

## **Marlesford Community Council**

### **Chairman's Report to Annual General Meeting, held 14 January 2026**

Well, it was three years ago in October that this committee took over running of the Marlesford Community Council charity. With a relatively quiet year in 2025, I think it's worth reminding ourselves of where we have come from since October 2022 and the good work achieved.

#### **Community Centre**

The Community Centre is in good condition after several recent investments, including installation of broadband and Wi-Fi, refurbishment of the roof and guttering, installation of solar panels, improved lighting, and painting of building's exterior and interior.

I was very happy to see the first income generated from the solar panels, with more than £400 revenue for the charity in a quarter. It has taken a while to get the export arrangements in place, but this sets us up nicely to benefit from investment made with some regular income.

This last year saw installation of an emergency defibrillator, located on the outside of the building. It is very visible, and available for use in an emergency when directed by the ambulance service. Arrangements are in place to check the device periodically and update the device's record on the national register.

#### **CPR and First Aid**

Thanks to Rob Maycroft for providing a first wave of CPR awareness sessions this year, supported by Lisa Kenyon. The more people in the village who are aware of what to do in the event of a cardiac arrest, the more resilient we are as a community. This is not about providing any form of emergency response, but in helping all of us better understand what we should be doing in case of an emergency. More general emergency first aid sessions will be provided in the next few months, with several names already on the list. None of this is a one-time thing; we will continue to provide training both in CPR and broader first aid to improve the resilience of the village and its residents.

#### **Community Engagement**

First Aid was one of the ideas coming out of the drop-in session we organised in May, in partnership with the Parish and Parochial Church Councils. It was great to see a strong turnout from a cross-section of the community, and a great litter-picking effort alongside!

There was lots of interest in green initiatives and activities for younger Marlesford residents. As a result, we are taking forward the idea of a community orchard on the former Bowling Green – a space for community activities, quiet relaxation and learning new skills. Lesley is leading the way on this and we expect significant progress this year.

There were many other ideas floated on the day, and I encourage any residents who want something for the village to grasp the nettle and make it happen. We have limited resource as the Community Council but are all for supporting people who want to get involved and make things happen.

On that front, I will be proposing that we have another drop-in session this year to see what people want to prioritise.

### **Events**

The Thursday morning Community Café is a mainstay of village life. While there is a solid group of regulars in attendance, I encourage all residents to come along whenever they can for hot drinks, home baking and plenty of conversation to be enjoyed.

Evening events have proved to be a little trickier this past 12 months, with a couple of well attended and profitable quizzes, but also a general trend of smaller attendances. Coupled with a very enjoyable, but not amazingly well-attended, pop-up pub/BBQ in September, I feel we really need some fresh insight into what would get more people together. We are all for shaking things up and trying new things, but we need some inspiration from others to continue to offer the types of social events that people want.

We were lucky again with the weather in our second collaboration, with the Parochial Church Council, on the community fête. It was a good fundraiser as well as an enjoyable day for all who attended. We will start planning this year's event before long.

### **Purpose**

I don't propose any changes to our constitution this year. As a reminder, the purpose of Marlesford Community Council is (from the charity's constitution):

"To provide adequate recreational facilities, playing fields, playgrounds, community centres and other amenities of a similar character for the benefit of the community residing in Marlesford and the neighbourhood in the interests of social welfare and with the object of advancing education, furthering health, relieving poverty, distress or sickness or in pursuing any objects which now are or hereafter may be deemed in law to be charitable by improving the conditions of life of the said persons for whom the facilities are intended."

### **Donations**

We are grateful to our county councillor Stephen Burroughes for funding of the defibrillator, and to The Beaverbrook Foundation for funding to support first aid training.

Thank you to the management committee and trustees for your continued support and commitment over the past 12 months. I look forward to another successful year together in 2026.

Ross Proctor, 12 January 2026