

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Monday 10th February, 2025 commencing at 7.30 p.m. and held in the village hall, Barrow Close Marcham

Present:

Sheena Bigden, Mark Harvie (Chairman), Michael Hoath, Ruth Mander, Joe Withers

Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin

Cllr. Robert Clegg (Vale of White Horse District Councillor) from 7.33 p.m.

Cllr. Peter Stevens (Oxfordshire County Councillor) from 8.15 p.m.

1 Member of the public

- 2025/30 Apologies for Absence
No apologies had been received.
- 2025/31 Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest.
- 2025/32 Minutes of the meetings held on 13th January, 2025 and 21st January, 2025
The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January, 2025 and 21st January, 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meetings.
- 2025/33 Matters arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 13th January, 2025 and 21st January, 2025

Marcham Fair
Initial discussions had been had with organisers of village events such as the Marcham Big Weekend team. The suggestion for an information exhibition of organisations within the village had been well received. It was a matter of deciding at which event it be arranged, and going forwards with the planning.
- 2025/34 Cllr. R. Clegg joined the meeting.
- 2025/35 Public Participation
Mr. Doug Colkin, on behalf of residents in Faringdon Road near St. Peter's crossroads, and residents in Sheepstead Road, addressed Council regarding speeding traffic, inadequate sight lines for some leaving their properties, the poor condition of Sheepstead Road and the general increase in traffic volumes including HGVs. He sought the support of the Parish Council in reducing the speed limit.
- 2025/36 County Councillor's Report – Cllr. P. Stevens
This item was deferred to later in the meeting when Cllr. Stevens would be present.

2025/37

Faringdon Road / Sheepstead Road Marcham – Correspondence from residents

Council considered correspondence from residents and the Faringdon Road/Sheepstead Road Action Group, regarding speeding traffic and the possibility of a speed reduction for these roads. It was acknowledged that future developments such as housing at Dalton Barracks, and Kingston Bagpuize, plus increased activity from Hills Aggregates quarry would add to the issues raised. It was noted that the Faringdon Road at the Frilford Heath end was already a 40 mph area, and so was Gozzards Ford, yet the cross roads area in between was 60 mph. The difficulties in Sheepstead Road too were acknowledged. Similarly, it was thought that a speed reduction for a few metres north of the crossroads towards Cothill, would be welcome, as this would help motorists negotiating the bend, and property exits.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That this Council supports the residents in their aim to have a reduction in speed for Sheepstead Road, and Faringdon Road.
- (ii) That a request be lodged with Oxfordshire County Council for a 40 mph limit in Sheepstead Road, and for Faringdon Road between Gozzards Ford and Frilford Heath.
- (iii) That the request also include a section of Cothill Road from St. Peter's crossroads northwards.

2025/38

Junction of The Gap and North Street – parking too close to the junction

Council considered correspondence from a resident who was concerned about the lack of visibility for motorists leaving The Gap and joining North Street owing to vehicles parking in North Street too close to the junction. It was noted that the resident has approached the Police in regards to this matter.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That an article be placed in Marcham and District News requesting residents to be courteous to their neighbours and think carefully where they parked.
- (ii) That the County Council's Highways team be asked for measures to improve sight lines at the junction of The Gap and North Street.

2025/39

District Councillor's Report – Cllr. R. Clegg

A written report submitted by Cllr. Clegg in advance of the meeting, had been circulated and read by members. The report was noted. The report referred to:

Parkside – Road Condition - The Vale of White Horse District Council, who owned the property access lane, off Parkside adjacent to the allotments, was going through the procurement process and seeking tenders to restore the surface. A contractor would be appointed following completion of the procurement process. Disruption would be minimised, and it was noted that phased works may be needed. The works programme would be prepared in due course by the selected contractor.

Upwood Quarry – No response had been received from the County Council regarding water monitoring.

Dalton Barracks redevelopment - The matter of update articles from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation appearing in Marcham and District News had been raised with the DIO. Unfortunately their timings did not match with the newsletter copy dates. They were attempting to improve this going forwards.

National Planning Updates - District Council officers had updated their Members on planning matters.

An update to the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) announced on 12th December 2024 included an uplift target for the Vale District Council to deliver 949 houses per annum (up from 633), and a requirement that Local Planning Authorities have a 20% buffer within the 5 year land supply. The Joint Local Plan which had been submitted to the Inspector was not affected, and the Vale District Council's 5 year land supply was sufficient to meet the new requirements in the interim, until the Joint Local Plan was adopted.

Environment Agency – New Flood Risk Assessment – A new flood risk assessment had been published in December 2024. Maps would be available in February. These would include climate change projections.

Grey Belt – A new Grey Belt concept was introduced. A review of the Green Belt may be required. Developments on Green Belt land in future must provide at least 15% more affordable housing than normal, up to a cap of 50%.

Policy wording – References to “beautiful” and “beauty” had been removed, and a focus was on practical design quality. Local character could no longer be taken into account when Councils consider their ability to meet housing needs.

Public Service Infrastructure – Significant weight had to be placed on new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure. Sustainable transport modes would be prioritised.

Neighbourhood Plans – Protection was included for Neighbourhood Plans, so a Parish Council undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan was still being recommended.

Local Government Reorganisation – Oxfordshire had not been selected within the first wave of regions to reorganise under the Government’s White Paper. An all Oxfordshire Unitary Authority was most likely, although other Councils, Swindon were keen to join the Strategic Authority. The Vale of White Horse District Council was holding additional meetings. Central Government had requested that Oxfordshire Councils submit an interim plan by 21st March and full proposals by 28th November, 2025.

Joint Street Trading Policy – A revised policy document was approved by Licensing Committee on 7th February, and would come into effect from 1st April. The Police included updates to multiple site traders which was relevant to The Crown and similar places.

Budget Setting – The District Council would meet on 12th February to agree the budget for 2025/26. It was considering using s. 106 funding to purchase some accommodation to use as temporary housing. This would reduce the use of hotels and Bed/Breakfast accommodation.

A question was put to Cllr. Clegg as to what happened to the housing when it was no longer required.

2025/40

South East Strategic Reservoir Option

Council Considered correspondence from Sutton Courtenay Parish Council who was very concerned about the proposed South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) and its potential for a major flooding disaster due to a let down of water from the reservoir during flood conditions. That Council wished to work with other parishes who were similarly concerned, to work together to object to the project. Members referred to the incredibly flat slope to the top of the reservoir, rather than a high bund, and the emergency discharge pipe to the river Thames. The opinion in Marcham as to the reservoir was split.

After some discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (i) That this Council believed there were enough forums to voice concerns, and therefore Marcham Parish Council did not see the need, at this stage, to join with other parishes, as each had different expectations.
- (ii) That Sutton Courtenay Parish Council be asked if they would keep Marcham Parish Council informed

2025/41

Planning Applications

- a) Decisions on previous applications
No decisions had been issued since the last meeting.

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

No applications had been received.

- c) Applications considered at the meeting

No applications had been received

2025/42

Community Facilities

Council received an update report on the Noticeboard and play area benches. A meeting was taking place with the District Council's arts officer in regards to the design of the Noticeboard and benches. Ruth Mander offered to join the group.

It was noted that the Anson Trust had agreed to a speed hump at the entrance to Barrow Close. They had obtained one quotation, and were obtaining a second one. The Clerk would check with the Anson Trust for an update prior to the next meeting.

2025/43

Projects identified for 24/25

Council received an update on the projects identified for 24/25. Steps had been taken to obtain quotations for tree works in Harding Way. The Chairman had spoken to Marcham Society in regards to the conservation noticeboard in the Churchyard. It was suggested that the heading of Projects be included in each agenda.

2025/44

Cllr. P. Stevens joined the meeting at 8.15 p.m.

2025/45

County Councillor report – Cllr. P. Stevens

Cllr. Stevens had investigated the A415 area, near to the junction with Church Street and what measures could be taken in regards to traffic speeds following the fatal accident. The Department for Transport oversaw a database of accident statistics, however, this did not record minor incidents of near misses. He was taking step which would encourage the public to register near misses. This would be helpful going forwards, but past occurrences could not be recorded. In regards to the A415, the coroner would issue a Regulation s. 28 report (Prevention of Future Deaths) where he thought addressable highway factors were relevant.

Members noted that this section of road flooded, and believed the speed limit from 60 mph into 30 mph at a bend in the road was not appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That this Council seeks clarification from the County Council of what road improvements were likely to take place in view of the recent fatal road accident.

2025/46

Council Funding/Grants

Council considered a review of the grant application form, and grant policy.

RESOLVED:

That a working party be formed comprising Michael Hoath and Sandra Hill to consider amendments to the application form and policy documents , and make recommendations to Council.

2025/47

Annual Meeting of Electors

Council considered the arrangements for the annual meeting of electors.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That this take place on Thursday 15th May, 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall.
- (ii) That guest speakers, and meeting details be deferred to a future meeting

2025/48

S. 106 funding for artificial pitch

The housing developments in Abbots Grange, and Kings Field phase 1 had generated £4300 of funds for artificial sports pitches within 10 miles of Marcham. Wantage Town Council had requested the use of these funds towards a new artificial pitch at Alfredian Park, Wantage. Council considered the release of these funds for this purpose.

It was RESOLVED:

That this Council had no objection if the funds were released for Wantage Town Council.

2025/49

All Saints Church – Invitation to send Council representatives to the formal opening of the new kitchen / servery in the Church on Sunday 2nd March at 10.30 a.m.

Council noted an invitation from All Saints Church to attend the Church service on Sunday 2nd March, and to represent the Parish Council at the formal opening of the new kitchen area after the service.

It was RESOLVED:

That Mark Harvie represent the Council.

2025/50

Risk Assessment

Council considered the risk assessment, and noted the amendments made.

RESOLVED:

that the risk assessment as presented be adopted.

2025/51

Finance /Accounts

Council noted that Nationwide Building Society has confirmed the reinvestment in their 6 month business saver account of £54202.91 with effect from 24th January, 2025.

Council noted the bank reconciliation as at 31st December, 2024, and balances.

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 £434294.19 and be accepted
- (ii) the report from the Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit Working Party be noted and recommendations accepted.
- (iv) the Audit Plan Jan 25 and Terms of Reference 21.1.25 be accepted
- (v) Pauline Hedges be appointed internal auditor for the year 24/25

The list of payments had been circulated to Members, and Council noted the cheques numbered 3849 to 3859 and authorised payments in the sum of £3080.53 in respect of administration costs, play area checks, defibrillator pads, pest control and water pipe repairs at allotments, Christmas tree lighting expenses.

2025/52

Matters raised by Members for information

Allotment – rat treatment

It was noted that the tenant of the paddock had requested 2 rat bait boxes to be sited near the paddock. The clerk would make enquiries of the pest control company.

2025/53

Items for Marcham and District News March edition

The Clerk would prepare an article. This would include parking and a request to avoid obstructions, and preliminary details of the annual meeting of electors.

2025/54

The Chairman moved that in accordance with s. 1(2) Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings) Act 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

2025/55 Item discussed – Access across Parish Council land. Council received an update report.

2025/56 Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting would be held on Monday 10th March, 2025 in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 9.55 p.m.

Signed Date