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April 2026 Vol 48 No. 4

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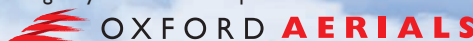
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Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the April Issue.

Cheers

Kay

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PROOFREADING

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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Richard.Osborn@thamesvalley.police.uk

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Email: james.plumb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Marcham and Shippon

Robert Clegg, 42 Harding Way, Marcham,

OX13 6FJ Tel: 07784 225290

Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Other DCs

Frilford Garford Jill Rayner jill.rayner@

whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Tubney Mark Coleman mark.coleman@

whitehorsedc.gov.uk

MP

Layla Moran layla.moran.mp@

parliament.uk

MARCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

FIX MY STREET

Do you know about Fix My Street for reporting routing highway issues? This website is an independent website, which makes it easier to report local issues. It can be used for reporting things which are broken, dirty, damaged or dumped, and need fixing, clearing or cleaning. For example these are issues such as graffiti, dog fouling, potholes or street lights that do not work.

It should **NOT** be used for things that cause immediate danger such as fallen trees or issues such as noise pollution, missed wheelie bin collection or requests for new street items e.g. zebra crossings.

More information can be found at www.fixmystreet.com. Any reported problems remain visible to all, which prevents a duplication of reports being submitted about the same thing.

LITTER PICK

The Parish Council has been informed that two residents are organising a village litter pick on Saturday 11th April at 9:30 a.m., with volunteers meeting at the Marcham Centre. Litter can make our village feel neglected, so the Council is grateful for their initiative and encourages residents to take part in helping keep Marcham clean and tidy.

APPEAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

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.

CEMETERY

The Council has received reports that items placed on graves are being disturbed. If your plot has been affected, please let us know. If you have seen anything or have any information that might help identify those responsible, we would be grateful if you could contact the clerk or your local parish councillor.

COW LANE ALLOTMENTS – RATS

Rats tend to be widespread in areas with steady food sources and places to hide. The allotments have compost heaps, chicken feed, water, crops and sheds. Undisturbed heaps or bins on the soil are inviting because rats can burrow underneath or nest inside. As rats thrive where food is easy to reach and shelter is undisturbed, preventing rats on the site becomes a collective effort, and

the Council would ask tenants to manage their compost heaps and overgrown areas. These should be turned regularly and preferably a base should be used so that the rats cannot burrow underneath. Ensuring compost heaps are clean and unattractive to nesting helps reduce the rat population.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P26/V0385/HH Install 22 ground mounted PV panels at Bluebell House, Frilford Heath. The Council had no objections.

P26/V0417/LDP Certificate of lawfulness for proposed removal of false chimney to resolve leaking roof issue at 7 Greenwood Grove. The Parish Council had no objections to the removal of the chimney should planning consent be required.

P26/V0464/FUL Formation of a tennis court within the residential curtilage of Upwood Park (retrospective) at Upwood Park, A420, Besselsleigh. The Council expressed concerns regarding the retrospective nature of the application, and would have preferred to have had the opportunity to comment prior to the construction of the tennis court.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Annual Electors Meeting on Thursday 14th May 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 is a composite of the Moon plus the planets, with the planets in order from bottom right clockwise to top right: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.

by Jim Asher

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Marcham Guides would like to thank **MCG Community Investment Fund** for their very generous donation in January which enabled us to hold a Forensics Evening.

Hayley Scott from "The Forensics Experience" led a brilliant session and we invited other girls to join us from the community.

Hayley led a brilliant session where girls had to investigate a murder scene and try to work out who the murderer was by looking at the evidence presented, taking finger prints and testing blood samples. The girls were all given a forensic suit and masks to enable them to really get into the role of Forensic scientist!

Everyone had a great evening and the leaders also got involved - see photo of PC Lizzie Harvey.

Also this term we had a trip to the Oxford Gangshow followed by a sleepover in the church, and a wonderful pamper evening with foot soaking and massage, henna hand decorating, relaxing herbal teas, face masks and silly socks.

We are now busy working on a Biodiversity badge and had a talk by Charlotte from the Wildlife Trust. After the Easter break we will be making mini ponds, litter picking and visiting Sutton Courtney Nature Reserve for pond dipping and exploring.

Girls who are 10 or nearly 10 are very welcome to join our thriving unit at any time; we meet on Monday evenings in term time at the Marcham Centre small hall from 7 - 8.30pm. contact Jill Rowe for more details 07811 165351.



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Changes to the Waste Collections

Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Wednesday 8 April	Thursday 9 April



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THE MIDWEEK WALK

Thursday 2nd April 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 "Steeple Aston Observatory" by Tim Haymes
Wednesday 15th April at 7.30pm
Small Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY
Please contact: astronomy@marchamsociety.org.uk

THE MONTHLY TALK

"The Wildlife of Radley Lakes" a talk by David Guyoncourt

Monday 27th April at 7.30 for 7.45pm
Main Hall, Marcham Centre, Barrow Close, OX13 6TY



Photo of the Great White Egret by David Eccles

Radley Lakes is a floodplain area beside the Thames which over time has evolved into a wide variety of habitats. For many centuries it consisted mainly of pasture with few trees. Then gravel was quarried and the pits became lakes. Subsequently at the end of the 20th century many of the pits were filled with ash from Didcot Power Station and these soon became a new unique habitat. The site was allowed to rewild and a variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats evolved.

David Guyoncourt has surveyed the flora and fauna of the Radley Lakes area since 1974 for county and national organisations. With the threat to Radley Lakes in the 1990's David became a founder member of Save Radley Lakes and is now a Trustee of the Radley Lakes Trust.

David's talk will describe some of the flora and fauna which inhabit this splendid wildlife area.

Members free of charge, Guests welcome at £5

www.marchamsociety.org.uk

Facebook: marchamsociety

Please contact: admin@marchamsociety.org.uk

MARCHAM WI

It is with much regret that Marcham WI was suspended after our March 2026 meeting. The committee would like to thank all the members, past and present, for their support over many years and send everyone their very best wishes.

For further information on other local branches, please contact the Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes by email at ofwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk, or phone on 01869 331081



Quiz

Test your knowledge with our monthly questions

1. Who is the new Archbishop of Canterbury?
2. What is the capital of Albania?
3. What is the fastest land animal?
4. Who won the 2026 Super Bowl?
5. Which airport is the world's busiest by passenger numbers?
6. What is the currency of China?
7. Which record label is closely associated with the city of Detroit?
8. By what name is the French tyre-based animated character Mr. Bibendum better known?
9. Which city is most associated with diamond merchants?
10. Which team plays at the Stadium of Light?
11. Who wrote Wuthering Heights?
12. How many medals did Team GB win at the 2026 Winter Olympics?

Answers on page 19

MARCHAM CENTRE



Horse Race Night

Friday 24th April Doors open at 7:30pm

First race at 8:00pm

£20 per table (up to 6) includes bottle of fizz

Adults Only
Cash Only Event!



Games Morning

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Easter Opening

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

Easter will be upon us by the time you read this, so we're hoping that you're enjoying this little break as we are and, for those that love chocolate, we hope you've had plenty!



As the shop will be closed over the long Easter Bank Holiday weekend, Hedges orders placed that week will be available for collection on Thursday 2nd April after 2 pm. Order forms and price list are available in the shop.



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now now provides services that your local bank did. You can use us for your basic banking needs including cash withdrawals, cash deposits and cheque deposits (not applicable to all banks). In addition:

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- the shop and post office are open every day Monday to Friday and ½ day on Saturday – whatever the weather
- we are here to serve you!

NEWSFLASH

Stamps are going up again on 7 April, but you can buy your stamps in advance and get them at the current price. These are the new prices for just some of the postal items below:

Class & Letter Size up to 100g	Current Price	Price from 7 April	Price Increase
First – standard	£1.70	£1.80	+10p
First – large	£2.60	£3.30	+70p
Second – standard	87p	91p	+4p
Second – large	£1.55	£1.55	0

As a trial, we have started to stock Beau Busby Jewellery. This is a locally made costume jewellery product hand made from polymer clay. Each item is unique and prices start from £6.00. All the items are on display in the shop – perfect for a birthday present, thank you gift or just for you. **Come and see for yourself.**



Normal opening hours are as below:

Monday – Friday: 0830-1700
Saturday: 0830-1200
Sundays & Bank Holidays: Closed

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

Marcham Farmers' Market

The Hungry Gap

Have you ever heard people talk about the "hungry gap"? They are referring to the period between March and early May when stored winter crops such as potatoes, squash, carrots, and onions are running low but spring crops like lettuce, spinach, and radishes are not yet ready to harvest. It can be a challenging time for local growers with fewer crops ready for sale, but the work of preparing the next season is already well underway. Seeds are being sown, soil is being prepared, and infrastructure is being repaired after winter storms. It's a period of high labour but low harvest, which can place pressure on small farms that rely on regular market sales.

This year's very wet winter and early spring rains across the UK have made things even harder. Waterlogged soils have delayed planting and made field work difficult. In some cases, early sowings have been delayed while growers wait for ground to dry out.

But there are clear signs of the new season arriving. Longer days, blossom on trees, buzzing bees and the first young seedlings in gardens all remind us that fresh local food will soon return.

To celebrate the arrival of spring and support local food growing, we're planning a Community Table at the April Farmers Market. We hope it will become a friendly hub where people can swap seeds and seedlings, share any recently split plants, ask questions, and learn more about what's happening locally.

We're looking for a few volunteers to help run the Community Table during the April Market. Tasks would include welcoming visitors, sharing information, and helping set up or pack down the table.

No specialist knowledge is needed – just enthusiasm and a willingness to chat with people about food, growing, and community.

If you'd like to get involved or learn more, please get in touch. Even an hour of your time would make a big difference.

Together we can help support local growers and celebrate the start of a new growing season.

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



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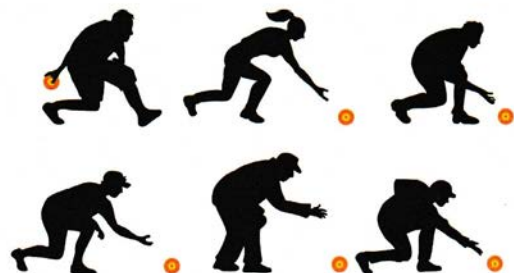


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Spring has arrived at Little Angels



There has been a real sense of magic at Little Angels this month as we have welcomed the change in seasons. With blue skies above and the first signs of spring all around us, our Little Angels have been making the most of the fresh air and brighter days. You may even have spotted us out and about in the village, enjoying nature, exploring our surroundings, and soaking up the spring sunshine.

The changing season has inspired so much of our play and learning. We loved celebrating St David's Day, with our Little Angels getting wonderfully creative as they painted daffodils in a very special way by using leeks. It was such a fun and memorable activity, and a lovely way to introduce the children to seasonal change, culture, texture, colour, and creativity all at once. We also enjoyed using different materials in our play, including our dragon costumes, which brought plenty of imagination, laughter, and excitement to our days.

It has not just been our Little Angels who have been busy. Our "Big Angels" have also been hard at work behind the scenes, giving their time over the weekend to completely revamp our rooms. With brand new furniture and beautifully refreshed spaces, our nursery is looking more magical than ever. Every corner has been thoughtfully designed to spark curiosity, wonder, and a love of learning, creating an environment that feels warm, inspiring, and full of possibility.

One of our favourite new additions has to be our stunning reading garden. It has already become such a special part of our nursery, creating a cosy and enchanting space where stories can come to life and imaginations can grow. It really is a little piece of magic for our children to enjoy each day.

At Little Angels, we believe the environment plays such an important role in a child's early years experience, and we are so proud to keep creating spaces where our children feel inspired, nurtured, and excited to learn.

If you have recently found out you are expecting a Little Angel of your own, it is never too early to book a visit. Our waiting list is very busy, so do not be put off into thinking it is too soon. We always love welcoming new families to come and see what makes Little Angels such a special place. You can find out more on our website.

The Marcham Little Angels Team

T: 01865 819992

E: joinus@littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

W: www.littleangelschildcaregroup.co.uk

Facebook @MarchamLittleAngels

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MARCHAM PRE-SCHOOL

With spring just around the corner, we have been teaching the children about new life and growth. As part of this theme we have been nurturing frogspawn, explaining what might happen next and encouraging the children to draw what they see.

Having set up an investigation station to watch the changes the children have been fascinated by the changes and they are eager to check in on them each day.

We've offered a simple frog lifecycle sheet to colour, cut and display and we're all looking forward to a visit from Zoolab UK soon with more animals and minibeasts to learn about.

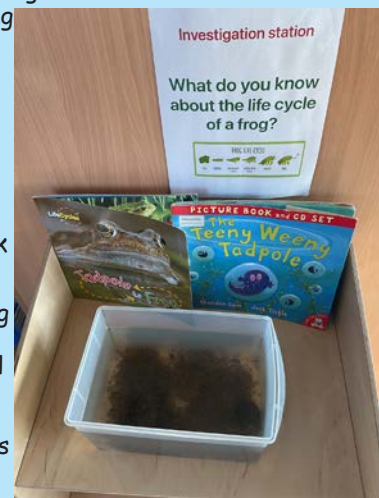
To find out more about Marcham Pre-school please contact us at admissions.mps@outlook.com

Nicky Sanford, Early Years Teacher

Marcham Pre-school

01865 392101 email marcham-preschool@hotmail.co.uk

www.marcham-preschool.weebly.com




COMMUNITY LITTER PICK IN MARCHAM

Help us keep our village clean, green, and beautiful!

Saturday 11th April

9:30 AM

Meet at **THE MARCHAM CENTRE**

Join friends, neighbours & families for a morning of community spirit and fresh air.

Every bag collected makes a difference!

WHAT TO BRING:

- Comfortable clothes
- Sturdy shoes or wellies
- Gloves (if you have them)

Litter pickers & bags provided
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Organised by Jamie and Nikki Butcher - 07342 812801 if you have any questions.

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Marcham Centre

MCG INVESTING IN MARCHAM: YOUR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND AT WORK!

The Marcham Community Group (MCG) is delighted to share an update on some of the latest projects supported by our Community Investment Fund (CIF). This fund ensures that the income generated by our community bar facilities is ring-fenced and reinvested directly back into the village, supporting the spaces and activities that make Marcham a vibrant place to live in.

OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU: LET'S FILL THE HALL!

By keeping our rates low, we are making a conscious investment in our village. However, to keep the hall sustainable and thriving, we have a 'call to arms' for all residents: Let's increase our occupancy! If you've been thinking about starting a project or hosting an event, now is the perfect time to make it happen. We want to see the lights on and the rooms buzzing every day of the week.

PROTECTING OUR PLAYING FIELDS

Our most significant recent approval is a vital £10,800 investment in the Anson Field. Following an application from the Field Committee, the Trustees have approved a major renovation project to "act now and save later."

- **The Work:** Specialist "verti-draining" to 175mm depth to improve drainage, alongside high-grade feeding and seeding.
- **The Benefit:** Whether you're playing competitive sports, attending "toddler football," or just walking the dog, this ensures our primary outdoor space remains high-quality and safe for everyone.

SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL: MARCHAM PTFA

We are excited to support the Marcham Primary School Parent, Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA). The PTFA wanted to cover the hire of the large hall, kitchen, and hub for up to four major events.

- **Strengthening Ties:** A recent survey showed that 91% of parents and carers prefer hosting events at the Marcham Centre.

- **Maximizing Impact:** By using the CIF to cover room hire,PTFA ensured that 100% of the money they raised went directly toward classroom resources, books, and school trips for the school's 190 pupils.
- **Community Spirit:** These events—often held on Friday nights or weekend afternoons—are key to building relationships between staff, parents, and the wider village.

STRENGTHENING YOUTH GROUPS: MARCHAM GUIDES

We also continue to support our local Guides. The CIF helps our volunteer-led organisations bridge the gap between their core income and the rising costs of providing great experiences for our young people.

The Trustees have been working closely with the Guides leadership to ensure that the unit can continue to offer a diverse range of activities—from local cinema trips to skills development—without placing an undue financial burden on families.

LOOKING FORWARD

The MCG is proud to provide this "seed funding" to get projects off the ground. Do you have a project that needs support? The CIF is here for the community. If you are part of a local group with a project that needs a helping hand, please get in touch with the Trustees admin@marcham.org. We are always looking for ways to put your community funds to good use.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

- Quiz Nights (Adults only) – 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

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 20th 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 20th April 2026
- 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.

TIDDLYPEEPS
BABY AND TODDLER GROUP
a group for small people and their grown-ups

All Saints Church, Marcham
Tuesday 10:00 - 11:30am

SUMMER 1

- 14th April
- 21st April
- 28th April
- 5th May
- 12th May
- 19th May

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We are back on the 2nd June

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SPORT REPORT

FOOTBALL

Congratulations to Marcham Colts U12 team who got their photo on the back page of the Abingdon Herald as reported on the Marcham Facebook page by Sandra Hill on 20th February.

Since my last report, Marcham First team has won 3 games and lost 1 and is joint top of the Table with Berinsfield. Marcham Second Team has won 2 and lost 2 games sitting comfortably in mid-table and with 2 games in hand against the second placed team (Berinsfield Reserves) but face a real struggle to reach the Table leaders Drayton Reserves. Marcham Vets has been busy with 5 games played since my last report, winning one game against Holyport Vets (Hooray!). Holyport is a small town near Maidenhead but is a long way from any water (e.g the Thames) and got its name from the old English 'Horig Port' meaning Muddy Market Town! It has 3 more public houses than Marcham.

CRICKET

England men's team were disappointed in the recent T20 World Cup held in India, but here in Marcham the regular walkers over the soon-to-be lush meadow of the playing field will have noticed the cricket square has had its first cut of the season. A frisson of excitement has rippled through the village in anticipation of the start of this season.

AUNT SALLY

I notice that The Crown is advertising its Aunt Sally 'pitch' and seeking players for next season on Facebook. Registration for the 2026 season took place on 16th March in the Abingdon Conservative Club. The fixture list will become available once all teams are registered.



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I'll be at home, in my studio,
Saturday 11th April - 10am

I am also open for Artweeks 2,3,7,8,9 May
11am - 6pm

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Artist

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email editor@madnews.co.uk with the details
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Marcham Parish Council

Annual Meeting of Electors
Thursday 14th May, 2026 at 7.30 p.m.
At Marcham Centre
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. Your voice matters. Join us, take part in the conversation, and see how you can play a role in strengthening our community.

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. The Council is delighted to have guest speakers. Those that have agreed to attend so far and provide an update on what they do, are the Marcham Community Group and The Abingdon Bridge.

Email Clerk@marchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

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EVENTS



The Arts Society Abingdon LECTURE

**Wednesday 15th April,
10.30am and 2.00pm
Abbey Cinema, Abbey Close,
Abingdon OX14 3JD**

The Eccentric World of Agatha Christie Benedict Morrison

Agatha Christie is one of the most adapted writers of all time. These adaptations, however, have often been critiqued as nothing more than gentle exercises in period nostalgia. If this is the case, it raises the question of why have they attracted some of the most brilliant actors of all time? This lecture goes on a trip through decades of Christie adaptations, exploring how the performances of John Gielgud, Maggie Smith Albert Finney (to name but a few) help to express the uniquely eccentric world of Christie's work



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 theartsocietyabingdon.org.uk or email info@theartsocietyabingdon.org.uk



SAUNA AT THE FARM

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A Worm's Open Letter to Builders Who Keep Calling My Home "Just Dirt"

By **Wriggles T. Earthworm, Long Time Soil Resident and Part Time Aeration Specialist**

Before I begin, let me wriggle something out of the way. I am tired, exhausted even, of hearing humans, especially builders in large boots, refer to the ground as "dirt." Dirt! As if the entire subterranean world were nothing more than a messy inconvenience stuck to your wheelbarrow. I assure you, from the perspective of someone who literally eats, sleeps, and romances in this stuff, soil is very much alive.

Let me take you on a brief tour of my neighbourhood, since you seem determined to bulldoze it without so much as a polite knock.

The Microbe Metropolis

Down here, billions of microbes bustle about like tiny commuters. They break down organic matter, recycle nutrients, and generally keep the whole place running. Think of them as the unsung civil servants of the underground. They don't get holidays. They don't get pensions. They don't even get names. But they work harder than any cement mixer you've ever operated.



Image: Sandie Clark (Unsplash)

The Fungal Motorway

You may think your motorway system is impressive, but have you ever seen a mycelial network? Fungi weave vast underground highways, transporting nutrients from one end of the soil to the other with the efficiency of a well trained postal service, if the postal workers that is, were glowing white threads with a flair for dramatic expansion.

Root Row

This is the leafy suburb where plant roots mingle, trade sugars, and gossip about rainfall. They're constantly chatting with fungi, microbes, and, occasionally, me. (I'm not saying I'm popular, but I've been known to help a carrot achieve its full potential.)

Worm Borough (Population: Many, All Fabulous)

My district is a thriving community of tunnels, compost heaps, and the occasional awkward encounter with a mole. We worms are the soil's architects. We aerate, we mix, we enrich. We are, in short, the reason your tomatoes don't taste like disappointment. And yet, despite all this, you stand above us declaring, "Shift that dirt over there." Dirt! You might as well walk into a cathedral and say, "Nice shed."

Soil Isn't Just Alive, It Keeps You Alive

Without soil, you'd have no vegetables, no timber, no cotton, no gardens, no parks, and nowhere to drop your sandwich crumbs (which, by the way, we appreciate). Soil filters your water, stores your carbon, and supports your buildings, yes, even the ones you insist on plonking directly on top of my living room.

So please, on behalf of the entire underground community, I beg you: stop calling it dirt. Call it soil. Respect it as a living ecosystem. Call it a living ecosystem at least. Call it the bustling, breathing, wriggling miracle it is.

Or at the very very least, call it something that's respectful while you're stomping around up there. We worms have feelings too, you know.

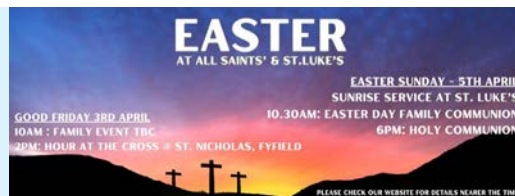
Happy Gardening!

**Stuart Mabbutt,
Wildlife Gardening Specialist
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www.wildmaninspires.co.uk**



ALL SAINTS' & ST LUKE'S CHURCHES

www.marcham-with-garford.org.uk



Is there anyone in charge, and if there is, would we trust them? So far in 2026, there have been plenty of reasons to feel anxious about the state of our world, maybe more reasons than ever: the ongoing war in Ukraine, the scandal and political turmoil associated with Jeffrey Epstein, and now the conflict in Iran and across the middle east, to name but a few. The latter affects us all with global markets disturbed and prices increasing. Of course, the world has endured periods of unrest plenty of times before, but we may not have done so, and not quite like this. It's an unsettling time, and when things feel out of control people tend to look towards the solid ground of familiar things... family, friends, and faith. After he was raised from the dead, Jesus said, "all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." That could be dismissed as the empty boast of a megalomaniac, were it not for the evidence that backs up his claim: his life, his teaching, his miracles, and supremely, his resurrection from the dead. A defeater of death has a unique claim to ultimate authority. So Christians believe Jesus is in charge of his world, and he has done plenty to prove himself worthy of our trust. That doesn't mean our lives and the world about us will be free from turmoil and pain. But it does mean there is hope, and hope is what we all need. The spring seasons of Easter, Ascension and Pentecost are a great time to reflect of this. Week by week, Sunday by Sunday, our churches offer plenty of opportunities to discover and deepen our sense of faith and hope in our troubled and troubling world.

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.

Easter Sunday 5 April, 6.15am Sunrise Service
 led by Rev'd Phil Rowlandson
Sunday 3 May, 6pm Sung Evensong
 led by Rev'd Nick Weldon
Sunday 7 June, 6pm Communion Service
 led by Rev'd Nick Weldon

Contact: st.lukes@allsaintsmarcham.org

As we enjoy the simple beauty of Spring in Garford - brighter mornings, blossom, and the brilliant greens of trees and hedgerows coming into leaf - we are offered a powerful reminder of the promise of renewal that Easter brings. Our Sunrise Service is an opportunity to gather, reflect and begin again with hope and we would love you to join us there, details above.



DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

With conflict in the Middle East pushing up energy prices once again, it feels appropriate to focus on energy this month. The Vale is making great progress decarbonising its leisure centres, with solar panels installed on roofs and measures taken to reduce energy use. Waste collection is proving more challenging, but we are laying the groundwork now for more electric Refuse Collection Vehicles once the battery range improves. All of this is crucial to reducing our emissions, but it is also a sound financial investment: using less expensive imported energy reduces operational costs and so will more than pay back for itself.

But beyond the Vale's operations, what can we do to help the district as a whole?

LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLAN

With electrification comes a challenge to the electric grid and so the Vale is one of a group of organisations drawing up a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) for how best to adapt Oxfordshire's energy network. I'm especially involved in this, previously through my role as Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and now as the Cabinet Member with Climate Action in my portfolio. The first phase – data collection and modelling what's possible – was completed last year and so we're now in Phase 2: creating detailed plans. Energy infrastructure is included, of course, but also topics like community heat networks and retrofitting homes to reduce energy use. All of this will eventually lead onto the third phase – delivery – but it's not yet clear how Local Government Reorganisation is going to interfere with this.

LOCAL POWER PLAN

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) recently published a Local Power Plan report setting out how it intends to provide support for local government and community (co-) owned renewable energy assets, such as solar panels or wind turbines. I'm very in favour of these, as they give communities a real say in what kind and where these new assets go and can return some revenues directly back to those communities to fund local priorities, such as cutting bills or supporting services. Details are yet to emerge, but we're keeping a close eye on it.

THE LESS GOOD NEWS

So far, so good! But in a spectacular display of disjointed thinking the Government is also proposing to strip councils of their powers to force higher energy standards on new homes (as the Vale and South Oxfordshire are trying to via our emerging Joint Local Plan). The Vale is pushing back strongly on these proposed changes (and more) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Wish us luck...

Local Area Energy Plan **CLLR DR ROBERT CLEGG**

District Councillor for Marcham Ward

Phone: 07784 225290

Email: robert.clegg@whitehorsedc.gov.uk



COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

This month I have continued to work on a number of issues affecting residents in Marcham and surrounding areas. Following concerns raised by both Marcham Primary School and residents about the faded "Keep Clear" markings on Orchard Way, I have arranged for these to be added to the County Council's lining maintenance programme for the year ahead, which should help improve safety and visibility during busy school times.

Recent periods of better weather have finally allowed the County Council's highway teams to undertake some more extensive pothole repairs, and I'm pleased to report that several of the most serious defects I have previously raised are now being addressed. This includes potholes on the A415, the Abingdon



Road through Tubney, and Sheepstead Road in Marcham. Whilst more work is of course needed, and I continue to report potholes as they arise, the progress is certainly welcome.

Finally, each county councillor has a £10,000 budget available to support community projects in their division, known as the Councillor Priority Fund. The fund can support a wide variety of local initiatives, including things such as tree planting schemes, improvements to community facilities or activities run by local volunteer groups. If any local groups are interested in applying or would like to learn more about the fund and whether their project might be eligible, please do get in touch with me via email - I would be very happy to help!

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

I hope this finds everyone well and that you are enjoying what is (at the time of writing at least!) a beautiful sunny start to Spring!

Here is my update on what I have been up to over the last month – which has been as busy and as varied as ever.

I've had meetings here in Witney on issues from climate change to potholes; and debates in Westminster on everything from Universal Credit to Thames Water and shotgun licensing.

In early March, Witney, Carterton and many of the surrounding villages experienced huge disruption after a large water main burst near Eynsham. This left thousands of homes without water – many for two, three or even four days – with at least a dozen schools and many businesses having to close.

I spent most of this time focusing on trying to get information to people about what was going on, and on encouraging and pushing Thames Water to get their existing emergency distribution points working better, or to set up additional ones where there were clear gaps. This was pretty non-stop from Wednesday evening to Sunday morning. There was also plenty of following up on water deliveries for lots of vulnerable people who contacted me saying they should have had water brought to their home as part of the 'priority service' but it had not arrived.

I've written to Thames Water to seek detailed information regarding what compensation will be offered to which communities and when and how this will be received. I'll publish information about this on my website and social media channels as soon as I receive it, so please do keep an eye out for this.

An old repair failed on the supply pipe from the main treatment works. This was repaired but getting the system back up and running was further slowed by a couple of pumps failing. This speaks to the underlying problem of Thames Water's infrastructure being a terrible state and despite everyone's bills being ramped, the company's finances being so woeful that there is no end in sight.

While the Conservatives got us into this mess, it is deeply disappointing that Labour is doing so little to fix the underlying problems which would require Thames Water to be put into bankruptcy (also known as Special Administration) and much of its debt written down. If you'd like to read more about the work I have done to fix our broken water sector, including fighting Thames Water in court, please take a look at my website:

www.charliemaynard.co.uk

Away from water, I've had a number of very useful meetings this month about the Witney Rail project, including with the Chair of the Oxford Growth Commission. The OGC has been set up to coordinate the delivery of infrastructure, housing and employment across Oxfordshire. Given the huge number of new homes, the Government are pushing Oxfordshire to accommodate, it is crucial we have the infrastructure, whether it is rail, roads, health, schools or sewage, before Oxfordshire is covered in many thousands more houses.



Speaking of roads... the huge number of potholes across the area is a huge frustration to all of us. I've had some useful conversations with the Highways Team at Oxfordshire County Council this month to try and find solutions to this dire problem.

The team were keen to highlight their PotShot campaign and the Fix My Street Super Users Programme, where you can play a role in highlighting potholes you come across, which speeds up the process of having them fixed. Please do get in touch with the County Council if you are up for becoming a SuperUser - fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk. It's a great way to help our communities.

The Highways team have told me that they have doubled the number of crews who are out fixing potholes. Since January 2025, OCC have repaired around 8,000 potholes in West Oxfordshire, but obviously this is nowhere near enough. There is a very long way to go before our roads are back to where they should be, and at the root of this, is the longstanding challenge of local government funding. The Government really needs to find a solution to this, for the sake of all council services – from roads to schools and social care. I'll keep doing what I can to push for this in Parliament.

Another issue I've been continuing to work on is improving treatment and outcomes for people with less survivable cancers. Last month the Government published its new Cancer Plan. Although I welcome the ambitions in it, it contains no new funding or infrastructure, without which I'd question how effective it will really be.

However, following a debate where I highlighted how brain tumour tissue removed during surgery could be used in the development of vaccines or for research, I was very pleased to receive a letter from the Public Health Minister, announcing an additional £11.7 million funding for the Brain Tumour Consortium and £3 million to co-fund the Cancer Research UK Brain Tumour Centres of Excellence, this year.

As ever, if you need my help, please contact me at charlie.maynard.mp@parliament.uk.

CHARLIE MAYNARD

MP Witney (for Frilford, Garford and most of Tubney)

OTHER REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

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

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

MP Layla Moran layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk

Answers to this month's Quiz from page 7



1. Dame Sarah Mullally
2. Tirana
3. Cheetah
4. Seattle Seahawks
5. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
6. Renminbi (Yuan)
7. Motown Records
8. The Michelin Man
9. Antwerp, Belgium
10. Sunderland AFC



JOIN GARD and add your name to those opposing the proposed reservoir. Go to our website at Group Against Reservoir Development groupagainstreservoirdevelopment.org/

Planning permission is not yet applied for: in seven months' time Thames Water submit their planning application for the proposed giant reservoir, now called The White Horse Reservoir. They must give in a detailed application for a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate because the proposed reservoir is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. Vale of White Horse District Council are not the Planning Authority for this. They are opposing the plans, as are Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire Council and the three MPs whose constituencies are affected: Olly Glover, Layla Moran and Charlie Maynard.

Thames Water have already spent more than £543 million of customer money developing the huge proposed White Horse Reservoir yet there is still no final design, no published construction time-plan and no clear strategy to address major water-quality risks. Given the dramatic cost escalation, Ofwat must carry out a new independent "best value" reassessment to ensure customers are not locked into the most expensive option without proper scrutiny.

Before any Development Consent Order can responsibly proceed, it is imperative that several fundamental issues are resolved:

- a completed detailed structural design published
- a credible construction timetable and accurate cost forecast detailed
- full dam-breach and flood-risk assessments modelled and published
- a proven emergency drawdown mechanism modelled and published
- a fully costed and transparent water-treatment strategy published

GARD is opposing this application all the way. Join us now and add your support to the MPs and Councils that already oppose the plans.

Send us your ideas for actions over the spring and summer, to show that we refuse to be ignored. Let's also show that democratic institutions cannot be trampled.

Write to the Secretary of State emma.reynolds.mp@parliament.uk

Write to your MP and Council, approving of their opposition to the proposed reservoir and asking them to continue opposing it. See GARD website, Take Action section.

Advance notice: the GARD Annual General Meeting will take place on May 8th in Steventon Village Hall Millenium Room at 8pm.

Contact the secretary for information or to give ideas gard.secretary@gmail.com

Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday 4th April at
Marcham Centre,
Starting at 12 noon until
2pm
Free family event for village
children.
Cake Stall and Face Painter
Sponsored by The Trading Co and The
Village Shop.
Bar will be open

Register your child/children by
emailing
hayleycousins38@hotmail.com
please include your home
address and any dietary
requirements

APRIL 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 April Fool's Day DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)	2 Maundy Thursday Milletts Farm Classic car meet 9.30am-noon Marcham Society Midweek Walk 12.30 pm (7)	3 Good Friday MVS CLOSED	4 MVS CLOSED MC Easter Egg Hunt 12-2 pm (19)
5 Easter Sunday MVS CLOSED SL Sunrise Service 6.15 am (17) AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	6 MVS CLOSED DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm	7	8 DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2pm (-)	9 Revised Bin Collection Day	10 MC Quiz Night 7.30pm (13)	11 MC Litter pick 9.30 am (11) Glass Botanicals Studio Open 10am (14) Milton Bowls Club taster 2.5 pm (9) AS Melodies and Morsels 5 pm (5)
12 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	13 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm MC Marcham Parish Council Meeting 7.30pm (3)	14	15 MADNEWS DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE 5pm DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-) MC Astronomy Group 7.30pm (7) Arts Society Abingdon 10.30am & 2pm (16)	16	17 MC Quiz night 7.30 pm (13)	18 CRUK Honey Table Top Sale 10am-2pm (5)
19 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	20 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm MADNews photo competition closes (13)	21	22 Earth Day DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-)	23 St George's Day	24 MC Race night 7.30 pm (13)	25
26 AS Morning Service 10.30am (17) AS Evening Service 6pm (17)	27 DP Community Games Group 10.30am-12.00 noon (7) MC Bridge 6.50pm MC Marcham Society 7.15pm (7)	28	29 DP Holy Communion 10.30am (17) MC Short Mat Bowls 2.30pm (-)	30		

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