

Dear Editor

Bypass NOW please

The end of the evening rush hour found tailbacks on the A415 through Marcham on Wednesday 18th January as police, ambulance and fire crew attended a serious collision caused by a driver from London who was later taken away by police in hand-cuffs and charged with having excess alcohol in his blood.

A Marcham resident had his car virtually destroyed as he neared the Marcham side of the new Pelican crossing on his way to Abingdon. Luckily he and his daughters were able to walk back home after being checked out in the ambulance called to the scene. The other driver reportedly swerved into the side of his car pushing it off the road and sending one of the rear wheels and bits of the suspension half way up the driveway towards my front door.

After colliding with the first car the other driver continued along the pavement for some 50 yards before coming to a final stop. Happily there were no pedestrians walking along at the time or they would almost certainly have been killed.

BOB ANDERSON

For pictures see the cover

Ed

Dear Editor,

Many readers will have noted Mr. Buckingham's letter about the Institute (or Village Hall as he referred to it) and perhaps agreed with his sentiments.

He came along to the latest Parish Council meeting and re-stated the points in his letter. Although a member of the Parish Council, because I am also a Director of the Anson Trust company, I declared an interest in the matter and therefore was not present when the subject was discussed. However, I understand that the Parish Council re-affirmed that it has no proprietorial interest in the Institute and therefore can only make representations to the Anson Trust on behalf of parishioners. In addition the Parish Council does not have the necessary financial resources to make a contribution on a scale, which would be needed to 'save the priceless jewel'.

I offered to speak to Mr. Buckingham outside of the meeting and he took me up on my offer. Briefly I explained the situation as I saw it. The Anson Trust exists to provide facilities and amenities for the welfare, recreation and leisure of parishioners. The present hall is not well suited to the provision of suitable facilities and because of its age and state is very expensive to maintain. Equally the temporary buildings on the sports field are now time expired and suffering significant problems. I said that in my opinion, even to maintain both the Institute and the temporary buildings, even in their current unsatisfactory state, would require expenditure of at least £10,000 per annum over and above what present users could reasonably afford.

When this is set against the funds available
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to the Anson Trust, essentially nil, then the proposal to sell the Institute site and build a facility to meet adequately, at a sustainable cost, the current needs appears to be the only reasonable option.

Mr. Buckingham appreciated what I told him but felt that many villagers were not aware of the situation, as I had set it out. Accordingly, I have written this letter in an attempt to correct that.

COLIN BOUGH

PS I have written this letter in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the Parish Council or the Arthur Anson Memorial Trust Limited.

Dear Editor

Marcham, along with the rest of the villages in the vale, will almost certainly grow. One only needs to look at an exhibition by the Marcham society to see the changes in the last 60 or so years to get an idea of the scale of growth.

A bypass, which we are all working for, would almost certainly bring the land between it and the village to the attention of the ever watchful developers. Marcham would then grow quite quickly again.

This possible increase in population would require more facilities. It is for this reason that residents of Marcham – and quite a number too – have been saddened and frustrated by the closure of the Institute. The idea that a village the size of Marcham cannot support a village hall and a new facility on the Anson field is totally unproven.

Here in Sparsholt, we have saved, rebuilt and enhanced our cherished Griffin Hall, with no great benefactor, few grants - as we don't tick the boxes of many of the funders, and a population of only 200! Just up the road in Childrey, we are involved in fundraising for a new sports pavilion for the playing fields, population of Childrey about 500!

So, FW Buckingham you see it can be done. You have, in your words, a generous benefactor, and I have just organised a meeting of the reservoir affected parishes, which proved to be most useful to all who attended, even though the views of some parishes differed considerably. I would be more than happy to organise a similar meeting for the residents of Marcham to air their views publicly on the future of the institute.

I would point out, however, it appears to be a Marcham solution which is required, not a district or county council one. I was elected to represent your views at county level and will continue to do so. A meeting place, time and date can be arranged if it is what the residents of Marcham wish.

I look forward to your comments.

IAIN BROWN
COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Dear Editor

Residents may not be aware that they are being asked by local health boards for their views on reforms to the NHS in Oxfordshire.

There has been little in the press on this, yet should these reforms proceed they will impact on patient care.

National coverage of a deepening financial crisis across the country in the NHS is mirrored in Oxfordshire where there have been recent ward closures, operations cancelled and referrals from GPs refused. A confidential paper released in January also revealed that Abingdon community hospital services are imminently under threat again despite reassurances before the 2005 election. All this at a time when Oxfordshire County Council is cutting vital support services to carers. Nationally, a survey of some 117 NHS chiefs blame the high level of debt in the NHS; inflexible waiting targets; costly pay awards for consultants and GPs and the growing use of the private sector. In Oxfordshire a huge waste of public funds is predicted on at least one of the new private treatment centers paid for operations even though they haven't done them!

Regarding the current consultation exercise, it was only a few years ago that the government abolished the Oxfordshire Health Authority and established 5 Primary Care Trusts, yet in the blink of an eye it is now proposed that we go back again to one body for Oxfordshire! It is known to take about 3 years for a major reorganization to start working properly and in the meantime vital front-line work is halted or delayed and staff are demoralised. It is vital that the powers that be do their homework on whether the Oxfordshire health system is safe for patients if major cuts and major reorganisation are imposed at the same time. I have already given evidence to the Parliamentary Health Select Committee on the proposed reforms and this cross-party Committee reported this month that the risks of the reforms are high and that there is little evidence that the large costs of large-scale restructuring will be outweighed by the benefits. A meeting to discuss the future of Oxfordshire Health Service is to take place on 1st February at Oxford Town Hall at 6pm. Anyone interested in attending or with views they wish to send in please contact me for more information.

Finally, I would like to respond on another important matter raised in the January MADNews concerning the Anson Trust. I was involved over a year ago in attempting a mediation of a legal dispute in respect of the Institute. Although this encouraged a sharing of information, it did not settle the matter, which is now in proposed litigation. I understand that sensitive negotiations are ongoing, and although it is very frustrating for the local community I know with my legal hat on that this is likely to impose some restrictions on public information from the Anson Trust. I am encouraged that a letter in this edition of MADNews from one of the directors of the Anson Trust will provide some further information for residents.

JANE HANNA
DISTRICT COUNCILLOR