

GREAT MARLOW

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR APRIL 2016 TO MARCH 2017

At the end of my second year as Chairman to Great Marlow Parish Council, I would first like to record my sincerest thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors for their selfless endeavour and their individual regular positive contributions towards attaining an ever-improving delivery of service commitment to the Great Marlow Parish. Each individual Parish Councillor has brought to the table a combination of relevant skills together with an abundance of enthusiasm to tackling and resolving the various needs and developing issues that face the Parish of Great Marlow, month by month, throughout the year.

I would also like to record my personal thanks, as well as those of my fellow Councillors, to the three part time GMPC Clerks, over the last twelve months, who have individually served this Parish Council to the best of their abilities despite the interruptions to the monthly business routine caused by the departure of two of them within this last year.. We are confident that the recent appointment of Jonathan Holder, as the new Clerk to GMPC, will herald a period of stability and constructive development of GMPC business activities and future initiatives for the benefit of all Parish residents, as well as visitors to various parts of the Parish.

Before proceeding with the Chairman's Annual Parish Report, I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for having the confidence in me by allowing me a third term as their Chairman. I am honoured to accept their decision of reappointment and confirm my resolute intention to continue to work towards an ever improving and productive relationship between Great Marlow Parish households and their Parish Council.

So, for the benefit of those attending this evening and for those who, in whatever manner, are associated with the Parish of Great Marlow, I will endeavour to summarise succinctly what I believe to have been the key elements of constructive progress achieved across the Parish over the last year.

Chronologically, I will start with the transfer of responsibilities on 1st April 2016 by BCC to GMPC of monitoring and implementing appropriate levels of maintenance work to selected Rights of Way, namely bridleways and footpaths within the Parish Boundaries.

1 BCC TRANCE 2 DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES Originally the BCC brief was for six GMP Rights of Way. That number has now increased to eight. Before commissioning any actual maintenance work GMPC had to draw up a list of suitable local maintenance contractors and set up a competitive tendering process. Bucklands Landscapes were appointed on a one year's trial work contract. Requisite grass cutting and hedge flailing on these eight Rights of Way have taken place at appropriate times during the last twelve months, for the benefit of horse riders and ramblers/walkers, using these rural paths.

This first year has enabled GMPC to gain valuable experience of effectively monitoring the ongoing condition of Rights of Way within the Parish, whether they be the direct responsibility of GMPC or whether they are either still the responsibility of BCC, due to above 30mph speed considerations or that certain paths are the responsibility of adjacent private land owners, such as Munday Dean or Woodend Farms.

This newly found experience has also been of benefit to GMPC in contributing effectively to the Government's 'RESTORE THE RECORD' project. Across England, Parish and Town Councils have been requested to undertake thorough research into local Rights of Way, both those already recorded, as per the above eight GMP paths. However, the Government's objective is to encourage PCs and TCs to extend their research to other paths which may have been neglected, lacking any maintenance at all for many years and can no longer be used. Submissions for the recording of the restoration of such old neglected paths must be by 2022, after which the newly updated national paths map will be frozen for perpetuity.

2 MODERNISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT From autumn 2016, GMPC has been involved in attending seminars arranged by both BCC and WDC to educate Parish and Town Councils on the above subject. BCC is promoting a Single Unitary Authority for Buckinghamshire with the eventual disbandment of BCC and the four DCs. The Bucks DCs favour the model of two Unitary Authorities, Aylesbury Vale being one and Chilterns, South Bucks and WDC being the other, followed by the disbandment of BCC and the current four District Councils. These two proposals are now lodged with the Department for Local Government. After the result of the UK national election next month, it is anyone's guess if these conflicting proposals involving Buckinghamshire Local Government will carry any great priority with the next Secretary of State.

3 WYCOMBE DISRICT PLANNING APPLICATIONS Over the last year, GMPC has been active in supporting local groups of Parish residents who have had the need to organise themselves to protect their specific local areas from potentially damaging local planning applications. The 2016 WDC Local Plan included a proposal for up to 250 houses being developed on Greenbelt land at the top of and on either side of Oaktree Road. GMPC were pleased to have been approached by residents of Seymour Plain, requesting it's support. The removal of this part of the WDC Local Plan is testament to

the determination and focussed endeavour of those activists on Seymour Plain. Similarly, residents on and around Marlow Common have joined together with residents in Lower Woodend to protect themselves against potentially damaging repercussions, emanating from the ambitious new house development plans by the owner of Ridgeway, Marlow Common North. A new planning application has recently been submitted to WDC. Ongoing development activities on Hawkins Farm, Frieth Road have been causing deep concerns, and not inconsiderable inconvenience, to local residents over the last two years. Steve Baker MP has been contacted by a local group of immediately affected households to solicit his potential involvement and support. GMPC continue to make appropriate observations to WDC planning department on relevant planning applications on a monthly basis.

4 GMPC AND THAMES VALLEY SPEEDWATCH GMPC continue to conduct a monthly speedwatch on the Frieth Road with the support of PC Lee Turnham and PC Claire Marchant.

5 BOOKER AIR PARK Representatives from GMPC attend the Joint Consultative Committee meetings at Booker Air Park from time to time. The principal objective for GMPC representation is to provide a contribution towards the effective monitoring of noise nuisance, caused by the various flying activities operating out of the Air Park.

6 GMPC WEBSITE AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS Great effort continues to be expended by GMPC Councillors, so as to ensure that the GMPC website remains a dynamic and beneficial communication tool for the benefit of GMP residents. Readership shows positive signs of daily engagement by users. Two of our Councillors have recently visited Oxford IT, our Website creator, to ascertain possible changes to the website, in order to refresh and update selective parts. Any such positive and intuitive input from interested parish residents would be very much appreciated.

The recent hand delivery of a trial GMPC newsletter to parts of the Parish led to a few constructive responses. The lead item, that Steve Baker MP would visit the Parish at Bovingdon Green Village Hall on Friday 9th June was a popular news item. Sadly, that visit has had to be postponed until sometime after the UK national election.

7 NEW GMP INITIATIVES Each month at the GMPC Full Council Meeting, time is regularly devoted to discussing potential initiatives that GMPC could introduce and develop for the benefit of all households within the Parish. Once again, novel input from Parish residents would be highly valued.

Kenneth Muller

CHAIRMAN GREAT MARLOW PARISH COUNCIL