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# Barkham Newsletter

Issue 130 Winter 2019

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

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

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



## CAROLS in the PARK

**Friday 13th December**

**7pm at The Junipers Elizabeth Park**

**Everyone Welcome**

**Finishing with mulled wine or hot blackcurrant and mince pies**

**Closing voluntary collection for the band 'Breakaway Brass'**

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## Are you good with figures? Do you know your debits from your credits?



We are seeking a new Treasurer to join the BVRA Committee as our current Treasurer wishes to resign, due to his advancing years. Knowledge of spreadsheets and business common sense are required. Book keeping or accountancy experience would be an advantage but is not essential. The post takes 30 to 40 hours a year, including attendance at four Committee meetings and the AGM.

Duties are;

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Receiving the BVRA's income from membership subs, Barkham Parish Council grant, newsletter advertisers, social events etc and paying the cheques and cash into our bank current account.</li> <li>2) Paying all the expenses, by cheque, against receipts and being a cheque signatory.</li> <li>3) Keeping an analysed spreadsheet cash book for the current and deposit accounts, reconciling the balances to the bank statements quarterly, and reporting the balances to the Committee meetings.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Reporting to the Committee on the profit or loss from each social event, using a spreadsheet.</li> <li>5) Preparing the year end accounts spreadsheet and answering the queries of our honorary auditor/examiner, presenting the accounts at the AGM.</li> <li>6) Invoicing the advertisers (less than 8) annually and chasing them if they do not pay.</li> <li>7) Renewing our events insurances annually.</li> <li>8) Applying for licences for events where we sell alcohol, usually 3 a year.</li> </ol> |
|---|---|



**We are a friendly bunch and would like to hear from you if you can spare a few hours for your community. Please email the chairman@barkham.org.uk**

## The Winter Quiz

Regular readers may remember the theme in the autumn edition was that the answers to the questions started with the letters from the first half of the alphabet. There were 10 questions but 13 letters, so 3 of the questions had 2-word answers – but all in alphabetical order.

This time the questions cover the second half of the alphabet, but with the same rules as previously. It may sound complicated, but it isn't really!

1. Scottish archaeologist and TV presenter, who has contributed to or presented many programmes, possibly best known for "Coast".
2. US city and 1993 Tom Hanks film.
3. Harry's game?
4. Ringo's birth name.
5. At which hotel in Kenya was Princess Elizabeth staying when she heard about the death of her father, George VI?
6. Second largest lake in the Lake District.
7. British fashion designer, achieved fame (notoriety) through punk designs in the 1970's.
8. "Rebel Without a Cause" was one of the earliest of these.
9. Aden is a city in this country.
10. Birthplace of Freddie Mercury.

Answers on page 19



## Chairman's Chat

For those of you that attended the AGM on the 7th November thank you. We discussed a number of important subjects including an increase in the subscription charges for 2020 and if we should initiate a trial that allows members to pay their subscriptions by direct debit. I am pleased to say that we have decided not to

increase the £2 that you currently pay and we have decided to offer residents the option to pay for their subscriptions by direct debit. This will be introduced as a trial with the Spring edition of the Newsletter in 2020. It is optional, but if you are like me and struggle to find change when the distributor knocks on the door it will mean you don't have to worry again!

We still need volunteers for Treasurer and Membership secretary. These are key roles within the Residents Association. They are not time consuming so please help your local community by stepping forward for one of these roles.

Our social events continue to be a big success and we are conscious

that we want to be as inclusive with these as possible. Carols in the Park is next in December and has always been one of the traditional resident's favourites. Please try and attend with family and friends, I would like to make sure this year's is one of the best attended ever. For further details see subsequent articles and adverts.

Finally, I would like to welcome a new advertiser to the Newsletter, Pineapple Holidays. It's a local Barkham business with a great name! Anything to do with travel and holidays is always a favourite of mine. Make sure that you read their introductory feature in this Newsletter.



## Seasonal Greetings from the Editor

So, suddenly we are on the countdown to Christmas! It seems hardly a moment ago when we were enjoying the balmy late summer, now the weather has turned decidedly wintry and the adverts on the tv are ramping up the excitement to the big day. It is true, the spirit of Christmas has been commercialised and with

the technology of today providing immersive advertising and promising immediate gratification, expectations are often raised to dizzying levels which can cause stress and worry at this time of year. So, if you are in a fortunate position spare a thought for those less able, or lonely and put a smile on someone's face with a random act of kindness, I am sure you will feel the benefit in warmth and wellbeing.

In the Trigg household we do not leave anything to chance when it comes to the giving and receiving of presents. All the family have created and distributed their Amazon preferred present list to anyone who they think may be inclined to buy them a gift. This ensures that they get the right size and colour of the coveted jumper and don't have to fake

the 'it is lovely' smile on Christmas morning. This is due to the many years of not quite getting what you really want, or possibly worse still, getting duplicates, at least this way there is less waste, and everyone is happy. This does mean of course, that surprises are few and far between, but we are a practical lot and prefer not to accumulate lots of unrequired clutter. This will not prevent me from bathing in the ultimate Christmas Eve activity of wrapping the stocking presents while listening to 'Driving home for Christmas' with a cheeky G&T on the go. So, I toast you all and wish you a joyful Christmastime.

Don't forget, newsletter articles or contributions for the Spring edition should be in by 7 February 2020.



## Barkham Bridge

The Barkham Bridge project consists of a new bridge structure across the Barkham Brook and approximately 300 metres of associated carriageway realignment. The current Barkham Bridge is a highway structure along B3349 Barkham Road, operating on a priority give-way system. It will be retained and be converted to a shared footway / cycleway, connecting the sections of footway to the east and west. The new bridge is to be constructed south of the existing Barkham Bridge within private land. The improvements are in order to accommodate continuous flow 2-way traffic which are needed in order to alleviate a potentially dangerous choke point and help ease congestion. Please see our website ([barkham.org.uk](http://barkham.org.uk)) for more details.

As part of the project scope, the council have included the refurbishment of the existing highway drainage system leading up to School Road. In addition, the project team is aware of the condition of the existing Thames Water main on Barkham Road and will likely have to divert a section of this as part of the bridge works. They will explore opportunities with Thames Water to look at the

water main beyond the project scope, particularly, in light of the burst pipes in mid-August 2018. This means the site will occupy a considerably larger footprint than would be expected just to deliver the bridge.

Confirmation from the Planning Authority in February 2017 concluded that the improvements were considered permitted development under the Town & Country Planning Act and did not require a planning application. Preliminary design work was completed and agreed in March 2018 which proposed a new off-line bridge to the south of the existing structure to provide 2-way traffic on Barkham Road, removing the existing bottleneck. As the project has developed since February 2017, we recently sought confirmation of this permitted development based on the scheme layout.

Balfour Beatty has started the work after undertaking some ground investigation works which included feedback from Thames Water and the Environment Agency, to inform the detailed design of the bridge structure and further survey works will be on-going to inform the design.

There is a communications plan and list of key stakeholders with Balfour Beatty to allow them to take forward on-going project updates, more details can be found on Wokingham Borough website.

The timetable for delivery:

Summer / Autumn 2018: Data collection including archaeological and environmental studies

Spring 2019: Complete detailed design

Spring 2019: Site preparation and utilities re-routing

Autumn 2019: Construction begins

Spring 2021: Open for traffic

Barkham bridge is part of the £124m Highways Programme delivered under the SCAPE Procurement Framework which includes the Arborfield Cross Relief Road, Barkham Bridge improvements, Winnersh Relief Road - Phase 2, Lower Earley Way Dualling and three projects which form the South Wokingham Distributor Road, Eastern Gateway, Spine Road and Western Gateway. This programme is only part of the wider infrastructure that Wokingham Borough Council is committed to deliver and includes the West of Old Forest Road, Toutley Road and Ashridge Farm sections of the North Wokingham Distributor Road.

Wokingham Borough Council handed the project over to Balfour Beatty in March 2018 as part of a wider contract to undertake detailed design and construct nine major highway projects across the borough. The nine projects are part of Wokingham's Major Highways Programme, which aim to build vital new strategic roads and highway improvements that will help to alleviate congestion which we all know is a major concern. In meeting the council's responsibilities to deliver new housing, the council is committing substantial investment, secured from the developers and government grants, in a wide range of infrastructure. This comprises new schools, open spaces and leisure facilities, community facilities and roads, amounting to nearly £1 billion investment.

## Development

I continue to support residents on all aspects of issues in Barkham. My number one priority is stopping any further development in our area which is already overdeveloped and to make sure Barkham retains as much of its character as possible.

In Wokingham less than 25% of the houses approved have been built and just look at the state of the traffic now! Unless somebody acts sensibly there is little hope for the green spaces and the environment and that's before any new applications on top of the existing 8000 homes already approved which are yet to be built.

I have called for a halt on further approval of major housing applications (over 10 houses) for at least the next 5 years or until we can measure the impact of the houses which have been approved already and yet to be built. This suggestion is meeting with success with my fellow councillors including the Leader of the council, as the views of the residents across the borough are clear in relation to excessive development. Unfortunately we are still being pressured on housing numbers and updating our local plan which is considered to be out of date by appeal inspectors, it is becoming obvious the only way to deliver the government allocated numbers is to look for a site where the majority of the new homes can be built with its own infrastructure schools doctor surgeries and all the roads and communications as well as services being installed in front of housing delivery. In essence a new town outside the urban and semi urban areas of Wokingham Borough

## The Coombes

This is a very important hundred-acre wood and it continues to be a major concern. There are a number of plots which have sold for sums which would lead one to believe they were not purchased with the sole intention of preserving the environment. Once any activities which are to the detriment of the woodland habitat are allowed, it will become the thin edge of the wedge and this woodland will be lost forever. My concern is that under the guise of protecting the environment we end up with commercial activities and even housing, with all that that brings; such as parking, destruction of woodland to create paths and roadways, all of which are in no way related to preserving the much valued woodland habitat and will eventually lead to its loss.

I am working with enforcement officers, fellow councillors and Arborfield, Barkham parish council along with residents to protect this important community asset. My family and I, with many others from Arborfield and Barkham have used the Coombes over the years for what it was intended, an area of Woodland which defines the very essence of our community. Any loss of such will make us all much poorer.

This is not a political issue and as such I am happy to put my full weight behind saving the Coombes from being turned into anything other than an area of woodland to be enjoyed by all residents. As a result, several legal actions have been taken by the council to protect the Coombes including ongoing monitoring by council enforcement officers.

As you can see my views are clear and as such, I will continue to fight and campaign to protect our environment and ensure you the residents are listened to and your views are respected.

In the event I can be of any help with regards any matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

John Kaiser  
Councillor for Barkham ward,  
Wokingham Borough Council  
07714192352

## Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Spring edition should be in by 7 February 2020. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to [newsletter@barkham.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@barkham.org.uk).

For trade adverts, please email [treasurer@barkham.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@barkham.org.uk), or call 977 1831. 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 late February.

## Social Events Email Alerts

Residents may be interested to know that we have an email subscriber list for early notice of the BVRA social events. This list is ONLY used to make residents aware of forthcoming events and is separate to the Development Watch alerts we also operate. If you would like to subscribe to this list you can do so via the BVRA website [barkham.org.uk](http://barkham.org.uk) and choose the "Keep in touch" option from the home page.



## The Neighbourhood Plan passes a crucial test

Good news! The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan has taken a huge step forward as it has successfully come through the examination process. The Examiner has reviewed the documents and, subject to some modifications, has agreed that the Plan meets the basic conditions and may proceed to referendum. In her report, the Examiner complimented the local community volunteers and Parish Councils for producing a nicely presented plan, tailored well to their planning requirements.

The Steering Group has been working with officers at Wokingham Borough Council to amend the plan in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations. At the time of writing just some minor amendments are yet to be completed. It is anticipated that the Executive of Wokingham Borough Council will approve the modified Plan at a meeting on 28 November, paving the way to a referendum early in the New Year. A revised version will be published and can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan website [www.arbarplan.com](http://www.arbarplan.com) once it is completed.

## The Referendum; why it is important to vote

If the Neighbourhood Plan passes the last few hurdles, then Wokingham Borough Council will use the plan for Arborfield & Newland and Barkham parishes to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. This should be a great benefit to the local community as it is a plan created by local people, not by officers, and has been developed to address the concerns of local people. The greater the number of residents who vote, then the greater will be the credibility of the plan at planning committees and the inevitable planning appeals.

The referendum will be similar to any other election. All residents who are on the electoral roll of the two parishes will be entitled to vote. The Borough Council will be making all the arrangements as usual. Barkham polling will take place at Barkham Village Hall.

## Policies

There are fourteen policies in total. These are concerned, amongst other topics, with protecting the rural setting of villages and settlements, designating areas of public open space, retaining valued local assets, ensuring that development is appropriate to the area and prioritises local needs, addressing local flood risk management and promoting sustainable transport.

Some very useful principles have been established:

a) Separation of settlements. In order to protect the separation of settlements, development proposals outside development

limits will generally not be acceptable and will be required to preserve the character and appearance of the countryside; and not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements.

b) Identity and rural setting. Development proposals must recognise, respect and preserve the identity and rural setting of settlements, with regard to various design criteria including the distinctive character of the varied landscapes of the area and outstanding views.

c) Public Open Spaces. The importance of Public Open Spaces is recognised and they should be retained for this purpose. This applies to the Junipers Field and the adjoining amenity land to east and west, plus the small enclave off The Woodlands.

d) Locally valued assets. Locally valued natural and heritage assets have been identified within the plan and development proposals should conserve and where possible enhance them. These include The Coombes woodland and adjacent areas, the rhododendron avenue along Bearwood Road, the lime grove at Nashgrove Ride and the old granary in Barkham Street.

e) Minimise additional traffic on unsuitable roads. The need to minimise additional traffic on unsuitable roads is recognised. Specifically, in establishing capacity of individual roads, consideration must be given to the frontage land-use and its sensitivity to traffic. Proposals should recognise and respond as appropriate to the fact that there are many narrow country lanes with no footway in

the neighbourhood area, already under pressure from current traffic levels.

A major challenge has been to ensure compliance with national and local plans. The Steering Group sought to push the boundaries as far as possible: in the end, the modifications required by the Examiner were not as extensive as feared. The main consequences have been some loosening of proposals to preserve landscape views and a proposed formula for the provision of open space in conjunction with any new development was not accepted.

Laurence Heath  
Chair of Steering Group  
Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan



The Sunday before Christmas, just after 7pm. Barkham Church, hopefully full (it usually is). Candles flickering on the windowsills. A few words of welcome from the front, then an expectant hush.

Then, into the silence, those well-known words, to that old, familiar tune:

*Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly, cattle shed...*

And so, another Carol Service will begin. Such a part of our village tradition. And yet, for so many, so much more as well. Not just a quaint story on which we happen to have built a civilisation, but a moment to consider - and celebrate - something quite extraordinary. Something that happened not just 'once upon a time', but at a real point in history. Not just in 'a land, far, far away' - but in a real place too: Bethlehem ('royal David's city').

What happened? Verse 2 of the carol puts it so well:

*He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all...*

What a thought! Forget any frantic search to see if God is even there. Forget our desperate efforts somehow to lift ourselves up to him. Instead, we remember once again, 'he came down.'

All the way to earth. Becoming a human being, truly sharing our pains. Living the life we should have lived, then dying the death we should have died. So that, in his sheer kindness, he might lift people like us back to him.

Not sure about that? That's fine. Maybe you want to think about these things some more (perhaps even for the very first time)? Maybe you're really only interested in the carols and candles (and possibly some mulled wine too)? That's fine too. We'd love to see you for any of our Christmas services at Barkham Church this year. Please join us. You would be very, very welcome indeed.

David Horrocks

We warmly invite you to our  
Christmas Services at

 **Barkham Church**  
St James

**Sunday 22nd December**  
Carols by Candlelight - 7pm

**Tuesday 24th December**  
Family Carols - 4pm  
Midnight carols - 11:30pm

**Wednesday 25th December**  
All-Age Service - 10am

**Please join us  
Everyone is welcome**

0118 976 0285  
[www.abch.org.uk](http://www.abch.org.uk)



### Sam Hosgood Sporting Endeavour Fund

This fund was set up by Sam Hosgood in order to help young people who are passionate about their sport and compete at County level or above. We were delighted to present an award at the November meeting of the Council.

The Award was presented to Bracknell and Wokingham Swimming Club to support the sporting activities of Miss Castle, aged 15, who is a talented swimmer, and has this year competed at the National Championships, in which she made the finals. She trains 14 hours a week over 6 days on top of her school work.

### Precept

The Parish Council will shortly be setting its precept which is collected as part of your Council Tax, based on the band of your property. Wokingham Borough Council collects the precept from the residents on its behalf and pays to the Parish Council annually in three instalments. Grants this year have been given to local charities who support our residents such as Keep Mobile, Wokingham Job Support Agency, BVRA, St. James Church to keep the graveyard in a tidy condition, and the Village Hall which pays for the mowing of the grass.

During the year the Parish Council has sponsored the purchase of another new kissing gate which was placed on the Barkham footpath 7, and was purchased and installed by the Loddon Valley

Ramblers Association.

The Parish Council is not authorised to make the big decisions such as planning and road maintenances, but it does have an important role ensuring that the views of the parish are represented to WBC. Therefore, we budget for seeking guidance from professionals where needed, plus we hold a healthy planning reserve fund as a fighting fund should it ever be required.

### Vacancy for Councillors

We have three vacancies for a parish councillor to join the Team as we meet the challenges of a rapidly changing local Environment.

Barkham covers an area from its boundaries in Barkham Road, Barkham Ride, and Bearwood Road to its Southern boundaries in Arborfield Green (the majority of which is in Barkham), Park Lane, and towards the end of Langley Common Road and School Road.

From established communities in Elizabeth Park, rural and semi-rural areas and the new community developing at Arborfield Green, the Parish faces many opportunities and challenges. The Council has been heavily involved in commenting and consulting on new development as well as challenging new proposals like the potential 500-1000 houses at Barkham Square.

Parish Councils are beginning to benefit from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will provide funds to help enhance facilities for residents. There is also a Neighbourhood Plan in prospect.

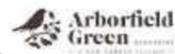
This means we need as broad a spread of councillors as possible

as we work with residents on the future of the area.

Existing councillors live across the Parish. To find out more, contact our Parish Clerk and arrange to come along to one of the monthly meetings.

### History Books

The "Barkham A History" book can be obtained from the Clerk at £8.50 each or from Henry Street Garden Centre. These will make ideal Christmas presents for anyone who is new to the area and does not already own one.



Would you like to be involved with events at Arborfield Green?

Why not join our Events Committee?

We meet regularly to discuss ideas and plan for future events. Roles we are looking to fill include:

- \*Treasurer\*
- \*Secretary\*

Please email: [community@arborfieldgreen.co.uk](mailto:community@arborfieldgreen.co.uk) to find out more.

### Wokingham Choral Society

### Carol Concert

Saturday Dec 14th, 6pm at All Saints' Church, Wokingham.

Entry by programme (under 5s free)

Seasonal refreshments will be served from 5.15 pm.

[www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk](http://www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk)

NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS  
TRINITY CONCERT BAND  
PRESENT THEIR

# Christmas Concert

FESTIVE MUSIC & CAROLS FOR ALL THE FAMILY



SUNDAY 8 DECEMBER - 4pm  
READING MINSTER, ST MARY'S BUTTS

TICKETS £12 up to 1 week before | £14 thereafter | students £7 | u16s FREE  
Available via our website and the box office 0118 449 2099  
Newcomers get their first ticket FREE\*  
\*T's & C's apply. Newcomer ticket must be reserved in advance via the box office

 [www.trinityband.co.uk](http://www.trinityband.co.uk)

CROWTHORNE  
Symphony ORCHESTRA  
CONDUCTOR ROBERT ROSCOE LEADER MIKE JESSOP

# Christmas Concert

Seasonal Music & Carols for All the Family

SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER 4.30pm

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH  
WATERLOO ROAD, CROWTHORNE

Tickets £10 advance, £12 on the door  
Aged 16 and under free

Tickets from Decor Interiors, Crowthorne High Street, the Information Centre, Wokingham Town Hall or the orchestra website

[www.crowthorneorchestra.com](http://www.crowthorneorchestra.com)

### Sing Healthy Choir Christmas Concert

December 14th, 7.30pm

St Crispins School, Wokingham, RG40 1SS

Tickets: £11 / £9  
[singhealthy.co.uk/tickets](http://singhealthy.co.uk/tickets)

The choir will be joined by Ascot Brass, CLASP choir and the school choir of St Michael's Easthampstead. Expect many well-known Christmas classics, opportunities to join in with audience carols, and much festive cheer.

This year's concert will raise money for Crowthorne-based charity Sebastian's Action Trust, along with Macmillan Cancer Support.

YOU'RE INVITED TO A

# CHRISTMAS DAY CELEBRATION

WITH THE LINK VISITING SCHEME

On Christmas Day, we're hosting a celebration full of joy and companionship for anyone in the Borough who would otherwise be alone.

The Link Visiting Scheme along with 'Our Community First' aims to make Christmas day a happy, memorable day for those otherwise on their own. We'll have lots of delicious Christmas food, entertainment and plenty of good company. Transport can be provided if needed.

Contact the Link Visiting Scheme on: 0118 979 8019 or email: [marjie@linkvisiting.org](mailto:marjie@linkvisiting.org). We look forward to hearing from you!

CHARITY NO: 1139248 | [WWW.LINKVISITING.ORG](http://WWW.LINKVISITING.ORG) | [FACEBOOK.COM/COMMUNITYFIRST](https://FACEBOOK.COM/COMMUNITYFIRST)



### Social Matters

Autumn has certainly been a very soggy affair this year but the changing colours of the trees have been quite spectacular. The clocks have gone back, and we now have dark evenings and some chilly mornings, but the Christmas festivities are beginning, and we have BVRA events to look forward to.

We held the Barn Dance on September 28th which was attended by 41 keen dancers and everyone said how much they had enjoyed the evening. The hot dog supper went down well and the usual last dance, the 'Swiss Roll' caused lots of amusement, the key is to NOT let go of the hand!! Alan Dyer, the leader of the Alderbricklam Band said he always enjoys visiting this Barkham Village event as everyone joins in and dances.

The annual Quiz takes place on November 23rd, so a report on this will be in the next newsletter.

Our next event, and the last one for 2019, is the 'Family Carols in the Park' on Friday December 13th starting at 7pm at the junction of the Woodlands and the Junipers. This is a free event, so please



bring your torches and singing voices as the Breakaway Brass Band provide the music. Carol sheets will be provided. On arriving at the Park there will be singing and then mulled wine and mince pies. There will be a bucket collection for the Band as they very kindly give up their free time to do this for us. So, do come along, wrap up warm, bring the children and grandchildren and enjoy this lovely start to the festive season.

#### Future events and dates for 2020

The Family Skittles evening is on Saturday March 14th at 7.00 for

7.30 at the Village Hall. Supper will be provided and there will be a licensed bar. Tickets can be obtained from Gill Powell, by emailing [social@barkham.org.uk](mailto:social@barkham.org.uk) or by telephone on 0118 9783373. This is always a fun event so do put the date in your diaries. More details in the next newsletter.

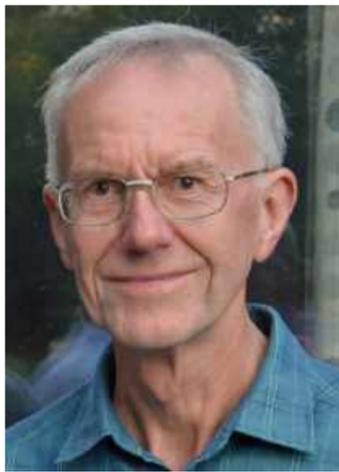
As usual the Children's Easter Egg Hunt will take place on April 12th, Easter Sunday at 3pm in the Junipers Park. A reminder will appear in the Spring Newsletter. The annual Barn Dance and Quiz are also planned for September and November respec-

tively, so look out for details of these in future newsletters.

I hope to see many of you at our planned events, which the BVRA arrange for your enjoyment, as they are always great fun. I would now like to wish you all and your families a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Shirley Warner  
Social Committee Member





### Alan's Patch

A very wet October and early November has resulted in floods further north. Fortunately we have escaped them so far and it has been quite warm again until this week when there has been a relatively cold snap. The leaves have been clinging onto most of the trees with glorious colours, see photos, so I haven't yet done the winter pruning of my apple trees. It's been so wet that I haven't even lit my bonfire yet, as I write this piece over a week after bonfire night!

In my patch I am still harvesting carrots, parsnips, leeks, and spinach which will stay over winter. In addition, there is beetroot, remnants of lettuce and spring onions plus perennial herbs, there's even a couple of cabbages that survived the wrecking squad of caterpillars!

A wet summer led to an excellent crop of potatoes that are now bagged up and safely stored in the old deep freeze in the garden shed, safe from the mice and from serious frosts, should we get any!

I had the best crop of pears ever from my single long-established tree, probably as a result of the dramatic pruning last winter. It

is now much more open and lets the light and air in much better. Similarly, an excellent crop of apples this year because, I like to think, of my improved technique to reduce the effects of the codling moth. These are also stored away from the mice.

A few days ago, I made my first sowing of broad beans, another to follow in February. Now I'm growing for one I need to reduce quantities and increase variety by trying some new things. I need to set aside some time to study the options.

A few weeks ago, I opened the leaf cage to discover that last year's



leaves had decomposed into a superb crumbly black humus. Last year was so dry that the leaves didn't rot down properly but this year the process worked much better. I emptied the contents into a compost heap ready to apply onto the beds in due course along with the compost. The leaf collection season is about to commence.

One recent task was to remove the remains of the peas and beans and their associated sticks and netting. They had all worked out well producing crops from early July until very early November. This year I grew Cannellini beans for the first time. I thought they were climbing beans but it turned out not so—they are dwarf, should read the packet more carefully, doh!

Another good crop of about 30 butternut squashes, not quite as many, or as large as last year but plenty enough to keep me stocked through the winter. Curiously the sweet corn plants were shorter this year, less than five feet high

when normally they grow to six. It had no effect on the size or quality of the crop though. I grew courgettes as usual but this year yellow for the first time. They were very tasty so I'll be growing them again.

In the greenhouse there was a typically good crop of tomatoes, if somewhat later in the season. Cucumbers were fine but aubergine were a failure, I've never been

very satisfied with the outcome. I don't heat the greenhouse so perhaps that's one reason. Chilli and peppers, on the other hand were really successful this year.

One adventure this past couple of years is to plant a nectarine and am trying to train it into a fan shape against a brick wall. It came as a single stem but has grown well and is now starting to look quite established, see photo. I wonder how long it will be before I get some fruit to try.

I've processed surplus rhubarb, black currants, blackberries, gooseberries and raspberries into compote or jam. I've frozen some fruit and surplus tomatoes. I've just done some green tomato chutney for the first time and am wondering how that will taste but it needs time to mature in the jar, so I must be patient. The current pot of chutney on the go is butternut squash from last year, one of Pam's. It's really tasty so I hope I can find the recipe!

On the Autumn Watch front, in the field I've seen the family of roe deer, foxes, the occasional rabbit and red kites soaring in the sky. In the garden I've noticed quite a few jays, tits of various sorts, robins, wrens, pheasants along with pesky pigeons.

### Where in Barkham

Finally, I've been walking the footpaths recently and here is a photo of a kissing gate in Barkham. Do you know where it is? Answer on page 19.



## Arborfield Gardening Association

Hello Everyone!

We have had a busy autumn. In September, we participated in the very successful Village Show, and I am pleased to report, we came a respectable close second in the annual Inter Societies' Quiz at Henry Street Garden Centre. In October there was no meeting in the Village Hall due our responsibilities for the Three Societies Social. Shinfield & Swallowfield Garden Societies join us for this social each year and this year it was our turn to organise the event and I am excited to say we won the Table Competition in the Three Societies' Social, by a mere half point, it was a close-run event. There was no favouritism, the judges of the competition tables were completely unaware of which completion table belonged to which club!

Congratulations to Margaret Edwards & Patsy Townsend, who organised and performed most of the amazing work on the Competition Table and aided in the kitchen by their brilliant helpers, who produced a delicious dinner. We learned a lot from our entrepreneurial speaker on the history and facts about the Riseley Tea Rooms, the raffle made over £100 which helped with costs for the evening and an impressive evening was finished with the two strange quizzes - "Beverages" & "Black & White" which produced more than a few groans!!!

For our September meeting we had an interesting talk from a member of THRIVE. Our Programme Secretary Patsy Townsend organises all the speakers which are of the very best, the

cost of these are supported by our fund-raising events, such as the village Plant Sale in May.

Our next meeting on Thursday 28th November will be a talk on Container Gardening, then - can you believe it - it's Christmas! We shall be celebrating at the Bull in Arborfield.

We open the New Year on Thursday 23rd January 2020(!), with a talk from our own knowledgeable and hardworking Margaret Edwards, entitled "My Gardening Life". Then on 27th February it is our exciting AGM, when we will have another of our crazy quizzes.

### News from further afield

Can you help the Conservation Foundation to gauge the state of the elm trees in the UK? Upload a photo of the elm trees you see (leaves, bark, shape), with its location and as much other information as possible where experts will verify the entries to create an authoritative public database. See more information on website <https://conservationfoundation.co.uk/join-the-great-british-elm-search/>



The bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* has not yet made its way to the UK but having caused significant damage in Italy, France, Germany and Spain, it remains one of the biggest risks to the UK horticultural industry and wider landscape. To reduce risk, the RHS advises people to buy plants

from reputable sources and not to purchase plants from mainland Europe, unless through professional growers. See defra website for more information. <https://planthealthportal.defra.gov.uk/pests-and-diseases/high-profile-pests-and-diseases/xylella/>



A post mortem recently on a dead hare confirmed it was killed by the RHD2 virus, which is contagious and spreading across the country. Please report all sightings on <http://hare-preservation-trust.com/>

### Jobs to do

Now is the time to apply slow-acting fertilisers to really enrich your soil ready for next year's

growth. Hope the weather stays fine while we bed-down our gardens for winter and Merry Christmas to you all!

Catherine Breen



## HRH The Princess Royal visit

On the 27th September, Citizens Advice Wokingham were delighted to welcome Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to open their newly-refurbished Waterford House premises. Alongside local MPs and dignitaries, HRH joined Wokingham's John Redwood, Maidenhead's Theresa May and Reading East's Matt Rodda in taking a tour of the offices and attending a reception in Wokingham Borough Council's Shute End establishment. A group of councilors, including Wokingham Borough Mayor Bill Soane, were also present.

The initial plan to erect a gazebo for grand effect upon the visitors' arrival at Waterford House was scuppered by adverse weather conditions, but events proceeding that could not have run more smoothly. HRH and the MPs chatted to the waiting volunteers,

staff and trustees of Citizens Advice Wokingham inside the offices, along with a number of founding volunteers from 1977 and several clients of the service. This offered the visitors a variety of perspectives on how the service operates and the changes it makes to people's lives.

Following speeches from Tim Abbott, the Chair of Trustees, and HRH, a plaque commemorating the opening of the new offices was unveiled. The attendees were then ushered to the Shute End reception, where CEO Jake Morrison also spoke before HRH took to the stage again before closing the successful day with photographs and a commemorative cake.

Launch new Advice Task Force project

Citizens Advice Wokingham launched a new Advice Task Force service on 22 October, with the first session held at Ashridge Road. The initiative sees a group of volunteers, host 'pop-up' advice sessions on a wide range of issues around the Borough. Alongside these sessions, they will be looking to hold talks and drop-in sessions at community centres.

At least 34 of these Advice Task Force pop-ups will be held across the year, with at least two in each of Wokingham Borough's designated town council areas and parishes. Clients can expect to approach a volunteer adviser with their issue and receive expert guidance, signposting towards the information or agency that could further their path towards a solution, or even resolution of the problem (depending on its nature). Debt, Universal Credit and housing are just a small selection of the topics which the volunteers are experts in. As Citizens Advice is a national charity, you don't even have to pay for it! Look out for the next session here in Wokingham Borough - it could be coming near you.

Help us to ensure everyone in Wokingham has access to good quality, effective advice and information when they need it. Contact us or visit our website for more information: [www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk)

Emmott Leigh  
Communications Volunteer



## Introducing Pineapple Holidays

Following years of extensive travel and a love for everything the world has to offer, myself and a colleague Julie, decided to take the leap almost 18 months ago and start a small independent Travel Agency based in Barkham. In a world where people are now able to search the web and book a holiday in the space of minutes, some people may have thought we were mad but we understood that the world of travel was changing and we knew we wanted to offer the local area a service that could meet these changing needs.

### Is the independent Travel Agent really a thing of the past?

I don't believe we have seen the back of the 'package' holiday but many travellers have started to realise that a holiday doesn't need to be regimented to 7 or 14 nights in one destination, the options available really are endless. We are now seeing travellers who are more open minded about where and when they travel and with the rise of social platforms like Instagram, people long for those destinations and bucket list options. Authentic immersive experiences are becoming more and more popular, but more than anything personalisation is fast becoming one of the priorities. This is where an independent travel agent really comes into their own and it doesn't mean blowing the budget to achieve a holiday that you really want.

An independent travel agent can take a client's idea, however big or small, and use their own experience and expertise along with destination training to access local, personal experts and

suppliers who have specialised in their markets for many years and put together unique trips which are truly personalised.

This can be anything from city breaks, escorted tours, solo travel, cruises, island hopping and anything in between but if you are looking for a holiday that is not available at a click of a button and still wanting the security of knowing everything is Atol Protected then using an independent travel agent really is for you and best of all, the service is completely free.

There are many new destinations that are rising in popularity which are certainly worth considering, here are a few that we are really excited about at the moment.



### Alentejo, Portugal.

Inland, beyond the mountains of Monchique and the Serra do Caldeirao, stretch the plains of the Alentejo, a magnificent landscape of sweeping fields of wheat and sunflowers dotted with tiny whitewashed villages, forests of pine and cork and mighty rivers which encompasses one third of Portugal. The coastal region of the Alentejo, the Costa Azul, is still practically deserted and like the Algaive 40 years ago, with

just a handful of pretty seaside villages such as Vila Nova de Milfontes, Zambujeira do Mar and Porto Covo with their fine sandy beaches.

Evora, the capital of the Alto Alentejo province, is one of Portugal's oldest and most interesting cities and once famous throughout Europe as a seat of culture. There is plenty to explore in this UNESCO World Heritage site. The town is full of narrow streets, fine buildings, old palaces, churches and fountains, and amazingly it is still possible to eat a three course dinner with wine for around 10 Euros.

A pristine Atlantic coastline, similar to the Algarve of 40 years ago. Secluded, sandy beaches are the

perfect place to watch the beautiful Portuguese sunset.

Arguably some of the best wines in Portugal, grown in sun-drenched vineyards; why not explore the Alentejo Wine Routes during your holiday?

Picturesque whitewashed villages and historic hilltop towns crowned by Medieval Castles; perfect for the Alentejo Culture Vulture.

### Ras Al Khaima, UAE.

Just 45 minutes along the coast from Dubai lies the little known Emirate Ras Al Khaimah. With over 7,000 years of history and culture, it is the perfect getaway from everyday life for those who enjoy visiting lesser known places. Discover beautiful beaches, desert oasis, hot springs, and sand dunes, opulent hotels and rich culture, all surrounded by the dramatic Hajar Mountains. Enjoy incredible sunsets on picture-postcard beaches, stunning nature with terracotta deserts and high mountains.

For adventure seekers, the emirate is a great setting for scuba diving, sailing, water skiing, parasailing and with theme parks, kids clubs, shopping and safaris there's something for the whole family. Ras Al Khaimah offers an experience quite unique from that of its neighbouring emirates. You can tick off the crazy on holidays



to Ras Al Khaimah – zip line on the Via Ferrata's one kilometre sky high route, quad bike over rolling dunes and climb the highest mountain in the UAE. Equally you can star gaze through telescopes, discover how Arabian explorers navigated the terrain and fall asleep under the stars to the night sounds of the desert.

preserved 14th-Century buildings, and frenetic souks, early morning fish markets and unique mosques ascertain where you are in the world.

Sarah Jackson

Nomadic life of years gone by can be found in abandoned ghost towns home to perfectly



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Our September meeting was a talk on the 'Windsor Street Angels', a voluntary organisation which operates in Windsor town centre where volunteers patrol the streets on Friday and Saturday nights providing help and advice to those young and not so young people when a night out has not ended well! They do much needed work. October saw the return of Geoff Lunn with a wonderful presentation of wildlife photographs. From his garden hide we were treated to some stunning close ups of birds and animals that visit him. He also travels widely and so we were shown photographs of wildlife that most of us never manage to see. In November Tony Weston spoke about how a young French girl, around the time of the French

Revolution, began making death face masks, and eventually became Madame Tussaud. This story about how the now famous Madame Tussaud's Waxworks in London came about was fascinating, and a real History lesson too! Our Christmas Party is our December meeting when we all bring some food and enjoy a very festive occasion, in the New Year we also have a meal out at a restaurant. We return to the Village Hall in February for our AGM. We have a varied program of events. We meet each first Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm at Barkham Village Hall and most months we have a speaker. Some members of the group regularly visit Wokingham Theatre, and in Spring, Summer and Autumn a member will organise daytime walks with lunch. If you are new to the area you would be most welcome to come along and meet us, and then join us if you wish. For further details please contact Shirley Warner on 0118 9789124.

Shirley Warner  
Chairperson

### What it means to be a Volunteer Driver

The Wokingham Volunteer Centre provide a highly valued services to the local community one of which is Volunteer driving. This is a superb service that help Wokingham residents who are unable to use public transport or cannot drive themselves to enable them to get to medical appointments. Typical places are local surgeries, hospitals, dentists, physiotherapy practices and Royal Berks is one of the main destinations. Volunteer drivers stay with the client for the duration of their appointment, acting as a companion. You can become a bit of an expert on the best parking places and where the various departments are also which departments have longest waiting times. This personal service is a lifeline for elderly and vulnerable residents, who may have no one else to depend upon. You get to chat on the journey and in the waiting areas. You learn life histories, hear stories about families and more about Wokingham in the "old days" more than you could ever find from the library. This is one of the most appealing aspects of the role. Volunteer drivers decide when and how far they want to drive, and expenses are reimbursed.

We are very keen to recruit new drivers, so if you are interested, please do contact us 0118 978 2446. Open: Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 12.30pm.

Phones are manned by volunteers, who help out on a rota basis.

**The Quiz - Answers**

1. Neil Oliver
2. Philadelphia
3. Quiditch
4. Richard Starkey
5. Treetops
6. Ullswater
7. (Dame) Vivienne Westwood
8. X-rated films
9. Yemen
10. Zanzibar

**Where in Barkham?**  
Along the path past Edney's Hill Farm.  
OS: SU788668  
lat/long: 51.394775, -0.868773

## Barkham Diary

04/12/19	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
10/12/19	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
10/12/19	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
11/12/19	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
13/12/19	BVRA Carols in the Park	Junipers	7.00pm
08/01/20	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
14/01/20	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
14/01/20	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
27/01/20	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
07/02/20	Copy deadline for Spring Newsletter		
05/02/20	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
11/02/20	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
11/02/20	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
12/02/20	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
24/02/20	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
04/03/20	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
10/03/20	Barkham Parish Council	AGCC	7.30pm
10/03/20	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
11/03/20	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
23/03/20	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
<b>Weekly Events</b>			
Mondays	Pilates Class	BVH	11.30am
Mondays	Dog Training	BVH	6.30pm
Mondays	Yoga with Jude	AVH	7.30pm
Tues-Fri	Barkham Pre-School	BVH	9.00am
Tuesdays	Sing For Your Self (except 2nd Tuesday)	AVH	1.00pm
Wednesdays	Yoga with Jude	AVH	2.00pm
Thursdays	Pilates Class	BVH	6.15pm
Thursdays	Yoga with Jude	AVH	5.00pm
Fridays	Yoga with Jude	AVH	9.30am

AGCC is Arborfield Green Community Centre  
AVH is Arborfield Village Hall      BVH is Barkham Village Hall  
CRH is California Ratepayers Hall      FMH is Finchampstead Memorial Hall

### BVRA 2019/20 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman: Alan Dixon  
chairman@barkham.org.uk  
977 1831

Secretary: Richard Roberts  
07785 228684  
secretary@barkham.org.uk

Treasurer: vacant  
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