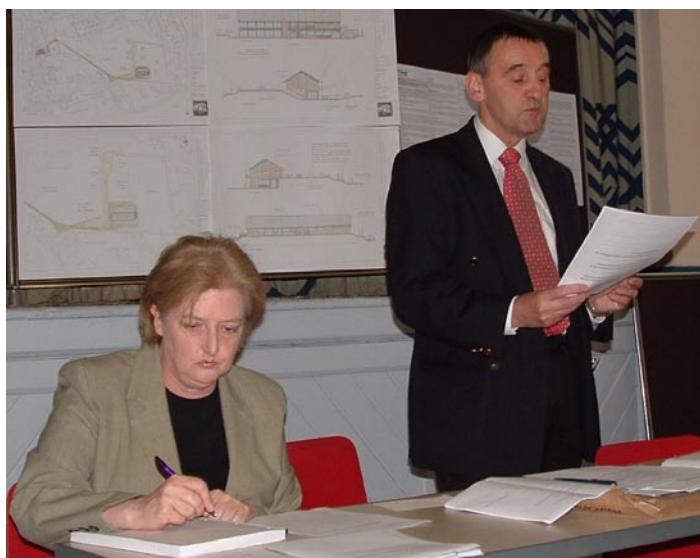


## ANNUAL MEETING OF MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL MAY 2004

For all those people who were unable to attend the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May, here are some of the reports given. We also heard from Lesley Clark (Marcham Primary School) and The Anson Trust, saw all the winners of the Best Kept Garden competition collect their prizes and watched Martin Thorne receive the first award of Parishioner of the Year. *Thanks to Will Cumber for the photos.*



**Colin Bough and Linda Martin**

### **Chairman of the Council: Colin Bough**

I thought it would be helpful to give a brief overview of the Council, for anyone who is not familiar with the Parish Council, and then to mention highlights/major issues of the past year.

The Parish Council comprises 10 councillors who are elected for a three-year term. They are ably served by the Parish Clerk (Linda Martin) who is a paid officer. The Parish Council meets 11 times per year to transact business. (plus ad hoc meetings, sub committees, and numerous meetings attended by individual councillors). Your Parish Council sets the precept (£28,000 last year and for this year), and this funds activities within the Parish. The Parish Council discharges all parish business. There is a very large amount of formal business particularly consultation from all levels of government Central County and District and an associated large volume of paperwork.

Amongst the things the Parish Council does is to arrange grass cutting throughout the village; it has developed and manages the play area on the Anson field; it owns and manages the allotments at Cow Lane and on Parkside; it manages and lets the pony paddocks at Cow Lane and at Constable's Ham; it is responsible for and manages the churchyard (with assistance from the Parochial Church Council and the Marcham Society); it manages the arboretum; it provides grants and support to worthy village organisations and activities; it paid for and maintains the Bus Shelter in Howard Cornish road as well as several seats around the village;

It also owns and administers the Burial Ground in conjunction with Frilford Parish through the Marcham and Frilford Joint Burial Board. The Chairman of the Joint Board, Murray McLean, has asked me to make specific mention of the Joint Board especially in view of the improvements which have been carried out recently, in particular the new fencing on the eastern side of the burial ground. (Please take a look next time you're in the vicinity.)

Amongst the multitude of consultations a very important one, and one which the Vale of White Horse takes particular notice of, is with respect to planning applications within Marcham. And here I must thank Marion Pointer; Jenny Allen and Ian Charles for their work as the planning working group

The Parish Council also organises the Garden Competition and this year the Villager of the Year Award.

During the past year the Parish Council has been involved in a

range of activities and responsible for a number of actions. The most worthy of mention are:

- On Low Cost Housing, we arranged presentations from the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council which resulted in the undertaking of a survey. The results are still awaited
- There has been much discussion of the Anson Trust developments. The Parish Council position is that it seeks to obtain and, if necessary provide support for, optimising the provision of sporting, leisure and social provision within the village
- The Youth hut has now been opened and the Parish Council has provided significant financial and organisational support for the building and activities; Special thanks to Chris Ricketts and David Hutchinson and also to Will Cumber for much practical support
- The Parish Council entered the Best Kept Village Competition and has sought to catalyse parishioners by promoting Village Pride Week. Further tree planting in the Arboretum plus the erection of a notice board.

All that remains is for me to thank all of the Parish Councillors for giving their time, their attention and their commitment and to thank Linda for excellent support.

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### **County Councillor: Andrew Crawford**



Herewith is a brief summary of some of the key achievements & issues of the last year:

*The Council's Waste Management Team* have reported that Oxfordshire residents produce the lowest amount of rubbish per capita of any County in England. This is a result of various initiatives by both the County itself and individual District Councils. Less waste going to

landfill aids considerably in keeping Council Tax down as we are able to save on Landfill Taxes. Many thanks to all who recycle at home – the Vale's recycling rate is now over 20%.

*The Social & Health Care Directorate* was rated one of the best in the South East at dealing with Children in need and the Council was given Beacon Status by the Government as a recognition of its efforts. Overall it secured a 2 star rating in the Department of Health's latest national review of Social Care. You may have read recent press reports about problems with the Social and Health finances. Whilst these have been significantly overplayed they leave room for considerable concern. It is possible that some £1 million will have to be written off. I understand much of this write off relates to monies which can no longer be collected – for example through the death of someone receiving notionally chargeable services. In some cases some of these funds may well not have been capable of being collected even if they were dealt with promptly but this does not disguise the weak financial systems in this area. Independent review is currently being undertaken and a number of staff have been suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

*The County's Youth Offending Team* was singled out for praise in a Home Office Report ("Restorative Justice") for the way that it works with young offenders.

*Oxfordshire's libraries* are now computerised in a fully integrated manner allowing a million items to be made available from any Library in the County.