

# Marcham & District News

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JULY/AUGUST 2020 VOL: 42 NO: 7/8

READ & RECYCLE!

FREE



▲ There are still plants for sale see page 13



Deadline for the September issue of MADNews, 17.00 Thursday 20th August  
[editor@madnews.co.uk](mailto:editor@madnews.co.uk)



▲ Privet Hawk Moths  
 Photos taken by Pippa Hoath around Marcham ▶



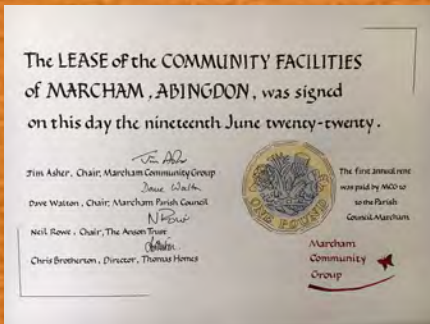
▲ Pyramidal Orchid



▲ We've got the keys to the new hall!  
 ▼ see page 5



▲ Marcham Shop:  
 Dress Up and Come on Down! ▼▶



I wonder what's happening at pre-school



▲ What's on the tree in Parkside? page 7



Don't forget!

Bank Holiday Waste Collection  
 Wednesday 2 September  
 Thursday 3 September  
 Green, food and garden waste

# HELP AND ADVICE

## MARCHAM

There are volunteers who are available to help for each area. If you don't know who to ask, please contact Jude or Jacqui by email [marchamhelpers@the-kraken.co.uk](mailto:marchamhelpers@the-kraken.co.uk) or call MADNews on 391725

## MARCHAM COMMUNITY LARDER

Providing food parcels for those in need during the current situation. For full details see page 13

## FRILFORD

If you don't know who to ask, please contact Shaun or Christine by email [frilfordparish@gmail.com](mailto:frilfordparish@gmail.com) or call MADNews on 391725



**Do you need some help while self-isolating?**

If you, or someone you know, needs a hand with collecting shopping or prescriptions, or just wants someone to talk to, our NHS Volunteer Responders are here to help.

Join the thousands of others throughout England who are already receiving support – even if it's just for a friendly chat.

**Call 0808 196 3646 or visit [nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk](http://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk)**

Help is available if you have a medical condition which makes you vulnerable to COVID-19, especially if you are over 70. You also qualify if you are pregnant or have a disability.

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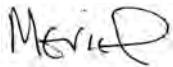
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Dear Readers

We had a few gremlins in the MADNews office this week so please excuse any mistakes in this issue! Hopefully by the time we come back in September everything will have been sorted out!

*And by then, things might be nearly back to normal – we can just hope.*

*In the meantime – keep safe*



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Advertising: 5pm 15th month  
Other copy: 5pm 20th month  
except for Jan when it is 15th Dec for both

**ADDITIONAL COPIES**

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

**DISCLAIMER**

We apologise in advance for any errors that may creep into MADNews (online or print), or omissions that creep out - we don't do it on purpose!

The Editor reserves the right to alter, omit or hold over copy to another issue. The views expressed in the Marcham & District News are not necessarily those of the editorial team, who are all volunteers.

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[Richard.webber77@ntlworld.com](mailto:Richard.webber77@ntlworld.com)

**DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

*Marcham and Shippon*

Catherine Webber, Orchard Barn, Sutton  
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Tel: 01235 534001

[Webbercatherine1@gmail.com](mailto:Webbercatherine1@gmail.com)

For other councillors go to

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**MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL**

**Linda Martin**

As many of you will know, Linda Martin our Clerk is unwell and so is off work for the time being. We have been able to appoint Wendy Quigley as the interim Clerk to cover this absence. She can be contacted by email to [Interim.MarchamPC@gmail.com](mailto:Interim.MarchamPC@gmail.com). Alternatively you can contact the Chairman of the Council by email to [David.Walton@MarchamParishCouncil.gov.uk](mailto:David.Walton@MarchamParishCouncil.gov.uk). It would be appreciated if contact can be limited to essential matters for the time being. Meanwhile we send our very best wishes to Linda for a full and speedy recovery.

**New Village Hall and MUGA**

As you will see elsewhere in this issue, the Parish Council took ownership of the new village hall and Multi-use Games Area on the Anson Field on Friday 19th June. We also received a 99 year lease of the remainder of the recreation ground which includes the cricket ground and the two new football pitches. At the same time we gave a 99 year lease of the village hall, MUGA and most of the recreation ground to Marcham Community Group who will manage the facilities on behalf of the community. This was the culmination of an enormous amount of work that started more than four years ago and has involved dozens of people and countless meetings. The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who has been involved and we look forward to the community making full use of these excellent facilities in the months and years to come.

**Play Area – Anson Field**

Please note that the play area remains closed, with no public access. This is to conform to the 12 June Government rules which forbid the use of playgrounds due to the coronavirus risks

**Planning Applications**

The Council has considered the following applications:

P20/V1083/FUL 19 Mill Road Marcham Abingdon Oxfordshire OX13 6NZ. Proposed wheelchair accessible two bed detached bungalow. The Council objected, citing impact on the street scene and conservation area, access difficulties and questions over parking.

P20/V1101/FUL Land off Packhorse Lane Packhorse Lane Marcham Marcham OX13 6NU. Variation of condition 8 of application P16/V0644/O - to regularise the 'as built' material of the path - finished in hoggin instead of tarmac as approved. The Council objected as the hoggin surface was breaking up, as were the edges, and requested tarmac as per the planning approval.

P20/V0600/HH 86 Howard Cornish Road. Move dining room window forward in line with garage and porch protrusions, move porch wall, replace flat roof of dining room recess and porch with pitched tiled roof and remove an internal wall. The Council had no objection, but requested materials to be in keeping with the house and other properties in the area.

P20/V1097/LB – New central heating system at 21 North Street. Council had no objections.

**Date of Next Council Meeting:**

The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is Wednesday 8th July, 2020 at 7.30 p.m. To be held virtually via Zoom. However, please check the Council's website for the latest information.

**Interim Clerk to the Council:**

Mrs. W. Quigley  
[Interim.MarchamPC@gmail.com](mailto:Interim.MarchamPC@gmail.com)  
[www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Any member of the public is most welcome to attend any of our meetings. There is a section near the start of each meeting for public participation, where any member of the public is able to speak about any topic which is relevant to the work of the Parish Council (for a maximum of three minutes). Members of the public are also welcome to observe some or all of the rest of the meeting.

*Dear Editor*  
Thank you so much to the young child who posted postcards in Anson Close while in lockdown saying:  
*"I hope lockdown is ok I hope you find something to make you smile today"*  
It certainly did , it was a lovely thought and loved the smiley face too.  
**SUE SODEN**

*Dear fellow residents.*  
While we are all focussed on the pandemic, don't forget the end of June is the deadline for the UK to prevent another hit to jobs and business at the end of December.  
We left the European Union in January but until the end of this year we still enjoy all the benefits of membership. Unless the UK requests an extension to the trade negotiations we could be in for a very bleak 2021. Expect border problems affecting jobs and customs delays affecting availability of food and essential supplies.  
It would be wonderful if the "oven ready" deal could be sorted out by year-end but because the UK/EU negotiations have stalled while the world struggles with Covid19 this is no longer realistic. Bluster and brinkmanship will not work this time and we will very likely end up with a no deal crash out.  
Please can everyone contact our MP David Johnston and ask him to support the transition extension, before the 30th June deadline. <https://www.david-johnston.org.uk>  
Thanks  
**BOB ANDERSON**

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## Major Milestone achieved — MarchamCentre handed over!

The new village hall complex, MarchamCentre, was officially handed over on Friday 19th June. Last-minute legal issues were resolved and the lease documents were exchanged. The process completed just in time to enable MCG to receive the keys from Thomas Homes via Marcham Parish Council at 3:40 pm—with a huge sigh of relief. Social distancing rules meant that only a few representatives from MCG, Marcham Parish Council and Anson Trust could be there to mark the occasion—a major milestone for Marcham.



We must acknowledge at this key point the huge inputs from: Anson Trust (especially Neil Rowe); Thomas Homes (Chris Brotherton and his team); Marcham Parish Council (and hard work by Dave Walton and Ruth Mander, especially over the past few weeks, dealing with tricky legal twists); and all MCG trustees and committee members, for making this happen. This is a big step for Marcham and we are delighted to have reached it together.

Government Covid-19 rules mean that we are not able to open the new village hall for its intended community use for some time yet. We will be working to fit out and furnish the new building over the next few weeks. We do, however, have plans to open the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for tennis, football and other games, under strict rules. We need first to arrange safe operating procedures for players and put signage in place. Page 9 has more details. Our website will show other opening plans in due course.

Our fund-raising continues going well. The sale of plants from the gate by Sheila Dunford and Anne Smithson has passed the **£850** mark—thank you again to those donating for plants. A big thank-you to Claire, Paula, Sue, Margaret, Pippa, Amélie, Lily, Jenny and Zoe, who have raised over **£350** so far from making face-masks for donations to our facilities. Thank you to all who are donating for them...and using them to keep us safe.

Thank you to everyone who has sponsored bricks at Marcham Village Shop. We have now exceeded Chris Ricketts' original target of **£4000**—well done all! Please continue to sponsor bricks from the Shop, as all monies raised will go towards equipping our new village hall.

We will soon advertise the **MarchamCentre administrator job**— see our website for details.

Updates on plans for the new facilities, with news, photos and posts are on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/marchamcentre/](http://www.facebook.com/marchamcentre/) or [@marchamcentre](https://www.instagram.com/marchamcentre/), and our website, [www.marchamcentre.org](http://www.marchamcentre.org). We are happy to answer any questions you may have.



Major Milestone achieved — MarchamCentre handed over!



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Thank you to everyone for supporting the plant sales available from outside the gate at No 18 Frilford Road (Anne) and at Priory Lane (Sheila).

**We have raised over £900 and still have plants to sell!**

Tomatoes: Roma and Money Maker; Sweet and Chilli Peppers; 3 kinds of Brassica: Cabbage Greyhound, Broccoli Lancer, Lettuce Little Gem.

*All will be bare rooted so Anne will need to know when to put them in bags to be collected and how many.*

Flowers: Green Zinnias, Hollyhocks (mixed), Morning Glory ready to climb sticks (purple), Purple Iris

Herbs: Rosemary and Sage (decorative)

There will be Rambler Rose 'Veilchenblau' for autumn planting, mauve buds fading to lilac-grey, semi-double and fragrant.

Cuttings prepared for next year: Rosemary, border carnations, Perennial wallflowers (Bowles Mauve).

You can order your plants through Sheila Dunford or Anne Smithson or contact MADNews.

*All donations for the plants will go toward village facilities and can be made at the Post Office, see the advert on page 2 for the opening hours.*

Enjoy your gardening.

**SHEILA DUNFORD AND ANNE SMITHSON**

## COMMUNITY FACE MASK TREE

Marcham community and surrounding areas have a **Community Face Mask Tree**. It can be found at 13 Parkside. There are three sizes, adult, child and small child that would suit toddler age. We are asking for a minimum of £2 per mask with all proceeds going to the new facilities at Marcham Community Centre.

A total of nearly 400 masks have been put out on the tree and we have made nearly £500. There's a lovely lady in heaven, Chris, looking down on us egging us on. The more we sell the more money we make for the new Marcham Community Centre. Thank you so much for your support.

**PAULA AND CLAIRE AND THE MASK TEAM**



## Marcham WI

### Meetings Cancelled

Unfortunately, as we are still unable to hold our monthly WI meetings, our July garden party will not be able to take place this year. Hopefully we will be able to resume our meetings in the not too distant future.

If you have not already done so, we would encourage all our members to sign up for the Oxfordshire Federations's newsletter on their website: <https://www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk>

These special editions of the News and Views monthly magazine contain lots of information, including the opportunity to sign up for a range of fascinating, upcoming Zoom talks, which are free for all members. We look forward to seeing you all again as soon as possible, but meanwhile hope you are all keeping well

*For further information, please contact:*

Pippa Hoath 01865 391349 [pippahoath@gmail.com](mailto:pippahoath@gmail.com)



The  
**Marcham  
Society**

### Why are birds so different?

*Graham Lenton*

will be broadcast live online on  
Tuesday 14th July at 7.30pm

Members will automatically receive an email invitation to join using Zoom.

*Non-Members wishing to receive an invitation should email Simon Blackmore*

**membership@marchamsociety.org.uk**  
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Marcham MUGA will soon be open for ball games, conditioning or fitness training and general exercise for solo use, by members of 1 household or groups of up to 6 people observing social distancing rules staying at least 2 metres apart, and the following rules will apply.

- You enter the MUGA at your own risk.
- Marcham Community Group will not be held responsible for any injury caused whilst using the MUGA.
- This court is unmanned, no part of the MUGA will be disinfected: wear gloves, practise strong hygiene/hand-washing before and after use and keep equipment-sharing to a minimum.
- Children under 12 must be supervised by an adult.
- Trainers or similar footwear should be worn and **NO STUDES**.
- Keep the gate open at all times to minimise hand contact.
- No glass to be taken onto the MUGA at any time.
- Please take your litter home. Thank you.

We will review these rules as and when required, in accordance with Government guidelines.

As Marcham Centre opens up, the use of the MUGA will be timetabled, with specific organisations having allotted times. The free use of the facility for villagers will be central to this timetable.

We would ask that parents make sure that their children are aware of these rules and that they understand mistreating the MUGA will result in its free use for them and others being limited.

Check [www.marchamcentre.org](http://www.marchamcentre.org) and **Marcham Village Facebook** pages for opening information and updates.

The Trustees of the Anson Trust were delighted to see the keys of the new community facilities being handed to representatives of the Parish Council and MCG on Friday 19th June. This marks the culmination of over 15 years of work by the Trustees to deliver facilities fit for the 21st century and it would not have been possible without a considerable amount of effort, determination and vision from members of the Trust, PC and MCG.

The Trustees would particularly like to thank Chris Brotherton of Thomas Homes Ltd and Mark Patchett, our project consultant. Without their pragmatism, persistence and encouragement it is doubtful we would have all managed to steer our way through the complexities, challenges and frustrations that are inevitable with a project of this size – especially when most of us have never been involved in anything like it before.

Alongside Section 106 funds, donations and grants from the Parish Council, the Trust has contributed over £1.4m to this project and we sincerely hope the residents of Marcham and surrounding hamlets will benefit from these amazing new facilities for decades to come. The land on which the new Marcham Centre and adjoining multi-use games area (MUGA) have been erected is now owned by the Parish Council and the Trust has leased the rest of Anson Field to the Parish Council on a 99 year term.

The Trust has also re-invested £400k in the wonderful new Nursery building which not only gives the community a much needed facility for its young families but also provides the Trust with an income stream from which it can start to fulfil its long neglected charitable objective of assisting those “persons resident in the parish who are in need, hardship or distress (including making of grants to bodies who provide goods, services or facilities to them)”. We have already offered assistance to the Marcham COVID-19 Hardship Fund and over the course of the next few months the Trustees will begin work on defining a grant application process for those persons or organisations eligible for our charitable support. More information on this will be provided in the Autumn.

Lastly, thanks to everyone in the village for bearing with us during the last 18 months of construction but please do be aware that the re-seeding on the Anson Field may take longer than expected if the weather conditions mean it does not take and has to be re-done in September.

We sincerely hope that the continued relaxation of COVID-19 lockdown rules means that we can all start to use the Marcham Centre soon and we urge all residents to support the MCG as much as you can to ensure that these new facilities are the resounding success they deserve to be.

**CHRIS HILLIER**  
 on behalf of the  
 Trustees of the Anson Trust



**ThirstyCafé – Marcham Community Café**

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We missed our families so much through lockdown, and they missed us. We kept in touch with each other as much as we could sharing activity ideas, posting on social media, and sending cards and activities to our children.

Since returning we are enjoying our social bubbles, and we have been having a wail of a time in the garden whatever the weather. We've been learning all about social distancing, and why it is important to keep washing our hands. Our pre-schoolers have even been measuring our 2 meter distance checks and laying the tape on the ground so our parents know where to stand when dropping off.

It is fantastic to see our children thrive back in their nursery environment, and their imaginations have been running wild. One of our bubbles spent a whole afternoon playing with a 3 meter long cardboard tube. It started out as a builder's beam, being carried around the garden and cemented into place in the sandpit. It then became a tunnel for cars and we were able to see how fast or slow the cars went down it depending on which angle it was held. The tube then turned into a magic train which took the children to space where they went to the space supermarket and the space zoo. It then turned into a boat which transported our children back to the nursery, splish splashing all the way in time to meet their parents after a busy day. It's wonderful to see the way our children have been interacting again after such a long time away from each other.



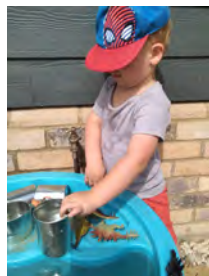
Before we re-opened we made the decision to create a garden especially for our babies to enjoy in their own social bubble, and they have been having a wonderful time exploring this new space. With tyres to climb on, tunnels to crawl through, sensory pods, and walk along toys, the garden has been a huge success and we will continue to add resources to it over the coming weeks. Our babies are thoroughly enjoying their time outside, and with this comes even more water play, sand and messiness. They also have the best vantage point to watch the final stages of the Marcham Community building coming together, and have been fascinated to watch the building team at work.

**It's great to be back!!!**

Tel: 01865 819992

Email: [info@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk](mailto:info@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk)

Web: <http://littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk/>



**MARCHAM PRE-SCHOOL**

The effects of Corvid-19 have reached everyone and impacted on daily life for each of us. As a charity and a not-for-profit organisation, Marcham Pre-school has been hit in a number of ways...



We have sadly had to limit the number of children able to attend, which means that for some, their journey in the classroom has been cut short... but we are staying connected, being creative and running lots of events via Zoom!

Financially, the preschool has been hit hard, not just by a loss of fees, but through the loss of fundraising opportunities and the ongoing support from our fabulous families... with reduced face-to-face contact - we estimate a loss of around £1000 from donations and 'extra' fundraising.

But we have exciting news! Over the summer we will be opening **Marcham Safari Park!** There will be opportunities for EVERYONE to be involved with decorating their houses with models and pictures, and for one day only there will be activities, games, a raffle, face painting... and much much more - spread all around the village and arranged in a way that visitors can stick to social distancing rules...

Please head to our Facebook page to follow as more details are released.

The ultimate day out - at home!

**Nicky Sanford,**

Early Years Teacher, Marcham Pre-School

01865 392101 [Marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk)

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**Marcham Safari Park**



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**PTA ROUND-UP**

I usually end my PTA reports with 'See you on the school run.' I haven't seen anyone on the school run for more than three months now! We live in interesting times!

And challenging times. On behalf of all the PTA, can I thank all the school staff – teachers and support staff – for the incredible work they've been doing in keeping the school going in the most extraordinary circumstances. I know it's been difficult for all of us, and home schooling has shown many of us just what goes into educating our children, but it's been even more testing for the teachers over the past weeks as they've had to develop new methods of teaching. And all the while, they have been looking after key workers' children as normal in the school buildings.

Speaking of which, work on the new building has recommended after a break, and the new classrooms are nearing completion. They will undoubtedly help in maintaining social distancing when school returns in September, and I'm very pleased to say that we, the parents, will have played a major part in bringing the new classrooms online.

With the new classrooms on the horizon for a number of years, the PTA has been working (and saving) hard to build up a sum of money that we can put towards the new rooms. As they near the point at which furniture will be installed, I'm very proud to say that the PTA will contribute £10,000 toward the purchase of furniture that will make the new rooms magnificent 21st-century learning environments for the children coming up through the school for many years to come. This contribution has only been possible through the generosity of the parents and villagers who have supported our events over the years, so on behalf of the PTA, the school and, of course, the children who will use the new rooms, many, many thanks for what you have done to make this possible – baking cakes, filling Smarties tubes, buying raffle tickets, supporting school discos – every pound you've given has gone towards the school's work, and I know Mrs Hutchinson and all the staff are extremely grateful.

I'd also like to thank All Saints Church, Sandra Homewood Funeral Directors, Matthew Holmes Limited and Taylor Wimpey plc, all of whom made significant donations to the PTA specifically to help equip the new classrooms. Their contributions helped kickstart the funding drive, and we are very grateful for their generosity.

I'm sure that between now and September the school will be giving us lots of news on the new classrooms. And hopefully in September we'll be able to get back to organising fun-packed fundraising events to support the school's ongoing work. Until then, please stay safe and look after yourselves.

See you... eventually! ... on the school run.

**PETER KIDD, PTA CHAIR**

07708 251312 peterkidd2708@gmailcom



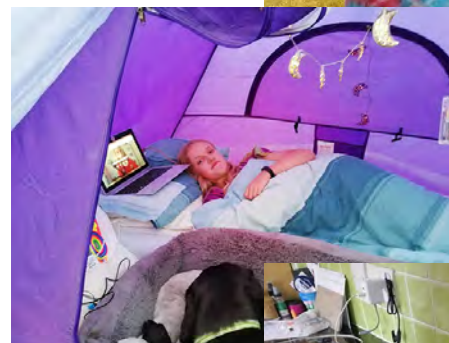
Parent Teacher Association

**MARCHAM GUIDES**

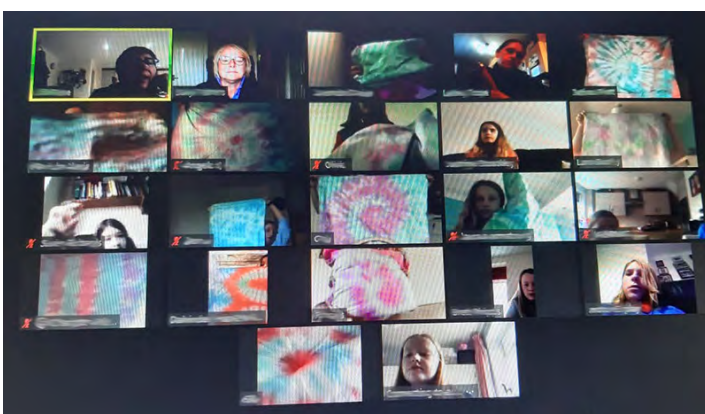
Still active during lockdown! We've been meeting each week over Zoom and doing lots of activities, games and challenges including making paper aeroplanes to send each other encouraging messages (girls had to fly them over Jill's garden wall during the week); making bird feeders using an orange; Kim's game, practising surfing skills on the kitchen floor, and a space challenge to see the relative distances of planets from the sun using beads, an orange and a piece of string.

We had a virtual camp out at the beginning of June when girls were encouraged to put up a tent or make a den either outside or in. Unfortunately it was the weekend that the weather turned and was much colder, but lots of them did sleep outside in their gardens! We delivered some camp craft activities and a breakfast pack and then had a zoom session in the evening when we had a virtual campfire and even enrolled 2 of our girls over zoom! Amelie Marah also renewed her promise as the final part of her Young Leader Qualification - Well done Amelie! We then zoomed again on Saturday morning and shared how we had cooked our breakfast - some girls cooked outside and others in their kitchen. All the girls who took part thoroughly enjoyed it, and want to do it again, next time with more activities and interaction!

We would like to thank the parents for supporting us and helping the girls during this time, as we aim to keep Marcham Guides alive and active.



**▼ Marcham Guides - Zooming!**



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## DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

First and foremost, I would like to thank all our volunteers, including the church, the shop and other small groups which have popped up, for the excellent work they have been doing in and around Marcham to keep residents safe, fed and reasonably sane. And secondly, I would like to thank YOU, the Marcham residents, for patiently complying with the rules and regulations that keep coming forward to combat this terrible virus. Many thanks!

### Where is the Vale District Council going to be housed?

An urgent conversation is being held at the Vale about where to house the District Council. If you remember, its offices at Crowmarsh Gifford were burnt down in 2015, and so it was based in a building it owned, "Abbey House" in Abingdon, for a short time before being moved to 135 Eastern Avenue, Park Drive, Milton which it shares with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) at favourable rates. (County Council officers moved into Abbey House). In the next few years these favourable rates will come to an end and the cost will rocket. Also, bear in mind that because many officers have been working at home during this COVID pandemic and have discovered that they quite like working at home, is there the same need for large office space? Many officers would like the flexibility of working from home and maybe coming into the office every now and then for certain meetings. This would also mean that far fewer cars would be on our roads causing congestion and polluting the air.

So, the Vale has been looking at three possible options. It could share a new build with SODC at Crowmarsh Gifford (built at SODC's expense)....the rent still needs to be negotiated. This option means that the building will be purpose built and will satisfy climate change needs, but because of its position in the heart of South Oxfordshire and because of the lack of regular bus services, it will mean that most Vale residents and councillors will have to travel a long way to meet officers etc. Not good for climate change. The second option is for purpose-built offices (for both districts) to be built at the Gateway of Didcot garden town, opposite the station.... who pays for the building (the Vale or SODC or will it be a shared?) still needs to be negotiated. However, this option is attractive as it would mean that the building is much closer to the Vale, is on a bus and train route and would be built to high standards to satisfy climate change issues. But the arguments against it are that a large office building at the Gateway of the Garden town does not look very garden-like, and after COVID and all the economic stresses the population is likely to be going through by then, is it really the right time to be spending large sums of money on building a large office for the District Councils?

The final option is for the Vale District council to move back to Abbey House in Abingdon, which is on a regular bus route and in a town that is in the heart of the Vale. If the county officers decide that they could vacate Abbey House and move out into a much smaller building, because many of them, too, will be working at home, there would be enough space to house both the Vale and SODC officers. Clearly, this appears to be much the cheapest option for the Vale, but some expenditure will have to be made on adapting and upgrading the building to satisfy the District Councils needs and to comply with climate change demands. We don't know the cost of that yet.

So, it is all up for grabs ... Of course, it is possible that none of these options will apply as the government might insist that we become Unitary. In which case, District Councils and County Council will be dissolved and a unitary council of debatable size will be set up somewhere! But that is another conversation.

### A Useful Link

For those of you who like to be alerted of any building application which may come forward in your area, the following link will be useful to you.

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/news-and-events/keep-me-informed/email-alerts>

### CATHERINE WEBBER

District Councillor of Marcham Ward Tel no. 01235 534001

Email: [Catherine.webber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.webber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

July / August 2020

## LIVING WITH UNCERTAINTY

If, like me, you are feeling a bit suffocated in Covid briefings and are unsure if the latest news is good or bad, then you probably won't be wanting more updates, more advice and more emergency phone numbers from me.

Suffice it to say that despite a small rise in domestic violence, nationwide protests following events in America, there has been some good news here. Oxford protests have been peaceful - and there has been some exemplary restraint from the British police. Despite the uncertain evidence, it seems highly likely that Oxfordshire's Covid statistics are beginning to head in the right direction.

The biggest problem we are all having to deal with is uncertainty. What's the damage to the national and local economy? How long will it take to repair? Who is going to pay the greatest share of the cost of repair? What damage is being done to young people's education, to young people's future employment opportunities? How many businesses will survive? How many theatres and concert halls will survive?

The list of uncertainties seems endless and they affect us all - young and old, rich and poor, whatever our race or nation. And Brexit, far from being a life-defining issue, is now just one more uncertainty. However these uncertainties are resolved, there is one issue we cannot escape.

### Climate change and the environment.

We are told with increasing conviction that we have a very few years to address the problem of carbon output and global warming. We have all noticed the quieter, cleaner, healthier world that Covid has offered us. And we have noticed how friendly and mutually supportive we have all been.

So we may be poorer in the future, but we should all hope that in a rush to get wealthier again, we do not lose sight of what the last few months have taught us.

A very kind friend and neighbour suggested recently that, rather than read my monthly ramblings, people might appreciate the chance to ask questions via parish newsletters on Council related matters. If any resident would care to email me a question they are prepared to have published, I would be very happy to send in a reply for the next edition. Alternatively, if a resident wished to send a question to the newsletter, I would endeavour to publish a reply. It would obviously depend on the editor's judgement as to whether or not the question (and answer) were fit for publication.

### RICHARD WEBBER

Cllr OCC SC & Marcham Division.

[Richard.webber77@ntlworld.com](mailto:Richard.webber77@ntlworld.com) or 01235 534001

## NEWS FROM DAVID JOHNSTON MP

I spent lockdown in the constituency, in the home we got in the Didcot area in February. Whilst none of us have enjoyed lockdown, it was nice to spend an extended time in our new home. Having lived in Oxford for 6 years I was already somewhat familiar with Didcot, but spending an extended period here - rather than just the Friday-Sunday as is usually the case when parliament is sitting normally - helped us to get to know it better still.

Virtual parliament was smoother than I had expected - despite me thinking it would feel strange speaking into a webcam and having it beamed into the House of Commons. You get used to asking questions and even giving speeches from your desk, as I did on legislation such as the Domestic Abuse Bill and the Agriculture Bill.

But parliament has now returned. We still can't have more than 50 people in the House of Commons at any one time and our staff are not allowed to return yet. Some of you will have seen the very long queues when we first had to vote, but they have now come up with a much better system. Our staff can't return yet and like a lot of people they miss being in a different environment to home and seeing their colleagues, but for MPs it has been nice to be back for the same reasons.



continued on next page

## PET CARE

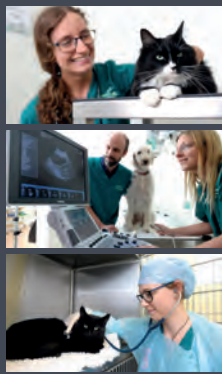


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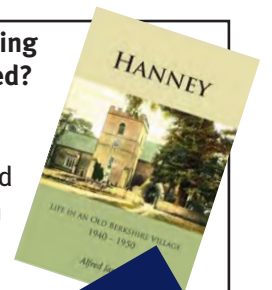
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continued from page 15

There is plenty on our plates. We have been debating a number of pieces of legislation, including the Counter-terrorism and Sentencing Bill, designed to prevent the sort of attacks we saw at the end of last year and beginning of this year. There are ongoing debates both in the House of Commons and in the Education Committee (I am a member) about the reopening of schools. I am firmly on the side of seeing all schools open for all children as soon as possible: the Children's Commissioner told our Committee that we are on course for 8 million children to be out of school for 6 months which will be damaging to all children and the most disadvantaged will suffer most.

As shops start to reopen, I'll be returning to spending at least every Friday visiting local businesses, charities and, if we can make it work, schools – keeping my distance, of course. I'd encourage everyone to try and support our local shops if they can, so they can hopefully survive what has been a very tough time. I recently invited people to nominate their volunteer hero – the individual or organisation they feel has really made a difference lately. I was pleased to see such a huge range of people and organisations nominated. The top 3 were the Ray Collins Charitable Trust, Helping Hands and Maymessy – congratulations to them all.

As ever, do get in touch if I can help via [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk)

**DAVID JOHNSTON OBE MP,**

Member of Parliament for Wantage

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

0207 219 3858 Email: [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk)

**OPEN THOUGHT**

The Oxfordshire Growth Board has set up a new web site called Open Thought, where residents can put forward their ideas on how they would like to see Oxfordshire in 30 years time. This is the chance to flaunt your creative ideas, so do go on the website and put forward your ideas :

[www.oxfordshireopenthought.org](http://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org)



It's quiz time – it'll be worth your while as our bin crews are checking green recycling bins and are not emptying those with the wrong things in.

<https://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/TheGreenRecyclingBinQuiz/>

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 Quiz queries? email [haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk) or call 01235 422425

**Nature Is Us  
and We are Nature**



I'm writing this at the start of June, amidst the loosening of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Like many others, I've been following the shielding advice, and not really been out for what must be 11 weeks? Not really sure, I'm not counting anymore.

Today is my first proper walk out, and I've headed for my 'retreat spot'. The highest part of my favourite field, just east of Oxford, offering views across Oxfordshire to where Didcot Power Station should be, and beyond. I'm sat in nature writing this and expressing my honest thoughts and feelings.

The long grass is swaying like rivers as the breeze crosses the hillside as the sun sets, and I can hear huge amounts of birds singing and what is effectively dusk from the dense hedgerows around me, and from the woods nearby. Some are flying overhead.

Plenty of Wood Pigeons, Blackcaps, a Tawny Owl, a couple of Great Spotted Woodpeckers, half a dozen Song Thrushes, a Cuckoo, a Chaffinch, Blue and Great Tits, a Wren, Robins aplenty, a handful of Blackbirds, a Crow, a Jay, Chiffchaffs. The well-established Magpie roost is forming in the hedge to my right, and a convoy of Black Headed Gulls are passing overhead, heading toward their roost at Farmoor Reservoir.

I'm noticing people seem to now be more appreciative of the nature around them after lockdown.

We've rediscovered a sense of commonality to, we've changed forever! The shared experience we've all been through, offers a new starting point to make changes, and live the life we want.

We can more easily challenge ourselves now to live better. We can challenge our leaders and decision makers to modify the systems we live by, so these integral processes are more environmentally sustainable. Democracy works from the bottom up, we have the power, especially as we are now far more linked as a community, and not disparate individuals.

We can now individually, and collectively, push on with newfound nature awareness and appreciate the nature around us in our communities. We can now push on with protecting it, starting with the nature in our gardens, flowerpots and road verges.

Whilst its worth reflecting on the fact as well, that we are part of nature, not separate from it.

The systems and habits we live by exist within the framework of nature, not outside of it.

Nature is us and we are nature.

**Happy Gardening!**

**Stuart Mabbutt**

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Who remembers the **Yellow Peril**? Back in 1989, a group from Marcham got together to write, perform and film Yellow Peril. It started as a summer holiday project but then just grew, adding actors from all over the village!

A chance email to MADNews started a hunt for an original copy and we found a VHS in the Asher's cupboard which was sent off to Dave Walton to convert to digital format, emailed back to MADNews office and is now on YouTube for everyone to enjoy.

You may recognise some of the actors, and the tune will stay with you for a while!

Michael Barrett, who played 'Chief' was taught to fly over the summer and actually landed the plane himself – but enough of the plot!

Head over to [www.madnews.co.uk](http://www.madnews.co.uk), click the link... and see for yourself! (The sound is a bit fuzzy but it was filmed in Super8, converted to 16mm and then to VHS and on to mp4.... so it has suffered.)

**Does anyone fancy making another film this summer? Ready to show in the new hall when it is open, perhaps.**



### Marcham Society Needs Your Help !

These are truly unprecedented times indeed. Marcham Society is undertaking a project to record the coronavirus lockdown and its affects on people of all ages and their everyday lives in the village.



To achieve this we are contacting as many of the villagers as we can to ask them to write a few lines or more, anecdotes or even a poem, with photos if possible, and share their experiences showing how village life has changed for them. Some ideas are to describe home schooling issues, online exercising experiences, social distancing escapades, shopping queues, neighbourhood spirit, isolation, missing family, not to mention panic buying and the temporary closure of The Crown and so on.

This will all become an historical record held for posterity so people in the future will be able to see how we coped. It may be used in future exhibitions, put on a website or published in book form at some point and if you wish to remain anonymous, that's fine.

We would really appreciate your help with this project, we can't do it without you. Please email your article to [marchamlockdown2020@gmail.com](mailto:marchamlockdown2020@gmail.com)

Thanks and best wishes from The Marcham Society

### CITIZENS ADVICE CAN HELP YOU THROUGH FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES



If you are facing financial problems in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, Citizens Advice can help find a way forward.

Citizens Advice research has revealed that currently over 13 million people are unable to pay, or expect to be unable to pay, at least one of their household bills. These bills are higher than usual in any case because the population is spending more time at home during the lockdown. For 11 million of these people, a missed bill could have drastic consequences: eviction, the bailiffs, or disconnection.

It is vital that you do not give way to despair, feel isolated with your problems and consider that you have to solve them all by yourself. For instance, Citizens Advice can help maximise your income with a benefit check if your working hours have dropped or if you are made redundant. We can help you decide on the best way to manage your debts in your individual situation.

Get in touch with us by telephone on Adviceline (**0300 330 9042**). There is also a lot of useful information on our website <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> where you can also chat online.

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Please visit our website for an update of our procedures during Covid-19

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# ALL SAINTS' & ST. LUKES CHURCHES

[www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk](http://www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk)

We are opening our doors again! **From Monday 29th June the church will be open between 9.30am and 12.30pm for private prayer and reflection.** Please can we ask that anyone visiting complies with the current governmental guidance on hygiene and social distancing. We do not yet know when we will be able to open for public services but you can join us virtually at 10am on Sunday mornings for our service over YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzLePXEjyP7\\_WRWfyHr1rmg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzLePXEjyP7_WRWfyHr1rmg) - either as the service is streaming or you can catch up later in your own time.

What an emotional rollercoaster these last few months have been... Compared to many people, I've been so fortunate. I have an income. I've not got sick. My family have been OK. Nothing compared to those who have lost their livelihoods, or who are working at the frontline. Or who have lost dear ones to this terrible virus. But I've had my disappointments. Like so many people who had lovely plans that were dashed by the unexpected. I was due to move to Scotland, to start a new life on an island, just when the lockdown hit. Suddenly there were no house moves to Scotland. No chance of contractors getting on a ferry to start work on my house. Everything on hold. Limbo. I found I was crying a lot, and realised I was suffering from grief. Nothing at all compared to the grief of people who have lost jobs, or loved ones. But my own little grief, even so. Then there was fear. At first they said Coronavirus for most people would just be like 'flu. Not too much to worry about. But that night when they said the Prime Minister had been moved to intensive care, I remember feeling scared. I grew up on my parents' stories of 'the War'. I'd always been proud of them. Dodging doodlebugs in the Blitz. Fighting with Monty. But I don't think I ever really understood what they went through. We've found a few months tough. They had their lives on hold for 6 long years. Each of us will have stories of Coronavirus to tell our children and grandchildren. And we will laugh together about all those toilet rolls. Or in my case, tins of chick peas. We've learnt more about ourselves, haven't we? Introvert or extrovert? Rule-book keeper or rebel? Glass half empty or half full? For me as a Christian, the big test has been: do I continue to trust God? I don't believe God has sent this pandemic. But sometimes God does allow terrible things to happen. It's one of those impossible mysteries. Why would a loving God allow something like Coronavirus? I don't have an answer to that. But I do know, from a lifetime of experience, that God is there, and never leaves me. If I turn to Him, I can find deep-down peace, whatever the circumstances. Up on my Scottish island, things are slowly opening up. The ferries will re-open to outsiders eventually. In the meantime, I have my lovely flat in Marcham to wait in, and to visit in the future. But now my son and his family have to return from UK to their work in Moldova, where Coronavirus is very bad. And I couldn't even hug my grandchildren goodbye.

*God: I don't know what the future holds anymore. But yes, I will trust You.*



< *Written by Mary Embleton*  
[See website for details of Covid-19 Hardship fund and Community Larder](#)

## **Contacts:**

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