

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:

Sheena Bigden, Keely Ewart-Brookes, Mark Harvie (Chairman), Michael Hoath, Ruth Mander, Andrew Mason, Tanya Rosenfeld, Joe Withers
Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin
Cllr. Robert Clegg (District Councillor)
2 members of the public

- 2026/49 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence had been received from County Councillor James Plumb.
- 2026/50 Declarations of Interest
Michael Hoath and Ruth Mander declared an interest in the agenda item relating to a revaluation for insurance purposes of Marcham Centre, as they were Trustees of the Centre.
Although the Members' requirement to declare interests did not relate to the Clerk, in the interests of transparency, the Clerk placed on record the fact that she was related to the agent for the planning application for Bluebell House.
- 2026/51 Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February, 2026
The minutes of the meeting held on 9th February, 2026 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.
- 2026/52 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February, 2026
Annual Meeting for Electors
Council noted that the date for this meeting had been confirmed as Thursday 14th May, 2026 at 7.30 p.m. and the hall had been booked. Guest speakers to date had been confirmed as Gary Hibbins from The Abingdon Bridge and Adam Grady from Marcham Community Group.
- Litter pick
A resident was arranging a village litter pick. The Council was not involved in these separate arrangements. A member reported that he had seen the litter pick advertised on the village facebook page for 11th April.
- 2026/53 Public Participation
Davies Edge
A resident made comments in regards to Davies Edge development by Pye Homes Ltd. Prior to the meeting he had handed the clerk a copy

letter from the Vale of White Horse District Council to Pye Homes Ltd which indicated that the public open space on that development would be transferred to the Parish Council under a Deed of Variation dated 12th December 2021. The Council was unaware of any suggestion that it was to take on any open space land on the development.

The resident also indicated that residents had sent a joint formal complaint to Pinnacle Management Company (the property management company) regarding a lack of response to their correspondence, and he queried the ownership of the boundary on the north side of the Davies Edge development. It was understood that this belonged to the development as the allotment land to the north had already been fenced off by the landowner prior to occupation.

The Clerk would scan and circulate the letter handed to her. The resident stated that he had raised the ownership of the public open space with the District Council, and a reply had indicated that someone would respond in due course, but he had not received any further correspondence.

Allotments

A resident raised concerns regarding rats at the south eastern corner of the allotment site. Sheena Bigden, the Councillor serving on the allotment working group, responded and stated that contractors had advised that the bait boxes already used were not effective, in that there were better areas for rats to source food, such as compost heaps, and on plots where chickens were kept. Snails had been found in the bait boxes, and bait remained uneaten. The Council could not continue to pay a pest controller when there was no gain. Discussion took place regarding allotment tenants taking their own measures within the confines of their own plots. Consideration would be given to letting tenants have some best practice notes to minimise pests on the allotments.

2026/54

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

No progress expected until warmer weather.

Davies Edge Biodiversity

No further update. Cllr. Clegg had last been updated by the Cabinet Member on 3rd March.

Dalton Barracks site redevelopment

Surveys on traffic modelling were expected in late April and stage 2 consultation would follow soon after.

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

The Vale of White Horse District Council had set up a new webpage on the topic, and new correspondence was being added as it arrived, with historical correspondence also being added.

2026/55

County Councillor's report – Cllr. James Plumb

Cllr. Plumb was unable to attend the meeting, but had produced a written report on County Council matters which had been circulated to members. This included:

Keep Clear Lines – Marcham Primary School

These were being added to the lining maintenance programme for 26/27.

Frilford and Marcham Transport Study

County Council officers had concluded a detailed optioneering study including the Frilford Lights junction, HGV movements through the village and the pinch point on Packhorse Lane. Cllr. Plumb was due to meet with the officers to discuss the findings and a report would follow.

Oxfordshire County Council Budget 2026/27

The County Council had set its budget for 26/27. This included a 4.99% increase in council tax that would see a band D household paying £2006.78 per annum.

Local Government Reorganisation

Cllr. Plumb reminded members and those attending that central government consultation on reorganisation was open until 26th March. Three different proposals had been put forward by the County Council, Oxford City Council and Vale of White Horse District Council/South Oxfordshire District Council jointly. A decision on which proposal was being adopted was likely to be announced in the Summer of 2026.

Points raised by members to be sent to Cllr. Plumb

1. Would it be possible to repaint the stop lines at the entrance to Barrow Close at the same time as repainting the lines adjacent to the school.
2. Safety barrier – a barrier to stop people walking across the grass into Barrow Close was required
3. Potholes – these seemed to have had a temporary repair carried out. Whilst the Parish Council was pleased with the endeavours of the County Council, the repairs undertaken were not sustainable and they were not a full repair, and were breaking open again
4. Would James Plumb like any assistance with the role of highway super user?

2026/56

Planning Applications

a) Decisions on previous applications

P25/V2732/LB and P25/V2731/HH

Erection of a single storey part oak framed flat roof extension with

rooflights. (amended pans)
3 Mill Road
Withdrawn 18th February, 2026

b) Applications dealt with prior to the meeting

None received

c) Applications for consideration at the meeting

The Clerk, having declared an interest in the following application, did not advise members or make any comment.

P26/V0385/HH Install 22 ground mounted PV panels
Bluebell House, Frilford Heath
Comments: No comments

P26/V0417/LDP Certificate of lawfulness for proposed removal of
false chimney to resolve leaking roof issue
7 Greenwood Grove
This application was for a determination by the District Council as to
whether planning consent was required.
Comments: No comments

P26/V0464/FUL Formation of a tennis court within the residential
curtilage of Upwood Park (retrospective)
Upwood Park, A420, Besselsleigh
Comments: It was unfortunate that this was a retrospective application,
and the Council would have preferred to have had the opportunity to
comment prior to the installation of the court. Otherwise no comment.

2026/57

Vale of White Horse District Council – Planning Training 26th
February/3rd March 2026

Andrew Mason reported on this training event which he had attended. New legislation and planning reforms were taking place with new processes being introduced. The Council being able to call in applications and override planning officers may be removed. A new computer system was being introduced, and the way in which the public accessed planning applications on line would change. Teams from the sections within the planning department had circulated around tables of those attending providing a very brief update on their role within the department and answering general questions. Surgery sessions were being introduced and design guides were being reviewed with greater consistency across Oxford City and the Vale and South areas for car parking standards.

2026/58

Thames Water – SESRO reservoir briefing 5th March, 2026

Mike Hoath reported on a briefing meeting hosted by Thames Water regarding the reservoir, which he had attended. The group against the reservoir development had been present. The key points to note were:

The clay looked acceptable and Thames Water was reasonably content, but some areas were being looked at again. The matter would progress by a single Development Order. Concerns were raised that there seemed to be no answer to the question on flooding. The water table would rise by 1m in some parts. The Grove area would drain to the river Ock, and this could be a problem for Marcham. A traffic study was in progress, but this was aimed at the build phase and not the operational stage. Thames Water was too looking at the Severn/Trent water transfer.

2026/59

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government –
Consultation on local government reorganisation

Andrew Mason had provided an update on a presentation by Oxfordshire County Council which had suggested more consistency across the county would result, with work being undertaken by area committees. As a unitary authority it was thought that £163 million would be saved over 5 years.

2026/60

Footpaths

Joe Withers gave an update report. A meeting with the contractor would take place on Friday 13th March. There was a proposal to start on the Anson field path owing to the collapsed wall near the cemetery entrance, and comments received that works were going to be taking place on the wall to the north of the cemetery path. Information would be given to MCG and the Anson Trust as owners of the field after the meeting with the contractor. A question was raised as to the clearance of the area near the cricket screens to enable greater space for the contractor to work.

2026/61

Community Facilities
Morland Road path

Council noted that the path had now been relocated by the County Council, away from the entrance into the Barrow Close. Concerns were again raised regarding people crossing the grass and not using the footpath to access Barrow Close.

Bench Seats

These were now complete and ready for installation. This would be done when a vehicle could access the Anson field and village green.

Revaluation of hall building / muga for insurance purposes

Council noted the clerk's report in regards to difficulties in finding a local valuation surveyor for non residential buildings. Two quotations had been received for a desk top survey valuation or a site visit. Costings were considered high. Discussion took place regarding larger councils which owned buildings, probably undertaking a similar exercise.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the County Council be asked as to their restrictions (height, length,

visibility, type) to aid Parish Council discussions as to barriers which might be able to be installed at the Barrow Close path entrance.

- (ii) that larger councils be approached to enquire which firm was used in regards to a valuation of public buildings for reconstruction and insurance purposes.
- (iii) that the matter of insurance valuations be deferred to the next meeting.

2026/62

Allotments

Council received an update report regarding clearance of land for new allotments. Council also considered correspondence regarding rats and pests which were on the allotments, and noted the resident's comments from the public participation section of the meeting.

Whilst it was regrettable that there were still some rats at one end of the site, it was felt that unless their foot supply was cut off at the source, and compost heaps cleared, public money would be spent for nothing.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the resolution from October 2025 that the pest control contract not be renewed still stands.
- (ii) that this be conveyed to the allotment working group

2026/63

Churchyard/Cemetery Memorial Testing

Council noted one quotation had been received in regards to memorial testing, and a site meeting had taken place with a second firm on 16th February. The second quotation was awaited, and the firm had been reminded.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a reasonable amount of time be allowed for receipt of the second quote
- (ii) that a sum up to the value of the quote received be approved.
- (iii) that delegated authority be given to the clerk to select a relevant contractor up to the value shown.

2026/64

Vale of White Horse District Council – Community Infrastructure Levy

Council noted a further sum of CIL funds in the sum of £80,000 were due from Bloor Homes to the Vale of White Horse District Council. Council considered whether its share should be passed to the Parish

Council or retained by the District Council for the time being.
The Chairman called for a show of hands of those in favour of leaving the funds with the Vale of White Horse District Council

In favour	Against	Abstention
5	3	0

RESOLVED:

- (i) that any further sums paid by Bloor Homes to the Vale of White Horse District Council, and due to be passed to the Parish Council, should be kept by the District Council for the time being.
- (ii) that the matter be reviewed again when the District Council next makes enquiries in September.

2026/65

Staff Matters

Council considered costs and the terms of engagement in regards to an independent assessment of staff requirements.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a sum of £500 be set aside for this purpose
- (ii) that the letter of engagement be signed by the Chairman and Keely Ewart-Brookes

2026/66

Accounts

Council noted that the new artist designed noticeboard and 2 bench seats had been added to the insurance policy. In addition, the fidelity guarantee figure had been increased to £600,000 owing to balances held.

The list of payments had been circulated to Members. Council noted the cheques numbered 3976 to 3984 and cemetery account 441 and authorised payments in the sum of £3348.76 in respect of administration costs including subscriptions, grass cutting, (annualised sum) and litter bin emptying.

2026/67

Items for Marcham and District News – April 2026 edition

The Clerk would prepare an article for inclusion in the April issue of Marcham and District News. This would include how to report potholes and highway issues via Fix My Street, encouragement for residents to join the independent litter pick, information regarding the annual parish meeting, rats on allotments, an appeal for volunteers to help.

2026/68

Matters Raised by Members for information

The following matters were raised

Property For Sale Boards – 2 for sale boards from different estate agents, and relating to 2 different properties had been erected on the village green without the knowledge of or permission of the Parish Council. The Clerk would raise the matter with the estate agents.

Neighbourhood Plan – A request was made for this item to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Meeting to encourage volunteering within the village – This meeting was due to take place on Saturday 14th March at 3.00 p.m. Andrew Mason would substitute for Ruth Mander.

Litter Stations

This project still needed to be actioned. An existing post on the village green could serve as the place to affix the station.

2026/69

The Chairman was about to move that the meeting go into confidential session, however as there was no further correspondence received, this agenda item was not required.

2026/70

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 13th April 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

Signed Date