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Barkham Newsletter

Issue 123 Spring 2018

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

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

Twitter: @BarkhamVRA Facebook: <http://gid.uk/BVRAF>

**Great News – the BVRA is saved
thanks to the support of
Barkham residents!
See pages 2 & 3**

**Easter Egg Hunt
Easter Sunday 1 April 3pm
Junipers Play Area - see page 12**



**Barkham Clean Up –
Sunday 25 March
See page 7**



2018 Subscriptions

**2018 BVRA Membership Fees are now due and remain
at £2 per household**

**In
this
issue...**

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

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Chairman's piece

It is with pleasure I write to you as the new Chair of the BVRA. I am Richard Roberts, I have lived with my wife Mel and daughters Lauren and Amy in Barkham for over twenty years. My family and I have participated in many of the local events and have been interested readers of the Newsletter.

Little did I think, one day, I would be writing to you as the new Chair.

I am encouraged by the number of you who volunteered for office and pleased to be selected along with my friend and Vice Chair Alan Dixon. How did this come about? Alan and I were attending a local pre-Christmas soiree, when the topic of the imminent closure of the BVRA came up and we both said we didn't want that to happen. We decided to contact Stewart to offer our services. It is sometimes said "Two heads are better than one", with this thought we met with Stewart with a proposal for both of us to serve on the committee. A vice chair offers more resilience and continuity in times of absence.

Since my appointment I have been working with the committee to bring myself up to speed with the history of and past and present activities of the BVRA. I asked the committee to consider three questions:

- What works well?
- What doesn't work well?
- What do you want "Good" to look like?

We have a Development Watch email alert with over 150 registered followers and good attendance at the social events we arrange throughout the year. Is that what you want from BVRA, or is there something else? Invite you to contact me and the committee (details on page 3) with your comments and ideas, based on these three questions.

Barkham is undergoing rapid and ongoing change, the BVRA is your voice for the village.

With best wishes

Richard



Editorial

Welcome to the spring 2018 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. We had a new record number (708) of Barkham households as BVRA members in 2017. Thank you for your support!

Also, you may remember, the winter edition of the newsletter was something of a crisis issue as, after 30 years of service to the Barkham community, the BVRA was in imminent danger of having to close down if we did not recruit new members to our committee. I am very pleased to say we had a very positive response and we have been joined by Richard Roberts (Chairman), Alan Dixon (Vice Chair) and Pam Edwards (Secretary). Richard has written an introductory piece on the facing page and Alan and Pam are pictured opposite. Richard and Alan are "new" to the BVRA but Pam was a founder member in 1987 so we welcome her back after a long absence! I'd also like to thank the other residents who came forward and I hope they may be involved with the residents' association as we go forward.

Moving on to this edition – this is our first full colour issue. Reductions in printing costs have enabled us to have colour on all pages (previously it was just the cover and centre spread) and so we will be in colour for all future issues. Not before time you may say!

Laurence Heath gives an update on planning issues, including lobbying government and the issue which may become the biggest development threat to Barkham – the possibility of 1000 new houses in Barkham Square. Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) are likely to come out to consultation on this later in the year if they consider the proposed development is credible (!!!) and we will be working with Barkham Parish Council to encourage residents to make their views known to WBC.

If you haven't already done so, please consider letting us have your contact email address so we can more easily get in touch between the quarterly newsletters if an urgent issue arises. We promise you won't get a deluge of such mails – no Spam! See page 11 with details of how to easily register your email address and also the BVRA social media accounts we have set up.

Other articles include our WBC councillor, John Kaiser, who this time focusses on infrastructure – roads and street lighting and the interminable Wokingham traffic problems!

Joe Kinnagan always provides an unusual article for the spring edition of the newsletter and this time (page 18) he is airing his views on "Barkham's New Order", which is not, as I first thought, Barkham's answer to that great Manchester band!

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

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

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

Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Summer edition should be in by 11 May 2018. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to newsletter@barkham.org.uk. They may also 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 landscape 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.

BVRA 2017/18 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

See page 23



Alan Dixon



Pam Edwards

Barkham Development Watch

Helping to protect Barkham's distinctive character

This email list is only used to send out periodic email alerts if we wish to bring any development plans to the notice of Barkham residents.

Often the time allowed by Wokingham Borough Council for comments on a specific planning application or more general plan will expire before the next Barkham Newsletter is published so these alerts give residents a timely chance to comment on issues that may concern them. We currently have over 150 Barkham households on the list.

Please join the mailing list today by going to the BVRA website (www.barkham.org.uk) and follow the instructions to register for the alerts on the home page. Alternatively follow the instructions on page 11 of this newsletter to register for one or more email alerts and updates from the BVRA.

Also, if you have previously registered for these alerts but have changed your email address, please don't forget to resubscribe via the website.



Lobbying Government

Barkham Parish Council has been active lobbying government ministers, to make them realise that the national housing shortage and affordability is not simply a matter of local government failing to provide enough land for housing. There are many other reasons, including lack of skilled manpower, lead times to build infrastructure and even a shortage of bricks. There are also financial reasons for delays once outline plans are approved such as protracted arguments about the provision of affordable housing and building new roads and whether the developers should pay for them. Whereas developers are happy to trot out the argument that they are trying to resolve the housing shortage, the reality is that the prime motivation is for landowners and promoters to make a lot of money – if a piece of unused land can see an uplift from £30,000 to well over £1,000,000, it is obvious that big profits are at stake.

Since we wrote our original letter to Sajid Javid, the Communities Secretary last autumn, we have followed up with further letters including to Philip Hammond and Sir Oliver Letwin and one which was published in 'The Telegraph'. Several other parish councils have also been active in sending their own letter to ministers too. David Lee, the Deputy Leader of WBC has taken

on board our arguments and has now met with several ministers including the Prime Minister herself. Theresa May arrived late for a meeting at Shute End due to traffic congestion and had to walk the last leg – I guess that helped her to appreciate our problems!

It is satisfying that statements by politicians show that they are beginning to appreciate the wider arguments. Philip Hammond has set up an inquiry to examine land banking, to be led by Sir Oliver Letwin. This review is expected by some commentators to recommend "use it or lose it" planning permissions. It could also open the way for new charges on land that rockets in value after being approved for development.

According to a recent article in "The Times", the housing secretary has told Homes England, the government's housing agency, to make greater use of its powers to purchase land with compulsory orders, to stop owners from holding developments to ransom. He also raised the prospect of new charges to ensure that taxpayers benefited from increases in the value of land approved for development.

Do not expect the government to row back on their commitment for more housing, but hopefully a more nuanced approach will evolve that actually lead to the right houses in the right places..

Local Plan Update

While there is encouragement on the political front, we are still faced with feeding frenzy by developers trying to get planning permission in Barkham and neighbouring parishes.

Currently planning decisions are guided by the Core Strategy adopted in 2010. This is being updated (the Local Plan Update) to accommodate a higher number of houses, increasing at the last count from 621 to 894 per annum.

The 'Call for Sites' initiated by WBC over a year ago is still attracting new proposals. There are a few additional sites in Barkham, but some large new sites have appeared nearby, including land between Blagrove Lane and Coombes Lane, additional land off School Road, sites to west and north of Arborfield and around Sindlesham including the whole area between Sadlers Lane and the M4. To see the full extent of these proposals, Google 'Wokingham Local Plan Update' and look for 'Interactive map of suggested development sites' or use the following link:

<http://bit.ly/2sHtWsm>

Though these sites will eventually have to be assessed by the Borough's planning team, the promoters of many of these sites will be unwilling to take "no" for an answer and a long process of enquiries and appeals can be foreseen. Meanwhile some promoters are attempting to jump the gun by submitting applications ahead of the Local Plan Update, hoping that Planning Inspectors will approve their plans, arguing that the Borough does not have a 5 year land supply.

Barkham Square

The main site in Barkham is of course Barkham Square. This involves extending Arborfield Green (the former garrison site) on open land to the north of Arborfield Green, stretching from Commonfield Lane to Langley Common Road.

Barkham Square was previously submitted as a possible development site as part of the Wokingham the Core Strategy. This was rejected by the Planning Inspector who considered it would not achieve sustainability benefits, would affect separation from nearby villages and would have an adverse landscape impact. Eight years on, we are back to making the same arguments all over again.

Barkham residents are already concerned about traffic congestion. This was identified as the main concern in the Residents Survey carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan. Expansion of Arborfield Green will inevitably lead to even more traffic having to use residential roads such as Langley Common Road, Barkham Road and Bearwood Road, especially as Barkham Square will have no direct access to the new Arborfield Cross Relief Road.

The Core Strategy allocated 3,500 homes for the garrison redevelopment, including some lands to the south at Hogwood Farm. So far just a few hundred homes have been built. In spite of progress being slow, the parish is already being expected to accept further expansion. Barkham Parish Council finds this totally unreasonable, especially as most of the promised infrastructure has not even left the drawing board.

District Centre at Arborfield Green

The proposed District Centre at Arborfield Green is a part of the promised infrastructure and is only in the early stages of planning. Crest Nicholson recently carried out a consultation for the District Centre, which will be located near to Bohunt School.

Personally, I found the concepts rather disappointing. First of all, the plans do not live up to the concept of Garden Village principles. To do so, I feel that the district centre should be better integrated with the surrounding open spaces, in particular the village green which is intended to lie between the centre and the stables.

The road layout seems unsatisfactory. The proposals do not have adequate north-south primary routes running through the whole development. As a result, the new roundabout in Langley Common Road will be the prime entry point for the northern and western sectors of the development.

There is a case for using the 'legacy library block' as a community centre. It would be useful, though, to know exactly what these buildings currently contain before making a commitment on this. That said, the community centre ought to be adjacent to open space to allow for outdoor events and there should be room for future expansion. Adjacent green space would be invaluable and cannot be added as an afterthought.

Space has been allocated for a medical centre. It is not clear whether this is adequate, but the first obstacle is that the Care

Commissioning Group has not yet made a commitment to place a facility here, as explained in the previous edition of this Newsletter.

WBC advise that they still plan to locate a swimming pool near the District Centre, but this project is still said to be five years from fruition.

Stables and horses

It is pleasing to note that Crest Nicholson has made an excellent job of restoring the infirmary stables. They can be viewed from Tope Crescent or from the car park south of the community centre in Sheerlands Road. I await with interest to see what opportunities arise to make good use of these buildings.

Crest Nicholson have also commissioned sculptures of three running horses which will be located next to the new roundabout on the A327. I have seen the initial models – they should prove to be a spectacular piece of public art.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are now busy writing the detailed policies and drafting the Plan document itself, using all the evidence gathered during the process so far, including the residents' survey, focus group outputs, research paper and analysis of housing needs. The recent 'call for views' has also produced some first rate submissions which are on the home page of the Neighbourhood Plan website www.arbarplan.com.

There are a number of Neighbourhood Plans already in place in nearby parishes that face *cont...*

...cont the same challenges of development pressure. We have been discussing those documents with the people who wrote them, and we are adapting elements of these 'tried and tested' plans to our particular needs where we can.

We have been keeping officers at Wokingham Borough Council abreast of our work as it has progressed, so that, when the draft plan emerges, there won't be too many surprises about what it contains.

The next key stage is to have the draft plan undergo a 'health check', probably using someone from the panel of planning inspectors working directly with us, so that we can be happy that it is ready to be released as a draft for consultation or, alternatively, to highlight any further work needed. Currently it is expected that the consultation draft to be issued early in the summer.

The Neighbourhood Plan will not be able to put a stop to all the development, but it should have a strong influence on making sure that standards are kept high, especially in terms of ensuring adequate amenity spaces and landscape zones. Also, it can require an appropriate mix of housing types.

As always, you can keep up with progress, or contact the Neighbourhood Plan team through the website.

Laurence Heath
Vice Chairman
Barkham Parish Council



News from your Parish Council

The Parish Council now has a new Clerk. Ellen Tims joined the Council as Clerk in January. She is new to the role and will be undertaking training to help her develop her understanding of the role. Ellen comes from a managerial background and has worked in and managed Nurseries and Retail shops. She has experience of administration from these roles, which can be transferred to the role of Clerk.

Ellen will be based at the new Council Office at Arborfield Green Community Centre. The public opening hours of the office are Monday and Wednesday morning from 10am until 12 pm. Our new contact number for the office is 0118 976 2089.

JUDITH NEUHOFER

Many residents of Barkham and the surrounding parishes will know Judith, mainly for her 22 years' service, working as the Clerk to the Parish Council. Ju-



dith has been instrumental in keeping the Councillors on track and making sure that we fulfil all the tasks we have to complete. All of this she has done from a room in her own house.

Judith had already decided that she wished to retire from her post and hoped to enjoy time with her husband, Keith, travelling and taking part in the walking and other sporting events that they enjoyed. It came as a devastating blow when Keith suffered a fatal cardiac arrest after heart surgery. Even though she had decided that she did not wish to continue in the Clerk's position, Judith has worked with the Parish Council and our new Clerk, Ellen Tims to make the transition to a new Clerk and into the new Parish office as seamless as it could be.

We will always be grateful for the work that Judith put into the Parish Council, from the Litter pick in March to answering all the queries she has received from residents over the years, concerning Planning and other areas of Wokingham Borough Council matters. Judith has many friends throughout the local area and will, I am sure, receive support from all of them.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work and to offer once again, our deepest sympathy for her loss.

Thank you Judith.

The photograph is from the 'Opening' of the Shelter on the Juniper Field and is one of the very few times that Judith (far left) appeared in front of the camera.

Pam Stubbs
Chair, Barkham Parish Council



Barkham Parish Clean Up Day 2018

Meeting at Barkham Village Hall on Sunday 25 March 2018 at 9.30am to 12noon.

Please come along and lend a hand but remember to wear gloves, strong footwear and suitable clothing.

Refreshments, safety vests and litter pickers will be provided.

Just turn up on the day or for further details please contact Derek Oxbrough 0118 976 0578 or visit: www.wokingham.gov.uk/litterpick

LOVE your neighbourhood
Help keep it green!



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Borough Councillor's Report

Roads (Stuck in a Jam)

As I have said many times before, Wokingham borough has among the highest ratio of car ownership in the country – less than 6% of local households are without a car. In addition car ownership in the Borough is also one of the highest nationally for households having two or more cars.

The borough's road network has the unique problem of serving this high level of car ownership, which means it's trickier to maintain and upgrade without causing problems and congestion. The level of car ownership, this means the car has to be central to the council's policies on infrastructure. Wokingham like the rest of the southeast suffers from traffic congestion and on top of this we have utility companies who seem to be digging up roads endlessly. In a year, over 9,000 notifiable pieces of work are carried out on Wokingham's roads by utility companies and the Council. Why is this? Well like all things the networks decay and fail and bearing in mind we all rely on the vital services delivered by these networks, make do and mend repair work only helps in the short term but they reach a point where this is no longer possible and major replacement work is

required. This includes future proofing to take account of the additional load, new technology and the additional demands new developments place upon these networks both residential and commercial.

A great many of the service networks around the borough are of an age where major repairs are required and to avoid major failure which will impact delivery of the services such as water, drainage and the electricity supply to homes and businesses these repairs must be carried out.

Following on from the delivery of the station link road and the Shinfield relief road there are 5 new major road projects planned over the next 5 years, including Arborfield Relief Road (now with planning permission) a new bridge at Barkham, North Wokingham Distributor Road, South Wokingham Distributor Road, Nine mile ride extension and the Winnersh Relief Road (1st half due to be open shortly). These projects are costing hundreds of millions of pounds most of which will come from government grants and developers' contributions. To recognise the impact these works will have on the current road network, where possible as much of this work on new roads is planned to be built off line.

In addition to the major roads, there is a programme to replace the all the borough's worn out streetlights as well as junction upgrades, new junctions and road improvements 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, cyclists and horse riders).

The council has plans for 2 new park and rides with future plans for additional locations, and will be looking to extend the destinations served by these park and rides.

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

So far we have secured over £40m in government grants to enable us to deliver the infrastructure the borough badly needs and the residents deserve. This is in addition to the tens of millions of pounds from developers building new homes in the borough and wherever possible we plan to deliver this infrastructure in front of development.

The Council owns and operates more than 16,000 street lights and there is a 5 year replacement program which we are 18 months into. The cost of operating these lights is split between energy costs and maintenance costs. This year we will spend more than £600,000 on electricity for street lights and more than £300,000 maintaining them. In 10 years' time our street lighting energy bill could be more than £1.3m a year and rising with the old street lights. Lighting technology has improved significantly over the last few years and modern LED lights require significantly less energy many of the lighting columns are at the end of their serviceable life and to ensure no danger to the public we have had to step up the maintenance and inspection to ensure they remain safe pending their replacement.

The cost of the new street lighting is £12m and again we have secured a grant from central government of £8m, delivering

some millions of pounds of savings over the life of the new lights.

Add all this to the regeneration of Wokingham town centre which requires road repairs and redesign and it becomes obviously clear why we have the congestion around the borough.

Nobody likes to sit in traffic and we are all victims but what is being done is being done for future generations and the option of doing nothing is not an option, people want to come to live in Wokingham and while the governments see development as the engine that drives the economy the council must respond and deliver the infrastructure this demands.

Remember I am available to provide support for any issues you may have with regards to the borough council and I am always available on the phone or email to deal with any enquiries or questions you may have with regards to your borough council.

John Kaiser
Borough Councillor
For Barkham Ward and
Deputy Mayor for Wokingham
Email:
john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk
Telephone: 0118 976 2116
Mobile: 0771 419 2352

Late news: The council now believe they have a land supply which is equal to 6.80 years which will allow them to defend against unsuitable and unsustainable planning applications from opportunistic developers.

The important numbers are over 1000 homes built April to November 2017 and over 1400 houses at various stages of construction in the borough.



Our meeting in December was our Christmas party. We all enjoyed wonderful food and mulled wine – which we provided for ourselves – and contributed to gifts under the Christmas tree which we chose from following playing a word game.

In January we held a card making workshop where we made a card using the "iris folding" technique. We all completed a card to take home. The photo shows 3 cards made by (left to right) Marilyn, Marion and Chris.

The AGM was held in February and we held a "silent auction" of items brought along by members to raise funds for the club. We

were horrified to be informed that the paint that was going to be used by volunteers to refurbish the main hall was stolen from the locked store room. This means that it was a hall user who stole it. Please everyone show some respect for those who donate their time trying to spend money wisely and improve our lovely hall for the benefit of all.

The meeting on March 7th will be an "Edwardian Murder Mystery".

We meet at Barkham Village Hall on the first Wednesday evening of the month at 7.45pm. Visitors are welcome so if you are new to the area why not come along and meet us for an evening and then see if you would like to join.

Pam Edwards

For more information please contact our Chairperson Mrs Pauline Vestey on 979 1714



The Quiz

The theme this time is “American States”. Each question refers to a (different) state of the USA.

1. Which is the largest US state by area?
2. In which state is Amazon’s HQ?
3. In the Simon & Garfunkel song “America”, on which road are they “counting the cars”?
4. In which state is Cape Cod?
5. Niagara Falls is part of the boundary between Canada and which US state?
6. In which state is the HQ of the Church of Latter Day Saints?
7. Which state has produced (i.e. born there) the most US Presidents, starting with George Washington?
8. Where did Holly originate from in Lou Reed’s “A Walk on the Wild Side”?
9. In which state was Martin Luther King assassinated?
10. And finally.....which state can claim infamy by giving The Donald the greatest percentage share of the vote in the 2016 presidential election? Clue: The state capital is Cheyenne.

Answers on page 23

Loddon Valley Ramblers’ Walks

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

Sunday 11th March 10:00. A 6 miles circular walk to the north of Henley. Lambridge Wood, Bix, Middle Assendon and Henley Park. 2 short steep inclines. **Start: [SU759826](#)** Car park in Henley behind Waitrose. Meet at library end. RG9 2FD. Leader **Chris R, 07710 534818.**

Sunday 18th March 10:00, 6 miles: A lovely walk through Sulham woods, across fields to Tilehurst, on to Sulham, returning by the river Pang. **Start: [SU634765](#)** Pangbourne station road car park by the village hall. No charge on Sunday. RG8 7AN. Leader **Cathy O, 07940 801261 or 0118 961 9024.**

Sunday 25th March 10:30, 4 miles: Along the Thames Path from Hurley between Frogmill Farm and Temple and through the adjacent riverside meadows. **Start: [SU825840](#)** Free car park in Hurley village, opposite the church. SL6 5NB. Leader **Ellen H, 07715 553979 or 0118 934 1084.**

Thursday 29th March 10:30, 5½ miles: The Green Lanes of Waltham St Lawrence. Fields, lanes, a village church, a country pub, an old yew tree, **Start: [SU829769](#)** Careful parking in village centre of Waltham St Lawrence RG10 0JJ. Leader **Marianne & Ian M, 07429 337369.**

Sunday 8th April 10:30, 5 miles: Rose Lane and Culham Farms. Farm tracks, country lanes, a mausoleum, the Thames, one steep hill, white deer, and to finish off the Horns Public House. **Start: [SU800812](#)** Careful parking on common and around Crazies Hill village RG10 8NT. Leader **Marianne & Ian M, 07429 337369.**

Thursday 19th April 10:30, 5 miles: Pleasant and varied circular walk from Eversley Church via Up Green and Castle Bottom. **Start: [SU780609](#)** Careful parking around the green at Eversley Church RG27 0PX. Leader **John A, 0118 977 4183 or 07780 966598 on day of walk.**

Sunday 29th April 10:00, 6 miles: Woods, fields and.....a well. **Start: [SU822794](#)** Car park behind Flic’s cafe - near old Seven Stars pub, Knowl Hill. Leader **Mary W, 0118 977 0746 or 07833 582902 on day of walk only.**

Sunday 29th April 10:00, 10 miles: Spring colours in Windsor Great Park. **Start: [SU983699](#)** Wick Road, Englefield Green by Bailiwick Restaurant TW20 0HN. Bring packed lunch. Please call leader(s) if meeting at the walk start. Leader **Derek & Jenny S, 0118 978 5447 or 07816 037164.**



Keeping up to date with BVRA

In addition to this newsletter, which is issued four times a year, we’d like to take this opportunity to remind you of the other ways you can keep in touch with what is happening at BVRA.

We use emails to keep residents updated on development activities in the area, social events and other items of interest where we need to get details out before a newsletter is published.

If you wish to receive these emails you can sign up on the website <https://barkham.org.uk> We have recently simplified the process and all you need to do is supply your name, email address and select the topics you wish to receive emails on. To sign up visit <https://bit.ly/2Ei5nXC> (this is a shortened “bit.ly”) URL link but will take you to the correct page. The full URL is very long!))

The image shows a web form for signing up to receive emails from BVRA. It includes fields for Name and E-mail, a reCAPTCHA "I'm not a robot" checkbox, and several checkboxes for selecting email topics: "I accept the BVRA terms and conditions which contain the organisations privacy policy", "Development Watch Alerts", "Social Events", and "Other Information". There are "Subscribe" and "Unsubscribe" buttons at the bottom right.

We also use Facebook for providing details of our social events and also as a discussion board for residents. The Facebook Page is at <https://www.facebook.com/barkhamvillageresidentsassociation> If you visit the page you will find pictures and a video of the Christmas Carol concert.

To join out the discussion group visit our Facebook page and click on the ‘join group’ button. The Facebook group replaces our forum which has now been closed down as we believe Facebook is a more popular option for discussion.

Finally, we have set up a Twitter account <https://twitter.com/barkhamvra> to get short messages out quickly. If you’d like to receive these then follow us at @barkhamvra



Social Matters

It is now early February as I write this and we are still in the grip of Winter with some cold frosty mornings and an icy wind chill. But the bulbs in my garden are growing well and hopefully by the time you read this they will be providing some welcome colour and herald the start of Spring.

Since my last report there have been two social events. The first was the Quiz Evening which again was a successful and very enjoyable evening attended by 87 keen competitors. This time we had a new Quizmaster, Mike Wagstaff (pictured with his wife), who had kindly offered to take over the task following the retirement of Steve and Anita the previous year. They had been running the quiz for many years and had moved away from the area but did in fact attend this quiz and we expressed our thanks for all they had done. The winning team comprised Ruth and Mike, Louise and Simon, and Julie and Richard - so well done to them. The fish and chip supper went down well and Mike has kindly offered to present the Quiz again in November this year.

The second event, Carols in the Park, took place in the Junipers (see pictures opposite), and was again well attended. It was good to see so many children taking part too and singing along to



the 'Breakaway Brass' band, who once again did a wonderful job. Mulled wine and mince pies, and drinks for the children were served before the final carol singing at the edge of the Park. A bucket collection was given to the band as they had kindly freely given their time.

This was a lovely start to the Festive Season - and thanks go to all those who helped.

The first social event of 2018, will be the Family Skittles Evening on March 10th.

Then the next event will be the annual Children's Easter Egg

Hunt on Easter Sunday, 1st April, starting at 3pm in the Junipers Park. Entrance on the day is 50p for the children, and while the youngsters are excitedly trying to find their tokens to exchange for little chocolate eggs the adults will be able to buy raffle tickets for that Giant Egg and other prizes.

Other events for 2018 have already been planned: There will be a Barn Dance, with a live band, on Saturday 22nd September, and a Quiz Evening on



Saturday 24th November. These both take place in the Village Hall and include a supper and a bar. More information about these will appear in the next newsletter. They are always fun events so please make a note of the dates in your diaries. Tickets will be available nearer the time from Gill Powell, preferably by email - social@barkham.org.uk or by telephone 978 3373

I look forward to seeing many of you at future events, enjoying the fun and supporting your local Barkham Village Residents Association.

Shirley Warner
Social Committee Member



Yes, but...?

For three days next month, I've got the privilege of joining a small team that has been invited into an Oxfordshire school. The task we've been given is very simple: to put on a series of events designed to give pupils and staff a chance to think through the Christian faith for themselves.

It's a rare privilege to be asked to do something like this, especially in a day when we tend to be so scared about discussing differences of opinion over the very biggest questions of all. So massive credit to the school for taking the risk of inviting us in! And of course, we'll go out of our way to recognise and respect the fact that many of those we'll meet come from very different backgrounds and have very different views.

One of the ways we'll do that is by trying to tackle some of their biggest objections to Christianity head on. Short lunchtime events, combining free food, a punchy talk responding to a major objection, and plenty of time for questions (with almost no questions ruled off-limits) can be very stimulating indeed.

But which objections should we try to tackle? That's what I've been wrestling with, as I've sat at my desk this morning. Because let's face it – there are just so many! Actually, the type of scale of the claims Jesus makes mean there are bound to be. He doesn't present himself as an optional extra, who he says we can

take or leave, but as our rightful King, our only Saviour, and our future Judge. So it's no wonder there are so many things the Bible says that sound outrageous when we first hear them, and so many questions thoughtful people have about things Christians believe.

Maybe you can think of some right now... Why would anyone even assume what the Bible says is true? How can someone who lived 2,000 years ago be relevant to us today? How can we know there's life after death? If God is so good, and in control of all things, why is there suffering? Won't following Jesus simply ruin our fun? If Jesus is so good, why are Christians often so bad? On and on the list goes...

I wonder which questions or objections would be at the top of your list? We do hope you feel able to come and join us at St James' Church and ask them. Jesus faced so many questions in his lifetime and was very clear that those who follow him should be willing to face them too. So we're delighted that every Sunday we're joined by people who wouldn't call themselves Christians, but are looking into these things.

In fact, one of the courses we sometimes run to introduce interested people to the Christian faith begins by asking everyone who attends 'If you could ask God one question, and know it would be answered, what would it be?', with the promise to try to address them in the sessions that follow.

So why not come and join us one Sunday, stay for a coffee after the service, and fire away?! You'd be ever so welcome.

David Horrocks



St Eligius Church Arborfield Green

2017 brought a lot of changes to our church and the community that surrounds it, with many more of the new homes built, and the decision of the MoD to let their unused housing stock to private tenants. As a church, we were able to continue thanks to the support of the Diocese of Oxford, and in particular Canon Julie and the team at the Parish of Finchampstead and California.

The changes continued on March 5th, 2018 when Rev'd Tonia Elliott



was welcomed at a special service at St Eligius, by Bishop Andrew Proud the Bishop of Reading as the New Communities Minister for the area. She and her family will live at Arborfield Green and she will be based at St Eligius.

Last year we re-launched our lunch time concerts, and are delighted that the programme is continuing into 2018. Each concert is free for everybody to enjoy. You can also book a delicious buffet lunch for which we ask for donations to cover costs and to support the ongoing upkeep

of the church. There are many people around Arborfield Green during the day, and this is a great opportunity to enjoy some superb music and meet and share lunch together amongst the growing community in the village. Details of the upcoming programme and performers can be found elsewhere in the Barkham Newsletter.

We are located at the end of Tope Road, which is off Buttenshaw Avenue next to the Cricket Pitch and close to the Community Centre. Unfortunately, the parking used for many years by the church on Baird Road is now being sold by Crest Nicholson for housing, Crest have agreed to provide an alternative temporary parking area off Princess Marina Drive in the new year whilst a permanent solution is found.

We have a weekly service at 11am, which is a Holy Communion except for the second Sunday of the month when we hold an Ecumenical Service of The Word.

On the first Sunday of the month we hold a Family Service @9:30 which is an informal service when families and friends can join in crafts and activities, sing songs, listen to stories, pray, and enjoy one another's company.

For further information please phone the Church Office on 0118 9730133 or email office@steligius.church

To keep up with our upcoming events you can also find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at /steligiuschurch and on the Church of England website at <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/7376/>



Lunch-time Music at St Eligius Church Arborfield Green

The Lunch-time Concerts continue to be very popular and the Church is always well filled. People enjoy the good quality music, delicious buffet lunch, socialising with friends and meeting new people and the performers!

The Concert on 6 December 2017 by six Students from The Sixth Form College Farnborough, with their accompanist, Claire Tester, was a special highlight. It coincided with the Centenary of Finland's Independence. Following performances on the cello, clarinet, flute, horn, piano and voice, the students led the singing of the Finnish National Anthem, joined by Finnish ladies in National Costumes! See photo below.

The January 2018 Concert by a talented young pianist, Guy Murgatroyd, presented Children's Songs by a Jazz pianist 'Chick' Korea. It reflected children's quirks and personalities and was accompanied by art work created by the pianist's mother.

A New Series of Concerts in 2018!

All Concerts are on a Wednesday and start at 12.30 pm

	Margaret Bolt & Susan Frost Piano Duo
14 March	
	Students The Sixth Form College, Farnborough
11 April	
	Rebecca White Soprano
16 May	

Admission free, to include Buffet Lunch

Retiring Plate Donations in support of St Eligius Church
To book your Lunch, please, contact Rita Le Var
(Tel. 01252 372320, E-mail: rita_le_var@ntlworld.com)

St Eligius Church, Tope Road, Arborfield Green, Reading, Berkshire RG2 9NB

Do come and join us for a thoroughly enjoyable lunch-time experience!

A warm welcome awaits!



The December concert



Alan's Patch

This winter we have enjoyed open log fires for the first time in many years. I've spent quite a lot of time splitting logs, wielding a long axe, my neighbours can probably confirm!

Meanwhile in my patch we've still plenty of carrots, parsnips, leeks and a few beetroot left. The spinach has taken a battering from the weather and the pigeons, but I'll cover them soon and let them re-grow for a month or two before digging them up to make way for this year's sowing of carrots. We are still eating butternut squash, shallots and apples stored in the garage. Sadly, the potatoes have nearly run out, much earlier than normal because some of the plants got frostbite last spring when I was caught off guard, so I am having to buy potatoes, all very strange.



In the greenhouse I sowed some tomato, aubergine and chilli seeds a couple of weeks ago in the propagator and they have started their quest for glory. My automatic lights artificially extend the daylight to help them grow into better plants. Meanwhile



the seed potatoes are chitting in egg boxes in the good light of a frost-free window.

I've just received a nectarine tree and a couple of blueberries to plant when the current cold snap has finished. I've completed the pruning of the fruit trees.

The leaves have been harvested and are rotting in the leaf cage.

The leaf mould from last year is in a compost bin waiting to be spread out shortly. Meanwhile that's where the carrots and parsnips are stored.

Roe deer are regular visitors, the slope in the field just catches the sun and they love to lie down there. There have been lots of tits and finches. They like my patch when the pigeons aren't around. We have also had a flock of redwings from time to time. I've recently started to hear the rooks again, they are starting to think about nest building. The snowdrops are out, spring is just around the corner, I hope.

Alan Edwards



Arborfield Gardening Association



Hello Everyone!

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and great New Year ?!

In our November meeting, members were entertained by Paul Patton, a Plant Pathologist, Writer and Broadcaster. He can also be heard on "Dig It", a BBC gardening phone-in programme – you can catch up on BBC i-Player. Paul gives talks on a wide variety of gardening topics. On this occasion he gave an illustrated talk on "Wildlife in the Garden". It turned out to be a bit of a surprise for some, who were expecting to hear of nice wildlife not the nasty sort, but he happily satisfied them during the Q and A period afterwards!

Our Christmas event in December was held at The Bull in Arborfield and a very enjoyable time was had by all who attended. Excellent food, friendly staff and lovely atmosphere.

The topic of our first meeting of the New Year in January was "Growing Vegetables in a Small

Garden" a talk given by Geoff Hawkins. Geoff retired in January 2012 as head gardener from the private estate of Mill Court near Alton, Hampshire where he had worked since 1977. As a head gardener running a small estate of 30 acres, meant that he worked in greenhouses, vegetable and fruit gardens, herbaceous and shrub borders as well as looking after the trees, ponds and natural features on the estate.

Since retiring he has lectured at local adult education centres on gardening skills, garden design and growing your own fruit & vegetables. He is a member of the Surrey Guild of Judges and Lecturers and on the list of speakers for the Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies.

For over twelve years he was a regular expert on LBC's Weekend Matters along with Matthew Biggs, Christine Walkden, John Allbutt and Jim Buttress and has also appeared on BBC Southern Counties Radio and Delta FM. Geoff has also been part of the team at Loseley Gardening Show with John Negus, Peter Mills, Paul Patton and Alan Sergeant.

For a little bit of light relief from the day job he has also been involved in the running of Froyle Gardening Club, having done two stints as Chairman and having been on the committee for many years. He has also taken part in 23 of the 25 pantomimes produced by the Froyle Players! Not many bearded dames around these days! Geoff demonstrated these entertainment skills throughout his energetic and amusing talk to us.

The Wokingham Trading Store at the Ormond Street Allotments opened on 3 February where you

might find it interesting to visit (if you wish) the new waterless toilet, set amongst pine trees and complete with a tree-branch loo holder! The "green" facility was recently opened by Wokingham's Town Mayor, Cllr Peter Lucey and made possible by a generous donation from Wokingham Horticultural Association which is celebrating its 65th year as the town's gardening club.

Those of you who signed the RHS petition to preserve land and 500 trees at Wisley from the Highways England plan to widen the A3 road, will be pleased to know that this was successful. However discussions still continue as the announced route removes direct entry to Wisley for some visitors. (rhs.org.uk/wisley)

The Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice – Farnham - are sowing the seeds for their 2018 Open Garden event to raise money for local Hospice Care. They are looking for proud gardeners to open their garden to the public next Spring/Summer. For more information: 01252 729446 / fundraising@pth.org.uk

On March 22nd Jonathan Hogarth will speak to us about Hogarth Hostas; April 26th brings Angela O'Connell to us to talk about the National Garden Scheme; May 12th (NB – Saturday) is a very important day for us, our annual Plant Sale when we raise money to support our programme of speakers and on May 24th we have arranged an afternoon visit to the NGS Garden Handpost, not too far away in Swallowfield.

You are welcome to join us at any of our meetings.

Catherine (Chair)
catherinebreen@gmail.com

Barkham's New Order

I am delighted that some volunteers have stepped forward to save the BVRA from collapse. Without them, the Newsletter would have disappeared and I would be wasting my time. And I hate waste.

In some ways, Barkham's political system mirrors the type of structure that has provided great stability to modern democracies. The USA has its House of Representatives and the Senate, for example, and the UK has the Commons and the Lords. Similarly, Barkham has both the Parish Council and BVRA, neither of which is able to wield a huge amount of power because that comes from Wokingham Borough Council, a bit like the EU has been for the UK.

It would be dangerous to leave the Parish Council to run Barkham without the BVRA's balancing role. There are probably lessons that our re-invigorated Committee could learn from the national set-up to ensure that the BVRA lives on way beyond the thirty or so years it has already clocked up.

World politics has had quite a shake-up over recent times. The British electorate decided to leave the EU but then weakened the Prime Minister as she set about doing their bidding. The USA elected a President who addresses his nation and the rest of the world through Twitter. North Korea, in contrast, took to conducting its international relations through the medium of nuclear missiles.

Other issues that tend to threaten the status quo of organisations, and the people who run them, these days, are the scandals of

abuse and corruption, and lack of diversity and equality. I am not suggesting for one minute that there is any guilt of such things in the BVRA.

Nevertheless, I thought I should make a few enquiries of my own to make sure. I discovered that there is a gender imbalance to match that of fifteen years ago but was satisfied that this is down to a shortage of lady applicants. It turns out that there is no pay gap whatsoever, which is admirable. I was not able to find any signs of corruption (I was a little disappointed not to be offered a bribe to say that). The only abuse I could detect was by the Newsletter Editor, burning himself out while also covering the Chairman's job for as long as he did.

It is immensely encouraging to hear the lengths that our new Chairman is prepared to go to in his determination to be seen to get it right for the village. He goes into the clinic on 1st April to start his gender reassignment to improve the Committee's male/female balance. Good man, I mean woman, Madam Chairperson.

If you do hear of anything untoward going on within the BVRA, trust me, it will be fake news.

Joe Kinnagan

Barkham Village Hall

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

From as little as £23/hr for both halls. £26.50/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 judith.neuhofer@btinternet.com

FARLEY HILL BOWLS CLUB

We have been enjoying our monthly Winter Social Evenings in our Clubhouse, which is the Victory Hall, Church Road, Farley Hill RG7 1TR. If you are interested in trying your hand at lawn bowls, please come along one day or evening when we are playing at home and we will arrange a trial session for you. You will find details of all our fixtures and much more information about our club on our website: www.farleyhillbowlsclub.org.uk

Our green opens on 18th April, but our first five matches are away this year.

The best opportunity for beginners and prospective new members to have a go at lawn bowls will be at our OPEN DAYS on Saturday & Sunday 5th & 6th 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 to raise funds.

For further information, or to arrange a free trial session, please contact: Bill Dowling, the Club Secretary on 01344 772130 or E-mail: billdowling@farleyhill-bowlsclub.org.uk

Finchampstead Flower Club

We meet every fourth Monday of the month at California Rate Payers Hall. The meeting starts at 8pm with brief information of forthcoming visits and events and then a floral demonstration by a regional demonstrator. The arrangements are raffled at the end of the meeting.

Please come along if you think flower arranging would be of interest. We are a friendly club

and hold several workshops and social events throughout the year.

Entrance £5 each meeting or an annual subscription of £30 should you wish to join.

Next meetings:

March 26th 'Sunshine always follows the Rain' by Sarah Motley

April 23rd. 'My Life in Flowers' by Julia Russett

Please contact our Chairperson, Liz Barrett on 989 2092 for further information



Wokingham

I wrote in the last edition that we are planning a quiz for early this year (actually I wrote that it was February). However, we have now set the date for Saturday 17th March 7 pm for 7.30 pm start. The good news for you all is that it is at Barkham Village Hall – I am sure you all know where that is!

Wokingham Borough Council gives us around 76.8% of our costs, Parish and Town Councils another 13.1% and income from small projects another 3.7%. This leaves us 6.4% (which is around £12,000) to find from fundraising. So, events like this one are vital to our fundraising efforts to keep us operating at full service within the borough.

If you have a team (or individuals – we will probably have teams needing help on the night) that is interested in taking part email us on quiz@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk and we will keep

you up to date. We are planning on having food, so until we get that sorted out we can't give a cost yet, but by registering as above (with no obligation) we can let you know. We are still running our 100Club, with monthly results reported in The Wokingham Paper. If you are interested in joining email us at 100club@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk.

You can also email us with problem issues from our website (www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk) or on public@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk or drop in to our office:

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

Hours:
Mon - Thu: 9.00am - 3.00pm
Fri: 9.00am - 1.00pm

Telephone: 0300 330 1189

CROWTHORNE Symphony ORCHESTRA

At our Spring Concert in February, an appreciative audience enjoyed a rather different evening from our usual offerings – no concerto this time but opportunities for many of the orchestra members to be in the spotlight in a varied programme ranging from the very well known - Bizet's "Carmen" and "L'Arlesienne" Suites, Khachaturian's "Adagio from Spartacus" and the popular Sibelius "Karelia Suite".



Arensky's "Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky" gave the CSO strings the rare opportunity to perform without the wind section after which the orchestra's talented wind section rose to the considerable challenge of Stravinsky's "Symphonies of Wind Instruments", conducted by Andrew Taylor.



In another deviation from the usual format, the music was introduced by Chris Guy, who set the scene for each piece with entertaining and informative background information about the composers and first performances. It was amazing to hear that Carmen was initially judged to have very poor tunes - a view happily not shared by our audience or the orchestra!

The next event in the diary is our annual String Workshop on **Saturday 12th May 2018, 2-5pm at Oaklands Junior School**. As usual it is open not just to orchestra members but to any competent string players of any age. The programme is yet to be announced but it is always a very enjoyable afternoon, so if you are a string player and would like to come along details are on our website. It costs just £10 which includes cake in the interval!

It is quite a gap until our Summer Concert on Saturday 30th June at The Old Gym, Wellington College, but worth mentioning that the programme includes two very popular works, Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" Ballet Suite and Rachmaninov's 3rd Piano Concerto with internationally acclaimed soloist Marco Fatichent. The concert opens with Kabalevsky's overture "Colas Breugnon".

The orchestra welcomes new members subject to vacancies - if you are interested and are a competent player, even if you have taken a break from playing, please get in touch. Our regular membership is now over sixty players and we have a reputation as a friendly bunch with members of all ages.

Weekly rehearsals are on Mondays in term time from 7.45-10pm at Oaklands Junior School, Butler Road, Crowthorne. Our website has up to date information on concerts, rehearsals, workshops and more: www.crowthorneorchestra.com

Chris Gadsby



Trinity Concert Band will return to All Saints Church in Wokingham on Saturday 17th March for a St. Patrick's Day concert.

This prestigious wind band (which recently achieved the top platinum award at the National Concert Band Festival) will present a varied programme of wind band music under the direction of Paul Speed.

Highlights will include a medley of George Gershwin songs, a Glenn Miller selection, William Walton's Spitfire Prelude and Fugue, Resplendent Glory by Rossano Galante and, of course, a selection of favourite Irish melodies concluding with the ever popular Riverdance.

This spectacular concert will start at 7:30pm on 17th March. Tickets are priced at £12 in advance or £13 on the door. Children under 16 get free entry when accompanied by a paying adult.

Advance tickets are available via the band website www.trinityband.co.uk, the box office 0845 2263047, All Saints Church and the Information Centre at Wokingham Town Hall.

For further information, please visit the website.

Joanne Neale



Wokingham Choral Society

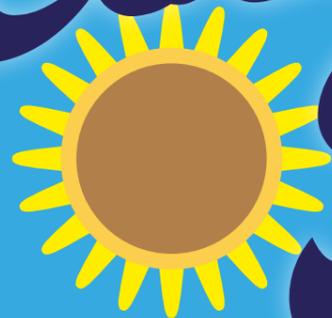
Details of all the following events can be found on www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk

Handel's MESSIAH will be performed by Wokingham Choral Society on Saturday 24 March at the Great Hall, University of Reading, London Road Site, RG1 5AQ. There will be a pre-concert talk at 6.30pm and the concert will start at 7.30pm. Tickets: £15 (under 18s and students £5)

Andrew Lloyd-Webber workshop. Come and join Wokingham Choral Society on Saturday 21 April for a Workshop led by the charismatic Richard Robbins and explore some of the songs of Andrew Lloyd-Webber. This will be held at the Holt School, Wokingham and the price for the day is £20 to include all music to take home.

Wokingham Choral Society's **Summer event** will be a concert of two halves. It will feature choruses from operettas, including Gilbert and Sullivan, followed by John Rutter's Feel the Spirit, so come along and enjoy a great evening of entertainment. Date: Saturday 23 June at 7.30pm at All Saints' Church, Wokingham. Tickets: £12.50.

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Barkham Diary

07/03/18	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
10/03/18	BVRA Family Skittles Evening	BVH	7.30pm
13/03/18	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
13/03/18	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
14/03/18	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
26/03/18	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
27/03/18	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
01/04/18	BVRA Easter Egg Hunt	Junipers	3.00pm
04/04/18	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
10/04/18	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
10/04/18	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
11/04/18	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
23/04/18	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
24/04/18	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
02/05/18	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
08/05/18	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
08/05/18	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
09/05/18	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
11/05/18	Copy deadline for Summer Newsletter		
22/05/18	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
28/05/18	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
06/06/18	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
12/06/18	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
12/06/18	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
13/06/18	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
22/09/18	BVRA Barn Dance	BVH	7.30pm
08/11/18	BVRA AGM	BVH	8.00pm
24/11/18	BVRA Quiz Night	BVH	7.30pm
Weekly Events			
Mondays	Pilates Class	BVH	11.30am
Mondays	Dog Training	BVH	6.30pm
Tues-Fri	Barkham Pre-School	BVH	9.00am
Thursdays	Pilates Class	BVH	6.15pm

AVH is Arborfield Village Hall BVH is Barkham Village Hall
CRH is California Ratepayers Hall

BVRA 2017/18 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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chairman@barkham.org.uk
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