

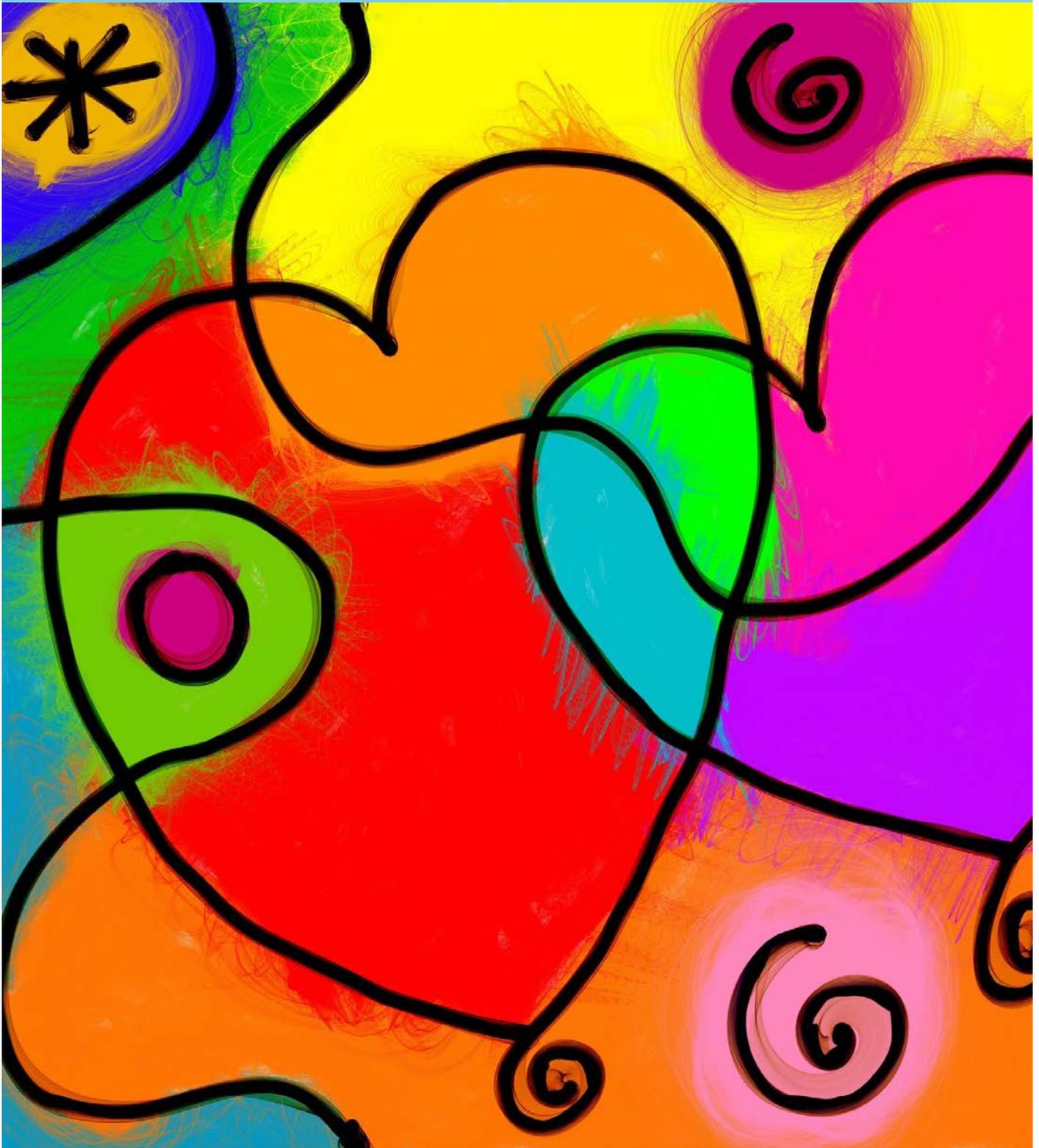
MAD News

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Marcham - Cothill - Frilford - Garford - Gozzards Ford - Tubney

February 2024 Vol 46 No.2

Your Independent Local News Source



Valentine's Month

Hug the one you love - if they're within reach!



Editor's Column

One could hardly fail to have noticed that Valentine's gifts and cards are overwhelmingly red.

Well, this month's cover is the perfect antidote to all that redness, with a nod to romance, but with a playful twist in the choice of colours

Announcement

As some of you know, my dear husband and the beloved father of my three children - Norbert Rodriguez - sadly passed away on the 8th December last year. It came as a huge shock to his whole family, friends and acquaintances.

Norbert retired in 2008 with the aim of travelling six months a year and staying in the UK for the other six months - to explore the country's local heritage, as he would say.

When we were back in Marcham - come rain or shine - Norbert would go on daily long walks around the village. Walks which he greatly appreciated as they allowed him to create new friendships along the way. The village and its community played an important role in his life and we would like to thank each and every one of you that knew him and took the time to create fond memories with him. We miss him dearly.

A heartfelt thank you for the flowers, kind thoughts, and heartwarming messages that we have received since. We are touched by your support.

Elise Rodriguez and family



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Jane Mander

DEADLINES

Advertising: 17.00 15th of the month
Other copy: 17.00 20th of the month
except for the Jan edition when it is 15th Dec for both.

ADDITIONAL COPIES

These are available free from Marcham Post Office or the Editor. Postal copies are also available – contact the Editor.

DISCLAIMER

We apologise in advance for any errors that may creep into MADNews (online or print), or omissions that creep out - we don't do it on purpose! The Editor reserves the right to alter, omit or hold over copy to another issue. The views expressed in the Marcham & District News are not necessarily those of the editorial team, who are all volunteers.

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GARD is a local community group formed to campaign against Thames Water's proposals to build a reservoir south-west of Abingdon.



GARD Newsletter for February 2024

GARD calls for Public Inquiry

On 20th December, GARD issued a call to the Secretary of State for DEFRA, Steve Barclay, to call a Public Inquiry into Thames Water's proposal to go forward with its huge Reservoir between Steventon and East Hanney. In our letter to Mr Barclay, we cited that there are many unresolved issues and issues of significant public interest on which Thames Water and its partners have chosen to ignore public consultation and criticism. Thus, in our view there is the need for a public hearing, inquiry or examination in public. We await the Secretary of State's response.

Support for a Public Inquiry grows

Subsequently, our MP, David Johnston has also written to the Secretary of State, supporting our demand for a Public Inquiry. We are very grateful for Mr Johnston's support, and this shows the value of all the letters you have written to him on this matter. We have also heard that the countryside charity, CPRE, has written to Mr Barclay supporting the call for a Public Inquiry. At the time of writing (15th January) we know that there are other organisations and political parties considering adding their voices to these calls. We remind readers that both the County Council (on the 12th December) and the Vale of White Horse (on the 13th December) have already passed unanimous council motions re-affirming opposition to the Reservoir, asking for talks with the Secretary of State, and for the reservoir plans to be suspended until issues have been resolved.

Join us!

Your support is needed, at this time, to show the breadth and depth of the opposition. New members are joining all the time, but being able to announce a strong increase in membership would make a good political point to our opponents.

Please contact gard.membership@gmail.com or use the online form on the website <https://www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk/joinus.html>

Derek Stork
Chairman GARD



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The Gardening Column

Sustainable On So Many Levels

A very interesting issue has again been sent in for me to explore during this month's article, which is – What should gardeners be aiming to encourage more of in 2024?

Effectively that's asking what kind of food chains or food webs we should be focusing on. I'd like to reframe that concept though, before we focus on these webs and chains.

I suggest we should be collectively thinking of ourselves within our garden's food chains and webs, not outside of them, or separate from them. From there I feel it would be a worthwhile exercise if we were to consider what positive and negative impacts we actually have ourselves.

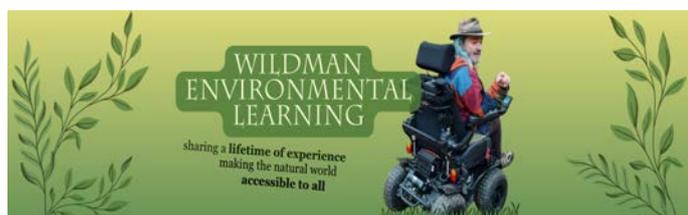
Then, further still, let's think about whether those positive and negative impacts adjust at all if we either start seeing ourselves as part of it, or not automatically at the top of these hierarchical webs and chains?

The act of reframing the question and reframing what our perceived role in the natural world is, really drills down into what our collective gardening ambitions might be for the coming season. So, let's all take the action to consider and churn on this conundrum.

I don't profess to claim to know at this stage what the conclusions are likely to be, or if they'll be far reaching, but it certainly feels like a place to start when roundly considering the innumerable cause and effects our mere existence has on the webs and chains we are directly involved with.

Thanks for another intriguing concept for me to write about this month, keep them coming and together let's make 2024 a gardening year to remember. Making your mark and having a garden of your dreams can be sustainable on so many levels, I'm glad I can contribute to that debate, even in a small way.

Happy Gardening
Stuart Mabbutt
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**Marcham
Moldova
Lifeline**

Do you, like me, feel hungrier when it's cold?

We had temperatures of around -6°C for a few nights last week, in Moldova it can get down to -30°C and rarely reaches above freezing throughout January.

Moldova is the poorest country in Europe and at the moment is hosting thousands of refugees from Ukraine. Marcham Moldova Lifeline was formed 15 years ago to support a Christian charity in Moldova, also supported by Abingdon School. Through MML the village has been helping families through the winter with food parcels, and when we first started a typical food parcel like the one in the picture cost £10. With inflation this is now £30. We hope to send funds for 50 parcels and have already raised £900 towards this but still need £600 to reach our goal.

If you would like to help, please make donations to Marcham Moldova Lifeline referenced 'Food parcels'. Account details 60-01-01 40588629
Alternatively cheques made out to Marcham Moldova Lifeline can be given to:-
Sheila Dunford, Prior's Corner, Priory Lane Marcham or
Julia Davies, 7 Tower Close, Marcham



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Marcham C of E Primary School

Although we are only just back at school, we have all been busy settling into our work. Pupils in classes from Reception to Year 3 have engaged in drama workshops, which involved cowboy boots, Stetson hats and imaginary horses! It sounded like a great deal of fun! Photos of events such as this can be found on the school website - take a look at the latest news or class pages. Other highlights include the Kangaroo Class transforming into 'Newsreaders' to share breaking news stories of erupting volcanoes or the Leopards who have had fun exploring the school's outside area in the icy weather.

Thank you to our Year 6 for giving us something to think about - What is beauty? Do we stop to notice the extraordinary in the ordinary? Year 6 have been aiming to recognise that, despite there being a lot of awful news around, there is still much to wonder and value. And so many of them can be found right where we are! Everyone wrote their thoughts down. This is what Yasmin wrote:

Beauty is love,
Beauty is pain,
Beauty is mistakes you make again and again.
Beauty is prosperity,
Beauty is friendship,
Beauty is disabilities, different abilities, different needs,
Beauty is in everyone for people to see.
Beauty is an eagle preparing to fly,
Beauty is the ocean, the land and the sky.
Beauty is in nature wherever you go,
Beauty is animals, some rarely known.
Beauty is like an arrow hitting a target;
Beauty is in everything if you look carefully;
Beauty is in the wood, the forest, the beach,
Beauty is always in your reach.

All of us could take up the challenge, to look for beauty wherever we are. It could be a thing of beauty in itself!

Marcham Primary School feel that they can share in the success of others. The Head was delighted to attend a concert last week of the Thames Valley Youth Orchestra, where two of our ex-pupils were playing: Charlotte on double bass and Bethan on clarinet. It was amazing. The programme would have been demanding for a professional orchestra and they performed it magnificently. It did all begin at Marcham School – in Year 3 learning to play a string instrument. We are enormously proud that it instilled a love of music in them and they have continued to pursue this beautiful art form.

Also, Larkmead recently held their annual award ceremony for Year 11 pupils. 27 different pupils were invited from the 160 in that cohort – and almost 20% of them were from Marcham School – significantly exceeding the proportion of children who went to Larkmead from Marcham and outperforming other schools. There were awards for outstanding progress or outstanding achievement in Sociology, D&T (both Food and Nutrition, and Textiles). Maths, Sports Studies, Computer Science, Music and Business Studies. Congratulations to Will, Nathan, Emily, Alex and Josh.

In Year 12, Lara achieved an all-round achievement award for outstanding science results and Megan, in Sixth form received an award for an outstanding contribution to school life. We are thrilled that our pupils have maintained and continued to build on the great learning behaviours they exhibited here at Marcham, and they remain a credit to our school. We look forward to hearing further great things about them in the future.



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Marcham Parish Council News

Council Tax 2024/25

The Parish Council carefully considered its budget for 2024/25 at its January meeting. It is requesting £76500 from the Vale of White Horse District Council to help with the costs of running the parish. This sum is shared between the council tax paying properties in the parish. For the past 2 years, the cost to each band D household has been £76.77. In order to undertake projects in the parish, the Council has agreed a slight increase of £3.28 next year, making the amount payable £80.05. As well as needing to undertake regular maintenance, and grass cutting within the village, the Council has decided by agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to take over the cutting of the highway verges. It has budgeted for 2 cuts in the season rather than the one cut that is undertaken by the County at the moment. This hopefully should ensure that visibility at main road junctions in the parish is improved. Grass cutting in the cemetery will revert back to a cut twice a month instead of the monthly cut which resulted when a temporary contractor had to be engaged last year. It is planned to undertake memorial testing in the cemetery and churchyard. The Council has also set aside funds for awarding £9500 in grants to local organisations that support the parish, and £5000 towards the costs of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will be looking at other projects too in the next financial year, to include Phase II of the play area, improvements to the war memorial, and maintenance of the footpath towards the cemetery. It will again review lighting on the path from Howard Cornish Road towards Harding Way. Funding for the projects will come from the Council's own funds, its community fund and hopefully grant sources.

Street Names – Bloor Homes

The Parish Council has been asked to provide suggestions for street names for the new housing development south of the A415. A final list will be considered at the next Parish Council meeting on 12th February. Some suggestions have already been put forward, but if anyone wishes to make a suggestion for a new street name, and has not already done so, please email the Clerk on the details provided below.

Casual Vacancies

2 vacancies exist on the Parish Council. If there is anyone interested in helping with the various village projects outlined above then please contact the clerk for further details of what is involved in being a councillor.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Joint Local Plan 2041

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working together on a Joint Local Plan which will guide the planning of the locality over the next few years. The Plan will cover housing, employment, transport, environment and much more. The District Council's preferred options are out for consultation. The consultation closing date is 21st February, 2024.

Comments have a direct role in shaping the future of the area. More information about how to join in, is on the Vale of White Horse District Council website, as are the details of the local exhibitions in Abingdon, Faringdon and Didcot. <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/local-plan-2041/>

Notice of future events

Annual Meeting for Electors

This year's meeting has been planned for Wednesday 22nd May at 19.30 in Marcham Centre.

An opportunity for residents of the parish to raise issues about the area.

CPR training

Some while has passed since the last training session in CPR and how to use the village defibrillators. The Council has received an offer of help in running a community awareness session in CPR and defibrillator use. It is looking at arranging a further training course, so look out for the date being advertised on the Council's website and elsewhere, if you would like to take part, and learn essential life-saving skills.

A415 Kingston Bagpuize road closure

The Council has been notified of a complete road closure on the A415, just south of the Co-Op store (i.e. in the direction of Millets Farm), at Kingston Bagpuize. This will take place between 4th – 6th March, to allow for the installation of a zebra crossing.

Planning Applications considered by the Council

P23/V2787/HH Install replacement PCVu conservatory to the rear of 16 Parkside. The Council had no objections.

continued on next page...

...continued

Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin, 90 Howard Cornish Road Tel: 01865 391833

Email: clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 12th February, 2024 at 19.30 in the Village Hall, Barrow Close.

Please check the Council's website www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk in case arrangements change.

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We have had a brilliant start to the year already here at Marcham Little Angels! The team started the year off with some impactful and important training on gardening for biodiversity and outdoor learning. The team have really taken this on and have been making the most of our outdoor spaces here in our beautiful village, you may have spotted us out and about jumping in muddy puddles and enjoying time in our forest school area, as well as of course our weekly football and hockey lessons outside the nursery with Coach Dec..



Everyone loves jumping in muddy puddles!



Climbing trees in forest school!



Scoring goals with Coach Dec



Visiting the "fairy tree"

All of our Little Angels have been learning about their emotions, and the team are helping to support this with a mini focus on the stories of Winnie The Pooh and his friends. It felt only right that we joined the festivities of national Winnie The Pooh day. We dressed up as our favourite characters and enjoyed a scrummy picnic of sandwiches, spiced honey cake and Winnie the Pooh rice cakes for snack made by our fantastic chef Alicia



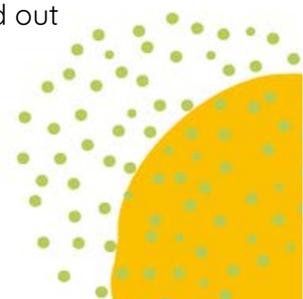
As you may have seen, we are looking for amazing people to join our ever growing team here at Marcham Little Angels. We have some very exciting projects happening in 2024 so we are looking for all kinds of people for a variety of different roles. If you, or someone you know may be interested in joining our team, please do not hesitate to contact us for a chat, or come along to our recruitment morning on Saturday 27th Jan 9am-12.30pm here at Marcham Little Angels to find out all about our exciting news.



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All Saints & St Lukes Churches



**This is real love - not
that we loved God,
but that he loved us
and sent his Son as
a sacrifice to take
away our sins
1 John 4:10**

A rare coincidence approaches. This year Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day. It last happened in 2018, but before that it was in 1956. When this happens Easter Day often falls on April Fools' Day, but not always, as is the case this year, because of leap years. As to the last time 14th February was Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day, but Easter Day was NOT April Fools' Day...? answers on a Valentine's card. So how could we celebrate Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday appropriately together? Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, traditionally a 40 day period of fasting and prayer when Christians remember that we are mortal sinners in need of God's gracious love. St Valentine was a 3rd century priest in Rome who was imprisoned by the Emperor for disobeying his orders to stop performing Christian weddings. He was guilty of helping persecuted Christians, and when he miraculously healed the Emperor's daughter secretly sending her letters from prison, he was martyred. So Wednesday 14th February 2024 is going to be an odd mash up. Maybe we could use the ashes of rose petals at the Ash Wednesday service? Maybe write "remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" with a couple of kisses in your Valentine's Day card? Maybe not. How about dwelling on this wonderful truth and enjoying it for the 40 days running up to Easter: "This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins (1 John 4:10). All human love is a reflection of the love God has for his people; a love that brought God to earth and took Jesus to the cross all for love's sake. Happy Ash Day! Happy Valentine's Wednesday!

Revd Nick Weldon

Regular services at All Saints:
10.00: Morning Service
18.00: Evening Service
Wednesday Holy Communion
10.30: at Duffield Place

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Parish Administrator
info@allsaintsmarcham.org



www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk

St. Luke's, Garford

Our Epiphany service touched the heart of our congregation.

Rosemary led us so gently into an understanding that, like the 3 Kings, we too can always find new pathways.

Talking of which, we now have the pathway to St. Lukes fully lit. Our outside lights arrived. They are now installed and working.

Sunday 7th February, 11.00: Candlemas at St. Luke's with the lighting of candles

Sundays February 11th, 18th, 25th: Church open for quiet prayer 11.00-12.00.

Contact: Carolyn Whiting

st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org





Happy New Year to all Marcham Centre hirers, users, volunteers and to MCG members. It is hard to believe that it is coming up to four years ago that Marcham Centre was handed over. Much has happened since then, in Marcham and elsewhere. We will be updating our hire rates from April to allow for the impact of inflation since we opened in 2020, to ensure that we operate sustainably.

Marcham Centre maintenance

During the Christmas/New Year closure, our contractor carried out re-painting of the toilet areas and the kitchen. We have used paints professionally selected for durability, moisture resistance and ease of cleaning. Phased re-painting of the building in stages is part of a plan to maintain the clean and fresh appearance of this popular facility within a manageable budget.



We have also had the store area re-floored (above right) as we had been facing problems due to wear of the floor paint and erosion of the concrete underneath. The new flooring is a commercial-grade durable PVC material, which should give us an extended period of service. It is looking good.

A big thank-you goes to all those volunteers who took time out of the festive season to help us clear everything out of the store in advance of the flooring work, and for putting it all back again afterwards. It was a good opportunity for a tidy-up, too!

MCG Community Investment Fund is funding the purchase of a set of portable floodlights by Marcham Football Club to enable it to better carry our training over the winter months. This helps to underpin the great work by the club in bringing on increasing levels of youth football team activity.

If your club or group activity needs support to further the interests of our community, please email admin@marcham.org for further details and a grant application form.

Volunteers

We rely heavily on volunteers to support the operations of Marcham Centre. As well as support for hall operations and volunteers for the bar, we are looking for volunteers with finance experience to assist us with day to day book-keeping. Please contact jim.asher@btinternet.com, if you are able to help. You could be making a real difference!

Events at Marcham Centre

Friday 23rd Feb: Quiz Night: Adults only - 19:30 for 20.00 prompt start.

Friday 1st March: Family Bingo: Eyes down at 19:30.

Advance dates for your diary:

Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday 30th March

Big Marcham Weekend: Friday/Saturday 10th-11th May

Indoor short-mat bowls at Marcham Centre are held every Wednesday at 14.00 (or 14.30 - see diary). Please contact Colin Trinder (c_trinder@btinternet.com) or just turn up.

If you wish to book a room at Marcham Centre, please use the booking request system on www.marchamcentre.org or contact our Coordinator: coordinator@marchamcentre.org.



Marcham Village Shop and Post Office

Winter is now definitely upon us, and we only go outside if we really need to. We hope that you are all able to stay warm and keep safe during this chilly season. Roll on sunny days!

February and March are busy months. February sees the Chinese New year on the 10th, Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) on the 13th and Valentine’s Day on the 14th. Also March has St David’s Day on the 1st, Mother’s Day on the 10th, St Patrick’s Day on the 17th and Easter Sunday is the 31st.

The new Chinese year will be the Year of the Dragon. If you plan to celebrate with a Chinese meal, we have ready-to-cook frozen duck, egg noodles, prawn crackers, soy sauce and rice, along with other items that will all go to making a lovely meal.



Along with all our other products, we also sell milk, butter, eggs, flour, lemons and sugar – just what you need to make your traditional pancakes on Pancake Day.



For Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day and Easter, we have a brand new selection of chocolate gifts, along with some of our traditional varieties. We also have new stock of the gloves that we had in before Christmas (they all sold within one week!). And, we are waiting on a new delivery of some soft, cashmere style scarves. In addition, we are currently sourcing a local supplier of wax melts – watch this space.

Our long-term egg supplier, Ben, has now given up the egg side of his farming business and the eggs will now be managed by another supplier called Billy. Billy manages the whole process, from collecting to packing. Continuing in Ben’s footsteps, the eggs are free-range and there will be no small eggs. Sadly, the price of the eggs will increase slightly, so a box of 6 will now be priced at £1.70 and a tray (30 eggs) will be £8.00.



Don’t forget that you can order your meat from Hedges through the shop. Order forms are available from the shop and orders should be placed by 5 pm on Wednesdays ready for collection between 12 noon the following Friday and 12 noon Saturday (excluding bank holidays). Further details, including a price list, are available from the counter. If there are any meat products that you cannot see on the price list, please let us know and we will check availability and price for you.



Remember, we provide most Post Office products and services. And, as Barclays Bank will be closing in Abingdon, we are able to carry out cash withdrawals, cash deposits and cheque deposits.



Shop and Post Office Opening hours

Mondays – 0830-1700 hrs
Tuesdays – 0830-1700 hrs
Wednesdays – 0830-1700 hrs
Thursdays – 0830-1700 hrs
Fridays – 0830-1700 hrs
Saturdays – 0830-1200 hrs
Sundays – CLOSED
Bank Holidays - CLOSED

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Marcham Village Shop, 16 North St, Marcham, Oxon, OX13 6NG, Tel Shop: 01865 391993, Tel PO: 01865 391940

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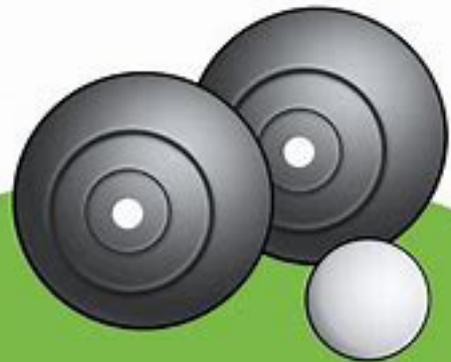
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The Marcham team of Short Mat bowlers at Kingston Bagpuize & Southmoor bowls club during a break in the away match v KB&S on Wednesday 17th January.

Thirsty Café

Thirsty Café reopened on Saturday 13th January. It was so nice to welcome back old and new customers for the New Year.

Thirsty is a Pop-up Community Café, find us in the Marcham Centre on a Wednesday 09.00-11.00 and on a Saturday 09.00-11.30. As a community café we rely completely on our fantastic volunteers to set up and open each week. There are a variety of roles across the sessions where volunteers are needed. We would love for you to join our team.



Stay and Play is on the first Wednesday of the month. Bring your children and enjoy the company of other Mothers, Fathers and children.

Monthly Community lunch.

We will be serving roast dinners and puddings from 12.00-14.00. This runs in addition to the regular Wednesday café. The next lunch is on 21st February and are usually on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. We are looking for more volunteers and a volunteer to co- ordinate the lunches in order to continue with these popular events.

Valentine's Day Wednesday 14th February, the Café will be popping up in The Crown from 10.00-13.00 for coffee and cakes. Please come and join us we would love to see you.

Thirsty Café requires a new Treasurer to join us in April. It is a voluntary position. Please contact us to know more.

Dates for the Diary

Stay and Play Wed 7th February

Valentine's day in The Crown Wednesday 14th February.

Community lunch Wed 21st February.

Website www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

Email: Hello@thirstycafemarcham.co.uk.

Friday Club

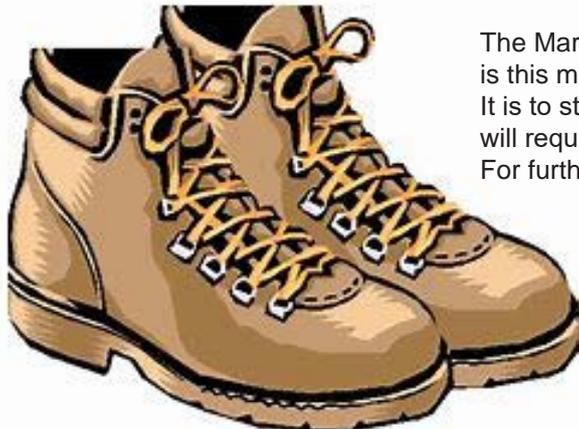
The children, young leaders and adults would like to thank the Anson Trust and the Parish Council for their very generous grants, which enabled us to go to 'Jack and the Beanstalk', staged at the Oxford Playhouse.

On Friday 5th January, 70 children , young people and leaders boarded a coach paid for by Anson Trust and Parish Council, and had a thoroughly entertaining evening.

"I loved the bubbles and foam that fell on us", "I loved when the lady threw sweets to us", "I loved it when the baddy was talking to Daisy in the audience", are just a few comments from the children.

The combination of the Playhouse giving us very good value on the tickets and the paid coach journey, meant this was a very accessible treat for many Marcham families.

THANK YOU!



The Marcham Society monthly walks led by Eric Dunford is this month on Thursday 1st February. It is to start at Swyncombe, north of Nuffield Place, and will require some determination just to find it on the map! For further information contact Eric on 01865 391439



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www.bnb-rafters.co.uk

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Does Your Local (to Marcham) Organisation, Society, Group or Club Need Help with Funding?

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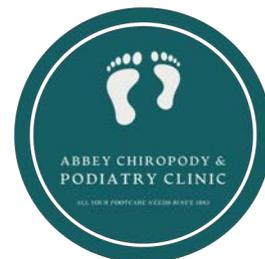
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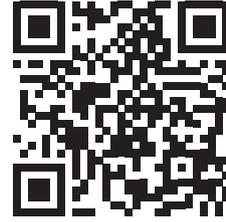
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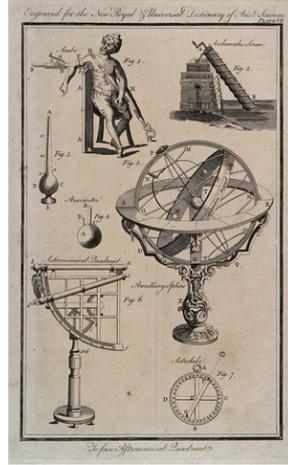
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THE ASTRONOMY GROUP



**A talk on “Archimedes and Astronomy”
and other members’ contributions**

*Thursday 22nd February 2024 at 19.00 in the Small Hall,
Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY*



Water voles: a national approach to saving ‘Ratty’

Dr Merryl Gelling

 @SpiresEcology
merryl@spiresecology.com

*Monday 26th February 2024 at 19.15 for 19.45 in the Main Hall,
Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY*

Merryl has undertaken research on water voles for over 20 years, initially based at the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at Oxford University. More recently she has been an independent consultant working to put academic research into practical application.

Water voles have disappeared from over 90% of their geographical range. In this talk we learn about the ecology of water voles, as well as threats to their survival, and ultimately the work that is ongoing to reverse the decline and bring ‘Ratty’ back as an iconic part of our local habitat.

MP's Report

I know it has been a difficult start to the year for some local residents with the flooding that we have seen across the constituency. I have been in contact with the Environment Agency throughout and will be meeting with them to discuss the recent flooding and our flood defences, as well as with the Council about the measures they can take to prevent flooding. Please email me if you have anything that you would like me to raise with them.



I know that of particular concern has been the flooding on the A417. I have written to the Council about this many times and have pushed them again to do the work that they had planned to do on this and other roads. I also visited local businesses like Mellor's Garage and Vale Hydrotherapy in East Challow to talk about their experiences in the recent floods, how I can help and what more needs to be done. Mellor's in particular have been losing a lot of business while the road remains flooded so do support them and others affected if you can.

If you or someone you know has had their home or business affected by flooding, which I hope you did not, there is Government support available to help people recover. This support will be provided through local councils who will announce further details on eligibility and how to apply.

Please do complete my Local Roads Survey to share your experiences and thoughts with me about the issues on our roads, currently on my website at www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey. The more responses we receive, the better data we have to push for change.

From now until 31 March, working parents can get an HMRC code that will entitle them from this April to the first 15 free hours of childcare for their 2-year-olds. Visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk for more information. I am very proud to be overseeing this rollout, which is the biggest ever investment in childcare, as the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing.

Men's Sheds are community workshops which are doing great work across the country to tackle loneliness amongst men. I visited one of our very own Men's Sheds in Sutton Courtenay to meet with founder Jon and talk to its users – who all said how much it has helped them. They are based in the grounds of the Abbey at Sutton Courtenay, and you can contact them at info@shedoxford.co.uk if you would like to get involved.

Speaking of the Abbey, they have recently recruited a very experienced French chef who is producing delicious food for visitors, which I was pleased to try on my visit there. Find out more at <https://theabbey.uk.com>.

As ever, if I can help with anything then do please get in touch via david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk.

Marcham WI - Monday, 19th February 2024

19.30 at The Marcham Centre
Trading Standards - Preventing Scams



At our February meeting, we will be welcoming Shelley Edwards from Trading Standards, who will be giving us some tips and advice on how to avoid scams and doorstep crime. She will tell us how to spot a scam and what we can do if we think we are being targeted. As we are all being targeted more and more frequently, come along and see what you can do to make yourself safe and avoid becoming a victim of this crime. Further information can be found at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/trading-standards/advice-communities/scams>

Visitors are always welcome. For any further information, please contact:
Pippa Hoath: 01865 391349
pippahoath@gmail.com

District Councillor's Report

District Boundary Changes

The Vale's district ward boundaries are currently being reviewed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, a normal process that 'updates' boundaries every 15 years or so to account for changes in local demographics. The Commission is now starting to look at any changes to ward boundaries that may be necessary to standardise the councillor-to-residents ratio across the district (while also trying to keep parishes intact within district wards, etc). Any changes made would come into effect at the point of the next district council elections in May 2027. If you would like to express your views on this, the Commission's consultation is open until 18th March at www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/vale-white-horse



Waste Contract Extension

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and the Vale have a long-running relationship with Biffa for residential waste collection. Although not perfect, the relationship is notable for keeping the districts near the top of the English recycling tables for over a decade and for a high level of resident satisfaction in a recent survey. The food waste process produces biogas, which provides enough energy to power up to 4,800 homes, and nutrient-rich bio-fertiliser which is sold to local farmers to use on their land. The contract with Biffa has now been extended for a further two years, taking it through to June 2026.

Joint Local Plan (JLP)

As mentioned in my December report, the consultation for the Joint Local Plan (JLP) is now open. Please take the time to respond to this, whether it be to the full 'Preferred Options' survey or to the summarised 'In a Nutshell' survey. Both can be found at theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/jlp/ online or in paper versions at council properties around the districts. There will also be in-person events around the districts for those who would like to chat with officers or councillors before submitting their responses.

The proposed JLP is ambitious and so we really would appreciate your support: the JLP will need to be approved by the national Planning Inspectorate, who will look at residents' consultation responses as part of the evidence base when making their decision.

A correction

In my January report for MAD News I made reference to the Vale's "administration of 2012-2016". This should have read "administration of 2015-2019". Sorry!

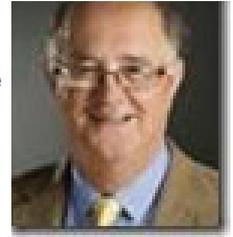
Cllr. Dr. Robert Clegg
District Councillor for Marcham Ward
Phone: 07784225290
Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk



County Councillor's Report

Flooding

In 2007, I became Chairman of the Ock Valley Flood Group. As a result of those floods, more than 100 homes in Abingdon had to be evacuated, some for more than a year. Problems with insurance companies and the overstretched Environment Agency were compounded by confusion over who was responsible for what. While some of those problems were addressed, the volunteers in the flood group began work on clearing Sandford Brook from Tescos to the Thames.



Clearing the debris and removing the dams caused by supermarket trolleys, bicycles, collapsed trees and branches and the like, it was not long before the brook was flowing clear and fast. Within a year, the gravel bed was clear and to date there has been no repeat in South Abingdon. Unfortunately, people get older and memories fade. The flood group is no longer operating for lack of volunteers. As a result, there is not the same sense of urgency as there was from 2007 to 2012. Flooding was more the concern of people in Gloucestershire and Cumbria than in Oxfordshire. The recent heavy rain and local flooding have reminded us that we may have been lucky. Flooding is, of course, a regular occurrence in Sutton Courtenay but the statistics around the 2023 rainfall suggest that it exceeded 2007 measurements by at least another 10%. Photographs of the B4016 and Ginge Brook suggest there is no room for complacency. Even more significant are photographs of the proposed land for the Hobbyhorse Lane development (the appeal having been granted). It becomes ever more important that the drainage scheme for that development works and works well. As the development goes through the various stages of the planning process, it is going to be vitally important that the drainage plans are thoroughly challenged. We are told that climate change is going to make flooding events more likely and more frequent. I would encourage all concerned residents to respond to the consultation on the developing South and Vale Local Plan 2041 to ensure that Flooding is taken fully into account.

The six-week consultation began on 10/1 and will run until midnight on 21/2 2024. Visit: southandvale.gov.uk/JLP to find out more and have your say.

Other urgent news

The “call in” hearing of the Hif1 planning application begins on the 20th February at the Bee House on Milton Park. This is likely to continue for at least two weeks.

As a result of the recent Local Government settlement, it seems likely that OCC is going to have to find more than £10m of savings in order to balance its budget.

In spite of it all....

Happy New Year

Richard Webber Cllr
01235 534001

richardwebber777@gmail.com



February 2024

March '24

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Deadline Day >>>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1 Millets Motor Meet Millets Farm 09.30 MarSoc Walk See p17	2	3
4	5 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.30 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00	6 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	7 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15 Stay & Play (Toddlers) Marcham Centre 09.00 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	8	9	10
11	12 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00 Parish Council Mtg Marcham Centre 19.30 see p8/9	13 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	14 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15 Valentine's Day The Crown 12.00 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	15	16 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30 Live Music (Adam Matthews - Guitar) The Crown 20.00	17
18	19 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.30 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00 Marcham WI Meeting Marcham Centre 19.30	20 Deadline Day editor@madnews.co.uk Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	21 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15 Community Lunch Marcham Centre 12.00 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.30	22 Astronomy Group Marcham Centre 19.00	23 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30 Quiz Night (Adults) Marcham Centre 19.30	24
25	26 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00 Marcham Society Marcham Centre 19.15	27 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	28 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	29	1	2

