

## NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN WHITEHOUSE

### A. ALLOTMENT SITE

#### **Completion of the Allotment Site**

The contractors are due to complete the works mid-December. From the time the last plant has been planted, a 12-month defect liability period comes into play from that date. This means that the contractors will take responsibility for re-planting or grass maintenance for 12 months from the time the last plant has been planted.

#### **Establishing the Grounds**

Grass seed at the allotment site have been laid and the grass will continue to grow over the winter period depending on weather. The contractor will be able to tell if germination takes place over the next week or so. The grass needs some time to establish and because of recent weather conditions, it is advised that the ground is left and undisturbed until next year.

#### **Access to the Allotment Site**

Milton Keynes City Council has advised that we hold off plot holder access until March 2024 – there is very little plot holders can do before then in any case. In March, potatoes can be planted but not much else. Planting of veggies will mainly be in the months of May, June and July.

The Council needs to consider that allowing plot holders access to the allotment site earlier, could result in damage to the grass as it may not have had time to establish. If the reason for damage is due to allowing plot holders to access the site, the contractor may not make good on the grass. Delaying access to the site in March will still allow plot holders a full growing season ahead.

If the Council agrees to delay access to the site, then in the meantime, the Council could consider arranging an 'open day' say in January or February for plot holders to have a look around and see the location of their allocated plots.

The Council has now set up another bank account for the receipt of allotment payments. Tenants can now pay deposits and tenancy payments into the Council's bank account.

It is very busy at year end and most allotment payments are requested in October (start of the growing year). It is recommended that deposits and 6 months payment is requested to cover March to end of September 2024. A full year's tenancy could then be requested from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

#### **Transfer of Ownership**

Once the allotment site is complete, then the site will be transferred from Milton Keynes City Council to Whitehouse Community Council. The Council's appointed solicitor has been instructed to start the transfer process.

### **Contractor – ITQ Process**

The defect liability period comes into effect on the day of the last plant planted. The MKCC contractor will look after the grass until the grass is established. This means that we do not need to send out the Council's agreed ITQ until later next year.

If say, the contractor feels the grass is established say by April, then at that point, MKCC will negotiate with the contractor to continue maintenance until we have gone through our ITQ process. This means that we do not need to 'guess' when to start sending out the paperwork.

A meeting has been arranged with Milton Keynes City Council for Whitehouse Community Council to meet with MKCC and the contractors on site at the end of November 2023. The car park at the site will have been completed by this time.

The Allotment Working Group considered delaying plot holder access to the site until March 2024 and considered this appropriate to ensure that the grass is establish the Council needs to decide about residents' access to plot.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That, the Council notes the report and the estimated completion date of the allotment site in mid-January.
2. That, to ensure that the grass is established at the site, the Council delays plot holder access to the site until March 2023, allowing for a full growing season.
3. That the Council arranges an 'open day', early 2024, inviting plot holders to see the site and their allocated plot.
4. That the ITQ process starts once confirmation has been received that the grass is well established.
5. That the Council starts to issue tenancy agreements to residents that have been allocated a plot, giving 28 days for them to return the signed the contract, provide proof of residency in Whitehouse and make payment into the Council's bank account.
6. That residents are charged 50% deposit and 6 months allotment charge, to take effect from March 2024.
7. That a full year's tenancy is charged from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

## **B COMMUNITY MEETING PLACE**

### **Completion Dates**

The Community Meeting Place is on track to be completed at the end of February / beginning of March 2024.

### **Naming the Meeting Place**

The Council ran a competition to name the Community Meeting place, receiving 91 entries from residents. The winning entry was 'The hive' as it felt this name reflective the hive of activity the community centre would become. The winner of the competition was announced and received a £50 Amazon Voucher and a special guest invite to the opening launch.

### **Terms of Hire and Charges**

As agreed at the last meeting of the Council, the Community Facilities Working Group will be meeting to consider the draft terms of hire and centre charges and would be making its recommendations to the Council.

### **Internal Fixtures and Fittings**

The Community Facilities Working Group have had extensive input into the internal fixtures, fittings and internal decoration and some input into access and security systems that will ensure the Meeting Place is kept secure, but accessible to those who need it. Once agreed, then bookings can be confirmed.

### **Transfer of Ownership**

Once the Community Meeting Place is complete, then it will be transferred from Milton Keynes City Council to Whitehouse Community Council. The Council's appointed solicitor has been instructed to start the transfer process.

## **C. TEMPORARY SHOP**

The temporary shop will be a 'rapid retail' unit and will be located near the Whitehouse Medical Centre. The shop requires planning permission. It was hoped the shop would be up and running by Christmas 2023. However, there has been a delay with the planning application as L&Q Estates had not provided Milton Keynes City Council with all the information required.

Subject to no objections being received during the statutory neighbour notification period, a planning application could be completed in as little as 6 weeks from start of application to permission granted. Realistically, once the application has been submitted with the correct information, it is likely to be around 8 weeks.

As from the date of writing, the planning application had either not yet been submitted, or it had been submitted but not yet validated by MKCC.

Prospective retailers will be assessed against a set of criteria to ensure they will provide the best service possible to Whitehouse residents.

It is now likely that the temporary shop will come online around January 2024.

## **D. GRIT BINS**

The Council has identified 5 areas for the installation of grit bins. The bins were ordered in January 2023. Milton Keynes City Council has received a batch of grit bins and are due to install them in the Whitehouse area soon.

## **E. DOG BINS**

An order for 2 dog bins has been placed with Glasdon. An error in the number of dog bins ordered last year (5 ordered instead of 6) has meant a delay in the installation of the dog waste bin on the North Buck Way. It was agreed at the meeting in September to order another dog waste bin.

The two dog waste bins will be delivered direct to Marcus Young Environmental Services Ltd (the Council's dog waste bin emptying contractor) and he will fit them once received. The pole for the dog bin at North Bucks Way has already been installed so the dog wastes bin should be available soon. The Clerk has still to hear from Bovis regarding the installation of the dog bin at Anatolian. Their permission will be required before installation and hopefully will help with the installation of the pole as did other developers where dog bins have been installed in their areas.

## **F. DE-FIBRILLATORS**

### **Whitehouse Primary School**

The defibrillator, bleed control kit and combined cabinet has been installed at Whitehouse Primary School. The school had donated the defibrillator to the community and had agreed for the defibrillator to be installed on the external wall near the reception area.

The provision of the defibrillator is housed in a secure cabinet alongside a Bleed Control Kit. The funding for all the de-fib equipment was a good example of partnership working. The cost of the bleed control kit and a third of the cost of the secure cabinet was funded from Ward Councillor Joe Hearnshaw's Ward Based Budget. Whitehouse Community Council funded two thirds of the secure cabinet. The cabinet was installed by TS Electrical free of charge.

### **Community Infrastructure Fund – Provision of Two Defibrillators**

Whitehouse Community Council has made a grant application to Milton Keynes Council's Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) for match funding of two more defibrillators in the Whitehouse area. One will be located at the new Community Meeting Place and discussions with MKCC has taken place to ensure that an external power source will be available on the outside wall of the community centre.

The other was to be located at Watling Primary School, but it has since informed the Council that they would not have an external power source for the defibrillator that would allow it to be accessible for residents. The Council would need to withdraw its CIF application for this defibrillator.