



Redevelopment of 5-7 Church Street Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council 11th Feb 2020 Agenda Item: 5

Update:

1. Further to my report Property Development Committee Meeting in December. The Town Council approved the recommendations made by the Working Group at the January Full Council meeting.
2. Survey results on the increase to the precept to help pay for the refurbishment (excluding the Solar Panels) (*see attached, Appendix A*)
3. Asbestos considerations: We have been advised by MKC and the company approved to undertake the Refurbishment and Demolition survey (necessary before any works are undertaken), that an additional localised Refurbishment and Demolition survey is necessary prior to the Installation of the Solar Panels. Further, the management of asbestos survey and log is inadequate (due to changes in regulations). A new management survey is necessary. The total cost is £650. £285 of this fee will be to undertake the Localised Refurbishment and Demolition survey (this will be funded from the S.106 Carbon Offset fund from Elizabeth House. The remainder (£365, funded from the 5-7 Church Street Reserve) will be to carry out an up to date Asbestos management survey. Should the survey require additional high-level access equipment, costs could go up to a maximum of an additional £500. It should be noted that the management survey is required as part of a client's Management Plan in accordance with CAR 2012: Regulation 4 'Duty to Manage' and the survey does not in itself constitute a Management Plan as defined by CAR 2012. Upon completion of the survey, I will obtain quotes for the production of a Management Plan based on its findings. In addition to these costs, an electrician will need to be on site to shut down the power. This work is scheduled for Monday 10th February when the Library will be closed.
4. Scaffolding considerations: The responsibility for obtaining the relevant permission for erecting scaffolding on Church and MKC Highways land (including permission to suspend parking bays) has been passed to Wolverton Community Energy. A letter of support has been sent to the Diocese and Highways have been informed by the TC of the imminent application.
5. S.106 Carbon Offset Funds (from the Elizabeth House development): Originally, MKC advised that any organisation could make the application and as much of the application for release of funds was technical (and as WCE are appointing the contractors), this was passed to our partners WCE to complete. The release form was then submitted by the TC together with a letter of support from the Town Council. The TC also sent letters requesting support for the release of funds to MKC SSTC Ward Councillors and received confirmation of their support. Subsequently, MKC advised that they could not give the money to an organisation and it would have to be given to Stony Stratford Town Council. The TC duly amended (with the SSTC named as the applicant and bank details) and re-submitted the form by return. We have now received confirmation from MKC that we will receive a payment of £33,950 to be paid into the Town Council's interest-bearing account. I will organise passing over the monies on completion of the and on receipt of an itemised invoice from WCE.

5.1 Extension of Partnership Agreement with Milton Keynes Council:

Background: The Partnership Agreement relating to Stony Stratford Library was signed on 25th February 2013, remains in force for a period of 25 years (ending on 24th February 2038) and is reviewed on an annual basis. The contract and lease with Wolverton Community Energy (WCE) is for 25 years. MKC have indicated that there are 2 main options to enable SSTC to sign the lease agreement for installation of the photovoltaics:

- a) to vary the terms of the Partnership Agreement and extend another 7 years (to 2045): this is a fairly major change and will need MKC to consult their legal team. Although there is not a present thought to be any reason that MKC would want to take the Library back into Council ownership or the Town Council to hand back the Library
- b) to reduce the lease with WCE to coincide with the end of the Partnership Agreement with Milton Keynes Council.

I have suggested a further option for consideration:

- c) to amend the lease and contract between SSTC and WCE to coincide with the end of the Partnership Agreement with Milton Keynes Council with an option to extend for a further 7 years. This should negate a change to the Partnership Agreement (subject to confirmation by MKC Libraries Service), which might have held up the project. WCE have indicated that they would be happy with this option and I am awaiting confirmation in writing from MKC Libraries Service.

- 5.2 Installation of Photovoltaics Project: Following legal advice obtained by SSTC, as previously circulated. Council to APPROVE
 - a) Amendments to the Lease agreement with Wolverton Community Energy: amended lease to be tabled
 - b) Amendments to the contract with Wolverton Community Energy: amended lease (to be tabled)
and make resolution to sign the amended agreement

- 5.3 Next Steps: to consider

Lynne Compton, PSLCC

Clerk to the Council

2. Survey results on the increase to the precept to help pay for the refurbishment (excluding the Solar Panels)

a) Engagement process: The project details and questionnaires were circulated to every household in Stony Stratford, Fullers Slade and Galley Hill via the Stony Stratford newsletter (which was delivered during Mid to end December 2019). Consultation responses were requested by 17th January 2020. The details were also circulated via Facebook (a number of times) from 9th December 2019, on the Stony Stratford website and available in the Library. Residents were given a variety of options to complete the form: hard copy, via email and via the Survey Monkey link.

b) The main single question was

Q1: Would you support an annual increase in the precept of £4.70 per annum (based on a Band D property) to support the cost of refurbishment?

There were also two additional boxes:

Q2: freeform box for comments

Q3: box for the respondents' postcode.

c) Analysis of Responses:

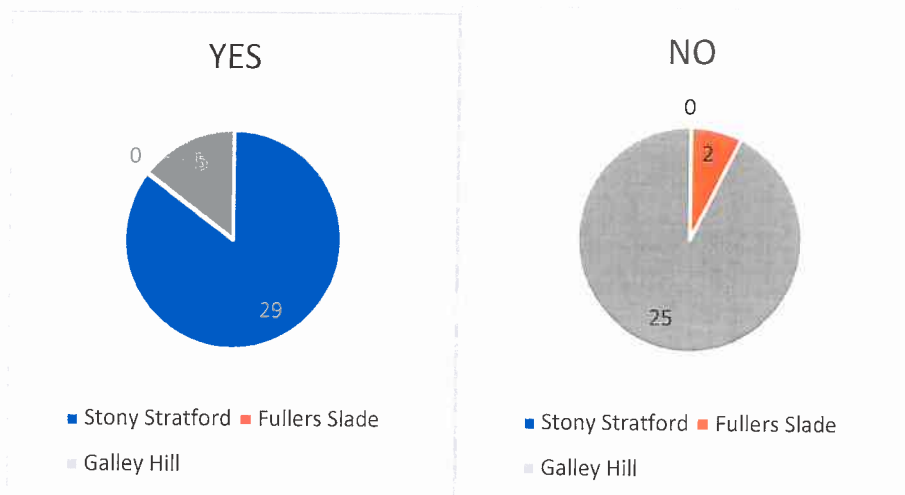
As you can see from Table 1 below, the majority of respondents chose Survey Monkey. Unfortunately, there is no way of downloading the responses into PDF/CSV format without paying for an upgrade.

➤ **Table 1: Number of respondents split by medium for response**

Medium for Response	YES	NO	TOTALS
via hard copy:	12	0	12
via email (then printed):	1	0	1
Via Survey Monkey*	21	27	48
TOTALS	34	27	61
Percentage of total responses	56%	43%	

*62 in total, 1 of which was a test by the PCO

➤ The split between postcodes was as follows:



- The average time to complete a questionnaire via Survey Monkey was 57 seconds.

Conclusion: 61 responses is a reasonable response rate and represents of just over 1% of the electorate of 5971. The percentage in favour of the increase is 56% and put together with the evidence of support for the project from the previous workshops and consultations, provides a basis for applying for the Public Works Loan Board Loan.

- Below is a summary of the additional comments.

YES
I would support a higher annual increase if it meant that the Parish Council building could become Carbon Neutral. The good quality wooden bookshelves should be retained and mended rather than replaced with plastic. Any kitchen appliances should be of a high carbon efficiency
Why are the improvement to every other library facility in the Borough paid for by Milton Keynes taxpayers when the costs of improvements to our local library fall exclusively on the tax-payers of Stony Stratford? I am concerned that a project that began in 2014 has made so little progress. This maybe suggests that is its neither very necessary nor feasible Would like to see a more reliable cost estimate before the Town Council commits
What changes will take place upstairs. Will it be adult books as at present with additional space for community events
We are happy to support improvements to the library. We do feel the 200K seems excessive and that most of the objectives could be reached without heightening the ceiling. I do hope that the interest rate quotes is fixed for the term of the loan.
We would happily pay an additional £10 pa to shorten the loan period and reduce interest We would support crowdfunding and grant bidding Is low ceiling really a problem? Could the mobile library be in Cofferridge Close or elsewhere rather than Market Square (which already has limited parking)
It is important that the Library is improved and kept in good order for future generations
The Library is a fantastic resource, we are please to keep supporting it
Happy to increase the precept – but can any of this be done through crowd funding? Or share scheme where the interest paid back is less than 3.12% If nothing else can we crowd fund for the solar panels? Materials used need to be environmentally sustainable, likewise the contractors. Could people sponsor elements, such as a panel/roof tile basted on costed appeal? See EGNU example.
The library space should be a considerable asset to the town, but it has looked very 'tired' for years. I think the refurbishment is a good idea, especially with all the new neighbours on Fairfield & Whitehouse. The improved facilities should bring real benefits socially and economically to Stony.
We would welcome these proposals to best maximise the use of space & update the library
Support the refurbishment although very much hope that the closurw does not overrun as 6 months is a long time to be closed. I would also support more paid professional staff in the library and less reliance on the machines.
This is am Important community resource
Easy for me to say 'yes" to Q1 - I can afford it. I am concerned that some cannot
Whilst I understand the increase may difficult to manage, I believe it is a very worthwhile cause and that a more modern fit for purpose building is necessary as a community resource.
As long as the library is not to be reduced in space while the SSTC takes up more of the area. Q3
This is a worthwhile investment and I'm very happy to support upgrading the library. Let's do more fundraisers. Also, could you make sure there is good WiFi and lots of desks with sockets for people who need to work/study at the library please?
The library serves an important part in the life of the town.
I understand, and welcome, the need for refurbishment to make the Library an (even more) vibrant part of Stony life. However, I have a BIG concern about the location of a temporary/mobile library in Market Square. The problem is the perennial Market Square issue of parking. As a resident, we have difficulty enough parking in the Square because of the shortage of spaces. As SSTC knows, there are usually four, sometimes more, cars illegally parked on the pavements (except when the parking wardens come to town). We already regularly lose spaces once a month (Market) and on a number of other times in the year (car rallies and Lights switch on). I am quite aware that Market Square is a logical location, but please can you consider the impact this would have.

NO
much more pressing things need looking at
I think the property should be refurbished, but I have a issue with the how that money will be raised. If Town Hall is to be treated as a separate item on the Tax bill? If so then that is just raising Taxes by the back door! Will that amount always be shown separately and the amount always stay the same for 30 years (other than interest rates perhaps) like a Mortgage? Or will it just be included in the total Tax bill for next year (which is a Tax increase) and then the amount go up every year in line with other Council Tax rises? If the latter, then you are profiteering from the loan repayments. You need to pay refurbishment costs out of current Taxes and budget for it like any other cost you have to. If you can't afford Social Care, then you can't afford your refurbishment! Does the council lease or own the building? If leased, then why are you paying for refurbishment; that is for the Landlord. If you own it, then presumably the Library are Tenants of yours; are they to pay an increased rent for the enhanced premises.
I do not see that this is a great use of funds especially if we do not have the funds in the first place and you are taking out a loan for what is not a necessity but a nice to have. I do not support this.
Fullers Slade get very little value from Library and it's too expensive for them to travel into Stony
my concern is that we will lose the library
The Town Council Rates have gone up each year for the past few years and they never go down. This is an uncapped Stealth Tax

The scarcity of responses from Fullers Slade and Galley Hill postcodes might be due to:

- i. A lower number of Council taxpayers in relation to Stony Stratford leading to a feeling that as they don't pay Council Tax, it is not worth responding.
 - ii. Lack of engagement with the process
 - iii. Library facilities not used (one reason given was the expense of travelling into Stony)
- d) Publication of results: The results of the consultation will be publicised via the website and a summary in the next edition of the Town Crier. I am also endeavouring to ascertain from Milton Keynes Council, the spread of Council Taxpayers and bands between the postcodes.
- e) Council may wish to **CONSIDER** the following actions:
- i. Sharing the responses with Milton Keynes Library Service and asking for responses on the items relating to the Library.
 - ii. Putting responses to the questions raised in the next edition of the newsletter and on the website

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