

# MAD News

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

March 2024 Vol 46 No.3

Your Independent Local News Source



## Springtime is Here



## Editor's Column

It is now two years since Europe has been threatened with upheaval, and that threat shows no sign of abating.

In this issue, I had hoped to have stories from Ukrainians that call Marcham 'home',

Two completely different stories from people of different ages and backgrounds with different circumstances behind them.

Yet as I type, I have learned of a third refugee in the village who will surely have another angle to report.

So rather than offer you their stories in a near ad hoc basis, I have decided to postpone the Ukraine connection until next month, when we can balance the stories with a third point of view.

It also provides me with the opportunity to explore the possibility of enlarging future editions without incurring extra costs. I have a couple of companies to engage with, which I hope will benefit MAD News for the foreseeable future.

If you have ideas that could improve the structure and viability, please contact me as shown opposite.

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Advertising: 17.00 15th of the month

Other copy: 17.00 20th of the month

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.

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## Marcham Pre-School

January has given us a busy start to the year! The children have been learning about Burns Night - with a taste of haggis! We held our own highland games with a caber toss, hammer throw and tug of war. The weather led perfectly into a theme of 'Frozen' with ice exploration and of course Elsa and Ana....

February brought Chinese New Year and lots of activities including an afternoon of dancing and stories together with Pandas - the Reception Class in Marcham Primary School. A highlight for everyone was watching and recreating our very own Dragon Dance.

We're looking forward to World Book Day and a bus trip to Abingdon to visit Mostly Books - more on this next month. Transitions and changes will be our focus over the coming weeks, as we'll be exploring the changes in the seasons.. looking for the spring new growth, talking about starting school, and 'school readiness'... we'll be promoting independence, curiosity, courage, focus, engagement and concentration.... the essential skills for approaching the next stage of learning.

If you're interesting in finding out more about Marcham Pre-school or to join our waiting list, please contact us at marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 01865 392101.



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## The Gardening Column

### Rediscovering Nature In The Modern World

I've been asked to return these scribblings back to gardening and environmentally leaning book reviews, that readers of this gardening article can maybe look to get hold of, and expand their thinking a bit. Happy to do that, and how about the book by Sue Stuart-Smith called *The Well Gardened Mind: Rediscovering Nature In The Modern World*.

A Times and Sunday Times Best Book of 2020 and described as: "How can gardening relieve stress and help us look after our mental health? What lies behind the restorative power of the natural world?" It's an interesting book and I enjoyed much of it! It for me clearly explores how gardening can affect mental health. Well written and focusing on the holistic healing qualities of gardening and nature, the book reflects on the life changing impacts of nurturing a seed, based on the author's research among prisoners, hospital patients and people with long term mental health challenges.

If anyone ever thought any form of gardening was generally a good thing, they should read this book. If you're interested in modern scientific research, brain biology, or trying to regenerate communities, you'll probably find the content interesting. It sends a great message to this generation addicted to screens. This book to some, I can see, may feel like a right slog though. It's all about how gardening makes you happy, but it doesn't tell you how to do it properly. It will to some feel like reading a cookbook without any recipes.

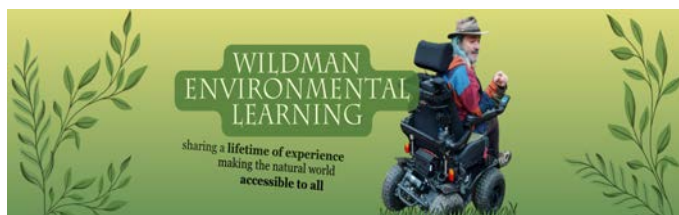
It is on the whole, a lot of science stuff about your brain, and how it works when you're digging up weeds and planting flowers, which I personally learnt from. You can tell the author has put a lot of effort into it, but if you're a looking for a fun book, maybe this wouldn't be for you.

A lot is spoken about people who have overcome their problems, by getting in touch with nature and gardening. But what about the ones who hated it? I'd have liked those to be looked at too. What about the ones who got stung by bees, or slipped on a slug, or got chased by a fox? They don't really mention them do they? Maybe they learned a different lesson: that gardening is not for them, and they'd rather stay indoors where it's warm and dry. Gardening and nature, by default isn't a positive thing for everyone.

And then they say that gardening is not the only thing that can make you happy. They say that music and art and drama can do the same thing. Well, that's a bit obvious isn't it? Of course they can. Anything can make you happy if you enjoy it. But that's not the point of the book is it? The book is supposed to be about gardening and connections with nature, not about anything else. The book left me wanting to explore more about the people who didn't enjoy gardening.

That's the point and mark of a good book, though in my view. It leaves you wanting to read on.

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Thirsty Cafe is a pop up cafe, and this month we have had some very busy Wednesday and Saturday sessions and although being short of volunteers on one Saturday we still managed to open without doing hot cooked food, welcoming our customers instead with croissants, pain aux chocolates and sausage rolls as well as our usual cakes. Thank you to everyone that supported and helped us.

On Valentine's Day as a pop up cafe we opened in The Crown during the morning, we were so pleased to welcome so many of our customers and are very grateful to all our bakers who made wonderful cakes, many decorated in the shape of hearts. They were very much appreciated and sold well. We are grateful to our volunteers who helped and a big thank you to Laura and Ricky for letting us use The Crown as a venue.



Thirsty is open at the Marcham Centre on a Wednesday morning from 09.00 to 11.30 and on a Saturday morning between 09.00 to 11.30. We rely on volunteers, there are a variety of roles across the sessions where volunteers are needed. Please get in touch if you think you can give us a few hours of your time.

Stay and Play is on the first Wednesday of the month. Bring your children and enjoy the company of other mothers, fathers and children.

Community lunch serves roast dinners and puddings from 12.00 to 14.00, everyone is welcome, the price is £8 for adults and £4 for children. The next lunch is on Wednesday 20th March at 12.00, after our regular cafe.

This year the cafe will be closed on 30th March, Easter Saturday.

Thirsty Cafe urgently requires a new treasurer to join our team in April, it is a voluntary position. Please contact us to find out more.

#### Dates for your diary

Stay and Play Wednesday 6th March at 09.00.

Community lunch Wednesday 20th March at 12.00.

Website <http://www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk>

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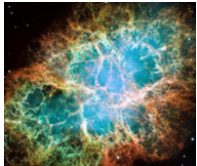
The  
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THE ASTRONOMY GROUP

**“Supernovae”** – a talk by Mike Greig  
**Thursday 14th March**

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



In 1969 Joni Mitchell sang "We Are Stardust". But since then we have learned a lot more - most of the elements in our bodies were formed in Supernova explosions. We are overdue a supernova explosion like the Crab Nebula which was visible in daylight in 1054 AD. The remnants of that incredibly violent explosion are captured in this image from the James Webb Space Telescope.

**"Everyday life and accidental death in 16th Century Oxfordshire and Berkshire"**  
a talk by Steven Gunn

**Monday 25th March** at 19.15 for 19.45  
in the Main Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY

Steven Gunn is Fellow and Tutor in History at Merton College, Oxford and Professor of Early Modern History. He teaches and researches the history of later medieval and early modern Britain and Europe. His most recent books are *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England* (2016) and *The English People at War in the Age of Henry VIII* (2018). He is writing a book on accidental death and everyday life in sixteenth-century England.

This talk will look at everyday life in Tudor Oxfordshire using the fatal accidents that people had at home, at work and at play. What could possibly go wrong when greasing the cogs in a windmill, catching eels on the Thames, going upstairs to bed on Christmas Day or playing bowls on the frozen River Cherwell?

Sandford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, 30 June 1549.



John Cowpar, aged 16, son of Richard Cowpar of Sandford, husbandman, was playing and wrestling with Edmund Obyn, aged 17, son of John Obyn of Sandford, on their way home from a pasture called 'le more', in the presence of John Haseley, servant of Richard Dey of Sandford, and Gilbert Jomys, servant of Thomas Stokker of Sandford. John and Edmund fell to the ground, and John got up but immediately fell again and died instantly.

All Members welcome, Guests £5.00

[www.marchamsociety.org.uk](http://www.marchamsociety.org.uk)

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# All Saints & St Lukes Churches



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## All Saints, Marcham

### Contacts:

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[vicar@allsaintsmarcham.org](mailto:vicar@allsaintsmarcham.org)

**Jill Rowe**  
**Children and Families minister**  
[families@allsaintsmarcham.org](mailto:families@allsaintsmarcham.org)

**Rob Finch**  
**Youth Worker**  
[youth@allsaintsmarcham.org](mailto:youth@allsaintsmarcham.org)

**Tamsin Gilbert**  
**Parish Administrator**  
[info@allsaintsmarcham.org](mailto:info@allsaintsmarcham.org)

Regular services at All Saints:  
10.00: Morning Service  
18.00: Evening Service  
Wednesday Holy Communion  
10.30: at Duffield Place

## St. Luke's, Garford

St. Lukes has had a busy month. Our villagers have raised some money and we have secured a heritage grant to restore our Church bell. This is a very specialist job and we are lucky to have the UK's oldest Bellingring Co right on our doorstep, in Appleton. They have completed many Cathedral projects; Worcester, Sheffield and Wells to name a few. We might have been considered rather small by comparison but you really would not know it. Whites have been so helpful. As our bell was removed they noticed an engraving.....Cornelius Hammans 1864. Cornelius was the chapel warden. Wouldn't he be pleased to know how much we care about St. Lukes? We ring our bell every Sunday and we are looking forward to the completion of the restoration and the rehunging when we will have a special celebration and all will be welcome. We owe a special thank you to Carolyn and Neil Whiting for their persistence and organisation of this project.

**Sunday 3rd March, 11.00:**  
**Candlemas with the lighting of candles**  
**Sundays March 10th, 17th, 24th:**  
**Church open for quiet prayer 11.00-12.00.**  
**Contact: Carolyn Whiting**  
[st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org](mailto:st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org)

## Marcham C of E Primary School

As you will know from last month's Madnews, the school is celebrating writing in all its forms this year and we have already shared some of the exciting writing that we have seen. Our Values theme this term is Compassion and both as a whole school and in our classes, we have been thinking about what Compassion means and how we can show it. This is what Thomas in Year 5 wrote:

Compassion is the calm after the storm  
Our hearts, our souls, the fire that keeps us warm.  
Making people smile and laugh with delight,  
Part of all colours, including black and white.  
All other people share this power  
So make each other blossom like a flower.  
So, for every single day or night we will never come apart,  
In our souls and everywhere too our compassion is in our heart.  
Our special gifts are given too.  
Never make our compassion not true.

Thank you, Thomas. Beautiful words - especially the first line. With so many horrors going on in the world at the moment, it is lovely to know that there are thousands of people who volunteer or work hard to help to bring healing where there has been devastation and despair. But Compassion doesn't have to be the big things or an enormous gesture. We posed a challenge to our school families – a challenge of kindness, using a Family Wallchart with 40 Acts of Kindness suggestions. Staff in school have also been showing anonymous acts of kindness to each other. It has been lovely to see bunches of flowers on tables, chocolate bars put next to bags and little gifts to bring cheer. We could turn Marcham into a village where kindness is just the done thing.

Other writing news came from Laurie in Year 2 who was very excited as he brought his special letter to share with his class. Laurie had written to the King and the King replied! "I wrote loads of questions like, 'What do you eat for lunch?' and 'How many corgis do you have?'. He didn't answer them, but he did give me a lovely letter"

We as a school also want to offer a huge well done to the girl's football team for their first football match in a few years! They showed wonderful determination and resilience on and off the pitch. They were cheering each other on and had a fantastic time. It's not just about winning for them; it's about showing everyone that they can compete at the top level. They love the game, and it shows in every kick and pass. A massive well done Team Marcham!

Please do remember you can see the latest school news on our website: <https://www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/girls-football-tournament/>

On 16th March we are going to have a Helping Hand Day in school. Perhaps some of you can join us for a couple of hours on that Saturday morning to give the school a bit of a Spring clean.

Do contact the school office on 01865 391448 if you require more details.

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### Marcham Centre Update

We have a wide range of activities open to our local community and a great set of facilities to support them. We aim to ensure that the running costs of Marcham Centre are covered by our hire charges. Our hire rates were first set when we opened in 2020, and we have held these rates since then to help support our local community through periods of financial challenge for all.

We have found, as so many others have, that our running costs have escalated over the last 12-18 months, including big increases in our energy bills. Costs of various services have increased, and we are meeting costs of redecoration and replacement of kit and fittings to maintain the facility in a good and safe condition. For instance, in the last year, we have added to our already comprehensive CCTV coverage; laid new carpet in 'The Hub' and new flooring in the store; professionally redecorated the kitchen and toilet facilities as the first stage of an ongoing internal decoration programme; and replaced the broken basketball hoops.

We plan to further improve the sound quality within the building, including purchase of moveable screens to aid noise abatement from room to room. We will continue to consider and review other longer-term improvements to our already excellent facilities. We have a healthy level of cash reserves and we aim to keep it that way. This underpins our long-term future.

Taking all this into account, there is a general need to update hire rates for all users. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support of our regular weekday hirers, which is reflected in the new rates for that time of the week. New rates will apply to facility bookings from 1st April this year. They are shown on the Marcham Centre website and are being implemented in our booking system.

**MCG Community Investment Fund** (derived from the gift-aided profits from Marcham Community Trading, which operates the bar) has recently funded the new set of portable floodlights purchased by Marcham Football Club for training, recognising the community benefit of increasing levels of youth football team activity. In addition, in the last year, the Cricket Club have been supported with purchasing new sightscreens and pitch covers and grants have been actioned to assist new groups set up within the community.

There is sufficient funding available to support any village or club activity, including any new interests within our community. Please email [admin@marcham.org](mailto:admin@marcham.org) for further details and an application form.

### Events at Marcham Centre

**Friday 1st March: Family Bingo:** Eyes down at 19.30

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

**Easter Egg Hunt:** Saturday 30th March – an afternoon of family fun

### Advance dates for your diary:

**Big Marcham Weekend:** Friday 10th and Saturday 11th May – we are filling up with stalls bookings already.

Please remember to come to the MCG stall on the day and find out more about what we do.

If you are available we would welcome your help on the weekend, especially with clearing up at 16.00 on 11th May.

**Indoor short-mat bowls** at Marcham Centre are held every Wednesday at 14.00 (or 14.30 - see diary).

Please contact Colin Trinder ([c\\_trinder@btinternet.com](mailto:c_trinder@btinternet.com)) or just turn up. Indoor short-mat bowls at Marcham Centre are held every Wednesday at 2pm. Please contact Colin Trinder ([c\\_trinder@btinternet.com](mailto:c_trinder@btinternet.com)) or just turn up.

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



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## Marcham Village Shop and Post Office

Spring is in the air, and to welcome us in we celebrate St David's Day on 1st March, Mother's Day on the 10th and Easter at the end of the month.

In addition to all your local groceries, we have a selection of gift ideas such as soft, cashmere style scarves and super-soft, one-size gloves – too good to miss, come and see for yourselves. We also have a variety of chocolate gifts to serve Mother's Day and Easter, and of course, any other special celebratory event.

Don't forget that you can order your weekly meat from Hedges through the shop. Order forms are available from the shop and orders should be placed by 5 pm on Wednesdays ready for collection between 12 noon on the following Friday and 12 noon Saturday (excluding bank holidays). Further details, including a price list, are available from the counter. If there are any meat products that you cannot see on the price list, please let us know and we will check availability and price for you.

Remember, we provide most Post Office products and services including cash withdrawals, cash deposits and cheque deposits – saving you a trip to your Bank!

**Easter opening hours**  
**We will be closed on Friday 29 March**  
**and re-opening on Tuesday 2 April at 08:30 hrs**



**Shop and Post Office Opening hours**  
**Mondays – Fridays - 0830-1700 hrs**  
**Saturdays – 0830-1200 hrs**  
**Sundays – CLOSED**  
**Bank Holidays - CLOSED**



Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

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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.



Thames Water finally admit that building the Reservoir will cause groundwater levels to rise by 1 metre without serious mitigation! After more than 25 years of denying any effect of the Reservoir on the local groundwater, Thames Water have only just got round to performing preliminary calculations on the actual effect. As local people have long claimed, this shows a major adverse impact on the groundwater of the area. They have no proven solution to this effect of raising the water level by 1 metre, which as residents know, will leave large areas of villages like Hanney, Steventon, Drayton, and the surrounding area underwater for months every year, even without heavy rain!

At the time of writing (18th February) the Secretary of State for DEFRA (Steve Barclay) has not made any decision on Thames Water's reservoir plans, or on GARD's call for a Public Inquiry (which we made on 20th December). So, there is still time for you and our MPs to influence his decision.

If you sent your complaints to Thames Water in the consultation, and you feel that they have not answered your points, or you want to write against the new, larger, project, then we urge you to follow GARD's example and write to the Secretary of State and demand a Public Inquiry. If you email [water.resources@defra.gov.uk](mailto:water.resources@defra.gov.uk), label your email 'Public Inquiry into Thames Water's Water Resource Management Plan', and address your comments in the email to Rt Hon Steve Barclay, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, then your comments will get through to Mr Barclay. You will be in good company (See below). Don't forget to copy to your MP.

### **Support from MPs, Councils and other organisations for a Public Inquiry**

The support for a Public Inquiry is growing. David Johnston MP (Wantage), Layla Moran MP (Oxford West and Abingdon), local County and District Councillor, Sally Povolotsky, the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council (Cllr Liz Leffman) and CPRE, the Countryside Charity, have all followed GARD's lead and written to Steve Barclay requesting him to call a Public Inquiry into Thames Water's plans. Amongst the Parish Councils, Steventon have joined in the call. Oxfordshire Liberal Democrats, representing all LD Prospective Parliamentary Candidates and local councillors, have issued a Press Release calling for a Public Inquiry. All these organisations cite unresolved issues from Thames Water's consultation.

Of course, both the County Council and the Vale of White Horse have passed unanimous council motions re-affirming opposition to the Reservoir.

Layla Moran MP called a Westminster debate on Thames Water's terrible record in Oxfordshire, at which she cited all the problems with Thames Water's dumping of sewage into Oxfordshire streams and rivers, and spoke against the Reservoir proposal.

### **Details for contacting your MP**

- If your MP is David Johnston, Wantage (covering Grove, Steventon, East and West Hanney, East and West Hendred, Ardington, Drayton, Garford, Milton, and Sutton Courtenay) you can contact him on [david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk)
- If you live in Abingdon, you can support your MP Layla Moran's opposition – and seek her support [layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk)

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

Derek Stork, Chairman GARD

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## **Marcham Parish Council News**

### **20 mph limit scheme**

Residents have probably noticed that 20 mph signs started to appear, and then disappear. Oxfordshire County Council has apologised for any confusion caused by the initial installation and then removal of the signage. New illuminated poles are required in certain places, and unfortunately an over zealous contractor put in the signage ahead of schedule.

Until the poles are erected, the 20 mph scheme cannot be properly implemented and enforced. The current speed limit of 30 mph will remain until all the works can be completed. The latest information is that the 20 mph scheme works are due the week commencing 11th March.

continued on next page...

## **A415 Road closure**

To allow for carriageway patching works, the section of the A415 North Street to the A338 by Budgens, will be closed overnight 11th–12 March, between 20.00 – 06.00. Then to allow for surface redressing works the County Council is planning to closing that section of road again (A415 from North Street to the A338 - Budgens) between the hours of 05.00 and 18.00 between 27th and 30th April.

The diversion route for both closures is via the A338, Faringdon Road by the Dog House Hotel, and Sheepstead Road.

## **Annual Meeting of Electors – 15th May, 2024**

This is a public meeting open to all electors in the parish. The purpose of the meeting is so that the Parish Council, and other local organisations can explain what it has been doing over the last year. It also enables the electors to have their say on anything they consider is important to the people of the parish. The date of the meeting is Wednesday 15th May at 19.30 in The Marcham Centre. Please put the date of the meeting in your diaries, and please let the Clerk to the Parish Council know if you wish to request any item to be added to the agenda or wish to submit any questions.

## **Would you like to become a Parish Councillor?**

The Parish Council currently has two vacancies and would like to co-opt residents who have a little time to spare to help Marcham become a better place to live. There are various projects currently being undertaken, so if you want to find out about what a councillor does, and how you can help in the parish, then please contact the Clerk for further information.

## **Street Names for new housing development south of A415**

Thank you very much to all who have submitted suggestions for possible street names for the new housing development under construction south of the A415. 34 suggestions were put forward, plus a suggestion to use the names of those who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2, making a total of 54 submissions. It was therefore a very difficult task to decide which 4 to put forward to the District Council, but the Parish Council has agreed on the historical names of Edgar, as King Edgar gave Marcham to Abingdon Abbey in 965, Rimes and Stone, as these are names on the Inclosure Award of 1818 for the land in question, and Merece meaning wild celery, which is the origin of the name Marcham.

## **Electoral Commission – Electoral Review**

The Electoral Commission is undertaking a review of the ward boundaries for the Vale of White Horse District Council. It has sought comments of issues that they should take into account. The Parish Council has raised the question of the proposed development at Dalton Barracks, and asked that there be a further review when that development takes place to ensure even representation on the District Council.

## **Marcham Centre**

To help people understand how Marcham Centre works, the Council can confirm that the hall, Multi-Use Games Area and car park are owned by the Parish Council, with the field and access road being owned by the Anson Trust. The hall, car park and MUGA are leased by the Parish Council to Marcham Community Group, a registered charity, on a long 99 year lease, and the field is leased by the Anson Trust to the Parish Council, and then to MCG on a similarly long lease. Should MCG ever surrender the lease, it would revert to the Parish Council. However, MCG operates all the facilities on a viable basis, working with the Parish Council to ensure that The Marcham Centre continues to thrive and develop for the benefit of the community.

Marcham Parish Council has commissioned a road safety audit regarding the entrance off Morland Road, and access into the site. This is to see whether there any safety measures that can be implemented for the benefit of all users, given the number of pedestrians not only going into the site, but crossing the entrance too. Once the audit is done, and report issued, the Parish Council will consider what is suggested and will be liaising with MCG and the Anson Trust.

## **Planning Applications considered by the Parish Council**

P23/V2670/HH Move front door to side of porch and construct a small ramp at 5 Haines Court.

The Council had no objections

P23/V2840/HH Installation of air source heat pump at 97 Howard Cornish Road.

The Council had no objections provided there were no noise implications for the neighbouring property.

P24/V0164/HH Conversion of garage first floor from games room to an ancillary accommodation annex at Beechfield House, Frilford Heath. The Council requested that the accommodation should be ancillary and incidental to the existing dwelling on the site, and should not be occupied or used separately, e.g. rented out for Airbnb, and that no separate curtilage shall be created.

P24/V0248/LB Installation of ventilation cooker hood above cooking range in kitchen to vent through kitchen wall at 21 North Street. The Council had no objections.

Clerk: Mrs. L. Martin, 90 Howard Cornish Road Tel: 01865 391833

Email: [clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Date of Next Meeting: Monday 11th March, 2024 at 19.30 in the village hall, Barrow Close.

Please check the Council's website [www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk) for the latest information in case arrangements change.

Five years ago groundworks commenced on the Anson Field and within eighteen months the local community had a modern purpose-built nursery building and, in the Marcham Centre, a village hall fit for the 21st century. Since then the Marcham Centre has quickly established itself at the heart of the community and almost all of us will have taken advantage of the new facilities and surrounding Anson Field. It would not have become the success that it is without the considerable investment of time, energy, patience, pragmatism and enthusiasm from the volunteers that make up the Marcham Community Group. The Anson Trust would like to thank them all for what they have done for our community and urge other residents to step forward and help them continue to be as successful in the future.



**SO, WHAT HAS THE ANSON TRUST DONE IN TERMS OF GRANT FUNDING?**

**£53,000 OF LOCAL GRANT FUNDING APPROVED IN LAST 2 YEARS**

**£25,000 MORE AVAILABLE NOW FOR NEW GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Since 2022 we have received 24 grant requests totalling £74,000 and, of those, we have approved 20 and made grant payments totalling £28,000, with a further £25,000 yet to be claimed. Typically we make decisions on grant applications within one to five weeks of receipt and funding is released within a day or two of request. If required for cash flow reasons, the Anson Trust can purchase items direct for applicants.

Organisations that have benefitted include **Rainbows, All Saints (Friday Club & Tiddlypeeps), Marcham Colts FC, Thirsty Café and Marcham Pre-School**. The Anson Trust is also delighted that it has been able to support the **Primary School** with over £18,000 in a range of grants (inc. phonics books, community garden and outdoor equipment) and has recently teamed up with the **PTA** to create up to £3,000 in additional funding each year for the Primary School in the form of a match funding scheme – so please support the PTA and its events and help them raise more money for the Primary School and its pupils.

**If you are part of a local organisation, society, group or club and need help with funding and would like more information on our grant application process and policy please visit [ansontrust.org/grant-giving](https://ansontrust.org/grant-giving)**

If you are interested in helping us by becoming a trustee please either speak to one of our current trustees ([ansontrust.org/about-us](https://ansontrust.org/about-us)), or email us at [ansontrustinquiries@gmail.com](mailto:ansontrustinquiries@gmail.com) or call **07944 204493**.







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## District Councillor's Report

### Budget setting

It's that time of year when councils up and down the country are preparing their budgets for the coming financial year, and the Vale is no exception. There are major challenges that all councils continue to face, including below-inflation government funding increases and below-inflation permitted council tax increases, which have recently contributed to several councils declaring themselves effectively bankrupt. Despite this, the outlook is cautiously optimistic: careful management of the Vale's finances means that the services we provide (notably, kerbside waste collection, planning, leisure facilities, and so on) will continue unaffected. Recent investment in making the Vale's leisure facilities more energy efficient is already paying off: not only are they producing less emissions, but operating costs are also greatly reduced. Outsourced services are under close scrutiny, and some may be brought back under direct Vale control where we deem there to be significant cost savings or performance benefits.



The Vale's council tax is currently the 15th lowest of all shire districts nationally, and this ranking is not expected to change significantly into next year. (Note that the total council tax paid by residents is a combination of district, county, parish, and police & crime commissioner.)

### Flooding financial support

To the best of my knowledge, Marcham and surrounding areas fared relatively well overall during the flooding earlier in the year. For any unfortunate exceptions, however, it's worth knowing that financial support is available for anyone whose house or business was seriously affected. See <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/community-support/emergency-situations/flood-advice/flooding-financial-support/> for details. Support for affected farmland is expected to be announced soon (and will be administered by DEFRA).

### SESRO flood risk

Together with fellow councillors, representatives from organisations such as GARD, and staff from the Environment Agency, I attended a Thames Water (TW) technical briefing on the flood risk aspects of the proposed reservoir to the south of Marcham. Despite having been thinking about this reservoir for many years, TW has only recently started thinking about the risks to local flooding that it may pose, and only some of the aspects at that; they now have preliminary modelling for the fluvial and groundwater situation, but have yet to start work on the potential impacts of an embankment breach or of emergency draw-down (i.e., if TW needed to empty the reservoir in an emergency, what would happen to the level of the Thames if that water was emptied into it in a hurry?) TW said that modelling efforts will continue, together with collection of more data on the current situation.

Better late than never. In my view, they have a huge amount of work to do before the it is established that the reservoir would be safe.

Cllr. Dr. Robert Clegg  
District Councillor for Marcham Ward  
Phone: 07784225290  
Email: [robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

**MERRY MILLER**  
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## MP's Report

One of the most common questions I'm asked is 'what is life like as an MP?' In general my week is split Monday-Thursday in Parliament and Friday-Sunday back home in Didcot.

At the time of writing this, the last week kicked off with a team meeting at the Department for Education, followed by my weekly meeting with the team delivering our huge expansion of childcare, with the first 15 hours of free childcare becoming available for working parents from April. Alongside various other meetings, Chilton County Primary School came for a visit to Westminster, and it was great to meet them and take their questions.

Tuesday included meeting with GARD to discuss the next steps following me echoing their call for a public inquiry of the reservoir proposal in December; attending a networking event of charities and businesses involved in our Disability Action Plan; and responding for the Government in a debate about nursery provision in the South West.

Just as MPs like myself have regular surgeries with constituents, so Ministers have regular surgeries with MPs to discuss problems they're having locally in areas the Minister covers, and Wednesday kicked off with one of these. After attending PMQs, I presented to Parliament my petition to reopen Grove Station, which I'm grateful to the 2127 of you for signing. I met my Parliamentary team before taking another debate - this time on special educational needs - and several other meetings.

Last week was National Apprenticeship Week and on Thursday I visited childcare apprentices and then another nursery. To and from the visits I had calls with 10 local authorities and did some paperwork.

Then on Friday I began with a Q&A at Didcot Sixth Form then met with Liane and Mark from Active Future South Oxfordshire and visited apprentices at Williams Racing in Grove. I had several surgery appointments, including meeting a local subpostmaster who contacted me after seeing the ITV drama about the Horizon scandal having recognised that what happened had also happened to her. I am pleased this Government is taking such decisive action to right this wrong.

I met with Niamh Dernie from Wantage to talk about the next steps in her campaign against sexual harassment and then had the pleasure of presenting Mikayla Beames from Team Mikayla, which I am a proud patron of, with her Points of Light award from the PM. Then I rounded off the day with my weekly visit to Merv, as part of my volunteering with the Didcot Good Neighbours Scheme.

Weekends are always a combination of door knocking, emails and paperwork for both MP and Minister roles and - when I can manage it - Liverpool games! I love the ability to make a difference in the job and the variety - as I always say to people, it's better to be very busy than bored.

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



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## County Councillor's Report

### Housing

Apparently, the latest acronym for an extreme "NIMBY" (Not in my back yard) is "BANANA" - (Build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything).

Wherever we are in the argument – everyone agrees we have a large and growing problem. Since 2010, no less than 16 housing ministers have tried to address the problem with little success.

The national shortage of housing has been a major issue for the UK for the past 50+ years. Of all post war governments, it was the MacMillan government (1957 – 1963) that managed to build the most houses. Since then, we are told we have been falling ever further behind. This has helped to push house prices to levels far beyond the reach of most young people. A few lucky ones have been able to rely on "the bank of Mum and Dad" or "help to buy" schemes; another minority have made use of "affordable" homes schemes; but most have been thrown on the mercy of a shrinking number of homes for social rent caused, at least in part, by "right to buy" schemes

In our part of "leafy, rural" Oxfordshire, the issue is most acute - and don't most of us know it? All political parties now accept that we must face and address the problem before it produces social unrest.

The uncomfortable and conflicting facts are that 1. There is growing concern that many of our villages are now separated by a single field. 2. As a major contributor to the national exchequer, there is enormous pressure for us to grow our local economy as rapidly as possible. 3. VWHDC has already taken more houses in the last 10 years than any other District in the UK. 4. We have a number of brown field sites which are often sited as suitable places for future housing. 4. Our road system is already suffering from congestion, and, at present, more road building seems to be the only solution on offer. 5. Leafy and rural we may be, but much of the space we do have is Area of Natural Beauty, Green Belt and Flood Plain.

It is hard to see a way out of this dilemma but there is one unavoidable conclusion. Any solution is going to involve some pain for all of us. It is vital that that pain is fairly shared between us all. Local Councils and Government are going to have to work together in a way they have failed to do so for many years.

### Flooding

Living in Drayton, it is easy to forget that Oday Hill, in all its 30ft majesty, protects the village from the worst of the recent local flooding. Given the dire forecasts of ever more frequent and extreme flooding events, this protection may not last for long. However, at present, it seems that only a small number of Drayton homes built centuries ago are affected.

Spare a thought for our neighbours in Steventon, Milton and Sutton Courtenay. Milton village (with many older homes) was particularly badly affected by the recent flooding. Some of the roads in Milton were like rivers.

Solutions fall into two categories – first, immediate actions by councils, the EA and local residents\* and secondly longer term solutions (most of which involve more money from central government) and changes in planning policy.\*\*

\* Some drivers determined to challenge the floods and driving too fast resulted in abandoned cars and more water entering already part flooded homes.

\*\* The almost complete Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan has been told by an Inspector that it cannot restrict the road between Drayton and Sutton Courtenay from further development because there is already much development on the South side of the road. By implication, development on the North side of the road might happen in the future. For those that know that road, it was up to four feet under water in the recent flood.

I don't believe I am behaving as a NIMBY – still less a Banana – when I say this seems like Planning gone mad.

Richard Webber

Richardwebber777@gmail.com 07546571521



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## March 2024

April '24

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	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Deadline day >>>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 Eyes Down	26 <b>Marcham Bridge Club</b> Marcham Centre 19.00 <b>Every Monday</b>	27	28	29	1 <b>Friday Club</b> Marcham Centre 17.30 <b>Family Bingo</b> Marcham Centre Eyes Down 19.30	2
3	4 <b>Games Morning</b> Duffield Place 10.30 <b>Guides</b> Marcham Centre 19.00	5 <b>Quiz Night</b> The Crown 19.30	6 <b>Ladies Coffee</b> Marcham Centre 10.15 <b>Stay &amp; Play (Toddlers)</b> Marcham Centre 09.00 <b>Short Mat Bowls</b> Marcham Centre 14.00	7 <b>Milletts</b> <b>Motor Meet</b> Milletts Farm 09.30 <b>MarSoc Walk</b> Contact Eric Dunford Location tbc	8 <b>Friday Club</b> Marcham Centre 17.30	9
10 Mothers Day Afternoon Tea Marcham Centre 13.00	11 <b>Guides</b> Marcham Centre 19.00 <b>Parish Council Mtg</b> Marcham Centre 19.00	12 <b>Quiz Night</b> The Crown 19.30	13 <b>Ladies Coffee</b> Marcham Centre 10.15 <b>Stay &amp; Play (Toddlers)</b> Marcham Centre 09.00 <b>Short Mat Bowls</b> Marcham Centre 14.00	14 <b>Astronomy Group</b> Marcham Centre 19.00	15 <b>Friday Club</b> Marcham Centre 17.30 <b>Night in the museum</b> see Feb issue p9 <b>Quiz Night - Adults Only</b> Marcham Centre 19.30	16 <b>Helping Hand Day</b> Primary School
17	18 <b>Games Morning</b> Duffield Place 10.30 <b>Guides</b> Marcham Centre 19.00 <b>Marcham WI</b> Marcham Centre 19.30	19 <b>Quiz Night</b> The Crown 19.30	20 <b>Ladies Coffee</b> Marcham Centre 10.15 <b>Community Lunch</b> Marcham Centre 12.00 <b>Short Mat Bowls</b> Marcham Centre 14.30	21	22 <b>Friday Club</b> Marcham Centre 17.30	23
24	25 <b>Guides</b> Marcham Centre 19.00 <b>Marcham Society</b> Marcham Centre 19.15	26 <b>Quiz Night</b> The Crown 19.30	27 <b>Ladies Coffee</b> Marcham Centre 10.15 <b>Stay &amp; Play (Toddlers)</b> Marcham Centre 09.00 <b>Short Mat Bowls</b> Marcham Centre 14.00	28	29 <b>Good Friday</b>	30 <b>Café closed</b>
31 Easter Sunday	1	Notes	<b>Wednesday 20th</b> <b>Stay &amp; Play (Toddlers)</b> Marcham Centre 09.00 <b>Wednesday 20th</b> <b>Deadline Day</b> <a href="mailto:editor@madnews.co.uk">editor@madnews.co.uk</a>			

### B&B Rafters



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