

Present:

The Chairman of the meeting (Mr. C. Bough) and eight members of the Parish Council, Councillor I. Brown (Oxfordshire County Council), Cllr Ms. J. Hanna (Vale of White Horse District Council).

Guest Speakers: Mr. Steven Howell, Head of Transport, Oxfordshire County Council and Mr. Roger O'Neill, Team Leader for the Local Transport Plan, Oxfordshire County Council who spoke about the traffic problems on the A415. Mrs. Ruth Atkins, School Governor who gave a report on the school and its activities.

22 Members of the public, including 4 members of the "Packhorse Lane Action Group for Safety" who had erected display boards with posters showing their concerns regarding safety issues on the A415.

The Parish Council had recently elected Mr. W. Cumber as Chairman of the Council, but its immediate past Chairman, Mr. Bough took the chair for the Annual Assembly.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **2. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2005**

These minutes had been circulated and read by the parishioners attending. There were no objections and these were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings.

### **3. Business Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **4. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman outlined the meeting schedule of the Council and the main activities in which it had been involved. He listed the village organisations which had received grant support. He referred to the affordable housing scheme, plans to develop an improved play area, road improvements such as village gateways and vehicle activated sign, and the garden and best kept village competitions. He introduced Mr. Peter Rowe who had been co-opted on to the Council to replace Mrs. Marion Pointer who had resigned. He placed on record his thanks to the District and County Councillors, Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their time and commitment to the parish.

### **5. Parish Council/Burial Committee/Parochial Charity Accounts**

The Parish Council's and Burial Committee's budget had been presented to the parishioners attending. The Clerk explained the content of the documents. The Parochial Charity accounts were presented.

### **6. Police Community Support Officers**

The two officers for Marcham had been unable to attend the meeting and no report was available.

## **7. District Councillor's Report - Cllr. J. Hanna**

Cllr. Hanna stated she enjoyed working with Marcham parish as there was a lot of interest in parish matters from the community. She reported the following:

- a) The Vale of White Horse District Council had been awarded grant funding and would be proceeding with a skate park on a site adjacent to the leisure centre in Audlett Drive.
- b) The Council too had been awarded additional funding of £100,000 for meeting recycling targets. The Vale now recycled approximately 28% of waste.
- c) She offered her support for affordable housing in the parish and confirmed that the local plan, which was about to be adopted required affordable housing to be included in all but the smallest developments.
- d) She referred to the fact that the District Council's policy was to oppose the reservoir, but should the proposals proceed then the District Council would be a key player to ensure all necessary infrastructure and facilities are provided.
- e) The District Council had introduced half price bus passes this year as mandated by government.
- f) The District Council had continued to have the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest Council Tax in England, charging on average £90 per person or about 10% of the overall council tax bill.
- g) She referred to her support for local health services and her campaign to protect the local hospital from closure.

## **8. County Councillor's Report - Cllr. I. Brown**

Cllr. Brown gave a report on county matters.

- a) Waste - He raised concerns regarding the future of waste in the county as the county Council would be fined if it did not reduce landfill. There had been a suggestion that incinerators might have to be built.
- b) Government White Paper – There was to be a government white paper published in September. It was expected that there were to be proposals on the restructuring of Local Government and the possible creation of unitary authorities.
- c) County Council, Council Tax – The council tax rise was the lowest of any County Council in the South East of England. There had been a 4 year review on finances and money had been reinvested in the computer system which would bring savings.
- d) Reservoir - This was a large issue for the county. He identified that the compulsory works order process did not have any mechanism for planning gain. The Reservoir Affected Parishes Group was a group of elected members who would put forward local views and fight for planning gain. He referred to the fact that the Reservoir Affected Parishes Group would have its own website and the public would be informed via the village newsletter MAD News.

## **9. Marcham Primary School – Mrs. Ruth Atkins, School Governor**

Mrs Atkins stated that it had been a productive and exciting year for the school as it sought to build on the strengths identified in the Ofsted report of 2005. The school was in the process of building a partnership with Marcham Pre-School to make major improvements to the site to allow for a shared foundation unit to be established. She outlined the school's links with the community and its connections with the Church. She thanked the volunteers from the community who helped the school in many ways and particularly with their after school clubs. She explained the planned improvements to the curriculum and invited anyone with an interest in the school and its activities to contact the school.

## **10. Presentation of Community Service Award**

The Chairman explained the nomination and selection procedure for the recipient of the award. He read out the details on the Certificate and then presented it to Mrs. Christine Ricketts. Mr. Cumber spoke, paying tribute to the voluntary efforts of Mrs. Ricketts and outlined all the activities in which she had been involved.

## **11. Guest Speakers: Mr. S. Howell, and Mr. R. O'Neill**

Mr. Howell spoke regarding an implementation plan for 2006 – 2011 which had been sent to Government. Oxfordshire County Council was guided by Government with a set framework. Large schemes were dealt with by the South East Region. This included the By Pass. This had only achieved priority 3 rating. The County Council had decided the A415 was a strategic route. Consultants would be looking at the whole route for possible improvements. There were constraints at Newbridge. A new bridge was being considered and a general strategy for the A415 devised. Although the strategy would have to be developed before Marcham itself could be considered. Mr. O'Neill explained the 2 types of funding, that for major schemes and that for smaller schemes. The County Council effectively had 20% less funding than what it had 5 years ago, together with inflation this meant a very real drop in available finance. Best value over the whole county had to be achieved against priority targets set by central government. An initial scheme for the centre of Marcham cost £250,000. This funding was not available. County Council staff would look at Marcham but it had to fit in with other work. Should a scheme be given enough high priority then it could be implemented. Mr. Howell and Mr. O'Neill then answered questions.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the County Council's representatives for attending.

## **12. Any Other Business**

A question was asked regarding the position of the Anson Trust and its report. It was understood that the Trust was committed to explain itself, but was unable to do so at the moment owing to a pending court case.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 p.m.

Refreshments were then provided for those wishing to stay.