

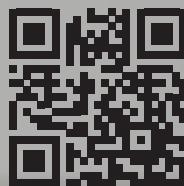
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March 2026 Vol 48 No. 3

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Hi Everyone,

It's spring, clocks change, days for St David and St Patrick... and maybe some sunshine to enjoy.

Cheers!

Kay

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The MADNews Team

DEADLINES

All entries including articles, notices, reports and advertising:

5pm 15th of the month

ADDITIONAL COPIES

These are available from Marcham Village Shop. 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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Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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Tubney Mark Coleman mark.coleman@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

MP

Layla Moran layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION IN OXFORDSHIRE

Central Government is undertaking consultation and seeking views on the proposals submitted by councils for the re-organisation of local government in Oxfordshire. There are three main proposals:

- A single county unitary proposal for Oxfordshire developed and supported by Oxfordshire County Council: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oneoxfordshire
- A two-unitary proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire developed and supported by Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Berkshire and West Oxfordshire councils: www.twocouncils.org
- The three-unitary proposal for Oxfordshire and West Berkshire developed and supported by Oxford City Council: www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils

Further information is at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-oxfordshire/proposals-for-local-government-reorganisation-in-oxfordshire>

Your comments can be submitted on line, or via email to LCGconsultationresponse@communities.gov.uk **The deadline for comments is 26th March.**

HOWARD CORNISH ROAD - SALVATION ARMY TEXTILE BANK

Residents will have noticed that the textile bank has now been removed by Salvation Army Trading. This has been removed owing to a review in operational changes. The Salvation Army has said, "Unfortunately the second-hand textile sector has sustained a prolonged downturn over the past 24 months with no indication that this will reverse in the near future. This decline has been driven by global economic uncertainty and rising operational costs. At the same time, the growing influx of low-quality garments from ultra-fast fashion companies and significant volumes of non-rewearable textiles has increased waste and processing costs, while recycling markets for these materials remain extremely limited".

MORLAND ROAD - FOOTWAY

As previously reported in Marcham and District News, one of the issues being investigated locally, is the relocation of the Morland Road footway at the point of entry into Barrow Close. Pedestrians crossing the entrance could not be seen by vehicles leaving the hall site, and safety needed to be prioritised. Oxfordshire County Council manages the highway, and when asked for an update at the end of last year, indicated that they were in the process of preparing some drawings. However, owing to pricing deadlines for road schemes to be achieved this financial year, the County Council had to rapidly progress the matter, so unfortunately there has been no chance to view and comment on the design proposals. At the

February meeting of the Parish Council, the Council learned that the work was imminent. The new path will be monitored closely and suggestions for further improvements put forward if required.

THAMES WATER RESERVOIR – SESRO

The consultation has closed and Thames Water are reading and digesting all the responses received. The replies will feed into and inform the Development Consent Order application which will be lodged with Government. The Parish Council wishes to be kept informed as the project progresses and is sending representatives to a briefing for councillors on 5th March. Any new information given can be shared with residents

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

This meeting is not a Council meeting, but is a gathering of electors in the parish. This is your opportunity to engage with your local councillors, not only the Parish Councillors, but the District Councillor and County Councillor too, as well as hearing what is happening in the area. The date set for the meeting is Thursday 14th May at 7.30 p.m. in Marcham Centre. Put a note of the date in your calendar now.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Council considered amendments to applications P25/V2571/HH and P25/V2732/LB for the erection of a single storey part oak framed flat roof extension with roof-lights at 3 Mill Road. As per the previous main application, it raised no objections to the proposal.

Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 9th March, 2026 at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall.

Please check the Council's website in case arrangements change.

Clerk to the Council:

Mrs. L. Martin, 90 Howard Cornish Road

Tel: 01865 391833

clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Can You Help?

MADNews needs a new team of distribution managers as Paula and Claire will be stepping down with the July issue.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Kay editor@madnews.co.uk

Thank you

This month's cover photo

Bluetit

by Doncoombez on Unsplash

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Marcham Parish Council – How We Work & What's Planned for 2026

Marcham Parish Council is made up of 10 councillors, meeting regularly at the Village Hall in Barrow Close to discuss local issues, projects and priorities. Our work ranges from improving village amenities to representing residents in discussions with the Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Our committees and working groups help us focus on specific topics such as footpaths, allotments, and environmental matters.

How We Are Funded

Most of the Council's income comes from the parish precept—the portion of council tax paid by households in Marcham. Additional income comes from cemetery fees, allotment rentals, grants, interest, and developer contributions (S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy). This funding allows us to maintain village assets such as the Village Green, Play Area, Arboretum and open spaces.

What is the Precept?

It is a local tax used to provide services such as cemeteries, playing fields, open spaces, street furniture and more. Parish councils do not receive funding from central government, so the precept is essential to maintaining village amenities.

Community Grants

The Parish Council sets aside funds annually to support local groups benefitting residents, with applications usually reviewed in November.

What We Achieved Last Year

Grass Cutting & Village Appearance

Following concerns raised by residents about visibility at junctions and general village maintenance, the Parish Council decided to opt out of the district-wide grass cutting scheme. This gives us full control over scheduling and standards.

Footpath Improvements

We worked with the Green Working Party to progress improvements to the Arboretum path and wider village links, with further work expected as S106 funds are released.

Anson Field Play Area Upgrade

Major upgrades were completed at the Anson Field play area, adding new equipment for all ages, seating, picnic tables and safety surfacing. Final signage and repainting work is planned for later 2026.

Barrow Close Safety Measures

Working with partners, a second speed bump was installed near the community centre, and discussions continue on rerouting the footpath to further improve safety.

Allotment Improvements

Cow Lane saw new fencing, gate works and tree maintenance. Parkside allotments were cleared to create additional growing space.

Village Assets & Repairs

Recent work includes repairs to benches, planning for a new noticeboard, tree maintenance and improvements to the War Memorial.

Plans for 2026

- Allotment improvements
- Footpath upgrades
- Entrance safety at the village hall
- Recreation ground wall repairs
- War memorial enhancements and artwork
- Bus shelter improvements
- Speed indicator devices
- Lighting upgrades along Harding Way
- Link paths between new housing estates

To achieve this, however, we need additional persons to be involved to help to complete these projects.

Get Involved

Working parties welcome new volunteers. If you're interested in joining a working party or the council, or simply want to know more about getting involved, please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk.

If you are passionate about your local community, we need you. Councillors make a huge difference to the quality of life of local people and how local issues are dealt with. Councils need people from all backgrounds and experiences to reflect the communities they represent. There are also multiple, and varied, opportunities to volunteer for specific groups that match your interests with how you can help the wider community without needing to become a Councillor. We are particularly interested in people who are able to contribute to identifying the core identity of the Parish and how this can be taken forward in a local Neighbourhood Plan. If you wish to see how you can contribute, develop your skills and add to your CV while helping your community contact the Parish Clerk, who can illustrate the options available.



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THE MIDWEEK WALK

Thursday 5th March at 12.30pm

Please contact: walks@marchamsociety.org.uk

THE ASTRONOMY GROUP

A round-up of recent astronomy sightings
followed by a short talk on
'Space Games' by Mark Buckley

Wednesday 18th March at 7.30pm

Small Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY
Please contact: astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk

THE MONTHLY TALK

The History of RAF Abingdon a talk by Alan Bovingdon-Cox

Monday 23rd March at 7.15 for 7.45pm

Main Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY



RAF Abingdon was established as an airfield in 1932, serving as headquarters and the base for two bomber squadrons until the onset of World War II in 1939. Following the war, the airfield transitioned to Transport Command, operating aircraft such as the Dakota, York, Hastings, Beverley, and Andover.

Growing up near RAF Greenham Common sparked Alan's interest in aviation. In 1968, he moved to Abingdon

and witnessed RAF Abingdon's final days as a Transport Command hub.

From then until the airfield's closure in July 1992, he was captivated by its history and stories. His fascination continues today and he helps as a volunteer at the Abingdon Air & Country Show held each year on what remains of the airfield.

Please contact: admin@marchamsociety.org.uk

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**Don't forget
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1am on Sunday
29th March**

MARCHAM WI

Monday 16th March

7.30pm at Marcham Centre

Annual Meeting and Italian Themed Evening

Our March meeting is our Annual Meeting, when following the business, we will be enjoying an evening with an Italian theme.

marchamwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



Quiz

Test your knowledge with our monthly questions

- 1 Which team did England's women's rugby team play in the World Cup Final in 2025?
- 2 What is the longest pier in the UK that is still open and operating?
- 3 Which premiership football team are known as The Cherries?
- 4 What is the capital of Estonia?
- 5 Which country is hosting this year's Winter Olympics?
- 6 This year's World Economic Forum is held annually in which Swiss town?
- 7 Who was the lead singer of Nirvana?
- 8 What day of the week is Beaujolais Nouveau Day?
- 9 Who played President Bartlet in 'The West Wing'?
- 10 What is the largest planet in our solar system?
- 11 Who painted the Mona Lisa?
- 12 Which element has the chemical symbol Si?

Answers on page 19



Games Morning

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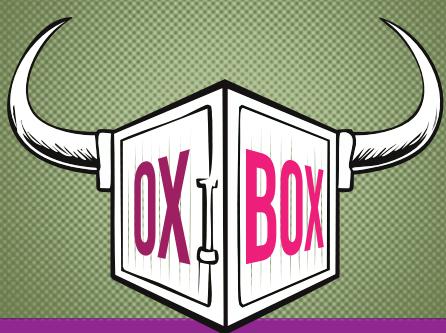
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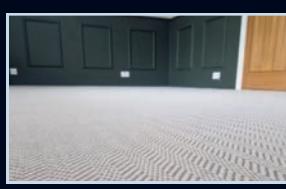
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Spring is definitely on the way and the daffodils and snowdrops are making their presence known. We hope that, despite the rain, you had a good February and enjoyed some of the 'different' products that we had on sale to help with Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year and other special occasions.

Now is the time to get ahead and plan for Mother's Day on 15 March. We have some beautiful gift boxed chocolates, luxurious chenille socks, Cath Kidston body butters, All4One gift cards, fancy bottles of wine and fizz, many card varieties, and a few more items that may surprise you.



We are also stocking up for Easter as that time of year is fast approaching. Easter Sunday falls on 5 April this year and, in addition to the traditional Easter eggs, we already have some lovely chocolate-based gifts including a chocolate hen with 8 eggs. And for those non-chocolate lovers, some of the items listed above will make a fabulous gift.

Easter Bank Holiday

We will be closed from Friday 3 April to Monday 6 April inclusive, re-opening on Tuesday 7 April at 08:30

If you're planning to order your Hedges meat from the shop for the Easter weekend, the collection day will be Thursday 2 April from noon, rather than the usual Friday. For those of you that

have not ordered before, orders are delivered on a weekly basis and instructions with order forms and price list are available in the shop. If there are meat products that you cannot see on the price list, please let us know and we will check availability and price for you.

Don't forget that you can post your Mother's Day and/or Easter cards at the Post Office. We are here for your benefit, and we cover most of your daily banking and posting needs. Everything from a basic stamp, withdrawal/deposit of cash, postage of parcels/letters right through to cheque deposits, foreign currency, bill paying, gift cards (All4One), mobile top-ups and much more.

Not only do we rely on you to support the shop as a customer, we also rely on volunteers to give up their time to work in the shop and serve you. If you have a spare couple of hours a week and would like to become part of the shop community, please give your details to a volunteer behind the counter and we will get back to you.



**THANK YOU, AS ALWAYS,
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT**



Marcham Farmers' Market

Eating locally means choosing food that is grown and harvested close to where you live. In the UK fresh food travels on average 1,500 miles to arrive on our dinner table. That's a pretty large carbon footprint to leave for a little bulb of garlic. Our Farmers market gives you the option to buy closer to home.



Besides the food miles, there are other reasons to go local. Local produce is often better quality, more nutritious and for meat and milk, produced under higher welfare conditions. Vegetables are often grown with environmentally sensitive methods because by cutting out aggressive supply chains, growers can invest more in growing their vegetables. Buying local means eating in season when the produce tastes best. It is certainly an investment in your community and local economy.

Strangely enough there is no officially agreed-upon distance for what constitutes eating locally. Did you know that 'local produce' can come from as far as 50 miles away?

At Marcham Farmers' Market we go further. Most of the produce is grown or prepared within just 10 miles of Marcham, delivering a truly local experience that you can see, smell and taste.

That's produce with real roots in our community. See you on Saturday 21 March 9-12 at the Marcham Centre.

We are looking for volunteers to join our friendly team. Please contact us on facebook.com/marchamfarmersmarket or farmersmarket@thirstycafemarcham.com

Thirsty Community Café



Find us in the Marcham Centre, OX13 6TY. We open on Wednesday (8.45-11.30am) and Saturday (9.00-11.30am) mornings serving delicious, local food and hot drinks. Natural Bread run alongside us on Saturday mornings; bringing you your fresh bread and pastry fix..

Our upcoming February dates are as follows:

- Stay and play - Wednesday, 4th March
- Mother's Day Tea - Sunday, 15th March 2.30-4.30pm
- Farmers' Market - Saturday 21st March 9am-12 noon
- Café Lite & Easter Community Lunch - Wednesday, 25th March

Mother's Day Tea and Farmers' Market:

Thirsty Café are celebrating those who mother us, by hosting a tea on Mothering Sunday (15th March). It will run from All Saints Church OX13 6NP, 2.30-4.30pm. This is a ticketed event – book online or in person www.thirstycafemarcham.co.uk

We are pleased to announce the ongoing success of our Farmers' Market for Marcham. The market returns on 21st March from 9am-12 noon. Find sweet and savoury treats, local crafters and food suppliers.

Giving back to Marcham – Pay it forward with Cup of Love

Thank you to everyone who has donated café items to the Cup of Love, pay it forward scheme. It is our hope that people will feel free to use these little post-its should they wish to.

- **To donate, please ask at the till.**
- **To redeem, simply take a sticker of your choice and hand it to one of our servers by way of payment.**

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EVENTS

The Arts Society Abingdon LECTURE

**Wednesday 18th March,
10.30am and 2.00pm
Abbey Cinema, Abbey Close,
Abingdon OX14 3JD**



THE ART OF ART DECO

Pamela Campbell-Johnston

Art Deco has the reputation of being the most glamorous and popular style of the 20th century which was prevalent during the 1920s and 1930s. We will review the development of the style within the context of its social and economic environment and look at specific examples of objets d'arts, including silver, jewellery, furniture, ceramics, clocks and architecture.



The range of designers, craftsmen and artists that we will contemplate will include, but not limited to, E-J Ruhlmann, René Lalique, Tamara de Lempicka, Jean Dupas, Georgia O'Keeffe, Eileen Gray, Romain de Tirtoff (Erté), René Vincent and English ceramicist, Clarice Cliff. In addition to some examples of domestic and civic Art Deco buildings in the UK, we will also touch on certain architectural buildings in New York, Miami, Mumbai, and Napier, thus confirming Art Deco's full global reach and appeal.

The talk will be held at The Abbey Cinema at 10.30 and 2pm. Visitors are very welcome to attend this lecture, cost £6.00. Lectures last 1 hour but allow extra time for announcements.

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

A new exhibition

21 March - 30 April 2026

The military heritage of Oxfordshire stretches back nearly 2000 years. This long heritage is evident in the sweep from the earliest named soldier in Oxfordshire, Lucius Valerius Geminus, a veteran of the Second Augustan Legion who was buried at Alcester in 79AD to the siege of Oxford as the Royalist stronghold of Charles I in the English Civil Wars to the present day. Over the last 300 years the people and regiments of Oxfordshire have actively shaped Britain's most important conflicts from the American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars to the First and Second World Wars and beyond.

Oxfordshire's Military Heritage



Two regiments are most associated with the county: The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (Oxf & Bucks LI) and The Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars (QOOH) also known as the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. Over the course of their history they were deployed across the world in various capacities including the defence of Europe and the British Empire. Their involvement has often proved critical in the key military events of British history, be it the 52nd (Oxfordshire) Regiment of Foot charging the French Imperial Guard during the Battle of Waterloo or the 2nd Battalion of the Oxf & Bucks LI landing in gliders to secure exits from the Normandy beaches on D-Day.

This exhibition considers 50 objects selected from the 14,500 items preserved in the collection of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum to give a glimpse into the story of Oxfordshire's military heritage. These objects tell the stories of residents of the county and the soldiers of Oxfordshire's regiments who have been impacted by, and influenced, conflicts across the centuries.

A full list of the 50 Objects, with images, can be found at:

www.sofo.org.uk/collection/oxon50objects/

**Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum
Park Street, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1SN**

Another wonderfully busy month has flown by at Marcham Little Angels, and our rooms have been full of winter magic, curious minds, and busy little hands.



In our Yellow Room, our smallest Little Angels have been wrapping up warm and heading out for gentle winter walks, breathing in the fresh air and exploring the world with wide eyes. Back indoors, they have been creating Valentine's cards for the people they love. It has been such a joy watching them choose their colours, practise careful sticking, and chat excitedly about who their special card is for. These simple moments are packed with learning, lovely language, turn taking, sharing ideas, and helping friends when tiny hands need an extra bit of support.

Over in the Green Room, our toddlers have been right at home at forest school, where the outdoors has been offering little clues that winter is starting to soften. They have been spotting tiny signs of change, looking closely for buds beginning to appear, and noticing the days slowly growing lighter. It has sparked brilliant conversations, with the children sharing what they can see, what they think might happen next, and building a real sense of wonder about the natural world.

In our Teal Room, our preschool Little Angels have been celebrating Chinese New Year and learning that 2026 is the Year of the Horse. They have been making shakers, exploring rhythms and patterns through music, and trying mark making inspired by Chinese characters. It has been a gorgeous blend of creativity, early writing skills, and curiosity about the wider world.

And just like that, we have now passed the halfway point of winter. The brighter days are on their way, and we cannot wait to see what the next month brings for our Little Angels.

If you'd love to work in a warm, nurturing setting and become part of our Little Angels team, we'd love to hear from you. Take a look at our current opportunities on our Careers page: <https://www.littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk/careers>.

The Marcham Little Angels Team

For more information:

T: 01865 819992

E: joinus@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

W: www.littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

Facebook @MarchamLittleAngels

Instagram @Little_Angels_Childcare_Group

MARCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Although the weather has been wet and gloomy, learning and curricular opportunities have been in abundance this half term at Marcham Primary School.



Twelve of our Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in the **Music Flood Orchestra Day**. They had been practising hard to learn three pieces at school before assembling for one day with 300 other pupils to perform the pieces. Sectional rehearsals took place before the Silk Hall in Radley was filled with pupils from primary and secondary schools performing together. The experience was amazing and the sound was outstanding but as the pupils said "very loud".

"I loved it because it sounded very harmonious and very professional (though it was incredibly loud!)" Ally

"Twelve of us went and you could hear every instrument work hard and every note contributed to how mesmerising the whole thing was" Zara

Out on the field, some children took part in **Tag Rugby Competition**, developing teamwork skills, coordination and confidence. The sessions were full of energy and enthusiasm, with everyone enjoying the chance to get active and support one another. They worked well as a team and represented our school admirably. It was our first time at this type of competition so we had to learn as we went but the children thrived.



Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 took part in **Singing Workshops from Radley College**, where simple songs and games were learnt. The children practised singing individually as well as in a group during the action games. Our key intention is to increase enthusiasm and the amount of singing within each classroom.

In addition to this, some children took part in a Dance Festival where they explored movement and rhythm, learning routines and expressing themselves through dance. Their hard work and excitement were clear for all to see and on return, they spoke animatedly about the experience.

Finally, our Year 4 class have taken part in a **Science Workshop at Abingdon School**, where hands-on activities and engaging demonstrations encouraged learning through exploration. They built simple electric circuits and learnt about current, voltage and resistance through practical activities and problem-solving challenges.

We look forward to another exciting half term with learning and opportunities to ensure everyone reaches their full potential. Please do contact the school office: office.3235@marcham.oxon.sch.uk if you would like to visit the school.

LINDSAY PRIDDLE

To see what else the school has been up to go to
www.marcham.oxon.sch.uk/class-pages

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Vicky Hickman Tel No: 07887711454
Email: info@vickysafterschoolclub.co.uk
website: www.vickysafterschoolclub.co.uk

**Playworker Vacancies available
please get in touch for more information**



Marcham Centre

OUR GOAL FOR 2026: KEEPING MARCHAM AFFORDABLE!

In the face of continuing rising costs for all of us—from household bills to the daily essentials—the Marcham Community Group Hire Rate Review Team has been hard at work. As we look ahead to 2026, our primary objective is clear: we are aiming to freeze our hire rates at current levels for the coming year.

While we are currently finalizing the details for our next Trustee meeting, our intention is to absorb increasing operating costs ourselves. We want to ensure that the hall remains the affordable, accessible "beating heart" for everyone in our community..

THE CHALLENGE: WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS WORK!

To make this price freeze sustainable, we are launching a "call to arms" for all residents: **Help us fill the hall!** If we can increase our occupancy and see these rooms buzzing every day of the week, we can keep our prices low for everyone.

If you've been thinking about starting a project, a club, or hosting an event, 2026 is the year to make it happen.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Do you have an idea that needs a home? Here are a few ways you can help us make the most of this community asset:

Start a Club: Whether it's a games club, a coding workshop, or a toddler playgroup, we have the space if you have the passion.

Host Your Celebrations: From children's birthday parties to anniversary teas, keep your celebrations local.

Business & Meetings: If you work from home and need a professional space for a meeting or a "pop-up" office day, think of the hall first.

Performance & Art: We would love to see more rehearsals, gallery showings, and live music filling our rooms.

LET'S MAKE 2026 OUR BUSIEST YEAR YET

The hall is at its best when it is full of people, laughter, and activity. By choosing to use the hall, you aren't just renting a room—you are supporting the very fabric of our village life.

Ready to book or have an idea to discuss?

Contact Tash at coordinator@marchamcentre.org and visit www.marchamcentre.org to check availability.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

- Quiz Nights (Adults only) – Friday 13 March and Friday 17 April. 7.30pm for prompt 8pm start.
- Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday 4 April
- Race Night – Friday 24 April
- Big Marcham Weekend – Friday 8 and Saturday 9 May

Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, Marcham OX13 6TY
enquiries@marchamcentre.org www.marchamcentre.org

Operated by Marcham Community Group (MCG)
Registered in England 7470307 Charity No. 1144407



MADNews 2026 Photography Competition

Do you remember that we ran a competition last year? Well we want to do it again and recognise our local photographers by showcasing their work on the cover of MADNews to reflect the beauty, the community and wonder of life in Marcham and District.

We need images that reflect all the months of the year so we can use them in the appropriate issues, so dig out some you took last summer as well as taking some spring photos now.

We are asking for photographers to submit a single A4 glossy print in the same orientation as the cover (vertical) with your name and contact details on the back. One entry per person, to be judged at the Big Marcham Weekend on Saturday 9th May. Entry box is in Marcham Village Shop and the deadline for entries is 5pm on Monday 13th April.

The judging will be done by public vote at the Big Weekend and the ones chosen will be contacted to provide a hi-resolution jpg/tiff of their image.

Rules:

- Entries must be submitted by 5pm on Monday 13th April
- One entry per person
- No age restrictions
- The photos must be your own work and not AI generated, but you may manipulate them to enhance colours, blur backgrounds etc
- They may show people but you must obtain written permission from each person featured.
- No obscene or violent images will be accepted

The MADNews Team reserve the right to disqualify any entries that do not abide by the rules.

Some of the winners from last year...



Flexicare is delighted to host the Ivel Trio once again for a magical **Night in the Museum** classical concert.

The trio, comprising of flute, cello and piano will perform amongst the dinosaurs in the stunning **University of Oxford Museum of Natural History** on Saturday 7th March 2026. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

The performance is followed by a drinks and canapé reception, included in the ticket price of £35. Tickets are available from www.ticketstripe.com/flexicareconcert or by emailing events@flexicare.org

Flexicare is an Oxfordshire charity providing a specialised sitting service for families with a disabled child in Oxford, Abingdon, Wantage and surrounding villages for 40 years. Your generous donations help us to continue to provide this unique, vital service.



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If you have an event to promote

email editor@madnews.co.uk with the details

Deadline is the 15th of the month before publication

SPORT REPORT

FOOTBALL

Since last month football has been affected by the weather (again) and looking at the pitch outside the Centre it is difficult to imagine that this (mostly muddy) field will, in a couple of months or so, become once again a verdant sward with a look forward to the return of cricket which starts at the beginning of May, and runs through until September. Marcham 1st football team have played three games and had one walkover (a win for Marcham), winning two and losing one. They currently lie 3rd in the North Berks table, only one point behind the leaders, Drayton, but with two games in hand. The Marcham second team have played two games and drawn one lost one. The valiant Vets have lost both games but are not at the bottom of the table.

WINTER OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS

Italy is hosting the Winter Olympics and Paralympics in the north of the country where, unlike Marcham, they have hills and usually have snow and ice at this time of year. The first winter games were held in France in 1924 and have been held every four years since then, only interrupted by World War II. This year a total of 93 countries are taking part in 16 sports including a new event; ski mountaineering – clearly out of reach for Marcham, in fact anything downhill (or uphill) is out of the question for us.

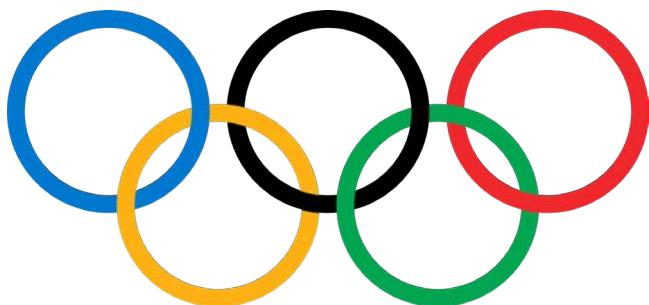
Great Britain has 53 competitors in all 16 sports. Each of the sports is scary in its own way, but for me the two scariest are the skeleton (head first) and the luge (feet first) where speeds of up to 90mph can be reached. These are undertaken as men's, women's and mixed which latter brings intimacy to a whole new level.

There has been controversy involving the British skeleton team's helmets that the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF) deemed breached the rules where the rear of the helmet 'significantly protrudes'. The Team lost an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas). Hence they must wear the helmets that they have worn when winning all seven world cup races this year. Peevishly the IOC have also banned a Ukrainian from wearing a helmet showing pictures of Ukrainian athletes who are victims of the war.

Security at such events is always an issue. It is estimated that there are around 6,000 security personnel drawn from several countries. Already cyber-attacks have taken place, allegedly by Russia and Belarus who are banned from the games due to the invasion of Ukraine. Unbelievably the USA has sent ICE agents to the games to assist with security, difficult to envisage them having the authority to deport an individual from Italy. Hopefully they are a little less trigger happy than those posted to Minnesota.

The Paralympics started with British victims of spinal cord injuries after World War II competing at Stoke Mandeville in England in 1948. Four years later Holland joined in, and Paralympic contests were born. Winter Paralympics started in 1976 and has grown. This year in Italy there are 79 different medals across 6 disciplines with over 650 athletes competing from 52 countries (the number of medals reflects the degree of disability within each discipline). This year sees a new medal event - wheelchair curling mixed doubles. Currently the size of the Great Britain squad is undetermined. More on this next month.

At the time of writing (15th February) the games are still in progress, and the Paralympics have yet to start. Great Britain have, to date, won 2 gold medals. There is still over a week to go, and those figures may change.



Age UK Oxfordshire: Help to keep your home warm this winter

Are you worried about the cost of heating your home, or finding it hard to stay warm? If so, there may be help available.

Oxfordshire County Council has been awarded government funding to help people on a low income improve the energy efficiency of their homes. This support is designed to make homes warmer and more comfortable to live in.

If you own your home, or rent privately, and are struggling with energy costs, you may be eligible for fully funded energy efficiency improvements through the Warm Homes: Local Grant.

We work with Better Housing Better Health (www.bhbw.org.uk), who can:

- Check whether you're eligible for this scheme
- Help you apply, step by step
- Talk through other options if this grant isn't right for you

Even if you don't qualify, you can still receive free, confidential advice on keeping your home warm, safe and energy efficient.

If you're unsure where to start, that's okay. We can help you to access this support, and you don't have to work it out on your own.

Contact our Helpline on **0345 450 1276** or email helpline@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk for more information. You don't need to reach rock bottom to ask for support.



**Garden Opening for Flexicare
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Safe and well visits offer practical advice to older and vulnerable residents about the risks in their home that could lead to falls, fire, or any source of harm.

Firefighters or dedicated advisers will talk to residents about smoke and carbon monoxide alarms (or fit them) and about how they can keep themselves safe in the event of a fire.

They can also provide advice and signposting on alcohol use, staying well and warm, and scams and doorstep crime prevention.

If you work or support vulnerable people in their own homes, you can refer someone for a safe and well visit on the county council's website here:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/fire-and-rescue-service/safe-and-well-visit

If you have spotted any of the following, then consider a referral:

- There are no working smoke or carbon monoxide alarms
- The resident may find it difficult to react quickly in the event of a fire or emergency
- They are using electrical equipment with trailing leads, lots of extensions or possible unsafe wiring
- There are large amounts of post or other indications that the resident is being targeted directly by possible scams
- The resident has made comments that they have concerns about staying safe.

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A Wildlife Garden's Confessions of a Winter Weary Daffodil

Let me tell you, life underground is wildly overrated. People imagine bulbs like me spending winter in some cosy botanical spa, wrapped in warm soil, sipping mineral-rich moisture. Absolute nonsense. It's cold, it's cramped, and my neighbours, mostly worms, have no sense of personal space.

By November, I'm already thinking, Here we go again. The leaves above have dropped, the sun's packed its bags, and I'm stuck in the dark like a forgotten potato. Every so often, a mole thunders past, shaking the walls of my earthly studio apartment. I try to stay positive, but there's only so much cheer a daffodil can muster when it's basically living in a mud sock.

Then comes January. Humans are making resolutions; I'm making peace with the fact that my roots are numb. The soil is so cold it could keep ice cream solid. I spend most days muttering, "Why couldn't I have been a houseplant? They get central heating".

But then, oh, something magical happens.

A whisper of warmth. A hint of light. A subtle loosening of the soil around my shoulders. Suddenly I feel it: the unmistakable urge to stretch. It starts as a tickle, then a tingle, then a full-on botanical LET'S GO.

I push upward like a green rocket with questionable aerodynamics. The soil parts. The air greets me.

And then, the grand finale: I burst into bloom.

Sun on my petals. Breeze in my leaves. Humans pointing at me saying things like "Ooh, spring!" as if I haven't been doing this every year like clockwork. Honestly, the relief is indescribable. After months in the subterranean gloom, I feel like I've escaped a very damp prison.

So yes, winter is miserable. But that first golden unfurling? Worth every shiver.

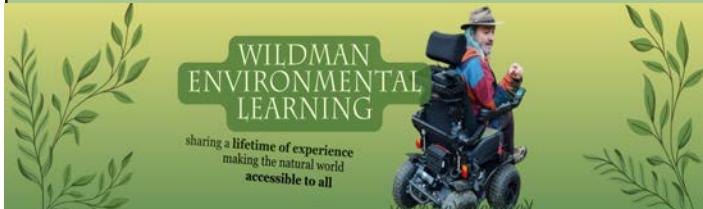
Besides, someone's got to announce spring.

Might as well be me.



©William Mankelow

Happy Gardening!
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ALL SAINTS' & ST LUKE'S CHURCHES

www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk

'Diggs, Sideline, Touchdown!' I can remember exactly where I was when I heard those three words, falling out of my chair in joyful disbelief at around 1:30am, as the Minnesota Vikings beat the New Orleans Saints in a playoff game in 2017. That may not mean much to you, but it meant a lot to me. Those three words can recall incredible emotion and excitement. It's amazing that so few words can have a profound effect on us. Think, 'I love you', or, 'it's a boy/girl'. In three words, so much can be communicated. Three words can change nations and echo through history: 'Veni, vidi, vici' (I came, I saw, I conquered), Britain Declares War, Russia Invades Ukraine. Few short statements, however memorable or emotive, can claim to change the whole world but there's a couple that might: 'It is finished' and 'He is risen'. The first, Jesus' dying words on the cross on Good Friday, the second, the words the angels said to the women at his empty tomb on Easter Sunday.

Those two statements, though low in word count, carry immense weight. They are the backbone of the Christian faith and will be read in churches in most or even every country in the world over Easter celebrations. They point to a completed work, a work that brings life where there was death and hope even where there is great darkness. Easter reminds us of this, of all Jesus has done and all he offers to us, and we hope you'll join us to hear more.

REVD PHIL ROWLANDSON.

Contacts:

Revd. Nick Weldon Vicar vicar@allsaintsmarcham.org 01865 391962

Phil Rowlandson Curate curate@allsaintsmarcham.org

Rob Finch Youth Worker youth@allsaintsmarcham.org

Jill Rowe Children & Families minister families@allsaintsmarcham.org

Tamsin Gilbert Parish Administrator info@allsaintsmarcham.org

Website: www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk

Regular Sunday services at All Saints' Church, Marcham

10.30am: Morning Service • 6pm: Evening Service

Wednesday Holy Communion 10.30am at Duffield Place

ST LUKE'S, GARFORD

St Luke's is open for quiet prayer 11am-12pm on Sundays with no morning service.

Sunday 1 March, 11am Service led by Revd. Mike Dilly

Sunday 15 March, 11am Mothering Sunday led by Ven. David Tyler

The churchyard in winter highlights the symbolic, evergreen presence of the two elderly yews and large holly bush but February also heralded the resilience and encouragement offered by a scattering of snowdrops and the newly planted saplings of spindleberry on the western boundary with the farm.

The churchyard has benefited from improved maintenance in recent years and any villagers with surplus snowdrops are invited to respectfully supplement the stock to further enhance the rural setting in years to come.



Details of services in March are provided above and we look forward to welcoming everyone to St. Luke's.

We look forward to welcoming everyone to our services in 2026.

Contact: st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

THE GOOD KIND OF FREEZING

As the weather warms up and gardeners worry less about frosts, I'm happy to report some more welcome "freezing" from the Vale and my cabinet portfolio, in particular. The first is on Car Park fees, where we have managed to keep fees unchanged for another year. This situation can't go on for ever, since we have a statutory duty to cover the costs of operating car parks and those costs are rising with inflation, but we're keen to do what we can to support both residents and town-centre businesses. There will be a change to Vale Car Parks, however: ticketless machines are being rolled out further, which will increase convenience for users and reduce printing costs (over 400,000 free-first-hour tickets were printed last year!). The second is on household bin collections: residents may be aware that many councils elsewhere are increasing the number of bins needed by each household, following DEFRA's guidance that introducing a separate bin for paper & card recycling will somehow make for "Simpler Recycling". We're sticking with our current approach of all Dry Mixed Recycling in the same bin, using the Vale's excellent track record on recycling as part of the justification.



GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

Central government is currently consulting on a number of themes that may be of interest to residents, and I'd encourage you to respond to these if you'd like to make your views heard.

One theme is Local Government Reorganisation: as I've mentioned in previous reports, the current two-tier structure of councils is soon to be abolished, with district/city councils (including the Vale) and Oxfordshire County Council merged into a Unitary Authority... or Authorities, depending on the geography selected by central government. Search online for "Proposals for local government reorganisation in Oxfordshire" for details and on how to respond. Another is on the growing problem of homeowners on new-build estates being trapped with a management company forced upon them, performing poorly and charging disproportionately high fees. This is often exacerbated by the difficulties of getting roads and other communal infrastructure adopted. Search online for "Enhanced protections for homeowners on freehold estates", or "Reducing the prevalence of private estate management arrangements" for details and on how to respond.

CLLR DR ROBERT CLEGG

District Councillor for Marcham Ward

Phone: 07784 225290

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

On 10th February, Oxfordshire County Council agreed its budget for 2026/27. Whilst the County Council continues to face financial pressures from national government, I was disappointed to see the administration approve yet another 4.99% increase in Council Tax for local residents. During the debate I supported an amendment which would've seen more investment in frontline services, headlined by an additional £1.3m per year for highways maintenance. This would have been particularly welcome given the poor state of local roads at present. This would have been funded through a series of small savings, including the removal of free lunches for councillors, and the use of a limited amount of reserves. Unfortunately, this amendment was rejected by the administration. Turning to more local issues, last month I reported that I had raised the issue of flooding on the A415, west of Church Street junction through Marcham. I'm happy to report that a 28 day 'defect' was raised for the culvert to be cleared and jetted on 14th January, so by the time you read this, works should have been carried out that address some of the longstanding issues with flooding. I will monitor the effectiveness of the works that are carried out and push for further work if the issue isn't fully resolved.



By the time you read this, works should have also been completed on the re-diversion and installation of a new section of footpath on Morland Road, at the entrance to Barrow Close. The existing footpath, which cuts across the entrance to the Village Hall, will be removed entirely and the area will be reinstated as a verge, with topsoil and seed. Clearly, we will need to monitor how effective this proves to be, but my hope is that it provides a better line of sight for vehicles exiting Barrow Close and should address some of the safety concerns in the area.

Finally, the government recently launched its consultation on potential changes to local government in Oxfordshire, which will affect both how councils operate and how services are delivered in the future. There are three proposals being considered for Oxfordshire and I would urge residents to take part in the consultation, as these changes will have a lasting impact. **You can take part and share your views until Thursday 26th March** and full details of each proposal, along with information on how to respond, can be found online here: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/oxfordshire/>

As always, if you'd like to stay up to date with what I'm doing around our division, do follow me on Facebook where I post regular updates: www.facebook.com/JamesRPlumb

JAMES PLUMB

County Councillor for Marcham and Cummor

Email: james.plumb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

MP'S REPORT

SESRO RESERVOIR CONSULTATION

I recently submitted my response to Thames Water's consultation on the proposed South East Strategic Reservoir (SESRO). In doing so, I sought to reflect the many concerns raised by residents, community groups and local authorities across our area.



There remain serious unanswered questions about the scheme's safety, environmental impact and spiralling costs. The estimated price has risen dramatically in recent years, and Thames Water customers, who have already seen significant bill increases, are expected to shoulder the burden. I have called for a full review of the business case, including proper consideration of alternative options, before any final decision is made.

Flood risk remains one of the biggest concerns locally, particularly for South Abingdon. Detailed flood modelling and mitigation plans must be finalised and guaranteed before any development proceeds. There are also major questions about construction traffic, including hundreds of thousands of HGV movements, and whether the impact on local roads has been properly assessed.

If the reservoir is to go ahead, Thames Water must work far more closely with local communities and ensure that meaningful, fully costed community benefits are delivered. At present, many of the promised amenities appear aspirational rather than guaranteed. I will continue to press Thames Water and ministers to provide clarity, transparency and proper safeguards for local residents as this process moves forward.

HOLDING THAMES WATER TO ACCOUNT

At the beginning of January, I called a Westminster Hall debate on the chronic mismanagement of Thames Water. I did so because far too many residents continue to experience flooding, sewage problems and spiralling bills, with little accountability and even less confidence that the company can put things right.

I have also raised these issues directly with the Prime Minister. Customers are being asked to pay more, despite years of underinvestment and infrastructure failures that Thames Water itself admits are widespread. If a company cannot be trusted to deliver the basics – sewage-free rivers, repaired leaks, and proper customer service – then serious reform is the only option.

I am continuing to press the Government to stop delaying action, and to ensure Thames Water is rebuilt as a public benefit company, with money reinvested into fixing leaks, preventing sewage spills, and restoring trust.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Alongside other Oxfordshire MPs, I have written to the Government to oppose planned cuts to Oxfordshire County Council's funding. Central government is proposing to reduce the council's funding by £24.1 million over the next three years, at the same time as allowing council tax to rise by up to 4.99% a year. These pressures come on top of growing demand for services such as adult social care, SEND provision and road maintenance.

I am clear that this situation is not the result of local failure, but of national decisions that shift responsibility onto councils while removing the funding needed to deliver. I will continue working with councillors across the county to press the Government to reverse these cuts and put local government funding on a more sustainable footing.

As ever, if you have any issues we can help with, please email us at: layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

LAYLA MORAN

For regular updates you can follow me

Bluesky: @laylamoran.bsky.social

Facebook: LaylaMoranUK

OTHER REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Frilford Garford Jill Rayner jill.rayner@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tubney Mark Coleman mark.coleman@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

MP

Witney (for Frilford, Garford and most of Tubney)

Charlie Maynard charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk

Answers to this month's Quiz from page 7



1. Canada
2. Southend Pier – longest pleasure pier in the world 1.3 Mile
3. AFC Bournemouth
4. Tallinn
5. Italy (Milan & Cortina d'Ampezzo)
6. Davos
7. Kurt Cobain
8. Thursday (Third Thursday of November)
9. Martin Sheen
10. Jupiter
11. Leonardo da Vinci
12. Silicon

White Horse Reservoir

A space for nature, a place for people

Thanks to everyone who took part in the recent statutory consultation on our proposed new reservoir. We're grateful to everyone who shared their views and attended our community information events. We're now carefully reviewing all the feedback received.

In January 2026, we were pleased to introduce the project's new name: White Horse Reservoir. Formerly known as the South East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO), it remains the same project with the same vision, but with a new identity that reflects its role in securing future water supplies and delivering lasting benefits for people and nature.

We've also published a tender notice to appoint a main works contractor to help design and build the reservoir. Construction is expected to create around 1,800 jobs, with roles during and after the build spanning careers such as ecologists, engineers, archaeologists, electricians, park rangers and sailing instructors.

To stay updated on our progress, please visit [thames-sro.co.uk/whitehorsereservoir](http://thames-sro.co.uk/).

Delivered in partnership by



Affinity Water



Ensuring water for life

NEWS FROM SOBELL HOUSE

Oxfordshire's compassionate care and hospice charity, Sobell House, is 50 this year!



We are delighted to have seven amazing, dedicated runners ready to take on the iconic London Marathon on Sunday 26th April **including:**

Andy Dibbs - <https://www.justgiving.com/page/andy-dibbs-1> - Andy is such a wonderful friend of Sobell House and, unusually for the hospice, he had no direct connection to us originally. His support stems from a chance meeting with Niki and Nikki from the fundraising team at the Marathon three years ago.

Abi Crane - <https://www.justgiving.com/page/abigail-crane-3> - Abi is truly part of the Sobell House family having been involved with the charity for many years after they looked after her beloved mum, Rosalie, and brother-in-law, Graham.

Amy Wiggins - <https://www.justgiving.com/page/amy-wiggins-1> - Amy took on the challenge of running the Oxford Half last October and the London Marathon this April in memory of her amazing dad in September 2023.

James Foord - <https://www.justgiving.com/page/james-foord-1755547406742> - James is running in memory and celebration of his mother who passed away eleven years ago after a battle with cancer. James told us that she was a very special person and a keen runner, and this event would mean a lot to her.

sobellhouse.org



Did you serve as a Special Constable before the year 2000, or do you know someone that did?

We're looking to uncover and shine a light on the remarkable stories from the history of the Special Constabulary at Thames Valley Police, and we'd really value your help.

If you were a Special before 2000 and would be happy to share your experiences, we'd love to hear from you. Please email reply@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk with your contact details and the years you served, and a member of our team will get in touch for a chat.

In the meantime, you can read stories from some of our current Specials at tvcareers.co.uk

MARCH 2026

The number in brackets refers to the page number where you can find more details

Abbreviations:

AS All Saints' Church, Marcham, **SL** St Luke's Church, Garford

DP Duffield Place, **MC** Marcham Centre

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
1	St David's Day	2		3		4		5		6		7	
SL Morning Service 11 am (17)		DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7)		MC Thirsty Café Stay & Play 8.45-11.30am (9)		Millets Farm Classic car meet 9.30am-noon		DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)		MC Thirsty Café with Natural Bread 9-11.30am (9)			
AS Morning Service 10.30am (17)		MC Bridge 6.50pm		MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)		Marcham Society Midweek Walk 12.30 pm (7)		MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)		Flexicare Concert, Oxford 7pm (13)			
8		9		10		11		12		13		14	
AS Evening Service 6pm (17)		DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7)		MC Thirsty Café 8.45-11.30am (9)				DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)		MC Quiz Night 7.30pm (13)			
AS Morning Service 10.30am (17)		MC Marcham Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm (3)		DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)				MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)		MC Thirsty Café with Natural Bread 9-11.30am (9)			
15	Mothering Sunday	16		17	St. Patrick's Day	18		19		20	Spring Equinox	21	
SL Mothering Sunday Service 11am (17)		DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7)		MC Thirsty Café 8.45-11.30am (9)		DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)		MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)		MC Thirsty Café 9-11.30am (9)			
AS Mothers' Day Tea 2pm-4.30pm (9)		MC Bridge 6.50pm		DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)		MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)		MC Astronomy Group 7.30pm (7)		MC Farmers Market 9am-12noon (9)			
AS Evening Service 6pm (17)		MC Marcham WI 7.30pm (7)		MC Astro Abingdon Arts Society 10.30am & 2pm (10)				MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)		SOFO Exhibition, Woodstock (10)			
22		23		24		25		26		27		28	
DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7)		DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7)		MC Thirsty Café 8.45-11.30am (9)		DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17)		MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-)		MC Thirsty Café with Natural Bread 9-11.30am (9)			
AS Morning Service 10.30am (17)		MC Bridge 6.50pm		DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7)		MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-)		MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-)		MC Thirsty Café with Natural Bread 9-11.30am (9)			
AS Evening Service 6pm (17)		MC Marcham Society 7.15pm (7)											
29		30		31									
CLOCKS GO FORWARD 1 HOUR													
AS Morning Service 10.30am (17)													
Garden Opening for Flexicare, Cumnor 2-3pm (15)													
AS Evening Service 6pm (17)													

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