

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Wednesday 14th January, 2009 in the residents' lounge, Duffield Place, Marcham at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. M. Denton (Chairman), Mrs. J. Allan, Mr. C. Bough, Mr. W. Cumber,
Mrs. M. Evans, Mr. D. Hutchinson, Mr. D. Walton.
Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin
6 member of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and commenced by advising that a third late grant application had been submitted from the Marcham village café. There was an agenda item relating to late grant applications and he stated that the application could be considered at that point if Council agreed.

2009/1

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr. I. Charles.
Apologies had also been received from Cllr. J. Hanna (Vale of White Horse District Councillor).

2009/2

Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Mrs. Allan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the agenda item relating to the late grant applications in that she had lodged an application on behalf of the village café.

Members noted the Clerk's reminder that the Register of Interests should be kept up to date. Mr. Bough asked that members be reminded at the annual Council meeting of what they had registered on the register kept by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

2009/3

Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December, 2008

These were agreed and signed as a true record of the proceedings, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) in the appendices relating to the Freedom of Information Act adding the fact that the Annual Return would be available on the website..
- (ii) in minute 2008/246 the words "thames valley economic development region" to be shown with capital letters.
- (iii) in minutes 2008/258 the word "Revd" to appear before the name Pamela Shirras.

2009/4

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December, 2008

Letters of thanks for grants awarded

Council noted receipt of letters of thanks for grants awarded received from Anson Field Management Committee, Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau, South & Vale Cares Centre, Marcham Society, Duffield Place Sunshine Club, and Marcham Senior Citizens Club.

Parking of Caravans – Public Amenity spaces

Council noted that the Vale of White Horse District Council and the Vale Housing Association were both looking into the siting of caravans which had been placed on their respective pieces of land. It was noted that the owners had been given time limits in which to have them removed.

Oxfordshire County Council – A415 – Satellite Navigation Systems – Reduction of HGVs

Council noted that Mr. Paul Fermer from Oxfordshire County Council was the officer dealing with the monitoring of the Satellite Navigation Systems. Council noted that the County Council had just purchased a Traffic Management database to help manage the road network. In other parts of the country the company that had supplied it were working with South Yorkshire Public Transport Executive to provide an interface to satellite navigation devices to provide current information as to congestion and better inform the travelling public. The Clerk was asked to contact the County Council and clarify that it was the Parish Councils wish to advise HGV drivers not to use the narrow A415 where they often became stuck, and not to necessarily keep the travelling public advised of congestion. It was suggested that there should be better pictorial signs as non English speaking lorry drivers could have difficulty reading the road signs. Council discussed this and concluded that most signs included a universal picture.

Weed Spraying

Council noted comments submitted by Cllr. I. Brown offering his support with encouraging the County Council to undertake weed spraying this season. It was noted, however, that the financial settlement within the budget may not be very generous for the next financial year.

The Anson Trust – Parish Council's Nomination

Council noted that the Parish Council's nomination had been accepted by the Anson Trust and that Mr. Hugh Logan had been appointed a Trustee. The Clerk clarified that he was not a representative of the Parish Council and would not be sitting on the Board of Directors as such. He had no duty or obligations to the Council.

River Flood Gauge

Mrs. Evans asked for an update on the provision of a river flood gauge. The Chairman advised that he had the information of the grant funded schemes and would get in touch with her to discuss the application.

6 The Farthings – Ivy overhanging wall

Mrs. Evans asked for an update on the cutting back of this ivy. The Chairman, although he had offered to speak to the occupants of the property, he had not managed to do this. He agreed to visit them soon.

2009/5

Public Participation

Marcham Road Pharmacy

Mr. Horler advised that the pharmacy at the Marcham Road Health Centre was to remain open. He placed on record his thanks to the Parish Council and to Cllr. Jane Hanna.

Closure of Marcham shop and Post Office, North Street

Mr. Buckingham of Sweetbriar spoke critically of the Parish Council and its lack of action and veil of secrecy over the closure of the only village shop and Post Office. He enquired whether the Parish Council had approached the Post Office Authorities, Ed Vaizey, M.P., the Vale of White Horse District Council and whether the Council could assist financially. He spoke in support of the retention of the shop and Post Office and the difficulties faced by those without internet access and public transport should the shop disappear. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council had no information about any closure. It was noted that the Council had not held a meeting since 12th December. Now that the matter had been brought to the attention of the Council, it would investigate and when the facts were known it could consider appropriate formal action.

Mr. Bott too expressed concern that the tenancy in the Post Office was not being renewed. The elderly were often unable to use public transport to get elsewhere without assistance and drivers were not allowed to help.

Cemetery

Mr. Scott of Sweetbriar queried the re-alignment of the cremated remains plaques in the cemetery. He expressed concern that the caskets could have been moved or were no longer under the plaque. The Chairman explained that the Cemetery committee had been undertaking some improvement works and plaques were realigned as part of this. The Clerk clarified that no caskets would have been disturbed as an exhumation order would have been required for this. It was merely a question of placing the plaques over where the caskets lay and straightening the row of plaques.

The Anson Trust – New Community Facilities

Mr. Bott referred to an article in MAD News regarding the Anson Trust's proposed new facilities. He stated that it seemed cut and dry. He stated he was prepared to offer £1000 towards a fund to fight the sale of the Institute. Mr. Bough replied stating that the Parish Council had no control over the Anson Trust or its assets. The Trust's article in MAD News referred to consultation, and at a future stage when the plans were known would there be an opportunity to comment.

A415 / North Street junction

A query was raised as to whether anything could be done to improve vision at the North Street junction with the A415. There was a telegraph pole, which, if moved, would improve sight lines. The Chairman advised that this would be a future agenda item.

Grant Application – Village Café

Mrs.Allan under s. 12(2) of the Code of Conduct, as the grant applicant, made a statement in support of the grant application. A Christmas dinner had been provided for those who attended the village café and a loss had been made and rent for use of the building was due. The year end accounts were in the course of preparation. A request for at least £160 was made towards the shortfall.

2009/6 Planning Applications

a) Decisions on previous applications

MAR/3036/10 Continued siting of a portable building for use as a childrens' nursery and an oil tank for heating.
Marcham Sports and Social Club, Morland Road
Permitted 18th December, 2008

MAR/1467/11 proposed garden room extension
Omega House, 29 North Street
Permitted 9th January, 2009

Works to trees
24 North Street
Permitted 8th January, 2009

b) Applications dealt with prior to the meeting

MAR/15255/3 Minor alterations to fenestration to rear of house, plus addition outbuilding to front of house.
Bracken Heath House, Wantage Road
For: Mrs. E. Osbourne
Comments: Council had no objections provided there was no breach of green belt policies or the potential for the outbuilding to be used separately from the main dwelling.

MAR/20732 Proposed two storey rear extension and front dormer window.
Demolish rear conservatory
4 Parkside
For: M. Powell
Comments: Council had no objections in principle, but had not been able to view the property from the rear and was unable, therefore, to judge the impact on the adjacent property. It would have some sympathy should there be concern from the neighbours regarding the dominant impact.

MAR/5011/5 Erection of garage doors to car ports
Plots 1 and 4 Cotsdale, Abingdon Road
For: Cranbourne Homes Ltd
Comments: Council could see no valid planning reason to object, but did query why the application related to only 2 of the 4 houses constructed

c) Applications for consideration at the meeting

MAR/20333/2 Erection of single storey extension to provide new guest sitting room, home office and garage

The Clockhouse, Sheepstead Road

For: Mr and Mrs. Dunning

Comments: Council objected to the application in that the proposal had not been altered significantly from the previous application which had been refused. Concerns were raised regarding parking, the lack of a site shown for the repositioning of the oil tank, the potential for the creation of a separate dwelling and the overall impact on the character of the area.

2009/7

District Councillor's Report

In the absence of Cllr. Hanna no report was available.

2009/8

County Councillor's Report

In the absence of Cllr. Brown no report was available.

2009/9

Vale of White Horse District Council – Future Development in the Vale – Core Strategy Preferred Options

Council noted that the preferred options document will be published for public consultation starting 16th January for 6 weeks. A workshop for Parish Councils will take place on 22nd January at 7.00 p.m. in Wantage Civic Hall. Public exhibitions will take place on 27th January in the Guildhall, Abingdon. Council discussed possible representatives to attend the workshop.

RESOLVED:

that Mrs. Evans, Mr. Denton and Mr. Walton attend as representatives of the Council

2009/10

Grant Applications

Council noted that 3 grant applications outside of the usual time for considering these had been received.

RESOLVED:

that consideration be given to them at this meeting.

Council considered grant applications from Home Start and Victim Support.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that more information as to how many people from Marcham parish had been assisted be obtained.
- (ii) that when grant applications are received from organisations outside of the parish that information that information as to the level of support for Marcham parishioners over the last 5 years be obtained.

Mrs. Allan left the room.

Council considered a grant application by the Village Café to assist with a shortfall in funding in their expenses.

RESOLVED:

that under s. 137 Local Government Act 1972 a grant of £250 be awarded to the Marcham Village Café.

2009/11

Annual Parish Meeting

Council discussed possible dates and speakers for the Annual Parish Meeting. The Clerk was asked to investigate possible dates in the latter half of May for the availability of the school hall. Possible speakers included The Anson Trust, The Chairman/Police from the local Neighbourhood Action Group, or Vale of White Horse District Council/Vale Housing Association as to letting policies and the procedure to be followed on bidding on social housing, particularly Duffield Place. It was thought that the first two suggestions might be of more interest to a wider group of parishioners. The Clerk would check the possibility of representatives from the District Council/Housing Association attending a meeting of the Parish Council to explain the letting procedure.

2009/12

Best Kept Garden Competition

Council considered running a garden competition this year.

RESOLVED:

that the garden competition be run again during the Summer of 2009.

2009/13

Budget 2009/2010

The Clerk explained the budget papers. Council carefully considered the current balances, the likely balances at the year end and the budget for 2009/2010. It was suggested that owing to the current economic climate there should be no increase in the precept if possible. Council considered quotations for grass cutting from 4 separate contractors. It was considered essential that the grass cutting be monitored this season whichever contractor was chosen. Council considered setting aside funding for Parkside allotment wall repairs, a base for the bottle bank hardstanding, and repairs for the War Memorial steps, and possible weed spraying on highway footways if permitted.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the budget as shown on the forms annexed to these minutes be approved.
- (ii) that a precept of £33,000 be set for the year 2009/2010
- (iii) that the quotation from Slade Estate Services be accepted for grass cutting during the 2009 season.

2009/14

Correspondence

- a) Vale of white Horse District Council – Your Vale Your Future – The Vale Partnership. A strategy for sustainable communities.
- b) NHS Health News – Winter 2008
- c) Oxfordshire County Council – Pension Fund – Report and Accounts 2007/2008
- d) Oxfordshire Rural Community Council – Review Autumn/Winter 2008
- e) Trust for Oxfordshire’s Environment – Report
- f) Vale of White Horse District Council – Local Community Flood Group in the Vale – Formation and Funding
- g) River Thames Society – Annual Conference 2009 on Saturday 21st February, Shiplake College, Henley.
- h) Oxfordshire County Council – Campaign against domestic abuse information
- i) Vale of White Horse District Council – Chairman’s Community Award lunch for those within the sporting community. The Clerk was asked to draw this to the attention of the Anson Field Management Committee, who may be aware of likely nominees.
- j) Vale of White Horse District Council – Air Quality Action Plan. An action plan to improve the quality of the air in Abingdon Town Centre had been produced and was out to consultation until 19th February.

2009/15

Accounts

Council noted that an additional invoice from Slade Estate Services Ltd had been received for grass cutting alongside the paths in the Churchyard. This was outside the usual cutting schedule and the Council had not requested the cut nor the Clerk had instructed them to cut the grass. Discussion took place as to whether this should be paid.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the invoice in the sum of £78.20 be paid
- (ii) that Slade Estate Services Ltd be asked on whose authority was the grass cut.

Council noted the list of cheques numbered 1950-1956 to be signed and authorised payments totalling £2322.55 in respect of administration costs, grant awarded, grass cutting and play area/maintenance.

2009/16

Matters Raised by members for information

There were no other matters raised.

2009/17

Items for MAD News

Council noted the list of items for inclusion in the village newsletter. The Clerk was asked to include an article reminding the public about the parishioner of the year award. She was also asked to include something about the village shop and Post Office should correct factual information be available.

2009/18

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Wednesday 11th February, 2009 in the residents' lounge, Duffield Place at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

Signed Date