

Dear Editor

During a recent visit to Marcham (I moved to Scotland a couple of years ago), I spent time catching up with all the news regarding the Institute and the (non-existent) bypass and the new pedestrian crossing and bus stops on the main road. I read your readers' stories about the traffic accidents and other incidents and concluded that nothing much changes in Marcham. No, things do change, they get worse. I empathise with you all as guess what? I have moved to a village on a main road, which also has a traffic problem and has been crusading for a bypass for several decades. However, the silliest and most dangerous thing I saw was that the bus stop at the beginning of Howard Cornish Road has been moved. It was on a straight stretch of road, (outside Linda Martin's house), with good visibility for passing both ways. Now it has been moved to the other side of Morland Road, on what is arguably the most dangerous blind bend in Marcham. It is bad enough trying to see round the residents' cars parked around there. Now with a bus stopped there unloading passengers, I am sure there will be a bad accident soon. Surely the Parish Council can persuade Stagecoach to move it back to where it was or to a safer location. On a more personal note, hello to everyone I didn't manage to visit while I was there. Hope you are all well.

JACKIE OWSNETT

(ex 52 Howard Cornish Road)

PACKHORSE LANE ACTION GROUP FOR SAFETY

Dear All

Firstly thank you very much for your returned questionnaires and the time you gave to filling in your comments. If you are reading about this Campaign for the first time or feel you are unsure of what PLAG's aims are, please let me assure you of why we started this campaign and what we hope to achieve:

We are a group of residents from a variety of areas of Marcham who are running this campaign in order to gauge the feeling of our village about the poor safety aspects that have been highlighted by the recent number of 'clippings' of pedestrians by vehicles on Packhorse Lane. Our aim is not to propose a solution but to see if we have agreement from the rest of the village that they consider this section of road is a safety problem. Hence the Questionnaire in the April edition of MADNews.

We are very conscious that whatever the proposed solution is to this safety problem we need to have your support and the support of the Parish Council as the starting point.

A Big Thank You

To all the villagers who sent us cards and contributed to our wonderful presents for our recent marriage in Antigua. We were totally shocked and surprised on our return to see the gifts you all bought us. We guarantee (weather permitting) the patio furniture will get plenty of use.



The wedding itself went without a hitch, getting married barefoot on a tropical beach was an amazing experience.

Once again a big thank you

Julia and David Ball

We have received a fantastic response from residents of Marcham and the surrounding area – the responses received unanimously felt that there IS a safety issue on this road for all users. From your comments we are aware that you have a number of fears and concerns about any proposed solution and that it might adversely effect other roads in Marcham – this must not happen – we must protect the safety and residential use of non A-roads in Marcham. This campaign should not diminish the urgent need for a bypass in the future, and is an interim measure to safeguard human life and give the village a say in reclaiming ownership of this road for its residents.

PLAGS are hoping that we can gain the support of the Parish Council – now that we know we have a good number of you in agreement. We will be attending the Parish Assembly Meeting on the 24 May to hear what the OCC Highways officer has to say on this issue and hope to see some of you there. After this meeting and the June Parish Council meeting we will give you a further update on what the next stage of the campaign should be.

With the continued support of you all, the Parish Council, our County Councillor, Iain Brown, our District Councillor, Jane Hanna, and our Member of Parliament, Ed Vaizey, we can work together with the OCC to plan a campaign to address the safety issues that we see as becoming more and more worrying. In this way we hope to safeguard those using not only this section of the A415 but also other areas of the Village associated with it.

Please email plags@madnews.co.uk with your name, address and contact details if you would like to know more and I will happily contact you. Please look at the PLAGS webpage (www.madnews.co.uk/plags) to see a list of what we consider are the Needs and Benefits for people living or driving through Marcham. We also hope to post updates on our progress on this webpage.

Thank you for your support.

SALLY TIMBERLAKE

on behalf of PLAGS

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

This column is always a bit behind the times, as I am usually up-dating you on what I have been up to in the last month. But I hope it still makes interesting reading...

I have spent a lot of time with some of our most successful businesses of late. I dropped in to see **Taylor & Francis**, a 200-year-old publishing business, which is responsible for numerous learned journals. This is all part of my extensive education in publishing, as I have participated in a debate on the subject in the House of Commons; launched **Blackwell's** carbon neutral HQ, and I am now doing "work Experience" with **Reed Elsevier**. This last link is under the auspices of the Industry and Parliament Trust, who quite rightly take the view that MPs know nothing about business, so ensure that they are embedded with a company for some three weeks over the course of a year. I also took **David Johnson**, the Deputy Chief of Mission from the US Embassy, to visit Harwell, and also Milton Park. This was a great opportunity to introduce a senior US diplomat to our part of the world, and the visit went very well until David was cross-examined by Didcot Sixth Formers. They were all very polite, but did not hide their views that they thought the USA was a significant cause of instability in the world. David seemed to enjoy himself though. You may have seen him recently in the papers, as the Embassy is refusing to pay the London Congestion Charge. That may be something on which we might all agree.

I have also met **Wallingford** campaigners who are calling for more Police – I get about 2 letters a week complaining about the lack of Police from all over the country; and been involved in helping to set up **Didcot First**, a campaign group for Didcot. All the towns in my constituency have something similar, but I certainly think Didcot needs a strong voice as it grows bigger.

Parliament has been quiet – at least in terms of legislation, if not in terms of politics! The most contentious piece of legislation, on which I have received correspondence, has been Lord Joffe's **assisted dying bill**. I oppose the Bill, but as you may have seen the Lords has voted it down so it won't come to the Commons.

Thank you to everyone who has said kind words following the news breaking that my wife is expecting our first child.

ED VAIZEY

MP Wantage (Con)

Write to MADNews and let others know what you think about current events