

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Wednesday 10th June, 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. I. Charles,
Mr. W. Cumber, Mrs. M. Evans, Mrs. C. Ricketts, Mrs. S. Turney, Mr. D. Walton
Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin
Cllr. J. Hanna, (District Councillor)
Guest Speakers: Mrs. L. Scaplehorn and Ms. H. Richardson from Housing
Department, Vale of White Horse District Council
2 members of the public

Prior to the Commencement of formal business, Mrs. Scaplehorn and Ms. Richardson gave a presentation about the District Council's housing register, the choice based lettings system and the method of allocation of properties. Reference was made to the locations of housing register application forms, the requirements of proof of residence, and the banding arrangements for properties which would change from 13th July. Potential tenants could bid for properties once their eligibility had been assessed and a band had been allocated. Properties available were shown on the District Council's website and on lists in libraries, GP surgeries etc. The District Council handled choice based lettings and most transfer lists, some housing associations handled their own transfer list. They explained the letting system for the rural exception site and the steps they took to ensure compliance with the s. 106 agreement. Approximately 400 properties were allocated each year and there were 4000 people on the housing register. The average waiting time for a family was 4 years, and for a 1 bedroomed property was 18 months. They answered questions as to conditions of houses and gardens, shorthold and assured tenancies, percentages of housing association properties which were on the transfer lists, and the "local connection" situation of those in the Army and other services.

The Chairman thanked them for the presentation and they then left the meeting.

- 2009/119 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence had been received from Mr. D. Hutchinson
- 2009/120 Declarations of Interest
Mr. Bough declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the grant request by the Anson Trust in that he was a Director of the Trust.
- 2009/121 Minutes of the annual meeting held on 13th May, 2009
These were agreed and signed as a true record of the proceedings subject in minute 2009/101 in Bulb Planting by Brownies to add the letter "r" in Howard.
- 2009/122 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th May, 2009
Longfields Play Area sign
Council noted that this had been manufactured and would be installed shortly.

Letter of thanks from Parochial Church Council for grant

Council noted receipt of a letter of thanks from the Parochial Church Council for the grant to send village children on an activity weekend.

Letter of thanks from The Ven. Eddie and Revd. Pamela for Parishioner of the Year Certificate

Council noted receipt of a letter of thanks for the Parishioner of the Year Certificate from The Ven. Eddie and Revd. Pamela Shirras.

2009/123 Public Participation

There were no matters raised

2009/124 Planning Applications

a) Decisions on previous applications

MAR/3579/2 Proposed two storey side extension
64 Howard Cornish Road
Permitted 18th May, 2009

b) Applications dealt with prior to the meeting

No applications had been received

c) Applications for consideration at the meeting

No applications had been received

2009/125 District Councillor's Report

Cllr. Hanna gave an update report from the working group which she had established to consider public consultation when the planning application from the Anson Trust was lodged. The group had met with the Directors and the information given had been reiterated at the Annual Meeting of Electors. The working group had met since to consider the information. There were some concerns over the consultation phase and plans for the consultation. The group had decided to write to the Anson Trust asking for clarification as to its intentions regarding consultation, the involvement of user groups and what its plans were for the involvement of the village. Information was being sought as to a planned timeframe for consultation. The group could not take action until it was better informed. Mr. Bough advised, as a Director of the Trust, that there would be a reply in the next edition of MAD News to the letter written by a resident which appeared in the June issue. It appeared that talks were taking place with a developer to have an option on part of the recreation field. Any planning application would be for the developer to handle. There would therefore be no consultation by the Anson Trust on this aspect. As for the rest of the proposals, there should be consultation on the matters which were in the control of the Anson Trust. Cllr. Hanna asked whether the Trust would have any pre-conditions with the developer as to what was acceptable, and queried

whether there would be a plan for consultation and whether the developer would hold a public meeting. It was stated that the Anson Trust had to manage their affairs in the best interest of the charity. Questions and answers and further discussion were not relevant to the District Councillor's report to the Parish Council and the issues were left to the working group to pursue.

In the absence of Cllr. Brown the newly elected County Councillor, a question of policy of where political signs were permitted at election time was put to Cllr. Hanna as several electoral posters had appeared on County Council highways. Cllr. Hanna acknowledged that signs should be placed only on private land, and that this would be borne in mind for the next election.

2009/126

County Councillor's Report

It was noted that Cllr. Iain Brown had been re-elected as the member for the Hanneys and Hendreds Division at the recent County Council elections. In the absence of Cllr. Brown from the meeting, no report was available.

2009/127

Post Office

Council noted that the Post Office would re-open from Monday 15th June between 9.30 a.m. – 1.30 p.m. This was a temporary arrangement. Mr. Cumber advised that the technical problems regarding the Post Office's computer equipment and telephone line had been resolved, and that the shop premises were still being advertised for rent.

2009/128

Annual Meeting for Electors

Council considered matters arising from the annual meeting for electors.

Arboretum Car Park - pothole

Council noted the request to repair the tarmac car park.

RESOLVED:

that this matter be referred to the Marcham Recreation Ground Charity.

Buses

Council noted the concerns that had been raised at the annual meeting regarding the proposal to reduce the bus service to hourly during the day and 2 hourly in the evening.

RESOLVED:

that this matter be deferred for discussion under the agenda item relating to buses.

The Anson Trust – The Anson field

Council noted the comments made by a Trustee and those of the public, at the electors meeting. It was clear that the Trust proposed to dispose of part of the Anson field to a developer and that part would remain as a green space.

Concerns had been raised as to the future of the open space should development take place on part of the field. Council discussed the possibility of being involved with the open space in some way, such as a Lease to the Council, to try and ensure its protection and use as a public facility. It was thought by some to be premature, as it was assumed that part of the Anson Trust's consultation would be about what to do with the space. However, it was generally felt prudent, to pursue the idea, as the future of the area and the Anson Trust's position was uncertain. It was suggested that a letter be sent to the Anson Trust to express the Parish Council interest in protecting the area. The Chairman asked for a show of hands

In favour 8

RESOLVED:

that a letter be sent to the Anson Trust to express the Council's interest in protecting any remaining open space on the Anson field should the Trust dispose of part of the field to a developer and subject to any planning application being successful.

2009/129

Buses

Stagecoach Service X30 and 31

Council received a report from Mr. Walton who had attended a public meeting arranged by Stagecoach regarding its proposed reduced service. The X30 and 31 service Oxford to Wantage was seen as one service, although one bus travelled through Marcham and the other direct from Oxford to Wantage. Stagecoach was unwilling to continue the half hourly service through the village owing to declining numbers. Council noted that the Clerk had written a letter of objection to Stagecoach following the concerns raised at the annual meeting for electors. Concerns were raised that if the bus service went to hourly, then residents would use cars and potential passengers would be lost.

Council considered a letter from Oxfordshire County Council regarding a bus subsidy, as it was proposed to reduce the bus service to hourly in the day and 2 hourly in the evening Monday-Thursday. The County Council had agreed to provide a subsidy to fund an hourly service in the evening until December 2009 and sought views as to its continuance after then, given the apparent lack of demand on the Abingdon/Wantage section of the route. Council was of the opinion that the evening hourly service was important for the village.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Council ratifies the action of the Clerk in writing a letter of objection to Stagecoach to the Proposed reduction in bus service through the village.
- (ii) that a letter be sent to the County Council advising that the retention of the hourly

evening service was vital for the village, and that the subsidy should continue after December.

- (iii) that the letter also include reference to the loss of potential passengers if the half hourly service was reduced to hourly.

X15 – RH Transport

Council noted a response from RH Transport that it was a rare occasion when anyone boarded the X15 around the village. A commercial decision had been made to run the service along the A415 main road only, and that it would not revert to going round the village. Council considered a request from a parishioner that the main road stop near Hyde Farm Nurseries be reinstated.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a letter be sent to Oxfordshire County Council requesting that this stop be reinstated, as it existed when the X15 ran along the A415 previously.
- (ii) that the Parish Council funds the cost of the “flag” if required by the County Council.

2009/130

Grant Request

Mr. Bough asked Council whether he could make a statement. Mr. Bough had previously declared a personal and prejudicial interest. Council agreed to Mr. Bough making a statement. Mr. Bough, under s. 12(2) of the Code of Conduct, as a director of the Arthur Anson Trust made a statement regarding the grant application. The Trust had received a second quote for a wooden ball wall, the same as the one on Tilsley Park in the sum of £1250. The intention was to erect a wall to stop youngsters kicking balls at the pavilion building.

Council noted that a grant request had been received from the Anson Trust for funding in the sum of £3,000 for a concrete sports wall on the Anson field, as well as the information tabled at the meeting. Council discussed whether to take this item at this meeting given its policy of considering grants only at the November meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the grant request be considered at this meeting

Mr. Bough left the meeting.

Council discussed the grant application. Some concerns were raised regarding graffiti, noise, flammability of the wooden structure, and direction of balls rebounding. In principle, Council was supportive of a grant of £1250 for the erection of a wooden wall, depending on a site visit to Tilsley Park to view the wall in that location. Council discussed placing an article in MAD News. This

was thought premature. The Clerk reminded members that this was a grant application, and the project was an Anson Trust project.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Mrs. Ricketts, Mr. Charles, Mrs. Allan and Mr. Walton visit the wooden ball wall at Tilsley Park and report back to the Clerk on its suitability for Marcham.
- (ii) that a plan showing the location of the proposed wall be obtained from the Trust.
- (iii) that a grant of £1250 be approved and paid to the Anson Trust by the Clerk subject to satisfactory comments from the 4 members following their visit to Tilsley Park.
- (iv) that no article be placed in MAD News by the Parish Council

Mr. Bough rejoined the meeting.

2009/131

Best Kept Garden Competition

Council discussed the arrangements for the competition. 7 members offered to act as guides for the first round judges. The results of the first round would be available by the end of June. Council was reminded that the competition would be biennial in future. The Clerk advised on sponsorship received to date. Mr. Denton advised that his employer might be approached to sponsor the competition if it was found necessary to seek further sponsors.

2009/132

Village Green

Council considered complaints from parishioners regarding the condition of the edge of the village green. Vehicles encroached over the edge destroying the grass. The Clerk reminded members of the statutory protection of village greens. Council discussed ways of dealing with the problem including signs to prevent vehicles, and the installation of plastic or concrete grid blocks to strengthen the edge.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the opinion of G & I Ayres of Marcham, highway work specialists, be sought as to the strength and weights supported by the grid blocks.
- (ii) that no signs be erected
- (iii) that the matter be deferred to a future meeting.

2009/133

Vale of White Horse District Council – Community Safety Tri-Signs

Council noted that the District Council would provide information signs free of charge for vehicle areas/car parks.

RESOLVED:

that no signs be acquired for use in the parish

2009/134

Street Lighting

Council considered the County Council's proposal to turn off street lights between 12.30 a.m. – 5.30 a.m. and noted the areas in the village where residents had requested that they be left on. Council was supportive of the idea of carbon reduction and turning off some lights.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the County Council be advised that this Council supported the turning off of alternate lights.
- (ii) but that lights at Parkside, garage block between Haines Court and Howard Cornish Road, path between Morland Road and Howard Cornish Road, and bus stops at Longfields and junction of Howard Cornish Road/North Street be left on as requested by residents.

2009/135

Bench Seat

Council considered a request from a parishioner to give a donation to the Parish Council to that a bench seat could be erected in memory of a family member. Council was prepared to accept a donation, subject to the agreement of the location of the bench. The Anson field was a possibility, and this would require the permission of the Trust. Should the plans of the Trust to develop part of the field reach fruition, then it was hoped that the Trust would relocate the bench if necessary. The arboretum was a possible site if the Anson field was not suitable.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the parishioner be advised that the Parish Council was prepared to accept a donation to cover the cost of a bench seat
- (ii) that the preference was to site this in the Anson field, subject to the Trust's permission.
- (iii) that the Arboretum be the second choice of site should the Anson field prove not possible.

2009/136

Correspondence

- a) Thames Valley Police Open Day – Police Training Centre, Sulhamstead, Reading 8th August
- b) Vale of White Horse District Council – Survive and Thrive magazine
- c) Oxfordshire County Council – Home 2 school newsletter
- d) South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy
Council noted that the Secretary of State had completed her consideration of representations. The document was available at www.gos.gov.uk/gose
- e) OALC – May newsletter
- f) Vale District Council Community Safety – newsletter
- g) South Oxfordshire District Council/Vale of White Horse District Council – Launch of Leader Project – a scheme to support capital projects, business and

rural communities from funding acquired from the Rural Development Programme for England.

h) Vale of White Horse District Council – letter from Chairman

Council considered a letter from the Chairman of the District Council offering to attend local events.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the letter be copied to Marcham C.E. Primary School
- (ii) that the Chairman be invited to present the prizes for the Best Kept Garden Competition

i) Vale of White Horse District Council – Flood Grant

The Chairman, as co-ordinator of the local flood group, stated he had received a letter from the District Council offering a grant of £1,000 to support Marcham with its flood prevention measures including the purchase of a flood gauge, fluorescent coats, road closed signs, sand bags and water bags (inflatable sand bags).

j) Abingdon and District Citizens Advice Bureau – Annual General Meeting

Council noted an invitation to attend the annual general meeting of the bureau On Thursday 25th June with guest speaker Lucy Bartlett, Business Management Consultant for the bureau. Members interested in attending to advise the Clerk.

2009/137

Accounts

Council considered the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009. Questions on the accounts were answered by the Clerk. Council had been provided with a copy of the proposed annual return and also considered the figures on the annual return and the governance assurance statement. Council noted that Mr. Walton and the Clerk had attended a meeting with the internal auditor to receive his report for the 2008/2009 year. Council noted the report. The issue for Council was that Council was effectively borrowing from its employee to pay for stamps and other petty cash items. This had arisen following the adoption of the financial regulations in December 2008 when Council had chosen to delete the clause relating to the petty cash imprest system which had previously been in operation. The internal auditor had recommended the reinstatement of the imprest system, or regular reimbursement of expenses to the Clerk. Council also noted that the recipients of the Parishioner of the Year Award had nominated the Parochial Church Council as the organisation to receive the Council's agreed £100 grant. This would be spent on village activities such as the children's holiday club.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Council approve the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009 as presented.

- (ii) that Council approve the annual return figures and the governance of assurance required by the external auditor BDO Stoy Hayward on the annual return
- (iii) that the report from the internal auditor RJS (IA)Ltd be noted, and that a review of financial regulations take place
- (iv) that the grant of £100 to Marcham Parochial Church Council, as nominated by the recipients of the Parishioner of the Year Award be approved.

2009/138

Matters Raised by members for information

Bottle Banks – Hardstanding

A question was asked regarding the moving back of the bottle banks now that the hardstanding had been finished. The Clerk would make enquiries.

Footpath alongside Anson Field - strimming

It was reported that this path needed strimming. The Clerk would ask the contractor to do this.

Churchyard – elderflower tree

It was reported that elderflower growing on the North side of the Church needed cutting down. The Clerk would make arrangements for this.

Footpath Church to Cemetery

It was reported that this path needed clearing. Mrs. Evans confirmed that those undertaking community service who were doing work in the parish would do this.

Location of Bench Seat

It was suggested that should there be a request to the Parish Council to accept a donation, in future, to erect a bench seat then one location would be in the hardstanding in the grass opposite the path by Sheepstead Road. Anyone sitting there could then see the arrival of the bus, and there was easy access to the bus stop.

Highway Weed Spraying

Mrs. Ricketts and Mrs. Turney handed the Clerk the map for highway weed spraying. The Clerk would ask Cllr. Brown the County Councillor as to the progress on the idea of devolved spending from the County Council for weed spraying.

Longfields

It was suggested that the Parish Council pursue the idea of putting play equipment in the Longfields play area. This could be an agenda item for a future meeting. It was reported that parking on the wide verge at the corner of

Longfields restricted vision and also prevented the grass from being cut. The Chairman offered to speak to the new Police Officer for the area.

Incident – Youths/Elderly person

It was reported that an incident had occurred involving youths with bicycles where an elderly resident had been injured. Anyone hearing information about this matter was asked to pass it on to the Police.

Neighbourhood Watch

It was reported that residents should be aware of leaflets in letterboxes regarding the purchase of jewellery, where callers returned to properties and were alleged aggressive. The Clerk was asked to place an article in MAD News concerning this.

Thames Valley Police - Update

The Chairman showed members a Police information newssheet. This also had been received by the Clerk and emailed to all members.

Wayside Cross

It was reported that weeds were growing in this area. Mr. Denton and Mr. Walton offered to clear this. It was noted that the work to level the steps had not been done. The Clerk advised that the contractor was planning to do it during the Summer in time for the next Remembrance Sunday. The Clerk was asked to remind the contractor that the work was outstanding.

Volunteer Group

Mr. Denton, for information, reported that the village volunteer group would be undertaking a tidy up in July. Marcham Cubs, would probably assist with this.

2009/139

Items for MAD News

Council noted the list of items for inclusion in the village newsletter.

2009/140

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council would be held on Wednesday 8th July, 2009 in the residents' lounge, Duffield Place at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Signed Date