

# GREAT MILTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Great Milton Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 7.30pm in the Pavilion.

Present: Mr Ken Rogers (Chairman), Mr Stephen Harrod, Mr Phil Ashworth, Mr Doug Colley, Mr Peter Fewell,

In Attendance: Michele Block (Clerk)  
Pat Cox (Bulletin Reporter)  
David Turner (County Councillor)  
3 members of the public

### 19/09 Apologies for Absence

### Action:

Richard Pearce  
Ian Bradley  
John Nowell-Smith (District Councillor)

### 20/09 Register of Interests for this Meeting

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

### 21/09 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009

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

### 22/09 Matters arising from the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009

#### A Flood Plan Update

##### Old Field

Ken Rogers (KR) confirmed that he and Doug Colley (DC) had attended a good and constructive meeting with the Old Field Committee (OFC) last Saturday. OFC were pleased with the plans that the Parish Council had outlined to clear the ditches and gullies to alleviate the flooding problems at the top of Thame Road and, in particular, Orpwoods Cottage. All the work in and around Old Field was agreed and accepted with the exception of scraping out the 'winter pond'. OFC raised concerns that this work would disturb the wildlife in and around the pond and therefore it was agreed that this work would be put on hold.

DC and KR talked to OFC about Richard Reed's plan to dig another ditch along the side of Old Field, but this idea has been scrapped as OFC felt it would affect the main pond.

DC has agreed to get a quote from Ian Whales to dig out the three metres of ditches agreed with OFC. Once this has been done, Oxfordshire Highways can then cut gullies into the ditches so that water drains off of the road and into the sumps.

**Action:**

DC

### **Oxen Piece**

The Clerk confirmed that she had sent an email, drafted by Ian Bradley, to Vale Housing Association (VHA) on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009, outlining its responsibilities as riparian owner of the ditch adjacent to number 1 Oxen Piece. To date, no response had been received, however, the 14 days response time given, ran until the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2009.

Councillors discussed this matter and asked the Clerk to send a reminder to VHA, giving them a further 5 days notice to respond to the Parish Council's email and, if no response followed, then the PC would instruct a local contractor to clear the scrub and then forward the invoice on to VHA for payment. DC agreed to get a quote from both Ian Whales and Les Preston for clearing the land. KR confirmed that Bob Hutton had cleared out the ditch itself.

MB/DC

### **Church Road**

KR reported that no progress had been made on Church Road. KR has reminded Tim Wilde at Oxfordshire Highways that his team needs to check the underground pipe in Church Road to see if it is broken or blocked.

KR

### **Sworford Lane**

Phil Ashworth (PA) reported that after the recent arctic weather conditions, and when the snow had finally melted, the far end of Sworford Lane (near the disused railway bridge) was under 6-9 inches of water. KR believes that the ditch leading across the field to the roadside ditch had got blocked. It would appear that Oxfordshire Highways did clear a tree stump out of the drain, as there is evidence of it laying by the side of the road.

Councillors agreed that they would observe the area over the forthcoming Spring months, and report back if the situation occurs again and needs further intervention by Oxfordshire Highways.

All

### **B Village Website**

PA informed Councillors that the village website is currently under construction. As there was a lack of local photographs for the website, PA confirmed that he had taken some and sent Mike Henson a group from which to choose. PA asked Pat Cox if she could send him a copy of the 'historical introduction' she had produced for the Oxfordshire County Council Website, so this could also be posted on the Great Milton website. KR asked if there could be commercial links to local businesses, which could help raise revenue to run the site. This will be reviewed in more detail once the site is up and running.

PC/PA

C

**Potts Close**

**Action:**

The Clerk had circulated a letter from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) prior to the meeting, which confirmed that a shortlist of applicants for Potts Close had been passed to SOHA. The successful applicants would be selected from this list, but at present no final allocations had been made.

The Clerk also confirmed that she had asked SOHA to change the date of the Potts Close 'Open Day' for Parishioners from Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April to Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April. At present, she was still awaiting a response from SOHA.

Finally, the Clerk confirmed that SOHA had acknowledged the Parish Council's concerns regarding the Bus Stop and would ask all new residents of Potts Close not to park in the Bus Stop at any time. The Clerk had also requested that Oxfordshire Highways repaint the road markings, which they had agreed to do once the builders had vacated the lay-by.

Jackie Jones (JJ) was then invited to speak by KR. JJ explained that her brother, Alan Jones (AJ), was seeking an affordable home and is on the SODC's housing register as a priority 'B' applicant. He has been allocated a pin number, and is therefore allowed to 'bid' online for houses on the Homechoice scheme. However, AJ has been looking online for the Potts Close homes since January 2009 and could not find them on the website under his 'pin' number during the allocated bidding 'window'. He was therefore unsuccessful in getting on the shortlist of applicants. Councillors discussed the process, and then asked the Clerk to write to Sarah Jones, Housing Enabling Officer at SODC and ask her to look into the situation.

MB

Paul Lawrence then reported that SOHA has erected a 'heritage' lamp post in Potts Close behind the four houses. It stands about twelve feet tall and, at present, the light is on 24 hours a day. Mr Lawrence has complained to Kris Crowther at SOHA about the light, however, he wondered if the Parish Council could also speak to SOHA on the matter. The buildings at Potts Close have a number of external lights, which are run on motion sensors, and PL requested that this light should be run in a similar manner. The Clerk confirmed that she would write to SOHA regarding this matter.

MB

D

**Car Parking in the village**

The Chairman raised his concerns over parking in the village. More parishioners are parking both on the roads and on common land. PA added that the grass verges are being parked on and driven over, with no respect for the state of the common land. It was agreed that parking on the road is a good deterrent to slow vehicles down, however, on the other hand, it does wreck the common land, when cars are parked badly and vehicles coming the other way are forced to drive over verges and greens to get through tight spaces.

KR added that the worst times of day are school drop off/pickup,

especially as more and more pupils are now coming from out of catchment area. It was suggested that the Recreation Ground could be a possibility for parking during these busy times, however, comment was passed on the dangerous sharp bend at the entrance to the Rec, which could be lethal when busy. It would also endanger those who walk to the nursery in the mornings. David Turner (DT) said that he would look into the 'Better Ways to School' report and see if there are any suggestions on parking in and around Great Milton School. DT to inform Councillors at the next meeting.

**Action:**

DT

Pat Cox added that people need to use their driveways and garages more as, at present, their cars are left on the road/common ground for convenience. It was also added that those residents whose properties are reached by crossing over common land have a 'Wayleaves' agreement, which gives them permission to pass over the land but not to park on it. However, it was agreed that it would be too hard to 'police' this matter to ensure residents were adhering to their agreement.

After much discussion, it was decided to put 'Parking and Verges' on the Annual Parish Meeting agenda, to see if Parishioners had any ideas on how to combat this problem.

c/f MB

KR then asked Councillors to think about whether they would like to start up a Village Plan. This project would obviously need volunteers and extra input from parishioners to help to create and implement it. Oxfordshire Rural Community Council still has grants available to help with village plan set up costs.

#### **E Red BT Kiosk**

The Clerk confirmed that she had sent out the letter approved at last month's meeting to local businesses. Greenford had responded and kindly sent the Parish Council £250 towards the first year's sponsorship of the telephone and kiosk. Unfortunately, at present, the Clerk had not heard back from either The Revival Company or Le Manoir.

The Clerk also reported that she had now received the signed sponsorship agreement back from British Telecom, and that the first year's sponsorship money was due.

Finally, the Clerk confirmed that she was still pursuing the listing scheme with English Heritage and hopefully this would come to fruition in the near future.

#### **F The Forties**

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had circulated an email from Malcolm Bowler at Oxfordshire Highways regarding the Forties. The email explained that due to lack of funds, and impracticalities, Oxfordshire Highways would not be progressing the proposal of making The Forties a one way system. Councillors agreed that The Forties/widening roads should be put on the APM agenda next month.

c/f MB

- G Footpaths** **Action:**
- Phil Ashworth (PA) informed Councillors that he had recently met with the Footpath Officer in the Barlow's field between the allotments and Chilworth Road. Unfortunately for PA, the field was very dry at the time. The Footpath Officer could not understand where the water had drained in previous years and why the field was now causing a problem. A couple of ideas were discussed regarding how to overcome the situation. It may be possible to sink a pipe into the boggy area and drain it off into the wood. The Footpath Officer will speak to PA in due course. PA
- PA also reported that the footpath on top of the bank alongside Monkerly Farm has become extremely slippery as it has been so wet. Therefore, he asked Councillors to keep an eye on it, in case it gets any worse and needs some remedial work
- Finally, PA informed the meeting that Charles Peers' field between The Whites' field and The Forties had been let to a farmer with sheep. To ensure the sheep did not escape, the farmer had blocked the kissing gate on the footpath, between the fields, with a steel fence. As soon as PA spoke to Mr Peers the problem was sorted out swiftly.
- H Review of Great Milton Conservation Area**
- Following last month's meeting, the Clerk confirmed that she had sent an email to the Planning Department at SODC asking for advice and guidance on how to review and redefine a conservation area. As she had heard nothing, she has now sent a further email to Adrian Duffield, Head of Planning, and is awaiting a response. The Clerk to report back when she has further information. MB
- I Recreation Ground Access**
- Ken Rogers asked for this topic to be carried forward to April's Parish Council meeting. c/f  
KR/MB
- 23/09 **Correspondence and Public Discussion**
- A Common Land to the front of numbers 1 & 2 Hillcrest**
- The Clerk read out an email received from Sally Orriss regarding the area of Common Land to the front of numbers 1 & 2 Hillcrest in Church Road. Bob Hutton had approached SO about planting trees on the area of land, which is opposite her house, to stop cars from parking on the grass. However, SO has requested that wooden posts, similar to those outside the Old Garage are used, and she would like the Parish Council's permission for these posts to be installed. Councillors discussed this matter and decided unanimously that wooden posts were acceptable. Steve Harrod to inform Bob Hutton/Sally Orriss. SH
- Whilst discussing Hillcrest, KR raised his concerns over the doorway at the back of the property that has been re-opened on Church Road. KR feels that this is very dangerous, as it opens straight onto the road.

Also, if a step is to be installed then it will most probably bridge over the culvert, which could upset the drainage flow/system in Church Road. Steve Harrod agreed to speak to Bob Hutton regarding this matter, and if a step is to be installed, then he was advised by David Turner to speak to Brian Purcell-Smith at Oxfordshire Highways for advice.

**Action:**

SH

**B Victim Support – Thank you letter**

The Clerk read out a letter from Victim Support thanking the Parish Council for their recent donation to its cause.

**C Information from David Turner, County Councillor**

David Turner (DT) informed the meeting that he had spoken to Brian Purcell-Smith regarding the replacement of stolen salt bins. Unfortunately, Oxfordshire Highways (OH) will not replace missing salt bins as it feels that they are covered by Parish Council's insurance. The Clerk reported that the Council's missing bin had in fact re-appeared in Sworford Lane, so the problem had solved itself!

DT did add that loose salt piles are now banned, as it is felt that the salt gets into the water course and is not good for the environment. OH will top up old piles of salt, however, new piles are banned.

Following problems of stolen fuel and assaults, DT reported that Oxfordshire County Council has no objections to the Wheatley Middle Gound lay-by being closed, however it was now down to monetary issues. The local Police really do want to close it, so it may come out of its budget.

DT reminded the Parish Council that Oakley Wood waste recycling centre, just outside Wallingford, is closing for three months from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to the middle of June 2009. The Clerk was asked to ensure that this was advertised.

MB

DT informed Councillors that roughing up the surface of the dangerous pavement outside Close Cottages, in Lower End, has been turned down by OH, as it is too expensive and not felt to be very effective.

The County Council is closing the B4015, the road from Chiselhampton to the Golden Balls roundabout for five days from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The Clerk was asked to advertise this in the Bulletin.

MB

DT commented that local media reports, which had stated that the proposed idea of introducing bendy-buses in central Oxford had been dropped, are not entirely true. Other options are currently being reviewed, the aim being to cut down on the number of park and ride and local bus routes that operate in Queen Street.

Finally, DT reported that the merger between Vale of White Horse and SODC is now complete and all heads of sections have now been approved and implemented.

24/09 **Planning Applications**

**Action:**

**Great Milton Parish Council considers that the following Lawful Development Certificate application should be rejected by South Oxfordshire District Council.**

- A Yew Tree Cottage, Lower End, Great Milton OX44 7NF.  
P09/W0088/LD  
Proposed provision of vehicular access (via new gates/opening within existing wall) to proposed parking area.

The Parish Council's comments were as follows:

*Planning permission was sought and rejected in August 2008. The valid reasons for this rejection remain valid. This property is within the conservation area and the PC believe that this property should be conserved accordingly.*

*The PC would like it on record that permission to cross the common land will NOT be granted and therefore no work should be undertaken on this project.*

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

- B Old Cottage, Lower End, Great Milton. OX44 7NF. P08/W1257  
Rear 1 ½ storey extension to incorporate bedroom and bathroom within roof cavity and kitchen, dining/living room and cloakroom downstairs.
- C The Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Great Milton.  
Erection of rear extension incorporating kitchen, toilets, and storage. (Amendment to P05/W0083).

25/09 **Financial Resolutions**

- A The following payments were agreed; proposed by Phil Ashworth, seconded by Peter Fewell and agreed upon unanimously.
- Michele Block. Clerk's Salary - £303.43  
Jonathan Dudley. Bulletin Production (March) – £211.80  
Manny Stone. Editorial Services (Jan) - £50.00  
BT Payphones. Sponsorship – £575.00  
S Oxon Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers. Donation - £50.00 (agreed Feb)  
Thame CAB. Donation - £50.00 (agreed Feb)

26/09 **Items for Discussion**

- A **Risk Assessment for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009**

The Clerk circulated the GMPC Risk Assessment document. This document was reviewed by Councillors at the meeting. It was proposed by Stephen Harrod that this document be approved and accepted by the Council, this was seconded by Peter Fewell and agreed upon unanimously.

**B 2009 Village Litter Pick**

**Action:**

Following notification of the Oxfordshire 'Clean Up' Campaign, the Clerk asked Councillors when they would like to hold Great Milton's annual litter pick day. After discussion it was agreed that this should take place in early May – the final date to be decided at next month's meeting.

c/f MB

**C Internal Auditor**

The Clerk reminded Councillors that 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 was the end of the financial year, and therefore time to complete the Annual Return, have an Internal Audit, and then submit the accounts for the external Audit. The Clerk asked Councillors if they would appoint an Internal Auditor for this year's accounts. It was agreed to approach Andrew Subramaniam again, who had completed last year's internal audit. He is not only a qualified Chartered Accountant and Auditor by profession, but having carried out the internal audit for the past couple of years, has a good understanding of the Parish Council and local government accounts. The Clerk agreed to contact Mr Subramaniam.

MB

**D Neighbours Hall**

Paul Lawrence asked Councillors if they would have any objections to the Neighbours Hall opening up a second entrance to the car park at the back of the Hall, so it had a one way 'in' and 'out' entrance/exit system. Councillors thought that this was a good idea. David Turner advised Mr Lawrence to contact Brian Short at Oxfordshire Highways to see if any permission was required for this work, as it would be a new vehicular access opening on to Church Road.

27/09 **Any Other Business**

**A** Phil Ashworth told Councillors that he has now confirmed a date with Rosamund Griffin for St Mary's Churchyard Clean Up. It is to be held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009 from 10am to 1pm. There will be plenty of jobs to do, big and small, so all Councillors were encouraged to invite friends and family.

**B** Peter Fewell informed the meeting that Andrea Ashworth had brought to his attention the state of the rubbish bin in the Recreation Ground by the Fuller Fields steps. The bin is full to overflowing and urgently needs emptying. It was felt by Councillors that this came under the remit of the Recreation Ground Management Committee, and the Clerk was asked to inform Lesley Bush about the matter. Also, AA is convinced that a bin has gone missing, again in the Recreation Ground, from the entrance to Green Hitchings. The Clerk was asked to pass this enquiry on to Lesley Bush.

MB

**C** The Chairman then read out a letter that he had received from John Davis (JD).

The first point was regarding Backlands, Lower End (formerly known as Eunice). JD feels that Richard Keal has built the brick wall to the



front of his property on Common Land. Councillors agreed that permission was given to Mr Keal to gravel a driveway over the Common Land to his property, however, it was agreed that KR should speak to Mr Keal to ask if he knows where the boundary of his property ends. KR agreed to investigate the matter.

**Action:**

KR

Secondly, JD has asked if the Parish Council can investigate the possibility of installing a pavement to the end of Lower End, as the road is becoming more dangerous, especially for the infirm. Councillors discussed this matter and agreed that it was unrealistic to seek advice on this proposal, as having investigated a previous plan to install a footpath in Thame Road, the works would be too expensive for both Oxfordshire Highways and the Parish Council. In any case, OH only look to build pavements where there is a history of road/pedestrian accidents.

The final subject in JD's letter was regarding the village seat which commemorates the Silver Jubilee. This seat, which was outside the original Potts Close, holds many memories for the older generation of the village and JD would like to ensure that it is restored and re-housed. At present, Leadbitter is looking after the seat, and have indicated that they are going to provide a new seat for Potts Close as a gift to SOHA. However, after discussion, Councillors agreed that the old seat should be restored and put back in its old position, by the bus stop at Potts Close. KR agreed to speak to Leadbitter and SOHA on the matter and also to Les Preston about restoring the seat.

KR

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00pm,** followed by the **Annual Parish Meeting at 8.00pm.** Both meetings will be held in the Pavilion.

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

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