

**Minutes of the Marsworth Annual Parish Meeting held on
Monday 7 April 2025 in Millennium Hall, Marsworth at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllrs R Kennedy (RK) (Chair), R Brown (RB), D Cornwall (DC), R John (RJ), C King (CK), S Smith (SGS) and Clerk to Parish Caroline Smith

Apologies: G Monks

Others Present: Buckinghamshire Councillors Peter Brazier and Chris Poll
PCs Jake Bye & PCSO Tina Hobson
and 45 members of the public

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 April 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

1 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 had no new joiners or leavers during the year but parishioners are reminded that elections are coming up on May 1st which may change things.

The key issues over the past year have been:

The ongoing application by Ainscough Strategic Land to build around 320 houses on Marsworth Airfield (south site) thus creating a 'new village' is still undetermined. A few issues have been raised through the planning website by Ainscough aimed at addressing some of the many objections lodged, including most recently an attempt to make it lawful for traffic lights on the Red Lion canal bridge, but no decision has yet been made. The 2022 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) around Chiltern Beechwoods has continued to delay both this and many other new dwelling planning approvals, since Bucks has yet to conclude its policy for mitigating the damage caused by new development within 12.7km of the woods. However this is now close to resolution and the change in government policy for more housing on grey land and much higher housing targets for Bucks will impact our region significantly in coming years.

The White Lion has been sold to developers Prism Construction and work has commenced to stabilise the existing building with a view to converting it once the outstanding renewal of a former planning application is approved.

Although the 1400 housing development proposed in neighbouring Tring was refused by the Secretary of State of the previous government Dacorum Council have now included this as part of circa 2,300 house development programme for the Tring area in order to meet the targets imposed by the new government. We are hopeful that this will mean that Herts and Dacorum will successfully oppose any additional development around Long Marston including the section of Marsworth airfield which lies in Herts. However it will mean that Marsworth children will lose access to Tring schools and demand for Doctors, Dentists and other services in the Tring area will mushroom.

The Parish Council carried out 2 speed surveys on the village boundary during the year, one at Cooks Wharf on the south side of the canal bridge and the other in Bulbourne on the west side of the bridge. Whilst both showed speeding above the levels on the Lower Icknield Way in Marsworth no further action arose as a consequence. Pitstone opposed a fixed smiley face sign as their policy now favours intermittent signs and only for significant levels of speeding, and Tring/Herts feel they already have enough anti-speeding measures in Bulbourne. We have asked for traffic lights to be put at the Bulbourne bridge as part of the significant housing development now planned nearby.

The Community Speedwatch in Marsworth has operated throughout the year but remains very short of volunteer support. It is galling that virtually none of the many complainers who signed a petition for more action against speeding have been willing to participate in this effective remedy programme.

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 record attendance and payout to local and national good causes. It was also used successfully for the village fun run.

I am pleased to report that, through the auspices of Bucks Council's Helping Hands initiative, we were able to obtain £4,680 for the food bank which the church runs in Marsworth.

Finally we are pleased to report that the Section 106 funding agreement arising from the recent development in Bulbourne has been amended so the remaining £55 odd thousand pounds of monies can now be used more widely for both Recreation Ground and Village Hall improvements. I would particularly like to thank our long suffering clerk Caroline Smith for all the work she put in on this as well as her many other duties.

2 To receive Buckinghamshire Councillors' Report

As we come to the end of this council term, we would like to look back briefly to what has been achieved. Whilst all budgets are under sustained pressure our commitment to those services which affect residents every day remained a priority. From waste and refuse to road maintenance, from the environment to those statutory services we must maintain, our record remains good. Some nearby councils have seen their choices cause financial difficulty resulting in requests to government to increase their bills by more than would normally be allowed. Buckinghamshire remains solvent despite inflationary pressures.

We have, over the last 4 years, reacted to your requests and also been proactive when issues arise within Marsworth parish. We have attended every parish meeting unless a Council meeting causes a clash. We believe that contact with parish councils is one of the most important aspects of what we do and is a mark of the esteem we have for you. Outside of the parish meetings we make sure we are available to the clerks and residents whenever possible.

Despite a reduction in councillor numbers at BC we undertake to continue this important relationship if re-elected.

Whilst budgets are constrained, and a reduction of membership of one third, we have rejected the independent review body recommendation for a raise in allowance and instead voted to cut that allowance by 10% across the board. Our staff continue to see an increase in line with inflation unless on the higher rates to bring bandings to a more equitable level. Staff costs have risen greatly with the raise in National Insurance Contributions and minimum wage levels. We are both candidates in this election and hope we can continue to serve the ward. We remain your elected councillors until May 2nd and will continue to work for you until then. Derek has decided to hang up his lanyard and we thank him for his service and wish him all the best.

3 Reports

The reports from the following had been published on the Marsworth website and those submitted in time were also contained in the April edition of Marsworth News from the following:

Buckinghamshire Councillors' Report

Marsworth 100 Club

Marsworth Millennium Hall

All Saints Church

Marsworth Charity

Marsworth Food Bank

Marsworth News

Thames Valley Police

Marsworth Pre-School

Marsworth Steam Rally

Marsworth Women's Institute

Marsworth Speedwatch

Marsworth CofE School.

A report had not been received from Canal & River Trust

4 Open Discussion

a) Pot Holes

Cllrs Brazier and Poll explained that the quick repairs to potholes were for emergency make safe repairs where there was a set criteria including sharp ledge, deep enough etc as to why potholes nearby were left unrepaired (called a splodge). Sometimes a team will be out doing full patch repairs and larger jobs on the network and ordered to fix an emergency make safe, hence why there were more work people and vehicles than potholes being repaired.

b) Road by Wilstone Reservoir

Stephen Wooler asked if Hertfordshire Highways could be contacted to ascertain if the works to the road by Wilstone Reservoir – when the road will be shut – could be carried out during this period. Cllrs Brazier and Poll to follow this up.

c) Freight Zone and Lower Icknield Way

Ron Busby queried why so many heavy lorries were still driving along Lower Icknield Way. Cllrs Brazier and Poll reported that a survey had been completed before the link road to the M1 was completed and a 2nd survey after and the results were due in April and then enforcement would commence. Lorries were using Lower Icknield Way and not Icknield Way to the A41 from Castlemead as they were permitted to so. Upper

Icknield Way was omitted in error from the zone and the inclusion of the B488 is recent. Cameras now all in place.

a) Red Lion Bridge application by Ainscough for Traffic Lights

Cllrs Brazier and Poll said the application would be called in if officials were minded to approve it. The application is for a Certificate of Lawfulness because of the bridge's listed structure status rather than a planning application in the usual sense; but residents are still encouraged to comment on the application through the Planning Portal even though the nature of the application meant that different considerations were applicable. The Canal and River Trust has also objected because the lights would be on the listed structure. Chris Poll said it would fundamentally change the Street scene which would be unacceptable to the Council and Stephen Wooler pointed out that under the relevant legislation the key issue was whether it would materially change the character of the listed structure. His objections had therefore focused on the fact that the change was intended to facilitate a development which would result in a bridge that presently connects a village with a nearby hamlet becoming a main thoroughfare between two substantial villages. That change would substantially change its character. He also pointed out that the applicants had relied on a false premise in their supporting documentation claiming that no listed structure consent had been required in relation to traffic signals at the Brownlow Bridge or the bridge at Cooks Wharf (also listed structures). However, the point was based on a false premise and no significance should attach to their argument since those lights had been in place for at least 50 years – well before the two bridges were listed in 1984.

b) Support of the Councillor

Denis Cornwall placed on record Marsworth Parish Council's appreciation of the support from the Buckinghamshire Councillors

c) Planning Comments from members of the public no longer on the Planning Portal.

Buckinghamshire Council is the data controller for this data and it has decided to stop proactively publishing comments on planning applications. It has been done to improve their own data protection compliance. Cllrs Brazier and Poll reported that it was hoped to have an AI solution to ensure that private information could be removed. In the mean time, access to public comments will be available only to Buckinghamshire Councillors. It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk should write an article in Marsworth News to alert residents to email the Parish Clerk if they wanted Marsworth Parish Council (MPC) to take into consideration their comments.

5 Guest Speaker – Alex Razak from Ivinghoe and Pitstone Repair Cafe

We were entertained to an very interesting talk from Alex Razak about Repair Cafes in general and specifically what the Ivinghoe and Pitstone Repair Café can offer. The information gleaned from customer visits is fed back to international repair cafes to be able to advise companies, eg Dyson about batteries failing with a view to preventing early obsolescence. The Ivinghoe and Pistone Repair Café was started by Alex 2 years ago and is held in the Pitstone Pavillion from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm on the 4th Saturday of every month. More volunteers are always welcome. The aim is to attract the younger generation to encourage that repair is possible. The Repair Café has:

ceramic specialists
tool sharpening
jewellery and clock repair
woodwork
engineers
seamstress
software issues and mobile screens

If you can fit it through the door, we can fix it, is the mantra. There's also fresh sausage rolls and home made cake with good quality coffee and all for a donation.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

