

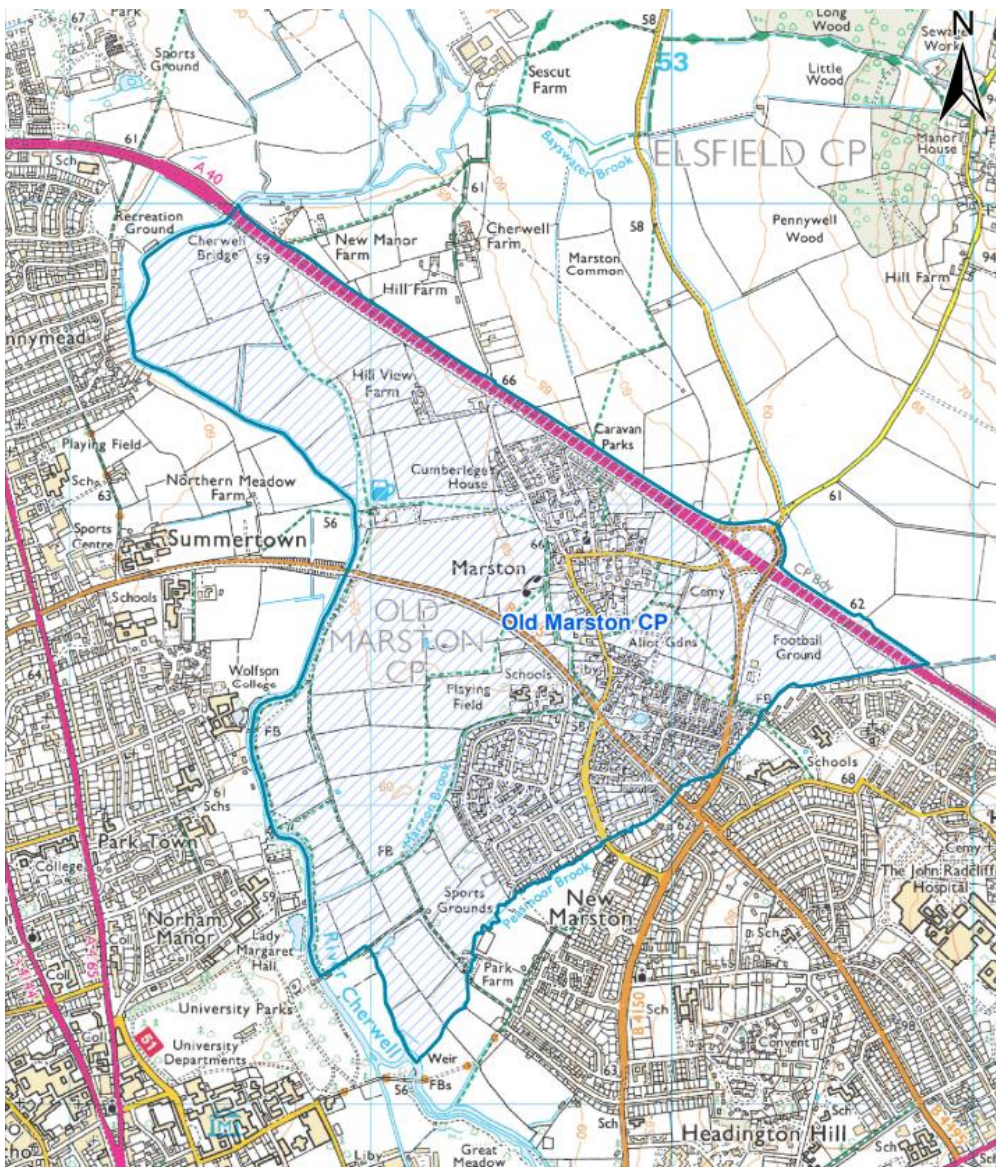


Old Marston Parish Council



## Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022



## Parish Councillors 2021-2022

Duncan Hatfield (Chairman)

Michael Bates

Michael Cadd

Peter Cox

Skye Denno

Patricia Hall

Mary James

Louise Milford

Alistair Morris

Alan Spence

Charlotte Vinnicombe

Peter Williams

## Oxford City Councillors

Mary Clarkson

Michael Haines

## Oxfordshire County Councillor

Mark Lygo

## Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Tim Cann

## Internal Auditor

Richard James FMAAT ATT

## External Auditor

Moore LLP

## Objectives of the Parish Council

- To represent the local community's interests
- To support local organisations and activities
- To help provide amenities, such as allotments, burial grounds, recreation grounds etc.
- To help look after all aspects of the parish of Old Marston.

## Chairman's Annual Report 2022

As we reflect on the past year, the pandemic had a major impact on how the parish council functioned. We looked for ways to support the community as we all struggled to cope with the effects. And despite the concerns about Covid, we were legally required to meet in person from May 2021.

The biggest issues facing Old Marston are the proposed developments in and around the parish which will remove a lot of the green areas that make this a pleasant place to live. We have met with developers, planners and architects to raise our concerns. The huge number of properties that will be built is more than the local roads and environment can sustain. Pollution will no doubt increase significantly, and traffic congestion will be considerable despite claims to the contrary. A number of residents have complained that their concerns have not been considered by the planners.

The Orchard Triangle has been opened up at both ends and a number of fruit trees planted, with efforts to encourage native wildlife. Thank you to all the volunteers who take care of this space.

This March we held our fifteenth annual OxClean litter pick. Thank you to all those who volunteered. It makes a difference and we have received feedback from grateful local residents.

As concerns about the environment and climate have increased, the parish council is looking at ways that it can play its part. We are supporting the planting of trees on our land. We are looking to have an energy audit done in the pavilion to look at ways to save energy use. The council is also working towards going paper-free. Councillors have been issued with low-cost laptops for all their paperwork. Our old tablets have been donated to St Nicholas Primary School.

In May 2022 the parish council had an election with two new members elected. We welcome them and look forward to seeing what the coming year will bring. We would also like to thank Mick Cadd and Alan Spence for their years of service on the council.

## Old Marston Parish Council's Action Plan for 2021/22

### Roy Garner Pavilion Project:

Progress had been delayed due to the fire, however, the intention this year is to:

- House the electric meter, **COMPLETE.**
- Resurface the parking area. **COMPLETE.**
- Install cycle rack(s).

### Play Equipment in Boult's Lane:

The new play equipment has been installed so the council intend to:

- Re-instate the fencing around the play area, **COMPLETE.**
- To install seat in the play area **COMPLETE.**

### Play Equipment in Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground:

- Replace the orbital play equipment. **COMPLETE.**
- Install an outdoor table tennis table **COMPLETE.**

### Elsfield Road Cemetery:

- Install seat in paddock at rear of cemetery **COMPLETE.**

### The Council to be a Local Council Awarded Council:

- To introduce the necessary policies and procedures to meet the criteria and achieve Foundation. **COMPLETE.**
- To ensure these standards are the norm **ONGOING.**

### Ongoing activities:

Background: Old Marston Parish Council is fortunate to own several facilities such as Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground, Boult's Lane Recreation Ground and Mill Lane Allotments, although the allotments are managed on a day-to-day basis by the allotment association on behalf of the council. However, with this fortitude is also the burden of upkeep and maintenance. The intension this year is to:

- Ensure the recreation grounds and cemetery are maintained. This is achieved by employing a contractor.
- An annual safety check is performed on all play equipment and any faults actioned. The council employs an outside qualified contractor to do this.
- A weekly safety check is also done to ensure ongoing safety of the council's equipment. The chairman of the appropriate committee does a weekly check and reports back to the main meeting.
- Effectively manage the trees on parish council land by actioning the tree survey.

As a statutory consultee, the parish council will continue to view planning applications in the parish and comment accordingly with the best interest of the community as a whole.

The parish council continue to manage and maintain Boulds Lane Recreational Ground, Mortimer Hall Recreational Ground, Mill Lane Recreational Ground and the cemetery in Elsfield Road.

The annual safety checks on play equipment in the Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground and the Boulds Lane Recreation ground have been done and the pavilion, recreational grounds and cemetery committee are reviewing the work needing doing. It will also monitor neighbouring developments to ensure the infrastructure, integrity, and quality of life within the community of the parish of Old Marston is not compromised.

The parish council strives to act as a guardian of the conservation area.

The parish council will seek, where possible, the opinions of parishioners concerning issues relating to the parish.

## Administration Report (including finances)

### **Budget & Precept**

**General:** The budget is a financial plan that the council is responsible for and should reflect anticipated items of income and expenditure. The income for the council includes the precept levied on residents as part of their overall council tax. The level of precept levied should reflect the income and expenditure as well as any adjustment to the level of reserves that the council wishes to hold at the end of its financial year.

**Level of Reserves:** This is an important part of the budget-setting process. The reserves are held for three main purposes:

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing. This forms part of general reserves.
- Reserves to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies and expenditure that the timing or amount is unknown. This also forms part of general reserves.
- Earmarked reserves, to meet project liabilities. This currently includes the Boults Lane pavilion.

**Precept:** This is the actual figure which is collected from every household through the council tax.

**Grant:** Oxford City Council gives the parish council a grant to assist in the maintenance of public areas owned by the parish council which are open to everyone, regardless of whether they are parishioners or not. This includes the two recreation grounds, allotments and cemetery.

**CiL Money:** For every new build within the parish the developers pay a community infrastructure levy, of which a percentage goes to the parish council.

**Cemetery Income:** This is the fee collected for burials, headstones, etc.

**VAT Returns:** The parish council can reclaim the VAT paid on non-business activities such as maintaining the recreation grounds.

**Wayleave:** This is the consent in writing that allows utility companies to carry out work on privately-owned land. It is a written legal agreement between the company and the land/property owner that grants access to install, maintain or repair network equipment.

**Rent:** A charge for use of parish council land or building.

**Bank/Building Society Interest:** Interest earned from reserves invested.

## Income

	Actual
Precept	£60,969.00
Grant	£10,000.00
CIL Money	£1,481.89
Cemetery Income	£2,125.00
VAT Returns	£2,583.29

Wayleaves	£34.46
Rents	£511.00
Bank/Building Society Interest	£492.96
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£78,197.60</b>

## Expenditure v Budget

	Budget	Actual
Allotments	1,000.00	-
Cemetery	500.00	2,054.99
Recreation Grounds Maintenance	300.00	2,599.47
Roy Garner Pavilion (Maintenance)	1,500.00	3,677.91
Roy Garner Pavilion (Capital)	2,500.00	16,634.00
Grants (s.137)	7,500.00	3,283.48
Administration (Salary, Pension, Tax Etc.)	19,550.00	25,652.55
Stationery		109.00
Software/Hardware	1,300.00	700.95
Legal Advice	250.00	-
Council Training	1,500.00	
Insurance	3,500.00	3,101.99
Contractors		
Recreation Grounds	3,750.00	1,872.00
Cemetery	3,500.00	540.00
Pest Control	2,500.00	2,270.40
Tree Maintenance	500.00	3,586.00
Audit Fees (External & Internal)	1,125.00	1,145.00
Memberships (OALC, SLCC, ICCM, etc.)	1,225.00	460.00
General Maintenance	4,000.00	-
Chairman's Expenses	1,000.00	191.85
CiL Money		13,891.00
Miscellaneous		8,774.95
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£70,950.00</b>	<b>£90,545.54</b>

## Overview

**Allotments:** The parish council owns the allotment site in Mill Lane. It is run on a day-to-day basis by the Old Marston Mill Lane Allotments Association (OMMLAA).

**Cemetery:** This covers land rates, waste collection and water usage,

which is metered.

**CiL Money:** This year the council spent money on replacing the orbit play equipment (£11,942) in the Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground and purchasing and installing an outside table tennis table (£1,949) also in the Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground.

**Recreation Grounds:** These are the Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground, Boults Lane Recreation Ground, and Mill Lane Recreational Ground (on the right of the entrance to the Victoria Arms drive) which, although not owned by the council, it is maintained by the council for local children to play on.

**Roy Garner Pavilion (Maintenance):** This is for the intruder and fire alarm annual service. There was also a faulty shutter which needed repairing.

**Roy Garner Pavilion (Capital):** Most of this expenditure was for the demolition and removal of the old pavilion.

**Grant (s.137):** This covers the grants the council give to local organisations to assist them in carrying out the work they do. This year the recipients were:

- Court Place Farm Allotments Association,
- Marston Community Garden Group,
- St Nicholas Church Junior Choir,
- St Nicholas Society of Bell Ringers,
- OXSRAD,
- St Nicholas Primary School Gardening Club,
- St Nicholas Church (Messy Church),
- St Nicholas School (Breakfast Club),
- St Nicholas School Nursery,
- St Nicholas School Forest School,
- Mortimer Hall,
- Mortimer Hall Preschool,
- Marston Saints FC,
- 43<sup>rd</sup> Scout Group.

There was also COVID assistance grants given to:

- St Nicholas Primary School and
- OXSRAD.



**Administration:** This covers everything which involves the running of the council, employing the clerk; his pay, tax, national insurance, pension and out of pocket expenses, training etc. and the payroll services.

**Software/Hardware:** This is not only the laptop and printer used by the clerk but also renewal of the domain address and hosting to keep the website and emails active.

**Legal Advice:** Although not used regularly, there is an amount budgeted should the council need any advice involving legal matters.

**Council Training:** A council and its staff need to be up to date with local administration, good practice, understand correct procedures and the law. This covers new councillors training as well as any on training for existing councillors.

**Insurance:** By law, the parish council needs to have certain insurance cover to protect itself and its property from theft or damage.

**Contractors:** The council has several contractors who ensure pests, such as moles, do not infest the recreation grounds or cemetery, the grass on its grounds is mowed regularly, and the trees on its land is inspected by a tree surgeon every two years.

**Audit Fees:** By law, the council have an internal auditor as well as an external auditor, to ensure public money is correctly spent and appropriate records are kept. Although called an 'internal auditor' they are not connected to the council in any way.

**Membership:** The council is a members of various organisations which assists it by providing information, training courses etc. These include:

- OALC (Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils)
- ICCM (Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management)
- Oxfordshire Green Belt
- CommunityFirst Oxfordshire
- ICO (Information Commissioners Office) which is essential where GDPR is concerned
  
- The clerk is a member of the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) and ALCC (Association of Local Council Clerks).

**General Maintenance:** This is a contingency and used for emergencies

such as tree damage etc.

**Chairman's Expenses:** The chairman of the parish council is the public figure of the council. They attend functions where they represent the council. Out-of-pocket expenses are available, such as travel, or any stationery they may require whilst carrying out the role as chairman.

**Miscellaneous:** This covers items that had not been budgeted for, such as the wreaths for the war graves in the parish, the new orbit play equipment and outdoor table tennis table in Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground, printing of the newsletters and the cutting of the hedges around the parish on council boundaries.

### **End of Year Audit**

The end of year audit is performed by an external auditor. For the year ending the audit was done by Moore Stephen auditors. They have no connection with the parish council and have never visited or attended any of the meetings. There were no issues raised in this year's accounts.

### **Membership of Committees and Outside Bodies**

<b>Duncan Hatfield</b> Chairman Webmaster OxClean organiser Staffing & Standards Old Marston Charities Trust Parish Forum	<b>Pat Hall</b> Vice Chair Finance Planning Staffing & Standards PRGC Parish Forum
<b>Peter Cox</b> PRGC Staffing & Standards Finance	<b>Peter Williams</b> Oxfordshire Greenbelt Network Planning Environment Staffing & Standards
<b>Louise Milford</b> Finance Environment	<b>Mary James</b> Finance Environment Planning

<b>Skye Denno</b> Environment	<b>Alan Spence</b> PRGC
<b>Alistair Morris</b> Environment Parish Forum PRGC	<b>Mickey Bates</b> Planning PRGC
<b>Charlotte Vinnicombe</b> Environment	<b>Michael Cadd</b> Finance Oxsrad PRGC Planning Old Marston Charities Trust

### COMMITTEES

<b>Staffing &amp; Standards</b> Peter Williams (chair) Peter Cox Pat Hall Duncan Hatfield	<b>Planning</b> Michael Cadd (chair) Michael Bates Mary James
<b>Finance Committee</b> Pat Hall (chair) Michael Cadd Peter Cox Louise Milford Mary James	<b>Pavilion, Recreation Grounds &amp; Cemetery</b> Peter Cox(chair) Pat Hall Alistair Morris Alan Spence Michael Cadd
<b>Environment</b> Peter Williams(chair) Mary James Louise Milford Skye Denno Charlotte Vinnicombe Alistair Morris	

<b><u>Council &amp; Committee Meetings 2021/22</u></b>			
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Attended</b>	<b>Potential</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Michael Bates	7	17	41%
Michael Cadd	17	20	85%
Peter Cox	19	19	100%
Skye Denno	7	13	54%
Patricia Hall	21	21	100%
Duncan Hatfield	13	13	100%
Mary James	20	21	95%
Louise Milford	14	18	78%
Alistair Morris	15	19	79%
Alan Spence	8	15	53%
Charlotte Vinnicombe	15	16	94%
Peter Williams	16	19	84%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>82%</b>

There were 11 parish council meetings and 14 committee meetings.

43 planning applications reviewed this year compared with 52 last year.

51 members of the public attended meetings.

**Please note:** There were elections for Old Marston Parish Council in May 2022 so the actual councillors on the council may have changed since this annual report was written.

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
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