

LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD AT ABBOTSBROOK HALL
ON FRIDAY 11TH MAY 2012
AND
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Present were eight members of the Parish Council, Mrs G.J. Barclay, Clerk to the Council, CCllr & D. Cllr. David Watson, D. Cllrs. David Johncock and 15 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Parish Cllr. P. Emmett, CCllr. M. Appleyard, D. Cllr. J. Savage and Mrs P. Northcroft.

WELCOME

Mr. Banfield welcomed everyone.

MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S MEETING

On the proposal of Mr G. Fitchew and Seconded by Mr. C. Innocent, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Friday 15th April 2011 were taken as read and approved.

POLICE REPORT

PC Richard Martin, and PCSOs Kim Buckle and Claire Bowles gave a report on police issues in the area. Crimes had reduced in the past 3 years, but stealing of number plates has increased. There has recently been a theft of copper cable on the A4155.

In October, the Wooburn and Bourne End team will be merging with the Marlow team.

The non-emergency number for the Police is now 101. The previous 0800 number is now obsolete.

PRESENTATION OF THE GEOFFREY MOSS MEMORIAL ROSE BOWL

Mr Banfield presented the Geoffrey Moss memorial Rose Bowl to Verity West in recognition of her work for the Little Marlow Lakes Country Park and the Spinney Path opening. Verity also looks out for the residents of Westhorpe Park and is active on the Little Marlow Residents' Association and the Village Amenities Committee.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

I have much pleasure in presenting my report as Chairman.

At the meeting of the Coldmoorholm Residents' Association here last Friday their chairman Richard Boas remarked in passing that I had been chairman of the Parish Council for some 20 years. I basked for a few moments in a self righteous glow until I learnt that Richard had chaired his organisation for 30 years and that Mr W E Yates a former Clerk to the council was in post for 43 years! I would like to make a sincere promise, especially to my wife that I have no intention of following either of these splendid examples.

Since the last meeting we have had council elections and we were very sorry to lose Vivienne Morton and Verity West as councillors. It was sad to lose both of them but it was heartening that we had competition to join our ranks. Some councils are lucky to fill all their vacancies let alone have a surfeit of talent. We welcomed two newcomers to the council Valerie Brownridge and Harry Midgley both of whom brought a wealth of experience from their professional lives that have already assisted the running of the council.

As I think our new councillors found very early on, the wheels of local government do seem to pass exceedingly slow. Projects reported on in past years are still ongoing, have not yet started or occasionally have come and gone. Part of the problem seems to be the myriad layers of consent that are required before any real action can be taken. At the grass roots level we are so often dependant upon other layers of local and central government and they, despite I am sure, the best intentions seem bound up in the proverbial red tape.

Fighting her way through this tangled web is of course our stalwart clerk, Gloria Barclay. As always I would like to give her my sincere thanks for the way in which she deals so effectively with the foibles of not only the members of this council but also the other organisations that we come into contact with. Without her tact and good humour (well usually!) we would not be the happy ship we are.

We are also fortunate to have a dedicated band of staff, Ron Stokes, Christine Samuels and contractors, Greg Taylor, Roger Wickes, Ivan Smith and Richard Tedham without whose help we could not operate as we do.

I would also like to thank Jane Vincent who is our allotments warden and those chairmen of Residents' Associations who regularly attend our meetings, William Northcroft and Richard Boas.

Turning now to our main areas of activity during the year;

Since the last annual meeting we met on 9 occasions as a full council plus various sub committees and working parties.

Abbotsbrook Hall

In the previous 2 years we have had the new floor laid and the outside painting done. This year we finished it off with decorating the inside. As is all too obvious despite carrying out various repairs we still are plagued with potholes in the car park. Short of completely starting again from scratch at goodness knows what expense I am afraid this is likely to be a continuing problem.

Pavilion/Recreation Ground

At the recreation ground we have had to carry out repairs to the play equipment and maintenance work has been ordered for the outfield (although the weather may have held this up!)

We have had the floor stripped and polished and it all looks a lot brighter.

The recreation ground remains the sporting focus of the village with good use by both the LMCC and BEJSC. I do of course thank Richard Tedham for his dedication to maintaining the grounds to their high standard.

Burial Ground

Once again the chapel has been used as a venue in Bucks Art week and will be so again this year.

Clive Innocent and the burial ground committee have been working hard and have had levelling works carried out to enlarge the area available. There are also plans to improving access and parking. New compost bins have been provided for green waste and have resulted in a far tidier look. Our thanks to Roger Wicks for carrying out the work. Our proposals to provide a loo remain on our wish list but without any definite proposals in hand.

There have been several working parties supported by councillors and members of the public who worked hard to clear back overgrown areas and generally tidy up. Whilst we don't want it too manicured it is also necessary to keep the ivy at bay.

You may have noticed in the local paper that a large fine has been imposed on the householder whose rubbish ended up being dumped by the chapel. I do hope the publicity given may make others think twice before hiring a "man with a van".

Street Lighting

Just a reminder that lights belonging to the Parish Council have a label showing our phone number. Should you see one not working please tell the Clerk.

Roads & Footpaths

Once again we have suffered from the sort of weather that seems to find every nook and cranny in the road surface and quickly turn it into a pothole. Patching does seem to be a never ending and I do question whether in the long term it is cost effective. Complete is expensive and disruptive but is probably the only answer.

I am pleased that after reporting the floods on the A4155 for more years than I care to remember that at long last some improvements have been made. I emphasise improvements as the problem is still there but much reduced. It may amuse you to know that one of the problems was caused by a cable contractor digging straight through a road culvert separating it from its soakaway. I do hope that the County Council are getting some sort of recompense for their expense.

We did try to get the decision to turn off the street lights on the C100 reversed but it seems that during the review period accidents actually declined. We have emphasised

however that for pedestrians to travel safely on this road and in the absence of pavements the verges need to be kept cut back regularly both to provide easy walking but also good visibility.

General

Once again we have produced our regular newsletters to keep residents informed of what we are up to and I am also grateful to the editor of Target for giving us space in their magazine. The Parish Council website is also visited by users from across the world (strangely!) and is a useful source of information with links to outside organisations.

BCC have offered us the chance to take on the car park in Coldmoorholm Lane in their bid to divest themselves of the management of small green areas of their estate. We have expressed a willingness to take this on but are still waiting to hear what terms are on offer. (Indeed we have been waiting for some time now!)

After considerable efforts we have finally had a grit bin installed in the village. Not where we considered it to be of most use near the parish church but opposite the Northcroft' s house . Needless to say it was a question of a safe location with the ability for a lorry to offload supplies that eventually directed where it ended up.

Dog fouling remains a problem throughout the parish and despite warning notices the lake and approach paths seem particularly affected. There is no easy answer and we can only continue to try and give publicity to the problem in the hope that dog owners will take a more responsible attitude.

At long last the legal arrangements regarding the permissive path at Westhorpe were completed and a number of us had the pleasure of joining an inaugural walk. Thanks to both the landowners and Verity West and her team who made it all possible.

Once again the village received awards in the BKVC; Runner up in the Gurney Cup and the Dashwood Trophy in the Best runner up category. Only a few marks separated us from the winners and I hope that this year's entry may do even better.

Your Council has representation on a number of outside organisations together with the BALC and WALC at which Little Marlow's affairs are promoted. Representatives attend the Chepping Wye Valley community partnership at which bids are made for available funding mainly on road schemes and other matters of wider interest.

Thanks to the Amenities committee we were once again represented at the fete and I hope you will visit us again this year.

REPORT FROM RT HON. DOMINIC GRIEVE, QC, MP

As residents will be aware, as Attorney General I am kept extremely busy with a wide range of functions ranging from advising the Government on the law, to prosecuting newspapers for contempt of Court. In addition, I have a superintendant's role with the Crown Prosecution Service, in which I try to ensure that it is run efficiently.

Although this takes up a great deal of my time, I am still out in the constituency on most Fridays, and frequently at weekends. I continue to hold surgeries on Friday afternoons, and I have, at times, held these in Marlow, as well as in Beaconsfield, although at the moment there are no Marlow surgeries in the programme. If there were to be greater demand for these, I am always happy to make arrangements to do some there.

The last twelve months has seen remarkably little correspondence concerning smells from the Little Marlow Sewerage Works. I very much hope that this is an indication of long term improvements, and will ensure that local residents are bothered far less by its presence. I continue to receive correspondence on a number of local and national matters.

I meet regularly with Gilbert Houalla, the District Commander at Wycombe police station. Rather remarkably, the evidence suggests that his policing district will meet all of its crime reduction targets this year, and be able to show reductions in every category. I obviously hope that this is something which can be sustained, but it is certainly an interesting achievement.

I am looking forward to being in the constituency during the course of the Diamond Jubilee weekend, and very much hope that I will have a chance of meeting Little Marlow residents at that time.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Income and Expenditure Account 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012.

	Expenditure	Income
Abbotsbrook Hall	15,674	9,380
Allotments	1,183	323
Burial Ground	6,405	18,430
Pavilion Recreation Ground	7,937	5,858
Street Lighting	4,264	-
Agency Work	1,996	2,074
Precept		39,794
Administration	<u>28,139</u>	<u>1,371</u>
	65,598	77,231

Bank Balances at 31st March 2012:

General a/c	7,316.32
Petty Cash a/c	430.78
Premier a/c	<u>32,868.26</u>
	£40,615.36

PLANNING REPORT

Planning Applications

There have been 70 planning applications for Little Marlow Parish since the last Annual Parish Meeting. None of these has been for a major development so it has been a quiet time for those of us who look at the applications. Although the number of applications has increased, this is mostly due to the number of repeat applications for the same properties. People apply for permission for changes to their property, but when they meet the planners, they find that for some reason their plans are unacceptable so they withdraw the application, make the necessary changes and then try again. I find it surprising that architects and other agents do not have preliminary discussions with the planners at Wycombe. In many cases it is the strict adherence to the Green Belt policy that causes the re-think and those problems could so easily be avoided by careful measurement and examination of previous work on the house. Four applications have been for an extension of the time limit for carrying out work – perhaps an effect of the depression. So, the number of applications for alterations and extensions has slightly exceeded the number for tree work in the Abbotsbrook Conservation Area.

The non-domestic applications have included extensions to the garden centre sales area (refused), a new classroom at the sewage works and a winery building for the vineyard. The last was withdrawn following neighbour and Parish Council opposition and a lukewarm response from WDC officers. I am sure we shall see another application for that.

As usual the majority of applications were permitted by WDC. Three were refused, eight withdrawn and 13 are still pending. This is in general agreement with the Parish Council's view. The notable exception was the re-siting of the new house at the rear of 18 Abbey Road.

Consultations The Parish Council has taken part in several consultations by Wycombe District Council, in particular one on the Community Infrastructure Levy. Also all major applications have to include a certificate of community involvement so the applicants have to have pre-application discussions with parish councils and community groups. This is being carried out in a new way by Taylor Wimpey and WDC to achieve the best form of development for the RAF site at Daws Hill. A Daws Hill Reference Group has been set up which I have been attending on behalf of the PC. This has proved to be an interesting insight into the sorts of evidence that has to be gathered before a major application is submitted. A more local pre-application consultation will take place at our Parish Council meeting next Tuesday, when Charles Brocklehurst from Wycombe District Council will come to speak about the proposed relocation of the running track from Handy Cross. Please come and take part.

The new National Planning Policy Framework, the Localism Act and Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act received Royal Assent in November 2011, and the government published the final version of the NPPF on 27th March 2012. Both Topics are very well covered on the WDC website and of course the dclg website if you want to read the original documents. One of the implications of this legislation for Parish councils is the possibility to draw up neighbourhood plans. I will mention some brief points,

but we are holding a public meeting on 22nd May to decide whether or not to go ahead with a neighbourhood plan in Little Marlow

- The provisions of the Localism Act 2011 which relate to neighbourhood planning came into force on 6th April 2012.
- Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) will form part of the development plan for the area
- One of the principal objectives of neighbourhood planning is to increase the rate of growth of housing and economic development.
- Neighbourhood planning must be carried out by the parish (or town) council where there is one.
- The plan can be for part of a parish area rather than cover the whole area if appropriate.
- In order to guarantee that neighbourhood planning cannot lead to a lower rate of growth, a neighbourhood plan will only be able to advocate an equal or greater quantity of growth in housing or economic development than is established in the development plan.

The procedures for drawing up a neighbourhood plan are very similar to what we did for the Parish Plan – lots of public consultation etc- but relating only to development issues. It is also more formal in that an independent inspector will examine it and it will only be accepted if the majority of people voting in a referendum support it.

Year	CTREE (Abbotsbrook)	CTREE (Other CA's)	Extensions, Alterations	New Houses	Non- domestic	LBC	CLP/ CLE	Total
2007	9	6	24	4	9	1		53
2008	7	6	22	3	10	5	1	54
2009	22	3	16	2	17	4		64
2010	7	1	20	2	17	3	4	54
2011	14	7	16	3	13	2	2	57
2012	18	6	24	4	8	4	6	70

Notes

1. The categories overlap to a certain extent; eg. New houses include replacements; non-domestic includes garages with rooms over etc.
2. Most of the LBC applications are duplicated or full applications for alterations or extensions.
3. Non-domestic is a very wide category.
4. There are a lot of duplicated applications or applications for the same property with very little alteration.

Decisions by Wycombe District Council

All the decisions this year were made by the officers using their delegated powers (none went to the planning committee). 46 applications were permitted, 3 refused, 8 withdrawn and 13 are still pending.

OTHER REPORTS

Little Marlow Relief in Need Charity

The Charity continues to pay cash sums to people of the Parish annually in December.

Training

During the last 12 months, councillors and the Clerk have attended training on the following:

VAT

Employment Law

Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information

Risk Assessment

Neighbourhood Plans

Planning Policy

Newsletter

The Parish Council's Newsletter has been published twice this year, and articles have appeared in each 'Target' magazine throughout the year.

Diamond Jubilee Lunch

This will be held at The Recreation Ground, Little Marlow on Sunday 3rd June.

Music at the Manor

This will be held on 2nd June. Tickets are on sale from the Church representatives.

Chairman