

# Great Linford Parish Council News and Views



The High Street cricket pitch – just one of GLPC's first class sports facilities

## Play, pray, compete or meet!

What have weight loss; worship, performing or playing, talking, competing, meeting and celebrating have in common? They can all take place in or on the facilities provided by Great Linford Parish Council (GLPC). GLPC has sports grounds; in Great Linford, at Marsh Drive and the High Street cricket pitch and at Downs Barn.

The High Street and Downs Barn pavilions can be hired throughout the day, in the evenings or weekends, for a variety of indoor activities, including religious gatherings, residents' meetings, tutoring children, out of the office business meetings, child-care groups, parties and celebratory family get-togethers.

### Hire our halls for little lolly!

The cost of hiring a hall is £11 per hour. Each venue can hold up to 50 people, but the meeting area at Downs Barn is on the first floor and is not suitable for toddlers or people with mobility problems. Kitchen and toilet facilities are provided but neither pavilion is licensed.

For more information on hire of GLPC facilities, contact Eirwen Tagg on (01908) 606 613 or email the parish.manager@great-linford.gov.uk

### Have YOUR say...

If you would like to comment on any issues raised in News&Views write to Great Linford Parish Council  
10 Tower Crescent  
Neath Hill, Milton Keynes MK14 6JY  
Ring us on (01908) 606613 or Email info@great-linford.gov.uk  
[www.great-linford.gov.uk](http://www.great-linford.gov.uk)

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## Who's Who? on the parish council

GLPC serves eleven local communities. Below is a list of parish councillors, the wards they represent and their contact details.

### Conniburrow

George Byfield.....01908 606613  
Joan Pickhaver .....01908 678569  
Pauline Wallis.....01908 395433

### Downhead Park & Willen Park

Elizabeth McMillan .....01908 606613  
Simon Teesdale.....01908 606613

### Downs Barn

Festus Akinbusoye.....07904 957046  
Charles Allum.....01908 668115

### Giffard Park & Blakelands

Cecil Macaulay .....01908 231027  
Colin Tripp .....01908 606613

### Great Linford

Rod Markley .....01908 605820  
Anita Rose .....01908 200433  
David Sim .....01908 201501  
Vacancy.....

### Neath Hill

David Stabler .....01908 672599  
Vacancy.....

### Pennyland & Bolbeck Park

Diana Fitchett .....01908 606613  
Ian Foskett .....01908 606613

### Parish Manager

Eirwen Tagg.....01908 606613

### Parish Council Office

10 Tower Crescent  
Neath Hill Local Centre  
Neath Hill MK14 6JY

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## PRECEPT 2010 – about forty seven pence a week!

From April the Council Tax Charge – the precept – per household, to pay for GLPC community services, will increase from £15.96 to £24.61 a year. A total of about 47 pence a week!

After a detailed examination and discussion of every budget cost centre, Councillors agreed that the basic financial strategy adopted was a sensible approach to preparing a budget that delivers value and is robust to scrutiny.

Councillor David Stabler anticipates some of the questions you might ask about this years precept increase and gives some answers on page 4.



The Downhead Park play area transformation is well under way and the planned opening is on 9th April, 10.30 to 12.00 at which a competition will be launched, Design the Rhino.

Dave Butler  
Play Lottery Coordinator at MKC. Page 3

The task to plant 41 trees was effortless with so many willing helpers.

Simon Teesdale  
Community Orchard project leader. Page 5

The Prohibition Order will allow MKC to introduce waiting restrictions on any road or part of a road with immediate effect.

Trevor Dove  
MKC Traffic & Transport Manager on proposed "Prohibition of Waiting on Footways and Verges Order". Page 6

Councillor Diana Fitchett writes about

## A day in the life of our Parish Manager, Eirwen Tagg

Eirwen has been working as the Great Linford Parish Manager for the past two years. She is the office's main point of contact and plays a vital role in our little team.

Eirwen was strongly influenced in her decision to work in her local environment because of her admiration for those members of the community who work tirelessly behind the scenes for little recompense or reward. Those who simply get on with it, like the lolly pop lady, the hospital workers, the emergency services and all those people who are deeply committed to making our world a better place to live and work.

The Parish Council office team is comprised of three staff, Eirwen, Malcolm and Les. Malcolm has been here for five years and can be found at his desk during the afternoon. Les has been with us for 18 months and can be contacted in the mornings.

### No day is the same...

Eirwen doesn't really have a typical day but she does describe it as organised chaos. No day is the same, as it often depends on who may call into the office and the issue they bring up. There are routine daily tasks, which must be completed to keep the council running as required by statute.

The vision of the council has changed since she started, as it now does more proactive things for the community, for example running the summer programme; looking at making Downs Barn more user friendly; establishing the youth club. Eirwen is also responsible for researching and collating information, allowing the councillors to make informed decisions which meet their objectives.

### ...difficulties can make her day even more challenging.

The other down to earth jobs are taking minutes for all our meetings, making sure we communicate with everyone. On many occasions, it is not always plain sailing and Eirwen does sometimes experience difficulties which can make her day even more challenging. Occasionally she finds herself stuck between residents and Milton Keynes Council officers whilst trying to find a quick, painless and pragmatic resolution to issues.

Balancing the finances is another of the Parish Manager's tasks. Eirwen has to ensure that there is sufficient funding available to undertake all the improvements required for our parishioners and the immediate parish environs.

Eirwen loves the daily challenges, the diverse range of problems that crop up. Each issue has to be tackled from a different angle and this can make it very time consuming because Eirwen is sometimes beholden to other people returning her calls to enable a final decision to be made.

### ...to get more local people involved in their community...

So, what would Eirwen change? Well, in spite of the daily frustrations and challenges, absolutely nothing. All she would like to see is a change in other peoples' attitudes in respect to their role in the community, to get more local people involved in their community and to see these people working more closely with the parish council.

We have a pocket full of parish guardians who go out of their way to help make this parish a better place to live and if there were more people like them, we would see such an improvement in our physical surroundings. This would lead to a greater sense of community spirit.



From top: Eirwen Tagg.  
Eirwen in collaboration with the Chairman.  
Eirwen digs in at the Community Orchard.

## Parish Guardians – “give something back”

Many Parish Guardians have made themselves known to the Parish Council since the feature in News&Views 22. They are the people – young and not so young - who help in so many ways, particularly by being the ‘eyes and ears’ of the parish. For example, rubbish has been cleared more quickly because of the reports received at the parish office, whether by residents calling in, sending emails, or ringing.

And it's not just grown-ups who get involved as Parish Guardians – those who take it upon themselves to become engaged in a proud community by, picking up litter, or reporting overflowing dog bins and dumped rubbish.

When ten year old Emily was told that the Mayoress would open the refurbished Downs Barn play area she decided, helped by of a couple of Southwood School friends, to clear litter from the vicinity. The enthusiasm and community spirit of these young Parish Guardians in Downs Barn certainly impressed the Mayoress!

Parish Guardians, who by volunteering ‘give something back’ to the community, make so many of us proud to be residents of this parish – thank you Emily.

## You don't have to get your hands dirty!

If you walk around the parish for exercise, or with your “best friend Scamp”, why not become a Parish Guardian and collect annoying litter on the way. GLPC can lend you a litter picker so you don't have to get your hands dirty or bend down!

## PLAY AREAS TRANSFORMED!

Two play areas are being refurbished, at Downhead Park and Pennyland, which young people have helped design, together with Milton Keynes Council (MKC) Great Linford Parish Council (GLPC) and other organisations.

Last summer, children, young people and parents were encouraged to offer their ideas. At the 2009 Waterside Festival, they were asked to choose which play equipment they liked from 30 different types available and at the opening of the refurbished Great Linford play area enthusiastic users were asked to say what they liked playing on most.

### £1 million program

The developments are part of the government Playbuilder scheme, which aims to change the way play areas are commissioned, designed and built. Milton Keynes has a £1 million program to spend over two years, refurbishing some 22 play areas.

The focus is on children aged between 8 and 13, with an emphasis on projects that will equally benefit boys and girls and those with disabilities. The aim is to include natural features, trees, rocks, and landscaping, areas for active challenging play, as well as places where children and young people can relax.

The redevelopment at Downhead Park will be completed this March and the design work for Pennyland is underway.

### Pennyland consultation during May and June.

The Pennyland project will be the play area behind Angel Close. The design team will be using information already gathered to create a concept as the basis for consultation with local children and residents during May and June. A final design will then be drawn up and work will start on the scheme in late summer. If you have any ideas or suggestions for the Pennyland play area, look out for the chance to have your say.

More details at [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/playcentres](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/playcentres) or contact Dave Butler (01908) 253 609 or email: [dave.butler@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:dave.butler@milton-keynes.gov.uk).

Dave Butler Play Lottery Coordinator at MKC & DS

## Want to Design a Rhino?

The Downhead Park play area transformation is well under way and the planned opening is on 9th April, starting at 10.30 - where a competition will be launched to “Design the Rhino”, a feature of the new play-space. The competition is open to all children and young people living in the parish and the winning design will be used to give the creature, currently rather drab, a multi-coloured makeover.

Dave Butler  
Play Lottery  
Coordinator at MKC



“Look out, he's behind you!” Vibrantly painted equipment will encourage active play.

# Parish Precept 2010

## Questions you might ask about the precept and some Answers

**Q** Why will the GLPC precept increase by 54.25%, when other councils have increases of around 2%?

**A** The percentage increase is high but in money terms the increase is only £8.65 a year. This is per house, not for everyone in the house.  
This is an extra 72 pence a month or 16.6 pence a week!

**Q** I was led to believe the GLPC precept was low?

**A** Historically and for other financial reasons the GLPC precept has been low, and by using reserve funds, much less than most Parish Councils in Milton Keynes.  
Last year the total precept was £15.96 a year. That was £1.33 per month or 30.7 pence per week.  
This year with the total precept of £24.61 a year, the charge per house is still low, £2.05 per month or 47.3 pence per week!

### GLPC Budget 2010/11

Cost Centre	£
Recreation Committee expenditure	60,882
Finance & Planning expenditure	89,927
<b>Total Gross expenditure</b>	<b>150,809</b>
Recreation income	21,017
Finance & Planning income	1,500
<b>Total Gross income</b>	<b>22,517</b>
<b>Net expenditure less income</b>	<b>128,292</b>
<sup>1</sup> Spending allocated to projects	21,295
<sup>2</sup> Reserves brought forward from 2009	26,991
<sup>2</sup> Increase reserves 2010	7,000
<b>Total projects and reserves</b>	<b>55,286</b>
Required net expenditure plus reserves	183,578
Precept 2010	153,957
<b>From general reserves April 2010</b>	<b>26,621</b>
<sup>3</sup> Anticipated general reserves April 2011	36,643

<sup>1</sup> Projects include Summer of Fun, Waterside Festival, Downs Barn overheads and Community Orchard.

<sup>2</sup> Reserves for Great Linford pond, thatched barn, tree prune/replacement, new allotments and Downs Barn redevelopment.

<sup>3</sup> Working capital.

**Q** So why is it necessary to increase the precept?

**A** This year GLPC had to deal with a large reduction in forecast income from facilities and the running down of reserve funds. Councillors also decided that GLPC should remain proactive about the things it does for residents. The Summer of Fun activities were much appreciated during the school holidays.

It was decided to fund additional security at the Waterside Festival.

The new Downs Barn Youth Club should be encouraged and supported.

Councillors considered these expenditures would benefit the local community - support family activities during the summer, make the area safer during the Waterside Festival and directly help young people who often say "there is nothing for us to do". Also the reserves had to be rebuilt.

**Q** What about cutting spending rather than increasing the precept?

**A** GLPC has always tried to provide low cost effective services. All cost centres were reviewed, even drastic reductions were considered, including:

Closing the parish office in the afternoon, removing dog bins and free poo bags, abandoning News&Views and not having children's summer activities or other parish "events".

It was not possible to cut councillors allowances as they do not receive any.

Councillors also had to consider longer term issues such as rebuilding reserves so known future expenditure would be available when required, including:

Re-thatching the barn and repairing the pond at Great Linford, or dealing with diseased and dangerous trees on parish owned land.

**Q** Why not charge more for facilities - playing pitches, hire of halls and allotments?

**A** All charges were scrutinized and increased. Charges have to reflect the market rate and ability of clubs to carry the cost.

Our pitches are arguably the best in the area and charges reflect the excellence of the facilities. However no council can cover the entire cost of maintenance from the fees charged. It is a question of either reducing the standards or subsidising the cost from the precept.

Charges for allotments were increased by £1, from £3 to £4 per pole, or £20 a year for a 5 pole plot. That is around 38 pence a week for an allotment plot to grow your own vegetables!

Councillor David Stabler Chairman Finance & Planning Committee



## Festus is enthusiastic about CLUBBING!

The Youth Club based in Downs Barn continues to go from strength to strength, with more and more people registering to join, even during these winter months!

It is hoped that we'll soon be able to start holding music workshops as part of the key activities at the Youth Club in order to get more young people involved.

When it was started in November, we were keen to



...good life skills and healthy eating habits too.

own nutritious healthy food as part of a group. This helps develop good life skills and healthy eating habits too.

Councillor Festus Akinbusoye

A lot of people I know come here and love it.

make sure that this was going to provide participants with constructive experiences.

As a result we don't have any vending machines with junk food at the Club. Instead, our young people cook their

### Youth Club Management Committee

Do you have a little time available, plus skills that could be directed to safeguarding the interests and encouraging club members to take a full, responsible and active part in the activities and running of the club? If you could help with the management of the club, please contact the Parish Manager on (01908) 606613

*I first found about the Youth Club through one of the Youth Club's, Tom. I have been coming to it since it started and I love it. We can do many things such as going to the cinema, playing the X-Box and many other things. I am glad to be part of the Youth Club.*  
Jon Legg

*Downs Barn youth club, where do I start? I have come here from the start as I enjoy it so much. A lot of people I know come here, and love it. I find it fun because there's multiple things to do like things as ping pong, table tennis, X-Box and we also have a youth club that I am in.*  
Jesse Brady

## "DIDN'T DIG DAY DO WELL?"

Community Orchard project leader, Simon Teesdale.

"In my mind, the 21st November 2009 will always be a special day. The overwhelming support for the project from the community and councillors was exceptional. To have 30 plus people out on a Saturday, bending their backs moving sticky clay, shows real commitment. The task to plant 41 trees was effortless with so many willing helpers some; thinking the digging and planting would go on all day, arrived when the work was near completion. Such generous support has changed the dynamics of the project. It might not be necessary for contractors to build all the paths and erect fencing. Some of these jobs are well within the capabilities of November's volunteers, given the right tools and team spirit.

The hard path area will obviously

have to be constructed by groundwork specialists; hopefully this will be completed within the next couple of months. We are applying for a grant from Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN) to co-fund the construction of this path, thus reducing GLPC costs to a minimum.

Once finished we can start on the soft bark path and then put our minds to the planting on the remaining 9 fruit trees; not more apple but varieties of plum, pear, filbert and others. This is when we will be asking for your support again - and as they will be mature trees - the holes might need to be a little deeper and wider."

Would you like to help with the community orchard project? Then please contact the parish office.

On the east boundary hedge we shall plant current bushes, which should bear fruit by the end of the year. Other fruiting bushes will be planted over the next couple of months and with the right feeding and support these should produce fruit for years to come. Currants are packed full of vitamin C and should attract many different species of wildlife to the orchard.

If you have any ideas for plants or anything else that you would like to see in the orchard, contact the parish office, suggesting your reason for the choice and the benefits they might bring to the project. We will look at the advantages of any suggestion you make - especially if they add attraction or unique appeal to the community orchard."

# KEEP OFF THE GRASS!

## And the footway!

Vehicles parking on grass verges and footways have for a long time, been issues residents complain frequently about to GLPC. News&Views talked to Trevor Dove, Milton Keynes Council's (MKC) Traffic & Transport Manager to see how the proposed "Prohibition of Waiting on Footways and Verges Order" will regulate inconsiderate parking and how it will work in practice.



Often inconsiderate parking blocks footways at Tower Crescent.

Damage to grass verge Currier Drive Neath Hill.

Roads or parts of roads to be assessed for waiting restrictions under the Prohibition Order in GLPC area.

Junction of Marsh Drive and Wolverton Road  
St Leger Drive alongside Great Linford School  
High Street Great Linford, adjacent Primary School,  
Great Linford, Neath Hill and Giffard Park local centres  
Currier Drive & Tower Drive, Neath Hill in front of St Monica's School

If you have a verge or footway parking problem in your street please contact GLPC.  
T: (01908) 606 613  
E: parish.manager@great-linford.gov.uk

- N&V** Parking on verges and footways is this really a serious issue?  
**TD** Yes indeed, vehicles do cause damage and obstruction when parked on verges and footways. But the Prohibition Order will only deal with sections of roads where a problem has been identified then assessed as severe and necessary.  
**N&V** Can the police not deal with any problems using existing powers?  
**TD** MKC believe Police time and resources would be better utilized, if they focused on serious crime issues, not random parking.  
**N&V** Some roads are narrow so people have to park on the footpath, what will they do?  
**TD** Alleged inconsiderate or dangerous parking will be identified by Parish or Ward Councillors, NAGs, Police, Fire and Ambulance services. Each location will be assessed and judged on each aspect of the circumstances. In some cases the only option may be to park on the verge or footway in which case, provided pedestrians can pass, no waiting restriction will be enforced. Where parking is considered to be inconsiderate, unreasonable or dangerous, a 24 hour waiting restriction will be put in place.  
**N&V** Why is it necessary to introduce blanket legislation for the whole of MK?  
**TD** The Prohibition Order will allow MKC to introduce waiting restrictions on any road or part of a road with immediate effect. If just some roads were specified in the Order it would be more difficult to amend or add other roads later.

Only roads having problems will have waiting restrictions.

- N&V** Will the Prohibition Order apply to the whole of the MKC administrative area including the small towns and villages?  
**TD** Yes but only those roads identified, assessed and confirmed as having a problem will be covered by waiting restrictions.  
**N&V** So there will be hundreds of signs all over the city then?  
**TD** No! Signs will only be erected along the roads or sections of a road where a problem has been identified and confirmed.  
**N&V** What will it cost to implement the scheme?  
**TD** Signs fixed to a lamp post cost £50 each. The number will depend on the length of the road covered by the waiting restrictions. A separate pole would cost another £100.  
**N&V** How do visitors from outside MK know that parking on verges and footways might be an offence?  
**TD** Signs, about 20 metres apart, will identify specific sections of road, so everyone - resident or visitor - should be aware of the waiting restrictions.

Every parked vehicle will be covered

- N&V** Do the new regulations apply to disabled badge holders?  
**TD** Yes, every vehicle will be covered. Exemptions will only be allowed for ambulances, BT, electricity, water and gas vehicles and perhaps landscape contractors.  
**N&V** Is there to be any latitude in how much of a vehicle is parked on the verge or footway; will one wheel or 100mm on a verge constitutes an offence?  
**TD** No! Any part of a vehicle parked on a verge or footway covered by the Order will contravene the waiting restrictions.  
**N&V** Will there be regular patrols of streets or will it be a responsive reaction to problem areas?  
**TD** NSL Services Group enforces on-street parking regulations for MKC. NSL will regularly patrol and enforce the waiting restrictions on the roads covered by Order.  
**N&V** What is the penalty for non compliance with the parking order?  
**TD** For two weeks after signs are erected a parked vehicle will get a warning notice. After two weeks NSL will issue a £70 Penalty Charge Notice [PCN], reduced to £35 for prompt payment before the end of the 14 day discount period.  
**N&V** Is there an appeals process and who will mediate on any disputes?  
**TD** You can challenge a PCN by writing to or emailing MKC, giving reasons why you think the PCN was incorrectly or unfairly issued. If you are not happy with MKC's decision, you can appeal to the independent Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

## NEWS in brief...

### NAG CLEANUP DAYS

**Downs Barn cleanup succeeded admirably with MKC, TVP, GLPC pulling together. Next cleanup, Neath Hill Tuesday 10th March. Join us to make your area rubbish free. More cleanup days planned in May July September.**

### SLEEPING GIANT STIRS

A Lottery Fund grant to GLPC kick-starts feasibility study for Downs Barn Pavilion revamp. More in News&Views 25

### MORE SUMMER OF FUN

For 6 weeks from 26th July. Full details in News&Views 25

### NEW ALLOTMENT PLOTS



21 coming soon at Sandy Close. Feature in News&Views 25

### NAG PAY FOR POO BINS

Possible locations considered for two new bins are Bolbeck Park and Downhead Park play areas.

### MKC SLASHING SHRUBS



GLPC are talking with MKC following many complaints about brutal tree and shrub cut-backs.

### VACANCIES

Neath Hill & Great Linford Volunteer for these vacant Parish Council seats and help your community change for the better!

### STILL "PICK 'N CHUCK"?

Will persons who walk dogs on the redway, Thorneycroft Lane to Colesbourne Drive, stop chucking poo bags under lamp posts. Take them home!

### GLPC SIGNS STOLEN

Shame on those who removed the signs from Marsh Drive and the Community Orchard! Tell us, if you know who it was?

### ROGUE TRADER VICTIM?

"Buy with Confidence", and give cowboys the boot! Choose a trader from a list approved by Trading Standards (08454) 040506.

### SHOW ME THE WAY HOME

Leave your SatNav on view in a car and you might find that a thief has got back to your house before you have!



### STRANGER AT THE DOOR?

Stop. Think. Take Time.

Criminals surprise, confuse and intimidate vulnerable victims to gain entry. Never open the door to a stranger no matter what plausible story you are told.

## COUNCILLOR PROFILE

David Sim



When David Sim, the new parish councillor for Great Linford, moved to Milton Keynes he brought with him not only his business but

also experience of working within the community. As a chartered architect David set up his own practice in London in 1971, while also working on projects for the then Milton Keynes Development Corporation. He moved his business, firstly to Stony Stratford and then to Great Linford, in 1975. When living in London David helped set up a neighbourhood association in Camden - this successfully campaigned to stop drivers using a residential road as a commuter shortcut.

### Former Chairman of Stony Stratford Cricket Club

Apart from his professional knowledge, David has considerable sporting and recreational experience, as a former hockey player with MK Hockey Club and playing cricket with Stony Stratford Cricket Club. As Club Chairman for many years, he helped develop it into the premier club it is today.

Although beyond official retirement age, David chooses to continue working while leaving enough time to devote to other activities - including now, his role as a parish councillor.

David can be contacted on (01908) 201 501.

### Comment...

"Parking is one of the Great Linford Neighbourhood Action Group's priorities and there are a number of roads in the parish - indeed all over Milton Keynes - where obvious indiscriminate parking is an annoyance. I am so pleased that at long last these issues may now be resolved and the NAG will be working closely with MKC to help put these sensible waiting restrictions in place."

Councillor Catriona Morris,  
NAG Chairman