

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 20th May, 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

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**Present:**

The Chairman of the meeting Miss Ruth Mander, (Chairman of Marcham Parish Council) and 5 members of the Parish Council  
Cllr. Richard Webber, (County Councillor)  
Mrs. Viv. Hutchinson, Headteacher Marcham Primary School  
Guest Speaker: Ms. Cecile Mallett – Volunteer with Dementia Friends, a branch of the Alzheimer's Society  
26 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from parish councillor Mrs. Samantha Turney, District Councillor Cllr. Mrs. Catherine Webber who was attending the annual meeting of the Vale of White Horse District Council, and also from residents Mr. James Allan, Mrs. Christine Denton and Mr. David Hutchinson.

**2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st May, 2014**

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

**3. Guest Speaker : Ms. Cecile Mallett from Dementia Friendly**

Ms. Mallett introduced herself. She gave practical exercises for those listening to do. She outlined the different types of dementia, and how it manifests itself, and how it affects people's perception of the world. 1 in 14 people over 65 had dementia. There were over 800,000 people in the UK with dementia. This was set to rise to 2 million by 2050. She related stories of people affected by dementia, and how it affected each person in different ways. The effect could be influenced by environment, diet, exercise. It was not a part of ageing, but caused by disease. She made an appeal for Dementia Friends, and handed out cards, information leaflets and badges.

The Chairman thanked her for the presentation, and Ms. Mallett then left the meeting.

**4. Marcham Primary School**

Mrs. Viv Hutchinson, Headteacher of the school, addressed those assembled and said she intended to talk about the future, but then had noticed the agenda which required her to give a report on events in the school over the previous year. The school was keen to develop curiosity within the children, and an exercise sheet was handed out for everyone attending to complete. She referred to the vision statement, and the requirements within education, as Marcham formed part of a group of schools. There was an increasing amount of administration and involvement with acadamisation. Financial services for the school had been transferred to Hampshire. The house system within the school was used to encourage competition and was working well, and the children were progressing successfully, having enjoyed various visits and trips. She placed on record her thanks to Jill Rowe for her dedication to the school, and to Joan Carter who listened to the children read.

## **5. Parish Council**

Miss Ruth Mander gave a report on Parish Council matters. She referred to the days and times of meetings, and invited the public to attend. Two councillors, Jennifer Allan and Stuart Young had stepped down and had been replaced by Ruth Atkins and Michael Hoath at the May 2015 elections. She outlined the planning applications where the Council had been a consultee. These ranged from extensions and solar panels, to applications for large housing developments and a holiday park. She referred to grants awarded by the Council, and the issues that had occurred through the year. She placed on record her thanks to the District and County Councillors, her fellow Councilors and the Clerk.

## **6. Parish Council/Burial Committee/Parochial Charity Budgets**

The Chairman presented the budget for 2015/16 for both the Burial Committee and the Parish Council. Questions were asked as to whether the planned increase in expenditure was worthwhile given that the situation generally was 0% inflation, and the Council has reasonable reserves. The Chairman responded by advising that houses had been lost to St. Helen Without parish with local authority boundary changes. The tax requirement was to be shared between fewer properties. It had been a year where parish elections could have taken place, and provision had had to be made for that. In future, with further development taking place, there would be the need for more facilities, but the cost would be shared between more council tax payers. Questions were raised regarding providing accounts rather than the budget. The meeting was held at a time when the accounts for the previous year were still in the course of preparation, and they were posted on the Council's website when available.

In the parochial charity accounts, the dividends were reducing, but a payment of £14 had been made to the school. Any small surplus had been saved over the years and the funds donated to village café.

## **7. District Councillor Report – Cllr. Mrs. C. Webber**

In the absence of Cllr. Mrs. Catherine Webber, Cllr. Richard Webber outlined the key issues relating to District Council matters. Cllr. C. Webber wrote regularly in Marcham and District News. The Local Plan would go to the planning inspector in June or July, and it was thought that it would be law by the end of the year. There was a general state of unhappiness with the Strategic Market Housing Assessment figures. The District Council found it difficult to refuse speculative planning applications, as it could be awarded costs against it if the application was approved on appeal. Encouragement was given to Marcham undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, as the village might be in line for new housing. Cllr. Webber had worked hard on air quality issues for the A415. A diffusion tube had been relocated to a better place. A survey had been carried out, and residents encouraged to write to the Vale of White Horse. That Council had agreed to produce an Air Quality Action Plan. Cllr. C. Webber handed Cllr. R. Webber (County Councillor) issues such as changing the route of HGVs, and signage.

## **8. County Councillor Report – Cllr. R. Webber**

Pressure on the County Council and its finances was building. Funding from the new homes bonus, however was mostly being allocated to the District Council, and only 20% to the County Council, yet the County had the larger share of expenditure on providing education, highways, and social services. Funds had been wasted on the removal of the Chief Executive. In education, some people were not being allocated their first choice of schools, buses and cycle routes needed improvements, and some issues needing to be sorted by central government.

Cllr. R. Webber had been elected the Leader of the Liberal Democrats on the County Council. He had, however, lost his seat on the Vale of White Horse District Council, as the member for Drayton. The County Council kept the political groups informed, and as Leader, he would therefore be aware of any issues which affected Marcham.

## **9. Any Other Business**

Questions were raised on the following:

Air Quality - A resident had produced a questionnaire of his own dealing with Air Quality issues. He wished people to complete this, and he would leave copies at the meeting. He wished to create a petition to be left in the village shop for signatures, and which could be presented to the County Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council. He stated that polluted rivers would be sorted by the Environment Agency, but the District Council was hiding from reality, as air quality in Abingdon was twice European levels, and when the A420 was closed, vehicles were diverted through Marcham even though there was known bad air quality. Cllr. Webber responded to this. He and Cllr. Mrs. C. Webber were fully aware of the air quality issues, and much work had already been done on this. Cllr. Webber wished to see people sticking together, and getting behind the achievements so far, encouraging those with responsibility to spend money and find a solution. If it had not been for the efforts to date, of councillors, then the success so far would not have been reached.

Neighbourhood Plan – A question was raised, that if a Neighbourhood Plan were undertaken, would it be soon outdated, and would the planning rules change. Cllr. Webber responded, and spoke about neighbourhood planning, outlining its position in the planning policy structure, and the merits of completing a Plan. He was confident that if started soon, it could be in place before the District Council's Local Plan.

Village Youth – There had been difficulties within the village with youths causing disturbances and causing vandalism. Mr. Denton, Chairman of the Police Neighbourhood Action Group was working closely with the Police and was arranging a meeting where the youths, their parents, Police, and affected landowners could discuss the issues involved.

Community Facilities – Mr. Chris Brotherton of Thomas Homes introduced himself. He was working with the Anson Trust to provide new facilities within the village. This involved redevelopment on the Institute site, acquiring some of the Anson field for housing, realigning the football and cricket pitches, and creating a new hall. He referred to some of the projects in which his company had been previously involved. A public consultation event would take place on 13<sup>th</sup> June, with a planning application lodged in the Autumn.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.10 p.m.

Refreshments were then provided for those wishing to stay.

Signed..... Date .....