

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Marcham Parish Council held on Monday 8th September, 2025 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,
Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin

Cllr. Robert Clegg (District Councillor)
Cllr. James Plumb (County Councillor) joined at 7.38 p.m.
Ms. Kay Sentance, Rural Housing Enabler, Community First Oxfordshire
7 Members of the public

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public to the meeting. Prior to the commencement of formal business, Ms. Kay Sentance, the rural housing enabler, from Community First Oxfordshire gave a presentation and answered questions about community led housing. She outlined the purpose of the project, the housing needs survey, the rights of the Parish Council to have more say as to the occupants, and Defra funding that was available until the end of the financial year.

- 2025/175 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillor Joe Withers, owing to work commitments.
- 2025/176 Declarations of Interest
Michael Hoath declared an interest in the agenda items relating to community facilities in that he was a Trustee of Marcham Community Group which ran the Marcham Centre site. Mark Harvie and Ruth Mander, both, too, declared an interest in the agenda items relating to community facilities in that they were Trustees of Marcham Community Group which ran the Marcham Centre site.
- 2025/177 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July, 2025
The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July, 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.
- 2025/178 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July, 2025
There were no matters arising.
- 2025/179 Public Participation
Pye Homes – Temple Gate development
A member of the public thanked Cllr. Clegg for taking forward issues he had raised regarding the Pye Homes development off Sheepstead Road. He advised that biodiversity matters had not been completed.

2025/180

District Councillor's report – Cllr. Robert Clegg
Cllr. Clegg gave a report on District Council matters.

Air Quality Monitoring along Packhorse Lane

The Air Quality Management Area status was likely to be revoked if the current trend in emissions continued. However monitoring would continue and the diffusion tubes at their current locations, and data collection would continue.

Differences in traffic volumes to the west and east of the village was most likely due to an increase in traffic associated with the village, rather than traffic passing through.

Cllr. Clegg answered questions regarding the diffusion tubes and monitoring.

Grass Cutting Parkside

Areas of grass in Parkside which were the responsibility of the Vale of White Horse, and those of the County Council had been investigated, and a plan provided.

Reservoir

Notable developments: The Judicial Review brought by the Group Against the Reservoir Development had been dismissed by the High Court in July.

Thames Water had published their RAPID Gate Three report in August. The revised construction costs of the reservoir was £6.5 billion ($\pm 15\%$). The earlier estimate of £2.2 billion was therefore not accurate.

Reservoir Steering Group

The members of this District Council steering group had been invited to a briefing in late September, where it was expected that they would contribute towards the District Council's submission to the Gate Three report.

2025//181

Davies Edge – Biodiversity matters

Council noted the report from Cllr. Clegg as to the steps he had taken regarding Biodiversity matters on the Temple Gate development by Pye Homes. Concerns raised by the public as to woodland management areas, bird and insect housing and wild flowers were discussed. It was noted that a tree had come down at the eastern side,

RESOLVED:

- (i) That these matters be referred to the planning enforcement officer at the Vale of White Horse District Council
- (ii) That matters relating to the trees also be referred to the tree officer

2025/182 Marcham Society – “Marcham Uncovered” Event Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th October.
Council discussed this future event, and noted the offer of support from Ricardo Rios, Neighbourhood Plan officer at the Vale of White Horse District Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that contact be made with Richardo Rios in regards to the event
- (ii) that members advise the clerk of their availability to be present at the event.

2025/183 Salvation Army Textile Bank
Council noted that concerns had been raised again, regarding bags being left on the ground around the textile bank. Questions were asked as to the type of items left, as not all appeared to be textiles. Suggestions were made as to a second textile bank, or another one from a different provider.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That enquiries be made of Salvation Army as to the types of items that are deposited, if they are not textiles
- (ii) That the Council works with the Salvation Army in an attempt to solve the problem, rather than take another textile bank from a different provider

2025/184 County Councillor’s report – Cllr. James Plumb
Cllr. James Plumb had submitted a written report on County Council matters:

Oxford Congestion Charge Update

More than 7000 people responded to the consultation with 66 % of those against the introduction of a congestion charge. 73% of respondents thought that a charge would negatively impact their lives. The County Council’s cabinet was going to decide on 15th September whether to implement a congestion charge. If agreed it would commence in the Autumn.

Faringdon Road Closure

This road would be closed between Blackhorse Lane and Sheepstead Road on 29th and 30th September to facilitate investigation works to determine the suitability for in-situ recycling works. The testing would relate to the adherence of new road surfacing to tarmac.

A415 Safety Review

Cllr. Plumb had requested information from the Cabinet Member for Transport regarding timeframes for the A415 in regards to the Vision Zero programme, (the fact that no one should be seriously injured or killed on the road network) and whether it would be possible for a weight restriction on the A415.

Sheepstead Road/Faringdon Road speed limits

Cllr. Plumb was pursuing enquiries as to whether there was developer funding available for the implementation of new 40 mph limits.

Electric Blanket Testing

The Trading Standards team would be hosting session throughout the county for residents to have their electric blankets tested. Locally these would be 26th September in Abingdon and 10th October in Wantage. Last year 30% of blankets failed safety tests.

Review of Salt Bins

The County Council had salt bins available should Parish Councils require them.

Junction of North Street and A415

Cllr. Plumb had arranged for white junction marker lines to be installed. These should deter vehicles from parking too close to the junction.

Poor road surfacing

Areas of poor road surfacing, in North Street and at the Howard Cornish Road junction were brought to the attention of Cllr. Plumb.

2025/185

Faringdon Road / Sheepstead Road - possible speed reduction

Council noted the estimated costs for the introduction of speed reductions. These were at least £10,000, given the legal work involved, consultations, press notices, and construction works. It was thought important to reduce the speed in these areas before the Dalton Barracks development progressed. CIL money had been paid in regards to the Bloor Homes site.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands for those in favour of using CIL funds provided by Bloor Homes should this be possible

In favour

Against

Abstention

7

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RESOLVED:

That enquiries be made of the Vale of White Horse District Council, in the first instance, as to whether the CIL funds could be used on the Faringdon Road schemes.

2025/186

Planning Applications

a) Decisions on previous applications

P24/V1326 Erection of new dwelling, Blackgate Lane
Appeal dismissed 11th June, 2025

P24/V1986/FIL Change of use of land to rear, to construction material storage, and marble cutting shed and storage
Black Horse Public House, Gozzards Ford
Withdrawn 17th July, 2025

P25/V0730/HH Single storey front extension. Changes to driveway entrance
Trinafour, Abingdon Road
Permitted 18th July 2025

P25/V1215/FUL Pizza sales from horsebox in car park on Fridays 5-9 p.m. and Saturdays 4-9 p.m.
Marcham Centre
Permitted 26th August, 2025

b) Applications dealt with prior to the meeting

None received

c) Applications considered at the meeting

P25/V1709/LB and P1745/HH Proposed alterations to first floor Windows on north elevation
Marcham Park (formerly Denman College)
Comments: The Council had no comment

P25/V1846/AG Prior notification of new agricultural track and removal of single bay from existing agricultural building
Manor Farm, Mill Road
Comments: The Council had no comment

P25/V1550/FUL Demolition of existing dwelling and garage and erection of replacement self-build dwelling, separate annexe and garage

Snowdrop Cottage, Cothill Road

Comments: The Council was concerned about adequate screening and did not wish to see the annexe become an independent separate dwelling. The site was very close to Cothill Fen, and the Council would not wish to see drainage affect the Fen in any way.

d) Application for Street Trading Licence

Application by Turning Peel Pizza to trade from Marcham Centre car park Mondays and Fridays 4.00-9.00 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays 2.00-9.00 p.m.

Comments: Council requested that the trader provide his own waste bins. Comments were also made that the requested hours of trading were inconsistent with the hours granted under the planning consent.

2025/187

Community Facilities

Hall drainage – shared costings

The Chairman, having declared an interest invited a member to take the chair for this item. Keely Ewart-Brookes took the chair.

Council had received a written report from its representatives who had attended a meeting with MCG and the residents on 21st July. The acting Chairman summarised the meeting. The residents had requested correspondence in writing, rather than discussing the drainage position at the meeting. The Parish Council had drafted a letter. Marcham Community Group had had an opportunity to comment on it. The group had provided their own letter. Reference was made at the meeting to Licences required for the handling of chemicals to deal with the hydrogen sulphide. It was felt that the delivery driver would be suitably qualified, and there was no obligation on village hall volunteers to undergo training in order to fill the chemical tank. It was noted that costings would be the day to day running costs, plus long term replacement, administration etc.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that a final draft letter combining those of the Parish Council and MCG be produced and first circulated to members
- (ii) that the final letter, once approved, now be sent to residents

Play Area report

Council noted a report from RoSPA and the quarterly service inspection report from MRH Services. One recommendation was to cut back overhanging trees from the signage and agility trail. The Clerk would arrange this.

2025/188

Footpaths – Church to Cemetery

Council received an update report on the plans for the surface of the footpath and noted ongoing works at Denman College.

Mike Hoath agreed to finalise the s. 106 application for footpath funding. Mark Harvie agreed to speak to the owner of Denman as there was a need to avoid works nearby being undertaken after the resurfacing was done.

2025/189

Marcham Churchyard

Garden of Reflection

Members had had sight of the communication from Revd. Nick Weldon referring to plans to create a Garden of Remembrance within the Churchyard or elsewhere in the parish, with a request that the Parish Council take the lead on this new project. The issues raised were the difficulties with accessing the wayside cross used for Remembrance Sunday and residents endangering themselves on a busy road, when leaving tributes for those killed in a car accident.

The Clerk had sent the communication to the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils who had advised that a Parish Council did not have the statutory power to create a garden of reflection and therefore could not take the lead on this project. Concerns had been raised regarding payments for maintenance of such a garden if it were in the closed Churchyard, and ownership and health and safety issues in coming years.

Members were of the opinion that if the Church established a working group, it could appoint a member to attend working group meetings, and to report back to the Council, particularly as the Council was maintaining the closed Churchyard.

Council noted that 2 contractors had been approached in regards to works to an American oak tree in the Churchyard which was suffering die back. One was unable to provide a quotation, and the second had provided a figure of £750.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that Andrew Mason attend any future meetings of a Churchyard Garden of Reflection working group established by the Church and to report back to the Parish Council
- (ii) that the quotation in the sum of £750 for pollarding the american oak tree in the south west corner of the Churchyard be accepted.

- 2025/190 Grants
Council noted small grant sources that were available locally. It was suggested that the s. 106 register and CIL funding could be monitored to ensure that funding opportunities were not missed.
- 2025/191 Finance / Accounts
Council received a report on the bank reconciliation as at 30th June, 2025. Balances of £ 5282748.58 were held.
- Council noted that the external audit for the 24/25 year had been completed and that the information contained within sections 1 and 2 of the annual governance and accountability return accounts was in accordance with proper practices and no matters came to their attention which gave cause for concern. However, the external auditors did state that they considered a date of 25th June for the giving of Notice to inspect the account, could have been earlier, as the approval date was 9th June, 2025 and also commented that there had been a slight error as to a year date adjustment in a template notice from a previous year.
- Council noted that the Notice of Completion of the Audit and the report from the External Auditor had been placed on the website on 20th August, 2025 to supplement parts 1 and 2 of the Annual Return already displayed.
- The clerk was employed on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services salary scales. The recommendation from NALC had been for an increase backdated to 1st April 2025.
- The list of payments had been circulated to Members. Council noted the cheques numbered 3906 to 3927 and authorised payments in the sum of £15512.22 in respect of administration costs, grass cutting, play area safety checks, tree works, litter bin emptying, and rat control treatment, allotment clearance /water tap repairs.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the bank reconciliation as at 30th September and current reserves be noted.
- (ii) that payments totalling £15512.22 be authorised.
- (iii) that the Clerk's remuneration be adjusted in accordance with the NJC recommendations for 25/26 for spinal point 22 for 19.25 hours per week as set in 2004, backdated to 1st April 2025.

- 2025/192 Matters Raised by Members for information

Trees

It was reported that trees in gardens alongside the public footpath path

from Abingdon Road to North Street had dropped branches.

Comments were made that trees and shrubs in various parts of the village were overhanging paths, particularly in Howard Cornish Road and Orchard Way. It was suggested that an entry on Fix my Street may assist, as well as a request in the October issue of Marcham and District News for residents to cut back overgrowth. It was also suggested that the Parish Council could consider writing to specific residents if general requests did not help.

Mill Road – Pigs

It was reported that since pigs were now being kept at the Manor Farm beef unit off Mill Road, there had been a substantial increase in farm odours on a daily basis.

- 2025/193 Items for Marcham and District News – September edition
The Clerk would prepare an article for MAD news. This would include a request for residents to cut back overhanging growth from hedges and trees, electric blanket testing by Trading Standards, and a request for volunteers to serve on the cemetery working party.

- 2025/194 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 installation of footpath by Pye Homes. Council agreed to refer the matter to the planning officer.

- 2025/195 Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting would be held on Monday 13th October, 2025 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

Signed Date