

South Marston Community News

Look Up to the Sky and See...

by Grev Commins



You would simply not believe what you can see outside at night, if you just look up. Though the night sky here is beginning to get too bright from light pollution, you can still see some sights with the simplest of tools if you are patient.

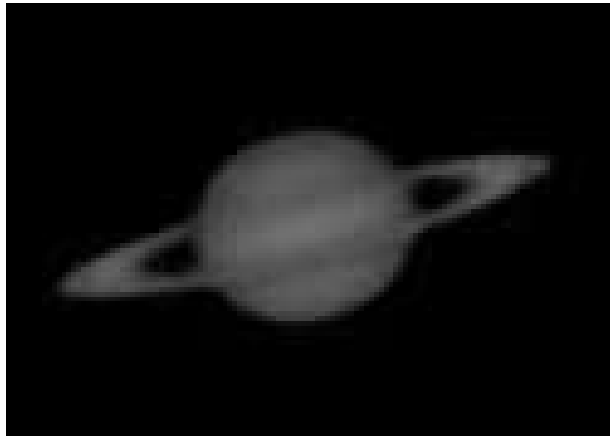
A pair of binoculars can capture a small smudge high in the south eastern sky which is one of the nearest galaxies to us, the Andromeda Galaxy, though it's 2 million light years away! Nearer and easier is the Moon; which is a great sight using binoculars.

I've used my mobile phone on a tripod to take some pictures of the night sky around the village. It can take longer exposures and capture more light. A tripod isn't essential - just prop the phone up somewhere and use a timed exposure. I took a great shot of the Super Moon last year in the village (above).

I have used a large telescope over many years to take pictures of the planets in our solar system. It is a pain to setup, usually taking an afternoon before the night's viewing. After that I just tell it what I want to see and it moves to the target on its own and will continue to track the object. This means I can take long exposure pictures and get some great detailed shots.



Continued overleaf



Stars twinkle, planets do not, which makes them easier to spot. Right now, Jupiter, pictured top left, is the brightest object with a couple of its faint moons, a planet 350+ million miles away. Planet Saturn, top right, is further away, 750 - 900 million miles, so is very much fainter and takes much longer exposures to capture.

Uranus and Neptune are very hard to see without a big telescope. Venus and Mercury are too close to the Sun, and you should never look at the Sun without specialist equipment.

Often, I've taken the time to setup only to be disappointed with the weather. To get great shots, visibility needs to be clear, the moon to be out of sight (or not too bright), the humidity low and the wind to be calm. With a big telescope, the best times are when it's cold, dark and still.



More recently I invested in a tiny 'smart telescope' called the Dwarf II (shown left). It's simple to use, taking only 5 minutes to setup and get going. So, I can wait until after sunset to decide to go out, and can sit in the warm watching TV while it's working!

However, this camera is no good for the planets...it is more suited to big objects like the Andromeda galaxy (overleaf) which was taken over about two hours. It's even possible to see another small galaxy faintly above it and one below.

Andromeda galaxy



These sights were all taken in South Marston. There are phone apps you can hold up to the sky and it will show what you are looking at! I use the Sky Map app, pictured below.

Go outside, face south and look about one third of the way up and then scan East to West. At this level you are looking at the Elliptic of the solar system (the orange line on the map below) where all the planets pass by.

Sky Map



So, whatever your interest, get outside with your phone on a dark clear night and look up to see the vast universe that we all live in, and enjoy it.

With special thanks to Siren Povey for reviewing this article for me.

The F & E Harris Memorial Trust

by Nigel Hole

Our senior citizens were ready to board the Barnes coach to Winchester at 9am for the annual Xmas market trip we organize for villagers. By 10.30am we were spilling off the bus right in the middle of Winchester by the King Alfred memorial ready for our day out.

Warned of rain in the early afternoon, most of us headed straight to the Xmas market by the historic Cathedral.

What a delight it was with a really good mix of varied stalls selling everything you could want for a Christmas stocking, including knitwear, soaps, artisan gins, chutneys and cheeses, garden wood carvings and of course, the usual gluwein, steins and bratwurst.



Winchester still has a good high street shopping experience with M&S and Next amongst the chains and then a selection of individual shops which is what makes a town centre and is so sadly lacking in too many places now.

With a good selection of restaurants, lunch beckoned and if the bratwurst in the market wasn't your thing, Robbie had identified a choice of other eateries in the handout given out on the coach. Rick Steins proved popular for those that like fish.

When the rain came in the afternoon, it was a good time to visit the Cathedral itself with a fascinating exhibition of its early history and rare Bible, from Vikings to Victorians! The Great Hall was interesting with its wall mural made for the wedding of Charles & Di – topical with The Crown on Netflix currently.

Quite a few of us visited the museum with its history of the city from being capital of Wessex to capital of England, when it first came together under Aethelred.

The feedback from all who went on the trip, was about how much they enjoyed it and wouldn't mind a revisit.

The children of the village have benefited hugely this year from the redevelopment of 'the Rec' with its new path, new play equipment and picnic benches, funded in part by the Harris Trust, with more yet to come. Our village pensioners still get their Xmas Hampers from the Trust which were distributed at The Carriers. Amanda kindly opened the pub especially for us on her usual day off, heating it toasty warm on a cold drizzly afternoon and providing free teas, coffees and biscuits. It turned into a real social event for all and a catch-up with people not seen for a good while. A pleasant afternoon was had by all, with a big thanks to Amanda.

At the recent meeting of trustees for the F & E Harris Memorial Trust, two founding members of the Trust board since 1998 decided that it is time after 25 years service to the community to step back from their roles.

Terry Sansum (right) was chairman of the trustees until very recently and has steered the Trust through considerable change in the village and overseen numerous projects over the years.



Mary Cooper, whose late husband was on the Parish Council, has enormous knowledge of the history of the village and its characters, which has been invaluable in her work as a trustee. Both of them will be sorely missed.

The Trust is in good hands going forward. In one of his last acts as a trustee, Terry proposed Robbie Taylor as his replacement on the board. As many of you know, she's been the Trust's secretary since 2016, the power behind it, but with no actual vote. That will now be put right, with the unanimous approval of her appointment.

Landscaping the Recreation Ground

by Sylvia Brown, Parish Council Vice Chair

Swindon Borough are running a *Trees for Climate Change* grant fund. It will support a community by giving trees and shrubs and contributing to the cost of maintenance over the next 15 years. Just the thing to finalise our Rec Development Project!

We had already mapped out our early plans and talked to Rec neighbours about their thoughts on landscaping. We'll talk to them again about the proposal now being developed ahead of planting in the early Spring. Apart from visual interest, trees are being planted for shade and shrubs to act as a windbreak. All the planting is on the northern and western sides of the Rec which will be untouched by future development plans for the new village hall and expanded school.

This is an early plea for those interested in a weekend family event of 'tree-planting' this Spring. Get in touch via the Parish Clerk or email to play@southmarston.org.uk. No date set yet - keep an eye on Facebook and the village website.

SMILE 2023

by Hazel Andrews

In the autumn, as the nights draw in, the planning started for the '2023 South Marston in Lights Event'. The idea was to bring the village together with something for all to enjoy.

Some people love letting their creativity run free in planning and hanging their light decorations, whilst others like to go out and see everyone's efforts with the sparkle that has been added around the village.

I think it's the 4th year that I have been running the event, which gets better each year! We were again generously supported with the winner's prizes by the F and E Harris Memorial Trust and the Carpenters Arms. Our thanks for their support and the work of the judges, as well as to everyone who added sparkle to the village.

This year the Village Hall was lovely and Rawlings Close put on a great display, a good team effort everyone! I must admit I was pleased not to have the job of judging as it would have been so hard to do, with such an array of fantastic displays.

The judges found it hard as well, but decided on the following winner and 4 highly commended entries:

Best in Village was awarded to 1 Pinehurst Cottages, Thornhill Road, described by the judges as 'joyful'. Highly commended winners are overleaf.





Priory Farm House 'a cheerful display'



4 Pinehurst Cottages, 'a fun alternative to Christmas decorations'



Ferndale Cottage 'a striking display'

6 St Julians
'classical elegance'



Well Done Winners!

Congratulations to our NOVEMBER and DECEMBER winners from South Marston Recreation Association.

NOVEMBER

£10 41. Peter Withers
£10 89. Colin McEwen
£10 9. Robbie Taylor
£10 81. Paul Flitton

DECEMBER

£100 93. Al Holman
£10 15. Rosemary New
£10 113. Carol Brickel
£10 56. Kirsty Feline
£10 17. David Buckley

The 100 Club is an annual subscription of £12 with the chance of winning £10, £30 or £100. All profits are used to support the maintenance of the Recreation Ground and the Village Hall. The SMRA would like to thank all the participants and Club collectors for their continued support especially in these difficult times.

If you are interested in supporting the SMRA, please contact Julie Hatherall on 07749211867 or Angela Newton on 07789068340 to obtain a number and participate in the monthly draw.



South Marston Friendly Club

A Happy New Year to all our members and residents of South Marston.

If you are over 50 and would like to join us at our meetings, we would be delighted to welcome you at the village Hall.

PROGRAMME 2024

Tuesday 13th of February at 2pm

A talk by Bill King, The magic and mystery of band leader Glenn Miller

Tuesday 12th of March at 2pm

A talk by Tony Hersh, A day in the life of a Magistrate

Tuesday 9th of April at 2pm

A talk by Lynda Warren, The life and mystery of Agatha Christie

For more information about the club please contact Sheila
on telephone number 828545 or email – smfriendlyclub@gmail.com

TT Linnet

We're sorry to see that TT Linnett's of Highworth closed down at the end of 2023. Having provided catering for some of South Marston's community events, they will be much missed as a small local business.



The Carpenters Arms

----- South Marston -----

...Offers for January & February...

Every Friday & Saturday 6pm – 9pm

Two 6oz Rump Steak Meals, Served with Chunky Chips & Garden Peas

AND A Bottle of Merlot or Pinot Grigio*

For just £22.00

Every Monday to Friday 12-230pm

Two Bowls of Homemade Stew Served with Ciabatta Bread*

For Just £10.00

****Offers cannot be used alongside any other offer, meal deal or promotion.
No changes can be made to any meals or drinks included in the offer.***

Tots & Toddlers

We have had another busy term with lots of fun activities and celebrations. There have been lots of birthdays with cake and singing as well as Christmas festivities.

For bonfire night we made some sparklers out of different materials and created firework pictures using glitter - making everything sparkle!

As part of Remembrance, we made a wreath of poppies using egg boxes and paint.

Santa made a special appearance at our end of term party. We also had an amazing inflatable play area set up, including a ball pool and bouncy slide, which was lots of fun!

We have some fun activities planned for the beginning of 2024 including celebrating some National Days. These will feature bubble painting on 'National Bubble Bath Day' and puppet bears on 'Winnie the Pooh' Day!

We look forward to continuing this regular, friendly group and hope that it will be a welcoming space to tots, toddlers and their grownups.

Hope to see you soon!

Emma and Rachel

Tots and Toddlers is run on Wednesdays during term time, 9-11am for children aged 0-4 in South Marston Village Hall.

There is a small charge of £2.50 for up to 2 children (50p for each additional child) with drinks and snacks provided.

Contact: racheljones878@gmail.com



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Village Litter Picking Update

by Anne Featherstone

Across 2023 litter pickers worked for 48hrs and collected a total of 71 bags. Numerous fly tips were reported and removed, along with broken glass and a dead deer.

Family groups pick the Rec and the bridleways. Teams of trained adult volunteers pick along the roadside.

Highworth Road is the most affected of the 3 village gateways. Another hotspot is the village car park. What we find changes over time. At present less cigarette butts and painkiller packets, but more vaping paraphernalia and food cartons. During lockdown it was protective masks and gloves. Pre-Covid it was wine bottles, sometimes with the glasses. High volumes of drink containers remain constant.

Our next Community Litter Pick will be in March. More details to follow.



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Flood Report Published

by Sylvia Brown, Parish Council Vice Chair



.....and the storms kept coming!

After October's storms, residents responded to the Parish Council's call for photos and information on the storm's impact around their homes. Thank you to all who helped us to compile a major report on local flooding, and the opportunity to develop recommendations for the future.

The Parish Council recommendations include:

- All water storage lagoons upstream of the village should be maintained to their design capacity. Except for Honda, they haven't been over the past 30 years. Swindon Borough Council is responsible for enforcement and they are directly responsible for the Keypoint lagoon. Additional infrastructure improvements may be possible, to include Panattoni's proposals for the former Honda site
- Specific parts of the ditch network should be improved or re-instated. They are the landowner's responsibility but they may need to be 'pushed' by enforcement action from Swindon Borough. We expect the Hallam Land Management, Hannick Homes, and Taylor Wimpey UK (HHT) consortium may shortly take a more helpful approach with land under their control
- The Thames Water pumping station on Nightingale Lane is currently unable to prevent the mix of sewage and flood water affecting housing. It must be upgraded, preferably now, before any further housing development is allowed
- Current plans for water storage areas and channels for the major HHT housing developments are, overall, along the lines required, but must be adequately implemented at each phase of the build
- The River Cole already floods its banks where it is joined by South Marston Brook at Acorn Bridge. This flow must not be increased by any of the developments either side of the A420. Consultants' reports, checked by the Borough's Drainage Engineer, plan for 1 in 100 year event plus 40%

A summary and the full Parish Council report are available on the village website www.southmarston.org.uk. Swindon's flood management officers will use it in their statutory review of the Borough's experience during storm Babet. The Parish Council will use it to frame responses to planning applications and to work with the Borough to minimise the risk to village properties.

by Colin McEwen

HHT Development Soon!

We recently had a meeting with the Borough Planner who was confident that we will see the starting gun fired early in the New Year. The first soil to be turned will probably be at the Thornhill Road end of the Construction Road, which will eventually be upgraded to become Hammerman Way, linking through to the new junction at Old Vicarage Lane.

A new overall Surface Water Plan has just been submitted for the site and we will be reviewing this in the light of the Storm Babet experience and flood report.

New Swindon Plan.....Finances.....and Consequences!

The new Labour administration at the Borough is consulting on a 'Swindon Plan' with 3 major themes: Combat Inequality, Build a Better Swindon and Achieve Net Zero. The first two of these indicate a concentration of effort on the poorer urban areas of the Borough.

My hope is that they will work with the urban Parish Councils, created 6 years ago, who have made a considerable success of maintaining and improving their areas.

The plan also emphasises that because of the Borough's dire financial position they will be further minimising the services that they provide and looking to the Parish Councils to pick up the slack.

These factors point to increases in both the Borough and Parish elements of Council Tax. You can access the plan and consultation details on their website at www.swindon.gov.uk/letstalkswindon

20 MPH Zone

Good news: Tom Butcher has had a meeting with the Highways Officer who has agreed that there is no need for the scheme to be held up by the school expansion. I hope that he will now liaise with us so that we can make the final tweaks needed following the consultation last April.

Flood Risk

It rained during December, but the risk of flooding became less immediate. The trick now is not to let the focus on writing the 'Swindon Plan' and a 'Section 19 Flood Report' disguise the fact that the Borough is failing to do the basics such as inspecting and maintaining the lagoons upstream of the village. Matt Vallender is pressing the Borough as Local Flood Authority on this.

Borough Councillor Update

Waste Collection Changes

In November, changes came in to enable more effective sorting of the material and to collect food waste that is sold at a profit. Whilst there were teething issues it has largely been successful, and we thank residents for embracing the new system.

Extra blue bags are available at local libraries and washed and squashed plastics and metals can be put out in sturdy containers such as spare recycling boxes (not in bags, please). Please contact one of us if you continue to have problems.

Panattoni

Cllr Matthew Vallender spoke at the SBC Planning Committee in support of the development, which includes a welcome £7.5 million of local benefit contributions. We are particularly pleased to see payments to improve the Rat Trap roundabout and the local cycle and walking network.

Flooding - Cllr Matthew Vallender

Following the storms this Autumn I have been working with the Parish Council, Borough and Environment Agency to minimise South Marston's flood risk and improve the warning system. Under the Flood and Water Management Act, a Section 19 Report has now been triggered to identify future actions to manage the flood risk across the Borough and the Flood Report prepared by the Parish Council will form part of this.

20mph Zone - Cllr Tom Butcher

The Parish Council has been pressing for a 20mph zone in the centre of the village for over a decade. Following the latest consultation last March, the scheme once again became stalled, and I was invited to tackle the problem with the Borough's Highways Department. I am pleased to report that I was able to arrange a meeting where it was agreed that the 20mph zone could proceed on its own timeline. I will continue to encourage the officer to liaise with the PC over the final details and an updated scheme should be published shortly.

We are always happy to help!



Cllr Russell Holland (Conservative)
07914 569256
RHolland@swindon.gov.uk



Cllr Matthew Vallender (Conservative)
01793 295171
MVallender@swindon.gov.uk, Facebook - [@cllrmatthewvallender](https://www.facebook.com/cllrmatthewvallender)

Cllr Tom Butcher (Labour)
07795 070254
TButcher@swindon.gov.uk



South Marston Gardening Club

2024 MEETING DATES AND PROGRAMME

Dates for your diary. All our events are held from 7.30-9.30pm in South Marston Village Hall unless otherwise stated. You can join the Gardening Club for £12 annual membership or as a visitor for £3 on the door.

We don't hold meetings in January or February, so our first meeting is our AGM.

- Monday 4th of March: AGM and membership renewal
- Monday 8th of April: Speaker
- Monday 13th of May: Speaker
- Monday 3rd of June: Plant Sale
- Monday 1st of July: Speaker
- Friday 16th of August: Annual Flower and Produce Show registration
- Saturday 17th of August: Annual Flower and Produce Show
- Monday 2nd of September: Speaker
- Monday 7th of October: Speaker
- Monday 4th of November: Workshop
- Monday 2nd of December: Social Evening

Carriers Arms

Live music:

Drew Bryant, April 28th, Live upbeat solo acoustic performer

24th February: Band/Artist to be confirmed



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SMRA report

by Jenny McEwen

A big thank you to all our lovely volunteers (old and new) who put up and decorated the Village Hall Christmas tree this year. It was a definite attraction for all the groups using the Village Hall for their Christmas festivities.



Special mention to Rachel for organising it, and to Ella and her Mum, Reg Kilfoyle, Lionel, Gareth and Steve Case, Mike Gambles and his two sons, Kevin O'Dea, Dave Williams, Dean Hoskins and Wendy Smith and Mary and Nick. We really do appreciate your efforts.

Recreation Ground Development Work

We didn't get the new Redlynch climbing frame installed in early December, but for a very good reason – the ground conditions at the time were horrendous. Redlynch are storing it for free until the weather and the state of the surface improves.

In the meantime, the Parish Council has carried out work on the tarmac path to the rear of the school to remove the dips and cracks that were causing accidents. This is a temporary fix as the path will be affected by the construction of the main new pathway around the expanded school boundary which, together with the new car park, is the first task the school construction team has to complete.

See page 5 for a taster on SMRA / Parish Council plans for landscaping the western and northern ends of the Recreation ground.

South Marston Recreation Association AGM

Advance notice of our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 11th of March at 7.30pm.

SMRA is a charity run by volunteers from the village. We manage the Recreation ground on behalf of the Parish Council and we own the Village Hall.

Every South Marston resident is a 'member' of SMRA and will be very welcome to attend the AGM and find out more about our work. We always welcome offers of help.

We would be very happy to hear from anyone willing to join our management committee. Contact Jenny via play@southmarston.org.uk.

Thoughts from the vicarage



As I write this letter, I can see out of my office window the last of the leaves falling from the trees. The wind catches the more stubborn ones and at last they give up their grip on the branch and flutter away. I wonder how many of us are like those last leaves, desperately gripping on to what we know, where we feel secure, reluctant to let go.

Feeling secure is important but if we are hanging on to things because we are not willing to change then we could be missing out. Change can be good; we change our cars, phones, even our bodies through diet and exercise.

As I write there is so much uncertainty, nationally with the cost-of-living crisis, and internationally as wars wage between Israel and Palestine, and Ukraine and Russia. By the time you read this my prayer is that these things will be resolved but there may be new challenges to face.

It can feel like we are powerless, that what we do and feel doesn't matter, but there is one thing we can do and that is pray and trust. The disciples had to trust Jesus as they left everything, and they knew to follow him. Mary had to trust God when the Angel visited and told her she would be with child before her marriage. Joseph had to trust God that marrying Mary was still the right thing to do. They both had to trust God on their journey to Bethlehem and later on their flight into Egypt to escape Herod.

As we moved into the season of Advent and Christmas, we remembered that the birth of Jesus brought a change that was so drastic and far reaching such that the world was never the same again.

Jesus changed the world, and we celebrate all that means. As Christians we are called to do our part in sharing the love and good news of Jesus to a world that still needs and wants to hear the message of hope. For a better world and a better future.

Wishing you a Happy New Year.

Rev'd Elveen

Stratton Team Ministry

Seeking, Sharing and Serving God Together

Stratton Team Ministry will be conducting Sunday Morning services at South Marston St Mary Magdalene Church (unless otherwise stated)

14th of January 9.30am	Holy Communion
21st of January 10.30am	Team Service at St Leonard's Church
4th of February 10am	All Age Worship
11th of February 9.30am	Holy Communion
14th of February 7pm	Ash Wednesday Service at St Margaret's Church
18th of February 11am	Team Service at St Margaret's Church
3rd of March 10am	All Age Worship
10th of March 9.30am	Holy Communion



Meeting Point is a 'drop in' for all members of our community to join us for a coffee or tea.

Every 3rd Saturday of the month at the Village Hall from 10am to 12pm.



Saturday Scene offers a very friendly welcome and gives an informal space for children to explore together in a Christian environment.

Join us in St Margaret's Centre at 4pm on 2nd Saturday of the month.

Getting in touch

We are very happy to hear from you if you have any questions about the church, our timetable of services and events, or if you need support.

Church Office:

☎ 01793 826505

💻 stmargaretsoffice2@btconnect.com

South Marston Churchwarden:

Diane Whitford ☎ 01793 824339

Stratton Team Ministry is also pleased to welcome you for private prayer at **St Mary Magdalene's Church** which will be open daily from early morning till early evening.

Christmas Activities with the Church

by Diane Whitford, Church Warden

Christmas began in earnest with the Christingle Service at the beginning of December which raised £125 in support of the Children's Society. It was a delightful service with Katie from South Marston School telling the story of the Christingle in the form of a poem, after which all the children received a Christingle. The school choir sang 'The First Nowell' and 'We Three Kings'. The church was full of happy people.

Key Stage 1 from South Marston School came to the church on the 4th of December to rehearse for their nativity play which they performed twice the following day. They were brilliant and the church was full with parents and grandparents all enjoying the performances. The story of Jesus birth and the visits of the shepherds and the kings were interspersed with lively carols, sung beautifully and with great enthusiasm by the children. Key Stage 2 brought their stage performance to the church on the 6th of December. This took the form of Christmas songs and poems in true Christmas style.

I was privileged to be at all the performances and thoroughly enjoyed them all. The enthusiasm of the children was infectious. The congregation kindly gave towards the heating of the church.

The Carpenters Arms invited us to come and sing carols with them on the 15th of December. Our choir included folks from our churches in Stanton Fitzwarren, Coleview, Stratton and of course South Marston, making



up our Team Ministry. It was an evening of great fun and the pub was full to bursting with customers who thoroughly enjoyed the carols and gave generously to the upkeep of St Mary Magdalene Church for which we are very grateful. We have been invited to return next year and a date will be put in the diary very soon.

Our community coffee morning 'Meeting Point', took place on the 16th of December. Lots of people came along for their morning coffee or tea with a cake or two and some even enjoyed a bacon bap. Cards were also on sale for last minute Christmas shoppers. Our next coffee / tea morning will be on Saturday 20th of January in the Village Hall, so do come along.

Our service of 'Nine Lessons and Carols' took place on the 22nd of December at 7pm and was a delightful service. The church was full and we all sang carols with the accompaniment of the church choir, who were excellent.



On Christmas Eve, our crib service at 5pm told the story of the birth of Jesus in the stable with the children placing Jesus in the crib. Our young folks and their parents came to share this delightful service and sing carols.

Our early midnight Christmas communion took place at 9pm on Christmas Eve and prepared us all for Christmas Day.



ABL Complete
landscaping service

Contact
07810317333

Thank you to all who helped to make these services and activities happen.

Thanks to our flower team for their beautiful Christmas flower arrangements and to our wonderful cleaning team.

Most of all thanks go to all of you who joined us and gave generously to our lovely church.

2024 Village Maintenance

by Barry Thunder, SMPC Open Spaces Working Group

Many residents regularly ask who is responsible for the maintenance of ditches, footpaths, grass and the hedges in the village. The answer is it all depends.....

Ditches - the landowner is always responsible. The only ditches on which the Parish Council can work are the ones alongside 'the Rec.'

Rights of Way - the landowner is responsible for keeping them passable, but the Parish Council and the Borough have the right to work on them if necessary. Lionel Cave-Ayland, our Footpath Liaison volunteer, has liaised with many landowners over the past year, although last Spring's rapid growth was a huge challenge.

Grass-cutting in the village 'envelope' and public open spaces is mainly done by the Parish Council or SMRA, either as the landowner, or because we have taken over, for instance, from the Borough Council since they can no longer afford to do it.

Hedges are normally a landowner responsibility. The one, for instance, along Thornhill Rd on the Keypoint pathway is managed by their contractor. The Parish Council has taken over the Borough's responsibility for cutting hedges alongside footways or roads where the hedge is part of the highway. Occasionally, in the interests of pedestrian safety, we also cut hedges with a landowner's agreement.

There are going to be some changes to how we manage our maintenance role, partly due to the recent retirement of our contractor Bill Battaglia who has, for many years, done excellent work cutting the grass around the village. Many may have seen him on his ride-on mower or wielding his strimmer in locations such as verges, Greenfields or the Churchyard.

Bill's departure brought about a rethink on how best to carry out our future work. We listed the works and those items that would be done by external contractors were put out to tender. Based mainly on the lower annual cost, we have selected Allbuild, a local company we have worked with for some years. Allbuild currently undertake most work on the Rec as well as installing and emptying our dog bins, cutting hedges, and removing smaller items of fly-tipping.



As well as employing contractors, we use the Probation Teams and have secured an increase in the amount of work the teams can tackle next year. This is a very cost effective way of doing many intermittent tasks.

All Parish Council owned hedges, together with ones we manage on behalf of Swindon Borough Council or others, are cut lightly in the summer, and then cut right back in the winter, outside of the nesting season.

We plan some ditch management work on the Rec boundary, ahead of the planned expansion of the school. The aim is to increase the efficiency of the renovated land drains put in last year by SMRA.

In addition to all those contractors working for the Parish Council, we do, of course, have the benefit of many local volunteers who offer their time and skills to improve our local green spaces. Our volunteering days in the woods are always enjoyable and it's great to be out in the fresh air as well as making a difference.

Thames Water are due to make a 6th attempt at finding the water pipe in the road up at the allotments! This will (hopefully) be on February 27th.

Honda Memorial Garden Closed

Honda may have left the Parish, but we still have constant connections with their legacy staff in charge of their Memorial Garden up at the allotments. There have certainly been some serious challenges over which we have needed to coordinate effort in recent years.

We've had the Thames Water connection saga and the flooding in the October storms, as well as last year's repair to the windmill 'spinners' on the site.

The gardens are currently closed to the public for safety reasons as the Parish Council reported to Honda that one of the spinner 'connections' had sheared off in recent storms.

Honda acted very quickly and organised the removal of all spinners, pending a re-think of their design in the light of more frequent high winds.



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A spider's frosty Christmas decoration at the Village Hall (courtesy of Lionel)

Acupuncture

Acupuncture treatment can help with many health conditions including back pain, fatigue, digestive disorders, poor sleep, arthritic pain and migraines to name just a few!

Hazel Andrews Lic.Ac AAC

7 Ash Gardens, South Marston.
SN3 4XX

For more information call me on

01793 827507

hazel@acuhome.co.uk

Cosmetic acupuncture also available

www.acuhome.co.uk



Banish those Winter blues!

Join us for some fun on the farm. Rain or shine, there's always something to see & do at Roves!

Lambing

9 - 13 Jan
&
6-23 April



Kidding

From
12 March



NEW membership offer
12 months for the
price of 6!*

Daily activities



Sensory Zone



Discovery Wood



Tractor Rides



Sevenhampton | Swindon | SN6 7QG | rovesfarm.co.uk

*Applies to NEW 6 month memberships purchased between 02/01/24 - 29/02/24. **Seasonal, check website

Useful Contacts

South Marston Parish Council: clerk@southmarston.org.uk 686150

Wiltshire Police Community Support: PCSO Victoria Townsend
victoria.townsend@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Neighbourhood Watch: martinhoffen@smsinternet.co.uk 823513

South Marston Church: via Stratton Team Ministry 826505

Church Warden: Diane Whitford 824339

Parochial Church Council (PCC): William Hiscocks, Diane Whitford

Meeting Point: Diane 824339, **Saturday Scene:** Pat England 826505

South Marston Church of England Primary School: 823379

SMRA: Julie Hatherall 07749211867, Jenny McEwen 07770633362

Village Hall hire: Rachel Case on rcase@sky.com 07741549393

Youth Club: clerk@southmarston.org.uk 686150

Tots and Toddlers: racheljones878@gmail.com, emmalouiselarge@hotmail.com

F&E Harris Memorial Trust: Robbie Taylor 823757

Gardening Club: Angela Newton 07789068340 angelanewton01@gmail.com,
Mike New 827807

Friendly Club: smfriendlyclub@gmail.com Sheila on 828545

Facebook page (South Marston): Sharon editor@southmarston.org.uk

Swindon Dial a Ride: 521123

Swindon Streetsmart 445501 or streetsmart@swindon.gov.uk

Regular Village Events

- **Meeting Point** - Every 3rd Saturday of the month at the Village Hall
- **Parish Council Meeting** - Every 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Village Hall
- **The Gardening Club** - From March to December every 1st Monday (2nd Monday if a Bank Holiday falls that month) in the Village Hall from 7.30-9.30pm
- **The Friendly Club** - 2nd Tuesday of every month in the Village Hall
- **Tots and Toddlers** - on Wednesdays during term time, 9-11am in the Village Hall

About Community News

South Marston Community News is produced by the Communications Working Group of South Marston Parish Council. Although funded by the Parish Council, the Editorial Board of Community News operates independently and aims to produce an impartial, community focused magazine of interest to all residents.



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PARISH COUNCIL**



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