

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** of Buckingham held in Buckingham Community Centre on Wednesday 25th March at 7.30pm

Present:

Cllr. T. Bloomfield	
Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins	
Cllr. P. Collins	
Cllr. J. Harvey	
Cllr. P. Hirons	
Cllr. D. Isham	
Cllr. L. O'Donoghue	Town Mayor
Cllr. A. Mahi	
Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. M. Smith	
Cllr. C. Strain-Clark	
Cllr. R. Stuchbury	
Cllr. M. Try	

Invited Guests:

Cllr. Mrs. J. Bloom	Vice Chairman, AVDC
Cllr. N. Blake	Leader, AVDC
Mr. J. McGinty	Deputy CEO, AVDC
Mr. C. Williams	Chief Executive Officer, BCC
Mr. P. Hodson	Localities Manager, BCC
Inspector James Davies	Thames Valley Police
Mrs. J. Harding	Buckingham & Winslow CAB
Mr. J. Barnett	Buckingham Youth Clubs Ltd.

Other residents:

Dr. C. R. Brown
Mrs. M. Buckingham
Mr. D. Child
Mr. M. Duncan
Mr. R. Edwards
Mr. B. Pankhurst
Mrs. E. Pankhurst
Mrs. U. Robinson
Mr. P. Strain-Clark

Also present:

Mr. Christopher Wayman	Town Clerk
Mr. C. Robson	Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs. K. McElligott	<i>for the Committee Clerk</i>

1. Apologies for absence

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Town Cllrs. R. Newell and W. Whyte, Cllr. T. Mills (Buckingham North, AVDC), Mr. J. Bercow MP, Cllr. Z. Mohammed (Chairman, BCC), Cllr. B. Chapple (Vice Chairman, BCC), Cllr. M. Tett (Leader, BCC), Cllr. M. Rand (Chairman AVDC), Mr. A. Grant (Chief.Exec., AVDC), Mr. D Hudson (Headmaster, Royal Latin School), Mr. E. Wallis (Chairman, Shop Buckingham).

2. To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26th March 2014.

The Minutes were approved and signed. There were no matters arising.

3. To receive a report by the Mayor of Buckingham and the Chairmen of the different Committees on the work of Buckingham Town Council

3.1 The Mayor – Cllr. L. O'Donoghue

I would like to welcome everyone to this year's Annual Town Meeting where you will hear some of the great work the Committees have undertaken this past year and also reports from our County and District colleagues.

It has been an aspiration of this Council to keep residents and businesses informed of the work we do and under the Chairmanship of Councillor Jon Harvey the Communications sub-group is now producing a high quality information booklet, that is delivered to every household and business in the town. I hope everyone has found the Buckingham Town Matters to be informative and helpful, especially for those who are new to the area.

Under the same sub-group a tender went out to local companies to deliver a new website for the Town Council. We are currently testing the new site to make sure all the links are working and people can access what they need, all going well the new website should go live in May, this year.

Even though you will hear more about the Neighbourhood Development Plan in the Planning Committee report, it would be remiss of me not to personally thank our Town Plan Officer Sheena McMurtrie, our Town Clerk Chris Wayman, Deputy Town Clerk Chris Robson and Katharine McElligott for the hours of paid and unpaid time they have given to this project. Having a Neighbourhood Plan is vital if we are to fight off developers who are often thoughtless in their vision and ignorant of local knowledge.

Another endeavour of this Council has been to build new toilets, something our residents and visitors have been crying out for. Since taking the decision back in 2013 we went out to companies to tender for the works, in Full Council we agreed the toilet building plans, we were successful in getting the funding through the New Homes Bonus money and we also agreed to put into place recommendations from a County Council Road Survey Report, that was requested due to negative comments from a District Councillor, who thought the small car park road was too dangerous for people to cross.

Your Town Council also agreed to build a path from the green bridge that brings users from Bourton Park across to the car park – currently the bridge deposits people into the path of oncoming traffic – whereas our path would take users over the current shrub land and safely onto the recycling/toilet site.

Unfortunately, throughout these two years we have had roadblocks put in our path by one of Buckingham's District Councillors, who believes we have chosen the wrong location for the toilets, despite it being Officers of the same council who suggested the site to us from the start.

Planning Permission had actually been granted to us for the toilet design on the recycling site back in October 2014 and had the District Council agreed to lease us the land our toilets would have been completed at the end of February this year. How disappointing for the people of Buckingham and all her visitors who remain cross-legged and have to rely on the good nature of local cafes for the use of their toilets, when we could have had our very own built and in use.

This District Councillor could turn the whole thing around if he just agrees to go with the views of 16 Town Councillors and a whole host of other professionals and allow the land to be leased, we could then start works and have toilets up and running for the summer, where we are likely to see more visitors.

On a happier note I am pleased to report that the Youth Council have recently gained new members and are making plans to encourage young voters to put a cross in the box

on election day, thank-you to the Youth Cllr's for keeping this avenue for young people going and to our Deputy Town Clerk Chris Robson for his continued support.

As a direct result of last October's Local Democracy Event, which involves both secondary schools, a suggestion from a young person to start an American Football Club will come to fruition. Funding has been sought for any interested members of the community to get trained as coaches and a local club in Bedford, called the Ouse Valley Eagles have agreed to support a start-up club here in Buckingham.

Special thanks to our Events Assistant Amanda Brubaker for her hard work and support.

Finally, our Town Council staff are amazing and extremely professional in all of their dealings with members of the public or other organisations. Councillors take decisions in meetings but it's the office who then deliver and they do so efficiently, so thank you for another fantastic year.

3.2 Environment Committee – Cllr. M. Smith

The Town Council's Environment Committee is authorised by the Full Council to take responsibility for the protection and improvement of the town and its environs. We make recommendations to the Full Council regarding any land or property held or leased, and any proposed purchases or sales.

We keep an eye on work required to footpaths, pavements, cycle-ways, roads, waterways, horticultural and arboriculture works, street furniture (seats, planters, waste bins and dog bins), play areas, and play equipment. A "health" element was added just two years ago, to promote all aspects of community safety and general "wellbeing" in our town.

Not all of this falls within the Town Council remit, however, so we try to liaise closely with our District and County Council partners on the maintenance of those items for which they have specific responsibility. In order to assist them, we reinstated occasional audits of all paths and kerbs in the town centre so that we could advise them of any defects requiring their attention.

We also engaged wholeheartedly with Councillor Christine Strain-Clark's cross-council "Access Awareness" day across the town centre and its shops. This led to numerous suggestions for improvements for the less-able, some of which will hopefully be encouraged by joint-funding from this Council and the AVDC-funded *Destination Buckingham* Group.

Two years ago, I reported that we had hopes of the existing shelter at the Bus Stand being replaced with a larger version, to better accommodate the increased use generated by the X5 service being re-routed through the town. This was at last completed, and also has state of the art illuminated bus time displays.

The bulk of the Town Council "estate" comprises Chandos and Bourton Parks, the Cemetery (including Cemetery Lodge and the chapels), the Railway Walk, and other open spaces. Apart from ensuring that these areas are properly maintained, we work closely with local Conservation Volunteers and various "friends" groups whose unstinting work helps to maintain and improve these valuable resources and protect the indigenous wild life.

During the past year, with the diligent efforts of our Green Spaces Manager and his team, we have again seen continuing improvements to Bourton Park and our Cemetery. An audit of our green spaces to identify where additional work might be needed, and to

check access for the less able and those with pushchairs, have been worked into our comprehensive Park Management Plans, which are being rolled-out as funding permits.

In Bourton Park, the long-hoped for replacement Trim Trail was installed in time for the summer, together with a MUGA on the pre-existing basket-ball court. Those picnic benches that were well past their sell-by date were replaced. We have commissioned a pond survey which will lead to a long-term project for improvements, and continue to look to replacing the otter sculptures. The park is well-used by dog walkers, which we welcome despite some dogs having badly trained owners who leave the place befouled with dog mess or allow their mutts to roam unchecked. Last year, our Events Team arranged a Dog Awareness event to reward those dogs with considerate owners, and plans are afoot to repeat the event this year. But be assured that less responsible dog owners are also in our sights ...

After earlier hiccups we completed replacement of the Chandos Road entrance path to the park, raising it above flood-level. We also reviewed arrangements with the Tennis Club and, as a result, obtained improved booking access to our tennis courts by members of the public. Regrettably, repeated vandalism led to the temporary closure of the public toilet in Chandos Park until repairs could be made – including a replacement door to the disabled toilet – and we now hope that people will now show a little more respect for this facility.

The Ken Tagg play area in Meadway also falls under our remit, and plans are now well advanced to refresh this in its entirety.

In the Cemetery, the Garden of Rest continues to mature nicely; but lack of available grave space gives continuing cause for concern. Recent burials have shown that the underlying bedrock is far more extensive than previously thought, which means that we now urgently need either an accessible extension to the existing cemetery, or a new one, as there are now only 19 available grave plots – enough for two years at the outside. Our emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan reflects this urgent need. All Buckingham folk can play their part by living longer until we find additional burial space.

Our policy is to retain this as a lawned cemetery, for ease of maintenance purposes, but in the older part of the cemetery our memorial safety testing continues on a planned cycle. General maintenance and grass cutting continues to a high standard by our Green Spaces Team and its contractors. The chapel doors were recently refurbished, and the Cemetery Lodge continues to be rented out. We recently sought quotes to improve the cemetery paths, and are currently looking into how these improvements might be funded.

The War Memorial at the parish church also falls under our remit and the base and protective bollards were specialist cleaned in time for Remembrance Day. We noticed that inconsiderate car-parking had caused a lot of damage to the grass verge to the north of the church, which we are in the process of reinstating. We shall also install bollards to prevent future vehicle damage.

We were, of course, aware of numerous complaints about the reduced grass-cutting of road verges etc by Bucks County Council. For some years we have undertaken some work on county's behalf under a scheme of devolved services, and we have recently agreed to extend this via a Community Enterprise scheme which should see our town and its entry points restored to the standards we have come to expect. I am particularly grateful to Lee Philips, our Green Spaces Manager, for his efforts in seeing Community Enterprise into Buckingham.

As you will have noticed in the local press, we continue to look at providing additional public toilets in the town centre. The site adjacent to the Cornwalls Meadow car park did receive planning consent, and some New Homes Bonus monies have been earmarked for this purpose. Our District Council (perhaps I should say one of its members) has other ideas, however, and we await the outcome of what most of us consider to be unnecessarily protracted negotiations.

Having replaced their Bridge Street play equipment the year before last, we remain hopeful that our District Council will refurbish their skate park area, which is well used but now looking increasingly tired.

The CCTV cameras in Chandos Park and in the High Street continue deter would-be vandals, but we are still plagued by anti-social behaviour, particularly in the vicinity of the Moreton Road toilets; and excessive litter.

From the foregoing, it will be clear that the Committee has extensive responsibilities and has achieved a lot in the last year or so. As Chairman I am grateful for the hard work of the committee members and of the Green Spaces staff, who together help to make Buckingham a nice place to be.

3.3 Resources Committee – Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins

As Chairman of the Resources Committee I am responsible for finance, administration and personnel behind the scenes. I am happy to say that we have been able to keep the council tax at the same rate as you have paid in the previous 5 years and also ensuring we could finance various projects in the town. I thank all members of the committee for their commitment. I would also like to thank the Town Clerk Chris Wayman, Deputy Town Clerk Chris Robson and our Committee Clerk Claire Bolton for their work and assistance in ensuring the smooth running of our committee process and all our other staff for their help and support.

3.4 Planning Committee – Cllr. P. Hiron

The Planning Committee covers two main areas – detail, such as planning applications, and wider-scale, such as consultations on policy. There haven't been many this year, notably BCC's revisiting of their Minerals and Waste policy.

Our main concern this year has been the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan. We started enthusiastically, but successive delays – Radclive withdrawing consent to include a small part of the parish, leading to re-consultation, finding AVDC had posted an incorrect map with this leading to another re-consultation – meant we were behind schedule. We felt it sensible to have the document vetted by Tibbalds for weaknesses, which led to the reluctant removal of the protection of a much-wanted southern bypass route; it would have meant including several neighbouring parishes in a new consultation. However the Autumn Statement included plans for a feasibility study for an Oxford-Cambridge road which we may hope results in a better road past Buckingham.

The current consultation will end on 24th April, when it will go to an outside examiner and then to referendum. The Committee thanks part-time Town Planning Officer, Sheena McMurtrie, for all the work she has put into the Plan.

We did process 147 planning applications in the year, down from 158 in the previous year & representing less than 4% of AVDC's applications. This is partly due to changes in Government rules on, for example, small extensions. Changes to AVDC's administration meant that, in the event of our opposing an application for which their officer recommended approval we had to send a representative to the Committee meeting or the application would be decided at officer level rather than by Councillors. We have attended as many of these Committees as possible, and have to report that we never made a successful intervention, which is disappointing.

We have co-opted to the Committee a member of the Buckingham Society and the direct input of the Society's views are much valued.

Last September AVDC decided to withdraw the issue of paper plans to the parishes, except for large applications, requiring everyone to use their computer system to access details. This would be OK with a good computer system, but it isn't. Its numerous failings make life more difficult for the parishes and residents.

3.5 Town Centre & Events Committee – Cllr. A. Mahi

I was elected last May to Chair this Committee as Cllr Robin Stuchbury, after 14 years of dedicated chairmanship of this Committee, reluctantly stepped down due to the pressure of work, as he is now on two other councils. However he is Deputy Chairman and I welcome his support and help, and would like to thank him for making the TC&E Committee what it is today.

My year started with Music in the Market and theme was Country and Folk; it was well attended and a fun day for families and young people, as was Bandjam later in the year. These two music events have proved very popular with the residents of Buckingham. I would like to thank Councillors, BTC staff and members of public who stayed behind to sweep and clean the town after these events, long after their bed time!

The Fringe Week went very well last year; we had a 1940s Dance event to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day landings, and everyone dressed up, many as Home-Guard or as Land Girls, and it was a fun evening attempting the 1940s style of dancing !

We had a new event last year, Dog Awareness Day, which turned out to be very popular, with many requests that we repeat it this year. And all the dogs behaved themselves as did the owners, although there were only prizes for the former! And to top it off, and I still don't know how the team did it, but we had the Red Arrows fly past the event !

Cllr Mike Smith organised a successful 'Bikeingham' event in the Heartlands, and the BMX riders were fun to watch in the Skate/BMX Park. The event even inspired me to buy a bicycle, but no lycra!

On 4th August at 10pm, we had time to reflect and remember at the 'Lights Out' event held at the War Memorial, marking the hour that Britain entered the First World War, 100 years ago. We had a good turn-out with people bringing their candles, which were then placed on the Memorial.

Both the River Rinses were well supported and it was a pleasure to see so many young children with their parents willing to help keep our river clean and free flowing. And my special thanks to the Stowe Sub Aqua Club who got into the cold water to bring out debris to the river bank for it to be put in the skips.

The Charter Fair is a popular and welcome event as we approach autumn. I must thank councillors and staff who were up early to prepare for the road closure, so that the Fair can arrive in the Town by midday. Even I was in town for 7am to support the team.

The Bonfire & Fireworks was another successful and well attended event in Bourton Park, and my thanks to the staff, Army and Air Cadets for helping build the bonfire and later for collecting for the Mayor's Charity. The Sealed Knot put on an excellent display of firing their muskets. And my thanks to the Buckingham Table who turned out the following day, a Sunday, to help clear up the debris from the firework display.

Last year the Christmas Parade, which is always very popular, had a special attraction: Joey the horse from the film 'War Horse' led the parade and there were 63 other entries. I would like to thank the Christmas Parade committee for the hard work that goes into making this event such a success. And to thank BTC staff, who are responsible for the road closure, and who were again up early to prepare for the road closure. I was again there at 7am to support the team. This was followed by a Community Fair organised by Cllr. Bloomfield and Cllr. Lehmann.

As we approached Christmas we had the Christmas lights switch-on and carols outside the Old Gaol at the end of November, the lights made the Town look very festive for Christmas. At the same time the pea lights on the trees in the Cattle Pens were renewed adding extra colour and brighten up the Town year-round.

This year started with a Comedy Night followed by a Pancake Race in the Church grounds, organised by Cllr Bloomfield; being half-term it was fun day for the young residents of Buckingham and for the adults and councillors, who also took part in a pancake race - unfortunately there had to be a steward's inquiry for the adult race, for holding the pancake !

The Food Fair was well supported and I was surprised to learn that we have an award-winning wine maker in Gawcott!

The hanging baskets and planters will soon be out and in bloom making Buckingham a colourful and welcoming town; at the same time we have agreed a fixed 3 year contract with suppliers of the hanging baskets and planters thereby saving the council and town money in the future.

Our next event is the Spring Fair on 19th April in the Cattle Pens, to which you are all invited.

I end this report by thanking Amanda Brubaker, the events co-ordinator, and all the staff and councillors who make all our events such a success.

4. To receive presentations from representatives on their work in 2014/2015

4.1 Buckinghamshire County Council – Mr. C. Williams

Mr. Williams was very impressed by the list of events and asked whether the Council had considered that this year was the 600th anniversary of the battle of Agincourt – the Buckingham swan emblem as used by the town and county councils, the police and other bodies was first used at Agincourt on the battle shield of the Duke of Buckingham. BCC were planning some commemorative event on 12th June and invited the town to participate.

Lack of money was very limiting; the period of austerity was forecast to last until at least 2020, and no party was proposing putting more funding into Local Government in that period. He expected the more cuts to come; BCC had saved £85million over the last four years and planned a further reduction of £60million in the next four, but faced increasing costs for care of the elderly and children and more school provision at both primary and secondary levels.

The budget for next year was £320million; their part of the Council Tax has gone up 1.99%, which amounted to 42p/week for a Band D property. He realised that this would affect the vulnerable and elderly.

Residents would be aware of the Ofsted report on children's services; he had already made public apology for the deficiencies, and had set aside 30% of his time to help colleagues turn the service around. He had set an ambitious target of attaining "good" or "outstanding" rating in 12-18 months.

Transport – £25million had been set aside for highway maintenance countywide. Grass-cutting would start on Monday (30/2/15) and he was pleased that BTC had taken on delegated work in this regard. The "Tesco" roundabout had been a terrible state of affairs: it had involved many meetings with the developers who had not managed the works at all well. Many of the problems could have been foreseen. A safety audit had been carried out, and the white lines repainted, but a recent letter from a resident had complained that HGVs obscured the crossing, so further work would be done. Lessons would be learned and conveyed to Cllr. Whyte's committee. There had been no further information on the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway study, beyond it being a dual carriageway with limited roundabouts and junctions, but it would have an impact on Buckingham. In light of the increased powers devolution had brought to Scotland, and now Manchester, he was hoping it could be extended to other areas, which was why Bucks. was now working with Oxfordshire & Northants, starting with joint working over Silverstone, and looking for further funding for the north of the county.

Referring to a question from the Buckingham Society pre-submitted to the meeting (*What planning is taking place to alleviate the inevitable traffic disruption that will be caused around Buckingham by the development of Hs2 and the massive Infrastructure Maintenance Depot (IMD) at Steeple Claydon?*) he said that there would be a lot of activity on local roads around Steeple Claydon, what with the EfW plant and the HS2 proposals. Further technical assessments were needed on the local road network with the objective of minimising damage by making use of the E-W rail link and the new road from the A41 to Calvert. BCC shared residents' concerns over the proposed route via the bypass.

LAF: The Town Council and 35 parishes formed the local area, and other Forums existed across the county. Local input ensured money was spent most appropriately; Speedwatch training had been arranged for local people to monitor traffic speeds, and there had been local input to the Parking review. A Social Enterprise had been set up, and 16 young people would be grass-cutting and cleaning signs and so on, making the town look better. Well Street Centre: this had been renovated at a cost of £1.5million, and now had 27 regular elderly or learning-disabled clients; it could take up to 54/week.

4.2 Aylesbury Vale District Council – Mr. J. McGinty

Mr. McGinty noted that the pre-election purdah period now applied, so officers had to be additionally careful not to venture any comments that could be perceived as politically biased.

During the last year the AVDC Cabinet had set a meeting in Buckingham, which had been very well attended – better than many in Aylesbury – and AVDC were looking to do this again.

The Council's remit covered recycling and waste collection, street cleansing, housing, planning, building control and leisure sites and activities and would be keeping its portion of the Council Tax unchanged from last year.

A £2.8million upgrade of the Swan Pool was being carried out, mainly to the 'dry side' – changing rooms and gym – and a climbing wall, and electric charging bays added; it was aimed to be completed by Christmas. It was hoped to have drawings available soon, for display at the Leisure Centre.

£35,000 of New Homes Bonus money had upgraded the MUGA and Trim Trail in Bourton Park; most other Councils do not share NHB money with their towns and parishes. £10,000 had gone to local businesses via Destination Buckingham. £5,000 funding had been provided to the Park Run. A three-year grant of £30,000 had been made to the Youth Club.

185 Affordable Homes had been provided, and a further 154 were being negotiated.

Looking to the future:

1. Public toilets. AVDC were looking to the best solution for the people of Buckingham; both they and the Town Council agreed new toilets were needed, the only debate was about where they should be sited – by the Community Centre or in the car park where the recycling bins are currently. AVDC had written to some local stakeholders asking for their views on the Community Centre site. They were also looking to re-site Shopmobility in a proper building with toilet facilities, and the Community Centre site would accommodate both. He didn't think residents would argue too much providing they got new toilets; AVDC would work with BTC.
2. Devolution. Mr. Williams had spoken of extending devolved powers - Mr McGinty had been asked to look into the business case for a unitary authority which, if a case could be made, could be put to the public in 12-18 months. AVDC was very keen to open a conversation with local communities on devolution of services after the election.

4.3 Thames Valley Police – (Rural Area) Insp. J. Davies

Though it was difficult to separate Buckingham town out from the Buckingham and District figures, the Buckingham area was doing well. Recorded crime across the District was down 18% and of the 7500 crimes across the Vale only 110 were in Buckingham. House burglaries were down by 50% (28 fewer victims) and theft from sheds down 34%. Theft of and from motor vehicles had also dropped – he appealed for drivers to lock their vehicles and remove all valuables when leaving them. Shoplifting was also down, but violent offences up (in line with other parts of England) by 11% for no obvious reason; 52% of crimes were cleared up.

The Buckingham Police site was manned 24/7 and had 4 neighbourhood officers (soon to be 5) and 5 (soon to be 4) PCSOs due to cuts by BCC. They covered the whole north of the Vale.

There had been a problem with the Class B drug mephedrone (m-cat), previously a 'legal high', both in Aylesbury and Buckingham. Children had been both smoking it and taking it orally, and it had led to crime and anti-social behaviour. TVP had worked with partners to secure behaviour contracts, and there had been a marked reduction in activity, helped by arrests of dealers. Aylesbury remained a problem. There had been 53 drug investigations; 70% of offenders charged or cautioned. PC Graham Briggishaw was awarded a commendation by the High Sheriff for his work in this and other areas.

Operation "Articulate" was dealing with historic child sex exploitation, some of the offenders were from the Buckingham & District area – it didn't just happen in urban areas. The Child Sex Exploitation Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub shared concerns about children seen to be at risk, and helped to divert the behaviour.

TVP had 5200 followers on Twitter for its 'Alert' messages.

Body-worn video cameras were now available across the whole TVP area and were useful in gathering evidence, especially in difficult situations.

A Code of Ethics had been implemented, providing a legal framework for principles and ethics to guide both officers and staff.

All forces were affected by money issues: TVP was one of only three to increase numbers of front-line officers. They had saved £58.9million so far, and had another £21million to go to meet the budget set. More cuts were expected after the election, and the face of policing in general was changing accordingly.

Since 1st April 2014 Police in Buckingham had dealt with safeguarding issues – There had been 810 recorded crimes since 1st April 2014, the majority safeguarding issues – missing persons (53), domestic incidents (150), mental health act detentions (10) and incidents affecting children (108).

5. To receive reports by recipients of 2014/2015 grants over £1000

5.1 Buckingham, Winslow & District Citizen`s Advice Bureau

Mrs. Harding said that CAB services were open to all from very young children to the housebound and elderly; they issued food parcels at least a week as the benefits system was now slow to react and it took longer to get payments arranged. They were one of the few CABs in the country to arrange home visits for the housebound, a growing need. They had 2000 clients needing debt advice, 450 requiring specialist help.

Access to legal advice services had been improved by arranging a group of 13 partners working together; clients could easily be referred from one to another, preventing duplication. There was also an outreach service involving University law students.

The CAB couldn't do any of this without funding; BTC had supported the CAB for 30 years since its inception, having recognised the need, and they were grateful for its continued support.

5.2 Buckingham Youth Clubs Ltd

Mr. Barnett outlined the recent history of the formation of BYC Ltd. following the BCC closure proposal for Club across the county. The Trustees could not countenance closure of such a well-used facility with good staff and a dedicated building, so formed the company and charity. BTC had been the first to offer funding, though other sources had also been found, detailed in his written report.

The County Council had allowed them to retain use of the building while they looked after its structural maintenance; this had allowed them increase use of the building by renting it out and in fact had broken even on rentals this year.

Some 300 young people visited the Club, averaging 80-90 per week, from age 11 to Sixth form; it was a safe environment for them to learn and work together with the paid staff and Sixth form volunteers.

BTC had a representative on the management committee; an accountant had offered his time f.o.c. to look after the books.

It was a good use of taxpayers money.

6. Questions from the Residents of Buckingham

6.1 (Buckingham Society – supplied in advance)

"When will the footpath be opened connecting Bridge Street with the car park along the north bank of the river (i.e. in front of Candleford Court)? Opening this path, part of the agreed plan for Candleford Court, could clearly be of benefit to shops in Bridge Street and Well Street and should happen as soon as possible".

Mr. McGinty answered that the path was not a Right of Way and part crossed land not in the developer's ownership. It was not a planning enforcement matter as it was not part of the planning permission. It was not a great location for a footpath, it was not lit, and could give rise to anti-social behaviour. There was an alternative footpath via the skatepark. The Town Clerk added that the developer had been contacted about the path, without response, and also the blocking of the pond sluice.

6.2 (Buckingham Society – supplied in advance)

"Section 106 money can make a significant contribution to social and physical infrastructure, especially in the wake of a grant of planning permission for a significant development. What role does Buckingham Town Council, or the local community at large, have in identifying suitable projects for Section 106 monies? How could this role be developed and enhanced? Or is this left entirely to the discretion of AVDC and/or Buckinghamshire County Council?"

The Town Clerk replied that BTC had long wished to be included in s106 discussions, but AVDC & BCC proceeded separately. If AVDC wanted BTC to take on new play space they would have to agree involvement.

Questions from the floor:

6.3 Mr. P. Collins: *Footpath at Candleford Court – who owns the other land?*

J.McGinty – BCC.

Mr. Williams said that BCC may not put obstacles in the way of completion of the path, the developer should contact BCC direct.

6.4 Cllr. R. Stuchbury: *Funding for Young Carers; following Mrs. Parfitt's attendance at Education Scrutiny, £5000 was found to fund the Young Carers; if this was not renewed much goodwill may be lost; Carers Bucks do not seem to appreciate the special circumstances of young carers, especially vulnerable children. Could BCC guarantee funding for the future?*

Mr. Williams could not commit to funding at this meeting but would remind the Cabinet of their commitment to care of vulnerable children. New legislation is due which will include a requirement to support carers, but he did not know if young carers were specified.

Cllr. Smith asked what the difference was: Mr. Williams said that they were technical and related to funding.

6.5 Cllr. Smith: *Public toilets - what has changed? – at first AVDC agreed the recycling site was a good place, now it wasn't.*

Mr. McGinty said he didn't know about the details, he had only been involved later on. It may have been the inclusion of a new site for Shopmobility.

MS: Furthermore, the consultation letter sent to a number of groups (but not BTC) only marked a small rectangle on the map; now we hear of accommodation for Shopmobility as well; this will be the first consultees will have heard of it.

JMcG: That was an oversight.

MS: Then you need to re-consult, this time with a properly scaled plan of both.

JMcG: The toilet facility is the same size as BTC's.

6.6 Mr. R. Edwards, Chairman, Buckingham Society:

HS2 – there is a danger that Buckingham will get forgotten; the traffic to and from the maintenance depot will inevitably have a major impact on the town;

Candleford Court path – I don't understand the problem – it was on all the plans. Direct access on that bank will benefit the shops;

s106 – the monies may be laid out, but residents never know what on; AVDC & BCC could show more transparency on what it is spent on – can you do that?

JMcG – we can do that, we have done it before; it is taxpayers money, they have a right to know.

CW: The District Council leads on s106 discussions; changes in legislation are making it more difficult to ask for contributions related to the development. BCC tends to ask for road improvements and education contributions.

6.7 Dr. C. Brown: *The House of Lords report indicates that HS2 is not worth having. Does that affect what AVDC and BCC do?*

CW: BCC will continue to object; the money could be better spent. The Government's arguments have changed – first it was an alternative to a 3rd runway at Heathrow, now Heathrow will have no station; then it would cut journey times to Birmingham, but now it will stop short of Birmingham and passengers will have to change to get to the centre; then it would narrow the north-south divide, but studies have shown that such schemes benefit the capital more than the regions. The House of Lords report did not challenge the principle, only the costing basis.

6.8 Mrs. U. Robinson: *Last year I complained about the sinkhole outside the old Hollis's site, and the large water puddles along that part of the Stratford Road which get splashed all over passers-by; the former has been repaired, but the latter has not been dealt with; also, the bus stand – the new shelter is very nice, but the circular cavities round the lime trees are a hazard. They used to be gravelled, but the stones are long gone, and stepping off a bus onto the narrow pavement you can drop into one of these holes. The pavement is quite narrow.*

Now the X5 comes and leaves by the same route, these 8 buses an hour are damaging the road surface, especially in the hospital entrance – these potholes need repair.

CW: Talk to your county councillors about the road problems.

JMcG: This is the first time I have been made aware of the problem areas round the trees, I'll look into it.

6.9 Mrs. M. Buckingham wanted to say how lovely Chandos Park, the play area and new path were, but had a question for BCC & TVP: *the double parking all the way down Chandos Road was dangerous, and larger vehicles, such as school buses, found it difficult to get through. There were two schools on the road. Small children were particularly at risk. How could this be resolved?*

Cllr. Stuchbury replied that he had taken this up a few weeks ago, including the problem of buses swinging in and on to the pavement to drop children off; TfB staff had met with the headteacher. This road had not been included in the town centre study, and a new Order would cost £7500 to implement. He asked Mrs. Buckingham to write to him with details.

6.10 Mr. P. Collins, treasurer of the Community Centre: *I have received an email about the toilets consultation; it shows a detached building but no detail; will it have a flat roof? what size is it? How can one make meaningful comment without any details?*

JMcG: We are not asking about the design, only the siting. I understand it is to be a separate building connected to the Community Centre's services. Other comments can be made during the planning process.

PC: I reiterate, one cannot make meaningful comment – for example will the building have a flat roof which would enable vandals to get on to the Community Centre roof?

JMcG: Highlight any issues regarding having a separate building or not in your response.

PC: the rectangle is not to scale, Shopmobility is not shown, it looks like a Portacabin; we need more information.

JMcG: It will be like the BTC design – brickbuilt. List your concern about getting on to the roof, talk about the slope later.

Cllr. G. Collins, Chairman of the Community Centre: *Apart from being applied at the small box shown, I can't see how the area is big enough to accommodate both services. It*

needs discussion on both sites – all one can comment on is this box; it feels as though we are being bullied into accepting this site.

JMcG: I take the opposite view – AVDC are consulting on two locations, BTC are considering only one. AVDC has made efforts to meet BTC to discuss this. We should get together; we should look at this area before deciding.

The Mayor: We have been working on this for two years; you could have discussed your alternative site much earlier - and it was your officers who pointed us to the recycling area at the very beginning.

Mr. B. Pankhurst: These toilets have cost a fortune already, and there will be an on-going cost. I ask BTC to make decisions for the town and **TELL** AVDC what we want, and AVDC must take notice.

Mr. J. Barnett: What process can resolve this impasse in a reasonable timescale? Who has the power to decide? Why can't the Community Centre house Shopmobility, and the recycling area the toilets?

JMcG: We want to improve Shopmobility with a water supply and toilet; it makes economic sense to build both on the same site. I hope this will be resolved soon. I have spoken to the landlords about access to the Community Centre's services, about the Right of Way outside, and then there will be a planning application and costings. The Town Council has planning permission and NHB funding, but as landowner of the car park AVDC needs to give permission for the use of part of it.

Mrs. C. Strain-Clark, for Access for All: This consultation letter you have sent out is disingenuous – "asked by BTC"...."working with BTC"; no mention of BTC's planning permission for another site in this consultation; it should mention both so the relative merits of each can be considered.

JMcG: The wording could have been better; but it was not meant to be a consultation on which site people would prefer, just how they feel about this one.

Mr. P. Collins: in 2005-2007 when BTC proposed their extension to the building, it fell because of the Rights of Way issue on access to the shopping centre; how are you going to resolve that?

JMcG: That is a commercial matter; there are obligations in their lease that we can discuss. It may not be an insurmountable barrier.

6.11 Cllr. Stuchbury thanked Mr. McGinty for his service to AVDC and wished him well in his new post. *Did he feel that he can complete his work on the business case for a Unitary Authority before he leaves? If not, will continuity be ensured?*

JMcG: Thanked RS for his kind words, and noted that where was going there were no parishes. The work on Unitary status would not be completed before he left, it was aimed for presentation to the Full Council in September, but he would ensure that there would be continuity.

7. Mayor's points for information

None.

Mrs. Robinson took the microphone to thank the Town Council for all the work it did on behalf of residents. It was a shame that so few had bothered to attend, but she was sure she expressed the thanks of all.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm.

.....
Chairman of Buckingham Town Council

.....
Date