

South Marston Community News

Re-opening of the Carriers Arms

by Rachel Case



Back in April this year, Peter Hunt, aka Jumbo, bought our village pub. After six long months of negotiations, three broken chains, and what seemed like an eternity, moving-in day finally came. A week or so later, after what seemed like forever, the moving of furniture, more furniture, a few vehicles and some more vehicles was finally complete!

Then the refurbishing began: walls, chimney breasts, roof repairs, floor sanding, bar renovations, licence transfers, new licences acquired, toilet repairs, and an overall facelift of the bar. And we're not finished by any means! All with the help of a dedicated team of family members and good friends, we really do appreciate everyone who has helped. There are too many to mention by name, as we've only got a page! However, we couldn't have done it without you, and to you, we are eternally grateful.

We finally opened the doors to the public again four months later. Thank you to all our customers, old and new, for your patience, and your continued patience with us during these first few weeks. I'm sure we'll have a few hiccups, but we'll work hard to overcome them.

Continued overleaf

Now, please come and join us to celebrate our new venture when you're passing our door. Whether it's an alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage, you will always be welcome, greeted with a warm smile and a simple, 'How are you?' Or just pop in to see the cow sign!

There are lots of plans for the future: pub food, quiz nights, bingo, but most of all, a place where everyone is welcome (ID is essential). A social space for gathering over a coffee or a pint, whichever takes your fancy.

We look forward to welcoming you!



South Marston Friendly Club

A big thank you to our super members for their donations for our tombola stall at the fete in July, making it a great success. Thanks also to the committee who worked so hard on the day.

Once again our members made a heroic effort in defying the hot weather in August for our annual afternoon tea. It was lovely seeing so many happy faces. We munched our way through masses of sandwiches, scones, and then (but only because they were there) plates of small cakes. A game of bingo was enjoyed, followed by our monthly raffle. Then we strode out to re-battle the sunshine, all looking forward to next year! Special thanks to Clare Bowditch for the sandwiches and Emma at Three Trees for the scones.

PROGRAMME

Tuesday 22nd September at 9.15am

A Coach Trip to Avenue Garden Centre Bicester

Tuesday 13th October at 2pm

Unusual & Interesting Weather - A Presentation & talk by Chris Brooks

Tuesday 20th October at 12.15pm

Harvest Lunch at The Cross Keys Wanborough

Tuesday 10th November at 2pm

The Jaybirds Choir

For those interested in more information please send an email to:

smfriendlyclub@gmail.com

Hello from Hammerman Way!

by Sam Olden

If you've spotted a few unfamiliar faces wandering around the village looking slightly lost (usually near the church, or trying to work out which bin goes out when), that'll be us. We're the four households who've recently moved into the Bovis development, and we wanted to say a huge thank you for the warm welcome we've received so far.

We've unofficially dubbed ourselves 'The Founding Four' - though 'Pioneer Plot' has also been floated, depending on who you ask. Some of us have moved from just down the road, others from a good deal further afield, but we all landed here for the same reasons: a beautiful location and the chance to be part of a community that's genuinely growing.

In the weeks since moving in, we've been busy playing tourist in our own village. The Carriers Arms has already had a visit (verdict: excellent), the green spaces are a joy to walk through and clearly well cared for, and two of our families now have children settling into the village school. It's fair to say the village has made a strong first impression.

Now that the boxes are mostly unpacked, we're looking forward to getting properly involved - whether that's village events, clubs, or just getting to know more of our neighbours. We're keen to help bridge the gap between the established village and the new development, so that it feels less like 'them and us' and more like one village that's simply grown a little.

We know there's been some chatter about a few snagging issues with the new builds - and yes, we've had our fair share of generator fun and wonky cupboard doors. But Bovis have been attentive and responsive throughout, and it's clear the development itself is taking shape with real thought: more green space, sympathetic design, and a genuine effort to fit in with the character of the village rather than fight against it.

Thank you again for making us feel so at home. We'll see you around - probably at the pub.



South Marston Gardening Club Update

by Angela Newton

Annual Flower and Produce Show

Held on Saturday 22nd of August, bringing together exhibitors, members and visitors for another enjoyable community event. This year's exceptionally hot and dry weather certainly presented challenges for gardeners. As a result, many of the vegetable and flower exhibits suffered from the difficult growing conditions. Despite this, there was still a wonderful selection of entries on display.

We were particularly pleased to welcome eight new exhibitors entering for the very first time. It is always encouraging to see new people getting involved.

Photography entries were unusually low this year, despite the addition of two extra categories, while the number of baking exhibits was also down. However, the craft section continues to grow in popularity, with an increasing number of impressive and imaginative entries.

When the doors opened at 5pm, visitors flocked in to admire the exhibits, enjoy delicious homemade cakes with tea or coffee and, just as importantly, catch up with friends and neighbours. The friendly atmosphere and opportunity for everyone to chat and socialise remains one of the highlights of the show.

The overall 'best in show' was awarded to a stunning handmade wedding dress in the craft section, as seen right. The beautiful piece of workmanship was a worthy winner and attracted plenty of admiration from all the judges and visitors to the show.



A big thank you goes to everyone who exhibited, volunteered, baked cakes, helped organise the event or came along to support us. We would also like to give a special thank you to the F and E Harris Memorial Trust for their continued generous donation, which helps us to put on this amazing show year after year. Their ongoing support is greatly appreciated and plays an important part in making the event possible.

The Annual Flower and Produce Show continues to be a wonderful community occasion, and we look forward to seeing even more people taking part next year. If you would like an advanced copy of next year's Show Schedule so you can start planning, please email Angela for a copy.

Congratulations to the 2026 Cup Winners:

- Challenge Cup (vegetables and fruit) – Barry Thunder
- National Vegetable Society Medal (NVS) – Barry Thunder
- Rose Bowl (flowers and plants) – Mary Case
- Bill Smith Trophy (Best dahlia in show) – Jenny McEwen
- Flower Arrangers Cup – Mary Case
- Photography Cup – Kathleen Gillen
- Cookery Trophy – Jenny McEwen
- Craft Trophy – Rusty Hartley
- Best Exhibit in Show Cup – Rusty Hartley
- Royal Horticultural Society 'Banksian' Medal for the largest total amount of points in the whole of the horticultural classes – Jenny McEwen
- Special Recognition – Lynn Scragg for her chutney which the baking judge highly commended!
- Under 5 years – Otis Simmons-Gumm
- 6 to 8 years – Leona Chard
- 9 years to 11 years, and 12 to 16 years – There were no entries
- Best Exhibit in the Children's Section – Leona Chard, as pictured right



Monday 5th of October, 7.30pm to 9.30pm

In the not-so-bleak midwinter – making your garden interesting in the winter. Think your garden has nothing to offer once summer is over? Think again!

Join us for an inspiring evening as Timothy Walker explores how to make the most of your garden during the colder months. Discover plants that provide colour, flowers and structure throughout winter, along with those that produce berries and seeds to support birds and wildlife. Winter may not bring the vibrant displays of summer, but it has its own unique beauty and Timothy will show you how to create a garden that remains full of interest all year round.

Timothy is one of Britain's most respected botanists and horticulturalists. After studying Botany at the University College Oxford, he trained at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, Askham Bryan College, the Savill Garden and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew before being awarded a Master of Horticulture by the Royal Horticultural Society.

He spent nearly 30 years at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, progressing from General Foreman to Director, during which time the gardens won four Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medals and received the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for education.

A popular and engaging speaker, he is also a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London and currently lectures in Plant Sciences at several Oxford colleges.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just looking for ideas to brighten your garden through the winter months, this promises to be an enjoyable and informative evening. Everyone is very welcome.

Why not join the Gardening Club?

We're always keen to welcome new members to help grow our community and bring people together.

Membership is just £15 per year, or £5 on the night for a one-off event. You'll be assured of a warm welcome, with tea, coffee and a delicious slice of homemade cake available.

All meetings are held at: South Marston Village Hall, Old Vicarage Lane, SN3 4SN.

For more information on any of the above, please contact Angela on 07789 068340 or via email to angelanewton01@gmail.com.

Looking Ahead to a New Academic Year

by Marie Hendry, School Headteacher

At the time of writing, we are preparing to welcome our children back to school for the start of a new academic year. There is a real sense of excitement about the opportunities and experiences that lie ahead. A new school year always brings fresh beginnings, new friendships, and the chance for every child to flourish in confidence, knowledge and independence.

Our staff have been busy planning a rich and engaging curriculum, alongside a wide range of enrichment activities that will help our pupils develop both academically and spiritually. We are looking forward to working closely with families and the wider community to ensure that every child has the very best opportunities to thrive. We have high hopes for the year ahead and are committed to continuing to provide a nurturing, ambitious and inspiring environment for all our pupils.

Before looking forward, however, it is important to celebrate one of the highlights of the summer term. In July, our PTA organised a fantastic 'Colour Run' which proved to be a huge success! It was the first time such an event like this has taken place at our school but one we hope to be repeated in the future. Children, families and staff embraced the event with enthusiasm, enjoying a fun-filled afternoon of colour, laughter and community spirit.



Thanks to the incredible support of our families, the event raised an amazing £900 for the school. These funds will make a valuable contribution towards enriching the experiences of our pupils and providing additional resources and opportunities throughout the year.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who took part, donated, sponsored runners or helped with the organisation of the event. The success of the Colour Run demonstrates the strength of our school community and what can be achieved when we work together. We are incredibly grateful also to our wonderful PTA who work tirelessly to support the school in so many ways – the Colour Run being just one example from this past academic year.

We look forward to another successful year ahead and wish all our families a happy and enjoyable start to the new academic year.



Parish Council News

by Colin McEwen

Traffic Calming Implemented

For decades, the Parish Council has explored options including everything from closing the Highworth Road to a zebra crossing at Pound Corner. Finally, a traffic calming initiative is in place. Our 20mph zone is now a reality.

Views differed as to whether the zone should stretch beyond 'the Bends' or be limited to the immediate environs of Pound Corner, School and Recreation Ground. In essence, we accepted what was on offer, funded by the Government's 20mph initiative. Any future measures will require further public consultation as well as further funding.



The zone extends to the end of the Taylor Wimpey parcel on Old Vicarage Lane. At 4.7m, it is narrow when compared with the 5m+ to the north and south. As it is an existing road, no width was specified on the planning permission, but it is very narrow for the intended bus route. Councillor Matt Vallender is taking this up with Highways on our behalf.

First Occupants!

Four families have now happily ensconced in Bovis (Vistry) houses on Hammerman Way close to what will become the Community Orchard.

Developer Meeting

We had a meeting with the Developer's Director at the end of August. She was open with us about the difficulties in getting the sites served by mains utilities. Electricity capacity is being brought into the South Marston parcels from the Old Vicarage Lane (OVL) and Thornhill Road. The existing capacity is insufficient to serve Rowborough and will likely need a connection from Highworth. Details to follow!

She also confirmed that:

The allotments planned for Rowborough are now 'hardwired' into plans, which should mitigate the conversion of the what was originally new allotments by OVL, which is, instead, destined to be a Community Orchard.

Both OVL and the new road Hammerman Way will be open as far as the Rowborough Lane junction in late September. Unfortunately, the work at that junction will last until late November and so access from the village to Sainsbury's will continue to be via Pound Corner.

The new road north of Manor Farm is completed sufficient for Bloor Homes to begin building houses. They hope to open their show homes late Spring 2027.

Vistry have also sold 40 homes 'off plan' in Rowborough to Places for People, a major housing association that 'creates communities that move lives forward' and are keen to get building.

School Expansion

Matt Vallender has received confirmation that the expansion is proceeding. Internal design changes have been made, but not such as to require fresh planning permission. The build has not yet been released for tender and no timelines are available.



A New Parish Councillor

We were pleased to co-opt Andy Meenan onto the Parish Council at the August meeting. Andy is an Army Major and had already been volunteering with Barry Thunder's Open Spaces Working Group.

Welcome, Andy!

Allotments Update

by Barry Thunder

I would like to thank the allotment tenants who have worked hard to maintain a good growth of vegetables and flowers, despite the unprecedented hot and dry weather conditions.

Some have discovered that early morning or later evening watering visits are good times to work in. Though we have all learnt that the weeds, especially Mare's Tail, appear to have a secret water supply!

I think that our dedicated growers have been amazed by the width and depth of the cracks in the soil and all are hoping that they help the 'hoped-for' rain penetrate to a good depth for when the digging commences in the autumn.

A big thank you too, to our new tenants who have managed to bring back their newly acquired plots to a near workable condition. Wishing you continued success with your preparations over autumn and winter.

Open Spaces Working Group Update

by Barry Thunder

One of the benefits from all of this summer's hot weather is that we have had very little grass to cut! This has given us time to catch up on some ongoing maintenance tasks. In St Julian's Woodland, Justin, our lengthsman, has been able to tidy around the gazebo and give the outside a lovely coat of green hammerite paint. The woodland information board has also been cleaned and stained.

Continuing along the circular path, Justin has cleaned and repainted the black wrought iron seat beside the pond (now minus its water!) and given the wooden table top a new lease of life by planing off the weathered top and staining it to give it some weather protection.

At South Marston brook, ongoing work is being undertaken to open up access to allow more light to get to the water, once it returns. Some of the self-seeded tree growth alongside the footpath also requires cutting back.

On the Recreation Ground, some of the raised ground that borders Magdalene Close has grown in places, surprisingly, and is in need of cutting.

Additional work that is awaiting cooler working weather is the fence bordering the Village Garden war memorial. Bramble and tree growth has caused the ageing fence to fall into a poor state of repair. We are currently working on a plan to open up the spaces around the four trees along that section and replace the fence with one that matches the fence line of the site opposite the village school. This will provide easier maintenance and grass cutting of the garden area whilst retaining a fenced area.

We also started to monitor all the potholes in our village by way of reporting them on the Swindon Borough Council monitoring system. Quite surprisingly, we received a response the next day. The potholes were all accepted, but where the road surface has lifted, they told us that these are not considered potholes! However, to our amazement, the potholes were all filled in within 48 hours of the acceptance confirmation. Let's hope that the repairs last longer than that!



South Marston Fete – A Village at its Best

by Kye Souter, Dave Webb and Rachel Case



What a day! After 437 weather checks, 3 'reliable' forecasts and 1 committee member confidently looking out of the kitchen window, the sun finally got the memo. South Marston turned out in force for another fantastic Village Fete.

From the moment the gates opened, the Recreation Ground was buzzing with families and friends enjoying the funfair, steam engine, classic vehicles, children's games, over 25 craft and community stalls, great food, Bailey's Bar, Chloes Farm, the ever-popular ice cream van and live music throughout the day.

The best part, though, wasn't just what was on offer. It was seeing neighbours catching up, children laughing, old friends meeting again and new friendships being made. That is what a Village Fete is really all about.

The entertainment was superb from start to finish. Thank you to Highworth Silver Band, Danielle Murphy, Jimmy Moore, K Collective and, of course, The Corsairs, who brought the evening to a fantastic close. There really was something for every musical taste, and they all helped create the brilliant atmosphere that carried on throughout the afternoon and into the evening. Judging by some of the dancing later on, confidence definitely increased in line with visits to the bar!

Of course, no Village Fete would be complete without a little unexpected excitement. We quickly discovered that walkie-talkies are brilliant...right up until everyone talks at once! Throughout the day they crackled into life with classics such as, 'can anyone hear me?', 'where's Spud?', 'can someone bring some cable ties?' and 'can someone cover the car park?', usually followed by five people all replying at exactly the same time. Somehow, none of them answering the original question.

The one exception came when the next call to duty was, 'code sick in the men's toilets, cleaner required.' The radios fell silent. It was like an old Western: tumbleweed rolled through the village, volunteers quietly disappeared, and nobody wanted to answer the call. Then, through the metaphorical dust, Pam appeared like the lone sheriff riding into town to restore order. Equipped with nothing more than rubber gloves, a nose peg, and nerves of steel, she marched into the men's toilets and dealt with the situation.

By the end of the day, Liam had decided next year's committee training programme would include a compulsory 'Walkie-Talkie 101' course. Despite our less-than-professional radio etiquette, messages somehow got through, problems were solved and, remarkably, everyone ended up in roughly the right place... eventually! **OVER!**

There was also a little real-life drama during the afternoon when a fire broke out near the industrial estate. Thankfully, it stayed well away from the fete, and Wiltshire's emergency services responded quickly and professionally. It was a timely reminder of the careful planning behind the day, from first aid and traffic management to safeguarding and contingency arrangements.

That commitment to safety even extended to the marquee, with everything checked and secured against whatever the great British summer had in mind. We're fairly certain it would have survived at least the opening scene of The Wizard of Oz! When the breeze picked up, one committee member was even spotted tapping their heels together and whispering, 'there's no place like South Marston... there's no place like South Marston...' Thankfully, unlike Dorothy's house, our marquee didn't move an inch!

Events like this don't just happen. Behind a full day of fete fun are months of planning meetings, sponsorship requests, bookings, site visits, supplier calls, WhatsApp messages, last-minute deliveries and volunteers arriving before breakfast and packing away long after everyone else has gone home.

Thank you to every volunteer who gave their time before, during and after the fete. Whether you were putting up gazebos, parking cars, running stalls, serving food and drinks, selling raffle tickets, helping in the arena, emptying bins or packing away afterwards, your enthusiasm made the day such a success.

Our parking team, led brilliantly by Sian and Emmerson and assisted by Dan, Laura, Chris and Mandy, somehow fitted what felt like half of Wiltshire into a field with smiles on their faces and without chaos. At one point, it felt less like parking and more like a live-action game of Tetris. It is a tougher job than it looks, and we are incredibly grateful.

It was also wonderful to see so many local groups showcasing what makes South Marston such a vibrant community, from the Scouts, Friendly Club, the Church and Air Cadets to the wonderfully entertaining South Marston Morris Dancers.

A special mention must also go to Liam Northeast for organising a fantastic fun dog show, now one of the real highlights of the fete. Judging so many wonderful four-legged entrants with Jackie Rostill is no easy task, but Liam handled dogs and owners alike with humour, patience and just enough authority to keep the labradors from taking over the arena. Same again next year, Liam? We'll start training the hounds now.

Thank you to the organising committee, pictured right: Rachel Case, Dave and Pam Webb, Liam Northeast, Sian and Emmerson Dudley, Julie Hatherall, Alfred Donald, Adam Rudnik (Spud) and myself. Every member of the team contributed countless hours to make the fete possible. Pam and Dave Webb seemed to wear almost every hat going throughout the day, although Dave and



myself were occasionally spotted carrying out very serious 'opening time checks' on Bailey's Bar. At one point, Kye reportedly said, 'Dave, a pint of Poretti is £7.' Dave's reply was simple: 'I don't care. I'm having gallons.'

Julie Hatherall also had the small matter of managing the finances, payments and bank accounts, as well as charging, handing out and tracking the walkie-talkies, while being the go-to person in the admin office.

A special mention must go to Rachel Case, whose passion for South Marston is infectious. If Duracell ever needs a new mascot, Rachel should be first on the list! Her energy, enthusiasm and determination to make every fete bigger and better never seems to run out. But Rachel cannot do it all herself. The fete's strength is its committee and volunteer team, with everyone bringing different skills, ideas and experience. Sharing the load keeps the event enjoyable, helps it grow and is exactly what community spirit is all about.

By mid-afternoon, the committee had achieved full Hot Fuzz energy: clipboards, radios, hi-vis jackets and a level of organisation that would have made Sandford's Neighbourhood Watch proud. No swans were reported missing, and naturally, it was all for the greater good.

A very special shout out must also go to Adam Rudnik (Spud), with brilliant support from Alfred Donald and Will Case, for the countless hours spent on the lighting, sound, power and electrical infrastructure that kept the whole event running, much of it before anyone arrived and after everyone had gone home.

Even more remarkably, Spud fitted all of this in while on paternity leave with his two-week-old baby boy at home. Most people spend paternity leave changing nappies. Spud somehow found time to wire an entire village fete. As the saying goes, not all heroes wear capes, some wear hi-vis, carry extension leads, own far too many cable ties and somehow always know where the right plug is.

To all of our performers, stallholders, sponsors, local organisations, businesses, prize donors and everyone who attended and supported the fete, thank you. You all played your part in making this year's event one of the biggest and best we've ever had.

There are always classic village fete moments: the child who somehow wins every game, the person who says, 'I'm only buying one raffle ticket', before ending up with half the book, the challenge of fitting a giant cuddly toy into the car, and this year, Bluey and Bingo bringing an extra burst of excitement for the children. They were, unsurprisingly, greeted with the kind of excitement usually reserved for ice cream vans and bouncy castles.

Before the last gazebo had even been packed away, planning for South Marston Village Fete 2027 had already begun. Taking inspiration from Emily and Michael Eavis, the first bands are already booked! We might not have Glastonbury's budget, but next year starts the moment this year finishes.

If you enjoyed this year's fete, have ideas for 2027, or have ever said, 'you know what they should do next year...', we would love you to get involved. Many hands really do make light work, and the more people who help, the more we can achieve together.

As Sir Winston Churchill once said: 'We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.' This quote perfectly sums up this year's fete. Your generosity, enthusiasm and community spirit are what make South Marston such a wonderful place to live.

Thank you, we look forward to seeing you next year...**Saturday 24th of July 2027.**

Running as Swindon's Rockin Robin!

A silly idea in a conversation has somehow become reality for Sammy Hiscocks, pictured right, who on Sunday 27th of September will be taking on the Swindon Half Marathon dressed as Rockin Robin! It seemed like a good idea at the time, and now there's no backing out, as it's for a fantastic cause, raising funds for the disability groups at Swindon Town Football Club Community Foundation.

Training has already started, with Sammy swapping comfort for kilometres and starts preparing for 13.1 miles of Rockin Robin running!

Please donate whatever you can via the QR code, shown right, or at the donation website link www.justgiving.com/page/rockinrobinstfc.

Every pound will make a real difference. Each share helps spread the word. Good luck Sammy!



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Looking Forward to Some Rain

by Jenny McEwen, SMRA Chair

The end is now in sight for all of the efforts on the Rec to repair the deep cracking due to the exceptional weather. Matting under and around the play equipment has had to be repaired, trees watered and mulched to retain moisture, and a huge quantity of sand and soil used to fill the deep cracks.

However ground is still very hard and dry, and we have to hope that the rain will soften it enough for the start of the football season.

We look forward to watching rain water cascading along the new guttering around the garage and toilet block. Justin and Lionel have been busy again, and the building with replaced guttering and a new coat of paint now looks much smarter, as seen in the photo.



Adam Rudnik and Lionel have also had to repair one of the picnic tables on the Rec, damaged by vandalism.

It sometimes feels as though it's all just work to be done on and around the Rec, but it provided an excellent venue for the Party in the Park. That was a great day, and SMRA's raffle raised over £600 for our funds. We use this money to help keep the Rec looking good and available for all villagers to use, so many thanks to everyone who donated prizes and bought raffle tickets.

Well Done Winners!

Congratulations to our JULY winners from South Marston Recreation Association. August winners will be drawn at the September meeting.

JULY

£10 No. 105 Gareth Case

£10 No. 49 Wendy Smith

£10 No. 9 Robina Taylor

£10 No. 18 Kirsty Munday

The 100 Club is an annual subscription of £12 with the chance of winning £10, £30 or £100. All profits 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. If you are interested in supporting the SMRA, please contact Julie Hatherall on 07749211867 to obtain a number and participate in the monthly draw.





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& FANCY DRESS COMPETITION

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*EXTRA CHARGE APPLIES. ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. TRACTOR RIDE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY, BOOK ON ARRIVAL.

Dear Friends,

In October, we celebrate God's provision and generosity with our Harvest services across Stratton Team Ministry.

We may now rely on supermarkets and have no memory of what bringing in a harvest is like, but we still need to recognise our inter-connectedness to the land. With the summer we've had, many of you will remember the worries that farmers have had with crops drying up and watering livestock. If there's no crops, then the supermarkets will be empty and prices go up.

We have a generous God who wants to bless abundantly. This may not directly effect our crops as much as global warming has, but it is a reminder that we give thanks to God in all things and in all circumstances. In creation we see the generosity of God. The birds are fed and the flowers are dressed in beauty, the Bible tells us. If God cares for them how much more will God care for us?

Our autumn and winter services become much more reflective as we head into November. We give thanks for the lives of the departed, those who have sacrificed themselves for us in war and those who we have known and loved. Remembrance is celebrated at the War Memorial outside the church in South Marston at 11am, following the morning service on Sunday 8th of November. Our Rosemary Service for loved ones will be held in St Margaret's as a Team Service later in November.

Everyone is welcome to our services so we hope to see you soon.

Blessings

Elveen



Stratton Team Ministry

Seeking, Sharing and Serving God Together

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

6th September	10am All Age Worship
13th September	9.30am Holy Communion
20th September	10am Team Service at St Leonard's Church
27th September	11am Holy Communion at Coleview Community Centre
4th October	10am All Age Worship - Harvest
11th October	9.30am Holy Communion
18th October	10am Team Service
25th October	11am Holy Communion at Coleview Community Centre
1st November	10am All Age Worship

St Mary Magdalene Church is open daily and we welcome you to visit our pretty church.

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 Church South Marston

Community Coffee Morning



10-12
Every third Saturday in the month

Next dates:
19th September,
17th October

**Enquiries or for table
reservations please call**

01793 824339

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

News from the Bell Tower

by Diane Whitford, Church Warden

We now have a list of items to bring the bell tower and the bells up to standard, with the electrics taking priority to make it easier for work on the bells. Our fundraising continues, mostly with making tea and selling cakes at church and refreshments at the village fete. We also have a new fundraising initiative of £50 for a quarter peal bellringing to celebrate a special occasion; do let us know if you would like one. Recently the bells were rung for a beautiful wedding service. It was delightful.

Swindon Churches Green Festival, which aims to promote practical environmental action, saw the churchyard being tidied up on an evening in June. Bell ringers from Gloucester, Chippenham, Faringdon, Highworth and other local churches were welcomed and rang a quarter peal to encourage those cutting back hedges and ivy.

With more people expressing an interest and coming along to learn bellringing, a second weekly teaching session is being arranged on a Friday night. Our original learners are now fully fledged and ringing for our church services. There is always a good atmosphere in the bell tower. Some quotes from a few of our great ringers:

"I have lived in South Marston all my life and worked on the former farm that used to be directly behind the church. Not owning a watch, the only way I knew what time it was, was to listen to the sound of the bell clock, so in a way the church tower was my watch! The realisation of how important our church bells are hadn't dawned on me, until I was made aware they hadn't been rung for a few years because of the restorative work needed. When our Church Warden explained we needed a band of ringers and some fund raising, I jumped at the opportunity to help and learn to ring the bells. I feel very honoured to be a part of such a special tradition and I will continue to fundraise and share joy with our community." Rachel Case

"I heard the bells ringing and always had an interest in how they worked, thought I'd give it a try and I have never looked back. Sociable and friendly, not had a bad experience." Alfie Donald, 16yrs

"My journey into bell ringing began quite by chance on a beautiful Easter Sunday in 2022. Growing up in South Wales, where the full-circle ringing is rare. I moved to Highworth and was captivated the moment I heard the bells of St Michael's ringing out for service. Just a week later, a Highworth Town Council post from our Tower Captain caught my eye; "Have you ever fancied being a Bell Ringer?" I contacted him straight away and joined a learner's session. From the moment I climbed those ancient tower steps, I was hooked. Touring the historic belfry and seeing the bells up close felt like discovering a new world. I've been passionate about it ever since and am now ringing and teaching at South Marston as well." James Mackenzie

If you would like any further information, please call Rusty on 07707496233 or Diane on 07964460418.



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The F and E Harris Memorial Trust

Christmas Hamper

To qualify this year, the recipient is required to have been in permanent residency in South Marston for a period of 3 years prior to submission of registration, and in receipt of, or become eligible for, the state retirement pension at any time throughout 2026. Application forms can be obtained from Robbie Taylor via phone 01793 823757 or email to robina.taylor@btinternet.com. Closing date for applications 1st of November 2026.

Christmas Market Trip

Our annual free trip for senior citizens of South Marston aged 60 or over will be to Bath on Tuesday 1st of December 2026. The coach will leave South Marston at 10am and depart Bath at 3.30pm. If you would like to go, please contact Robbie Taylor and advise if you need a carer to accompany you. Call 01793 823757 or email robina.taylor@btinternet.com. Closing date for applications 1st of November 2026.



Tots & Toddlers

We love welcoming new faces! 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!

Saturday 12th December 2026

Event starts at 4.30 pm



Carol Singing with the Church Choir

Cotswold Voices Rock Choir

Bang To Rites Drummers

Children's Elf Hunt

Santas Grotto



Come and join us for a short festive walk,
depicting the twelve days of Christmas!
Light refreshments on sale



PLEASE NOTE – The car park will be closed to vehicles during the event

Main car park at St Julian's Wood,
St Julian's Close, Off Thornhill Road, South Marston

Please bring
a torch if you
can! 

Useful Contacts

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

Local Borough Councillor: Matthew Vallender MVallender@swindon.gov.uk
295171, Facebook - [@cllrmatthewvallender](https://www.facebook.com/cllrmatthewvallender)

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

Neighbourhood Watch: martinhoffen@smsinternet.co.uk 823513

Via Stratton Team Ministry 826505, **Church Warden** Diane Whitford 824339.

Parochial Church Council (PPC): William Hiscocks, Michelle Giles

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, 07545 923021

Tots and Toddlers: bethfairchildmartin@rocketmail.com

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).



**South Marston
Parish Council**



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