

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Monday 10th January, 2022 commencing at 7.30 p.m., held in the village hall, Barrow Close, Marcham.

Present:

Sheena Bigden, Mark Harvie, Sandra Hill, Michael Hoath (Chairman),
Ruth Mander, James Plumb, Tanya Rosenfeld, and Suzanne Saunter.
Clerk: Linda Martin
2 members of the public

Joined by Keely Ewart-Brookes (7.35 p.m) and Cllr Richard Webber (County Councillor)(7.38 p.m)

- 2022/1 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence had been received from Tony Mackelworth.
Cllr. R. Webber, offered the apologies from Cllr. C. Webber during the meeting, at the point of the District Councillor's report.
- 2022/2 Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest.
- 2022/3 Keely Ewart-Brookes joined the meeting.
- 2022/4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th December, 2021
The minutes of the meeting held on 13th December, 2021 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting, subject to adding in minute 2021/212 the declaration of interest by Ruth Mander in the grant application by Marcham Community Group, in that Ruth Mander was a Trustee of that charity.
- 2022/5 Matters Arising from the meeting held on 13th December, 2021
There were no matters arising.
- 2022/6 Public Participation
There were no issues raised by the members of the public attending.
- 2022/7 Planning Matters
- a) Decisions on previous applications
P21/V23037/HH Demolition and removal of garage. Erection of garden office
11 North Street
Permitted 22nd December, 2021
- P21/V2345/HH New garage with office above
School House, Oakley Park
Permitted 21st December 2021

P21/V3081/N4B Prior approval for the change of use of an agricultural building to dwelling

Hitchcopse Farm

Confirmed 21st December 2021

P21/V1928/HH Conversion of garage to habitable accommodation

Christmas Cottage, 22 Gozzards Ford

Permitted 20th December 2021

b) Applications dealt with under delegated powers prior to the meeting

No applications had been received

2022/8

Cllr. Webber joined the meeting.

c) Applications considered at the meeting

P21/V2520/FUL Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a 6 bedroom dwelling (C3b) for people with highly complex disabilities (Revised access, parking and ancillary works)

Amended plans and highway information.

Council discussed the amendments to the application. They were insufficient to alleviate the Council's earlier concerns. Issues relating to access, traffic queues, link to the footpath network, adequacy of parking spaces for vehicles that took wheelchairs, and drainage had not been resolved.

RESOLVED:

that these points, as made in the Council's letter of 18th October, 2021 be re-iterated.

2022/9

District Councillor's Report – Cllr. Catherine Webber

Cllr. Richard. Webber offered the apologies from Cllr. Catherine Webber for her non attendance, and gave her report.

Budgets - There was some uncertainty as to what central Government was prepared to undertake, but a balanced local budget should be achievable.

Housing developments south of the A415 – linking path

Progress was being made on the connection path between the 2 main sites to the south of the A415.

2022/10

County Councillor's Report – Cllr. Richard Webber

Bridleway 17 – Mill Road bridge

Cllr. R. Webber had received correspondence from a user of the bridge concerned over the lack of progress in the repairs. Cllr. Webber was not aware of anything that would delay works, and there was nothing to suggest that they would not be carried out next year, when planned.

Housing Infrastructure Fund – Thames crossing at Appleford

This project needed a viaduct bridge rather than being constructed on embankments. There was still a shortfall in funding of around £60million. Discussions were taking place between the Government and Oxfordshire County Council. Construction costs were still rising.

2022/11

Neighbourhood Plan

Keely Ewart-Brookes gave a report on a meeting of the working party that had taken place. Terms of Reference, neighbourhood plan boundary area and reports had been discussed. These could be included on a future agenda for Council's approval, as these had been produced after the agenda had been out. In regards to the Plan boundary area, if this went to the west of the A338, then the parishes of Fyfield and Tubney, Frilford and possibly Garford might be affected.

Mark Harvie offered to contact the Chairman of Frilford Parish Meeting to ascertain any views on a Marcham Neighbourhood Plan taking in part of Frilford parish. Similarly the Clerk would contact Fyfield and Tubney Parish.

The Council, prior to Covid, had a working party beginning to look at the aspects of a Neighbourhood Plan. As members had left the Council, and new members keen to undertake a Plan had replace them,

It was

RESOLVED:

- (i) that this Council undertakes a Neighbourhood Plan
- (ii) that the new working party continue to progress this.

2022/12

East Hanney Draft neighbourhood Plan – Consultation

Not all members had had an opportunity to consider the draft Neighbourhood Plan

It was

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the agenda item be deferred to a future meeting should the deadline for comments permit this.
- (ii) that comments be submitted to the Clerk in the interim
- (iii) that delegated authority be given to the Clerk to submit any comments to East Hanney Parish Council should a response be required before the next meeting.

2022/13

Community Facilities

Sandra Hill provided a report from the Play Area Working Party meeting. Initial thinking was to provide for toddlers, juniors and older children. The project could be undertaken in phases depending on funding available. Some residents had offered to join the working party to assist with planning any area. Types and styles of play equipment were being investigated. A substantial amount of funding would be required. Members were asked to let the clerk know if there were specific items of equipment that should be taken into consideration.

RESOLVED:

that a sum of £120,000 from the Council's community fund be set aside and earmarked for the play area project

2022/14 Cllr. R. Webber left the meeting at 8.15 p.m.

2022/15 Cemetery Fees
Council reviewed the cemetery fees and charges. The chairman called for a show of hands

RESOLVED:

that the fees be increased by £5 per item as per the attached schedule with effect from 1st April 2022.

2022/16 Risk Assessment
Council considered the risk assessment. Comments were made that whilst checking headstones appeared under the cemetery heading, it did not appear under the Churchyard heading. It was noted that construction costs were increasing owing to Covid, and that the costs of construction of a new village hall could have increased proportionately. Insurance was indexed link, and the valuation was at June 2020. It was suggested that the building be revalued in 2023.

The Chairman called for a show of hands for adopting the draft risk assessment subject to including an item under the Churchyard heading to check headstones.

In favour	Against	Abstention
9	0	0

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the risk assessment be adopted subject to adding an item under the churchyard heading to check headstones.
- (ii) that a valuation of the village hall take place in 2023.

2022/17 Budget 2022/23
Council carefully considered the current balances, the likely balances at the year end, and the draft budget for 2022/2023. It was noted that a question had been raised by the Church as to any plans for the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations. It was thought that any expenditure could be taken from the sum allocated for grants. Members were reminded as to sums set aside last year.

The Chairman called for a show of hands for those who supported setting the precept at £71,500.

In favour	Against	Abstention
9	0	0

RESOLVED:

- (i) any unspent sums from 2021/22 be taken into reserves

- (ii) that the budget for 2022/23 as set out in the appendices to these minutes be approved
- (iii) that the precept for 2022/23 from the Vale of White Horse District Council be set at £71500.
- (iv) that a sum of £120,000 of the £180000 remaining from previous gifts be earmarked for play area provision.
- (v) that the remaining £60,000 continue to be set aside for the purpose of community facilities and benefit.
- (vi) that a sum of £70,000 from reserves continued to be earmarked for new cemetery provision.
- (vii) that the former funds held by Marcham and Frilford Joint Burial Committee and now part of the Parish Council's accounts, held in the PC Cemetery account be set aside for Cemetery purposes.

2022/18

Covid 19 – Face to face meetings

It was noted that Government still did not have legislation in place to permit remote meetings of Councils. In view of increasing risk from the variants of Covid 19 virus, the Council considered delegation to the Clerk to enable Council business to proceed should the Council not be able to hold meetings.

RESOLVED:

In response to the continuing Covid-19 outbreak and in the event that it is not possible to convene a safe meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Clerk shall have delegated authority after discussion with the Chairman, and/or other members of the Council, to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the Council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.

2022/19

Annual Meeting of Electors

For the benefit of newer members, clarification of the annual meeting of electors was provided. This had to be held between 1st March and

1st June. Owing to the general situation with the Covid 19 virus and its variants, there was uncertainty as to whether such a meeting should be held face to face. The guest speaker planned for the previous cancelled annual assembly had been on Neighbourhood Planning.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the village hall be booked provisionally for a date in the third week of May
- (ii) that the matter be kept under review, and a possible speaker, and arrangements be determined at a later date

2022/20

Correspondence

- a) Oxfordshire County Council - 20s plenty campaign
Campaign for reducing traffic speed and undertaking speedwatch.
- b) Vale of White Horse District Council – Code of Conduct – New arrangements were adopted on 8th December, 2021
- c) Emails with thanks from Be Free and South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau for grants awarded.
- d) Police Crime Commissioner bulletin December.
- e) Oxfordshire County Council – Local Transport and Connectivity Plan
Webinars for Parish and Town Councils on 24th January and 1st February at 7.00 p.m. Formal consultation will run from 5th January to 16th March 2022.
- f) Oxfordshire County Council – Operation London Bridge seminar for Clerks 18th January, 2022
- g) Vale of White Horse District Council – Vale news December 2021
- h) Affinity Water – Emerging Regional Plan for water, consultation to take place between 16th January 2022 and 14th March 2022
- i) OALC – Members’ December’s newsletter
- j) Vale of White Horse District Council – Planning Enforcement Statement as to policy.
- k) A34 Oxford – improvement information from National highways / Highways England. Consultation was expected later in the year.
- l) Marcham All Saints Church – Enquiry regarding Platinum Jubilee events for June 2022.

2022/20

Accounts

The list of payments had been circulated to members, and Council noted the cheques numbered 3474 to 3482 and authorised payments in the sum of £7785.33 in respect of administration costs, play area checks, litter picking, grants awarded, and tree survey works.

Review of the effectiveness of the internal audit

Council received a report from the working party that had undertaken a review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit. This had concluded that it believed that the Council’s system for internal financial control was satisfactory, and that the internal audit met the standards for scope, independence, competence, relationships, planning and auditing as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as well as the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance recommendations. The

asset register, audit plan and terms of reference had been reviewed, with dates for activities being brought forward within the year. It had been noted that the risk assessment was in hand.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the audit plan (version 7 dated 5th January 2022) and terms of reference (version 6 dated 5th January 2022) be accepted
- (ii) that the report and recommendations of the audit review working party be accepted
- (iii) that IAC Audit and Consultancy be appointed internal auditor for the account year ending 31st March 2023.

2022/23

Matters Raised by Members

Cow Lane Allotments

A question was raised as to signage and repairs to the fencing adjacent to the pedestrian gate. The delivery of the signage was imminent. The Clerk would check with the handyman as to the progress of repairs with the fencing.

A water meter reading was required for Castle Water. Ruth Mander and Sheena Bigden to provide this to the Clerk.

Harding Way – new Pye Site to the north

It was reported that works to lay the foundations for the roads were progressing. A connection to the public sewer which lay under the Council's public open space had been made. It was noted that several trees had been damaged, and were dead. The footpath in the open space too had been dug up and was in need of restoration, as no tarmac had been laid.

North Street – footway

Ruth Mander, for the benefit of newer members, provided a summary of efforts by the Parish Council to create a footway/refuge area for pedestrians using North Street between The Gap and Howard Cornish Road. The Parish Council did not have statutory powers to undertake works on the highway. The County Council, however, now had access to some community infrastructure funding. That Council was looking at a safety audit and feasibility study.

2022/24

Items for Marcham and District News

The Clerk would prepare an article for MAD News.

2022/25

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be called when it was considered safe to do so, in the light of the increased rate of spread of Covid 19 variants. The next usual scheduled date was Monday 14th February.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Signed Date