

MARHAM PARISH COUNCIL**MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL****Wednesday 14th May 2025 at the Village Hall, School Lane, Marham, PE33 9JA, at 7:00pm**

Parish Councillors: Valerie Inder (Chair), Roger Allerton, Inga Barrett, Pat Blyth, Dawn Flatt, Ian Haddleton, Sonya Haddleton, Tony Harrison, Heather Pearson & Mark Walton (arrived during item 98)

Clerk: Mike Inder.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Colin Heather.

In attendance: County/Borough Cllr Jim Moriarty and Public: 18

95/25 **Opening and Apologies:** Cllr Inder opened the meeting, stated that it was being recorded to aid minute taking, welcomed those present and asked for apologies for absence, the clerk passed on apologies from the above and that Cllr Walton would be unavoidably delayed.

96/25 **Declarations of Interest:**

Cllr S Haddleton – Bowls Club.

97/25 **Introduction on the Conduct of the Meeting:** The Chairperson outlined that, due to the nature of planning application 25/00683/OM for the development of 39 homes adjacent to the cemetery, and the significant attendance by residents, the public forum segment of the meeting would be divided into two parts to allow for a more focused discussion on each aspect. It was stated that after the public had expressed their comments, where responses and explanations from the Council and Borough Councillor would be provided where possible and if appropriate, that the Council would then debate the planning and determine its comments for submission. The Public would then be given the opportunity to comment on the Council's decision.

98/25 **Public Forum (Planning):** several members of the public expressed numerous concerns about the application, many of which were primarily aimed at the Local Plan rather than the application itself. The background being that throughout the development and consultation of the Local Plan between 2016 and its adoption in Mar 2025 that there was a significant number of valid objections that were also expressed by the Parish Council in their consultation process regarding the categorisation of Marham as a Growth Key Rural Service Centre (KRSC). Many of the criteria for that categorisation by the Planning Authority were commented on as out of date, mis-informed and not in touch with the lived experience of residents. Nevertheless, the BC continued with the plan to grow Marham with the 50 dwellings on the land south of the Street and East of the Mews (G.56.1), a few other small developments as infill but they did remove the proposed allocated site to the south of Meadow View, Church Lane (originally called MAR1). Later in the development of the Plan the site next to the cemetery was put forward and called MAR1. During 2019, a pre-application was submitted by the agent to the local Planning Authority (LPA) the BC KL&WN, that was advised as unlikely to be permitted as at that time it was not an allocated site. The reasons cited for the objection to the Local Plan growth included but were not limited to:

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- Inaccurate assessment of the growth of RAF Marham after the change from the Tornado to LII Forces. It will never reach the c8,000 Whole Force personnel during the height of the Tornado Force.
- The lack of recognition that the LII Force is 42% Royal Navy personnel, whose tradition is to serve away from their family homes with separated service at their postings for 2-3 years. This means that there is a need for more single accommodation and less family accommodation as a ratio of the Force composition.
- The sale of 160 MOD Houses in Upper Marham (Field View) to the open market.
- Amenities cited not all being accessible to the general public (MOD personnel and families only).
- Overstated public transport – bus route only to Kings Lynn and not to the nearby towns of Swaffham and Downham Market, where many Marham children attend Secondary schools and residents have Doctors and Dentists. In addition, the timetable stops at 5pm preventing it being used to access centres of amenity for work, sport and leisure in the evenings.
- Excessive urbanisation of a rural community with over-stated employment opportunities with the RAF Marham civilian jobs in decline.

During the latter stages of examination of the Local Plan by the Inspectorate the LPA were advised to amend many of the areas of growth including the change to Marham from a Growth KRSC;

...Fourthly, the status of Watlington and Marham as Growth KRSCs is not adequately justified in the submitted Plan. They are designated as such in Policies LP01 and LP02, because they are considered to be closely related to the Strategic Growth Corridor, and capable of accommodating a higher level of growth than previously. However, whilst Watlington is located within the A10/main railway line corridor, the Plan does not propose a higher level of growth at the settlement than in the adopted Local Plan but simply rolls forward the existing housing allocation for 32 dwellings at Thieves Bridge Road. Marham, on the other hand, is not actually located within or close to the Strategic Growth Corridor, but to the east of the Borough. Whilst it is near to RAF Marham and the Council seeks to support the base by offering further housing options for its employees there, in reality the two housing allocations at Marham, Policies G56.1 and MAR1, which amount to only 85 dwellings, comprise a lower level of growth than is proposed at several other KRSCs that do not have a 'Growth' status. Therefore, based on the evidence, the designation of Watlington and Marham as Growth KRSCs is not justified as appropriate.

As a result [Major Modification \(MM\) 4](#) was submitted to delete LP01 and LP02 and replace them with MM 5, which reclassified Marham as Tier 4 in the Settlement Hierarchy, a KRSC. The 're-categorisation' has in reality did not change the LPA's intent to support the RAF Marham perceived housing needs; the adopted LP still shows that in addition to the 1 delivered and 18 committed dwellings to the 1 Apr 2024 that the min 85 further houses will be delivered on the 2 allocated site (G.56.1 and MAR1). So, in essence, whilst not in the A10 growth corridor, Marham has been retained as a KRSC based on the assessment of the facilities that support sustainable development, based on the RAF Marham factor.

The Council requested information from RAF Marham regarding the projected growth, housing needs and the progress with the Future Accommodation Model (FAM). The response was:

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- There are no more plans to sell to the open market the families accommodation. At the end of the 30 year period of Annington Properties ownership of the former MOD properties, the 160 homes were sold during the transition period and uncertainty at RAF Marham and the wider implications that caused a significant re-think of the FAM resulting in the trial being stopped and the MOD buying the Annington estates back to manage themselves.
- A 3rd F35 Operational Sqn was to be “stood up” in the future. This would increase the housing need.

The sale of the Field View estate would in hindsight seem to have been premature and less than helpful to the MOD and Marham, leaving them with a deficit of c120 homes.

The other objection comments below were given by the public and whilst valid concerns were in some instances not ‘material matters’ that the LPA will consider. Some other concerns were based on assertions that were able to be responded to with facts, figures or features of the application documents, Local or National Planning Policy and strategy:

- **Planning Condition** to improve the permissive Trod Path between the Junior School and Upper Marham. – *Clarified that it is a permissive path and as such, the developer, Parish Council and public know that is not a realistic or necessary condition by the LPA.*
- **The Schools** are full and it is difficult to attract teachers to the area – *Cllr Inder provided information obtained from the academy that as follows:*

	Current roll	Anticipated roll Sep 25	Max Capacity
<i>Junior School</i>	186	199	240
<i>Infant School</i>	174	150	240

- **Excessive additional traffic flow** – *the Highways survey and assessment quoted in the developer’s documents states an average of 8 additional vehicles per hour. Whilst that doesn’t sound significant Cllr Allerton provided SAM2 data of an average traffic count of c13,000 vehicles per month (one direction), which extrapolates to 26,000, and 8 per hour equals c5,800 per month, that is a c22% anticipated increase, which was considered a high percentage increase, especially if the same calculations are applied with the 50 homes planned for site G.56.1.*
- **Road Safety**, in particular the lack of pavements on the north side of the road opposite the cemetery and no proper bus stop where the secondary school children wait on the roadside to be picked up in the morning. *The high wall, between HighTor and the field opposite the proposed development on the north side of the road, which is owned by the same landowner as the development, should be lowered to improve the safety with increased traffic and an additional junction and driveways. The telephone pole that is on the edge of the highway at that point should asl be moved back and into the field side to remove the obstructed splay view from the driveway of High Tor.*
- **Change of use of Grade 2 Agricultural land** – *Whilst the developer makes a case for it being low grade it is currently the absent landowner’s decision not to farm the land, albeit a small flock of sheep have been permitted to graze the land for the last couple of years.*
- **Ecology, Bio-diversity and wildlife** concerns, a Stork is a regular sight, slow worms and grass snakes are also known to be on the land – *The developer has plans to meet*

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c90% of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement on site and will meet the remaining requirement off site on other developments they own. A wildlife corridor is on the plan which will provide for the Muntjac deer but other wildlife currently on site will lose their habitat.

- **Flood Risk** – *Whilst the statutory risk has been assessed as low that is for fluvial risk, the lived experience of Marham is that pluvial flooding has and is increasingly a greater issue as flow down the hill from the south results in flooding of property north of the Street and ground water levels are persistently high on the lower reaches of this site. The IDB consultation and developer mitigate for surface water drainage by filtration, which may be sufficient for normal rainfall but recent years have seen significant, prolonged and frequent storms with rainfall that overwhelms the filtration soakaway capacity by a considerable margin and the effects of climate change with annual rainfall data increasing over the last few decades should be factored into ensuring that SuDS should have the capacity for more extreme weather events and not the minimum.*

The data in the FRA states:

- *For surface water flood risk, there are no modelled extents which are located within the site, only a small portion of pooling is located on and beyond The Street immediately north of the site, from the 1% AEP +40% CC and 0.1% AEP events.*
- *The site is located in a 1km² quadrant with <25% susceptibility to groundwater flooding.*

This data is historic and a snapshot, the future state modelling and assertion that long term storage is not required are not recognised by the community and Parish Council as being the current lived experience and more importantly the future state. NCC have needed to upgrade drain capacity and add additional drains in other areas of the village in similar scenarios with Mill Road being one example where surface run off overwhelmed the existing drains and flooded the house on the north of the Street on a regular basis c.25 years ago until new drainage was installed.

- **Foul Water**, Anglian Water are a consultee but have not reported at the time of the meeting. *It is unclear where the foul water will go after the proposed connection to the system at the bottom of Hillside and what the capacity of that system is and who is responsible for it so meaningful consultation by the PC and public at this time is not possible but is a concern.*
- **Parking** – The off-street parking for 2 vehicles proposed by the developer is positive. However, experience is that only 7 visitor parking bays will prove inadequate with the number of homeowner cars often in excess of 2 with children increasingly living at the family home for longer with difficulty finding affordable housing and getting onto the housing ladder and needing to commute over 10 miles which leads to a reliance on personal transport as the public transport timetables do not meet the need and cycling/walking distances and safety is totally impractical. In addition there is no parking at the cemetery and parking along the stretch of the street will no longer be an option – *provision of further significantly more visitor parking (15) to accommodate those residents with more than 2 cars, plus the allowance in size to accommodate 'work' vans is seen as essential. In addition, there is an expectation that cemetery visitors will park on the streets of the development causing obstructions to larger commercial and service vehicles.*
- **Joining of the Walnut Walk and new estate road**, this was a concern that it would increase traffic flow to and from the new development onto Villebois Rd – *Cllr Inder*

stated that the 'Ransom Strip' would prevent that and it is not what is currently shown on the plan. However, if it was added to the plan at a later date then there are pros and cons and that they would need to be assessed at that point as the impact would be dependent on other design and access proposals and recommendations.

- **Overlooking, privacy and Ancient Lights rights** – there are concerns that whilst the latest indicative plans show some 1 ½ dwellings that until the planning reaches Reserved Matters the actual impact will not be certain. *It was put forwarded that if Outline permission is granted then a condition to address these concerns with single storey dwellings on the boundary of Villebois Rd and The Street properties should be in place to ensure that the developer reduces the impact on the residents.*
- **A harmful urbanising effect** it was perceived that in conjunction with G.56.1 that the rural feel and appearance will be lost – *Cllr Inder drew attention to the loss of open space has been compensated for in the plan with the minimum of 660 sq.M exceeded to c840 sq.M and that density is comparable with other developments off the linear appearance of the village with the developer proposing to maintain the street scene continuity with the design of the dwellings facing The Street, it was commented that these should follow the building line of the properties west of the field.*
- **Ground Contamination**, concern raised about on site and the cemetery. *The issue has covered with conditions for surveys to be conducted and remediation. The Cemetery, as opposed to being affected is more likely to be a cause of pollution and contamination as a feature of the natural process of decomposition.*
- **Future Cemetery expansion** this field was known to have been offered by the parents of the current owner as a potential extension to the cemetery, how will its loss be mitigated – *The Council position is that it has capacity for c150 years and that legislation regarding re-use of grave plots is currently being reviewed and should be in place in good time.*

99/25 **County and Borough Council member:** County and Borough Cllr Moriarity was invited to comment and respond to appropriate questions and comments throughout the public forum and provided a much-appreciated impromptu break out surgery after the item 101/25.

100/25 **Consideration of planning** application 25/00683/OM to determine the consultation response. The Parish Council debated the issues and observations raised in the public session alongside their own review and research and formulated a response based on the material considerations that were captured on the Council's Planning Policy annex form appendix 1. The resultant outcome at the vote was:
Support – Nil.
Object – 8.
Abstain – 2.
Marham Parish Council Objects to planning application 25/00683/OM.
Whilst it broadly accepted that the inclusion of this site in the Local Plan and the categorisation of Marham as Tier 4 will most likely result in the Planning Officers recommending that it is permitted, and even if at Committee the application was refused it would likely be permitted at appeal, that there were sufficient material grounds that would be better addressed by 'objecting with a path to support', rather than 'supporting with conditions' and that Borough Councillors should have the opportunity to understand the ongoing concerns that the Local Plan does not sit at all well with Marham.

101/25 **Public forum reply:** the consensus was that they were pleased that the Council agreed to Object, albeit they understood that their full list of objections would not be included in the Council's response where they were not material considerations. They were also under the impression that the Council were not confident that the objection would be successful but appreciated that the Council would be seeking to give the developer the information and reasoning to improve the application for the longer term benefit of the community and to have the BC Planning Committee put effective conditions in place to ensure that the most important aspects are addressed when Reserved Matters are submitted. Borough Cllr Moriarty echoed that assessment as the most likely outcome. The Clerk offered to publish the list of material and non-material planning considerations for the public to refer to when writing their own comments to submit.

102/25 **Minutes of the last meeting:** the minutes of the meeting held on 16th Apr 2025 were proposed as a true reflection by Cllr Allerton, seconded by Cllr Barrett and agreed.

103/25 **Financial Matters:**

- a. Cllr I Haddleton expenses (Tractor Fuel) approved.
- b. Report on the Council Instruction of a solicitor for the Bowls Lease and Land Registration. The clerk stated that the instructions were not on file from when the instruction was given by the then Clerk. He had contacted WGA and a copy was provided with an estimate of £1,059 for conveyancing. An additional estimate had been provided for first registration of the land of c£800. That will need to be resolved at a later date but does not impact on processing the new lease for the Bowls Club.

104/25 **Bowls Club extension plans and new lease:**

- a. The Clerk provided a report on the current situation to clarify the non-conformity of the plans with Building Regs 2010 (2015) Edition Part H. in relation to the following criteria in bold text:

Minimum soakaway drainage field distances

ALL parts of the soakaway drainage field are required to be a minimum of:

- 10m from a watercourse or ditch.
- 50m from water abstraction points, boreholes, springs.
- **15m from any building, and sufficiently distant from any other soakaway, including roof water.**
- 2 metres from a boundary.

Other Drainage Field Regulations

- The soakaway drainage field area should be downslope of groundwater sources.
- No water supply pipes or underground services should be within the soakaway drainage field area.
- **No access roads, driveways or paved areas should be within the soakaway drainage field area.** This includes fields with tractor and agricultural vehicular traffic.
- **The water table or bedrock must not, at any time, be within 1 metre of the bottom of the soakaway drainage pipe itself. This usually means that it has to be a minimum of 2 metres below ground, at all times.**
- The maximum depth allowed for soakaway drainage field pipework is 700mm.

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- The maximum length of a single pipe-run is 30 metres.
- No rainwater must be allowed to enter the system.
- Drainage fields should not be located near other drainage fields or soakaways to avoid competing for absorption capacity.

The Clerk recounted the advice received in Jul 2025 from a drainage engineer that reviewed the issues experienced during the Fun Day with overflowing and the advice that the existing system being located under the gravel car park will have caused compaction and impacted on the filtration efficiency, in addition the high water table will have caused the system to become inoperable with external water actually flowing into the septic tank, as was witnessed immediately following the emergency emptying during the Fun Day. A pumped treatment system was recommended as the only practical solution.

The Parish Council has already accepted that a proposal and budget to replace the current shared septic tank was necessary.

- b. The Bowls Club representative was invited to provide the Bowls Club perspective. It was stated that there was frustration caused by the ongoing delay in finalising the new lease. The Clerk explained that the delays were for reasons outside of the Council's control, including the Council becoming inquorate in Jan 24 and business being suspended for 2 months and then needing to be picked up and prioritised. Also, the response time of the solicitor and their recommended phrasing of a section regarding the wastewater treatment system not being agreed by Council. In addition, when the new clerk was settling into the role in Aug 24 the matter was not prioritised. It is however being proactively progressed by the locum clerk who started in Nov 24.
- Regarding the Bio-digester system there was confusion by some on the Ctte regarding the introduction of the Building Regs being cited as a reason and that the Planning Permission had been approved and therefore the Plans must be ok?

The clerk clarified the following matters:

1. Planning Officers focus on the building's appearance, use and impact on the surrounding area, whilst Building Regs address the structural integrity, safety, and other technical aspects of the construction.
2. *The Architect must have drawn it correctly* - Planning drawings are more conceptual and less detailed than Building Regulations drawings.
3. *That the planning permission allows the applicant to build* – No, the landlord's permission to build must be given and that is in accordance with legislation on landlord and tenant rights and the old lease and draft new lease reflect this. The new lease needs new drawings to reflect the boundary adjustments for the extension and the proposed foul water treatment system.

The Clerk offered to share the references used in forming the report to Council:
Supporting my advice and clarification please see the references below:

[Building Regulations 2010 \(2015 Edition\)](#) – part H2 para 1.27 (siting) and para 1.30 (not under roadways or parking)

[A-Z of Building regulations drawings](#)

[Misconception of Local Planning Authority and Building Control dept responsibilities](#)

The concept of a pumped system to replace the current system with the capacity to cater for the Pavilion and Bowls Club usage and removal of the need for drainage fields was understood and the Bowls Club rep appreciated the clarification and proposed solution

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would communicate it to the Ctte whilst reiterating that the Club doesn't have funding to contribute currently and is focusing on starting the foundations up to DPC to ensure the planning permission does not lapse. It was suggested that the new drainage pipework could be installed at that point but would be able to be connected to whatever solution is derived at.

- c. **Next steps.** Cllr I Haddleton proposed that the lease could be finalised by including a clause that the sewage drains should use the existing foul water system in the short term and that would provide a sustainable solution when the Council replaces the current system with a pumped system. Cllr Harrison seconded the motion, and it was agreed.

105/25 The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting at 9.07pm

Signed: Chair. Date:

APPENDIX 1

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Item	Comments
Overshadowing	Reduce dwelling heights to single story on the west boundary line with Villebois and The Street to reduce overshadowing and loss of ancient lights.
Overlooking and loss of privacy	As for Overshadowing.
Adequate parking and servicing	Increase of visitor parking from 7 to 15 and ensure the bays are large enough for vans, to cater for families with more than 2 cars and 'work vans. Ensure that some additional parking is provided to replace the lost parking on the Street frontage for cemetery visitors.
Overbearing/ nature of the proposal	Not considered overbearing.
Loss of trees	The trees identified for removal are low value and the planting scheme improves the tree diversity and quantity as part of the BNG plan
Loss of ecological habitats/Biodiversity	The surveys carried out for bats and the wildlife corridor creation that will allow muntjac to move between feeding grounds is appreciated but there are other wildlife including a stork, slow worms, grass snakes and hedgehogs that will lose their habitat. Features such as hedgehog holes in fences should be incorporated.

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Design and appearance	Marham has a wide and varied design on estates off the Street, this would be no different and the proposed frontage is in keeping with continuing the street scene. The building line should be kept in line or slightly behind to accommodate any highway improvements.
Layout and density of buildings	Satisfactory and similar to other developments in the village.
Effect on Listed Building(s) and Conservation Areas	Not applicable.
Access and highway safety (highway authority views crucial)	The grave concern regarding the school bus pick up and drop off (pick up on heading east without a pavement) and drop off westbound at the cemetery) is already a concern along with vehicles exiting High Tor (opposite) with reduced visibility requiring the residents to edge out into the highway. An additional junction and driveways will compound this already dangerous stretch of road. Consideration should be given to widening the highway and installing a pavement on the Northside of the road and bus stop laybys as stipulated for in the Highways condition 9 of 18/01896/F if the school transport can't be re-routed to pick up on the south side. The boundary wall should be reduced in height and telephone pole moved back from the verge (on the field side of the wall) as conditions. The plans show a gap in the cemetery hedge near plot 11 and a new path to maintain access to it. This is an unauthorised break in the hedge apparently used for unauthorised access across the cemetery from a Hillside property to the field. The Council replanted hedging in the gap in Feb 25 and will be using a Hazel hurdle to fill the gap as an interim while the new hedging is established. The plans should be altered to remove and refer to the gap and any path accessing it removed from the plan.
Traffic generation (highway authority views crucial)	The survey data that assesses an additional 8 vehicles per hour, whilst sounding relatively low represents an increase of 22% when compared to SAM2 data of 13,000 vehicles (one direction counted only) per month. This raises further concerns when the 50 houses anticipated on G.56.1 are built, that would extrapolate to a 50% increase in traffic and would warrant further highway improvements for safety being implemented at this site and throughout the length of the Street, clearly the developers would not be expected to pay for those other than in the immediate vicinity of their developments but the continued extensive improvements would need to be agreed by NCC. The potential for joining the development to Walnut Walk and the traffic impact on Villebois Road would need to be assessed and mitigated.

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Noise and disturbance from the scheme	The short-term noise disturbance during build should be satisfied in part by the participation in the considerate construction scheme. However, as with 18/01896/F there should be a condition to ensure building contractor traffic parking is provided on site to prevent the Street traffic flow and ensure safety. In addition, the Street has frequent large agricultural traffic, and its access passage should not be impeded. The long-term noise and disturbance would be not different to that of Hillside and the School on the Cemetery
Public visual amenity (not loss of an individual's view)	Not applicable
Drainage/Flood risk (EA/ AW views crucial).	The Council does not recognise the data, assessments and projections by the EA and IDB with regards to the surface water risk and mitigation, as being in line with the lived experience. A greater degree of SuDS and improved highways drains should be included as conditions to cater for the high intensity rainfall that we have experienced frequently in the last 3 years and is reportedly set to become worse with climate change. Recycling of harvested rainwater with eco features on homes should also be a condition.
Impact on crime or detection.	Streetlighting is lacking in information in the application, albeit the Police had given their advice. The Council would wish to see a streetlight design that is sympathetic with the rural setting with minimal coverage and being turned off during the period of midnight to 5am. The streetlighting should be suitable for adoption by the principal authority.