

MILCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 22 MARCH 2022

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT 2021-2022

This report covers the activities of Milcombe Parish Council during 2021 up to the present. Due to the Coronavirus, PC meetings up until July 2021 were held on Zoom and re-commenced in the Village Hall from September 2021.

MILCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL is a local authority largely funded by public money and is responsible for ensuring it’s financial business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The PC meets bimonthly plus the Annual Parish Meeting. Sometimes it is necessary to hold an extraordinary meeting as in June 2021 for the co-option of 4 additional Councillors as MPC had been running on the minimum of 3 Councillors – Marlene Cowell (Chairman), Mandie McCullagh (Vice-Chairman) and Myra Peters.

A letter was drawn up and delivered to every household in the village explaining the situation and 4 names were put forward – Ruth Dale, Nigel Davis, Bob Ottway and Tracey Scott. (Bob Ottway has since resigned.)

PC elections take place every 4 years and are due this year on May 5th. This will be dealt with during the meeting.

Grateful thanks are expressed to all Councillors, County Councillor Kieron Mallon and District Councillor Hugo Brown who provide regular reports, attend meetings and are a huge support to the Council.

Particular thanks go to our Clerk, Theresa Goss, who takes on a huge burden of the work, especially in the last year and she is also our Responsible Financial officer.

PC meetings are open to the public, but few seldom attend.

Members again opted not to accept allowances as set out by the Independent Remuneration Panel, but agreed that travel expenses could be claimed. The Precept for 2022-2023 was set at £14,000.

PLANNING

The PC reviewed planning applications at the following properties:

Swerbrook Farm	Mulberry Keytes
Lessor Grange	Jasmine Cottage
1 Heath Close	Rickfield Farm
Farnell Fields	Dovecote Close
Horse & Groom	11 Oak Farm Close
Smithy Cottage	Little Acre
Oak Farm Phase 2	11 Newcombe Close
15 Heath Close	Hall Farm

Tree works at rear of Dovecote Close

Most of these applications were non-controversial.

Oak Farm Phase 2 is now well underway by Living Space with Sanctuary having pulled out as reported last year. There is an application for 3 dwellings at Little Acre (west of the Church tower) and observations were made regarding access.

PARISH COUNCIL PROJECTS

PLAY AREA – The Play Area on Bloxham Road is owned and maintained by the PC. Regular checks were carried out with an annual inspection by RoSPA.

Refurbishment of the Play Area has been on the cards for a few years and quotes were obtained from Timotay, Playdale, Kompan and Trevor Stewart. The PC opted to accept the quote from Kompan of Milton Keynes. A grant was made by CDC plus s.106 funding from Living Space.

The Play Area was closed in November whilst the refurbishment was carried out. Due to the grass seed taking some time to develop and the ground being extremely wet and muddy, it has not officially been opened, but it is hoped that this will happen in April.

DEFIBRILLATOR – This project has also been on the cards for a few years. The original intention was to place it in the Church porch but, due to much red tape and the PC wishing to have it installed for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, it was

decided to change tactics and to place it on the Village Hall. Milcombe Charities were notified of the proposal and no objections were received. The Defibrillator is on order from Wel Medical at a cost of £1500 and Nigel Davis will arrange for it to be fitted.

THE CHURCH TOWER CLOCK – The Church Tower clock is the responsibility of the Parish Council who originally had the clock installed by Smith of Derby with the promise of all future servicing and maintenance.

When the clock was serviced in March 2021, the report stated that the dial was showing significant signs of wear and tear and to replace the outdated internal mechanism which is about 30 years old and replacement parts no longer available.

The surface of the clock will be re-painted and the numerals and hands will be re-gilded with gold leaf. The total cost is £4983.00 (ex VAT which the PC can re-claim). A 30% deposit has been paid and the work is expected to be carried out in May in time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

These projects make up the PC's contributions to the village for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

GRASS CUTTING – The PC has again awarded the contract for mowing the grass verges throughout the village, the Play Area (when the grass has grown enough to require cutting) and the Churchyard to Nigel Prickett. The PC is responsible for the Churchyard extension.

DOG BINS are emptied on a regular basis by CDC and the PC is billed for this. CDC no longer provides free dogs.

VILLAGE LITTER PICK was arranged last year by Mandie McCullagh and Myra Peters and hopefully will take place again in May of this year. Volunteers from the village are required to help out.

SPEEDING/HIGHWAYS – Speeding through the village is always an issue as is parking. There is currently a survey for villagers to complete reducing the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph but OCC needs to know that residents are in favour. There have been suggestions of a zebra crossing by the Play Area and speed bumps which the PC has looked into in the past but need the agreement of OCC but the cost is too high for the PC to afford.

The PC is obtaining quotes for the replacement of the white gate at the entrance to the village by the Play Area.

THE MILCOMBE NEWSLETTER is a great asset to the village especially those who do not have access to the internet. It is on the PC website each month as well. The PC funds the cost of paper and print cartridges and we are indebted to Mark Boardman for putting it all together and printing. It has not been delivered around the village for the past 2 years due to the pandemic but copies have been available from the village shop and Church. Hopefully delivery will be resumed around the village if enough volunteers can be found.

MILCOMBE CHARITIES – THE VILLAGE HALL – The Committee members are Trustees responsible to the Charity Commissioners. The Hall had to be closed for a length of time as were all public buildings due to the pandemic but re-opened around September 2021 and remains open for bookings.

Rob Paul of Stoneleigh, Horton Lane, kindly took over as Treasurer which meant that bank signatories could be changed and the Hall able to run in the correct manner.

Raychel Pomroy is starting up the monthly Coffee Mornings again from April 1st.

THE DOVECOTE SITE is in the ownership of CDC who received commuted sums of around £66,000 from Tay Homes, the original developers of the Dovecote development in 1999. This was for the future maintenance of the Dovecote and surrounding site.

The Millennium soft floodlighting of the Dovecote is the responsibility of the PC.

CUCKOO WALK path contains the original blue bricks which made up the village footpaths in years gone by. Although not the responsibility of the PC, it has taken over some of the responsibility of clearing the path twice a year.

THE PUMP SITE situated on Main Road by the Millennium map served the old Council houses prior to mains water coming into the village. Again, this is not the responsibility of the PC, but it is a village feature and does enhance the appearance of the village when kept tidy as do all the daffodils around the village at this time of year, which were a vision of Peter Booth's who donated the bulbs.

REMEMBRANCE – Laying of poppy wreath ceremonies and Church Services were allowed to take place in November 2021. Myra Peters laid the poppy

wreath at the Bloxham War Memorial on behalf of Milcombe villagers and Nigel Davis laid the poppy wreath in St. Laurence's Church porch.

DONATIONS – Milcombe PC made donations of £500 to the Cherry Tree Centre at Bloxham Primary School, £100 to the Thursday Lunch Club and £100 to the Royal British Legion.

FINALLY, this report is mainly concerned with the affairs of Milcombe village, but the PC has responded to a number of Consultations from CDC and OCC which is all part of a PC's remit. CDC had sent out a survey under the Local Plan Consultation which included land put forward by owners as suitable for development. There were six sites in all in and around Milcombe and Nigel Davis and Myra Peters completed the survey on behalf of MPC.

My last two reports have talked about the Coronavirus. Although most of the rules have been relaxed, the problem has not gone away. I don't think many of us would have expected it to still be around in its 3rd year and I guess for sometime to come.

Marlene Cowell

Chairman – Milcombe Parish Council

March 2022

UKRAINE – I think we are all supportive of Ukraine and the terrible war they are having to fight with Russia – so many lives lost, so many homes lost and so many families separated and fleeing to safety in other countries.

Donations may be made through the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and the British Red Cross.