

NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1.0 Allotment Site

- 1.1 The Allotment Site was due to open at the beginning of April 2024 and an open day was due to take place in February/March 2024 so that tenants could visit the site and see where their plot was located. Unfortunately, the ground at the site is still too wet and it is unlikely that the allotment will take place in March.
- 1.2 Conditions over the last few weeks has meant that progress works have been delayed and work cannot commence until the soil dries. It will take a period of at least 10 dry days before the land is in a condition to continue the work. Milton Keynes City Council are continuing to monitor the site and the weather forecast. A site inspection will be taking place on Wednesday morning (20 March) and we will hopefully have some photos of the site to hand out at the meeting. It is looking likely that the site conditions will not improve by the end of the month and discussions will take place with the contractor regards delaying the opening of the site.
- 1.3 Anglian Water will be commencing works to connect the water pipes to the mains on 8 April 2024 and the road will be close for one week to undertake the work.
- 1.4 Allotment plots have been allocated to residents on the waiting list. Tenants are requested to complete and sign a tenancy agreement, provide proof of address, pay a 6-months tenancy and a security deposit (50% annual cost).

Allotment Plot Size	6-Month Tenancy Cost	Security Deposit	Annual Cost
75m	£55.00	£55.00	£110.00
70m	£50.00	£50.00	£100.00

- 1.5 The 6-month tenancy starts from 1 April 2024 to 31 September 2024. From 1 October 2024, the allotment cost will change to an annual charge.
- 1.6 If the allotment site is not completed by 1 April 2024, then a reduced annual cost will be charged in the 2024/2025 allotment year. A refund will apply, if an allotment holder decides to leave at the end of the first 6-month tenancy period.
- 1.7 Stats to date:

Confirmed Tenancies:	59
Partial Confirmed Tenancies:	
• Paid but not provided all paperwork	4
• Correct paperwork but no payment	5
• Wrong payment	1
Recent letter sent with 14 days to confirmation:	6

Ignored offer / reminders etc:	39
Confirmed vacancies:	8
No longer wanting an allotment plot:	22
Reasons:	
• Expanding family and no time	2
• Long term work commitments	3
• Moving out of area	1
• Terms not acceptable	1
• Too expensive	4
• Changing circumstances	7
• No reason given	4

1.8 Reducing Vacant Plots

The take-up of allotment offers is significantly less than expected. This is likely to be due to the length of time residents have been on the waiting list. Some residents had been included on the waiting list from early 2020 and circumstances may have changed since then.

The Council may want to consider taking the following actions to ensure the vacant plots are taken up:

1. Lower the cost of an allotment plot (although cost does not seem to be the over-riding factor of non-take-up).
2. Offer tenants the opportunity of a 140m plot (by merging 2 x 70m plots)
3. Offer second plots (not necessarily together)
4. Offer a community plot to the schools (up to 150m)

2.0 Community Meeting Place

2.1 There is now a permanent live power supply to the Community Meeting Place site and plans are in place to recommence works on 2 April 2024. This means that the completion of the Centre is on track for mid to end of July 2024.

2.2 At a suitable point, Milton Keynes City Council will arrange a site visit for Whitehouse Community Councillors to look around and start to get a feel for the size of the spaces and how the building is laid out.

3.0 Temporary Shop

3.1 Planning permission for the temporary shop has been granted and groundworks are progressing. There has been no update regarding an installation date for the rapid retail unit.

4.0 New Play Area

It was mentioned at the last meeting that the new play area was due to open on 25 March 2024 and that the mayor and the chair of this council would be invited to officially open the area.