

# Great Milton Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mr T Darch

Email: [contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk](mailto:contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk)

Website: [www.great-milton.co.uk](http://www.great-milton.co.uk)

## Minutes of the Meeting of Great Milton Parish Council held virtually via video conference on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs Steve Harrod (Chair), W Fox (Vice-Chair), P Allen, G Bennet, C Deacon, P Fewell and M Horsley.

In Attendance: Cllr Caroline Newton (SODC), Tim Darch (Clerk) plus Raymond Blanc OBE (by telephone), Celia Geyer (Senior Vice-President for Design and Project Development, Belmond Group), Andrew Wall (Project Director), Daniel Lampard and Sarah Moorhouse (representing Lichfields, planning advisors for the project) and Niall Kingston (General Manager, Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons) and 45 members of the public.

**The meeting was conducted through a video conferencing facility. The new arrangements for the Parish Council are allowed under the following Regulation:**

**THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020**

### 29/21 **Apologies for Absence**

All councillors were present at the meeting.

### 30/21 **Variation of order of business**

Discussion of Item 34/21 A and in particular the planning application relating to Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons was advanced for the convenience of those present.

### 31/21 **Declarations of member's interest (if any)**

Regarding Item 34/21A, the Chair advised that himself and Cllr Fox are Chair and Vice-Chair of the Great Milton Community Pub Limited respectively, as well as being shareholders in the pub along with the majority of councillors and Belmond Group and Raymond Blanc. Following advice from the District Monitoring Officer, a declaration of pecuniary interest was not required for councillors who hold shares in the pub, but this is mentioned here for full transparency. Councillor Allen also reported that he is a neighbour of Cotswold House (which is also the subject of a planning application to be considered): despite there being no pecuniary interest, Cllr Allen wished this to be recorded.

### 32/21 **Matters to Report**

Regular updates are being received from OCC and SODC and continue to be communicated to residents via the available channels as appropriate. Cllr Caroline Newton relayed the following additional information

- £6k business restart grants will shortly be available, with up to £18k for hospitality and gyms.
- SODC is the second-best district in the country for recycling
- A joint Local Plan with Vale of White Horse District Council is being considered for the next iteration (2040).

A resident complimented the District Council waste team for collecting some refuse which was not picked up as scheduled, and was instead collected on a Sunday morning. Cllr Newton advised that she would pass compliments on to the Waste team.

### 33/21 **Correspondence and Public Discussion**

A resident of Milton Common has reported instances of large household items being left at the roadside for long periods for collection on a 'help yourself' basis. When items are not removed quickly, unfortunately this practice creates an unsightly visual impression. Residents are asked to dispose of unwanted items at household waste and recycling centres, or to request that items are collected by SODC, which can be arranged for a nominal fee.

### 34/21 **Planning Applications**

A To consider the following planning applications received from SODC:

P21/S0482/FUL (Lynday Thame Road Great Milton Oxford OX44 7NY). Change of use of existing dining room to a hair salon.

After review of this retrospective application, no issues were raised and there were no comments from neighbours. The Council agreed to SUPPORT the application.

P21/S0343/FUL and P21/S0428/LB (Belmond Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons Church Road Great Milton). Full planning permission for the erection of a new Wellness Spa, Bistro, Raymond Blanc Academy, Garden Villas, Garden Rooms, Pavilions and Storage Barns, minor extensions and alterations to the

existing Grade II\* Manor House, former Stables building and Staff Facilities building, new highway access, internal road and car parking areas, limited demolition and associated works. Cllr Harrod introduced the item by stating that the Manoir expansion scheme had been under development for many years and was of key importance to the future viability of Le Manoir. The Parish Council was briefed online in Nov 2020 on the proposal and plans to consult residents via an online presence in light of the Covid pandemic.

Representing Lichfields, Sarah Moorhouse stated that planners have been working on the Manoir scheme for 18 months. It was unfortunately not possible to hold consultation events 'in person', so consultation was necessarily conducted by remote means. Letters were sent to 700 households and a special website was created which received several hundred hits. Full information on the consultation process appears in the Statement of Community Involvement on the SODC website.

Raymond Blanc OBE joined the meeting by telephone from France. He stated that this was his vision for a future Manoir, and that he had been working on it for 7 years and will remain involved to see the project through and create a legacy. The LMQS business is vulnerable and cannot compete with the best without change. The aim is to create a place driven by responsible, sustainable luxury that will ensure the retention of their Michelin stars, which are key to Le Manoir's success and reputation when many more establishments have similar accreditation relative to ten years ago. The aim is to create a centre of excellence: the food, gardens, hotel and teaching are all to be the best. M. Blanc's aim both at the meeting and with the development is to resolve issues, not to create them, and to serve everyone including the community of Great Milton.

Celia Geyer representing Belmond Group stated that the consultation is on emerging proposals rather than a final scheme, and that it is still developing and will be subject to further consultation.

## **Questions and comments from attendees**

### **Building sizes**

It was asked why some buildings are larger in the planning application than in the original proposal. Had anyone asked for this? Celia Geyer replied that one or two buildings have increased in size to accommodate operational requirements. Sarah Moorhouse added that the original plan was hand-drawn, then drawn up by CAD which will have changed the sizing of some elements. Andrew Wall representing the planning team also added that the increased size of the Bistro will enable more local residents to enjoy the facility.

### **Traffic volumes**

The traffic implications of increasing numbers of day visitors were questioned. Celia Geyer replied saying that the aim is to make Le Manoir a destination to improve its viability, with 43 rooms instead of the current 32, but that it is not aiming to become a 'mass market' hotel, and huge amounts of additional traffic are not anticipated. The new access road has been located off the A329 to take traffic direct from the main road and hopefully reduce traffic movements on Church Road. Andrew Wall added that longer stays are being encouraged by the scheme, which will hopefully help to reduce vehicle movements.

### **Impact on Church Road**

A resident questioned some new buildings on Church Road that appear in the planning documentation but which didn't appear on the consultation website, along with a potentially unsightly refuse/recycling area on the A329: he was happy to approve the initial consultation plan, but the second draft accompanying the planning application was very different. The noise from emptying bottle banks can also be very intrusive. Concerns were also expressed about property values nearby. Andrew Wall responded by stating that all refuse/recycling areas will be screened and are located to minimise visual impact on footpaths and the village in general as much as possible. Sarah Moorhouse added that the location of a refuse facility close to the A329 means that lorries can collect without impacting Church Road, minimising noise and visual disturbance. Niall Kingston added that noise can be dealt with by amending collection times if this would be helpful.

### **Building sizes: pre-application advice**

A resident commented that contrary to pre-application advice some buildings would benefit from size reductions to reduce impact and 'massing', but instead they have apparently become larger. Sarah Moorhouse replied that there were extensive discussions and socially distanced onsite visits with the planning authority as part of the consultation process. Comments will be collated and reviewed and potential amendments considered when all consultation responses have been received (several are still outstanding, including from the Countryside Officer), which will then inform a response back to SODC.

### **Size of development**

The size of the redevelopment was questioned, and specifically why it is necessary to be so large to be a viable business proposition, and why the quantum of proposed car parking is so large (160 guests, 90 staff) Celia Geyer responded that Le Manoir usually attracts one-night stays. 2-Star restaurants are no

# Great Milton Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mr T Darch

Email: [contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk](mailto:contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk)

Website: [www.great-milton.co.uk](http://www.great-milton.co.uk)

longer such an unusual proposition, and as a result ancillary facilities are required to give a more diverse experience (for example a different restaurant and a spa) to encourage longer visits: these require additional capacity. The trend is also for 'experiences', hence the proposals for a cookery school/Centre of Excellence, all of which requires additional space. Guests will have priority on spa bookings, but there may be some day spaces subject to availability.

## **Car Parking**

A resident suggested that a ratio of two to three day guests per one overnight guest was anticipated from the proposed parking provision, indicating a move towards more day visitors relative to overnight guests. Sarah Moorhouse confirmed that the figure of 160 guest parking spaces reflected an increase in the expected numbers of day visitors attracted by the new schools and bistro as well as the increased number of rooms. Andrew Wall added that the number of car parking spaces is based on a 'worst-case scenario' to minimise the risk of overspill using data provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

Surface water drainage was flagged as a concern given the site's location, and particularly the impact of heavy rain which is causing increasing problems in the area. Andrew Wall responded by stating that much of the surface water would be retained on site for use in garden areas, vineyards etc. and that reed beds would be created for sustainable drainage and recycling of 'grey water'. Celia Geyer added that garden areas and vegetable gardens are to be considerably expanded and will require additional water as a result. Full information on drainage proposals is contained in the application's Flood Risk Assessment/SUDS report, which can be found in the planning application documents on the SODC website. Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Water are drainage consultees, and their views will be considered and any conditions adhered to.

## **Size and legibility of plans**

A comment was made on the legibility of plans, many of which were on the small side. Residents were advised that it should be possible to zoom in to view the plans in more detail with no loss of clarity, though it can take a few seconds to render the plans at the higher level of magnification.

## **Impact on wider village**

A resident stated that residents love the village where they live, and are also proud of Le Manoir and M. Blanc's achievements. However, it is necessary to consider seriously the future potential negative impact on this development, particularly on light, noise and traffic pollution. It should also be noted that Sat Nav directs traffic coming from the Oxford direction through the village, rather than via the A329. Andrew Wall responded that Belmond and the planners are acutely aware of these issues, but that a successful Le Manoir would enhance the village too. It has taken two years of design work to reach the right balance between an expanded luxury hotel and impact upon the environment. Additional EV charging points and a staff minibus are proposed, and the team will continue to engage with the village as the project moves forward into detailed design. If planning permission is granted, input from the community will be sought during the detailed design process. Celia Geyer added that the aspiration was to maintain today's ambience in the Manoir of tomorrow and retain its 'soul', and that there was no wish to light up the buildings and surrounding area like a Christmas tree.

## **Volume of water/scale**

Concerns have been expressed by Thames Water in their consultation response about the volume of water that will be generated by the expansion. Additionally, although the professionalism of those involved is clear and the plan may make business sense, the problem is one of scale. This is a large development in a small village with a previous history of large developments being turned down (the Givenchy spa, in 1997). Historic England's opinion from their response is that the development will harm the current setting, the significance of the house and the village surroundings. Celia Geyer replied that as a resident of a village she was acutely aware of the need for protection of the surroundings, and that the process is still at consultation stage which may result in minor amendments when all responses are collated. Sarah Moorhouse added that she was aware of Thames Water's comments, which are part of a pre-application process and are being considered and addressed.

## **Application strategy**

It was suggested that maybe the application was asking for a larger quantum of development than would be permitted, but in the expectation that permission would be given for a smaller amount which

would actually suffice and be adequate for the expansion's objectives. No categorical response was received to this suggestion.

### **Notification of application**

A Church Road resident advised that they had not received a letter about the planning application. Celia Geyer advised that if notice had not been served this was the responsibility of SODC rather than the applicant, and that this should be followed up with them.

### **3D modelling**

Two residents suggested that 3D models would be helpful for residents (especially those without computers) to fully appreciate the potential size and impact of the development and impact on views, one expressing surprise that this had not been routinely pursued. There were also comments about landscape renders on the SODC planning application pages either being inaccessible or missing visual information, including proposed buildings. Sarah Moorhouse referred people to the Landscape and Visual Assessment, and advised that no 3D models had been produced. She would investigate the reported issues with the landscape representations on the SODC website with the case officer.

### **Timing of discussion**

The timing of this discussion with the planners and other representatives of Belmond and Le Manoir was questioned. Sarah Moorhouse replied saying that it was difficult to do a full consultation online and when 'in person' contact is not possible, and that they wrote to 700 people, wrote to people without access to the internet, created a consultation website and appeared at the Parish Council meeting which considered the application. Celia Geyer added that face-to-face consultation would have been preferable to all concerned, especially M. Blanc.

### **Councillor debate**

Cllr Fox was appreciative of the points made. He described Le Manoir as a huge asset to the village, and a world-renowned centre for culinary excellence, but fully understood the need for it to expand to compete and liked the plans as presented. The comments on the size of the development were appreciated but the Parish Council's role is to review the broad planning principles and to reflect the views of those directly impacted. Cllr Fox broadly supported the proposals in principle.

Cllr Bennet was in general very supportive of the scheme and expressed thanks to Belmond for their attendance. The scale was clearly of concern to some, and he felt that this should be reflected in the Parish Council's comments to the planning authority. Cllr Bennet was also supportive of the use of 3D modelling to convey the scale of the proposals and facilitate full accessibility and appreciation of the plan to all residents.

Cllr Allen was supportive of the principle and of Le Manoir, but felt that SODC should be allowed to determine upon issues with scale as the planning authority. He also expressed concern about the preservation of footpaths in the vicinity of the site and particularly in the adjacent fields, about which assurances were received regarding their preservation.

Cllr Horsley was broadly supportive, but also supportive of the use of modelling given the apparent discrepancies between the initial consultation plan and the drawings accompanying the planning application.

Cllrs Deacon and Fewell offered no additional comment.

### **Vote**

Councillors voted unanimously to SUPPORT the application, but with caveats broadly aligning with residents' concerns largely regarding the size and scale of the proposals. The Chairman's casting vote was not required. As the applicant, the Chair proposed that the recording should be shared with Raymond Blanc so that the feedback from the meeting could be fully and accurately transmitted.

Cllr Harrod stated that all comments received would be supplied to the District Council, and that any responses received during the week of the meeting would be considered by SODC. He concluded the discussion by commending M. Blanc, and the various representatives of Belmond and the planning team for attendance and their input. There has been a history of cooperation and support between the village and Le Manoir, and as a result of the hotel's success Great Milton is now known the world over. Cllr Harrod expressed confidence that M. Blanc would not endorse anything that would damage either the village, his legacy or Le Manoir's reputation. Le Manoir is a large employer of over 200 employees (rising to 300 after the expansion) whose staff and guests spend in the village shop and the pub and are thus vital to the local economy. Cllr Harrod felt that Belmond and Raymond Blanc will do the right thing for Great Milton, and expressed gratitude to all who had contributed to the meeting.

# Great Milton Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mr T Darch

Email: [contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk](mailto:contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk)

Website: [www.great-milton.co.uk](http://www.great-milton.co.uk)

P21/S0656/HH (Cotswold House Lower End Great Milton). Single storey extensions to side and rear. A single comment appears on the application pages of the District Council website from a resident supporting the scheme (Cllr Allen, who lives next door). Letters have been left by the Ward Councillor at neighbouring properties, which encouraged them to comment if necessary. Cllr Deacon had no issues with the proposal, and the Council subsequently agreed to SUPPORT the application.

B To review the following planning decisions received and any outstanding planning matters.  
P21/S0072/LB (The Priory Church Road Great Milton OX44 7PB). Removal of modern paint finish + Internal repairs to stone mullioned windows. Planning permission is GRANTED for the development outlined above.

P20/S3158/FUL (Bentley House London Road Milton Common OX9 2NU),  
Demolition of existing car repair workshop and erection of replacement commercial building comprising 4 units, with associated works including access, parking and landscaping. (As amplified by Noise Impact Assessment received 26 November 2020). Planning permission is GRANTED for the development outlined above.

P21/S0086/HH (Clovelly The Green Great Milton OX44 7NP). Ground floor extension to the existing property located to the side of the property and new rear lean-to extension to the rear of the property. Planning permission is GRANTED for the development outlined above.

P21/S0174/HH (Brook Bank, Church Road, Great Milton). Extension of existing out-building to provide studio, summer kitchen and store. Planning permission is GRANTED for the development outlined above.

## Chalgrove Airfield update

The Airfield Advisory Team (AAT, part of the Civil Aviation Authority) has expressed significant concerns about the plans for the redevelopment of Chalgrove Airfield for housing, as follows:

- *The site cannot accommodate both a housing development and Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Limited's specialised operation*
- *The proposed new runway and wider aerodrome site is inadequate for the flight operations requirements of Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Limited*
- *The proposed new aerodrome is inadequate in terms of space required for tests carried out by Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Limited*
- *Any reduction in the space currently available to Martin-Baker will directly impact their ability to carry out specialised testing and to service their customers effectively and efficiently*

Officers now need to consider this representation and assess the suitability of the current proposals in light of the policy requirements. At this current time officers are still considering all representations and will be discussing the scheme with the applicant, Homes England. As it stands there are no definite timescales for a decision on this application. A full update from Cllr Newton on the latest developments is available on the Parish Council website here:

[Meetings 2021 - Great Milton Parish Council - Great Milton Parish Council, Great Milton, Oxford \(great-milton.co.uk\)](http://www.great-milton.co.uk)

## 35/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held virtually on Monday 15th February 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings and signed on camera.

## 36/21 Financial Resolutions

A The following payments were authorised, and were physically signed along with associated invoices subsequent to the meeting:

Tim Darch. Salary, Tax and Expenses. £508.85  
Jonathan Dudley. Bulletin production March. £216.20  
Website hosting (reimbursement to Clerk). £19.99  
ALCC membership renewal. £40  
OALC membership renewal. £155.49  
ICO data protection fee. £40

B The latest monthly bank reconciliation, accounts and bank statements were received, signed and approved. The reconciled bank balance as at 3 February was £33,928.47.

**37/21 Parish Clerk and Councillors' update of matters in hand**

- Residents are reminded that the national Census takes place on Sunday March 21<sup>st</sup>. Participation is a legal requirement. It is hoped that the Census will be conducted largely online but paper copies are available by request by calling the Census Helpline on 0800 141 2021 or at census.gov.uk. There are physical support centres, but the closest are likely to be in Oxford (Cowley and Rose Hill) or Aylesbury.

**38/21 COVID-19: update on village response/impacts**

To review and discuss any significant local developments with regard to the current pandemic.

**39/21 Village mowing**

McCracken and Son Ltd have signed an agreement to take over the village mowing from mid-March for two years.

**40/21 Proposed move to new dog waste collection contractor**

A private contractor will take over the emptying of dog waste bins from April.

**41/21 Speeding and potential counter-measures in Milton Common**

Police checks have been taking place in Milton Common to try and deal with the reported issue with excess speeds. Contact has been made with OCC Highways as regards recommended measures to deal with the problem in the long-term: various options have been suggested including speed indicator signs, road markings and roadside gates at the start of the built-up area. The Parish Council has access to funding from the new housing development in the area which it is hoping to use to try to address this issue.

**42/21 Protocol for the death of a senior figure**

The Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils has advised all councils to review their arrangements for the death of a senior figure. Following discussions the following draft procedure has been suggested:

- Request PCC to fly Union Flag at half-mast at St Mary's Church (if practical/permitted in light of Covid/other restrictions)
- Postpone any council meetings scheduled during a period of mourning (seek guidance from OALC if this coincides with either of the two Annual Meetings: the Annual Meeting of the PC has to take place in May)
- Chair to pen letter/message of condolence from the Parish Council
- Encourage local residents to sign any national online Book of Condolence: consider local Book of Condolence if practical/permitted in light of Covid/other restrictions
- Encourage people to donate to a charity that resonates with the deceased rather than buy/lay flowers
- Note condolences/proclamation at next meeting and minute.

The process outlined above was APPROVED by all councillors present.

**43/21 Cllr Peter Fewell**

Peter has unfortunately decided to step down from his role as Parish Councillor. The Parish Council wishes to express its sincere thanks to Peter for his many years of valuable and diligent service to the village. A casual vacancy will shortly be notified to SODC and advertised locally: if no proposals are received for an election it will be possible to fill the post by co-option, and volunteers will be sought.

The meeting concluded at 9.15pm.

***The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council will be held virtually on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting, which will start at 7.30pm and which all are welcome to attend via the published Zoom link.***

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_