



Chairman / Mayors Report – March 2026

Town Council Meeting – 17 March 2026 at 5.00 pm - Public Question Time: The time allocated is at the discretion of the Council/Chairman. Residents are invited to give their views and question the Town Council on issues on this agenda or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Chairman. Members of the public may not take part in the Town Council meeting itself. A Councillor with a prejudicial interest in a particular issue may address the Council on the issue during Public Question Time subject to the Councillor leaving the room in the event of an exchange of the issue between the public and the Council during this period. 3 minutes per person if public wish to speak, or at the Chair's discretion.

Mayoral Update

- East West Rail: Keeping You Connected - Design Update Sessions

Woburn Sands Town Council has received a booking from EWR for one of the events described below at the **Summerlin Centre on Saturday 25th April** for one of these sessions

- The directors of the Greens Court Management Company have agreed to pay 50% towards the cost of repairing the entrance road to the car park off Russell Street.
- Victoria Amos from local charity Men in Sheds has confirmed that the community library boxes are now ready for collection. victoria.amos@meninshedsmk.org.uk
- WSTC will decide if they should enter for the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village Competition for 2026.
- David Bray (Delivery Executive Director) and Adam Lawless (Senior Political Relations Manager) both from EWR have confirmed their attendance at the Annual Town Meeting
- I will report verbally on any issues raised with me by residents at the Meet the Mayor Session scheduled for 14 March in the Library (10am)

Backing local high streets with new investment

MKCC is investing in six of local and much-loved traditional high streets in Bletchley, Newport Pagnell, Olney, Stony Stratford, **Woburn Sands** and Wolverton to help them thrive. The council is putting £30,000 into new community led activity that brings people in, supports independent businesses, and celebrates what makes each high street special.

Working with local partners, MKCC want to spark ideas that create lively, welcoming places, from pop up events and creative projects to seasonal attractions and standout moments that boost local pride.

The city council is also investing a further £10,000 to improve public spaces and make high streets more enjoyable to spend time in. This could include brighter planting, new seating or other small but impactful changes to help create cleaner, greener and more inviting streets.

Together, these six high streets are home to more than 700 businesses and over 4,600 employees. They have a strong mix of independent traders and continue to outperform national vacancy rates, but like high streets across the country, they also face pressures as shopping habits change.

Our new funding aims to back local businesses, support communities and help these important high streets adapt and grow. Many areas have already seen the benefits of community led events and improvements, and we're building on that success to keep our high streets vibrant for the future.

Follow up: *The town clerk had a very useful call following this announcement with Lewis Campbell, Economic Development Manager at MKCC, regarding the £5,000 allocated for Woburn Sands. He advised that the funding should be used for an event aimed at increasing footfall on the High Street. Previously, the funding was used for the birthday celebrations.*

Lewis also informed the town clerk that WSTC has £3,741.46 in S106 funds available for social infrastructure improvements within the Greens Hotel development. The town clerk discussed biodiversity and whether the funds could be used for planting in the planters and installing bug hotels (something the town clerk has seen at Kingsbrook in Aylesbury). The funds could also potentially be used for benches. The town clerk also wondered if WSTC might consider relocating a couple of the green benches to the bus stop on The Leys and the bus stop on Station Road, as previously suggested by a resident, and installing new benches on the High Street.

Finally, the clerk also discussed the long-discussed mural that the owner from Mrs Mac's has been talking about for the past few years. Lewis suggested that I speak with Fiona Boundy (Arts Manager) regarding any arts funding that may be available.

Litter Picks

The Great British Spring Clean runs from 13–29 March 2026.

Parishes Forum

I attended (virtually) the Parishes Forum on 12 March.

Topics covered were....

- Presentation from Victoria Mills – Parks Trust
- Nigel Hopper – Wildlife Trust
- James Dove – Suicide Prevention
- David Hiddle - Community Safety Officer
- Tom Golding – Corporate Customer Services Manager

Snippets



Theydon Avenue – Meeting March 5th with MKCC Cabinet Member (Cllr Wilson-Marklew)

Outcomes and Actions

We considered issues split into short term, medium term and longer term actionability.

Short term - Milton Keynes City Council is implementing new, self-funding, camera-based enforcement for moving traffic offences, aiming to improve road safety at key sites. The project is designed to be financed through Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) generated from violations like illegal U-turns and yellow box junctions, with surplus funds ring-fenced for highway improvements. The council is using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to catch offenders, with penalties typically around £130 (reduced to £65 if paid within 14 days) and unlike speed camera fines, revenue from these civil traffic offences is kept by the council to pay for the enforcement costs and other transportation projects.

Mobile average speed cameras could be deployed with the aim to reduce traffic incidents and improve traffic flow by penalising offences such as speeding, illegal turns and pavement mounting.

In addition, you would look at ways in which data would again be captured from speed wires etc.

And ... the town wide 20 MPH speed limit needs to be completed asap to avoid confusion with some parts of the town currently remaining 30 MPH whilst others already being 20 MPH

Medium Term

Much concern over the likely impacts that SEMK (up to 4,000 dwellings) will bring in terms of traffic flow through Woburn Sands both via Theydon Avenue and The Leys/Hardwick Road and an analysis needs to be published as to any data already gathered and mitigation measures propose.

East West rail simply adds to this issue with a new bridge at Woodleys Farm depositing traffic from SEMK onto Bow Brickhill Road and the level crossing gates likely to be closed 30 minutes in every hour, seven days a week (5 trains per hour on EWR in each direction + freight)

A timeline for the completion of the H10 (Bletcham Way) extension through to Newport Road needs to be considered and brought forward if possible.

Longer Term

The H10 will take traffic through to M1 J13 via the proposed east of Newport Road expansion of 3250 homes) – but not before 2038 (as set out in Plan MK2050)

School access for Fulbrook School.

We then walked to Station Road to the site proposed for a safe crossing point for students..

80%+ of the students attending the secondary school (Fulbrook) are Woburn Sands (and hence MK residents). The school however is located in Central Bedfordshire.

The town council has lobbied for many years for a traffic light-controlled crossing at the point where the link through from Station Road to Weathercock Lane is located.

MKCC has promised to undertake a safer access to school study, but no sign of that as yet. Some issues caused by the fact that the school is located in CBC despite its students coming from MK.

Generally

Road repairs and signage updates are happening slowly on Theydon Avenue, thank you for that progress and I know inclement weather over the winter has not helped but still more to be done.

We also raised the issue of the fact that Newport Road from Woburn Sands through Wavendon was now 30 MPH but (through national legislation) repeater signs highlighting this fact could not be installed. Can we find a way in which perhaps WSTC and Wavendon PC might fund temporary signs to help people become aware of the new lower limit?

We agreed that you would set up a meeting with Murray Woodburn involving ward councillors and the town clerk to have a general discussion on these issues.



*East West Rail – <https://www.railmagazine.com/news>

East West Rail: still no passenger service 500 days after line opened to traffic

(*Article reproduced from Rail magazine)

Frustration is growing among residents and local politicians over the absence of passenger services along the route of the first phase of East West Rail, 500 days since the line opened to traffic and as the first anniversary approaches of Chiltern Railways being awarded the operating contract.

EWR has been beset by problems that have prevented services from running - including trade disputes, issues with rolling stock, and construction delays.

The latter includes at Winslow station - the only new station between Oxford and Milton Keynes.

Network Rail initially built it with the intention of handing it over to Chiltern last year. However, the operator has disputed whether it was acceptable for passengers, and further work has since been carried out.

Winslow councillor Diana Blamires described the lack of services as “ridiculous”.

“The whole situation is a farce. As a councillor for the town, I have to tell people that while we have a station and a train, we cannot use either,” she said.

Blamires said the lack of communication over issues with the station and when passengers can expect services to begin has been poor.

“Nobody wants to talk about it or do anything about it. We’re just no clearer to understanding what we should expect or when to expect it anymore,” she said.

Issues with doors, emergency exits, land access, car parks, platforms and shelters have all been blamed by various stakeholders for the delays at Winslow. One union source said the station was “not fit for purpose”.

Winslow’s platforms, currently long enough to accommodate four-car trains, are set to be lengthened in preparation for construction of the Universal Studios theme park near Bedford, which will bring higher passenger numbers.

East West Rail Company now plans to procure five-car trains for long-term use along the entire line.

No date has been given for the works, but in a statement the company said: “Any work to extend platforms at Winslow would not affect the introduction of Chiltern’s new services.”

Both Network Rail and Chiltern confirmed to RAIL that work was continuing at Winslow station, but did not provide a timeframe for when the work is expected to be completed or when the station will be handed over to the operator.

Meanwhile, the dispute over Driver Only Operation (DOO) continues. RAIL understands that the RMT union and Chiltern are no closer to an agreement on which member of staff operates the doors, with both RMT and drivers’ union ASLEF resistant to DOO being implemented.

Sources have told RAIL that while it has not balloted its members on any strike action, the RMT has also not ruled it out if a resolution is not forthcoming.

ASLEF has paused driver training using Class 196s sub-leased from West Midlands Railway (part of West Midlands Trains, WMT) until an agreement has been reached between RMT and Chiltern. In the meantime, it has raised concerns with the units’ on-board cameras.

The union currently has 13 qualified drivers and close to 30 trainees at Bletchley, waiting to be trained on the diesel multiple units, but will only negotiate with Chiltern once the RMT and the operator have resolved their situation.

Chiltern has sent back three of the six ‘196s’ sub-leased from WMT to its depot at Tyseley. WMT confirmed to RAIL that one of the units has been sub-sub-leased back to operate driver training on Birmingham’s soon-to-be-opened Camp Hill Line.

Two more are undergoing “heavy maintenance and modification work” at Tyseley, but are due back at Chiltern.

The situation has elicited anger from local politicians.

Richard Fuller, MP for North Bedfordshire, said: “What do you call a railway company that cannot decide on a route, cannot decide how to power its trains, cannot get its drivers to drive the trains, and fails for nearly 500 days to deliver a service it promised?

“You would call it East West Rail - perhaps the most incompetent business in the country.”

Olly Glover, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Transport and MP for nearby Didcot and Wantage, said: “It is a scandal that a restored railway worth hundreds of millions of pounds still has no regular passenger service on it, well over a year since it was fully commissioned.”

Chiltern Railways told RAIL: “Since being announced as operator of the first stage of East West Rail between Oxford and Milton Keynes in March, we have been working at pace to get everything ready for services to begin on the new line.

"However, there is work still to finish to prepare the trains, on Winslow station, and on the operating arrangements for the new route."

And (MK Citizen 13th March 2026)

The Environment Agency has this week appointed a regulator to speed up the East West Rail project – but there's still no news of a start date for the much-delayed MK to Oxford line.

The new 'Lead Environmental Regulator' will coordinate streamlined, joined-up advice from all relevant regulators to save the developer dealing with a "merry-go-round" of overlapping environmental bodies, say officials from the non-departmental government body.

And the more efficient and streamlined way of working will allow East West Rail to focus on delivering the rail project for communities in Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Bedford and beyond, they have pledged in a lengthy press statement.

But the statement gives no mention of an opening date for the much-delayed £1.3 billion East West rail line built specifically to connect MK to Oxford.

More than a year after completion, this line is still lying dormant with appointed operators Chiltern Railways reportedly locked in battle with RTM union over the type of trains chosen for the new service. The union is against the use of Driver Only Operation (DOO) trains, saying they are unsafe.

Chiltern say they are "working at pace" for services to begin and making "significant progress" – but have not hinted at a date.

From today (Thursday March 12) the Environment Agency will act as a single point of developer's contact for the entire East West Rail project.

"Rather than them navigating a complex maze of overlapping regulators, we will provide streamlined, joined-up advice on behalf of all relevant environmental bodies, including Natural England. This will maintain full scrutiny and compliance with environmental law, while speeding up planning approvals and saving the developer valuable time and resource," said an agency spokesperson.

"Once complete, 3.5 million people across Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Bedford will have access to more frequent trains, better connections and a station closer to home. East West Rail is set to bring £6.7 billion in economic growth to the area and up to 100,000 new houses along the route that commuters, families and young people can call home." they added.

When asked about an opening date for passengers wanting to use the MK to Oxford line, they said: "DfT is supporting Chiltern Railways as they work closely with unions and other industry partners to get services on the first phase of East West Rail up and running as soon as possible.

"The East West Rail project is transformational, unlocking thousands of jobs and homes, kickstarting hundreds of thousands of pounds of economic growth for communities across England. It is crucial that services on the completed phase of this programme are allowed to start, and the benefits of this scheme can begin."

The spokesperson added: "The new system is focused purely on cutting bureaucracy, not environmental standards...Local residents have been waiting for East West Rail for a long time. Many are probably sceptical that it will ever be completed. This is because there is a deep-rooted feeling

that essential infrastructure in Britain takes too long to build. Our role as Lead Environmental Regulator will help change that, without compromising the standards we are here to uphold.”

Alongside the new Lead Regulator model, the government is investing £100 million in digital services and specialist staff for the Environment Agency and Natural England to help process planning applications faster.

Emma Reynolds, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said: "Our regulators do vital work protecting the environment we all depend on. These Strategic Policy Statements give them a clear mandate to deliver on our twin missions – economic growth and nature recovery.

“Having one Lead Environmental Regulator in charge speeds up approvals and helps projects like East West Rail to progress at pace, without compromising our ironclad commitment to the environment. This is a win-win situation for jobs, prosperity and nature.”

David Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, East West Rail, said: “We warmly welcome the appointment of a Lead Environmental Regulator for East West Rail. This single point of contact will make a huge difference, as it will ensure that key decisions can be made efficiently and effectively. Crucially, this will deliver momentum for the construction of the railway, helping us deliver infrastructure that works for nature and communities, allowing the region to feel the economic and social benefits of East West Rail far sooner than would have otherwise been the case.”

The East West Rail project is set to unlock £6.7 billion in economic growth, support 100,000 new homes, and provide more frequent trains for passengers between Oxford and Cambridge.

It represents a significant step towards delivering the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, which could add up to £78 billion to the UK economy by 2035.



Thames Valley Police *Have your Say* meetings

Crime Prevention Stand Woburn Sands Market, Woburn Sands	10:00AM - 2:00PM, Sat 14 March 2026
Have Your Say Woburn Sands Memorial Hall, High Street, Woburn Sands	7:00PM - 8:00PM, Tue 31 March 2026



Universal Studios

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has approved Universal request for planning permission to be granted by way of making a Special Development Order (SDO).

While there are still further steps to complete, including a statutory parliamentary review period, this decision represents another important milestone for the project. Universal on-site activity will now gradually start to increase, and they will share more information about project activity and construction in the Spring. **Contact - gidon.freeman@nbcuni.com**. Gidon Freeman is Universal Destinations & Experiences vice president



*Join the
Youth Council*

Woburn Sands (Proposed) Youth Club / Possible Youth Town Council

Responses have now been received to the tender for the provision of youth services in the town. The Town Council will discuss the options and reach a decision at its April meeting.

Community Library Boxes



Two Community Library boxes (to the design illustrated) have now been constructed by Men in Sheds and collected ready for installation in two locations in the town.



New Local Plan – MK2050 (Reg 19 Consultation Closed)

Following the re-opened Regulation 19 consultation (closed 16 February 2026), the MK City Plan 2050 is expected to be submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2026. A Planning Inspector will then conduct an Examination in Public to test for legal compliance and soundness before final adoption.

Next Steps After March 2026:

- **Examination in Public:** An independent Planning Inspector will review the plan to ensure it meets legal requirements and national policy.
- **Plan Adoption:** Following the examination and any required modifications, the City Council will formally adopt (or "make") the plan, replacing the current Plan:MK.

- Implementation: The plan will guide development to deliver over 38,000 new homes, with a focus on urban areas, sustainable transport, and green initiatives.
- Strategic Projects: Key focus areas include transforming Bletchley, integrating new Metro services, and adopting a "tall buildings" strategy for Central Milton Keynes.

The plan aims to manage growth up to 2050, supporting a population projected to reach 410,000

Where to Find More Info: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/mk-city-plan-2050/mk-city-plan-2050>



MK City Council Transport Strategy

The LTP5 consultation is now live on the Commonplace website here

<https://mktransportconversation.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/v3/the-local-transport-plan?step=step1>

The LTP5 Summary Document for Consultation which is attached here is really all that's needed - and I would draw your attention to the blue text boxes at the end of each section which highlight our policies and programmes in each of the subject areas, namely:

- Roads, Traffic and Parking,
- Travelling Safely,
- Improving Public Transport,
- Enabling and Encouraging Active Travel, and
- Future Transport.

I hope providing the LTP5 Summary Document for Consultation will assist with your discussions on the plan, and in formulating your responses.

Residents can send their views to the MKCC dedicated email address at

transport.planning@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Bucks and MK Fire – Protection of Greensand

Ridge Woodlands

Site visit with Bucks & MK Fire Authority – with Adam Moore (Station Commander West Ashland)

Plan for a major fire exercise in the woodlands in May.

- *We walked across towards Sandy Lane then back between the golf courses to Aspley woods and around to the Church and along Drakewell Road.*
- *We saw various hydrants and reservoirs*
- *Adam noted issues over access for the 4x4 vehicle and will discuss with Woburn Estates what vehicles they have to assist*
- *The fire service no longer has drones but TVP have them in every car apparently and would be used to assist - another idea would be to use the turntable ladder to get a view*
- *The proposed exercise is likely to be held in May so ground conditions are similar to summertime*
- *the exercise is really for the purpose of gauging access for vehicles and water supplies as well as giving training to firefighters. It will not involve a massive amount of fire vehicles for example and will not want civilian involvement*
- *Adam will liaise with the Estate and Beds fire service.*

Flood and Water Management Spring Update

<https://cmemailmarketing.co.uk/img/A56D78427/Milton%20Keynes%20City%20Council/Democratic%20Services/Images%20and%20Files/March/Spring%202026%20Cllr%20news%20FWMT.pdf>

The Flood and Water Management Team are pleased to share a spring update (link above) which includes information, advice and guidance relating to flood and water management, including an up-to-date report on current enforcement cases. For more information, please contact LLFA@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

Cllr David Hopkins

Mayor of Woburn Sands 2025/26

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