

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OLD MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL

HELD AT THE MORTIMER HALL AT 7.30p.m.

ON TUESDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 1996

Members present were; Mr A T Jones (Chairman)  
Mr C W Haynes (Vice-chairman)  
Mesdames Cox, Deam, Nurse, Sanders and  
Tiwari  
Messrs Bartleet, Drinkwater and Phipps

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Stone and  
Mr Devonport

The Clerk Mr L M Garner was in attendance.

Correspondence

The following were noted:

Oxford City Council- Members' Information sheets  
Oxfordshire County Council- Road safety report  
Oxfordshire Social Services- Community Care Plan and  
Charter

Oxfordshire Health Authority-Social care consultation  
Oxfordshire County Council- Reorganisation of Engineering  
and Planning

N.S.P.C.C.-Appeal Circular

Victim Support- Appeal Circular

Oxfordshire County Council-Timetable information. The  
Parish Council could receive either prints of a  
timetable which is due to change or two prints of  
every current timetable on preset dates. It was  
decided to opt for the timetable changes.

Planning

Applications

The following were considered between meetings:

35, Raymund Road- Extension  
4, Clays Close- Conservatory  
65, Cherwell Drive-Single storey extension to front  
and a garage.

After consultation with the Chairman no comment was made.

31, Mill Lane- Conversion of garage to living  
accommodation -No comment

Decisions

The following were reported:

66, Elms Drive- New garage etc.- Approved  
1, Horseman Close- Gates at rear- Withdrawn

Other matters

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Public  
Meeting to discuss Planning applications for the Oxford  
Radcliffe, John Radcliffe and Churchill Hospitals. Much concern  
was expressed at the massive increase proposed to the Oxford  
Radcliffe and it's accompanying increase in traffic.

A.T.J.

Although not mentioned in the applications it became clear in subsequent discussions that the Marsh Lane site for a Park and Ride scheme was intended. As no formal application had been made a planning objection was not possible. It was decided to take no further action at this time. Letters from the Elsfield and Woodeaton Parish Meetings expressing concern about the Park and Ride were received and noted. Similar comments were received from the Old Marston Residents' Association.

The Oxford Radcliffe Hospital had written to say that no further action was proposed on the provision of a link between the A40 and the Hospital.

A copy of a letter addressed to Mr Gummer expressing concern about encroachment of development into the Cherwell Valley was received from the Old Marston Residents' Association and noted.

#### Accounts

The following had been paid between meetings:

Public Works Loans board- Loan repayment	£320.52
Hale Signs- Signwriting notice-board & seats	£28.00

The following were passed for payment:

G.Tyler- Digging trial holes adjacent to Burial Ground	£90.00
Thames Water-Allotments	£44.39
Oxford City Council- Recreation Ground Maintenance	£257.00
L M Garner-Salary and expenses	£974.19
Marston Saints-Grant towards repairs to showers etc.	£40.00

#### Highways

The Clerk reported that an advertising sign had been replaced on the verge outside The White Hart. The Clerk was asked to write to the landlord to secure its removal.

The Clerk was asked to try to get the boat removed from the Highway in Mill Lane. He was also asked to report loose granite setts at the entrance to the Red Lion and to the over-growth of the Marsh Lane footpath between Horseman Close and Elsfield Road.

#### Burial Ground

The Clerk reported that an officer of the Environmental Agency had inspected the trial holes and accepted that single depth burials could be accepted in the area of the proposed extension. He needed to clarify the specified depth.

The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation to provide a stand tap in the Burial Ground.

#### Recreation Ground

It was agreed that the Scouts should be permitted to hold a firework display on 1st November 1996 in the Boulds Lane Recreation Ground.

*Alun T. Jones*

*11/10/96*

Application for outline Planning Consent, Mill Lane  
largely disused allotment site Old Marston

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Parish Council's response to comments made at the public meeting and in letters to the Planning Authority.

The comments were;

1. Overlooking etc.

Only one person raised this point. He lives on Ward's site in a mobile bungalow which is some distance away from the site boundary which is a high wall.

2. Local Plan Designation of the Site

A small part of the site, in the northern corner, is "Safeguarded Land"; the rest is allotments subject to RE28 which provides "... ..where allotments fall into disuse the Council will consider whether it is likely to be short or long term when considering a change to other use ... ..". It should be noted that the lack of demand for the allotments caused the Parish Council to look at alternative developments and uses- there is no question of the development ideas affecting demand. The facts are that they were last fully occupied in 1977. By 1983 the 38 had become 27, 1986 20, 1989 15, 1991 10, 1993 6 and currently 4. With over 100 vacant plots available some 500 metres away, where there is an allotments association and shop, which the largest part of the residents would have to pass to get to Mill Lane, there is clearly no prospect of future demand. One resident of Ward's site alleged that 15 of the 21 residents of that site required plots. On being asked to submit a list of those persons or get them to contact the Parish Clerk direct none has been forthcoming. Vacant plots have been advertised in the "Marston Times", which reaches about 75% of Old Marston households, every two or three years with little success.

The site therefore comes within the Local Plan provision for alternative use.

3. Retention as Open Space

It is usual, when the development of open land is proposed, for statements to be made favouring it's retention. Such is the case here but as the local setting of being surrounded by

other open space is not to be changed this comment has little force. It was also said that there was no children's play space available which is not true. About 200 metres from the site is a good  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of land for such use, owned by the OPT and mowed by the Parish Council. A nature reserve for those interested was also suggested. Nobody has taken any visible interest in the land left for such use, owned by the Parish Council in Elsfield Road, again about 500 metres from the site.

4. Traffic in Mill Lane

From the comments made it would appear that Mill Lane is a major busy highway with an extremely dangerous "S" bend. A recent traffic count has proved them to be a total misconception. A survey was conducted on Friday 20th September 1996, usually the busiest day of the week, in term time and in the traditional rush hours. Counting vehicles in both directions the total movements were 8-9 a.m. 80 vehicles and 5-6 p.m. 70 vehicles. A grand total of 150 vehicles in two hours.

AN AVERAGE OF  $1\frac{1}{2}$  VEHICLES PER MINUTE

There are only 195 approx. properties having their only access via Mill Lane, <sup>S bend,</sup> of these 50 are warden controlled sheltered housing generating very little traffic. Any development of the site will not therefore create an unacceptable level of traffic. A doctor who lives on the bend said he had treated one pedestrian injured there. He did not say when. He has lived there for fifteen years or so, so this isolated incident must be regarded as such in traffic terms.

The County Council "Casualty Report 1995 and Road Safety Plan" does not mention Mill Lane as an accident site, nor as a black spot or problem site.

5. Traffic in Oxford Road

Concern was expressed that the Mill Lane development would worsen traffic in Oxford Road. Again the increase would be small but the desirability of a traffic calming scheme has already been accepted. This, it is expected would result in an overall reduction in traffic.

6. Housing

Any additional housing, within the ring road, must make a significant contribution to reducing the continuing increase in commuting caused by so many of the new houses required being built so far away from people's jobs in Oxford. In addition, new housing must help to reduce, indirectly,

homelessness. Government Policy is to encourage the recycling of land rather than developing green fields in the Green Belt.

7. The History of the Site

It was not, as was stated, given to the Parish. It was purchased by the Parish Council to replace a rented site reclaimed by its owner. It was bought in 1952 on mortgage paid by Parish residents.

It has been said that the City Council will ask for money out of funds released following planning consent. This is not a material factor to determine whether the site is suitable for an alternative use as mentioned in a letter from the Planning Officer to the John Phillips Planning Consultancy, of 13th September 1996. The Parish Council will be pleased to discuss the proposal if it can be assured on determination, and signed agreement, outline consent will be granted.

8. The Type of Application

The question was raised why the application was for outline rather than detailed consent. This is, of course, a perfectly acceptable and normal way of establishing whether a change of use is acceptable to the Council. Further more, a detailed application is beyond the financial means of the Parish Council.

9. Archaeological Survey

The site is outside the envelope of the ancient village which is centred on the high ground near the Church, above what was largely marsh land. The land between the site and the stone house to the south has been largely excavated for gravel and it is only a few years since the second carriage way of the A40 was excavated all the way across the Cherwell valley. No finds of importance are known. This matter should therefore be left to the detailed stage. The Parish Council would permit exploratory trenches to be dug between outline and detailed stages so future plans can be made. To give the archaeologists free and uncosted rein at Parish expense would be unjustified at the outline stage.

10. Letters to the Planning Authority

Thirteen letters have been reported but it must be noted that three are effectively one, those from the Oxford Preservation Trust, its Old Marston Branch and Dr. Scargill who is their professional adviser. After deducting two of the above and those from the archaeologists, the Environmental Agency and the one in favour, eight remain. The subjects raised had been dealt with above.

11. Conclusions

Although 1370 properties were circulated (2660 electors) with details of the application and meeting less than 200 attended the meeting and only 8 written comments were made. The inevitable conclusion is that there is no groundswell of opinion against the proposal. Most concerns were about traffic volumes which have been comprehensively negated by a traffic count.

Any funds released by the development can only be used within the Parish for local improvement and social gain since these matters are controlled by statute. There can be no personal profit.

The application falls within the guidelines of the Local Plan. No valid reason why consent should not be granted has been identified.

L.M.Garner

Clerk on behalf of the Old Marston Parish  
Council

26th September 1996

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL - BRIEFING NOTES

The land edged red on the attached plan, of some  $3\frac{1}{4}$  acres, was purchased in 1952 to replace rented land, which became a caravan site, which provided parish allotments.

38 plots were provided, mainly 10 pole, one being about  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre.

Until 1978 there was always a waiting list, waits were often two or three years.

In 1987 24 plots were in use.

In 1991 11 plots were in use.

Now 7 plots are in use by 5 tenants, all of whom live a matter of yards from the site.

Many efforts have been made to encourage more tenants but the numbers continue to decline. There is no indication that this will ever change. Any new tenants would be expected to come from within about a 400 yard radius because any others would be nearer to, or would have to pass the other site in the Parish, that in Oxford Road, ( edged green) to get to Mill Lane.

The Oxford Road site is of some 15 acres and has 100+ sites vacant in spite of having an Allotment Association and shop.

There is therefore no possible likelihood of any increased demand for plots on the Mill Lane site. It has no potential for farming and its use for horses is not favoured, being unprofitable and damaging to land.

The site is bounded by development on two of its three sides,

the bypass and housing, and as it is unlikely that development will be permitted on the other side of the bypass this is the effective limit of the community. Any development would therefore not materially extend the village envelope, neither could it be considered ribbon development. Full services are already in place to the boundary so the site could be reasonably and economically developed.

The Parish Council, the owner, has concluded that this is the only reasonable future use for the site.

Recently an estate of modest houses has been built on the site coloured blue which has brought much needed young life to the area. The primary school needs extra pupils to enhance the staff and range of activities. Additional houses in the Oxford area, whose occupants could be expected to take jobs in Oxford, would help to reduce commuting, they would also move people up the housing ladder and reduce local homelessness.

This would be indirect as it has been recommended that as there is already a major concentration of council housing and caravans/mobile homes in the area (hatched black) this should not be extended.

The proximity of the bypass would cause no problems as it is on the north side of the site, windows would be few facing this direction and full noise attenuation measures could be used for the affected properties.

The Parish Council therefore intends to submit an application for outline consent to develop the site for residential use incorporating amenity and play space and to provide for allotments needed.

Development would avoid considerable future maintenance costs to the community to maintain the land for no useful purpose and would provide a fund to be used for the benefit of the community for all time, initially to extend and improve the Village Hall, recreation and possibly youth provision.

A copy of the Oxford Local Plan section on allotments is attached and attention is drawn to para. 6.65 "Before allowing the development ... the Council will expect ... that the development would serve wider community interests and to be provided with evidence that there is no demand for the allotments ... " These requirements have been complied with.

