

**Public Meeting re The Anson Trust
16 October 2009**

If you weren't there, I hope these letters and reports will give you an idea of how the meeting progressed. I think we all came away with the idea of putting the past behind us and looking to Marcham's future which WILL include a new village hall.

There were some interesting ideas put forward by villagers including

- Villagers contributing towards the cost of the new hall and facilities
- Increasing the precept (the part of the Council Tax which comes to the village) to raise funds
- Selling the field to the village
- Declaring the cricket field as a village green to protect it
- Selling shares in The Anson Trust

If you have any ideas how Marcham can get a new village hall for everyone to use along with some upgraded sports facilities, you can write to MADNews, contact Jane Hanna or the Anson Trust (details opposite) but don't sit on a good idea, now is the time to share it!

MERIEL LEWIS (EDITOR)

Dear Editor

As Clerk, I write, on behalf of the Parish Council following a resolution of the Council, to express its surprise at the letter last month from the Anson Trust which stated that "The Trust had been collaborating with the Parish Council through Jane Hanna's working party for more than a year". The Council strongly refutes this description of events. Both the District Councillor Jane Hanna and the Parish Council, as representatives of the electorate, will need to form a view on the applications in connection with the Anson Trust proposals in order to respond to the Vale of White Horse District Council at the appropriate time. To avoid any possible duplication in seeking the views of residents Jane Hanna has set up a working party, to which the Parish Council sends representatives, to plan how village consultation should take place. As no one knew what was happening or when it was happening, the Anson Trust was invited to two of the group's meetings (January 2008 and April 2009) in order to provide an information update as an aid to planning the consultation. Whilst good communication and understanding are important, the Parish Council is a corporate legal body in its own right, independently working as the elected representative of the people, at meetings which are open to the public. It does not collaborate with any organisation, nor does it work through other groups.

LINDA MARTIN, Clerk to the Council
November 2009

Dear Editor

I was pleased to be able to take part in the meeting organised by NAF members and chaired by our local MP to hear an update from the Anson Trust. What was most encouraging was the constructive atmosphere of the meeting.

There is an understandable anxiety that any future planning application will be presented as the only option for proceeding. Marcham is highly unusual amongst villages of its size in not either owning or contributing financially towards the upkeep of a parish hall. Whilst this has meant that for residents their parish precept has not had to be spent in this way it has meant that the democratic process, whereby parishioners through their elected Parish Council control the facility, has not existed either. It is not clear at this stage whether any proposal from the Anson Trust will alter this position. As previously reported in MADNews the Working Party which I chair, has urged the Anson Trust to consult with the village ahead of any planning application being formally made and to consider more than just one option. We had recently received a positive response that although they were not ready to consult they do indeed plan to consult the village well ahead of any planning application being lodged with the Planning Department at the Vale and this was confirmed in public at Friday's meeting. Equally positive were the views expressed by some residents at the meeting that perhaps it was time for the village to contribute financially in some way if this would open up the potential to safeguard the Anson Field from housing development.

At the Annual Parish Meeting this year and again on Friday I described the process which has to be followed once a Planning Application is lodged with the Vale. This process is largely set down by government. Normally the onus is on the applicant to make out a case to the Vale Planners that its proposed development complies with national planning regulations and the Local Plan which itself has been approved by a Government Inspector. Any proposal to build on public recreational land or outside the current boundary of a village is an unusual case where the Vale's planning officers' will also be looking for significant support from the village and would expect significant benefits to the village which outweigh the harm done by the development. Judging this will depend on the quality of the information provided to the village and the time allowed for consultation.

As of yet the working party has not yet seen a business case. Whilst appreciating that

the economic crisis will have contributed to the complexities of firming up such a document the Working Party have emphasised the importance of a business case being put in the public domain prior to any consultation. The Anson Trust has cooperated with the Working Party to date and I was pleased that at the meeting held last week the Anson Trust responded positively to a question from the floor asking whether a business case would be made available.

The effectiveness of any representation of the village at the planning stage will depend on the Working Party being able to conduct an independent survey and a public meeting at the appropriate time. The Working Party is therefore concerned entirely with the process going forward and gathering the views of as many parishioners as possible. It has not and will not form a view on any proposal and cannot become involved in any campaign. The group consists of two parish councillors who do not have any involvement with the Anson Trust and village residents Anthony Bradley; Ian Charles and David Hutchinson.

Various suggestions were made at Friday's meeting which need detailed consideration. It would make sense if these were presented to the Anson Trust in a more formal way. Whilst it would undermine my impartiality if I or the working party became involved in presenting alternative options to the Anson Trust, I am happy to facilitate one meeting to enable those who expressed an interest in particular options to get together and flesh out in more detail a formal proposal to the Anson Trust. If you are interested please contact me on janehanna63@googlemail.com or 07932 735479 by 13th November. **JANE HANNA** District Councillor for Marcham & Shippon

To contact the Anson Trust directly you can email or write to



8 Hyde Copse, Marcham OX13 6PT
ansontrustmarcham@yahoo.co.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Much ado in Marcham!

It was the former Prime Minister - Harold Wilson - who famously said "A week's a long time in politics!", well, last week saw 48 hours of frantic and enlightening events in Marcham.

Firstly, on Wednesday 14th, a presentation was made to the Parish Council on the possibility of the shop in North Street re-opening and having a small cafe area within it. A long way before anything is finalised, but a good positive start. I will try to ensure - along with the Chairman of