

# LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL

## UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT ABBOTSBROOK HALL FROM 8PM ON FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023 AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Present:	Mrs J Murray - Clerk Cllr K Acres - Chairman Cllr V Morton Cllr S Goss Cllr A Crabtree Cllr P Emmett Cllr S Kershaw Buckinghamshire Cllr Watson Buckinghamshire Cllr Johncock Buckinghamshire Cllr C Heap Joy Morrissey MP	Mrs B Wallis Mrs V Brownridge Mr W & Mrs P Northcroft Mrs L Johncock Mrs Oyku Tevfik Ms Jane Vincent Mr M Scott Mr C Stopps Mrs R Stopps Mrs S Brown Mr R Lewin Mr R Mills Mr Ashford Mr G Carter Mr A Snowden Mr J Macneil Ms J Waterman Mr R Sherwin Ms A Turner Mr M Power
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### APM23/01

#### 1. Welcome & Introduction by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council

### APM23/02

#### 2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr R Start, Cllr J Downes, Thames Valley Police

### APM23/03

#### 3. Minutes of previous meeting held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022

The Minutes of the previous meeting were **RESOLVED**, and the Chairman duly signed them.

### APM23/04

#### 4. Report from Joy Morrissey MP

Joy Morrissey reported that she was committed to protecting our greenbelt and waterways. She expressed her support for Little Marlow Parish Council (LMPC), Save Marlow's Greenbelt (SMG) and residents of Westhorpe in vigorously opposing the planning application for Marlow Film Studios and she had written to Buckinghamshire Council in support of the long proposed Country Park. She said that she was meeting with DEFRA to discuss increasing fines to Thames Water for violating the law re water pollution levels and suggested that prison sentences should be considered if utility companies continued to refuse to invest in the required infrastructure.

Ms Morrissey kindly took questions from the floor.

LMPC Chairman Councillor K Acres thanked Joy for attending the Parish Meeting and for her support.

APM23/05

## 5. Annual Report given by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council

Presented by Cllr K Acres, Chairman of the Parish Council

The full Parish Council has met nine times since our last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2022 and the Parish Council committees have met regularly. Sadly we collectively mourned the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (the second) in September 2022.

Parish Councillors have represented the Council on various outside bodies throughout the year, including the Southwest Chilterns Community Board and its four action groups.

The work undertaken and the money spent by the Parish Council is all carefully (and transparently) recorded on our website. You can find out many things by visiting [www.littlemarlowparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.littlemarlowparishcouncil.org.uk).

We have 9 seats on the Parish Council and co-opted Councillors Rose Start and Mike Wandsworth last year. Sadly Councillor Wandsworth resigned but happily Rose is still with us and we have two potential candidates for the vacancy which we hope to fill at our May meeting. Buckinghamshire Council and Town and Parish Council Elections will next be held in May 2025 and it would be wonderful to have a democratically contested election for LMPC. Hopefully the King's volunteering initiative will encourage more people to volunteer to become councillors?

It was with great sadness (and some trepidation on my part) that we received Councillor Valerie Brownridge's resignation in May 2022. Cllr Brownridge was elected to the Parish Council in May 2011 and served as Chairman with care, commitment and a great deal of hard work from May 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the huge amount of work she did while on the Council and I still greatly value her wise advice on Council issues.

The Council is fortunate to own a number of assets which both serve the community and bring in welcome income. With the exception of the recreation ground (which I will come on to) income has increased by 19% compared to pre covid income levels in the year ending March 2020, which is excellent news. We reviewed our 2022/23 Action Plan which set out our objectives for the year at our April Council meeting and drew up a new Action Plan for 2023/24 (including a number of new objectives relating to the environment). The plan can be found on the previously mentioned website [www.littlemarlowparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.littlemarlowparishcouncil.org.uk).

### Pavilion/Recreation Ground

Sadly the 'drastic measures' we took last year to control the bunnies had little impact on net migration (to coin a government phrase) and new bunny families moved straight back in, rendering the football pitch unusable for junior football this year, and meaning overall income was down by 5% compared to pre covid levels. Luckily the cricket pitch remained protected and our thanks once again go to Richard Tedham for maintaining the recreation ground so excellently.

## Abbotsbrook Hall

Fortunately a new owner Nathalie McDonald has taken over the pre-school group following the retirement of Angela Gregg after 17 years and the group has gone from strength to strength. I am grateful to our Hirings Administrator, Christine Samuels, and to our caretaker, Peter Samuels, for all they both do to ensure the smooth running of the hall.

## Burial Ground

Work has continued on expanding the cemetery by clearing the copse to become a new area for burials once we run out of space in the existing cemetery. In the meantime, we have sown wildflower seeds in the top part of the copse. Wild Marlow organised a successful working party with the Parish Council at the cemetery in November 2022 to plant whips and bulbs and to install owl and bird nesting boxes, bee boxes and to create a hibernaculum habitat for reptiles and invertebrates.

## Allotments

The allotments continue to be an asset for the community and all our allotments are now taken. We are taking steps to control water usage and have updated future contracts to reflect the Parish Council's sustainable environment agenda.

## Environment

The big news is that following consultation with parishioners LMPC has committed to replacing all streetlights in the Parish with LED lighting at a cost of c£27,000 (using funds from CIL grants arising from Planning approvals in the Parish) and work is due to start on this imminently. Not only is this the right thing to do for the environment but it will result in considerable savings in energy costs. We have also (with some funding from the Community Board) installed cycle racks at Abbotsbrook Hall, the recreation ground and in Coldmoorholme Lane car park.

The Parish Council is lobbying to influence the evolution of the Little Marlow Country Park (whose scale is currently threatened by Buckinghamshire Council's proposal to limit its size). Councillor Sam Kershaw chairs the Little Marlow Country Park Vision Working Group consisting of Parish and Ward Councillors and other interested parties which is committed to trying to bring about the Country Park as it has always been envisaged.

The Parish Council continues to carry out the grass cutting and other work which the then Buckinghamshire County Council devolved to us in 2015. The Devolved services contract was rolled over for a further year until March 2024.

We are grateful to volunteers from Coldmoorholme Lane Residents Association for the time and effort they put into maintaining and keeping litter free the car park funded (in part) by £500 per annum contributed by The Spade Oak Pub.

I would like to end by saying a few more thankyou's. We are fortunate to have two active Residents' Associations in the parish and I greatly appreciate the support and co-operation from their Chairmen, Guy Carter and Sam Kershaw (who (with much help from local residents Claire

Rolfe and Martin Braint) did a splendid job of organising the Coronation celebration kindly hosted by Councillor Jason Downes and his wife Priya). Martin Braint and Councillor Downes also ran a fabulous summer fete/fette. I am also grateful to Buckinghamshire Councillors David Watson and David Johncock for attending our Parish Council meetings and for their continued support and advice. We await with interest (and some trepidation) the findings of the Boundary Commission whose proposal that Little Marlow Village should become part of a 2 member ward named Chiltern Villages and that Well End be joined up with Bourne End, Flackwell Heath and the Wooburns to form a 3 member ward. The Parish Council objected to these proposals in December 2022.

My biggest thanks go to my fellow Parish Councillors for all the service they have given to the Parish Council and the wider community throughout the year and for the advice and support they have given me. Being a Parish Councillor is not always a glamorous job (and sometimes it could even be described as a thankless task) but we are fortunate to have such a strong team of Councillors with many different skills, talents and sometimes opinions who work so well together.

When I was working out how long Valerie had been on Little Marlow Parish Council I dug out old minutes from 2011. I wasn't really surprised to read that the car park pot holes had been repaired at Abbotsbrook Hall, or that work had commenced on repairing the chapel window, or that the Abbotsbrook Hall redecoration was complete with the exception of the wall under the kitchen sink (that was still drying out) or indeed that the Thames Water Liaison Committee had discussed the fact that works were to be undertaken at the Sewage works which may result in some escape of odour. 12 years on and we have recorded exactly the same issues in May 2023. The Parish Council's ongoing role is up there with painting the Forth bridge (although, actually technology has moved on and the bridge only needs painting every 20 years). Sadly this is not the case for our Parish Council.

You will be glad to know that I am not covering planning or detailed finances as the Planning Committee Chairman and the Budget Committee Chairman will be giving separate reports.

And last, but by no means least, I would like to thank our Clerk, Jo Murray, for keeping the council running on a day-to-day basis and for the support she provides to us all.

**APM23/06**

## **6. Financial Report**

### **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2022/2023**

Presented By Cllr A Crabtree, Chairman of the Budget Committee.

In 2022/23 the Parish Council agreed to keep the precept the same as in 2021/22 but had agreed a 3% increase for 2023/24. In 2023 we received a CIL surprise contribution of £18k from the development of flats at Westhorpe House.

Operating Surplus for the year was c£4k (Total income was £101k) and total cash balances were slightly down to just under £161k from almost £178k the year before.

## **APM23/07**

### **7. Planning Report 2022/2023**

Presented by Cllr P Emmett, Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Little Marlow Parish Council were requested by Buckinghamshire Council to comment on 65 Planning Applications including Dido Properties Planning Application for Marlow Film Studios.

The Planning Committee consider all planning applications presented to them and feedback comments to Buckinghamshire Council but it is Buckinghamshire Council's ultimate responsibility to review the planning application and determine the outcome. Little Marlow Parish Council are not the ultimate decision makers.

## **APM23/08**

### **8. Geoffrey Moss Memorial Bowl Rose Bowl Presentation by the Chairman**

Geoffrey Moss was a former County Councillor and Chairman of the Parish Council from 1975-1980. He gave a rose bowl to the Parish Council and asked that it be presented annually to any resident of Little Marlow who in the opinion of the Parish Council had given outstanding service to the community. The Parish Council considered the nominations for the bowl at its meeting on 19 March 2024.

This year the Council unanimously decided to award the Geoffrey Moss Memorial Rose Bowl to Valerie Brownridge. Valerie served as a Councillor from May 2011 and from May 2015 as Chairman.

From 2003 Valerie was a member of the Little Marlow Village Amenities Committee (the Committee which organises the Village Fete) and was Committee chairman from 2011 until 2018. She was also chairman of WDALC (Wycombe District Association of Local Councils) for the last three years. Valerie was Secretary of the Little Marlow Lakes Country Park: Community Partnership, an organisation formed to create a country park in the area around Spade Oak Lake and alongside the Thames back in 2009.

Valerie is a leading member of her church and has played a big part in organising Christ Church Marlow's ongoing huge support efforts for the people of Ukraine.

Valerie is a good friend, exceedingly generous with her time and always offers thoughtful and logical advice. Her attention to detail is simply amazing.

She has left a strong, and challenging legacy for LMPC to build on.

Valerie has given outstanding service to our local community and is a very deserving recipient of the Geoffrey Moss Memorial Rose Bowl.

## **APM23/09**

### **9. Other Reports**

**a) Thames Valley Police** submitted a verbal report and stressed that whilst there are many Neighbourhood Watch groups using social-media such as 'WhatsApp' to communicate issues they encourage reporting of incidents and issues formally - if they don't know they can't help. For non-emergency incidents, call **101** or report online at: [thamesvalley.police.uk](https://thamesvalley.police.uk) - 'Report a Crime' or call **999** if there is an emergency.

### **b) Save Marlow's Greenbelt (SMG)**

Richard Sherwin, Chairman of SMG, gave a presentation explaining the efforts of SMG as a local residents pressure group whose sole objective was to protect the green belt in the area whenever it was threatened.

Although the biggest threat was the Marlow Film Studios Application SMG had actively opposed other threats to our local greenbelt and would continue to do so. He outlined some of SMG's main concerns about the Film Studio application and why the application did not meet the criteria for development in the green belt.

**APM23/10**

**10. Other Matters**

There being no other matters arising the meeting closed for refreshments at 20.40.

Signed: .....  
Chairman of the Council

Date: .....