

Our mission is to make this area a safer place and to promote a strong sense of pride in all our communities.

The NAG is made up of local residents, Parish and Ward Councillors, Police, Fire service and Milton Keynes Council.

Welcome to the 5th edition of our newsletter. Our priorities remain Residential Parking, Anti-social Behaviour and Litter.

We have continued to work tirelessly on your behalf to improve things – our key objective being to provide you with a safer and better quality of life.

It is not easy, and we need wide ranging skills, time and effort to move towards that magical point where we can say - truthfully - that we are making a real difference! Getting to that point cannot be achieved without you - our 'eyes and ears' and we rely on you to let us know what your problems are. We cannot do what we do alone. Working together is the most effective way to make that lasting difference. We all have the right to be safe and to enjoy the peace and quiet of our homes. We should always value these basic rights and be willing to help make sure that they are preserved.

As always, elsewhere in this newsletter, our three priorities are discussed in a little more depth, as well as some other more seasonal / topical items. Please take time to read the articles and ensure that family members are also made aware of what's happening in their streets and the advice given.

Please think about what you could contribute in your neighbourhood, and ask the question - whatever the subject under discussion - is that me they could be talking about? If it is, please think about doing something positive about it!

Our message remains the same – keep safe, don't forget to regularly check the security of your property, always be a good, considerate neighbour, and if you witness anything suspicious, or unacceptable, **ALWAYS REPORT IT!** Nothing will improve if you ignore it!

All our estates are designated **Drinking Control Areas**. This means that a police officer can require you not to drink in public and this may result in the alcohol being confiscated and a Penalty Notice of Disorder issued.



Litter Why is Litter - dropped in the streets and on verges - considered by some to be acceptable? Often it is passed off as a 'social disease' - which it clearly is - but one that isn't incurable!

Surely, when you eat snacks, sweets and drink fizzy drinks whilst watching the TV you don't throw the packaging down on the lounge floor or, when you relax in your back garden, litter your own lawn or patio? So, what's the difference when you are in the street?

Recently, we did a litter pick in an area covering about 100 metres and managed to fill 5 pink sacks and dispose (correctly) of numerous glass bottles (beer and vodka). What sort of litter? Mostly sweet and snack wrappers, fizzy drink cans and plastic bottles. Not particularly good for dental care or personal fitness! There were also quite a few plastic bags from the local shops – do you always need one?



Although many adults do set a poor example, it is clear there is still a lot of litter caused by children and young people. We hope that parents - together with the work done in local schools - will get across the anti-social nature of littering and the adverse effects that it has on the community and environment.

How many reasons or excuses (and there are loads of them) have you heard? Litter is everyone's problem, and there is never an excuse!

**Excuses,
Excuses,
Excuses!**

- Can't be bothered or are too lazy to find a bin
- No sense of pride in their community
- Lack of education / poor parenting of young people
- We live in a throwaway society with a 'snack culture'
- It's not cool to use a bin
- Litter keeps someone in a job
- There aren't enough bins

**We've heard
them all!**

And finally:

- Litter is unsightly and can be dangerous, smelly and dirty
- If an area is heavily littered, it can lead to the 'broken window' effect – more litter, fly tipping, fly posting, graffiti and vandalism affecting local communities and the people who live there
- Clean up costs are met through the Council Tax - out of your pocket!

We organise 'one-hour' Litter Picks regularly – why don't you join us and do your bit for the neighbourhood?

Did you know? The UK is one of the most heavily littered countries in Europe.

Parking You may have seen and heard in the media that Milton Keynes was rated the number one most car dependent city in the UK. (*ref. Campaign for Better Transport*). So, if that's true - why do we have so much trouble with residential parking and regularly experience frustration and conflict? Did the planners recognise this?

In truth there are many reasons for problems with parking. Some are illegal, lots are due to selfishness and laziness with little thought for neighbours and others simply down to layout and design of the areas in which we live.

Some of our estates, particularly the newer ones, were built when central government penalised private car ownership by bringing in legislation that gave developers the green light to provide facilities to minimum standards with very low car to property ratios. The fact that this legislation has since been relaxed does not help us. We are left to deal with the problems and have to face the fact that we have what we have!

The expected cutbacks in public spending prevent any real, lasting physical solutions in the short to medium term and we can only focus on **parking behaviour** and **illegal practices**.

This newsletter deals with two of the most contentious and emotive issues - **parking on pavements** and **parking on grass verges**.

Firstly, parking on pavements and verges is illegal if you cause an obstruction and you could be issued with a warning from the Police if you are causing an obstruction. If not heeded, you could get a Fixed Penalty Fine. We make no apologies for stating that if you break the law you can expect consequences and, as a NAG, we will fully support the Police in their duty.


Why shouldn't I park on the pavement of verge - it doesn't cause a problem?

Think again!

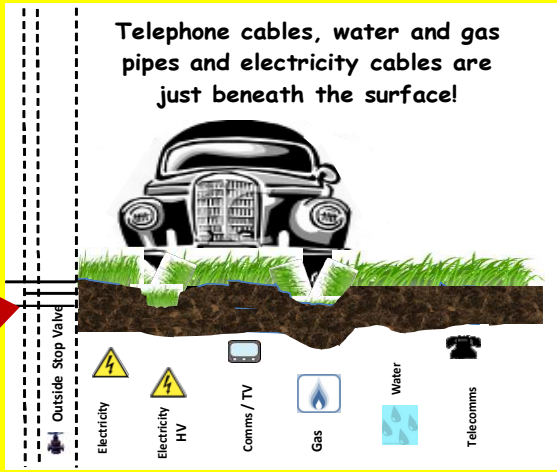
- **Dangerous**, as it obstructs pedestrians and causes people of all ages to walk in the road
- **Hazardous** for blind and partially sighted people
- A particular **problem for disabled** people and people with **prams**
- It causes **damage** to grass verges, to the detriment of local amenities. Damage can also be caused to vital underground services and access to fire hydrants may also be **blocked in an emergency**
- Most pavements are not designed to carry vehicles and parking on them can cause damage which adds to **maintenance costs**

Parking on Grass Verges

You are doing more harm than you think!

Does this look familiar? 

Telephone cables, water and gas pipes and electricity cables are just beneath the surface!



Please park sensibly and legally at all times – causing an obstruction could cost you a fine!



New members wanted

Would you like to be more involved in your community to solve the issues that matter to you? Could you spare a few hours each month?

We want a broader representation of residents across our whole area, and we are looking for more volunteers (from Monkston in particular) to join our Neighbourhood Action Group. We would also like some younger people to join us and bring a different insight to the group. For more information please contact the Clerk on 07946 512523.

This is your chance to make a real contribution to your local community.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
For all Emergencies	999
Thames Valley Police	0845 8 505 505
Bucks & MK Fire	01296 744400
Crimestoppers	800 555 111
Milton Keynes Council - Environmental	01908 252570
Milton Keynes Council - Out of Hours	01908 226699
Anti-Social Behaviour Team (0900 - 1700hrs)	01908 691691
Kents Hill & Monkston Parish Council	07946 512523
Safer Communities Helpline	01908 252400
Milton Keynes Community Mediation Service	01908 200828

Not sure what the kids are spending their pocket money on? We see lots of underage smoking. Amazingly, lots of teenagers will light up within a few paces of leaving the school gates and others take the long way round to school for that last puff before starting in the morning. Please make sure that your child is not one of them. Stop them smoking now – they are wasting money and putting their health at risk!

Anti-social behaviour cannot be tackled effectively if it isn't reported so it's vital that residents engage with the Police, and partner agencies, and report incidents when they happen.

The advice from Inspector Colleen Lavery for the South neighbourhoods is ...*"our message is clear – we encourage everyone to report anti-social behaviour. In an emergency dial 999 but if it is not an emergency people can call us on 08458 505 505, report the incident on line or report it to their neighbourhood watch co-ordinator or ring crime stoppers. Of course they can always report the incident to a member of the local neighbourhood policing team"*.

Vandalism is a word that is commonly used for damage done on purpose and for no good reason to any public or private property. People might talk of vandalism when bus shelters or phone boxes are trashed, when car aerials are snapped off or the paint is scratched, when windows are smashed, when play equipment is damaged, when litter bins are pushed over or when flowers and plants (and even young trees) are pulled and are thrown around. Often, when we see these acts of vandalism we just shrug our shoulders and carry on!

Vandalism is not 'having fun'. It can be a serious crime known as Criminal Damage that carries anything up to 10 years in prison. Vandalism can be very distressing for the owner of the property. It also causes inconvenience, it can be very expensive to make repairs and not everyone has got insurance to cover it. So the cost of vandalism often results in price rises for different things, such as what you buy in shops, the fares on buses and trains, and your Council Tax.

Think about what you've seen vandalised. Vandalism makes areas look grubby and people may stop caring about where they live. Soon, more and more things get vandalised, areas become dangerous and people don't want to live there. So vandalism doesn't just affect you or the owner of the property, it can affect everybody in your community.

Doesn't affect me! You couldn't be more wrong! It affects us all!

Changes in your Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood Management - Milton Keynes Council has allocated six teams across the Borough to work closely with communities to tackle and resolve a wide range of locally determined 'environmental' issues. Localised neighbourhood management and service delivery aims to meet priorities and to improve our quality of life.

Chris Carvell is our Neighbourhood Manager and he will cover the South Sector that includes the parishes of Broughton & Milton Keynes, Kents Hill & Monkston, Walton and Woughton. He and his team will be responsible for liaising with us to determine how local needs, preferences and priorities are addressed.

As well as being responsible for their sector, each Neighbourhood Manager will also be responsible for a cross cutting service area:

- **Fix it MK** - a reactive task force carrying out repairs and maintenance to the streets, play areas and illuminated furniture
- **Landscape** - creating an attractive environment whilst managing, developing and protecting the expanse of open space and countryside in Milton Keynes
- **Highways** - delivering highway and general street maintenance to our highway network
- **Cohesion & Partnerships** - dealing with our statutory obligations associated with environmental crime, anti social behaviour and other community issues
- **My Street MK** - delivering the statutory cleaning function and engaging communities in the delivery of this
- **Communications** - neighbourhood management news and projects

How will we benefit?

- Physical improvement to the environment
- People feeling safer and safety is the first priority
- Improved communications with a single point of contact
- Smarter ways of working
- Consistent approach to working with partners
- Medium – long term: greater efficiencies will result
- Communities will have a say in local priorities

Who's in our Neighbourhood Team?

Manager	Chris Carvell
Neighbourhood Environmental Officers (NEO's)	Kate Guiney
	Maurice Barnes
	Herbie Dawson
Wardens	Michael Kerrigan
	Tony Brown

The first step when reporting an environmental issue should be to either ring the helpline on **01908 252570** or report through the MK Council website www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/street-care/

Anti-Social Behaviour in this NAG Area

ASB Incident Type	Kents Hill	Monkston	Monkston Park	Brinklow Kingston	Total Area
Rowdy and / or Inconsiderate	19	35	29	11	94
Inconsiderate Neighbours	28	31	20	1	80
Vehicle ASB	15	13	12	10	50
Environmental	5	4	15	4	28
Other	6	2	3	5	16
Total Offences - Jan - Aug 2010	73	85	79	31	268
% Share	27%	32%	29%	12%	

Key:

Top Item

Second

Third

And that's only the ones we know about!