



*More often found on land, Berkshire S&R train for all eventualities*

**BARKHAM &  
ARBORFIELD GREEN**

# Village **INFO**

**November/December 2019**

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## Contents

### Village INFO

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*Village* INFO and the Parish web site aim to keep residents informed of issues and opportunities affecting the area.

See web site for the Council's meetings (every month except August) at the Arborfield Green Community Centre.

[www.barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk)

Contact Ellen Tims, Barkham Parish Clerk, for details of advertising and frequency.

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## Highlights



### Speedwatch gets a boost

Thanks to new volunteers the Speedwatch team is

planning to monitor traffic and speed regularly across the parish. Pictured here is one of the possible designs for new signs.



### Here is what you need to know

The planning process can be daunting. Graeme Dexter highlights the essentials and the role of the parish council and residents.



### On target for the NP referendum

It will be time for residents to vote in a referendum in the New Year on The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan if all goes well.



### Local WI celebrate 100th Birthday

Picture from WI national website of the early campaign against litter



# CHRISTMAS AT THE GREEN

This Christmas, Church@TheGreen are hosting several events at our home in Arborfield Green Community Centre:

## Tearfund Big Quiz

16th Nov. 7:30pm  
Test your trivia skills in our big quiz night whilst raising money for charity.

## Christmas Pudding Making

7th Dec. 7:30pm (Women's Event)  
Make a pudding to take home ready for Christmas. Everything you need will be provided!

## Reverse Advent

22nd Nov. - 15th Dec.  
During advent, put aside an item each day for a local foodbank and drop it off on 15th Dec.

## Christingle Service

Christmas Eve - 4pm  
A fun, family friendly, hands on service with a classic Christingle orange craft.

## Christmas Service

Christmas Day - 10am  
A family friendly Christmas service with a short talk.

 **Church@TheGreen**  
Arborfield Green | churchatthegreen.org |  

Explore & Discover

Meeting at  
Arborfield Green  
Community Centre  
Every Sunday 4pm

 **Church@TheGreen**  
Arborfield Green

## BARKHAM VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



# CAROLS in the PARK

Friday 13th December  
2019

7pm at The Junipers Elizabeth Park  
Everyone Welcome

Finishing with mulled wine or lemonade  
and mince pies  
Closing voluntary collection for band

## BARKHAM VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



# QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 23rd Nov 2019  
7:00pm for 7:30pm

Fish & Chip Supper Included  
Tickets available from  
Gill Powell Tel 9783373  
social@barkham.org.uk  
£10 per person

LICENCED BAR

So you don't need to bring a bottle!

# NEWS

## Speedwatch gets a boost

We now have eight more volunteers for the Speedwatch campaign in Barkham and Arborfield Green following the appeal in the last issue of Village INFO.

"It not only means we can go ahead next year with regular speed checks in the area," says Chris Heyliger, one of the existing volunteers and a parish councillor, "but it has also enabled the parish council to agree to purchase a sophisticated, combined traffic logging and speed monitoring system.

"Having our own equipment means we will no longer have to borrow equipment from the police. We can also use the device to record the number of

## More traffic issues at Arborfield Green

In addition to concerns about the speed of traffic in Biggs Lane, residents in the new part of Barkham at Arborfield Green have concerns about the safety of various areas. These include:

- **Crossing Common Field Lane at the new greenway from Arborfield Green to Finchampstead** – There are poor sight lines at the crossing in both directions because of bends.
- **Crossing Biggs Lane by the SANG** – There is a steep drop down to road level which makes it difficult and unsafe for those pushing buggies towards the SANG; the south side gate stays open allowing cyclists/pedestrians to rush into road, The gate on south side is too close to road to accommodate bicycles etc. Why is there no kissing gate arrangement on south side? Why is there only a 'cyclist dismount' sign on the North side? The 30mph sign is obscured by vegetation.

If approved, new signs will remind residents about Speedwatch



vehicles exceeding the speed limit in a given period. This kind of evidence is vital to have any chance of lobbying WBC for changes to limits, traffic calming, or requesting police enforcement.

"As an example, data collected over seven days recently in Biggs Lane, close to Langley Common Road, revealed 21% of vehicles were exceeding the 30 mph limit by more than 15%."

Biggs Lane was targeted after residents complained of excessive speeding and vibration from heavy construction traffic. The area will now be the focus for Speedwatch checks and representations to WBC.

- **Crossing Biggs Lane beyond Watermans Reach** – It is currently not possible to cross without leaving the pavement and going over the verge to cross the road. There are poor sight lines due to bends for those who try it. A planned walkway running parallel to Biggs Lane on the north side will allow for crossing at the roundabout, however, residents would prefer to be able to cross opposite Buttenshaw Avenue so they can take a shortcut across the Green to the Community Centre.
- **Road markings on new roads within Watermans and Barkham Place** – These are required to encourage motorists to stop at junctions etc When will they be provided?

The parish council has raised these concerns with Wokingham Borough Council along with other issues caused by the ongoing closure of the Nine Mile Ride by South East Water. (see next page)

The Speedwatch team will also be out and about in the area checking speeding vehicles.

# NEWS

## Nine Mile Road closure causing chaos on local roads

Closure of the Nine Mile Ride as South East Water renew mains over the next eight months is leading to increased traffic throughout Barkham and chaos down Commonfield Lane which is being used as an unofficial diversion route.



It has resulted in queues of traffic along the road, and erosion of the verges and passing points as large 4X4 and commercial vehicles try to pass each other.

There is further danger to those trying to cross the road to the greenway leading to the FBC and Bohunt School. The point at which they have to cross has reduced visibility and speeding motorists once free of the congestion are a danger.

The issues have been reported to Wokingham Borough Council and Barkham Parish Council is urging WBC to tackle the problems as a priority.



This was the scene recently in Commonfield Lane

## Update from South East Water on closures

According to South East Water's web site the company is installing more than 3km of water mains in Finchampstead Road, Billing Avenue, Gorse Ride South and Nine Mile Ride.

The renewal of the mains necessary to improve the capacity of the network and ensure that water pressure can be maintained as the community grows.

The first part was completed during the summer holidays. Work has now moved to the section of Nine Mile Ride working from the junction with Gorse Ride South to the junction with Park Lane.

"We anticipate that the Nine Mile Road will be closed for approximately 10 months but this will be split into smaller phases to allow sections of work to be carried out to reduce the impact to residents and businesses. California Country Park will remain open as normal throughout the project."

South East Water says that a clearly signed diversion route which has been agreed with Wokingham Borough Council is in place.

The closure is also affecting local bus routes. South East Water's web site says that following discussions with Reading Buses, a temporary shuttle service will be in place. During the second phase of the project, along Nine Mile Ride east of California Country Park, a shuttle bus will run between California Country Park and Sheerlands Road at Arborfield Green.

During the third and final phase, between California Country Park and the junction of Nine Mile Ride and Park Lane, a shuttle bus will run between Hogwood Industrial Estate and Sheerlands Road.

The closure is also affecting the 3 bus service between Wokingham and Reading and the 3b from Reading to Bracknell. Residents are advised to check timetables and routing on Reading Buses web site.

# NEWS

## Wokingham's response to traffic issues

The Parish Council have put residents concerns and suggestions to help combat various traffic issues to WBC. The response received so far is:

"As the Parish Council is aware, the highway authority is reviewing the speed limit, pedestrian crossing locations and visibility splays in Biggs Lane, Park Lane and Commonfield Lane, the first stage of which requires the collection of traffic and speed data which is programmed for later this year.

"Biggs Lane currently has two 30mph terminal signs, one on each side of the carriageway west of Commonfield Lane. The signs indicate the commencement and termination of the 30mph speed limit for Biggs Lane and are there to inform drivers of the extent of the limit. It is not currently legally permissible for 30mph speed limit repeaters to be used in this section of Biggs Lane.

"The suggestion for a periodic 20mph speed limit flashing sign for school children crossing could be considered as a measure, once the required traffic and pedestrian data has been collected. With regard to the visibility of traffic signs, including the 30mph speed limit signs and other traffic signs that may have become obscured by the trees, this is noted and signs will be inspected to determine whether any cutting back of trees is required to preserve visibility splays."

"Highways at WBC have asked Streetworks colleagues to provide comment on the informal diversion of traffic along Commonfield Lane and will respond separately to the Parish Council on this matter."

**BPC chairman Pam Stubbs says that the parish council will continue to push for safer roads in the area and will work with WBC to try to resolve the issues raised by residents.**

## Keep to 20 mph say Bohunt pupils

There is a new 20 mph speed limit near Bohunt school and pupils at the school recently took part in a competition run by Crest Nicholson to promote the limit near to their school at Arborfield Green.

Back in June, students were invited to take part in a 'Design Your Own Speed Limit Sign' competition which was later judged by Scott Black, managing director of Crest Nicholson Regeneration.

There was stiff competition and Matthew Garwell, head of art at Bohunt, says he was very proud to see the enthusiasm of the students in their inventive and creative use of both traditional and digital media.

The winner received a new iPad, donated by Crest Nicholson's Build Team. Second and third places received an MP3 player and stationery goody bag respectively. The prizes were presented to pupils by

senior site manager Mike Rooney.

The winning design is now on display along the Nine Mile Ride Extension approaching Bohunt School.



Winning designs in Bohunt competition

### Arborfield Green Community Christmas Event.

On 30th November there will be a festive event at the community centre. More details see AG web and parish web sites.





## Building an extension or planning a new house? Concerned about a planning application or overdevelopment? Here is what you need to know

**Parish councils are consulted on all planning applications. This may be an application for your modest changes, or a major housing development arousing considerable angst among residents. Graeme Dexter has been a member of the Barkham Parish Council planning committee (now part of the full council) for some time. So he is in a good position to explain the role of the council.**

Planning occupies a considerable part of the busy Barkham Parish Council agenda as it can have such a significant impact on some or all of us. The support of residents can be very helpful in determining any outcome.

Regardless of whether you live in the immediate vicinity of a proposed project such as an extension to a residential home, or you are concerned about a new development and its impact on the countryside or additional traffic, the planning process is essentially the same. In all cases, the parish council is consulted.

The council does not have legal powers of veto. However, its views will be taken into account by Wokingham planners and/or the WBC planning committee because of the relevant knowledge and experience of local councillors aided, of course, by residents.

Planning decisions are made in the context of prescribed rules rather than emotion. Considerable time is spent ensuring that proposals comply with these rules. The overriding guide – The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – is issued by the Government and was updated in February 2019. The key local document is Wokingham Borough Council's 2010 Core Plan and a draft update is imminent. This contains a number of policies such as CP11 - a very important one for Barkham as it controls any development in the countryside outside the prescribed development boundaries. There are several supporting documents such as the one entitled 'Managing Development Delivery'.

The next layer of documentation includes Village Design Statements and, more recently, Neighbourhood Plans. Barkham PC has had a Village Design Statement since 2007 which sets out the features of the area and gives design guidance (you can download a copy from the BPC web site\*).



*The Barkham Village Design Statement highlights the form and style of properties in the area and gives design advice*

Village INFO has covered the development of the joint Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan in detail. If approved in a public referendum\*\*, this will be an important planning document. Many of you have provided input by completing the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, participating in public events, or by responding to the recent consultation. All that will be said here is that the policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan have to be compatible with those included in the national and local planning authority's (LPA) documents.

Many domestic planning applications are not contentious and receive approval, albeit sometimes with conditions. However, some controversial proposals, whether domestic or from developers may be rejected.

Few applicants accept rejection of their planning applications easily. Their first recourse is to appeal against the local planning authority's decision. This will be heard by an inspector from the national planning Inspectorate, either in the form of written representation or a full public hearing lasting several days.

So rejection by the local authority is not the end of the matter. The independent inspector will listen to evidence from all the parties and if he or she decides to allow the appeal, the development then can go ahead, even if local residents feel it is the wrong decision. However, if an Inspector upholds the decision of the LPA, and the application is refused, you might assume that the application is dead and buried. That isn't necessarily the case as an applicant can submit a modified application to address or circumvent the original issues and serial applications can ensue. We have several examples of these in the parish.

It is important to remember that even if you have registered an objection to an application when it is first submitted, you will need to reiterate it at each of these additional stages to maximise impact and to ensure your views are considered.

A worrying feature of the NPPF is contained in Section 11 – 'The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development'. This effectively means that the appeal inspector can ignore the local plan and its policies in favour of an application if he or she considers that insufficient houses are being built in the Wokingham Borough area – a situation which has unfortunately been applied in Barkham in recent years. *Continued over...*



*The Wokingham Borough Design guide is available on the WBC web site*

In managing this complex process to ensure the best outcome for its parishioners, Barkham Parish Council has three goals.

**To provide a response to each application:** This may be a simple 'No Comment', or could be a detailed paper providing additional information. Residents' input is welcomed.

**To ensure residents are aware of relevant planning applications:** The LPA normally advises those residents living adjacent to the site of a proposed planning application. This is usually sufficient for smaller projects such as an extension. However, it is totally inadequate for larger, new developments which might, for example, encroach on the countryside, affect road safety or increase traffic for everyone. The parish council seeks to make people aware of this latter group of applications (see below). On occasions, the council has distributed fliers which have proved very effective when a quick response is needed.

**To present residents' views:** One example is the 2018 petition against over-development in Barkham which collected 4000 signatures and was a trigger for the recent WBC consultation which resulted in some 50,000 people objecting to future development in the borough.

The main message we would like you to take from this article is that the work of the parish council is greatly enhanced when you, our residents, take the trouble to express your views directly to the LPA and we would urge you to work with the parish council wherever possible.

*\*The Village Design Statement is a complementary planning document which gives design guidance*  
[www.barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk)

*\*\*see pages 12-15 for the latest news on the Neighbourhood plan*

Moving is such a traumatic affair that many people decide to alter their existing house. It can be an exciting transformation for which you will normally need planning permission. You are also well advised to get professional advice and a good builder.

## Working with Barkham Parish Council on Planning Matters

- If you would like to discuss any aspect of planning in Barkham Parish from your thoughts on a planning application you are considering, or your concerns about a planning application that has been submitted - then please contact the **Parish Clerk, Ellen Tims, on 0118 976 2089** or via **e-mail at [clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk)**.
  - If you would like to receive Barkham Parish Council planning updates\* by e-mail, please contact the Parish Clerk as above.
  - If you would like to receive alerts from The Barkham Village Association Development Watch\* by e-mail, then please sign up to the BVRA at: [www.barkham.org.uk/index.php/2-uncategorised/165-keep-in-touch-with-bvra](http://www.barkham.org.uk/index.php/2-uncategorised/165-keep-in-touch-with-bvra) selecting the items you would like to be kept up to date with from the list.
  - Progress of specific planning applications including details of what is being proposed, status, consultation period and responses in real time can be found on the Wokingham Borough Council web site at: [www.planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/welcome.asp](http://www.planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/welcome.asp)
- If you have the planning application number, simply fill in the appropriate field box.**
- If you do not have the planning application number then:**
- Go to advanced search, Complete the parish field box and Set the left hand drop box to 'Received Date' at the bottom of the page.
  - This will display all the latest planning applications that have been received and validated.

*\* There may be some duplication of these sites but at times different material is included.*

## NEWS

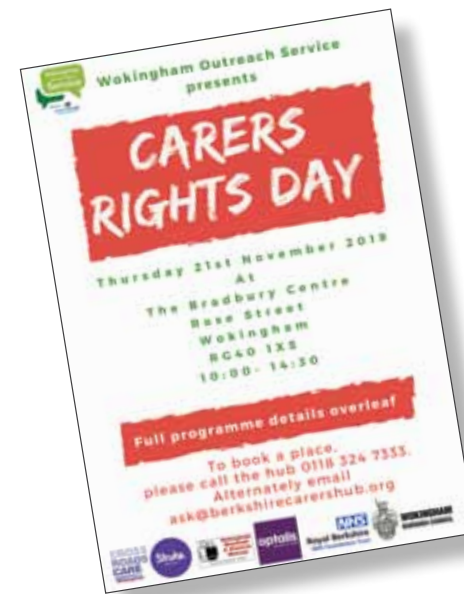
### Help WBC achieve carbon neutrality

Ideas to help reduce the Wokingham Borough Council's carbon footprint are being sought in a survey that runs to 31 December.

The survey asks people if they have any eco-friendly tips from their personal lives that they are willing to share with others, as well as ideas that would help borough-wide.

The council declared a climate emergency in July and pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. "We can't do it alone." says Cllr Gregor Murray, executive member for climate emergency. "We need our residents, businesses, charities and schools to work with us to help emissions, address climate change and secure the future of our planet."

To participate in the survey and submit ideas go to [www.wokingham.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/consultations). The best ideas will be publicised in the new year.







# NP on track for early 2020 referendum

**It has been a long process but the joint Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan has just passed one of the final hurdles and is now on the road towards a referendum early next year. Voters will be able to have the final say in a referendum organised by Wokingham Borough Council.**

Laurence Heath, as chairman, together with the rest of the steering group, can take a bow for the tremendous amount of work they have put into creating a credible plan which will have to be taken into account by planners and developers if it passes the referendum.

As Laurence says, *“It’s Good news! The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has taken a huge step forward as it has successfully come through the examination process. The Examiner reviewed the documents and subject to some modifications recommended, the NP 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.”*

We have covered the progress of the plan over previous issues but Laurence has provided below a useful summary of outcomes and the next steps.

## A reminder about the content

There are fourteen policies in total. These are concerned, amongst other topics, with protecting the countryside setting of our villages and settlements, designating areas of public open

space, retaining valued local assets, ensuring that development is appropriate to the area and prioritising local needs, addressing local flood risk management and promoting sustainable transport.

## Some very useful principles have been established:

- 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.
- 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.
- The importance of Public Open Spaces is recognised and 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.
- 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.

- 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 weakening 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.

## Approval for a referendum the next step

The amended NP will be presented for approval from Wokingham Borough Council to proceed to a referendum. It is expected that the decision to accept the modifications of the NP and to proceed to referendum will be taken at the meeting of the WBC Executive on 28 November.

The NP steering group is liaising with officers at the Borough Council on the modifications to the Plan. A revised version will be published as soon as possible on the Neighbourhood Plan website [www.arbarplan.com](http://www.arbarplan.com)

## Your vote will count

If approved in late November, the referendum should then be on target for some time in the New Year. Late January is seen as the earliest possible time given the statutory notice period required. 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. WBC Electoral Services will be making all the arrangements.

Barkham polling will take place at Barkham Village Hall.

The wording of the referendum question is determined by the regulations governing Neighbourhood Plans: *“Do you want Wokingham Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Arborfield & Newland and Barkham parishes to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”* Voters will be asked to vote yes or no. The result will be decided by a simple majority.

Prior to the referendum, the steering group will be publicising the plan and its merits and the polling date. So watch out for flyers and notices. By the time you read this article a general election or even a referendum on Europe may have been announced. Hopefully all that noise and kerfuffle will be over by the time you are asked to take part in our local referendum. So look out for the NP publicity material but, no, it is not proposed to hire a big red bus with a provocative slogan on the side!

## Implementing the decision

If voters in Barkham and Arborfield approve, the final step will be for the Neighbourhood Plan to be endorsed by Wokingham Borough Council. This should be a routine decision and will take place a few weeks later.



The Localism Act 2011 empowered local communities to develop planning policy for their area by drawing up neighbourhood plans. For the first time, a community-led plan that is successful at referendum becomes part of the statutory development plan for their planning authority.



Marie Curie volunteers fund raising outside Wokingham Town Hall

## You can make a difference!

**Editor, Ken Lane, says a bit of your spare time can make a huge difference to others.**

Yesterday morning we had a power failure just before going out for the day. It came back on as we left. Later that evening, along with some 200+ other residents in Barkham we again lost power, this time for several hours.

It was something to do with a low wire and a transformer somewhere half way up a telegraph pole just as night fell! All was soon well again. But it set me thinking. We take so much for granted, but when our personal worlds wobble, or change, we often need outside help.

It also took me back to last year when as a result of medical problems I couldn't drive for six months. Barkham may be semi-rural but it isn't a backwater. I still needed to get to the Drs at Swallowfield and to the Royal Berks. A ten minute walk to a bus stop put the RBH in reach (who in their right mind wants to drive there anyway!) and the Swallowfield Volunteer Car Service solved the GP access problem.

It was a bit of a shake up. It made me realise the extent to which volunteer services are a vital part of our social structure. They exist to help others of all ages but can only survive with help from the community, both for funds and for volunteers. Ironically, they also need users! So read on if you want to help or get help.

In common with many Wokingham residents, and in my guise as vice chairman of Barkham Parish Council, I went to the Charity Volunteer Recruitment Fair at the Town Hall in October. Sixteen charities took part under the aegis of The Wokingham Volunteer Centre who will be holding another Fair at **Wokingham Town Hall on Saturday 18 January, 10am – 1pm.**

It was good to see such interest from residents and to meet a great bunch of enthusiastic representatives from such a diverse group of organisations. You can volunteer to help children to read, to befriend the lonely, walk a guide dog, give finance and welfare advice, or help rescue those in

trouble. These as just a few examples of ways you can help as you will see scanning these pages.

### ABC to read

There are children who lag behind in reading skills perhaps because they are not read to at home

But ABC to read's community volunteers provide one-to-one mentoring to primary school children in Berkshire who are struggling to read. There are many local children waiting for support but more volunteers are needed in Wokingham and Bracknell to join a friendly team.

Contact: Email: [abctoread@btconnect.com](mailto:abctoread@btconnect.com)  
Tel: 01189 511336

### Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue

There is a fully-equipped search and rescue team located in Barkham within Crest Nicholson's project office centre at Arborfield Green.

Search and rescue normally conjures pictures of mountains, sea and helicopters but there is also work to be done here in the Thames Valley.



Bike team, Lowland Rescue

Berkshire Lowland Search & Rescue is always looking for people to join this 100% volunteer staffed charity.

It provides foot searchers, search controllers and search managers as well as all the equipment needed to manage a large scale search including a control vehicle, computerised mapping, radio communications, medical equipment, etc.

Volunteers will often be called upon by Thames Valley Police to assist and manage the search for missing vulnerable people, perhaps children, dementia sufferers or despondent people.

They also provide civil contingency services to the local authority in times of need such as flooding and heavy snow.

Contact: [enquiries@berkshirerescue.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@berkshirerescue.org.uk)  
[www.berkshirerescue.org.uk](http://www.berkshirerescue.org.uk)



### Berkshire Vision

This charity provides support to children and adults of all ages who are blind or partially sighted. They work closely with eye clinics, health care providers and specialists to ensure to ensure comprehensive support is provided.

There is always an element of fun to help boost self-esteem and independence. This might include home visits, sports and trips. Berkshire Vision has some specific vacancies:

- **Volunteer fundraiser:** To help with innovative ways of raising money to help keep the organisation delivering the best services.
- **Office admin:** Taking on general administrative tasks.
- **Volunteer Club driver:** Someone to collect BCBS visually impaired member/s from their homes and transport them to and from the Club each month, using the volunteer's own vehicle.

Contact: [Bwalya Treasure](mailto:Bwalya Treasure)  
[bwalya.treasure@berkshirevision.org.uk](mailto:bwalya.treasure@berkshirevision.org.uk)





CA chief executive Wokingham, Jake Morrison (right) with Theresa May (left) and HRH Princess Anne at the CA offices in October

## Citizens Advice Wokingham

Barkham Parish Council (BPC) has supported the work of Citizens Advice for many years. During 2018-19 some 57 clients from Barkham were helped by the CA. Two faced homelessness and two were actually homeless. Other issues included debt, benefits, relationships, financial services and housing.

In neighbouring Arborfield, 45 clients were helped while in Finchampstead (North & South) there were over 200 clients. CA offer face to face, telephone and email support across a wide range of issues challenging Wokingham people.

A good example is the recent joint work with Wokingham Borough Council's tax team. One of the biggest problems facing clients is council tax arrears. So there is now a joint monthly surgery aimed at supporting people with repayment plans and debt advice.

To provide such a wide ranging service, they need enthusiastic volunteers to join the team at Wokingham. Full training is given.

HRH Princess Anne visited the Wokingham Citizens Advice (CA) office in October to meet the team and to congratulate them on eighty years of service. She later walked round from CA's offices to Shute End where she spoke about the need for CA. The reception was attended by Pam Stubbs, Barkham Parish Council (BPC) chairman and Ellen Tims, parish clerk.

**Contact:**  
[volunteer@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@citizensadvicewokingham.org.uk)  
or Tel: 0118 9787258

## Guide dogs

Many Wokingham people will remember the Guide Dogs for the Blind centre along Barkham Road (now new housing) but will not know that there is still a training centre at Winnersh.

So they still need local volunteers by, for example, supporting fund raising events for two or three hours a month or puppy walking which means taking one of their pups to live in your home for at least a year.

Among the many different ways in which the Guide Dogs organisation communicates its message is the provision of speakers who can share their stories with schools, groups or work places.

**Contact:** [www.guidedogs.org.uk](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk)

## Girlguiding – Wokingham Division

Search for the 'warm welcome toolkit' on the Girlguiding web site and you can find far more information than we can give here about the opportunities to support all ages of girls in the local community.



Whether it is Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, the 14+ senior section, or helping in an admin role or sharing a skill, there is something that should appeal.

As with many organisations looking for volunteers, they are keen to emphasise that 'it's flexible and can fit round busy lifestyles.'

**Contact:** [www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested)  
or Tel: 0800 1695901

## Home-Start Wokingham District

Being a parent is tough and many mums and dads without support networks often feel isolated and lonely with no one to listen and understand the challenges they face.

Families in the borough, including those in Barkham and Arborfield Green can get help from Home-Start. Vulnerable families having at least one child under five, where the parents need a listening ear and a helping hand, get visits from volunteers. They spend 2-3 hours a week with families supporting and modelling good parenting skills. Across Wokingham Town, Barkham and Arborfield 26 families have been supported during 2018/19.

Home-Start provides training and support for all volunteers. If you would like to get involved give them a call on 01189 888025 and have a chat.

The next training course will begin in the new year

and run for six weeks. Home-Start is based in Shinfield.

**Contact:** [admin@home-startwd.org.uk](mailto:admin@home-startwd.org.uk)  
[www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk)

## Link visiting scheme

Many of us live very busy fulfilled lives, but there are times in life when loneliness may be a reality for us all. The Link visiting scheme exists to befriend mainly older people who need extra friendship and support.

Volunteers are given training and support and matched to those looking for a friendly face maybe once a week for an hour or so.

They also keen to learn of anyone who could benefit from their services.

**Contact:** [admin@linkvisiting.org](mailto:admin@linkvisiting.org)  
or Tel: 0118 9798019

## Marie Curie

Terminal illness charity, Marie Curie is appealing for new volunteers to help them to raise funds and spread awareness of the work of the charity locally.

The charity says that one in four people currently don't receive the care and support they need at the end of their life. With the population getting older, demand on the charity's services is set to increase.

Raising awareness and funds locally means more people understanding the services operating in the local area should they or a family member need them. Chances are, we all know someone who's been affected by a terminal illness.

Marie Curie say 'Our nurses care for people in their own homes, providing one-to-one care overnight and support for family members. We are always there with expert information, guidance or just a shoulder to lean on.'

Community Fundraiser for Berkshire, Fiona Turner says: "I am looking for new volunteers who have great knowledge of their local area and a few hours to spare to help me and my other group of volunteers fundraise through various activities especially during March for the Great Daffodil appeal."

**Contact:**  
[www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil) or Fiona Turner  
on 07834 106957 [fiona.turner@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:fiona.turner@mariecurie.org.uk)

## Me2 Club

The Me2 Club was John Kaiser's chosen charity during his term as Mayor last year. It resulted in raising £27,600 for the charity which is now recruiting local volunteers.

Since 2003, Me2 Club has enabled children and young people with additional needs and disabilities (aged 5-19 years) throughout Wokingham Borough to attend a mainstream leisure activity of their choice. To do this Me2 Club recruits, trains and supports volunteers before they are carefully matched with the young person.

The young people they help struggle to access these activities because of their needs, resulting in social isolation, lack of confidence and self-esteem.

Last year the Me2 club supported a record 106 children. They recruit and train throughout the year so do get in touch if you would like to find out more and make a big difference in our local area. As a small charity, help with fundraising is also a priority.

Me2 Club also organises residential 'Weekends Away'; day trips and parties at Easter, Summer and Christmas. December 1 is the date for this year's Family Christmas Party. Last year was a big success and for one child it was the first time he had been into Santa's Grotto because there was no queuing.

**Contact details: [info@me2club.org.uk](mailto:info@me2club.org.uk)  
Tel: 01189 696369**

## Oxfam

There is an Oxfam shop in Wokingham, one of many throughout the country. Without volunteers it would not be possible to operate them. The Wokingham shop needs help and various roles and shifts are available.

**Contact: [oxfamshopf3804@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:oxfamshopf3804@oxfam.org.uk)  
Tel: 01189 79213**

## Rotary Club of Wokingham

Rotary Wokingham is looking for local members to join its 1 million plus members over seven continents. You will have seen them working with other Rotary and local organisations at Wokingham May Fair, the Winter Carnival and Fireworks night.

Rotary support both local, national and international charities. Local support for young people includes Berkshire Maestros and Reading FC Community Trust.

**Contact: [www.rotaryclubwokingham.org](http://www.rotaryclubwokingham.org)  
or Tel: 01189 791447**

## Sebastian's Action Trust

In 2004, nine year old Sebastian Gates died. His last wish was to create a holiday home to give seriously ill children a break away from treatment schedules and hospitals.

The charity now runs a home from home for short breaks at the Bluebells in North Waltham and day visits at the Woodlands in Crowthorne.

They welcome volunteers of all ages who can give a little or a lot of time to everything from fund raising and supporting families at the two sites.

At Crowthorne there is a community room, cafe, cinema, sensory room and an extensive wooded play area.

**Contact: [volunteer@sebastianactiontrust.org](mailto:volunteer@sebastianactiontrust.org)  
or [www.sebastiantrust.org](http://www.sebastiantrust.org)**

## Sue Ryder

If you are 'calm, have strong communication skills and able to work on your own initiative', we need you is the message from Sue Ryder Wokingham Day Hospice.



The poster features the Sue Ryder logo in white script on a dark blue background. To the right, it says 'Wokingham Day Hospice' in white. Below the logo, the text 'Events Volunteer' is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath, it says 'Join your local Sue Ryder fundraising team to help at one or a series of local events.' There is a graphic of a gold medal with the number '1' on it. At the bottom, there is a small text box with contact information: 'For more information call: 0118 9550 434 email: [dekh.fundraise@suerydercare.org](mailto:dekh.fundraise@suerydercare.org)'

Volunteers are needed to help and support patients by simply listening or talking, taking part in group activities, or simply preparing that well-known British standby – tea and biscuits.

Or perhaps fund raising is more your liking. A volunteer is currently needed to support the fundraising team.

The Hospice provides specialist palliative care in Wokingham. It helps people live with life-limiting conditions.

**Contact: [Natasha.saunders@suerydercare.org](mailto:Natasha.saunders@suerydercare.org)  
or Tel: 01189 550443**

## Wokingham Transport Scheme

Three different medical practices cover the parish. People in the North go to Wokingham Medical Practice, while those in the South use Finchampstead or Swallowfield Surgeries. The one thing shared by us all is that no-one is within walking distance of a GP, or even regular public transport.

So for those unable to drive, volunteer car services like those provided by Wokingham and Shinfield (covers the Swallowfield Surgery) are a lifeline. Users get a low cost, or free (with a bus pass) transport to doctors and other medical appointments.

The service relies on volunteer drivers. All you need is your own car and all expenses are reimbursed.

**Contact: Wokingham Volunteer Centre 0118 9770749**

## Shinfield Voluntary Car Service

Last, but not least, here is a mention for a charity not represented at the Wokingham Fair. Swallowfield Surgery patients in Arborfield and Barkham can use the Shinfield Voluntary Car Service. They are looking for volunteers to take patients to appointments. Drivers can choose when and where they work and get their car expenses paid.

**Contact: Stevie Horton 01189 883400 or see [www.shinfieldvoluntarycarservice.org](http://www.shinfieldvoluntarycarservice.org)**



# More trees, less houses?

**Barkham's ward councillor, John Kaiser, is calling for a halt on more housing and backs Wokingham's Climate Change Emergency.**

It is great to see work in progress on the new Barkham Bridge. When complete this will solve one of our worst pinch points and safety hazards. Traffic is a major concern for residents, and I support efforts to reduce overall speed limits and welcome the sight of the local Speedwatch team out checking for speeding motorists.

Traffic growth is, of course, related to housing development and my number one priority is stopping any further development in our area. We need to make sure Barkham retains as much of its character as possible.

In Wokingham, just over 20% of houses with planning approval have been built. Yet the state of the traffic already shows that unless somebody acts sensibly there is little hope for the green spaces and the environment.

I have called for a halt on further approval of major housing applications (over 10 houses) for at least the next five years, or until we can measure the impact of the houses which have been approved but are yet to be built. This suggestion is being welcomed by my fellow councillors, including the leader of the council, John Halsall, and reflects the views of the residents across the borough.

We cannot cram more homes into our already congested towns and villages with their creaking educational and medical services. If the government continues to enforce us to adopt artificially high housing numbers, there will have to be new settlements or towns away from our current urban and semi-urban areas. They could be delivered with new, planned infrastructure in advance of housing. Any plan other than this is madness. It will destroy the very essence of why we have all chosen to live in Wokingham.

## Why has the council declared a 'Climate Change Emergency'?

In the last 20 years the impact of climate change on our world has changed conditions far faster than ever imagined. It may sound frightening, but the scientific evidence is that if we do not take dramatic action within the next decade, we could face irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of society.

More concerted and urgent action is needed at local, national and international level to protect our planet for future generations. This is the reason why, by example as well as by exhortation, we want to achieve a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030 and to report within the next six months as to what actions are required.

The clock is ticking and we have no option but to take action and hope that we are not alone either locally or globally.

Some of the council's key actions and achievements towards reducing energy usage and increase recycling are:

### Efficient energy usage

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is purchasing a proportion of its energy from renewable sources with a target of 25% renewable, as well as looking to reducing energy consumption.

We are installing solar panels on council buildings wherever possible. Low energy lighting has been fitted in over 30% of council buildings, which has saved an estimated 11% in energy consumption. Insulation has been installed in over 20 council buildings, saving over 3% in energy consumption, and we are encouraging the development of smart technologies to reduce energy usage.

WBC is also promoting the use of ultra-low emission vehicles by supporting the electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Residents are already helping by supporting the food recycling scheme and we are reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

The council is bidding for £500,000 of ERDF funding to invest in energy saving schemes. The project will look at opportunities for storing energy gathered by solar panels, which may include solar farms in the borough. This could reduce fossil fuel energy usage and possibly produce revenue for important and much valued council services.

### Enabling and encouraging more sustainable travel

Bus usage in the Borough has grown by 14% between 2014/15 and 2017/18 compared to a 1% decline in the same period in the South East region.

The 'Greenway Project' aims to deliver a sustainable transport network to provide traffic-free commuting



and leisure routes connecting the new Strategic Development Locations with the existing settlements

### Improving construction sustainability

Planning policies are encouraging development proposals to incorporate measures to improve energy efficiency and zero carbon as part of sustainable design and construction.

### Improve air quality in the borough

The borough-wide Air Quality Management Plan and the Sustainable Environment Strategy 2010-2020 will be supported by schemes to 'green' our towns and urban areas and protect our countryside. It will mean planting thousands of trees across the borough while at the same time ensuring we preserve the trees we already have.

Finally, we can all do more to help these initiatives by reducing waste and making choices that could include avoiding single use plastics, using reusable drinking containers, walking and cycling where possible, and buying goods and services from renewable sources.

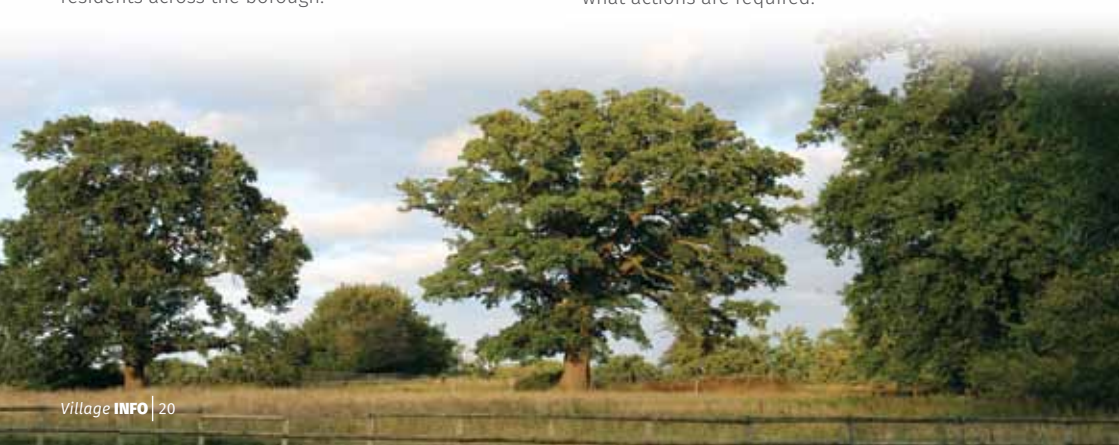
The world's climate is changing whether it is solely due to human activity or not. We can all help to bring about change and in doing so create a far better environment for us all.

**John Kaiser**

Councillor for Barkham ward Deputy Leader  
Wokingham Borough council

[john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk)

07714192352



# Yes, it's that time of year again!

## Christmas Pudding

Thoughts are turning towards Christmas. So it was natural to get a WI recipe for this annual event. But Arborfield and Newland – and Barkham - WI members have been concentrating their thoughts on celebrating their 100th birthday. They are having a party, but it misses this issue's deadline, so by the time you read this all the celebration cake will have gone!

However, Pam Stubbs, a keen WI member and cook, says that apart from weddings and Christmas, rich fruit cakes are a rarity.\* So carry on with your own Christmas cake recipe, while she provides her favourite recipe for that 'one-off' seasonal favourite: Christmas Pudding.

### Ingredients

- 175g plain flour
- 1 tspn mixed spice
- 1 tspn nutmeg
- 100g white breadcrumbs
- 110g vegetarian suet
- 110g raisins
- 1 grated carrot
- 50ml sherry
- 220g currants
- 220g sultanas
- 110g grated apple
- 100g soft brown sugar
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 220ml strong ale
- 50 ml rum or brandy

\*Birthday cakes, for instance, are often made using a sponge cake which can be of any flavour or colour. The cake is painted on the surface and sides with melted apricot jam and it is then simple to decorate using fondant icing which sticks to the jam, giving a smooth surface just waiting for decoration.



### Method

1. Grease one or two 120ml (1pint) basins.
2. Sift together the flour and spices.
3. Add the breadcrumbs, suet, apple, dried fruit, carrot, sugar and zest.
4. Mix well and gradually add in the eggs, ale and spirits.
5. Stir again thoroughly, and turn the mixture into the two basins or, if desired, into one large basin.
6. Cover with greased, greaseproof paper and then with aluminium foil or a pudding cloth. Tie up firmly and place in a saucepan on a trivet or an upturned saucer. Fill halfway up the height of the bowl and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer gently for six hours, topping up the water when necessary with boiling water.
7. Leave to cool, removing the cloth or foil. Leave the greased proof paper but cover with fresh foil before storing for Christmas
8. To reheat repeat the cooking process for 3-4 hrs before serving.

Traditionally, making a Christmas Pudding involves the whole family. Have a stir and make a wish! It's somewhat messy but makes a memorable start to the Christmas preparations.

# NEWS

## Celebrating 100 years

Just as Village INFO went to press, members of the Arborfield and Newland WI (includes Barkham) were looking forward to a 100th birthday celebration reception and tree planting.

One of the oldest organisations in the area, the local WI started life on 24 October 1919 with great encouragement from the Simmonds family. Beatrice Simmonds became the first President.

The WI, which started in Canada, had very specific aims:

- To give practical training in home affairs to women living in rural areas
- To drive forward the production of home grown food
- To encourage the use of home produced food.

These might look old-fashioned now, but this was just after the First World War and WI members would face those challenges and those of WWII.

Throughout the country WI groups sprang up, attracting members from all walks of life, and by working together, they broke down the existing social barriers.

When women were granted the right to vote, the National WI began organising members to champion many different causes. One of the most memorable was the campaign to 'Keep Britain Tidy'.

Locally, the WI worked tirelessly to get the Arborfield Village Hall and the Doctor's Surgery in place.

National campaigns are still at the forefront of the WI. They are tackling such issues as saving local high streets, ridding the world of plastic soup in the oceans, fighting loneliness, and helping those suffering mental illness.

The current president, Pam Stubbs, says: "The WI has been here for one hundred years, it would be wonderful to know that it could continue for another century."



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