

FROM JANE HANNA...

I am writing just after returning from arguing a range of resident and parish objections concerns at the Planning Committee decision on the Try Homes development on the Old Timber yard in Packhorse Lane. I have to say I was very disappointed that prior to the meeting, and inspite of strong objections from the PLAGS group, the Head of the County Council's Transport Department did not change his "expert" view that the development, including pedestrian access to Packhorse Lane, was safe so far as highways were concerned. My prediction made in the March issue of MAD NEWS that the planning authority as a quasi-judicial body would be highly likely to follow the views of the County Council as expert witness proved correct. Other objections to the scheme for 10 houses failed because of national rules requiring at least 30 houses per hectare and because the Government's Planning Inspector ruled last week that any development of the Timber yard would have to be integrated with Packhorse Lane. I will continue to give my full support to the PLAGS campaign in particular supporting any call on the County Council to make funds urgently available to deliver safety measures on Packhorse Lane. I will also call on the County to enforce rules which prohibit parking on footpaths or any other strips of Highway land along Packhorse Lane. I will also work on the details of the development to do what I can to ensure the estate road through The Green to Mill Road has a safe footpath and the contractors do not mess up the Village Green.

Finally, it seems a great shame that the popular X15 service is likely to be lost following the service being cut from the County budget. Since privatisation, all rural bus services have required subsidy. There was a 20% increase in the use of the service last year and it was used regularly by Abingdon College as well as villagers. The Vale District Council has called for, and awaits, urgent talks with the County to ensure this threatened service is rescued.

JANE HANNA District Councillor for Marcham & Shippon

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

I hope that many of you were able to enjoy an Easter break. Parliament had two weeks off, and came back in the middle of April. The first Bill that we discussed was the Mental Health Bill.

I have a strong interest in issues relating to mental health. I became very involved in this difficult and complex subject when campaigning to save the Park Hospital in Oxford, a specialist unit treating children with mental health issues. I have since gone on to found the all-party group for Samaritans, who do so much good work with people suffering with mental health issues. As I have got more involved I have been told time and time again how mental health was viewed as somehow of secondary importance and a lower priority than other areas of healthcare. Therefore I hope that the new mental health bill will be the first step to redressing this imbalance.

The bill is huge but there are two main areas that I think are of particular interest. Firstly, and quite controversially, people who are deemed a risk to others because of their mental health can be detained even if they have not committed a crime. I am very uncomfortable with this. As well as being an encroachment on our civil liberties it will have the knock-on effect of meaning that many people with mental illnesses will be fearful of presenting themselves for treatment. This can only result in a deterioration of their condition.

Secondly, the bill will do nothing to address the difficulties faced by young people with mental illness. Young Minds, the charity that nominated me for a Charity Champion award after my work on the Park Hospital, estimate that around 1,000 children a year are currently admitted to adult mental health wards. This neglect of highly vulnerable children is unacceptable, yet the new act will do nothing to increase provision of children's mental health services. I will continue to campaign for children with mental illnesses; it is time these young people were pushed up the political agenda

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

MARCHAM PLAYERS www.marchamplayers.co.uk

With early summer's arrival, Marcham Players are presenting a fund raising event. 'STUFF - ANCIENT & MODERN', an outdoor evening of varied entertainments including drama, music and history ranging from the serious to humorous.



'Curtain up' is on Saturday May 26th at 7:30pm (Bank Holiday weekend) and it is being held at Manor Farm, Mill Road (By kind permission of Will & Janey Cumber)

Entry is by ticket only and costs £7-00 pp. The ticket price includes wine and buffet supper. In the event of 'winter returning early', a covered venue will be available. Some seating will be available but please feel free to bring your own 'luxury' seating should you wish. Tickets are available from: The Post Office North St, Joey Maclean (01865 391242).

A Marcham Players internet web site is now available @ www.marchamplayers.co.uk. It's in embryo form but, should you need to see who did what, when and to whom or just look up old names, there are copies of nearly every Marcham Players production programme since we started in 1974. If you have one that we don't, please let Chris Smith know via Marcham Players web site or on 01235 539835, so that we may include it. The web site has information on events, theatre trips, play readings, in fact everything, past, present and future.

As you may have noticed in the opening paragraph, STUFF - ANCIENT & MODERN is a FUND RAISING event and we make no apology for this. You may ask, when our main venue the Institute is no longer available and the number of productions has declined, shouldn't costs reduce? Unfortunately no. When additional overheads for operating elsewhere, hiring in equipment and liability insurance etc arise, we are steadily being priced out of existence. Additionally, the loss of the Institute as a venue and 'HQ' has reduced our 'presence' in the village. We have lost our focal point and with it, people, ideas and direction.

As a Marcham Village group we feel we add something to Marcham and think it's worthwhile continuing. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, AS AN AUDIENCE, DO YOU THINK SO?

- Do you think we're irrelevant?
- Do you think we're out of touch?
- Do you want us to continue?
- Have you got ideas?
- Can you make a difference?
- What do you want to see?
- ANYTHING AT ALL - PLEASE TELL US.

By Phone to Dave Hutchinson - 01865-391964

By letter to Joey Maclean - Collins Farm, Frilford Heath OX13 5NX

By E Mail to our web site @ www.marchamplayers.co.uk.

By 'Word of Mouth', or just scribble it on a piece of paper and leave it at the Post Office with Dave.

We guarantee every contribution will be heard and responded to and THANK YOU.

TIM OWEN

Marcham School PTA Events
Family Quiz Night Thursday 24th May
 6p.m. max. 6 per team (2 adults + 4 children)

Summer Fete Saturday 16th June
 2-4p.m. watch this space for further details

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