

## MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, commencing at 7.30 p.m. held in the village hall, Barrow Close Marcham

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Present:

Sheena Bigden, Mark Harvie, Michael Hoath, Ruth Mander, James Plumb, Suzanne Saunter, Joe Withers  
Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin

Cllr. Robert Clegg (District Councillor)  
Cllr. Richard Webber (County Councillor)

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- 2023/115      Declarations of Acceptance of Office  
It was noted that those members, whose later signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office had been agreed by Council, had now signed their Declarations.
- 2023/116      The Chairman welcomed Joe Withers as a new member of the Council, and also welcomed the District and County Councillors. He suggested that the reports from both the District and County Councillors be brought forward on the agenda. This was agreed by Council. They would be received after discussing matters arising from the last meeting.
- 2023/117      Apologies for Absence  
Apologies for absence had been received from Sandra Hill.
- 2023/118      Declarations of Interest  
Mark Harvie declared an interest in the agenda item relating to the planning application P23/V1128/FUL relating to Denman College, in that his Landlord was related to the applicant.
- 2023/119      Minutes of the annual meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2023  
A query was raised in regards to bee keeping at the allotments. This item had been deferred at the last meeting for further research into guidance and requirements. Members discussed bee keeping. The Clerk reminded members that the agenda item was to approve the minutes. Research and a written report would be required, and when complete, would be a future agenda item.  
A member of the allotment working party had undertaken some research. Owing to the proximity of dwellings to the proposed site, and potential problems it was suggested that bee keeping at Parkside allotments not be permitted. This was supported by Members. The Clerk advised that this item would need to be a formal agenda item for the July meeting.

The minutes of the annual meeting held on 16th May, 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

- 2023/120      Matters arising from the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2023
- Oxfordshire County Council – 20 mph areas – informal consultation  
Council noted the response from the County Council in regards to its comments on the suggested 20 mph zones. There was some dissatisfaction as to not including the section of Sheepstead Road within the existing 30 mph, as part of the speed reduction proposal. Further comments could be made at the formal consultation stage.
- 2023/121      Public Participation  
There were no members of the public in attendance.
- 2023/122      District Councillor’s Report – Cllr. Robert Clegg  
Cllr. Clegg referred to:  
Climate Action Grant Fund - A second round of funding with a total of £100,000 was available, with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> July for receipt of applications.  
The Beacon, Wantage Open Day – This community centre would host a free of charge family fun event on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June between 11.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.  
East Challow Neighbourhood Plan – This had gone to local referendum and was being debated by the District Council on 13<sup>th</sup> June, with a recommendation for adoption.  
Parish Boundary Review – The Electoral Commission were reviewing ward boundaries. There had been much housing development in the Vale, and representation was being reviewed as demographics had changed. Some councillors had far more electors than others. This first stage of the review would be completed in December.
- 2023/123      County Councillor’s Report – Cllr. R. Webber  
Cllr. Webber referred to:  
HIF (Housing Infrastructure Fund) Road, Didcot to Clifton Hampden – The planning application for the new road was to go to the County Council’s planning committee on 26<sup>th</sup> June.  
Thames Water Reservoir – This issue and objections were ongoing.  
Highway Grass Cutting – The recent warm and also wet weather had encouraged rapid growth. Verge cutting, in the main, had been reduced to once in the season. Reducing the cutting schedule had been one easy way of reducing the County Council’s expenditure.  
Mill Road – Bridleway 17 – An update was provided. This matter had been raised at the annual parish meeting.  
County Councillor Priority Fund – He reminded the Council that County Councillors had been allocated £15,000 whereby they could specify certain priorities for spending within their divisions. Members suggested that clearance of land south of Bridleway 17 could be undertaken with some of that funding. The Clerk advised that the

County Council had already indicated that clearance was part of the planned works to the area, and would check past correspondence. Additional funding would not be required. Members however, discussed an application to be made to the County Council for some of the priority funding to be used towards clearance, The Clerk advised that the agenda topic was the receipt of the County Council's report and that no resolution should be made. There would be no direct benefit to the parish and the result would be just moving funds from one County Council budget to another. Notwithstanding the Clerk's advice, Council resolved to apply for funding towards path clearance.

Questions to Cllr. Webber - County Division boundary Review

A question was raised as to the progress of the County Council boundary review of divisions. Any changes would come into force with effect from the elections in 2025. Cllr. Webber would make enquiries as to the current situation with the review process.

2023/124

Appointments  
Public Transport Representative

RESOLVED:

that Suzanne Saunter be appointed at the parish transport representative

Need for War Memorial Working Party

The War Memorial working party at the March meeting of the Parish Council recommended that a structural survey of the war memorial be carried out. It was therefore suggested that the Council undertake this, and that the war memorial working party not continue as it had done previously.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a War Memorial Working Party not be formed
- (ii) that the matter of forming a war memorial working party be re-considered when necessary.

2023/125

Data Protection Policy

Council noted the Clerk's comments following checks on the Data Protection Policy.

2023/126

Planning Matters

a) Decisions on previous applications

P23/V0820.LB Replacement of 14 windows with double glazed windows

Hyde Farm House, Abingdon Road

Permitted 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023

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

None Received

c) Applications considered at the meeting

P23/V1077.RM Reserved matters application for the approval of details relating to appearance, landscaping, scale and layout for 88 dwellings, following outline consent P20/V1388/O Land south of A415

Comments: Council requested hoggin paths be changed to tarmac, requested that a property boundary be relocated slightly, to allow space be left for a possible future pedestrian link to the west. It had concerns regarding safety and enclosures near the attenuation area, as well as overall drainage and the impact on the water courses and sewage system.

As the Chairman had declared an interest in the following item, the Vice-Chairman took the chair for the next agenda item.

P23/V1128/FUL Proposed extension of existing lake and associated landscape work.

Denman College, New Road

Comments: Council sought assurances that the proposed works to the lake would not exacerbate future flood risk, and that there was adequate capacity for any increased water levels. It also sought assurances, that in view of the archaeological report referencing the potential for finds, that any finds would be appropriately processed.

Mark Harvie resumed as Chairman of the meeting.

2023/127

Annual Meeting of Electors

Topics raised by electors at the annual parish meeting related to the Play Area, a youth shelter, funding available in s. 106 funds held for Marcham, completion of the Neighbourhood Plan, traffic through the village and stopping HGVs, and the location of the Zebra crossing on the A415, and whether it could be better sited.

Council noted the queries and opinions raised on the various topics.

2023/128

Community Facilities

Council received an update report from the working party on the progress with the new play area. The planning application was pending, and the planning officer had raised some points which were being dealt with, including the positioning of some of the equipment. An arboricultural assessment was required. The clerk had obtained a quotation in the sum of £395. Lengthy discussion followed on various

play area topics. Concerns were raised by some members that should the equipment be moved slightly, then the final plan would be different from that agreed by Council. Council noted there would be a further consultation period undertaken by the planning department.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the quotation from Sylva Cconsultancy in the sum of £395 for undertaking an arboricultural assessment be accepted.
- (ii) that any issues regarding the new play requiring a decision before the next meeting of the PC be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the working party and Chairman.

Barrow Close entrance

Joe Withers spoke regarding concerns about the entrance point into Barrow Close, and safety for pedestrians. He had witnessed delivery vehicles exiting at speed, and near misses for pedestrians. Despite speed signage, he believed the area was still very unsafe.

The entrance was owned by the Anson Trust, and they had been asked to consider a speed hump. It was suggested that Joe Withers speak to the Chairman of Marcham Community Group to enquire of the latest position. Tri-partite co-operation was required between The Parish Council as owner of the hall, Marcham Community Group as tenant and the Anson Trust as owner of the entrance.

2023/129 As the duration of the meeting was almost 2 hours, it was moved that the next item be the accounts, as there was a need for Council to consider and approve the Annual Governance and Accounting statements at the meeting.

2023/130 Accounts  
Council received the financial statement for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 showing balances of £455944. The Internal Auditor's report, explanations where items had not been covered by the auditor, together with her letter confirming that there were no observations had been circulated to members, and these were considered.  
The Governance and Accountability Statement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 was considered. Each point was put separately to the Council.

Mike Hoath proposed and Sheena Bigden seconded and

On a show of hands

In favour

7

Against

0

Abstention

0

It was

RESOLVED:

a) that the Internal audit report, explanations of where items had not been covered by the auditor and letter confirming no observations be accepted by Council

b) that Section 1 the Governance Statement, of the AGAR for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 be approved with positive responses.

(ii) Council then considered the accounting statement which formed part 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Statement

Mike Hoath proposed and Sheena Bigden seconded and  
On a show of hands

In favour  
7

Against  
0

Abstention  
0

It was

RESOLVED:

that Section 2 the Accounting Statement, of the AGAR for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 be approved.

Council considered the dates for public access to the accounts

It was

RESOLVED:

that public access to the accounts be advertised as 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 (30 days)

Council noted that the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance had made slight administrative changes to the requirements going forwards from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

The list of payments had been circulated to members, and Council noted the cheques numbered 3639 to 3649 and authorised payments in the sum of £6371.07 in respect of administration costs, play area tree inspection report, tree work, and grass cutting.

Council reviewed the internal control mechanisms for financial control including signatories to the accounts and earmarked funds set aside. Balances in each account were reviewed together with interest rates. Management of the Cambridge Building Society account was less straight forward as it was a postal account. The higher sums previously kept in this account had been used towards the new village

hall. Council considered closing the two Cambridge Building Society accounts and transferring the balances to its Newbury Building Society account where the interest rate was higher, and where there was a local convenient branch if required.

RESOLVED:

that

- (i) that the mechanisms remain as at present
- (ii) Ruth Mander, Sandra Hill, Sheena Bigden, James Plumb together with the Clerk for administrative purposes act as signatories for Nat West bank accounts
- (iii) Ruth Mander and Sandra Hill together with the Clerk for administrative purposes act as signatories for the Cambridge Building Society accounts
- (iv) Ruth Mander, and James Plumb together with the Clerk for administrative purposes act as signatories for the Newbury Building Society account
- (v) Sheena Bigden and James Plumb together with the Clerk for administrative purposes act as signatories for the Nationwide Building Society account
- (vi) that the Council's 2 accounts with Cambridge Building Society be closed and the funds transferred to the Council's account with the Newbury Building Society.

2023/131

Standing Orders

The duration of the meeting had been 2 hours and it was RESOLVED to suspend standing order 3x to allow business to continue.

2023/132

Neighbourhood Plan

Council received an update report. Members had had sight of the questionnaire form. It was suggested that multiple choice options be given for the answer to the question how long have you lived in the parish to aid easier analysis. This would be considered by the Steering

Group. Distribution of the questionnaire was about to commence with hard copies being available for those unable to complete it electronically.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the steering group consider the ease of gathering information relating to the length of time a resident had lived in the parish.
- (ii) the questionnaire form be accepted and that the steering group proceed to circulate it to residents.

2023/133

State of Marcham Village

Council considered comments received from a resident regarding the state and condition of Marcham village. These had referred to the best kept village competition, grass cutting in the Churchyard and Cemetery, weed growth in the war memorial area, and highway verge grass, particularly at junctions where visibility was restricted for motorists.

Council noted the Clerk's comments that the Best Kept Village Competition run by ORCC had ceased in 2006. The Parish Council's own front garden competition had been put on hold in 2017 whilst new housing was being constructed. The Churchyard had a conservation policy, the Cemetery contractor had ceased trading and a new one had been found on an urgent basis. The War Memorial was weeded from time to time, and a contractor was scheduled to do it. Highway verges were the responsibility of the County Council, and they cut once in the season. Additional vision splays were cut at main A roads when required.

Discussion took place on encouraging voluntary efforts. Comments were made regarding insurance requirements, and the responsibilities of the Parish, District and County Councils in regards to grass cutting. The District Councillor would check with the District Council as to the areas it cut.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that an appropriate response be issued to the resident
- (ii) that the areas of grass cut by the Parish Council be referenced on the Council's website.

2023/134

Parish Communication

RESOLVED:

that this matter be deferred to a future meeting.



2023/135 North Street – Bus Stop – Eastbound opposite Post Office  
Council considered a request for support from a resident to relocate the bus stop close to 13 North Street to another location, 10-15 metres along the road, as those on the upper deck of the bus had views into the garden, when the bus stopped.

The stop had been in situ at that location for a considerable number of years, the road was at its widest point at that location. There was no obvious other location where it could be sited.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that this Council is of the opinion that the Eastbound bus stop opposite the Post Office could not be moved satisfactorily.
- (ii) that this Council would not support the relocation as requested.

2023/136 Correspondence  
a) CPRE Meeting – Championing our local countryside - Tuesday 27 June at 1800-1900 (via Zoom – one delegate invited). Details circulated.  
b) Oxfordshire County Council – Public Transport Representative Meeting Tuesday 4th July at 1.30pm. (via Teams).  
c) OALC – Newsletter May 2023

2023/137 Matters Raised by Members  
Tree Planting  
An informal approach had been made to a member regarding the planting of a tree in memory of a relative who had died. The Frilford Road recreation ground, or the first public open space in Harding Way, may be possibilities. The member would refer back to the family. A formal approach to the Council for an agenda item may follow.

Footpaths in village

Queries were raised in regards to outstanding path issues in the parish. The Willows – Pye Homes. The path works to link the site to the adjacent site to the West had started.

Monks Walk – the requirements for tarmac paths and links to join Eastwards were outstanding.

Harding Way to new development to the north. The path on the Eastern side of the development to link the two sites was outstanding. The path alongside Sheepstead Road from the new development to Cow Lane was outstanding.

Cllr. Clegg would raise these issues with the District Council.

Path alongside the Anson Field – The pothole found near the junction with the A415 had been filled in.

2023/138      Items for Marcham and District News  
The Clerk would prepare an article for MAD News. Topics raised included a play area update, the Neighbourhood Plan and grass cutting.

2023/139      Date of Next Meeting  
The next meeting would be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Signed ..... Date .....