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May 2026 Vol 48 No. 5

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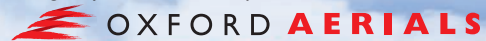
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Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the May Issue.
Two Public Holidays to enjoy.
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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Email: james.plumb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Marcham and Shippon

Robert Clegg, 42 Harding Way, Marcham,

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MP

Layla Moran layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING FOR ELECTORS

THURSDAY 14TH MAY, 2026 7.30 pm

MARCHAM CENTRE

Every English Parish must have a Parish Meeting. This is a meeting to enable electors to hear about what is going on in the area and to have their say. This meeting is not a Council meeting. Interestingly councillors can attend, but there is no compulsion for them to do so. This is your meeting, so please make every effort to attend. Please see advert on page 15

CEMETERY WALL, CHURCH PATH

The Council has been advised that the repairs to the wall along the church path are anticipated to start towards the end of April. The Council appreciates the residents' patience whilst works are sorted. Please continue to take extreme caution whilst in the area and visiting the cemetery. Once the wall is repaired, the focus will then be on resurfacing the path.

RE-SURFACING FOOTPATHS ANSON FIELD

A contractor will be starting work around the second week in May, working on part of the path alongside the Anson field. He will be carefully scraping away the top layer of debris and silt that has built up over the years, and will then lay a new base layer, and finish it with a path wearing course topping.

HIGHWAY SUPER USER

All residents are encouraged to report road or street problems on the website Fix My Street, and highway officers regularly inspect their areas. However, in addition, the County Council has "super users" who can sometimes fast-track the process of repair by placing an order direct with the contractors. This is applicable for smaller roads with a maximum speed limit of 30 mph. To date, James Plumb has been the Super-User for Marcham, going out checking potholes, and where authorised, reporting and marking them for repair. He would welcome help from other local people, and there are opportunities for others to be trained by the County Council. Any resident wanting to become a Fix My Street Super-User should email volunteercordinationteam@oxfordshire.gov.uk for further information, and also let the Parish Clerk know.

ALLOTMENT AVAILABILITY

There is some availability for allotment plots at the Cow Lane site. Any Marcham resident who is interested in growing their own produce and taking on an allotment, please contact the Clerk for further information.

WASTE DISPOSAL / GRASS CUTTING

It is that time of year when we are all out cutting grass and managing our gardens. The Council would remind you that the Vale of White Horse District Council provides a successful recycling and waste collection service for all its residents in the district. Please remember you now need a new permit for 26/27 to stick on your brown bin, obtainable from the District Council, if you use this service. In addition, the recycling centre at Drayton is open all week from 8 am - 5pm

every day. (Pre-booking required).

Please do not fly tip grass and garden waste on highway verges, private land, paths, in the Arboretum and Anson playing field, as such action interferes with the enjoyment of these areas, and can result in composting grass odours which in turn are a nuisance to those who live nearby.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P26/V039/FUL Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a six bedroom dwelling for children's care services, at the Baptist Church, Packhorse Lane. The Council expressed concerns regarding the relocation of the entrance, inadequate onsite parking, vehicles possibly reversing onto the A415, drainage, siting of bedrooms close to the A415, impact on adjacent properties, non-matching materials and noise generation from siting laundry facilities on the first floor.

P26/V063/HH Single storey rear extension at 17 Pointer Place. The Council had no objections.

P25/V2404/HH Erection of two out buildings in garden, one to be used as a single storey dwelling for use as an annexe, and the other to be used for storage, garage and a workshop at 33 Mill Road. The Council expressed concern regarding the lack of a design and access statement, access off Mill Road, and the potential for future changes of use.

P26/V0777/HH Alterations and conversion of existing outbuilding to provide gym, games room, shower room at Marcham Priory, 34 Packhorse Lane. The Council preferred the proposed alterations and materials to be in keeping with the Priory and the surrounding curtilage of the listed building.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 11th May 2026 at 7.30pm in Marcham Centre. 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.

Please check the Council's website in case arrangements change.

Clerk to the Council:

Mrs. L. Martin, 90 Howard Cornish Road

Tel: 01865 391833

clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Can You Help?

MADNews needs a new team of distribution managers as Paula and Claire will be stepping down with the July issue.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Kay editor@madnews.co.uk

Thank you

This month's cover photo is
Hot Air Balloon May 2025.

by Kay McKeown

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Monday – Friday: 0830-1700
Saturday: 0830-1200
Sundays & Bank Holidays: Closed

Big News for a Big Weekend



MVS will be at the Marcham Big Weekend on Saturday 9 May. We will be located in the small hall (Chris Ricketts room) at the Village Centre and we'll have a freezer full of ice creams, and crisps and sweets, for sale. We will have available a selection of our locally produced honey, flour, eggs, beer, jams & chutneys for sale. We will also be selling bottled beers and ciders, and soft drinks, from the bar, to reduce the queues for drinks at the main bar. We hope to see you there!



Each week we are able to take orders for Hedges Meats which is a locally sourced and reasonably priced fresh meat supplier. Order forms and price list are available in the shop. Orders need to be in by Wednesday evening for collection on the following Friday or Saturday.

Easter has now passed for another year, and we managed to get through an astounding amount of chocolate. However, chocolate is not just for Easter, it is a very welcome treat at any time of the year. We stock some amazing chocolate gifts, particularly some that you won't find in your local supermarket, and we aim to keep our prices as low as possible. Come and see what we have – you'll be in for a surprise.



Many other items that we sell in the shop would make suitable gifts for friends and loved ones, including a very good selection of gift cards. Our All4One cards can be used at many well-known outlets (full details are included with the card). We do stock other cards including Amazon and M&S cards for use with individual retailers. You choose how much you want to spend, and we will do the rest.

Our Post Office is doing well, and this is due to you. We are very grateful for your support and hope that you will continue to come to us for postal and banking services. We aim to provide almost everything that your local Bank would have provided, in addition to most of the traditional services already offered by the Post Office. Please keep using us to keep us open, and don't forget to bring ID with you when you come to collect your parcels.

We are always looking for volunteers, for the shop and the post office. Staff at the shop counter commit to one 2-hour shift per week and those in the post office commit to 4.5 hours in total per week. If you fancy being part of our team, please get in touch. And the benefit for you is that you get to meet other volunteers and lots of lovely customers and villagers.

There are two bank holidays in May – Monday 4th and Monday 25th. Please note that the shop will be closed on both of these days. Otherwise, our traditional opening hours are as above.

**THANK YOU, AS ALWAYS,
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT**

Rosemary Siebert

Many of us within the parish here in Marcham will remember Rosemary Siebert who died recently.

We at Sweet Briar have many reasons to miss her as she was the mainstay for the successful running of our committee and therefore for all of us here. She generously gave her time to anyone who needed help or advice. She was our 'go to' person being very knowledgeable and understanding. She was someone who would listen, give advice and calmly discuss.



We remember particularly how Rosemary would attend our social occasions even though this was very demanding on her health. But we felt more complete with her presence and she appreciated this. Rosemary never allowed us to speak of her health and difficulty in walking but without telling her we placed a bench halfway from her flat to the garden. Nothing was said but she would use it on her way.

Many people visiting the site for the first time would be greeted by Rosemary as her flat held a prominent position to view the car park. This held true for any stranger either walking in or parking a car as she guarded our safety and privacy very carefully.

Rosemary has left a huge hole in our little community as must be the case for many people living in Marcham.

THE RESIDENTS OF SWEET BRIAR

Litter Pick Big Thank You to all 28 helpers, all came back with smiles on their faces, the village is now shining bright with spring flowers and less rubbish, thanks to all who helped us achieve this. Look out for our next pick in August.

JAMIE AND NIKKI BUTCHER.



FRILFORD PARISH

Review of the Off-Street Parking Orders for South and Vale Districts Submit your comments from Thursday 9 April until 11.59pm on Friday 8 May 2026. It can be found here: <https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/development-and-corporate-landlord/off-street-parking-order-in-south-oxfordshire-2026/>

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Car Parks

Change all South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse car parks to a ticketless system. This means you will no longer need to display a physical ticket in your vehicle. You will still be required to enter your full vehicle registration number at the machine to either obtain the free one hour parking period or to pay for the duration of your stay with coins or contactless card including GooglePay and ApplePay. Alternatively, you can continue to PayByPhone which does not require using a parking machine.

South Oxfordshire Car Parks only

Change the charging period to introduce all day parking at the Southern Road car park in Thame (currently a short stay car park)

Bring the charging regime in two car parks in Wallingford (Castle Street Car Park and St Georges Road Car Park) in line with all other council off-street car parks in Wallingford.

Amend the layout of the parking bays in Cattlemarket Car Park in Thame (to allow for a change in use of commercial building adjacent to the car park).

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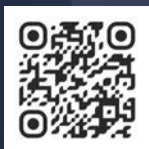
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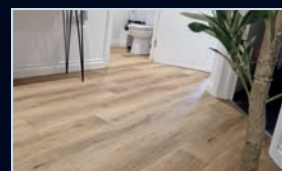
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THE MIDWEEK WALK

Thursday 7th May at 12.30pm
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THE ASTRONOMY GROUP

A round-up of recent astronomy sightings followed by a short talk on "Robotic exploration of asteroids, comets and KBOs" by Jon Pineau
Wednesday 13th May at 7.30pm
Small Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY
Please contact: astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk

THE MONTHLY TALK

Two short talks by members of the Marcham Society



'Smocks and Smocking: rural craft or local industry?'

by Sally Kingsley

'The History of Rycote Chapel, Thame'

by Ricky Smith

Bank Holiday Monday 25th May at 7.30 for 7.45pm
Main Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY

Members free of charge, Guests welcome at £5

www.marchamsociety.org.uk

Facebook: marchamsociety

Please contact: admin@marchamsociety.org.uk

Quiz

Test your knowledge with our monthly questions

1. Author of Winnie-the-Pooh first published in 1926 (100 years celebration)
2. What is the capital of Chile?
3. Where is the Large Hadron Collider located?
4. Who is the Chancellor of Germany?
5. How many stomachs or distinct compartments does a cow have?
6. What is the longest river in the world?
7. How many time zones does Russia have?
8. Who won the FIFA World Cup in 2018?
9. In which US state is most of Gone with the Wind set?
10. Who was the final de facto leader of the USSR before its dissolution?
11. What is the name of the river in Wantage?
12. Which planet has the most moons?

Answers on page 19

Thirsty Community Café

Find us in the Marcham Centre, OX13 6TY. We open on Wednesday (8.45-11.30am) and Saturday (9.00-11.30am) mornings serving delicious, local food and hot drinks. Natural Bread run alongside us on Saturday mornings; bringing you your fresh bread and pastry fix.



Our upcoming May dates are as follows:

- Milkshake shop - Tuesday 5th May 2 - 4pm
- Stay and Play - Wednesday 6th May 08:45-11:30
- No Thirsty Cafe morning session Saturday 9th May
- Farmers' Market & Thirsty BBQ - Saturday 9th May @MBW
- Toasted - Monday 18th May 12-2pm
- Community Lunch - Wednesday 24th June 12-13:30

TOASTED

In April, we hosted our first light lunch pop up - Toasted. The next Toasted session will be on 18th May, serving chorizo, tomato, mozzarella and pesto toasties, cookies and barista drinks. Vegetarian/vegan/gluten free options available too. Service runs from 12 noon-2pm

FARMERS' MARKET

We are pleased to announce the ongoing success of our Farmers' Market for Marcham. The market returns on 9th May, as part of Marcham Big Weekend. Find sweet and savoury treats, local crafters and food suppliers.

GIVING BACK TO MARCHAM

Pay it forward with Cup of Love

Thank you to everyone who has donated café items to the Cup of Love, pay it forward scheme. It is our hope that people will feel free to use these little post-its should they wish to.

- To donate, please ask at the till.
- To redeem, simply take a sticker of your choice and hand it to one of our servers by way of payment.

VOLUNTEERING

Thirsty Café thrives upon the generosity of its volunteers. If you feel like you could help us once a month, please email Nicci Sawhney hello@thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

Website: www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

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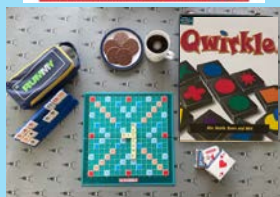
Games Morning

Enjoy a chat over a friendly game of Scrabble, Mexican Train dominoes, Rummikub,...

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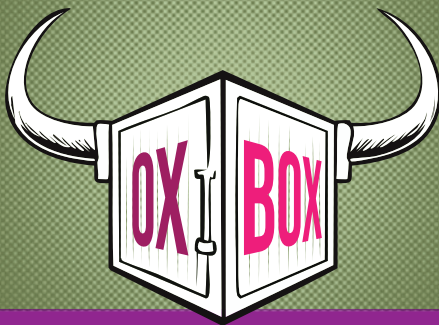
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MARCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

It has been a wonderfully busy and enriching term at Marcham Primary school, with pupils enjoying a wide range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. We welcomed everyone back to school on 13th April for another busy term.



Highlights from before Easter include our singing workshops, where children across the school had the opportunity to develop their vocal skills and confidence. Years 4 and 5 visited Radley College for a workshop led by Pete Churchill, a renowned professional music educator, composer and performer. The workshop was filled with energy and enthusiasm, and it was fantastic to hear the children singing together so beautifully with other children.

In addition, Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils took part in a special "Journey Through the Old Testament" presentation, which brought stories from the Bible to life in an engaging and memorable way. The interactive nature of the presentation really helped deepen the children's understanding. A quiz finished the afternoon where children had to find the information on boards around the hall.

We also celebrated World Book Day in style, with children and staff dressing up as their favourite book characters. The day was full of reading activities, storytelling, and a shared love of books, reminding us all of the joy that reading brings. We focused on the story of Charlie Cook's Favourite Book and even managed to write our own versions.

Sport continued to be a focus with our Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils enjoying cricket sessions led by Chance to Shine. The children have been developing their teamwork and skills, and it has been wonderful to see their confidence grow on the field. This term, a cricket club has been well attended with children continuing to develop their skills and abilities.

Reception and Year 1 pupils had a visit from Zoolab, where they had the chance to meet a variety of animals up close. This hands-on experience sparked curiosity and excitement, and provided a unique learning opportunity for all. They asked interesting questions and found out some very unusual facts about the animals.

Finally, the term concluded with a lovely Easter Assembly in the Church, where everyone came together to reflect on the meaning of Easter through songs, poems and readings. Following this, every child participated in an Easter Egg Hunt finding clay eggs around the field which they then swapped for a delicious treat (generously donated by Marcham Village Shop).

This term, each class has a new topic to focus on and learning has begun. These topics include Inspiring People (Reception), Castles (Year 1), Great Fire of London (Year 2), Ancient Egypt (Year 3), Modern Europe (Year 4) and Ancient Greece (Years 5 & 6). We will update you on our learning and exciting trips next time.

LINDSAY PRIDDLE

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

MARCHAM FARMERS' MARKET

SINGLE-USE MILK BOTTLES: A QUIET WASTE STREAM



Did you know that a typical UK family of four uses an estimated 200–260 two-litre plastic milk bottles per year? These are usually made from HDPE (high-density polyethylene), a material widely accepted in household recycling systems. That innocent daily cuppa tea carries an often overlooked waste footprint. Each splash of milk contributes to a steady flow of single-use plastic that is largely out of sight once it leaves the home.

A common misconception is that plastic recycling operates as a fully closed-loop system, where bottles are endlessly turned back into new bottles. In reality, this is only partially true. While HDPE milk bottles are among the more recyclable plastics, the process is not perfectly circular.

At a local level, Vale of White Horse reports household recycling rates of roughly 60–65% in recent years, placing it among the better-performing areas in England. However, this figure covers all recyclable materials, not just plastics.

In practice:

- A significant share of waste is still not recycled
- Contamination (such as unwashed bottles) can prevent recycling
- Plastic typically degrades during processing and cannot be reused indefinitely

Practical limits of reuse

The uncomfortable truth is HDPE milk bottles are technically recyclable but not designed for repeated home reuse at scale. While they can be repurposed temporarily, most households cannot realistically reuse hundreds of bottles each year.

YOUR LOCAL ALTERNATIVE: MARCHAM REFILL SYSTEMS

The Marcham Farmers' Market and Thirsty Café Refill are pleased to offer a refill scheme. All you need to do is:

Make the Switch

Switching even part of your household milk supply to refill can remove hundreds of plastic bottles per year from your personal waste. Choosing reusable options where available is a direct way to reduce single-use plastic and cut through the misconception that recycling alone solves the problem. Come speak to us at the next Farmers' Market on Sat 9th May, we'll be at the Marcham Big Weekend showcasing wonderful produce from local makers.

We are looking for volunteers to join our friendly team. Please contact us on [facebook.com/marchamfarmersmarket](https://www.facebook.com/marchamfarmersmarket) or farmersmarket@thirstycafemarcham.com

Cotteswold Dairy



The Arts Society Abingdon LECTURE

**Wednesday 20th May
10.30am and 2.00pm
Abbey Cinema, Abbey Close,
Abingdon OX14 3JD**

An Introduction to the Newlyn School 1880-1910

Alison Bevan

In the 1880s, the fishing village of Newlyn in the far West of Cornwall became a mecca for rural realist painters, who documented the lives of the local community in their beautiful and moving paintings. This lecture will outline the key characteristics of this famous art movement.

The lecture will be held at The Abbey Cinema at 10:30 and 14:00. 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



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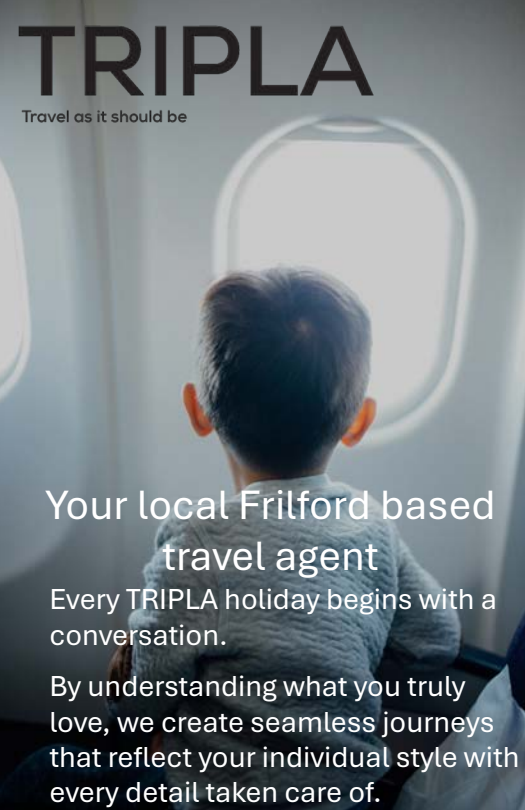
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It has been an insect-mad month at Little Angels, where our little explorers have spent the month eyes-down, magnifying glasses up, discovering the tiny creatures waking up in gardens, hedgerows and pavement cracks all around them.

From ladybirds to woodlice, beetles to bumblebees, the children have been learning what makes each minibeast unique: how many legs, where they live, what they eat, and why every single one has a job to do in our local ecosystem. Bug hunts have taken us out into the nursery garden and the village, crouching over logs and leaves!



The real stars of the show, though, are our resident caterpillars. The children are caring for them daily, watching with wide eyes as the tiny creatures munch, grow and begin their extraordinary journey towards becoming butterflies. Metamorphosis has sparked questions and a lot of wonder, and we are following every thread of curiosity wherever it leads.

Caterpillars have crawled into every corner of our learning. We have revisited an old favourite, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. We have practised our early maths by counting segments along a caterpillar's body. We have become observational artists, painting the bright spring flowers blooming all around us as we hunt for insects among the petals. Our little angels are learning that the natural world is endlessly fascinating, and that they are part of it.

THE MARCHAM LITTLE ANGELS TEAM

T: 01865 819992
E: joinus@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk
W: www.littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk
Facebook @MarchamLittleAngels
Instagram @Little_Angels_Childcare_Group

MARCHAM PRE-SCHOOL



Last month the children (and staff!) were very excited to receive a visit from Zoolab UK, with a variety of animals and creatures to meet and handle. This provided a wonderful experience where we learnt about the animals, how they live, what they eat and how they grow...



Did you know that frogs blink to swallow their food into their stomachs? Or that tarantulas lay 10,000 eggs? Or stick insects can be brown, green, blue or even pink?

The children were offered the opportunity to look, watch or touch the animals – including a very large corn snake! We linked this visit to our topic on life-cycles, growth and change, and it has inspired drawings and art work, role-play and stories.



We know that children learn best when we tap into their interests and keep their learning play based... so next term we will be focussing on trains and transport, travel and road safety. We're looking forward to exploring these topics with the children. You can find more information about road safety for children by visiting <https://www.brake.org.uk/zebras>

If you would like to find out more about Marcham Pre-school, our Prospectus is available at www.marcham-preschool.weebly.com or you can contact us at admissions.mps@outlook.com

We recommend getting in touch as early as possible and spaces are limited and fill quickly each year.

Nicky Sanford, Early Years Teacher
Marcham Pre-school
01865 392101
marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk
www.marcham-preschool.weebly.com



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Marcham Centre

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE HALL:

A WEEK WITH TASH AT THE MARCHAM CENTRE!

If the Marcham Centre is the hub of our village, then Tash is the one keeping the wheels greased and the lights on. Being the Coordinator isn't just a desk job—it's a masterclass in diplomacy, logistics, and occasionally, emergency heating.

We sat down with Tash to find out what really goes on behind those office doors.

THE MONDAY MORNING "AUDIT"

The week doesn't start with a quiet coffee. For Tash, Monday morning begins with a "damage report".

"The first thing I do is go into every room to see the 'damage' from the weekend," she says. It's a high-speed assessment to ensure that by the time the first Monday morning group arrives, the Centre is pristine and ready for action.

THE JUGGLING ACT

While we see a smooth schedule, Tash is often playing a high-stakes game of Tetris. The biggest challenge? One-off bookings. When a major event like a Polling Day or a Thames Water briefing needs almost the entire building, Tash has to pull out all the stops to keep our regular hirers happy. It's a delicate balance of space and timing that requires a very cool head.

THE "SOS" MOMENT

Every coordinator has a "MacGyver" story, and Tash's involves a freezing winter morning a few years back.

"The heating failed on a bitterly cold day," she recalls. "The place was freezing. We sent out a village-wide SOS and, in true Marcham style, residents turned up with heaters to warm the halls before the hirers even arrived."

A QUIET CONNECTION

Amidst the bustle of Mocha-fueled mornings (or the occasional well-earned Gin & Tonic in the evening), Tash finds her focus in a very specific spot. "I often look at the photo of Chris Ricketts in the bar. I either thank her for getting me involved in this project from the very start, or I have a laugh and say, 'You would've known what to do!' when a difficult situation crops up."

THE WHY

So, what makes it all worth it? For Tash, it's the simple things. Whether it's a regular hirer pausing to say thanks, or a visitor commenting on how well the building is looked after, that's the fuel that keeps the Marcham Centre engine running.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

- Big Marcham Weekend – Friday 8 and Saturday 9 May

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

Operated by Marcham Community Group (MCG)

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Changes to the Waste Collections

Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Wednesday 6 May	Thursday 7 May
Wednesday 27 May	Thursday 28 May



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Start date is still to be confirmed, but if you are interested, please leave your contact details in the shop and a member of the Committee will get back to you.

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email editor@madnews.co.uk with the details
Deadline is the 15th of the month before publication

TIDDLYPEEPS
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Tuesday 10:00 - 11:30am

5th May
12th May
19th May

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Marcham Annual Parish Meeting Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that this year's Annual
Assembly for the Parish of Marcham is to be
held at Marcham Village Hall, Barrow Close on
Thursday 14th May, at 7.30 p.m

This is a public meeting open to all electors in
the parish. This is your chance to hear what has
been going on locally over the past year, and what
is planned for the future, for the area in which you
live. Your voice matters, so join in and take part
in the conversation, and see how you can play a
role in strengthening our community.

Everyone is welcome to attend and ask questions,
and the registered Local Government Electors for
the Parish will be entitled to vote at the meeting
should the need arise.

If you have items for the agenda or any questions
in advance of the meeting then please contact the
Clerk to the Parish Council

Email: Clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

PTFA MAY UPDATE

The PTFA has been busy supporting the school with
several projects and exciting events for the months
ahead. Looking further ahead, please save the date
for our Summer Fete on Friday 3rd July. This is
always one of the highlights of the school calendar
and we look forward to welcoming families and
friends for an afternoon of fun. We're looking for
raffle prizes so if you or your company could donate
something please get in touch on
marchampta@gmail.com



Parent Teacher
Association

How your support is making a difference

Thanks to the amazing support from our school community,
the PTFA has recently been able to fund several
improvements and activities across the school.

School repairs

We have repaired and fixed the chairs in the school
reception area. Many children and families have
used these over the years, so we were delighted to
give them a new lease of life rather than replace
them. We funded the replacement of the blinds in
the Kangaroo and Meerkat classrooms. These rooms
receive full sun during the spring and summer
months, so we are pleased to help improve the
learning environment by making them cooler and
more comfortable for the children.

Supporting School Trips

We're pleased to be supporting a variety of trips
and experiences across the school, both recently
and in the months ahead.

- ZooLab visit for Reception and Year 1.
- Egg incubator for Reception
- May – Year 5 & 6 British Museum Trip (Oxford)
- June – Year 4 Residential (Youlbury)
- November – (Current) Year 5 Residential (Kilvrough, Wales)

The PTFA is also pleased to continue supporting
the popular school garden. This much-loved space
gives children the opportunity to learn about
nature and growing food. Thanks to Mrs Finch
and the Seymours for their hard work. Finally,
a date for your diary: our School Disco will
take place on Friday 1st May in the school hall.

KS1: 6:00 – 7:00pm KS2: 7:15 – 8:00pm

Thanks again to the DJ Bidy for spinning the
decks for this event. We hope lots of children
will be able to join us for a fun evening.

As always, thank you for your continued
support of PTFA events and fundraising.
THE PTFA COMMITTEE

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I'll be at home, in my studio,
Saturday 11th April - 10am

I am also open for Artweeks 2,3,7,8,9 May
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Artist

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The Hoot And A Half Guide To Urban Wildlife Corridors

By Orin, your neighbourhood's most overqualified owl

Greetings, featherless gardeners. Orin the Owl here, longtime observer of your curious human habits, part-time philosopher, and full-time critic of poorly pruned hedges. I've been perched above your streets for decades, watching you bustle about with your wheelie bins and your questionable patio furniture. But lately, I've noticed something rather heartwarming, you're finally starting to garden like the rest of us who live here too.

Yes, yes welcome to the age of urban wildlife corridors, where every garden becomes a stepping stone in a grand ecological obstacle course. Think of it as the world's slowest relay race, starring hedgehogs, beetles, and that one fox who judges your recycling. Allow me to guide you through the latest trends, with the wisdom of my years and the sarcasm of someone who hasn't slept properly since the invention of security lights.

Hedgehog Highways Motorways for the prickly and polite

You humans have finally realised that hedgehogs cannot teleport. A breakthrough, truly. Those little holes you're cutting at the bottom of fences. Marvellous. To you, it's a 13 centimetre gap. To a hedgehog, it's the M25 without the road rage. Suddenly they can toddle from garden to garden, visiting friends, finding snacks, and avoiding the indignity of squeezing under a gate like a furry doorstop. If you hear a faint grunting at night, don't panic. It's just Mr. Prickles commuting.

Community Planting Schemes Because bees don't respect property boundaries

I've watched you humans attempt "community spirit" before, usually involving bunting and an argument about whose turn it is to host the barbecue. But this new trend of shared planting schemes? Surprisingly effective.

When an entire street decides to grow pollinator friendly plants, whether they're native or not, it becomes a nectar buffet stretching as far as my excellent eyes can see. Bees zip along it like tiny, fuzzy commuters. Butterflies flutter through like they're on a spa retreat. Even I enjoy the view, though I'm mostly here for the mice.

Wildlife Friendly Fencing And Hedging Or, how to stop building tiny wooden fortresses

Look, I understand the instinct to mark your territory. I hoot loudly from treetops for the same reason. But your obsession with solid fences has turned neighbourhoods into labyrinths that even I struggle to navigate.

Swap a panel for a hedge, and suddenly the place is alive. Birds nest. Insects thrive. Small mammals scurry through like they're late for a meeting. And you get a living, breathing boundary instead of a plank that needs repainting every time it rains sideways.

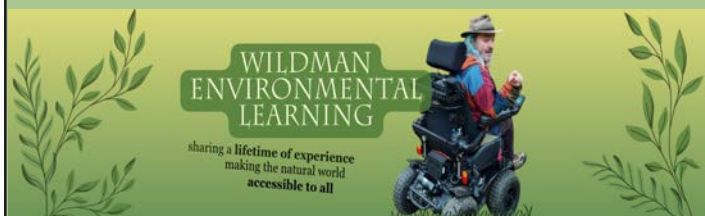
Every Garden A Stepping Stone The grand ecological hopscotch

Here's the big idea, no garden is too small to matter. A window box, a scruffy corner, a patch of long grass, each one is a stepping stone in a vast, interconnected network. To you, it's a slightly overgrown lawn. To a beetle, it's a metropolis. To a frog, it's a rest stop. To me, it's a snack bar, but let's not dwell on that.

When you link your garden with your neighbour's, and theirs with the next, you create a continuous corridor of life. A green thread weaving through the concrete quilt of your towns.

So, keep cutting those hedgehog holes. Keep planting those pollinator banquets. Keep letting your gardens get just a little bit wild, without the need to go the whole hog and totally rewild it. From my perch, it's a beautiful thing to see.

And if you could also switch off your patio lights at night, that would be splendid. Some of us are trying to hunt.



ALL SAINTS' & ST LUKE'S CHURCHES

www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk

Since we opened the new servery, kitchen and toilet facilities at All Saints' Church last year, the PCC has been carefully considering how we can improve other parts of the building. As well as being used for Sunday worship, the church is used for weekly youth and children's ministry, including Tiddlypeeps (our toddler group), and lots of other church groups and activities. We are also delighted to host community events and concerts from time to time. It is a beautiful and historic space, and unusually for a parish church, a wonderfully adaptable one too, mainly due to some ingeniously designed pew moving trolleys. However, the church is costly to insure and to heat, and coupled with the "problem" of a very full congregation at our main services, we are considering how the space can be better apportioned and furnished to serve the needs of the parish. One idea we are exploring is to make better use of the office and gallery on the first floor at the west end. In addition, we are considering reducing the size and height of the stage at the east end, and enlarging the two rooms behind the altar. This would increase the seating capacity in the nave, and also provide a new enclosed chancel and vestry for smaller gatherings of up to 25 people. The new east end would be separately heated, and include enhanced access for wheelchair users. Some elements installed in the 1988 reordering would be reused, including the present glass screens. Enlarging the vestry and chancel would also enhance the most historic features of the original 1837 building, and give greater prominence to the war memorial screens and stained-glass windows at the east end too. More information soon.

REVD PHIL ROWLANDSON.

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

Ruth Atkins *Safeguarding Officer* safeguarding@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 3 May, 6pm

Sung Evensong
led by Rev'd Nick Weldon

Sunday 7 June, 6pm

Communion Service
led by Rev'd Nick Weldon

Contact: st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org

The capricious weather has played a key role at St. Luke's in recent months with congregations feeling the chill from a defective heater (many thanks to Tony Carter for sorting the repair) and rain is now finding its way through the roof which will require work. A dry day enabled the delivery of pretty pots of spring flowers to Garford households ahead of the lovely Mothering Sunday service taken by our Archdeacon, David Tyler. An atmospheric daybreak on Easter Sunday was the backdrop for a joyous and well attended Sunrise Service in St. Luke's churchyard. Our next two services are on Sunday evenings and we do hope that you will join us.



DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

The consultation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Oxfordshire has now closed, and I would like to thank everyone who took part. LGR is very much in Westminster's hands now, and a decision by the government minister is expected in July.

Of concern, however, is the government's recent announcement that it is considering setting up a Greater Oxford Development Corporation (GODC). Details on this are still yet to be decided – the official stance is currently that government intends to launch a consultation later this year – but a similar proposal elsewhere is worrying: the recently-completed consultation on a proposed Greater Cambridge Development Corporation has drawn fierce criticism for its anti-democratic nature, stripping local councils of their powers over major planning applications and instead having these decided by a government quango. The government also claims that the use of the term 'Greater Oxford' in both the GODC announcement and in Labour-led Oxford City Council's (OCiC) 3-Councils proposal for LGR is coincidental, and that the two processes are separate; but this did not stop the Leader of OCiC from making the link when welcoming the GODC announcement. The Greater Oxford 3-Councils proposal would see the boundaries of Oxford City expanded to include practically all the Green Belt and is being touted as an opportunity to unlock huge amounts of development (housing, office space, etc) at a time when central government is relaxing rules about building on green belt land.

On a more positive note, early indications are that the GODC may not be granted plan-making powers immediately: it would initially be constrained by the Local Plans of areas it covers, and would instead focus solely on delivering those plans (i.e., using its powers to get things built). Residents may remember from my previous reports that the Joint Local Plan (JLP), submitted by the Vale and South Oxfordshire, had stalled last year. Things are now moving forwards again, and the Inspectors have granted us permission to publish a tranche of documents that is expected to lead to a further round of public examination. There is plenty in those documents about the Dalton Barracks site development, including flood risk assessment and infrastructure provision, as well as an ambition to submit an Outline Planning Application for Phase 1 of the site this autumn. I'll be scrutinising this all closely, together with colleagues at the Vale and parish councillors, but input from other residents is very welcome: please feel free to contact me (preferably via email).

CLLR DR ROBERT CLEGG

District Councillor for Marcham Ward

Phone: 07784 225290

Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk



on the A415 Frilford Road, new footways, cycleways and improved links to nearby bus stops. As part of these discussions, I asked officers to explore whether provision for a new pedestrian crossing on the A338 Oxford Road can be added as part of the scheme and I am happy to report this is now also being considered. There will be more information to share as the scheme progresses — but this represents a positive and important first step towards improvements at the junction.

At the last full council meeting in March, I was pleased to speak and vote in support of a motion calling for the re-introduction of routine weed clearance on pavements, which gathered cross-party support. This is an issue that a number of residents have raised with me locally, particularly in relation to the path along the A415 between Marcham and Abingdon. A report will now be prepared for the Cabinet Member for Finance, and this will be considered in the next round of budget setting.

Finally, turning to rubbish! At the last full council meeting, Conservative and Independent councillors proposed a motion to scrap the unnecessary new booking rules at Household Waste Recycling Centres in Oxfordshire. The county has always performed incredibly well on recycling but recent changes indicate an initial decline in visits to the tip, which could increase fly-tipping. Unfortunately, this motion was rejected by the administration but we will continue to keep the pressure up on this as more data comes through.

On a more positive note, I was delighted to take part in the recent Marcham Community Litter Pick in April, which was very well attended. A big thank you to both everyone who took part and the organisers for ensuring everything ran smoothly!

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

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MP'S REPORT

I hope you enjoyed a restful (and chocolate-filled!) Easter with friends and family.

Parliament was in recess for a couple of weeks over Easter, and I was thrilled to be back in Oxfordshire full-time. I made the most of it with lots of interesting meetings, as well as getting out and knocking on hundreds of doors to speak to people about issues in our area.

Back at the start of March as you'll recall thousands of properties across Witney, Carterton, Burford and the surrounding villages completely lost water supply due to a burst Thames Water main near Eynsham. I spent a very active few days pulling information out of Thames Water

about the burst itself and working to get water to people across the area. Since then, I've had lots of conversations with Thames Water about the compensation they would offer. You should now have seen a reduction in your water bill or will have received credit to your account to reflect this, but if you are still waiting for your compensation, or do not think your amount has been calculated correctly, please contact my team on charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk.

I am very concerned that we'll continue to see bursts like this, as well as the sewage spills which pollute our local rivers, unless there is a much more fundamental reform of our water sector. I've written to the Environment Secretary urging the Government to reject the 'recapitalisation' offer being negotiated for Thames Water, and instead put Thames Water into Special Administration, as a first step towards overhauling the balance sheet so that it is better able to spend the substantial sums which are required to fix our water infrastructure. I pursued Thames Water through the courts last year and will continue to seek better, fairer action. If you'd like to know more, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Last month I paid a visit to the Royal Mail delivery office in Witney, following concerns raised by many of you about serious delays getting post. This can have serious consequences, especially if you're waiting for confirmation of a medical appointment or for a new bank card to be delivered, for example. In a debate in Westminster, I voiced the frustration of the many Witney residents with post delays to the responsible Minister. I was also able to



COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This It's been a busy month at the County Council, and I want to start this month's update with an issue that I know will be of interest to residents. I recently met with officers to discuss the findings of the Frilford & Marcham Transport Study, which looked at a wide range of options to address congestion, safety, public transport, and walking and cycling on the A415 and A338 through Frilford and Marcham, with particular focus on Frilford Lights Junction and the impacts of planned housing growth. Following this study, as part of the Land East of Kingston Bagpuize (LEKB) development, officers are proposing to ask the developer to deliver highway improvements at Frilford Lights Junction (A415/A338), in order to help traffic move more efficiently and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed scheme includes a new left-turn lane on the A338 Oxford Road for traffic heading through Frilford along the A415, alongside upgraded traffic signals, a new pedestrian crossing



quiz senior figures from Royal Mail and their regulator, Ofcom, at a meeting of the Business and Trade Select Committee. A functioning, reliable mail service is essential for all of us – as well as for the smooth running of businesses and public services – and Ofcom need to get to grips with it.

Another issue which has been generating a great deal of concern this month is the steep spike in heating oil prices, linked to the foolish war in Iran. About a quarter of households in Witney constituency are off the gas grid, many of whom are reliant on heating oil. I have received a great deal of correspondence from people who saw the cost of filling their oil tank almost double in just a week at the beginning of March.

Rural homes already cope with higher rates of fuel poverty, worsening levels of energy efficiency and a fuel poverty gap of nearly a thousand pounds when compared to urban homes. I don't think the Government's funding support is nearly enough. To date they have announced £53m in funding to support low-income households, but with about 3.5m people dependent on heating oil, this won't go very far at all.

We clearly need urgent action. First, to get support to those who need it now and secondly, better regulation of this sector in the long term. Along with Lib Dem colleagues, I'm calling for greater protections for people who rely on heating oil by enacting a 3-month zero-rating for VAT on heating oil for all residential homes and developing a price cap, similar to what we have on both electricity and gas, to shield them from sudden price increases. If this is something which has impacted your household and you would like to get in touch with me about it, please email on charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk.

As ever, if you need my help, please contact me at charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk.

CHARLIE MAYNARD


MP Witney (for Frilford, Garford and most of Tubney)

OTHER REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

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



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

GARD NEWS UPDATE MAY 2026

GARD's summer campaign is beginning. See this as a **NEW CAMPAIGN**, as Thames Water move towards their Planning Application in November. We can still stop the Reservoir, as our banners state.

JOIN GARD and work towards a full opposition at the DCO hearings early next year. We can show them that democracy works – three MPs, Oxfordshire County Council, the two District Councils, the town and parish councils: all these oppose the Reservoir plans. Add your name to the list of GARD members and be part of that opposition. The joining link is on the website: Group Against Reservoir Development | GARD

Come forward and volunteer – we shall be delivering leaflets to all the affected villages and we are planning events too. There are jobs small and large, active and more routine. Please get in touch at gard.secretary@gmail.com

Show that people matter. Join GARD to stop the Reservoir.

Advance notice of the AGM: this will be on Friday July 3rd

Payment methods for Membership or Donations

Bank transfer to Group Against Reservoir Development Account
Number: 71266438. Sort Code: 40-45-36. Please include your name as a reference & email gard.secretary@gmail.com

DEREK STORK, Chairman GARD.
For more information www.gard-oxon.org.uk
Facebook: @abingdonreservoir, Twitter @GARD_OXON

See the website for details www.gard-oxon.org.uk

Answers to this month's Quiz from page 7

1. A. A. Milne
2. Santiago
3. CERN, on the border of Switzerland and France
4. Friedrich Merz
5. Technically, cows have one stomach, but it comprises four distinct compartments: rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum
6. The Nile
7. Eleven
8. France
9. Georgia
10. Mikhail Gorbachev
11. Letcombe Brook
12. Saturn



2025 Statutory Consultation Thank you for the feedback that you provided during our Statutory Consultation. Over 1200 people attended our face-to-face consultation events and we received over 2500 consultation responses. The project team are currently busy reviewing all the responses received, this feedback will help to shape our reservoir plans including design updates, which will

inform the Development Consent Order application (DCO).

Pre-Development Consent Order submission engagement The DCO application is on course to be submitted to the Government in November 2026. Ahead of the submission, we plan to run public information events in early Autumn. These events will be an opportunity for the community to hear about how we have considered stakeholder feedback, provide an update on the latest design, and set out more information on the Development Consent Order process.

Site Surveys We have been busy continuing our programme of site surveys. As we move into the spring and summer months, we are increasing our survey activity at the proposed White Horse Reservoir site. This is to ensure we have a detailed understanding of the local environment, geology, and heritage which will inform our evidence base for project planning and related submissions.

Our teams are currently carrying out the following works:

- **Ground Investigations** Across the site we have been installing borehole monitors to gather information on soils and groundwater. Later this month we will dig small Observational Trial Pits on fields within the site, we are using these pits to investigate the geology.
- **Ecology** We have been undertaking terrestrial ecology survey visits which include gathering data on badgers, bats, reptiles, breeding and wintering birds, riparian mammals, along with logging habitat types and condition. We will also have teams out surveying plant habitats. In May and June, our bat surveyors will commence night time bat surveys of buildings.
- **Archaeology** At the end of March we started the next phase of our archaeological trial trenching programme. This involves looking for archaeological artefacts, such as Roman Pottery, and documenting the history beneath our feet. By September we aim to have dug around 1,700 trenches recording the findings and then re-instating the trenches and fields back to their original condition.
- **Water** Our water teams are collecting data, using loggers and gauges to measure water flow, level, and quality to support our environmental assessments, including on flood risk and water quality.
- **Other surveys** This year we have also been conducting arboriculture surveys, landscape and visual nighttime photography, aquatic ecology, and noise.

We remain dedicated to completing these surveys in line with environmental best practice and with minimal disruption to the local community. We have a dedicated public liaison officer communicating with landowners, tenants, and local residents on survey work. We will provide further updates as the survey work progresses.

We will continue to update stakeholders through emails, one-to-one meetings, newsletters, and website updates on White Horse Reservoir - previously known as South East Strategic Reservoir Option - SESRO. If you would like to arrange a detailed briefing with our Engagement Team then do reach out and we would be happy to set up a meeting. thames-sro.co.uk

MAY 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
31 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)					1 May Day MS School Disco 5-8 pm (15)	2 At Weeks 2-25 May (11) MC Thirsty Café with Natural Breed 9-11.30am (7) KBS Bowls open day 11am-4pm (15) Glass Botanicals Studio open 11am-6pm (15)
3 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) Glass Botanicals Studio open 11am-6pm (15) AS Evening Service 6pm (17) SL Sung Eversong 6pm (17)	4 MVS CLOSED DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	5 AS TiddleyPeeps 10-11.30am (13) MC Milkshake Shop 2-4pm (7)	6 MC Thirsty Café with Stay & Play 08.45-11.30am (7) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)	7 Revised Green Bin Collection (13) Milllets Farm Classic car meet 9.30am-11am-6pm (15) Marcham Society Midweek Walk 12.30 pm (7)	8 MARCHAM BIG WEEKEND (16) Glass Botanicals Studio open 11am-6pm (15)	9 MARCHAM BIG WEEKEND (16) THIRSTY CAFÉ CLOSED Farmers' Market (7 & 9) Glass Botanicals Studio Open 11am-5pm (15)
10 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	11 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm MC Marcham Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm (3)	12 AS TiddleyPeeps 10-11.30am (13)	13 MC Thirsty Café 8.45-11.30am (7) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Astronomy Group 7.30pm (7)	14 MC Annual Parish Meeting of Electors 7.30pm (3 & 15)	15 MADNEWS DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE 5pm (LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED)	16 MC Thirsty Café with Natural Breed 9-11.30am (7)
17 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	18 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Toasted light lunch 12-2pm (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	19 AS TiddleyPeeps 10-11.30am (13)	20 MC Thirsty Café 08.45-11.30am (7) DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) Arts Society Abingdon 10.30am & 2pm (9)	21	22	23 THIRSTY CAFÉ CLOSED
24 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	25 MVS CLOSED DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm MC Marcham Society 7.30pm (7)	26 AS TiddleyPeeps 10-11.30am (13)	27 THIRSTY CAFÉ CLOSED DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)	28 Revised Black Bin Collection (13)	29	30 THIRSTY CAFÉ CLOSED MC Thirsty Café with Natural Breed 9-11.30am (7)

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