

GREAT MILTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Great Milton Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th October 2009 at 7.30pm in the Pavilion.

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

In Attendance: Joanna Botha (Clerk)
Pat Cox (Bulletin Reporter)
John Nowell-Smith (District Councillor)
6 members of the public

78/09 Apologies for Absence

David Turner (County Councillor)
Stephen Harrod (Vice Chairman)

79/09 Register of Interests for this Meeting

None

80/09 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on Monday 14th September 2009

Action:

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record. This was proposed by Christine Pepperell (CP), seconded by Doug Colley (DC) and agreed upon unanimously.

81/09 Matters arising from the Meeting held on Monday 14th September 2009

A Traffic Speed in the Village

Ken Rogers (KR) reported key outcomes of his and Stephen Harrod's (SH) recent meeting with Area Traffic Engineer, Peter Ronald, Malcolm Bowler and Cllr. David Turner. When introducing a 20 mph limit there are two options. The first to put the 20 mph limit on signs at the beginning and end of a village only and the second to put it on small decals throughout the village. With the first option you cannot have any additional slowing measures such as bumps but with the continuous option you can.

Two psychological measures that can be employed are to paint white-lined boxes on the road which encourages people to park in specific places or to remove the centre carriageway markings, which has a slowing effect by handing over control to drivers. These are proven methods of road safety with the added effect of returning the scene to a village one rather than a semi-urban one.

All agreed that any such measures would need careful thought. Peter Ronald will attend the next Parish Council (PC) meeting on 9th November to provide the full details of his suggestions. The temporary VAS is on hold until these broader issues are decided as with a 20 mph limit it would not be necessary.

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B Recreation Driveway / Pegswell Lane Grant Applications

SH had asked for the meeting to be updated that the Pegswell Lane grant application to Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) will be postponed until next year in favour of the Recreation Driveway.

SH/JB

C Fullers Field Path

Previously SODC Housing had written to say that it would like to prune the canopies of the fruit trees overhanging the path but that this would leave the other side unbalanced and could the PC arrange pruning. The Clerk is waiting for SODC Housing to respond to her letter asking if they could prune both sides and giving the Recreation Ground Committee's permission to do so. Ian Bradley (IB) said he would keep an eye on the progress.

IB/JB

D Ditch outside Oxen Piece

The ongoing debate between Vale Housing and OCC Highways about responsibility for this ditch has finally been resolved. As the ditch is in fact the responsibility of Highways, they will arrange for it to be maintained.

E Damage to the Grass Verge Opposite the School

The Clerk is waiting to hear back from Heyfordian, the contractors for the school swimming bus, having written requesting a reimbursement of the £22.50 it cost to repair the verge. James Cunningham asked that the Clerk contact the school if the company does not respond.

JB

F Report on Meeting with John Howell MP

KR explained that John Howell MP had offered to provide Parishes with informal surgeries. Great Milton had accepted and so Councillors took a list of local issues to a 1½ hour meeting in The Bull. Mr. Howell presented the Conservative policy on each of these. One significant issue discussed was planning policy which is currently under review. PCs have never been very powerful but a green paper may make the whole process more user friendly and push responsibility farther down. The Conservatives would also strip out the new level of management brought in by current government which many people have remarked is a hugely expensive operation and puts another layer between local government and Government. Generally Councillors felt that his approach of meeting with the regions was positive and that he had a genuine concern for rural communities and the tendency for them to be overlooked in recent years.

G Local Transport Plan 3 – OCC Consultation

Councillors had been asked to bring their thoughts on local transport in order to respond to the request for a list of issues for this consultation which is due mid-December. Phil Ashworth (PA) would like to see a footpath from GM to Wheatley. Obviously there would be a lot of work involved but to have a footpath through fields

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instead of roads would help to ease the isolation of the village for people who don't have cars. In addition he suggested that the 103 bus should connect with the 280. Currently it misses by 5 minutes. CP lamented the loss of access to the A40 going towards Oxford from Junction 7 of the M40. She suggested that putting a roundabout at the A418/A40/Waterstock junction might help with waiting times to join the A418 from Milton Common and Waterstock.

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H Chilworth Lane and Thame Road Potholes

The Clerk had logged these with Highways, although DC reported that more are starting to develop on the Thame Road. She apologised that she had not yet reported the sunken road on the Wheatley-bound carriageway at Lower End outside Rylands due to a mix up with the location but will do so.

JB

I Trees Overhanging Paths – Church Road and Green Hitchings

These matters appeared to have been dealt with promptly following the Clerk's letters to the respective residents.

J Signs to Village Post Office and Shop

A sign is to be erected on the main Thame to Stadhampton Road at the end of Church Road carrying the message Post Office/Shop. The Clerk is awaiting a quote for Councillors to approve.

JB

K Old Cottage

Following the previous month's meeting the Clerk had written to the residents of Old Cottage asking if the common land could be cleared now that building works are complete. As this has not been done PA asked the Clerk to write again requesting that every effort be made to get it removed in the next 7 days or the PC will have to do it and pass on the bill.

JB

82/09 Correspondence and Public Discussion

A Letter from Al Partington, Old Field Trustee

The PC had received a letter from Al Partington, an Old Field Committee (OFC) trustee objecting to the recent agreement between the OFC and the Reads to allow access to Old Field to excavate a ditch in order to prevent flooding. David Holme, OFC secretary explained to the meeting that most of the Committee would like to allow the Reads to excavate the ditch. It is his understanding that the Reads own the hedge and the ditch, but had asked permission because they would need to come into Old Field with machinery. There is an amicable situation between the Reads and the OFC and any question of legal ownership of land is not relevant in this situation. Mr. Partington believes there is an issue relating to ownership of the land and has said in recent letters that he would like to see proof of ownership of the ditch from the Reads. David Holme believes that Mr. Partington's view is incorrect. The PC had sought legal advice on this

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matter and agreed that his view was not relevant to the situation. KR felt that a majority vote at the next OFC meeting could be accepted by the PC.

An additional assertion in Mr. Partington's letter was that the pipe that was once run to fill up the pond was laid along the ditch line, implying that the ditch was dug for a cold water main pipe and was not an original ditch owned by the Reads. David Holme had spoken to Bob Wise who remembers digging the ditch for the pipe and said it was nowhere near the hedge.

B Request for donation, Thame & District Citizens Advice Bureau

Councillors agreed that as we have already made a donation this year the Clerk will write and suggest that they please make a request in March next year.

C Letter from OCC's Road Safety Officer regarding Mobile Information Unit

The Mobile Information Unit is available for Fetes and other public events. Councillors agreed that it would be good for the Fete. Pat Cox offered to find out for the Clerk who the correct contact is to pass this information on to.

PC/JB

D Letter and invitation from Wheatley Park School

Following the PC's recent donation the school had written offering thanks and an invitation to the Prize-giving. PA represented the PC at the Prize-giving.

E Information from John Nowell-Smith

Our District Councillor reported that small bins will be available in December and that the telephones will be improved. He asked that residents continue to feedback issues to the District Council and that this is welcomed. He added that joint working between SODC and the Vale of the White Horse is working well.

KR informed John Nowell-Smith (J N-S) that some residents in Church Road are concerned about the chestnut trees growing inside the boundary wall of The Priory, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Dryer. They are very close together, very mature and extremely tall. They seem to have the Horse Chestnut disease which is prevalent at the moment. The problem is that one of them has extended into the surface water drainage system and its roots have been seen inside a sump. The road floods in this area. It was felt necessary to involve an SODC Tree Officer to provide a technical opinion on the matter. J N-S advised that this would be Martin Gammie but to come back to him if they had no luck contacting him.

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83/09 Planning Applications

A Great Milton Parish considered the following application for a Lawful Development Certificate at this meeting:

P09/W0926/LD

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Yew Tree Cottage, Lower End, Great Milton, OX44 7NF

Erection of a summerhouse/garden building

James Cunningham asked whether acting Ward Councillor KR had consulted the school regarding this application. KR had not but agreed that he should have. It was agreed that the Parish Council would approve the application subject to there being no objections from the school. This was proposed by PA and seconded by PF.

B Great Milton Parish Council considers that the following planning application should be refused by Oxfordshire County Council (decided at Planning Meeting held on Monday 5th October 2009):

Great Milton C of E Primary School

County Council reference R3.0188/09

District Council reference P09/W0843/CC

Demolition of detached temporary classroom and brick built store and erection of detached single storey children's centre, an extension to provide a replacement classroom, reading room extension and replacement store extension, plus associated works.

The PC objected to the proposal for the following reasons:

- Severe inaccuracy in the supporting documentation.
- An overdevelopment of the site.
- Encroachment on a conservation area.
- Strong objections from neighbours.

The PC looks forward to considering a revised application. It would strongly support an application being split into two elements – school improvements and Children's Centre.

It was noted that the further discussions following on from the recent School/ Children's Centre planning meetings are beneficial to the village.

The PC also discussed sending a letter to project manager Helen West's seniors at the consultants Mouchel, who had not made their presence at the meeting known. While there was no compulsion for them to do so, Councillors felt they had acted unprofessionally by not doing so. Councillors had all felt quite embarrassed for Helen West. The PC agreed to send a letter from the council which the Clerk will prepare and cross-check with PA.

PA/JB

C Great Milton Parish Council considers that the following planning application should be approved by South Oxfordshire District Council (decided at Planning Meeting held on Monday 5th October 2009):

1 Tudor Cottage, London Road, Wheatley

P09/W0890/LD

Erection of replacement garage for existing dwelling. Retain existing Access from highway.

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84/09 Financial Resolutions

A NALC 2008/9 National Interim Salary Awards for Clerk

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated to Councillors the NALC recommended Salary Awards for Clerks to take effect from 1st April 2009. The salary increase was £3.90 per month to £307.33 per month. PA proposed that the Clerk and the Outgoing Clerk be awarded this increase backdated to 1st April 2009, this was seconded by DC and agreed upon unanimously. The Clerk thanked Councillors.

B The following payments were agreed; proposed by PA, seconded by Ian Bradley (IB) and agreed upon unanimously:

- Windmill Landscapes. Verge Grass Cutting (Sep) - £214.71
- Manny Stone. Editorial costs (Oct) - £50.
- Mike Henson Presentations. Website Design & Build - £690.00
- Mike Henson Presentations. Website Updates 12 months - £506.00
- Joanna Botha. Clerk's Salary (Sept) - £307.33
- Michele Block. Clerks Salary (adjusted & backdated Apr-Aug) - £19.50
- Thames Water. Allotments Water Supply (June-Sept) - £7.54

The Clerk read out a further invoice that had been received since circulating the Agenda:

- BDO Stoy Hayward. External Audit - £155.25

The Clerk informed the meeting that she had not received September and October invoices from Jonathan Dudley for Bulletin Production.

C Annual Return Year-ending 31st March 2009 – Conclusion of External Audit

The Clerk passed to Councillors a letter received from BDO Stoy Hayward LLP stating that there were no matters that had come to their attention during the external audit for year ending 31st March 2009. Therefore, it was proposed by Peter Fewell (PF) that the Annual Return be approved and accepted by the Parish Council, this was seconded by PA and agreed upon unanimously.

The Clerk will now publicise the conclusion of the audit on the notice boards. This will be after the deadline but is the earliest that could be managed given the timing of the audit's return and of the PC meeting.

D Quarterly bank reconciliation and analysis of actual receipts/payments versus budget.

Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated the quarterly accounts and bank reconciliation to Councillors. Councillors reviewed the accounts and confirmed that the figures appeared concurrent with being six months into the financial year. It was

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proposed by PA that the accounts be approved. This was seconded by DC and agreed upon unanimously.

85/09 Items for Discussion

A Great Milton 2020: A vision for our village's future.

PA had asked for this to be put on the Agenda because the PC has talked about the fact that the village needs a vision for the future, what it should be like and what it wants. He said that the title sums up what we want to achieve and 2020 is in ten years time. In a management sense, he felt the village only had opportunities and added that this follows on from John Howell's advice about project funds being forthcoming if a village consultation is robust. PA felt that it would be nice to see some of the passion witnessed at recent planning meetings recreated as a force for good action within the village. He proposed that Councillors start to think about how to take this forward.

KR responded that this was a progression from discussions last year about the need for a Village Plan - a funded scheme and defined process for developing a plan within the community for how it sees the village altering itself according to what is needed. KR asked whether a sub-committee should be tasked to focus on this rather than the council doing this during monthly business. This could comprise of Councillors who wanted to be on it and people who live in the community who have vision and an open-minded approach. There was further discussion about how any sub-committee should be put together.

IB commented that a village plan would be a helpful tool when difficult issues come up in the future. If a village has a plan that has agreement then issues can be tested against it. KR added that when the idea of a Village Plan was first discussed at a public meeting regarding proactive issues there were not enough core issues to form the basis of a plan, but perhaps the traffic and parking issues would now be enough to put a committee to.

The Clerk was asked to find out which other villages we can seek help from and about the formal process for a Village Plan and circulate.

JB

B Common Land amnesty

PA feels that a realistic review of Common Land access is required. Residents are parking on common land despite the PC asking them not to. Perhaps some agreements need to be drawn to allow this to a point and no further in order to avoid complete erosion of the village green. KR suggested this be added to the Agenda for any Village Plan sub-committee.

C SODC's Statement of Community Involvement Review

Councillors will read this document and e-mail thoughts by the deadline.

ALL

86/09 Any Other Business

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A Pernicious Weed

PA informed the meeting that a pernicious weed called Himalayan Balsam is spreading on the patch of rough ground between Lower End and the Allotments. It is recommended that this is got rid of so the Clerk will contact the SODC Environment team.

JB

B Yew Tree Cottage – New Access

KR told the meeting he'd had a conversation earlier that day in which the PC was criticised for allowing the Richards to gravel over their new access way because it may have inadvertently opened the floodgates for others to do the same. Councillors felt that in this particular situation they had been very limited in their options. KR had also been asked whether the PC had issued a licence to allow access but ban parking.

The Clerk was due to write to the Richards confirming details of an agreement between Councillors and the Richards since the last meeting that the previously recommended stone sets as the finished surface for the new access will be replaced by gravel. KR asked the Clerk to add to this letter that the PC is developing a licence document as signed by other residents in the village which allows them access in and out but no parking.

KR/JB

C Tree for Thelma

James Cunningham asked whether the tree for Thelma which had disappeared was to be replaced. KR said it had been discussed and that it would be replaced with a tree on a green in the village elsewhere. It was agreed that this matter should be discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____