

MAD News

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

December 2023 Vol 45 No.12

Your Independent Local News Source



Season's Greetings



Editor's Column

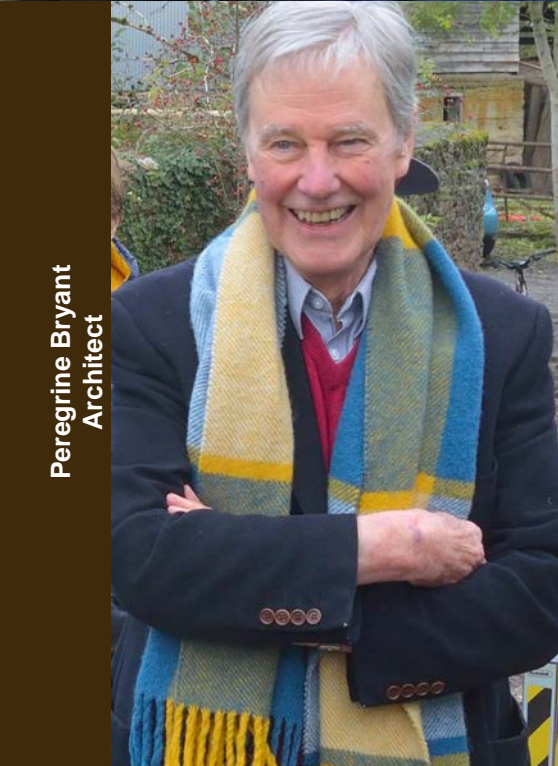
Last month we featured the celebration of the Mill bridge re-opening. This month we feature those behind the scenes personnel who worked tirelessly, without whose work, the bridge would still be in a state of disrepair. Many thanks to each of you.



Richard Webber
County Councillor



Sally Stradling
Listed Buildings
& Conservation Officer



Peregrine Bryant
Architect



Mark Harvie
Chair - Parish Council



Hugh Potter
OCC Group Manager
Countryside Operations

PUBLISHER / EDITOR

Paul Harwood
Tel: 07434 664343
Email: editor@madnews.co.uk
Website: www.madnews.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Fran Russell:
adverts@madnews.co.uk
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Paula Utting and Claire Wright
13 Parkside, Marcham
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Advertising: 5pm 15th month
Other copy: **5pm 15th *** December only *****
except for the Jan edition when it is 15th Dec for both.

ADDITIONAL COPIES

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

DISCLAIMER

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

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Tel: 01235 534001
Richard.webber77@ntlworld.com

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Marcham and Shippon

Robert Clegg, 42 Harding Way, Marcham, OX13 6FJ
Tel: 07784225290
robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
For other councillors go to www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Age UK Oxfordshire

As we move into the colder and darker months, we become acutely aware of the role we all have in looking out for vulnerable older people in our communities.

Winter can be tough at any age, but it's particularly challenging for older people who face additional health risks, and increased feelings of loneliness and isolation. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis with rises in food and energy prices, is causing many local older people to worry about staying healthy and keeping their homes warm.

We are asking please for your support in supporting older people in Oxfordshire this winter. We have brought together some useful information and resources in the form of an online Winter Hub - please share this resource with both older people and those supporting them this winter. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/winter-hub/>



We are also aware that not everyone has or wants access to the internet so we have created physical Winter Wellbeing packs which we can post out to you for any older people or groups you support / connect with (photo attached of contents).

These contain:

- An introductory letter
- Our 'Little Handbook of our Services'
- A Live Well Oxfordshire bookmark
- A Winter Wrapped up Guide (from Age UK)
- An Oxfordshire Talking Therapies leaflet
- Our Cost-of-Living Payment Grid

Please get in touch via

contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

or 0345 450 1276 if it would be helpful to receive some packs, or any of these items individually.

Just a reminder too that we have a Cost-of-Living Hub on our website with lots of useful information - <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/cost-of-living-hub/>

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

GARD has written to the Secretary of State for DEFRA (Therese Coffey) to ask her to confirm the timetable for her decision on the Thames Water plans, and particularly for the Mega-Reservoir. Our information on the grapevine is that this will be around the end of November. We will let all residents know her decision (Newsletter or Village website).

Until then, GARD will continue to send in our list of unresolved Issues about the Reservoir plan, which Thames Water refuse to answer properly. Looking at TW's "Statement of Response", GARD finds that they did not actually answer criticisms properly. If you feel that they have not answered complaints you made to Thames Water in the consultation, you can write to the Environment Agency and/or Ofwat and complain. This should be done as soon as possible, so it can inform the Secretary of State's decision. Email your complaint to one of these and please Copy to your MP and to GARD.

Environmental and water quality issues:

water.resources@defra.gsi.gov.uk,

and

water-company-plan@xn-environmentagency-0z2j.gov.uk

Costs to customers, leakage and water efficiency issues:

wrrmp@ofwat.gov.uk

In the meantime, Thames Water are on a 'charm offensive' trying to sell the Reservoir plans to local residents. They were met by protesters at their 'Drop-in event' at East Hanney Village Hall on 10th November, when Councillor Sally Povolotsky and Helen Marshall (Oxfordshire Director for CPRE) were interviewed by Press and TV. Thanks to all protesters, including other Vale and Parish Councillors from Steventon, East Hanney and East Hendred. Thames Water gave the usual PR-based presentation (not a bulldozer in sight on any of the posters, one assumes the work will be done by birds and butterflies). We are promised 'leisure facilities' (which we already have, and which they have no idea how they will provide, after devastating the area), but our questions on disruption, pollution, flooding and safety of the structure were brushed aside. We must keep up the pressure for the Reservoir plans to be scrapped!

Details for contacting your MP: make your voice count:

David Johnston, Wantage and Layla Moran, Abingdon

david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk

layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

Please copy gard.secretary@gmail.com into any correspondence and see the website for developments <https://www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk/>

Derek Stork
Chairman GARD



Is It A Sign?

Is it me, or did the leaves not change to their Autumn shades as early this year?

Normally, September and October is when I become aware of the vivid colour changes, but truth be told, I didn't really seem to start noticing it until November. At the same time, I noticed a couple of Daffodils, with leaves already 6 inches tall, when I was visiting the village of Flore, in Northamptonshire.

Meanwhile, at the same time again, locally here, in Oxfordshire, I noticed some spring 'weeds' already emerging, and even a number of Dandelions in full bloom, months earlier than they should have been. I remember when I lived in The Peak District, the fields there were often bright yellow with Dandelions in late Spring and Early Summer, so was taken aback to see so many in flower here in November.

Is this a sign of global warming, whether it's man-made or not, or do you see these anomalies year on year?

I'd be interested to hear what you are seeing at a time of year that maybe you shouldn't. Or what you are in fact not seeing that realistically perhaps you should.

We're not likely to end the debate in these pages of whether man-made influenced global warming is real or not, but I am interested to hear what is happening out there on the ground as it were.

By the way, I have been asked if I will be seen out and about less now I occasionally need to use a wheelchair. No chance, I'll be getting my wheels just as muddy as my walking boots, so I hope to bump into you in a greenspace soon. If you see me out and about, come say "hello".

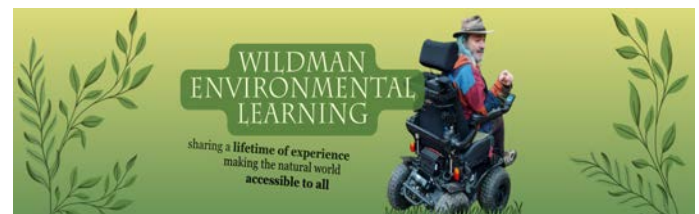
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The type of help that can be provided are services such as new boilers, repairs to boilers, loft or cavity wall insulation, access to a local and trustworthy repairs service and general advice on how to stay safe, well and affordably warm in your home.

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Triumph in North Abingdon as funding is secured for Lodge Hill Diamond Junction

After more than 30 years of campaigning, local Liberal Democrats have today secured the funding for the completion of Lodge Hill Junction on the A34.

Lodge Hill junction is a vital piece of local infrastructure, with local Liberal Democrats campaigning for the junction to be completed with south-facing slip roads for more than 30 years. The upgrade will reduce traffic flow through the centre of Abingdon and support development in the area.

The government backed the scheme in 2017, promising £9 million of funding. The County Council proceeded on that basis, securing Growth Deal funding and contributions from housing developers. But the government reneged on their promise and dropped the funding last year.



The £28 million project has been one of local MP Layla Moran's top priorities since being selected as a candidate in 2012. She raised the project in her first speech in the House of Commons in 2017, and has continued to press the government for action ever since. In April, Layla held a debate in Parliament on the project, where a Minister revealed that a portion of funding was available and waiting for sign off from the Treasury.

Layla has met with Ministers, written several letters to the Secretary of State for Levelling up and the Chancellor, and raised the issue in the House of Commons, urging the government to release the funding as soon as possible.

After months of delay, the final piece of funding had finally been secured, with £17.3m coming from Homes England. This means the project has now been given the go-ahead. Local Liberal Democrats joined Layla Moran MP at the site to celebrate.

Speaking afterwards Layla Moran MP said:

"I am incredibly excited that this vital piece of local infrastructure has finally been given the go-ahead. The plans have been shovel-ready for months, with money from the County Council and developers ready and waiting. It was high time the government made good on their promises".

"Local Lib Dem councillors have been tirelessly campaigning for years, determined to see local residents get the infrastructure they deserve. Abingdon's County Councillors, Alison Rooke, Nathan Ley and Neil Fawcett, have worked really hard to keep the County Council moving on the project."

"I look forward to being there to cheer when the first shovel hits the ground".

Abingdon East County Councillor Alison Rooke said:

"Local residents will be delighted to hear this news. This shows what happens when you elect Liberal Democrats. We've worked tirelessly to get this project over the line. In the face of broken promises, empty words, and interminable delays from the government, we have not stopped fighting for what Abingdon needs".



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Marcham Guides & Brownies

During a sunny weekend in September, Marcham guides went camping - our first camp since pre covid. We all had a great time and took part in lots of challenging activities.

On Sunday 19th November, Marcham Guides Brownies and Rainbows gathered at Marcham Centre for a circus skills workshop. It was great fun and we learnt how to spin plates, juggle, balance feathers and much more. We had great fun making juggling balls and had pizzas for lunch. Part of the day was the enrolment of our two newest Guides and a very special presentation of two Gold Awards (the top award in Guides), to Bethan Platt and Charlotte Wilson. Congratulations to Bethan and Charlotte and well done for all your hard work.

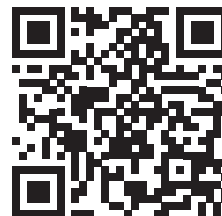


If anyone would like more details on;
Guides (10 - 14+) Brownies(7 - 10) or Rainbows (5 - 7),
please contact Jill Rowe (Guides), 07811 165351





The
Marcham
Society



Marcham Society Astronomy Group

Thursday 14th December 2023

at 19.00 in the Small Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY

"The Christmas Star" - studies into its origin via a 'balloon debate'

All members welcome. Guests £5.00

www.MarchamSociety.org.uk

The Poppy Report

We've just completed counting all the collection pots for the 2023 Poppy Appeal and I can confirm this year's collection has raised.....

£4786.98 - a great amount!

We would like to thank everyone who has donated in the Marcham, Garford and the Frilford community, this will ensure that The Royal British Legion can continue to give help to all service men, women and families who have served or are serving our country.

A thank-you again to Malcolm and Christine Denton for their help guiding us through this year's Appeal.

Jamie and Nikki Butcher.



Ring found in Marcham



Phone Editor - number in panel on page 2

This ring, and it is a nice one, remains unclaimed for over a month now.

Maybe one of your guests or relatives has mislaid it while visiting Marcham.



Thirsty Café

A huge thankyou to everyone who has helped to make the Café successful during October and November. The Café has been very busy during the Wednesday and Saturday morning sessions, especially when there are football matches on the field with many parents watching their children, needing a hot drink and food as the weather gets colder.

We are holding a special Christmas Community Lunch at Marcham Centre on Wednesday 13th December from 12.00-14.00.

Unlike our usual monthly lunches this one needs to be pre booked. We will be serving a full Christmas dinner. The price of the lunch will be £10 for adults and £5 for children. People can book in the Café via Sum Up or via our website,

www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk/product/christmas-community-lunch



We are looking for a volunteer who will coordinate the monthly community lunches in the future. This event has become very popular with adults and children all enjoying themselves. Thirsty Café would very much like to continue hosting the lunches but an organiser is desperately required to help us do this.

On Thursday December 7th Thirsty Café is holding a coffee morning in The Crown Marcham 11.00-13.00.

Coffee and tea will be served with a mince pie, and over the lunch hour soup and a bread roll will be served. Come and meet friends to have a chat in friendly surroundings.

We have received a lot of feedback recently about how valued the Café is to the community. We need volunteers to help us on Wednesday and Saturday mornings to help us keep Thirsty Café successful. Any time you can give us would be appreciated. It is a wonderful way to meet local people and be part of the community.

We are also currently looking for someone to take over the role of voluntary Treasurer. Do get in touch to find out more if you think you have the skills and the appetite to take this on.

Dates for Diary

Coffee morning in The Crown on Thursday December 7th (See above)

Christmas Community Lunch Wednesday 13th December. (See above)

**Last Café this year will be Saturday December 16th .
2024 Thirsty Café is back Wednesday 10th January.**

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MCG Public meeting and AGM

Marcham Community Group (MCG) held a well-attended AGM on 17th October. The accounts and updated Articles were approved unanimously by members. Dan Barnes and Mike Hoath were re-elected as trustees and Suzanne Crafer has stepped down. We now have one trustee vacancy which we are seeking to fill.

Future plans for MCG were discussed. Details were given of how the MCG Community Investment fund has already supported local community groups and activities.

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

Marcham Centre closure

Marcham Centre will be closed with no bookings from 24th December to 5th January to allow us to carry out essential maintenance and decoration work. In preparation for fitting new flooring in the Store area, everything in the store (including the shelving units) will be moved into the main hall between 27th and 29th December and back again on 5th January. We will be contacting all organisations with equipment in the store to arrange for it to be moved and we will seek your hands-on assistance with this task.

Volunteers

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

Events at Marcham Centre

Friday 15th Dec: Quiz Night: Adults only - 19.30 for 20.00 prompt start.

Friday 12th Jan: Family Bingo: Eyes down at 19:30.

Indoor short-mat bowls are held every Wednesday at 14.00 (14.30 on Community Lunch Days).

Please contact Colin Trinder (c_trinder@btinternet.com) or just turn up.

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 £8.00 per hour. Please remember to bring your own bats and balls.

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



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People often say to me in late November... “Coming up to your busy time of year again Vicar.” If I could have a penny for every time I heard that, Mrs Weldon would get an even bigger Christmas present. “True,” I reply, “but some regular things in the diary do stop for Christmas,” I usually add. December is a busy time for me from a work point of view but I think it is family life in the run-up to Christmas that makes life much busier, and that is the same for many households, not just a vicarage one. We have to be careful not to let the busyness of the festive season take over. Having said that, there will be some who long for a busy Christmas, but for particular reasons won’t get one this year. Perhaps your Christmas used to be filled with family and friends, but that was a long time ago. Either way, through busyness or quietness, we must hold tight to the essence of Christmas: the wonder of God’s coming into the world in the Baby Jesus. Before an all-consuming family Christmas kicks in, or a quiet one too, He deserves a little of our attention. Maybe that moment will come for you whilst watching a Nativity play, or hearing carol singers; better still, singing carols yourself at a Christmas service? (Details of all carol services and Christmas events across the community are in this issue.) For me, though, nothing beats carefully considering again the Bible’s account of angels, shepherds, and the Saviour who is Christ the Lord. He is the main event of Christmas – of course He is – and we know that in theory. But how easy it is to get through to another New Year without getting to know Him better. For my family, for this community, for our churches, and for myself I’m praying for the right blend of the hectic and the peaceful this Christmas. But most of all I’m praying for the Christ of Christmas to be better known.



Contacts:

Revd. Nick Weldon 01865 391962
vicar@allsaintsmarcham.org

Jill Rowe
Children and Families minister
families@allsaintsmarcham.org

Rob Finch
Youth Worker
07888 331708,
rob@marchamyouth.org

Tamsin Gilbert
Parish Administrator

See **MyDiary**
For listing of services.
(Highlighted in blue)

www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk



St Lukes Garford



The Patronal Service at St.Lukes was a musical triumph. The choir and our soloists were wonderful, as always. The highlight was an oboe solo by Ben, accompanied by James. At the end of the service there was a palpable silence as we listened to Bach until the very last note. Thank you Nick, Ben and Carolyn for organising such a lovely service.

All are invited to join us for one or more of our
Christmas Services and events at St. Luke's Church

- Sun 3rd December, 18.00 - Advent Carol Service
- Sun 17th Dec, 16.00 - Carol Service
- Thurs 21st Dec, 18.00 - Carols on the Green at Garford
- Christmas Day, 10.00 - Christmas Day Communion

Marcham C of E Primary School

So much has happened this term and yet it seems strange that we are nearly 2/6th of the way through our school year. As Christmas approaches, we enter advent with our celebrated sense of community. The first of which is a Christmas Card competition held during November. More to follow on future festive events in the next issue – and well done to the winning entrants.

The school has a real focus on "community" and the Year 5's have continued to contribute to life in Marcham as they have helped to prepare and lay the tables for the community lunches. Sarah, who manages the project, described our pupils as, "A fantastic group of volunteers (who) were keen, did fabulous listening, were very efficient and an absolutely lovely bunch to have." The children find joy in serving others and we hope that this attitude is one that they will carry into their adult lives.

Not only were children from Marcham helping to set the tables, they also grew the food! The café were given some of the pumpkins that we grew in the community garden at school. "The roasted pumpkin went down a storm with some people trying it for the very first time and loving it!"

In fact, we had a fabulous first season in the school garden. It's now time to think ahead to the future of the garden, and we are very keen to involve parents, carers or members of the community. The children are doing a fantastic job, but the garden will always require a little extra help with seasonal dig outs, and weekly maintenance visits through the spring and summer. We are forming a small gardening group of parents and carers, along with a representative from school staff. We will meet a few times a year to share ideas and plan for the next season to be part of a rota for works. If you would like to be involved, please email ginacram@live.co.uk. You do not need any gardening experience, just a keen interest to see the garden do well.

Away from the garden, in the studio, aprons have been donned while pencils and paints have been used to create a Christmas scene from a child's-eye view. Their creations can be seen opposite.

To see what else the school has been up to you can see the Latest News on the website or go to the Class Pages <https://www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/class-pages/>

Vicky's After School Club

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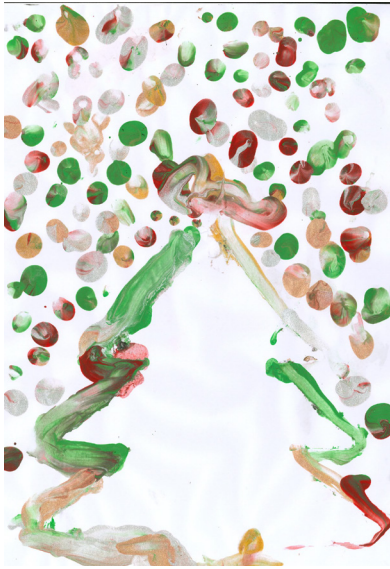
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A selection of Christmas themed artwork, one from each year.
Clockwise from top left:

- Leonor (Reception)
- Rosie (Year 2)
- Olivia (Year 4)
- Sienna (Year 3)
- Harry (Year 1)
- Ellie-Rose (Year 6)
- Hunter (Year 5)



Marcham Parish Council News

Mill Road bridge – Official Opening

Residents and cyclists from Drayton and Marcham gathered on 10th November, 2023 with Peregrine Bryant - architect for the bridge project, Hugh Potter – Rights of Way group manager in the Countryside service team at Oxfordshire County Council, and Sally Stradling - former conservation and historic building officer from the Vale of White Horse District Council to recognise the culmination of many people's hard work over a long while to restore the bridge and the bridleway to Abingdon and Drayton. Each of them spoke briefly about their role, and answered questions about the project. The Council was pleased to also welcome the District Councillor Rob Clegg, and County Councillor Richard Webber who latterly had been kept busy keeping residents informed as to the works and progress of the restoration and reinstatement of the bridleway. The Parish Council is very grateful to all who worked hard behind the scenes to bring the project to fruition. The restored bridge will bring benefits for walkers, cyclists and horse riders once again opening up the routes that were once enjoyed.

Christmas Tree – Village Green

To bring seasonal cheer to the village, the Council is again planning to site a Christmas tree on the village green. It is very grateful to Andrew MacLean from ADM Trees at Frilford, for once again providing the cut tree this year. Sadly the bare rooted trees planted previously have not survived, so the Council will need to look at other options for the future.

Christmas Tree Recycling

The Vale of White Horse District Council is again recycling real Christmas Trees in January. When you no longer need your tree, it can be put out next to the brown bin at the kerbside provided it is less than 1.8m or 6 ft tall. If larger than this it will need to be cut into sections. If you do not have a brown garden waste bin, then your real Christmas tree can be placed by the Salvation Army Textile bank in Howard Cornish Road (opposite Duffield Place). Again, please cut it into sections if it is taller than 1.8m (6ft). The last day for depositing your Christmas Tree at the textile bank will be by the end of the day on Tuesday 16th January, 2024. Trees left after this date will not be collected. Please do not obstruct the textile bank, or more particularly the bus stop, when leaving your trees.

Also there is to be a Christmas tree collection from Millets Farm, so this is another opportunity for local residents to recycle their tree. Trees need to be dropped off at Millets by the end of Saturday 6th January.

Play Area

The Council is pleased to be able to confirm that all the new equipment is now accessible and available to residents. The playground provides a range of items to cater for children of all ages and abilities. The Council's working party will continue to meet to plan the next stages of phase II, which includes seating and picnic tables, and also to provide a focal point which older children/early teens can enjoy.

Grants

The Parish Council annually awards grants to local organisations, in accordance with local government legislation, where there is benefit to some or all of the residents of the parish.

Applications for grants were considered at the November meeting of the Parish Council. The Council was pleased to be able to support Marcham Community Group towards the expenses of the Anson field maintenance, the Marcham Parochial Church Council to support its running of the childrens' club and outing for village children, the South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau who have helped quite a few local people over the past year, and the Abingdon Carousel Centre which supports families, and is visited by some from Marcham. The Council has also set aside some funds to help Marcham Pre-School, but is first seeking clarification on some points before reaching a final agreement as to the amount to award.

Oxfordshire County Council - Consultation

The Parish Council has discussed two matters raised by the County Council. Firstly there has been a proposal to extend even further, the white gate village entrance feature on the A415 at the Eastern side of the village. Whilst it was going to be moved a short distance owing to the proposed Bloor Homes development on the southern side, it has had to be moved again further Eastwards as drainage ditches were interfering with the proposed location, and there was not a suitable place for it to be installed. The Parish Council had no objections.

Secondly the Parish Council was consulted on a Lane Rental Scheme. Currently Oxfordshire County Council charges a fixed £300 fee to utility companies for a permit to work on the highway. There is a new proposal to charge £2500 per day for all works undertaken at peak times on certain roads in Oxfordshire. The intention is to change behaviour patterns so that the effect of roadworks on traffic movements are reduced. The Parish Council thought that such charges to utility companies would filter through to consumers, and was not in support of the idea.

School Admissions – Entry to primary or infant school September 2024

If you are a parent or carer of a child 3 or 4 years old then you need to apply for a primary school place now. This is for children born between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020 (inclusive). You still have to apply even if your child already attends a nursery attached to your preferred school. For further information and to apply online go to <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/apply-school-place/reception-applications/make-application>
The closing date for applications is 15th January, 2024

Parkside – Bench Seat

A contractor has now been appointed to install a slab base and bench seat off New Road, at the start of Parkside on the opposite side to the Gigaclear cabinet. Anyone who digs on a highway needs to comply with the County Council's requirements, and there was some delay in finding an appropriate firm with the street works accreditation who could undertake such a small job. It is hoped that it will not be very much longer before residents can have the benefit of a new seat.

Planning Applications considered by the Parish Council

Upwood Quarry, Hills Aggregates, Ground Water Monitoring Report -
Owing to the location of the quarry off the A338 close to Cothill Fen, the firm undertaking the sand extraction is required to produce an annual report which analyses the effects of their works on the special area for conservation. The Parish Council encouraged the County Council to consult with the Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust too, as the report indicated that there were some changes in mineral concentrations which needed close monitoring.

Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin, 90 Howard Cornish Road Tel: 01865 391833
Email: clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Date of Next Meeting: The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council is Monday 11th December, 2023 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall. In addition, it is proposed to hold a separate meeting to discuss next year's budget. Please check the Council's website www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk for the latest information and in case arrangements change.

The Council wishes everyone a happy Christmas.

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Little Angels Report

Here at Marcham Little Angels, it truly is the most wonderful time of the year! We have been very busy crafting away, making beautiful Christmas cards and delicious gingerbread to gift to members of the community, so if you have a special delivery land on your doorstep in the next few weeks, you will know our Little Angels have been out and about delivering their creations and spreading a little bit of Christmas joy.

As well as this, we have also been practising for our annual nativity performance at All Saints Church, we can't wait to perform to all of our families and to the community of the village! If you would like to come and watch our version of the very first Christmas story, please come along and join us at 16.00 on Friday the 8th December, the more the merrier and we can promise it will be a truly entertaining watch!

Nursery directors Kaye and Helen and Nursery Manager Lara loved meeting lots of families who are interested in joining our huge Little Angels family at a recent open day, it was lovely to meet you all and show you around our beautiful nursery and chat about what we do here at Marcham Little Angels. We are currently full until September 2025! And as much as we hate to disappoint any families who are hoping to join, unfortunately, we have no guaranteed spaces before then so if you are thinking about adding a new Little Angel to your family, please contact us sooner rather than later.

We will be ending the year here at Marcham Little Angels with a very cosy pyjama and Christmas movie day, with hot chocolate and mince pies to snack on. After all, we deserve a bit of a rest after a very busy and exciting December.

We wish you all a very peaceful and happy Christmas and we look forward to what 2024 has in store for us all.



Some of the cast of the School Nativity Play during a dress rehearsal.

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Marcham Village Shop and Post Office

Christmas and New Year Opening hours



Saturday 23 December – 08:30-12:00 hrs
Sunday 24 December – CLOSED
Monday 25 & Tuesday 26 December – CLOSED
Wednesday 27 December – 08:30-13:00 hrs
Thursday 28 December – 08:30-13:00 hrs
Friday 29 December – 08:30-13:00 hrs
Saturday 30 December – 08:30-12:00 hrs
Sunday 31 December – CLOSED
Monday 1 January – CLOSED
Tuesday 2 January – 08:30-17:00 hrs (back to normal)



Our Christmas gifts and special offers have been flying off the shelves and we still have a few more weeks to go. We are proud to say that we are able to sell some of our special items at a cheaper rate than some of the bigger stores including John Lewis and Harvey Nichols* – come and check us out. In addition, we also have a big selection of gift cards, Christmas cards, wrapping paper, gift bags and bottle bags - thank you for supporting your village shop and we hope you enjoy these lovely products.

Along with a very festive Christmas window, the Naughty Elf has returned and we are running the annual quiz for children aged 10 and under. Each Friday for 4 weeks, starting from 1st December, the Naughty Elf will move around the shop, and it will be up to the children to let us know where the Elf is hiding. Quiz forms are available in the shop and there will be prizes for all winning entries - these will be distributed on Saturday 23rd December.



As you may be aware, sadly Dews Meadow Farm in Hanney is closing (they used to supply the shop with cooked and raw meat until the pandemic). However, we have been lucky to start working with Hedges and so far the system is working well. Orders need to be in by 5 pm on Wednesdays for collection between 12 noon Fridays and 12 noon on Saturdays (excluding bank holidays). Details are available from the counter. In addition, we are now taking **orders for Christmas** i.e. Turkey, Goose, Hams etc. **Further information, including prices, are on the back page.**

A note for your diary: last posting dates for Christmas:

Monday 18 December	2 nd class & 2 nd class signed for
Tuesday 19 December	1 st class & 1 st class signed for
Wednesday 20 December	Pre-paid Royal Mail Tracked 48 [®] (not available to purchase at PO)
Thursday 21 December	Pre-paid Royal Mail Tracked 24 [®] (not available to purchase at PO)
Friday 22 December	Special Delivery Guaranteed [®]

If you would like to become a shareholder, please ask in the shop. Shares cost £10 each and includes an invitation to the Annual General Meeting where you can meet the Committee Members, hear how the shop is managing and have your say.

Thank you, as always, for supporting your local Village Shop and Post Office – we wish you a peaceful festive period and we look forward to seeing you again very soon.

*Correct at the time of going to print – Whittard Coffees of the World £28 John Lewis, Light up Snow Globe Gin £25 Harvey Nichols.

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MP's Report

Thank you very much to the 2,127 people who signed my petition to re-open Grove Station. It shows again the huge strength of feeling on this locally, and I will now be presenting it to the House of Commons and to the Department for Transport to make the case to them. Thanks too to Andy Holding of the Wantage and Grove Rail Supporters Group for his support. I will keep pushing for this station, which makes economic, social, and environmental sense.



We are the proud home of the 11 EOD and Search Regiment at Vauxhall Barracks in Didcot, and it was a pleasure to visit again and meet Lt Col Rob Swan and the team. Just this year they have so far responded to more than 1,800 requests in the UK to deal with explosive devices and I planted a remembrance stake in Parliament's Garden of Remembrance in their honour. I also, as ever, took part in poignant remembrance services and parades – this year in Wantage and Didcot. Thank you to everyone who made them happen.

UK Parliament Week takes place every November, and I was pleased to visit local schools and talk to different youth organisations about my role as an MP and how they can get involved in politics, including: Wallingford School, St Michael's CofE Primary School in Steventon, Brightwell Primary School, St Blaise Primary School, the 7th Abingdon Beavers, Chilton Explorer Scout Unit and Brightwell cum Sotwell Scouts.

I have been campaigning to improve our roads since I was elected and I have now launched my Local Roads Survey to give you the opportunity to tell me exactly where you are seeing issues on our roads that need to be resolved – including potholes, congestion, speeding and other safety concerns. I want to pull together a complete map of all the issues we are facing, and where, so that I can raise these with the road authorities.

Fill it out at www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey.

Now that I am the Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, one of the things I have responsibility for is overseeing the Government's big new expansion in childcare for parents. Once it is completed in Autumn 2025, it will give working parents 30 hours of free childcare every week from when their child is 9 months old until they start school. It is great to be involved in delivering this exciting new policy and you can see exactly what you're eligible for at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

It is also great that the Prime Minister has successfully delivered on his promise to halve inflation by the end of the year. It involved hard decisions and discipline, but it is right that we focused on this as inflation eats away at the pound in your pocket and has had negative effects on both prices and interest rates.

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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




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District Councillor's Report

Remembrance

It was an honour to lay a wreath at the Remembrance Sunday service in Shippon. Although the smaller of the two main villages within Marcham Ward, Shippon's link with Dalton Barracks makes its service especially pertinent and it was a privilege to meet serving members of the Royal Logistics Corp (RLC). With conflict continuing on the European continent and beyond, it's as important as it ever was that we acknowledge the sacrifice made by those who have, or indeed still do, risk their lives to keep us safe.

A huge thank you also to personnel from 7 Regiment RLC, who helped clear away weeds from the War Memorial in Marcham ahead of the Remembrance Sunday service there.



Reservoir

Thames Water's plans for building a huge reservoir to the south of Marcham appear to be gaining momentum. The Vale continues to be concerned about the underlying data used by TW in their modelling and by the important questions that TW still has yet to answer. We are stepping up our efforts even further on this: more news to come.

Homelessness

As winter approaches, it's especially important to help prevent homelessness. The Vale has a good track record here, with a significantly higher success rate than the national average, but with an increasing demand for emergency homelessness there's no room for complacency. If you are at risk of becoming homeless then please contact the housing team on 01235 422452 or at housing@southandvale.gov.uk

Swimming pool grant

South and Vale were recently awarded £440,000 by Sport England to support swimming pools across the two districts. There has been huge increase in costs to manage the pools over the last few years due to the rising energy costs and other financial pressures because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and so this funding is a very welcome boost to keeping our local facilities in good shape.

Christmas parking

As an initiative to support local businesses in the run-up to Christmas, free parking is being provided at various sites in market towns across the Vale. On Saturday's 2nd, 9th, and 16th of December, Vale-operated car parks in Abingdon will be free to use, and there are similar schemes running in Wantage and Faringdon. The ticket machines will indicate free parking and there's no need to display a ticket on those days, but maximum stay times will apply.

Cllr. Dr. Robert Clegg
District Councillor for Marcham Ward
Phone: 07784 225290
Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk



Marcham WI

We hope to see you at our Christmas Party on Monday, 18th December. Wear something Christmassy and come along for some fun to get you in the festive spirit. We'll be having a bring and share supper, so please bring along a plate of sweet or savoury food to share while enjoying everyone's company.

We'll be having a Christmas bottle raffle again this year, so it would be much appreciated if you could bring along a contribution - it could be a bottle of anything, so wrap it up to add to the surprise.

There will also be a collection of non-perishable treats for the food bank, unwrapped so they can see what has been donated, but they could be decorated with cellophane or some ribbon to look festive.

We hope to see you all there for a fun evening.
Visitors are always welcome. For any further information, please contact:

Pippa Hoath: 01865 391349
pippahoath@gmail.com

County Councillor's Report

Are we losing the ability to disagree constructively? For much of the past month, I have been fielding questions/concerns and sometimes abuse over transport and highway issues. From Oxford's LTN's (about which I can do very little) to 20mph zones (which I fully support) these issues provoke strong feelings. Of course they matter, but with our social services under ever more financial strain, and a cost of living crisis that will not go away, it is interesting, and a bit depressing, that potholes and restrictions on traffic speed seem to dominate the local agenda.



There has, however, been good news (most agree).

The delivery of the long awaited Drayton Road Build Out in Sutton Courtenay together with the new SID (speed indicator devices) will, we hope, go some way to improving the accident statistics and quality of life along that road - similar hopes for the new SID at Appleford Railway Bridge.

The completion of the Mill Road bridge in Marcham will allow greater access to the countryside for residents of Marcham and Drayton once the weather cooperates.

Work continues to resolve County and District planning issues in Drayton.

Work between District and County Councils on the Joint Vale and South Local Plan continues apace. New government allowing, we are hopeful that Housing delivery targets will be more modest than many we're expecting.

Whatever the numbers are, planning enforcement is in dire need of reform. Many councils do not have the resources to provide a decent service. Too few enforcement officers and a set of regulations lacking teeth, have steadily eroded public confidence in the planning system. Too often planning conditions sidestepped and even ignored, weak penalties for abuse, an endlessly forgiving system over retrospective planning applications and over long time given to applicants to comply with conditions, have all resulted in a general perception that planning is entirely in the hands of developers rather than planning authorities. It is time for a wholesale revision of planning regulations to restore public confidence in the system.

The Thames Water plans for a Reservoir rumble on. TW would now like the reservoir to be even larger. Most local residents would like the whole idea to be shelved. 2024 may well turn out to be decisive.

And finally, has anyone else noticed the enormous increase in the local squirrel population? We now have a family who have settled in under our eaves and are becoming increasingly assertive. There is one who looks back in through our window in the mornings, with a look of defiance on its face having spent the night chewing through the wire mesh, moth balls and polystyrene filler we have used to try to fill its access points. Using poison which birds and pets can pick up, we are told, is illegal and I don't own a blunderbuss. We are now trying "pigeon spikes" – potentially turning the house into a prison camp. Are these squirrels just picking on us or are others having problems?

Richard Webber. Cllr
07546 571521
richardwebber777@gmail.com



Images of the very well attended Christmas Craft and Gift Fair held in the main hall of the Marcham Centre on 18th of November. A general view (above), with WI members (left) staffing the refreshment area, some of whom might have been camera shy!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15	30	1 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30	2 Local Xmas Trees Collins Fm 10.30-16.00 See page 3 Xmas Craft Morning All Saints 09.30 - 12.00
3 Christmas Service Marcham Centre 10.00 Advent Carol Service St Lukes Garford 18.00	4 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.00 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00	5	6 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	7 Millets Motor Meet Millets Farm 09.30 Coffee Morning The Crown 11.00	8 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30 Little Angerls Christmas Story Nursery 16.00	9 Local Xmas Trees Collins Fm 10.30-16.00 See page 3
10	11 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00 Parish Council Meeting Marcham Centre 19.30	12 Tiddlypeeps Xmas Celebration All Saints 10.00 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	13 Ladies Coffee Marcham Centre 10.15 Thirsty Café Christmas Lunch Marcham Centre 12.00 Short Mat Bowls 14.30	14 Deadline Day (Tomorrow) editor@madnews.co.uk Astronomy Group Marcham Centre 19.00	15 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30 Firepit Carols All Saints Churchyard 17.30 Quiz Night Marcham Centre 19.30	16 Local Xmas Trees Collins Fm 10.30-16.00 See page 3
17 Carols by Candlelight All Saints 18.00	18 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.00 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00 WI Xmas Party Marcham Centre 19.30	19	20 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	21 Xmas Carols The Crown 18.00 Carols on The Green Garford 18.00	22 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30	23 Local Xmas Trees Collins Fm 10.30-12.00 See page 3 Thirsty Café Closed thru Xmas & New Year Re-opens Jan 10th
24 Nativity Service All Saints 16.00 Late Night Commun'n All Saints 23.00	25 Family Communion All Saints 10.00 - also.. St Lukes Garford 10.00 Happy Christmas Everyone	26 Oh my head!	27 Turkey sandwiches	28 Not much happening	29 There's always the pub	30
31 Communion All Saints 10.00 No evening Service	1	Marcham Centre closed 24th December to 5th January inclusive On Saturday's 2nd, 9th, and 16th of December, Vale-operated car parks in Abingdon will be free to use				

To order your Hedges meat for Christmas please complete the Christmas order form at the shop and leave it with the staff member behind the counter. Please remember to select your preferred collection date (ie between Wednesday 20 and Saturday 23 December). Full payment will be taken at the time of order (telephone orders cannot be accepted). The last collection day will be Saturday 23 December. Any orders not collected by that date will be returned to Hedges and we will be unable to refund payment. Please order early to avoid disappointment.

Item with approxiamete weight	Price per kg /each	Item with approxiamete weight	Price per kg /each
Fresh, oven-ready free-range bronze Turkey (individually boxed)		Gammon Joints – ready to boil or roast	
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5kg (11lb) – 10 people	£105 each	5.5-6kg (12-13lb) boned and rolled	£52 each
6kg (13lb) – 12 people	£118 each	Triple Oak Smoked Gammon Ham	
7kg (15lb) – 14 people	£129 each	8kg (17½lb) Whole on the bone	£90 each
8kg (17½lb) – 16 people	£138 each	4kg (9lb) Half on the bone	£50 each
Fresh Turkey		Cooked Ham	
Fresh whole English Turkey 5-7kg (11-15lb) – 8-10 people	£70 each	Half, serves 8-10 -2.5-3kg (5½-6½lb). Choose from: 1. Smoked, 2 Honey Roast, 3 Breaded, 4 Plain	£50 each
Fresh English Turkey Breast joint rolled ~2.5kg (5-6lb) – 8-10 people	£41 each	Whole, serves 16-18 – 5-5.5kg (11-12lb). Choose from: 1. Smoked; 2. Honey roast; 3. Breaded; 4. Plain	£90 each
Fresh English Whole Butterfly Breasts 4.5-5kg (10-11lb) – 16-18 people	£71 per pack		
Free Range Gressingham Duck ~2.4 kg (5 lb)	£30 each		
Fresh Oven-Ready Free-Range Goose		Hedges handmade fresh pigs in blankets (pack of 12)	£12 per pack
4kg (9lb) – 6 people	£189 each	All the Christmas Trimmings Pack	
5kg (11lb) – 8 people	£126 each	500g (1lb) sausage meat; 500g (1lb) chipolatas; 500g (1lb) streaky bacon; 1 box stuffing mix	£14 per pack
6kg (13lb) – 10 people	£141 each		
Cockerel/Capon			
2.2-2.7kg (6-7lb) 4-6 people	£24.95 each	Note:	
3.1-3.6kg (7-8lb) 6-8 people	£39.50 each	Whole turkeys can be prepared as a Crown with legs and wings separated (all packaged together).	
4-4.5kg (9-10lb) 8-10 people	£51.25 each	Other meats also available such as Venison; Veal; Mutton etc	