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Your Independent Local News Source





Editor's Column

Spring seems to have arrived at last and it is good to see the plants and trees around the village waking up from their winter slumber.

Here's hoping you all enjoy the Easter break and that the Easter bunny does not consume all the Easter eggs!

Many years ago when I was more childish than I am now, I made the decision to raid all my five siblings' Easter chocolates in one sitting - the scolding from my family has never ceased, necessitating an even longer mental recovery than the few days I spent bloated in bed!

Do you have a similar story to tell?
If so, please let us know.

Many of you will know that my dear wife Pam passed away on 19 March, after three months in the JR, and latterly in Sobell House.

Pam was diagnosed with cancer in 2020, and despite treatment, it came back last year. Towards the end of January we knew that the end was coming, but had several weeks to prepare ourselves for the inevitable. Nevertheless, it does hit you when it happens.

Although we only arrived in Marcham three years ago, Pam involved herself very quickly in village life, helping at All Saints Church, in Thirsty Café, and at the Marcham Village Shop. She will be greatly missed.

Thank you to all of you for the kind messages you have sent to all of us.

John Scoble and family.



Paul suffered a stroke as he was finishing this issue and sadly died on 1 April 2024.
A full obituary will appear next month.

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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.

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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GARD Newsletter for April 2024

Public Inquiry: Still no decision (as at 16th March) from the Secretary of State for DEFRA (Steve Barclay) either on GARD's call for a Public Inquiry, or on Thames Water's reservoir plans.

So, there is still time for you and our MPs to influence his decision.

If you have not yet done so, 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, 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.

Don't forget to copy to your MP.

Please sign our Petition: In the meantime, GARD and CPRE have launched an online petition, in collaboration with the organisation "38 Degrees", who specialise in environmentally oriented petitions. The petition which asks the Secretary of State to "**Stop Thames Water's costly mega-reservoir – fix the leaks!**" can be found at - <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/stopTWreservoir> - please sign and share as widely as possible.

Biodiversity and Habitat on the Reservoir Site: GARD has always maintained that Thames Water have deliberately sought to downgrade the natural habitats and biodiversity which would be lost when they first devastate, and then flood, the Reservoir site. They do this, of course, to try and maintain the fiction that they can 'create more diversity' on the site as part of the Reservoir project. However, they have not, after 25 years of proposal, yet managed to do an actual survey of the site, but rely instead on desk-based 'score-sheets' which tot up the general 'score' which can (according to the government) be given to, say, an acre of woodland, or arable field. No effort has been made to catalogue special features, such as 'red listed' bird species, quality of hedgerows, or even the special trees on the site ('Ancient', 'Veteran' and 'Notable' trees lost cannot just be traded for newly-planted trees a decade or so later when the site is 'restored').

GARD has started to investigate the true state of the nature in the area, with the co-operation and support of our farming members. We have started with trees – which, as they are large, one might have thought even Thames Water would have spotted in a quarter of a century. According to Thames Water, there is just one Ancient Tree on the entire 4 square mile site. In a couple of days, GARD has managed to catalogue (and get validated by the Woodland Trust) a total of 4 more Ancient Trees, 43 Veteran Trees and 6 Notable Trees! We haven't even looked in Drayton and Hutchins Copses yet. After this, the main farm north of Hanney Road will be sharing the results of their Hedgerow Survey with us.

So, helping to nail yet more of Thames Water's biased views. If you have some knowledge or skill on the subject of biodiversity, we are hoping that all this work can count towards the Public Inquiry, please contact us at; gard.chair@gmail.com if you want to help.

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
- If you live in Abingdon, you can support your MP Layla Moran's opposition – and seek her support 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

The Gardening Column

Buzz, Blooms & Banter: Life Lessons from the Garden

So, here we are, another month, another wildlife gardening column. And guess what? Not a single reader question to answer. Not one! It's like you've all gone on a secret holiday to the Bermuda Triangle or something. But don't worry, I've got this. I've got more metaphors than a bloke trying to impress his missus at a poetry competition.

Now, picture this: I'm sat in a café, right? Trying to channel my inner David Attenborough and find inspiration of what to write about again. But instead of hearing whisperings about rare species from the conversations around me, I'm just staring at my empty cup of tea. In silence. Pure silence. And you know what? It's brilliant. Because life and the writing process, my friends, is like a well-brewed cuppa. Sometimes you've got to let it steep, let it infuse, and just enjoy it.

So, here's the angle for this month's article: Life is like gardening. Yeah, stick with me here. You see, we're all out there, buzzing around like bees on a sugar high. Busy, busy, busy. But when was the last time you sat down and really looked at your garden? I mean, really looked. Not just a quick glance while you're mowing the lawn or chasing away the neighbour's cat. No, I'm talking about a proper sit-down, cup-of-tea-in-hand, birds-chirping, insects-buzzing kind of look.

Because let me tell you, your garden is a whole ecosystem. It's like a little jungle out there. You've got the pigeons doing their best impression of a low-budget helicopter, the squirrels playing hide-and-seek with the nuts, and the ants—well, they're just ants, aren't they? Always in a hurry, like they're late for a tiny ant meeting.

And don't get me started on the birds. They're like the neighbourhood gossip squad. "Did you hear about Mrs. Finch? She's been eyeing up that new worm by the rose bush!" And the insects? They're the real party animals. Buzzing around, having a right laugh. Probably throwing tiny insect raves under the leaves. "Oi, Barry the Beetle, pass me that tiny glow stick!"

So, my gardening tip for you: Position your garden seat strategically. None of this "randomly plonk it wherever" business. No, no. Think about it. Where's the best view? Where can you see the most action? Maybe near the bird feeder, so you can watch the feathery drama unfold. Or by the flowerbed, where the bees are doing their funky bee dance. And if you're lucky, you might even spot a hedgehog doing the moonwalk. (Okay, maybe not the moonwalk, but you get the idea.)

And when you're sat there, taking it all in, remember this: Life's a bit like gardening. Sometimes you've got to let it grow, let it bloom, and let it surprise you. Maybe that daffodil you planted last year will finally decide to show up. Or perhaps that mysterious tomato plant in the corner will start producing bananas. Who knows? It's all part of the magic.

So, my fellow green-thumbed adventurers, go forth and embrace the chaos. Let your garden be your front-row seat to the greatest show on Earth—the one where the star performers wear feathers and the audience is made up of lady-birds and snails. And if you ever feel overwhelmed, just sit back, sip your tea, and remember: Life's too short to be too busy for a bit of insect-watching.

Learn to enjoy silence,
it can feel like we're not living if we're too busy.

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Marcham School

We have had another busy month with learning in lots of different contexts. The **Year 6's returned from their residential trip to Youlbury Scout Activity Centre** on 16th March. We were so proud of the way in which they managed and challenged themselves and supported each other as they undertook activities that pushed them beyond their 'safety zone'. Many, many thanks to Mr Clayton who led this trip and to Miss Knowles, Mrs Callahan and Miss Kilpatrick (Miss K) for assisting him. Everyone returned tired but pleased with what they had been able to achieve.

We also took part in our first **Netball Tournament** for a number of years. A group of Year 5 and 6 pupils represented the school in an Abingdon Partnership tournament. Mrs Peacock, who leads Netball club and Miss Knowles, our PE subject leader, both commented on how well the children conducted themselves, positively encouraging each other and showing true sportsmanship. Mrs Peacock said, "They were an absolute credit to the school. I was enormously proud of them." So, well done to **Summer, Ellis, Thomas, Ohemaa, Dexter, Chiara, Lily-Mae and Alayna**. Excellent Marcham behaviour!

The previous week, some of our Year 5s and 6s also took part in a netball festival. The theme was honesty and teamwork and, again, we shone in showing these values.

Match reports and information can be found on the school website at

<https://www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/school-netball-tournament-march-24/>

Our chicks, whose eggs were being incubated by Reception, have hatched and grown. They had lots of attention from both staff and pupils before leaving to go back to the farm that they came from. We waved a teary goodbye because they brought much joy, awe and wonder to school in keeping with our focus on being able to marvel at the beauty of our world.

Videos of the chicks being born can be found on the school's website at

<https://www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/chicks-chicks-chicks/>

We also had World Book Day! The children were really excited to be in their pyjamas and onesies – and so many families made story boxes of their favourite stories - which were brilliant! The children loved looking at them and guessing the story they were telling. Many, many thanks to Mrs Callahan and Miss Wagstaff for their work in organising such a lovely day. Thanks also go to parents and carers, for supporting their children to engage in this wonderful activity. There are lots of pictures here and many more will appear on the school website next week.

New to the website and worth a look:

Year 4 - The children in Meerkats share exciting videos from their topic on electricity.

Year 3 - The chicks take a visit to Kangaroos class.

World Book Day - Images shared on World Book Day fun across the school.

Sport Galore - From Netball Festivals, Tournaments and Girls Football too - it's been a busy sporty March so far!



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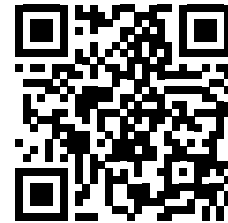
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The
Marcham
Society



THE ASTRONOMY GROUP

"Why Astronomy Matters: Space Weather and other examples"
– a talk by Mike Hapgood RAL

Thursday 18th April 2024 at 19.30 in the Small Hall,
Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY



The talk will bring out how astronomical knowledge affects modern human societies in practical ways - its continuing importance to technology for position, navigation and timing as well as hazards posed by space weather and near-Earth objects.

THE MEMBERS EVENING

Monday 22nd April 2024 at 19.15 in the Main Hall,
Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY

All Members welcome, Guests £5.00

www.MarchamSociety.org.uk

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Thirsty Café is a pop-up café that takes place in Marcham Centre on a Wednesday morning from 09.00 to 11.30 and on a Saturday morning between 09.00 and 11.30.

On Saturday 13th March we had a live music session with musicians Becky Ramsum and Richard Venn, it was a lovely morning to celebrate Mothers Day. Thank you to both of them.



On Saturday 16th Thirsty Café held a volunteers event to refresh our volunteers on different policies used in the café and to reward them for all their hard work. Several volunteers were presented with trophies including the youngsters that help us and the bakers who make the marvellous cakes each week. Everyone bought food to share which made a delicious buffet.

Being a volunteer is very rewarding, being able to meet people in the community and learning new skills. Next month is National volunteer month runs from April 1st to 30th April, why not become a Thirsty café volunteer? No time commitment is too small, there are a variety of roles you could help with. Please get in touch if you think you can give a few hours of your time.

Community lunch serves roast dinners and puddings from 12.00 to 14.00. Because of the popularity of the lunches we are asking you to book a place in advance either in the café or by email. Payment will be taken on the day, £10 for adults and £8 for children. The next lunch is on Wednesday 24th April.

Stay and play is on the 1st Wednesday of the month. Bring your children and enjoy the company of other mothers, fathers and children.

There is no café on Easter Saturday.

Dates for Diary:

3rd April Stay and play

24th April Community lunch.

April is volunteers month.

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HE IS RISEN

Everyone loves an underdog, and there is nothing like sport to produce one. In April, Coventry will play Manchester United in the FA Cup semi-final. If they win it won't exactly be a giant killing as the two teams are only one division apart. But if Coventry go on to win the final they would be the first side outside the top division to do so since 1980. At this time of year there are numerous sporting events to cater for all: the men's and women's Six Nations, the Cheltenham Festival, the Boat Race, the Grand National, the London Marathon, and the Masters. I'm happy usually just to stick to the rugby, but in the spring I'll often watch the events from Aintree, Augusta and the Tideway even though I would never normally tune into horse-racing, golf or rowing. It's even better if one of them plays host to a giant-killing. That phrase, of course, comes from the Biblical story of David slaying Goliath. It's a Sunday school and school assembly favourite, and it is an echo of the greatest giant-killing in history which we will commemorate again this Easter time. A lone competitor is nailed to a cross, and He dies. Game over, with no extra-time. Sin and death surely winning a decisive victory, right? Wrong, because in the greatest come back since Lazarus, Jesus rises victoriously three days later. Whatever happens to Coventry in the Cup this year, or in any other of the events mentioned above, it's really only this giant-killing that matters, because it is a decisive victory Jesus won over sin and death for us all. Details of all our Easter services and events are below.

Contacts:

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Children and Families minister
families@allsaintsmarcham.org

Rob Finch
Youth Worker
youth@allsaintsmarcham.org

Tamsin Gilbert
Parish Administrator
info@allsaintsmarcham.org

Easter Services at All Saints'

Good Friday, 29th March
10.00-12.00: Family Service

Easter Sunday, 31st March
10.00: Easter Family Communion
18.00: Easter Holy Communion

Regular Sunday services

10.00: Morning Service
18.00: Evening Service
Wednesday Holy Communion
10.30 at Duffield Place



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St. Luke's, Garford

Easter Services at St. Luke's
Friday 29th March
14.00-15.00: Good Friday Reflection

Easter Sunday, 31st March
07.00: Sunrise Service

St. Luke's, Garford

Sunday mornings (when no service): church open for quiet prayer 11.00-12.00
Sunday 14th April, 18.00: Songs of Praise – **NO SERVICE AT ALL SAINTS'**
Sunday 26 May, 11.00: Pentecost Service
Contact: Carolyn Whiting st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org



MCG Community Investment Fund (derived from the gift-aided profits from Marcham Community Trading, which operates the bar) is providing funds to help enable Sweetbriar Residents Association to buy tables and chairs for their new Meeting Room.

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

Membership – it's time to renew!

Our members form the backbone of Marcham Community Group. They elect and support its trustees in investing in our community and in Marcham Centre. Membership runs from 1st April each year, so it is that time again when we will contact you to renew your membership. For those who are not yet members or whose membership may have lapsed, we are keen to bring you on board and support us. Please use this QR code or go to marcham.org/join to download a membership form for 2024-25.



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 12th April: Quiz Night: Adults only -19.30 for 20.00 prompt start.

Friday 19th April: Family Bingo: Eyes down at 19.30.

Big Marcham Weekend: Friday 10th and Saturday 11th May – Events, activities, food and refreshments for everyone. If you have newly moved into Marcham, this is a great introduction to Marcham and its community groups and a chance to meet people.

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

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) or just turn up.

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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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Art Projects for Marcham

The Vale of White Horse District Council collects contributions from housing developers towards art in the district. There are some funds (potentially around £40,000) available for Marcham from the various new housing developments in the village. Approximately half of that needs to be allocated to a particular project over the next few months, otherwise there is a risk that the funds will go back to the developer. The Council is inviting suggestions from residents as to art projects that can be accommodated within the parish. Councillors themselves have proposed an art feature at the war memorial, a new information board in the Arboretum, a noticeboard in the village, lighting on the path from Howard Cornish Road to Harding Way, and an art trail, plus bench seating. The art has to be bespoke and such that it will add interest, quality and distinctiveness to the area. Before the Council selects which project to prioritise, it would encourage residents to contact the clerk and put forward other ideas that can be taken into account too.

Would you like to become a Parish Councillor?

The Parish Council currently has 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.

Community Defibrillators - CPR Training

On Sunday morning 19th May Paul Tiney, from the village, and who runs his own first aid business, will be running a community awareness training session in the use of the defibrillators that are located locally. The idea is to create confidence in the community, so that residents will find them easy to use should the need arise.

The hall is open from 10.00 for tea/coffee, with the course starting shortly thereafter.

Places are limited, so anyone wishing to attend is asked to book their place via the Clerk by emailing

clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk or telephoning 01865 391833. This is on a first come, first served basis.

Should the course be over subscribed, then a waiting list will be created and a further training session arranged for later in the year.

Street Names for new housing development south of A415

The Vale of White Horse District Council has confirmed that the roads within the new current development south of the A415 will be known as, Edgar Gardens, Rimes Place, Stone Close, and Merece Close.

Increase in Cemetery Fees

Fees and charges for the services provided in Marcham Cemetery have been reviewed. They were last reviewed 2 years ago, and a slight increase on those fees will come into effect from 1st April, 2024. The increase ensures, as far as possible, that the fees are in line with other similar providers in the area, and any additional income raised will go towards the grass cutting expenses incurred each year.

Garden Waste Changes – 1st April 2025

A new garden waste permit scheme will be introduced from 1st April 2025. The year 24/25 will be a transition period, so that when your direct debit is due for renewal, the District Council will take only the sum due until the 31st March 2025. From 1st April 2025 you will need to apply for an annual permit in order to have your brown garden waste bin emptied. You will receive a permit which will need to go on the bin. Look out for further details in due course, and visit the Garden Waste section on the Vale of White Horse District Council's website for more information.

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/recycling-rubbish-and-waste/garden-waste/garden-waste-scheme-changes/>

Planning Applications considered by the Parish Council

P24/V0351/FUL Single storey front extension and two storey side extension to the existing Dwelling, and construction of a new house in the rear garden. Alterations to vehicular access at 10 The Gap. The Council had great concerns regarding access,

P24/V0444/LB Proposal to (1) strengthen, (2) stitch, and (3) carry out traditional masonry local repairs such as stonework repairs and repointing following the defects observed and the structural assessment of the bridge. Noah's Ark Bridge on the A338. The council had no objections.

P24/V0326/HH Erection of conservatory to the rear at 5 Longfields. The Council had no objections.

Continued on next page...

,,, continued

P24/V0319/HH Loft conversion to provide new bedroom, dressing room and bathroom. 3 roof lights on the front, and 2 on the side at 17 Davies Edge. The Council raised concerns regarding new windows which were overlooking adjacent land resulting in loss of amenity.

Clerk:

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

Email: clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council is Monday 8th April 2024 at 19.30 in the village hall, Barrow Close. Please check the Council's website www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk for the latest information in case arrangements change.

**Annual Meeting of Electors – Wednesday 15th May, 2024 at 19.30
Marcham Village Hall, Barrow Close**

Please take part

This is a public meeting open to all electors in the parish. This is your opportunity to hear what has been going on locally over the past year, and to understand the projects that are ongoing, and planned for the future, which affect the area in which you live. Please come and join in, listen and hopefully offer to help. If you wish to request any item to be added to the agenda, or wish to submit any questions then please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council.

Email clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

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District Councillor's Report

Thames Water's proposed price hike.

Residents may have heard in the national press of Thames Water's proposal to increase household water bills to an average of £735 by 2030 (an increase of 60% in cash terms), but also of TW's dreadful performance in handling customer complaints and in dumping sewage into our local rivers. Meanwhile, TW has been paying out large dividends to shareholders and rewarding its leadership with generous pay packages. At the Vale's full council in February, a motion was agreed to oppose this and to petition Ofwat and Defra to oppose it also. We were delighted to see the campaigner Feargal Sharkey applauding the Vale for this on X (formerly Twitter)!



Upcoming Elections.

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) Election will be on Thursday 2nd May, and a General Election is expected later this year. Please make sure that you are registered to vote well in advance and also remember to bring photo ID to the polling booth on the day. If you don't have an accepted form of ID, please visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID to apply for a free voter ID online.

There are paid roles open at polling stations for the PCC Election; if you are interested, please visit whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs to apply.

Garden waste collection service.

South and Vale will be introducing a change to the garden waste collection service, coming into effect from April 2025. Residents will no longer pay via Direct Debit, but will instead pay annually via credit/debit card and will be sent a garden waste permit sticker to put on their bin(s). The new scheme is similar to that already operated by many other councils, including in neighbouring West Oxfordshire.

Consultations.

Residents may be interested in responding to an ongoing consultation around Playing Pitches and Leisure Facilities. The consultation is open until 17th April 2024 and can be accessed online at https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/planning/vale_pps_ifs_consultation/ or on paper at White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre in Abingdon.

Also open until 23rd April is South and Vale's annual Waste Satisfaction Survey, where residents can express their views on kerbside waste and recycling collection, and on street cleaning (note that drive-to recycling centres and highways maintenance are managed separately by OCC and so not included in this survey). The survey is online at <https://theconversation.southandvale.gov.uk/housing-and-environment/waste-survey-2024/>

As a general note on consultations, if residents would like to be notified of all consultations run by the Vale then they can sign up for email alerts by clicking the "Mailing list signup" link near the top of the page for either of the two consultation pages mentioned.

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



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MP's Report

Being an MP involves a lot of travel across the length and breadth of my constituency from my home in Didcot and this means I know first-hand that the state of the roads across our area is not good enough.

I launched my Roads Survey last year and I'm grateful to the almost 900 people who have filled it in. More than 80% of residents agreed that our roads are poor quality. Flooding on the A417 and safety issues on the A420 and A34 were frequently mentioned, and many people spoke about issues with congestion. I am meeting with the Roads Minister to share the findings with him.



From potholes to congestion to flooding and safety issues, it is clear that we need improvements. We do not need blanket 20mph zones across our area – and the Government is rightly making clear that these should be decided on a hyper-local basis with local consent. No-one objects to strict limits in areas near schools or other sensitive areas but are they required across an entire town? Constituents regularly say no and 71% of residents who filled in my Roads Survey agreed with the Government's policies here.

I have been taking action since I was elected and have raised every issue that has been reported to me with the County Council and the Highways Authorities, who are responsible for our roads. This has resulted in some issues being fixed but I think everyone can agree that it should not take an MP writing a letter for this to happen.

I have spoken about the need to improve our local roads in 13 separate debates, met with the Roads Minister about it, and led a debate in Parliament on safety issues on the A34 and A420.

It's not all about money, but the Government has also rightly given the County Council millions in funding to help improve our roads and fix our potholes - including a substantial increase of 30% for 2023/24. We need to see this used effectively.

I will keep campaigning on this, but please fill in my Roads Survey at www.david-johnston.org.uk/RoadsSurvey.

In other news, Didcot Powerhouse Fund celebrated their two-year anniversary, and I was pleased to attend the launch of their new Impact Report and meet some of the local people who have received funding from them – including great organisations like the Cornermen in South Moreton.

I also took senior managers from the Environment Agency to Steventon to talk about our flood defences and what more can be done to prevent the flooding we have seen. Many constituents shared their thoughts with me ahead of this and I raised various issues on their behalf, including concerns about the proposed reservoir. I will remain in close contact with the Environment Agency and the Council.

Other highlights in recent weeks have included visiting Willowcroft School in Didcot, Williams Racing in Grove, the Happiness Horse Box in Uffington, and Quantum Detectors in Harwell as well as holding a Pop-Up Surgery at Tesco in Didcot.

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



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County Councillor's Report

Hif1 Appeal hearing

The hearing is now having a three week break to give all involved a break and to gather more evidence. The meetings, held at the Bee House MEPC Milton Park and are open to the public. Having attended some of the sessions, in particular those where representatives of POETS (an organisation of Planning experts opposed to the road development), I have been struck by the level of hard work and commitment in answering the rigorous questions from the multitude of KCs involved on both sides. In summary, whilst we will not hear the Inspector's conclusions for many weeks but there are two questions which will have to be answered. First, should this major project be delivered? This enquiry and the Inspector, herself will eventually decide this when her recommendation on the Secretary of State's desk in the autumn. The recommendation will also try to answer the question – Can the project be delivered at an affordable cost? When the enquiry resumes, it will be considering the financial implications of the project and its affordability. The outcome will depend on negotiations between Homes England (the Government body with its hand on the purse strings) and OCC.

We all owe considerable thanks to Cllr Greg O'Broin, representing the five most involved Parish Councils who has been faithfully attending all sessions.



20mph zones

I sympathise with the retiring First Minister of Wales, when he expressed surprise at the strength of feeling on both sides of this issue. Evidence for the impact of 20mph policies has taken some time to accumulate but evidence from Wales is that in areas where these zones are instituted, average speeds reduce by 4-5mph. It may not seem much, but it equates to several lives saved every year.

Flooding

Water levels never cease to surprise us. Sometimes it is predictable. More often it behaves differently in each flooding event. Thankfully, water levels recede quickly if/when the rain stops, but the local impact on lives can be enormous. Milton village had a particularly bad time of it with deep water blocking roads and a number of people having to move upstairs as ground floors are inundated. All councils are well aware of the issue and are tightening policies to deal with the expectation that there will be an increasing frequency of serious flooding in the future.

The behaviour of some drivers in flood and wet conditions has hit the headlines with abandoned cars and even the large digger that collapsed into the Ginge Brook in Sutton Courtenay.

Richard Webber Cllr
richardwebber777@gmail.com
07546 571521

A colorful event poster for a talk by Marcham WI. The background features silhouettes of people's heads in various colors (red, blue, green, orange) at the bottom. The text is centered and reads: 'MONDAY 15TH APRIL 2024, 7.30PM AT MARCHAM CENTRE' in black, 'Doing Their Bit - Life on the Home Front' in blue, 'This month we have a fun, interesting and informative talk from some 1940's re-enactors about various parts of life during WW2.' in blue, 'So come along to join us through a journey to the past - including lots of original photos, short films and music.' in blue, 'Evening includes themed raffle and refreshments.' in blue, and 'Visitors always welcome' in blue. A small illustration of a white stone building with a thatched roof is in the top right corner. A blue box at the bottom contains the text 'Marcham WI' in white.

MONDAY 15TH APRIL 2024,
7.30PM AT MARCHAM CENTRE

Doing Their Bit - Life on the Home Front

This month we have a fun, interesting and informative talk from some 1940's re-enactors about various parts of life during WW2.

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Marcham WI

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7	8 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00 Parish Council Mtg Marcham Centre 19.30 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.30	9 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	10 Coffee Morning Marcham Centre 10.15 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	11	12 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30 Quiz Night Marcham Centre 19.30	13
14	15 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.30 WI Meeting See p19 Marcham Centre 19.30 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00	16 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	17 Coffee Morning Marcham Centre 10.15 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.00	18 Astronomy Group Marcham Centre 19.30	19 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30 Family Bingo Marcham Centre 19.30	20
21	22 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00	23 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	24 Coffee Morning Marcham Centre 10.15 Community Lunch Marcham Centre 12.00 Short Mat Bowls Marcham Centre 14.30	25	26 Friday Club Marcham Centre 17.30	27
28	29 Games Morning Duffield Place 10.30 Guides Marcham Centre 19.00	30 Quiz Night The Crown 19.30	1	2	3	4

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