

Hamstead *Hornet*

Hamstead Marshall's quarterly newspaper since 1996

March 2024

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Community chit-chat, news, tips, alerts, requests. Contact [Sarah Stevenson](#)

HM Growing Tips gardening triumphs and disasters. Contact [Lanie Allen](#)

What will happen to St Mary's Church?

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What lies ahead for St Mary's?

St Mary's church, like many others, has suffered from dwindling congregations over recent decades. Nonetheless, the diocese of Oxford requires every parish church to remit a substantial annual fee – the "parish share" – for central services, including the provision of a minister. With Sunday service attendance often falling below a dozen, this burden would eventually have meant insolvency for St Mary's.

In 2019 the parochial church council mooted that St Mary's should withdraw from the diocese of Oxford, and place itself in the hands of one of two charities* which exist to take over and care for historic churches at risk. Parishioners may remember two fairly heated meetings which were held in the churchyard of St Mary's in the summer of that year, attended by the (then) priest-in-charge, the Rev Mark Wilson, and concerned parishioners.



**The [Churches Conservation Trust \(CCF\)](#) is the larger of the two, currently caring for 350 churches. The [Friends of Friendless Churches \(FFC\)](#) owns 58 such churches. Vestment with either would secure the future of St Mary's as a place of worship, albeit occasional. There would be no minister, but one could be hired for up to six communion services a year, and for any number of weddings, christenings and funerals. The church would remain open for visitors, social events, and lay-led services. The building and churchyard would be maintained.*

St Mary's is fortunate in having a fund bequeathed by a parishioner some years ago specifically for maintaining the fabric of the church. Thus the building is currently in good condition, and in possession of a dowry for future maintenance, making it an attractive proposition for either of the two charities. This legacy is vigorously defended by St Mary's churchwardens and the PCC from diversion to other uses.



The CCT has first refusal, being an official institution of the Church of England, but it is believed that the FFC may ultimately take on St Mary's. Either way, the wheels of ecclesiastical administration grind exceedingly slowly, and there may be another two years to wait.

So, the present situation is that St Mary's is technically closed, since it cannot be open for worship and simultaneously on offer to either of the charities, but the diocese and benefice continue to shoulder pastoral responsibility for Hamstead parishioners. To this end the parish of Hamstead is about to be joined with that of Kintbury (and that of Enborne to St John's in Newbury). Details can be seen on the [benefice website](#).

A new face on the parish council

Hamstead's parish council has been running under-strength nearly two years, but with the arrival of a new member – **Steve Masters** – it is back up to five members.

Steve is not a permanent resident of the parish, but he is an occasionally transient resident by virtue of his houseboat *Biscuit*, on which he often travels between Newbury and Hungerford.

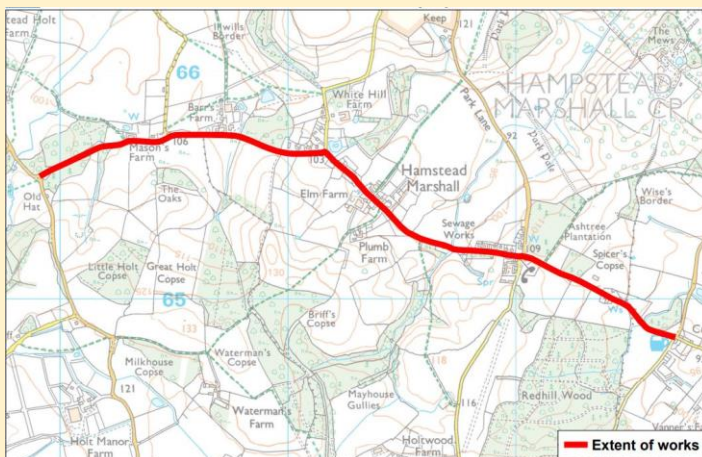
Following 19 years as an airframe fitter in the RAF, Steve now works as a renewable energy consultant. He is a keen cyclist, and also serves as a director of the Mobile Phone Museum.



Steve served on WBC as the Greens' district councillor for Speen from 2019-23, and currently represents Speenhamland on Newbury Town Council. Moreover, he will be the Green party candidate at the next general election.

Steve was recruited to HMPC by Anne Budd, with whom he has worked on WBC's governance and ethics panel. He was formally co-opted onto the parish council in January, and will make his first official appearance at the next parish council meeting on Monday 20th March.

Kintbury Road closure, 8am 11th to 5pm 16th March



Kintbury Road will be closed between the Craven and Old Hat for what WBC calls essential carriageway improvements (patching) by Volker from 8am Monday 11th March to 5pm Saturday 16th.

The start date and duration may change due to wet weather (see the site notice).

No on-street parking will be allowed within the works, and access to properties will be restricted or delayed at times. An alternative route will be signed.

Access will be made available to emergency vehicles on a blue-light call under site supervision. Any queries regarding this project should be directed to Nick Coulson on 01635 519080.

Parish café



Hamstead's social calendar has brightened with the introduction of a monthly Parish Café, instituted by Anne Budd, Liz Copas and Chris Moss. In the interests of addressing social isolation within the village, all-comers are welcome.

Liz oversees the refreshments, with contributions from Sharon Hansen and Carol Moss. There is no charge for parishioners; costs are currently borne by the organisers, so donations are always welcome. (No left-over food goes to waste, being distributed to people who cannot attend.)

Two sessions have been held so far this year, enjoyed by a varied group of parishioners, and two more dates are in the diary, for 28th March and 25th April, from 2 until 4pm in the village hall. It would be helpful to let Anne know if you are thinking of coming, by [email](#) or phone (07479 986897).

News in brief

They've arrived... they've long been naturalised in London parks. Now, according to the *NWN*, a ring-necked green parakeet has been seen in a garden in Hamstead Marshall.

photo: Charles J. Sharp, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



Nine speeding motorists were bagged by village speedwatchers outside the White Hart on 2nd February. Speeds of between 37 and 43mph were clocked and reported to Thames Valley Police. More volunteer speedwatchers would be welcome.

Don't raise the alarm if you see the village hall lights on in the middle of the night. Under the new legislation emergency lighting in village halls and other public buildings must stay on for 24 hours each day. Following a recent inspection, the hall's electrical and heating systems have been replaced, along with the installation of emergency lighting.

Planning applications

Details taken from the WBC planning portal on 3rd March 2024. To see more details visit [this site](#) and search on the application number.

ALL ARE AWAITING DECISION

Fishery Cottage, RG20 0JD

23/01928/FULMAJ validated 22nd September 2023

Demolition of current dwelling to be replaced with larger dwelling, to provide storage space near the house. Demolition of the existing barn to be relocated and replaced with a smaller barn, separate for mini-diggers and equipment to maintain the river banks. Shortening of fishpool.

Supported by HMPC

Elm Farm, RG20 0HR

23/02550/FULMAJ validated 7th November 2023

Demolition of redundant farmstead buildings, new house, relocated barn, change of use of field area for re-location of solar panels and significant landscape/biodiversity enhancement.

Letters of support from 23 neighbours and local walkers. The parish council has commended the application.

Watery Lane Farm, Holtwood RG20 0JH

23/02799/FUL validated 6th December 2023

Application for a temporary dwelling for a rural worker.

Six letters of objection from local residents and from West Woodhay PC.

One letter of support.

Enborne Equestrian Centre, Holtwood RG20 0JL

24/00087/FUL validated 19th January 2024

Conversion of building to three self-contained equestrian-related accommodation letting units, replacement of water tank with conservatory and associated internal and external alterations.

Supported by HMPC.

Morewood House, RG20 0JD

24/00180/LBC validated 22nd February 2024

Replacement of existing timber windows which were installed in the 1980s with similar timber windows incorporating slimline double glazing and draughtproofing.

Hamstead Marshall Parish Council has lodged an objection to an [application \(23/02596/FULMAJ\)](#) for 24 new residential plots at Zippo's Circus' headquarters in Enborne.

Property on the market

#3 Elm Farm Cottages and land totalling about 46.36 acres (18.76 ha)

Pasture land, agricultural buildings and a three-bedroom end-of-terrace house offered freehold by BCM of Winchester with vacant possession as a whole, or in three separate lots (£405,000, £335,000, £210,000)

Currently described on as **sold subject to contract**.

Holtwood Farmhouse, RG20 0JH

Five-bedroom Grade II-listed. Offers in excess of £1,000,000 sought by Hamptons. Currently described as **under offer**.

White Hart Inn, RG20 0HW

Colliers' website continues to offer the inn, with nine letting bedrooms, for £895,000 freehold, or leasehold.

What's on in the village

March

Thu 7th	19.00-22.00	Circle of Friends: village hall: sugarcraft
Sat 9th	10.00-13.00	Community market in village hall
Thu 21st	19.30	Parish council meeting in village hall
Thu 28th	14.00-16.00	Parish café in the village hall
Tue 30th	19.30	Village hall AGM

April

Thu 11th	19.00-22.00	Circle of Friends: village hall
Sat 13th	10.00-13.00	Community market in village hall
Thu 25th	14.00-16.00	Parish café in the village hall

May

Thu 2nd	07.00-22.00	polling day (WBC)
Thu 9th	19.00-22.00	Circle of Friends: village hall
Sat 11th	10.00-13.00	Community market in village hall
Thu 18th	19.30	Annual parish assembly and parish council meeting

June

Sat 8th	10.00-13.00	Community market in village hall
Thu 14th	19.00-22.00	Circle of Friends: village hall

Pilates in the village hall continues on Tuesday mornings in termtime, 09.30 to 10.30. To enquire or join, contact [Jenny Carter](#).

Ladies who Brunch/Lanie Allen 07775 804143.

Circle of Friends/Sue Watts 07884 004418.

The mobile library will stop at Ash Tree Grove from 10.40 until 11.10 on Thursdays 28th March, 18th April, 9th and 30th May.

The *Hamstead Hornet* is published quarterly online, in March, June, September and December. Back copies can be seen on <https://www.hamsteadmarshall.net/social-life/hamstead-hornet/>. Readers who have supplied their email addresses to the editor receive a link as soon as each issue is posted. News stories are updated between issues on the [village website noticeboard](#). The *Hamstead Hornet* is edited and published by Penelope Stokes admin@hamsteadmarshall.net.