

**Minutes of Old Marston Parish Annual Meeting  
Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 7.00pm at Mortimer Hall**

**Present:**

**John Batey (JB)  
Angie Tiwari (AT)  
Patricia Hall (PH)  
Tim Cann (Clerk)**

**Duncan Hatfield (DH)  
Peter Cox (PC)  
Nils Bartleet(NB)**

**Members of the public 3**

**17/01 Apologies for absence**

Parish Councillor Charlie Haynes, City Councillor Mary Clarkson and County Councillor Mark Lygo

**17/02 Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016**

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true record. However, due to an error by the Clerk copies had not been circulated so the Chairman read out the minutes and displayed on the projector.

**17/03 Matters Arising (omitting those for which an agenda heading follows)**

None

**17/04 Chairman's Report**

The last council year has seen a great deal of activity by the Parish Council and many issues have arisen which involve us all here in Old Marston. I will start with....

**Proposed developments.**

In July 2016 the Oxford Mail reported a proposal by developers to build 700 homes on land north of Mill Lane. It was not supported by City Council and was a major threat to that part of our parish. We sent a press release stating our strong objections, especially because of traffic access, which was published by Oxford Mail in August and council expressed their opposition at the September meeting.

At that meeting two members of public raised the issue of the proposed Swan School on the Harlow site. This reflected press reports of efforts to locate a new secondary school there which we were not a party to and I sent emails to the leaders of the City and County Councils asking why we had not been informed and expressing our huge concerns over the impact of this. Nevertheless the site was eventually chosen and County Council's cabinet were scheduled to discuss the sale of the site to DfE on February 21st. I called a public meeting for the night before this happened and there was unanimous opposition to it from that meeting. This council met immediately afterwards and approved a document with 9 points of objections which was sent that night to each of the cabinet members. Unfortunately they decided to approve of the sale for £1 and we now await plans from the DfE to the City Council.

In September Peter Williams, the Clerk and myself attended a meeting in Elsfield concerning a proposed development by Christ Church at Lower Elsfield. I voiced our major concerns over the impact of traffic on the Marston interchange and Marsh Lane. We are represented on a large group consisting of local bodies which is still fighting development of this and a further proposed development at Wick Farm.

Apart from Green Belt implications, all of these would have a very serious impact on traffic in Marsh Lane and through Elsfield/Oxford Roads as well as the Marston Ferry/Cherwell Drive/Headley Way arterial route. Here in Old Marston we are suffering already from being a major hub for traffic and we are yet to feel the impact of the Barton Park development on our roads or see any benefits from the Headington Access proposals.

### **Planning.**

We were successful in having the City Council approve of our application to have the Red Lion pub nominated as an Asset of Community Value. Unfortunately the Jack Russell, although having an ACV and having been opposed by the council at planning stage, has been lost to developers and they plan to build a huge block of flats.

Some of our members attended a planning training session held by City Council and all of us have been issued with a helpful document on planning from that meeting.

We are very concerned at family-sized homes being turned into multi-occupancy flats for rental which tends to change the character of our neighbourhoods.

### **Boults Lane Project.**

I have always seen this in 3 distinct phases - erecting the modular pavilion, demolishing the old one and creating more parking, and providing new play equipment in a relocated area. The planning and preparation for the first phase was a great challenge especially for the Clerk and myself. We were dealing with issues of which we had no knowledge or experience and I felt it necessary to have the Pavilion Committee appoint someone with such experience to help initially. (We have also received advice from Ian Homer, a builder from Marston Saints). Fortunately, the contractors proved to be very helpful and we built a good relationship with them. The Structural Engineer decided that the ground necessitated more sophisticated foundations than planned for and this was an extra cost. Although there is more to do, costs have been kept within budget and we do have some reserves.

The first phase is now almost complete and people I have spoken to have said the building looks fine, better than expected. At present the mains services and internal connections are being set up and landscaping will follow. We are working with Marston Saints regarding occupation.

Meanwhile preparations to dismantle the old pavilion and plans for the new playground are continuing in council. We expect soon make an application for a grant for the play equipment.

### **Vandalism.**

At the end of last 2016 this community suffered a wave of vandalism unlike any before. Among other things, several trees on our recreation grounds were attacked with an axe or machete. Some were chopped down and some had to be destroyed, incurring extra expense. Depressingly, Roy Jones memorial tree was destroyed and I had to inform his widow. The vandalism was reported to and publicised by the Oxford Mail. The local police have increased their visits to the area, especially at weekends and the Clerk joined one team to see them working. I arranged for PCSOs to attend council meetings and there is now a regular agenda item to cover that.

Because of this vandalism, council decided to hold back on buying a defibrillator, one of which was damaged at Marston Saints pavilion.

### **Bradlands Bus.**

Council voted to financially support the local 'shopping bus' from Bradlands in view of regular bus services not serving north Mill Lane. This has proved to be very valuable and popular with residents.

### **Recreation Grounds and Cemetery.**

A new footpath was made into Mortimer Recreation Ground from the underpass, a waste bin has been sited near the picnic table at Oxford Rd. end, various repairs were necessary due to vandalism.

The equipment is inspected weekly. A group of councillors examined headstones in the cemetery for safety and found no real problems.

Thanks are due to councillors Peter Cox and Anthony Greenfield for their dedication to these grounds which are a credit to the council.

### **Events.**

We raised strong objections last year to lack of consultation before the Oxford half-marathon.

A successful Fireworks Night was held at the Red Lion and a Family Fun Day is scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> June at the Victoria Arms. Such events are normally supported by grants from the Parish Council, which also distributes grants to many local bodies each year.

Councillor Greenfield produced an Old Marston calendar illustrated with local photos and council decided that proceeds from their sales were to be given to the local Marston Times circular.

The Clerk and myself will be representing the council at the installation of the new Lord Mayor and

The Vice-Chair and myself will be represented council at the induction of the new vicar at St. Nicholas' Church last Thursday.

### **Structure and working of the Parish Council.**

We now have regular slots on the agenda for public participation and inputs from city and county councillors as well as the police. These are valuable channels of information and feedback for the council.

Council has met 12 times in the last year and following restructuring, we have committees for planning (Chair Michael Cadd), recreation grounds and cemetery (Chair Tony Greenfield), finance (Chair Pat Hall), pavilion (Chair Michael Cadd) and staffing and standards (Chair Peter Williams).

These have met 15 times in the last year.

### **Thanks.**

Committee meetings have meant a great deal of extra commitment and time from councillors and in addition to those already mentioned I want to thank Councillors Anji Tiwari, Nils Bartleet, Peter Cox, Barry Lewis and Michael O'Keefe for their attendance at committees and for the way they work together for the good of this parish.

My thanks to Vice-Chair and Website Manager Duncan Hatfield for his hard work and support.

I want to thank the city and county councillors for their attendance and support for council and for the work they do for the Old Marston community. They do a great job.

Finally, I especially want to thank the Clerk Tim Cann. He has been a great help to me during the year and his work rate and dedication to his role as Clerk to Council and Responsible Finance Officer is amazing. Council voted recently to increase his salary in recognition of this. He is a true professional who takes his work seriously and looks to improve himself at all times. This council is lucky to have him.

### **17/05 Finance Report**

The Clerk advised the meeting that the Council had a budget of £65,100 this year but had actually spent £162,594.10. However £100,589.13 was spent on the new pavilion, so if you took this figure away from the expenditure it actually gives £62,004.97. Income for the year was £105,118.07

### **17/06 Correspondence** No items.

The Annual Parish Meeting ended at 7:30pm