

## At Dead of Night

Barrie Rock hurried towards the village green. It was nearly 11.30 and starting to snow, his breath left an icy trail and he shivered in his warm black coat (with white trimmings). As he passed the Quart Pot, he almost fell over FM, weaving cheerfully out waving an empty champagne bottle by way of a greeting; "Hi Barrie." "Hello FM, you're looking bright eyed and bushy tailed!"

Roland peered at them peevishly over his half glasses. "At least you two are here, where are the others?" At that moment in rushed Molly, grinning and flopping down, pushing one wedge-heeled shoe out of the way as she settled herself. "Come on, come on" shouted Roland as Minnie scurried nervously in; "Sorry Mr Chairman, have a chocolate" she said, holding out a large box of Milk Tray. Roland, momentarily appeased, picked out the largest and then grunted in disgust. "This has teeth-marks in it," "Oh dear," said Minnie, "Try another one."

At that moment Barrie flapped in waving a court summons round his snow covered head; "Sorry, I've been had up for speeding again, good job it's too whet too whoo haha!" "Minutes please" said the Chairman crisply as Minnie foraged in her large knitting bag, discarding a cardigan, a half knitted jacket, an ice cream and one of her off-springs trainers, before emerging triumphant with a dog eared copy of the Minutes. "Minutes agreed," said Roland, before anyone could disagree; "FM put that mobile

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Council (A) EGM  
Milton Village Green  
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Subject:  
The Belfry  
Development Protest*

phone away!" .FM scowled: "I want to complain" he interrupted, getting crosser by the minute; "about dustbin collection; once a week is ridiculous, once a month is required for successful scavenging."

The Chairman banged his gavel enthusiastically: "The Belfry Development Protest", he reminded them, "we cannot tolerate that family squatting there, what are we going to do?" "The answer's a lemon," said FM chuckling to himself as he remembered the salmon fillets in his bag. Molly burped in memory of a lamb bone and jumped up, "Let's chase them out. Let's nip their heels, let's bite them to pieces."

But at that moment, three things happened! The church clock struck midnight, the group of "squatter" bats flew out grumbling about the cold belfry, and the Church bells started ringing loudly. As the snowflakes fell thicker, people started emerging in their ones and twos, well wrapped up for the Christmas Eve Mass. The work of the Milton Parish Council (Animals Branch) was over, the animals had fled. All that was left on the Village Green to show they had ever been there were a lemon, a pack of salmon fillets, an empty champagne bottle, a large box of spilt chocolates, an ice cream, a lamb bone, a court summons, a mobile phone, one trainer, one wedge heeled shoe, a cardigan and a jacket.

**Liz Clarke-Watson**

*With apologies to Heather Shute!*