Annual Chairman's Report 2023-24

Presented by Cllr K Acres, Chairman of the Parish Council

Annual Report given by Chairman of Little Marlow Parish Council

The full Parish Council has met seven times since our last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2023 and the Parish Council committees have met regularly.

Parish Councillors have represented the Council on various outside bodies throughout the year, including the Southwest Chilterns Community Board and its four action groups.

The work undertaken and the money spent by the Parish Council is all carefully (and transparently) recorded on our website. You can find out many many things by visiting www.littlemarlowparishcouncil.org.uk.

We have 9 seats on the Parish Council and co-opted Councillor Katie Cook in May last year. Councillor Elections will next be held in May 2025 and it would be wonderful to have a democratically contested election then for Little Marlow Parish Council so please consider if you would like to join our ranks. It can be fun and is always interesting. If you aspire to write cosy crime novels (and according to my research on something called 'Book Brunch' the stereotype of cosy crime novels is that they're set in small villages, featuring amateur and often bumbling detectives who somehow manage to solve mysteries) there can be no better starting point than Little Marlow Parish Council with its Councillors (we could be the detectives), if you need ideas for a plot we have a Cemetery, we have a Chapel, who knows what's buried in Ted's Shed on the Cricket Ground?, not to mention what goes on at two rival Bridge Clubs at Abbotsbrook Hall and the Pilates, Thai Chi and yoga groups. You certainly don't have to join Marlow Town Council for inspiration. We did invite Richard Thorogood of Marlow Murder Mystery fame to come tonight but didn't hear back.

The Council is fortunate to own a number of assets which both serve the community and bring in welcome income. These include our Allotments, our halls here at Abbotsbrook and at The Pavilion and of course our beautiful (and biggest earner) our Cemetery.

Pavilion/Recreation Ground

If you were here last year you may remember that despite the 'drastic measures' we took to control the bunnies it had little impact on population density. We accepted defeat and bought a bag of soil to fill holes and to enable Bourne End Junior Football to play this season. Luckily the cricket pitch remained protected and our thanks once again go to Richard Tedham for maintaining the recreation ground so excellently.

Exciting news is that we have gone out to tender for a new equipment shed to replace the infamous Ted's Shed and we hope to have it completed in time for the Annual Fete on Bank Holiday Monday.

Abbotsbrook Hall

The introduction of a Hall Bookings Calendar has helped us increase lettings here at Abbotsbrook Hall and we just have a few slots left for summer weekends and the school

holidays. We aspire to instal WiFi here shortly and have started to tackle the car park surface issues by clearing vegetation. We did have yet another issue with more four legged furry friends though (I can't believe I had to google how many legs does a rat have?….) but that too has been dealt with.

We are grateful to our Hirings Administrator, Christine Samuels, and to our caretaker, Peter Samuels, for all they both do to ensure the smooth running of the hall.

Burial Ground

Work continues on expanding the Cemetery and we are preparing the ground for new hedging but there is still much to do. We were rewarded with a fine display of flowering Foxgloves in June and the bluebells were resplendent in April. The chapel roof has been repaired and there are plans afoot to add to the bee population there having cleared the area of damaged hives.

Allotments

The allotments are not without their own challenges but all our allotments are now taken. We are taking steps to control water usage and have updated contracts to reflect the Parish Council's sustainable environment agenda.

Environment

LMPC has now replaced all streetlights in the Parish with LED lighting using funds from CIL grants arising from Planning approvals in the Parish. This has resulted in savings of 83% in energy costs. We have also installed extra dog poo bins at Abbotsbrook, at the Recreation Ground and in Coldmoorholme Lane car park.

There has been much press coverage in recent weeks on the level of pollution in the River Thames in our Parish and Cllrs P Emmett and S Kershaw had the joy of a guided tour of the sewage works which Cllr Kershaw will tell us about. I am pleased to report that Cllr James Mortimer from Bourne End and Wooburn Parish Council has initiated a water testing programme for the Thames that LMPC is participating in and he will be telling us more about this later.

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 2025.

We are grateful to volunteers from Coldmoorholme Lane Residents Association for the time and effort they put into maintaining and keeping litter free the carpark funded (in part) by £500 per annum contributed by The Spade Oak Pub.

I would like to end by saying a few more thankyous. We are fortunate to have two active Residents' Associations in the parish and I greatly appreciate the support and co-operation from their Chairmen, Guy Carter and Sam Kershaw. Martin Braint and all his helpers run a fabulous summer fete on August Bank Holiday Monday and are always grateful for more volunteers to help. I am also grateful to Buckinghamshire Councillors David Watson and David Johncock for attending our Parish Council meetings and for their continued support

and advice and I am grateful to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Bourne End and Wooburn Parish Council for their support in recent months And I would like to thank our ex Clerk, Jo Murray who left in February after 5 years to work for Buckinghamshire Council and to welcome our new Clerk Jennie Phenix.

Sometimes it seems that being a Parish Council is like being on a wheel in a hamster's cage, with the same issues recurring year after year: the sewage works, the quality of water in the Thames, attacks on our Greenbelt, the pot holes, assorted rubbish related issues, speed limits, trees that need looking after and of course following THE rules…

So 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. Being a Parish Councillor is not always a glamorous job (and sometimes it could even be described as a thankless task) but we are fortunate to have such a strong team of Councillors with many different skills, talents and sometimes opinions who work so well together.

Planning Applications Received for Little Marlow Parish 1 May 2023 - 30 April 2024

	TOTAL	**PERMITTED**	**REFUSED**	**PENDING**	**WITHDRAWN/NA**	
Full	30	17	3	6	4	
Tree Works (including Tree Protection Order requests	28	25	1	2		
Certificate of Lawfulness	9	5	1	3		
Listed Building Consent	7	3		4		
Other (eg prior approval applications, non material amendments	13	8	3	1	1	
TOTAL	**87**	**58**	**8**	**16**	**5**	**87**
1 May 2022 - 30 April 2023	**65**					

Marlow Film Studios Planning Application was validated on 23 May 2022 and LMC has objected to both the original Application and
to Amendments on the grounds that there are no special circumstances
to justify loss of greenbelt.
Despite Officers recommendation for refusal the Application was deferred by the Buckinghamshire Council Strategic Sites Committee
in October 2023 due to concerns
around Highways and Transport
issues.
It is likely to be discussed at the next Strategic Sites Committee on 30 May 2024 which is open to the public. As of 9/05/2024 there are 5299 documents associated with the Film Studio Application.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2023/2024

Presented by Cllr Crabtree. Councillor Anna Crabtree is the Chair of the Budget Committee and outlined significant income and expenditure in 2023/24 (up to 31st March 2024).

2022/23	**Income**	**Expenditure**
Abbotsbrook Hall	£8,935	£15,649
Allotments	£1,481	£1,990
Burial Ground	£29,801	£11,607
Pavilion / Recreation Ground	£5,480	£12,914
Street Lighting	-	£9,317
Precept	£53,851	-
Devolved Services	£1,820	£3,966
Grants	-	-
Administration	-£138	£41,050
Subtotal	**£101,230**	**£96,493**
Full Council to 31st March 2023	**Surplus**	**£4,737**

2023/24	**Income**	**Expenditure**
Abbotsbrook Hall	£11,745	£10,774
Allotments	£1,428	£539
Burial Ground	£22,082	£14,854
Pavilion / Recreation Ground	£7,665	£20,160
Street Lighting	-	£39,656
Precept	£55,467	-
Devolved Services	£1,984	£6,126
Grants	£19,238	-
Administration	£3,218	£37,881
Subtotal	**£122,827**	**£129,990**
Full Council to 31st March 2024	**Deficit**	**£7,163**

Little Marlow Parish Council Bank Accounts at 31st March 2024

	2024	**2023**
Current account	£21,638	£52,148
Reserves account	£1,315	£108,645
High interest account	£132,199	-
Total	**£155,152**	**£160,794**

Little Marlow Parish Council Earmarked Reserves at 31st March 2024

Burial ground	£10,018
Playground/pavilion/recreation ground	£4
Road safety	£2,000
Replacing street lighting with LED lights	-
Replace cricket shed	£13,423
Repair chapel roof	£5,000
Environmental projects	£1,000
Green energy projects	£5,000
EPC ratings	£500
Pathway maintenance	£2,000
Elections provision	£1,550
CIL 2023/24	£18,397
Total Earmarked Reserves	**£58,892**