

GREAT MILTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Great Milton Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 12th January 2009 at 7.00pm in the Pavilion.

Present: Mr Ken Rogers (Chairman), Mr Phil Ashworth, Mr Doug Colley, Mr Peter Fewell, Mr Ian Bradley

In Attendance: Michele Block (Clerk)
Pat Cox (Bulletin Reporter)
David Turner (County Councillor)
John Nowell-Smith (District Councillor)
5 member of public

01/09 **Apologies for Absence**

Action:

Richard Pearce
Stephen Harrod

02/09 **Register of Interests for this Meeting**

Ken Rogers registered a personal interest under the Flood Meeting Progress Report item, as he lives in Church Road, which is one of the areas affected.

03/09 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on Monday 8th December 2008**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record. This was proposed by Phil Ashworth, seconded by Doug Colley and agreed upon unanimously.

04/09 **Matters arising from the meeting held on Monday 8th December 2008**

A **Flood Meeting Progress Report**

Ken Rogers (KR) opened the meeting by stating that following the original Flood Meeting on Wednesday 26th November 2008, an on-site meeting had taken place in the village with representatives from South Oxfordshire District Council, The Parish Council and Monson on Monday 22nd December 2008. All parties had visited the various problem areas highlighted at the original meeting, and the following plan of action had been made:

Old Field

It would appear that, at present, the corner opposite Orpwoods Cottage is prone to surface flooding as the ditches, which should drain the water away, are filled in almost to road height. The Old Field Committee, with the help of the Parish Council, need to dig the ditches out to three metres, both up and down the Thame Road, to uncover the

drainage pipes that run and feed into the 'winter pond' in Old Field itself. Oxfordshire Highways has agreed to dig out the road gully and jet all pipes, once the ditches are cleared and they have been uncovered.

Action:

Whilst on site the experts all looked at the winter pond in Old Field, and agreed that the bottom needs to be scraped, as it is probably blinded. It also needs to be doubled in area (although not deepened). It was felt that if the ditches, gullies and pipes were cleared and the pond enlarged to increase storage capacity, this should significantly reduce the risk of flooding in this area.

KR then went onto discuss the cost of hiring a contractor to dig out the ditches, and added that perhaps traffic lights would be required as the work is to be carried out on this dangerous corner of Thame Road. Doug Colley (Ward Councillor) was asked to take on the project of costing out the work. He was given the names of Richard Read and Ian Whales, who both have diggers and ditchers, and may be interested in taking on the work. Doug confirmed that he would liaise with Michael Hayes on the matter, as Michael knows both of them.

DC

Oxen Piece

South Oxfordshire District Council informed the various parties at the on-site meeting that it had already replaced the piece of pipe between Oxen Piece and Collets View. Accordingly, there is now a continuous nine inch pipe from the 'lower' ditch inlet outside number 2 Oxen Piece to the bottom of Thame Road.

The 'top' ditch to the front of 1 Oxen Piece is a mess and looks blocked. It is also not helped by the fact that the area immediately behind the ditch is overgrown and unkempt. Ownership of the ditch is with the riparian land owner, which is believed to be either the Rural Housing Trust or the Vale Housing Association, which both own properties at Oxen Piece. It was also added that Bob Hutton has cleared the ditch at Oxen Field and also the road gully. However it seems that surface water from the adjacent entrance way is not able to enter the ditch. This is evident when it rains, as the water runs down onto the road. KR suggested that Mr Hutton be asked to cut into the ditch, so that the water can drain down the pipes. The Clerk was asked to ascertain who owned the land to the front of 1 Oxen Piece, and then write to them. As per Oxfordshire Highways directive, the PC should inform them that it is their responsibility as riparian owner to clear the land and ditch. The Clerk was further asked to add that if they did not reply within 14 days, then the Parish Council would contract the work and send them the invoice.

MB

KR proposed that all contributory factors regarding the flooding at Oxen Piece should be resolved, i.e. all the ditches, drainage pipes etc, as quickly as possible. Council learnt that Monson has formally requested that an overflow pipe be connected from the pond into Michael Hayes French drain/pipe to cope with the excess rain water. Mr Hayes did add that by lowering the normal level of the pond water to provide some surge capacity would significantly reduce the risk of a repeat of the flooding which occurred last June.

As Monson (Consulting Engineers) has given Bob Hutton a description of what they want installed into the pond, the Parish Council felt that it was better to leave the matter in their hands. Monson has promised to pursue it until resolved

Action:

Church Road

KR reported that the last blocked road gulley in Church Road has been cleared. However, the nine inch water pipe that carries the water under the road and away to the brook appears to be laying half full of water. Oxfordshire Highways is going to do an inspection on this section of pipe and find out if it has collapsed or is blocked. All of the experts are quite confident that if the gulley, drains and pipe are cleared and repaired, if necessary, then Church Road should not flood.

It would appear that the Brook is also in need of some reparation and this is the responsibility of the riparian land owners. However, KR has asked if Oxfordshire Highways could look after the first three metres of the Brook from the roadside.

It was pointed out that there is a major leaf problem in Church Road, not only from the neighbouring trees, but also leaves are brought down from the Thame Road. Extra leaf clearance by Oxfordshire Highways has taken place this year however, all Councillors agreed that people just need to be neighbourly and clear up the leaves outside their house.

Sworford Lane

Unfortunately it was not possible to visit the problem areas in Sworford Lane on 22nd December, due to time constraints. However, it was concluded that a proper survey needs to take place on the drainage system in and around the lane, to ascertain what needs to be done to improve the situation.

It was concluded that all possible measures were being take, at present to prevent a repeat of the flooding of June 2008, and hopefully when all of the measures outlined above have been implemented, Great Milton would be prepared for future 'monsoon like' rainfall.

B Great Milton Website

Phil Ashworth (PA) updated Councillors on progress on the new website. He confirmed that he had changed the website address to GreatMilton.org.uk (for a small fee of £7.50), as this was a UK based address rather than a '.com' address, which is worldwide. There will be a redirection placed on the old website.

PA then informed the meeting that all of the information on the existing website needs to be checked for accuracy and updated, where necessary, before being put on to the new website. He asked if Councillors could all take a web page away to check and amend. The pages were distributed as below:

Sports Clubs – Doug
Parish Council Information – Michele
Local Businesses
Village Charities – Peter
Village Societies and Groups – Pat
Local Amenities – Michele
Local Services and Emergencies – Ian

Action:

DC
MB
KR
PF
PC
MB
IB

PA gave everyone two weeks to check the information on their web page before returning the corrected version to him as a word document (or similar) via email.

C Lower End Footpath

David Turner (DT) informed Councillors that he had had a lengthy conversation with Brian Purcell-Smith regarding the dangerous footpath in Lower End. Unfortunately, Oxfordshire Highways (OH) is not able to do anything to resolve this problem. The PC's idea of moving the grass verge is too expensive. The only suggestion made by OH is that the residents of Close Cottages have their drives dropped so that the gradients between the drives, pavement and road can be lessened. Councillors discussed this matter and resolved that the residents would not want, or be able to afford, to drop their driveways, so unfortunately due to cost issues this matter cannot be resolved.

One final suggestion to help with the steep gradients would be roughing up the pavement surface to make it easier to grip. However Councillors were concerned that the elderly or infirm may catch their feet or walking sticks and it could make the problem worse. David Turner confirmed that he would discuss this suggestion with Brian Purcell-Smith at OH.

DT

D M40 CEG Email regarding Proposed Noise Barriers at J7/M40

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated an email received from Ken Edwards, Chairman of the M40 CEG regarding the proposed noise barriers at J7/M40. It outlined the Groups continuing pressure on the Highways Agency to get noise barriers at J7 improved for residents in Milton Common whose properties adjoin the motorway. However, it did state that noise barriers would not help Great Milton village itself, as the many fields and roads between the motorway and village eliminate the benefit. The email did go on to say that planting trees alongside the motorway has been proven to reduce noise and that this could be a possibility for Great Milton if the local farmers and landowners concerned would be willing to get involved.

Councillors discussed this and concluded that the main farmland that would require planting to benefit the village would be the Read's farm at Milton Common, whose land runs from J7 along the M40/A40 sliproad to Chilworth Road. However, it was agreed that the Clerk should obtain more details and specifications from Ken Edwards before the Parish Council approach Mrs Read on the subject.

MB

E **Red BT Kiosk** **Action:**

After December's meeting, the Parish Council had unanimously agreed to retain the red kiosk and working telephone in Great Milton by sponsoring at a cost of £500 per year. The Clerk had been asked to draft a letter to The Sheppard Charitable Trust, asking if the Trustees would consider paying the first year's sponsorship, as the PC had not budgeted for such expenditure. The letter had been circulated prior to the meeting, and was approved by all Councillors.

The Clerk then presented the completed BT sponsorship agreement (which had been circulated to all Councillors), which means that the telephone is safe and cannot be removed. The Chairman, Ken Rogers, signed the document and the Clerk confirmed that she would send the necessary paperwork to BT.

MB

In the meantime, Councillors agreed that the Clerk should continue to seek 'listed building' status for the red kiosk. The clerk confirmed that she would submit the application to English Heritage in the near future.

F **Potts Close**

The Clerk confirmed that SOHA had agreed to an Open Day at the new Potts Close houses and flats. The date is still to be confirmed but should be at the end of February/beginning of March, just before completion. The Clerk also showed Councillors a map supplied by South Oxfordshire District Council showing the names/positions of each cottage and numbers/positions of each flat.

G **Public Footpath - Allotments to Chilworth Road**

Further to his email to the Countryside Officer regarding the poor state of the public footpath that runs between the allotments and Chilworth Road, Phil Ashworth confirmed that he had received a positive response and will let the PC have any feedback when he receives it.

PA

05/09 **Correspondence and Public Discussion**

A **The Forties**

Charles Peers (CP) voiced his concerns about the condition of the Forties, all the verges are chewed up and the lane looks a complete mess. There are also concerns over safety for both pedestrians and motorists, especially when coming face to face with the bus, which takes up the whole of the lane. KR confirmed that he has taken up the issue with Oxfordshire Highways (OH) in the past, and even had an on-site meeting with them regarding establishing proper passing places. However, due to a lack of money, there is absolutely nothing that OH can do. CP then suggested that perhaps The Forties could become one-way, which would alleviate the problem of passing. Councillors then discussed the current bus route and whether that would be affected, however, it was thought that it could travel down Sworford Lane instead. KR suggested that the Clerk ask David Turner for his advice and also who to approach at Oxfordshire Highways

Action:

MB

about the matter.

B 1 Oxen Piece

Doug Colley referred to an email he had received from Richard and Natasha Keal regarding their son Shaun, who has lived in Great Milton for over 14 years. He and his partner are currently staying at the new family house 'Backlands' in Lower End. However, they are really interested in taking over the tenancy of the Keal's old family home at 1 Oxen Piece. At one stage, Vale Housing Association (VHA) stated that they could move into the rented property, but this has since been withdrawn. The Keals have asked if the Parish Council can do anything to help.

Councillors discussed this matter and firstly asked DC to check if Shaun and his partner were on the SODC Council register, as without this, they will not be eligible to move into any Housing Association property in the area. Secondly, their needs will be judged on the number of points SODC allocate to them, and realistically they will not be eligible (as per the SODC Housing guidelines) for 1 Oxen Piece, a two bedroom house, which is for allocation to a family with one to two children. SODC allocate properties run by SOHA, VHA, RHT and other similar Housing Associations to people on its register, it is SODC's decision as to who is allocated the property.

DC

C Old Field Insurance

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated a letter from the Old Field Committee (OFC) regarding the economic downturn and how it was affecting its capital fund invested with COIF. The income from the fund is used to pay all expenses for Old Field, and currently it looks like expenditure may exceed income. To try and overcome this, OFC asked if the Parish Council would consider including its Insurance Policy under the Parish Council's policy. Councillors discussed this and were all in favour of combining the premiums. The Clerk confirmed that she would look into the matter, stating that if it is not possible to combine the PC's insurance policy with Old Field, it may be possible to include it under the Recreation Ground Insurance Policy, which the Parish Council pays for each year.

MB

D Letter from OCC regarding new footpath in Parish

The Clerk presented to Councillors a letter from Oxfordshire County Council Countryside Service regarding the introduction of a new footpath in the parishes of Great Milton and Waterstock. The footpath starts outside Langsmead Cottage on the A40 (Milton Common) goes across the dismantled railway and the A418 to Waterstock Golf Course. Councillors reviewed the map and concluded that any new footpath is a good thing, and asked the Clerk to convey this to the Countryside Officer.

MB

E Thank you letter from Air Ambulance

The Clerk précised a letter from Thames Valley & Chiltern Air

Ambulance Trust thanking the Parish Council for its recent donation.

Action:

F Local Village/Town Web Pages

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated an email from Oxfordshire County Council wherein it is looking at the possibility of creating a web page for each town and village in Oxfordshire. The short article for the web page should cover history, buildings, landmarks, geography and other points of interest in the village. The ultimate aim is to provide detailed information on each town and village in Oxfordshire, with links to local village websites.

OCC wanted to be put in contact with someone in the village who would be willing to write the article and who had a good local and historical knowledge of the area. Pat Cox kindly volunteered to be the contact point for OCC and agreed to write the article. The Clerk confirmed that she would let OCC have Pat's email address.

MB

G Victim Support – Fundraising Appeal 2008-9

The Clerk précised a letter received from Victim Support, outlining its fundraising appeal for 2008-9. The Charity provides practical and emotional support to victims and witnesses of crime. Councillors discussed this Charity and Peter Fewell proposed that the Parish Council donate £25.00, this was seconded by Doug Colley and agreed upon unanimously.

MB

H Thank you letter from the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

The Clerk read out a letter of thanks from the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, for the donation that the Parish Council recently sent.

I SODC letter regarding Land Use Classes for roads in Great Milton

The Clerk outlined a letter received from South Oxfordshire District Council regarding Land Use Classes for all roads in the Parish of Great Milton. SODC is asking the Parish Council to clarify what the roads are classified as, ie a rural road, an industrial road, a main road etc, and there are 10 different classes to choose from. The Parish Council should also check that all roads in the Parish are actually noted on the letter. Ken Rogers agreed to work on the list and reply to Fred Thompson-Brown at SODC. The deadline for this project is 23rd January 2009.

KR

J Oxfordshire Business Education Alliance – Request for Grant for Residential Week

The Clerk précised a letter from the Oxfordshire Business Education Alliance, which over the past few years has operated a resident week in France for students with Special Needs. The aim of the week is to provide the children with experiences that are exciting and educational. The children are selected from local schools including Wheatley Park, John Watson and Lord Williams. It was felt by Councillors that, unfortunately, this was not the right time, in the current climate, to start

donating to such causes. Therefore, it was decided not to donate to the OBEA this year.

Action:

K Information from David Turner, County Councillor

David Turner (DT) informed Councillors that the Scrutiny Committee, of which he is the Chairman, will be reviewing the flood action plans put together by the various agencies on Tuesday 10th February 2009 at 6pm at Council Offices in Crowmarsh Gifford. This will highlight the work done so far by the various agencies on the action plans for each area in South Oxfordshire that were hit by the June 2008 flash floods.

The reports being discussed and reviewed at the meeting will be available on the SODC website one week earlier. If Councillors feel that something has been missed off a report, or wish to speak for any other reason at the actual meeting, then they need to register to speak by noon on Monday 9th February, and they will be allocated a five minute slot on the evening. DT did add that it would be in the Parish Council's interest to have at least one Councillor attend the meeting, even if they did not want to speak.

KR

DT informed Councillors that UK Highways, a sub contractor to the Highways Agency, has been carrying out more investigation work on the A329 Bridge at J7/M40. It would appear that UK Highways now state that the bridge is not in such bad disrepair as originally thought and the corrosion on the bridge is not as serious. In addition, UK Highways was lead to believe that fuel pipes run through the bridge, as they appear on some plans, however, it is now thought that they run under the M40 itself. UK Highways has produced a report that has now gone to an independent authority for verification. It is thought that they may not have to close the bridge entirely now, it does still require some work, however, it is looking as though partial closure is more likely. At present, it appears that the work is scheduled for the back end of summer 2009, at the earliest. It has been confirmed that both the bridges at J7 and J5 will still have to be repaired, however, J7 will be first. The only downside to this reduced programme is that it may affect the progress of the M40 CEG noise barriers at J7.

OCC is currently looking at its budget, it will be finalised in February. It is reviewing further cost cutting in Highways Maintenance, which DT and his party are fighting. The Government has increased its local authority grants by only 1.8% for 2009-10. Two thirds of the County Council's income is from the Government and business rates, with the remaining third coming from Council Tax. Therefore, any deficit from Government funding will mean an increase in household Council Tax bills. However, the District Council has received an even lower increase from central Government of only 0.5% increase this year.

DT informed the meeting that £1.5 million had been received for upgrading the fire stations in both Thame and Wallingford.

DT reported that there is to be a change to primary school applications from next year. Parents can now apply for children to go to school in the year that they actually turn five, rather than the term, although this will be a parental choice and is not compulsory.

Finally, DT reported on a meeting that he had attended with police in the lay-by outside Middle Ground. DT is part of the Neighbourhood Action Group in Wheatley. The Police are very concerned for lorry drivers who are parking in the lay-by overnight, who are having their fuel stolen whilst they are asleep and in some cases being attacked. The fence adjoining the lay-by, which belongs to Peter Alden, has been broken down and the Police are anxious to get the fence replaced, the scrub cleared and the adjacent road closed so that drivers have a chance of seeing any thieves approaching. DT has agreed to go and see Peter Alden about the issues, but does not see that putting the fences back up will stop the problem. Another proposal would be to close the lay-by so that lorry drivers can no longer park there. This may not solve the problem, however it is felt that thieves would not be able to get away on foot from another lay-by and there would be more chance of a prosecution.

Action:

06/09 **Planning Applications**

Great Milton Parish Council considers that the following planning applications should be approved by South Oxfordshire District Council (decided at Planning Meeting held on Monday 22nd December 2008).

- A Brannock Cottage, Lower End, Great Milton. P08/W1232
Two storey extension.
- B Old Cottage, Lower End, Great Milton. P08/W1257
Rear 1 1/2 storey extension to incorporate bedroom and bathroom within roof cavity and kitchen, dining/living room and cloak room downstairs.

South Oxfordshire District Council has granted planning permission on the following planning application:

- C Welcome Break Services, M40 Motorway J8A. P08/W1134
Two single storey extension to the existing amenity building to provide additional storage and retail space. (As amended by drawing number WB/229/11-B)

07/09 **Financial Resolutions**

- A The following payments were agreed; proposed by Peter Fewell, seconded by Doug Colley and agreed upon unanimously.

Michele Block. Clerk's Salary - £303.43
Jonathan Dudley. Bulletin Production (Jan) - £210.00
Manny Stone. Editorial Services (Jan) - £50.00
South & Vale Carers. Donation - £35.00 (agreed at Dec Mtg)
Thames Water. Allotments Water Supply - £11.51
Ken Rogers. Flip Chart for PC Flood Meeting - £61.98
Michele Block. Stationery/Clerk's Expenses - £40.30
- B Quarterly bank reconciliation and analysis of actual receipts/payments vs budget.

The Clerk circulated the third quarter's bank reconciliation and accounts. These were reviewed by Councillors and it was proposed by Peter Fewell that they were approved, this was seconded by Phil Ashworth and agreed upon unanimously.

Action:

08/09 **Items for Discussion**

09/09 **Any Other Business**

A **Great Haseley Windmill**

A question was asked as to how the Great Haseley Windmill restoration was progressing. Both Pat Cox and Ken Rogers had heard nothing since the Charity was set up by George Yannagas in 2008.

B **Green Hitchings Manhole Cover**

Following an email from Doug Colley, the Clerk informed the meeting that she had reported a dangerous manhole cover in Green Hitchings to Oxfordshire Highways. She had been informed by OH that it would be investigated and appropriate action taken where necessary.

The meeting closed at 9.35

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Monday 9th February 2009 at 7.30pm** in the Pavilion.

Signed: _____

Date: _____