

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 21st May, 2014 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

The chairman of the meeting Miss Ruth Mander, (Chairman of Marcham Parish Council) and 4 members of the Parish Council

Guest Speaker: Mr. Mark Matthews and Mr. Tim Beech from Thames Water
28 members of the public

The chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced herself as the newly elected Chairman of the Parish Council.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from parish councillors Colin Bough, William Cumber, and Matthew Hillis. Apologies had also been received from County Councillor Cllr. R Webber and District Councillor Cllr. Mrs. C. Webber.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd May, 2013

These minutes had been circulated and read by parishioners attending, and approved as a correct record of the meeting.

3. Guest Speakers : Mr. Mark Matthews and Mr. Tim Beech from Thames Water

The role of Thames Water was to provide and maintain water and waste facilities for residents between Cirencester to the Thames Estuary. A 5 year business plan, signed off by the Regulator was in operation. The role of Thames Water was outlined in relation to new housing development, and reference made to the fact that it was not a statutory consultee on planning applications. If they were invited to comment, then issues such as pipeline concerns and sewage capacity could be identified. Thames Water could not object to applications as they had a legal duty to provide water/sewage facilities. If there were concerns regarding capacity then conditions were placed in the granting of planning consent. Infrastructure was not developed until after planning consent had been granted to avoid wasted investment on land where development was unlikely to take place. As for Marcham itself, there were probably constraints on the capacity and topography, and upgrades in the services may be required. The local sewage treatment works were in Appleton, and new development in the area would require the measure of flow onto the works.

Water Resources – The long term plan for the Thames Valley area was the construction of a reservoir. The current plan was before Defra. Leakage reduction measures were being taken, and compulsory metering would take place over time.

Mr. Beech and Mr. Matthews answered questions relating to: piecemeal consideration of housing development rather than a whole overview. The last developer had to make sure that there was no detriment to previous customers. Concerns were raised regarding water run off from roofs, going into the sewer system which in turn had reduced capacity. Developers, however, had a right to connect into the sewage system. Grampion conditions were included in planning approvals which required developers to meet the requirements of Thames Water in order to connect new housing schemes to the water supply and sewage systems.

Discussion took place on the capacity of the pumping station in Marcham, as the main pump had failed on more than occasion. Quotations had been sought for replacement pumps, but no date for the replacement had been fixed. Questions were answered too in connection with a multi-agency approach with the County Council and Environment Agency in regard to issues such as river water/ground water and flooding.

Mr. Matthews and Mr. Beech were thanked for their presentation and they left the meeting.

3. Presentation of the Parishioner of the Year Award

The Chairman presented the Parishioner of the Year Award Certificate to Ms. Meriel Lewis, editor of Marcham and District News. She read the citation which referred to her commitment to local issues, skills in publishing which was evident in various village publications, and her voluntary efforts in the village shop and post office.

4. Marcham Primary School

Mrs. Viv Hutchinson, Headteacher of the school, gave a report on events in the school over the previous year. Mrs. Rook, a teacher for some 14 years had retired. An OFSTED inspection had taken place, and the school had achieved a rating of “good” overall with “outstanding” in some areas. A new curriculum was commencing in September and the school was working hard to prepare itself for it. There had been many opportunities for experiential learning, and visits had been made to Warwick Castle, Sulgrave Manor, Youlbury scout activity centre, museums, gardens and the theatre. Visits had been made to the school from outside organisations such as Fire and Rescue Service, ZooLab, and external RE workshops. A variety of sporting and artistic clubs were run as well as a Bridge club. A house system had been introduced and a number of in-house competitions had taken place. Mrs. Hutchinson made reference to the Governing Body, the PTA and thanked Jude Brown the Chair of Governors, Sam Hillier, Chair of the PTA and Jill Rowe the church link worker for their generosity and tireless work. Thanks were also placed on record to the members of the village community who volunteered with various aspects of the school life.

5. Parish Council

Mr. David Walton, the immediate past chairman of Marcham Parish Council gave a report on Council issues which had arisen over the previous year. This included the various planning applications for new housing. The Council had produced detailed design guidance for developers, and had tried to make the best of a very inadequate system that was supposed to ensure that infrastructure in the village kept pace with new development. The biggest impact of new development was felt by the school.

Progress on improving community facilities within Marcham seemed to have stalled. An exhibition by Taylor Wimpey had taken place in October which included plans for a football pitch, cricket pitch and sports pavilion, but nothing had been heard since. The Community Led Plan was completed last Summer and a copy delivered to every house in Marcham in September 2013. The Council carried out a wide range of other functions for the benefit of the parish. Thanks were placed on record to the County Councillor, Richard Webber, Catherine Webber, District Councillor and to the Parish Councillors and Clerk. David Walton then answered questions relating to the zebra crossing which had been installed by the County Council.

6. Parish Council/Burial Committee/Parochial Charity Accounts

The Parish Council's and Burial Committee's budget had been presented to the parishioners attending. The chairman answered questions. Funding had been set aside for possibly

relocating the war memorial, and Mr. Malcolm Denton was meeting with the Diocese to see whether it could be located at the edge of the Churchyard. A request was made for the total current balances of the Council to be provided. The Parochial Charity accounts were presented. Mrs. Christine Denton, clerk to the charities introduced these.

7. County Councillor and District Councillor Reports

In the absence of Cllr. Richard Webber, Mr. Denton read a written report from him, and in the absence of Cllrs. Mrs. Catherine Webber, Mrs Jenny Allan read a written report from her.

Issues within the County Councillor report were:

County Council budget – less money available for road maintenance, social services and grants, although community grants and highways grants for 2014 were saved. The previous year's grant money was being spent on weed treatment and on new entrance gates for the Abingdon entrance to Marcham village.

Air Quality – The County Council passed a motion requiring Air Quality to play a major part in all its decision making.

Village expansion – Concerns regarding the impact of an expanding village has on the village school. A threat of children from additional homes in Marcham being bussed out to schools elsewhere.

Council Tax – A modest minimal increase in Council Tax bills this year

Issues within the District Councillor report

Planning – Disputed need for more than 20,000 houses in the Vale by 2030, the lack of the 5 year land supply, new Local Plan in preparation and the resulting vulnerability of Marcham to speculative planning.

Air Quality – Air quality was a statutory concern for all District Councils. Diffusion tubes were measuring air quality in Packhorse Lane. Marcham was overdue being designated an air quality management area.

8. Any Other Business

Questions were raised on the following:

A415 – Pye Homes Ltd housing development – A resident felt let down in relation to the new exit from the Willow Farm site. This was immediately adjacent to the X15 bus stop and more or less opposite his own house. He raised concerns that with only one exit from the site he would encounter great difficulties in leaving his own property. Other residents raised concerns regarding the bus exiting Howard Cornish Road , queueing traffic, and suggested that traffic lights or roundabout or cross roads would be a solution. It was thought that all the developers on the South side of the A415 needed to work together to find an acceptable solution to traffic problems that would be created.

North Street / A415 junction – Concerns were raised too regarding the buses trying to enter and leave North Street and negotiating the corner at the garage. It was suggested that as the garage was closing and the site being redeveloped with housing, that the sight line should be improved and the telegraph pole on the A 415 removed with cabling placed underground.

Parking on Pavements - Issues regarding cars parking on pavements in Kings Avenue, Howard Cornish Road, Duffield Place were raised as well as cars parking near road junctions. Residents were encouraged to write to Marcham and District News and to contact the Police Community Support Officer.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.05 p.m.

Refreshments were then provided for those wishing to stay.

Signed..... Date