

Minutes of the Annual Assembly of Local Government Electors  
for the Parish of Marcham duly convened, and held in Marcham  
Primary School, Marcham on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2007 at 7.30 p.m.

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Present:

The Chairman of the meeting (Mr. W. Cumber) and seven members of the Parish Council, Cllr I. Brown (Oxfordshire County Council), joined by Cllr Ms. J. Hanna (Vale of White Horse District Council).

Guest Speakers : Ms. Charlotte Davidson and Mr. Martin Townsend from the Environment Agency

29 Members of the public.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Presentation of Community Service Award**

The Chairman presented Mrs. Christine Whild with the parishioner of the year award. He spoke paying tribute to the voluntary efforts of Mrs. Whild over many years.

**3. Guest Speakers – Ms. Davidson and Mr. Townsend**

Mr. Townsend and Ms. Davidson spoke briefly on the role of the Environment Agency and its role in connection with the Thames Water reservoir. He outlined the 3 main functions of the agency (i) as a regulator for industry, landfill, abstraction and disposal of water and enforcement by visiting and inspecting (ii) operational – site visits to ensure no flood or pollution risk and to provide a quick response where appropriate (iii) as an educator going into schools.

As far as water supply was concerned there was a dense population in the South East and there was a need to find more water to meet people's requirement. All the water companies in the region were looking at new resource development. There was a need to find the right solution, this included demand management. The Environment Agency was working with Government to encourage people to be more efficient. The Agency too was working with Thames Water to understand why the reservoir was needed, how much water was needed, the need for it to be in Oxfordshire, and was holding discussions as to what the best option was. It was not a question of working with one company as the water resources planning process required all companies to indicate their needs.

Mr. Townsend and Ms. Davidson then answered questions. These covered topics on leaking pipes, the possibility of a water grid system, whether consideration had been given to the growth of housing in the South East, the nature of water authorities as public companies whose role was to make profits for shareholders, the statutory powers of the Environment Agency, the power required and fuel emissions generated during reservoir construction and issues such as transport and global warming and whether the Environment Agency had power to stop a reservoir by refusing a licence. The Chairman thanked Mr. Townsend and Ms. Davidson for their presentation and for answering questions. They then left the meeting.

**4 Minutes of the last Annual Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2006**

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.

## **5. Business Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **6. Chairman's Report**

The first meeting of the new Council had taken place since the elections earlier this month. The Chairman introduced Mr. Walton as a new Parish Councillor. The Chairman outlined the main functions of the Council and its role as a statutory consultee in the planning process. He referred to the consultation documents which the Council had to consider, and the responses given which had taken a considerable amount of time. He mentioned the issues that the Parish Council had been involved with over the previous year. These included affordable housing, renovations to the play area, a planned trial for temporary traffic lights on the A415, the formation of the Neighbourhood Action Group and some discussion on the Anson Trust's proposals for redevelopment of the Anson field and new recreational facilities elsewhere. He made clear the fact that councillors, if they had any connection with the Trust declared an interest and left the Council meeting when Trust matters were being considered. The Council had spent a considerable amount of time dealing with complaints on village issues such as potholes, overhanging vegetation etc. He placed on record his thanks to the public for attending the meeting, and reminded them that Council meetings were open to the public. He also thanked the District and County Councillors, the Clerk and the editor of MAD news who helped keep the village together.

## **7. 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.

## **8. Neighbourhood Action Group**

Mr. Denton outlined the history of the NAG which had been initiated by the Police and was a group of parishioners, businesses, Police and interested parties from Kennington, Radley, Cumnor, Wootton, Sunningwell, St. Helen Without and Marcham who looked at village issues such as speeding, parking and antisocial behaviour. A new community policeman had been appointed and 2 new community police support officers were about to be appointed. An environmental audit was planned. He asked for any issues relevant to the group to be referred to him

## **9. District Councillor's Report – Cllr. J. Hanna**

The meeting noted that Cllr. Hanna had been elected District Councillor for a second term at the recent elections. She had spoken to many residents over the past year. Council Tax had been a big issue, although the Vale of White Horse District Council's was the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest charging council in the country. Delivery of good service was the main element.

She undertook to represent the village as far as she could, but she had no powers. Last year she had been involved with the local plan which would govern development in the future. She congratulated the parish and the landowner on the provision of phase III of affordable housing on the rural exception site at Longfields. The key issues ahead would be the Anson Trust's proposals. She undertook to consult with the village about this.

## **10. County Councillor's Report – Cllr I. Brown**

Cllr Brown stated he regularly contacted the Drayton Depot and pushed for village matters to be attended to. He confirmed the traffic trial would take place in July. £80,000 had been ring fenced by the County Council if the trial were successful. He referred to waste in the county where landfill sites were filling up. The County Council was going out to tender for incineration. The bid by Oxford City Council for unitary status had been turned down. On the reservoir matter Thames Water was not answering questions, and matters appeared to have gone quiet. He confirmed the X15 bus service Witney to Wallingford in its present form would cease, but that a new service Witney to Abingdon would replace it with a link to the X40 Abingdon to Wallingford service. He referred to funding being given for an intelligent traffic system in Oxford and also to the fact that the County Council had been rated excellent by the Audit Commission.

## **11. Marcham CE Primary School – School Governors' Report**

Ruth Atkins, Chairman of Marcham School Governors gave the report. She indicated that pupil numbers had risen from 78 last September to 118 currently. A new head teacher would start in September. The school was working closely with Marcham Pre-School who would be joining them in September. The school sought ways of working with the community especially the Church, via the Friday Club, support for religious education teaching in the school, the noticeboard in the Church and the singers taking part in Church services. The children had benefitted from a visit to the farm, sporting events and success in competitions. The school had achieved good SAT results and was working towards "healthy school" status. The school was in a time of transition with building work over the Summer to allow for the Foundation Stage Partnership Unit and with the appointment of a new Head Teacher, Mrs. Vivian Hutchinson who was taking over from Mrs. Lesley Clark on her move to Essex.

## **12. Any Other Business**

Parishioners raised the following points:

- (i) Motorbikes had been reported in the fields
- (ii) Village signs had faded e.g. school signs. Were these in the right places if they were to be effective
- (iii) The position with the Marcham By Pass
- (iv) The route taken by traffic when the traffic light trial was operational e.g would it wait in a queue or divert around Church Street
- (v) The closure of The Crown Public House

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.15 p.m. Refreshments were then provided for those wishing to stay.