

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 18th May, 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

The Chairman of the meeting Mr. Walton, Chairman of Marcham Parish Council and 7 members of the Council

Recipient of the Parishioner of the Year Award – Mrs. Jill Rowe

Guest Speakers: Mr. John Nichols – Divisional Director, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust and Sqn.Ldr. Deborah Easby, member of the RAF's critical care air support team

40 members of the public including Mr. Jim Asher, Mrs. Jessica Brod and Mrs. Suzanne Crafer of Marcham Community Group.

The Marcham Community Group had a display table about the work of the group.

The chairman introduced the meeting and stated it was a public meeting and an opportunity to comment on parish matters.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Parish Councillors Cllr. J. Hanna (District Councillor), Cllr. I. Brown (County Councillor) and Mrs. V. Hutchinson, Head Teacher Marcham Primary School.

2. Presentation of the Parishioner of the Year Award

The chairman read the citation on the certificate and paid tribute to the contribution that Jill Rowe made to village life. There had been a previous surprise presentation to her in Church. The certificate was formally presented and photographs taken. Mrs. Rowe, thanked everyone and named several people who had encouraged her to become involved in so many village organisations.

3. Guest Speaker: Mr. John Nichols

Mr. Nichols outlined his service with the South Central Ambulance Service. The Service was moving from an NHS Trust to a Foundation Trust. He outlined the services provided by the Trust which included emergency response, first responders, logistics, out of hours services, patient transport and equipment services. Mr. Nichols spoke about the area covered by South Central Service (Berks, Bucks, Hampshire and Oxfordshire), the expectations that people have of the Service, the achievements of the Service including faster response times, and clinical performance indicators. He explained the proposed transition to a Foundation trust, and the need to recruit 4500 public members by April 2011 and 15,000 by April 2013. Those over the age of 14 could join. He clarified the governance of the new Foundation Trust, and encouraged those attending the meeting to join and also consider volunteering as a driver, community first responder, or air ambulance supporter. He then answered questions as to how the improvements to response times had been achieved. Staff had been split with one fully qualified paramedic and one assistant per ambulance rather than two clinically qualified people, this had doubled the number of people available, also solo working had been introduced and standby waiting where ambulances waited at specified locations, changes too had been made in the control room.

The chairman thanked Mr. Nichols for his presentation

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th May 2010

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.

5. Guest Speaker: Sqn. Ldr. Deborah Easby

Sqn. Ldr. Deborah Easby stated that the tactical medical wing was moving from RAF Lyneham to RAF Brize Norton. It provided a world wide air evacuation for any member of the forces and his/her family. The team would work within any airframe and was fully mobile. The team comprised consultant anaesthetist, registrar, 2 nurses and medical equipment technician who maintained the equipment. In addition to repatriating injured personnel, the Service provided local transfer to other medical facilities within war torn countries where there are serving personnel. She provided statistics which showed an increase in battlefield injuries over the last 5 years with 76 amputees being repatriated during 2010, with flights sometimes taking 18 hours owing to re-fuelling and crew changes. She provided a very interesting summary of her role as part of the RAF's critical care air support team, and invited questions. There were no questions from the public.

The chairman thanked Sqn. Ldr. Easby for her presentation.

6. Business Arising

There was no business arising from the minutes.

7. Marcham Parish Council Report

The chairman explained when the meetings of the Parish Council were held, and invited anyone to attend as a member of the public. The County Council had consulted the Parish Council regarding improvements to the bus stops including raised kerbs, real time information and bus markings on the road. The works had been cut owing to funding and those that had been done had not been carried out as the Council would have preferred. The Parish Council too, had been consulted about the review of the subsidy given by the County Council to support the Monday to Thursday evening, and Sunday services. It was hoped that this would not come to an end which would affect local bus services.

The County Council whilst consulting on the proposal to change street lights started introducing the night time conversions without regard to the proposal put forward by the Parish Council. The Council was continuing to pressure the County Council to undertake the preferred recommendations as to which lights remained on and which were switched off.

Mr. Walton referred to a planning application at The Croft which had originally been for 5 houses but the Vale of White Horse District Council had recommended 13 dwellings. A revised application had been lodged for 8 units.

The chairman referred to other matters where the Parish Council had been involved. These included dealing with vandalism at the youth shelter, management of the play area, weed spraying of the highway footways and the arrangements for the biennial best kept village competition. Mr. M. Denton, chairman of the Local Police Neighbourhood Action Group, was available if residents wanted to speak to him afterwards.

The chairman placed on record his thanks to Meriel Lewis for the publication of the village newsletter, Cllr. Iain Brown and Cllr. Jane Hanna as the County Councillor and District Councillor, other Parish Council members and clerk and particularly former Parish Councillors Marjorie Evans and Christine Ricketts who had not stood as candidates in the recent election.

Questions from the public attending related to the bus services in that the lack of the “real time information” flag at the bus stop opposite the Post Office had caused a bus driver to take a passenger to the Howard Cornish Road stop. The installation of the real time information was becoming urgent. Other questions related to the increase in frequency of the X 15 and 31 services, and also for the X15 to go round the village instead of the main road. Whilst the bus companies could be approached, it was thought it would be difficult to persuade them to change.

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 2010 and unaudited balances as at 31st March, 2011. Various questions were asked. These included the taking of reserves each year to cover the Council’s spending and the ability of the Parish Council to help the Anson Trust to continue, as that charity was short of funds. The chairman responded that the Council set the precept and then spent the funds available. It could not build up too many unused reserves. On major capital expenditure it was, in theory, possible to take a loan but no request had been received and there were no plans to do so. 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. Marcham Community Group – Jim Asher

Mr. Asher stated that the Marcham Community Group was making good progress. There were a good number of members, and this supported grant applications. Subscriptions offset operating costs. The Group had organised a Royal Wedding tea party, and was undertaking fund raising including a concert in the Church, an open garden event and garage sale. He stated that the absence of a community plan was a handicap and the Group would be launching a major consultation exercise to gather opinion on needs, options and choices. This would be done at a public meeting on 7th July. The last village appraisal was done in 1992 and a team of volunteers was needed. He stated that a further team of volunteers was needed to undertake the current consultation.

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

In the absence of Cllr. Brown, Mr. William Cumber, Parish Councillor, read out the written report sent by Cllr. Brown. The report highlighted the cuts to be made by the County Council. These were £119million over a 3 year period, with £59 million in the first year. Cllr. Brown continued to take an active role in many aspects of the County Council. He referred to the County’s music service, and the outdoor educational centres which with effort were continuing. He referred to Marcham Primary School and his efforts to ensure that it met the future needs of Marcham. He mentioned the fact that the reservoir proposed for the area had been dealt a blow by the Secretary of State in Thames Water’s Water Resources Management Plan, in that the company had had to address several issues. He also mentioned the Localism Bill which would give more say to local councils in planning and local services.

10. District Councillor’s Report – Cllr. J. Hanna

In the absence of Cllr. Hanna, Mr. Walton, chairman, read out the written report sent by Cllr. Hanna. The report referred to the new waste collection service and its aims to save £400,000 per year. Recycling targets had increased to 70% and CO2 emissions halved. Working with South Oxfordshire District Council the restructuring of management saved £750,000 per year, and a District Council budget had been set which saw no loss of front line services. The previous year saw changes in the ways in which Councils plan for housing, other developments and infrastructure needs. The Council’s Local Plan had been replaced by the Local Development Framework, but even that had been put on hold whilst the Government consulted on the entirety of planning policy during 2011. The report referred to the District Council securing £53 million from Scottish Widows for the benefit of Abingdon town centre, and the refusal, at the moment, of the reservoir for Thames Water. She placed on record her thanks for those who supported her at the May elections.

11. Any Other Business

Mr. Matthew Hillis introduced himself as one of the new Parish Councillors and referred to the vacancies that were currently on the Council. He encouraged anyone interested in joining to contact the clerk for information.

Mr. Denton placed on record his thanks to both speakers, Mr. John Nichols and Sqn. Ldr. Deborah Easby.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.15 p.m.

Refreshments were then provided for those wishing to stay.

Signed..... Date

Parishioner of the Year 2010 - Jill Rowe

Citation on Certificate presented at the annual meeting of electors May 2011

Much of Jill's working life has been closely involved with animals, but young people have always been a priority for her. She started helping with 1st Marcham Guides in 1985, and since 1995 she has been the Unit Guider, in charge of weekly meetings and camps. There will be so many girls who will be indebted to her for the time she has given, to enable them to succeed and to reach their full potential. The hospitality offered to so many from her home, coupled with numerous village BBQs, has always been a joint effort with Neil, and she is the first to acknowledge his whole-hearted support. Jill, Neil, Emma, Jos and Becca make a great family team. Jill's energy is constant and selfless, and her imagination and creativity never ending, whether she is taking school assemblies, or running clubs in the village and the church, where she is Youth and Children's Minister. Her caring gifts, supported by her Christian faith extend to families and individuals of all ages, wherever there is a need. Nothing seems to be too much trouble for Jill.