

LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT ABBOTSBROOK HALL ON FRIDAY 10TH MAY 2013 AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Present were seven members of the Parish Council, Mrs G.J. Barclay, Clerk to the Council, C.Cllr D. Watson, D. Cllr. D. Johncock and 17 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Rt Hon. Dominic Grieve, QC, MP and D. Cllr. J. Savage.

MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S MEETING

On the proposal of Mr. C. Innocent and seconded by Mrs. V. Morton, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Friday 11th May 2012 were taken as read and approved.

PRESENTATION OF THE ROSE BOWL

Mr Banfield presented the Geoffrey Moss Memorial Rose Bowl to Clive Innocent in recognition of his work as a former Parish Councillor, and sometime Chairman of the Village Fete and Amenities Committee. Mr Innocent has been instrumental in the refurbishment of the Chapel in Fern Lane, ensuring that the building can be used again by having the electricity re-installed and the building renovated and refurbished.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

I have much pleasure in presenting my report as Chairman.

This has been a busy year on the planning front, the athletics track, the winery and the neighbourhood plan, to name but a few. These are all matters that come within Barbara Wallis's remit as our planning guru and I know they will form part of her report. I can't allow this opportunity to pass however without referring to the enormous amount of work Barbara does and to thank her for it. Many councils have to find consultants to advise them on technical planning issues but thankfully we have our very own expert. How she finds the time amongst her other commitments I will never know.

As you will have gathered from the previous item Clive has decided it is time to leave the council and has now resigned. Although I have already referred to some of his achievements on the council I would also like to thank him for the support and assistance he has given me over the years. He always had something interesting to add to our discussions and could

on some occasions even be open to persuasion! I will miss his presence at our meetings.

This does of course mean that we have a vacancy on the council and at the last count we had 3 candidates expressing interest. As no one has called for a public election the task of selection is down to the councillors themselves and we will hold a ballot at our next meeting on 21st May. Some councils seem to have enormous difficulty in filling vacancies and I am gratified that in Little Marlow at least we have more than enough people willing to give up their time to serve as councillor.

I am sure one of the reasons we are able to attract candidates is that we are known to run a happy and efficient ship and this is very much down to the dedication of our clerk, Gloria. Gloria is there to steer us in the right direction when we are in danger of straying from the permitted path and seems to keep her ear so close to the ground that I wonder she ever sees her direction of travel. She gets us out in the pouring rain to deliver magazines and on frozen days to clear cemeteries. We are all grateful for what she does and hope it may continue for some time at least.

We are also fortunate to have a dedicated band of staff, Ron Stokes, Christine Samuels and contractors, Greg Taylor, Roger Wicks, 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

Now that the new floor has been laid and the building decorated inside and out we have turned our attention to some more minor matters. 20 new chairs have been purchased and a new fridge provided in the kitchen. Maintenance has included the felling of some trees and further filling of potholes. Finally I am bound to report that on a couple of occasions the vice chairman and I have enjoyed rodding through the drains and we

remain somewhat bemused as to how drawing pins get to be washed down the sink!

Pavilion/Recreation ground

Our current round of tree works has now been completed although further management will no doubt be needed before too long. We are intending to add to the play equipment and a meeting held with the suppliers. Their suggestions, and of course a quote are now awaited.

We are delighted that the recreation ground is put to good use by both the cricket club and Bourne End Junior Sports club and that the pavilion is able to host so many different events and organisations. We are less pleased however by the amount of itinerant parking that takes place to the annoyance of our paying customers. Some of which is by people who ought to know better!

My thanks particularly to Richard Tedham who with others continues to keep the ground looking so good.

Burial Ground

At long last we have the sadly necessary window guard in place in the chapel protecting what is a rather fine piece of stained glass. The chapel itself was used again last year for Bucks Art week and is will indeed host a further exhibition this June. Much work has been done during the year including fencing and hedge planting, the thinning of a number of trees in the "wildlife "area and the siting of a bench in memory of Wilfred King. Access has also been improved for vehicles coming in from Sheepridge Lane although before this can be improved further planning consent needs to be obtained for improvement works at the entrance.

A working party was held and attended by a number of councillors and others and a further day is planned for the autumn.

Unfortunately there have been a few incidents of out of hours illegal activities and the police have become involved. We are now locking the gates at certain times to discourage such use.

New burial regulations have been produced which should make matters much clearer for relatives and stonemasons and my thanks to the committee for their hard work in producing such a comprehensive document.

Street Lighting

Some of our street lights are getting past their prime and we have ordered two replacements in Winchbottom Lane as being those most in need. We would have liked to convert all our stock to LEDs but unfortunately the cost is prohibitive. This is however something we will return to as costs of this technology decreases.

Roads & Footpaths

Looking at my report from last year despite the best efforts of the county council nothing really seems to have changed and we are still faced with potholes, flooding and blocked gulleys. Unfortunately there is little that your council can do other than to keep on to BCC whenever a problem arises. There has been some resurfacing to the A404/A4155 junction recently completed and I understand that works are scheduled for Well End/ Sheepridge Lane at some stage possibly using quieter surfacing.

We are still pushing for improvements to the verge on the C100 following the decision to switch off the lighting. A pathway has been investigated but as yet the quotations are unacceptable and an alternative scheme is sought. The number of accidents on Sheepridge Lane has also been raised with the County Council as to whether anything can be done to reduce speeds and warn drivers of the hazardous bends. As yet we do not have firm proposals but we will keep pushing.

General

Something else that hasn't changed all that much is the possible take over by the council of the car park in Coldmoorholm Lane. General terms have been agreed in principle but we are still waiting for the legal transfer document to determine whether this is something we can sign up to.

Hopefully I won't have to give the same report next year!

We have had a few incidents of fly tipping during the year most have which have been dealt with promptly by the county council and some of which have resulted in convictions. I am afraid I find it rather satisfying to read of someone being fined far more than it would have cost them to dispose of their rubbish legally.

There is of course the ongoing problem with discharges from Thames Water's works. A lot has been written about this in the press and,

possibly due to Dominic Grieve's intervention the Environment Agency do at long last seem to be taking the matter seriously. You should have received an insert in our recent magazine giving the numbers to contact should you be aware of a problem and please do keep up the pressure and use them.

On a happier note I am sure you will be aware that Little Marlow village won the Gurney Cup in the Best Kept Village Competition; a great pat on the back for everyone who does so much to keep the place tidy and looking good. We have entered the competition again this year so do please keep up the good work.

Whilst it is good to see the number of residents who do attend our meetings we appreciate that not everyone has the time to do so. In addition to our regular newsletter we are fortunate to have an informative and well maintained website on which you can find a host of information about the council and links to other organisations. We are also grateful to Target for allowing us space in their magazine and to the Amenities committee for allowing us a stand at the fete.

Finally may I thank all the councillors for their hard work, unfailing good humour and above all their desire to ensure that Little Marlow remains the delightful place that it is.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Income and Expenditure Account 1st April 2012 – 31st March 2013.

	Expenditure	Income
Abbotsbrook Hall	12,760	10,341
Allotments	760	542
Burial Ground	13,223	14,120
Pavilion/Recreation Ground	11,583	4,146
Street Lighting	3,396	-
Agency Work	2,285	2,301
Precept	-	39,500
Administration	<u>25,108</u>	<u>247</u>
	69,115	71,197

Bank Balances at 31st March 2013

General a/c	7,678.45
Petty Cash a/c	351.34

Premier a/c 33,885.87
 41,915.66

PLANNING REPORT

Planning Applications

First the statistics: as you see from the diagram, there have been 62 planning applications for Little Marlow Parish since the last Annual Parish Meeting. 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 the expected new application for the winery building : this time it was allowed. Others included changing garages to playrooms/ storage areas etc – an acknowledgement of something that often happens?

But, of course the most time consuming application was the Athletics Track at Westhorpe Farm Lane. The planning committee at Wycombe predictably recommended approval and it now still remains with the head of planning to sort out the details including the allocation of the Section 106 money.

As usual the majority of applications were permitted by WDC. Two were refused: one for two houses adjacent to the vets' surgery in Pump Lane North and one a change to the agreed design for the second house behind 18 Abbey Road. Five were withdrawn: the result of consultation with WDC planners – either formally through a CLP application or informally – I think they all reapplied and were approved. Six applications are still pending. This is in general agreement with the Parish Council's view. The notable exceptions were the second new house at the rear of 18 Abbey Road, the winery in Pump Lane North and the Athletics track.

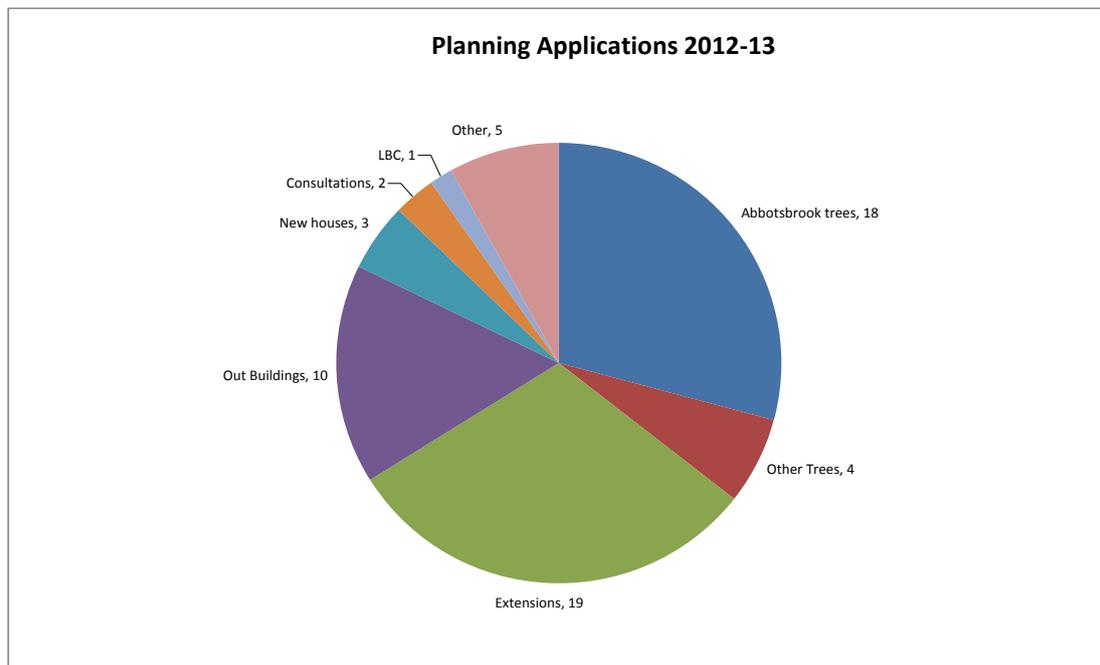
Consultations As many of you know, the pre-application consultations arranged by the property department at WDC in relation to the running track were less than satisfactory and only served to alienate many of us to the scheme.

WDC is now consulting on their new local plan and the parish council has taken part in the early stages of this. We now await the next stage which will probably be a public meeting in Marlow.

Neighbourhood plan The Parish Council has been very pleased at the response to our publicity about neighbourhood plans and a group of interested people has been set up to consider the matter. At present we have decided that the important thing is to concentrate on the new Wycombe District Local Plan. This will give us scope to object to any alterations to the green belt boundary or incursions into our countryside. A neighbourhood plan may come later if there is development that we want to influence. It is absolutely clear that the government intentions for neighbourhood plans is to encourage development.

Government Policy The NPPF is now more or less fully operational, but its interpretation still has to be extensively tested by the planning lawyers. The relaxation of planning permissions required for extensions or conversions is still not

entirely clear and anyone wanting to carry out any development is advised to consult the planners at Wycombe first.



OTHER REPORTS

Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve, QC, MP

The past year has been eventful as the relocation of the running track to Little Marlow has been extremely controversial. I am sorry that I was not successful in persuading the Secretary of State to call it in. I will continue to do what I can in the matter.

There have been a lot of complaints about the operation of the sewage works. I am pleased that action is being taken and will continue to monitor progress.

Finally I look forward to seeing many of you over the coming year. I am available most Fridays for surgeries in Beaconsfield and am happy to come to Little Marlow for visits as required.

Police

Neighbourhood Update:

The local neighbourhood team is unchanged from last year, although from October the Wooburn and Little Marlow Neighbourhood Team, as we were called, merged with Marlow to become one larger team covering the entire area. This combined with a new shift pattern, does mean often we are covering crimes and incidents in the other areas, as there are less staff on at any one time. Although this does mean we cover a larger area, it does give the benefit of having more staff to cover more of the time. Having said this, the team have managed to deliver and visit 95% of the homes in the area and deliver crime prevention advice and give residents the opportunity to voice their concerns.

Recorded Crime:-

For residents the most important thing to know is how safe is the area in which they live? Well the answer for that is quite simple: Little Marlow is Very Safe!

In the last 12 months (April 12 to March 13) there have been 77 reported crimes in the area, which accounts for just 6% of the Marlow Neighbourhoods Crime figures which were 1370 reported crimes. Compare these figures to the entire Wycombe local policing area (of which we are part) there were some 8876 reported crimes, so Little Marlow accounts for 0.8% of the LPA.

All crime has an impact on the victims and community, but probably the one most people worry about the most is a burglary in the home. This year we have seen 9 burglary dwellings, which are up from just 3 the year before, but again compared to the Marlow neighbourhood where there were 74 again Little Marlow only 12% of the areas burglaries. Again in comparison for the Wycombe LPA there were 410 burglaries, so Little Marlow only accounts for 2% of the reported Burglaries.

The theft from our cars or vans is another crime that appears high on residents concerns. This year we have seen 13 reported thefts from vehicle, some of which have been number plates, which are then used to steal petrol from petrol stations. This is actually the same as last year and down 4 from the year before. Again compared the Marlow area this is just 8% (146 recorded crimes).

Of the 77 reported crimes, there is one crime that stands out as being the most reported. This is Burglary other than in a dwelling, which is commonly out buildings. Most of the time it is where the shed has been unlocked or has very limited security. Sometime we forget quite how much high value gardening equipment or tools we store in our sheds. So it is worth the investment for good security and getting the items property marked.

Moving Forward

Clearly crime reduction plays a big part in moving forward, after all 74 crimes are 74 too many. Clearly sat on the A4155 and next to the A404, Little Marlow does provide a lucrative spot for travelling criminals. The team have put in place the installation of an ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) camera on the A4155 on the Marlow side of the roundabout. This will alert Police instantly of any travelling criminals coming through the area. Often we have found criminals will travel into Marlow as well as coming through to Little Marlow. So although many will feel the camera doesn't help Little Marlow, I feel it will be of great use for the wider area. The camera we hope will be installed in the next few months.

We will be offering additional Crime Prevention drop in events and giving residents the opportunity to have their property marked. We will also include the residents of Pump Lane North and give a location convenient to them.

The new community messaging service called THAMES ALERT and is working very well and proving to be an excellent tool to make contact with residents. It is a free service and residents can sign up online at www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk. We will be looking to sign up as many residents as we can to this service and it really is the best way to find out what is happening locally. We will also be trying to promote residents to set up or joining Neighbourhood Watch.

Little Marlow Relief in Need Charity

The Charity continues to make payments to local people each year.

Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works

Residents were concerned that the Sewage Treatment works does not have the capacity to cope with the quantity of sewage arriving at the site, and new developments in the area will add to the problem.

Speed on the A4155

Speeding on the A4155, particularly in Well End is a concern. Can a speed check be undertaken along this stretch of road.

Chairman