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Your Independent Local Newsheet – www.madnews.co.uk

FEBRUARY 2022 VOL: 44 No: 2

READ & RECYCLE!

FREE



▲ Dawn of a new day in the new year Photos by Joe Withers



▲ Christmas Carolling see page 11



▲ Little Angels' new bikes see page 13



▲ Self portraits of House Captains see page 11



Diary for February

Date	Event	Pg
11 Fri	Valentine Party Disco, Marcham Centre, 19.30	9
12 Sat	Snow White, Wantage Parish Church, 15.00	7
14 Mon	Marcham Parish Council Meeting, Marcham Centre, venue to be confirmed 19.30	3
16 – 19	Dick Whittington, Wootton & Dry Sandford Community Centre	15
16 Wed	Arts Society: The Silver Thread, 11.00 & 14.00 Online	7
20 Sun	Deadline for next issue of MADNews, 17.00 Email editor@madnews.co.uk	
21 Mon	Marcham WI: RAF Mountain Rescue, Marcham Centre 19.30	7
22 Tue	GARD Public Meeting, Marcham Centre, 19.30	19
25 Fri	Quiz Night, Marcham Centre, 20.00	7
28 Mon	Marcham Society, James Mather: The Watlington Hoard, 19.15	7

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

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Dear Readers

February is a great month for fun – Chinese New Year and Valentine's day – a good excuse for some sweet treats, plus Shrove Tuesday with pancakes on the 1st March!

We have a great wordsearch competition this month with a chance to win a £25 voucher courtesy of Millets Farm Shop. Get a cuppa, grab a pencil and turn to page 17 to have a go.

Until next time



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Jane Mander

DEADLINES

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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Tel: 07357 464699

catherine.webber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

For other councillors go to

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Bus Changes - Reminder

The S8 Wantage to Oxford via Marcham is now run by Thames Travel and is called X1. The timetable is available at www.oxfordbus.co.uk and printed copies from Marcham Village Shop.

The S9 Wantage to Oxford via the A338 Frilford, is still operated by Stagecoach. Its revised timetable can be found at www.stagecoachbus.com

Parishioner of the Year - Reminder

The Council is again considering the possibility of an award for 2021, to be presented at the annual meeting of electors should one be able to be held later in spring. The Award recognises the efforts of local people who at any time, have significantly contributed to life within the parish. The Council would invite anyone who wishes to put forward a new suggestion, to submit a short statement of not more than 200 words, as to whom he/she wishes to nominate, and the reasons why the person should receive the award. All nominations to be emailed to the Clerk at the email address below. The Council, owing to Covid 19, was unable to give an award for the past 2 years, and the names of those previously nominated will be carried forward and considered this year along with any new nominations.

Council Tax 2022/23

The Parish Council considered its budget for 2022/23 at its January meeting. It is requesting £71,500 from the Vale of White Horse District Council to help with the costs of the parish. This sum is shared between the council tax paying properties in the parish. This element of the Council tax is currently £75.40 per band D property. This will rise slightly by an increase in the region of £1.36 next year making the amount payable £76.76. The budget can be found on the Council's website www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk. As well as needing to undertake regular maintenance, and grass cutting within the village, the Council has set aside funds for awarding £6000 in grants to organisations that support the parish, and £5000 towards the costs of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.

Play Area

The Council has a working party looking at the play area in the Anson field, and considering how this could be improved to cater for the growing village. The group will be meeting, remotely, approximately 6 weekly in order to progress ideas. If there is anyone interested in being actively involved in planning this area then please contact the Clerk.

Marcham Mill – Bridleway 17

The County Council has advised the Parish Council that work is set to commence on the repair and reconstruction of the bridge this spring, as soon as the water levels have

reduced and stabilised. At present, the plan is to have the bridge reopened this summer. As soon as the County Council has firm dates for the commencement of the work they will let the Parish Council know.

Planning Applications considered by the Council

P21/V2520/FUL Amended plans for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of a 6 bedroom dwelling (C3b) for people with highly complex disabilities at the Baptist Church Packhorse Lane. The Council maintained its earlier concerns regarding access, drainage and materials to be used.

Vale of White Horse District Council – Planning Enforcement Statement

The Vale of White Horse District Council has published a new planning enforcement statement. Councillors are attending a virtual briefing to hear about the changes

Date of Next Council Meeting:

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council is Monday 14th February, 2022 at 7.30 p.m. This may not take place as the Council is limiting face to face meetings, owing to Covid rates. Please check the Council's website www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk for the latest information 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


Thank You

Just to say many thanks to people who enquired and sent cards following my recent fall and hospital stay. I'm now happy to report that I'm home and on the mend.

A special thanks to the lady who came to my aid on the day of my fall.

Best wishes to all

Jean Dix



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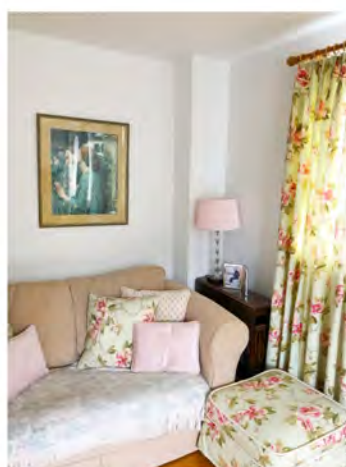
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Hidden Heroes

This month we have two!

Rachel Gaisford



Rachel has been a friend and listening ear to so many people in our community. A quick survey of the community highlighted her fantastically generous nature, green fingers, excellence as a gluten-free baker and her impressive love of chickens! However, her real hero superpower is how she cares for her community, whether practically, like organising meals for those in need or spreading joy as Head Elf of the annual Christmas wreath making at All Saints Church. Thank you Rachel for all you do, seen and unseen.

John Scoble



John faithfully turns up most Wednesday and Saturday mornings to help set up and pack away for Thirsty Cafe. A vital and mostly unseen service which we are so incredibly thankful for.

We are looking for more nominations for your Hidden Heroes. Send a name (plus a photo if you want) and a short description of why you want to nominate them – email editor@madnews.co.uk or drop a note through the editor's door at 8 Orchard Way.

February 2022

SUNDIAL



Dear Editor

Neil Rowe responded in 2020 and gave a good outlook, but the un-named response in January 2022 MADNews is unacceptable. Thomas Homes, were introduced to the villagers at a meeting, prior to any development starting, as a very professional company supporting the village financially for the Anson Trust to provide a new village hall and sports facility. Thomas Homes have possibly made good money building all the houses, flats and the village facilities on the land and building bequest by the Anson sisters to the village. The Anson Trust says that Thomas Homes are responsible for the care and custody of the sundial.

Under these circumstances they, Thomas Homes, should show their responsibility and interest in the village by replacing the sundial, at their expense, before the Anson Trust, the Trustees of the village heritage, claim on Thomas Homes insurance.

Was the theft reported to the police and a crime number issued? Was the Anson Trust and the Parish Council informed of the theft?

I have been told that the Parish Council has no knowledge of the sundial and its replacement, but they are the ones issuing the planning permission that says the facade of the Institute has to be left at the end of building as original.

The Anson Trust should be claiming replacement from Thomas Homes insurance. It must also be part of the council's remit to be responsible to see that planning consent is adhered to!

BRIAN HARROW



MADNews is online: www.madnews.co.uk

Dear Editor

I was extremely distressed to read of the theft of the above-mentioned sundial. There was a duty of care for this Scientific Instrument given to the village by the Anson Sisters. Obviously those responsible for the safe-keeping of this Sundial did not understand its importance.

Was the theft reported to the police? If not, why not?

As a member of the International Scientific Instrument Society, I could (if I had known) reported the theft to the Society, as well as to the Sundial Society; both these International Societies could at least have made their membership aware of the situation.

These wall-dials are only of use at the place to which they are fixed. Each, and there are thousands around the world, are unique.

If a reader of MADNews has a decent photograph of the missing dial then I can arrange for a notification of the theft be published in both Society journals.

JEREMY P COLLINS

PS Perhaps the thief, if he/she reads this, might be inclined to return the dial anonymously?





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1st February

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Marcham WI

Next Meeting:

7.30pm Monday, 21st February 2022

At the Marcham Centre

Open Meeting:

Al Sylvester: RAF Mountain Rescue Service

In February we will be having our Open Evening, when everyone is welcome. So please come along and bring your spouses, partners and friends to listen to our speaker, Al Sylvester. The subject of his talk will be *RAF Mountain Rescue Service*, the highs and lows of the past 75 years of this outstanding service. Wine and cheese will be served following the talk. We hope to see you there for a sociable evening with friends old and new.

For further information, please contact:

Pippa Hoath 01865 391349 pippahoath@gmail.com



The
Marcham
Society

Monday
28th February
7.15 for 7.45pm
Marcham Centre

Treasures beneath our feet and finding the Watlington Hoard

James Mather

The Watlington hoard was discovered by James Mather in 2015. During his career in Marketing, James developed a hobby in metal detecting and has had numerous exciting finds including individual Treasure items and several hoards. Once retired, he achieved his most important find to date, the very valuable and archaeologically significant Watlington Viking Hoard, now on permanent display in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Over the years James has published numerous magazine articles and has appeared on Radio Berkshire in "The Big Dig" and on National TV in Professor Alice Roberts' "Digging For Britain" series. His talk will cover some background information on responsible metal detecting, a selection of interesting local finds and the discovery, excavation, conservation and significance of the Watlington Hoard.



For more information contact
membership@marchamsociety.org.uk
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The Arts Society Abingdon is holding its monthly lecture on **Wednesday 16th February, 11.00am and 2.00pm, ONLINE ONLY**

The Silver Thread: Silver Filigree and Traditional Arts of Kosovo

by Elizabeth Gowing



From the early Kosovan silver mines, which are mentioned in Dante, a silver thread winds through Kosovo history. Its most intricate tanglings are in the country's cultural capital, Prizren, where a seventh generation of filigree artisans use 'filum' and 'granum', zigzags, 'mouse-tooth' into magic lacy creations from dull

sticks of raw material. The results – in boxes, buttons, jewellery, religious ornamentation, and the talismans of superstition – are a fine narrative of Kosovo's history and traditions.

Non-Members welcome, £6.00, **PLEASE BOOK** via email info@theartsocietyabingdon.org.uk, links to the online lecture will be sent out a day or two before.

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

QUIZ NIGHT- ALL WELCOME
FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY – VILLAGE HALL



A Quiz night will be held on the last Friday of the month in the Main Hall in Marcham Centre, starting at 8.00 pm Questions are on a range of subjects and aimed at everyone's ability! Teams of up to five people. £10 per team. Everyone welcome, just turn up on the night for a friendly evening of fun and banter.



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For further information call Trevor Hill on 01865 391321

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Marcham Centre

It was a quiet end of year for Marcham Centre, as some events were cancelled due to the high levels of omicron infection and regular hires stopped for the festive break. Since new year, regular hirers are coming back along with private bookings, so we are hopeful of returning nearer to normal.

Coming events at Marcham Centre

Friday 11th February: Valentines Disco 7:30pm – 11.30pm (adults only); entrance is free with a ticket – available from the village shop or the bar at the hall – as we need to know numbers for Covid safety purposes.

Friday 25th February: Quiz Night 7.30pm to 11pm (Adults only)

Burns Supper—Saturday 5th February 2022

We are going ahead with the Burns Supper in the large hall at Marcham Centre on Saturday 5th February at 7:30pm with appropriate Covid precautions. Numbers will be limited to allow sensible social distancing between tables.

A few tickets (£20 per person) are still available on a first-come first-served basis, covering the traditional 3-course meal and entertainment, drinks and Scottish dancing.

Those of you who have been to a Burns Supper before will know what is involved in celebrating the famous poet. We will be delighted to welcome anyone who has not been to one before. Proceeds will go to support Marcham Community Group to fund continuing capital projects at Marcham Centre.

To book tickets, please email jim.asher@btinternet.com or call **Jim or Denise Asher (391727)**. We also welcome offers of help with the event and serving tables on the night.

Indoor short-mat bowls are played in the Large Hall on Wednesday afternoons 2pm–5pm – contact **Colin Trinder (391718)** or just turn up. There is now a regular group of bowlers turning out weekly. Beginners and experienced players are equally welcome.

Table Tennis - the table tennis table is available to hire, for periods of an hour or more. This can be made by booking a slot in the meeting room via the www.marchamcentre.org website. Please note: this room is used for other purposes, so you will need to book and pay the 'local user' fee of £8 per hour. Whilst the room may not be quite large enough for the serious league player, it has proved fine for social games. So give it a try and let us know your views.

If you wish to make a booking request for a room at Marcham Centre, please use the booking request system on our website www.marchamcentre.org or contact our Coordinator, Tash Kingsbury, on coordinator@marchamcentre.org

Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, Marcham OX13 6TY
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Punch & Pie – big thank-you!

The Punch & Pie morning held in the church on 11th December by the Marcham Moldova Helpline raised a magnificent £507 to help provide much needed food parcels for Moldovan villagers.

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed in any way. A BIG THANK YOU to everyone for their generous donations. It was lovely to see people chatting and enjoying each other's company on the day
DENISE ASHER 391727



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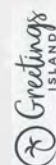


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Have you felt lonely recently? Would you like to join others for a walk in nature and explore your local green space?

Thanks to funding from OCF (Oxfordshire Community Fund) Earth Trust are running a series of mindful walks at 3 of our beautiful greenspaces.

Walking within nature will be the main focus of the walks, but there will be time to chat and get to know each other.

Walks are run by an Earth Trust tutor and supported by our volunteers. Walks will happen even when raining but might be slightly shorter!

Sign up at earthtrust.org.uk/walking-in-nature

Spaces are limited, so booking is essential
Over 18s only please

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**CAROL SINGING IN MARCHAM
DECEMBER 2021**

Shortly before Christmas a merry band of carol singers, braved a chilly evening singing carols in and around the village. Warming mulled wine and mince pies in the church at the end helped to make this a most enjoyable evening. One group was led by Martin Poon with the Vicar, Nick Weldon, and the other by Hugh Lawton and his guitar. On behalf of All Saints Carol Singers, many thanks to all who supported this event. *See cover for photo.*



CORAL RAG

Since 2001 the Marcham Society has published eleven volumes of 'Coral Rag' containing articles covering topics of local interest, including Natural History, Geography, Archaeology and History. Copies are on sale in the Village Shop.



We invite anyone with an interest in a particular aspect of local history to submit an article for the next issue.

For more information or to express an interest, please email Sheila Tilley : sheilajtilley@gmail.com.

Alternatively please follow this link to the Marcham Society website: www.marchamsociety.org.uk/contact.php



MARCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

This Academic year, we have been able to complete elections for pupil offices in school. There were roles available in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All interested candidates were given a week to prepare a speech on why they wanted the role and these were either given to a class vote, or for some roles (such as School House Captains) I was involved in the interviews. Congratulations to all those who were courageous and committed enough to put themselves forward for election. I was genuinely blown away by the quality of the answers and the considered responses of the interviewees. It did make me think that, if our pupils continue in this way, we have young people who will make a significant and positive impact on our world. They were all amazing!

I wanted to properly introduce our four **House Captains** who have now been in their roles since October – here they tell you why they wanted the role and what they have been up to so far.

Daniel W for Duffield

Daniel said he was a Vice-Captain when he was younger and thought going for this role would give him skills he can use later in life. When he took part in the election process, he found it fun but was horribly nervous at the time of giving his speech! So far in his role as House Captain, he has written information leaflets for all of his members. They are for both key stages and aim to explain each of the school values – including quotes from Dr Seuss 'Unless someone like you cares a lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not'.

Bella C for Denman

Bella was a Vice-Captain and on the Eco-Committee lower down the school. She really enjoyed her time in those roles so wanted to carry on in a position of responsibility and apply her skills. She was so excited to be elected and could recount when everyone found out in the whole school assembly. Bella has, along with the other House Captains, been focusing on the system for collecting and counting House Points. She and her Vice-Captains (Beatrice and Willow) have met with the other houses to discuss this and combine ideas from across the school.

Scarlet W for Morland

Scarlet has taken various roles in her time at Marcham – including being a Vice-Captain, being on the Eco-Committee and on the School Council so she knew that being House Captain would be lots of fun. She really wants to be useful and help the school. Her main role so far has been to keep track of House Points effectively. She has plans to create some posters to advertise ideas on how to gain and count House Points to better the system for everyone (but of course, Morland for the win!)

Emily W for Anson

Emily joined as a new student in September this year but had been on the school council in her previous school so knew the role was an opportunity to get involved in school life. She is keen to look for solutions that involve input from everyone. She has really enjoyed the role so far and being involved in meetings with the Headteacher and working with other House Captains. There is a plan for a competition where everyone in the school will be challenged to write 'What makes our school amazing?' from which winning entries can be selected. So watch this space...!

Well done all of you! We are excited about what you will continue to do to make Marcham school an even better place to learn, to grow and to thrive.

To see more about what the school has been up to go to <https://www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/class-pages/>
VIV HUTCHINSON, HEADTEACHER

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MARCHAM PRE-SCHOOL

We had an a-mazing start to the year.... The children drew their own mazes, created them with blocks and got lost in our own ginormous cardboard maze!



Thank you to all the parents for their support during our COVID closure - we're back and raring to go!

We will be allocating places for September 2022 in March... so if you'd like to register your interest please get in touch today.

Contact us 01865 392101
 Marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk
 www.marcham-preschool.weebly.com



A-mazing!



We have started the new year with a lot of amazing activities. We all returned at the start of the year with a team training day where we had a speaker who gave the team a talk about "Positive Approaches to Behaviour" it was really interesting and great to have a outside speaker to give a different perspective on things. This was followed with a lunch and planning for the next 90 days. A great first day of 2022.



Yellow Room

The Yellow Room has been really getting into colours over the last few weeks, focusing on a different colour each day to ensure that the younger children and babies really start to learn and recognise colours. The activities have been varied with paintings, collage, fun with coloured balls and matching colours, e.g. coloured hats to back up the learning and recognition of coloured items. The children really became involved in the colour hat game where objects of matching colours were hidden under the hats, a fun activity. The garden has been an adventure with everything icy and sparkling in the mornings has been an interesting environment for the babies to discover. And the staff have put the weather to good use by filling up the trays with water over night to have wonderful ice displays when the children arrive in the mornings.

Green Room

The Green Room has been busy enjoying the cold weather and mark making in the frost along with walks around the village and visits to the park. They have been focusing this month on turn taking and learning to share in particular the new bikes, the children produced a stop and go sign and took turns controlling the traffic, they learnt to place their name on the chalk board in order to ensure they were on the list to take a turn on the bikes. All good skills to encourage literacy, social development and physical development.

Teal Room

The Teal Room has been having fun with a lot of sensory play, in particular they spent a long concentrated time on water pasted using it like cement to build brick walls and structures, they have been busy spending time with the cold weather exploring the sparkling cobwebs and ice that has formed in the garden, the path with its heavy frosting allowed the children to create wonderful patterns with their footprints

Winne the Pooh Day

The whole nursery took part in the Winnie the Pooh day, children arrived some dressed in Winnie the Pooh clothes along with their bears and had teddy bear picnics, tasted honey and had Pooh bear stories, they collected sticks and using a large water tray with long brick over as a bridge created the pooh stick game. Pooh masks were made and everybody joined in to celebrate this special Winnie the Pooh day.

If you are interested in securing a place for your child please contact us:

T: 01865 819992E: info@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

www.littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

follow us on Facebook: littleangelsmarcham

Pop-up Café Find us in Marcham Centre at the usual times:

- Wednesday 9-11am
- Saturday 9-11:30am

Volunteer with us

As a community café we rely completely on our fantastic volunteers to open each week. We would love for you to join our team. There are a variety of roles across Wednesday and Saturday sessions. Please speak to a member of the team, email, or call us if you're interested in getting involved.

Website: www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

Email: hello@thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

Phone: 07871 208811, Mon-Fri, 9 am-12 noon



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2022

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All classes are £5 and are streamed on zoom, recordings are
available too. for more info please contact Stu
stu-zumba@hotmail.co.uk

Drop-ins are welcome, See you In class!!

Premature Awakenings

Another year does dawn, and already record high temperatures have been recorded for the time of year. So global warming really is occurring then, whether or not you believe human activity is causing it, or, just making it worse. 'It', being the natural warming and cooling cycles of the planet itself.



I'm already seeing people out in their gardens at this unseasonably warm time of year. The new season vigour and energy, so visibly seen, is something to behold. Don't be too keen though, as a cold snap could still do a lot of damage.

Alongside, keep in mind the wildlife that shares our gardens with us, may still be hibernating, so try not to disturb it too much, too early. Otherwise, you'll risk unsettling the balance. Much of what's hibernating could well be the predators of what we call pests, so they're our friends and companions.

Hibernation is a way many creatures survive the cold, without needing to forage for food, or migrate to somewhere warmer. Animals may die during hibernation from lack of fat, really severe weather, or premature disturbance by us, if we are out gardening early in the year.

So although many gardeners are already waking up early this year, due to the warmer than normal spell, remember, that hibernating creatures are not as adaptable as us to going back into hibernation once disturbed if the weather happens to get bad again for any extended period.

Let's enjoy the warmer winter by all means, but let's do it with balance.

Happy Gardening!

Stuart Mabbutt

01865 747243 www.wildmaninspires.co.uk

When you dispose of any face masks, snip off the ear straps before you throw them away. Hundreds of tangled animals have had to be rescued from them. Takes a moment, makes a huge difference

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SCAN ME



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As winter approaches, it's vital that we can keep the most vulnerable people in Oxfordshire moving as we recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Hundreds of people across Oxfordshire are already benefiting, with participants saying, "It's the best I've felt in years" and "I have increased my walking and started to feel more positive about things."

Find out more today:

www.getoxfordshireactive.org/move-together

February 2022

BEAVERS

For fun, friendship and activities that get you thinking as well as doing.

The 5th Abingdon (Marcham) Scout Group are pleased to announce that we are planning on starting a Beaver colony in March.

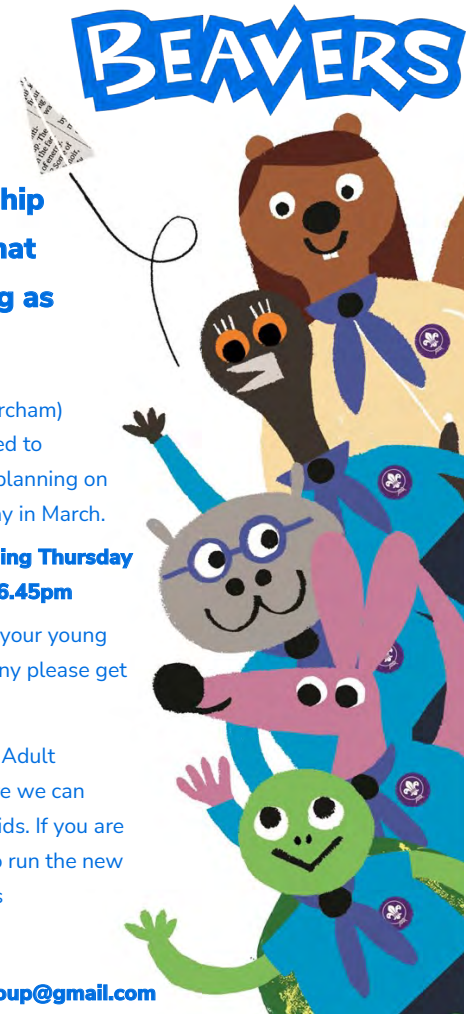
We are planning running Thursday evenings from 5.45—6.45pm

If you are interested in your young people joining the colony please get in touch.

We are also in need of Adult volunteers to make sure we can accommodate all the kids. If you are interested in helping to run the new section please email us

Email :

5thabingdonscoutgroup@gmail.com



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Find all the words in the list. Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other. Once you find all the words, copy the unused letters starting in the top left corner into the blanks below to reveal the hidden phrase. (You will have some letters left over at the end.)

----- / ----- / -----
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Email your answer to editor@madnews.co.uk or drop a note in for the Editor at 8 Orchard Way, Marcham to go into a draw for a chance to win a £25 Millets Farm Shop voucher. **Deadline for entries is 15th February.**

- | | | |
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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This month, I thought I would highlight a few news items from the VWHDC website newspaper.

THE RESERVOIR

Some of you may have seen that at the last Full Vale council meeting, councillors passed unanimously a motion opposing Thames Waters' proposition for a four-square-miles, banded reservoir to be built in the Vale and demanded more evidence for the need for such a reservoir and its environmental impact. It was also agreed to recommend to the water services watchdog OFWAT that a carbon calculation is conducted on the proposals. This would scrutinise the amount of carbon produced and, it is hoped, result in Thames Water detailing how it planned to reduce the carbon footprint of its proposal and how quickly it could achieve this.

Thames Water are going through a 4 Gate consultation, and the results of the first one has just been published. It shows a lot of opposition to the reservoir and the demand for much more scientific evidence for the need, especially as the forecast from ONS suggests that our population numbers will drop rather than rise in the future. There are other more climate friendly and cheaper alternatives to a reservoir. I would highly recommend that you come along to **Marcham Centre on 22nd February (7.00-9.00)** to hear a presentation from a highly-informed scientist from GARD, who will take any questions you want to ask.

TREE RECYCLING

Most of you will know that you can recycle your Christmas tree by putting it in your brown bin for collection or taking it to a recycling site. But what you may not know is what happens to it then. It is sent to be composted, and in Christmas 2020, 1,599 trees were composted and saved 0.45 tonnes carbon from being emitted into the atmosphere through incineration. That's the same as

*making 849,056.60 cups of tea

* charging 833.33 phones each day for a year.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Our Community Hub has had a fairly busy start to the year supporting residents. Since 4th January we have handled 142 enquiries, mostly around financial hardship and food poverty, and 135 people were referred for additional support.

We've also made 241 calls to people told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace to offer further support. There have been 31 successful applicants so far this month for the £500 test and trace support payment, and we've also been able to allocate additional supermarket voucher support to 12 of these residents.

ROUGH SLEEPERS

For the first time since 2013, no rough sleepers were recorded on 31st December 2021 in either the Vale or SODC. Both councils are committed to ending rough sleeping and, through targeted prevention and early intervention measures, the housing needs team have 85% success rate. There are a small number of entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs, people who have physical and mental health issues and had previously refused help. By working with partner agencies, the team have found them appropriate support and accommodation so that their future looks more promising in 2022. If you know anyone who may be at risk, please contact: housing@southandvale.gov.uk

HELP MAKE NIGHT-TIME SAFER

SODC and VWHDC want to hear from anyone who has felt unsafe in either town on a night out, or when returning from an evening out elsewhere, such as Oxford.

The two councils are working with Oxford city, who has been awarded £426,000 government grant to introduce measures to help prevent violence against women and girls travelling in and out of Oxford at night.

RETROFITTING HOMES

As you will know, if we are to meet our target of achieving a carbon zero district by 2045 and country by 2050, one of our biggest hurdles is to retrofit our homes to make them sustainable. The leader of the Vale council is calling for a nationally funded and sustainable scheme across the country to ensure the energy efficiency of existing housing stock through installing insulation or carbon neutral heat pumps. Furthermore, she is calling on the government to guarantee that at least 2,250 homes per year in the Vale are retrofitted if we are to meet our carbon zero targets. However, there is also a critical shortage of workers across the UK who have the skills to retrofit homes, and the Vale is lobbying the government and working with its partners to identify what action could be taken locally to address the skills gap.

CAN YOU HELP US SPREAD THE WORD TO REDUCE YOUR WASTE IN 2022?

The Vale and SODC are running a short social media campaign at the start of the year to remind people to reduce their waste where possible. This supports the councils' joint aim to help tackle the climate emergency. Why not join in and share the councils' social media posts? Among the messages, they are asking people to buy fruit without packaging, to seek out zero-waste products and to buy previously owned products where possible. They are also reminding people to use reusable water bottles and shopping bags too.

You can see them on our websites here:

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/reducing-your-waste-increasing-your-reuse/>



And on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/whitehorsedc/videos>.

I hope this has given you a brief idea of some of the things that are happening in the Vale. You can always find out more by looking on the VWDC website.

CATHERINE WEBBER Cllr VWHDC

District Councillor for Marcham Ward

Phone: 07357 464699

or catherine.webber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

My children like to make sure that I am fully informed and updated on any new ideas and ways of thinking. This Christmas, I was given a book by a young, eminent Dutch economist who is passionate that many of our economic problems could be solved with a universal basic income given to everyone together with policies providing housing to the homeless free of charge and obligation. He believes that there is overwhelming evidence that the homeless, the unemployed and those below the poverty line would respond very positively. Whilst I am not fully persuaded, I am intrigued enough to start reading the economist's follow up book.

However, in our part of Oxfordshire - particularly in the Vale - we have, thankfully, very low unemployment, homelessness and poverty. But we do have a related problem, and it is getting steadily more acute. This is the problem of housing affordability. A few weeks ago, I was approached by a young local scientist who was despairing of ever being able to get onto the housing market. He was in his early thirties, on a well above average salary but had no access to bank of mum and dad. He had been saving towards a house deposit but price increases were outstripping his rate of savings. The village he would like to stay in now had almost nothing for sale under £350,000. There are almost certainly far more people in our area in this bracket than those in poverty.

One possible solution is simply to build more homes. We've been trying that for some years now. The latest government survey had both VWHDC and OCC in the top 10 of 150 councils for

the numbers of houses built since 2010. But whilst housebuilders insist on building more large homes for the wealthy and London commuters, this simply feeds more house price inflation. We need more affordable housing or rather, housing that people can afford. But there is little profit for developers in low cost, affordable housing. And there is no evidence in this country that building more houses reduces house prices.

With some ingenious use of capital reserves, VWHDC has managed to build 10 affordable homes in the past year. Very few councils have been able to do this and, anyway, it is a drop in the ocean of what is needed. Without major changes in the way councils are allowed to finance building, it is doubtful that solutions lie in this direction.

So how does a wealthy area like ours provide homes that the next generation of local residents can afford? No one really knows. There is, however, some unlikely light at the end of the tunnel. Latest ONS statistics suggest that population numbers in this country (and indeed worldwide) are falling. This may give us some economic challenges, but fewer people need fewer houses. If this trend continues, one might expect a steady downward pressure on house prices which would allow more young people to get on the housing ladder. It would also mean less house building in the future.

But does this mean that the solution lies in less economic growth? I need to get on with my Dutch economist's next book.

RICHARD WEBBER Cllr OCC SC & Marcham Division.
Richard.webber77@ntlworld.com or 01235 534001

MP'S REPORT

I held my debate on the role of developers, house-builders and management companies at the beginning of January. You can watch it on my Facebook page, but I used as many constituency examples as I could of the low-quality of some homes; their environmental impact; the lack of affordable homes; the role of management companies, who charge large fees for very little work; and the overall broken process by which the houses come into being, including the failure to provide the infrastructure that is always promised.

My recommendations included ensuring a higher building standard for the homes; 'use it or lose it' planning permission; making builders build to the latest environmental standards, not the ones that existed when they got planning permission (often several years before); a tougher regime for management companies that prevents them hiking their fees and treating home-owners the way they do; and for the infrastructure to support new homes to go in first, as people no longer believe it will follow afterwards.

As I said, my campaigns for better infrastructure – including Grove Station to be reopened, improvements to the A420 and A34 and much better medical facilities for the constituency – are the least we should see given the number of houses we've had. There was quite a bit of cross-party support for what I said, and it is something I will return to regularly.

Making predictions about Covid is a mug's game but, at the time of writing, we do seem in a much better place to what we were last year. I am glad that people could, in general, have a better Christmas and New Year than they did the year before. I am particularly pleased our schools have remained open for all children (most were open for at least vulnerable children throughout the pandemic) as it is the best place for them to learn.

Regular readers will know I am the lead parliamentary sponsor of the Local Electricity Bill, which would enable local communities to buy their energy from local, renewable sources. At the moment a community operation generating renewable energy would have to pay in the region of £1 million set-up costs to access the grid and agree to supply the whole country, rather than just, for example, their local village. This year, I'll be chairing a new All Party Parliamentary Group of MPs and Lords to try and help push this forward.

I know many of you are continuing to have problems with your post. I am in regular contact with Royal Mail about this, which is something I held a debate on in Parliament in June 2021 and which I have raised multiple times. As ever, the Royal Mail staff are working hard but something is still not working correctly. I'll continue to keep on the case of Royal Mail HQ.

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

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Through to the next stage

There have been lots of developments this month regarding the proposed Abingdon reservoir. The regulator has released their view on the water companies' recent submissions as to how they will provide water over the next 50 years and the reservoir has been given the go-ahead to proceed to the next development stage. This is very disappointing, but not unexpected. It is also disappointing that the regulator has largely ignored many of the points against the reservoir raised by local groups, organisations, and councils.

The regional water company grouping, called Water Resources Southeast, are due to reveal their big plans in the week beginning 17th Jan and there will be a consultation period. Once we formally receive the plans and can analyse them, we will be highlighting what local people and organisations can do to help fight these proposals.

The proposed reservoir

As a reminder, the reservoir will be the largest of its kind in Europe, rising 25m above the ground and filling the area between Marcham, Abingdon, Drayton, Steventon and East Hanney – the construction will be at least 10 years of misery for us.

We know that much of the information on which the reservoir has been planned so far is incorrect. As a simple example, an increasing population is one of the main reasons why Thames Water argue that it's needed. For the last 4 years we have been trying to get them to use sensible figures for this increase, rather than the ludicrous worst-case scenario they always seem to use. Only this week, the Office for National Statistics published figures reducing their expectation for future UK population increases - due to the falling birth rate, deaths will now outnumber births for the foreseeable future. In fact, immigration is now the only reason why numbers will stabilise or increase. This is the 4th update in a row where the ONS has lowered its forecasts and any actual increase will only be a fraction of what Thames Water are planning on. This fact alone makes the argument for the reservoir ridiculous.

Upcoming meetings & opposing the reservoir

We have lots of meetings coming up with Thames Water, local MPs, Oxfordshire County Council and VOWH District Council, where we will be helping to develop a unified opposition. Next month we can let you know how you can respond to the consultation and help get this stopped. Evening public meetings (7:30pm) are being finalised across local villages. Dates so far are:

- Friday 4th and 25th February – Steventon Village Hall
- Friday 11th February – Drayton Small Hall
- Monday 21st February – Hanney Memorial Hall
- **Tuesday 22nd February – Marcham Centre**
- Thursday 24th February – East Hendred Snells Hall
- Monday 28th February – Garford Village Hall

More details will follow or keep an eye on www.gard-oxon.org.uk and Facebook @abingdonreservoir.

ALL SAINTS' & ST. LUKES CHURCHES

www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk



“Where is the love?” sang the Black Eyed Peas in 2003, the year Jane and I got married. Despite it being a protest song rather than a love song, it still comes to mind as we approach Valentine’s Day again. It falls on a Monday this year, which is not the best. I find Monday evenings tend to be filled with domestic chores and ferrying children to activities if I’m not at a church meeting. Maybe I’ll push the boat out and surprise Mrs Weldon this year with a romantic dinner for two, not least because I’m wondering where the love is here in the parish. We currently have no weddings in the diary for either of our two churches. It is the first time in 15 years of ordained ministry that I don’t have a wedding in my diary. There is to be a renewal of marriage vows at All Saints in the Spring, but apart from that, where is the love? The number of church weddings is in decline nationally. Civil ceremonies have remained steady at about 175 thousand a year in England and Wales since 2000. Church weddings number about 50 thousand services a year, a drop of two thirds since 1992. So that is part of the story sadly. It’s decades since this parish had lots of weddings every year, and I think the main reason for that is changing demographics. But even so, for the last 20 years, Marcham and Garford have averaged 3 weddings a year, so one would expect some in 2022. Perhaps there are other factors... a lack of affordable reception venues, and couples increasingly marrying where they meet rather than where one is from. If you can think of other possible reasons, I’d really like to know. Maybe the pandemic has quenched the love. At the very least, I hope those of us that are married will take a little more care to treasure our spouses this year, being a better example to those that might follow. Taking weddings is one of the best parts of my job, and both our churches are wonderful venues. If you or any family members are interested, there is a dedicated weddings page on our website with more information.

Regular Services

Sunday

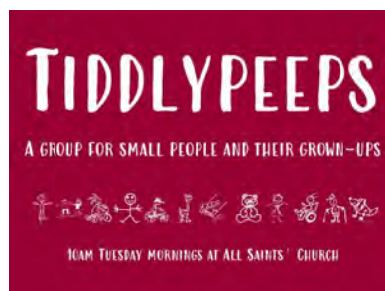
10am: Morning service at All Saints *(except our All-Age service on the first Sunday of the month at Marcham Community Centre)*

11am-12pm: Open church at St. Luke’s Garford

6pm: Evening Service at All Saints

Wednesday Holy Communion

10.30am at Duffield Place



From the Registers:

Baptism: Charlie Taylor

Contacts:

Rev. Nick Weldon vicarvicar@allsaintsmarcham.org **01865 391962**, **Rob Finch Youth Worker** 07888331708, rob@marchamyouth.org **Jill Rowe Children and Families minister** families@allsaintsmarcham.org **Tamsin Gilbert Parish Administrator & Churchwarden** info@allsaintsmarcham.org **Neil Rowe Churchwarden** 07915527563