



Old Marston Parish Council

Tim Cann. PSLCC. Clerk & RFO to Old Marston Parish Council
8 Nicholas Avenue, Old Marston, Oxford. OX3 0RN
Tel: 01865 203139 email: clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk
Website: www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk  twitter.com/oldmarston
 www.facebook.com/pages/Old-Marston-Parish-Council

Old Marston Parish Council

Annual Report

May 2022 – April 2023

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Chairman's Summary

As we review the past year one of the of the biggest threats to Old Marston is the proposed developments. Marston Paddock has been approved and the city council has agreed to purchase the properties as affordable housing. This means the loss of a nature rich area and heavy traffic on narrow roads. Residents have complained about the lack of transparency in the planning process.

The proposed developments at Hill View Farm and Almonds Farm have gone to judicial review and it is not certain when this will be completed or what the outcome will be. The Bayswater development which will eventually lead to about 1500 properties will have a huge impact on the community especially regarding traffic and demand on local amenities. I have asked one of those involved with the project whether the developer would voluntarily pay a community, infrastructure levy to help mitigate the effects of the development. There are concerns that Back Lane could become a cycle track and cease to be a bridleway.

Traffic issues continue to blight the community, especially since the Swan School opened. Vehicles entering and leaving the school are putting a risk to the cycle lane users despite promising that there would be wardens to manage this. The proposal to install bus gates on the Marston Ferry Road has raised concerns regarding increasing air pollution and congestion on the bypass and Marsh Lane. Oxford Bus Company stopped running the 13-bus service due to changes at the plain. Stagecoach has extended 14 bus route to cover some of the old 13 route. The controlled parking zones have been rolled out across the parish. Elms Drive was reviewed to reflect the wishes of residents.

There are changes on the parish council. The election in 2022 brought in a new look council. We have a new logo and have become an Oxford living wage employer and will be encouraging our contractors to also pay the living wage. Councillors now have a budget laptop which will save time and money on printing, delivery costs and the environment. We have also signed up to the Debate-not-Hate campaign which encourages healthy, lively debate without abuse or threats. We are also building links with and supporting Oxford's other parish councils. Our finances have been approved by both the internal and external auditors thanks to the diligence and integrity of our responsible financial officer.

We were awarded the foundation award by the NALC and are now working towards the quality award which is the next level.

Mortimer Hall and Old Marston Library celebrated their 60th anniversary in September with an open day which was well attended and featured displays and pictures from local organisations – pictures on both websites. OxClean turned 16 this year: a big thank you to all our volunteers who took part and made it fun and made a difference. The Red Lion did a great bonfire night event with fireworks supplied by the parish council. Thank you to Skye for organising the Earth Day event last month – a very well attended event which was also supported by the parish council.

In 2022 we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, only a few months later to mourn her passing, whilst celebrating her many achievements. In memory we are supporting the planting of trees locally as part of the Queen's canopy project. We welcome our new King and thank those who organised the local Coronation events.

There have been a number of complaints about anti-social behaviour within the parish with some offenders appearing to be primary school age. The council sent leaflets to local residents encouraging them to report every incident so this will highlight the issue to police and city council, who will hopefully allocate more resources locally. The clerk and chairman met with the county youth service to get some advice for some possible solutions. Also there have been issues of fly tipping in Elsfield Road and Boults Lane Recreation Ground.

You may notice that there is a new look to part of the underpass. After a lot of hard work and persistence we managed to get the walls painted. Oxfordshire Highways gave permission and provided funding to prepare the wall surfaces. Oxford Direct Services prepared the walls, the parish council paid for the paints and pupils from Meadowbrook College designed the artwork and painted the walls themselves! Thank you to everyone involved, especially the pupils and their teachers for the brilliant designs. We are now waiting for ODS to provide the protective surface (eventually).

Our other local projects include the creation of a local emergency plan, but we are still lacking volunteers for various aspects. We are also

reviewing cycle safety in the parish, involving the highways department: the recent developments have created new safety risks.

As part of our commitment to the local community, we are looking into how best to meet the needs of older residents, such as recreational, social, health and transport needs. We are looking at ways to hear from our residents and have taken advice from Help the Aged. We are also looking into providing communication boards in our play areas aimed at children with autism and learning disabilities. We are reviewing MUGA play equipment to ensure it continues to meet current standards.

The parish council continues to support local organisations who serve the local community. We give grants to local organisations each year towards projects they organise. We are funding the installation of cycle racks outside Mortimer Hall and the parish church.

We are developing a 'Community Needs' Survey which will be sent out to all residents and available on the website. Please do take the time to complete and return as this will enable the parish council to make more informed decisions.



Cllr Duncan Hatfield.
(Chairman 2022-2023).

Your Parish Councillors 2022-2023



Tel: 07706998224

Cllr. Duncan Hatfield – Chairman

- Staffing and Standards Comm.
- OxClean Organiser
- Parish Councils Forum
- Website and social media
- Old Marston Charities Trust
- Mortimer Hall Representative

Email: chairman@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Tel: 01865 241 696

Cllr. Pat Hall – Vice-Chair

- Staffing and Standards Comm.
- Finance Committee (chair)
- Parish Councils Forum
- Planning Committee
- Pavilion, Recreational Grounds, Allotments and Cemetery Committee

Email: Pathall@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Tel: 07789645992

Cllr. Mick Bates

- Planning Committee
- Pavilion, Recreational Grounds, Allotments and Cemetery Committee

Email: mickbates@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Tel: 01865 256 053

Cllr. Peter Cox

- Finance Committee
- Staffing and Standards Comm.
- Pavilion, Recreational Grounds, Allotments & Cemetery Comm. (chair)

Email: petercox@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Skye Denno

- Environment Committee

Tel: 01865 202 988

Email: skyedenno@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Charlie Haynes

- Pavilion, Recreational Grounds, Allotments & Cemetery Committee
- Finance Committee

Email: charliehaynes@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Mary James

- Planning Committee
- Finance Committee
- Public Transport Group
- Environment Committee

Tel: 07500893148

Email: maryjames@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Louise Milford

- Finance Committee
- Environment Committee

Tel: 01865 790953

Email: louisemilford@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Alistair Morris

- Pavilion, Recreational Grounds, Allotments and Cemetery Committee
- Environment Committee

Tel: 01865 724081

Email: alistairmorris@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Louise Upton

- Finance Committee
- Environment Committee
- Old Marston Charities Trust

Tel: 07799768233

Email: louiseupton@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Charlotte Vinnicombe

- Planning Committee
- Environment Committee
- Parish Councils Forum

Tel: 0776961670 Email: charlottevinnicombe@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Cllr. Peter Williams

- Staffing and Standards Committee (chair)
- Oxford Greenbelt Network
- Planning Committee

Tel: 01865 790198

Email: peterwilliams@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk

Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer



Tim Cann.
Tel: 01865 203139
Email: clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk



Oxford City Councillor Mary Clarkson
Tel: 01865 751 493

Email: Clirmclarkson@oxford.gov.uk



Oxford City Councillor Alistair Morris
Tel: 01865 724081

Email: cllramorris@oxford.gov.uk



Oxfordshire County Councillor Mark Lygo
Tel: 07826 527047

Email: marklygo@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Attendance Record for Council meetings 2022/2023.

<u>Council Meetings 2022/23</u>			
Councillor	Attended	Potential	Percentage
Michael Bates	8	11	73%
Peter Cox	11	11	100%
Skye Denno	8	11	73%
Patricia Hall	10	11	91%
Duncan Hatfield	11	11	100%
Charlie Haynes	10	11	91%
Mary James	10	11	91%
Louise Milford	8	11	73%
Alistair Morris	7	11	64%
Louise Upton	8	11	73%
Charlotte Vinnicombe	11	11	100%
Peter Williams	11	11	100%
TOTALS	113	132	86%

There were:

- 11 Parish Council meetings and 6 Committee meetings.
- 33 Planning Applications reviewed.
- 68 members of the public attended Council meetings.

- City Councillor Mary Clarkson attended 6 out of 11 meetings.
- City Councillor Alistair Morris is also a Parish Councillor so see above for attendance.
- County Councillor Mark Lygo attended 3 out of 11 meetings.

A rough guide to who does what:

<u>County Councils</u>	<u>District Councils</u>	<u>Parish Councils</u>
Monitoring Officer for County Members only	Monitoring Officer Ethics & Probity for District & Parish Members	
Education Most schools Special education Nursery, adult, community	Housing Management and maintenance of council houses Working with Housing Associations (known as Registered Social Landlords) Housing advice Renovation grants Homelessness Unfit housing Residential care	Clocks
Personal Social Services Securing provision for the elderly, children and those with disabilities (including social care and health and residential care) Inspection Services	Cemeteries and Burials, Crematoria	Closed Churchyards Burials/Cemeteries

<p>Planning</p> <p>Strategic planning/structure plans</p> <p>Minerals and waste planning</p> <p>Historic buildings</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Development control (Planning applications and enforcement)</p> <p>Advertising consent</p> <p>Historic buildings</p> <p>Conservation areas</p> <p>Tree preservation</p>	<p>Planning – as consultees</p>
<p>Highways/Transport</p> <p>Public transport</p> <p>Highways and parking</p> <p>Traffic management</p> <p>Footpaths and bridleways</p> <p>Transport planning</p> <p>Street lighting</p>	<p>Highways/Transport</p> <p>Unclassified roads</p> <p>Off-street car parking</p> <p>Traffic management</p> <p>Footpaths and bridleways</p> <p>Road safety</p> <p>Local transport plans</p> <p>Street lighting</p> <p>Street naming</p>	<p>Bus shelters</p> <p>War and other memorials</p>
<p>Emergency Planning</p>	<p>Emergency Planning</p>	<p>Street lighting</p>
<p>Recreation</p> <p>Parks and open spaces</p>	<p>Recreation</p>	

<p>Support for the arts</p> <p>Archives and Record Office</p> <p>Museums/Art Galleries</p>	<p>Parks, open spaces and halls</p> <p>Swimming pools and leisure centres</p> <p>Support for the arts</p> <p>Museums and art galleries</p>	<p>Public Open Spaces</p> <p>Village Halls</p> <p>Playing fields</p> <p>Museums and the Arts</p>
<p>Economic Development</p>	<p>Economic Development</p>	
<p>Tourism Development</p>	<p>Tourism Development</p>	<p>Tourism Development</p>
<p>Environmental Services</p> <p>Refuse <u>disposal</u></p> <p>Recycling</p> <p>Gypsy sites</p>	<p>Environmental Services</p> <p>Refuse <u>collection</u>/street cleansing</p> <p>Recycling</p> <p>Management of travellers/gypsy sites</p>	<p>Litter bins and litter clearance</p> <p>Local charities</p>
<p>Trading Standards</p>	<p>Food safety</p> <p>Public conveniences</p> <p>Markets</p> <p>Dog and pest control</p> <p>Noise abatement</p> <p>Health & Safety</p>	<p>Markets</p>

<p>Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths</p> <p>Library & Information Service</p> <p>Grants to voluntary bodies</p> <p>Community Planning</p>	<p>Seats</p> <p>Licensing</p> <p>Allotments</p> <p>Electoral Registration/Elections</p> <p>Council Tax and Business Rate collection</p> <p>Grants to voluntary bodies</p> <p>Help with Lottery Applications</p> <p>Community Planning</p> <p>Community Safety (anti-social behaviour, alcohol byelaws)</p>	<p>Public seating</p> <p>Licensing – as consultees</p> <p>Allotments</p> <p>Grants to voluntary bodies</p>
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Allotments

Mill Lane allotments are self-managed by Old Marston Mill Lane Allotments Association (OMMLAA) on behalf of Old Marston Parish Council. The parish council has just agreed a further 25 years on the lease, taking it through to 2053. The parish council provide financial support to the allotment association by giving a grant each year.

Bus Shelter

The bus shelter on the Elsfield Road, opposite St Nicholas Church, is owned and maintained by the parish council.

Local Planning Consultee

There were 33 planning applications which the parish council reviewed. Along with these were:

- **Hill View Farm (159 dwellings):** The parish council expressed its concerns over several issues. This is currently awaiting the outcome of a judicial review.
- **Almond Farm (also known as Land West of Mill Lane) (80 dwellings):** The parish council expressed its concerns over several issues. This also is currently awaiting the outcome of a judicial review.
- **Marston Paddock, Butts Lane (40 dwellings):** Although this application came through the parish council in 2021 Oxford City Council approved the development in July 2022.
- **Land North of Bayswater Brook (1,145 dwellings):** Although not within the parish, and the parish council accepts that additional affordable housing is needed, this very large development could affect the village part of the parish and would see the loss of green belt land.

Local Tourism

Although having few retail amenities, Old Marston has several active community groups and a wide range of activities benefiting local tourism. Whether through sporting events hosted by Oxford City Football Club or Marston Saints Football Club or health and leisure activities available in Mortimer Hall, Church Hall and OXSRAD.

The parish council has supported several community groups and events through the year.

Neighbourhood Planning

The parish council has made several attempts to ignite a neighbourhood plan with little response. It needs about 15 to 20 committed people to be involved in seeing a plan from its initial form right through to its completion, assuming it is adopted through a referendum of residents.

Playgrounds

Old Marston Parish Council own and maintain Mortimer Hall Recreation Ground, Boults Lane Recreation Ground as well as the Orchard Triangle.

New equipment was installed in the Boults Lane Recreation Ground in 2019, after the old equipment had to be removed for the pavilion.

The equipment in the Mortimer Hall recreation ground was installed in 2009 and, although still well used, is beginning to show its age.

Playing Fields and Sports Facilities

The pitch in the Boults Lane Recreation Ground is maintained by Marston Saints Football Club, with financial assistance from the Oxfordshire Football Association.

The field next to the entrance to the Victoria Arms is owned by Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT). The parish council has an agreement with the OPT that children are allowed to use the field to play in as long as the parish council maintains it. The agreement however only allows one set of goal posts to be installed, no other equipment.

The Orchard Triangle was an initiative from the Marston Community Garden Group which has become very popular with people helping to tend the fruit trees and use the area to stop and relax.

A few years ago, the parish council paid for the installation of six solar powered streetlights:

- Two in School Lane (the track leading from Oxford Road/Cherwell Drive through to St Nicholas School entrance).
- Two in the parking area in Boults Lane Recreation Ground,

- Two in the Mortimer Hall play area on the recreation ground.

So far, there have been very few issues with them, but they are maintained by the parish council.

It has recently come to light that the bus stop in Elsfield Road (opposite the church) is also owned by the parish council.

Community Health & Wellbeing

The parish council introduced three initiatives for 2022:

- **Community Engagement:** To have a two-way engagement with the community. Using a variety of methods and striving for positive outcomes.
- **Environment:** To be mindful of the environment, locally as well as nationally, in council activities. To strive to be sustainable and zero carbon emission as far as economically and practically possible.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** To encourage a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Supporting and working to combat loneliness and encourage inclusion of the elderly, young and all sectors of the community. To empower people to be able to make positive choices.

Community Grants

Old Marston Parish Council have always supported the collection of community groups who all do amazing work within the community.

The parish council spent just over 5% (£3,284) on grant funding to local groups and a further 5.5% (£3,392) on supporting local events.

Community grants have been issued to the following organisations throughout the year:

- **Court Place Farm Allotments Association,** £300
Towards a skip for the removal of historic rubbish from site
- **FOSNS,** £300
Towards the cost of books and musical instruments
- **Marston Community Garden Group,** £300
To help people grow food and be more self-sufficient and sustainable.

- **St Nicholas Society of Bell Ringers,** £92
Repair of two bell ropes.
- **OMMLAA,** £300
Towards purchase of equipment to minimize burning or landfill.
- **Old Marston Library Junior Reading Group,** £300
Towards hiring of room.
- **OXSRAD,** £300
To add additional sensory equipment to the sensory room.
- **St Nicholas School Forest School,** £300
To provide equipment necessary to enable all children to access the Forest School provision regardless of their family's financial background.
- **Marston Times,** £300
Towards cost of printing.
- **Mortimer Hall,** £300
To pay towards the cost of ground maintenance.
- **Mortimer Hall Preschool,** £300
Christmas Activities: craft resources, party presents for each child.
- **43rd Scout Group.** £300
Towards maintenance on building.

As well as financial support for:

- Queen's Jubilee Celebrations at the Red Lion & St Nicholas Church, £1,000
- St Nicholas Church Halloween, £500
- Firework display hosted at the Red Lion £1,500

Remembrance Sunday

The parish council has held a short service and laid wreaths on the war memorial in the churchyard as well as laying wreaths on the graves of the individuals of the parish who were lost in combat during that time.

Crime and Antisocial Behaviour

The council is very concerned about the antisocial behaviour within the parish. It seems that a very small number of individuals are responsible, and the local police as well as the antisocial behaviour teams have been working together to address the incidents. The parish council sent out a flier to as many houses as possible giving details as to how to report any incidents. The flier has also gone into the Marston Times.

Health & Wellbeing

The parish council has produced a walking leaflet to encourage people to get out, exercise and explore the countryside around them. This is available to download from the website or pick up a hard copy from Old Marston Library. Further walks to follow.

Oxford Living Wage Employer



We are a certified
Oxford Living Wage employer

Receiving a liveable wage that covers household and family costs is one of the most important reasons why employees work hard and stay with their employers.

The Oxford Living Wage has been created to promote liveable earnings for workers. It reflects the fact that Oxford is one of the most expensive cities to live in the UK and helps accredited employers demonstrate they value their workforce. With expensive housing in the city, many workers must choose between spending more money to live in the city, or more on travel to get to work.

Old Marston Parish Council take its responsibilities as an employer very importantly and is committed to ensuring its employees are paid a fair and honest rate of pay.

Local Council Award Scheme



The Local Council Award Scheme is a scheme where local councils can achieve a recognised sector-specific standard award. There are three levels: Foundation, Quality & Quality Gold.

Old Marston Parish Council obtained the Foundation level this year.

To achieve this is hard to demonstrate that it has the documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice.

It is also well on the way to getting quality level, demonstrating that it has documentation and information in place for good governance and effective community engagement.

This is not saying that everything about the parish council is perfect. We are all human, but it shows that Old Marston Parish Council is open, listening and adapting to the community it serves.

Accessibility

The parish council compiled a 'Safer Cycling Report', which is available on the website, where it highlights points around the parish and surrounding area which could be hazardous for cyclists. This was taken up by my County Councillor Mark Lygo and looked at with Oxfordshire County Council's highways. An Accessibility Survey will be carried out each year with the report updated. Next year pedestrian safety will be included.

Debate Not Hate Campaign

Old Marston Parish Council has signed up to support the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate Campaign.

Debating and disagreeing with one another is a healthy part of democracy, but abuse and intimidation crosses the line into dangerous territory. Anyone, regardless of their background or political affiliation, should feel safe to become a councillor and be proud to represent their community.

Climate

Old Marston Parish Council has declared a climate emergency.

The parish council has been doing its bit, small actions accumulate, for the environment. Agenda packs are emailed and sent to councillors rather than hard copy. Saving on printer ink, paper, envelopes, etc. Obviously, Old Marston Parish Council have limited resources and a much lower media presence than either the city or county councils, but small actions accumulate in making a difference. The parish council also

support and encourage communities to ‘do their bit’ and together make a difference.

Rewilding

Various strips of land, mainly around the perimeter of the recreation grounds, have been taken out of the maintenance contracts to allow to grow wild. These will only be cut once a year, around August/September, and the cuttings removed.

The parish council also provided wildflower seeds for people to sow in their gardens, free of charge available from the shop at Court Place Farm Allotments in Boults Lane.

Finance

Governance & Accountability

General Reserves

A parish council usually maintains a general reserve of about six-month operating costs, or precept. The precept is received in instalments so, if an instalment is late or not received for whatever reason, the council must ensure that sufficient working capital is available. The council is currently maintaining a general reserve of £31,216 (six months precept).

The council voted not to increase the annual precept, to support residents during the current cost of living crisis.

This means the council has not increased the precept for the last three years. Although this was seen as necessary to help residents already struggling with everyday bills it also means that inflationary costs are being met from the council’s reserves.

Balances £100,128

Financial Reserves

General Reserve £31,216

Other Reserves £68,912

TOTAL £100,128

Income v Budget

	Budget	Actual
Precept	£60,969.00	£60,969.00
Grant	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
CIL Money	£00.00	£00.00
Cemetery Income	£6,040.00	£3,567.00
VAT Returns	£6,000.00	£3,721.06
Wayleaves	£44.00	£52.10
Rents	£511.00	£506.05
Other Income	£800.00	£366.00
TOTAL INCOME	£84,364.00	£79,181.21

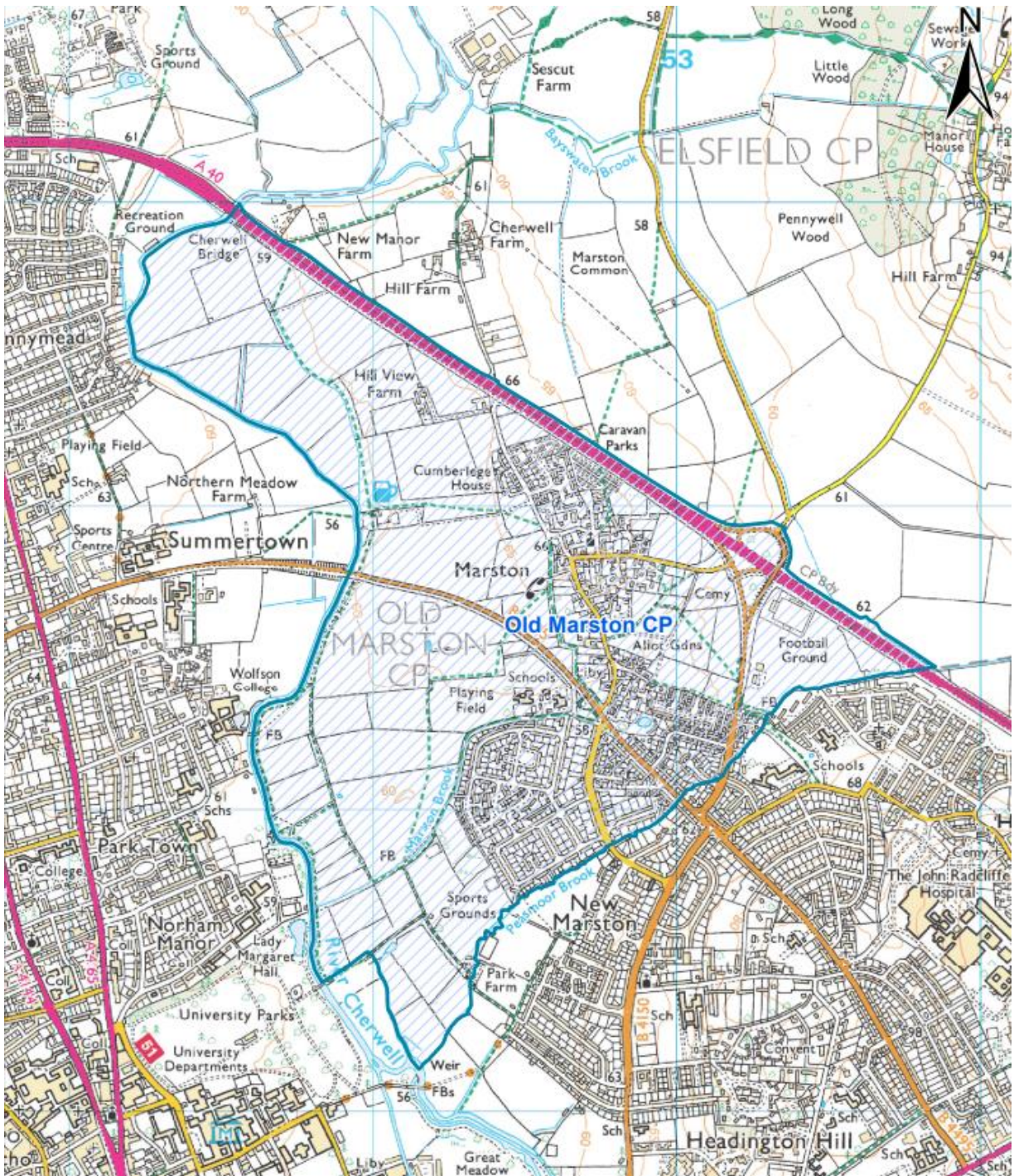
Expenditure v Budget

	Budget	Actual
Cemetery	300.00	335.43
Recreation Grounds (Replacement)	5,000.00	00.00
Recreation Grounds (Maintenance)	2,225.00	455.80
Roy Garner Pavilion (Maintenance)	2,000.00	5,130.78
Boults Lane Project	2,000.00	38,026.80
Grants (s.137)	8,000.00	6,675.67
Administration (Salary, Pension, Tax Etc.)	25,300.00	27,161.23
Stationery	500.00	691.84
Software/Hardware	500.00	2,266.73
Webmaster	500.00	348.76
Legal Advice	100.00	00.00
Council Training	2,000.00	66.00
Asset Valuation	4,000.00	00.00
Insurance	3,300.00	2,062.69
Initiatives	1,000.00	00.00
Elections	1,500.00	2,757.50
Contractors: Recreation Grounds	3,000.00	1,977.00
Cemetery	1,500.00	630.00
Pest Control	2,500.00	1,880.40
Tree Maintenance	3,000.00	3,903.00
Audit Fees (External & Internal)	1,100.00	660.00
Memberships (OALC, SLCC, ICCM, etc.)	1,250.00	1,474.23
General Maintenance	4,000.00	00.00
Chairman's Expenses	1,000.00	356.35
New Projects	5,000.00	00.00
Miscellaneous Payments *		6,846.85
TOTAL	£80,575.00	£103,707.06

*Miscellaneous Payments were:

- Replacement defibrillator battery & pads 400.80
- Cost of survey for revalue council assets 3,600.00
- Cost of paint for underpass 686.35
- 20x Sheffield cycle racks 864.00
- Meeting sound system 404.47
- Wildflower seeds 214.16
- Sundry (hall rent, logo prize, flags, bunting, etc) 677.07

Map of Old Marston Parish Boundary



Map of Old Marston Parish Boundary