

Annual Parish Meeting April 8th 2024

Parish Council Chairman's Report, Councillor Bob Kennedy

Welcome to this Annual Parish Meeting . It is a statutory responsibility of every Parish Council to hold an open meeting every year for all Parishioners and organisations which operate within the Parish to allow views to be expressed, questions asked and answered, and inform other Parishioners as to what is going on. It is not a Parish Council meeting, that will follow on after this meeting and you are all welcome to attend if you wish.

Our council welcomed 1 new councillor this year, Robert John replacing Keith Thomasson.

The key Planning matters over the past year have been:

The application by Ainscough Strategic Land to build around 320 houses on Marsworth Airfield (south site) thus creating a 'new village'. We mounted a strong campaign of opposition and mobilised village support encouraging objection, and as a result Ainscough withdrew their application. However they re-applied and are trying to overcome many of the reasons for objection. Their key argument is that the site is brownfield and this gives them an enhanced opportunity in the event that Bucks County fails to deliver its housing targets laid down by government. We have opposed this since the site has always been agricultural but that issue remains in contention.

The 2022 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) around Chiltern Beechwoods has continued to delay all new dwelling planning approvals, since Bucks has yet no policy for mitigating the damage caused by new development within 12.7km of the woods. This has prevented determination of both the Airfield and White Lion applications.

The 2023 application for changing the Anglers Retreat into housing, which we opposed, was withdrawn, but a fresh application for conversion into 3 dwellings has now been made. The Parish Council has opposed this arguing that it would be the third Pub lost to the village in 15 years, and that it has been most successful in the past serving the whole surrounding area and many visitors to the reservoirs.

Underenforcement of Planning Restrictions at the south Airfield site continues although we regularly complain but the planning authorities seem powerless to stop flagrant breaches of the rules.

We are pleased that the 1400 housing development proposed in neighbouring Tring has now been refused by the Secretary of State.

Other developments have been:

The launch of Community Speedwatch in Marsworth run by volunteers and supported by the PC.

The installation of a new oven in the Village Hall funded by PC S106 funds. We are working on S106 agreement rejigging so the funds can be used more widely.

We are pleased to report the village again had a record Bonfire Night on our Recreation Ground, and the Steam Rally used it for parking in June which also allowed it to enjoy a high attendance. It was also used successfully for the village fun run and Coronation picnic. Improvements to the parking area will take place shortly to reduce damage to the playing surface when such events are held.

I regret to report that CRT removed all its dog waste and litter bins from the canal and reservoir areas as a cost saving measure. Unfortunately this resulted in a large increase in litter and dog waste. Marsworth litterpickers have raised their efforts to combat this and the PC will shortly be increasing bin provision at taxpayers' expense.

Finally after a long period of pothole profusion we are seeing more repair activity from the County's new Highways contractors and look forward to the road around the White Lion being sorted soon.