

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 13th April 2015 in Millennium Hall at 7pm

1. Minutes of meeting held on 14th April 2014 were approved

2. Chairman's Report – Cllr Dick Brake

Welcome to the 2015 Annual Parish Meeting for Marsworth. Whilst the Parish Council is well represented here I would stress that the meeting is not a Parish Council Meeting but is one for the whole village to participate in. Our task is to ensure the meeting takes place, and is properly managed and recorded, and also to report on the main aspects of the Parish Council activity over the past year. Firstly I want to thank my fellow councillors and clerk for their efforts over the past year. Councillors give their time freely and often this involves hours of commitment and inconvenience. Additionally I want to thank our District Councillor Corrie Cashman who is leaving the post at the next elections he has worked tirelessly for everyone in the Cheddington Ward.

This year has been relatively quiet for the Parish Council, but I feel we should remind Parishioners of our remit. We are responsible for the street lighting in the village area, except for the Lower Icknield way. There is one light at Startops which is also ours. We maintain the Recreation ground, dog waste bin and several trees throughout the village. We have certain areas of grass cutting as well. There has been concern over the loss of the 61 Bus route in 2013, this was done by the Bus Company and we have no power to change their business plan. We did however with help from Council obtain a re-route of the 164 into the village and persuaded them to go to Pitstone to meet the new 61 route; otherwise it would have turned at Vicarage Road and gone into Tring to meet the 61. The weekly bus to Hemel was through the work of one of the Parish Councillors and took five years to obtain. We also have been queried on what we are going to do about The White Lion, we can do little, we did oppose plans for the carpark development and change of use, and we all know the outcome. It has been suggested we insist on new amenities when it is developed, we have no power to request this. We are now in the process of upgrading the Play area at the recreation ground and have taken note of all the forms returned to us with suggestions, including adult equipment. This was the result of the survey carried out in the village Newsletter. I would remind everyone that they can come to the Parish Council meetings to air views and problems.

I will close now so we can continue with our guests and local organisations giving their reports.

3. To receive report from Canal and River Trust – Neil Owen and Sarah Brown

Sarah was introduced to the meeting as the primary contact for local organisations. The structure of CRT has changed with the maintenance teams working regionally. Standard maintenance (brickwork, locks, bridges) is now on a programme. Where damage occurs, an insurance claim is made if possible. Vegetation work, tow-path management, hedges will be routine maintenance. It is hoped to use s106 monies for tow-path improvement as on the Aylesbury Arm following Arla development. Work to Tring Reservoirs is planned with the water level being reduced at Startops for work to repair leaks in the head wall. Works at Tringford are required by the EA.

The CRT is working to build community links with a proposed new car park at Startops and the area used for the works to be a visitor centre. External funding is being sought. The possibility of open water swimming and links with a sailing club are being considered. It is hoped to increase visitor numbers by improving facilities. A 10year management has been produced which encourages partnership working.

The progress of the development of Melbourne was questioned by a Councillor. Discussions are ongoing with planning and there will be consultation on firm proposals.

The development of the former Fencrete site should be completed in 3-6months.

4. AVDC Councillor's report – Cllr Corry Cashman

First, I would like to thank the Parish Council for always making me welcome at its monthly meetings.

Introduction

In common with recent years and with other councils, this has been another "challenging" year. The council's workforce continues to contract and this inevitably has consequences in relation to service provision.

Financial matters

Council Tax 2015-16

For the next financial year AVDC has frozen its council tax. This means that the AVDC council tax for a Band D property will remain at £136.35 a year (£2.62 a week).

Both Buckinghamshire County Council and Thames Valley Police have increased their tax by 1.99%. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has decreased its tax by 1%.

AVDC takes only 9p in every pound of the total council tax collected, with the rest of the money (81p) going to Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and individual parish councils.

In 2010 the district council received around £12 million in annual government grant. This has been reduced, over the last five years, to around £6 million this year. The council anticipates that by 2020 this grant will have disappeared altogether.

Council Tax Bands for Marsworth 2015-2016

The total council tax payable in Marsworth Parish is set out below:

Band A: £ 1016.39
Band B: £ 1185.79
Band C: £ 1355.20
Band D: £ 1524.59
Band E: £ 1863.39
Band F: £ 2202.19
Band G: £ 2540.98
Band H: £ 3049.18

Marsworth and Planning Matters

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

It is possible that until the Vale of Aylesbury Local plan is adopted in 2017 there will be a large number of speculative developments of all sizes in the Vale. Some of these may be of a kind that would not normally be expected to get planning permission. However, because of the lack of a local plan and the problem of the five year housing supply we are likely to see permission given to some schemes (which in different circumstances might not have been considered appropriate) there being no significant planning reasons with which they can be resisted.

Across the Vale the situation should begin to improve once the issue of the five year housing supply is resolved and as the VALP, with its specific policies for the Vale, begins to emerge during 2016. However it should be noted that the timetable leading to the anticipated adoption of the plan in 2017 is dictated to an extent by the work that adjoining local planning authorities have yet to carry out; the results of which have to feed into VALP.

Local Democracy

Boundary Commission: Cheddington ward

Last year's boundary commission report resulted in changes to Aylesbury Vale District council ward boundaries both in Cheddington and other wards in the Vale. With effect from Ivinghoe (village parish ward). It will return two members to the district council.

Slapton, presently in Cheddington ward, will become part of Wingrave ward.

There will be fifteen single-member wards, ten two-member wards and eight three-member wards across the district.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

A new voter registration system called Individual Electoral Registration (IER) came into force last summer. Instead of the head of the household being responsible for registering everyone who lives at an address, now every individual is responsible for their own voter registration. Further details: 01296 585807 or by email at

electoralregistration@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

The District Council

AVDC Committees Reduced in size

All AVDC committees now consist of a maximum of 11 members. I see this as a generally welcome development, as some committees with as many as 17 members did not always operate as efficiently or effectively as they should have. Committees with up to 11 members should still ensure the range of opinion, expertise and experience needed to do an effective job.

Web-casting of District Council Meetings

Aylesbury Vale District Council now broadcasts live web-casts of its meetings. Buckinghamshire county council has already done so for some time. It is too early to say whether or not AVDC webcasts have had any effect on the standard of debate or to gauge to what extent the public have availed of the opportunity to see their council at work.

Unitary Authority Status.

At its February meeting the district council voted, with cross-party support, to spend £80,000 on preparing a business case in support of establishing a unitary authority for North Bucks. This would replace the present two-tier structure.

I abstained on the grounds that spending such money on a project that would barely commence prior to the district, parish and national elections in May was inappropriate and might, in the light of political developments after the elections, prove to have been money wasted. I did, however, stress my support for the principle of a unitary authority based on the north Buckinghamshire area. One council providing the services presently provided by BCC and AVDC would, in my opinion, make for improved democratic accountability and also financial sense.

iESE Improvement and Efficiency Award

The council won the top award in this year's iESE Improvement and Efficiency Awards for transforming the way it delivers services while reducing costs across the authority.

Works in Progress

Waterside North

A regeneration scheme for the Waterside North area as part of the masterplan being promoted by BCC together with Aylesbury Vale District Council has commenced.
Aylesbury's new Education Centre

Good progress is being made on building Aylesbury's new education centre, which will be known as University Campus Aylesbury Vale (UCAV). Aylesbury Vale District Council have appointed contractor Morgan Sindall to construct the building, which is being built on Walton Street at the head of the canal basin, next to the Waterside Theatre. The centre is due to open this September.

The Swan Pool and Leisure Centre

The Swan Pool and Leisure Centre in Buckingham is to be redeveloped.

The Political Composition of the Council

The political composition of the council is as follows:

Conservative: 36
Liberal Democrat: 17
UKIP: 3
Independents: 2
Labour: 1

Other Matter

A 418 – Wing Bypass

At last September's Local Area Forum we were informed that a bid by BCC for government funding for an A 418 bypass around Wing had been unsuccessful.

It would appear that, even if future bidding opportunities arose and were successful, it would be unlikely that Wing would see a bypass built before the mid 2020s.

My Allowance and Expenses

My allowance and expenses for the last full financial year (2013–14) were:

Basic allowance: £ 5,304.00

Mileage allowance: £ 508.80

Parking and Fares: £ 50.85

TOTAL: £ 5,863.65

The above figures do not include any costing for the laptop computer on loan to me from the Council. The mileage allowance includes attendance at site meetings all over the Vale for the development management committee.

May Elections

Parish, district council and General elections will take place on Thursday 7 May. On a personal note, I will be standing down at this election.

Looking Ahead

The greatest challenge facing Aylesbury Vale and local councils nationally is the continuing reduction in the government grant funding which they receive to help them provide local services. In the Vale, as I have already mentioned above, this funding is likely to have been reduced from an annual £12m in 2010 to £0 by 2020

The district council will raise approximately £9m in council tax this year. Even doubling this tax would not make up the projected shortfall in government grants anticipated by 2020. Inevitably cuts to and /or abolition of some council services has to be a likely outcome in such situations. Many councils may find it increasingly difficult to deliver mandatory services (such as refuse and recycling and planning) in the future.

Such a challenge may represent an opportunity for a national debate on local democracy. Questions which could be addressed include democratic accountability, new ways of funding local services, local government reorganisation and levels of service provision. It is, in my opinion, a debate long overdue.

5. County Councillors Report – Avril Davies

The BCC budget is £320 million, 71% of which is raised through Council Tax. And an £8 million reserve. The remainder is other grants which are being cut. There are increased costs and demands on the budget. £68 million cost reduction has been achieved but a further £65 million is required. This is against a background of an increasingly elderly population and the fastest growing 0-15 age group in the country. Cases of neglect are an increasing need and the demands of the Care Act have to be met. The budget is high risk which makes services vulnerable.

OFSTED reported that the Children's Services were not meeting statutory obligations but a recovery plan has achieved government approval and there has been a £6 million increase in the children's services budget. BCC has found it almost impossible to recruit social workers with only 7 permanent staff and 20 agency. BCC may set up a training programme.

The roads budget of £50 million is raised by Council Tax. 10 roads have been repaired in the Cheddington Ward. Members can request repairs but are not always given priority.

The school bus charging system has problems which have not been resolved and the fees and service are not adequate. The school grant funding is lower than average for the country and a judicial review is taking place to ensure adequate funding is available.

Adult services are being provided by joint working with the NHS. Consultation is taking place on elderly persons housing schemes and on delivery service changes.

Beacon Village Community Library is going from strength to strength and the grant has been guaranteed for 4 years. Volunteers are always required. Councillor Davies was asked if the expense of providing the Waterside Theatre could be justified. It was explained that the developer had walked away but some development round the canal had raised funds. The shortfall was made up by the sale of right to buy council houses.

General discussion questioned whether local government was fit for purpose. It was felt that the whole issue of Council Tax and grants need to be reviewed. Is it right to fund infrastructure projects from s106?

6. Police Report

The yearly crime figures are as follows:

- Theft from vehicles 2
- Vehicle interference 1
- No dwelling burglaries
- Non dwelling burglaries 4
- Theft of bike from outhouse
- assault 1
- dangerous dog incident when a child was bitten

7. Village Newsletter – Neil Waterman

Last year was a year of change for the Marsworth newsletter with the retirement of Lynne Rayner and the revamp of the newsletter from a new team in charge. A show of thanks for all the hard work and effort Lynne and her mum Val had given to the productions and distribution of the newsletter was given with a presentation at the Church in December.

As for the new team, thanks go to Graham Dickinson and Sandra Costello for creating the excellent new look newsletter. Sandra has taken on the lead role and is being assisted by Chas Pearson, Josie Kempster, Dick and Lynda Brake, Elaine Standen and Carole Hawkins who are all helping with copy, interviews, idea generation and the look and feel of the newsletter. Sandra continues to look for help and has recently persuaded Andrew Burnett to cover for one month as guest editor.

Myself as treasurer and Annie Sandon as advertising manager remained in post. We both look forward to the additional advertising revenue that the new look newsletter will bring in and the team have visions of future improvements to the look and feel of the newsletter as funding allows.

Thanks go out to the delivery team, we have 15 willing volunteers delivering between them 325 newsletters each month and none of them have complained too much about the extra weight they now have to carry.

In the last year the magazine's reserves reduced slightly to £2,000. With the current publication costing £124 per month, the newsletter remains in good financial health.

8. Millennium Hall

The Committee meets monthly and currently consists of 10 members with representatives from the WI and Parish Council. There's plenty of room on the committee with vacancies for representatives from Pre School, School, Church and any other group / society that uses the hall.

Thanks goes to the Committee, consisting of;
Josie Kempster - Chairperson Evan Kempster – Parish Council
Steve White - Vice Chair John Kearsley – Co opted
Neil Waterman - Treasurer Sue White – WI
Francis Brown - Bookings Secretary Michelle Churchill – Co opted
Lynda Brake – Secretary Dick Brake – Co opted
Vacancy – Pre School Vacancy – Church
Vacancy - School

We are a Charity (Marsworth Social Centre no 205732) and our year end is now 31st March.

We have a paid caretaker / cleaner Michelle Churchill 6hrs per week.

Hall income is similar to previous year at circa £9,200k p.a.

Regular user income includes:

Pre School 50% of the total hall hire income - Mornings and Afternoons

Badminton – Mondays and Thursday evenings

Dance – Wednesdays

Free Hall – Friday evenings

Monthly etc - WI, Bridge, School, Church, Parish Council

Palates in the Mike Frost room a few times a week.

Occasional income (children's parties for example) – approx. 30 events per annum

Complaints – None in the past 12 months.

Damage – None in the past 12 months.

Our Income is supplemented with a few annual fundraising events

Fireworks on the recreation ground –For the last two years the fireworks have been sourced by the committee to make the event viable. Nov14 made £346 (2013 £298). As long as it continues to make a profit we will carry on.

Christmas Bazaar was well attended and attracted a good variety of stall holders and contributed £163. Thanks to Ken and Betty Lyndhurst running the mulled wine stall.

The 100 Club (247 members for 15 month period) - £1,347 (£2,100 in prize money will be given out over this period)

2014/15 financial year to 31 March 2015 will see a net cash outflow of around £2,400 due the one off expenditure on refurbishment of the floor which cost £3,300.

The solar panels cost £7,725 to install in Aug 2012.

Earning an average of 22.6p per unit of electricity produced - £1,900 has been earned so far (11.5 year pay back !!).

Upstairs room is now being regularly used by palates group 3 times a week - £980 income being received for first 6 months.

9. Report received from Bridge Club

The Marsworth Bridge Club continues to meet monthly in the Village Hall on the evening of the second Tuesday of every month as it has done for many years. We regularly have four tables playing duplicate bridge and we would like to increase our numbers a little from this level if possible. Since I took over the organisation of the Club about two years ago we have donated profits of £350 to All Saints Church in Marsworth.

Once again I ran a large charity bridge lunch in the Hall last February and this year the profits of £2,500 were shared between the Florence Nightingale Hospice in Aylesbury and the Chilterns MS Centre at Halton. On Tuesday 7th July I am organising a lunch and an afternoon of bridge at the Village Hall in aid of this year's Flower Festival at All Saints Church. If anyone is interested in coming to this lunch and playing bridge or would like to help on the day I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Betty Longhurst

74 Vicarage Road Marsworth

Home phone: 01296 660711 Mobile: 07788 452894

10. Report received from Marsworth CofE Infant School

Vicarage Road, Marsworth, Bucks, HP23 4LT

Tel/Fax: 01296 668440

E-mail : office@marsworth.bucks.sch.uk Website: www.marsworthschool.ik.org

Headteacher: Miss A Urban

ANNUAL REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL
FROM MARSWORTH CE INFANT SCHOOL
APRIL 2015

Personnel:

After the retirement of Yvonne Goodwin in July 2014, I was appointed Headteacher as well as continuing as the KS1 teacher. Mrs Jenny Nurden supports me in Class 2. Mrs Jan Stevens takes Class 1 (Nursery and Reception) all day Tuesday to Friday supported by Mrs Wendy Casterton. Mrs Emma Thompson was appointed in January 2015 and takes Yr 1 and Reception all day Monday and four afternoons when I have Office time. Mrs Stevens also takes the Music tuition for the school. Mrs Eccles takes the Year 2's for recorders and keyboards. Mrs Pankiw is our Bursar/Secretary and Mrs Haig, Mrs Carter and Mrs Hall are our Midday Supervisors. Mr Broad continues to be our caretaker.

Group Membership:

The school continues to be a member of the following groups:

5. Network Learning Community of Schools
6. Buckingham Sports Partnership
7. Federation of Small Schools Group

Buckingham Sports Partnership has provided various sporting events for our Year 2 children:

- Multi-skills sporting events at Cottesloe School
- Small Schools Sports Festival at Stoke Mandeville Stadium

These events are continuing due to the new Government Sports Funding to Schools. This is going to continue for the next 3 years.

Our Level 3 Travel Plan Status has been renewed because of our continued activities in this area. The children enjoy having their "Go for Gold" cards stamped daily by Mrs Pankiw. This is a Travel Plan initiative encouraging children to walk to school.

Facilities/Resources:

Mrs Caron Owens (Premises Governor) carries out termly inspections of our premises with Mrs Yvonne Goodwin. She brings a great deal of expertise to this aspect of school life supported very ably by Mr John White (Premises Governor).

Refurbishment/Maintenance

The large window in Class 2 was replaced and the chimney in class 2 was removed, hopefully solving major damp problems in this classroom. We used our Devolved Formula Capital funding for this. Ongoing projects are to replace two heaters and to develop and improve our outdoor Early Years area as well ongoing maintenance with our boundary wall and damp problems in Class 1.

Outside Activities:

The school joined the village at All Saints Church, Marsworth for the annual Harvest Festival service. The children then distributed their Harvest gifts to people in the village.

For the UNICEF Day for Change the children came in ordinary clothes and paid to do this. Their contribution was then sent off to UNICEF.

These activities, and through our RE lessons studying these countries, help the children to understand about life in other parts of the world.

We also held a Global Awareness week in March (for a third year) to raise awareness of different cultures around the world. This was a very popular week, when the children looked at, and found out about life in France and Brazil.

We also held a Science week for a fourth year. The children studied the weather in Science. They all

enjoyed this work.

Our Friends of Marsworth School continue to hold a variety of events in aid of our school. We have purchased a number of resources for the school thanks to these events.

Life at Marsworth School, as you can see, continues to be varied and enjoyable.

We would also like to add our thanks to the whole village for their valued support of our school – it is much appreciated.

11. Report from Marsworth WI (Elsie Beesley)

The WI has had a busy year with increasing membership and many interesting outings to the theatre, an local auction. A very successful jumble sale (organised by Josie Kkempster) raised over £700. The annual Garden Party was held in April Cottage and a coffee morning at the home of Sylvia Frost. Neil Gurney entertained with a flower arranging demonstration. Last year £500 was donated to Hospice of St Francis and Florence Nightingale House. This year, the WI is raising funds for All Saints Church, Marsworth. The speakers at the monthly meetings have included the Grand Canal in China and the work of the RNLI. Marsworth WI hosted a group meeting when 100 local members enjoyed hearing about Jennifer Worth who wrote "Call the Midwife" from her daughter and husband. Members continue to meet socially with monthly coffee mornings, book club, craft group and supper club. This year is the centenary of the WI and special events are being organised.

12. All Saints Church (John White)

The year has proved challenging with the retirement of Rev. Tracy Doyle on 23rd February 2014. It takes a while for the a suitable incumbent to be found but with the support of Ivinghoe and Slapton parishes, Rev. Adrian Manning was offered and accepted the post.

Bell ringing has gone from strength to strength, not always to everyone's liking, but a simulator means that the bells cannot be heard outside the church and has proved very successful.

This year saw the completion of the remedial work to the masonry and chancel roof. Fund raising proved a major challenge but we managed to achieve it at a very small cost to ourselves.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 8.15pm.