

LITTLE MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AT ABBOTSBROOK HALL FROM 8PM ON FRIDAY 13th MAY 2022 AND CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

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| Present: | Mrs J Murray – Clerk Cllr K Acres Cllr V Brownridge - Chairman Cllr J Downes Cllr P Emmett Cllr S Kershaw Buckinghamshire Cllr Watson Buckinghamshire Cllr Johncock Joy Morrissey MP Cllr C Heap | Mrs B Wallis Mr W & Mrs P North Mrs L Johncock Mr R Mills Mr Ashford Mr G Carter Mr A Snow Ms V West Mr M Teague |
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APM22/01

1. Welcome & Introduction by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council

APM22/02

2. Apologies for Absence

PC Darren King and PCSO Chris Bis, Thames Valley Police, Cllr A Crabtree, Cllr V Morton, Mrs A Falk, Mr B Berger

APM22/03

3. Minutes of previous meeting held on Friday 19th March 2021

The Minutes of the previous meeting were **RESOLVED**, and the Chairman duly signed them.

APM22/04

4. Report from Joy Morrissey MP

Joy Morrissey thanked the Parish Council for the invitation to attend the meeting.

She confirmed that she fully supported local councillors and community groups in their efforts to protect and preserve the green belt for future generations. She said that she would continue to oppose the planning application for the Marlow Film Studio but she suggested that it was important to ensure that any Section106 agreement was written into the planning application and would deliver measurable outcomes. She had also lobbied Thames Water (who have shown a lack of commitment to maintenance in the last 12 years) about water quality and she recognised that there were still urgent issues that needed to be addressed in the area when raw sewage spills into the Thames.

Ms Morrissey kindly took questions from the floor.

APM22/05

5. Geoffrey Moss Memorial Bowl Rose Bowl Presentation by the Chairman

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 that it be presented annually to any resident of Little Marlow who in the opinion of the Parish Council had given outstanding service to the community. The Parish Council considered the nominations for the bowl at its meeting on 12 April.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Council decided to award the Geoffrey Moss Memorial Rose Bowl this year to Verity West in recognition of all she does to safeguard and look after this beautiful part of the country where we live.

Verity set up Wild Marlow to protect the biodiversity in the Marlow area, including Little Marlow. She has organised a number of activities and workshops in Little Marlow including the building of bug hotels and birdboxes to raise awareness, particularly among young people, and to encourage them to get involved. Wild Marlow was highly commended in the Best Community Group contribution category in 2021 Proud of Bucks Award. And before she came here this evening, Verity gave a brilliant interview to BBC TV news about the peregrine falcons at All Saints Church in Marlow. What a star! When the Parish Council was given the opportunity to take part in Buckinghamshire Council's bid to the Government's Local Authorities Treescape Fund, Verity provided crucial advice and guidance to Cllr A Crabtree when she was putting our bid together. Verity was instrumental in helping to set up Save Marlow's Greenbelt to protect the green spaces in and around Marlow, including Little Marlow. Verity keeps a watchful eye on developments in our parish and draws the Council's attention to any which might be in breach of planning permission. Verity also looks after the interests of the residents of Westhorpe Park and flags up issues of concern to the Parish Council and Buckinghamshire Council on their behalf. She has also acted as a spokesperson for them at the Community Liaison Group meetings set up by the Marlow Film Studio team.

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

I would also like to recognise another of our residents: Guy Rigby. Not many parishes have a world record holder in their midst and only Little Marlow can claim to be the home of one half of "the oldest pair on planet earth to row any ocean". Guy and his rowing partner David Murray set off in December 2021 to row the 3,000 miles from the Canaries to Antigua. While fulfilling a huge personal challenge, he shared his journey along the way with local residents and raised over £750,000 for UnLtd, a charity that funds and supports Social Entrepreneurs by helping them to create sustainable businesses that focus on people, profit and the planet to (hopefully) change the world for the better. He is a fine example of how retired people can make a positive and inspirational impact.

APM22/06

6 Annual Report given by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council

The full Parish Council has met nine times since our last Annual Parish Meeting in March 2021. The Parish Council committees, including a new Environmental Committee, have met regularly. Parish Councillors have represented the Council on various outside bodies, including the Southwest Chilterns Community Board and its four action groups.

Buckinghamshire Council and Town and Parish Council Elections were held on 6 May 2021. There were nine candidates for the nine places on Little Marlow Parish Council so there was no need for an election.

Sadly, one of our long-standing Councillors, Councillor Richard Mash, died suddenly at the beginning of March. Richard was highly respected and much loved by us all. Council meetings are just not the same without him. During his many years as Parish Councillor, Richard was of great service to the Council and to our local community. He was well plugged in to what was going on in the Parish, particularly in relation to local land issues. We benefitted as a Council and as a community from his local knowledge and experience and his great love for the outdoors. I would just like to record our sorrow at his death and our thanks to him for his many years of service.

Two of our Councillors have stood down since our last meeting: Cllr Roger Randall in March 2021 and Cllr Geoff Fitchew in January 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for all the work they did while they were on the Council. I will just say a few additional words about Geoff as he served on the Council for 20 years and was Deputy Chairman for many of those years. Both the previous Chairman and I greatly valued his advice and support. I am particularly grateful to Geoff for his hands-on oversight of

Abbotsbrook Hall, dealing himself with many of the maintenance issues which arose there and for the expertise he brought to planning related matters.

We were delighted to welcome to the Council Cllr Sam Kershaw who was co-opted in September 2021 and Cllr Stephen Goss who was co-opted in April 2022. Sam hit the ground running and is already making his mark on planning matters as well as getting on top of other aspects of Council work. It is obviously early days for Stephen, but I am sure he too will quickly find his feet.

The Council is fortunate to own a number of assets which serve the community and bring in a welcome income.

Pavilion and Recreation Ground

We were able to allow our regular hirers to return as the COVID 19 restrictions were gradually lifted between April and July 2021. It was good to be able to welcome back first the children's groups and then the adults who use our recreation ground and a little later those who hire our halls for children's activities before finally being able to open our doors to adult exercise groups and finally all our hirers. Not all groups came back right away, some preferring to wait until September or even later, but most are now back. We were fortunate that the pre-school was able to continue to operate throughout the pandemic. I would like to thank Richard Tedham for the excellent job he has done maintaining the recreation ground. This was particularly challenging this year because of the large number of rabbits who all seemed to want to build their burrows in Little Marlow village. There were so many holes in the football pitch that the Bourne End Junior Sports Club were forced to stop playing. We eventually had to resort to drastic measures to resolve the problem and we are now looking forward to the return of the junior football teams.

Abbotsbrook Hall

I am pleased to report that most of our regular hirers have returned to Abbotsbrook Hall, although we are not yet back to full capacity. The pre-school operated throughout the pandemic. Maintenance work undertaken at the Hall last year included digging a new soakaway in order to divert the rainwater from the east side of hall to the existing drains at the west side and work on the guttering. I am grateful to our Hirings Administrator, Christine Samuels, and our caretaker, Peter Samuels, for the way they coped with the ever-changing rules over this last year.

Burial Ground

In September, we started work on expanding the cemetery by clearing the copse. This area will eventually become a new area for burials once we run out of space in the existing cemetery. In the meantime, we have sown wildflower seeds in the top part of the copse. The Council organised a working party at the cemetery in December to clear leaves and cut away the ivy on some of the old gravestones.

Allotments

The allotments continue to be an asset for the community. All our allotments are now taken.

General

The Government decided not to extend the legislation allowing Town and Parish Councils to meet remotely beyond 7 May 2021, so the Parish Council had to revert to meeting physically at its meeting on 18 May.

We reviewed our 2021/22 Action Plan which set out our objectives for the year at our March Council meeting and drew up a new Action Plan for 2022/23. This includes a number of new objectives relating to the environment. The plan can be found on our website alongside all our previous plans.

The Parish Council is committed to improving the sustainability of our community and to this end created a new Environment Committee to draw up an environmental strategy for the Council to guide our decision making and ensure we take environmental factors into account. The Council had a number of discussions about whether we should declare a climate emergency. We eventually decided that we would not do so, but the Council confirmed that we are committed to following through on the actions for addressing the climate

change emergency locally as identified in the Parish Council's environmental policy. The policy can be found on our website. Key aims include reducing the carbon footprint of the Council, supporting and educating parishioners to help them reduce their household's or business's environmental impact, protecting the natural environment in the parish, seeking to improve biodiversity locally and encouraging behaviours that will build resilience in face of climate change.

The Parish Council was involved in the successful bid which Transition Town Marlow, through its Releaf Marlow project, submitted to the Local Authority Treescapes Fund. Our portion of the bid was for 3 Wild Cherry trees in Little Marlow Recreation Ground, 6 Black Poplars in Spade Oak Car Park, 4 mixed native broadleaf trees in the Allotments and 4 mixed native broadleaf trees in Fern Lane Cemetery. These were all kindly planted by Cllr Anna Crabtree. We were also allocated 534 mixed native hedgerow species for each side of the causeway footpath (on the east side of Spade Oak Lake) for which we did not bid. Transition Town Marlow kindly arranged for these to be planted.

The Parish Council recognised that we needed to be in a better position to influence the evolution of the Little Marlow Country Park. It therefore set up a Little Marlow Country Park Vision Working Group whose main objective is to produce a vision for the Country Park that will influence both Buckinghamshire Council's and private landowners' plans for and investment in the Country Park, as well as influencing consideration of planning applications within the Country Park. The Working Group has been asked to produce a vision document for consideration by the Council before submission to Buckinghamshire Council. The vision document is to include recommendations of what we would like to see in the Country Park in terms of access, leisure, recreation, biodiversity and habitat expansion and facilities, as well as on the types of development which the Council should and should not support in the Country Park.

The Parish Council continues to carry out the grass cutting and other work which the then Buckinghamshire County Council devolved to us in 2015. The Devolved services contract was rolled over for a further year until March 2023. I should like to thank our two contractors, Buckland Landscapes and Steve Rogers of SR Farm Services, for the excellent job they continue to do maintaining the Parish open spaces and the burial ground respectively.

As always, we are grateful to the volunteers from Coldmoorholme Lane for the time and effort they put into maintaining the car park on the Lane on behalf of the Council so as to ensure that it remains a valuable asset not just for the Lane, but also for the wider community. We were saddened by the death last June of the then Chairman of the Coldmoorholme Lane Residents, David Brown. The Council is grateful to David for all the work he did on behalf of his residents while he was Chair and is indebted to him for ensuring that the annual donation which the residents receive from the Spade Oak Restaurant to help cover some of their costs in maintaining Spade Oak Car Park is now covered by a formal agreement.

I am not covering planning in my report as the Planning Committee Chairman will shortly be giving a separate planning report.

The Parish Council continued to play an active role in the South West Chilterns Community Board and its four action groups, ensuring that the interests and concerns of Little Marlow residents are taken into account in discussions. We submitted three bids to the Board: one in support of a bid from Transition Town Marlow to reduce the speed limit along the A4155 between the Westhorpe roundabout and Sheepridge Lane, one for funds to enable the Council to engage a landscape architect to help create a vision for the Country Park and one for funds to enable us to install bike racks in the Parish. The first two are still under consideration and the third was successful so we are now in the process of arranging for the racks to be installed.

I would like to end by saying a few more thank yous. We are fortunate to have two active Residents' Associations in the parish. I greatly appreciate the support and co-operation I receive from their Chairmen, Guy Carter who took over from Jason Downes and Sam Kershaw. I am also grateful to Buckinghamshire Councillors David Watson, David Johncock and Jocelyn Towns for attending our Parish Council meetings, for their continued interest in our Parish and for their support and advice on issues affecting Little Marlow, particularly in relation to planning matters and ongoing issues with Thames Water. My biggest thanks go to

my fellow Parish Councillors for all the service they have given to the Parish Council and the wider community throughout the year and for the advice and support they have given me as Chairman. The Parish is really fortunate to have such a strong team of Councillors who work so well together. Between us we have a wide range of skills and experience which we can draw on for the benefit of the Council and the community. And last, but by no means least, I would like to thank our Clerk, Jo Murray, for keeping the council running on a day-to-day basis and for the support she provides to us all.

Cllr Valerie Brownridge
Chairman, Little Marlow Parish Council
Chairman's Report 2021-2022

APM22/07

7 Financial Report

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2021/2022

Presented by Cllr K Acres, Chairman of the budget committee and outlining significant income and expenditure in 2020/21 and 2021/22 (up to 31 March 2022).

The council agreed to maintain its precept (the contribution Buckinghamshire Council makes to the Parish from Council Tax) for 2022/2023 at the same level as 2021/2022 which means that Parishioners will be paying the same amount of their Council Tax to LMPC as last year and the year before.

This year we were fortunate to receive a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) payment of £64,000 as a result of the development of Westhorpe House. We have spent some CIL money clearing space to expand Fern Lane Burial Ground and have identified a list of items that could benefit from our CIL funding in future, including significant investment in new LED street lighting throughout the Parish. Although income from our venue users remained low due to Covid restrictions Burial Ground income has remained healthy. Our largest expenditure is on salary costs that are included in Administration expenditure.

Our balanced budget for 2022/2023 makes provision for a year's running costs as is considered prudent in current circumstances.

| 2020-2021 | Income | Expenditure |
|---|----------------|--------------------|
| Abbotsbrook Hall | £3,520 | £11,946 |
| Allotments | £1,256 | £662 |
| Burial Ground | £24,343 | £15,579 |
| Pavilion / Recreation Grd | £2,496 | £26,033 |
| Street Lighting | - | £4571 |
| Precept | £53,851 | - |
| Devolved Services | £1,767 | £5,006 |
| Grants | - | £400 |
| Administration | £517 | £36,979 |
| Full Council to 31st March 2021 | £88,020 | £101,177 |

| 2021-2022 | Income | Expenditure |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| Abbotsbrook Hall | £4,382 | £9,057 |
| Allotments | £1,554 | £2,978 |
| Burial Ground | £22,630 | £16,279 |
| Pavilion / Recreation Grd | £4,364 | £24,486 |
| Street Lighting | - | £5,346 |
| Precept | £53,851 | - |
| Devolved Services | £1,767 | £3,073 |
| Grants | £64,274 | £400 |
| Administration | £1,007 | £36,153 |
| Full Council to 31st March 2022 | £153,829 | £97,771 |

Little Marlow Parish Council Bank Accounts – 10th May 2022

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Current Account | £69,222.23 |
| Reserves Account | £108,441.21 |

APM22/08

8. Planning Report 2021-2022

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

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

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Building applications | 50 |
| Tree applications | 42 |
| Certificate of Lawfulness | 1 |

Little Marlow Parish Council's Planning Committee are asked to comment on local planning applications by Buckinghamshire Council as a consultee. The Planning Committee are aware of future planning applications due from Marlow Film Studio Project, Sports Hub/Football training grounds and have already been involved with the Van Storage proposal.

The Planning Committee consider all planning applications presented to them and feedback comments to Buckinghamshire Council.

It is Buckinghamshire Council's ultimate responsibility to review the planning application and determine the outcome. Little Marlow Parish Council are not the ultimate decision makers.

APM22/09

9. Report from Thames Valley Police

Apologies that we can't attend as unfortunately the meeting has fallen on our 'off-shift' days.

Reported incidents over the past 12 months:

1. Theft from motor vehicle (residential driveway off Church Rd)
2. Theft from motor vehicle (items left in vehicle in School Lane)
3. Ant-Social Behaviour in Muschallik Road adjacent to the Thames Water site
4. Vehicle damaging the cricket pitch ('Police Op in Progress' signage placed at entrance, following)
5. Road Traffic collision on Marlow Road into your boundary fence

As a result of the logged incidents, our team continue to patrol the area as part of our routine patrol route. However, if there are any areas of concern then please let us know and we will circulate the information and add to patrol routes where we can.

As ever, we are here to support our communities and welcome any information. If we don't know, we can't help, and what might appear insignificant might help us to form part of a bigger picture. Please remember that we don't always get informed about incidents – just because it might be on a 'WhatsApp' group doesn't mean that we know about it.

We always advise calling 101 for non-urgent issues (or complete TVP online web-form), or calling 999 for urgent/emergency issues.

To reiterate some advice given last year:

We ask that residents continue to evaluate their home security. Your neighbourhood team can complete home security visits, free of charge, at a time that is convenient for you. This service is under-utilised by members of the public, so we welcome the opportunity to help improve security in our communities. Other popular areas of support and advice that we give are for: Vehicle Security, Fraud/Scams prevention and awareness, plus ‘target hardening’ advice and signage to help reduce risk.

Many of you will have engaged over the years with Sgt. Robin Hughes who was at Marlow for many years. Robin has now retired and his replacement is Sgt. Oliver Brixey, who has been with us for a couple of months now and who is just as community-minded as Robin was.

Finally, a reminder that your Marlow Neighbourhood Police Team is here 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. Again, sorry we can’t be with you tonight.

PC4432 Darren King Darren.King@thamesvalley.police.uk Mobile: 07974156642
PCSO C9776 Chris Bis Christopher.Bis@thamesvalley.police.uk Mobile: 07980 857604
PCSO C7392 Sophie Parfitt Sophie.Parfitt@thamesvalley.police.uk Mobile: 07970 863611
Marlow Neighbourhod Policing Team, Dean Street, Marlow, Bucks. SL7 3AB

APM22/10

10. Report from Wild Marlow

Please see attached presentation

Wild Marlow was started in 2019 and is run by passionate volunteers. Wild Marlow have been involved in community events, usually at Higginson Park, plus guided walks and talks. They’ve hosted working parties; building bug hotels and stumperies for stag beetles. They work with schools: assemblies, practical working parties and every local primary school child received a packet of wildflowers.

There was an announcement in the press that Marlow would be the first bee town. Marlow Town Council have committed to wildflower verges and to signing up to a pollinator policy, banning harmful pesticides and cutting regimes where safe to do so and planting native wildflower seed.

Wild Marlow are working with Little Marlow Parish Councillor Anna Crabtree to do the same at Fern Lane Cemetery.

Verity West asked attendees to visit Wild Marlow’s website to find out more or sign up to membership at £10 per year.

APM22/11

11. Report from Save Marlow’s Green Belt

Please see attached presentation given by Peter Ashford.

APM22/12

12. Other Matters

Little Marlow Parish Council will have two parish councillor vacancies arising in late June and the Chairman asked that anyone who was interested, or knew of anyone who might be interested, to get in touch with the Parish Clerk.

Councillor J Downes confirmed that the Little Marlow Village Fete would be held again on bank holiday Monday 29th August 2022.

Signed:

Chairman of the Council

Date: