



## WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2019

### Introduction

I am delighted to introduce this year's annual report which summarises West Bletchley Council's main activities and achievements during 2018/19 and our statement of accounts at the close of the financial year.

We have, during the past year, continued to seek to protect and enhance local community assets and green space that you have told us are important to you. We have accordingly agreed to take ownership of all play areas within the parish as well as seeking the transfer of a number of local green spaces.

Similarly, we have sought to improve the delivery of local services. In particular, we have continued to fund additional litter picking and increased the frequency of gully weed clearance. We have also set aside funding to extend the support we provide to local residents. This includes funding for both a young carers project and youth counselling service.

Our "West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan" has, following a successful referendum, been formally adopted by Milton Keynes Council as part of its development plan. This will help to ensure we have sustainable and well-planned development that enhances our community as well as helping us to resist poor development that would diminish our quality of life.

***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 2016/19 Business Plan.

These priorities are reviewed and updated on a regular basis taking account of consultation with parish 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 Franks 55+ drop-in that meets twice weekly, a fortnightly memory club, Arts and Crafts, belly dancing 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. The Centre also hosts a programme of free community events including family discos, quiz nights and regular holiday activities.
- 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 to a core group of local older male residents. Free counselling is also available for West Bletchley residents through a partnership with the West Bletchley Wellbeing and Counselling Service.
- The Council continues to expand its annual programme of events. Current highlights include the West Bletchley Carnival, Remembrance Day Parade and Christmas Trees Carols event.
- In 2018 the Council extended its Summer Play Scheme to 4 days a week across 4 local venues providing free holiday activities for local children.
- 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.
- Chepstow Park has again been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme as "one of the best green spaces".
- The Council continues to develop new strategies to address parking issues within the parish and has, this year, allocated resources to fund a series of parking improvement projects on the Saints' estate.
- West Bletchley Council remains one of few parish councils across Milton Keynes to provide free dog waste bags to residents.
- The Council has continued to extend the public realm services that it provides by increasing both the number of grit bins and frequency of gulley weed clearance within the parish.

## **Planning**

- The West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan has successfully passed referendum and has come into force as the statutory development plan for the parish.
- 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 Council continues to challenge proposals for housing development on land within Aylesbury Vale, adjacent to the parish boundary.

## Council Finance

The following figures have been extracted from the draft accounts for the Council, for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, subject to audit.

### DRAFT SUBJECT TO AUDIT

Local Councils in England

**Annual return for the year ended  
31 March 2019**

## WEST BLETCHLEY COUNCIL

### The statement of accounts

	Year ending	
	31 March 2018 £	31 March 2019 £
1 <i>Balances brought Forward</i>	1,826,756	2,045,677
2 (+) <i>Annual Precept</i>	869,529	914,670
3 (+) <i>Total other Receipts</i>	274,841	211,606
4 (-) <i>Staff costs</i>	375,693	385,044
5 (-) <i>Loan interest/ capital repayments</i>	33,746	33,114
6 (-) <i>Total other payments</i>	516,011	546,006
7 (=) <i>Balances carried forward</i>	2,045,676	2,207,788
8 <i>Total cash &amp; investments</i>	2,029,647	2,357,913
9 <i>Total fixed assets and long term assets</i>	1,049,583	1,057,506
10 <i>Total borrowings</i>	248,276	220,690