



Online edition No. 6

January 2021

From the Editorial Team

We are disappointed that it is necessary to produce an online edition of the *Crowmarsh News* once again because of the restrictions associated with the Coronavirus pandemic. Our aim is to return to a printed edition as soon as possible, but we cannot at present say when that will be. As before, we are asking for readers to be kind enough to print off a copy of this issue for neighbours who do not have access to the internet.

Regular advertisers will know that we will be carrying advertisements as normal when we return to a printed edition. In the meantime, we hope you will all keep well and stay safe.

E-mail: Crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com

Your *Crowmarsh News* needs you!

Thinking about Volunteering?

Crowmarsh News is produced every month by a group of volunteers from the parish, and we are delighted to welcome the most recent new members to our team. However, we would still like to recruit an additional volunteer who has experience of using Microsoft Publisher, which is the software we use to produce the page layouts for both the printed and the online editions. If you think you can help us, or would like more information, please send us an email to

crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com..

Useful telephone numbers

Crime Stoppers	0800 555 111	NHS Emergency Only	999
Police non-emergency number	101	NHS Non-emergency	111

Parish support contacts

There are various groups you can join in the villages. If you don't know how to make contact with your local group, the *Crowmarsh News* will put you in touch.

WhatsApp groups

Bellamy Way, Stephens Field and The Street (from the bridge to Colliers)

Crowmarsh Hill (numbers 164 to 206)

Home Farm

Jethro Tull Gardens

Lane End and immediate neighbours in The Street

Mongewell

Murren Croft

Newnham Green, numbers 20A to 52

North Stoke

Park View

Robert Sparrow Gardens

Winter's Field

Facebook groups

Crowmarsh Parish Council

Crowmarsh Gifford Community

Crowmarsh COVID-19 Response

Thanking Local Heroes

Amidst all the heroes we have celebrated in 2020 let us not forget our local ones who have kept us going:

Crowmarsh Stores with Corrine, Deb and Lyndsey looking after us all
Biffa and all our regular dustmen/refuse collectors
Royal Mail and especially our local postie

There may be other unsung heroes.

(Signed T J Cotton)

We'll add thanks to all who have worked behind the scenes in support networks and online groups, and those helping friends and neighbours who are self-isolating. -Ed

Corn Exchange news

The Corn Exchange in Wallingford has been awarded a total sum of £40,700, (payable in three stages) from the government's Culture Recovery Fund. This fund was set up to ensure that arts venues are able to continue operation despite the current Covid pandemic.

The award was made by the British Film Institute on behalf of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and reflects the association between the BFI and independent cinemas through the Film Audience Network.

The Corn Exchange is a member of the FilmHub South East network and thus has access to a wide portfolio of British, independent and foreign films.

The BFI grant is a lifeline for the Corn Exchange and will ensure that the new season in 2021 starts on a positive note with sufficient funds for the venue to continue operating safely and comfortably.

Entry to Primary or Infant school – September 2021

Children born between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017

15 January 2021 is the closing date for on time applications.

Parents/Carers must apply by this date, online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/primaryadmissions or on paper (forms available from the County Council website or a local school)

16 April 2021 is when those who applied online will receive an email and will be able to view the result of the application online. Letters offering places will be posted second class to those who made a paper application.

Full details of the Admissions process are published on the County Council website – www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Crowmarsh Stores

Please note that Crowmarsh Stores will no longer be opening on Sundays from January.

Past Times

A Very Personal Nativity

At this time of year every parent or grandparent will have fond memories of their children or grandchildren performing in a School Nativity Play. In December 1949 St John's Boy School produced a series of sketches and a nativity play at the Masonic Hall.

It was late September when the parts were cast. I had no hope of getting into the choir as, only a year before, the Reverend Gobbit told my parents that my two weeks in St Leonard's Choir would have to come to an end as I could not sing, and I was putting off the other choir members. But I hoped for a part in the nativity play.

I thought one of the wise men was beyond me but a shepherd or an angel was attractive. Miss Nash, the director, began to name the cast, Alan Pemberton was given the role of the Angel Gabriel, Billy Batten and Tony Morris were two of the Kings, Richard Lay was the Innkeeper, and Peter Shayler was his wife.

I thought, "she hasn't named Mary yet" - and then her steely gaze fell on me. I can still remember her words, "Beasley you will play the Virgin Mary", and then she laughed and so did the rest of the class. To make matters worse she told me to come down to her house sometime in the next two weeks so my dress could be altered.

For the next month we learnt our lines. Dress rehearsal followed; the white piping that had been added to my dress was thought to be extremely attractive, a view I did not share. The costumes were very good and had been made before 1914.

It was decided that the National Health glasses that I wore would not look right on Mary, so I had to remove them. But the opening scene was the Angel Gabriel visiting me on a darkened stage. Getting to my chair in the dark, without my glasses, was a problem and I walked into the chair and knocked it over, an act that Miss Nash didn't forgive for some time.

On the night of the performance, over 300 parents, relations and friends crowded into the Masonic Hall. John Atwell did the make-up of us boys, he put lipstick on me which I wasn't that happy about. The play went very well, and we had a good write-up in the B and O newspaper.

That was my one and only stage appearance as I didn't want to be type-cast. I must also thank Richard Lay for not telling anyone of the part I played in the nativity play.

David Beasley

Benson Garden Club

December's Benson Garden Club Zoom talk was given by Doug Stewart. Taking inspiration from nettle beer through to more exotic beverages such as pulque, Doug provided an amusing and sideways look at plants, gardens and favourite tipples. He certainly provided a whole new way of looking at plants and gardens, with borders becoming cellars filled with possibilities. For example, he quickly established that many of us on the Zoom talk already had the makings of a gin border (juniper, coriander, bay and citrus trees, roses and some cucumbers being key plants for ingredients).

The evening was rounded off by a light-hearted quiz that had some of us groaning when we were told the cryptic answers, but certainly kept up the festive spirit (no pun intended) of the evening.

Our next Zoom talk, on Thursday 7th January, is the New Year themed: "New Tricks for Old Gardeners?" by Katherine Crouch. Katherine's talk will be about how to garden with your body in mind, to keep us all gardening whatever the challenges that face us.

We have a fantastic programme lined up and hope to encourage new members to join from the comfort of their armchairs. As always, we welcome visitors - you will need to let us know that you would like to join the event and arrange an online payment of £3 up to two days beforehand. The visitor's form is on our website: [https://bensongardeningclub.](https://bensongardeningclub.weebly.com/visitors-membership.html)

[weebly.com/visitors-membership.html](https://bensongardeningclub.weebly.com/visitors-membership.html) . Further information is on the website, or please feel free to email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

From the District Council

Our district - along with the rest of Oxfordshire - was placed in Tier 4 from Boxing Day. This means that we all must stay at home to protect ourselves, our families, our communities and the NHS.

The number of cases in South Oxfordshire has been rising significantly in the past few days, as they have in the rest of the county. We know this will be a cause of concern for so many of our residents, especially at this time of year – and that makes it all the more important to follow the government’s guidelines and stay safe. Please also do not be tempted to travel between Tiers – for example to family members in a lower Tier, as this runs the risk of transmitting the virus more widely and putting you or your families at greater risk.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we will continue to support our most vulnerable residents, including those affected financially, along with businesses that have felt the full force of the various lockdowns and restrictions.

Over the past ten months, so many of our council officers have been working exceptionally hard, often around the clock, to support our communities and businesses through this pandemic, and most of them are taking a short but well-earned break between Christmas and New Year. However, our Community Hub remains open on an emergency basis for our vulnerable residents who are in urgent need of food or medical supplies – if you’re worried about getting vital supplies, do not be worried about contacting us – all the details are at www.southoxon.gov.uk/communityhub

As ever, businesses can find out what help is available to them on our Business Support website at www.svbs.co.uk

I know it’s going to be a very different Christmas, but I’d like to send all of our residents our warmest Christmas wishes and a better New Year. Please do stay safe and look after yourselves and your families.

Cllr Sue Cooper
Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council

Henley & District Stamp Club

If you have recently taken up Stamp collecting or Postcards again, or are starting from the beginning during the time of enforced ‘relaxation,’ perhaps you would like to get even more interest and enjoyment from it by joining your local Stamp Club. You will meet people with the same hobby, which has so many different ways of collecting and subjects to do with it, from a single country, ‘old’ letters or envelopes to a theme based collection. We would be very pleased to meet you.

We are now holding our meetings by Zoom on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. Although still learning the intricacies, people are enjoying the meetings. If you would like to know more, please phone 681739 or see our website: www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk We look forward to meeting you.

Wallingford Photographic Club

Want to try something new in 2021? Come along to Wallingford Photographic Club. Meetings continue to be virtual but we are offering a full programme of speakers, competitions, and other events to help you improve your photography and meet like-minded people.

The club meets via Zoom every Thursday. Evenings start at 7.30pm and run until around 9.30pm, with Zoom access from 7.15pm.

Our programme for January will begin with an “8X10” evening (eight members give presentations for ten minutes each) on the 7th. On the 14th, Jeremy Sugars will give a talk about Olympus cameras. Mary McIntyre will give a talk on “Photographing the Milky Way and Lightning” on the 21st, and finally on the 28th we will have our No Set Subject 3 competition.

Please visit www.wallingfordphoto.club to learn more about the club and find out how to get involved.

Emily Dunn

Parish Council notes

Crowmarsh Parish Council met on-line on Thursday 10 December.

Present: Cllrs John Griffin, Stephen Sherbourne, Andrew Johnson, David Rowley, Ken McCrea, Robin Smith, Stuart Soames, Fleur Stevenson, Liz Ryall and Julian Park, Dr Yvonne Peet (Finance Officer) and Mrs Sue Rance (Clerk). Apologies were received from Cllr David Topliss and District Cllrs Cooper and Powell.

The council still has one vacancy and would welcome expressions of interest: please contact the parish clerk.

Mrs Elizabeth Burnell, a director of the Residents' Association of Bellamy Way and Stephens Field, addressed the meeting on the long-term problem of inappropriate parking in Stephens Field and the road to the Riverside Park. Vans parked overnight for a period have been reported to the County and District Councils. The Chairman will ask the County Council again to implement the parking restrictions agreed following last year's survey and to close the old access road.

District council matters

District Councillors were unable to join the parish council meeting because they were attending the full District Council meeting to discuss adoption of the controversial South Oxfordshire Local Plan (LP2035).

SODC officers are working intensively with colleagues from the County Council, Public Health England and the NHS to plan for mass testing and mass vaccination of the local population. Residents are encouraged to contact the Community Hub if they need help with access to food, or to claim the £500 grant if instructed to self-isolate. The SODC Community Hub team is available from 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 9.30am-4.30pm on Fridays. Call 01235 422600 or email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk.

SODC is taking responsibility for managing on-street civil parking enforcement in collaboration with the County Council during 2021, alongside their existing off-street parking enforcement powers.

Your responses to the residents' survey about possible use of the former SODC site on Benson Lane are being analysed and will be reported to the next parish council meeting.

Planning

The proposed development at Newnham Manor is due to be considered by the SODC Planning Committee on 26 January.

A meeting has been arranged between residents, Bloor Homes and the county and parish councils to discuss highway works in Benson Lane.

Decisions by SODC

[P20/S3889/HH](#) 27 Benson Lane Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8ED. Ground and first floor rear extension. Planning permission

[P20/S3870/N1A](#) 55b The Street Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EA. Conversion of office to 2-bed residential property. Permitted development, but without the proposed new window to the south facing elevation.

[P20/S3537/HH](#) 4 Whitehouse Road North Stoke OX10 6BA Demolition of existing conservatory; two storey side and rear and single storey front and rear extensions. Planning permission.

Responses to consultations

[P20/S4150/LB](#) Carmel College gateway. To widen the access, deconstruction of piers 3 and 4 is required as well as the rebuilding of dwarf walls C & D. No objection but rebuilding must be according to the earlier planning permission and the conservation officer's requirements, using

appropriate materials.

P20/S4518/FUL 'The Sycamores' Land east of 206 Crowmarsh Hill Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BG. Erection of five dwellings and associated works as phased development. Plans have already been agreed, and there is no objection to the work being phased. Members questioned whether RAF Benson had been consulted.

P20/S3849/HH 84 The Street Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8ER. First floor extension on top of ground floor utility room to increase size of 1st floor bathroom. No objection.

P20/S4163/HH 53 Newnham Green Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EP. To demolish existing garage to west and erect a two-storey extension. No objection, but comment questioning alternative parking provision.

P20/S4178/FUL The Old Walled Garden Mongewell Park Mongewell OX10 8DA. One for one replacement dwelling (of implemented house). The five houses were conceived as a set of 5 (see <http://carrollandpartners.co.uk/project/wall-house/>) but assuming no wasteful demolition of an existing building, there would be no grounds for objection.

A meeting has been arranged between residents, Bloor Homes and the county and parish councils to discuss highway works in Benson Lane.

Neighbourhood plan

The Crowmarsh neighbourhood plan has now been submitted to SODC.

Finance

Payments approved included £1620 to Carroll & Partners for building regulations fees and construction drawings, £720 for the external audit, £1980 for three days' consultancy to prepare the neighbourhood plan for submission and £3000 for a survey and preliminary design of a pedestrian crossing in The Street near The Bell. £676 had been received in November from the feed-in tariff for the solar panels.

The audit report is complete and no issues were raised: the report and accounts are available for inspection.

The draft budget for 2021-2 had been circulated based on a precept of £39,605, which will keep council tax charges at the same level. After discussion, the budget and the precept were agreed.

The budget was considered in the light of a year when income has been reduced because of the closure of the pavilion, although tennis income has increased. The budget for the year predicts an overall deficit of £5367. This includes £50,000 for pavilion improvements, £10,000 for sports equipment and replacing the floodlights on the hard-court area with LED ones, and expenditure on safety measures, with further income expected from developers through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

We will review the budget every quarter in the light of the considerable uncertainties. The Finance Officer was thanked for her clear budget presentation and sound advice.

Environment and recreation

The architect will apply for building regulations approval for the planned improvements to the pavilion and a structural engineer will be engaged.

It is hoped to fit a safety net for the climbing equipment and a barrier to prevent large vehicles entering the car park. Repairs to the roundabout and the train will be carried out early in the New Year. Biomisting of the play equipment has continued.

A resident has expressed appreciation of the facilities at the playground that enable disabled children to participate fully.

Traffic and transport

The council agreed to support the '20s Plenty for Oxfordshire' campaign to reduce the speed limit in towns and villages to protect pedestrians and cyclists.

The replacement bus shelter is now in place near the Crowmarsh roundabout on Portway. A new name plate has been installed in Church Lane, North Stoke.

The Chairman has submitted a proposal for improvements to Watery Lane to the County Council and the Ridgeway Trail Officer, for costing and assessment.

Other matters

Street lighting in North Stoke has not yet been replaced with LED lights as promised.

Councillors were encouraged to participate in online training courses. The chairman had attended an online meeting of the Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Planning Alliance.

The Bell public house, which is a listed building, has been closed since March. It was agreed to write to Greene King enquiring about their future plans for the pub.

There will be speed restrictions on Portway for installation of cables between 26th February and 1st April 2021.

Next meeting

The next Parish Council meetings will take place online on Thursday 14th January and Thursday 4th February, starting at 7.30pm. Please contact the clerk if you wish to join a meeting. Dates for meetings in 2021 were approved, mostly on the first Thursday. We expect to meet online until June.

Contact the Parish Clerk, Mrs Sue Rance, at 2 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EL, or by e-mail at crowmarshparishclerk@gmail.com

The Vicar writes...

It seems our main hope for 2021 is for the COVID vaccination. I've spoken to many people who are awaiting the phone call that tells them when theirs is due. The pandemic has affected us all, mostly affecting our quality of life, but it is the potential reduction to our quantity of life which frightens us the most. This is why we accept the lockdown restrictions and their impact on the economy and our own wellbeing, because we do so out of love for our neighbour and those working in the NHS, to protect them from a premature death ...or even a "mature death" as it is the elderly who are most affected.

So, using the same logic, what are we prepared to give up for an eternal life? It should be everything, right? All else is ultimately expendable: our wealth, job prospects, way of life and even deeply held family traditions such as the way we spend Christmas. The good news that the church proclaims is that God offers us a vaccine against death itself. This cost a huge amount to bring about but it is freely available and offered to all. Now, that may seem too good to be true - it is natural to have questions: Is it safe? How effective is it? What are the side-effects? Who has gone ahead of us in the queue?

To answer these in reverse, Jesus was first in the queue and has proven it works. It works because it was God's plan all along and he knows us more intimately than even those who can decode our genome – God our creator knows our problems, our deepest needs and most importantly he knows the solution – God's own self-sacrifice is the only solution as he alone represents both absolute justice and the absolute love that forgives.

So, what about the side-effects? Is it safe? Well, actually... "No".

To follow Christ is the way of the cross - it stands against the worldly values which rely on the exploitation of fellow humans and of creation. His followers may expect persecution, ridicule and disdain. In some societies, following Jesus can mean actual persecution, false accusations, rejection by family, denial of basic rights and being last in the queue for state aid during this pandemic. Ironically, those who turn against the tide are called "sheep" but it takes a brave sheep to follow Jesus and his teachings. But if there is "herd-immunity" it is to be found in his flock that self-identifies as the church – here his life-giving Spirit rules. The vaccine of ultimate salvation is available to all and brings real comfort and joy even in these dark times.

Worship from home (again!):

It was lovely to be able to worship together in church over Christmas and on 27th December. However, with the new strain of coronavirus rapidly spreading despite the existing Tier 4 restrictions and increasingly present among our own friends and neighbours, we are advised to stay at home until the situation improves. With that in mind we will switch to online worship – connection links and details will be on our Wallingford CofE Facebook page: www.facebook.com/wallingfordcofe. All are welcome to join us. Also, please do get in touch with me if you or someone you are aware of needs particular support, prayer or just a friendly chat - I'm on 01491 599873.

Blessings, Kevin

From John Howell MP

As I write I am mindful of those whose loved ones have died prematurely at the hands of the virus and those who have suffered in other ways too. I doubt many people have come through the situation unaffected in some way or another. As we turn the corner into a new year, and with one vaccine already rolling out and others potentially close behind, let us hope that as 2021 progresses we will be able to return to a more normal situation.

Whatever their political view, during the course of 2020 many people told me that they did not envy the Government having to make decisions about how best to deal with the COVID crisis with the many different issues to be considered. Whatever decisions were made there were some people who were unhappy – some wanting tighter restrictions, some wanting greater freedoms; and whatever financial support measures were introduced there were some who felt they were too little and some who felt they were too much.

During the year The Speaker did much to keep parliament moving and enable business to carry on but inevitably it has been slower than usual with remote working. Debate was also curtailed to some extent with limited numbers of MPs allowed to be in the Chamber at any one time and so the usual pattern of discussion with interventions was limited. For some time there were also no Westminster Hall debates. This is where MPs can raise specific shared concerns for debate and reply by a Minister.

In all of this it has been difficult to move as quickly as the Government would have liked to act on election manifesto promises. The opportunity to bring things forward was hindered by the more urgent issues. Some things will still come forward but more slowly, and others may need refocus in the light of the experiences of 2020. It is my hope that in the year ahead we will be able to focus on some of the important issues that have been leapfrogged by COVID. I hope too that I may be able to get out and about more to meet people in the constituency in business and in the community as I have in other years. Although technology has enabled us to keep some contact going as human beings there are times when there is no substitute for meeting face to face. However some of the benefits of using technology in ways we had not previously discovered must not be lost. I will continue to use online meeting facilities where it is more efficient to do so. I think we have all learned to be adaptable and must harness new opportunities.

With my best wishes to you all for 2021.

Advertisers

These *Crowmarsh News* advertisers have confirmed to us that they are open for business:

Name & services	Contact details	Website
Arbocare Tree Services	07778 811136 or 01235 813619	Arborcare.co.uk
Clean Machine	01491 825600	Machinesthatclean.com
Crowmarsh Tyre	01491 834088	
GA Electrical	reception@groupga.co.uk 01491 835875	
Garden Machinery repairs and servicing	Call Jon 07766 755652 anytime	
Howard Chadwick Funeral Service	office@chadwickfuneralservice.co.uk 01491 825222	
Howbery Park	01491 822495	howberypark.com
Joss Coulton Plumbing	info@coultonplumbing.co.uk 01491 824486	coultonplumbing.co.uk
Me My Spade and I garden and grounds maintenance	07899 868183	memyspadeandi.com
Puppy Classes	info@sohelpmedog.co.uk 07788 174506	sohelpmedog.co.uk
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Roy Windebank	roysworkshop@gmail.com 01491 652345	roywindebank.co.uk
RefreshPro	info@refreshpro.co.uk 07772 416465	refreshpro.co.uk
Scott Gesner gardener	gesnergardening@yahoo.co.uk 07818 244787	gesnergardening.co.uk
SH Decor	enquiries@shdecor.co.uk 01865 400208	shdecor.co.uk
South Oxfordshire Wellness	jo@sowellness.co.uk 07775 943574	sowellness.co.uk
The Landscape Group Oxford	lee@tlgo.co.uk 01865 341750	tlgo.co.uk
Warmingham	01491 874144	warmingham.com
WEPS	sales@weps.org.uk 01491 827825	