

# **OLD MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Bulletin October 2008**

Welcome to our seventh bulletin keeping you in touch with the work of the Parish Council in Old Marston. Some of the items in this issue include:

- Who we are
- What we do
- Our projects and campaigns
- Local news and events
- Useful information
- Local groups and organisations
- What is coming up
- Planning Applications
- Some local history
- Getting in touch

If you have ideas for further editions please let us know!

### **Who We Are**

#### Parish Councillors

- Charlie Haynes (Chairman)
- Wally Cox (Vice-Chairman)
- Duncan Hatfield
- Dr Graham Smith
- Peter Cox
- Gill Cox

- Mick Cadd
- Nils Bartlett
- John McGinn
- Angie Tiwari
- Roy Jones
- Hugh Deam

#### Officers

- Parish Clerk: Roy Garner
- Minutes Secretary: Kate Stratford
- Auditor: Phil Hoffer

### **Local Groups and Organisations**

In addition to the Parish Council there are a number of local groups and organisations, some of which are listed below (contact details on our website or published in Marston Times).

- Court Farm Allotment Association
- Scouts, Cubs, Beavers
- Guides, Brownies, Rainbows
- Old Marston Residents Association
- Over 50s
- Marston Wives
- St Nicholas Church
- Bell Ringers

- Women's Institute
- OXSRAD
- Mortimer Hall Pre-school
- Falcon Rowing and Canoe Club
- Friends of St Nicholas School
- St Johns Ambulance
- St Nicholas Baby and Toddler
- CYFA, Pathfinders and Holiday Club

### **Marston Parish Council 1894**

The Parish Council first meet 1st December 1894. The first elected parish councillors were:

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Mark Carter        | 5. William Roberts |
| 2. Alfred Evans       | 6. Frank Sims      |
| 3. George Haynes      | 7. David White     |
| 4. Alfred Clark Hills |                    |

### **Mortimer Hall Pre-School**

Mortimer Hall Pre-School currently has vacancies for children aged from 2 ½ to 5 years of age. The sessions run from Monday to Friday 9.15 to 11.45 and from Monday to Thursday afternoons 12.30 to 3pm. There is also a Lunch Club available that runs from 11.45 to 12.30pm. For more information please ring **07818236348** or e-mail [mortimerhall1@btopenworld.com](mailto:mortimerhall1@btopenworld.com) or come along and meet the friendly, experienced staff.

### **Play Areas and Recreational Grounds**

The Parish Council is upgrading its play areas in Boults Lane and Mortimer Hall recreational grounds. This is being managed by a Committee of parish councillors and local parents, including a garden designer. We have consulted with the children at St Nicholas Primary School and Cherwell School and aim to purchase new equipment as a result.

Also we want refurbish and repaint the existing equipment, replace the benches, removed graffiti, improve the drainage in Mortimer Hall recreational ground, put a bench around the tree in the middle, and prune the hedges and cut the lawn regularly. The play area in Boults Lane recreational ground will be moved when the pavilion is built.

We will need to fund raise for this as well. There will be an exhibition of the proposals at Mortimer Hall - details to be advertised. We are currently reviewing our maintenance contracts. If you would like to comment or be involved contact Duncan Hatfield [duncan@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:duncan@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk) or call 07706-998224. Any health and safety concerns please contact parish clerk at [clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk) or on 01865-241888.

### **Underpass**

The Parish Council is responsible for monitoring the underpass beneath the Marston Ferry Road. There has recently been a problem with graffiti. The City Council works department have been painting over it as it appears. We would like to improve the underpass. Please contact us if you have any suggestions or would like to be involved.

### **Neighbourhood Police**

Our local police have identified: parking, anti-social behaviour, speeding and criminal damage as the main issues in Marston. You can visit their surgeries at Northway Centre from 3:30 – 5:30pm on either 20th November, 15th December, 12th January, 29th January or 5th March; call 08458 505 505, or e-mail them at: [MarstonNorthway@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:MarstonNorthway@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk), Our beat officer is Jon Shaw.

### **Stray Dogs**

The City Council is now responsible for stray dogs. Call 252887 (9am-5pm) or 742138.

### **Cemetery/Burial Ground**

The cemetery is currently maintained to a very high standard by parish councillor Peter Cox and a team of volunteers.

We need to increase the area available for burials. However the land is subject to waterlogging, and the ditch by the allotments needs to be cleared. We are in discussion to find out who owns the ditch.

There have been some changes to the burial terms and conditions, and charges. Contact the clerk for more details or if you would like to see the burial records.

### **Traffic Calming**

The traffic calming scheme in the village is due to be reviewed soon. A lot of residents have told us how dangerous it has become, particularly for cyclists. Some cars are parked between and opposite the obstructions which creates dangerous blind spots. Any concerns should be sent the Highways Authority at Oxfordshire County Council.

### **Trees**

In 2007, a number of trees were either felled or pollarded on the advice of a tree surgeon because of the risk of possible risks he identified. If you are concerned about any of the trees in Old Marston then please contact the parish clerk on 01865-241888 or [clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk)

### **Waste Collection**

In the next few weeks the City Council will change the days it collects household waste. You should be receiving information about soon.

### **OxClean**

After our successful litter-pick in Old Marston we will be having another one on Saturday 6th March 2009 - meet at Mortimer Hall at 10:00 and have refreshments afterwards - please come and join us.

### **Bus shelters**

A bus shelter is due to be put outside Mortimer Hall as part of a city-wide programme by the City Council.

### **Mortimer Hall**

Mortimer Hall is run by a charity on land leased from the Parish Council. During the summer the stage was replaced by two walk-in storage cupboards, a mezzanine floor and a podium. This work has been paid for by grants from Oxfordshire County Council via Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, the North East Area Committee and the St Michael's charities. Alterations are being made to enable a toilet for the disabled to be installed.

The next stage is to replace the large sliding doors, which divide the main hall from the entrance hall with smaller doors. The existing storeroom will be converted into a toilet for the disabled and ladies toilet. Improvements will be made to the existing gents' toilets and the kitchen. Grants are being sought for this next stage of the work to be carried out.

If anyone is able to assist with finance or grants please contact Wally Cox – Chairman on 01865 245154 or e-mail to [mortimer.hall@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:mortimer.hall@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk). More information, pictures and history can be found on the council website.

### **Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

Part of this act relates to 'eligible parish councils' exercising the power of well being and the power for parish councils to appoint councillors.

### **Threats to Green Belt**

Last year we became aware of a proposal to build 1050 houses on greenbelt land around Old Marston in 2012. We have been told that this was only a proposal or would not happen before 2012. If we become aware of any further developments we will inform you through the bulletin, our website, our noticeboards or local press.

### **Residents Parking Zones**

The County Council will be doing more consultation and surveying, including Headley Way and in response to the London Road development. The Cherwell Drive shops are waiting for the erection of signs and enforcement of the restricted hours parking. It has been proposed make parts of Marsh Lane and Ashlong Road residents parking only. There are complaints about commuter vehicles being parked in residential areas.

### **North East Area Committee**

We send one representative to each monthly meeting. They can speak for five minutes on each item. There are open sessions for members of public to ask anything. Angela Cristofoli is the Area Co-ordinator and her role is to move projects forward and create partnerships to resolve issues jointly such as bringing the Marston Saints and the Football Association together to improve the facilities. She is preparing an Area Plan identifying issues at a more neighbourhood level, and to tie them in with Parish Plans. She has tick box postcards for residents to express their opinions. Contact her on 01865 252415 and for details of meetings.

### **Mill Lane Allotments**

Bill Agent has resigned as manager. Please contact Dr Swift for further information.

### **Rats**

There have been report of rats in the area. Residents should contact the City Council Pest Control Team 01865 252887 for advice.

### **Noticeboard**

The Parish Council now has a second noticeboard outside Mortimer Hall

### **Signposts**

New direction signs to St Nicholas Church will be placed along the by-pass.

### **Advertising Signs**

Planning permission must be sought for displaying notices. In a statement in 1993 the Highways Authority authorised the Parish Council to remove any that do not have planning permission on their behalf.

### **Old Marston Library**

In addition to books you can view our website from here as well.

#### **Opening times:**

- Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2.00pm – 5.00pm and 5.30pm – 7.00pm;
- Fridays 10.00am – 12.00pm and 2.00pm – 5.00pm;
- Saturdays 9.30am – 12.30pm.

### **How you can reduce your council tax**

Many people still pay their council tax in full because they are not aware they can get council tax benefit from the city council. Council Tax Benefit is not just for pensioners or those out of work. Even if you are working you may still be able to reduce your council tax bill with Council Tax Benefit.

To find out more, visit the website at [www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk). We also have a benefits calculator on the tax and benefits page which will give you an estimate of any potential award. If you prefer to talk to someone instead, phone us on 01865 252849.

### **Holiday Club at St Nick's Church**

St. Nicholas Church held its tenth Holiday Club in August, considered by many to be the best one yet. There were games, singing, crafts, stories, sketches, puppet shows and video show, followed by a barbeque on the Sunday.

There will be a special advent Holiday Club on Saturday 29th November 2008 for local children. For more details contact Jane Burd on 01865-242239 or visit their website at:

[www.stnicholasholidayclub.org.uk](http://www.stnicholasholidayclub.org.uk)

### **Good Neighbour Scheme**

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action is currently running a project Funded by Oxfordshire CC with the aim of supporting local communities to establish new schemes. *A limited number of start-up grants are available* to allow communities to meet the costs of setting up- buying a mobile phone, public liability cover and publicity material. (These grants will be available on a first-come, first-served basis).

For further information please contact: Liz Pride on 01865 251946 or email: [liz.pride@ocva.org.uk](mailto:liz.pride@ocva.org.uk)

### **Water Courses and Flooding**

Most of the boundary of Old Marston is marked by either the River Cherwell or streams. In addition to these there are a number of streams in the parish, some of them underground.

Historically Marston has been prone to flooding. Marston Brook which runs along the back of Arlington Drive is a tributary of the River Cherwell and in a flood plain. Thames Water are responsible for maintaining and removing obstructions from it to prevent flooding.

If you have concerns about flooding you should call the Environmental Agency on: **0845 988 1188**

### **Planning Items Discussed at Recent Meetings**

The Parish Council have commented on 20 planning applications which have been made between April and July 2008

#### **The following are decisions that Oxford City Council have made:**

2 Ponds Lane – Approved  
55 Rippington Drive – parking in front garden – refused.  
4 Beechey Avenue, Extension – Permitted  
Marston Saints Football Club, fence adjoining Marsh Lane – Permitted  
42 Elms's Drive, Extension – Permitted

#### **Application withdrawn**

2 South Croft – application for a porch and side extension – withdrawn

#### **The Parish Council drew the planning officers attention to:**

67 – 69 Oxford Road – extra parking spaces created.  
43 – 55 Oxford – extra dormers. In both cases planning consent had not been applied for.

All planning application and decisions can be viewed at [www.oxford.gov.uk/planning](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/planning)

### **New Appointments**

- We are pleased to announce the appointment of Mrs Kate Stratford as our new Parish Clerk. Kate, who is our Minutes Secretary, will start early 2009 initially part-time working alongside Roy Garner our retiring clerk before taking over the role April 2009.
- Roy Garner will officially be retiring as Parish Clerk in April after nearly fifty years in the role. We wish him all the best for the future.
- We have appointed Mr Phil Hoffer as our auditor. He will independently audit the accounts at the end of each financial year before it is submitted to the National Auditor.
- Beverly Hazell was elected as City Councillor for Marston in May 2008

### **Areas of Responsibility**

Old Marston Parish Council owns and is responsible for the burial ground in Elsfield Road, the allotments in Mill Lane, the recreational in Boults Lane, the recreational ground by Mortimer Hall, the land on which Mortimer Hall stands which is leased to Mortimer Hall, the underpass under the Marston Ferry Road, and the recreational ground between Back Lane, Oxford Road and the cycle track. The council also manages the recreational ground between Cumberlege Road, Mill Lane and the track to the Victoria Arms, on behalf of the owners the Oxford Preservation Trust. If you have any queries on these areas please contact the parish clerk on 01865-241888 or e-mail to:

**clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk**

### **Profile of Parish Councillor: Dr Graham Smith**

A Bristolian by birth, as a child I lived in Wiltshire and Dorset before moving to Sussex in time for the outbreak of war and the Battle of Britain. We moved to Southampton for the duration of the Blitz and I was then evacuated to Bournemouth, observing at close quarters the build up to D-Day

I was educated free at Grammar School and university and qualified as a doctor in 1956, an ambition probably triggered by some months in hospital in childhood and long evenings acting as a partner for my mother's Red Cross first aid class.

After a short spell in hospital medicine and a brief interlude as an expedition doctor in Lapland, I became a GP, and eventually settled in Woodstock in 1965, retiring to Old Marston in 1995.

Happily married to Gillian, a wise course, for fifty years, four children, six grandchildren. Apolitical, enthusiastic traveller (now we can afford to), a member of the National Trust, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), the Oxford Preservation Trust, Royal Horticultural Society, RFS, the Oxford Woodland Group and BBONT (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxford Wildlife Trust).

### **Boults Lane Recreational Ground**

Over the past couple of years, the Parish Council has contracted to have the recreational ground at Boults Lane improved by installing a drainage system under the ground to prevent water-logging when it rains heavily. The City Council developed the field next to it and have leased it to the Marston Saints Football Club for their use. The Marston Saints will be erecting a small shed at the end of the recreational ground which they will use to serve refreshments on match days. The Marston Saints and Parish Council are campaigning and fundraising for a pavilion which will be for the whole community which will be situated in the recreational ground. We will keep you informed of progress.

### **Street Wardens**

The street wardens have now been withdrawn from Old Marston as it was felt there was not enough crime to justify having them here. If you have any concerns related to local policing please call 08458-505-505.

### Marston in 1799

The following is an article published in the "Gentleman's Magazine" in 20th December 1799. It was written by a Mr Urban after he visited Marston in 1799:

"The Parish of MARSTON in Oxfordshire is Northwood from the city of Oxford, and the church is about a mile and a half from Magdalen Bridge.

The church is a plain building consisting of a nave, two aisles, a chancel and a square tower. The annexed rude sketch is a North-West view; a Southern cannot be so well commandant, on account of a large walnut tree growing in front of the chancel.

The following epitaphs are the only existing memorials of eminent persons contained in the church

This living is a vicarage of but small value, not, as I am informed, more than 26l per annum, which the present worthy incumbent, the Rev Dr. Curtis of Magdalen College, distributes mostly, if not wholly, among the poor of his little flock.

The service of the church the Doctor performs every Sunday. His sermons are well attended; and his parishioners are as much edified by his good example as by his excellent discourses. Some of the young farmers have studied psalmody; and they attend the service very regularly. The instrumental part of the divine harmony consists of a bassoon and two clarinets."

### Parish Council Website

The parish council has its own website. On our website you can find minutes of our meetings, planning applications, bulletins, local information, local businesses, local history, picture galleries past and present, our accounts, local news, some of our archive documents, local groups and organisations, information on the council and councillors. You can use the computer at the library to view our website. The address is:

**[www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](http://www.oldmarston-pc.gov.uk)**

The parish council also has a large large collection of archive documents going back to 1894, some of which are displayed on our website. If you would like to see more please contact the parish clerk: [clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk) or ring 01865-241888

### And Finally...

If you would like to contribute to or comment on our newsletter or website then please contact the editors: Duncan Hatfield on 07706-998224, [duncan@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:duncan@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk) or Gill Cox on 01865-245154.

You can contact the Parish Council via our website, any parish councillor or the parish clerk Mr Roy Garner on 01865-241888 or [clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@oldmarston-pc.gov.uk)

Meetings are on first Tuesday each month (except August) in Mortimer Hall small room.

Details of our meetings, minutes and other parish items can be found on our noticeboards at Mortimer Hall and the Jack Russell Pub, and also our website. Residents are welcome to attend our meetings. If you would like to speak at one of our meetings please contact the parish clerk in advance.