

South Marston Community News

12 Days of Xmas Illuminated Walk

by Lionel Cave-Ayland



One Boxing Day Janet and I had been visiting Bolton Abbey estate in Yorkshire with a 12 Days of Xmas feature. This was when I said to Janet, 'we could do this in St Julian's Wood', and so the seed was sown. Others later agreed it was a great idea, and Claire Fleming was soon on board with her own ideas and usual enthusiasm.

Our event started in the car park with carols from the Church Choir along with some audience participation, before the 'illuminated walk' began. Children had a quick stop to meet Santa at his 'gazebo grotto' and then walked on around the wood searching for hidden elves and stopping to view our version of the 12 Days of Xmas. Each of the day's artworks had required imagination, though I don't think Banksy will be losing any sleep! Completing the illuminated walk led back to the car park where festive refreshments were welcomed.

Once again through careful planning and generous sponsorship, we have provided another free community event with something for all ages. Being environmentally friendly, all the timber used was reclaimed mostly from skips. Paper cups, serviettes, spoons and used tea bags etc, were either recycled or composted. All lighting used low energy and low heat LED bulbs.

Continued overleaf

A big thank you to: The Parish Council for their sponsorship, loan of the generator and gazebo. Lawn Doctor for the additional generator. Swindon Borough Council for the Bellway Homes Travel Plan funding. Claire Fleming for her continued support for events in South Marston, producing the fantastic publicity artwork and helping to provide and serve refreshments. Spud and his team, who once again, worked their magic to provide us with a stunning lighting display. The residents who gave us access to free power and parking. The Church Choir for serenading us so beautifully. Santa and his helper, for visiting us at this busy time of year. He was so popular that extra gifts were required. Finally to Janet, who has over the years always been supportive of my community events and various ideas.



At the end of the evening we had time to reflect on what we had helped to achieve, an illuminated walk and smiles on faces. It was an emotional moment stood by the 11 pipers piping and listening to Amazing Grace playing in the background. Thank you to everyone who has helped in so many ways to make this event so successful. It was a great way to sign off as I now step back from my community activities, allowing younger people with energy, enthusiasm and new ideas the opportunity to play a bigger part in future community events. To you all, thank you, and have a happy and healthy 2025.



Hello, my name is Melody Parry Sumner and I was Santa's helper. I am 14 years old and my family have lived in South Marston for over 10 years. I have been given the opportunity to take part in the Bronze stage of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. I wanted to concentrate my efforts on 'community activities' and Lionel, as a trustee for the South Marston Recreation Association, has helped me with this. Over the next few months I will continue with my efforts, working with as many village organisations as possible.

Tots & Toddlers

Happy New Year from all at Tots and Toddlers.

We wrapped up last term with so many exciting activities, and the kids had a blast creating their own firework displays using salt! We also tried our hand at paper weaving to craft our own tartan for St. Andrews Day. On top of that, we got into the Christmas spirit with some delightful tree decorations, crafted our own snow globes, and even had a special visit from Santa himself!



We're thrilled to welcome everyone back for a brand-new term! The children will be busy updating our display board, showcasing some of their creations and sharing pictures from the sensory and messy play sessions. This term, we've decided to explore a theme for each month instead of our usual weekly highlights, kicking things off with a fun exploration of polar animals.

We're also excited to enhance our equipment and offerings for our under-ones, creating a safe and welcoming space for them to join in on the fun. It's been wonderful to see so many new faces in the past few months, and this new area for the little ones will truly be a fantastic addition!

Tots and Toddlers has been a beloved part of our community for many years, and we take pride in fostering a friendly, inclusive environment for all caregivers and their little ones. If you're interested in becoming a part of Tots and Toddlers, whether by helping run our weekly sessions or offering some time to assist with our resources, we'd love to hear from you.

We love welcoming new faces, so if you're caring for a tot or toddler on Wednesday mornings during term time, we'd be delighted for you to drop by and join us. Tots and Toddlers meets on Wednesdays during term time from 9am to 11am at South Marston Village Hall. There's a small charge of £2.50 for up to two children (just 50p for each additional child), and drinks and snacks are provided.

We can't wait to see you!

South Marston in Lights Event 2024

by Hazel Andrews

Another successful SMILE competition has come to the end as we welcome in the New Year. It was certainly a challenge getting lights up this year as the storms did their best to disrupt attempts. The squally wet weather also made judging difficult, so it had to take place over several different days.

This year villagers put on a fantastic display with the village hall looking sparkly and bright and there were new displays joining the regular displays from previous years. In Rawlings Close, Thornhill Road and Magdalene Close, clusters of houses were lit up together creating a very memorable effect, prompting discussion on adding a new category for a 'Best Street Display' in coming years.

Thank you to the support from the F and E Harris Memorial Trust enabling us to run the SMILE competition and for the Christmas goodie bag prizes.

Best in village winner: Manor Lodge, Thornhill Rd



This year's winning light display received much appreciation and there were a couple of standout comments posted online too:

'Was my favourite, made me feel like walking through a winter wonderland.'

'That beautiful colour I pass most of the time, well done winner.'

Highly commended

It was very tough and it took a while for the judges to agree on just three:



6 St Julians - 'Classic Christmas sparkle'



4 Rawlings Close - 'Pretty and classic display'



9 Bell Gardens - 'Attractive colours and interesting theme'

Mud, Glorious Mud

by Nigel Hole

In early December, Colin, Barry Thunder and I returned to view the progress on the Panattoni site. While last time back in July we might have had snow, there was now only mud and with a capital M, for good reason. Those of you who can picture the huge car plant that was, it's now gone.

Just one small part of a building is left for a temporary shelter, which they plan to video for YouTube when it finally comes down. The rest of the site is just mud after storm Bert passed through the previous week.



The first stop on our tour was the 'rock crusher'. For those wincing, it's a massive piece of kit fed huge lumps of concrete from the demolition, grinding them down to aggregate sized pieces for reuse in the construction of the new roads and buildings. It's truly



remarkable to see the effort going into recycling waste material, with virtually no rubble carted off-site, reducing lorry use. All the metals have value and get stripped out for recycling. The old runway concrete was expected to be a metre depth to tear through and remove. But as per much of this site, it was over-engineered and two and a half metres; now it's a mile of aggregate. The tarmac, once removed, was found to contain coal tar - a big 'no' in recycling. Though careful lab analysis proved it can be safely reintegrated into the new construction materials.

As Parish Councillors, a key issue for us was reassurance that flood risks were being mitigated during the demolition/construction phase and into the future of the site. Last time, we showed you a photo of a massive concrete culvert with its 'otter shelf'. There's now a



'water feature' going west to east across the site, carefully being sculpted by the diggers while we were there. It's the new Kingsdown Brook to join up with South Marston Brook at St Julian's. All along its length there are concrete culverts but they've been beautifully rendered with Cotswold stonework facing, to take the starkness away.

It will become a meandering stream with grass bank sides, which will be idyllic for workers to sit at breaktimes watching wildlife. And with the cycleway and footpath access across the site being secured by the Parish Council, we as a village, will be able to enjoy this pleasant area using access points at Oak Tree Corner, the back of Crown Timber and also from the Keypoint site.

The on-site 'water feature' stream, has been designed so that normal water flow is just a small channel at the bottom, but in flood conditions, the sides are deep enough to reserve a huge amount of water and the flow rate is designed with a negligible incline to slow egress from the channel in our direction. But before it gets anywhere near the village there are storage ponds to divert it into, to allow a slow controlled release. This isn't yet all fully in place and operational but there are interim contingency measures.

During storm Bert, and then two weeks later with storm Darragh, they fired up 6-inch water pumps to take water into the massive storage ponds so that it could be slowly released later. This meant that we didn't get the inundation we saw with Babette back in October 2023.



But for this flood protection during the site development, there is a trade-off. A pump that will shift this volume of water away from the village and prevent flooding is not going to be quiet. Some of you might have heard what you thought was a jackhammer going all weekend recently. No, it wasn't that bad, but it was the pump. We have a choice, flooding or a bit of background noise while a storm passes. I know which the residents of Greenfields, Byron Close or Old Vicarage Lane would prefer!

From demolition, the site is now moving into re-construction phase and, to reinforce that it's full steam ahead, the new roads should be going in for the north of the site starting in February. And Winvic, who've run the demolition, are hoping to be constructing one of the first of the new buildings just off the Crematorium roundabout.

South Marston Friendly Club

The Committee wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

If you are over 50 and live in South Marston or in a nearby community why not come along to our meetings held in the Village Hall?

We host entertaining speakers and interesting events, and with tea and biscuits served after, it's a great way to meet new friends and neighbours.

PROGRAMME 2025

Tuesday 14th of January at 2pm - Social Afternoon with Bingo and Mince Pies

Tuesday 11th of February at 2pm - Stewart Linford will talk about Winston Churchill, his vices, tastes and virtues

Tuesday 11th of March at 2pm - A Spoon Full of Sugar
Emily will sing a collection of Julie Andrews songs

For more information about the club
please contact Sheila by email to smfriendlyclub@gmail.com.



Lambing on the farm
24th - 27th January

Keep an eye on the flock & watch our lambs being born!
Meet the Lambs sessions start after all ewes have lambed.
Follow us @rovesfarm for lambing & bottle feeding updates.

Animal Antics
15th - 23rd February

Meet Bluey
15th & 16th March

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School Update

by Mason Conlan, Assistant Headteacher & Class Teacher

We hope that everyone in the South Marston community has enjoyed a relaxing Christmas break and a joyful start to the New Year. Here at the school, we are pleased to share updates on what we have been up to and what is ahead for this term.

Joining the Blue Kite Academies Trust. We are excited about this new chapter and the opportunities it brings for our school's future.

Sporting Success. Children have proudly represented South Marston in events such as the swimming gala, football matches, and even enjoyed a visit from a future Olympic athlete! Coming up, some KS2 pupils will be performing in the Swindon Schools Dance Festival at the Wyvern Theatre. A big thank you to Mrs Doughty and



Mrs Hamilton-Gill for their hard work in organising sports and activities.

To enhance playtime, we have a new structured lunchtime setup with playground zones. Children can enjoy skipping, Lego, tyres, small-world games, hoops and more. If you have outdoor games or equipment to donate, we would be grateful!

A New Chapter for Our Library. We were thrilled that local author Kate Claxton joined us to open our newly decorated library. The children enjoy regular visits, sparking a love of reading across the school.

Christmas Cheer. Well done to children for their wonderful Christmas nativity plays and performances! It was a joy to see their creativity and hard work come to life.

PTA. The recent school disco and the annual Winter Fayre were huge successes. Popcorn was provided for our festive movie afternoon and refreshments at our nativity plays in Church. Further events are planned and we continue to be extremely grateful for all the incredible hard work they do to support our school.

Welcoming New Families. Thank you to the prospective parents who joined our recent school tours. We have spaces available in some year groups, pre-school and reception classes so please pass on our contact details to anyone looking for a



**South Marston
Parish Council**

Parish Council News

by Colin McEwen

Crown Timber Brownfield housing site

A fresh plan for re-developing the Crown Timber site has been submitted that appears to meet the concerns of both the Parish Council and Planning Officers and we are hoping that approval will happen soon. This will provide a surfaced footpath route from Ash Gardens around Hoddinotts Corner to reach the Keypoint bridleway, something residents have requested for the past 10 years or more, and which was included in our Neighbourhood Plan. Redevelopment of the site will remove one eyesore at the entrance to the village, but there is no sign of the remainder of the Thornhill Industrial Estate being developed.

TWV development about to start!or will it be deja vu again?

Having bought out Hallam/Hannick and the landowners, Taylor Wimpey and Vistry (Bovis) are pressing on with applications to discharge the Conditions on their Planning Consent. The big question is, when will the infrastructure groundworks start? It was to be November, and now we are promised a revised Phasing Plan in January...

We have to assume that it will happen, and we have been active in challenging the design in the original plans for the two 150 house estates south of Magdalene Close. These come under the heading of 'South Marston Phase 1 development. We are now much happier with the layouts and connections to the proposed Village Centre and the School.

As part of the proposals, The Leaze - the bridleway from Old Vicarage Lane to Manor Farm, will be resurfaced to make this stretch, at least, fit for use by cyclists and walkers. It's also been confirmed that the utilities services will be ducted underground across the site.

Before Christmas, residents directly affected by the surface water flows around the housing development areas were able to discuss concerns they have about flood risk with the drainage consultants working for the developers and see the proposed mitigation measures.

Flood Risk

With Councillor Vallender's help, we have a meeting arranged with the relevant Borough Council Cabinet Member and Officers specifically to discuss the village issues as set out in the Flood Report that we prepared last year. My concern is that I don't know whether any officers with the relevant background remain at the Borough, so initial work will be needed to make this worthwhile.

20mph zone

We met and considered the plans for the village drawn by the Borough's consultant. They are much along the lines of the plans drawn by Brookbanks 11 years ago and those displayed last February. Currently random car parking is providing informal traffic calming, but we discounted this and approved and returned the plans to the Highways Department for implementation.

Trees in Greenfields

When originally built, Greenfields had a dozen Mountain Ash trees. The last of these were fatally damaged in the recent storms. The Borough doesn't have the money or manpower to replace them, but the Parish Council are looking at the possibility of a grant for replacements with volunteers planting them.



Have Your Say Event

by Sylvia Brown



This is a drop-in event for residents to find out what's happening in the village, and ask questions or raise matters of concern. Two showcase topics are being planned - look out for notices on Facebook and the website for updates nearer the time.

Thursday 27th February, 6 to 8pm in the Village Hall

The South Marston Dig

During the evening, there will be a **dedicated session run by MOLA** (the Museum of London Archaeology). This is the team that has spent the last few months excavating the marshlands south of the village prior to construction of the housing developments.

Around 7pm, they will be hosting a sit-down presentation for residents about what they have done and what's been found so far. This is a taster session for a planned 'archaeology evening' to be held in the Village Hall at a later date when the dig is completed, probably later in the spring. We are sure that this will be very much of interest to the village.

Traffic Matters

The drop-in session is being used to update residents on progress with the long-awaited '**traffic calming**' in the central village area, as well as other changes such as the extension of the 30 mph limits towards the A420. In addition, the latest plans for Crown Timber will provide the long-awaited footway from the village to the Keypoint bridleway, but we can't yet say when construction will commence.

What does 2025 bring for our Open Spaces?

by Barry Thunder, Open Spaces Working Group

January is a good time to look forward to warmer weather and what to plan for the coming year. Our two woodland sites have taken rather a battering from recent storm winds, with perhaps more to come before we get to Spring time.

Oxleaze Wood, although owned by Swindon Borough Council, is managed by the Parish Council via the Open Spaces Working Group. Damage from the high winds, combined with Ash die back, has meant that many trees have fallen or been felled for safety reasons, many thanks to our regular volunteers for this work, of note are the trees that line the north side of Morses Lane. We hope that, with financial support from the 'Community Forest' funds arising from the new build housing, we will be able to remove all the dead and diseased trees and at the same time restore the lane to its original width.

With support from a grant from 'Planting Trees for Climate Change' we hope to plant a specimen oak and two blossom trees within the Memorial Garden to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of D Day and the end of WW2.

We also plan to hold a weekend of tree planting of fruit trees in Orchard Meadow and at the Allotment site. Together with additional planting of trees and hedgerows in the recreation field, this can become a day for village residents and their families to come together and enjoy some organised planting time. If you or your family would like to take part in the tree planting, the potential dates are February 22nd or March 1st, weather dependant. For more details email me at barry.thunder@southmarston.org.uk.

On wider matters, we are working with our contractors Allbuild, to maintain some of the key grass verges that will allow safer passage for pedestrians to use. A trial of roadside weed spraying is being planned along central key village roads.

Here's an interesting fact...1.5 tons of fallen leaves were removed from central village roads this Autumn.

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Village Allotments

by Barry Thunder



Your Parish Council has been managing the allotment site for many years. Whilst not being the land owners we have a long-term lease over the land for allotment use only. Under current regulations that means it is not development land. In writing this, I hope to make clear who does what within the site.

Honda took ownership of the land some 37 years ago when they bought the wider area for car building. Although the ex-car works site, including the allotments, are owned by Panattoni, Honda management have temporarily retained overall control of the Honda Memorial Garden until the connection to the water main has been completed. (Ahh, therein lies a tale!).

The Parish Council rents the allotments to all within the area for £52 pa, with a subsidised rate of £32pa for residents. We maintain the trees surrounding the site and keep the grass cut with volunteer support and monthly cutting via our village contractors Allbuild, and monthly help via People on Probation managed by the local Probation service. We also liaise with the Honda management in relation to their Memorial Garden, particularly the colourful 'windmills' amongst the trees. Recently some of these had been emitting a most uncomfortable wailing noise for which Honda apologises. Whilst any such problems are promptly reported to Honda, it can take some time to get contractors to remedy them.

Interested in an allotment for 2025? Please contact us as soon as possible as there isn't currently a waiting list for plots coming available. Please email Kevin our Parish Clerk at clerk@southmarston.org.uk or me at barry.thunder@southmarston.org.uk.

SMRA Update

By Jenny McEwen

At the end of a very active year, we wrote to thank our regular volunteers without whose help we would not be able to function as a charity. At our December meeting, we celebrated with those who could join us for drinks and nibbles, as a thank you for their hard work. They included our band of '100 Club' collectors, our auditor, representatives of the F and E Harris Memorial Trust and those who have helped support and promote SMRA and its activities over the past year.

We reminisced about past times when SMRA was just starting in 1978 and the early years of trying to offer climbing equipment for youngsters made from wood from felled trees and concrete pipes. There followed a number of decades of constant fundraising activity, when we had more active volunteers under the age of 50 - fetes, bonfire nights, sports days - which helped us on our way to providing a Recreation Ground to be proud of.

Our guests were invited to draw **December's winning numbers for the 100 Club**, including the end of year prize of £100. Every meeting, we draw number tokens from a canvas bag, which are then matched with winners names by Julie Hatherall, who helps keep our accounts in order. We found it very satisfying that the big prize, this time, went to Julie - at least our guests were there to see it was all above board!

We hope everyone was impressed with the Village Hall Christmas Tree and decorations this year.

Thanks to:

Alfie, Donald, Rachel, Gareth, Stevie and Mary Case, Dave Williams, Andy Mundy, Alan Phillips and Reg Kilfoyle for braving the windy weather to erect it, and to Roves Farm for supplying the tree itself.



We've had quite a few comments on how good the Recreation Ground looks now the boundaries and the hedges have been cut, and the internal ditches cleared.



We are very grateful for the use of the Probation Service Teams organised by Barry Thunder and Mark Rostill, who take on specific maintenance jobs on the Rec that are not part of our normal contractor's work.

2024 showed the impact of climate change on everyday maintenance such as grass cutting. We were not the only ones to be caught out by warmer weather and rapid growth from February onwards, at least a month ahead of our usual schedule, with the ground too wet for machinery to cut properly. For 2025, we have increased the number of cuts per year in the hope we don't end up with similar problems in future.

Well Done Winners!

South Marston Recreation Association congratulates our end of year winners.

NOVEMBER

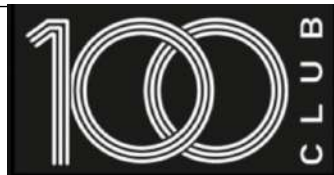
£10 No. 48 Michelle Giles
£10 No. 82 Francesca McElroy
£10 No. 120 George Allen
£10 No. 78 Lisa Allen

DECEMBER

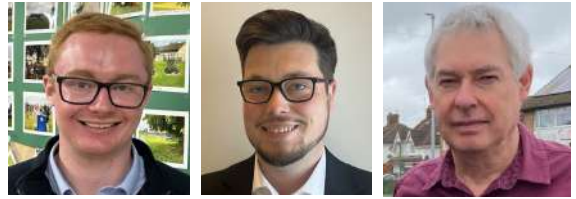
£100 No. 34 Julie Hatherall
£10 No. 5 Mike Page
£10 No. 3 Michelle Page-Harvey
£10 No. 55 Ros Liddiard
£10 No. 12 Ian Addison

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.



Update from Your Local Borough Councillors



Matthew Vallender, Tom Butcher, and Simon Shelley

Update from Councillor Matthew Vallender

2024 has been a busy year, working locally to represent you and tackle the issues that matter. Please see below for an update on some of the key issues I have been working on.

Update from November's Full Council Meeting: I spoke in support of mental health awareness on a motion on local charity Legend on the Bench. I questioned Cabinet Members on flooding in South Marston, road sweeping, library services, tree preservation orders, and customer service call times.

Flooding: I am continuing to work with the Parish Council and the Borough Council's Flooding Team to tackle the ongoing issues in and around the village. I have been raising issues with the Flood Risk Asset Register, (the complete lack of) lagoon maintenance, updates to the Flood Risk Management Strategies and Community Area Action Plan (which haven't been updated in a decade), progress on the Section 19 Report into last autumn's flooding, and plans to extend the bulwark on the Greenfield culvert. I am the only Councillor in Swindon who has been able to secure roundtable meetings with the Cabinet Member and the Lead Local Flood Authority to discuss these issues.

Nightingale Lane Traveller Camp Planning Application: I strongly opposed plans for a traveller site in South Marston. The site is inappropriate for a variety of highways and flooding reasons, especially when the future New Eastern Villages development is considered.

Following my campaign against this planning application, which included the information leaflet I sent to every house in the village, I am incredibly pleased to be able to report back that the Nightingale Lane Traveller Camp Planning Application has been refused planning permission. I want to say a massive thank you to everyone who took the time to register their objections to the application. We saw record levels of responses objecting to this completely inappropriate planning application.

As always, if there is ever anything I can help out with locally, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the details below. I hope everyone has had a good Christmas.

Update from Councillors Tom Butcher and Simon Shelley

Update on recent storms: The UK was battered recently by storm Darragh and Swindon was no exception to this. There were a number of fallen trees in the village which were reported to us as Councillors and subsequently to the SBC teams to follow up on. It was reassuring to see community spirit in action with residents and volunteers also managing to clear some of these away and get roads reopened.

Please continue to report any casework to Cllr Tom Butcher and Cllr Simon Shelley via email.

If any residents wish to raise any local issues with us, please contact us on the details below - we are always happy to help.

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

Cllr Simon Shelley (Labour), 07584 042161, SShelley@swindon.gov.uk

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 Tenby Mon 7th Apr 2025 5 Days: From £469 Pembrokeshire is known throughout the world for its awesome coastal scenery and its golden sands are backed by towering cliffs. Tenby is one of the UK's favourite seaside towns, it is steeped in ancient history and surrounded by an imposing medieval stone wall.	 Sidmouth Fri 11th April 2025 5 Days: From £519 Sidmouth is a beautiful coastal town with a regency feel which is ideal for visitors of all ages. Set in the middle of spectacular countryside Sidmouth is home to beautiful beaches, stylish eating places and great shopping!	 Splendours of Shropshire Mon 2025 5 Days: From £619 Including River Severn Cruise, Stokesay Castle, Blists Hill Victorian Village, Ironbridge Gorge Museums and a lunch! Shropshire has so much to offer, with its remarkable heritage and beautiful towns.	 Suffolk Boats, Beaches & Gardens Mon 21st Apr 2025 5 Days: From £689 Including Ickworth House, Sutton Hoo and Lavenham. From timeless seaside towns to archaeological wonders, Suffolk hosts many treasures and pleasures!	 The Best of Cornwall, Looe Fri 25th Apr 2025 4 Days: From £379 Including Fowey, Padstow, Polperro, Falmouth, Truro Mevagissey! Explore Cornwall's harbour towns and Villages from the historic fishing port of Looe, where two rivers create a tidal harbour.	 Keukenhof, Bruges & The Hague Fri 25th Apr 2025 4 Days: From £689 There is no better bulbfield than Keukenhof and The Hague is one of the most extraordinary cities in Holland and home of the Dutch Royal Family.	 The Outer Hebrides Sat 26th Apr 2025 8 Days: From £1,049 Including Isle of Lewis, Harris, Benbecula, North & South Uist, plus Skye!
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Local Boy Shines on Stage at the London Palladium

Arthur Clark, aged 5, got more than a ticket to see the Christmas Pantomime this year - he ended up starring in it! He proved to be very convincing when acting as a chicken in a rendition of Old McDonald's Farm.

Proud Dad Ian said:

'On the way home after the show, we had people coming up to us on the tube half way across London to congratulate him on his star performance!'



The F and E Harris Memorial Trust

The free bus service pick-up location in South Marston is next to The Carriers Arms Pub leaving at 9.30am. The return bus departs from Swindon/Cirencester at midday.

Timetable for 2025

SWINDON

23 January, 20 February, 20 March, 17 April, 15 May, 12 June, 10 July, 7 August, 4 September, 2 October, 30 October, 27 November

CIRENCESTER

6 February, 6 March, 3 April, 1 May, 29 May, 26 June, 24 July, 21 August, 18 September, 16 October, 13 November, 11 December

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South Marston Gardening Club

2025 MEETING DATES AND PROGRAMME

Save the dates! All events take place at South Marston Village Hall from 7.30pm to 9.30pm, unless otherwise noted. Refreshments will be provided with an optional raffle. We invite new members to join us, a warm welcome awaits. Gardening Club Annual Membership is £15 or as a Visitor for £5 on the door.

There are no meetings in January or February. Our first meeting will be on Monday 3rd of March, for our AGM and Annual Registration followed by a Members' Workshop making individual late spring/early summer pots. If you plan to join the Gardening Club and attend on Monday 3rd of March, please inform Angela Newton in advance. This will help to ensure we have sufficient materials for those attending.

Monday 7th of April

Speaker Nick Gilbert, 'The Gilberts Dahlia Year' Dahlias will also be on sale

Monday 12th of May

Speakers Pete and Bob Biggs, 'Herbs' Herbs will also be on sale

Monday 2nd of June - 7.30pm to 8.30pm 'Plant Sale'

Monday 7th of July

Speaker Geoff Hodge, 'Scented Plants and the Scented Garden'

Saturday 16th of August

Annual Flower and Produce Show

(for classes and timings please refer to the Show Schedule)

Monday 1st of September - TBC

Monday 6th of October

Speaker Hugh Warick, 'Why did the Hedgehog cross the road'

Monday 3rd of November

Gardening Club Members Christmas wreath Workshop

Monday 1st of December

Quiz and Social Evening

For more information on the above or the 2025 Annual Flower and Produce Show schedule, please contact Angela on 07789068340 or angelanewton01@gmail.com.

Dear Friends

The bulbs I planted recently have already pushed up leaves, but I look forward to the flowers appearing in the spring. As a Christian, I believe that we are living in an 'in-between' time, between when Jesus came to begin to establish his rule of justice and goodness, which he called the 'Kingdom of God', and when he will return again.



We all live with challenges such as illness, difficult relationships, money worries and long for their resolution, goodness and justice. I don't know why there is suffering. However, just as I believe my bulbs will eventually flower, I hold onto hope that Jesus will return to establish goodness and justice on the earth. The bulbs' roots are growing out of sight. Similarly, the goodness we see in many situations is, I believe, a sign of the Kingdom of God that is already growing, often invisibly, but surely.

Blessings, *Rev Charlotte*, Curate, Stratton Team Ministry



Church Christmas activities started with our Christingle Service in December held in aid of the Children's Society, and the church was full to hear the school choir. The Christingle story was told and the children received a Christingle. We were pleased to welcome the school KS1 and KS2 to perform their Nativity plays; both were brilliant.

Our choir was invited to return to sing at The Carpenters Arms, with people from our churches in Stanton Fitzwarren, Coleview, Stratton, and South Marston. We had great fun and the carols were enjoyed by the customers and staff, to whom we are grateful for their generous donations to St Mary Magdalene Church. We were very pleased to see so many people at our Christmas Coffee Morning on the 21st of December in the Village Hall. Our choir was fantastic at our carol service and on Christmas Eve at our crib service we had a fun account of the nativity in which the large congregation were encouraged to participate. At 9pm our services in South Marston closed with a Christmas communion.

Thank you to all who joined us, making it so enjoyable and giving generously to the Children's Society, and our lovely church - helping us to keep open. Thanks to our wonderful cleaning team and the flower team, who supply flowers all year, and for the beautiful Christmas flower displays.

Diane Whitford, Church Warden

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)

12th January 9.30am	Holy Communion
19th January 10.30am	Team Service at Stratton Methodist Church
2nd February 10am	All Age Worship
9th February 9.30am	Holy Communion
16th February 11am	Team Service at St Leonard's Church
2nd March 10am	All Age Worship
9th March 9.30am	Holy Communion

St Mary Magdalene Church, welcomes you to visit for private prayer. The church will be open daily from early morning till early evening.

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

💻 stmchurchoffice020@gmail.com

South Marston Churchwarden:

Diane Whitford ☎ 01793 824339

Flower Help! If you are able to help with flower arranging or just put some flowers in a vase for the church once or twice a year, please get in touch on 824339.

St Mary Magdalene Church South Marston

Community Coffee Morning



Come and join us in the Village Hall for refreshments
(including bacon butties and delicious cakes)

10-12
Every third Saturday in the month

Next dates:
18th January,
15th February,
15th March

**Enquiries or for table
reservations please call**

01793 824339



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Useful Contacts

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

Wiltshire Police Community Support: PCSO Jo Bennett 101

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. **Community Coffee Morning:** 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 at village.hall@smrateam.org.uk 07741549393

Youth Club: clerk@southmarston.org.uk 686150

Tots and Toddlers: cassie@edandcassie.co.uk

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

- **Community Coffee Morning** - Every 3rd Saturday of the month at the Village Hall
- **Parish Council Meeting** - Every 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Village Hall
- **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
- **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

About Community News



**South Marston
Parish Council**

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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