and enhanced.
- Demonstrate how the tranquillity of the area will be preserved or enhanced.
- Identify and protect important views that allow the experience and appreciation of landscape character.
- Protect and enhance the distinctive settlement patterns found across the Greensand Ridge, preventing the coalescence of 'ends' and settlements and preserving Important Countryside Gaps.
- Protect the distinctive contrast between the Greensand Ridge and the surrounding clay vales, particularly for development at the base of the Greensand Ridge.

Proposals must support and enhance blue and green infrastructure through nature recovery by: - - - - -

- Aligning with the priorities identified through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Greensand Ridge Nature
- Improvement Area by delivering a net gain in biodiversity, increasing ecological connectivity, and support species recovery and resilience.
- Protecting and enhancing important resources for climate resilience, such as peat or highly organic soils found in the Flit and Ivel valleys.

- Promoting a minerals and waste approach that encourages the restoration of quarries to land forms that respect a rural character and are well embedded into the wider landscape character.
- Securing public access to green and blue infrastructure that supports the long-term resilience of biodiversity and heritage assets.
- Supporting and enhancing strategic visitor hubs to the Greensand Ridge, such as Rushmere Country Park, that support public access to nature, outdoor recreation, environmental education, volunteering, habitat management, landscape scale conservation, health and wellbeing, and the wider visitor economy.

Proposals must take a landscape- and vernacular-led approach to design, to: - - -

- Deliver a high quality of design that meaningfully respects and enhances local vernacular styles and traditional building materials and methods.
- Avoid suburbanisation within or on the outskirts of villages.
- Create screen planting that is climate resilient and appropriate for the setting of the site. Particularly high sensitive sites, such as those within or in the setting of designed landscapes, may be adversely impacted by dense tree planting.

Energy, industrial, and communications infrastructure must be landscape-led, by: - - -

- Integrating renewable energy proposals into their landscape context with appropriate mitigation. Ancillary development should contribute to a tranquil character and design should focus public open space, routes, and views

away from detracting visual elements.

- Ensuring that the development of key transport corridors acknowledges and mitigates the wider landscape impact.
- Conserving and enhancing historic communications infrastructure, such as sunken lanes, that contribute strongly to local distinctiveness.

In making planning decisions, the local authority should: - - - -

- Monitor the spread of equestrian development, as this can have an adverse impact by eroding the diversity of land use across the Greensand Ridge and result in infrastructure such as boundary treatments that harm landscape character.
- Monitor how householder development can adversely impact landscape character. Householder applications should conserve and enhance landscape character through sympathetic use of vernacular materials and methods.
- Demonstrate how Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy where applicable, Biodiversity Net Gain, stewardship, external grant funding and strategic partnership mechanisms to support long-term management, development, and visitor infrastructure across the Greensand Ridge can be realised.
- Recognise The Greensand Trust as a key strategic delivery partner for landscape-scale conservation, access, community engagement and land management, with

established expertise in translating policy objectives into practical delivery on the ground.

International Day of Older Persons



Councillors, parish representatives and local organisations joined the Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor Paul Trendall, and Older Persons' Champion, Councillor David Hopkins, on 1 October to mark United Nations International Day of Older Persons at Milton Keynes Rose. This year's theme, "The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives", highlighted the importance of creating age-friendly communities and services.

The event was well attended, including the High Sheriff, and featured speeches from the Mayor and Councillor Hopkins. Read Councillor Hopkins' speech here. https://cmemailmarketing.co.uk/img/A56D78427/Milton%20Keynes%20City%20Council/Democratic%20Services/Images%20and%20Files/October/Older%20Person%20Champion%20Speech%201%20October%20.pdf

Cllr David Hopkins

Unitary Councillor for Little Brickhill