

Issue 525

March 2023

The Crowmarsh News team

The *Crowmarsh News* is run by the Crowmarsh News Association, a group of local volunteers — more help welcome!

Editorial and Layout: Toni Taylor and Jane Thrift

Editorial support: James Taylor, Julian Park, Revd Kevin Beer, Caroline Campbell and John Griffin

Advertising: Pat Shields

Distribution: Frank Sadler and the team

The *Crowmarsh News* is a self-funded publication, and we regret that we are unable to accept unpaid advertising, even from local businesses and societies.

We welcome material for inclusion but do not necessarily endorse the views of contributors. We reserve the right to refuse material or to shorten contributions as may be appropriate: editorial decisions are final.

Useful telephone numbers

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ADVERTISING RATES

.Our rates for a one eighth-page display advertisement (nominal 9cm wide x 7cm tall):

1 month	£9.35
3 months	£26.40
6 months	£49.50
12 months	£92.40

Leaflet distribution

For a single sheet loose insert in the Crowmarsh News (size up to A4) our rate is £33.00 for 1 month. Advertisers must supply their own inserts (840 copies please)

Next month's issue

All new advertisements and all copy for the April 2023 *Crowmarsh News* must reach us by our **20th March deadline**.

For all items of news, articles or correspondence, please e-mail

crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com

or deliver to the Editors at 57 The Street.

For all advertising, please contact

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or deliver to The Old School, Benson Lane.



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The Crowmarsh News urgently needs more volunteers!

The Crowmarsh News editorial team urgently need new volunteers if we are to continue publishing it every month. We work in two-person teams on a rota basis. The more teams we have, the fewer times they are on the rota. You don't need any professional or technical qualifications. We have a dedicated laptop which has all the software needed on it, so you don't even need to have your own computer. All done via email from the comfort of your own home, at a time to suit you, so long as everything is completed to the monthly deadlines.

Can you help with editing articles? You just need to be able to use Word and have a good grasp of spelling and basic grammar. All articles are sent in, so you don't need to write anything.

Or perhaps page layout is more your thing? We use Publisher for that, enabling text and images to be brought together into a document. It's very straightforward and if you enjoy design it could be something you would enjoy working on.

We have 3 or 4 meetings each year, usually on a Monday at 8pm, when you will be able to meet the whole editorial team. It's very sociable and informal.

If you think you might be able to help, just email us at: Crowmarsh.editor@gmail.com to arrange a chat.

Welcome to new residents

A warm welcome if you have just moved into Crowmarsh Gifford, Mongewell or North Stoke, including all who have moved into homes on the new residential estates as they grow, and we hope you will be very happy here and quickly become part of our local community.

If you can help with the monthly distribution of the *Crowmarsh News* in your local street or neighbourhood, or would like to join the editorial team, please contact the email address on the front page.

An observation from a Crowmarsh News 'paper-boy'!

Occasionally, when delivering the Crowmarsh News in my patch, I find front door keys left in the lock, which I immediately 'post back' through the letter box.

Please, everyone exercise care in this respect. Of course it's easy to forget your keys when unloading shopping etc with kids and dogs milling around, but with opportunist crime prevalent, we should all be mindful of our personal security.

Philip T, Howbery Farm

Wallingford Bridge

Work to repair the steps up to the bridge is long overdue, but Wallingford Town Council report that work is now scheduled to take place in June. Meanwhile SSE Networks have been working to repair the streetlights on the bridge, so we hope they will be operating again soon.

Wallingford Country Market

Have you visited us yet? Open each Friday morning in St Mary-le-More Church, (situated just behind the Town Hall), between 9.30am and 12 noon. Fresh delicious Home-baked Cakes and Savouries, Local Honey and Seasonal Preserves, Plants, Flowering Bulbs and Hand-crafted items available each week.

Our Easter Market will take place on Maundy Thursday, 6th April (replacing our usual Friday market) when Easter bakes and treats will be available. Orders taken for most items we sell. New producers always welcome: if interested, please visit us one Friday morning and speak with our Market Manager, Alison Broadbridge, or phone her on 681596.

Quiz 'n' chips, 17th March

Please contact Rev Kev or the churchwardens to book your places, and fish and chips, for St Mary Magdalene's church quiz night on St Patrick's Day (17th March). Ticket price £15.

Campaign to Protect Rural England Oxfordshire — trustees wanted

Do you care about your local countryside?
Want to make a difference?

Due to retirement of current trustees, we are looking for an Honorary Secretary and a Board Member to join our team.

This is an excellent opportunity to play an influential role in a respected and long-standing environmental charity, applying your experience to make a real difference and to be part of a friendly group that is passionate about the Oxfordshire countryside.

Application deadline is 30 March 2023 in the first instance, but we are happy to receive expressions of interest on an ongoing basis.

For further info, please contact our CPRE Branch Director, Helen Marshall.
Email: director@cpreoxon.org.uk
Telephone: 01491 612079

See our website for more information:
www.cpreoxon.org.uk

Sue Ryder Palliative Care

Sue Ryder is holding a careers information day in Reading on Wednesday 15th March from 10am-1pm, giving healthcare professionals the chance to get a glimpse into what it is really like to work in palliative care. To find out more or register, visit www.sueryder.org/careersday or email healthcare.recruitment@sueryder.org.

Sue Ryder Palliative Care Hub South Oxfordshire's team of Sue Ryder Nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, family support and befrienders provide a Hospice at Home service, a day service and care coordination and advice line.

For more information on working in palliative care with Sue Ryder, and to view current vacancies, visit sueryder.org/palliativecareers.

Wallingford Photographic Club

Wallingford Photographic Club enjoys spring with a mix of online and in-person meetings (at Crowmarsh Pavilion). Our inclusive club allows people of all ages and levels of experience to learn how to improve their photography through conversations with other members, presentations by visiting speakers, practical evenings and competitions. The club meets every Thursday at 7.30 for an 8pm start (7.45 for online sessions and competitions).

March opens with an inter-club competition (in Abingdon on 2nd) followed by a members' evening on the 9th at the Pavilion. Then we have consecutive online meetings: Rod Bird "What photos mean" (why photos are taken, rather than how; 16th) and Alison Mees "Living the African Dream" (wildlife photos and stories from the bush; 23rd) - each hosted via Zoom. For the 30th March we return to the Pavilion for Mark Seymour's "Street and Travel Documentary Photography".

Health Information Morning

Saturday 25th March

Wallingford Patient Participation Group (PPG) is organising a Health Information Morning. The PPG consists of a number of patients who represent everyone registered with Wallingford Medical Practice. Anyone is welcome to join the group for quarterly meetings to discuss matters on behalf of the 17,500 patients. They also organise events covering various health topics which are open to all.

At this busy time for the NHS, it is important for us all to look after our own health. To support this, the PPG have arranged for a wide range of health organisations to be in St Mary's Church in Wallingford Market Place on Saturday 25th March, from 9.30 until midday. Coffee and cake will be on sale and members of the PPG will be available to talk with you.

Don't let this opportunity pass you by, whatever issues you may have.

Put the date in your diary!



Team Vicar: The Revd Kevin Beer
The Vicarage, 34 Thames Mead,
Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8EY
Tel: 01491 599873 (day off Monday)
Email: teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk
Blog: revkevbeer.blogspot.co.uk

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Crowmarsh Gifford

March services (at St Mary Magdalene's Parish Church unless otherwise stated):

Sunday 5th	11am	Family Service
Saturday 11th	11am	Crowmarsh Community Café at the Village Hall
Sunday 12th	11am	Parish Communion
Friday 17th	7pm	Quiz 'n' Chips
Saturday 18th	2pm	Preparing Mothering Sunday posies!
Sunday 19th	11am	Mothering Sunday Parish Communion
Sunday 26th	10am	Team Communion at St Mary-le-More, Wallingford

Morning Prayer – every Friday at 9am

Evening Prayer – every Sunday at 4pm (6pm during BST)

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

The Vicar writes ...

March is when we march towards the Spring Equinox and the days lengthen, which gives us the name for our church season of Lent. It is a season of preparation, of getting ready ... but for what?

"In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war..." is found in the Old Testament (2 Samuel 11:1), going back to the time of King David. From ancient times, all the way through the Civil War armies would go into winter quarters to break from fighting and then embark on new campaigns in the spring. This seems to be true today with the war for Ukraine and also with the tensions in the Holy Land between Israelis and Palestinians. Religion is often used to justify war and it is even said that Putin has persuaded the Russian Orthodox archbishop to support his cause. It gives an easy, if lazy, excuse for people to dismiss all religions.

So where is Jesus in all this? He was a man of peace, indeed the Prince of Peace. In his first sermon, he said *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."* However, knowing our human nature (as a creator would), he also knew that peace on earth is a distant hope, as we have the fight between good and evil within each of us. Indeed, he prophesied: *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places"* (Matthew 24:7). Does this mean forever, literally 24/7? No, there is another way.

Although the Jews were expecting the Messiah to be a military hero like King David, on Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, symbolising peace, instead of a warhorse. Therefore, most didn't recognise him and he was rejected and crucified. But this innocent victim rose again from the dead, convincing his disciples that his Kingdom is coming. Likewise now, during Lent, his followers prepare our hearts to welcome him so that we may know his peace, starting with ourselves. He said: *"I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"* (John 16:33)

May his peace be with you.

Rev Kev

The Corn Exchange for March

Cinema

All regular performances normally start at 7:30pm unless stated otherwise. Please note that we will start on time and that latecomers will only be allowed in after the start of the film where there is no disruption to sitting patrons. This means that we may have to reseat some latecomers. For Live Screenings we reserve the right to seat latecomers in the Curtis Room where there is a large screen relay. The bar and auditorium will open from 7pm so there's plenty of time to collect drinks beforehand.

We are also showing films on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at 2:30pm. Please look at the website for updates.

Tickets £10 for Adults and £5 for under 15s unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 12th & Monday 13th - The Son (15)

Tuesday 14th, Wednesday 15th 2:30pm & 7.30pm - Women Talking (15)

Thursday 16th - Roman Holiday (U) 70th Anniversary

Friday 17th, Saturday 18th, Sunday 19th - What's love gotta do with it? (12A)

Monday 20th - Saint Omer (12A)

Tuesday 21st, Wednesday 22nd 2:30pm - Till (12A)

Thursday 23rd, Friday 24th - The Middle Man (12A)

Saturday 25th 2:30pm & 7.30pm - Marcell, the Shell with Shoes On (PG)

Tuesday 28th 7pm - Heathers, The Musical (15)

Live screenings

Wednesday 22nd, 7:15pm - The Royal Opera – Turandot

Tickets: £18 (adults), £15 (senior citizens), £10 (under 18s)

Live on stage

Tuesday 7th to Saturday 11th at 7:45pm with a Saturday matinee at 2:30pm – Chess

The collaboration between Crescendo and the Sinodun Players, with recent successes Guys

and Dolls, Showtime and The Sherman Show, is back ... this time presenting the hit musical Chess.

Written by ABBA's Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus with lyrics by Sir Tim Rice, Chess is a masterpiece of musical theatre featuring songs like I know Him So Well, One Night in Bangkok, Anthem, and Pity the Child. If previous shows are anything to go by, this will be first class and one not to miss!
Tickets: £18 (adult), £16 (under 18s)

Launch of the new Corn Exchange space

We are pleased to announce that the Club Room in the Corn Exchange is to become a second space in the theatre where we will host some theatre, music, open mic nights, talks, poetry readings and cinema. Watch this space in the months to come for announcements of events. The space is accessible via the stage door in Mousey Lane. The space is on the first floor via a staircase and unfortunately we are unable to provide access for those with limited mobility.

Tuesday 28th to Saturday 1st April at 7:45

An evening of One Act Plays by the Sinodun Players: Three classic plays in an evening of comedy and pathos: Indian Summer of an Uncle by P.G. Wodehouse, A Talk in the Park by Alan Ayckbourn, and Suppressed Desires by Susan Glaspell. Tickets: £10 (limited numbers)

Coming soon

Saturday 22nd April, 7:45pm - Abba Sensation Tribute Band - Tickets £18

Saturday 29th April, 7:45pm - A Room of One's Own - Tickets £18

To book Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall for birthday parties and events

Call Chris Strange on 07711 904252
or email: cvhbookings@gmail.com

To book the pavilion or hardcourt on the Recreation ground in Crowmarsh Gifford

Phone Chris Strange on 07711 904252, or
email chrisstrange47@gmail.com

Past Times from David Beasley



Mongewell Park Fête

A fete was held at Mongewell Park on Tuesday 5th July 1871 followed the opening of the Free Library in St Leonard's Square, Wallingford [now the Methodist Church Hall]. The Free Library opening ceremony began at 2 o'clock, when all the shops in Wallingford were closed.

When the opening ceremony was concluded at about 4 o'clock, a large number of the public made their way to Mongewell Park, which Mr George Brettle, the owner of the Park, had opened to the public as part of the opening celebrations. It was thought that over 3000 people attended.

They were allowed to wander around the grounds and listen to the bands of the 10th Hussars and the Foresters Brass Band. A large number of spectators watched the donkey and boat races, and the slippery pole, which gave great amusement to all who weren't actually trying to walk the pole! The prizes for the winners of these races were given by the tradesmen of Wallingford.

There were a number of vocalists, the principal singers being Lottie Cherry and Frederick Albert of London. The children were entertained with a Punch and Judy show from the Crystal Palace.

In the early evening dancing was held on the lawn in front of the house, and the 10th Hussars and Wallingford Foresters provided the music. A firework display started at 9.30 which lasted until 10.30. Mr Brettle generously paid the entire cost of the display. The grounds weren't cleared of all the visitors until after eleven.

Henley and District Stamp Club

At the Henley stamp club, we have our annual auction where you will be able to obtain fantastic philatelic material. This year we can proudly announce that we have over 800 lots of excellent quality.



To learn more about stamps and postal history why not visit us at Bix one Wednesday evening? You can then meet people who find postal history and the story of stamps fascinating too.

Wednesday 8th March – Stamp Auction
Wednesday 22nd March – Guest speakers from High Wycombe

Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at Bix Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Visitors and new members are very welcome. Further details can be obtained by phoning Brian on 681739 or on our website: www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk

Cholsey repair café

The next Cholsey repair café is on Saturday 18th March, from 11.00 to 13.45. A wide variety of repairs can be attempted, from bicycles to toasters, from torches to garden shears. Repairs and advice are free, but a small donation towards operating costs is appreciated and the cost of replacement parts must be covered.

This very popular voluntary service can be busy at times, but the rush has usually died down by about 12.15.

Benson Choral Society Spring Concert

Mendelssohn's *Elijah* – first choice for Benson Choral's new MD Steven Grahl

Singers in Benson Choral Society are in high spirits as they rehearse for their spring concert under their new Musical Director Steven Grahl. Steven is already Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

Mendelssohn's *Elijah* is an inspired choice by Steven for his first concert with us. It's at the heart of the British choral tradition, premiered at the 1846 Birmingham Musical Festival and conducted by Mendelssohn himself at the height of his powers. It is a great and dramatic story with text well chosen from the Old Testament. Elijah has to deal with the Israelites' desperate for rain after a drought, who are tempted to look to any gods who might help them. Elijah sees off the false prophets of Baal, and trusts in his true God and the rains arrive. After many adventures, Elijah dramatically gets to heaven with the help of fiery horses and fiery chariots.



It was an immediate success and remains so today. It's a great and dramatic story. There are many fine moments for chorus and soloists in this impressive oratorio is a pleasure for singers and audience alike. A fine quartet of soloists includes Giles Underwood in the title role.

We are accompanied by the West Forest Sinfonia, and the concert takes place at 7.30pm on Saturday 18th March in Dorchester Abbey – tickets are £18 and £15 – book online at www.bensonchoralsociety.org.uk.



Wallingford Museum news

We are looking forward to Wallingford Museum's opening on March 1st for the 2023 season. Throughout the closure period the team have been busy creating not one but two new exhibitions.

This year, 2023, The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS) are celebrating 50 years since their foundation. Our first exhibition reflects TWHAS's development from its early beginnings through to the establishment of the museum and the impact of the historical and archaeological research on the heritage of the town. All led by volunteers, awarded in 2019 the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

House detectives: history behind the door

The houses in this exhibition have been chosen to reflect the changing development and use of houses in Wallingford, from the medieval period to the 20th century, including a fictional fun mystery house.

On your journey through the museum you will discover how we became house detectives and how you could become one too!

Look out for Wallingford's Guided Historic Town Walks starting again. Each walk is led by an expert guide from The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society, exploring the backstreets and bringing to life the history of the town and its buildings from Saxon times to the present day.

To find more information, request special group tours and find out about all museum events, please visit

www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk

Museum bookshop

We have an excellent selection of good second-hand books (both fiction and non-fiction) at sensible prices. We look forward to seeing you - it's free to browse!

Check the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society website www.twhas.org.uk/meetings-programme.html for the 2023 talks programme.

Free service supports thousands of residents in Oxfordshire with their home energy

Residents in Oxfordshire can benefit from the advice and support of Better Housing Better Health, a service that helps those worrying about their home energy to create warmer healthier and happier homes. Last year, through the service's free helpline and their free home visit service (BHBH+) – their team of trained advisors helped over 2500 residents with the aim this year to help even more.

The service can help:

- Residents who are finding it hard to understand energy bills, pay for fuel or read meters
- Access funding to replace old and broken heating systems
- Access funding for insulation measures
- Reduce damp, condensation and mould by better ways of managing a home
- Understand and programme heating controls
- Making onward referrals to additional support services, such as Benefits advice and debt support

Some residents may be eligible for additional heating support depending on their situation.

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*2021: 2,021,583 v 1,828,816 (2020: 1,049,500 v 1,004,040)
2020: 1,049,500 v 1,091,101 (2019: 1,018,103 v 1,020,100)
2019: 1,018,103

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Parish council notes

Crowmarsh Parish Council met at Crowmarsh Gifford Village Hall on Thursday 2nd February. Present were Councillors John Griffin (Chair), Stephen Sherbourne, Julian Park, Jay Anderson, Andrew Johnson, Stuart Soames, Fleur Stevenson, David Topliss and Julia Streete, plus Parish Clerk Sue Rance, Finance Officer Yvonne Peet, and District Councillor Sue Cooper and six members of the public.

Finance

The council agreed grants of £500 to Sue Ryder Palliative Care Hub, £500 to Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice, £200 towards a sponsored walk in aid of Floatability and the Churches Conservation Trust, and up to £200 towards coronation celebrations in North Stoke.

Mr Chris Strange's annual salary review had been carried out by the Environment and Recreation Ground Management Committee and the council accepted an increase to reflect his increased workload, to be backdated to April 2022.

Payments were approved including dog bin emptying, refuse collection, a new distribution board at the pavilion, church lighting, water, a TV screen for the new pavilion meeting room, membership subscription to Community First Oxfordshire, a replacement dog bin for North Stoke and £18,312 to SCM for work at the pavilion. Water bills will be paid by direct debit in future. Shield Maintenance will be asked to quote for cleaning the bus shelters on Nosworthy Way.

Three quotes will be sought for this year's grass cutting, to include the roadside verges and other areas in Crowmarsh Gifford, the North Stoke Recreation Ground and Newnham Murren Churchyard. The parish clerk would like to hear from anyone who can suggest a possible contractor.

Planning

Decisions by SODC

P22/S1045/FUL Maclean Building, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BB. Installation of ground mounted solar arrays to the north-east and west of the site: Planning Permission

P22/S4370/HH 6 Little Hitchen, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8FW. Single-storey side extension: Planning Permission

P22/S3672/HH The Thatched Cottage, Old Reading Road, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BW. Refurbishment of existing dwelling. Alterations to external materials. Planning Permission

P22/S4100/S73 Crowmarsh Pavilion, Bellamy Way, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8FN. Reconstruct the ramp to the rear to current Building Regulations standards: Planning Permission

P22/S3870/HH Spring River (formerly Minyak), Pocock Lane, North Stoke OX10 6ET. Demolition of conservatory and erection of single storey front extension, single storey infill extension and new garage canopy roof. New cladding. Planning Permission

P22/S3789/FUL Avalon Kennels, Icknield Way OX10 6PP. Change of existing residential unit to specialised veterinary clinic, construction of replacement dwelling, relocation of parking areas. Planning permission.

Application withdrawn

P22/S3794/HH Maple Croft, Mongewell OX10 8BP. To add two bedrooms to new first floor. Mary Busby (the applicant) came to speak about a letter received from the planning officer. District Cllr Cooper will investigate.

Consultations

P23/S0169/HH 6 Elizabeth Road, Mongewell OX10 8FQ, Single-storey rear extension. Recommend approval

P23/S0119/HH North Stoke Farm, The Street, North Stoke OX10 6BL. Erection of detached garage with two dormer windows. No strong views.

P22/S4576/HH 13 Park View, Crowmarsh Gifford OX10 8BL, First floor dormer extension. No strong views.

P22/S4648/S73 Blenheim Farm, Icknield Way OX10 6PR. Application to vary several conditions on application P20/S0826/FUL (demolition of existing buildings and erection of new dwelling, new B8 storage building and two holiday let dwellings with access and parking), to allow for a phased development, and to make minor amendments to the approved landscaping scheme. It seems the phasing is acceptable, the oak tree will be better protected under the new landscaping scheme, the holiday units continue to be restricted to short-term lets and the highway conditions are subject to OCC approval as before. Recommend approval.

P22/S4382/HH 6 Wallingford Road, North Stoke OX10 6BD. Proposed cart shed. Cllr Soames declared an interest and took no part in the discussion. No strong views.

P22/S4431/HH The Old Farmhouse, The Street, North Stoke OX10 6BL, Outdoor swimming pool. Recommend approval.

Appeal

An appeal has been lodged against refusal of the Sheringham House planning application next to the A4074 Portway.

District Council report

The District Councillors reported that the annual budget is looking more positive than in previous years.

A new Community Infrastructure Levy strategy has been introduced for developments approved from the beginning of 2023. There was still no news of what the Council proposed for the former district council offices site on Benson Lane: the clerk will ask for information.

District Cllr Cooper asked residents to contact the SODC Waste Team to report specific areas where litter is a problem, with photos if possible at waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk or by ringing 01235 422406. Problem areas identified immediately included Benson Lane, Clacks Lane and the Crowmarsh to North Stoke B4009 road. A community litter picking event in the spring was proposed and equipment can be borrowed from SODC: volunteers will be welcome.

There was no report from the county councillor.

Environment and recreation

The pavilion project is nearing completion and the committee is starting to make arrangements for an opening event.

It is hoped to carry out tree planting at the end of the recreation ground. Three hundred free trees should be available in November. The council agreed that planting a community orchard would be an excellent project to mark the Coronation of King Charles III.

Serious injury accident involving a pedestrian

Following the December meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Thames Valley Police on speeding and motorcycle noise, there had been little action taken and it was reported that a serious injury accident

had taken place on Monday 30th January just south of Crowmarsh roundabout on the A4074.

It was agreed that Thames Valley Police should be held to account and the traffic and transport sub-committee will meet within the next two weeks to discuss appropriate action. Initially Cllr Sherbourne will draft a letter and circulate it to the sub-committee, asking Thames Valley Roads Policing to send a representative to the parish council meeting in March. Copies will be sent to neighbouring parishes, the MP and the county council.

Cllrs Topliss and Streete will investigate how we might set up a Community Speedwatch scheme with volunteers.

Strategic projects

The county council had suggested possible contractors for the pedestrian crossing at The Bell: the Clerk will contact them and offer to send them the approved plans.

Cllrs Griffin and Park continue to work on planning improvements to Watery Lane. Cllr Park had circulated information outlining possible locations for information boards to show details of rights of way and help promote the Country Code.

The next parish council meeting will be held at Crowmarsh Village Hall on Thursday 2nd March 2023 at 7.30pm.

Anyone who might consider standing for the parish council in the May elections is encouraged to talk to the clerk, the chairman or any councillor.

Parish Clerk: Mrs Sue Rance, 2 Home Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, OX10 8EL
email: crowmarshparishclerk@gmail.com

Chairman: John Griffin, 29 Thames Mead,
email: johngriffin@phonecoop.coop

Parish councillors needed

The parish of Crowmarsh includes Crowmarsh Gifford, Mongewell and North Stoke. There will be 12 parish council seats up for election on 4th May: three for North Stoke ward (which includes Mongewell) and nine for Crowmarsh Gifford. North Stoke and Mongewell are under-represented on the parish council.

Residents over 18, including those who have moved into the village, are encouraged to come forward to join the parish council for the four-year term to 2027. The parish council is not party political, but tries to work for the

benefit of the whole community. It meets monthly on a Thursday evening for about two hours and we have a significant budget to spend for the benefit of our residents, organisations and future generations. We have a say on guiding new development by responding to planning applications and try to work closely with the district and county councils, police and other authorities. The council manages allotments, recreation facilities and green spaces, and we take responsibility for dog waste bins, bus shelters, church floodlighting, flower planting and much more. The council is well supported by our part-time staff – parish clerk, finance officer and recreation ground manager – and employs contractors for much of our work.

In the last four-year term we have built a children's playground and outdoor gym equipment, completed our Neighbourhood Plan extended and improved the pavilion, installed speed indicator devices on several roads, planned pedestrian crossings and improved our nature area and allotments. There is more to do to improve our environment and we have plans to plant significant numbers of trees, increase biodiversity generally and improve Watery Lane and other walking and cycling routes, provide more safe road crossings and find ways to control traffic speed and noise.

If you want to find out more about standing for the parish council, please contact the clerk or the chairman or any councillor – see the parish council notes in every edition of Crowmarsh News. Nominations must be submitted to SODC by 4 April.

Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) is also holding a free one-hour online session via Zoom for those looking to become a councillor for the first time. The session is on 15th March from 2 to 3 pm. There's no need to book: to join the meeting, go to the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87125012109?pwd=VzZkYzkwajlqTTJSWEdrVmVxTUUs2QT09#success> and use the following details to access the session: Meeting ID: 871 2501 2109, Passcode: 386520.

Or see www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/local-democracy-and-elections/elections-and-voting/current-and-upcoming-elections/are-you-interested-in-becoming-a-councillor.

Parish and District Council elections in May

Local elections will be held on Thursday 4th May 2023 for both South Oxfordshire District Council and Crowmarsh Parish Council. Please note that these elections will be the first time that voters at a polling station will be required to show photo ID. Or you can vote by post if you register by 18 April.

You will need to take an identification document with a photo in order to be able to vote at the polling station. A range of photo ID will be accepted, including a passport, driving licence, disabled parking blue badge, concessionary bus pass or proof of age PASS ID card.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you can apply now for a free voter ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate. Visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or call 0800 328 0280.

The deadline to apply for this election is 5pm on Tuesday 25 April.

Help to run your Village Hall

Are you particularly interested in culture or your community? If so you may wish to consider joining the small group of volunteers who administer the booking and running of the Village Hall in Benson Lane. The hall has a relatively modest capacity of 80 seated people. It is nevertheless very popular and acts as a central hub and meeting place for our growing village.

We would particularly welcome younger people or people who enjoy performing in whatever capacity to contribute to an expanding repertoire of activities in the future. There are only 5 or 6 meetings a year so the commitment is quite modest for what you can contribute.

If you think that you might be interested, please contact Mrs Sue Rance, the Parish Council Clerk, as she also provides secretarial services to the village hall committee, or call Stephen Sherbourne, who chairs the committee, on 07901 556395. Thank you.

Who are Wallingford WI and what do we do?

Wallingford WI is a friendly and welcoming group for women of all ages. We meet on the first Wednesday evening of every month at Ridgeway Community Church on Wood Street in Wallingford.

A typical meeting will begin with a guest speaker, followed by an opportunity to socialise over tea and biscuits. We have recently welcomed speakers on a wide range of topics, from local history to fitness.

Outside of our monthly meetings, we offer a walking group, a Knit & Natter group and a book group. There are regular informal coffee mornings and meals out for our members. We also enjoy regular cinema and theatre trips to the Corn Exchange and other local venues. There is always scope for further activities and outings outside of our monthly meetings, depending on our members' interests.

You can see details of our upcoming meetings on the website at www.wallingfordwi.co.uk/calendar. If you'd like to come along to one of our meetings as a visitor, to see what we do, we'd love to meet you.

There are more than 3,800 WI members in Oxfordshire, and over 200,000 in the UK. Joining Wallingford WI is a great way to make new friends locally, and you'll also be part of a powerful national organisation of women.

Find out more about Wallingford WI on our website www.wallingfordwi.co.uk or on Facebook www.facebook.com/WallingfordWI.

A message from Wallingford food bank

Wallingford food bank benefits from a number of volunteers from Crowmarsh as well as support from local residents and organisations – thank you all very much – and Wallingford food bank regularly helps those in need in your village.

We wanted to let you know about a way you can support the food bank even more.

We are now using Bank the Food, an app that will 'ping' you a notification as you arrive at a donation point, to give you an up-to-date list of urgent needs – so you can be sure you are donating exactly what is needed. If you have a smart phone, you can download the free app from the 'App store' if you have an iPhone or from 'Google Play' if you have an Android phone. Then register on it and 'follow' our food bank (you can easily find us if you enter OX10 in postcode search). You will then find a choice of donation points to follow. Currently they are in the Co-ops in Benson and Woodcote and in Waitrose in Wallingford.

It is already a great help to us that people are using the app. This means we can help more people, local to you, who are in need.

If **you** need food, please visit our website to see how we can help:

www.wallingfordfoodbank.org.uk

Thank you.

Alice Penney,
Manager, Wallingford food bank

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The advertisement features a hand holding a smartphone displaying the Bank the Food app interface. The app screen shows a circular graphic with the number '9' and the text 'URGENTLY REQUIRED'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a 'Download' button. The background is dark with white text.

Services at St Mary's Church, North Stoke

Sunday 5th March	11.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 11th March	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sunday 19th March	11.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 26th March	11.00am	Morning Prayer
Sunday 2nd April Palm Sunday	11.00am	Holy Communion
Friday 7th April Good Friday	12 noon	'Watch at The Cross' at Mongewell
Sunday 9th April	11.00am	Holy Communion

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Benson Garden Club

Benson Garden Club's February talk was given by Charlotte Popescu on the topic "In Praise of Apples". Charlotte is an experienced gardener, writer (including author of "The Apple Cookbook") and publisher. Her love of apples stems from her childhood home which had an apple orchard with many different varieties. She began her talk by sharing an eclectic selection of historical facts and myths featuring apples. For example, all apples derive from the crab apple and evidence of them have been found at Avebury's Neolithic site. The Roman army carried apples on their marches and planted pips along the way, with trees spreading northwards along their routes. And the Trojan War started with the fruit of temptation, the Golden Apple. Charlotte also shared some interesting folklore and customs, including apple wassailing on Twelfth Night and the saying that if it rains on St Swithin's Day there will be a good crop of apples.

Turning to the charm of different apple varieties and their origins, Charlotte said that you could eat a different apple grown in the UK every day for six years and still not sample every variety (worldwide there are around 7,000 varieties). An apple pip does not breed true, which is why we graft them, although some of the most well-known varieties were grown from pips (such as Cox's Orange Pippin). The longevity of apple trees was surprising e.g. the much loved Bramley apple was first grown in 1846 and the same original tree is still growing today. And D'Arcy Spice is an old apple variety (prior to 1800), found growing in the gardens of Tolleshunt d'Arcy, in Essex.

Charlotte also shared some planting choices which would enable you to enjoy apples over a long season, starting with an early variety such as George Cave which ripens in early/mid-August and finishing with Ellison's Orange which is ready from late September to late October. Finally she recommended storing the fruit wrapped in newspaper, so that their season could be extended.

For our next event on Thursday 2nd March, Pip Smith will give a talk on "Nuts about Narcissus". A landscape architect with over 13 years' experience working as a

professional horticulturist, Pip has held the post of Head Gardener at several private and public gardens, most recently at the highly acclaimed Wollerton Old Hall in Shropshire.

Then on Thursday 30th March, Michael Holland will give a talk from his "Tales From the Fruit Bowl", titled "Saucy & Spicy" (focusing on the nightshade family). Michael is a writer, lecturer and author with a 25-year career at the renowned Chelsea Physic Garden in London.

For both talks our venue will be Benson parish hall. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.45 start (£2 for members, £5 for visitors – just turn up on the door, no need to book). We will also have our "Flower of the Month" competition (for members only).

Further information about this thriving club, which has been running for over 25 years, and how to join as a member can be found on our website [https://](https://bensongardeningclub.weebly.com)

bensongardeningclub.weebly.com or please feel free to email

bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

Liz Harrison

Council elections in May – take ID to vote!

At the council elections on 4th May, you will need to take an identification document with a photo in order to be able to vote at the polling station. A range of photo ID will be accepted, including a passport, driving licence, disabled parking blue badge, concessionary bus pass or proof of age PASS ID card.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you can apply now for a free voter ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

Visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID or www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate or call 0800 328 0280. The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate is 5pm on Tuesday 25 April.

John Howell MP writes ...

As readers may know I lead the UK Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe on behalf of the Government. Whilst this does take me away some of the time it also enables me to steer a positive contribution for the UK as well as all other Member countries. For example at the January meeting of the International delegation I put forward a paper for the introduction of a new International Convention or Treaty on the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict. Whilst this could seem remote what it would mean is that we would have something with which to prosecute a crime such as deliberately exposing a community to chemical weapons. I have been working too with the UN on this. Something long needed.

Whilst on the subject of Europe there has been talk of the UK leaving the European Court of Human Rights. I am a firm believer that we should stay a member of the Court and of the Convention on Human Rights. The Court is not a foreign court but is an international body in which we share responsibility with the other countries who are members. I believe that leaving the Court would be disastrous for the UK. I am sure we will hear more on this in the coming months.

Much more locally I have been pursuing issues relating to our GPs. I fully appreciate that some constituents have been frustrated at issues around access and face to face appointments. At the same time many of our GPs are feeling under huge pressure. Towards the end of last year I met with some of our GPs to listen to their concerns and this month I called together a meeting with other Oxfordshire MPs and the Chief Executive of the local Integrated Care Board (ICB) which oversees primary care provision. Among the issues raised was that of some GP practices closing their books to new patients. My view is that this is an unfair move for other Practices and for residents who cannot register locally. Further it does not solve the problem. The senior ICB team agreed to meet with local GP teams and pursue this and other issues with them. I will be following up on this in due course.

Also working with other Oxfordshire MPs, I have been looking into the issue raised with

me by a number of parents of the decision by the County Council to withdraw its 'spare seat scheme' for school transport on some services. This is essentially a scheme where any unallocated seats on school buses could be offered to parents of children not eligible for free school transport for a fee. Removal of this scheme inevitably leads to a negative impact for working parents, but it also puts many more cars on the road. The latter flies in the face of the County Council's own environmental ambitions where they have promised to reduce car journeys by 1 in 4. There are also safety implications for those children who would have to walk along busy roads not served by footpaths to get to school. The County Council said that as it did not have a statutory duty to deliver such a scheme it did not need to involve parents in the decision making. We have urged them to reconsider this decision as a matter of urgency as it is causing huge stress to many families.

I have long supported the part that apprenticeships play in the transition from full time education to work as a robust alternative to a university or college course for some people. I am therefore delighted to see that for young people seeking apprenticeships as an alternative to university there is good news. Plans have been launched to allow young people to use the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, more commonly referred to as UCAS, to search and apply for apprenticeships alongside degrees. This will give them a better understanding of all the options available to them so they can get the best possible start in life. This will take time to get up and running and will be available from next year.

There are, of course, many big issues which affect us all which are well rehearsed in the national media and which the government is already working to address. If there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts. If you would like to know more about my work on behalf of the Government, and in the Constituency, please do look at my website. The address is: www.johnhowell.org.uk. My contact details are also on the website.

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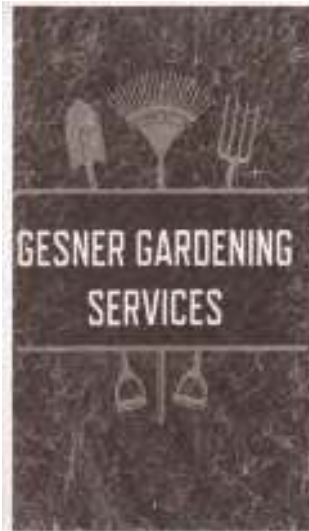
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WHAT'S ON — MARCH 2023

Regular events and meetings

Every Friday	9.30-12.00	Wallingford Country Market	St Mary le More Church, Wallingford
Every Saturday	10.00-12.00	WAGS Store open	Centre 70, Wallingford
Every Thursday	19.30 onwards	Wallingford Photographic Club	Crowmarsh Pavilion
Most Saturdays	10.00-12.30	Local Producers' Market	St Mary le More Church, Wallingford, or Market Place
Various Days	Differing times	Didcot and Wallingford Ramblers	www.ramblers.org.uk/didcot-wallingford
Every Sunday	11.00 onwards	Parish Communion. Family service first Sunday of month	St Mary Magdalene's Church, Crowmarsh Gifford
Various Days	Differing times	Cycling CTC Wallingford	www.ctcwallingford.org.uk/
Various summer days	Differing times	Cholsey and Wallingford Heritage Railway	www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com

This month

Wednesday 1st March	14.00 onwards	U3A: The Commonwealth War Graves	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Thursday 2nd March	19.30 onwards	Crowmarsh Parish Council Meeting	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Saturday 4th March	19.30 onwards	Winter Recitals - Le Grand Tango	St Mary le More Church, Wallingford
Wednesday 8th March	19.45 onwards	TWHAS: The World of the Wittenham Clumps	St Mary le More Church, Wallingford
Saturday 11th March	10.30-12.30	Crowmarsh Community Café	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Saturday 11th March	19.00 onwards	Grieg Piano Concerto	Dorchester Abbey
Friday 17th March	19.00 onwards	Quiz 'n' Chips	St Mary Magdalene's Church, Crowmarsh Gifford
Saturday 18th March	19.30 onwards	Mendelssohn's Elijah with Benson Choral Society	Dorchester Abbey
Saturday 25th March	9.30-12.00	Health information morning	St Mary le More Church, Wallingford
Sunday 26th March	10.00 onwards	Treehouse 10k run	Around Cholsey, see treehouse10k.org.uk/run-info/

April

Wednesday 5th April	14.00 onwards	U3A: Marie-Louise Kerr on 'Oxford's Penicillin'	Crowmarsh Village Hall
Thursday 6th April	19.30 onwards	Crowmarsh Parish Council Meeting	Crowmarsh Village Hall