

£1, free to Members

Barkham Newsletter

Issue 111 Spring 2015

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

<http://www.barkham.org.uk>

Easter Egg Hunt
Easter Sunday 5 April 3pm
Junipers Play Area - see Page 10



Suggest a name for the new Garrison Development (which is mainly in Barkham) – see page 7

2015 Subscriptions

2015 BVRA Membership Fees are now due and remain at £2 per household

If you have not already done so, please pay your distributor, who is:

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The Quiz

The theme for this edition is "Time".

1. Who wrote "The Time Machine" in 1895?
2. Who directed the film "Time Bandits"?
3. Charles Lindbergh was the first. Mark Zuckerberg, Barack Obama, Pope Francis and the Ebola Fighters are recent winners of which title?
4. Which female singer wrote and had a major hit with "Time after Time"?
5. Who wrote "A Brief History of Time"?
6. What is the home planet of the Time Lords?
7. What is the current time showing on the "Doomsday Clock" (it was recently updated)?
8. In "Casablanca", what was the song for which Humphrey Bogart's character Rick told the pianist Sam: "You played it for her, you can play it for me"?
9. Who won the men's cycling time trial at the 2012 Olympics?
10. And finally, which famous battle took place at a quarter past six in the evening?

Answers on page 17.

Loddon Valley Ramblers' Walks

For more walks, including some longer ones, visit Loddon Valley Ramblers Website: www.lvra.org.uk



Sunday 22nd March: Pleasant walk through Heathlands and Heath Lake then Gorrick Woods 5 miles 10.30 from Wokingham library car park Denmark Street RG40 2BB Leader Cathy O'N 0118 9619024 or 07940 801261.

Thursday 26th March: Circular walk around Ridge Wood then up valley to Great Wood then Luxters Farm and Jubilee Plantation 6 miles 10.30 from Hambleden village CP behind Stag & Hounds RG9 6SG Leader Alan B 0118 9616595.

Sunday 29th March: Circular walk around Goring & Streatley 6 miles 10.00 from public CP off High Street Goring RG8 9AT Registered assistance dogs only, please! Leader Caroline L 0118 9781336.

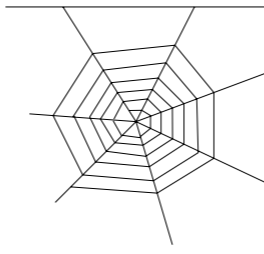
Thursday 2nd April: Circular walk along high-ground Chiltern tracks across farmland to the north of Reading 5½ miles 10.00 from Playing Field Car Park, top of Caversham Park Road RG4 6AA Leaders Silvia & Ricardo S 0118 9761737 or 07846 434861.

Sunday 5th April: A leisurely walk around Hurst and along River Loddon 6 miles 10.00 after meeting at Dinton Pastures Sailing Club CP on South side of Sandford Lane RG10 0SU (Small charge applies). Leaders Derek & Jenny S 0118 9785447 or 07816 037164.

Thursday 23rd April: Circular walk from Eversley Church via Up Green and Castle Bottom 5 miles 10.30 from Eversley church, after careful parking around the green. RG27 0PX Leader John A 0118 977 4183.

Sunday 26th April: Afternoon walk through the past & present of Hartley Wintney and along King John's Ride 5 miles 13.30 from Hart District Council CP (Free on Sunday) Monachus Lane Hartley Wintney RG27 8NY Leader David M 07932 246232.

Thursday 30th April: Leisurely (to Moderate) Views of Thames Valley on varied walk through woods and fields skirting Hambleden village, UP a short section of Shakespeare's Way to Rotten Row returning DOWN to Medmenham village 6 miles 10.30 from Mill End Car Park, off A4155 (Henley/Marlow) towards Hambleden RG9 6TL Leader Sue G 01183481506 or 07837412068.



Barkham web site

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our website www.barkham.org.uk and would welcome your suggestions.

More photos please!

We are always in need of attractive images of the Barkham area for both the web site and newsletter, so if you have some interesting photos and would like to share them please get in touch.

Dave Clements

Barkham Village Hall

Next to St James' Church, beautiful rural setting for weddings, christenings and parties.

From as little as £22/hr for both halls. £25/hr after 6.00 p.m. on Saturday.

Can accommodate 175 guests and now has a new fully equipped kitchen. Plus with the benefit of Lottery Funding a new ceiling and lighting have been installed which can be fully dimmable for evening celebrations.

If you are a group who needs somewhere to meet on a regular basis why not use your local village hall, we have plenty of tables and chairs and spacious car park and grounds for use during the summer. We offer very competitive rates for regular users.

Further information can be obtained from the parish council web site with photographs of the hall plus a calendar with availability. Please contact Judith Neuhofer on 979 0296 or email clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk

BVRA 2014/15 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Summer edition should be in by 15 May 2015. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to newsletter@barkham.org.uk. They may also be hand written, and should be sent to the Editor, Stewart Richardson, at 342 Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4DE.

For trade adverts, contact Ian Overton by email to treasurer@barkham.org.uk, or call 973 4806. We offer three sizes, 64mm x 54mm at £22, 124mm x 105mm at £52 and 190x130mm at £100, for 4 quarterly insertions.

Distribution of the next issue will take place in early June.



Editorial

Welcome to the spring 2015 edition of the Barkham Newsletter! Can I start by reminding residents that the annual BVRA Membership Fee of £2 per household is due so please pay your distributor as soon as possible. If you don't have their details, please contact the Membership Secretary.

This is a 20 page edition with a wide range of articles. There is news from the parish council (including the annual Parish Clean-up on 29 March) and also from our WBC councillor, John Kaiser. Laurence Heath reports on the Garrison development plans, including the new secondary school and the Crest Nicholson plans for a new community development on the ex-Garrison site, which will be predominantly in Barkham parish. He (and the parish council) are looking for ideas for a name for this new community which shows its attachment to Barkham. Please let Laurence have your ideas or if you send them to me I will forward them on. Alternatively you could use the Forum facility on the BVRA website www.barkham.org.uk to stimulate discussion on the topic.

I was interested to hear that local resident Joe Kinnagan, an

occasional contributor to the newsletter, is planning to stand in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. He sets out his case on page 13 and is seeking your support.

Thanks also to my regular contributors covering gardening, rambling, church, music, history and other local societies.

As always, we have a quiz, this time on the theme of "time".

Finally, if you have any comments (good or bad, but hopefully constructive!) on the contents of the newsletter please email me at newsletter@barkham.org.uk.

Stewart Richardson
Editor



The Christmas Party went well with a good attendance. In January we had a meal out in Wokingham at "Cote". It was an enjoyable evening. February was the AGM. The committee members were voted in. We had a Silent Auction, which raised money for the club. There have also been trips to Wokingham Theatre.

The meetings take place on the first Wednesday of the month at approx. 7.30pm at Barkham Village Hall. New members will be made most welcome. For more details, contact Pauline Vestey on 979 1714.

Angela Hands



News from Your Parish Council

Councillor Frank Postlethwaite

It is with great sadness that we announce that Councillor Frank Postlethwaite has passed away suddenly. Frank will be greatly missed by everyone on the Parish Council. He had served on the Council for many years, always putting the residents of Barkham before himself. He served on the Planning and the Finance Committees and was always striving to improve facilities for our young people. Our condolences go out to his family. Frank, we miss you.

Parish Precept

The Parish Council are delighted to inform you that they have been able to keep the Precept the same as last year, we are sure this is welcome news to you all, £26.62 per property BAND D. Full details of the budget for 2015 – 16 can be obtained from the Clerk or it is available to view on the web site.

Saturday Amenity Vehicle Collections

The Saturday collections around the Parish ceased at the end of January 2015. The Parish Council has supported the service - provided by Wokingham Borough Council - for many years, and is aware that it will be missed by many residents. However, WBC

have advised the reasons why the service had to cease, the main ones are outlined below.

- The waste collected cannot be sorted and all goes to landfill - this amounts to around 550 tonnes per year, around the weight of 140 elephants! Much of it could and should be reused or recycled.
- More and more traders are taking advantage of the service and are depositing waste, some of which is hazardous, for example containing asbestos.
- Additional Waste Regulations have come into force and mean that all waste must be separated for reuse or recycling. The service does not and cannot comply with these regulations.
- When the service was introduced there were very limited recycling facilities, and household collections were limited to general waste only.

Times have changed and there are now Household Waste Recycling Centres at Smallmead in Reading (RG2 0RP), Longshot Lane in Bracknell (RH12 1RL) and Hares Lane in Hartley Wintney (RG27 8BW) where many items can be left for reuse or recycling, or if need be tipped as general waste.

Wokingham Borough Council now operates the weekly waste (blue bags) and kerbside recycling (black box) collections, and green waste can now be collected through the garden waste scheme (brown bins and bags). You can find out more about these schemes, offers such as discounts on composters, and also how to recycle other items from Christmas trees to batteries, nappies to paint and even light bulbs at www.wokingham.gov.

uk/rubbish. The site also has information about a service to collect larger unwanted items. You can organise a collection for up to 5 bulky items for £27, this does not include fridges, the contact is Veolia 0118 909 9360.

Please do your bit and recycle as much as you can.

The Annual Litter Pick

This year's Clean Up will be held on Sunday 29th March. We meet at the Village Hall between 9.30 – 12.00. Sacks, jackets and litter pickers will all be provided we just need you. If you could spare one hour to help clear our verges of the litter which is thrown from cars or dropped this would be much appreciated. If you have children we will allocate you a safe road or park. You don't even have to bring the rubbish back, just leave the sack at the road side and we will collect them all in a trailer. We will then invite you to join us for a warming drink, bacon rolls and homemade cakes.

Barkham Remembers

We have a section on the Parish Council web site dedicated to those men who fought and lost their lives in World War 1. If you look under Local Information, Barkham Remembers is listed below. With the help of our local historian Janet Firth we have been able to add the names and information about Frederick Ernest Hutt, John Francis Coston and Alfred Thomas Key there are fascinating photos and inscription. Do take a few minutes to read their stories.

History Book

We are delighted to inform you that the Parish Council now

have a new stock of "Barkham A History". The history book has now been reprinted with a new Foreword which details the forthcoming move of the Garrison to RAF Lyneham. If you are new to the area and do not own a copy of the history book they can now be purchased from the Clerk for £8.50 each, or they are on sale at Henry Street Garden Centre and Barkham Post Office.

Arborfield Garrison SDL Update

The MOD (Crest Nicholson) Planning Application for 2000 houses and the one for the new secondary school are both scheduled to go before the Planning Committee on the 25th March. There is no date yet for the Hogwood Farm planning application for the remaining 1500 houses. Do you have any suggestions for a name for this development? Bearing in mind that the bulk of the houses will be in Barkham, please let us have any ideas, we do not want to see this development known as Arborfield.

[Ed – there is a more detailed report from Laurence Heath on page 7].

The Community Forums

The Community forums are held at Henry Street Garden Centre and are an excellent opportunity for residents to have their say on the development and its impact on residents and have been very well attended.

The Annual Parish Assembly

Finally last but not least the date of the Parish Assembly is Tuesday 14th April, we will conclude our Council Meeting by 9.00 p.m. and then commence with the Parish

Assembly, do come and give your support and question your councillors. Hear reports from the local organisations. The WW1 banners will be on display and if you have not yet had a chance to view them this will be an ideal opportunity. We look forward to seeing you there.

Judith Neuhofer
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council



As a follow up to my last article on homelessness we met with WBC Housing and Housing Needs in December last year. We found out that the council does have a strategy to help rough sleepers in severe weather. If the temperature drops below minus 1 degree for two nights running, rough sleepers can present themselves at Shute End and will be put in overnight B&B for the period of severe weather.

However, we were told quite bluntly that there is no 'political appetite' for a hostel in Wokingham Borough to help people with nowhere to stay. There is, unfortunately, no access for homeless people in Wokingham to access provision in neighbouring areas. So, if we want to see this change, it looks like we may have to try and change the 'political mind'.

There will be an extra 13,500 new homes in the Borough over the next 10 years. If the developers stick to their word (mmmm...) 2,400 will be social housing, 12,200 will be shared tenancies and 500 will be affordable. In

theory, this could wipe out or have a significant effect on the council's waiting list for council homes. Currently this is around 2,200 people or families. The group they are keenest to help is the 16-25 year olds.

There are two Tenancy Sustainment Officers (TSOs) who do their best to prevent council tenants losing their homes. Both the CAB and the Council are keen to work closer together. Not just on housing issues but other things as well, such as welfare benefits.

When a person goes to the council and says that they are homeless they do an initial assessment (in a similar way to the CAB seeing a client for the first time). If they can find a way to help the person they will do their best.

If someone is really having a tough time with paying the rent they have a discretionary housing payments (DHP) budget, which is around £147K per year. They tell us that they are 'on target' to spend it all this year. They also tell us that they did not receive any extra DHP money from central government to help people affected by the 'bedroom tax', as some other Local Authorities did.

Many thanks. John Ferguson,
CEO Wokingham CAB.

To contact us for help:

WOKINGHAM
2nd floor, Waterford House,
Erfstadt Court RG40 1AP
public@wokingham-cab.org.uk
www.wokingham-cab.org.uk

Hours:
Mon - Thu: 9.00am - 3.00pm
Fri: 9.00am - 1.00pm
Telephone assessments: 0844 499 4126



Planning Update

Planning Application for a Secondary School

An application for the new secondary school within the Arborfield Garrison site was submitted by the Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) at very beginning of the year. Barkham Parish Council (BPC) supports the proposal to build a secondary school. This will be on a vacant site within the southern part of the existing military area. It is near to the existing gym and library block, both of which, we understand, will be retained for future use. A school serving the south of the Borough is much needed and we are delighted that it will actually be in our parish.

We do have, however, a number of observations that need to be considered by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). First of all BPC is irritated, to say the least, that WBC seem to be naming the School "Wokingham Arborfield". It is clearly not in Arborfield. Ultimately the Garrison development will have a new name, but in the meantime "Wokingham South" might be a more suitable working name. This is a school, so it is a poor start if it cannot get the geography right! An opportunity is being missed to make the buildings as sustainable as possible. Altering the orientation of the buildings could increase "solar

gain" to improve the energy efficiency of the building. Access will be poor, especially in the early years before the road network within the development area is expanded. It must be assumed that a large proportion of pupils will arrive by road, as the school will be remote from existing housing areas. Initially the only road access will be via Princess Marina Drive. The possibility of a drop off point adjacent to Hogwood Lane has been suggested: this could be helpful but it has to be questioned whether this is genuinely practical within an industrial area with potential conflicts between school traffic and HGV movements.

The No 3 Leopard Bus covers a lot of the anticipated catchment area as it winds its way through Barkham, Finchampstead and Arborfield. An increased frequency on the Wokingham leg, at least in the morning and evening periods, would encourage greater patronage by pupils. A bus stop could also be positioned closer to the school than the existing one at the Sheerlands Road/Baird Road junction

To enable safe access to schools, cycleways will be required that are off road and have hard all weather surfaces. Safe crossing points on main roads are also essential. Any proposal (as shown in the application) that suggests children can use existing roads such as Commonfield Lane, Barkham Street and Barkham Ride are totally unrealistic. These roads are narrow, already congested and are far too dangerous to permit cycling by youngsters. The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Greenways Group has devoted considerable effort to examining proper cycle routes (see below).

Revisions to the Arborfield Garrison Planning Application

Crest Nicholson have submitted some revised and additional documents. In some respects they appear to have taken note of our comments although all is not as we would wish.

The main headline news is that it is now proposed to widen Barkham Bridge, and this seems to have the support of WBC. Widening is definitely desirable on safety grounds, but nobody should run away with idea that it will solve the congestion problem in the area: the Barkham Bull junction will instead become the main bottleneck.

It is disappointing that no real traffic strategy for the area has emerged so far, in spite of all the expertise that has been employed on this topic. The answer, I guess, is that there is no simple answer. We have had a disagreement with Crest about some of the assumptions included in the Traffic Assessment: it tends to suit developers, local authorities and government alike to understate traffic volumes as theoretical solutions are easier to justify than the reality! Nevertheless it is interesting that WBC have indicated in the supporting information for the secondary school application that all the key local junctions are already at capacity. In my opinion a local solution has to encourage as much traffic as possible from the new development to flow on to the proposed Arborfield Relief Road rather than using Langley Common Road. In the long term, plans have to be developed to link the Arborfield Relief Road more effectively with the corridor alongside the M4 between junctions 10 and 11. This corridor will

have to absorb a great deal more traffic in the future from other developments in the Borough and the growing employment zones at Green Park and Winnersh.

A revised plan for the Biggs Lane junction has also been submitted. It is an improvement on the previous version but BPC is not yet convinced that the road layout in the area properly integrates the junctions at Biggs Lane, Eversley Road (at the existing Bramshill Hunt roundabout) and the southern end of the relief road. A layout that includes a succession of five roundabouts within a mile, (running from the Biggs Lane junction to the western gateway on the A327) does not seem well thought out.

Improvements for Commonfield Lane have been suggested, based on passing places. While this is undoubtedly an improvement on the existing arrangement, where strips of mud masquerade as passing places, it is felt that designated passing places should only be considered as an interim solution. BPC preference is to widen Commonfield lane for 2-way traffic, with an adjacent greenway also provided. A safe crossing point at the bridleway toward California Park is required – this would also provide a traffic calming opportunity.

The proposals for the Barkham Street/ Barkham Ride/ Commonfield Lane junction are a negligible improvement on the current arrangements. Roundabout would help to reduce speeds and improve the prospect of creating a safe crossing on to the bridleway towards Barkham Church.

A plan showing greenways passing through the development and linking to the wider area

have been included in the revised proposals. In many respects these reflect the ideas suggested by the Neighbourhood Plan Greenways Group, but more details are required. BPC would expect that as part of any planning approval, there should be a commitment to make available adequate funding to support the creation of a high quality greenway system to link the Arborfield Garrison development to local communities.

Lack of landscaping along Langley Common Road was highlighted by BPC in its response to the original planning application. Crest seem to have acknowledged this requirement: it is stated that the boundary to Langley Common Road should be enhanced with new planting to "create country lane character". The need for a "softer feel approaching the countryside from the north east" and that "the edge facing Langley Common Road should present a positive frontage incorporating tree planting" are also identified. However all the documents are not consistent, with some maps still showing no additional landscaping on the northern edge. It is also a concern that the housing adjacent to Langley Common Road is shown as potentially three storeys high: this is not compatible with creating the "softer feel approaching the countryside" that has been suggested.

BPC welcomes the submission of a document entitled "The Infirmary stables at Arborfield Garrison – Towards a Sustainable Future". The idea of creating a "War Horse" museum to communicate the equine role in World War I and the military association of the site would be very exciting indeed. The parish council is keen to co-operate in any way that it can and would

welcome a dialogue with Crest as plans progress.

The name of the community now needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Describing the development as "Arborfield Garrison" is becoming inappropriate and confusing. The Executive Summary refers to the development as "Arborfield Garden Village". This is not acceptable as over 80% of the site is in Barkham. It is clear that a new name must be sought and it would be desirable if one is chosen for the whole of the Arborfield Garrison development (including the area to the south) and that it should have a local association. Crest have indicated that they would carry out a public consultation on this: BPC would encourage this to be done sooner rather than later.

Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Greenways Project

A Greenways Working Group has been set up as part of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan. This group includes councillors and residents from both parishes, with the aim of developing a plan to improve the greenways in and around the two parishes. The Arborfield Garrison development and the proposed secondary school are real opportunities to initiate and fund some significant improvements. In the meantime WBC have been working on their own greenways project, and it is a goal of the Greenways Group to ensure that improvements are prioritised coherently.

The parishes of Arborfield and Barkham both have extensive greenway networks. Due to a combination of gaps, unsafe crossings of main roads and in-

creasing traffic on minor roads, this network has considerable weaknesses as a leisure amenity and fails to provide realistic options for commuting and as safe routes to schools.

It must be stressed that in this area, a route must be off road to count as a greenway and that it should have an all-weather surface. Safe crossings of main roads are essential – these could include better signage including illuminated warning signs, road markings and central refuges on the busiest roads and sight lines should be protected where possible. Signalled crossings will be needed near schools.

The Greenways Working Group have identified three main requirements. Each of these categories will have different priorities in terms of both location and physical conditions:

- Cycleways designed as “safe routes to school” and serving other personal transport needs. These will be point to point routes, require an all-weather hard surface, ideally some lighting and should not be in very remote areas. Cycleways could be provided alongside existing main roads but width of existing footways and verges is a major a constraint.
- Walking routes should need to create circular walks. Drainage is very much an issue in some places, so all weather routes are required: Hard surfaces, however, are not essential
- Equestrian routes also should provide circular routes and exclude on-road sections. Crossing points on main roads require good sightlines and appropriate traffic calming.

Priorities within Barkham include:

- A direct route from the secondary school to Commonfield Lane, with a safe crossing of Biggs Lane required.
- A safe crossing of Commonfield Lane is also required, opposite the bridleway that runs adjacent to California Park towards Barkham Ride.
- This bridleway should be upgraded to all weather cycling standard. This would provide a route to much of Finchampstead and indirectly to Barkham Hill via Nashgrove Lane.
- The greenway following Commonfield Lane should be off road and also all-weather cycling standard.
- The link from Commonfield Lane to Barkham Church can be off road by providing a safe crossing of Barkham Ride, and then along an existing (and currently unusable) bridleway to the church.
- A route heading north east towards Barkham Hill should be provided with all-weather cycling standard. The route could follow the existing right of way or possible alternative routes.

Other important goals are to find safe routes to link Barkham to Wokingham town centre and Barkham to Winnersh. Neither of these will be easy to fulfil.

The draft Greenways Report can be viewed on the Barkham Parish website. <http://bit.ly/1BHpYhq>

Laurence Heath
Vice Chairman
Barkham Parish Council



Borough Councillor

Dear Residents

We are now well into the New Year and the weather is improving hopefully the economic climate will continue to do likewise.

My article covers important items both for Barkham and borough wide. I felt it was important to explain the budget constraints the borough council has been put under and cover off what is the latest news with regards the Garrison development. The other issue is what’s going on with the roads around the borough, something which touches us all almost every day and has a major impact on our lives.

Garrison Development (Arborfield)

The MOD (Crest Nicholson) Planning Application for 2000 houses, 75% of which falls in Barkham and the one for the new secondary school are both scheduled to go before the Planning Committee on the 25th of March. As I write this there is no date as yet for the Hogwood Farm planning application for the remaining 1500 houses, most of which fall in Finchampstead.

No rise in council tax

Wokingham remains the lowest funded unitary authority in England with regards to the level

of government grant it receives and despite the on-going austerity programme the council has agreed a council tax freeze for 2015/16. Therefore its share of the overall council tax will remain at £1,246.21 for Band D.

The council has seen a 10.5% reduction in the government settlement funding assessment – equating to £2.9 million in real terms when compared with last year. I have been fighting along with other members of the council for greater efficiencies to enable the cost burden on residents to be held at its current level for at least the next 12 months

Even so the council is set to continue investing, with £95.8 million in capital projects this year, to support its priorities including new schools, roads and housing and despite the financial pressures we continue to focus on maintaining good quality services.

Included in the investments planned for 2015-20 are:

- £33 million for new schools including a first class secondary school at Barkham on the Arborfield garrison site in the south of the borough, planned to be delivered in 2016, new primary schools in the strategic development locations
- Four new roads including Arborfield Relief Road, North Wokingham Distributor Road, South Wokingham Distributor Road, Shinfield Eastern Relief Road and the Winnersh Relief Road will follow on shortly in 2019-2021. We have already completed the station link road which serves the new station and aids the traffic around Wokingham.

Road investments

Wokingham borough has the highest ratio of car ownership in the country - only 9% of local households are without one, in addition car ownership in the Borough is also one of the highest nationally for households having two or more cars.

Wokingham borough’s road network has the unique problem of serving this high level of car ownership, which means its trickier to maintain and upgrade without causing problems and congestion.

The A329 is the major route through the borough and each day sees 40,000 traffic movements both ways. Winnersh Crossroads sees 24,000 traffic movements each day and Showcase Roundabout over 50,000.

Investment in the borough’s highways infrastructure and maintenance between 2015-2018 will, in addition to the major roads I have mentioned, include a programme to replace the borough’s worn out streetlights, four additional footbridges over the Waterloo railway line and just over £8 million for replacement railway bridges (Guildford and Waterloo lines) on the A321 Finchampstead Road plus the extension to Nine Mile Ride in addition to junction upgrades and new junctions where required.

There is also planned investment in future and current cycle networks as part of the development of greenways (a network of quiet community and leisure routes for pedestrians and cyclists) and public rights of ways.

We will also be investing heavily on measures to keep traffic moving to negate as much as possible the effects of these works on road users whether vehicles, bicycles or pedestrian

Please remember if you need help with any issues which relates to the borough council or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

John Kaiser
Wokingham Borough Councillor for Barkham
jk2gk@aol.com
976 2116
0771 419 2352t



WJSC provides **FREE** support and guidance to unemployed people living in the Wokingham area. We provide friendly, professional support in an atmosphere where you can spend time in a motivational, open environment which can help remove the feeling of isolation that job searching can sometimes bring. You can also interact with staff, who are on hand to answer your questions and give dedicated support to you. So come along and see how we can help.

Workshops have also become an integral part of the services that WJSC offer for **CV Writing, Interview Skills and the Over 50’s**. They are run every 3 – 4 weeks from 10:30 – 12:30pm at The Cornerstone. Contact us to book yourself a place.

Tel: 977 0517
Email: Jobsearch@wjsc.org.uk
Website: www.wjsc.org.uk



Social Matters

At last the afternoons are beginning to stay lighter for longer and the weather is getting slightly warmer so hopefully spring is not too far away. Even though it is mid-February at the time of writing, I have daffodils that look as if they are going to flower any day. It is only when I see on the television the pictures of the north of the country that I realise how lucky we are in the south as their plants are quite some time behind ours and their winter days longer.

The quiz coincided with the issue of the winter newsletter so missed the copy date. The winners were InshahAllah which I am sure you all know is arabic for "God willing" or "hopefully", so called as two of the team were late arriving from Dubai.



I hope that those of you that attended the Carols in the Park just before Christmas enjoyed the singing and the mince pies and mulled wine. My thanks go to all who helped at the event. The musicians I am sure are pleased with the bucket collection which goes towards their running costs. Once again we were lucky with the weather which often seems to determine whether an outside event is a success or not.

At the moment your committee are arranging the skittles event and this will be followed by the children's Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday 5th April at 3pm

in the Junipers play area. This is for children up to the age of 14 and the cost is 50p per child. The children are divided into two age groups and each looks for a token which is then exchanged for a small egg. Last year, if you remember, Easter was late in April and so we expected good weather. Unfortunately this was not to be and at just before three o'clock we had no participants. However in true British fashion people began to arrive and as we had not managed to put out the tokens as usual, the children followed us around! However there are still some tokens lying out

there in the grass. We also hold a raffle for the adults for a larger egg so come and join us.

On June 20th in the village hall we are holding a mid-summer dance so please put that date in you diary now. Further details will be on the website and in the next newsletter.

If you would like to help in arranging an event why don't you join our committee? We are a very friendly group and only hold meetings when necessary - it's not like being on the board of a company! As you can appreciate some of us have been members for quite some time and new blood, with new ideas, would be wonderful. If you are interested please give me a ring.

I look forward to seeing you at a future event.

Judith Collins
977 1579





St James' Barkham

www.abch.co.uk

Is God capricious, mean-minded and stupid?

I do feel sorry for Stephen Fry. You are asked one question in an interview on Irish television and the next moment, your reply has been viewed millions of times around the world, with countless people wanting to post their responses. I'm sure he didn't intend to create such a stir, but it was inevitable that many would seize on his opinion, when he is so widely respected as a great wit, fine mind, modern man and all-round national treasure. People want to know what Stephen Fry thinks about everything.

When asked what he would say to God if he met him in heaven, he replied; "I will say bone cancer in children, what's that about?... How dare you, how dare you create a world that has such misery that is not our fault. It is not right. It is utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world that is full of injustice and pain?" I don't know what lay behind his outburst; whether it is a purely intellectual objection, or whether a particular personal tragedy has touched his life. I did, however, want to jot down a few things in response.

First, I don't think taking God out of the picture solves the problem. It's tempting to say that the existence of suffering in the world is proof that God is not there, but if we say there is no God, do we cease to struggle with the suffering that surrounds us? It seems to me that an atheistic view of the world gives us no reason to be outraged. Richard Dawkins said that, 'in a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice.' His view is consistent, but not at all satisfactory when we experience suffering. It is no comfort to be told, 'Tough luck'.

That leads me to the next point. The anguished sense we have that the world shouldn't be like this does not necessarily point us away from faith in God. For one thing, our longing for suffering and evil to be put right assumes that there is a standard of justice and goodness to which we can appeal. This is something C.S. Lewis came to realise when he converted from atheism to Christianity. 'My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.' We only have grounds for calling for things to be put right if there is someone on whom we can call.

Finally, however, the Bible does not deny the suffering and pain in our world. Rather it affirms that we live in a fallen world, in which everything has been fractured and tainted by humanity's turning away from God. The biggest problem with the world is us. The wonder of the Christian message

is that God did not abandon us when we turned our back on him, but rather he stepped into our world as the man Jesus Christ. The God of the Bible is not removed from suffering, but came and endured suffering himself as he went to the cross to bring us the forgiveness we so desperately need. And what's more, through his resurrection from the dead, he invites us to be part of his new world, where suffering will be at an end and everything will be put right.

This is the good news we will be celebrating again this Easter, with services on Good Friday (10am) and on Easter Sunday at 10am (all-age) and 7pm. As ever, everyone is more than welcome to join us.

Julian Bidgood
Minister of Barkham

Wokingham Choral Society

We will be performing a Summer concert of sacred and secular music on Saturday 13 June 2015 at 7.30 pm at the Masonic Centre, Sindlesham. Tickets £12.50 (under 18s and students £5.00). Plenty of free parking. Details will be found on www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk. Do join us!

Alison Sears

Barkham resident bids to become local MP

Until January, I was blissfully unaware that there is a general election looming in May. After one or two evenings discussing the subject in the Bull at Barkham, I decided to throw my hat in the ring – I shall be standing as an Independent candidate for Wokingham on the 7th of May.

My life has become firmly rooted in the area since moving to Wokingham in 1985 and since 1991 I have lived in Barkham. After nearly thirty years living and working in this area, where my wife and I raised our family, I am very much in tune with the issues that affect us all. Not only do I understand the needs of our community, but if elected, I shall fight vigorously to get them satisfied. And I won't be shackled by the dogma of any established political party.

There is a huge amount to do to make myself known across the

whole constituency before the election. Tireless though I am as a worker, I could certainly use some help. If you feel you could lend a hand to my campaign, to whatever extent, I would very much appreciate hearing from you.

Probably the most time consuming, but necessary, activity is attending to the production of leaflets and canvassing - the more people who can help with that, the better. One area where I would especially like help is in the formulation of a manifesto. By getting input from as many residents and business people as possible, I believe I will be better equipped to serve the community. I plan to release my manifesto one month ahead of polling day but it will take a few days to finalise and get published. I am therefore asking people to get their ideas and offers of other help to me by midday on April the first.

As you see, I am open to persuasion, but policies I have in mind so far are:

- Abandonment of HS3 in favour of higher speed rail links in the south
- Movement of military facilities to less densely populated areas
- Devolution for London and the south-east
- Thames diversion to free up / make safe current flood plains for housing

If you do feel you could help in any way, I would encourage you to get in touch through the Newsletter Editor.

And if you simply want an MP who is truly able to represent your interests, cast your vote for me on Polling Day, 7th of May.

Many thanks,
Joe Kinnagan

Farley Hill Bowls Club

We are still enjoying our monthly Winter Social evenings at our Clubhouse in Church Road Farley Hill RG71TR. Please see our website www.farleyhillbowlsclub.org.uk for more info.

If anyone reading this is interested in playing Bowls at our club this coming season, we would be pleased to welcome you.

Our green opens on 22nd April for practice, but our first three matches are away this year. Our first home match is on Wednesday 6th May at 6.00pm, if you would like to watch it.

The best opportunity for beginners and prospective new members to have a go at bowls is at our OPEN DAY on Sunday 3rd May from 2.00 -6.00pm. Please just turn up.

All you need to bring is a pair of flat soled shoes (e.g. Trainers) to protect the green.

Entry and refreshments are free, but we usually run a plant sale as well to raise club funds.

The next best time to have a look at our club and/or have a go at bowls is every Tuesday and Thursday evening between

5.00pm to 8.00pm from May to August, which is scheduled on demand for coaching and practice sessions. Please advise the undersigned the day before if you are coming along, so that I can ensure that enough coaches and helpers are present!

This year one Thursday evening a month during these summer months is going to be a Club Social Night, when we expect lots more members to turn up to socialise as well as bowl.

For further information please contact Bill Dowling, Club Secretary on 01344 772130 or E-mail: billdowling@tinyworld.co.uk

Arborfield Gardening Association

It has been a busy year for the Committee & we certainly did have good attendance throughout the year, with more members joining our friendly Garden Association.

25 people from AGA came along to the Swan Inn to celebrate Christmas. The table looked beautiful, the decorations were fantastic, the food delicious, all beautifully served. A fun Christmas quiz followed by a bounteous raffle rounded off a very good evening.

January brought an excellent talk, accompanied by some delightful slides, on "landscaping" by Ray Norton from Pudding Lane. Congratulations to Angela Hands, who won the Best Winter Photograph competition

Membership remains at £5 per person and meetings £1 per evening (£2 for guests / non-members). Members of AGA are able to shop at discounted rates in the 2 Trading Stores at Shinfield & in Wokingham allotments and enjoy our very special Garden Party in the summer.

The AGM was followed by a talk from Claire Osler, who manages the SHINE programme, with a team of instructors. SHINE ("Some Health Improvements Need Exercise") is part of the Sports & Leisure Department, supported by the Wokingham Borough Council. It has a wonderful programme of numerous activities designed to enable the over 50s maintain an active & full life. Watch out for their special "taster" days this year.

Claire then handed over to a Pilates instructor, amazingly called

Aga (!!) who came along to advise us on how to stay fit whilst gardening and demonstrated some activities (stretches etc.) for good back health. The Best Indoor Plant mini-competition was won by a beautiful yellow orchid, owned by Sheila Bunce.

We have another exciting programme ready for 2015 -16 & hope that you will join our events too. You will be made very welcome. On April 9th, Marcus Dancer will be talking to us about Clematis, with some wonderful slides & a pruning demonstration. He will also judge the Spring Show, so if you would like to exhibit, look out for the schedules around Arborfield, or just come along and enjoy! There will of course be an opportunity for you to socialise with tea/coffee, biscuits and the free raffle.

May is a busy month, with our very popular Plant Sale on Saturday 9th May, outside the Village Hall, where you can purchase good quality indoor and outdoor plants, produced by professional gardeners, at competitive prices 8am is not too early to be there !! Our Plant Swap evening follows on Thursday 14th May. Bring your excess plants and see what you can pick up in exchange..... and try our fun quiz whilst enjoying some delicious refreshments.

Hopefully we will see you all around our stall at the Arborfield Village Fete in Arborfield Park on Saturday 6th June.

Catherine Breen, Chair
catherinebreen@ymail.com
976 1848

CROWTHORNE Symphony ORCHESTRA

This is a good year to be performing music by Sibelius as it is the 150th anniversary of the great Finnish composer's birth in 1865. So the orchestra is right on target playing 2 works by Sibelius in our Spring Concert at 8pm on Saturday April 18th at The Old Gym, Wellington College and more in our Summer Concert in July ('Finlandia' is on that programme).

The concert will start with 'Valse Triste' which is one of the composer's most popular pieces and was originally written in 1903 as incidental music for a play called "Kuolema" written by his brother-in-law. These days it is well known as a concert piece in various arrangements. The more familiar orchestral version which we will perform is scored for flute, clarinet, horns, timpani and strings.

One of the main works in the concert is Sibelius' 5th Symphony. This was given its premiere in December 1915, on the composer's 50th birthday with Sibelius himself conducting. Sibelius loved the countryside of his Finnish homeland and its landscape and the sounds of the birds often formed the basis for his compositions. The theme in this movement has a wonderful motif starting with the horns and later developed throughout the orchestra as the movement progresses. It is said to have been inspired by the sound of swan calls after he had witnessed 16 of them taking flight simultaneously. "One of the great experiences of my life! God, how beautiful," he wrote in his diary.

The other work in the concert is Mahler's 'Kindertotenlieder' when the orchestra will be joined by the baritone Richard Bannan who is the Musical Director of Yateley Choral Society.

Tickets are available from Traveltime in Crowthorne High Street, and Bookends in Peach Street Wokingham or from members of the orchestra (£10 in advance or £12 on the door). Tickets can also be purchased on-line via the orchestra's website. Remember children of 16 or under are free.

If you are interested in joining us and play an orchestral instrument to a good standard, even if you haven't played for a while, do get in touch with us to see if there are vacancies. We rehearse on Monday evenings (7.45-10pm) in term time at Oaklands Junior School in Crowthorne and although we take our music making very seriously, rehearsals are relaxed and friendly occasions. You will find contact information on our website: www.crowthorneorchestra.com which also has details of rehearsals, workshops and past and future concerts, or you can contact our secretary, Ruth on 0118 972 2164

Chris Gadsby



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RG2 9JR

Arts & Crafts, Arborfield Military Wives & School
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Contact info:

www.arborfieldvillagefete.org.uk/

Any local voluntary organisations, residents or
 businesses with commercial interest please e-mail:
stalls@arborfieldvillagefete.org.uk

For general volunteering contact us on:
volunteers@arborfieldvillage.org.uk

Arborfield Local History Society

We are now well into 2015, a year which brings some important anniversaries. On the 15th June 1215, a Charter (Magna Carta), was issued by King John at Runnymede near Windsor, which has become one of the most celebrated documents in history. In 1415 on the 25th October (the feast day of Saints Crispin and Crispinian), an army led by Henry V fought the French army during the Hundred Years War, at Agincourt in Normandy. The 18th June marks the bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo and sadly we have recently heard of the death of the 8th Duke of Wellington, Arthur Valerian Wellesley, aged 99 years, just 6 months short of the bicentennial. The Stratfield Saye Estate which is quite near to us here in Arborfield has been the home of the Dukes of Wellington since 1817. The Battle of Waterloo is being remembered by an exhibition and trail at Windsor Castle and is open each day from 31st January 2015 – 13th January 2016.

At our February meeting in Arborfield Village Hall, David England regaled us with "Berkshire Folk Tales" and on March 2nd we will welcome back Richard Poad who will entertain us with "The Thames from the Cotswolds to the Sea". On April 13th we will hold our AGM combined with a social event. We meet once a month, usually on the first Monday at 7.45 in the Village Hall. All are welcome (there is an entrance fee of £2.00 for non-members).

Recently we have been very fortunate to have been contacted by a past member of our village community and he has kindly sent us a photo of his class (Junior 4) at the local primary school, dated 1967.

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Most of the children are named but some are not and we will be looking for help in this regard...so if you or your siblings attended our local primary school at this time, please get in touch.

I have recently wondered about the origins of the local school...

By an indenture dated 25th December 1840, a site in Arborfield was conveyed by John Pither and James Fuller to the Rev. J. H. Hayes and others, upon trust for a school for the education of the poor of the parish in the principles of the Christian religion according to the doctrine of the Church of England. (This school was in Greensward Lane).

There have been many changes

over the years and recently the new primary school – The Coombes CE Primary School – was opened on 1st September 2008 as a result of the amalgamation of The Coombes Infant and Nursery School and Arborfield Newland & Barkham CE Junior School.

If you are interested in the history of the village or just want to be part of a friendly, local group then join us...for more information take a look at our website or make a 'phone call.

Ray Hill
<http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk>
rayhill@aol.com
 976 0784

1. HG Wells
2. Terry Gilliam
3. Time Magazine Person of the Year.
4. Cyndi Lauper
5. Stephen Hawking (a bonus point if you've read it!)
6. Gallifrey
7. 23.57 (3 minutes to midnight)
8. As Time Goes By ("Play it again, Sam" is a misquotation)
9. (Sir) Bradley Wiggins (he was knighted after the Olympics)
10. Waterloo (1815 - sorry!)

The Quiz - Answers

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If you do one thing this year, make it volunteering!

Are you looking to make a change that will improve your health and happiness? Why not consider volunteering with a local charity?

Volunteering is a fantastic way to make a difference in your local community. Wokingham Volunteer Centre is an independent charity working with hundreds of charities to help them to find the volunteers they need to deliver essential services. These charities help children, young people, the elderly, education, literacy, employment, substance misuse, people with mental and physical health issues and disabilities, animals, gardening, transport schemes, befriending, sport, environment and conservation.

In volunteering, different roles suit different people. Some want regular hands-on activities, while employed or recently retired professionals can offer invaluable strategic help. As charities increasingly take on delivery of front-line services, they are badly in need of hands-on volunteers as well as trustees with business experience in finance, tendering and contracts, business planning, HR and employment law, IT, Health & Safety, marketing and PR.

Christine Knox, Manager of the Volunteer Centre, says: "Some volunteers are passionate about a certain cause. Others see a need for their help or particular expertise and go where they are needed most. Whatever your motivation and availability, we can help you find the right role for you."

It's easy to get locked into the "rat-race" of life but volunteering can bring a better balance - it may just turn out to be the best thing you ever did!

Contact Christine or Helena at Wokingham Volunteer Centre on 977 0749, wok-vol@btconnect.com or visit our website www.volunteercentrewokingham.org.uk

Are you a Finchampstead Surgery patient? Do you have views on how the Surgery services are delivered? - YES?

If you would like to have a say on local healthcare matters please join the Finchampstead Patients Reference Group (FPRG). FPRG members, who are all patients of the Finchampstead Surgery, provide regular input and feedback on Surgery matters by taking part in surveys which help the Surgery staff and the patients work together to improve standards and understand each other's needs.

At present not enough young and middle aged people have joined to make the Group fully representative. Whilst many people may be young and fit, and may not see the relevance to themselves, at some stage in their life most probably they and their loved ones will need to use the medical services and their voice needs to be heard. To join the Group it is very easy. Simply pick up a leaflet at the Surgery or a local pharmacy, or send an email to patient.finchampstead@nhs.net asking to join the FPRG and giving your name and email address.

Barkham Diary

14-Mar-15	BVRA Skittles Evening	BVH	7.30pm
23-Mar-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
23-Mar-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
24-Mar-15	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
1-Apr-15	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
5-Apr-15	BVRA Easter Egg Hunt	Junipers	3pm
8-Apr-15	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
14-Apr-15	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
14-Apr-15	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
27-Apr-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
28-Apr-15	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
6-May-15	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
12-May-15	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
12-May-15	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
13-May-15	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
15-May-15	Copy deadline for Summer Newsletter		
25-May-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
26-May-15	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
3-Jun-15	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
9-Jun-15	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
9-Jun-15	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
10-Jun-15	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
20-Jun-15	BVRA Summer Dance	BVH	7.30pm

AVH is Arborfield Village Hall BVH is Barkham Village Hall
CRH is California Ratepayers Hall FMH is Finchampstead Memorial Hall

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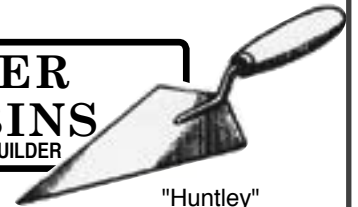
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