

Dear Editor

The level of interest shown at the 16 October public meeting was encouraging. We are indebted to Ed Vaizey for initiating it and taking the time out of his busy schedule to chair it. We are sure everyone there was impressed with the way Ed handled the meeting and encouraged a spirit of cooperation.

A 16-page record of the meeting has been placed on the MADNews web site for all to read. Several who spoke at the meeting were keen to explore alternative ideas that might avoid the proposed developments both on Hyde Copse and the Anson Field. There seemed to be little enthusiasm among the 140 or so who attended for the proposed developments. There was however plenty of respect for the commitment shown by the Anson Trustees and the patient way that Mike Hoath handled the numerous points requiring a response from him as Trust spokesman for the evening. It was stressed that although the Trust is not bound to consult with the village, any proposals that the Trust take to the Charities Commission will only gain their approval if the Trust can demonstrate clear support from the majority of the village. As Jane Hanna reported last year: significant support from the village would also need to be demonstrated in order to obtain planning permission for facilities on Hyde Copse.

It was also explained that the Trust is running short of funds quite quickly now and they only have a few months to finalise their proposals. They spoke about wanting to commence public consultation as soon as they can but also about the difficulty of fitting this in around the planning process with its tightly defined time scales. The message to the whole village must be to take every opportunity to make your views clear to the Trust and the Parish Council and in the pages of MAD News. Do not wait to be asked for your opinion, however if there is a public consultation, as hoped, then respond quickly and do not leave it to others to speak for you. Read the record of the meeting if you can. Your views are essential to ensure that the Trust do not set off on a course of action that could be generally unpopular and irreversible.

BOB ANDERSON

(on behalf of Neighbours Around the Field)
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Dear Editor

One late afternoon recently when it was already getting dark (the street lights were on), I was walking our dog round the fields north of the village, when I heard a faint cry for "help". Further along the path we were on, I noticed a small boy on the ground being guarded by a dog, unleashed.

On approaching I asked if he was alright to be informed that he had stumbled over a hole in the ground and that he was in pain, his ankle and leg being twisted.

With difficulty I was able to get him on to his feet, supporting him whilst at the same time re-leashing his dog, keeping my own hound on a long lead, his on a short lead and thus this brave little fellow led us all to his home and safety.

I was astonished when, during our slow, and for him painful walk, he told me that at least one person had passed him, refusing help.

It concerned me that such an even could have happened. I mentioned this to two senior adult friends, one male the other female; neither showed surprise as in their view, the recent paedophile paranoia has, in some cases, led to adults avoiding contact with children.

If this is so, what is our world coming to?

Name and address supplied

Dear Editor

I would like to wish the residents of Parkside a happier new year for 2010 as many of us have been coping with the parting of loved ones and illness in the last year or so and I hope that we have a brighter and happier year to come. I hope that our neighbourly spirit stays strong and I wish all my neighbours all the best.

NICOLA (No 13)

Dear Editor

We have six hens regularly free-ranging in our garden at Hyde Farm House. Unfortunately we have not found any eggs! Does anyone own them?

CLAIRE 01865 391391

Dear Editor

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

The appeal in Marcham, Frilford and Garford raised £3,454.13, a new record. Very many thanks to everyone who contributed and had the poppies for sale on their premises.

A big "Thank You" also to the other 12 house-to-house collectors who agree so very willingly to help me every year, our house-to-house collection raised £997.31. No doubt with Afghanistan so constantly in the news this has made more people aware of the work of the Royal British Legion.

SUSAN SPURGEON



ED VAIZEY WRITES...

The New Year is a good chance to look at what the issues our local area will be facing in months to come.

There are still some major infrastructure issues facing the local area. The reservoir public enquiry is due to start in the spring. Neither the district council nor local pressure groups have the resources to take on fully Thames Water, and I have asked the Government to provide funds for this. Personally, I think the reservoir is less likely to happen, mainly because Thames Water does not have the resources currently to build it. But I also think that the alternative options seem more and more viable.

The other issue is the incinerator, near Didcot. This has been on the back burner since the County Council turned down the planning application, but it remains an issue that needs to be monitored very closely.

Then there is housing. The development of 2,500 houses in Grove is back on, as property developers emerge from the credit crunch. We now learn that Wantage will be the site for 1500 homes, making a total of 4,000 for the area. Personally I do not think Wantage and Grove can take that much development, even if it is spread over nearly two decades. It means growth of almost 50 per cent.

Didcot will also see some 3,500 houses, and there are more planned for the north of the town. And Wallingford is fighting an additional 750 houses. And there is the constant worry of the expansion of Swindon to the east, which will affect villages around Faringdon, though I think this threat is receding.

All in all, this is huge and unprecedented development for our area. While we need new homes, we do not need them on this scale. And it is ironic that local villages, that need and want a few extra homes, are consistently turned down when they ask for them. The system is completely bonkers.

Transport is another issue that will take up my time. I am campaigning for the re-opening of Wantage Road station, and also want the improvement of Didcot station to be used as a chance to enhance the Didcot Railway Centre as a tourist attraction. I have saved some of the train service in Appleford, and continue to represent commuters worried about high rail fares and car park charges.

Then there are numerous local issues, such as the future of Wantage cinema, which I will continue to be involved in, as well as issues specific to individual constituents, such as benefit and child support payments, housing and health waiting lists and numerous other matters.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

