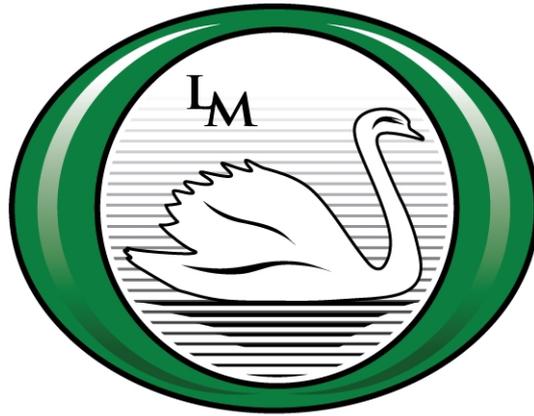


# **LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL**



## **ANNUAL REPORT AND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014**

## **LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD AT ABBOTSBROOK HALL ON FRIDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2014. AND CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Present were seven members of the Parish Council, Mrs G.J. Barclay, Clerk to the Council, District Councillor D. Watson and 24 members of the public.

Apologies were received from Parish Councillor G. Fitchew, and District Councillors D. Johncock and J. Savage.

#### **GUEST SPEAKER**

Amanda Foister, CEO of Adventure Learning Federation, gave a talk about the organisation. It had developed from Longridge Activity Centre and they have now formed a new charity and have taken on the administration of Shortenills and Green Park on a 25year lease from Buckinghamshire County Council and are looking for other centres to expand. They are in talks with Wycombe District Council to take on the Athletics Track at Westhorpe. Ms Foister said that ALF are the preferred supplier, but nothing has yet been signed. If they are successful, they would look to open up other areas around Westhorpe and Westhorpe Farm. She offered to arrange a tour of the site.

Ms Foister answered questions after which Mr Banfield thanked her for coming.

#### **MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S MEETING**

On the proposal of Mr Emmett and seconded by Mr Mash, the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013 were taken as read and approved.

#### **PRESENTATION OF ROSE BOWL**

Mr Banfield presented the Geoffrey Moss Memorial Rose Bowl to Roger Wicks in recognition of his work at the cemetery and as a good neighbour at Westhorpe Park.



## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Once again I am pleased to offer my report as Chairman.

We started the year well by having the luxury of three potential candidates to fill Clive Innocent's vacant seat and, after interviewing them all finally selecting Kath Acres to be co-opted. Kath has thrown herself into the Council's affairs which she ably balances with her other varied interests. This year we have another vacancy to fill. Cllr Harry Midgley having moved out of the parish has just tendered his resignation and we will be seeking a replacement shortly. Harry has been a useful member of the council and we wish him well wherever his house hunting takes him.

We will also be seeking to fill some other shoes in that Cllr Barbara Wallis has decided to stand down as Chairman of our Planning Committee. Over the years Barbara has given her extensive knowledge and enthusiasm to the Council on all matters "planning" and has been in the forefront of the various battles that we have had to fight. Sometimes successfully other times less so. Whatever the outcome you can be sure Barbara did her very best and brought a level of expertise that is rare for any councillor.

As usual Barbara will be covering planning in her report so this relates to other matters within the council's remit. Reviewing the discussions at our various council meetings there is a recurring theme; sewage, floods and the Spade Oak car park. In May last year a sewage spill was reported and this re-occurred at regular intervals. To add to the problem we were then faced with the floods which not only brought its own problems but also exacerbated the sewage situation. Whilst the floods have now receded we are still left with some very unpleasant detritus still to be cleared. We hope that Thames Water's new manager will be more effective than the last. You may recall from last year that the council had agreed, subject to terms to take on the car park in Coldmoorholm Lane from the County Council. Despite regular nagging it has taken until a couple of weeks ago to get a draft lease and we will be taking a final decision as to whether it is acceptable at our meeting next week.

Other areas that may be of interest are;

### **Abbotsbrook Hall**

We had a major cut back of encroaching vegetation to increase the parking area. Standing water remains a problem for which we still have to find a solution. Some minor roof repairs have been carried out and we continue to try and balance the use by our regular hirers with those who want the space for one off events. A recent energy audit suggested that given the age of the property it was reasonably efficient but that when funds allowed we should install additional secondary glazing.

### **Pavilion/Recreation Ground**

We are fortunate to have the support of the Bourne End Junior Sports Club and Little Marlow Cricket club in maintain the grounds in such a good state and my thanks to Richard Tedham for all his efforts .

With a contribution from the Village Amenities committee we installed additional play equipment and renovated the existing. The energy audit suggested some additional insulation in the roof space and we are also planning repairs to the cladding and some redecoration works during the year.

There was a request by some parents that a path could be laid between the car park and the school and that they be permitted to leave their cars there whilst walking their children to school. The council considered the proposals in detail but finally refused the request on the grounds that it would be detrimental to our existing users some of whom also dropped off their children attending the play school and for those hirers of the hall in the afternoon.

## **Burial Ground**

Councillors and others had their annual working party in February and carried out some major clearing with the attendant bonfire, coffee and refreshments. Unlike last year thermal underwear was not needed.



An additional area of ground has been levelled and made available for use and the track from Sheepridge Lane made more suitable for traffic. The chapel once again hosted an exhibition of glass crafts during Bucks Art week and we look forward to welcoming them back again this year.

## **Street Lighting**

We are continuing our policy of replacement of lamp standards as it becomes necessary. Replacements do of course use LED technology.

## **Roads & Footpaths**

As reported last year we continue to push for some safe form of footway on the C100 up to the junction with Pump Lane North. The County Council say costs are untenable although they are pushing ahead with funds for a cycleway. We will continue to raise this whenever possible.

We asked for a “Slow” sign in Coldmoorholm Lane on the bend by Old Thatch but Bucks County Council have refused. We have also raised the problem of informal parking of lorries at the top of Winchbottom Lane and have asked Bucks to fund some form of bund to prevent it. We await a decision.

Gloria has a good relationship with the County Council’s local area technicians and is very persuasive in getting an extra bit of grass cutting or the filling of a pot hole or two. Responsibility for clearing of some footpaths is now being transferred to the council from the County and funding will be made available. We hope that the Chiltern Society will be able to take the work on.

## **General**

All of the council’s notice boards have been replaced during the year and my thanks to Jason Downes for arranging for the one in the village to be fixed to the Manor House wall. Likewise thanks to Cllr Richard Mash for a similar effort at Westhorpe and to Cllr Geoff Fitchew for renewing the remainder. During the year we have made grants to Marlow Museum, Wye Valley Volunteers , Target Magazine and towards the cost of the subsidised bus service.

The village took the Tindall runners up cup in the Best Kept Village Competition and residents will be pleased to know that we are entered again for this year.

The council is represented on the Rural Forum, Future of our Village group, the Marlow Society, the River Thames Alliance and Wycombe District Association of Local Councils and my thanks to all of the Councillors who give up their time to attend the meetings.

Councillors have also attended various training sessions and I am sure we are all relieved to hear that we now have a “Social Media” policy. Despite this modern innovation we are also continuing with our website and regular newsletter which is delivered to all houses that have letterboxes!

Cllr Valerie Brownridge has been active in bringing our management policies up to date and I am grateful for her hard work on this.

I am also grateful to our regular attendees at our meetings. The Chairmen of the Residents’ Associations: Richard Boas and William Northcroft and our District and County Councillors, David Watson, David Johncock and John Savage.

Finally my thanks to our staff, Ron Stokes, Christine Samuels and contractors, Greg Taylor, Roger Wicks, Ivan Smith, Peter Lovell and Richard Tedham.

Last but not least is of course our Clerk, Gloria without whom we would not be able to operate as we do. She maintains proper professional standards and keeps up to date with the ever changing world in which Parish Councils attempt to survive. More than that she keeps us all on our toes and for those of us with less than perfect memories send regular reminders which we ignore at our peril.

## **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

### **Income and Expenditure Account 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.**

|                            | Expenditure  | Income       |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Abbotsbrook Hall           | 11,191       | 10,796       |
| Allotments                 | 523          | 584          |
| Burial Ground              | 8,905        | 12,330       |
| Pavilion/Recreation Ground | 13,169       | 4,871        |
| Street Lighting            | 3,719        | -            |
| Agency Works               | 4,577        | 6,363        |
| Precept                    | -            | 39,229       |
| Administration             | 27,102       | 70           |
| Grants                     | 400          | 0            |
|                            | <hr/> 69,586 | <hr/> 74,243 |

### **Bank Balances at Lloyds Bank Plc at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014**

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| General a/c    | 8,227         |
| Petty Cash a/c | 503           |
| Premier a/c    | <u>37,905</u> |
|                | 46,635        |

## **PLANNING REPORT PRESENTED BY BARBARA WALLIS**

### **Planning Applications**

There have been noticeably fewer planning applications this year. As usual I have summarised them on a pie chart and am happy to answer questions about that.

Of last year's consents the winery has been built. I leave you to judge whether it is as conspicuous as we thought it would be.

The Athletics Track is well on the way to completion. However, because of the lease agreements, the permissive footpaths do not have to be completed until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 (or 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 at the very latest). Meanwhile there is to be an open day at the Athletics Track at the end of May – look out for invitations.

No applications were refused by WDC this year although one tree preservation notice was made. This is in general agreement with the Parish Council's view. Four

applications were withdrawn: two of these have reapplied. Four applications are still pending. Oddly we have had no pre-application consultations to look at this year.

Bucks County Council applications (minerals and waste). Lafarge Tarmac applied to BCC to extend the time for using plant at Spade Oak pit to process gravel from Harleyford. Bucks refused the application and L/T appealed. The appeal was refused. We expect BCC to issue an enforcement notice.

North West Estates appealed against BCC's refusal for an application to import waste to make a bund round the field they own at Westhorpe. Bizarrely this appeal was allowed on a technical point about whether or not the activity was importing waste. We do not know what will happen to that site now.

### **Wycombe District Local Plan**

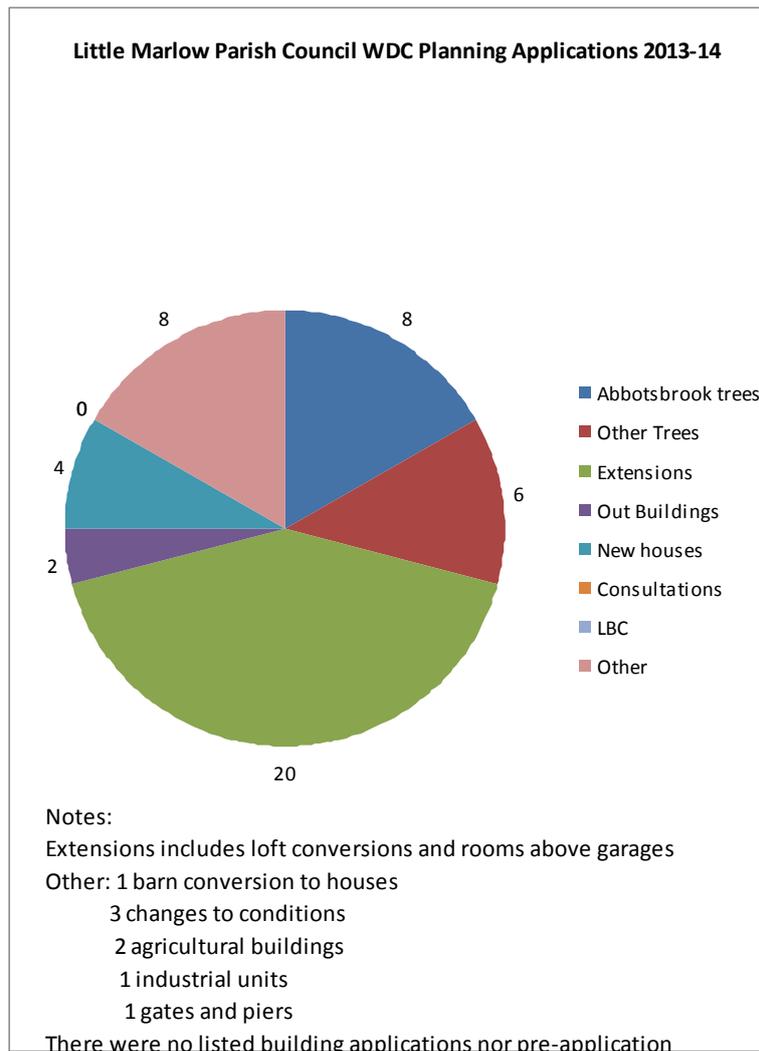
As I explained last year, the new Government Policy requires every local planning authority to have an up to date Local Plan. Wycombe were well on the way to having a Local Development Framework (the requirement of the last government), but this has now had to be abandoned in favour of an 'old style' Local Plan. Added to this the South East Plan has been scrapped so Wycombe has to plan to build enough houses to meet the housing need of the district. There is 'a duty to cooperate' with neighbouring districts, but as they are all in the same position.... Wycombe District Council has been shocked to find that the 2011 census has revealed a jump in population that they had not expected and there is no longer the almost full employment that Wycombe has enjoyed for many years. The District is also restrained by the Green Belt and Chilterns AONB. With this background the planning policy team embarked on the writing of the plan to shape Wycombe District up to 2031 in particular where housing and employment land should be located. Wycombe embarked on a series of public consultations which Little Marlow Parish Council has taken a full part in, and they have employed consultants to advise on where houses and workplaces should go. This resulted in the Document that we have recently been asked to comment on- The Options Consultation. [If anyone here does not know what is proposed for Little Marlow Parish I am sorry because we have done all we can to publicise it but for the record ] there is a proposal in the document that there is a business park to the west of the A404 in Little Marlow Parish, which is not mentioned, in one of the most sensitive areas of the proposed Gravel Pits Area Country Park, which has disappeared from the plan. The Parish Council response can be seen on the website.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Last year I suggested that we did not need a neighbourhood plan as we could work with the planners at Wycombe. After the publication of the Options Consultation I wonder if my advice was right, but I still think it would be too much for Little Marlow to embark on, but if Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council decide to go ahead with one we should support them.

### **National Planning Guidance**

Following from the National Planning Policy Framework, the government has now published its National Planning Practice Guidance. This consists of about 40 documents that can be downloaded from the planning portal website. They cover all aspects of planning and are well worth reading. They do not seem to be published as paper documents, I think so that they can be updated frequently, but I am sure either the District or parish Council would print off any that people need to put in a planning application or comment on one.



**Thank you**

I should like to thank everyone who has helped me with the planning this year, particularly Geoff Fitchew who has done all the tree consultations and looked after Abbotsbrook, Philip Emmett who has come on site visits at short notice and offered pragmatic advice and Valerie Brownridge who has come with me to meetings, proof read my submissions to Wycombe and generally supported me. I am standing down from the Parish Council at the next election, but meanwhile I will give up being chairman of planning at the Council’s AGM next week. Thank you everyone for your support.

**OTHER REPORTS**

**Rt Hon. Dominic Grieve, QC, MP**

I am sorry that I cannot be with you this evening, due to a prior commitment.

I am very much aware that the Little Marlow Parish Council AGM takes place against the background of the revision of the Local Plan, and the creation of a new one that raises considerable challenges for Little Marlow. Having successfully seen off the proposals to move the football ground to a site within the parish, there is now the possibility of substantial development taking place at Westhorpe, as part of the

economic development of the area. I am also aware that there are concerns at the northern end of the parish as to how development, for both infrastructure and housing, might impact on the AONB.

I have contacted the District Council to express my concern over any change to the Local Plan which would undermine the Green Belt lying between Little Marlow and the A404. I will work with the Parish Council and local residents in trying to make sure that these issues are fully debated. I recognise, of course, that in a country where the population may well be rising towards 70 million in the next fifteen years, Wycombe District Council faces some difficult issues over how to structure its development. But it also seems to me that there needs to be some reassurance that the strategic gaps between urban areas are maintained, and there is no doubt that the Green Belt between Little Marlow and Marlow is of very high importance in this respect.

I have received the usual representations over the course of the year about problems relating to the operation of the Little Marlow sewerage works. But it seems to me that there may have been less of this than previously. I visited the LaFarge site last summer to see the work that is taking place there, and to discuss how the eventual re-landscaping of the mineral extraction site will take place.

If any local resident does wish to contact me, then this can be done through my parliamentary office, by email: [dominic.grieve.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:dominic.grieve.mp@parliament.uk) or by telephone: 020 7219 6220.

I hope that the Annual Parish Meeting is successful and look forward to seeing many of you over the coming months.

**PC Merlyn Evans, Neighbourhood Officer Thames Valley Police**

The local Neighbourhood team has been working hard with other officers throughout the Wycombe Local Policing Area to make the Little Marlow parish area an even safer place to be. I have been very pleased with the results over this year and as you will know Burglary across the Wycombe LPA has reduced by 47% which is a terrific result, what does that mean for this area however? Please see the below statistics showing the previous year's recorded crime versus this year's results (this is for the whole parish which includes Well End):

2012-13: 49 crimes recorded of which the following priority offences were recorded

8 Burglary Dwellings

- 15 Burglary Non Dwellings
- 2 Acts of Violence Against The Person
- 11 Auto-crime offences
- 12% of crimes were detected

2013-14: 33 crimes recorded of which the following priority offences were recorded

- 2 Burglary Dwellings
- 4 Burglary Non Dwellings
- 1 Act of Violence Against the Person

4 Auto-crime offences  
15% of crimes were detected

This translates to the following statistics:

75% Burglary Dwelling reduction  
73% Burglary Non Dwelling reduction  
50% Violence Against the person reduction  
64% Auto-crime reduction  
33% Total crime reduction

The team have been liaising with local rural residents and business owners as part of Operation Ranger in an effort to reduce crime. We are also going to liaise with the business owners of the Cress Service Station in Well End as motorists making off without payment contribute to a larger slice of the recorded crime than we would like and we will look to combat this in the future.

Anti-social behaviour is still very low for the area and we will continue to patrol to ensure that this is kept as low as possible. Patrols are carried out across the district along with particular attention to School Lane, Fern Lane, Pump Lane North & Monkton Lane to reduce drug possession offences and Burglary Dwelling.

We liaise with homeowners in Westhorpe to combat the anti-social use of dirt bikes in the derelict site adjacent to the A404 and the public footpaths and would urge residents to continue to call us when they are using the bikes on footpaths and bridleways.

Parking patrols have taken place at school times for Little Marlow School and I would urge that parents remember to abide by the informal one way system to ease traffic flow and be considerate in relation to driving standards when passing by the school as there were reports of unnecessary speed during school pick up time.

I am very much looking forward to the year ahead and myself along with my colleagues PCSO Claire BOWLES and PCSO Joshua JONES would welcome any feedback or comments you have in relation to crime in your area. You can contact us via our website, using 101 or by attending Marlow Police Station Tuesday-Thursday from 1000-1400.

#### **Bourne End Post Office**

Plans to change Bourne End Post Office have been announced.

#### **Target Magazine**

Mrs Penfold thanked the Parish Council for the donation to Target Magazine.

#### **Sewage Issues at Westhorpe**

Mr Randall's fields have been flooded by leaks from the sewage outflow pipe. Thames Water are going to install two new pipes but not until 2015. In the meantime, walkers along the Thames path are avoiding areas that are or have been flooded and making new gaps in fences. D. Cllr D. Watson agreed to take this matter to Thames Water.

Chairman  
*DD Banfield*