



## WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2018

### Introduction

I am delighted to introduce our 2018 annual report which details West Bletchley Council's main activities and achievements during 2017/18 and summarises the Council's financial position at the close of the year.

During the past year we have continued to invest in and improve those local assets that you have told us are important to the local community. This has included providing capital resources to help fund the refurbishment of Bletchley Library and support the continued provision of local library services.

We have also continued to work on your behalf in representing your views on local planning matters. This has included our work in developing a "West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan" which will help us shape and guide development for the next 10 years across our area.

Last year we committed to continue to seek to address residents' concerns regarding littering and dog fouling. We have during the last year funded additional litter picking and implemented new initiatives to reduce dog fouling within the parish. We will continue to monitor this as well as consider new ways of addressing these problems.

***Councillor Veronica Belcher***  
***Chair of West Bletchley Council***

### Summary of Activities and Achievements

West Bletchley Council has continued to deliver services and facilities, locally, in accordance with objectives and priorities included within its published Business Plan.

The Council regularly consults with parish residents either formally by survey or informally, whether at events or when residents visit the Council offices, in order to determine priorities and/or concerns that the Council should address. The Business Plan 2016/19 was compiled with the benefit of this regular engagement and we have continued to review performance through these means as well as through postal surveys with a random sample of residents.

Residents' surveys completed during the last twelve months, continue to show good satisfaction levels. Of those who responded to 2018 postal surveys:

- **93%** indicated that the way in which the Council communicated with residents had improved or stayed the same over the last 12 months
- **91%**, indicated that the level of information provided by the Council had either got better or stayed the same.
- **93%** agreed that facilities within the parish had either got better or stayed the same.

Feedback from our residents is an essential way of ensuring that the Council's priorities are in line with the views of our residents and that our policies and the actions we take continue to have a positive effect on the lives of those who live within the parish.

## **In the Community**

- The Frank Moran Centre continues to be popular with all members of our community. As well as being a drop in venue for local residents of all ages to meet up and socialise, including easy access to computers and information, the centre also facilitates regular meetings of age or interest related social groups in the main hall. Groups include the lively Franks 55+ drop-in that meets twice weekly, Arts and Crafts, belly dancing, a Junior Youth Club provided by MKC and a weekly lunch club run by Age UK MK. It also provides discreet access to support and advice from agencies including Money Lifeline, Food Bank and Age UK MK.
- A “Coffee, Cake & Chat” Drop in Session has recently been introduced at St Johns Hall. This is designed to be a sociable, friendly and welcoming space for anyone who would like to drop-in for a cuppa and a listening ear.
- The Council continues to support projects which aim to address social isolation, whether of individuals or groups. Living in the Moment sessions run twice monthly at the Council offices in Whaddon Way. The Men in Sheds project, based in Rickley Park, has become well established, meeting several times a week and providing a range of activities and crafts, with an emphasis on woodworking, to a core group of local older male residents.
- The annual West Bletchley carnival, managed and supported by the Council, remains the high profile event within the parish attracting all ages to both participate and watch.
- In conjunction with Milton Keynes Play Association, we ran play and activity sessions for children during school holiday periods at local parks and community centres, which will continue during the coming year. We are also exploring the possibility of additional locations for the coming year.
- The Council's partnership with West Bletchley Wellbeing and Counselling service continues to provide a valuable resource for our residents, enabling them to access timely and free counselling support, when it is needed.
- The Council continues to fund the scheme at Bletchley Leisure Centre, which enables many West Bletchley residents, within those qualifying categories and age groups, to swim for free.
- The Council's quarterly magazine, Open Door, delivered free to every household in the parish, provides information and updates on the wide range of activities on offer.
- The Council sets aside an annual budget which is used as grant funding for local groups who need support for specific projects or purchases.

## **Environment**

- The Council continues to work closely with its appointed contractor to ensure sustainability of parks and other areas of public open space.
- For the fourth year running the prestigious Green Flag status has been awarded to Chepstow Park.
- The Council continues to develop new strategies to address parking issues within the parish.
- West Bletchley Council remains one of few parish councils across Milton Keynes to provide free dog waste bags to residents.
- The Council recognises there is still work to be done regarding dog fouling & litter and will continue with its on-going education and awareness campaigns.

## Planning

- The Council has now produced the final version of the Neighbourhood Plan for West Bletchley. The Plan will, during the coming year, undergo a final round of formal consultation and independent examination.
- West Bletchley Council's planning committee comments on all planning applications submitted to Milton Keynes Council that relate to land or property situated within West Bletchley, taking account of this Council's planning policy as well as the views expressed by local residents.
- The prospect of large scale housing development on land within Aylesbury Vale, but adjacent to the parish boundary, remains. The Council remains alert to any proposals from developers, keeping residents informed and supporting their objections to planning approval.

## Council Finance

The following figures have been extracted from the draft accounts for the Council, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, subject to audit.

### DRAFT SUBJECT TO AUDIT

Local Councils in England

**Annual return for the year ended  
31 March 2018**

## WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL

### The statement of accounts

	Year ending	
	31 March 2017 £	31 March 2018 £
1 Balances brought Forward	1,631,570	1,826,756
2 (+) Annual Precept	821,017	869,529
3 (+) Total other Receipts	313,673	274,841
4 (-) Staff costs	364,409	375,693
5 (-) Loan interest/ capital repayments	34,377	33,746
6 (-) Total other payments	540,718	516,011
7 (=) Balances carried forward	1,826,756	2,045,676
8 Total cash & investments	1,809,877	2,029,647
9 Total fixed assets and long term assets	1,057,228	1,049,583
10 Total borrowings	275,862	248,276