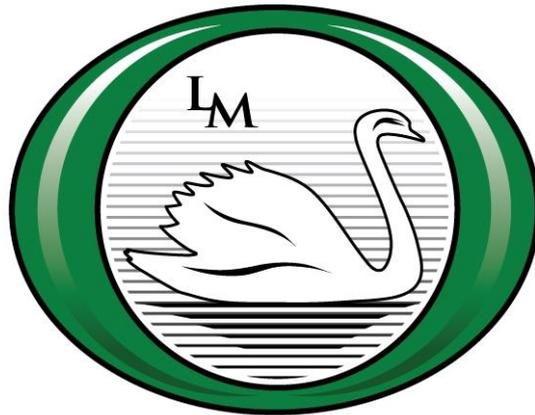


# **LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL**



## **ANNUAL REPORT & CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2017**



## **Little Marlow Annual Report 2016/17**

It has been an honour to be Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council for a second year and I am pleased to present my report for the year to you.

The full Parish Council has met 9 times since our last Annual Parish Meeting, including one extraordinary meeting. The Council sub-committees have also met regularly. You will find the minutes of all these meetings on our website. Your Parish Councillors have represented the Council on a wide range of outside bodies and have ensured that the interests of Little Marlow parishioners are taken into account. In addition, the Clerk and Councillors have attended training courses as well as briefings on the Local Plan and the proposed Unitary Authority. I am most grateful to all of the Councillors for giving up their precious time to attend these various meetings.

We have produced two newsletters again this year. As well as reporting on Parish Council activities, we have made an effort to include more articles and photos from local organisations. We now have a new website. I hope that you will agree that it is a huge improvement on our old website. It is still a work in progress. We have had a few teething problems but we are confident that they will all be sorted out soon. Many thanks to Councillors Downes and Acres and to our Clerk, Emma Marsden, for all the time and effort they have put into the new site. I would also like to remind you again that we now have a twitter feed.

I reported last year that we had gained Quality Award Status in the new Local Council Award Scheme. We have worked hard this year to ensure that we continue to meet the Quality Award standard.

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

### **Abbotsbrook Hall**

In order to improve the cleanliness of the hall, we have increased the number of hours the hall is cleaned each week. We have contracted out the additional hours to a cleaning company to our longstanding cleaner, Peter Samuels. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Peter Samuels for his many years of service and also to thank Christine Samuels, our caretaker, for all she does, including dealing with Hall bookings on our behalf. You may recall that I reported last year that we had had a lot of work done on the car park. I am pleased to announce that as a result all the residents whose properties back onto the car park are now paying the licence fee.

### **Pavilion and Recreation Ground**

We have also contracted out the cleaning at the Pavilion. The Parish Council entered into a new Agreement with the Little Marlow Cricket Club over the use of the pavilion and the recreation ground. I should like to record our thanks to Richard Tedham for all the time and effort he puts into keeping the recreation ground in such excellent condition. I am disappointed to report that we have had a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour on the recreation ground. We have alerted the police. It would be very helpful to them and to the Council if parishioners could call them immediately if they witness any anti-social behaviour.

### **Burial Ground**

One of our longer-term projects for the Burial Ground was to improve access to and from Sheepridge Lane for funeral corteges and funeral service employees by creating a bell-mouth onto Sheepridge Lane. We have now completed the first phase of this project which involved the removal of some of the hedgerow to the North of the entrance and rehanging the gate so it opens inwards. The Council resolved not to go ahead with the bell-mouth as the work undertaken had improved the sight line sufficiently for vehicles to exit safely onto Sheepridge. The memorials in the old part of the burial ground have been made safe. We held

our usual working party at the Cemetery in December. Many thanks to all those who came along to help. We are also grateful to the 1<sup>st</sup> Bourne End Cubs who kindly volunteered to do some tidying up at the cemetery as part of their community engagement. I would like to apologise for the state of the waste bins at the burial ground. Our attempts to bring in a skip to clear the bins have been thwarted by a low hanging telephone line blocking the entrance. In spite of calling them repeatedly, BT Openreach have not yet sent anyone to raise the line.

### **Roads and road safety**

The Vehicle Activated Sign which was finally installed on Sheepridge Lane in June has done its job: there have been no reported accidents this year. The C100 Green Path starting from the Rebellion Brewery and finishing at Pump Lane North has been completed thanks to funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

### **Allotments**

Over the year we continued tidying up the allotments site. We also improved the numbering of the plots. We have managed to attract a few new gardeners but still have some vacant plots. I would like to thank Jane Vincent, our allotments warden, for all she has done to help us improve the allotments and find new plot-holders.

### **Athletics Track**

The Parish Council has established good relations with Active-in who are now operating the Track on behalf of ALF. There was a well organised charity Sprintathon at the Athletics Track in September which in spite of the numbers participating caused minimal disruption to residents. One of the Developer Obligations set out in the S106 Agreement between the Little Marlow Trust and WDC was that Little Marlow Trust had to create new permissive paths. The Council has kept up the pressure on WDC and work has started on one of the paths.

### **General**

You may recall that in order to obtain the Quality Award, we were required to draw up an Action Plan setting out the Parish Council's objectives for the coming year. Drawing up such a Plan has certainly helped us as a Council to think ahead and to decide our priorities for the coming year. I am pleased to say that once again we have met most of our objectives. You will find copies of the 2016/17 Action Plan on our website. We will be discussing our new Action Plan at our next meeting.

The Parish Council is continuing to carry out the grass cutting and other work which Bucks County Council devolved to us in 2015. At the end of last year we invited tenders for the ground maintenance of the Parish open spaces and the ground maintenance of the burial ground. The Council awarded the contracts to two different contractors who started work on 1 April. Both are doing an excellent job.

We have undertaken a fair bit of work on the trees in the burial ground, the recreation ground and Abbotsbrook Hall as part of the tree maintenance plan we drew up following last year's tree survey..

Little Marlow Village was highly commended in the Gurney Cup in the Best Kept Village Competition. We have entered the 2017 competition. Judging takes place in June and July. The Parish Council again had a stand at the Little Marlow Village Fete last August. We have installed two dog bins in the village, one near the path by the Queen's Head and the other near the Moors.

Thanks to the efforts and persuasive powers of our enterprising Clerk, we obtained a grant to improve the Spade Oak Car Park. I am very grateful to the volunteers from Coldmoorholm Lane who have kindly maintained the car-park throughout the year.

Thames Water was given a record fine for a series of significant pollution incidents on the River Thames at a number of sites including in Little Marlow where the Sewage Treatment

works polluted the River, Thames Path and farmland between November 2012 and December 2013. Local businesses, residents, Residents' Associations and the Little Marlow Lakes and Country Park have submitted claims to Thames Water.

Parish Councils are the lowest tier in local government and as your elected representatives, it is important that we speak up on your behalf about local issues. This year we have submitted comments to WDC on its draft Local Plan for 2017-33. We expressed our concern about the immense strain the proposed new developments at Abbey Barn South and Hollands Park would put on our local infrastructure (roads, schools, doctor's surgeries) and queried the ability of the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment work to cope satisfactorily with the growth in catchment. We have also commented on Bucks County Council's proposal to replace BCC and the 4 district councils with a single unitary authority and WDC's proposal to replace them with 2 unitary authorities.

I would like to end by saying a few more thank yous. As I said last year, we are fortunate to have two active Residents' Associations. I greatly appreciate the support and co-operation I receive from their Chairmen, Jason Downes and Richard Boas. I am also grateful to County and District Councillor David Watson and District Councillors David Johncock and John Savage for attending our Parish Council meetings, for their continued interest in our Parish and for their support on issues affecting Little Marlow. I owe a huge vote of thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors for all the service they have given to the Parish Council and the wider community throughout the year. The Parish is very lucky to have such a great team of Councillors who all have different skills which complement one another. This means that between us we can usually deal with any issue that arises. And last but not least, I would like to thank our fantastic Clerk, Emma Marsden. I don't know what we would do without her! She is a huge support to all Councillors, but particularly to me. She is extremely resourceful and manages to sort out any problem thrown at her— and there have been quite a few this year - and keep smiling. She keeps us all on our toes and ensures that the Parish Council serves its parishioners to the best of all our abilities.

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Presented by Cllr Acres. Councillor Acres is the Chairman of the budget committee and outlined significant expenditure in 2016/17. She also explained about the precept and how it is calculated.

	Income	Expenditure
Abbotsbrook Hall	£11,565	£16,044
Allotments	£531	£2,810
Burial Ground	£14,770	£12,684
Pavilion / Recreation Grd	£5,901	£9,904
Street Lighting	-	£5,902
Precept	£47,113	-
Devolved Services	£1,767	£2,270
Grants	£7,615	£50
Administration	£458.00	£33,102
Full Council to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	£89,721	£82,766

## Little Marlow Parish Council Bank Accounts – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Current Account	£7,034.92
Precept Account	£15,630.43
Petty Cash	£281.07
Reserves Account	£44,082.43

### Planning Report

Yet again a busy year for applications in our Parish with nearly 90 received in total.  
52 were for buildings and signs  
35 for tree works, most of which we agreed to be guided by the tree officer at WDC

Most were fairly routine with the exceptions being:

Westhorpe house which was offices then nearly a veterinary practice and now posh apartments

Well End Lodge, all 3 storeys which we opposed, the councillor called in but was still granted, sorry neighbours

Now the Kings Head which we widely welcome but have enormous fears over parking in the village which have not yet been adequately addressed.

Worthy of note is the fact that Thames Water have ceased composting here and waste is transported off site for treatment with the old building being converted to allow loading of this material internally to reduce smell problems.

Cllr P Emmett – Planning Chairman