The Voice of the Village
Marsh Gibbon Newsletter
September 2024 Issue 4

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Back in Time: 1916 Steam Engine at MarshFest

Seeing a steam engine driving around the village during MarshFest evoked a strong sense of nostalgia, reminiscent of the annual Steam Rallies held in Marsh Gibbon in the early 1970s to fund the building of the Village Hall.

This particular steam engine, lovingly restored since the early 1980s by Roy Herring of Marsh Gibbon, was one of just four commissioned by the Ministry of Munitions during the First World War. Two were taken to France, while this one and her sister remained behind to haul the heavy agricultural machinery for the vital job of hay binding to ensure the cavalry horses on the Western Front had enough to eat.

Welcome

It feels to me like Marsh Gibbon has reached another level this year. There are clubs for various hobbies and interest with new ones starting regularly, monthly live music at the Plough with Shane and James – The Ploughmen – alongside other performers who want to show off their talents, inspiring Breakfast Clubs with guest speakers, and an evolving Farmers' Market, not to mention a sell-out performance by our amazing choir, the Marsh Mellows, and arguably the best-ever MarshFest over the summer.

I've enjoyed meeting new people (and their dogs!) who have moved in and eagerly embraced our community, helping to keep in perspective any worries about new housing proposals. I've also been pleasantly surprised to see the over-flow pond behind Swan Meadows naturalise so beautifully - watching the swallows dip and dive across the surface one sunny morning was delightful. You can read about the history of the village ponds in this issue, once five, down to two… but now up to three!

Happy reading.

Kath Pullen

If you would like to contribute an idea or article, or you have a business in Marsh Gibbon and you would like to sponsor or advertise in future issues, please email:
marshgibbonvoice@gmail.com

Deadline for Issue 5: 28th March 2025

Joy Bells Ringing!

Not only do we have church bells ringing in the village, we now have a hand bell group ringing locally too.

The fabulous Launton Handbell Ringers helped us along with some taster sessions and we have now formed a new group of ringers from Marsh Gibbon and Twyford.

We are named 'Joy Bells' after the late wife of our benefactor who kindly purchased the bells in her memory. We are learning together so sometimes we bring joy and sometimes we don't – but we are improving all the time!

If you fancy having a go – no experience necessary and no need to read music – do come along. We meet bi-weekly on a Thursday evening at 7.30pm in the Twyford Village Shop.

For more information, please contact Di Hodges: dianehodges21@gmail.com

facebook

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Marsh Gibbon Wildlife Hub
Marsh Gibbon Village Hall
Marsh Gibbon Farmers Market
Marsh Gibbon Business advertising
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Village Life Through a Local's Eyes

Well finally summer arrived and the ground eventually dried out, and since returning to the Parish Council after a break of 35 years I'm actually getting to meet and put names to faces of quite a lot of newer Gibbons. I'm delighted to learn that most share the same affection and concern for the village as me which bodes well for future generations of Gibbon-ites.

Marsh seems to be a place where people want to live and several building projects are being queued up to satisfy that need. The village does appear to be enlarging at quite an alarming rate and we hope that the planners continue to police this sympathetically as they always have. What I will say is that the families who moved into developments in years gone by all had different skill sets that enhanced this village immensely.

On a lighter note, I just heard that a new synchronised swimming club is forming in Marsh and that trials will be held on Saturday 21st September, starting 10am at Ware Pond. Please dress in matching costumes as points will be awarded for presentation and coordination. Judging the event will be the Right Hon Peter Ferens. First to fill the trailer will be guaranteed to make the squad.

To conclude, I gave my cousin who lives in Maids Moreton the first three editions of this magazine and she said what an exciting vibe the village seems to have. Long may that continue.

Les Cross

Award for Kay

Kay Patel, owner of our village shop, has received a **Community Service Award** from the Post Office for her 10 years of serving customers in Grendon. Very well deserved!

Asked what she enjoys most about owning a shop, Kay said: "It's the people that make it all worthwhile, I love chatting to the customers, hearing about what's going on with them and finding out how we can make their lives easier!" That sounds like an invitation to pop in and introduce yourself, doesn't it?

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MarshFest 2024

So MarshFest is over for another year and the consensus from the community is that it was the best one yet! Blessed with a fabulous day of sunshine and plenty of activities to keep everyone entertained, it's fair to say that a great day was had by all… with the Sunday a write-off for most.

Proceedings were kicked off with the arrival of the Classics alongside the sounds of the brilliant Marsh Gibbon Silver Band. The day was then packed with a variety of live music, great food, entertainment for all ages and, most importantly, plenty to drink…incredibly, despite even more ale and cider ordered than ever before, every barrel was still drunk dry!! The evening session saw the headline band The Spokes take the party inside where the night was filled with more drinking, fun and plenty of dancing (not all of it in time with the music).

The village hall committee would like to say the biggest thank you to EVERYONE who supported the event including our generous sponsors, willing volunteers and those who came along on the day. We raised a huge £7,320 which will be put to good use on more upgrades to our brilliant hall.

Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the Village Hall so we plan on making **MarshFest 2025** even bigger and better to mark the occasion. The date is set for **Saturday 16th August**, so don't go making other plans or booking holidays on that date! If anyone has any suggestions or would like to get involved then please get in touch.

As always, the committee are still busy bringing a variety of events to the hall for everyone to enjoy. Dates for your diary include the following:

Saturday 12th October
Drag Bingo with Sandy Flaps

Sunday 17th November
Christmas Craft Market

Saturday 21st December
Christmas Party

These are in addition to the weekly pop-up pub, food vans and our Farmers' Market held on the third Sunday of every month. Follow us on Facebook for more details of all our events.

Emily, Maddy, Mark,
Kathy, Elizabeth
Marsh Gibbon Village Hall Committee

!!Sell Out!!

Getting hold of tickets for the Marsh Mellows **Community Choir Concert in May** was nearly as challenging as snagging tickets to a Taylor Swift concert!

Jonathan Cramp reported:

"Marsh Mellows 24th May 2024. Having missed the cut for the tickets, I managed to buy two (restricted view) from a tout at Marylebone Station this evening. Arriving 10 minutes late, I couldn't sit with 'my very lovely' and was stuck at the door!

Sian and James Dodd: what you have put together in our village is just wonderful. A harmonising choir that turns the most ordinary songs to be so emotive, a group of youngsters singing their hearts out and a packed audience who loved every minute.

A sleepy little village? Not with an evening like that. It was a joy being there."

Maggie Whitford sang a beautiful rendition of 'Emmylou' by First Aid and explains, "My friend Liz passed away unexpectedly in 2021. Singing was a huge part of Liz's life, and our friendship, and 'Emmylou' was a song she loved to sing which is why I chose to sing it in her memory."

The Mini Mellows were fantastic, the two choirs joined together for 'When I grow up' (Matilda) and Mark Tweedale delivered a stunning performance of Freddie Mercury's 'Somebody to Love' to reach a triumphant crescendo.

Choir practice sessions are held 5-6pm on Sundays at the Village Hall, all welcome.

Farmers Market
Continuing to Grow

MGFM is pleased to be back after our break in August. It's been a positive year for the market, and we have certainly built upon the foundation set over the last few years.

We are happy that our following on Facebook is increasing every week since we launched our own page, which was a significant milestone.

The introduction of live music has certainly received a fantastic response from our customers. We have almost doubled the market stalls since April and will be bringing a community stall to the market next.

We hosted our first 'summer celebration' event at Julys Market, and we are pleased to announce that with the positive feedback received, we will be keeping a seasonal theme to our market. The September market will feature a harvest theme, and don't forget that the Christmas craft market will return to the Marsh Gibbon Farmers Market on Sunday, 17th November.

Please follow us on Facebook - Marsh Gibbon Farmers Market. For new trader enquiries, please email infor@mgvh.org

Busy Beavers

Marsh Gibbon Beavers have had a fun packed first year. The numbers have slowly grown and the leaders have been marvellous.

We had our first successful camp and all the Beavers loved the experience and gave them a taste of what scouting is all about.

In May the Beavers helped to keep our village tidy with an evening litter pick.

We look forward to the Colony growing and next year we hope to have Cubs starting back as well, exciting times.

If anyone is interested in Beavers for their child between the ages 6 to 8, please get in touch with Debbie Cross for more information deborahcross464@gmail.com

Happy scouting!

Welcome to Marsh Gibbon!

Aquila and Simon moved to the village earlier this year with their two young children Rupin and Nikhil, and Aquila's father Mukund has been staying. They and have been discovering what goes on in the village.

"We love how friendly everyone has been and because of that (and the very helpful Facebook group!), we have settled in so quickly. We have also loved making the most of all the village has to offer - our eldest will start at the village school in September, he loves going to the playground, and Simon and I have enjoyed the dancing and badminton at the village hall, and also the circuits on Sundays! Little one enjoyed the baby group at the URC!

My father is only a temporary visitor, but has enjoyed all the social gatherings he has attended - coffee at both churches, the Monday walks and the choir concert!

We look forward to meeting more of you and hope to continue being involved in community life. There is so much in the village to take part in! The village shop has also been a big bonus. Thanks to everyone to making us feel so welcome."

The Craft Club

has gone from strength to strength since starting at the beginning of the year. The club meets every second and fourth Monday evening of the month at the URC, 7.30-9.30pm, and often there's a craft to try out with materials provided – last week was glass jar painting - or you can bring your own. A fantastic atmosphere and plenty of banter! Plus a WhatsApp group that is filled with new crafty ideas to give inspiration.

A group of crafters visited the 'Handmade Oxford' Craft Festival at Waterperry in June.

From Marsh Gibbon to the Olympics

A parent's view...

Like most parents of sporty children, our story begins supporting them pitch side. Zoe, Rupert and Charlie all went to Marsh Gibbon School and they thrived on the sports provided by the school and the local teams in Marsh.

Rupert came to hockey quite late, excelling in football, cricket, tennis, and rugby, but following an injury that ended his rugby ambitions while at Cardiff University, he rediscovered hockey through his sister's success with England and GB. Following unsuccessful trials for England, the Welsh coach jumped on the chance to recruit him for the Wales U21s (a Welsh grandmother and living in Cardiff meant he qualified). He later left teaching to pursue hockey full-time, captained Wales in several major tournaments, and made his GB debut in Australia early in 2020 scoring a crucial goal.

Rupert's performance in the Pro-League earned him a spot on the GB Men's Olympic team. With flights and hotel booked, we were excited to watch him achieve his Olympic dream, but Tokyo 2020 was postponed due to Covid. A year later, with no spectators, he became an Olympian, and his team reached the quarter-final.

Rupert had continued success with Wales as he captained them at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the 2023 World Cup and the 2023 European Championships.

Paris would be a hugely different experience to Tokyo, but first he had to be selected. At 31, Rupert was in top physical condition, playing well and scoring goals. It was looking good until a torn hamstring just 15 weeks before selection

made his future uncertain. An operation followed by weeks of intensive re-hab paid off and he was selected to represent Great Britain at the Paris Olympics.

Friends and family joined us in Paris, and many from the Marsh Gibbon community sent supportive messages to Rupert, which he greatly appreciated. Although Rupert was disappointed with the final result, we are extremely proud of his achievements. He has over 50 caps for GB and well over 100 for Wales, and it all began in the Marsh Gibbon School playing field with his friends.

We have been overwhelmed by the generous comments from villagers throughout the Paris Olympics and afterwards when Rupert spoke at the Breakfast Club in The Plough. Thank you!

Peter & Elaine Shipperley

Marsh Gibbon Breakfast Club

St Mary's Church Marsh Gibbon

ESTD 1647 THE PLOUGH INN MARSH GIBBON

June saw the start of a new joint venture between St Mary's Church and The Plough with a monthly Saturday Breakfast Club. Grab a sandwich and a cuppa before taking a seat to be amazed, inspired and educated.

Sasha Woods from Earthwatch Europe kicked it all off with a talk about the Tiny Forest scheme, FreshWater Watch and farming with nature.

In July we heard from **Joe Brouder**, MD of the Vale Brewery who gave great insight into the history of modern brewing and future plans.

And in August **Rupert Shipperley**, GB hockey player drew quite a crowd to listen to a fascinating insight into his Olympic story.

On Saturday 21st September, 9.30am **Steven McCann** of 101 Engineer Regiment will be giving an overview of his career in the military and work in the explosive's unit.

Steve will also be bringing an Army Reserve officer to give a different perspective.

£10* for a sandwich and a drink, no need to book, but do let The Plough know if vegetarian/vegan is required.

*£3 from every breakfast will go to St Mary's Church fund

"I like breakfast-time better than any other moment in the day. No dust has settled on one's mind then, and it presents a clear mirror to the rays of things." George Elliot

ESTD 1647
THE PLOUGH INN
MARSH GIBBON

Restaurant is
OPEN

We continue to serve good food prepared fresh on the premises using as much local and seasonal produce as they can, with vegetarian and gluten-free options.

EVENING MEALS: WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY, 6PM TO 9PM

LUNCHES: FRIDAY TO SATURDAY, 12PM TO 2:30PM, SUNDAY: 12PM TO 5PM

VIEW MENUS ON OUR NEW WEBSITE
WWW.THEPLOUGHMG.CO.UK
TO BOOK A TABLE CALL 01869 866907

Horticultural Society Autumn Show

And the winners are…

Class & Award Winners: John & Judy Cox, Martin Searle, Hilary Lambourne, Peter Ferens, Anne Ferens, Alan Lambourne, Julie Everett, Junior Winners: Rohan & Wilfred. Well done everyone!

Plant Sale We were blessed with great weather and lots of donations with people coming from far and wide to grab a bargain. The addition of a coffee van went down a treat, and lots of children planted sunflower seeds to grow over the summer.

Summer of Talks & Events We've had a great summer of talks and events which have all been well supported by members and non-members alike! We're delighted to welcome several new members to the society.

The flower arranging workshop (including fizz and nibbles), was a lovely evening of fun and learning thanks to our own Hilary Lambourne sharing her wisdom! Our Winter programme includes talks on The Work of the Woodland Trust and the Enclosure of Otmoor (see Diary pages of the newsletter and follow Marsh Gibbon Horticultural Society on Facebook).

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the Marsh Gibbon Horticultural Society and we have a full year of celebrations planned - more on that soon.

Clara with her sunflower grown from a seed sown at the Plant Sale.

Anyone interested in joining the Society, please contact annferens398@gmail.com

Friday 6th December
7pm

Village Hall

Bar and snacks available

NOTE – Booking is essential as spaces are limited

Call 07927 244913 between 9am & 3pm Monday to Friday or email leader@marshgibbonpreschool.co.uk

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Down on the Farm

Last week on Radio 4's 'The Food Programme' there was a comment that made us fact check. Of course their facts were correct but even we were surprised that only 3% of agricultural holdings are farmed organically in the UK. Much lower than Italy, Spain, Germany, France and further afield.

We have farmed organically for 24 years. Years ago our fields often looked pristine. Today some of our fields look far from pristine even though the work has been labour intensive to plant. However, if you look past the untidiness, you will see many insects, butterflies, birds and other wildlife. We briefly talked about returning to conventional farming earlier in the year but we will continue. We don't want the 3% to fall any lower. We start planting again this autumn.

On a less serious subject we have been asked for an update on the goats. They are currently residing on a neighbour's land with high security fencing, but even so if you look them in the eye you might catch a glint and wonder: *Are they planning their next great escape?*

Adrian & Will Lambourne

Weekly Activities

Monday

Bucks Simply Walk, meeting at 10:30am, at URC for a walk round the village (1 hour approx.)

Beavers, 5.15 – 6.45pm, VH

Indoor Bowls, 7:30 - 9:30pm, VH

Tuesday

Marsh Minis - Baby & Toddler Group, 9:30 – 11am, URC (term time only, £2)

Indoor Bowls, 7:30 - 10pm, VH

Bell Ringing Practice 7 - 8:30pm, St Mary's Church

Wednesday

Tea & Cakes, 2:30 – 4pm, St Mary's Church

Tracy Norris Dance, 6 – 9pm, VH

Thursday

Board Games, 1.45 – 3:30pm, URC (tea and a biscuit, £2)

Silver Band Practice, 7 - 9pm, URC

Badminton Club, 7:30 - 9pm, VH, £4

Friday

Café Connect, 10:30am – Midday, URC. Meet friends for chat over cakes and refreshments.

Saturday

The Pop Inn, 7 – 10pm, VH (usually with Food Van from 6pm)

Sunday

The Marsh Mellows & Mini Mellows Community Choir Practice, 5 – 6pm, VH

VH: Village Hall, Clements Lane
URC: United Reformed Church, Tomkins Lane

St Mary's Church

Sunday service: most often at 9.30am but can vary, especially for festivals and special occasions.

Details of services can be found in the monthly 'Life Together' magazine.

Highway Christian Church

Sunday Service: 4th Sunday at 10am, Village Hall. www.highway.org.uk

United Reformed Church

Sunday Service: 2nd and 4th Sunday at 10.30am, and other Sundays for special occasions.

Bible Study: 1st Monday at 2:30pm.

UFC premises are available for hire.

Monthly Activities

Food Market every 3rd Sunday, 10am–1pm, VH

Craft Club every 2nd & 4th Monday, 7.30-9.30pm, £2.50, all welcome.

Lunch Club every 1st Thursday, 12.30pm, URC, for villagers over 65. Booking essential (01869 242634).

Marsh Gibbon Classics Club every 1st Thursday, 8pm, The Plough

Life Music Night every 1st Friday evening, The Plough

Bin Collection Day: Mondays
Download the Aylesbury Vale Bin Collection app

Dates for the Diary

September

Saturday 21st: The Breakfast Club (Steven McCann of 101 Engineer Regiment), The Plough, 9.30am, Cost: £10 (no need to book)

Saturday 21st: Ware Pond Clearing, from 10am, volunteers needed, tea/coffee/biscuits/banter provided

Friday 27th: Macmillan Coffee Morning with Cakes & Raffle, 10.30am – 12.30pm, URC

October

Friday 4th : The Work of the Woodland Trust (Horticultural Society Talk), VH, 7.30pm

Friday 11th: Book Signing by Charlie Ross, auctioneer and TV antiques expert + Bar & Raffle, St Mary's Church, 7.30pm, Tickets: £10 (£5 U18s), sddemellow@gmail.com

Saturday 12th: Drag Bingo with Sandy Flaps, VH, Tickets: £10 (Adults Only), marshgibbonvillagehall@gmail.com

Sunday 13th: Harvest Festival Service, St Mary's Church, 9.30am

POST OFFICE **Marsh Gibbon Village Shop**

Open: Monday to Saturday 7am-7pm
Sunday 8am-1pm

November

Friday 8th: The Enclosure of Otmoor by Nigel Lambert (Horticultural Society Talk), VH, 7.30pm

Sunday 10th: Remembrance Day Service, St Mary's Church, 9.30am

Friday 15th : Village Quiz Night, VH, 7.30pm, sddemellow@gmail.com

Sunday 17th: Christmas Craft Fair, VH, 10am – 2pm (traders can email marshgibbonvillagehall@gmail.com)

December

Friday 6th: Wreath Making, VH, 7pm, Tickets: £45 incl materials leader@marshgibbonpreschool.co.uk

Saturday 21st: Christmas Party, VH (details to be confirmed) marshgibbonvillagehall@gmail.com

Sunday 22nd: United Church Carol Service with Marsh Mellows Choir, St Mary's Church, 6pm

THE PLOUGH INN
MARSH GIBBON

Open: Wednesday-Sunday from 12pm
(Food served: Fri-Sat 12-2.30pm, Weds-Sat 6-9pm; Sunday 12-5pm)

Weekly Fizz Friday
Bottle of Prosecco for £14

Live Music Night
First Friday of Every Month

Quiz Night
Last Sunday of Every Month (tbc)

Horticultural Society Membership is £8 p.p. (£6 Senior Citizen, £15 Family) or anyone can attend a talk at the Village Hall for a small one-off fee. Contact annferens398@gmail.com

Marsh Gibbon Classics: Contact Terry Healy, 07765 012982 or Mathew Orlando, 07771 556200

Success for MGCC Midweek Team, good turnout for Presidents' Day and plans for a Ladies Team

Summer 2024 brought silverware to The Recreation Ground as the MGCC Midweek team won the Buckinghamshire League Shield. Following on from last years' cup success, Midweek Skipper Michael Timms praised all involved for their camaraderie and positive culture within the club.

The Saturday Cherwell League side also had a respectable season finishing in their highest position with more victories than any previous year in the Cherwell league.

Overall, the club continues to flourish and hosted a number of Oxfordshire County Youth matches, bringing the best youngsters in the county to play at The Recreation Ground.

The call has also gone out for female cricketers to come forward and form a new Marsh Gibbon Ladies team next Summer. Anyone interested should contact Carl Needham: ca_needham@yahoo.co.uk

The annual Presidents' Day match on August Bank Holiday Sunday was attended by more than 100 players and spectators. All current and former players were invited to take part and the best turnout to date meant the teams swelled to 15 players on each side. Though more than the customary 11 per team, it is not uncommon in Marsh for such variation with matches in the nineteenth century often pitting the 11 cricketers of Marsh against 22 other villagers!

Club President Bob Summers and Vi Leonard presented the Horace Leonard Memorial Trophy to Club Captain, Stuart Leonard *(left)* as his side comfortably chased down the 203 runs scored by Chairman Carl Needham's team. The post-match celebrations almost saw the sunrise – another Marsh village tradition.

On Sunday 1st September MG Football Club hosted a charity match in honour of **Colin Jessopp** who sadly passed away early this year. The match was between a MGFC XI and Bicester Town Colts XI. Colin sponsored both teams and was also part of the coaching team at Bicester Town Colts (formally Whitelands). All money raised is going to the British Heart Foundation, a charity close to the family's hearts.

Aunt Sally has returned to the Plough, where staff have been gracious and accommodating, and has been successful in recruiting new players to strengthen the teams. Plough 1s had a rocky start and a defeat to Plough 2s, but they've seen a strong second half of the season so could finish anywhere from 2nd to 6th with one game left. Plough 2s have led the way in second place most of the season but a couple of defeats at the end will give Plough 1s a chance to move ahead.

The pairing of Captain Lewis and Paul Symonds look to retain their pairs trophy at finals night. After a gruelling season solidifying their stay in the league there will be an end of season dinner at the pub for both teams to celebrate.

Changes at the Nest

Marsh Gibbon FC experienced one of the most successful seasons in their history during 2023-24.

The team won the Intermediate Division of the North Bucks League to return to the Premier Division at the first time of asking whilst also reaching no less than four cup semi-finals. Sadly, none of these resulted in appearances in finals.

At the recent AGM, the club parted company with former first team manager Terry Hankins. We are grateful for his efforts over the season. We would also like to give our thanks to The Turner family for their service over the years.

With lots of changes at committee level the club is slowly getting into a groove. This season has started well under the leadership of John Patterson. Two draws in two tricky away games so far is a solid return.

Training is currently 6:30pm on Tuesdays at The Nest OX27 0AT if any new players wish to come along.

We have also welcomed a new Veterans side managed by Nathan Callow who play on Sunday mornings, and there is a Reserve side run by Alex Piggott.

Contact Alex on 07564 540943 for info., and follow us on our Facebook page:

Marsh Gibbon Football Club

MARSH GIBBON
TENNIS CLUB

Looking to stay active, meet new people, and improve your racket skills? Join our tennis club!

We offer three excellent macadam courts near the village hall, available for online booking. Members and non-members can play, with a pay & play option for occasional players.

Our social tennis sessions create a relaxed atmosphere for all skill levels, while tournaments offer fun competition. Every other Sunday in the summer, we host a friendly ladder.

For competitive players, we enter teams in the Aylesbury and District Tennis League, including women's and mixed teams.

If you're new to tennis or looking to improve your skills, our coaching team provides personalised instruction for all ages and abilities.

A new offer will be available for anyone wishing to join the club from 1st October for 6 months.

Interested? Contact Andrea Healy at healyandrea@hotmail.com.

The State of our Rivers

The first Great UK WaterBlitz took place from 7th-10th June, 2024, with over 2,600 participants measuring the water quality of local rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds. FreshWater Watch (part of Earthwatch Europe) used this data to assess river health based on nitrate and phosphate levels.

Results showed that 75% of data points indicated poor ecological health, with significant regional variation. The Thames and Anglian regions had the worst water quality, with up to 89% showing poor ecological health.

The Cherwell and Ray river basin, home to Marsh Gibbon, ranked fourth worst in the whole country.

Key factors driving pollution include: increased agricultural pressure (63%); and reduced natural areas (9%) versus artificial surfaces (24%) in the Thames district. Wetland presence also differentiated the North West from the Thames district. For more details visit: earthwatch.org.uk/greatukwaterblitz/

Cherwell and Ray Water Watchers are a group of coordinated volunteers who regularly test freshwater quality, including nitrate levels, phosphate levels and visual factors. The data is fed into the global Freshwater Watch database.

It is important that we have a team of water testers in Marsh Gibbon, could you help to test once a month?

claire.robertson@thames21.org.uk

Past Times

Ponds in Marsh Gibbon

To most people today a pond is either a small garden feature, or something occasionally seen in a field on a countryside walk. However their importance, until recently, was part of the requirements of farming and countryside life.

Here in our village, we are left with just two of those past necessities: Townsend Pond and Ware Pond. But, within the village limits, there were six ponds: Townsend, Mud, Ware, Box, and two in Castle Street. The ponds were for livestock to drink from, as cattle were moved through the village roads on a daily basis.

In the wider limits of our parish most fields had a pond, as these were essential for the watering of livestock, but as mains water became available most field ponds became unused and abandoned.

A further requirement for roadside water was for steam engines to top up on their journey, up to the time of the Second World War. Most people are familiar with John Constable's famous painting 'The Hay Wain' where a wagon is driven into a pond. And stood there. This was a familiar part of agricultural life in the summertime. The iron tyres of farm wagon's wooden wheels would come loose as the wood dried in the hot dry weather. The purpose of standing the wheels in water was to swell the timber and tighten the tyres. These ponds had stone bottoms to facilitate this, and Ware Pond, and the one in Castle Street by Leopold Farm were particularly good for this.

Top: Mud Pond, West Edge; Bottom: Ware Pond

As the need for ponds decreased, so has the maintenance of them, and they became untidy and useless and so gradually were filled in. Ware Pond was filled in, but was reopened as a village feature by the Parish Council. The pond has an abundance of wildlife and is now admired by many using the seat to rest and reflect.

Roy L. Lambourne

The Ewelme Trust: How it all began

It can be puzzling to learn that a Trust based 25 miles away owns four farms, both pubs, the shop, and 26 residential properties in Marsh Gibbon. To understand the reasons, we need to go back to Medieval times.

In the fourteenth century ownership of Marsh Gibbon's original manor house and its surrounding estate was transferred to Michael de la Pole whose descendant William de la Pole, Earl and later Duke of Suffolk, married **Alice Chaucer**, granddaughter of the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (author of *The Canterbury Tales*). Alice's family owned two manor houses, inherited on her mother's side, in the village of Ewelme near Wallingford, Oxfordshire.

It was common in medieval times for the wealthy to provide for the poor, it was seen as a spiritual obligation giving an improved chance of salvation. Alice and William gained permission from the King in 1437 to establish a chantry foundation in Ewelme, with a chapel, almshouses and a school. The income for running these was to come from the estates they owned including, of course, Marsh Gibbon. Records show that former labourers from Marsh Gibbon resided in the Ewelme almshouses from time to time during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Master of the Trust, responsible for its overall administration, was later determined to always be Oxford University's Regius Professor of Medicine. This post was held in the mid-nineteenth century by Sir Henry Acland, who visited and wrote about the appalling living conditions in Marsh Gibbon. His research on cholera outbreaks was instrumental to the passing of the Public Health Act in 1848. Together with the Ewelme trustees, he greatly improved the condition of the village – old houses were rebuilt, new buildings were added and modern sanitation was introduced.

In 1897 the Trust separated out its educational objective of supporting children from the Ewelme estates into secondary education.

Suffolk Court, Marsh Gibbon

In the 1980s, Suffolk Court in Marsh Gibbon was built by the **Ewelme Almshouse Charity** to reflect the significance of the village in the Trust's estate. There are ten units, residents pay a nominal Weekly Maintenance Contribution rather than rent, and a warden visits regularly, allowing elderly people who meet certain criteria to continue living independently within the community.

Today the income from the estates owned by the Ewelme Trust continues to cover the cost of the almshouses in Ewelme and Marsh Gibbon.

Ewelme Financial Award

The income also provides financial awards to support educational opportunities for young people who demonstrate exceptional talent or need. These can cover school bursaries or provide grants for young people up to the age of 24.

Anyone living in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire or Berkshire can apply, search online for **Ewelme Exhibition Endowment** for more information.

A legal duty to meet its objectives

The Trustees have a legal duty to preserve the Charity's total level of investment assets over the long term, while achieving a steady rate of income return, with a low level of investment risk.

The Charity needs to meet its objectives of providing the almshouses, maintaining its historic buildings in Ewelme and funding its educational charities, as well as holding sufficient reserves for exceptional circumstances. The decision to sell land is guided by these requirements.

More about Alice, Duchess of Suffolk

Alice de la Pole (née Chaucer) was a formidable character - highly intelligent, well read, and a generous patron of the arts. She could also be ruthless, shrewd and perhaps even corrupt in her pursuits. The full story of her life makes for an interesting read, and her place in history has arguably been over-shadowed by patriarchal assumptions about women's roles.

Alice's father, Thomas Chaucer was a charismatic and ambitious man with a highly successful political career, royal connections and an appetite for acquiring land and property.

Marriages of noble daughters were strategic unions and dowry was offered in exchange for status and titles.

Alice was 11 years old when she was married for the first time to a knighted friend of her father's. William de la Pole was her third husband and their union was to encourage an end to The Hundred Years' War through the joining of two families who promoted peace.

Tragically William was impeached, exiled then murdered for his support of the King. Alice's shrewdness secured a large inheritance for their son, John and their descendants caused no end of trouble for the Tudors!

Tomb of Alice de la Pole, Duchess of Suffolk, in St Mary's Church, Ewelme

St Mary's Church needs our help

For over 700 years, St. Mary's Church has served as the spiritual and cultural heart of our village, providing a central hub for joyful celebration and for finding solace during times of sorrow. However, our beloved church is now facing a financial crisis and without additional support from the community, we risk losing this treasured piece of our heritage.

Like many organisations, the Church of England has been hit with rising costs. Declining congregations means it is difficult for parishes to cover essential expenses such as church maintenance, electricity and insurance, as well as clergy salaries, pensions and housing.

The Church of England has a large investment portfolio which generates income to help fund its work across the country but the share for each parish only covers around 15% of overall costs. The rest of the funding for parishes like St Mary's primarily comes from donations and support from the local community.

Your Feedback and What's Next

Thank you to everyone who completed our recent survey. Your insights have reaffirmed that St Mary's remains central to our community life, offering a valued space for coming together.

You clearly recognise that a church isn't just a place of worship, it contributes enormously to people's well-being and community spirit. We'll be sharing the survey results soon.

How You Can Help

Many of you are already giving generously, and we are sincerely grateful. However, we now need the whole village to rally behind St Mary's, securing the funds necessary to ensure its future. The church is committed to being transparent about where donations go and the difference they make.

Please talk to your friends and neighbours about the vital role St Mary's plays in our village and consider how your gift could make a lasting impact. To donate or become a regular giver, contact Steve de Mellow at sddemellow@gmail.com.

Let's work together to preserve St Mary's for the generations to come.

Parish Council News

In recent months, several changes have impacted the Parish Council. A new government is in place, and while Bucks Council didn't have local elections, the spirit of change is evident. We remain committed to working with our local councillors and MP Greg Smith, re-elected under the new Mid-Bucks constituency, to achieve positive outcomes for our village. The political landscape in Buckinghamshire has diversified, reflecting our community's variety.

Locally, we face potential changes with proposed large-scale housing developments by Catesby and Land & Partners. We appreciated the positive feedback from our June meeting on the Catesby proposal and were pleased with the strong volunteer response that led to the formation of an informal sub-committee.

High turnout for meeting about Catesby proposal

We've also received initial consultation from Land & Partners who will be sharing revised plans in October.

To gather your views, the sub-committee will soon distribute a short survey. Additionally, we've launched a website to keep everyone informed about these developments - please check it regularly for updates:

www.savemarshcountryside.com

Dave Rollins cut the ribbon to officially open the new skate ramp he built

On a better note, we're expanding the village's leisure facilities. A pump track (a looped bumpy circuit traditionally for bikers), basketball court, table tennis table, and new swings will be added near the astro turf, complementing the successful new skate ramp built by Dave Rollins. These additions aim to benefit the older children in the village, offering them local options rather than having to travel elsewhere.

A pump track will be positioned near the astro

We sincerely thank all the village volunteers for their efforts. The village has never been better, and that's thanks to everyone's hard work and dedication.

Councillor Nick Lyon

Feedback on Consultations

Feedback from Land & Partners:

We held a public consultation event on 8th July, inviting the local community to share their views on initial proposals to develop land currently owned by the Ewelme Trust. The event was well-attended, with over 100 residents. We thank all those who attended and also those who have reached out since.

Following the event, we have developed more detailed plans that will form the basis of our outline planning applications. These two schemes aim to reflect the diverse opinions of the community.

We are excited to share these revised plans at a second consultation event in October 2024 (date/time to be confirmed). Residents will receive invitations by post, and we will work with the Parish Council to ensure interested parties can attend.

Feedback indicated that residents recognise the need for growth in Marsh Gibbon, especially given the new Government's increased housing targets. Many expressed a preference for distributing future housing needs across two smaller sites, each with distinct design characters, rather than one large estate.

Our revised proposals not only aim to deliver much-needed homes, including affordable options and bungalows, but also introduce community benefits like a Forest School expansion area and new picnic benches.

Feedback from Catesby Estates:

Following the consultation earlier in the year, our team of consultants are analysing feedback received and evolving the proposals further. We are seeking to submit an outline planning application to Buckinghamshire Council towards the end of autumn. We will update the consultation website in due course detailing any changes.

Statutory consultees, for example the Environment Agency and the Highways Authority, and local residents will have the opportunity to formally comment on the application once it is submitted and registered with the Council.

www.catesbyestates.co.uk/land/off-little-marsh-road-and-station-road-marsh-gibbon

We were treated to a display of the Northern Lights, amazing on camera, slightly less spectacular but still a spectacle with the naked eye.

Pond Clearing

Ware Pond, a key feature of our village, is currently overrun by a fast-multiplying weed known as "floating soldier." To address this, we are organising a cleanup on Saturday, 21st September from 10am to 1pm, and we invite villagers to help. Local farmers are providing a trailer for collecting plant material. Volunteers are needed to pitchfork the weeds into the trailer, tidy the pond's edge, and possibly use waders to remove plants. A small boat will also be available for manual removal. This is a social event with tea, coffee, and biscuits provided. Please bring any useful tools like rakes, gloves, or strimmers. Whether you want to help or just lend moral support, we'd love to see you! Email pferens398@gmail.com

Bus Times

18 to Bicester d. Mon-Fri 08:11, 10:12, 12:37, 14:27, 16:52
18 to Buckingham d. Mon-Fri 08:53, 11:18, 13:08, 15:27, 17:29
16 to Aylesbury d. Mon-Fri 06:35, 09:15, 13:47; Sat 07:00, 10:30
17 to Aylesbury d. Mon-Fri 07:44
17 to Bicester d. Mon-Fri 15:36

Upcoming Road Works

30 Sep - 2 Oct: Castle Street at Leonard Meadow, traffic management while road surface work carried out

13 Aug – 4 Oct: Main Street, Charndon remains closed, diversions in place

one.network/uk/buckinghamshire

FixMyStreet

Report problems like fly-tipping or potholes. Simply provide the location along with a description and it will be forwarded to the council.

Download the app or go to www.fixmystreet.com

WINTER 2024 DONATIONS

Drop off at Costcutter Launton or message via Facebook LCNWells to drop off in Marsh Gibbon.

Marsh Gibbon Classics Club continues to grow as more classic vehicle enthusiasts join. Meetings are held at The Plough at 8pm on the first Thursday of each month, where members discuss cars, events, and nonsense over drinks. Everyone welcome.

In August, the club proudly opened MarshFest '24, with over 40 vehicles parading from The Plough to the Village Hall for display. Children voted for their favourite car, and it appears that Trevor Jenkins noble'd the kids, as won with his blue Noble. Next year we will aim for at least 50 vehicles on display for the Village Hall's 50th anniversary.

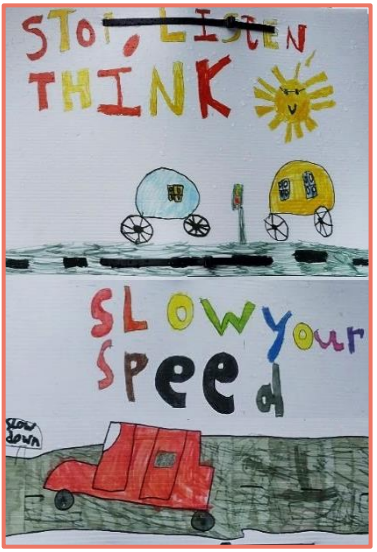
The club also organises regular outings to local pubs and classic car meets. Recent events included a visit to the Pie Pub (The Marlstone Tavern), and the Blackthorn Classic Car Show featuring over 350 vehicles. For updates on future events, follow the official Facebook page, **Marsh Gibbon Classics**.

Winner of the Best Vehicle at MarshFest 2024 as voted for by the children at MarshFest was Trevor Jenkins' Noble.

Classics Competition

Trevor also has an **orange** and **yellow** Ford Escort, use the letters of both of those colours to form an anagram. Send your answers to Mathew or Terry (see below), the **best answer wins a bottle of wine.**

For information, contact Mathew on 07771 556200 or Terry on 07765 012982



Around the village…

The new signs near the school provide a good reminder for all of us…

And look out for someone with a cherry picker, we have a Banksy in our midst – first a (long) deer now an owl! Whatever will be next, we wonder?