

LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL

**UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD REMOTELY VIA TEAMS
ON FRIDAY 19th MARCH 2021
AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Present:	Mrs Jo Murray – Clerk Cllr K Acres Cllr V Brownridge Cllr A Crabtree Cllr J Downes Cllr P Emmett Cllr G Fitchew Cllr R Mash Cllr V Morton Bucks Cllr Watson	Mrs P & Mr D Banfield Mrs B Wallis Mr M Braint Mr B Burger Mrs J Sheppard Mr D & Mrs S Brown Mr S Crabtree Mrs S & Mr N Blair Mr R Mills Mrs A Falk Mr N & Mrs M Hodson
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APM21/01

1. Introduction by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed all those present, mentioning in particular Bucks Cllr David Watson, the new Chairman of the Colmoorholme Residents' Association, David Brown, and the Chairman of Little Marlow Residents' Association, Jason Downes. She announced that we had just learned that unfortunately Mrs Joy Morrissey MP was no longer able to attend and had asked for her apologies to be passed on to the meeting.

APM21/02

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs Joy Morrissey, MP, PC Darren King and PCSO Chris Bis, Thames Valley Police, Bucks Cllr David Johncock, Parish Councillor Roger Randall, and Mrs Verity West.

APM21/03

3. Minutes of previous meeting held on Friday 17th May 2019

The Minutes of the previous meeting were **RESOLVED**.

APM21/04

4. Geoffrey Moss Memorial Bowl Rose Bowl Presentation

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 them to present it annually to any resident of Little Marlow who in the opinion of the Parish Council had given outstanding service to the community. In the past, nominations were made by Councillors, a vote was taken and the person with the most votes was awarded the bowl. Last year, for the first time, we also asked Little Marlow residents to let us have their suggestions. The nominations were considered by the Parish Council when it met remotely on 9 March.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Council decided to award the Geoffrey Moss Memorial Rose Bowl this year to Margery Hodson in recognition of all the work she does for charity. We would normally have presented the bowl to Margery at the Annual Parish Meeting, but I don't think anyone has yet come up with a way of handing over a rose bowl virtually! We therefore decided to make the announcement tonight and present the bowl to Margery either at our first physical Parish Council meeting or at a separate ceremony outside depending on which we are able to do first within COVID restrictions and weather permitting.

Since 1997 Margery has raised funds for the Home Farm Trust, a national charity which supports people with learning difficulties, by hosting the annual Marjorie Lunnon Memorial Garden Party strawberry cream tea in her garden. The Home Farm Trust was founded in 1962 by a group of parents to provide a home where people with learning disabilities could flourish. Marjorie Lunnon who lived in Coldmoorholme Cottage and had two sons with Down's Syndrome who were Home Farm Trust residents was an active supporter and started the annual cream tea fundraiser in her garden back in the 1960s. Margery (with lots of support from her Coldmoorholme Lane neighbours) took over as host when Marjorie reached her 90's and 2021 would have been the 25th anniversary of the garden party if Covid hadn't prevented the 2020 event taking place. Hopefully this year's event will go ahead depending on the rules when we reach July. Let's hope so.

During this last year, Margery has been collecting and delivering food from local residents for the One Can Trust Food Bank. The food bank is currently supporting 690 people in South Bucks of which 326 are children, delivering to 288 homes a week. This is more than three times as many as last year. As well as her local charity work Margery is one of a committee of 7 people that support an orphanage in Nepal and sponsors an individual child there. They are currently keeping in touch via zoom.

I am sure that you will all agree that Margery has given outstanding service to our local community and is therefore a very deserving recipient of the Geoffrey Moss Memorial rose bowl.

Mrs Hodson expressed her surprise and her pleasure at receiving the award. She thanked the local community for supporting the Garden Party and her One Can Trust collection.

APM21/05

5. Annual Report given by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council –Cllr Valerie Brownridge

Chairman's Report 2019-2021

As we did not manage to hold an Annual Parish Meeting last year, I did not have the opportunity to give you my annual Chairman's report. I therefore have to cover two years in this year's report.

The full Parish Council has met 17 times since our last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2019 and has held two public meetings. The Parish Council committees, including a new COVID 19 Committee, have also met regularly. Since April 2020 all our meetings have been held remotely. Parish Councillors have represented the Council on various outside bodies, including the South West Chilterns Community Board and its working groups. In addition, the Clerk and Councillors have attended training and briefings on a range of issues. We have produced two newsletters, one in Autumn 2019 and one in Winter 2020/21.

One of our Councillors, Anthea Falk, stood down in May 2020. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Anthea for all the work she did while she was on the Council, particularly for the interest she took in environmental issues. I should also like to welcome Anna Crabtree who was co-opted to the Council in October 2020. I am pleased to say Anna is already getting to grips with all aspects of Council work and she too is keen to focus on environmental issues.

The Council is fortunate to own a number of assets which serve the community and bring in a very welcome income, although less so in 2020.

Abbotsbrook Hall

Abbotsbrook Hall was well used by the community in 2019, but since March 2020, Government COVID restrictions have meant that apart from the pre-school, all the activities which normally take place there have had to stop, except for a few brief periods when some other activities were allowed. We are looking forward to being able to welcome back our regular hirers in the not-too-distant future. I would like to thank our Hirings Administrator, Christine Samuels, and our caretaker, Peter Samuels, for the flexibility they have shown over this last year.

Pavilion and Recreation Ground

It is a similar story at the Pavilion. Apart from a few short periods when some restrictions were lifted, only the pre-school has been able to operate in the Pavilion since March 2020. I do however have some good news to report. The long-awaited refurbishment project went ahead last summer so when we are finally able to open the Pavilion to all our users again, they will be returning to a much-improved facility. I should like to thank our Clerk Jo Murray, for masterminding this project. Turning to the recreation ground, we installed an all-inclusive roundabout in the play area at the beginning of 2020. I am grateful for the contributions towards the cost from the Ward budgets of the three then Wycombe District Councillors, David Johncock, David Watson and John Savage, from Little Marlow Village Amenities Committee, and from St John the Baptist Church. We were able to allow some of our outside activities like the football training, cricket and the boot camp to resume when some of the COVID restrictions were lifted in the summer. I would like to thank Richard Tedham for all the time and effort he puts into maintaining the recreation ground.

Burial Ground

Over the last two years, in addition to our regular maintenance work and some recent work we have had done to the trees, the hedge beside the tap has been grubbed out in order to widen the road and make it easier for hearses to drive along, the slope leading on to the burial ground has been flattened out to make it safer for pall bearers and we are about to create a better turning point for hearses. Work has started on preparing a new area for burials in the existing cemetery and plans have been drawn up and money set aside to extend the cemetery into the copse area.

Allotments

The Council did quite a bit of work on the allotments in 2019 and 2020 including clearing away rubbish which had accumulated there and splitting up some of the larger plots to make them more manageable. We acquired a few more allotment holders in 2019 and then in 2020 following the increasing interest in gardening as a result of lockdown, we have managed to let almost all of the allotments.

General

COVID 19 has not just had an impact on our Parish Council facilities, it has also had a significant impact on the way the Council has operated for most of 2020. When we went into lockdown on 23 March, we closed our office at the Pavilion and our Clerk began to work from home and has done so for most of the time since then. We were able to hold our Parish Council meeting as normal on 10 March. By the time of our next meeting on 21 April, legislation had been enacted which enabled Town and Parish Councils to meet remotely. Fortunately, an upgrade to our Council IT system in December 2019 meant that we had the necessary IT in place to enable the Council to meet as scheduled, albeit remotely via teams. Since then, we have held all our Parish Council meetings, two public meetings and now our Annual Parish meeting remotely. One of the advantages of remote meetings is that like many other Parish Councils, the Council has seen an increase in the number of members of the public attending our meetings.

We reviewed our 2020/21 Action Plan which set out our objectives for the year at our most recent Council meeting and are in the process of finalising our 2021/22 Action Plan. This will include a number of new objectives relating to the environment. Once it is finalised, the plan will be posted on our website alongside all our previous plans.

The Parish Council continues to carry out the grass cutting and other work which Bucks County Council devolved to us in 2015. The Devolved services contract was due to expire on 31 March 2020 but the new Buckinghamshire Council extended it to March 2021. I should like to thank our two contractors, Buckland Landscapes and Steve Rogers of SR Farm Services, for the excellent job they have done maintaining the Parish open spaces and the burial ground over the last two years. The Council has just renewed both their contracts for a further two-year period.

I should like to ask David Brown as Chair of the Coldmoorholme Lane Residents to pass on our thanks to the volunteers from Coldmoorholme Lane for all the hard work they put into maintaining the car-park on the Lane. This was particularly challenging in 2020 because of the number of visitors visiting the Spade Oak lakes and Spade Oak Wharf in 2020 because of lockdown. Thanks to David's efforts, the annual donation which the residents received from the Spade Oak Restaurant to help cover some of their costs is now covered by a formal agreement.

In September 2019, the then Wycombe District Council bought the Spade Oak Quarry site as part of its plans to develop the Little Marlow Lakes Country Park. The first action WDC took was to clear away the large piles of fly-tipped rubbish on Muschallick Road and put in cameras and other measures to prevent fly-tipping in the future. They renewed the formal access agreements with Marlow Angling Club and Bucks Bird Club and over the last 18 months WDC and the new Buckinghamshire Council who took over the site in April 2020 have carried out works on the trees, the water courses and some of the paths around the lake.

WDC were looking for ways to generate income to raise revenue to reinvest in the Country Park and hit on the idea of temporarily letting out the former gravel works yard to Pinewood studios for film use. Prior approval was granted for the temporary change of use of the site for film-making purposes under Permitted Development rights for a period of 9 months, starting in March 2020. Following significant delays on the film set as a result of COVID 19 restrictions, this was subsequently postponed till August 2020. With the prospect of further delays, Buckinghamshire Council applied in October 2020 for planning permission for a period of three years from 1 May 2021 to allow the filming to be completed and the site to be vacated. Residents were concerned about this application for a number of reasons, not least the environmental impact the film-set would have on local wild-life and habitats. The Parish Council organised a public meeting with Buckinghamshire Council. As a result of this meeting, Buckinghamshire Council agreed to reduce the extension period from three years to six months. Given the level of local opposition to the application, it will now be considered by the West Buckinghamshire Area Planning Committee. In the meantime, we are in discussion with Buckinghamshire Council about setting up a Vision Group for the Country Park so the Parish Council and other local parties can have a say in the future development of the Country Park and in particular on the sort of activities which are appropriate on the site.

I don't normally mention planning in my report as the Planning Committee Chairman gives a separate planning report, but since I have mentioned the film set application as it was relevant to the development of the Country Park, I should mention another planning application which has caused concern among Little Marlow residents and that is an application to put a battery storage facility in the green belt in land adjacent to the Country Park off Coldmoorholm Lane. Again because of the level of opposition from local residents, a request has been made for it to be called in and determined by the West Buckinghamshire Area Planning Committee.

The new Buckinghamshire Council came into being on 1 April 2020. It had been agreed that Town and Parish Council elections would be postponed from 2019 till 7 May 2020, so they could be held at the same time as elections for the new Unitary Council. These elections had to be postponed again because of COVID and are now due to take place on 6 May 2021. Buckinghamshire Council officially launched its sixteen new Community Boards in September 2020. These Boards are designed to be the local link between the new Council and the community. Little Marlow belongs to the South West Chilterns Community Board along with eleven other neighbouring parishes. The Parish Council has been playing an active role in the Board and its working groups.

Before I end my report, I would just like to pay tribute to my fellow Parish Councillors who provide an invaluable service to the local community through all the work they do on behalf of the Parish Council and, of course, to our Clerk, Jo Murray for the support she provides to us all. I would also like to thank the chairmen of our two Residents' Associations, Jason Downes and initially Richard Boas and now David Brown, the former District but now Bucks Councillors David Watson and David Johncock and also former and now retired District Councillor John Savage for their advice and support and for always being prepared to take up matters on our behalf with the former District and now the new Buckinghamshire Council. I think that together we make a great team.

APM21/06

6 Financial Report

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Presented by Cllr Kath Acres as Chairman of the Budget Committee, Cllr Acres outlined significant income and expenditure in 2019 and 2020/21 (up to 2 March 2021).

The largest expenditure was spent on refurbishing the Pavilion which the council was able to fund from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds which were held in our Ear-marked Reserves without applying for a Public Works Loan. Expenditure was also incurred replacing the boiler at Abbotsbrook Hall. Although income from our venue users has considerably decreased funeral income has once again exceeded budget. Allowance has been made in next year's budget to use Ear-marked reserves for expansion and improvements to Fern Lane Cemetery, the playground and for road safety works leaving £81,000 in our Premier Interest account (which equates to a year's running costs and is considered prudent in the current circumstances). The council has agreed to maintain its precept for 2021/2022 at the same level as 2020/2021 which means that Parishioners will be paying the same amount of their Council Tax to LMPC as last year.

2019-2020	Income	Expenditure
Abbotsbrook Hall	£10,802	£7,709
Allotments	£921	£433
Burial Ground	£24,990	£10,403
Pavilion / Recreation Grd	£6,268	£23,156
Street Lighting	-	£3,332
Precept	£52,283	-
Devolved Services	£1,767	£3,966
Grants	£12,079	-
Administration	£29	£35,193
Full Council to 31st March 2020	£109,139	£84,192

2020-18th March 2021	Income	Expenditure
Abbotsbrook Hall	£2,551	£11,152
Allotments	£1,526	£681
Burial Ground	£23,560	£10,099
Pavilion / Recreation Grd	£1,518	£24,949
Street Lighting	-	£3,942
Precept	£53,851	-
Devolved Services	£1,767	£3,668
Grants	(£50)	-
Administration	£516	£29,528
Full Council to 18th March 2021	£85,240	£84,018

Little Marlow Parish Council Bank Accounts – 18th March 2021

Current Account	£14,806
Precept Account	£47,454
Petty Cash	£0
Reserves Account	£44,160

APM21/07

7. Planning Report

Presented by Cllr Philip Emmett as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Little Marlow Parish Council were requested by Buckinghamshire Council to comment on:

- 17 Building applications
- 36 Tree applications
- 6 Certificates of lawfulness

The Council also dealt with two major planning applications, already mentioned by the Chairman: the film set at the Spade Oak Lakes site and the Battery Storage facility on land off Coldmoorholme Lane.

APM21/08

8. Elections update

Cllr Valerie Brownridge gave the following update:

Town and Parish Council Elections will be held on 6 May. By being here this evening, you show that you take an interest in your local Parish Council. I would therefore like to encourage you to take the next step and think about standing as a Parish Councillor. If it is not something you would like to take on, perhaps you can think of a friend or a neighbour who might be willing to consider it. I have been impressed this past year with the number of residents who have engaged with the Parish Council on the two big planning applications the Council has had to consider as well as on other issues. We would be delighted to see you engaging with the Council on a more permanent basis. There is an elections tab on our website where you will find information about what being a Councillor entails as well as practical information about how to stand. The other Councillors and I would all be happy to talk to any of you about being a Councillor. Nominations have to be submitted by 4pm on 8 April. It is great way to serve your community. Please think about it.

APM21/09

9. Report from Mrs Joy Morrissey, MP

Unfortunately, due to personal family circumstances Mrs Joy Morrissey, MP was unable to join Little Marlow Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting and sent her apologies.

APM21/10

10. Report from Thames Valley Police

PC Darren King was unable to attend the meeting but sent a written report which was read out by the Clerk. Your Neighbourhood team is there for you, please continue to report any suspicious activity. If we don't know about what's going on, resources are directed elsewhere. Also, if any events are planned and you would like us to be present, please make contact.

APM21/11

11. Other Matters

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was closed at 8.45 pm.

Signed:
Chairman of the Council

Date: