

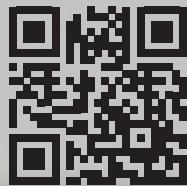
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February 2026 Vol 48 No. 2

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Hi Everyone,

Welcome to February and Happy Valentines... an interesting anniversary of a martyr filled with hearts, roses & love.

Cheers

Kay

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PROOFREADING

The MADNews Team

DEADLINES

All entries including articles, notices, reports and advertising:
5pm 15th of the month

ADDITIONAL COPIES

These are available from Marcham Village Shop. 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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Marcham and Shippon

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Frilford Garford Jill Rayner jill.rayner@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tubney Mark Coleman mark.coleman@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

MP

Layla Moran layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ALLOTMENTS

COW LANE AND PARKSIDE

If you have an allotment you are reminded that allotment rent collection for the 25/26 financial year is taking place. Thank you to those who have paid promptly, but for those who have not yet paid, please transfer the sum due to the Council's bank account (details in the letter sent out, or available from the clerk if needed), or let the Clerk have a cheque payable to Marcham Parish Council. If anyone has a query as to what is owed, then please contact the Clerk. Those in arrears with rent, or found not to be utilising their plot, could lose it by the service of a Notice to Quit.

PARKSIDE AND NEW ROAD

The Parish Council was awarded funds by the Vale of White Horse District Council for new growing areas and fencing in the allotments. The clearance of a plot at the corner of Parkside and New Road has had the benefit of some of these funds, with the Parish Council investing in the clearing and tidying of the overgrown corner.

Do you want to grow your own vegetables, have fun in the process and burn off some of the Christmas calories? Please contact the clerk if you are interested in an available plot.

POSSIBLE BUS SHELTER DUFFIELD PLACE EASTBOUND BUS STOP

The Parish Council is investigating the possibility of erecting a bus shelter with seat at the Duffield Place eastbound bus stop. The land is owned by the Vale of White Horse District Council and permission is needed from them. They have been approached, and a decision is awaited. Residents who have lived in the area for a while will remember this as the location where the District Council's bottle banks used to be sited.

RECYCLING CENTRES

You must now book in advance if you wish to visit one of the recycling centres in Oxfordshire. You will need to book online and provide your email address. You can book a slot up to two weeks in advance, or up to 30 minutes before your visit, subject to availability.

Anyone wishing to deposit household asbestos at Redbridge, Dix Pit or Ardley, will need to book at least 48 hours in advance.

When visiting the recycling centre you will need to bring proof of your address and arrive in the vehicle that you specified on your booking form. Acceptable proof is either a driving licence, recent utility bill or recent council tax bill.

Further information and the link to book a visit can be found at

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/book-recycling-centre-visit>

HOWARD CORNISH ROAD -

SALVATION ARMY TEXTILE BANK

Sadly clothing sacks have started to be left again on the ground next to the textile bank. This is fly tipping and anyone found leaving bags in this way can face prosecution. The

clothing dumped can become wet and dirty as well as making the area unsightly. Such bags tend to go into the dustcart and are not of benefit to the work of the Salvation Army. Please place clothing in a small bag or loose, in the chute in the textile bank, and DO NOT leave it on the ground.

FUTURE ROAD WORKS – A420

For those who undertake evening travel to or from Faringdon, please be aware that from 16th February the section in the Buckland/Pusey area will be closed overnight between 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. to allow for surface dressing works.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council considered applications P25/V2571/HH and P25/V2732/LB for the erection of a single storey part oak framed flat roof extension with rooflights at 3 Mill Road. It raised no objections to the proposed works

DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 9th February 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall, Barrow Close. *Please check the Council's website in case arrangements change.*

The Council meetings are open to the public, and the Council welcomes anyone who has issues to raise on parish matters to attend, or speak to their local parish councillor.

Clerk to the Council:

Mrs. L. Martin, 90 Howard Cornish Road
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PETER FONTAINE

17th February 1944 - 13th December 2025

Peter Ellis Fontaine was born in Bath in 1944. In 1947 his father took up a post as an engineer for the UK Atomic Energy Authority. The family moved to a prefab at the Authority's Harwell site, in what was then north Berkshire. Peter attended nearby Chilton Primary School, then moved to St Birinus boys' secondary modern school in Didcot. At the age of 15 he was accepted onto an apprenticeship at the Atomic Energy Authority, following in his father's footsteps. On completion of his apprenticeship, he worked for three decades as a mechanical engineer at Harwell. This involved highly secret and often fascinating work, working closely with leading scientists to develop innovative new forms of nuclear power.



After starting work at Harwell he met Judith Stallan, the daughter of a neighbour in Chilton. Peter immediately found that she was very interesting to talk to. They were married in July 1971 and moved to Tower Close, Marcham, where they lived for the next 54 years. Judith and Peter were made welcome from their first days in Marcham. They received huge support from their neighbours in Tower Close over the years. They and many of their neighbours all moved into the end of Tower Close as the houses were being built in 1971. They felt like they were part of an extended family, seeing their

neighbours' children grow up and have children of their own. After 12 years of marriage they had a son, Paul.

Judith and Peter were active in the local community in and around Marcham for many years. They delivered the MADNews for roughly 22 years. They were active committee members of the Marcham Society, with Peter having acted as treasurer and Judith as secretary. During the production of Marcham Society's book in 2009, *Marcham Remembered*, Judith and Peter took responsibility for the writing and production of the chapter on Occasions and People. They were both on the Parent Teacher Association at Marcham School, and Peter was also treasurer for some years. Peter volunteered in the Marcham Village Shop for many years. These contributions resulted in them sharing the **Parishioner of the Year Award** in May 2018.

Judith and Peter's quiet but unwavering support of all things Marcham, and their willingness to sit on committees and do the hard work to make voluntary organisations thrive, added so much to village life, and we are deeply grateful to them.



Peter was always impressed by Judith's wisdom, intelligence and kindness. During nearly 54 years of marriage, they always had plenty to talk about. But they never exchanged a cross word. Paul remembers them as a very close, loving couple and remembers Peter as kind, caring, gentle, funny but firm when he needed to be. In 1995 Peter took early retirement from Harwell. He then worked part time as a secondary school lab technician, preparing practical science lessons for pupils. He worked first at Fitzharrys School in Abingdon, and then at the European School at Culham. He really enjoyed working with an international group of colleagues, learning about their different national customs, celebrating their festivals, and enjoying a wide variety of fantastic food from around Europe.

In 2006 Peter was diagnosed with coronary artery disease, and needed a quadruple heart bypass. Judith provided him with enormous support, that helped him to get through this difficult time. Then in 2010 Peter was diagnosed with bowel cancer. He endured years of treatment, including bowel surgery and chemotherapy, and learned to live with a stoma. Once again Judith was by his side every step of the way, providing all the practical and emotional support he needed. As a result of this, and his own determination and resolve, he was able to beat cancer and live for another 15 years.

Peter was devastated when Judith died suddenly from cancer last June. After 54 years of happy marriage, it was extremely difficult for him to be separated from her so suddenly and unexpectedly. Nevertheless he bore his grief with courage and dignity. He continued to cook, clean and carry out other housework for himself, right up until the end. Now Peter is reunited with his dear Judith.

Peter is remembered by all those who knew him as a lovely man, kind, gentle and generous with his time. He is very sadly missed by all who knew him. But we are all grateful to him, for enriching our lives in so many ways over the years.

SUPPORTING OTHERS TO REACH THEIR DREAM WEIGHT – AND LOVING EVERY MINUTE

Becoming a **Slimming World Consultant** has been one of the most rewarding decisions of my life. What started as a personal journey has grown into a role I genuinely love – supporting, encouraging and celebrating real people as they work towards their dream weight and a healthier, happier life.

Every week, I have the privilege of welcoming members into group, listening to their stories, sharing ideas and helping them see that weight loss doesn't have to mean missing out. Slimming World is about real food, real life and real support – and that's exactly what I aim to offer. Watching confidence grow, habits change and members achieve goals they once thought were impossible never gets old. It's inspiring, emotional and incredibly fulfilling.

One of the most special parts of my journey has been seeing how Slimming World has helped my own family. Last July, on our wedding anniversary, my husband decided to join Slimming World alongside me as a present to me. It was a meaningful decision on a milestone day, and one that has changed his life. With consistent support, simple changes and plenty of delicious food, he has now lost almost **three stone**. Seeing his confidence grow and his health improve has been amazing, and it reminds me daily just how powerful this plan can be.

As a consultant, I understand that everyone's journey is different. There's no judgement, no pressure – just encouragement,

understanding and a belief that small steps really do add up. I love being there for the highs, helping through the wobbles and reminding people that they are capable of far more than they think.

Supporting people to reach their dream weight isn't just my job – it's my passion. Whether someone wants to lose a little or a lot, feel more confident, improve their health or simply enjoy food without guilt, I'm proud to be part of that journey. Slimming World isn't just about weight loss; it's about changing lives – and I feel incredibly lucky to be doing what I do.

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Marcham SOCIETY

THE MIDWEEK WALK

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A VISIT TO WELFORD PARK ESTATE

and snowdrop walk along the River Lambourn

Thursday 12th February at 11am

Please contact: Shirley.MarSoc@gmail.com

THE ASTRONOMY GROUP

A round-up of recent astronomy sightings

followed by a short talk on Saturn

Wednesday 18th February at 7.30pm

Small Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY

Please contact: astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk

THE MONTHLY TALK

"Those other village voices, the birds that share our gardens with us"

Barry Hudson and Andrew Mann

Monday 23rd February at 7.15 for 7.45pm

Main Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY



BIRDING IN THE BUSH

by Barry Hudson

Barry Hudson, Secretary of the Oxford Ornithological Society, is a retired farmer. He spent much of his farming life locally and developed a special affection for farmland birds. He is author of 'Birding in the Bush'.

Barry and Andrew Mann, his copy editor and the Publicity Secretary of the OOS, now take their presentations out to groups to promote the cause of birding locally. Their talk is engaging, educational and challenging.

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Can You Help?

We are still looking for people to deliver MADNews for several areas in Marcham:

- Church Street
- All Saints' Close
- Frilford Road

Please message Paula on 07709849788

Thank you

MARCHAM WI

Monday 16th February

7.30pm at Marcham Centre

Speaker: To be confirmed nearer the time.

We are still waiting for confirmation from our speaker for February, but we'll make sure all our members are informed in advance of the meeting.

marchamwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



Quiz



1. What is the tallest mountain in England?
2. What was Margaret Thatcher's first ministerial role?
3. What city in America is known as the Windy City?
4. Which group sang 'London Calling,' the title track of their 1979 double album?
5. What is the name of the ground in Leeds which hosts test cricket?
6. What is the key ingredient of Hummus?
7. When was the rebuild of the All-Saints Parish church in Marcham undertaken?
8. What is the capital city of Pakistan?
9. Who was the first British astronaut in space?
10. What is the nationality of the 2025 Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Machado?
11. What was the first National Park in England that opened in 1952?
12. Who wrote Far from the Madding Crowd

Answers on page 18



Games Morning

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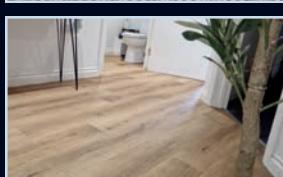
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Monday – Friday: 0830-1700

Saturday: 0830-1200

Sundays & Bank Holidays: Closed

January has now passed, and hopefully so have those awful storms. In addition to our traditional groceries, we also stock some basic car aids including de-icer - and we try to make sure that we cover all eventualities including making deliveries, staying open in all weathers and being there for you as much as we possibly can. If you can think of other ways that we could possibly help, especially in extreme circumstances, then please let us know.

For all the youngsters that followed the Naughty Elf around the shop during December, we hope you picked up your prize – if not, please do come into the shop and ask at the counter – we still have some unclaimed prizes for winners.

Coming up, we have a few celebratory dates to look forward to: Valentine's day on the 14th (why don't you treat that special person to some sumptuous wine or chocolates); Shrove Tuesday

(Pancake day) on 17th February – and sharing that, we have the Chinese New Year which starts on 17th February – this year is the year of the Fire Horse. We have lots of lovely gift ideas available – some very good-priced boxes of chocolates, fancy tea caddies, bottles of fizz and wine and also flavoured gins and rums. There is too much to list, so please come in and have a look. We are always looking for different products and that 'something' special and we wouldn't want you to miss out.

Why not, to help celebrate, order and cook that special Sunday lunch for your partner/family - fresh meat can be ordered from Hedges - on a weekly basis (not just for special occasions). Instructions with order forms and price list are

available in the shop. If there are meat products that you cannot see on the price list, please let us know and we will check availability and price for you.

Don't forget that our Post Office service covers most of your daily banking and posting needs. Everything from a basic stamp, withdrawal/deposit of cash, postage of parcels/letters right through to cheque deposits, foreign currency, bill paying, gift cards (All4One), mobile top-ups etc. One small, but significant, change though – Lloyds Banking Group, which includes Halifax and Bank of Scotland, has decided that its customers cannot deposit cheques via the post office, as has been done in the past. Lloyds Banking Group customers can upload cheques through the banking apps, or mail them to LBG Processing, PO Box 13664, Harlow, Essex, CM20 9XF.

**Thank you, as always,
for your continued support**



continues with our twice weekly café session with Natural Bread with us every Saturday morning. This upcoming Valentine's day, join us at 7PM for a memorable evening of fine food and lively company, set against the atmospheric backdrop of All Saints' church. With your ticket, you'll enjoy a thoughtfully curated three-course dinner and wine – all designed to celebrate love and friendship in style. Indulge in our delicious menu and raise a glass to your nearest and dearest! Booking is required through our website, £20 for three courses.

Our upcoming February dates are as follows:

- Stay and play - Wednesday, 4th Feb
- Community puzzle - Wednesday, 11th Feb
- Valentine's Meal - 14th Feb
- CLOSED - Wednesday, 18th Feb
- Community Lunch - Wednesday, 25th Feb



As ever, we are always eagerly accepting new volunteers. If you are interested in helping out as a chef or barista, washing up or taking orders out front, or simply just giving a hand setting up / packing down, please reach out to hello@thirstycafe.co.uk and Nicci or Sasha will get back to you. We are very flexible with our dates and times!

Website: www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

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Marcham Farmers' Market

Have you noticed that a market has sprouted up in the centre of Marcham, selling fresh and locally grown produce? It has never been easier to buy vegetables, meat, bread, milk, ice cream and much more – just rock up to the Marcham Centre patio area every third Saturday of the month (between 9-12) and be a part of this growing initiative.



Why a Farmer's Market?

Organized by Marcham locals for the community, the market is also a way of supporting quality, local producers. At markets such as ours, producers can cut out the middlemen and get their food to you quicker. While you get to meet the people who grow the food, bake the bread and look after the cows in our countryside. Low food-miles means that the food reaches you fresher and, you would be surprised, can be reasonable. Buying local is better for the environment too because it bypasses polluting transport systems and energy-hungry storage. To top it all, this market is committed to minimising food waste.

This month the Farmers Market will fall on **Saturday 21 February** from 9-12 and we hope to also bring you stalls selling crafts, samosas, garden plants.

Pop in and have a look. And don't forget, you can enjoy hot drinks and food at the Thirsty Café at the same time.

Would you be interested in making contributions to a community bring and exchange stall? Share excess seeds, allotment crops or split plants. If yes, get in touch with farmersmarket@thirstycafemarcham.com

Thirsty Community Café

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MARCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

This Spring Term has begun with great excitement across the school, with pupils quickly settling back into learning and embracing new challenges. A highlight of the start of term has been our whole-school project based on the book *The Lights that Dance in the Night* by Yuval Zommer. This captivating text about the Northern Lights has inspired some truly amazing work, with children producing high-quality writing and imaginative artwork across all year groups. From thoughtful descriptions and poetry to expressive speech and mixed-media artwork, the project has encouraged creativity, reflection and a shared love of storytelling. Here are a couple of pieces of our writing, one from the youngest year group and one from the oldest.



Prayushi - Reception

The whale is big.
The whale is spraying.
water. The whale is long.

The whale is big. The whale is spraying water. The whale is long.

We Are The Children Who Dance In The Day.

We are the children who dance in the day.
Starting our journeys, adults leading the way.
Naturalistic plays and athletic competition.
Our hearts pulsated naturally, we knew what was true.
Over time we gained voices and learned to say,
we are the children who dance in the day.

Reception - Prayushi

We were the Pandas, who hung, rolled and clung,
pulling silly faces and sticking out our tongues.
Classmates voices echoed, screaming words that made you laugh,
beaming happily as we skip home from that night.
In this year we shivered, shuddered, shivering away
we are the children who dance in the day.

In addition to this whole-school focus, classes have launched into a wide range of new topics designed to spark curiosity and deepen understanding of the world around us. These include Winter, Around the World, Oceans, Natural Disasters, Transport Through the Ages and Childhood Through Time. Each topic offers rich opportunities for cross-curricular learning, linking history, geography, art and English in meaningful and engaging ways.

To further enhance learning, several classes are making excellent use of specially prepared resource boxes containing artefacts and hands-on materials from Oxfordshire Museums. These have proved particularly popular, allowing pupils to explore objects from the past, investigate materials, and ask thoughtful questions, bringing their topics to life in an exciting and memorable way. Trips are also starting to be planned with Year 4 class visiting Williams F1 looking at new and inventive designs in car manufacturing.

Our amazing group of volunteers who read with children across the school have returned and their invaluable contribution ensures that skills in reading progress. We send a big thank you to these volunteers and also to those who run after school clubs for the children, particularly sporting clubs. These enable our children to experience further coaching in a selection of sports – at present this is netball.

It has been a positive and purposeful start to the spring term, and we are looking forward to sharing more of the children's learning and achievements with the village community as the term continues.

LINDSAY PRIDDLE

To see what else the school has been up to go to
www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/class-pages

We hope you all had a peaceful festive season and a very happy New Year. It was lovely to slow down for a little while, and we have come back feeling refreshed, energised, and so ready for an exciting 2026 at Little Angels.



We began the year with something really special, our Staff Development Day on Friday 2nd January. Twice a year we dedicate a full day to our team so we can focus on sharing best practice, learning from guest speakers, and taking time to invest in our professional development. It is one of our favourite days in the calendar because it reminds us that when we grow as a team, our Little Angels benefit every single day. It is all about being the best versions of ourselves for the children and families we care for.

And then came the magic. When our Little Angels returned, the snow arrived like it had been planned just for them. We wrapped up warm and headed outside to explore a world that felt brand new. For many of our Little Angels it was their very first time seeing snow, and the wonder on their faces was everything. We built snowmen, made snowballs, listened to the crunch under our boots, and watched the snow transform as we painted it with colour. When it began to melt, the fun simply changed shape, puddle jumping, splashing, and plenty of giggles included.

This month we have been learning all about winter and noticing the seasonal changes around us, the colder air, the frosty mornings, the bare trees, and all the little signs that nature is resting and getting ready for what comes next.

We are really looking forward to the year ahead, full of curiosity, learning, and lots more magical moments with our Little Angels.

The Marcham Little Angels Team

For more information:

T: 01865 819992

E: joinus@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

W: www.littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

Facebook @MarchamLittleAngels

Instagram @Little_Angels_Childcare_Group

MARCHAM PRE-SCHOOL

Lunchtimes at pre-school are a social affair... we start by singing Grace together before opening lunchboxes and exploring the savoury foods, before treats... the children learn about healthy eating, food groups, how to open packets and pots, and how to clear up any spillages.



Lunchtime brings some delightful conversations and the staff love sitting with the children and talking about their morning, or their lives at home. All full and ready to enjoy the afternoon activities and resources!

If you would like to be considered for a place at Marcham Preschool please get in touch for an application form. It's never too early to apply, and there's no registration fee to pay... but spaces are limited. Email us today on Marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk

Nicky Sanford, Early Years Teacher

Marcham Pre-school

01865 392101 email marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk

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This vacancy does not have a formal closing date, it will remain open until a suitable candidate is appointed.

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**Playworker Vacancies available
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Marcham Centre

GAME ON! WHY THE MUGA IS MARCHAM'S ALL-WEATHER HERO

If you look out at the Anson Field in February, you usually see two things: mud and the occasional red kite. But look a little closer at the fenced area next to the Centre, and you'll see something else: life. While some of the village is huddling indoors, our Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is glowing under the floodlights. Whether it's the rhythmic thwack of a tennis ball or the shouts of the Colts perfecting their passing, this patch of specialised tarmac is the hardest working floor in the village.

But this isn't just a facility for the sports clubs. It is a community asset available to everyone, year-round, rain or shine. Here is why you should be using it.

TENNIS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Whether you are looking to get your children started with their first racket, or you want to dust off your own backhand, the facilities are right here. You don't need a membership at a fancy club to enjoy a set or two; you just need to head down to the Centre.

HOME OF LOCAL FOOTBALL

The MUGA is the engine room for Marcham FC and the Marcham Colts. The all-weather surface allows them to train effectively when the grass pitches are waterlogged, ensuring our local teams stay sharp throughout the winter season. But you don't have to be the next Harry Kane to play. Fancy a "Dads vs Kids" 5-a-side match? Want to settle a score with your neighbours? If the court is free, it's yours.

HOW IT WORKS: JUST TURN UP!

We believe in keeping things simple. There is no complex booking system or login required for casual play.

First Come, First Served: Generally, you can just turn up and play! While there are a few regular spots used by the football clubs and some informal village groups, the court is open for everyone to use the rest of the time.

Need Light? Don't let the dark evenings stop you. The floodlights are push-button operated. Simply turn them on when you arrive, and they will stay lit for 45 minutes before automatically switching off. No coins, no tokens, and no hassle.

THE 'GOOD NEIGHBOUR' GUIDE

To keep the MUGA in top condition and keep our neighbours happy, we ask all users to follow three golden rules:

Trainers Only: Please, no studded boots or blades. They damage the surface.

Respect the Peace: We love hearing the sound of sport, but please keep noise to a minimum, especially after 8:00 PM.

Sport Only: The MUGA is a sports facility, not a hangout spot. Please ensure it is used for active play only.

DID YOU KNOW?

No Puddles: The MUGA surface is made of "porous tarmac." This means water drains right through it, so you can play safely just 15 minutes after a heavy rainstorm. It truly is an all-weather hero.

READY TO PLAY?

Don't let the winter weather stop you moving. Grab your trainers/rackets and we will see you on the MUGA!

www.marchamcentre.org

Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, Marcham OX13 6TY
enquiries@marchamcentre.org www.marchamcentre.org

Operated by Marcham Community Group (MCG)
Registered in England 7470307 Charity No. 1144407



VILLAGE HALL BAR

As generally known, the bar is managed by the company Marcham Community Trading (MCT). Its Directors are Geoff Dix and Trevor Hill. These are voluntary positions and along with the excellent volunteer bar staff, numbering over twenty, ensure the bar facility is open to everyone of all ages, particularly local residents, throughout the year.

Whilst appreciating the patio area, the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and playing field lend themselves to potential customers, including families, during the warmer months, the bar does provide the opportunity to have a social drink and to meet new acquaintances during the winter. The bar is open every week during the following times:

Wednesdays	7pm until 11pm
Fridays	5pm until 11pm
Saturdays	1.30pm until 10.30pm
Sundays	Midday until 6.30pm

MCT sponsor events that take place in the village hall, such as the bingo, horse racing and quiz nights. It also provides a venue for watching Sky TV, particularly sporting events.

The intention is to cover as many main sporting events as possible. Certainly major Cricket, Formula One and Golf events are likely to be included.

For those of you not specifically sport minded, you will see there are many times during the week when sport is not to the fore, so we hope there's plenty of opportunity for everyone to enjoy a chat and a drink, particularly when the warmer months and outside socialising on the patio becomes available.

In the meantime, some dates of forthcoming events for your diaries:

- Family Bingo – Friday 27 February 7pm for 7.30pm 'eyes down'
- Quiz Nights (Adults only) – Fridays 13 February; 13 March and Friday 17 April. 7.30pm for prompt 8pm start.
- Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday 4 April
- Race Night – Friday 24 April
- Big Marcham Weekend – Friday 8 and Saturday 9 May

More detail of these events will be advertised nearer the time by Hayley Cousins and the excellent Events Team.

Please contact Geoff or Trevor (07748 696733) if you have a suggestion that will enhance your visit to the bar. It is after all a provision for you, the community, with all its profits being donated to community groups within the village.

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EVENTS



The Arts Society Abingdon LECTURE

**Wednesday 18th February,
10.30am and 2.00pm
Abbey Cinema, Abbey Close,
Abingdon OX14 3JD**

Crossing Religious Boundaries: Islamic Carved Ivory Caskets

Ian Cockburn

The exquisite carved ivory caskets and pyxides produced in al-Andalus were secular objects, given by members of the Caliphal court as expensive containers for perfumes and jewellery. They were covered in Islamic inscriptions and a range of imagery depicting everything from simple arabesque vegetation to scenes of the Islamic royal hunt. During the centuries of the reconquest, many of these caskets fell into Christian hands and were often donated to church or cathedral treasuries. Some were even re-purposed as reliquary containers for Christian saints, despite their overtly Islamic inscriptions and decorative programmes. Understanding how and why this happened gives us a fascinating insight into the porous religious and political boundaries between the opposing cultures.



The talk will be held at The Abbey Cinema at 10.30 and 2pm. Visitors are very welcome to attend this lecture, cost £6.00. Lectures last 1 hour but allow extra time for announcements.

For more information on future lectures and other activities see theartsocietyabingdon.org.uk or email info@theartsocietyabingdon.org.uk

Image: Abbasid Islamic Art Carved Ivory Box 11th century AD - Wikimedia Commons



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A Wildlife Garden's Unofficial Report on Humans

Fox's Statement

Look, said Mrs Fox, I've been studying humans for years. Purely for academic reasons, of course, and absolutely not because they leave bins full of delicious research materials. Humans are fascinating creatures. They wander into the garden wearing "outdoor clothes," which appear identical to their indoor clothes except muddier and accompanied by loud sighing.

They plant things, and just expect them to grow, then talk to the things, they fuss over things, then get upset when the things don't grow. They call this "gardening." I call it "free entertainment." Sometimes they even leave out snacks for birds, which I generously help clean up. They should thank me, really. I'm practically a public servant

Woodlouse's Statement

Humans? Oh yes said Grandma Louse, the stompy giants. I mostly see their boots. Big boots. Heavy boots. Boots that have no respect for a quiet afternoon under a flowerpot.

From my vantage point, approximately 1.3 centimetres above soil level, humans are unpredictable. One moment they're gently lifting a log to "check for wildlife," and the next they're shrieking because they've found... wildlife. Honestly, I don't know what they expected. I'm not here for drama. I'm here to decompose leaves and mind my business.

They also seem obsessed with "tidying." Why? The garden is perfect as it is: messy, damp, and full of rotting wood. Humans keep removing the best bits. If they could stop cleaning up my house, that would be ideal.

Sparrow's Statement

I observe humans from the bird feeder said Brother Sparrow, which they refill with the enthusiasm of a medieval banquet host. They scatter seeds like confetti at a wedding. I approve, and so do my friends.

However, humans do have a strange habit of pointing at me and whispering things like, "Look! A sparrow!" as if I'm not fully aware of being a sparrow already. They also attempt to photograph me, but their timing is terrible. I'm either mid-chew, mid-blink, or mid-poop, or undertaking them all at the same time. They never get my good side.

Still, I appreciate their efforts. Without humans, I'd have to forage naturally, and frankly, I've grown accustomed to the buffet lifestyle.

Joint Conclusion

After extensive observation, we, the fox, the woodlouse, and the sparrow, agree on the following:

- Humans are loud but mostly harmless.
- They enjoy rearranging nature for fun.
- They provide snacks, intentionally or otherwise.
- They panic easily when something with more than four legs appears.
- They are, in summary, peculiar but useful creatures.

We recommend keeping them around. Just... supervised.

Happy Gardening!

Stuart Mabbutt, Wildlife Gardening Specialist
01865 747243
www.wildmaninspires.co.uk

ALL SAINTS' & ST LUKE'S CHURCHES

www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk

If you ask Google or various AI platforms the question, "What are the top 5 weeks that have changed the world?" you get suggestions like: the week of the 9/11 attacks, the weeks when both the World Wars started, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, and various other relatively recent events.

Did nothing important happen before 1914?

Perhaps I should modify the question, but it is surprising that the week of Christ's Passion doesn't feature. Surely the death and resurrection of Jesus should get an honourable mention. Many down the ages have poured scorn on the Bible's account and the church's teaching about Easter, but few historians doubt that something very significant happened concerning a man called Jesus one Passover week in 1st century Jerusalem. And even if the claims of the Christian faith about the meaning of that week seem unbelievable, no one can doubt the world-changing impact of the first Easter, an impact still felt all over the world today. I have long been convinced of the Bible's account of that week, and the wonder of God's redeeming work through Christ. But even though the events of that week are familiar to me, and to many, even those that doubt their meaning in post-Christian Britain, there is always something new and wonderful to see in "the week that changed the world". In our churches throughout the Sundays of Lent this year, we will look through the eyes of various key characters in the story of that week (Mary Magdalene, Joseph of Arimathea, Pontius Pilate and others) and, in seeing how that week changed them, perhaps we will find God speaking Easter meaning and hope to us today.

REVD NICK WELDON.

Contacts:

Revd. Nick Weldon Vicar vicar@allsaintsmarcham.org 01865 391962

Phil Rowlandson Curate curate@allsaintsmarcham.org

Rob Finch Youth Worker youth@allsaintsmarcham.org

Jill Rowe Children & Families minister families@allsaintsmarcham.org

Tamsin Gilbert Parish Administrator info@allsaintsmarcham.org

Website: www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk

Regular Sunday services at All Saints' Church, Marcham

10.30am: Morning Service • 6pm: Evening Service

Wednesday Holy Communion 10.30am at Duffield Place

ST LUKE'S, GARFORD

St Luke's is open for quiet prayer 11am-12pm on Sundays with no morning service.

Sunday 1 February, 11am Communion Service

Sunday 1 March, 11am Service led by Revd. Mike Dilly

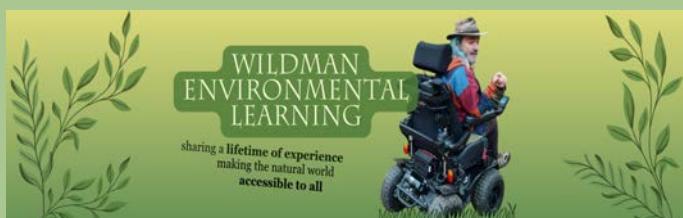
Sunday 15 March, 11am Mothering Sunday led by Ven. David Tyler

The traditional warm welcome at St. Luke's was very much in evidence for the Epiphany Service on 4th January despite the chilly, though beautifully sunny, weather.

Details of services in February and March are provided above

We look forward to welcoming everyone to our services in 2026.

Contact: st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org



DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT RESERVOIR NEWS

LIFE IN CABINET

I mentioned in last month's MAD News that I was expecting to join the Vale's Cabinet in early January, as maternity leave cover for a colleague. As luck (or perhaps, biology) would have it, her baby arrived a month early and so I was appointed to Cabinet somewhat earlier than I had expected... although I'm very conscious that she had an even busier week than I did!



My first taste of Cabinet life revolved around waste collection: only a few days after being appointed I proposed the purchase of 9 internal combustion engine (ICE) refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) at a Cabinet meeting. We would have preferred to have replaced the old vehicles with electric RCVs, but unfortunately the range on these isn't quite enough for our rural district. More positively, I soon after approved the purchase of two new electric Food Waste Collection Vehicles; these are lighter and so have sufficiently better range.

I was also delighted to attend the launch of the Shed Space in Abingdon, near the Caldecott Recreation Ground. This is a new community repair hub where people can fix bicycles and household items, as well as making new friends and sharing skills. MAD News readers would be very welcome there.

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT

As I'm sure most residents are aware, traffic along the A415 through Marcham can be problematic and causes air pollution in the immediate area. The zone around the A415 through Marcham was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2006, when nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels were above 50 µg/m³ (the national objective is 40 µg/m³). Thanks to the improved efficiency of ICE vehicles and to the accelerating uptake of hybrid and electric vehicles, NO₂ levels are now comfortably below the national objective and are declining year-on-year. Under the rules of the Environment Act 1995 (amended in 2021), the Vale therefore recently had no choice but to revoke the AQMA. This is good news, but I'm sure some residents will still be worried about air pollution in that area: I'm therefore delighted to confirm that air quality monitoring will continue regardless of this change in legal status.

CLLR DR ROBERT CLEGG

District Councillor for Marcham Ward

Phone: 07784 225290

Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Starting with tips this month and the recently announced changes to how Household Waste Recycling Centres operate across Oxfordshire. Residents are required to book their visit to tips in advance, including details on the type of waste being disposed of, and will also be required to provide ID (like a driving licence) upon arrival, to confirm Oxfordshire residency. I know many residents have raised concerns about these changes and to be clear, they are not something I support. There is a very real risk that by making it harder for residents to use our tips, there is an increase in fly-tipping. I will be monitoring how these changes impact waste disposal locally and will continue to raise concerns with the administration at the County Council.



Turning to more local issues now and I've been in contact with officers regarding the frequent flooding that occurs on the A415, west of Church Street, through Marcham. Despite the council's pledge to clear every highway drainage gully on an annual basis, the road has still flooded several times recently during periods of bad weather. I will continue to push for a longer-term solution here to address the issue of flooding and will report back when I have more information to share.

On a more positive note, I was pleased to see the recent completion

of vegetation works in Frilford along the A415. A number of residents had raised concerns over the state of footpaths in the area with me, which were proving unsafe and inaccessible, due to overgrown vegetation and overhanging trees. Following conversations with officers at the County Council to highlight these issues, I'm glad to see the works have now been completed and hopefully the footpaths will now be more usable for local residents.

At the time of writing this in mid-January, I am still awaiting a meeting with officers to discuss the planned improvements to the Frilford Lights Junction. Whilst I hope to have further information later this month, I may not be able to provide an update in here until March. However, I will post about this on my Facebook page as soon as I hear more, so please do follow me on there if you'd like to stay up to date.

Finally, I was disappointed, albeit unsurprised, to see the recent news that Oxfordshire is amongst the worst local authorities for pothole damage claims in the country. Recent analysis by the RAC showed the county had the third-highest number of compensation claims for potholes in the UK, which increased by a staggering 297% in just three years! Clearly, not enough funding is going into the maintenance of our roads, which I know is causing frustration for residents. As your local councillor, my priority will always be trying to deliver the best I can for residents, so I continue to try and ensure that potholes locally are repaired as soon as possible. Please do report potholes via FixMyStreet in the first instance but if you notice one that is particularly serious, don't hesitate to contact me and I'll do my best to escalate a repair.

As always, if you'd like to stay up to date with what I'm doing around our division, do follow me on Facebook where I post regular updates: www.facebook.com/JamesRPlumb

JAMES PLUMB

County Councillor for Marcham and Cummor

Email: james.plumb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

MP'S REPORT

From now on my report will be quarterly with my next one being in March and then June, September and December. As ever, if you have any issues we can help with, please email us at:

layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk



LAYLA MORAN

For regular updates you can follow me

Bluesky: [@laylamoran.bsky.social](https://bluesky.social/@laylamoran)

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OTHER REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Frilford Garford Jill Rayner jill.rayner@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tubney Mark Coleman mark.coleman@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

MP

Witney (for Frilford, Garford and most of Tubney) Charlie Maynard charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk

Answers to this month's Crown Quiz from page 7



1. Scafell Pike, located in Lake District National Park stands at 978 metres (3,209 feet)
2. Secretary of State for Education and Science
3. Chicago
4. The Clash
5. Headingley Cricket Ground
6. Chickpeas
7. 1837-1838
8. Islambad
9. Helen Sharman
10. Venezuelan
11. Peak District
12. Thomas Hardy



Turn the Page in 2026

Volunteers Needed to celebrate the National Year of Reading



With 2026 declared the National Year of Reading, now is the perfect time to take action and give a gift that can change a child's life through the power of reading.

ARCh Assisted Reading for Children is looking for volunteers to become Reading Helpers in Oxfordshire Primary Schools in 2026.

Email info@archoxfordshire.org.uk, visit www.archoxfordshire.org.uk or scan the QR code to find out how you can turn the page in a child's life in 2026!



Flexicare is delighted to host the Ivel Trio once again for a magical **Night in the Museum** classical concert.

The trio, comprising of flute, cello and piano will perform amongst the dinosaurs in the stunning **University of Oxford Museum of Natural History on Saturday 7th March 2026**. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

The performance is followed by a drinks and canapé reception, included in the ticket price of £35. Tickets are available from www.ticketstripe.com/flexicareconcert or by emailing events@flexicare.org

Flexicare is an Oxfordshire charity providing a specialised sitting service for families with a disabled child in Oxford, Abingdon, Wantage and surrounding villages for 40 years. Your generous donations help us to continue to provide this unique, vital service.



NEWS FROM SOBELL HOUSE BIKE OXFORD TEAMS UP WITH SOBELL HOUSE FOR 2026



Iconic Cycling Events

Oxfordshire's compassionate care and hospice charity, Sobell House, has been announced as the charity partner of Iconic Cycling Events annual sportive, Bike Oxford, for 2026.

Bike Oxford attracts between 700-1,000 cyclists of all abilities to the City on June 21st 2026 for a choice of signed routes heading out from Oxford into the countryside, with many riders raising funds for a wide range of local charities. For 2026, the event has partnered with Sobell House, the hospice and compassionate care charity close to many Oxfordshire residents' hearts. As 2026 also marks Sobell House's 50th anniversary, it's a special time for both the charity and Bike Oxford.

Niki Wardell-Yerburgh, Senior Relationships Fundraiser at Sobell House, said: "Sobell House Hospice has proudly supported Bike Oxford for several years, so becoming the charity partners for 2026 is very exciting. This partnership will help highlight the vital care we provide for adults in Oxfordshire living with life-limiting illness, as well as the support we offer to their families and friends. What's more, 2026 marks 50 years of caring for our local community, so it's an amazing time to join Team Sobell and make a difference."

Richard Best, Iconic Cycling Events Founder, said: "Bike Oxford is delighted to be supporting Sobell House for 2026's event. It's a fantastic charity and Team Sobell has been a huge part of our event. Supporting Sobell House's vital, compassionate work as Bike Oxford's charity partner is an exciting development for the whole team."

One cyclist, John, has taken part in Bike Oxford for the last four years, and will be riding again in June. John started taking part because a friend encouraged him to get out cycling, but sadly in 2024 a close friend and colleague died and John used the bereavement services offered at Sobell House. As John puts it: "I first did Bike Oxford for the joy of the ride, beautiful countryside, good company, and a well-earned beer afterwards. But after experiencing Sobell's compassionate care firsthand, the event means so much more. Now I'm grateful to be able to support their vital work, though of course I still enjoy those Oxfordshire views and the well-earned beers!" **John has raised over £3,300 for Sobell House.**

Bike Oxford will start at the Oxford University Rugby Club on Iffley Road on 21st June 2026 with a choice of three routes (25, 45, and 75 miles) that all begin with a scenic tour of the historic City Centre. Book before 12th January for £5 off: www.iconiccylingevents.co.uk/bikeoxford

If you'd like to pedal for a medal with Team Sobell, find out how here: <https://sobellhouse.org/event/bike-oxford/>

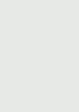
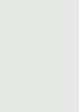
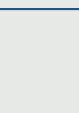
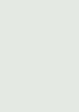
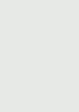
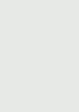
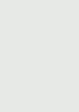
Sobell House provides compassionate palliative and end-of-life care for people with life-limiting illnesses, as well as essential support for their families and friends. As Niki Wardell-Yerburgh puts it: "Every pound you raise will ensure patients and families receive compassionate care around the clock during some of life's most difficult moments. Many of the services we offer, including transport services, onsite catering, bereavement support, and social work care, simply wouldn't exist without your support. We can only keep caring because you do."

FEBRUARY 2026

The number in brackets refers to the page number
where you can find more details

Abbreviations:

AS All Saints' Church, Marcham, **SL** St Luke's Church, Garford
DP Duffield Place, **MC** Marcham Centre

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  SL Communication Service 11 am (17) AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	2  DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	3  MC Thirsty Café Stay & Play 9-11.30am (9) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)	4  MC Thirsty Café Community Puzzle 9-11.30am (9) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)	5  Milletts Farm Classic car meet 9.30am-noon Marcham Society Midweek Walk 12.30 pm (7)	6  MC Thirsty Café with Natural Bread 9-11.30am (9)	7
8  AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	9  DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	10  MC Marcham Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm (3)	11 MC Thirsty Café Community Puzzle 9-11.30am (9) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)	12 Marcham Society outing 11am (7)	13 MC Quiz Night 7.30pm (13)	14 Valentine's Day
15 MADNEWS DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE 5pm AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	16 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	17 MC Marcham WI 7.30pm (9) Shrove Tuesday	18 MC Thirsty Café CLOSED (9) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)	19 MC Astronomy Group 7.30pm (7) Arts Society Abingdon 10.30am & 2pm (16)	20 MC Thirsty Café with Natural Bread 9-11.30am (9) AS Thirsty Café's Valentine's Dinner 7pm (9) ❤	21
22 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	23 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	24 MC Marcham Society 7.15pm (7)	25 MC Thirsty Café 9-11.30am (9) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Community Lunch 12-1.30pm (5) MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-)	26 MC Bingo 7.30pm (13)	27 MC Farmers Market 9am-12noon (9)	28

Details of events may change after publication, please check with the relevant organisers before attending events