

South Marston Community News

My Duke of Edinburgh Experience

by Melody Summer



Hello! My name is Melody and I am 14 years old. Last year I decided to do the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Bronze award. The DoE is designed to challenge young people, giving them a sense of achievement through working hard in a wide variety of active interests. This includes serving the community, participating in physical activities and developing other skills outside of school. I am playing lacrosse and hockey at the weekends and improving my photography skills.

Late last year I approached Lionel from the South Marston Recreation Association to see if he could help me with my community work. Lionel helped me by providing lots of community things to do around the village. This even included dressing up as a Santa's helper at the South Marston Christmas event he organised!

Continued overleaf



My other activities have included:

- monthly litter picking in the park and routine checks of play equipment and benches
- checking footpaths around the village making sure there is suitable signage and that they are clear of any obstacles
- helping our churchwarden Diane in the church.

It is very clear how much unnoticed voluntary work takes place in the village. Without volunteers the park and its hedges would be full of litter, park equipment and benches would probably become too dangerous to use and the footpaths would be overgrown and poorly signposted. There may also not be any Christmas or Summer events that bring the village together. Church events would also be limited.

I have not experienced other activities undertaken in the local community such as the work of the Parish Council...So thank you to all the volunteers...You do a great job! A special thank you to Lionel, who since December has so enthusiastically helped me with my DoE community work.

Well Done Winners!

Congratulations to our January and February winners from South Marston Recreation Association.



January

£10 No. 64. Lyn Flitton
 £10 No. 7. Reg Kilfoyle
 £10 No. 80. Claire Rowse
 £10 No. 40 Eddie Rudnick

February

£100 No. 43 Brian Bell
 £10 No. 98. Dot Bird
 £10 No. 39. Val Goodheart
 £10 No. 90. Lyn Flitton

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.

Tots & Toddlers

Hello from all at Tots and Toddlers.

We've had such fun so far! We had the chance to join the polar animals for some exciting adventures, exploring fun ways to paint with forks to create our very own polar bears! Our sensory sessions were a delightful mess with indoor snow, bringing so much joy. But the true highlight of January was definitely the dancing penguins! The kids absolutely loved making their own penguins, complete with hats, and bringing them to life around the table.



In February, we kicked off our celebration of food. For National Pizza Day, we took on the important mission of taste-testing, yum! We also got creative with a mix and match activity, practicing our silliest faces using magnetic strawberries.

Now, we're beginning our new topic for March, diving into the wonders of outer space through crafts and small world play. With the warmer weather coming in April (fingers crossed!), we can't wait to explore all the beautiful signs of spring. We're hoping to make great use of our outdoor space for our ride-on toys and exciting sensory play opportunities. It's going to be a fantastic time!

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 the Tots and Toddlers team, whether by helping run our weekly sessions or offering some time to assist with our resources, we'd love to hear from you.

We absolutely love welcoming new faces! 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 we provide drinks and snacks. We can't wait to see you!

South Marston Friendly Club

by Sheila Jinks

The Club was established some years ago for residents over 50 years of age from our village and nearby communities. It is a 'friendly' social club for those who wish to keep in touch with neighbours, meet new people and enjoy some group activities.

We meet every 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2pm, except December, and offer a raffle, tea, coffee, biscuits, and a speaker, or a quiz and bingo. We've had some entertaining speakers over the last year including Stratton Fire Station - extremely amusing but also informative on keeping our homes safe, and Arkells Brewery - enjoying some tasting, obviously!

In addition we offer some chargeable events such as a cream tea in August, various day trips to the seaside, a country house & garden, or a city for shopping. When numbers allow on these trips, you can bring a non-member, friend or relative. In October we have a Harvest lunch and in December a Christmas lunch, both at a local restaurant.

If you are interested your first visit is free, so why not pop along to the Village Hall for our next get-together and see for yourself. We'd really love to meet you!



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PROGRAMME

Tuesday 11th of March at 2pm

'A Spoonful of Sugar' Julie Andrews songs.

Performed by Emily who is looking to become a budding entertainer.

Tuesday 8th of April at 2pm

Moonies, Movers & Shakers by Graham Carter

A Collection of stories of local people who have done amazing things.

Tuesday 13th of May at 2pm

The Golden Age of Children's Television
A Talk & Presentation by Jeff Evans

For more info please contact
Sue on 07767 796936 or
email smfriendlyclub@gmail.com

South Marston Recreation Association

by Jenny McEwen

It's been another extremely busy time for SMRA. Our trustees are not just doing the day job of maintaining the Village Hall and Recreation Ground, but also taking part in initiatives such as the Trees for Climate Change Project and organising last week's Have Your Say Event, both reported elsewhere in this edition.

This year, we will have a lot of very different challenges to work on. The accelerating housing construction, which will give us the expanded Recreation Ground, Hall and new facilities, means we have to consider the transition. We lose one football pitch but gain a new one, we lose the changing rooms, but gain brand new facilities at the new Hall, the existing car park will go and we'll be using a new temporary one ahead of the one attached to the new Hall. Meanwhile, we have to keep on maintaining the grounds and pitches, manage our football teams' expectations and keep abreast of the next new priority that pops out of the woodwork.

One of these new priorities comes from the housing developers becoming aware of the great job we did on renovating our play area and want to involve us in designing the mini 'junior' play sites within the new development parcels. More importantly, there is one 'teen' play area planned for just south of the expanded Rec. and they've also asked for our help on that. This really interests us, because when we consulted about what was possible for older teenagers' play and recreation, we weren't really able to find anything suitable for the current play area with its limited space in an area close to housing. So this would be really something new for all the village to welcome.

Annual General Meeting March 11th at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

We always issue an open invite to residents to attend, but this year, we would be very interested in hearing from anyone who might be willing and able to become a trustee and help us with the challenges we've outlined above.

We've made our younger residents very happy with their renovated play area. Why not come and help improve things to accommodate our teens and young adults too?



South Marston Gardening Club

Monday 3rd of March saw our first meeting of the year, where we kicked things off with our AGM, followed by a workshop on 'planting up a pot for late spring/early summer'. Afterwards we completed our annual registration. If you'd like to become a member of the Gardening Club, our annual membership fee is £15. which can be paid in advance or on the door at one of our events.

Monday 7th of April

Speaker Nick Gilbert will present a talk on 'The Gilbert's Dahlia Year'. Get an insight into what goes on throughout the year to produce and grow and care for some wonderful dahlias. If you have any questions on Dahlias Nick will be able to answer them for you. At the end of the evening there will be Dahlias available for sale. Don't forget our August Produce Show where you can show off your dahlias!

Monday 12th of May

Speakers Pete and Bob Biggs are bringing along herbs, so the talk and presentation is 'All about Herbs'. There will be the usual varieties as well as some unusual ones. All the herbs go on sale at the end of the evening.

If you are attending any of the events in April or May, be sure to bring some cash! There will be dahlias for sale in April and herbs in May.

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

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Save the Date!

This year's Plant Sale – Monday 2nd of June @ 7.30pm to 8.30pm.

All our events take place at South Marston Village Hall from 7.30pm to 9.30pm, unless otherwise noted.

Refreshments will be provided and there's an optional raffle. We're always welcoming new members so come and join us.

For more information on any of the above or for a copy of the 2025 Annual Flower and Produce Show Schedule, please contact Angela on 07789068340 or email angelanewton01@gmail.com.

Our Wonderful Pre-School at South Marston CE Primary School

by Mrs Jones Pre-School Lead

Did you know there is a Pre-School based within South Marston Primary School?..

This term has been very exciting, learning all about space! They have had lots of fun creating some lovely artwork such as a collage rocket, designing their own aliens and decorating some lovely stars using cotton buds and paints. We have also been reading some fantastic space-based stories. The children particularly enjoyed 'Aliens Love Underpants' and 'How to Catch a Star.'

I think the children have enjoyed our messy play the most this term though! We created some awesome space-themed rice at our messy table and the children have loved using their imagination with astronauts, aliens, rockets and stars in the rice. They also had great fun creating some aliens with playdough and random items such as googly eyes, pipe cleaners, gems and bottle tops. They were very proud of their creations and this was lovely to see!



In our Pre-School, we work very closely with the Reception Class and over the academic year so far we have covered some fabulous topics such as 'All About Me' and 'Fairy Tales.'

Our topic next term is 'Down on the Farm' and we are very excited as we are hoping to go on a school trip to tie in with this to Roves Farm.

Our Pre-School has been busy growing in numbers recently so we have been pleased to welcome Mrs Goward to the team this term.

If you have any questions about our Pre-School, please do contact school on (01793) 823379 and we will be very happy to help.

Update from Your Local Borough Councillor

by Matthew Vallender



January's Full Council Meeting

I seconded a motion aiming to rise above party-political point-scoring and try to find a way through the current financial challenges on a cross-party basis. I called for a new cross-party group of Councillors to be established which reviews all spend over £50,000 before they are approved by Cabinet. I also called for greater transparency with all proposals that were rejected and not included in the 2025/26 Budget to be published with a reason why each was not taken forward. I also spoke in favour of a motion on addressing retail crime and supported a motion on working from home and supporting our town centre.

Flooding

I continue to work with the Parish Council and the Borough Council's Flooding Team to tackle the ongoing issues in and around the village. I am the only Councillor in Swindon who has been able to secure meetings with the Cabinet Member and the Local Flood Authority team to discuss these issues. We had our first meeting in January to start to make progress on the issues, including lagoon maintenance and Panattoni's surface water flood management infrastructure, which drains into the brook.

Crown Timber Site

I was pleased to join the efforts of the Parish Council to secure a viable design to enable this development to begin. I wrote to the Applicants and obtained confirmation that the footpath around Hoddinotts Corner will be provided early in the build rather than at completion.

Police Drop-In Session

After attempts to break into cars were spotted in South Marston over the Christmas period, I organised a police drop-in session in January to discuss community concerns. Thank you to everyone who attended to discuss local issues – and also, a massive thank you to the organisers of the South Marston Community Coffee Morning for letting us join (and Eleanor for baking)!

As always, if there is ever anything I can help out with locally, please do not hesitate to get in touch on 01793 295171, MVallender@swindon.gov.uk, Facebook - [@cllrmatthewvallender](https://www.facebook.com/cllrmatthewvallender)

Talking Community Safety



In response to concern from a large number of residents' posts on Facebook about attempts at

night to break into cars in the village, our Borough Councillor Matt Vallender organised Police Support Officers to attend a discussion on community safety issues at the recent Community Coffee Morning. Residents were able to voice their concerns and ask what could be done on a number of issues.

One important takeaway from the discussions is that instances of crime should be reported to the Police if you want action taken. Residents' posts on Facebook reported 14 roads across the village with CCTV/video doorbell footage of cars being tampered with, but only 1 got as far as formally logging it with the Police.

BARNES COACHES

Easter day trips, by coach!

 Ideal Home Show, Olympia London Sat 5th April 2025 Adult: £42* Child: £15*	 Barry Island OR Cardiff Sun 6th April 2025 Adult: £28 Child: £15	 Brecon Mountain Railway Sun 6th April 2025 Adult: £56* Child: £37*	 Blists Hill Victorian Town & Ironbridge Wed 9th April 2025 Adult: £55* Child: £34*	 RAF Cosford Air Museum (free entry) Wed 9th April 2025 Adult: £35* Child: £15*	 London Eye & Thames Cruise Wed 9th April 2025 Adult: £71* Child: £48*
 Hampton Court Palace Sun 13th April 2025 Adult: £58* Child: £30*	 Black Country Living Museum Mon 14th April 2025 Adult: £56* Child: £30*	 THE PADDINGTON BEAR EXPERIENCE Mon 14th April 2025 Adult: £73* Child: £44*	 Bletchley Park: Home of the Codebreakers Tue 15th April 2025 Adult: £55* Child: £34*	 LEGOLAND WINDSOR RESORT Tue 15th April 2025 Adult: £28 Child: £15 each only	 Tower of London Tue 15th April 2025 Adult: £66* Child: £32*

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Have Your Say Event

by Sylvia Brown



Around 70 residents took the opportunity to drop into the Village Hall and find out about Village matters. In fact 50 of them stayed for the 1 hr presentation on the South Marston 'dig', that the Parish Council had arranged with the MOLA team (Museum of London Archaeology) - see opposite for what we all learned.



Traffic calming and road closures grabbed people's attention. The Borough will proceed with the traffic calming plans, which include a 20 mph zone for the village centre plus speed reduction features. Views on the options offered were canvassed.

The developers have applied for closure orders for both Old Vicarage Lane and Thornhill Road to construct the junctions with the new Primary Street that runs between the two. The key closure will be the new Thornhill Road roundabout, since this would divert HGVs via Supermarine and through the village to the Industrial Estate, the weight limit being temporarily suspended. The Parish Council has quizzed the developers who told us that it's unlikely full closure would be needed, and if it is, it will only be for short periods outside working hours, so the impact would not be so great as it sounds.

The timetable for the new **housing construction** is now faster, with the aim of delivering everything in South Marston by July 2027.

Work is expected to start in May this year on designs for the new Village Centre and expanded Recreation Ground. In preparation, we are inviting residents to get involved in the design and consultation period of over around 6 months (see page 14).

A large numbers of plans for the different road sections and housing plots are now coming through the planning system. Of the 4 major housing parcels in the village expansion, 2 have been formally approved and 2 are to be submitted shortly.

After that, the developers will be submitting plans for the open space that runs between the housing parcels, crossed by new cycleways, footpaths and even a new bridleway route. We have been promised that Taylor Wimpey and Vistry personnel will mount a display of their proposals later this spring.

Unique to South Marston?

Many of us think South Marston is special. Rory Falconer (pictured right), of the MOLA team working on the archaeological dig in the village, told us why we may not just be special, but perhaps we're unique.



MOLA is working on field areas along the route of the new 'Primary Street' prior to construction this year. Unfortunately the good weather when it started gave way to a sea of mud for the last couple of months, making working conditions pretty awful. Their first job of the morning was to clear the ice out of the hoses and get the pumps working. We were very grateful to Rory who came hot-foot from the dig itself to talk about their work. It was fascinating and generated lots of audience questions.



Having covered some of the ways the archaeologists set about their work, Rory took us through it field by field, starting with the different soil structures and how they can indicate past uses. Some areas were very complex, having different layers of use criss-crossing a site. There was lots of evidence of enclosures, pits and ditching, including channels which could be old cattle drove routes or pathways for people trying to make their way safely over what is, and was, pretty wet land.

A few 'finds' are typical of Romano-British people - Rory called them 'fake Romans' - local inhabitants who copied Roman building styles and pottery. Two brooches were recovered, but there were also some much earlier axe heads.

So far not all that exciting, until we came to evidence of cremations and the four skeletons - ancient, but as yet, undated. One of these was buried face down, which was quite unusual. Since most of my family in days gone by fell head first into the ditch on the Rec on their way home from the Carriers, I wasn't all that surprised!

In the final field came the most important 'puzzle'. Multiple circular depressions about a metre wide, each with a central 'hillock'. MOLA says early investigation shows nothing like this has come to light elsewhere in the archaeological world. So we may actually make it into the text books with the 'South Marston Donuts'.

Work is due to finish shortly on the Primary Street route but will restart on areas allocated to housing. Hopefully, the land will be much easier to work in the summer.

by Colin McEwen

Expansion kicks off!

We met with the developers Vistry (Bovis) in February and were startled by the head of steam building up, with groundwork contracts likely to be signed by the end of March and diggers starting shortly thereafter, and a pre-sales sign also now on the A420.

Taylor Wimpey and Vistry remain busy complying with the conditions to their planning consent. We have been able to secure significant improvements to the layout and appearance of the developments, but less satisfactory is the continued absence of detailed site drainage and footpath network plans.

It is a condition that the developers enter into a legal agreement for the transfer of the Bell Gardens field to the PC. Vistry have now provided Terms of Agreement for the transfer along with the draft for our approval.

Clearance work is currently being carried out on the hedges before the build can start.

Lengthsman required!!

Last year we employed Mark for small jobs around the village, but he is not able to carry on and has had to step back for family reasons.

We thank him for his tremendous work on our behalf. He took on lots of tasks that our ageing volunteers could no longer do, including the regular watering of the newly planted trees, supporting the weeding and maintenance work on the Rec. and working with the Probation volunteers that regularly help with Parish Council Open Spaces Working Group.

Mark became a real asset, with an impact that is far greater than his job description implied. If you might be interested in taking on the role, please contact Parish Clerk Kevin at clerk@southmarston.org.uk.



Recent community events

The Have Your Say event at the end of February was very successful and well attended (see pages 10 and 11) and I'd like to thank the SMRA (South Marston Recreation Association) for taking on the advertising and the refreshments on the day. Similarly, our thanks go to all the volunteers who turned out to help with the tree planting on March 1st (pages 15 to 17), organised jointly by the PC and SMRA. We were only too happy to fund the very good free BBQ after the day's efforts!

Worth an extra 49p a week?

This is the average rise per household in Council Tax required by the Parish Council to meet villagers' expectations. At a consultation undertaken as part of a Have Your Say event last year, residents expressed concerns about the overgrown verges and impassable footpaths. We asked in a survey about priorities and were told that road safety and generally keeping the village tidy were both important. As a result, the Parish Council undertook to clear the verges on Nightingale and Morses Lane.



What a difference!

Morses Lane is shown (left) last year and how it looks now (right).

We feel we can no longer rely on the Borough Council to do this work, so have committed to doing it ourselves in future.



In addition, we aim to spend more on tackling weed growth on pavements and will generally keep an eye on roadside debris. We can't, unfortunately, tackle potholes, which remain a Swindon Borough responsibility.

Staff costs will increase with the government's National Insurance charges and we need to give increased subsidy to the Village Hall to ensure its viability.

Our planned expenditure next year will be greater than our income, and our reserves will subsidise deficit budgets for the next 3 years. After that, we are now reasonably certain that the additional housing will deliver a substantial increase in our income,

Compared with other Swindon Borough parishes, our 'precept' charge (that part of your Council Tax that goes to the Parish Council) is lower than most of a similar size and much lower than more urban parishes. Smaller rural parishes are being hard hit by the withdrawal of maintenance services by Swindon Borough and many are raising their precept by a far greater percentage than we are.

All Parish Councillors remain unpaid and will continue to oversee the hedge and grass cutting in the Village, Allotments and Open Spaces, as well as negotiating with developers and mounting initiatives such as the recent tree planting.

Fully audited accounts for the last year will be available in May, with the Parish Council giving a Report at the Annual Parish Meeting shortly thereafter, when residents are encouraged to come along and question Councillors.

Have Your Say:

Help shape the new Village Centre

We could have a new Village Hall by mid 2027!!

The developers have accelerated the timetable for delivery of the 500 property village expansion. Road and housing construction work starts in April this year.

By July, they will be focusing on the design of the new Village Centre - this is the expanded Recreation Ground, new Car Park and the new Village Hall. The land behind Bell Gardens becomes part of what will be a much larger recreational asset for all the community, and residents will have a say in shaping the final result.



The initial draft plan, above, drawn by a consultant in 2016, needs amendment but the 2021 planning permission fixed the location of basic facilities, such as the new Hall, car park and pitches. There is also a fixed overall budget within which we have to work.

Beyond that, we have flexibility to design the layout and look of the Hall, the activity and recreational space around it and the network of footpaths and cycleways that criss-cross between the different accesses.

If you want to participate in the design work, which may last up to 6 months, **please email the Parish Clerk at clerk@southmarston.org.uk.**

There will be opportunities for joining an overall project group, or by participating in the consultation sessions that will take place once we finalise the proposals.

Activities in the Mud, whatever the Weather

by The Open Spaces Working Group (OSWG)

Thanks to some really hard work from our contractors Allbuild, we have cleared around 90 trees of varying sizes from alongside Morses Lane. This involved clearing the verge of bits of tree trunks and more importantly, removing the risk of dead and decaying trees falling onto the road. What had not been noticed was that a BT cable was trapped under some of the fallen trees. Once these were removed the cable sprang back into place without any apparent damage!

Whilst this work was supported by the Borough Council's Community Forest funding from housing developers, we were not able to restore the lane and its drainage system to its proper width. We still hope to complete this work at a later time. The Parish Council can no longer rely on the Borough Council to cut verges regularly, so we will be doing this once the growth starts in earnest, along with the south side of Nightingale Lane and the Highworth Road verge opposite the allotments.

Planting Trees and Hedgerow

To aid work for the Planting Day, and to ease any aching muscles, we, along with the Community Pay Back and Allbuild, cut the grass turf from the planting sites and removed some of the soil from the holes. This year we planted in 4 locations under the grant for 'Planting Trees for Climate Change'. In conjunction with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, village volunteers worked together, with South Marston Recreation Association (SMRA) leading the planting on the Recreation Ground with 9 Cherry blossom (*prunus serrulate*) trees close to the Thornhill Road entrance. Once established these will provide a lovely colourful entrance area to the Rec. At the far end of the new pathway towards the Oak tree, we are planting 3 Acer competre (Field Maple) and a Beech hedge of 135 young whips.

The War Memorial village garden will have a traditional English Oak (*Querus robur*) planted in the centre of the circular bed, flanked by a flowering Cherry together with an Ornamental Crabapple tree. Orchard Meadow will gain a variety of 9 fruit trees, including various Apple, Pear, Quince, and a most unusual Medlar tree.



At the end of a successful and sunny Planting Day, volunteers enjoyed a well earned relaxing break with a BBQ of fresh beefburgers, sausages and sweet treats, and these were all prepared and served by Andy and Alison, sponsored by the Parish Council. See pages 16 and 17 for more on the Planting event.

Planting Trees for Climate Change

by Barry Thunder and Sylvia Brown

Last year, the Parish Council and South Marston Recreation Association used grant money from the Government's Climate Change Programme to mount our Phase 1 landscaping plan on the Recreation Ground. Sixty volunteers from the village turned up to spend a day planting trees and hedges. This year, we worked together on a Phase 2 planting scheme that tackled 4 sites across the village - Orchard Meadow, the Rec., the Allotments and the Village Garden, where the War Memorial stands

This time we learned from experience and, because we couldn't guarantee the weather, a good deal of preparation was done in advance of Planting Day - removing turf and preparing holes for planting. The work at the allotments was, in fact, completed earlier in the week to avoid trying to manage all 4 sites at the same time.

Saturday 1st of March turned out to be a beautiful dry sunny day and great for our village volunteers to get stuck into the task. Parish and Borough Councillors, as well as SMRA and other local volunteers were again given instruction by Wiltshire Wildlife personnel on planting techniques. One team tackled the planting of fruit trees on the Orchard, a second planted the beech hedge and 3 field maples close to the Oak tree on the Rec, whilst the third team planted 9 cherry trees at the Thornhill Rd entrance to the play area.



Thanks to all the volunteers who came and gave up their time to make it a success.



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Dear Friends

Do you know that feeling when you hear or read some words which resonate, when someone expresses your own thoughts or feelings?

The whole range of human experience – joy, despair, hope, bafflement and more - is expressed in the Psalms. Over the last 4,000 years, this collection of songs and prayers has provided the words for generations of believers to express themselves to God. Still today, the Psalms enable us to say with utter honesty what is on our hearts, to the God who knows and loves each of us more than we can ever understand.

This I know:

My life is in your hands.

I have nothing to fear.

I stop,

breathe,

listen.

Beneath the whirl of what is

is a deep-down quiet place.

You beckon me to tarry there.

This is the place

where unnamed hungers

are fed, the place

of clear water,

refreshment.

My senses stilled,

I drink deeply,

at home

in timeless territory.

In peril, I remember:

Death's dark vale holds no menace.

I lean into You;

Your eternal presence comforts me.

I am held tenderly.

("Psalms Redux" by Carla Grosch-Miller, Canterbury Press, 2014)

Some readers may recognise the words above as based on Psalm 23 which opens with "The Lord is my shepherd".

This month, where will your place of refreshment be?

Rev Charlotte

Curate, Stratton Team Ministry

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)

9th March	9.30am Holy Communion
16th March	10am Team Service at <i>St Margaret's Church</i>
30th March	10am Team Service
6th April	10am All Age Worship
13th April	9.30am Holy Communion
20th April	8am Easter Morning Holy Communion
4th May	10am All Age Worship
11th May	9.30am Holy Communion

There will be an afternoon tea to celebrate 80 years from VE Day, in the church garden on Sunday 4th of May between 2 and 4pm - further news to follow.

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

St Mary Magdalene's, welcomes you to visit for private prayer.

The church will be open daily from early morning till early evening.

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:

15th of March

19th of April

**Enquiries or for table
reservations please call**

01793 824339

New Allotment Plots Seek Tenants

by Barry Thunder

The allotment site has been a part of the village for well over 50 years (I would welcome any details on exactly when it was established). Over time many of the plots have changed hands, leaving some extra-large areas to be managed by experienced allotment holders. Whilst this has worked well, many current tenants are finding that work on this scale does not fit in with modern needs and family life.

Recently, one of our long-term tenants has had to leave us, and at the same time two of our other larger plots also became vacant. This presented us with an opportunity to resize these plots.

February has not been a dry month, but is a good time to work on the land. Utilising a team from our contractors Allbuild, armed with a small digger and a transport truck, we set about clearing the 3 plots of old wood and a variety of other waste items filling some 20 truck loads. Once cleared, the digger got to work on restoring the sites to level, dug land. New fences were constructed complete with gates where required.



As pictured above, we now have 9 new more manageable plots, each of which is ideal for first-time tenants, perhaps suiting young families looking to grow their own fruit and vegetables. But remember, an allotment is not just something for the few months of sunny weather! We hope to be able to provide water containers and compost bins to get them started, and even have a few tools to lend if needed. There is also horse manure for fertiliser, and wood chippings for path and ground cover.

The Parish Council are offering these new plots at a special discounted rate of £25 for the first year. Following which in year two, it will be the normal rent of £32 for residents, or £52 for those not resident to the village, along with a one-off refundable deposit of £50.

If you would like to learn more about our Allotments, please contact me by email to barry.thunder@southmarston.org.uk.

Our site is next door to the Honda Heritage Memorial Garden that provides an ideal and secure area for young children to play safely and enjoy a picnic.

As part of planting 'Trees for Climate Change' we also recently planted 6 new apple and plum trees to provide fruit to pick in the summer months.



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A Message for All Village Dogs



When you go for a walk in and around the Open Spaces in the village please keep your human on a lead and make sure they bring poo bags with them and pick up after you!

Sadly, not all of the humans follow the advice from their dogs. The photos below are just a few that were taken one morning over a 25 metre distance in St. Julian's Wood, and there were plenty more examples around elsewhere!



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Useful Contacts

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

Local Borough Councillors:

Matt Vallender 01793 295171, MVallender@swindon.gov.uk,

Tom Butcher 07795 070254, TButcher@swindon.gov.uk,

Simon Shelley, 07584 042161, SShelley@swindon.gov.uk

Wiltshire Police Community Support: PCSO Victoria Townsend, 101, swindonnortheastruralnpt@wiltshire.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

South Marston Church of England Primary School: 823379

SMRA: Julie Hatherall smrateam@gmail.com, Jenny McEwen 07770633362

Village Hall hire: Rachel Case on village.hall@smrateam.org.uk, 07741549393

Tots and Toddlers: cassie@edandcassie.co.uk

F&E Harris Memorial Trust: Robbie Taylor 823757

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



Produced in partnership with our printers, Orchard Press (www.Orchard-Press.co.uk) and sponsored by Eneco, which manages South Marston's solar farm (www.eneco.co.uk).



**South Marston
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