

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Monday 9th February, 2026 commencing at 7.30 p.m. and held in the village hall, Barrow Close Marcham

Present:

Sheena Bigden, Michael Hoath, Andrew Mason, Joe Withers
Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin
Cllr. Robert Clegg (District Councillor)
Joined by Tanya Rosenfeld (7.37) and
Cllr. James Plumb (County Councillor) (7.40)

2 members of the public

- 2026/21 Appointment of Chairman
In the absence of the Chairman, It was proposed by Sheena Bigden and seconded by Andrew Mason that Michael Hoath be appointed Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

Michael Hoath took the chair, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 2026/22 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence had been received from the Council's Chairman Mark Harvie, Keely Ewart-Brookes and Ruth Mander.
- 2026/23 Declarations of Interest
Michael Hoath declared an interest in the agenda item relating to Community Facilities in that he was a Trustee of Marcham Community Group which ran the hall and field facilities.
- 2026/24 Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January, 2026
The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January, 2026 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.
- 2026/25 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January, 2026
There were no matter arising.
- 2026/26 Public Participation

Davies Edge – Planning Enforcement
A question was asked regarding progress with planning enforcement issues concerning biodiversity. It was noted that the Parish Council would not necessarily be updated, but Cllr. Robert Clegg, as District Councillor confirmed he had some information.
- 2026/27 District Councillor's report – Cllr. Robert Clegg
Cllr. Clegg had produced a written report on District Council matters which had been circulated to members. This included:

Pig Smells - The Vale of White Horse District Council had monitored potential issues with odour and noise. To date these seemed in line with living near to a livestock farm. Monitoring, particularly over the Summer months, would continue.

Davies Edge Biodiversity – Matters regarding possible breach of planning requirements were progressing, and some reseeded and replanting would be undertaken by the developer and management company. The informant would be kept updated when timeframes were known.

Bus Stop – Duffield Place eastbound – This had been raised with the District Council’s property team, who had forwarded the request to a 3rd party surveyor. An update was awaited.

Local Government Reorganisation – Central Government’s consultation on the three proposals for Oxfordshire had commenced and was open until 26th March.

2026/28 Tanya Rosenfeld joined the meeting. 7.37 p.m.

2026/29 County Councillor’s report – Cllr. James Plumb
Cllr. Plumb’s report would be taken on his arrival at the meeting.

2026/30 **Planning Applications**

a) Decisions on previous applications

P25/V1852/HH Proposed two storey side extension, rear single storey extension and rear elevation changes
The Warren, Faringdon Road
Permitted 23rd January 2026

b) Applications dealt with prior to the meeting

None received

c) Applications for consideration at the meeting

P25/V2571/HH and P25/V2732/LB - Erection of a single storey part oak framed flat roof extension with rooflights (amended application)
3 Mill Road
Comments: The Council had no objections to the amendments

2026/31 Cllr. James Plumb joined the meeting 7.40 p.m.

County Councillor’s report – Cllr. James Plumb

Cllr. Plumb had produced a written report on County Council matters which had been circulated to members.

Cllr. Plumb reported on:

Morland Road – Footpath – This was being diverted during half term week.

A415 – Culvert near Church Street – a 28 day urgent clearance request was raised on 14th January. The jetting and clearance was expected shortly.

Budget – The County Council’s budget was due to be set on 10th February. The Conservative Independent Alliance group had proposed an amendment to the draft to increase funding of frontline services

Local Government Re-organisation – Notification that Central Government had commenced consultation on local government reorganisation. The consultation would remain open until 26th March.

Questions were put to Cllr. Plumb regarding potholes/uneven roads, particularly North Street where there was a very uneven surface and Howard Cornish Road near to Anson Close. As the highway “super user” he had marked up and been able to fast track some repairs.

Reference was made too, to the culvert under the A415 which caused flooding, as leaves and debris were being washed down from an area much further north. It was stated that it was essential that any rubbish was kept out of the culvert.

Mill Road verge – A later agenda item was to discuss the state of the Mill Road verge. A photograph would be given to Cllr. Plumb.

Morland Road realignment of footway – Questions were asked of Cllr. Plumb regarding lack of communication of the date of installation of a new path. The date was unknown to the Parish Council, and there were still some safety concerns. Copies of correspondence would be given to Cllr. Plumb and he would raise the points.

One Network

Cllr. Plumb referred to the website One Network which listed upcoming road works in the county.

Cllr. Plumb left the meeting at 7.55 p.m.

2026/32

Footpaths – Church to Cemetery

Council received an update report regarding the footpaths.

Council noted that the Vale of White Horse District Council had agreed the s. 106 funding could be secured via a letter rather than a more formal legal agreement. Council noted, and understood the terms in the letter.

Joe Withers proposed, seconded by Sheena Bigden that the Council comply with the terms and conditions laid out in the letter.

On a show of hands		
In favour	Against	Abstention
5	0	0

It was RESOLVED:

- (i) that the terms and conditions of releasing £31019.95 of s. 106 funding for footpaths set out in a letter from the Vale of White Horse District Council dated 21st January, 2026 be accepted.
- (ii) that the Responsible Financial Officer and Michael Hoath, member of the Parish Council and Chairman of the meeting sign the acceptance letter on behalf of the Parish Council.

2026/33 Local Government Re-organisation – Session hosted by Vale of White Horse District Council 9th February, 2026
 Michael Hoath gave a report on the Local Government Reorganisation session which he had attended. Slides would be circulated. This could be an item for debate at the next Parish Council meeting to see if the Council wished to lodge a response to central government, otherwise members could do so as individuals.

2026/34 Neighbourhood Planning – Session hosted by Vale of White Horse District Council 28th January /and online 2nd February
 Andrew Mason gave a report on a meeting which he had attended, and summarised the points relevant to Marcham. Although there were changes proposed in regards to planning matters, Councils were still being advised to start a Neighbourhood Plan as any new plan would not be in place until after changes were introduced. The benefits and pitfalls of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan were outlined. There was a dedicated person at the Vale of White Horse District Council, Tom Gill, to assist with Neighbourhood Plans.

Discussion took place as to timeframes, the work needed to complete a Plan and general lack of help. Andrew Mason would draft a paragraph about Neighbourhood Plans, appealing for help for insertion into the next issue of Marcham and District News.

2026/35 Michael Hoath was a Trustee of Marcham Community Group and had declared an interest, he stepped down from the Chair, and took no part in debate. Sheena Bigden was appointed Chairman for the next items.

Community Facilities
 Council received an update report in regards to drainage at the hall. Professional advice was awaited, and no further action could be taken until that was received.

Council noted correspondence from Marcham Community Group in regards to costs of drainage. A resolution had been passed previously to defer any discussion regarding drainage costs until professional advice as to the shared private drainage had been received. No request had been received by the Clerk for redebating or reversing the previous resolution. There were grant opportunities for village organisations should current external funding be required.

Council noted and considered the layout drawing for the footway adjacent to Morland Road. This matter had been raised earlier in the meeting with the County Councillor James Plumb who was going to raise the Parish Council's concerns.

- 2026/36 Michael Hoath resumed as Chairman of the meeting.
- 2026/37 Allotments
Council noted that £9420 of £12732 s. 106 funding, had to date been spent on clearing a new allotment area, and fencing. The final phase of the work would be completed before the end of the financial year.
- 2026/38 Mill Road – state and condition of verge
Council considered correspondence and a photograph from a resident regarding the state of the verge in Mill Road. The photograph would be sent to Cllr. James Plumb.
- 2026/39 Salvation Army Textile Bank
Council noted correspondence from Salvation Army Trading indicating that owing to operational changes and a downturn in the second hand textile sector, the recycling bank had been removed. An article to advise residents would be placed in the village newsletter and on the Council's website.
- 2026/40 Annual Meeting for Electors
Council considered the arrangements for the annual meeting of electors. It was agreed that the meeting should be held on Thursday 14th May. It was suggested that Abingdon Bridge, a grant recipient, could be invited to be a guest speaker. In addition, MCG and Marcham School too could be invited to talk to residents.
- 2026/41 Cllr. Robert Clegg left the meeting.
- 2026/42 Risk Assessment
Council considered the risk assessment, and noted the amendments made from the previous year.
It was noted that fidelity guarantee cover was set at £545,000, and balances were £587,000. The clerk would make enquiries regarding an increase in premium costs for raising the cover. In addition it was noted that topple testing of cemetery memorials needed to be undertaken. The Chairman called for a show of hands of those in favour of adopting the risk assessment

In favour	Against	Abstention
5	0	0

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the risk assessment as presented and numbered version Feb 26, be adopted.
- (ii) that enquiries be made as to adding the new bench seats and noticeboard to the insurance policy as well as increasing fidelity guarantee cover
- (iii) that topple testing of memorials in the Churchyard and cemetery be pursued

2026/43

Finance / Accounts

Council noted the bank reconciliation as at 31st December 2025. Council received a report from the working party on the review of the effectiveness of internal audit in regards to the Parish Council and Marcham and Frilford Joint Burial Committee.

RESOLVED: that

- (i) the report on the bank reconciliation showing balances of £578082.82 be accepted
- (ii) the report from the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit Working Party be noted and recommendations accepted.
- (iv) the Audit Plan 31st Jan 26 version 11, and Terms of Reference 31st January, 2026 version 9 be accepted
- (v) Pauline Hedges be appointed internal auditor to undertake the AGAR review and final audit for the year 25/26

The list of payments had been circulated to Members. Council noted the cheques numbered 3969 to 3975 and cemetery account 440 and authorised payments in the sum of £3404.31 in respect of administration costs, grass cutting, (annualised sum) and litter bin emptying,

2026/44

Staff Committee

Council considered setting up a working party alongside the Staff Committee to aid meeting arrangements. This would enable members

to meet online to discuss confidential matters, rather than having to meet face to face to discuss matters at a meeting with a closed session.

Council also considered undertaking an external professional assessment to undertake a review of staff duties and hours needed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a staff working party comprising the members of the Staff Committee: Mark Harvie, Andrew Mason, Keely Ewart Brookes and Sheena Bigden be established to support the work of the staff committee.
- (ii) that an independent external assessment of staff duties and hours needed be investigated and undertaken.

2026/45 Items for Marcham and District News – March 2026 edition
The Clerk would prepare an article for inclusion in the March issue of Marcham and District News. This would include Central Government Reorganisation consultation, the removal of the Salvation Army Textile Bank, annual meeting for electors. Andrew Mason had offered to draft a paragraph regarding helpers for a Neighbourhood Plan, and Sheena Bigden/Ruth Mander/Mark Harvie would draft an article regarding Council's achievements, accompanied by photographs, outline a list of projects going forwards, and particularly information as to keeping the 26/27 council tax level the same as the current year.

2026/46 Matters Raised by Members for information

Works to footpath

Queries were raised in regards to contacting the County Council, start dates and notifications to relevant organisations. The Clerk would continue to keep Joe Withers informed.

Litter Picking

It was suggested that litter picking stations be purchased so that residents can assist with litter picking. The costings would be put to the next meeting.

Litter Picking Day

It was suggested that there be a litter picking day in the Spring. A resident usually arranged this. Sheena Bigden agreed to approach the resident to enquire whether he could arrange it again.

2026/47 The Chairman moved that in accordance with s. 1(2) Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item

on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public's interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

RESOLVED:

that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item which related to exempt information

Item discussed

Rights of access over Parish Council land and boundary position

RESOLVED:

- (i) That a local resident be asked again to mark on site where he believed his boundary to be.
- (ii) that rights of access be further considered once the boundary line had been set.

2026/48

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 9th March, 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

Signed Date