

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

It's been another busy month. At the beginning of February, the Post Office published its list of closures for Oxfordshire.

Twenty-two post offices are closing across the County, more than 10 per cent of the 180 or so that we have at the moment. In our area, five are earmarked for closure - Childrey, Ardington, Fyfield, Upton and Long Wittenham. Thankfully Marcham is not on the list. I will obviously fight as hard as possible to save as many as I can, but it would be unrealistic and misleading for me to pretend that all will remain open. The final decision will be taken in the summer.

February was also the month when Councils - county, district and parish - set their bills for the coming year. I was contacted by one lady pensioner after my last column asking why I had not highlighted the difficulties many pensioners face with their Bills. I am duly admonished and would go further and say that council tax is a real burden not just for pensioners but for many families. After our mortgage and food, it is probably the main item of our monthly household budget. This column is not meant to be political. However, it is worth pointing out that the County Council's grant from Government has increased by two per cent next year, and by just 1.75% and 1.5% for the subsequent years - all below the level of inflation. Not surprisingly, the level of increase in Government grant is much higher in the north. Nevertheless, the County has succeeded in limiting any increase to below 4%, and has found £10 million in efficiency savings.

Council tax is too high - but I still think it is the best system in principle for local taxation, mainly because it is easy to collect. I think we need to look at how we help pensioners, and also how we reduce the burdens on local government set by central government, in order to bring costs down.

On another constituency matter, I am delighted that, after a long campaign, we have succeeded in introducing post-16 special needs education in schools across the county. This was a campaign led by parents, and supported by all local MPs, and it is very gratifying to see a good result.

Finally, the employment arrangements of MPs came under scrutiny in February. I do not employ any family members. My wife Alex is a successful lawyer so wouldn't work for me anyway. My son Joseph, while obviously a genius, is only sixteen months old. By the time you read this, we will with luck have been joined by a fourth member of our family (my wife is due on February 29th). As I will be taking paternity leave,

you should see fewer pictures of my ugly mug in the local paper. But there will be no diminution of other services as I will continue dealing with post and e-mails.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

MP'S SURGERY WITH ED VAIZEY
5.30-7.00pm, unless stated otherwise

7 March	Wantage, Civic Hall
Contact Ed Vaizey by	
Post	The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
E-mail	vaizeye@parliament.uk
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Dear Editor

NAF Update

Following the recent comments regarding the possible restoration of the Village Institute Building, our committee requested a meeting with the Anson Trust's Board of Directors.

It was with great disappointment that their response was to impose an onerous pre-condition, requesting fully detailed proposals. We felt that a meeting would have been an opportunity to open preliminary discussions with them on what we, and numerous other Villagers, consider a better way forward for the benefit of the entire Parish.

We feel there is an obligation on the Trustees to openly discuss their plans for our Village, and therefore if they are reluctant to meet with us, they should now convene an open meeting for the entire Parish. In the meantime we are seeking further advice.

NAF COMMITTEE

Dear Editor

On the 7th August 1913 the Anson sisters entrusted their Brothers estate to the care of the Oxford Diocese, this would then be known as The Anson Trust. The Indenture stated that the Institute, part of the Estate, could be used for Lectures, Concerts, Entertainments. Recreation or Amusements, and generally any purpose having for their object the welfare and benefit of the inhabitants of Marcham.

Almost 100 years later in 2004 the Trustees decided to close the Institute Main Hall, denying various village organisations of a permanent home. This eventually took place on September 1st of that same year. This left the Ex-Servicemen's Club in residence, who have a lease on the Small Hall.

The main source of income for the Trust is from the Ex-Servicemen's Club, they pay an annual rent in excess of £5,000.00, and frequently prior to the closure of the Main Hall hired it for Indoor Aunt Sally,

OAP Christmas Party, Dances and other activities.

The Trust frequently mentions their lack of funds, and the possibility of going into liquidation. Could it please be explained why this has been allowed to happen? when a positive source of income was there for the asking.

It appears that over the past three and a half years the Trust has spent monies on an empty Main Hall, paying Insurance, Heating and Lighting, and occasional maintenance bills.

The Statement of Account for year ending 31st December 2006 shows a total expenditure for the Institute as being £11,158.00 with a total income of £5,488.00.

One must look at this situation and consider what A.W. Bradley wrote in the January 2008 M.A.D. News. That the Trustees in the past had great difficulties in discharging their obligations, and these difficulties are continuing. Would the new way forward be to transfer all the Trusts assets, (including the Institute and The Field) to a new Charitable Trust for the benefit of the people of Marcham.

MARCHAM EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB

POWER CUTS

We have been experiencing a series of brief power cuts taking place at around 5.20pm each time.

The latest recorded message (20 Feb) on the Southen Electric Emergency Number (0845 770 8090) says "... there is a fault on the main network and engineers are investigating." They acknowledge that this is not an isolated incident.

Any more news will be published here.

ED

WANTED

Accommodation for mature, professional, single person working locally with horses and ponies. 6 month let/rental period in either a shared house or as a lodger.

Please contact Juliet Walker, Manor Farm, Garford. Tel: 01865 391374.

WANTED

REEL-TO-REEL TAPE RECORDER

Has anyone got a tape recorder I can borrow to transfer tapes recorded over 50 years ago? Please contact Donald Creasey 01865 391398

FOR SALE

OFFICE/COMPUTER DESK in light wood finish. 80cm deep x 160cm wide and 70cm high with cable trunking. Slot together system for easy assembly. £25

GOODMANS 20" CRT TV with SCART socket £25

Call 01865 391725.

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