

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

Present: Cllr. Barry Coward (*Chairman*)
Cllr. Kate Daunt
Cllr. Paul Harrison
Cllr. Alison Shelton

Mr R Fergusson (Clerk)

County Councillor Stephen Harrod
District Councillor: Caroline Newton

Twelve members of the public

01/05/18 Introduction by Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meeting.

02/05/18 Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 10th May 2017 were taken as read and the meeting approved the minutes as a true record of the meeting

03/05/18 Report by Chairman of Parish Council

The Chairman reported that the past year had been a particularly busy one for the Parish Council. It completed the installation of three defibrillators in the village and one was taken to the scene of a road accident a few months ago but was not used.

The Chairman was delighted to report that the project to replace the children's play area was now in place and would be opened shortly. He expressed his thanks to the small working group led by Elizabeth Swabey-Collison that did an enormous amount of work on our behalf researching, talking to companies, consulting and designing a scheme. As a result, our subsequent grant applications to SODC and WREN were successful and we secured funding for a £100,000 project.

The Chairman stated that SODC's Local Plan, or lack of it, has dominated business for the last year. The debate around possible development at Chalgrove Airfield continues, with strategic sites at Berinsfield and Culham also being considered. However, with Chalgrove now very much in doubt, the District Council recently decided in effect to go back to the drawing board and review all options again. The Parish Council has been playing an active part in all the relevant consultations. The Council's focus has been on traffic issues and also increased flood risk. This was coupled the Government's proposal to develop the so-called Oxford-Cambridge Arc or Corridor as a major national programme of housing and employment development. The Arc will start at a point yet to be determined on the A34 south of Oxford and may run west and then north of Oxford via Bicester towards Milton Keynes, or could come south and east of Oxford possibly via Thame. Within the Corridor there is a proposal to build the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, a major road, possibly of motorway standard. He stated that the Parish Council was watching developments very closely. The level of protection given to the Green Belt in all of this will be a major determining factor as to where housing and roads will go. The alignment of the arc or corridor is supposed to be decided this summer, the route of the Expressway in about two years' time. The Chairman stated that if this road is to be built at all, there are some route options which may actually be beneficial to this village, taking traffic, particularly HGVs, off the A329.

The Chairman reported that over the last year, the Council had worked hard on developing our Neighbourhood Plan, including the gathering of all the necessary evidence to support it. The Chairman thanked the work done by the Steering Group. The Plan went out for the first round of formal consultation in January and was generally well received. Following that consultation, the Council made a number of amendments and the Plan was formally submitted to SODC who today initiated a further round of consultation which takes a further 6 weeks. The next key point is when the village votes on the Plan in a referendum, which we hope to achieve in the autumn.

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

The Chairman reported that the Council continues to maintain the recreation ground and MUGA, although the area around the gate will need some further work to restore it after the play ground work. Maintenance costs take up a significant proportion of our budget. The Chairman thanked the small team of volunteers who help with keeping the recreation ground in good shape. He also thanked those who have helped the work of the council during the last 12 months, the volunteers who do the litter blitzes, stream clearers and many others. The council continues to support the village newsletter and thanks should go to Raymond for his sterling work as editor. It is worth noting that the newsletter is currently self-financing as production costs are covered by advertising fees.

The Chairman reported that against the background of everything else that is going on, in January the Council decided, after no rise last year, to raise the precept by 4.4% for this year in order to cover rising costs.

The Chairman referred to concerns that he raised in his update in 2017 where he highlighted issues related to succession planning across a number of village organisations including the Parish Council. He explained the steps that had been taken to address the concerns. The Chairman updated the meeting on the recent unsuccessful attempt to recruit a new Clerk but thanked Raymond for being prepared to stay on in the post. He stated that the resignation of two Councillors due to the leaving the village had been disruptive but was pleased to report that one vacancy had been filled and hopefully the second would be too.

The Chairman finally encouraged people to step forward and stand for election next year as continuing to manage our own affairs in this village is very important.

04/05/18 Financial report

The Clerk stated that a Parish Council needed to explain what services and facilities it provides to its parishioners and where it receives the money to pay for those services/facilities and that it manages the finances responsibly by holding an appropriate level of reserves to meet future needs. He explained that the finances are subject to an external audit as well as a review by our internal auditor Ian Dennis who also reviews the Council's internal control systems.

The Clerk started by reviewing the expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2018. He reported that the total expenditure was £98,874 which is large for Little Milton Parish Council. A significant part of that was in respect of the new playground amounting to £72,688. This was progress payments to Kompan of £66,266 and £5,375 to WREN as a third party contribution towards the grant of £50,000. However a fund raising event in 2016-17 raised a net £1,800. Expenditure on the Neighbourhood Development Plan was £8,044. The total NDP expenditure is around £15,000 but this had all be paid for by grants received from SODC and the Government. The balance of around £18,000 of Council expenditure related to Newsletter £4,155; Recreation Ground £4,189 Loan Repayment £3,409; Council administration £3,229 and other expenditure of c £ 3,000. The Other expenditure cover a large number of relatively smaller levels of expenditure including verge cutting £900, Audit Fee £400, Election costs £300.

The Clerk reported where the Parish Council received the money to pay for the £98,000 of expenditure. He explained that the precept is the amount of income that the Parish Council requests the District Council to include in the Council Tax that each resident you pay each year. For every £1,000 that the Parish Council raises through the precept it adds around £52 per annum to your Council tax bill. He reported that sources of income included Grants of £73,405 Newsletter advertising £5625; MUGA £989, other income £996 and Precept of £11,250. The Clerk pointed out that the precept per Band D equivalent per property was £52.50 and that this should tell our residents that the Parish Council seek funding from other than the precept to provide excellent facilities and services.

The Clerk concluded the financial report by reporting that the General Reserves were £12,538 and Earmarked Reserves of £1,588. He stated that this level of reserve was adequate to meet known future events and normal ongoing expenditure.

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

04/05/18 District Councillor Report

Councillor Caroline Newton gave a report of the activities within the District Council.

The District Councillor gave a short commentary of the current status of the Local Plan that had been delayed as a result of the full Council rejecting the recommendation of Cabinet at a meeting in May. She stated that there was further set of meetings in the next week that would determine its future direction.

The District Councillor commented upon the high number of planning applications that are received and determined by the District Council. Unfortunately this had led to a number of developments going to appeal and resulting the Inspectorate finding in favour of developers as a result of a lack of a five year land supply for housing. She reported that latest calculation of a 5.4 year land supply should afford the District Council more protection.

The District Councillor commented upon the high level of waste recycling within the District and although it was good there was evidence that further education was required to maintain its level.

Finally the District Councillor referred to the proposed Oxford-Cambridge Strategic Corridor and stated that the District Councils preferred location was north of Oxford

05/05/18 County Councillor Report

Councillor Stephen Harrod gave a brief report on of the activities within the County Council.

The key issues covered

Infrastructure Funding Bid

The Oxfordshire Growth Board* has provided unanimous support for an application to the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) as part of a package of investment to deliver transport infrastructure. The funding bid for up to £500 million was submitted on 28 September by OCC as the county's transport authority. Money is sought to bring forward infrastructure investment to pump-prime three major development schemes: Didcot Garden Town, West Oxfordshire Garden Village and North of Oxford. These potential investments would support additional housing.

Growth Deal

The Oxfordshire Growth Board has also reached an outline Housing and Growth Agreement (Growth Deal) with Government. This will see an additional £215m of investment over the next five years to build infrastructure, support the delivery of new homes and boost economic productivity across the County. During the period of development all planning authorities will have their five-year land supply requirement reduced to a three-year land supply.

Social Care Costs & Council Tax

The rising cost of social care continues to be a problem for most councils and OCC is particularly hard hit. In partial recognition, Government has allowed councils to set an additional 3% Council Tax rise for 2017/18 and 2018/19 in respect of Adult Social Care plus 1% for 2018/19 and 2019/20 in respect of Children's Services to offset these costs. The net result of this is that OCC Council Tax will rise by 5.99% in 2018/19, 2.99% in 2019/20, and then 1.99% in 20/21.

Oxford Cambridge Expressway

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has published its report to Government on the Oxford-Cambridge arc. It advised on the need for long-term investment funding for new transport infrastructure to harness the region's economic potential, to benefit local people and boost UK plc in a post-Brexit landscape. Oxfordshire County Councillors are concerned about the proposals and have passed a motion calling for a Public Inquiry. This has been rejected by the Chairman of the NIC. The NIC has recommended that the most logical corridor for the expressway would be to closely align with the East-West rail project, broadly to the west and north of Oxford, although the NIC can only recommend.

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

However, Highways England will announce their choice of ‘corridor’ later this summer, without any consultation other than a broad request for input from affected local authorities. A consultation will then be held to determine the specific route within this corridor, to which interested parties will have input.

Carillion: OCC agrees exit deal after company collapse

OCC has formally terminated its contract with Carillion LGS Limited effective from 1 February 2018, following the collapse of the parent company. This brought forward the already agreed end of the contract set for the end of June 2018. Carillion provided services on behalf of OCC including school meals and cleaning; maintenance of council buildings; property services, and building work such as school extensions. Carillion staff in OCC’s maintained schools who contracted their services via OCC have been transferred to OCC, and services continue as normal. Services previously provided by Carillion to the county council will continue through a mix of bringing staff in-house (e.g. school meals, cleaning); continuing with suppliers (mainly catering), and working with existing sub-contractors (mainly construction and property services). Like every other Carillion customer, OCC is now working out the most cost-effective way to complete work left unfinished by Carillion. OCC will now take over direct responsibility for commissioning future construction work and service delivery. County council officers are reviewing the uncompleted works under the Carillion contract and talking to sub-contractors about the best way forward. OCC is establishing a process to assess, on a case-by-case basis, the impact on companies in the Carillion supply chain involved in providing county council services such as building maintenance.

06/05/18 Report from Village Hall Management Committee

The report on the Village hall was given by Teresa Quested Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee.

The Chair reported on another busy year at The Pine Lodge with the committee working hard as always to keep the hall running smoothly and in top condition.

She reported the changes to the committee during the year and welcomed Melanie Kinghan in the autumn as a representative of the school, Corinna Sidhu, Alison Vallance and Mark Willis earlier this year. In addition, Joe Rudkin was co-opted in April. The Chair stated that at the AGM in June 2018 The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer would not be standing for re-election and there had been a concerted effort to encourage people to join the committee and was very pleased with the response. Marian Buckingham left the committee in the autumn and the Chair thanked her for her support over the years.

The Chair detailed a number maintenance matters that had been attended to during the year as well as the challenge to comply with the new Data Protection Law (GDPR)

The Chair reported that bookings showed a definite down turn last summer and both RugbyTots and the dance class closed last July. However, a new twice weekly Pilates class started in April 2017 continues to do well. A weekly Toddler sense class began in April this year and Adult Acting classes begin in June. Our regular events continue to do well with a very successful quiz season this year both financially and socially. Here I should like to thank our quizmasters – Mike Pennick, Tim Sharp, Roger Longshaw and David Hawkins and Dee Waldron for doing most of the cooking. The annual Fireworks Night was almost too successful with about 250 people attending. More food needed next year! Thank you to Jim and his team for organising the display.

The Chair reported on the events hosted by the Pine Lodge including the Xmas Fayre for the village on 3rd December, with the profits being shared equally between the Pine Lodge, the Orchard and St James’s Church. There was a re-launch of the family board games evening in Spring 2018 and the monthly Craft evenings continue to be popular with forthcoming events including an Elliot Morris

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

concert and a village party to celebrate the Royal Wedding. The Chair outlined the support that the Village Hall Committee make to charities as part of their remit.

The Chair detailed her appreciation and thanked Linda and Jim Lovegrove who take the bookings, let hirers in and out, carry out minor repairs and decorating and keep the hall beautifully clean and tidy. We truly could not manage without them – thank you both for all you do. Secondly, we are lucky to have an amazing, dedicated committee who give up so much of their time to keeping everything running well – a huge thank you to them all. A special mention for Dee who keeps our books and finances in perfect order, for Chris for all the time spent on administration and Kath who does such a good job on publicising all our events. I feel I must also mention our partners without whom we could not manage – thank you Barry, Brian and Jeremy.

The Chair felt confident that with our new committee the hall will continue to be a huge village asset and a social hub for us all.

07/05/18 Report from Little Milton Shop

Mr Kevin Hunt, Chairman of the Village Shop, gave the following report on behalf of the Shop Management Committee.

The Chairman explained that he had very recently taken over the chair of the village shop from Simon Oddie. He thanked Simon for all his effort especially in respect of the refurbishment of the shop. Kevin also thanked Alison, the shop manager/post mistress, and a very special mention to all the volunteers who keep the shop and Post office open. The Chairman reported that the re-configuration of the shop/post office had proved to be a success especially in the staffing of the shop with limited volunteers.

The Chairman highlighted the need for more volunteers as without it the community facility will under threat. He recognised that this was not a new problem but equally was one that require a response from the community. The support could be as little as a two hours a week.

The Chairman stated that another key objective was to consolidate the financial situation in the forthcoming year after the refurbishment and its associated cost. He looked towards increasing the footfall to drive revenue by improving the product offering and to improve the café seating area.

Finally the Chairman was delighted to report that the Shop had secured participation in the SODC Lottery that will provide important revenue to improve the facilities for our community shop. The Lottery has been publicised in the newsletter and already with only 17 people participating it will benefit the shop by £1,250 per annum. He urges that this was way of supporting the community shop.

The Chairman welcomed the opportunity of speaking to the parish meeting and again urged for more support from the community.

08/05/18 Report by Chair of Little Milton School Governors

Sarah Davis Chair of Governors gave a report on behalf of Little Milton School.

The Chair reported that life at Little Milton School had been busy during the last year: the main external development of the school's grounds signalled the end of a long drawn out project involving diocesan funding. The result was that the school finally had the space to accommodate our classes. A new classroom was built during the summer holidays and now houses our Year 5/6 class. The project has also funded some grounds improvement, improved security, replacement of some facilities, decoration and allowed us to invest in the latest LED interactive screens. The school feels like it has had a makeover and is certainly fit for purpose for some years to come!

The Chair stated that as a small, nurturing family based school, they are a popular choice for parents, especially during the infant years. The overall numbers of around 65-70 have been the case for some years, and the governors don't wish to increase the numbers on roll. Some year groups are particularly small, which brings challenges but also an appealing adult / child ratio and small class size.

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

The Chair reported that the school held their usual celebrations at St James' church this year, including Harvest and Christingle: Ascension Day is due later this month. The school continued to offer our children the opportunity of plenty of sporting events, with various clubs at school and specialist dance, cricket and tennis tuition. In addition, we have organised several trips, including to Dorchester Abbey (angels workshop), the Ashmolean, and are due more this summer to the River and Rowing Museum, the Manoir, Harcourt Arboretum to name but a few.

The Friends' Committee have organised a string of successful events throughout the year, including a very well supported silent auction, mini spring fair and maypole event, all of which have raised money to subsidise visits, pay for whole class music lessons (all of our Year 4,5 and 6 children play the ukulele) and to improve our technology within the school. Without the time, energy and commitment of the Friends these purchases would not have been possible.

Community events such as the church fete were well supported by our parents and children and we try to keep villagers up to date with newsletter articles. In March we held our first open afternoon and were able to offer tours of the newly refurbished school site, as well as refreshments and some entertainment from the ukulele band – it was lovely to see so many local faces, familiar and new. We're always very grateful for support too and, having recently removed our beautiful walnut tree due to root growth, we would love to plant some silver birches to complement a new outdoor seating area.

We look forward to the end of year activities and hope to see many at our Ascension Day service and Maypole event later in the term.

09/05/18 Report from Orchard Pre-School

Linda Nann, Chair of the Orchard Pre-School, gave a report on behalf the Committee.

She stated that she had been the Chair of the Orchard for a year. Linda reported that there are 33 children on register and 5 members of staff, 4 Level 3 Educators and our Finance Administrator. Our committee is a new and have we have made some positive changes to The Orchard. The key changes were a new library corner; mathematics area; development of outdoor space and a mud kitchen in progress. There had also been an upgrading of the fire alarms, emergency lighting and switches. Linda also reported that a new website had been developed.

Linda concluded by stating that The Orchard is in a great place and will continue to make positive changes and she expressed her thanks to all the staff over the past year as well as to the committee who support the Orchard Pre-School.

10/05/18 Report on St James' Church

The Reverend Simon Cronk gave a report on behalf of St James's Church.

The Rector stated that he represented three parishes within the Benefice, was involved with two village schools and was a trustee to five charities within the Benefice.

The Rector reported that the church at St James was in good heart although congregations were small although the Festival services were well attended. The church had the support of the wider community as the fete and Christmas were well supported and he was very appreciative. He believed that the church was valued as an asset within the village even if it was attended by a relatively small number of people on a regular basis. It was there to support the community and their needs.

The Rector stated that he needed to dispel the myth that the Church of England was very wealthy and funded the local church. He said that all monies spent at St James was a result of the offertory, fund-raising or grant funding. This led the Rector to highlight the cost of the Quinquennial inspection that will require £250K to carry out all the necessary repairs to the building. There are other projects that the church would like to do to improve the amenities. However a small PCC team could not on its own manage the scale of fund-raising that will be required and it would require a wider community involvement. Although the church was not under immediate threat he stressed that we could not take it for granted that it would continue.

Little Milton Parish Council
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 9th May 2018
in the Pine Lodge Little Milton

The Rector concluded that the Christian community within the church in Little Milton were in good heart and Alpha Courses and Spring Harvest had been well attended by local people were a good indicator of its well-being

11/05/18 Parish Forum

There were no matters raised.

The meeting closed at 8.27 pm

Signed by

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