

Great Marlow Parish Council



Following my article, published in the Winter 2016 issue of Valley News, entitled 'TIMES ARE A CHANGING', I believe that it is crucially important for every one of us to consider, on an ongoing basis, what each household within the Parish needs and has aspirations for from the three current tiers of local authorities, County, District and Parish.

Whilst Buckinghamshire County Council and Wycombe District Council battle out their competing proposals for 'Modernising Local Government' with parallel submissions to the Secretary of State for creating either one single or two Unitary Authorities within Buckinghamshire, it is incumbent on local Parish and Town councils to ensure that their electorate are regularly made aware of the undulating flow of developing issues that can variously impact on the lives of residential households and businesses located within the boundaries of the District of Wycombe.

At their February 2017 monthly meeting, Great Marlow Parish Council agreed to devote adequate time at future monthly meetings to consider what the core imperatives were for delivering genuine benefits to the various communities spread across the Parish. Meaningful connectivity between the Parish or Town Council and its electorate is essential in order to realise such ambitious objectives. Public apathy relating to most political processes is sadly ever present. Unlike Marlow Bottom Parish, which is clearly a defined geographical community, the Parish of Great Marlow comprises a series of neighbourhoods, which generally seem to have very little in common with each other. The only three common elements are Steve Baker MP, Bucks County Council and Wycombe District Council.

With an annual precept of only £12,000, Great Marlow Parish Council has little scope for undertaking any substantially bold initiatives. However, the current team of seven Great Marlow Parish Councillors and its part time Clerk to the Council are constantly striving to engage constructively with its Parish residents to maintain and, hopefully, improve the quality of the public amenities and attendant services appertaining to the Parish as a whole.

For the Parish of Great Marlow, examples of the above include maintenance of public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways, street pavement lighting within certain areas of the Parish, provision of winter ice gritting bins and Parish Council representation on the Wycombe Air Park JCC (Joint Consultative Committee) to monitor and limit noise pollution from the daily aircraft movements.

A great deal of effort has been and is being expended by Great Marlow Parish Councillors in firstly, developing and now maintaining a dynamic website, designed to inform and serve all of the parishioners of relevant ongoing issues and upcoming local events. It is important to reflect that all of this effort is given freely and voluntarily by these Parish Councillors, just as it is across all of the parishes within Buckinghamshire and all other UK counties. Meaningful reward for all of this selfless dedication would be some regular level of engagement by parish residents, showing at least awareness of what Parish Councils are trying to do for their local communities. The bonus would also be signs of genuine interest and even appreciation of what is regularly being done, by such a few focussed individuals, on behalf of all the Parish residents.

Kenneth Muller Chairman