

Dear Editor

Having read both letters regarding the Institute/New village hall proposal in last months MAD News, I felt I must put pen to paper. In both letters objectives were quoted, they read as follows:

Anson Trust – “for the welfare and recreation of the people of Marcham”.

Ex-Servicemen – “to foster good citizenship in Marcham and seek to improve amenities”.

It seems to me that reading between the lines, neither of these objectives are being met. The people or community of Marcham are certainly not being considered. It is more like a personal argument. Maybe both these parties should consider how the community is suffering because of this. We have all been very amicable so far by imposing upon the Sports and Social Club building (which incidentally was built entirely by voluntary labour for the community). The Youth Club and Play Group are sharing the portable building, and the café, cubs, guides, cricket club, football club, parties and meetings are taking place in the remaining building. This argument is costing both parties thousands of pounds which could be used, according to their above objectives, much more sensibly within the community.

Whatever the result of these legal proceedings, it is going to be of no benefit whatsoever to the community. If the Ex-Servicemen win they only have 5 years left on their Lease. Are they then going to sit tight for that 5 years watching the Institute decay around them.

If the Anson Trust win they will probably be in the red and the sale of the car park will not cover the repayment of their debt, restoration of the Institute, build a new village hall or leave them enough money in an Endowment to run the new facilities. So what is the point of it all !!!!!!!

If both parties had their objectives at heart it would be the future of our community they were putting first not themselves. There are many people within this village giving hours of voluntary time to make it what it is, and it just seems such a pity that a legal battle, which could be resolved amicably, could over night ruin everything that we have tried for the last 30 years to achieve. Please let's think sensibly about this whole situation. Hopefully it has not already gone too far to be resolved amicably.

CR

Dear Editor

I wonder how the creation of a Pelican Crossing on the A415 at Marcham could possibly take 8 weeks to do.

A CONCERNED RESIDENT

Dear Editor

As most of you know, MPs are now enjoying an 80-day holiday. We call it a recess to try and fool you. As I am a new and rather inexperienced MP, I am using the recess to work. No doubt I will grow out of that bad habit with time.

There are two issues which concern local residents – traffic and the reservoir. Some Marcham residents have written to me about the speed of the traffic passing through Marcham. I have been in touch with the County Council about this, and have been working with your new County Councillor, Iain Brown, on what can be done. County tells me that they are conducting a review to see what improvements can be made to slow down traffic as it passes through Marcham, and we will keep you up-dated. I have also written to the Secretary of State for Transport, Alastair Darling, about the bypass. As most of you will know, the final say on this rests with the Government, and once I hear from the Secretary of State, I will have a better idea of what I need to do to press the Government on this important issue.

The reservoir is now firmly back on the agenda. Thames Water is pushing very hard for this. We are all familiar with the arguments. Thames Water says they need the reservoir to provide water supplies for the growing number of people living in the south east and London. On the other hand, some of us point out quite fairly that 40% of Thames' existing supply is lost through leaks. Worse, something I learned recently, none of this water ever finds its way back – it leaks eventually into the sea. So Thames, I feel, should be doing a lot more to repair the old pipe system in London before deciding to go ahead with a reservoir.

I have had a meeting with the Environment Agency about the reservoir – they will have a small role to play and it was useful to hear their views. I am also going to meet the water regulator, Ofwat, in early September. Ofwat have given Thames £30 million to do some feasibility studies. In theory, Thames will be reviewing the need for a reservoir and also looking at all the other sites that they could use. But I suspect they are set on Drayton. I have, of course, asked to meet Thames Water, and am waiting to hear back from them. And I will be seeking a meeting with the relevant Minister to get an up-date on the Government's view.

I'm afraid that, as you will see from the above, I have very little concrete news to give you at this stage. I am still very much in fact-finding and up-dating mode, and will let you know as soon as I have any news. Meantime, please get in touch on any issue that concerns you.

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Next Surgery: 2 Sept, 5.30pm, Didcot, Community Centre, King Alfred Drive
I'll be on holiday for 2 weeks from 17 September.

ED VAIZEY MP for Wantage (Con)

Ed has also forwarded this letter he received regarding the A415 and the Bypass.

Dear Ed Vaizey

Thank you for your email of 30 June concerning the village of Marcham, and I apologise for the delay in responding to you. Our Road Safety Team are currently investigating the placing of a vehicle activated speed sign (smiley face) on the western approach to the village. A suitable site has been identified for east bound traffic at this location but this would require the relocation of some lighting; the current work is looking at whether the street lighting can economically be moved to allow for the speed sign to be installed. On the eastern approach to the village there is only one possible site identified within the 30 mph speed limit, although even this was marginal in terms of having a length long enough for the sensors to operate. However, this site would interfere with the proposed pelican crossing to be sited on the A415 near the junction with Howard Cornish Road. This scheme is due for construction this autumn and should in itself act as a “gateway” for traffic entering the village from the east.

Traffic levels are being fuelled by traffic using the A415 to avoid congestion in the Oxford area, both between A34 and A420 and between A34 and A40. It is highly unlikely that the re-classification of the road would act to halt this trend. It was recognition of this, and its likely continuation in the future, that led to the Transport Networks Review proposal to improve the full length of the A415. This has been incorporated in the Council's Provisional Local Transport Plan, with Marcham and Newbridge included for improvement in 2006-2011 and the rest of the route (Standlake, Kingston Bagpuize) for 2011-2016. The Bypass is currently being considered by the Regional Assembly as part of their regional prioritisation process. If it gets approval through this then the County Council will begin the process of getting permission/funding for the scheme.

Yours sincerely

DAVID ROBERTSON

Cabinet Member for Transport

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