

Great Milton Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mr T Darch

Email: contact@clerkgreatmilton.co.uk

Website: www.great-milton.co.uk

Minutes of the Meeting of Great Milton Parish Council held on Monday 21st October 2019 at 7.30pm in the Pavilion.

Present: Cllrs S Harrod (Chairman), W Fox (Vice-Chairman), P Allen, G Bennet and P Fewell

In Attendance: Michele Block (Clerk, standing in for Tim Darch), Caroline Newton (SODC), Gwen Harris (resigning Councillor) and 4 members of the public.

126/19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Clyde Deacon.

127/19 Variation of order of business

Discussion of Item 136/19 was brought forward for the convenience of those in attendance.

128/19 Councillor Gwen Harris

To report the resignation of Councillor Gwen Harris. The Parish Council wishes to express its thanks to Gwen for her valuable and enthusiastic contribution to village life during her time as a councillor. A casual vacancy has been notified to SODC and advertised locally: as there have been no proposals for an election the post can now be filled by co-option. Volunteers are therefore sought for a new councillor to replace Gwen: if interested please contact the Clerk for more information.

129/19 Declarations of member's interest (if any)

No declarations of interest in matters on the Agenda were received from those in attendance.

130/19 Matters to report

The County Councillor's and District Councillor's monthly reports for October were received by the meeting and are available to view on the Parish Council website.

Cllr Caroline Newton (SODC) reported that the Chief Executive of the District Council is going to see the Secretary of State on Tuesday 22 October, as SODC are legally challenging the way that the Secretary of State intervened and prevented a debate and vote on the Draft Local Plan at the Full Council Meeting on 10th October. The outcome cannot be predicted, but all Councillors have been told that they cannot discuss the Draft Local Plan and that it is not to be used. The District Council has had to revert to the March 2013/14 Core Strategy and this is now being applied to all planning consents. This affects all planning, both for strategic sites and guidance for private planning permission. The delay in approving the SODC Local Plan means that the Harrington development will probably be pushed back for the foreseeable future, whilst the Chalgrove Airfield site remains in the balance. Homes England has bought all the land surrounding the airfield: this is thought to be as a contingency in case Martin Baker cannot be moved from the airfield site.

131/19 Correspondence and Public Discussion

A letter has been received from a young resident in Lower End, who has asked if the Parish Council can investigate the implementation of a 20mph speed limit zone in the centre of the village. It was agreed that the Clerk should speak to Highways about installing a timed 'flashing light' 20mph speed limit sign for school drop off/pick up times in the heart of the village.

A member of the public asked what influence the Parish Council has over the publication of the Great Milton Bulletin, which is supposed to be delivered on or around the 1st of the month. October's issue was not received by some until 14th October, by which time many events had been missed. Councillors agreed that production can occasionally be slower than is desirable, and volunteer distributors may not always deliver instantly. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk should write to Jonathan Dudley explaining that the PC has received complaints about the Bulletin's delayed appearance, and suggesting that the situation does need to improve.

The Parish Council will review the situation in January 2020, and may need to investigate other options if consistency cannot be guaranteed.

It was suggested by a member of public that the Parish Council should write to Red Rose Bus Company and request that it re-routes one of its service 275 journeys from High Wycombe to Oxford through Great Milton. There is a scheduled bus that could reach the village at 10.30am to travel into Oxford and would return about 2.30pm from Oxford, which would be excellent for those without means of transport. It was discussed as to whether a financial incentive may make it more worthwhile for the bus company to re-route. It was agreed to ask the Clerk to write to Red Rose with these suggestions, although a similar question asked of the company in the past elicited a negative response.

A member of the public reported that two Polish-registered articulated lorries nearly collided with him under the railway bridge at the end of Sworford Lane; they were taking up the whole road which is far too narrow for HGVs. The Parish Council agreed that they would again ask Highways to install signs showing that the M40 is straight ahead and not through the village: however as the location for the signs is on the A329 between the Pine Lodge and the Windmill Hill turnoff in Little Milton, Little Milton Parish Council will also have to be on board with this request. It was also suggested that a weight restriction sign be put on Sworford Lane.

The Parish Council acknowledged that despite requests it was yet to receive any information direct from the police about the recent accident involving a motorbike at the Windmill Lane/Forties junction. It seems that a motorcyclist coming from Wheatley direction may have cut the corner where there was a van coming in the opposite direction: a resident noted that this illustrates the need for full renewal of all white lines and SLOW markings on Windmill Hill. OCC advises that this work is scheduled and has been prioritised: 'Give Way' lines have already been restored at the Forties junction and 'SLOW' markings repainted on the Windmill Lane corner. The Clerk has once again sought an update from the police on this matter: this is awaited.

132/19 Planning Applications

A To give consideration to the following planning applications received from SODC:
P19/S2743/LB and P19/S2475/LB (The Old Stores, The Green, Great Milton OX44 7NT).
Replace cracked and damaged single glazing with slim/heritage glazing in two bay windows (P19/S2743/LB) and repaint in Sage Green (P19/S2745/LB).
Cllr Fewell reported that this application was all quite straightforward and will in fact improve insulation at the property. The Parish Council deemed that this application was purely for listed building approval and agreed that it had NO OBJECTIONS.

B To review the following planning decisions received and any outstanding planning matters.
P19/S2358/HH (Brannock Lower End Great Milton OX44 7NL). Removal of the single-storey ground floor kitchen and bathroom. New build replacement ground floor kitchen with utility, with new bedroom and bathroom over. Additional door to west elevation. Internal alterations. Permission has been GRANTED for the proposed development detailed above.

P19/S2612/HH (3 Brookside Cottages Church Road Great Milton). Demolition of small brick lean to. Erection of new single storey stone brick extension with slate roof. Replacement of windows and new French doors.
Permission has been GRANTED for the proposed development detailed above.

P19/S2462/FUL and P19/S2462/LB (1 Monkerly Farm Church Road Great Milton OX44 7PB)
Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (EPS License), 5 (External Materials), 6 (Contamination Report) and 9 (Protected Species Mitigation Strategy) of planning permission P18/S3645/FUL for the conversion of a grade II listed barn into a dwelling.
Permission has been GRANTED for the proposed development detailed above.

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that SODC has imposed protection orders on 'some trees on land due west of Mount Pleasant Farm' as notified by a letter to the Parish Council dated 9th October. It was noted that the two trees in question are actually within the boundary of Mount Pleasant Farm, and not on the land itself.

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133/19 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council held on Monday 16th September 2019 were signed and approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

134/19 Financial Resolutions

A

The following cheques were signed and payments authorised:

Tim Darch. Salary, Tax and Expenses October. £436.90

Jonathan Dudley. Bulletin production October. £264.50

Green and Growing. Grass cutting September: £450

Wheatley Park School: prize-giving donation. £50

Jane Jefferis. Volunteer Car Scheme: reimbursement of fee for Public Liability Insurance. £35

Carina Martin: reimbursement for GMPC website SSL licence. £47.99

B

The monthly bank reconciliations, accounts and bank statements were approved and signed.

The reconciled bank balance as at 4 October was £31,191.02.

135/19 Parish Clerk and Councillors' update of matters in hand

- No flooding was observed near the railway bridge on Sworford Lane following the heavy rain at the beginning of the month, though this did return briefly this week. OCC and SODC have been informed. Many thanks to the landowner for clearing nearby ditches and culvert entrances: OCC are expected to be carrying out further maintenance in this area.
- Roads have been re-lined and SLOW markings repainted in places along Windmill Hill, though not all have been dealt with. OCC has been contacted about this.

136/19 School parking update

Alyson Frost (Headteacher, Great Milton Primary School) attended the meeting with a member of the Board of Governors to deliver a progress report on measures to improve safety and reduce parking on the main road through the village at school drop-off and pick up times.

Mrs Frost confirmed that recent school newsletters have reminded parents of the need for respectful parking in the village. Since the last meeting she has made a plea for volunteers to supervise a 'walking bus' through the village from specific drop off/pick up points such as The Bull Inn car park, as there are insufficient staff to supervise such a scheme. However, unfortunately no volunteers have yet come forward.

Another idea being investigated is safe parking on village residents' driveways. Mrs Frost dropped off some signs which could be displayed on willing volunteers' gateposts. The Clerk will hold these for any volunteers who may come forward. Mrs Frost also confirmed that she spoke to the local PCSO in May: he walked the pavements with her but said that no one was parked illegally so there was little he could do. Councillors agreed that the situation had improved since the beginning of the year, and parents are definitely parking more considerately. The school confirmed that it would keep the pressure on regarding parking, so that parents/carers don't slip back into bad habits. The school is also encouraging children to use the free school bus which picks up from Tiddington, Milton Common and Great Haseley.

On a separate matter, Mrs Frost mentioned that she would speak to 'Thunderbirds', a minibus operator the school uses for its daily outings to see if it is able to help with a village bus service to Wheatley.

137/19 Path along Sworford Lane from Great Milton to Wheatley

Officers at OCC have been contacted with regard to an early discussion on the potential for a path to Wheatley. Unfortunately OCC does not have a scheme for a pedestrian/cycleway on or near Sworford Lane, and no funding is currently available for such a scheme, either to design one or for its delivery. The officer suggests contacting Sustrans or Greenways to see if they can help further. The Parish Council felt that this was a good idea and asked the Clerk to contact Sustrans to see if there was any help they could provide.

138/19 Budget 2019-20 preparation

The Parish Council's objectives for the next financial year were considered and discussed.

Cllr Fox had a couple of queries on the current budget which should be taken into consideration for next year's budget preparation. The Parish Council already appears to have overspent on the village maintenance budget with 6 months of the year remaining. However, investigations reveal that the apparent overspend is due to the refurbishment of the Milton Common bus stop (£920, of which half has been covered by a contribution from OCC) and a payment for the maintenance agreement for the defibrillator (£162, which may be better allocated to another 'line' of the budget). It was also noted that having reached the end of the grass cutting season only just over half of the budget appears to have been used (although one payment has not yet been recorded): this is partly due to drier weather over the summer, and also a reduced number of cuts needed on the recreation ground as a result of the demise of the village football team.

After some discussion it was agreed to base this year's precept on a 5% increase (it has been 6% for the past two year), this can be altered if necessary when the draft budget is presented. It was suggested that money be put aside for extensive tree surgery which will be needed in the village in the next few years. Cllr Allen will work on a draft budget plan.

139/19 Data Protection Policy/ICO Model Publication Scheme and Published Information list

It was agreed to defer discussion of the Parish Council's draft Data Protection and Freedom of Information policies to next month, to ensure that all Councillors have had sufficient time to read the documents.

140/19 Connecting Oxford

Oxfordshire County Council has proposed transport measures in the 'Eastern Arc' of Oxford (which broadly encompasses Summertown, Marston, Headington and Cowley), including initiatives such as a Workplace Parking Levy, traffic restrictions (e.g 'bus gates') and bus service improvements. Cllr Harrod summarised this scheme, which looks to eventually make the Park and Ride around the city free of charge to encourage people off the road in Oxford. All the proposals including suggested parking levies are to discourage people from driving to and parking at work in Oxford. It was mentioned that the bus service would need to improve before this would work, as buses move extremely slowly in and around the city at present. However, all Councillors felt it was a positive proposal.

141/19 Great Milton Football Club

It was noted with regret that Great Milton Football Club unfortunately folded in September after 89 years, largely due to insufficient player numbers. All councillors agreed that this was sad news for the village, especially when coupled with the loss of The Bull's darts team which has also recently folded due to lack of numbers.

142/19 Parking on The Green

A resident has observed and reported frequent pavement parking on the one-way section of the village green. All Councillors had looked at the photographic evidence that had been provided, and although it was felt there is no need to park on the pavement (as there is sufficient room for two cars on this section of the road around The Green) it was not thought to be a significant problem. There appeared to be plenty of room on the pavement to get a push chair or wheelchair past the car. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk should send a note back to the resident thanking them for informing the Parish Council of the situation and that Councillors will continue to monitor developments over the coming months.

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143/19 Accessible Minibus for sale

Oxfordshire's volunteer transport providers have been notified that the FISH Volunteer Centre in Sonning Common is selling its current minibus for £12,000 as a new one has been purchased. The Parish Council has been asked whether this may be of interest to the village. Councillors discussed this offer and agreed that although it would be a lovely idea, the Parish Council doesn't have the financial resources or a sufficient pool of volunteers to run a Community Bus. Additionally, previous trial schemes have shown there is insufficient day-to-day demand for such a facility. Unfortunately therefore the Parish Council is not in a position to pursue this opportunity at the present time.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

The next meeting of Great Milton Parish Council will be held on Monday 18 November starting at 7.30pm in The Pavilion.