

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13th January 2021

Present:

Cllr. Alaric Smith (Chairman)
Cllr. Francois Van Der Merwe
Cllr. David Wakeling
Cllr. Steve Sidhu (Part Meeting)
Cllr. Howard Harrison
Cllr. Adam Sheppard

District Councillor: Caroline Newton (Part Meeting)

Mr Raymond Fergusson (*Parish Clerk*)

Member of the public: Two (Part Meeting)

01/01/21 Regulating the Conduct of the Meeting

The meeting was being conducted under THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020. These Regulations allowed Parish Councils to conduct their meeting by video or audio link with Councillors and members of the Public and Press not being in the same location.

02/01/21 Election of Chairman

The current Chairman Cllr. Alaric Smith explained to the Council his desire to relinquish his role as Chairman as he had moved out of the village but would remain on the Council up to the Annual Meeting in May. The Chairman invited Councillors to offer themselves for the position to avoid any nominations of a Councillor who did not wish to be considered. As there were no offers Cllr. Francois Van Der Merwe was proposed as Chairman and this was supported by all Councillors. Cllr. Francois Van Der Merwe signed the Acceptance of Office form and agreed to return it to the Clerk. Francois expressed on behalf of the Council his thanks to Alaric for his contribution as Chairman.

The Chairman stated that the position of vice-chair would be considered at the Council meeting in February

Cllr. Steve Sidhu left the meeting

02/01/21 Apologies for Absence:

County Councillor Stephen Harrod

03/01/21 Declaration of any pecuniary interests of members

There were no pecuniary interests declared.

04/01/21 Approval of Minutes

The Parish Council **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 9th December 2020 as a true record of the meeting. The minutes will be signed by the Chairman outside the meeting.

05/01/21 Report by District /County Councillor

Councillor Newton expressed her personal thanks to Cllr. Alaric Smith for his role as Chairman and wished Cllr. Francois Van Der Merwe well in his new role as Chairman.

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Caroline referred to her recent monthly update that had been circulated to Council members. She concentrated her remarks to Covid 19 with reference to the redeployment of some staff within SODC to support the Survival Logistics Team. This meant that some departments would only offer a reduced level of service. However the Planning Team had not been effected by this decision. Caroline stated that the Councillor Grants would not be available in 2021-22.

Cllr. Newton left the meeting.

06/01/21 Planning

The Clerk reported that the following Planning Applications had been determined by South Oxfordshire District Council.

P20/S3934/HH

Orchard House Windmill Hill: An extension to the first floor bedroom at the back of the house (**Approved**)

P20/S4133/FUL

Wells Farm Haseley Road: Proposed Roller & Personnel Doors, Concrete Blockwork Walls & Cladding to existing barn and installation of a waterless WC Unit (**Approved**)

P20/S3985/HH

Hilltop House High Street: To close off a secondary unusable driveway which provides a dangerous exit on a blind corner onto the A329 (**Approved**)

Certificate of Lawful Development: 20 Thames Road: erection of a new garden building to create a garage and storage. (**Application withdrawn**)

P20/S3312/FUL Land West of Old Belchers Farm: Change of use of land to provide Sculpture Park (existing agricultural use maintained) (/temporary duration) (**Approved**)

Other Planning related matters

The Chairman welcomed Henry Venners who had requested an opportunity to address the Council on behalf of his client in respect of an un-named site in Little Milton. Mr Venners stated that the site was Milton House. Mr Venners stated that his client had appointed builders Sweetcroft Homes to create preliminary design options for the site that he shared with the Council.

The Chairman invited Barry Coward, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to outline the planning policies that would be considered when a planning application was submitted. Barry stated that the site would attract a considerable interest if a planning application was submitted. He highlighted the key questions that the Council would need to consider.

- Is the development needed at all?
- Would the development fit in with the surrounding built environment?
- Would the development be sustainable in terms of access and infra-structure

Barry went on to highlight some of the key planning issues

- Infill development or Re-development
- Housing density
- Waste Water System
- Conservation Area
- Design and character
- Dwelling Mix

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Barry stated that Planning Policies which would address the planning issues were detailed in the recently Adopted Local Plan 2035 and the Made Little Milton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Henry Venners left the meeting.

The Council having directed Mr Venners to some key points in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, **RESOLVED** that the most appropriate engagement going forward would be in the context of a public and formal planning application.

The Chairman thanked Barry for his input into the meeting

07/01/21 Further Meeting with OCC Strategic Transport Team and SODC Planning

The Clerk informed the meeting that County Councillor Stephen Harrod was still trying to organise the meeting with the relevant members of the OCC Strategic Transport Team and SODC Planning. The Chairman stressed that it was important that momentum was not lost. The Clerk stated that he would contact Cllr. Harrod.

08/01/21 Matters Arising

Re-siting of litter bin

The Clerk reported that this matter was still under consideration by South Oxfordshire District Council.

09/01/21 Recreation Ground/Playground

Entrance Gate into recreation ground

The Clerk highlighted the poor drainage behind the pedestrian gate into the recreation ground from the car park and asked Cllr, Adam Sheppard if he could investigate the situation. Cllr. Sheppard initially suggested that he would fill the indentation with compacted hard-core.

Hard Standing for Grondon Refuse Bins

Cllr. David Wakeling informed the meeting that he had been approached by Mark Willis to bring to the attention of the Council the positioning of the Grondon Bins on the delineated pedestrian part of the car park. Mark considered that this presented an avoidable risk to both motorists and pedestrians. Mark suggested that the creation of a hard-standing close to the barrier would provide an acceptable solution. There was a discussion on the suggestion and the Council **RESOLVED** that it should be investigated. The Clerk highlighted that such a construction could encroach on the existing drainage infra-structure when the car park was constructed.

Covid guidance playground

The latest Covi19 lockdown allows for playgrounds to remain open. Cllr. David Wakeling stated that he would put up new posters that were used during the first lock-down reminding parents of their responsibilities when using the playground.

Grass cutting quotes

The Clerk informed the Council that he was gathering quotes for the grass cutting of the recreation ground, playground and village green as well as the verges within the 30 mph speed limit within the Parish. The Clerk stated that these would be available at the February meeting.

10/01/21 MUGA

The Chairman stated that he had no additional information to report on the cost of renovating the MUGA. However he did report that the tennis group were preparing for the re-opening of the court and were planning to have some open days and coaching sessions.

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11/01/21 Finance

Approval of Council expenditure

Colourplus: January 2021	£199.74
Raymond Fergusson: Month 10 2020-21, Clerk/Editor salary	£214.68
HMRC – Payment of PAYE months 7-9 2020-21	£429.20

Direct Debit

Intuit: Accounting software January 9th – February 9th 2021	£24.00
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The Clerk reported that the bank statements at 4th January 2021 had been reconciled with the ledger at 8th January 2021 and were available for viewing on Quickbooks.

The Chairman summarised the budget proposals considered at the December meeting that resulted in a 10% increase in the precept for 2021-22. The Chairman invited Councillors to approve this proposal or put forward other options for consideration. Cllr. David Wakeling expressed his concern that the increase was too high and would prefer holding the current precept of £12,500. The Clerk highlighted the drivers for the 10% increase were the additional cost of Council Administration as result of a new Clerk and the anticipated cost of improving the MUGA. After a lengthy discussion the Council **RESOLVED** to increase the precept for 2021-22 by £1,000 to £13,500. This results in a Band D equivalent rate of £63.10 an 8.8% increase over 2020-21.

12/01/21 Recruitment of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

Cllr. Alaric Smith reported that he had received no further applications for the vacancy of the Parish Clerk following the advert in Great Haseley, Great Milton and Stadhampton. The Council **RESOLVED** the following

- Cllr. Alaric Smith would contact the candidate who had shown a serious interest in the position
- Cllrs. Steve Sidhu, Alaric Smith and Francois Van Der Merwe would convene to finalise the basic conditions and terms of the appointment
- The Clerk to provide an analysis of his involvement in tasks outside the core aspects of the role
- The Council to review the future responsibilities of Councillors after the appointment of a new clerk
- Arrange a remote interview with the candidate

13/01/21 Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

14/01/21 Exchange of Information

There were no matters raised.

15/01/21 Date of Next Meeting

The Parish Council will convene at **8.00 p.m. on Wednesday 10th February 2021 under the new Regulations unless otherwise advised**

The meeting finished at 9.58 p.m.

Parish Forum

There were no matters raised

Signed by:

Chairman.....Date.....