

Town & Parish Council 'Creating Stronger Communities' Conference

22 November 2016
Conference Report

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you to everyone who attended our 25th Town & Parish Council Conference. I was delighted to welcome 70 town / parish council delegates representing 32 Town / Parish Councils as well as a number of my ward councillor colleagues.

This post conference report includes a summary of the presentations, your questions and our responses and a summary of your feedback. The presentations used at the Conference are available to view on the [website](#).

The Conference focused on Stronger Communities and we explored the support needed to increase volunteering and deliver local services, learning from the experiences of Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Silsoe Parish Council and Police community watch schemes, as well as feedback on Emergency Planning. What all had in common was the passion, commitment and resilience to do something for their communities; recognising the role and value of local volunteers, whether it's helping out in an emergency, engaging volunteers in local schemes or taking on the management of an important local facility. This was alongside a couple of useful updates on access to legal services and setting the parish council precept.

I hope you find this report useful and share it amongst your councillors. We welcome and value your participation and look forward to further engagement opportunities that will take place with you in 2017.



Councillor Tracey Stock

Deputy Executive Member, Corporate Resources (Stronger Communities)
Central Bedfordshire Council

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Mark Conway – Emergency Planning Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Mark's presentation focused on the emergency response to the recent gas outage which affected the communities of Ampthill, Clophill and Maulden. He considered the lessons learnt and the importance of each parish having an Emergency Response Plan in place.

Mark explained that Central Bedfordshire Council is required to have a 'Duty First Contact Officer' who is on duty 24/7 every day of the year, and this is the single point of contact that the emergency services and other responders must notify about an emergency situation or significant event.

Mark briefly described the emergency response to the recent gas outage incident where over 6,000 properties were affected when a developer struck a high pressure gas pipeline on a development site in Ampthill. Local services responded to cordon off the area and National Grid Gas attended and advised that there was no immediate risk to life or of an explosion. However, they were unable to fix it straight away and had to shut the pipeline down, which left Ampthill, Maulden and Clophill without gas for 4 days.

A response strategy was deployed following clear procedures as well as key learning points from other emergency situations e.g. in Caddington in 2009. The emphasis was to:

- Protect the vulnerable
- Protect the electricity supply
- Restore the gas supply as quickly and safely as possible
- Minimise the risk to the wider community
- Maximise the safety of responders
- Gather multi agency information and intelligence to support and guide strategic, tactical and operational decision making
- Warn, inform and advise local communities and key stakeholders
- Gather learning to improve our responses in the future

During the emergency it was vital to develop a recovery plan involving key agencies.

Mark referred to a number of key learning points including the importance of:

- the 'Before' phase with parishes having an up to date emergency plan in place and that this is also known to Central Bedfordshire Council;
- the 'During' phase of the crisis to help manage the response; and
- the 'after' phase to help with community recovery.

Mark suggested a future conference devoted to emergency planning and this received support from delegates.

LGSS LAW

Chris Rushworth, CBC Legal Services Business Relationship Manager and Fiona McMillan LGSS Law.

Fiona gave a short presentation on LGSS Law services and their expertise in advising / supporting town and parish councils. Fiona explained that LGSS Law can advise on points of law and procedure in relation to the administration of parish councils and can help resolve disputes over a wide range of issues.

Specifically, LGSS can help with some common legal issues facing parish / town councils such as village greens, common land and Rights of Way; land issues - ownership, occupation and use, allotments, contracts and affordable housing; employment issues and community projects e.g. building of new community centres or village halls.

More information is available at www.lgsslaw.com or Email Fiona.McMillan@LGSSLaw.co.uk

TOWN AND PARISH PRECEPT PROCESS - 2017/18

Sarah Michael Senior Finance Manager – Strategy; and Phil Martin Finance Manager - FPS Strategy

Sarah and Phil shaped their presentation to build on the detailed guidance provided last year and covered:

- understanding why your Tax Base changes; and
- update on referendum principles.

Sarah and Phil went through examples of some common issues, for example where the tax calculator had not been used, or forms were incomplete and simply said 'remain the same'.

Sarah and Phil emphasised that the Tax Base often changes; citing that 90% of parish tax bases changed between 2016/17 & 2017/18. For larger Towns / Parishes it can change on a daily basis, as the circumstances of residents change. It's not just about new housing development or demolition. There are a number of reasons as to why the tax base changes, which include:

- Single Person Discount
- Resident moved into Hospital or a care home
- Occupied by students
- Discounts for disabled people
- Council Tax Support
- Property is in Probate
- Housing
- Growth
- Resident in prison

Finally Sarah and Phil mentioned DCLG's Technical consultation on the referendum principle. The proposals are:

- A referendum principle of a 2% cap for the larger higher-spending town and parish councils - those with a precept of over £500k and a £75.46 Band D charge.
- Extending the principle to all local precepting authorities.

VOLUNTEERING: WATCH SCHEMES

Juliet Wright Bedfordshire Police Watch Co-ordinator and Cllr Tony Morris, Leighton – Linslade Town Council.

Juliet introduced the three watch schemes: Street Watch, Speed Watch and Neighbourhood Watch.

Speed Watch

In Central Bedfordshire 575 volunteers are engaged in Speed Watch and have access to 22 devices and training to carry out their role effectively. Further training is planned for 2017 and will take place on

- Saturday 21st January
- Saturday 1st April
- Thursday 27th July
- Saturday 21st October

The groups are proving very effective in tackling speeding, and their efforts have resulted in a number of warning letters sent to vehicle owners.

Neighbourhood Watch and Street Watch

There are 150 Neighbourhood Watch schemes involving 4, 000 volunteers and 10 Street Watch schemes involving over 100 volunteers in Central Bedfordshire. Street Watch takes place in Ampthill, Maulden, Barton, Biggleswade, Shefford, Clifton, Caddington, Marston, Houghton Regis and Harlington.

Street Watch volunteers are actively tasked to look out for particular issues and can feedback intelligence to local parish councils and the Police.

If any Town or Parish is interested in finding out more they should contact Juliet.Wright@Bedfordshire.pnn.Police.uk

Leighton- Linslade

Cllr Tony Morris spoke passionately about efforts underway in Leighton-Linslade to create a bank of volunteers based on the Caddington Model, which has combined its Watch schemes into a single group so volunteers can tackle priority issues in their communities.

Cllr Morris explained that the key driver in Leighton-Linslade is to support the Police and help keep the community safe with weekly speed checks at key points within the town. He wants to encourage members of the community to act as 'good neighbours' and volunteer across the range of the three Watch

Schemes to provide a reassuring presence, particularly for the elderly and vulnerable.

Initially the drive is being led by town councillor volunteers, but Voluntary & Community Action is helping engage with more volunteers from across the town in new and existing communities.

SILSOE COMMUNITY SPORTS CENTRE

Ian Kelly Vice Chairman of Silsoe Parish Council and John Robinson Chairman Silsoe Recreational Trust.

Ian and John spoke about the history of the Community Sports Centre in Silsoe. Initial discussions had begun in 2005 with Cranfield University. After 10 years, in 2015 the Parish Council took ownership of the building and opened it to the local community in 2016.

Ian and John highlighted the important factors and key events during the last 10 years to effect the specification, construction and eventual transfer of the community building.

Ian explained that it was vital to have a working group in place and to meet regularly and liaise directly with the developer and then the construction company. Regular liaison with Central Bedfordshire Council was also vital to address planning and legal issues.

The Parish Council engaged directly with local residents through events and provided information on the website so that stakeholders could keep up to date. It was also essential to appoint a legal representative and surveyors to monitor construction.

The Parish Council also undertook a feasibility study to understand what the market could sustain with regards to community sports facilities. The results were fed through into the Business Plan and building specification and the first floor became a dedicated gym facility with 25 gym stations.

Ian explained that it was important to bring in other skills to help manage the facility and Silsoe Recreational Trust was created to oversee the operation of the Centre and ensure benefits to the community.

Stevenage Leisure have been appointed to run the community sports centre which now has 400 members using the gym; local residents enjoying the community lounge and café; sports clubs booking and using the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), badminton courts and dance room.

DEVOLUTION: A TABLE DISCUSSION ON JOINT WORKING AND VOLUNTEERING

See appendix 1.

QUESTIONS

A number of questions were asked following the presentations and also submitted on the feedback forms. Answers to both sets of questions have been collated and are listed below.

Questions at the Conference

Emergency Planning

Q1: Maulden Parish Council: During the recent emergency, we received no contact from CBC. We would like to work with CBC to develop an Emergency Plan for Maulden. Debrief should be published so that other town and parish councils can find out about it.

Mark Conway, CBC: Yes, we would like to work with you too to develop a Community Emergency Plan. We also do not have good 24/7 contact details for town and parish councils and this is something we would like to improve to assist two way communications. We will share a tailored version of the debrief report for town and parish councils. I would like to meet with Ampthill, Maulden and Clophill councils as part of the debrief process to learn as much as we can from this incident.

Q2: Ampthill Town Council (Mark Smith): We feel the response to the outage was generally good. However we very surprised that CBC was not aware of our Emergency Plan and would also question why our Good Neighbour/volunteer schemes were not consulted – these are a valuable resource as they will be aware of vulnerable people. Social Media worked well but we relied on National Grid for information, nothing from CBC.

MC: There are over 20 lists of vulnerable people, collated by various agencies, which we went through. National Grid was lead agency dealing with this emergency, however would agree we need to work more closely and share data. CBC were not aware you had an emergency plan and we have not had direct liaison over this for many years. We need to work more closely in the future and a common platform to store and share our community emergency plans would be useful for this. I will look to develop something and share this further. There are many different lists of vulnerable people, collated by various agencies, which we went through, these are detailed in our multi-agency vulnerable people plan. However there will be lessons learnt to improve the vulnerable people plan going forward. National Grid was the lead agency dealing with this emergency, however we would agree that we need to work more closely and share data. The knowledge of all the local groups that could have helped in this scenario and their emergency contact details is vital, Town and parish councils do know this information and that why we need to work more closely together.

Q3: Toddington Parish Council (Jim Gledhill): Were the volunteer centres even called upon during the incident? (VCA given as example)

MC: VCA is part of BLEVEC so were aware of the incident. They may have been able to play a bigger role, but what this role would be and how it would be utilised at the time, needs to be explored further.

An observation from Toddington Parish Council (Jim Gledhill): - 5-7 years ago a liaison officer for emergency planning sent letters to all TPCs to encourage them to formulate an

emergency plan. Small communities assume 'it won't happen to us' and it's time we all realised that it might happen. T&PCs need to think about the unthinkable. Also, CBC assumes everyone can access information online – an lot of people in Central Bedfordshire aren't on the web. Please don't rely on the internet.

Q4: Totternhoe Parish Council: What is the legal position of sharing a 'list of vulnerable people'?

A: MC: If you were to create your own list, people would need to know what the list would be used for and agree that their information can be shared to help them in an emergency and this would be fine. We encourage the safe sharing of lists of vulnerable people in an emergency to ensure we can help as many people as possible. The multi-agency vulnerable people plan details this and the Government have specific guidance on information sharing in emergencies. A 2 page summary can be found here -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60971/data_protection_handout.pdf

Guidance on planning to assist the vulnerable in an emergency is here -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61228/vulnerable_guidance.pdf

LGSS Law

Q5: Should we be digging into our Parish Precept to pay for all legal advice or are some areas covered?

A: Fiona McMillan, LGSS Law: We are happy to discuss individually. The core advice to parish councils on code of conduct and governance issues remains unchanged with no charge to parishes. In terms of other legal work we are happy to discuss costs individually with parish and town councils as we understand the financial constraints you are under and would anticipate being cheaper than high street solicitors you may currently use.

Q6: Haynes Parish Council (Richard James): Was outsourcing the role of Monitoring Officer and Legal Services wise? What has CBC actually saved?

A: Quentin Baker, LGSS Law: I would like to clarify that neither Monitoring Officer nor Legal Services have been outsourced. I am an officer of Central Bedfordshire Council. CBC is a one third owner of LGSS Law. Sharing services is cheaper and provides a much more effective service. LGSS Law does not make a profit.

Q7: Could we hire them (LGSS) to take CBC planning decisions to judicial review?

A: We would consider this should the issue arise. It would be subject to our conflict of interests policy and setting up "Chinese walls" within the organisation to keep everything separate and confidential.

Precept

Q8: Is it necessary to answer using methods one and two?

A: Sarah Michael, CBC: No but we would prefer it if you could.

Q9: Eggington Parish Council (John Westbury): Tax base figure – no buildings have been built or knocked down so why has our tax base changed?

A: SM: – gave lots of examples of circumstances that may make a difference to tax base figures.

Q10: John Westbury: is property that is put out for commercial rental not included in

the tax base as it then comes under business rates.

A: SM: Yes.

Q11: Cllr Lewis Birt, CBC: Last 2-3 years has seen enormous amount of building in and around Shefford but this is not reflected in the tax base – why not?

A: SM: We would need to look at Shefford individually, so will find out and get back to you. This has been followed up and clarified with Shefford Town Council.

Silsoe Community Sports Centre

Q12: Question re Cranfield University/ redevelopment/ community building in return for lots of houses.

A: Silsoe: We have a good relationship with Cranfield University and we worked together. Cranfield were clear that they wanted to leave a legacy to the village and we maintained that throughout discussions to realise the Community Sports Centre.

Q13: How do you make sure developers do what they say they are going to do?

A: Silsoe: We worked together. We had huge support from the Partnerships and Community Engagement team at CBC and from Bloor Homes.

Q14: Who chose Bloor Homes as developer?

A: Silsoe: Cranfield University.

Q15: Was the S106 money the only funding you received? How did Silsoe negotiate with CBC to get the S106 funding?

A: Silsoe: The S106 Agreement required the developer (Bloor Homes) to provide a community building as part of the development.

Q16: What would you change now looking back?

A: Silsoe: Would have got a price on the building as a whole so we knew what we were getting. (Carpet tiles replaced with more functional vinyl flooring was an example given.)

Q17: ..but if you had signed off on it should you have known what you were getting?

A: Silsoe: Yes we prepared a specification and discussed this with Bloor Homes. Changes were made along the way as new information became available to us. For example, we replaced two meeting rooms with a gym facility.

Question from Dunstable Town Council on feedback sheet

Q18: Earlier this year, when car parking charges were increased, we were promised “pay for your time only” machines. When are they being delivered and commissioned?

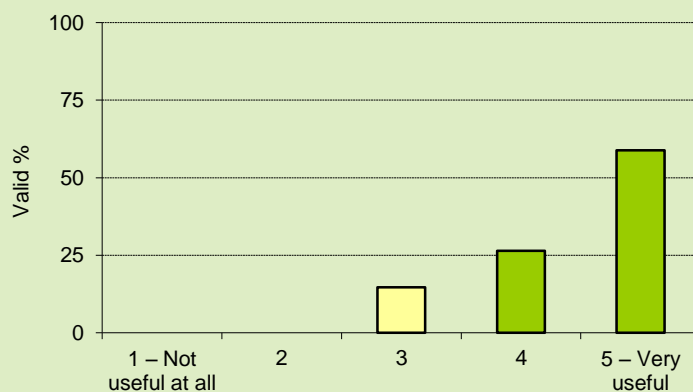
A: There will be three pay on foot car parks in Ashton Square car park, (Dunstable) Hockliffe Street car park and the West Street Multi storey car park (in Leighton – Linslade) The intention is that they will be in place in February 2017.

FEEDBACK ON THE CONFERENCE

Q1. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not useful at all, 5 being very useful, how useful were the presentations to you and your Town / Parish council?

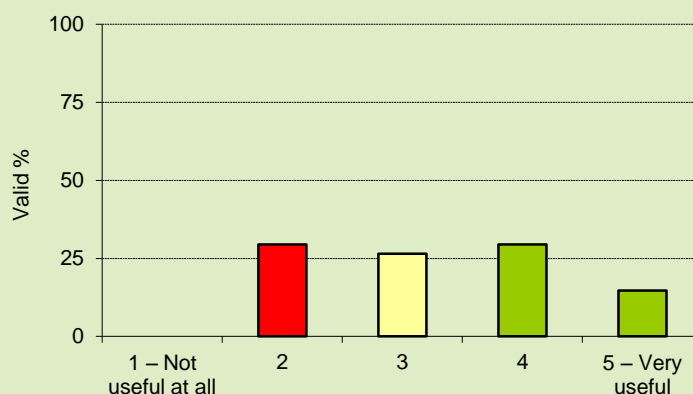
Emergency Planning

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	5	15	15
4	9	26	26
5 – Very useful	20	59	59
Total	34	100	



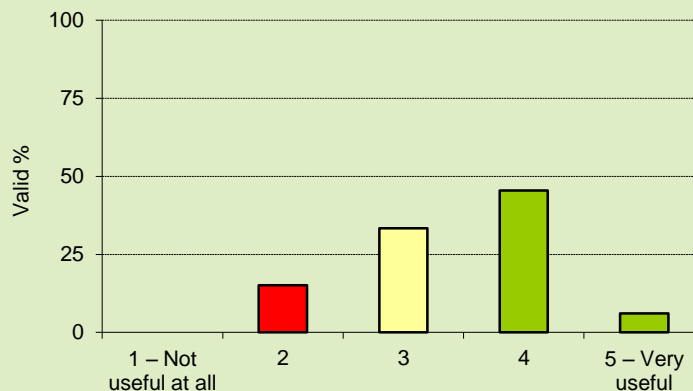
LGSS Law

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	10	29	29
3	9	26	26
4	10	29	29
5 – Very useful	5	15	15
Total	34	100	100



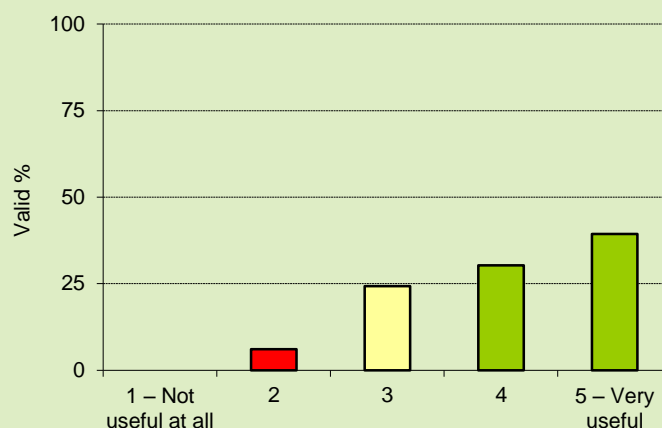
Town & Parish Precept Process – 2017/18

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	5	15	15
3	11	32	33
4	15	44	45
5 – Very useful	2	6	6
Total	33	97	100
Missing	1	3	



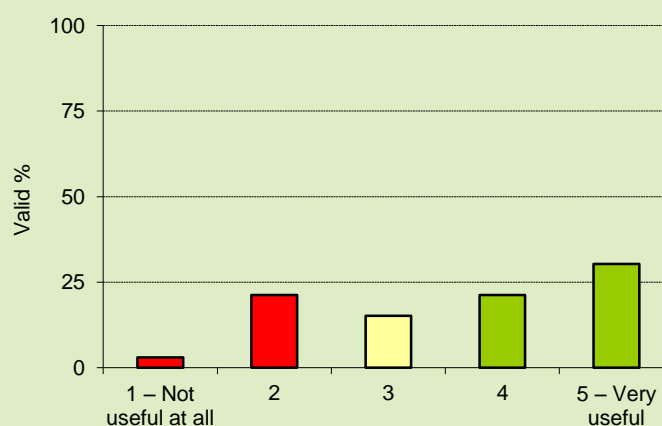
Volunteering: Watch Schemes

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	0	0	0
2	2	6	6
3	8	24	24
4	10	29	30
5 – Very useful	13	38	39
Total	33	97	100



Silsoe Community Sports Centre

	Count	%	Valid %
1 – Not useful at all	1	3	3
2	7	21	21
3	5	15	15
4	7	21	21
5 – Very useful	10	29	30
Total	30	88	91



2. What subjects would you like to see discussed at future events?

Shefford Town Council	Emergency Planning – community involvement. CERT – training programme for all town and parish councilors, invitations to all households. How to use internet and social media for TPC promotions.
Blunham Parish Council	Emergency Planning.
Dunstable Town Council	Dunstable Town Council are constantly talking to CBC reference to services. Gypsy and Traveller Communities – permanent sites and illegal sites.
Blunham Parish Council	Building cohesive communities – examples of best practice, new opportunities etc.
Shefford Town Council	Fund raising for community projects.
Brogborough Parish Council	Emergency Planning
Chalgrave Parish Council	Highways work. Potholes, grass cutting, street lights etc. regarding the “new” contract. We need times scales that

	are kept to.
Eggington Parish Council	Rural broadband. Highways.
Chalton Parish Council	Traffic flow control. Pollution monitoring and control. Fault reporting and rectification (lights, drains etc)
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Planning procedures.
Shillington Parish Council	More opportunities for councillors to speak to each other on key issues – a forum perhaps.
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Emergency Planning – how to set up a plan. Highways – pay for speed control in village.
Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Emergency Planning. Precepts. Budgets.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Partnership working with CBC more effectively.
Amphill Town Council	Parking. Charging for services.
Amphill Town Council	Volunteering (perhaps in the lead up to volunteers week) Special conference on Emergency Planning using the impacts of Amphill's gas outage.
Silsoe Parish Council	Health.
Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council	Planning issues. Planning Inspectorate does not take enough notice of local issues.
Studham Parish Council	Planning.
Langford Parish Council	Emergency Planning.
Clifton Parish Council	The serious deterioration in the system for reporting highways faults. Potholes, blocked gullies, light outages etc. The website system is time consuming, difficult to use and I believe it has been received very poorly.
Aspley Guise Parish Council	Emergency Planning talks.
Houghton Conquest Parish Council	A suggestion was to have a seminar on emergency planning to parishes – an excellent idea.
Maulden Parish Council	Enabling parishes to work together.
Haynes Parish Council	The so called Rural Match Fund for CBC Highways work. Our table were concerned that CBC are seeking to get parishes to help pay for Highways works (in addition to the council tax which we already pay!)
Northill Parish Council	Planning updates are always useful. How Local Plan is progressing - problem areas (e.g Gypsies and Travellers) How social media can help town and parish councils.

Q3. Volunteering

a) Do you plan to increase volunteering in your town / parish? What help do you need to do this?

Shefford Town Council	Training – volunteer specific available to everyone and made known to all households.
Blunham Parish Council	Promote good neighbour scheme.
Dunstable Town Council	We are always looking for volunteers/helpers to assist with town events/projects e.g. In Bloom.
Blunham Parish Council	Not at the moment – but it would be worth considering as a way of developing community involvement.
Shefford Town Council	Help to run hi-vis promo events.
Brogborough Parish Council	Starting SpeedWatch/Neighbourhood Watch.
Chalgrave Parish Council	We would like to restart Neighbourhood Watch but need an assurance that it won't all fall apart with no support as it has several times before.

Eggington Parish Council	We'd like to, but getting volunteers is proving difficult.
Leighton Linlade Town Council	Yes - watch schemes.
Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Some younger members coming forward but not enough to replace aging current volunteer base. Some people completing several roles.
Chalton Parish Council	We would if we could find anybody willing.
Shillington Parish Council	Would like to but difficult to get volunteers together – don't all step forward. Guess direct approaches works best.
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Village meeting when organised.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Volunteer schemes.
Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Yes.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Yes, village agent scheme, watch schemes, Houghton Hall Park scheme, youth council and community transport.
Amphill Town Council	Yes, whilst there are some very active volunteer schemes in Amphill we always need more. Need support to coordinate activity.
Amphill Town Council	Yes, encouragement that more groups register their needs with Community and Voluntary Service (CVS) so they can promote those opportunities. Encourage StreetWatch/SpeedWatch to register opportunities with VCA and CVS depending on their location.
Silsoe Parish Council	Yes, Emergency Planning.
Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council	Quarterly newsletter and village website but still struggle to get parishioners to volunteer to come onto Parish Council etc.
Studham Parish Council	Possibly.
Arlesey Town Council	No immediate plans – other than StreetWatch. Volunteer groups need guidance on constitution, setting themselves up etc. and access funding.
No name	We are expanding our volunteering. We need to keep adding to the core of volunteers. We would like to have hundreds rather than just a few.
Fairfield Parish Council	How to entice people to volunteer.
Langford Parish Council	Advertising
Clifton Parish Council	We have an active StreetWatch group that is trying to increase membership and is looking at linking various "watches".
Aspley Guise Parish Council	Same people all the time.
Houghton Conquest Parish Council	Hoping to set up Neighbourhood Watch – just starting SpeedWatch but find it is the same group of volunteers and they are running out of steam.
Heath and Reach Parish Council	Yes.
Maulden Parish Council	Increase.
Haynes Parish Council	This is very much in hand.
Northill Parish Council	Appeals in parish magazines – use of social media could be set up (none of us on our council are up to date enough IT wise to maximise its use).

b) What do you need volunteers to help with in your town / parish?	
Shefford Town Council	Annual Gala preparation and planning, organising and clearing up. Internet/social media promotions and usage.
Blunham Parish Council	Christmas lights event. Town Carnival.
Blunham Parish Council	Litter collection, watch schemes, Neighbourhood plan.
Shefford Town Council	SpeedWatch, StreetWatch
Brogborough Parish Council	Running of village hall, SpeedWatch and Neighbourhood Watch.
Chalgrave Parish Council	SpeedWatch works very well and is well supported. Neighbourhood Watch. Rights of Way.
Eggington Parish Council	Neighbourhood Watch. Neighbourhood Plan.
Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Getting the message across the village. Village magazine and electronic social does not seem to be raising enough interest.
Chalton Parish Council	Assistance with village Association. Youth Services.
Shillington Parish Council	We have a lot of village organisations so can call on for specific activities.
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Neighbourhood Watch.
Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Liaison with youth.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Yes! To help fulfil the above plans and ideas.
Amphill Town Council	Work to build communities within the town as have lots of new houses. Work with young people.
Amphill Town Council	Amphill Park (Friends of), Coopers Hill, Amphill Good Neighbours, StreetWatch (possible SpeedWatch), Timebank (Amphill & Flitwick), Amphill Festival.
Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council	To become parish councillors. To join Neighbourhood Plan team.
Studham Parish Council	People to get involved.
No name	StreetWatch.
Fairfield Parish Council	Youth Club, community hall, coffee mornings.
Langford Parish Council	StreetWatch, SpeedWatch, Neighbourhood Watch.
Clifton Parish Council	More younger, interested and competent people to serve on Parish Councils.
Aspley Guise Parish Council	SpeedWatch, P3, Community Sports, Helping Hand (elderly and frailty community)
Houghton Conquest Parish Council	Neighbourhood Watch.
Heath and Reach Parish Council	Formulate a Neighbourhood Plan.
Haynes Parish Council	Improving the use of Haynes Village Hall (now underused) In setting up an Emergency Plan for Haynes. A session at our Jan 2017 meeting of our parish council.
Northill Parish Council	Our draft Neighbourhood Plan is identifying 20 (?) projects for community led action (I keep telling the group that the parish council cannot lead on them). Our SpeedWatch group needs new input – present coordinator about to retire through ill health (no sessions have been run for around 18 months). Residents continue to complain about speeding in the parish and

should be prepared to assist.

Q4. Devolution

a) What (additional) service(s) would you like to see delivered by your town / parish council?

Shefford Town Council	Lower School education
Blunham Parish Council	None – unless CBC makes a monetary contribution.
Dunstable Town Council	(see Q2)
Shefford Town Council	High Street refurbishment.
Brogborough Parish Council	Allotments, community events.
Chalgrave Parish Council	Grass cutting, speed control (20mph), raised areas, chicanes etc.
Leighton Linlade Town Council	Car parking and parking enforcement.
Shillington Parish Council	Could do more with a refund of precept to undertake services no longer being provided by CBC.
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Neighbourhood Watch, Village Plan, grass cutting, road and pavement repairs, transport.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Youth services, parking enforcement, parking management, trees and hedges, footpaths.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Parking enforcement, highways issues.
Amphill Town Council	Support for younger people, lots of focus on elderly and disabled.
Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council	We would like to do swaps with CBC whereby we do more things ourselves but funding from CBC is an issue.
Arlesey Town Council	Community transport – to access train station early morning and evenings.
Fairfield Parish Council	Planning – as to work requirements. Lighting – secured for main road.
Langford Parish Council	(as per Q3 b)
Clifton Parish Council	Weed spraying of highway paths.
Aspley Guise Parish Council	Police, parking officers
Houghton Conquest Parish Council	Were CBC to deliver the required services on a timely manner.
Northill Parish Council	(see table list from the table discussion)

b) What help / support do you need to make this happen?

Shefford Town Council	Require a new Lower School – now.
Shefford Town Council	Funds
Brogborough Parish Council	Legal services.
Chalgrave Parish Council	We are small with a very small precept, but a lot of road areas with verges. Unless we get pro-rata payment support it is impractical. Part funding works against us unless it is pro-rata.
Eggington Parish Council	We need knowledge! Verge cutting “is” and isn’t being done – highways know but CBC doesn’t. Who is going to do it/be responsible? (we need to know so as to be able to budget) How much money comes from CBC to cover?
Shillington Parish Council	More funding and experience.
Gravenhurst Parish Council	Encourage volunteers, legal help, more money.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Youth Services.

Marston Moretaine Parish Council	Commercial expertise.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Better relationship with CBC.
Amphill Town Council	Understand what other parishes have done and what support is available.
Amphill Town Council	Amphill Town Council would appreciate greater support for Amphill Park, as it is an asset used far and wide but the upkeep is borne by the council tax payers of Amphill!
Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council	More funding as per above.
Arlesey Town Council	Funding and working model.
Fairfield Parish Council	Local Plan variation.
Langford Parish Council	Advertising and man power.
Clifton Parish Council	A sensible budget allocation from CBC.
Aspley Guise Parish Council	Police PCSO, many of them.
Northill Parish Council	Funding advice/support.

Q5. Please use the space below to make any further comments about this event.

a) Further comments:

Shefford Town Council	Some items were rushed through with insignificant time left for Q&As; unnecessary amount of time left for final exercise – devolution discussion.
Shefford Town Council	Font size of feedback form too small. Comfort break – 2.5 hours is too long to sit.
Dunstable Town Council	Presenters must be able to use microphones. Invest in clip on mics.
Flitwick Town Council	Silsoe and Leighton Buzzard presentations too long.
Blunham Parish Council	This did not really tackle building communities except for the Leighton Buzzard Watch Scheme and the Silsoe Sports Centre. We need more examples for small communities with more ideas from CBC and elsewhere.
Shefford Town Council	Need better coffee.
Brogborough Parish Council	Not enough time for questions. Juliet (Watch Schemes) left before we could ask her anything. No comfort break.
Eggington Parish Council	Good to meet up with colleagues from other parishes. Time a better set of microphones were obtained.
Marston Moretaine Parish Council	This was one of the best conferences I've attended.
Houghton Regis Town Council	Quite long after a long day.
Amphill Town Council	Would be willing to be part of the Emergency Planning group and any debrief following the Amphill gas outage.
Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council	Slightly too long.
Studham Parish Council	Need more time for questions.
Clifton Parish Council	Generally good. Use lecterns to remove the need to hold notes in one hand and the microphone in the other.
Houghton Conquest Parish Council	StreetWatch. It seems a scheme to save the police conscience for not patrolling themselves.
Aspley Guise Parish Council	Very interesting. Requires parishes/towns to talk to each other.

Aspley Guise Parish Council	It was unclear what services LGSS charge us for and what we can get for free. (see answer to Q5, page 8)
Haynes Parish Council	LGSS Law were, in my opinion, selling their company to town and parish councillors. E.g. Could we hire them to take CBC planning decisions to judicial review? (see answer to Q 7 page 8)
Northill Parish Council	When I first looked at the agenda, I didn't think it would be very useful – but it was! Emergency Plans – something I hadn't even thought about. Devolution – suggestions from other members on our table made me think of all areas, e.g. someone said Planning which I would not have thought of.

b) If you would be willing to present at a future conference to share with other towns and parishes something great happening in your community, please provide brief details below:

Dunstable Town Council	As the time and situation occurs.
Shefford Town Council	Not at this time.
Amphill Town Council	Amphill Festival.
Amphill Town Council	Happy to give a presentation on funding opportunities available to town and parish councils (funding role in CVS). Also promoting volunteers.
Studham Parish Council	Yes!
Clifton Parish Council	I have an interest in reducing street sign clutter.
Northill Parish Council	Neighbourhood Planning matters e.g. what we would do differently if we were starting again.

Appendix 1: Table discussion

Devolution

Which services would you like devolved to your parish?

- Yes, if the money follows
- Car parking – devolve from CBC
- Parking wardens and enforcement (sharing of)
- Street lighting / grass cutting (3)
- Additional gritting – some do already – CBC has insurance
- Street cleaning / weed spraying – annual litter pick (drains) equipment / funding will it be cheaper
- Clean signs- need insurance to do it
- 77ha of common land – refused to take on due to lack of expertise (Studham) so leave with CBC
- Greater power in planning decisions
- Maintaining Rights of Way - Trees and Hedges
- Clearance of roadside drains/leaves.
- Planning and listen on transport issues
- Listen to recommendations from Parish Councils
- Listen to Local communities' wishes and opinions
- Some power re planning – our experience / training
- Nothing unless we get paid

- Local bus services
- Potholes, pavements
- Youth services
- Highways – pavements, footpaths and potholes.

Are there any barriers and how would you overcome them?

- Funding /lack of technical knowledge
- Are CBC refunding a proportion of our precepts to do jobs that their contractors seem incapable of doing
- Lack of funding /capped precepts/no resources or skills.

Volunteering

Do you have a bank of volunteers, what schemes do they engage in?

- All Watch Schemes
- Community Emergency Response Team / First Responders
- Hands Across the Village / Helping Hands / SOS Silsoe / Friends of Langford / Friends of Studham – Good Neighbour / village care schemes /gardening
- Taxi (community) services
- How to attract younger volunteers
- Youth Council
- Friends of Houghton Hall Park
- Houghton Helpers
- Community groups
- T&PC are volunteers
- Conservation Group
- Enhancement Group
- Youth Group Leaders
- Village Hall Committee
- General Town Centre care and maintenance (e.g litter pickers, cleaning signs)
- P3 (parish paths)
- Safer Maulden – strategy
- Christmas Lights
- Emergency Committee PTP
- Remembrance parades etc
- Volunteers to help with Neighbourhood Plan (over 2yrs +)
- Website management – Flit 'N' More.
- Langford Village Coffee Morning every week (rota of 6 weeks)
- Friends of schemes (parks)

Any gaps and how might they be filled?

- No – same few do everything!
- No spare time – little local employment so residents have to commute to work and spare time is valuable to spend with families.
- Still the old brigade

- Ageing volunteer base
- Encourage volunteers
- Community spirit
- Closer relationship between Parish Council and volunteer groups
- How to get more volunteers
- Engage with existing volunteer centres (CVS and VCA)
- Engage with new residents (with a welcome pack)
- Youth Volunteering (Youth Action)
- Age
- Parish Councils “a joke”.
- Neighbourhood Watch lapsed
- uncertainty about contacts
- Christmas lights – problems getting help
- All need emergency planning

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Thank you for your attendance and participation at this conference. We have listened to your feedback and will take this into account when planning future Conferences.

In addition, you have given plenty of suggestions for future agenda items and we will endeavor to respond to this.

We will contact you as soon as possible with details of the next event. In the meantime, please contact Peter Fraser or me if you have any further comments or suggestions: peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Councillor Tracey Stock

Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources (Stronger Communities)
Central Bedfordshire Council

A full copy of this report and the workshop presentations can be found on the Council's website:

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/councillors/conferences.aspx>

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priority House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire SG17 5QT

Telephone 0300 300 8000
Email customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk