

MILCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT APRIL 2024

This report covers activities of Milcombe Parish Council during the period April 2023 to April 2024.

Milcombe Parish Council is funded by public money received via Cherwell District Council through the Council Tax. It is Milcombe Parish Council's responsibility to use these public funds in a responsible manner for the benefit of the whole of the village of Milcombe.

The Council meets bi-monthly plus the AGM and all the meetings are open to the public, however there is a very low attendance rate. The current Council comprises Myra Peters Chairman, Nigel Davies Vice Chairman and Councillors Mandie McCullagh, Chris Hill and Tracey Scott. There are currently two vacancies for councillors to fill. The current complement was elected in May 2023 or co-opted during the year and can serve until 2026. Councillors do not receive any remuneration but can claim travel expenses or reasonable expenses in the course of their duties.

Our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer is Mrs Theresa Goss, who oversees the efficient running of the Council affairs and statutory obligations. The precept for 2023/2024 was set at £14000, this will rise to £15000 for 2024/2025.

Thanks go to County Councillor Kieron Mallon for his ongoing support dealing with Oxfordshire County Council and to District Councillor Andrew McHugh for his help in dealing with Cherwell District Council when the need arises.

Planning

The following planning applications were dealt with during the year, the three major one's were:

Heath Close – This development was objected to by MPC and rejected by CDC planning committee, however it was given the go-ahead on appeal by the Government Inspector. At the current time work is just commencing [April 2024].

Bloxham Road - An application for 90 houses plus a shop and land for a village hall was lodged with CDC in April 2023. It is currently awaiting a decision by CDC and this is due to happen at the June 2024 planning committee meeting.

Rickfield Farm – Four planning applications were submitted during 2023/24:

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| July 2023 | 2 no. poly tunnels – decision Permitted |
| Sept 2023 | Change of use of existing poultry shed and Dutch barn – decision Refused |
| Sept 2023 | Certificate of Lawfulness for existing 25 storage units – decision Refused |
| Nov 2023 | Change of use of existing poultry house shed to container storage – decision Permitted |

Several smaller planning applications for Milcombe were also submitted, all of which are available to view on the Cherwell District Planning website.

Play Park

The play park continuous to suffer from minor vandalism during the year. The litter bins seemed to bear the brunt of this and graffiti on the benches was disappointing to see. Minor repairs were needed to be carried out to the swing bolts and a new platform was required for the zip wire due to vandal damage. A new gate was also fitted with a better closing mechanism. The stone wall adjacent to the park entrance was finally rebuilt by Cherwell District Council.

MPC are still researching a CCTV system for the play areas which it is hoped will be installed by summer 2024.

20MPH/New Road Weight Limit

During the course of the year Oxford County Council implemented a 20mph speed limit throughout the village and a 7.5 tonne weight limit imposed in New Road to help stop articulated lorries using New Road as a short cut.

Weed spraying throughout the village footpaths was carried out by Complete Weed Control and the grass verges, play area and cemetery were cut monthly by Nigel Prickett.

Flooding

Due to the high rainfall levels during the winter period, several villagers reported flooding issues mostly around Heath Close/Station Approach. The ditch and culverts were initially cleared by Oxfordshire Council operatives which was partially successful and one villager paid for Bourton Drains to jet clear the culvert near his home as his Klagester system flooded and is claiming recompense from Oxfordshire CC.

Bus Route

Stagecoach bus company want to re-route the 488 bus away from New Road and back down Bloxham Road. The Parish Council strongly objected to this cost cutting exercise and were backed by County Councillor Mallon as unacceptable due to the number of people who use the New Road bus stop. To date no decision has been made on this subject by Stagecoach.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Councillors Davies and Hill are currently undertaking this project and funding is now in place from Community First to enable it to go ahead. A preliminary meeting for all villagers to let them know about the development plan was held on 7 March 2024 in the village hall.

Village Hall

On going work to obtain grants for the refurbishment of the village hall is in hand. The monthly coffee mornings continue to be popular and well attended. Thanks go to all the volunteers, particularly Raychel Pomeroy and Doreen Wyatt for providing lovely bacon rolls and scrumptious cakes. Bookings for the hall remain low although a small profit of £700 was made during the year.

Trees

Oxfordshire County Council planted five young sapling tree species during the autumn along New Road and the Parish Council had the verge cut back and cleared of all the overgrowth.

Litter Pick

The village had another successful litter pick in April 2024 and collected approximately one dozen sacks of rubbish along the assorted tyres and roadwork signs.

In conclusion Milcombe has had a fairly successful year, some wins, some losses but overall apart from the ongoing battle against potholes and blocked drainage gulleys, the village continues to be a small, friendly, pleasant community to live in.