

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 20 April 2009 at 7.30pm in the Bowls Pavilion

Present: JE Coston (chair) PS Badley RH Chapman G Covell RJ Farrington HM Smith RT Summerfield RLE Waters

The clerk, County Councillor M Williamson and 7 members of the public:

D Geasor R Jones P Nowak L Sandford SJ Snaith M Waggett M Woolhouse

- 1 **Introduction of Parish Councillors** – the Councillors introduced themselves. The chairman pointed out that Councillors had an excellent attendance record at Council meetings.
- 2 **Apologies for absence** – AJ Campbell R Day M Ellwood TA Drummond SC Humphreys B Jefferson IF May D Chamberlin.
- 3 **Minutes** - the minutes of the APM of 2008 were approved and signed as a true record.
- 4 **Chairman's report and Draft Accounts** – the chairman presented her report together with the draft accounts - (attached).
- 5 **Parish Plan report** – Phil Badley. It was exactly one year since the surveys were collected. An action plan was approved before Christmas and since then groups had been working together to produce "A Plan for Milton" which had now been delivered to every house. Full version of the data was on the website. Thanks to those residents who delivered the Plan.
The Environmental Group, Communication Group, Transport and Village Appearance Group and the Police Liaison Group had been formed and were working in various ways to address areas that were highlighted in the survey. The groups would report to the Parish Council. The Parish Council would then decide what is possible to take forward.
Over a period of time some actions will be replaced by others.
The need for information was clearly highlighted as an issue. The assistant clerk was in the process of producing a guide to Milton – to be paid for by adverts.
- 6 **Milton Community Centre report** (attached)
RJ F reported on staff changes. Andy Gray was appointed manager in November 08. The police were aware of anti social behaviour. A large window was broken on the previous Friday.
- 7 **County Councillor's report** – Michael Williamson presented his report – (attached).
Questions raised:
Has the traffic calming north of the village been successful?
Should there be white line markings in the middle of Cambridge Road / High Street? Vehicles often cross the unbroken white line that delineates the cycle lane.
The Parish Plan Transport Group intended looking at cycle routes in the village.
- 8 **District Councillors' report** – the district councillors presented their report – (attached).
Sport Lakes Trust S106 Agreement was not yet officially agreed but M Woolhouse expected this to happen shortly. The Highways Agency had now agreed to clean off the graffiti from the Jane Coston bridge and had also taken responsibility for maintaining the lights. CCTV had not yet been installed.
Tesco wind turbine – HMS reported that permission had been granted. It was suggested that this turbine would produce a negligible amount of electricity.
Sluice gates (by river end of Fen Road) – one gate was stolen, two were now were in South Cambs yard. SCDC could not justify replacing them as they were not in the original specification. It was unclear who was responsible maintaining the wall on the river side.
Road signing Butt Lane / A10 junction – M Williamson would ask Alistair Frost, CCC for improved signing for vehicles approaching from Histon. Motorists had been observed carrying out dangerous manoeuvres in order to turn right towards Cambridge.
- 9 **Question and Answer Session**
Norman Industrial Estate – appearance at the entrance unsightly; vehicles parked were a hazard for cyclists. An area for double yellow lines? The Village Appearance Group were considering ideas for this area and The Parish Council was looking at proposals to improve the whole area.
Motor bikes nuisance – the police were aware of the problems of motor cyclists using roads in a manner likely to cause dangers to others. This subject was raised at the recent Neighbourhood Police Panel meeting. It was important to report all incidents to the police.
Speedwatch – 5 volunteers had been trained – more volunteers were needed. Speeding had been detected in Ely Road but by cars leaving the village.

The chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

4 Chairman's report

During the past year I had the pleasure of delivering flowers to 2 residents in the village who celebrated their 100th birthdays in 2008.

We continue to provide a mini bus to Tesco once a fortnight for the frail and elderly and once again put up Christmas lights with the help of volunteers. We also organised as usual the Remembrance Day Ceremony which was well attended.

We keep in contact with the new managers of Milton Country Park and continue to work closely with the police. We have recently allowed the local PCSO to use the Parish Office for her meetings with the public.

We have also been working with Urban Renaissance Villages who are planning to build 101 retirement homes at the north end of the village and we are working with the District Council and Urban Renaissance to try to ensure that the village gains extra recreational space as an additional benefit of the scheme.

The Parish Plan Group, headed by Phil Badley, has done a tremendous amount of work with the support of the Parish Council and I would like to thank them for all their efforts. The group has also brought together people in a positive way to work on various projects. We now have an Environment Group, Police Liaison group, Communications Group and a Transport /Village Appearance group. A 'Plan for Milton' is currently being distributed.

In addition to this the Parish Council are producing a booklet with details of clubs groups and local information as a need for more information was identified by the Parish Plan.

I have enjoyed my 5 years as Chairman and have decided to stand down this year. It has been a pleasure to be chairman of such a professional and well respected Parish Council.

I am grateful to all the Parish Councillors who give up their time freely to work and meet on behalf of the village to try to ensure the best for the area.

I am especially grateful to Rob Chapman as Vice Chair and Jim Daniels as Clerk whose depth of knowledge is exceptional and also David Geasor in his recent new role as Assistant Clerk.

I have found the past five years extremely interesting as we moved from the Community Centre in 2006 to our own purpose built office with its own storage space & negotiated joint use of the pavilion with the bowls club for our meetings which has worked very well.

This has also meant we have become much more accessible to the public as people are now able to call at the office with their queries and enquiries.

We also now store all our documents on site so they are easily accessible. We deal with a vast amount of enquiries by email, telephone and letter and also from callers in person.

We gained Quality Status during 2007 and we are working to make sure we retain this in the future and are planning Councillor training sessions.

We have built a Purpose built Youth Building, responded to consultations and dealt with developers including Urban Renaissance.

Expectations and responsibilities of Parish councils have risen and we have had to grow and develop to deal with this. We have moved further into the world of electronics, computers and IT to make sure we are able to cope with the demands.

Currently we are working hard to try to secure extra recreation space. We have employed an assistant Clerk – David and the office will now be open regular hours with other times available by appointment.

More details of the role and responsibilities of Milton Parish Council and the service it provides are included within the village guide.

I would like to thank the Charities for their support, the Village View team of volunteers and Paul Oldham for all his voluntary work supporting our web site.

We also have an excellent team of people who work for the Parish Council and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them, Philip Adams, Village Cleaner Robin Adams, relief cleaner, Tracey Ebbon & Linda Harding, Community Care workers, Jim Daniels & David Geasor, Clerk & Assistant Clerk. I would also like to thank the Community Centre Management Committee and all the staff.

Jane Coston
Chairman, Milton Parish Council

6 Milton Community Centre - Managers Report 16/04/09

Bookings

The Centre continues to be busy, both daytimes and evenings. We have a new Pilates class on Saturday mornings, an IVC French class (for adults) on Thursday mornings and 3 new regular 5-a-side football groups on the court, Mondays and Fridays. However, our regular Sunday Church group Calvary Chapel have unfortunately outgrown the facilities and have moved to a larger venue in Cambridge.

Saturday Night bookings are a little disappointing, although I have recently taken bookings for a couple of weddings, one in Aug 2009 and the other in Aug 2010.

The Annexe continues to be fully occupied by either Cygnets Pre-School or Kids-R-U's, Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 6.00pm, with additional groups using the facilities in the evenings. The building is used on average a couple of times a month for children's parties on Saturdays or Sundays.

The Youth Building hosts the Youth Club on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, Young Carers hire the building on Saturday mornings and it is also used by the Centre School at Cottenham for a couple of hours each day during term time. Very occasionally, All Saints Church use the facilities.

Vandalism

Although there have not been many acts of vandalism over the last few months, youths hanging round the Community Centre continue to be a problem, generally causing a nuisance, leaving a trail of litter and intimidating the users. I have been in regular contact with PC Phil Shulver and PCSO Claire Whiteman, who have confirmed that they are paying more attention to this area in an effort to move these youths on elsewhere.

Staff

Linda and Gina continue as our main cleaners and key holders, Ray keeps the recreation grounds at The Sycamores and Coles Road clear of any litter, John unlocks/locks and cleans the Youth Club Building, Colin is our project co-ordinator involved with major repairs and maintenance whilst Kevin cleans and locks up after any Saturday night events.

I am responsible for the everyday management of the Centre, including the Annexe, Youth Club Building and Pavilion. I can generally be found in the office, although an increasing amount of my time is spent unlocking/locking the YCB during the day and carrying out general repairs and maintenance at the various buildings, play areas or courts.

Andy Gray
Community Centre Manager

A County Councillor has two roles. Firstly to represent those who live in his or her Division, and secondly to take part in various committees that sit in Shire Hall and are concerned with wider issues affecting the whole County.

During the last year, I have dealt with a number of matters that affect Milton and that are within my remit as County Councillor but quite a lot of my time has been concerned with my role as Chair of one of the County's Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee.

Milton matters

Looking back at my report of last year, I notice some issues that continue to recur.

Traffic

I still get some people contact me about the issues at the junction with the A10 roundabout that has no traffic lights. There are undoubtedly still some problems during the morning rush, but I would be concerned that if lights were to be installed, they would operate all day and all night and cause frustration to those leaving Milton at quiet times. I would welcome comments.

There is also a problem of timing of the lights that causes queues to build up for those who wish to travel west along the A14. I have asked the traffic lights team to look into this, but so far they do not seem to have found a solution.

Major developments

This time last year I said

We are still waiting for the Minister's decision on Mereham. I, together with Hazel Smith and Jane Coston, spoke at the planning enquiry and our remarks can be read on the web-site. I very much hope that such a ridiculous scheme will be thrown out and that the developer will have to pay the costs of the Councils.

Well, eventually we heard the result and I and many others were delighted that the scheme was rejected pretty forcefully.

However, as I also said last year, schemes such as these have a habit of coming back again and again, and it is a matter of concern that developers are still putting forward plans to develop Waterbeach Barracks into a huge new town. Currently it seems that the lack of decent transport links into Cambridge are a major stumbling block to these ideas, but we must be aware that these plans have not gone away.

Park and Ride

This is now open and seems to be working well, although there are still some issues related to signage.

It is a matter of regret that it was impossible to upgrade the A10 bridge at the same time as the Park and Ride was being built, despite strong representations from those who live in Milton. However, it does seem to have eased the traffic into Cambridge and for that we must be thankful.

Other matters

There are lots of other matters that I discuss with your Parish Council on a regular basis. I try to help where I can but the very difficult budget situation in the County Council often makes it very hard to get things done. Please let me know if there are other issues I should look at.

Scrutiny

Scrutiny provides one of the checks and balances that give back-bench members of all parties the opportunity to question the administration. Scrutiny Committees are rather like Parliamentary Select Committees, and we can investigate matters of interest and importance to the residents of Cambridgeshire as well as asking the Council's Cabinet to 'think again' about certain decisions (the process of 'call-in') if we feel they have not been made on the basis of full consideration of the relevant issues.

The Council has four Scrutiny Committees covering the whole range of its activities. Over the past couple of years, my committee has looked at a number of important issues. These include

The Council's budget

Cambridgeshire, unlike many other Councils, has a very open process of budget setting, and uniquely among County Councils, the process includes scrutinising a formal opposition amendment to the administration proposals. Indeed, we have won an award from the Centre for Public Scrutiny for our budget Scrutiny and I was privileged to go to a meeting in London and accept the award on behalf of the County Council.

Community engagement

The Government's agenda for Local Government includes a major role for involving local communities in local decision making. This includes enhanced roles for Parish Councils, especially those with Quality status, but goes beyond that in many areas. I chaired a sub-group that looked into this issue, and produced a report that was accepted by the Council and is forming the basis of the Council's policy now and in the future.

Member Training and Development

As a new Councillor four years ago, it took me some time to understand the workings of the Council and I am sure that I wasn't as effective as I might have been. I and others were involved in a subgroup that looked at this issue, and we proposed ways in which Councillors, both new and not-so-new, can become more effective in their roles as community representatives. The new arrangements will come into place after the elections on June 4th, and I am confident that they will help those elected fulfil their important responsibilities.

Council reorganisation

The new Chief Executive, Mark Lloyd, made major proposals to review the Senior Management of the Council. My Committee carried out a review of the proposals and reported back with our comments.

Conclusion

Scrutiny carries out a vital role in the Council's operation. We work in a non partisan way and it has been a privilege to be involved with my colleagues from all political parties in this important function.

Michael Williamson

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8 MILTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2009 District Councillors' Report

Housing

The major issue from the District Council this year – and one of the most important decisions it will ever take - is the proposed transfer of the Council's stock of approximately 5700 homes to a new housing association. There are strong reasons to be made for and against. The Council's ruling group has taken the view that transfer should happen. A tenant vote is to take place 'in the spring' but no date has been given. At least £756,000 has been spent 'consulting' tenants with a voluminous flow of literature, DVDs (costing £53,000) that many tenants can't watch, a prize draw, several drop-in sessions and home visits. Unfortunately the information is almost all one-sided – outlining the arguments in favour of transfer – making it difficult to come to an informed conclusion about what is best for tenants, for the future of social housing, and for the shape of the council left behind should transfer go ahead.

Homelessness

Homelessness enquiries have nearly doubled in the second quarter, with no figures available for the 3rd and 4th quarters. More complex cases are coming forward. Support from the Citizens Advice Bureau in Cambridge is critical as the first port of call in preventing homelessness and continuing support from District Councils to the CAB is fundamentally important.

Planning

The recession has had a big impact on planning. Staff are experiencing breathing space but there are serious implications. Planning applications were down 33% in last quarter of 2008 resulting in loss of revenue, and the Government still expects us to plan for the same numbers as before. There have been significant delays on Northstowe and Cambridge East, where the move of Marshalls Airport is now stalled, and the Milton Sewage Works is not now expected to move. The fact that these sites will now not have houses on them before 2016 means that planners have had to look elsewhere to make up the district's 2,220 housing shortfall, including yet more houses at Orchard Park.

Although work on the new houses at Orchard Park has stopped for the moment, the developers are still making progress towards starting work at Trumpington Meadows, where 1,200 houses will be built on the Monsanto site. The new Addenbrookes Access Road from the Hauxton Road at Trumpington is nearly complete now. The Guided Bus track is now due to open in the autumn to the North of Cambridge, and the section to the South, leading to Trumpington Park and Ride and with a branch to Addenbrookes will follow.

The Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document is far behind schedule and now an urgent priority as a policy vacuum creates difficulties for all. Identification of a list of small sites is now expected in June or July with consultation in August.

In Milton we have had more planning issues this year than for many years: the retirement homes complex of 101 bungalows, houses and flats on the Eastern Electricity site (EDF Energy) beside Milton Hall has been passed by the planners, subject to the Parish Council's agreement on the benefits to the village, which are to be wrapped up in a legal document. This should give us 3 pitches for Colts football and a pavilion.

The Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust who now run Milton Country Park have received permission to build an extension on the Visitor Centre, and are applying for a grant for a pontoon on Todd's Pit for teaching rowing to learners.

There appears to be no further progress in agreeing the S106 agreement for the Rowing Lakes with the Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust since our full update on this at last years Annual Parish Meeting.

The Park and Ride has opened successfully, apart from some problems with the signage, which left some people panicking about how they can get out, and others trying to do U-turns on the A10. We have made representations about the gritting of the A10 footbridge, as well as the Jane Coston Bridge, in icy weather. The improvements to cycle routes through The Rowans area were done as part of this work.

On the Jane Coston Bridge, Jane organised a couple of meetings with the County and City Council officers and the Highways Agency to try to get them to agree who was responsible for what aspect of maintaining the bridge over the A14. In spite of good intentions we still have no CCTV, 6 of the 10 lights on the bridge broken, and graffiti which has been there for over 3 months. The double yellow lines at the bottom of the bridge have been painted, and improvements to the junction of Winship Road to make it safer for users of the cycle track should follow later this year.

Drainage

Some villagers may remember we were grateful to have the support of the SCDC Drainage Manager Pat Matthews to give advice on maintenance of the ditch behind Goding Way. He advises on flood risk measures when development proposals come in, co-ordinates any emergency response in flooding events, and runs a team of ditching operatives who dig out and trim the 275 km of 'Award Drains' which are mainly ditches dotted around the district, all of which date back to the mid-19th century Enclosures Act. The in-house drainage team led by Pat Matthews is brimming with local knowledge (though it is an aging team and needs new recruits). The service they provide is now to be tendered: Pat has written a detailed description of the service, the in-house team is expected to tender against a number of local firms for the work in the next few months, and the successful applicant will take over from August.

Refuse

Kerbside plastics recycling was introduced last autumn and there has been a substantial increase in all types of recycling, including a knock-on effect on amounts of glass and tins collected. It costs three times as much to collect plastics from the kerbside as it did from banks. The dumping of litter around the recycling banks is not as bad as it was, but some plastics were still being left at Milton Tescos. This may be due to the fact that people living on Chesterton Fen have got used to keeping plastic bottles for recycling, and now have no-where to take them – they do not yet have a recycling box collection, though they do have the fortnightly bin collection like everyone else, and this is something we are hoping to introduce.

The Christmas collections this year went much more smoothly, as the council and refuse collectors had fewer days off over the holiday period.

Pest Control

When the council was capped four years ago the free pest control service was done away with and charges introduced for getting rid of rats, mice and insects. Efforts to extend discounts for those who cannot afford the fee have been unsuccessful, and some residents find this policy particularly harsh during a period of recession.

Neighbourhood Police Panels

These are working well. It is useful to have an opportunity for direct dialogue between residents and the police, greater awareness of local problems, and broader perspective for individual parishes within a larger context. It also helps to see the picture across several villages with similar problems, and to realise how lucky we are in many ways.

Chesterton Fen

Hazel started a campaign a year ago to force Anglian Water to consider putting in a mains sewerage connection to the travellers plots on Chesterton Fen. People who walk or cycle down the towpath will probably be aware of the problems with the existing disposal arrangements down there. A petition from the residents was sent to Anglian Water, who have now surveyed the properties themselves and sent 3 different firms of consulting engineers to survey various aspects of the current sewerage provisions there. The investigation is on-going.

There is also an issue of sub-standard housing; some of the older caravans are rented out to migrant workers, mostly from Eastern Europe.

Tesco

There always seems to be plenty to talk about in our meetings with the Manager. There remains a problem with litter, which the store staff aim to clear more regularly. They had a problem with their grass-cutting contractor last year, which left the verges of The Rowans uncut for very long periods. The shrubs also need pruning back from the road. We are now trying to persuade Tesco Head Office to back a plan to put in a made-up path from The Rowans to near the cash machines, where people currently walk through on a muddy track, to avoid the dark and grimy passage beside Tesco. Tesco have also just received planning permission for a 10m high wind turbine to be sited just at the entrance to the site.

Council Tax

SCDC has set the 2009/10 Council Tax (CT) at 4.5% higher than last year. This was considered to be a high-risk strategy with a real possibility of the authority being capped again. However since the CT was set the Government has announced its capping criteria and SCDC has escaped capping for a second time. It remains a nonsense that Councils have to fix their CT levels before the Government announces the capping criteria.

Half of the SCDC increase amounting to £150,000 is being spent on help to business in the District during these difficult economic times. At the CT setting Council meeting the opposition proposed that this expenditure be removed from the budgets and that the CT increase be held at 2.45%. It was argued that this sum was a drop in the ocean towards the help needed by business and that the money was better kept by our residents in these difficult times. Regrettably this proposed amendment was lost.

Finally

If you have any questions we would be pleased to answer them and you can contact us about any Council related problems you may have at any time. Our contact details are published in the Village View.

Cllr Richard Summerfield

Cllr Hazel Smith