

# GREAT MILTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Great Milton Parish Council held on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009** at **7.30pm** in the **Pavilion**.

Present: Mr. Ken Rogers (Chairman), Mr. Stephen Harrod (Vice Chairman), Mr. Phil Ashworth, Mr. Doug Colley, Mr. Peter Fewell, Mrs. Christine Pepperell

In Attendance: Joanna Botha (Clerk)  
Pat Cox (Bulletin Reporter)  
David Turner (County Councillor)  
11 members of the public

## 69/09 **Apologies for Absence**

Ian Bradley  
John Nowell-Smith (District Councillor)

## 70/09 **Register of Interests for this Meeting**

None

## 71/09 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record. This was proposed by Stephen Harrod (SH), seconded by Peter Fewell (PF) and agreed upon unanimously.

## 72/09 **Matters arising from the Meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

### A **Boundary Potts Close/Backlands**

SH reported that the endeavour to sort out the boundary issues at Potts Close and Backlands had been resolved rather unsatisfactorily. SOHA had written to Richard Keal suggesting that if he is a good neighbour for a year they may allow him to have access. All concerned felt that this approach was somewhat patronising. Mr. Keal may write to SOHA to ask what they would like to do about the orange plastic fencing. The Parish Council agreed that as the ball is now in Mr. Keal's court it was time to withdraw from the matter.

### B **Recreation Ground Access**

The Clerk reported that she had written to the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association for advice on how to fund the resurfacing of the Recreation Ground access, which is likely to be a cost of around £6,000. A possible grant might be Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), although SH pointed out that this is the fund that the Parish Council has in mind for the rebuilding of the wall in

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Pegswell Lane. KR asked Andy Noble if he had any further suggestions as the step that has developed at the edge of the pavement and driveway is now a serious hazard for pedestrians. Andy confirmed that TOE was a possibility or WREN (another landfill tax fund), or SODC Small Grants.

SH asked whether the proposal by the Great Milton School that the Recreation Ground be used for temporary parking during its proposed building works might be a solution. The school had advised at a previous meeting that grant money is available from Oxfordshire County Council for temporary parking projects for schools. Andy Noble confirmed that the Recreation Ground committee had discussed the suggestion of permanent parking for the school, but had not been asked about temporary arrangements. The committee is not in favour of the drive being used for parking as it presents a safety risk for children using the Recreation Ground and would be a fundamental change of its use. There is already considerable parking by parents on the Recreation Ground driveway and so Little Owls will now be closing the gate at 3.30pm to avoid this informal use of the recreation ground as a car park.

## C **Temporary VAS in Great Milton/20 mph Speed Limit**

The Parish Council revisited some of the discussions about slowing traffic down in the village. KR asked whether it would be right to take up John Davis's offer of paying for an extra VAS bracket at Lower End, considering that this solution may not alleviate the regular speeding through the village which he feels happens at certain times during the day and probably by drivers heading to certain destinations. KR suggested taking down the vehicle registration and contacting Le Manoir and Countax. A member of the public asked if this kind of reporting was effective. KR felt it would be effective but that residents seem reluctant to do this despite the Parish Council's advice.

A 20 mph speed limit is also on the table and SH and KR confirmed that they and DT would be meeting with Peter Ronald, Area Traffic Engineer, the next day to discuss the matter. DT reported that the police advise that some kind of calming device should go with any introduction of a 20 mph limit.

A member of the public suggested putting up a camera sign in the village but asked whether this would be costly. KR said he would ask Peter Ronald but wondered whether it would be legal if there was no actual camera in the vicinity. PA thought he recalled that a sign showing a camera with a speed limit means that there is a camera within half a mile but a sign with just a camera means there is a camera within 3 or 4km of the sign, such as the camera in Little Milton.

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KR and SH confirmed that they will discuss all these matters with Peter Ronald at their meeting.

## D **Flooding and Ditch Clearance Updates**

Regarding the Old Field Drainage Ditch, Doug Colley (DC) confirmed that he had attended a positive meeting with the Reads and the Old Field Committee (OFC) and that the outcome was that they were in favour of the Reads digging out the culverts and ditches outside of Old Field and digging a ditch alongside the hedge in Old Field. The OFC had been concerned about the conservation issues regarding the nettles and rabbits in the area but the Reads had put their minds at ease and offered to gift a tree to the OFC. DC felt that what was put forward by the Reads was fair and accurate representation of the issues and their intentions.

DC had also met with Tina Dresher to explore whether they can help expose the pipe that runs from Old Field to the bend coming up Thame Road. Mrs. Dresher was concerned that after heavy rain, water would still build up on the corner so it was agreed that all ditches in the vicinity would need to be cleared regularly. SH said that recent excavation of the gullies in this area will limit the likelihood of flooding anyway. PA commented that he was pleased with this work on the gullies but that it would only take a careless motorist to undo the work. KR said that such clearing needs to become an annual event.

DT asked whether the issue of responsibility for the ditches outside Oxen Piece had been resolved. The Clerk explained that it had reached a stalemate situation, with Oxfordshire Highways stating that Highway Records Manager Sue Parker had confirmed that the responsibility lies with Vale Housing, while the Director at Vale Housing said he had a conversation with Sue Parker in which she confirmed the opposite. DT offered to write to Sue Parker on Great Milton's behalf. The Clerk accepted and thanked DT for his support.

## E **Footpath between Fullers Field and the Recreation Ground**

SH informed the meeting that the PC was taking action to ensure the offending hedges and trees were pruned. SOHA had written to the PC to say they would like to arrange the pruning above head height of the trees that were dropping fruit litter but believed that the trees do not belong to SOHA and that pruning on one side will unbalance the canopy. They said they would clear the seasonal fruit litter but requested that the PC arrange pruning of the other side. SH asked the Clerk to write to SOHA and ask them if they wouldn't mind pruning both sides. Andy Noble reported that he has applied to the

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Forestry Division of SODC for permission for pruning the Beech Tree, which is in a conservation area, and was waiting to hear back.

## F **Pegswell Lane**

SH said that he has been let down by the third quote for this work and will endeavour to chase this so that he can meet TOE's grant application deadline of Oct 15<sup>th</sup>.

## G **Damage to Grass Verge**

Phil Ashworth (PA) reported that following July's meeting, the notice in the Post Office window has brought forth the information that the damage to the grass verge opposite the school happened between 8:45 am and 10am on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July and that it was the school swimming bus or coach that caused it. PA asked the Clerk to write to the school requesting reimbursement or the details of the coach company.

## H **Potholes around Village**

It was also reported that not all of the Potholes on Chilworth Lane had been filled and that there were further problems on the Thame Road near Mrs. Timb's residence and near the Whites' residence. The Clerk said she would follow this up with Oxfordshire Highways.

## 73/09 **Correspondence and Public Discussion\***

A A letter had been received from Wheatley Park School requesting a donation from the Parish Council towards the cost of book tokens for their annual Prize-giving. Councillors agreed unanimously that a £30 donation, the same as last year, would be appropriate. SH proposed this and PA seconded.

## B **Little Milton Shop**

David Turner (DT) informed the meeting that he had contacted the Area Traffic Engineer regarding signage for the Great Milton Shop and that signs will be put up on the roads into the village which will say Post Office/Shop. PA thanked DT for his help in this matter and explained to the public that the recent opening of the Village Shop in Little Milton had given rise to worries about the viability of the shop in Great Milton which he felt was intrinsic to our community.

The Donnellys at the Post Office had been in contact with SH concerned about the matter and why an SODC grant had been used for a commercial venture. Christine Pepperell (CP) informed the

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meeting that the shop is registered with the Industrial and Provident Society so excess profits go to Little Milton village projects.

PA commented that while delighted for Little Milton residents to have such an asset as we have, we don't want their success to be to the detriment of the Great Milton Shop. The shop is at the heart of GM and an asset to business life in the village. GM home-owners also have a stake in the GM shop as the value of properties would diminish if the shop shut. He felt that if LM's shop were confining its activities to LM, where the profits are being reinvested, that would be OK, but the Haseleys and Milton Common have been aggressively marketed.

CP asked whether people would be likely to go a few miles extra from these areas to shop in LM but PA thought that because of the local road network it may actually only be a case of turning left instead of right. Ken Rogers agreed that this might be unfair competition which is why the PC was arranging for additional signs to the GM shop to go up. He suggested that an item go into the Bulletin to remind residents of this issue.

John Nowell-Smith (District Councillor) had telephoned PA in advance of the meeting to say that LM was not doing anything wrong, but PA clarified that the concern is with the way the shop is being promoted. SH suggested that the Donnellys might need to do some aggressive marketing of their own. KR agreed, suggesting that the offering in the GM shop may be a better offering than that in LM and that the hopefully the success of the GM shop will win over.

PA stated that it was incumbent on the PC to act in support, as a school, a pub and a PO are the three things that are crucial to village life. All agreed. SH added that PC was not consulted when the grant was made and that the Donnellys felt that SODC should have considered the ramifications of their grant more deeply.

## **C New licensing rules to help village / community halls**

KR read out an e-mail regarding the licensing of liquor in village halls. Halls no longer need to have a Designated Premises Supervisor which should give halls greater flexibility.

## **D Meeting between Councillors and John Howell MP**

**KR**

John Howell MP is arranging to meet informally with all PCs in his domain. GMPC had agreed to meet on the evening of Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September and was putting together a list of the important issues locally. Unfortunately the meeting was arranged with little notice so there had been no time to put an article in the Bulletin. KR thought that perhaps one issue is why central government has disregarded

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rural areas for so many years. There are moves to push decision-making down to a grass roots level but if there is no funding, rural communities will not be able to respond.

A member of public asked whether the Sworford Lane flooding would be an appropriate issue. KR felt that yes, this would be appropriate to raise this, particularly as part of the problem is that ditches are no longer regularly maintained. Another member of the public said he was concerned that it is water from the M40 causing the fields to flood. Normal rainfall would drain away so residents are driving through water that is being passed onto us by Highways. KR agreed that it is time to approach Oxfordshire Highways again to crank it up to engineering level. This area does not have capacity for M40 drainage, especially if it continues to flood despite all the work done. Perhaps the trenches or the pipes are not big enough. He said he would discuss it at the forthcoming meeting with Peter Ronald.

## **E Local Transport Plan 3 – Consultation**

PA reported that the village is being asked to think about what transport schemes might be needed in the village and respond between mid-November to mid-December. One idea (PA) is a footpath between here and Wheatley. Perhaps we could talk to landowners about putting this on the field side of the hedge to make a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians. KR thought this would be a good candidate issue for a strategic plan for the village. SH suggested bringing ideas to next meeting so KR requested that all Councillors bring one or two ideas concerning transport in its broadest sense to the next meeting.

## **F Information from David Turner**

DT reminded the meeting that Further Education courses start on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> and that anyone wishing to enrol should take action quickly.

He told the meeting about two exhibitions at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock until 17<sup>th</sup> October which may be of interest.

DT announced that the Oxfordshire County Council Standards Committee has a vacancy for an independent member. Information is available on their web site.

Following the recent relocation of bus stops across the county, DT has been working hard to ensure that shelters are also moved. He asked whether Great Milton's Bus Stops have shelters. A member of the public confirmed that it does not. DT said he would raise this as an issue.

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DT confirmed that Oakley Wood recycling centre is now open again. It has a new layout, avoiding congestion on the roads, but offers the same services as previously. He added that the County Council has chosen Ardley as its new incinerator site.

DT asked whether the Great Milton Parish Council had responded to the recent pre-consultation reviewing speed limits across South Oxfordshire. The PC had not received this. DT thought that only two of the sites in question might affect Great Milton, one being the possibility of increasing the 30 mph speed limit on the A329 across the bridge which he said he personally objected to. The other was the 30 mph limit on the Old London Road through Tiddington which was also being considered for an increase. The full consultation will be issued in a few months.

The latest deadline for Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) grants is 15<sup>th</sup> October. Current grants available include computers for rural people, enabling individuals to be set up for as little as £99.

## **G Comments from Members of the Public**

Charles Peers said that he endorsed everything that PA said about the GM Shop and the PC's view. He also supported discussing drainage at the meeting with John Howell as he felt no maintenance is ever done and this is something central government has control over.

He reported that the Silver Birch trees causing problems on Forties will be moved and any significant trees will be replanted elsewhere on the farm. KR asked Andy Noble if the trees might be of use to the Recreation Ground Committee. Andy said that yes, the diseased Horse Chestnut would need replacing.

Charles Peers also reported that for various reasons they would soon be putting in a retrospective planning application to regularise what happens in their yard at Stoneworld.

## **74/09 Planning Applications**

### **A Great Milton Parish considered the following planning application at this meeting:**

Great Milton C of E Primary School, County Council Ref: R3.0188/09,  
District Council Ref: 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.

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After much discussion, the PC thought this might be an overdevelopment which would add to the existing parking problems in GM and that the bid raised a lot of questions. All agreed that as the deadline allowed more time for consideration, that an additional planning meeting would be held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September to allow for further consultation with affected neighbours.

**Great Milton Parish Council considers that the following planning application should be refused by South Oxfordshire District Council:**

Romeyns Stables, Church Road, Great Milton, P09/W0823  
(resubmission of P08/W1030)

Alteration of proposed new stable building to provide bedrooms within the roof.

**B 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 10<sup>th</sup> August 2009):**

Jessamine Cottage, Thame Road, Great Milton. P09/W0689  
Proposed two storey extension, porch and conversion of stone outbuilding.

**C South Oxfordshire District Council has granted permission on the following planning applications:**

The Old School, High Street, Great Milton. P09/W0465  
Repositioning and replacement of 5 rooflights. Addition of oak gate.

The Old School, High Street, Great Milton. P09/W0466/LB  
Relocation and exchange of existing rooflights to provide adequate means of escape in the event of a fire. Addition of oak gate for security.

Grooms Farm, Thame Road, Wheatley. P09/W0330  
Change of use from dwelling to special day school for secondary aged children in connection with Chilworth House School.

Jessamine Cottage, Thame Road, Great Milton. P09/W0689  
Proposed two storey extension, porch and conversion of stone outbuilding.

## 75/09 Financial Resolutions

**A** The following payments were agreed; proposed by Peter Fewell, seconded by Steve Harrod and agreed upon unanimously:



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- SODC. Dog Bin Emptying (Jan-March) - £66.54
- Windmill Landscapes. Verge Grass Cutting (July) - £214.71
- Manny Stone. Editorial costs (Sept) - £50.
- MH-P. Website registration and hosting (til Jan 2010) - £78.19
- M.Block/J.Botha. Clerk's Salary (shared for August) - £153.43 & £150.00.
- Enterprise. Recreation Ground Grass Cut (July) - £58.32
- Wheatley Park School. Book tokens for prize-giving - £30

The Clerk read out two further invoices that were received since circulating the Agenda:

- Windmill Landscapes. Verge Grass Cutting (August) - £214.71
- Enterprise. Recreation Ground Grass Cut (August) - £58.32

## **B Annual Return for Year-ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 (External Audit Report).**

As the deadline for publicising the results is 30<sup>th</sup> September, the Clerk had chased the auditors who promised to meet this deadline. The Clerk will publicise the results on the notice boards to suffice until the next meeting.

## **76/09 Items for Discussion**

### **A New Great Milton web site**

The Clerk reported that this has already been useful particularly for viewing the Minutes and the Planning Applications. The old site will redirect you to the new one. Responses from residents have been positive and viewing statistics have been high with 95 unique visitors in the first week and 44 in the second.

## **77/09 Any Other Business**

A PA reported that works seems to have finished on the Old Cottage building site and wondered if the site could be cleared whilst we are still in the growing season so that the ground can recover. The Clerk said she would write to the residents about the matter.

B PA asked whether there is a PC recommendation about the lighting of bonfires and whether a note in the Bulletin could ask people to be considerate when lighting bonfires. Pat Cox agreed to see to this.

C SH précised a letter from Mr. & Mrs. Richards of Yew Tree Cottage regarding the PC's request that they maintain the grass effect on the length of Common Land rather than putting in a solid driveway. The Richards asked the PC to consider their views which were that Grasscrete would be incongruous with neighbouring properties and

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that they do not feel that its use elsewhere in GM has been successful. SH agreed. They feel it would be an eyesore due to the lack of continuity but agreed with the PC about the use of tarmac. Their intention is to copy the drive of Priors Gate, Church Road, of which they had enclosed photos. The existing drive would be completely turfed over.

The PC agreed that there was not much point in opposing this and that the discussion had been useful.

The Clerk said she would write to say this was acceptable.

- D A member of the public reported that trees were overhanging the path outside No. 4 Green Hitchings, off Thame Road. A similar problem was also reported on Church Road in front of the path opposite Priory Bank, caused by a tree on Monkery Farm.

The Clerk said she would write to the appropriate parties asking them to tend to the matter.

\* At this point in the meeting Michele Block, Outgoing Clerk to the PC, arrived and was presented with a card and a gift of a book on home decorating from all the Councillors as a thank you for all her hard work and efficiency over the past six years. Michele thanked the PC for all their support and said that she had very much enjoyed her time as Clerk.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

The next Great Milton Parish Council meeting will be held on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 7.30pm** in the Pavilion.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_