



Online edition No. 8

March 2021

From the Editorial Team

We hope you are all well. We are asking readers to be kind enough to print off a copy of this issue of *Crowmarsh News* for neighbours who do not have access to the internet.

Regular advertisers will know that we will be carrying advertisements as normal when we can return to a printed edition. In the meantime, stay safe.

E-mail: crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com

Census 2021

The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. All households will be asked to take part in Census 2021 on 21 March.

This census will be the first to be predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code to complete the questionnaire on a computer, phone or tablet. Paper questionnaires will be available if you need them.

The census results will be available within 12 months and will inform where millions of pounds of public funding is spent on services like cycle routes, schools and surgeries.

For more information, visit the [census website](#) or email the District Council's [Insight and Policy team](#).

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 help to 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

COVID-19 vaccination programme

The nationwide programme will take several months to vaccinate the whole population.

The key messages to all local residents are:

- The vaccination programme is being phased in across the county following the national guidance on prioritising patients.
- Please do not contact your GP or another NHS service to seek a vaccine – please wait until the NHS contacts you.
- When the NHS does contact you, please be ready and attend your booked appointments.
- Please continue to follow all the public health guidance to control the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and save lives.

University of Oxford COVID study: appeal for volunteers

Over 50? Had a positive COVID-19 test with symptoms? Researchers need your help

People aged over 50 who have had a positive COVID test and are showing symptoms of the virus are being sought for research into helping them get better quickly.

Over-50s with certain underlying health conditions and all over-65s with suspected COVID-19 can apply to take part in the University of Oxford study at participating GP practices or www.principletrial.org.

Participants are randomly allocated to receive either usual care or usual care and an existing medication. It is hoped the trial can prevent people in these groups needing to go to hospital. Contact principle@phc.ox.ac.uk or call 0800 138 0880.

Participating GP practices include Wallingford Medical Practice and Mill Stream Surgery in Benson.

Wallingford Photographic Club

Wallingford Photographic Club continues to meet virtually, 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, with Zoom access from 7.15pm, and run until 9.30 or 10pm.

We will have a competition on the theme of "Time" on 4 March. This will be followed by a members evening on 11 March, featuring four members speaking about a topic of their choice, for around 20 minutes each.

On 18 March, Paul Sanders will give a talk on "My time as a picture editor of The Times."

On 25 March, Andy Small will talk on "Macro photography especially plants and flowers".

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

Benson Garden Club

On a cold, damp evening, February's Benson Garden Club Zoom talk made us think about, (and long for), hot summer days and how gardeners can prepare for this Summer and beyond.

Geoff Hodge gave a talk on "Gardening in dry and drought conditions – drought-resisting plants". He started the talk by pointing out that soil can dry out very quickly, meaning that conditioning your soil is an essential first step on the road to managing hot weather. Geoff recommended adding plenty of BOM (bulky organic matter) to retain nutrients and moisture, and then adding a 3"/7.5cm bark mulch (2"/5cm as a minimum) to top up your original BOM.

In terms of planting, Geoff advocated buying younger plants rather than being tempted by bigger, "instant impact", mature versions. As well as being cheaper, smaller plants are likely to develop their root systems more quickly. This, he explained is important because plants are only drought-resisting once they are well established with their roots down into the soil. So, for example, while *Crocsmia* "Lucifer" is drought-resisting once established, you will need to water it well for some time after it is first planted.

Geoff also advised on watering practices, with one thorough watering a week being better than damping down each day, in order to encourage the roots to follow the water down and grow deeper. Obviously, plants in containers still need to be watered more regularly.

Geoff then treated us to a wide range of drought-resisting plants to consider for our gardens, from different types of trees to shrubs, climbers, bulbs, herbaceous and bedding plants.

To help identify specimens likely to thrive in dry conditions, he pointed out what plant qualities tend to lead to drought resistance. For example, plants with waxy, scaly or hairy small leaves are better protected against the drying effects of strong wind or sun. Likewise, having silvery-grey leaves is another sign that a plant has drought-resisting properties.

By the end, we were thinking about how we might be able to spend more time this Summer looking at our garden from the comfort of a deckchair, rather than with watering can in hand!

Andrew Oldham will give our next talk, "The story of Dig for

Victory", on Thursday 4 March 2021. He will cover the history of the Second World War fight for food and why it is still relevant today.

Andrew is a disabled garden writer who has written for "The Guardian", "Sainsbury's Magazine" and the "Kitchen Garden". In 2010, after being made redundant from his job, he turned to "Dig for Victory" to help him convert his 1/4 acre garden to produce food to feed his family. In this talk, Andrew covers what he learnt whilst researching "Dig for Victory", including the common misconceptions and problems with digging to produce high yield food on a new plot.

We have a fantastic Zoom programme lined up for our members over the coming months and hope to encourage new members to join. 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: we will then send you log-in details for the meeting.

The visitors' form is on our website: <https://bensongardeningclub.weebly.com/visitors-membership.html> - you can fill it in and submit it there. Further information about the club and how to join as a member can also be found on the website, or please feel free to email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com.



Andrew Oldham
(photo credit: Alun Callender)

Past Times

Killed by a sheep

On 23 February 1878, an inquest was held at the Swan Inn, Cholsey, on the body of 29-year-old Alfred Shaw, the Station Master at Moulsoford Railway Station.

Catherine Shaw, his widow, gave evidence that Alfred returned home from work at about ten past nine on Friday night, and said he'd had a hard day assisting loading sheep. One of the sheep refused to go into its railway truck and turned on him, butting him in the stomach and knocking him down.

She asked if he was hurt. He said he was only winded and he was able to carry on working until all the sheep were loaded and sent on their way to London. However, during the night she awoke and sensed something was wrong with her husband. She called her servant who struck a light, and they found her husband was dead.

Philip Pugh, a policeman at Moulsoford Station, said the deceased was assisting in loading sheep into some 11 railway trucks bound for London. Each truck held 35 sheep, so it had taken most of the day. Nearly all the sheep were from Mr de Mornay's farm in Crowmarsh.

One of the sheep refused to go into the truck and butted Mr Shaw. He was struck by the sheep at 3.40pm and was able to work on until 5.30pm when he left to have his tea. He returned at 7.00pm and helped to finish loading the sheep. He left for home at 8.30pm.

Doctor Nelson examined the body and concluded that Alfred Shaw died from the rupture of a major blood vessel, probably by the sheep butting him in the stomach.

A verdict of "accidental death from the butt of a sheep" was returned. In Victorian times the number of deaths caused by horses, cows and pigs was very high, but being killed by sheep was quite rare.

David Beasley

Citizens Advice



When bills start piling up and multiplying, vague fears can turn into a paralysing panic for people experiencing money troubles. Turn to Citizens Advice, with eighty years of experience in pulling people back from precipices. Your burden might seem overwhelming and impossible to resolve but in reality there is a lot you can do to turn things around.

Start by assembling your bills and make an overall list, with relevant details like dates when payment is due. Sort the bills into priority debts (rent and mortgage arrears, Council Tax, gas and electricity, tax and National Insurance – see <https://www.citizensadvice.org/debt-and-money> for a complete list) and non-priority debts (water rates – your supplier can't cut you off – credit cards, unsecured loans, hire purchase, etc).

Take the priority debts first and contact your creditors. Don't be afraid of this step. Many companies will be expecting you to get in touch, saying on the bill itself "We know that paying a bill can be difficult" or "Affected by Covid-19?" – and providing a telephone number or web link. Approach them with a constructive attitude, tell them you are actively tackling your debts, and perhaps ask them to suspend interest charges while you do so. They also might be amenable to letting you defer payment or pay smaller amounts over a longer time period. Ask about any special reductions – for example, the Warm Home Discount Scheme for electricity supplies (see www.gov.uk for more information).

If you need to compose a letter or email to a creditor, you don't have to start from scratch: copy or adapt a template letter from the Citizens Advice website. One especially useful letter asks creditors to give you more time.

If your circumstances have changed you might be able to claim benefits, or extra benefits. Citizens Advice runs a Help to Claim programme (call 0800 144 8444) and can guide you through all the stages. The Turn2us website at <https://www.turn2us.org.uk> will tell you what benefits you might be able to claim, and has details of grants for those on low incomes.

If you have an overdraft, talk to your bank. In the coronavirus age many banks are making

concessions and charging no interest on overdrafts up to a certain amount. Contact your district council about a possible Council Tax reduction. And think creatively about ways of increasing your income. Could you rent out a spare room in your house, for instance?

Talk to a volunteer at Citizens Advice (call Adviceline free on 0800 278 7907, Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm) or through webchat (“chat with us online about debt”) Monday to Friday 8 am to 7 pm. Appointments in person are not available at present.

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

Oxfordshire County Council is running a Vision Consultation on its [Local Transport and Connectivity Plan](#) (LTCP). This is the first step in developing a new Local Transport Plan for Oxfordshire. The consultation runs until 29 March 2021. Please send in your views at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltcpvision. A second consultation later in 2021 will cover the development of the full LTCP including an updated vision and themes.

The Vicar writes...

One of the things that keeps us sane during lockdown is to maintain our routines as best as we can, day by day, week by week and season by season. The signs of spring are all around us as the days lengthen and snowdrops are followed by daffodils and bluebells, birds build their nests and trees blossom. In the Christian calendar, we are now in Lent, the time of preparation for Holy Week and Easter. This is a time of reflection.

Many people are asking deep questions of faith. Most people I speak to are hoping that the “new normal” will be an improvement over the old pre-pandemic days, desiring a less-selfish society in which we care for each other – neighbours near and far – and indeed, the whole of creation in its wonderful biodiversity.

Now, usually we would give up some luxury for Lent, but this year we have already given up so much that there is already a gaping void in our lives. So how do we fill it? Jesus says, ‘Come and see, come and explore, let me help you to understand how all this fits together’. So why not walk with us, as we walk with Jesus? Our churches are following the “Come and See” program from our Oxford Diocese and all are welcome to join us, either for our livestreamed services or more directly by signing up to receive a daily email. You can find out more at www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see, including access to all the daily reflections and weekly videos from Ash Wednesday onwards.

All are welcome to join us online for any of our services below, or give me a call if you would like more personal prayer or indeed practical support through the Crowmarsh COVID-19 Response network of neighbourhood volunteers (www.facebook.com/groups/crowmarshresponse).

Blessings, Rev Kev

March Services

Livestreamed Services on www.facebook.com/wallingfordcofe

Zoom Services in Meeting ID: 687 610 8967 / Passcode: 422377

Sunday 7 th	11am	Family Service (on Zoom)
Saturday 13 th	11am	Crowmarsh Community Café (on Zoom)
Sunday 14 th	9.30am	Mothering Sunday Parish Communion (from St Agatha’s, Brightwell)
Sunday 21 st	11am	Parish Communion (from St Mary Magdalene’s, Crowmarsh)
Sunday 28 th	9.30am	Palm Sunday Service (from St Agatha’s, Brightwell)
Morning Prayer	Every Friday at 9am on Zoom	
Evening Prayer	Every Sunday at 4pm on Zoom (moving to 6pm after the clocks change)	

Full details at www.wallingfordcofe.org.uk/calendar

Parish Council notes

Crowmarsh Parish Council met on-line on Thursday 4 February.

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

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Liz Ryall.

District council matters

The heavy rainfall and prolonged high river level had once again led to flooding and sewer overflows in Retreat Gardens and at Bridge Villa Campsite. Following drainage problems at Newnham Farm requiring pumping out by tankers, a temporary diesel sewage pump has been installed. District Cllr Sue Cooper was following up on these and other local sewerage problems and had arranged a meeting with Thames Water to address all these issues in the near future.

A meeting would be held to discuss the future of the former SODC offices site following the recent survey.

Local elections are expected to take place on 6 May, and officers are working on the logistics planning needed to accommodate voting and vote-counting.

District Councillors would strongly encourage voters to consider applying for a postal vote if they are concerned about voting in person – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-a-postal-vote>.

Planning

Decisions by SODC

P20/S4518/FUL 'The Sycamores', Land east of 206 Crowmarsh Hill, Crowmarsh Gifford
Erection of five dwellings and associated works as phased development. PLANNING PERMISSION

P20/S4163/HH 53 Newnham Green, Crowmarsh Gifford. To demolish existing garage to west and erect a two-storey extension. PLANNING PERMISSION

P20/S4695/HH 55B The Street, Crowmarsh

Gifford OX10 8EA. Insertion of a new window to match existing. PLANNING PERMISSION

Major developments

The Newnham Manor site was expected to come to planning committee in March but no date had been set. There have been details on conditions to be discharged (drainage strategy and arboricultural assessment), but the Parish Council is not consulted on these.

Neighbourhood plan

Consultation on the Crowmarsh Neighbourhood Plan will run until 9 March. If you know anyone who might be interested in this consultation but who is shielding or has no internet access, you can email haveyoursay@southandvale.gov.uk or ask them to call SODC on 01235 422425.

The plan documents are at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/emerging-neighbourhood-plans/crowmarsh-neighbourhood-plan/>, where you can comment by online form or by emailing planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk or writing to Planning Policy, South Oxfordshire District Council, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB.

Finance

Donations were agreed of £200 to Sue Ryder Palliative Care Hub and £500 to Citizens' Advice South Oxfordshire.

Expenditure in January included salaries, refuse collection and the regular biomisting of the play equipment with Zoono, plus £1,440 for the preliminary design of a pedestrian crossing near The Bell. There will be consultation on this once a response has been received from Oxfordshire Highways.

Environment and recreation

The committee met on 18 January. Linda Parker was welcomed to the committee. Planning permission has been granted for improvements to the pavilion and building regulations approval will now be applied for.

Procedures for Covid management, including signage, have been reviewed. The parish council has taken precautions to make the area as safe as possible and the playground remains open, but will need time to dry out

following the recent heavy rain. The gym equipment is closed in accordance with government regulations.

If you do have to drive to the recreation ground, please park on The Street or use the Riverside car park, not in Bellamy Way, Access is needed for emergency services at all times.

Traffic and transport

Traffic management in North Stoke is a high priority to reduce speeding on Wallingford Road. Cllr Soames suggested action to slow traffic entering the village from the south. He and Cllr Sherbourne will work together to arrange a site meeting with an OCC Highways officer to consider the options. There is a requirement for a crossing in the planning approval for The Springs.

Next meeting

The next parish council meeting will take place online on Thursday 4th March, starting at 7.30pm. Please contact the clerk if you wish to join the meeting.

The parish council still has one vacancy and would welcome expressions of interest: please contact the Parish Clerk, Mrs Sue Rance, at 2 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EL, or by e-mail at crowmarshparishclerk@gmail.com

Letter to the editor

Crowmarsh Gifford is one of Oxfordshire's smaller villages when compared to the amenities and facilities of its local neighbour Benson, but nevertheless has a sense of pride and independence. In addition Crowmarsh doesn't want to be subsumed or seen as an adjunct to Wallingford, "the town across the waters".

So why does Bloor Homes describe its new greenfield development as Wallingford Reach when it's neither in the town nor beside the River Thames? This adds insult to injury – it should have been Crowmarsh Meadows or Crowmarsh Fields so as to emphasise its heritage.

Trevor Cotton

[Note that, while developers can advertise their site in whatever way they choose, the Parish Council has had a say in naming the roads on this development, as they have elsewhere, Among the names, French Gardens reflects the historic market garden that preceded the SODC offices across the road, and McCulloch Meadows is named after the founding director of the Institute of Hydrology (now UKCEH). An article explaining all the road names will be published in a future Crowmarsh News.]

Your Crowmarsh News needs you!

Crowmarsh News is produced every month by a group of volunteers in the parish, and we are delighted to welcome the most recent new members to our team, Caroline and Rachel.

Editorial team: James and Toni Taylor, Amanda Maher, John Griffin, Kevin Beer, Caroline Campbell and Rachel Wakefield.

What's on listings: Julian Park, Advertising: Pat Shields, Distribution: Frank Sadler and team.

However, we would still welcome additional volunteers, especially someone with 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.

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	
Feet First	21 St Mary's Street, Wallingford 01491 825224	
GA Electrical	reception@groupga.co.uk 01491 835875	
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
Purely Plants	andy@purelyplants.co.uk 01491 833831	
RefreshPro	info@refreshpro.co.uk 07772 416465	refreshpro.co.uk
Roy Windebank	roysworkshop@gmail.com 01491 652345	roywindebank.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
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	