

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 26th May, 2010 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

The Chairman of the meeting Mr. Walton, Chairman of Marcham Parish Council and 5 members of the Council. Cllr. I. Brown (Oxfordshire County Council), Cllr. Ms. J. Hanna (Vale of White Horse District Council).

Recipient of the Parishioner of the Year Award – Mrs. Jessica Brod

Guest Speaker: Mr. J. Asher – Great Marcham Weekend Committee and Marcham Community Group

Mrs. V. Hutchins Headteacher, Marcham Primary School

31 members of the public.

The Chairman introduced the meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillors Mr. W. Cumber, Mrs. C. Ricketts and Mrs. S. Turney.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th May 2009

These minutes had been circulated and read by 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 was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Presentation of the Parishioner of the Year Award

The Chairman read the citation on the certificate as per the appendix to these minutes and paid tribute to the work of Jessica Brod in connection with the Marcham Society. There had been a surprise presentation to her at a previous Marcham Society meeting. The Chairman formally presented her with the certificate. Mrs. Brod spoke and placed on record her thanks to the Chairman and the Parish Council. She was pleased at the public recognition of efforts in connection with the publication of the Marcham Remembered book, and accepted the award really on behalf of a team as there had been many people involved.

5. Mr. Jim Asher, Great Marcham Weekend 18th – 20th June.

Mr. Asher outlined the events that would be taking place. These included a quiz, street party, games and entertainment and maypole dancing for children, plus drama workshop, Wantage Silver Band and barn dance. The following day there would be an open air service at the farm, with Denman College having its grounds open with vintage car display, other gardens open, the Church and board room at the farm would host exhibitions. In addition there would be activities such as a treasure hunt and guided walks together with activities in Garford. An programme of activities was being printed and publicity flyers would be displayed in shops and Abingdon library. Volunteers were required to assist with events. The Chairman thanked Mr. Asher and his committee for organising the weekend.

6. Marcham Parish Council Report

The chairman acknowledged the work and efforts of Mr. Malcolm Denton previous chairman of the Parish Council over the past year and invited him to give the Council's report. Mr. Denton stated it had been another busy year looking after the parish. He thanked the councillors, clerk, county councillor Iain Brown and district councillor Jane Hanna, and also Meriel Lewis as editor of the Marcham and District News. He referred to the resignation of Parish Councillors David Hutchinson and Ian Charles and the co-option of Peter Rowe and Ruth Mander to replace them. There had been several transport issues over the past year including discussions as to what happened when the A34 closed, diverting HGVs away from Marcham, speed limits on the A338 and joint meetings with other parishes on the A415 to discuss Newbridge and the county council's proposals for a new bridge. Other transport/traffic issues included dealing with parking problems in New Road, alterations to bus timetables, the reinstatement of the bus stop at Hyde Farm nurseries, a review of bus stops around the village and the switching off of some street lights between 12.00 midnight and 5.30 a.m.

The Parish Council had been busy with many planning applications including dormitory block at Denman College, mineral extraction off the A338 and a new house in Blackhorse Lane. The Council too had been looking at the fabric of the village and had undertaken weed spraying, sited tarmac under the bottle banks and had helped fund clearance works in the Cemetery, Arboretum and Churchyard. It had a flood working party which had arranged for the acquisition of flood prevention items and had a team of flood volunteers willing to help in times of need. It too had been involved with sending a representative to meetings regarding the care of the elderly in the village and there was a team of volunteers willing to help.

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, and audited balances as at 31st March 2009 and unaudited balances as at 31st March, 2010. Various questions were asked about the budget documents which were duly answered. The Parochial Charity accounts were presented. Mrs. Christine Denton, clerk to the charities introduced these. These showed small grants having been made to local organisations.

8. District Councillor's Report – Cllr. J. Hanna

Cllr. Hanna, stated that it was an honour to serve Marcham. She recognised it was an active village and this could be seen by the articles in MAD news and the numbers at public meetings. She was aware of and recognised the efforts of the Parish Council and Mr. Denton, its past chairman. She had not claimed expenses and the Vale of White Horse District Council remained the 12th lowest charging council in the country. However, there were challenging times ahead. Locally she had been involved in public meetings regarding the Anson Trust's proposals and a significant planning application to provide additional accommodation at Cothill School which was in the green belt. Although planning officers had recommended approval of the application, it had been refused by the development control committee. She referred to the new waste collection service, and recognised that there might be teething problems, but was available to help. Overall the new contract would mean savings. In the wider community she was the District Council's representative on the County Council's Health overview and scrutiny committee. At times of service changes it was important to safeguard important services and protect those who were vulnerable. She answered questions. One referred to the provision of smaller bins for single people who did not need a large wheelie bin. Cllr. Hanna offered to check the position.

9. County Councillor's Report – Cllr I. Brown

Cllr. Brown referred to the squeeze on public finance and the reductions and cuts that the County Council would have to make. These would be mainly efficiency savings. Council tax would increase by 2.75%. If the cuts were successful, then the rate would be frozen for 2 years. Cllr. Brown referred to highway potholes and the difficulties following the Winter weather. A new 10 year contract had been entered into for repairs. Highway inspectors had GPS electronic reporting systems which would improve communications. He referred to the Public Inquiry into Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan which started on 15th June. He was due to speak on 11th July. He had received details of the Cotswold canal trust's

Scheme for water transfer. He had not claimed any expenses. He handed to the clerk a copy of Garford's parish plan. He placed on record his thanks to the Clerk, and commented on Marcham as a village with active councilors and a good village newsletter. Cllr. Brown answered questions on the reporting system for potholes and the speed of repair.

10. Neighbourhood Action Group

Mr. Denton as Chairman of the local NAG group gave a report. The scheme had worked well over the last 12 months. There had been regular consultation and work undertaken with other agencies. The crime rate was actually low, although public perception was of a high crime rate. The detection rate was high. A monthly bulletin was issued by Thames Valley Police. There had been some anti-social behaviour in the village and criminal damage to property. Investigations into these were ongoing. Police Community Support Officer Laura Schmid had received an award from the High Sheriff of Oxford. Rural Abingdon area was essentially a safe community.

11. Marcham CE Primary School – School Governors' Report

Mrs. Hutchinson, Head Teacher gave a report on the school's activities over the last year. She referred to the new curriculum and subjects that were now linked. The new curriculum had been pared down. A new school classroom had been built owing to the difficulties in taking in catchment children. There had been a rise in the number of children attending the school from 112 to 136. Admission numbers had been capped and the school could not take in more than 20 children in September. Some families would be disappointed. She referred to focusing on the style of learning and the teaching range which was tailored to learning methods. She listed the visits from outside organisations and the trips the children had been involved with. She mentioned the excellent governing body and Parents Teachers Association, and referred to the good SATs results.

12. Marcham Community Group

Mr. Jim Asher referred to the public meetings hosted by the Anson Trust when the Trust presented its options for new community facilities. He outlined those options. There was a tangible public demand for facilities. There was a requirement for something the size of the Institute and an expression to keep the Anson field open. The aim of the group was to reflect the views of the village and to promote ownership and management of new facilities. The advantages of an independent body were that it could raise funds separately rather than having to raise funds up front by the sale of assets.

The group was looking at a legal structure. It had a steering group and there was some involvement from younger people who not previously involved. The group had 3 sub groups of finance, planning communication and consultation.. Some skills existed but they need

legal, accounting, architectural and other skills. He stated that the group was determined not be a talking shop, but would become a constituted body with a wide membership. It had aims to be open and transparent. Mr. Asher answered questions. A member of the public stated that the Anson field had historically always been known as Marcham field.

Questions were asked as to the role of Jane Hanna’s working group, Neighbours around the Field group and the new Community group and whether they were working together. Jane Hanna stated that the remit of her group was different, it was to ensure that the village was consulted, and it would help the Parish Council and herself represent the village on any planning application. She felt it was a positive development to have a group looking at the substance. Her group however maintained its neutrality and would be in communication with

Jim Asher and the Anson Trust. Mr. Asher stated that if consultation with the village becomes unnecessary that it would show the success of his group. Further questions were asked as to how the group was accountable, it was not elected and there were concerns that it would run into the same problems as the Anson Trust if it went blindly off on its own. Timing too could be a problem. The group recognised that timing was important and they needed to shape a proposal by the end of the year.

12. Any Other Business

Revd. Richard Zair placed on record his gratitude to Malcolm and his team for maintaining the Churchyard and Cemetery. Mrs. G. Goulding, resident, thanked Mr. Asher for his efforts.

There were questions on the Council’s budget and questions as to whether the Council could help cross fund the Anson Trust. The Clerk responded to the points raised on the Council’s budget and the Chairman responded that there was the possibility of raising a capital sum via a loan. Questions were asked as to the school’s Ofsted report. Mrs. Hutchinson, as Head Teacher would answer these outside of the meeting. Mrs. Dunford referred to the local grow a sunflower competition in aid of the Moldova lifeline initiative. Prizes would be awarded.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.30 p.m.

Refreshments were then provided for those wishing to stay.

Signed..... Date