

Dear Editor

DOG FOULING

There appears to have been an increase in the amount of dog fouling on the playing fields and the footpaths in Marcham. During a walk around the village on Sunday 5th December, I had to constantly watch where my daughter placed her feet for fear of her standing in dog muck. We 'encountered' more than 7 piles of excrement on footpaths and on the sports field.

I am not aware of a large stray dog population in the village, so this fouling must be taking place during supervised walks with owners! Dog owners not only have a right to enjoy the pleasure of canine companionship but they also have a RESPONSIBILITY to the rest of the village population. This RESPONSIBILITY is to ensure that everyone else can enjoy village life without having to constantly watch his or her step. Dog muck is a health hazard and should be 'scooped' and placed in a bin.

May I ask:

a. All dog owners to take responsibility for their pets and ensure they tidy up after them?

b. Everyone else to be vigilant and if they see an irresponsible dog owner to:

- (1) Ask them to pick up their dog's muck.
- (2) If they don't pick up their dog's muck, take a note of the time, date, location and a description of the dog and owner and report them to the Vale of White Horse District Council Dog Wardens.

Dog Wardens can:

- (1) Impose £50 on the spot fines.
- (2) Write to offenders, or dog owners in general, and warn them about their responsibilities.
- (3) Prosecute and if found guilty the Court can impose a fine of up to £1000.
- (4) Mount patrols at times when offenders may be caught in the act.

Hopefully, this problem can be solved quickly, if the few dog owners who are guilty take RESPONSIBILITY now.

NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD



The Poppy Appeal last November raised a new record total of £2,205.73, over 7% more than 2001, the first time we broke the £2000 "barrier". Thank you all for such magnificent support and especially to the band of helpers who give of their time so willingly each year to collect from homes in Marcham, Frilford and Garford. As always, the shops, garages, schools, pubs and many other "outlets", not forgetting Milletts/Frosts, all do so much to support the work of the Royal British Legion, so vital to our Forces at this particular time.

SUSAN SPURGEON

Dear Editor

Some observations on being a MADNews Deliverer

As pleasant as it is to meet people on one's way round, and stop for a chat, it is also likely that some (or all) of the following hazards might present themselves:

- It will start raining, even if you set off in sunshine
- You will find (too late) an unscooped-up doggy dropping
- One dog will leap up inside and snatch the MADN from the letterbox, probably chewing it up almost before you've got your hand clear
- Rat-trap letterboxes with narrow openings and very strong springs can detach fingers at a stroke, unless you know which they are (you soon learn!)
- Driveways covered in large, sharp, crunchy gravel and pebbles worse than Brighton beach, will reduce shiny shoes to scratched ones only suitable for gardening
- One barking dog will set off a chain reaction in all neighbouring pooches
- Some households have loose dogs who approach with great interest and greater speeds; these need feeding with a copy of MADNews to keep jaws busy long enough to aid escape – always carry a spare copy...
- Only deliver in full daylight in order to avoid doggy presents (see above) and scattered toys abandoned on paths. Some of these have wheels, making them very mobile once a foot engages with them
- Security lights will come on if you visit late, making you feel like a potential burglar
- There are extra-low letterboxes to challenge one's bending ability. Others have fancy new "door furniture", with stiff brushes behind the box, so that MADN gets wrinkled up. Some places don't have a letterbox at all, which necessitates a cheeky opening of an outside door to throw the newsletter inside, or maybe you can tuck it into a nearby fence and hope the owners come home before it blows away.

Oh, all right, I'll do it all again next month! JC

I had no idea things could be so bad, makes my job look like a piece of cake! Ed

FOSTERING NOW


The world of fostering is continuing to undergo significant change. It has moved on from a time when foster carers were unpaid, untrained, volunteers who cared for orphaned children. Foster carers are gradually coming to be seen as professional childcare specialists who care for children with a wide range of needs. There are a number of reasons for these changes.

On the childcare front, efforts to enable more children to live in a family setting rather than in children's homes have proved so successful that a greater proportion of "looked after children" now live with foster carers than ever before.

Increasing awareness that some foster children require carers with high level parenting skills means that foster carers now receive a higher level of support, training and financial reward. Although foster carers are still primarily motivated by a desire to help children in need, these extra inputs now help to ensure that their efforts are more properly valued, recognised and supported

The range of children needing help is now much more diverse and some foster carers now develop specialist interests. For example, caring for a sick baby, helping a young person who has sought asylum, supporting young mums and babies or caring for a disabled child. If you are interested in fostering and would like more information, please telephone Andy Clipson on 01993 201514 or email info@familyplacement.com

Jean, Stephen and Duncan Reeve would like to thank all kind friends and neighbours for their messages of sympathy and kindness in the recent sad loss of Brian. A cheque has been sent to the British Heart Foundation for £724.62.
Thank you all so very much.



Have your say about local issues – write to the editor!