

Marcham Community Building/The Institute

Dear Editor

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the meeting of the Marcham Community Group held at the school hall on 14th January. I was at the first meeting and found it informative.

I have just viewed the Marcham Community Group web site. Under Background, Direction of the Group, they state that the village has been without a community building (The Institute) since 2005. This indicates that no building exists, and of course we all know that it does.

The building is a solid substantial building. The large hall, the kitchens and the ancillary areas have unfortunately stood unused since the Anson Trust closed them, forcing out all long term local users and closing its occasional use for private parties, weddings, etc. The small hall is leased by the Ex-Servicemen's Club.

The Community Group made it very clear at the first public that they have no funds and that they believe that the way forward to protect the Anson Field is for the Trust to sell the Institute, and for the Community group to use this money to build a new hall on part of the Anson Field.

The Institute exists, no money is required to purchase land, no massive amounts of spend for rebuilding, planning, drainage etc. etc. Yes, some work is necessary on the Institute, the Anson Trust have said that there is money for refurbishment without selling off the Field.

The Institute is in the middle of the village. Not as planned by the Trust behind the trees on the outskirts of the village with access across a Bus route.

The Institute could be available for many of the village recreations and pastimes, and again for weddings, theatre groups, pre-school activities etc... It could also be available before, during and after sporting activities on the Anson Field, via the path; which could be resurfaced and lit. This would also give access to overflow parking for the Institute when necessary, alleviating street parking.

Why are both the Trust and the Community Group wanting to sell off the Trusts assets? Why are the members of the Community Group putting all their effort into spending lots of money (which they do not have) instead of putting all this expertise into making the Existing Community Hall, The institute, into the Marcham Village Hall at a fraction of the cost?

BRIAN HARROW

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Dear Editor

Brian Harrow has raised interesting questions about Marcham Community Group, the Anson Trust and the future of the Institute in the context of developing new facilities for the community.

It is clear that the Institute is owned by the Anson Trust and the Anson Trust is responsible for its management and future.
March 2011

MCG is in active discussions with Anson Trustees about our broad plans for the community and the economic realities. We are also aware of the limitations of the Institute building, the site it occupies, and of the very substantial costs that would be involved in any major refurbishment, along with maintenance and operation costs in the long term.

At the same time, MCG is planning a major consultation across the whole community to understand community needs and the potential range of uses for a new facility in Marcham, backed by an ambitious fundraising campaign. Long-term sustainability is a critical requirement. We have made a commitment that the views of the community, along with development of a clear practical plan to best meet these needs, will guide what MCG does.

THE MCG DIRECTORS

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Dear Editor

We read the letter from Brian Harrow with interest. Whatever the Anson Trust does over the next few years by way of developing its facilities, we have to ensure that we provide facilities that people in the village will want to use and are financially viable.

In terms of facilities the Institute has some problems. As Mr Harrow notes, the Institute is not adjacent to any open space and is, therefore, not suitable for many users. The Institute is too small for many functions, there is a maximum number of people allowed in at any one time. There are restrictions on its use in the evenings. Car parking is limited. Between these problems, the Institute is just not suitable for many of the functions that Mr Howard mentions. Realistically, the Institute does not provide facilities the village will want to use.

In terms of finances, the Institute lost substantial amounts on money when it was in use (the figures are in the Post Office). With its limited potential we cannot see how these losses could be avoided if it were brought back into use. The Trust does not have the funds to subsidize these losses. On top of this, the cost of bringing the Institute back onto use is substantial. Mr Harrow is incorrect when he says that the Trust has money available to do this work – it doesn't.

Overall developing the Institute does not provide the facilities the village needs or work financially. As one of the people at the original village meeting said "My heart says reopen the Institute, my head says don't" – we have to agree with her.

If Mr Harrow, or anyone else, would like to meet to discuss the matter further, we would be happy to do so.

DIRECTORS ANSON TRUST

METAL THEFTS

Over the past 12 months we have seen a huge increase in metal (lead & copper) thefts from houses & commercial premises. In order to increase awareness, encourage reporting and lower the level of these crimes we are contacting all home owners, tenants and business premises who have lead or copper on their properties or who are having construction work carried out.

Where possible:

- Put sensor security lights up.
- Lock and secure all tools, ladders away.
- Be aware of any unusual behaviour in your street, (vans driving slowly up & down, people paying particular interest to your property).
- Report any suspicious activity to the police.
- Report any thefts as soon as possible.

By following this straightforward advice, and working together, we can ensure that this type of crime starts falling.

**Abingdon Neighbourhood Team
0845 8 505 505**

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**MARCHAM AND DISTRICT EX
SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
NORTH STREET MARCHAM
OXON OX13 6NG
NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS**

**Annual Subscriptions Due by
March 31st 2011**

Payments may be made in the Club during normal opening hours

NOTICE TO ALL LIFE MEMBERS

All life members including widows and widowers of members are reminded that they must register in writing to the secretary at the above address, or register at the Club each and every year they wish to remain on the list of current Life Members. The closing date of this registration is March 31st. each year. Please note that those failing to respond by March 31st 2011 will no longer be considered Members their names will be removed from the register of Members and Life Members

Chairman November 2010

A list of currently registered members / life members valid until 31st March 2011 is available to be viewed in the Cub during the Clubs normal opening hours
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