



Marston Murmurs

The Newsletter of Your Marston Parish Council March 2024



A word from the editor;

This month's edition is all about spring and is bringing you a free gift of wild flower seeds, which we hope you will enjoy planting and watching the wildlife the flowers will attract.



Hopefully by next month we will be introducing our new Clerk and new Councillors. Interviews are taking place for the position of Clerk and there are still plenty of opportunities to join us on Marston Parish Council as a Councillor.

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Development Management (Planning) Team has received an application in respect of the following:

Site Address: Lion Salt Works
Ollershaw Lane Marston Northwich
CW9 6ES



Proposal: Seeking permission to continue to manage the area of trees as a screen and to prevent excessive growth of trees making them unmanageable and a risk to neighbours. Reference Number:

24/00399/CAT Case Officer: Tree Team

treeplanningapps@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk Ward: Marbury.

Parish: Marston

How to comment online: If you want to comment on this application or view all the application documents (including supporting documentation) please use our online Public Access system at <https://pa.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

If you have any comments, please submit them by: 5 March 2024 We will not determine the application before this date. If you need more time, for example where the application raises complex issues, please contact the case officer to discuss.

MARBURY PCSO REPORT JAN / FEB 24

GREAT BUDWORTH:

Report of garden items stolen from property on School Lane. There is no CCTV at the location - no lines of enquiry. Report of alarm activation at property in Great Budworth - this proved to be a false alarm by occupiers - the alarm was set off accidentally.



MARSTON:

Report of money being stolen from a wallet near to the Salt Barge Pub. There is no CCTV at the location. Male is unsure how he has come to lose the wallet. Wallet was found later with money missing.



Keep your eyes open when walking past the local flashes for the Grebes. Grebes are diving waterbirds, feeding on small fish and aquatic invertebrates. A little bit larger than a coot, known pairs in England. Numbers increased from the mid-19th century up

until 1996, after which little evidence of population change has been

detected. Never mind Strictly Come Dancing, to see some fancy footwork head down to your local lake or reservoir to watch the wild dance of great crested grebes. Their early spring courtship includes 'mewing' and calling, synchronised swimming, preening and fanning out their feathery ruffs. great crested grebes' nest on floating platforms made up of waterweed. They can be found on lakes and reservoirs everywhere. Historically persecuted for its beautiful feathers, the Great Crested Grebe population was once reduced to as few as 32.

A Home Upgrade Grant scheme, to improve the energy efficiency of homes not heated by mains gas, is open for applications from West Cheshire residents now.

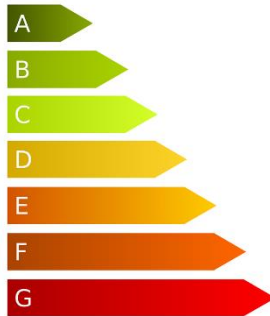
This grant offers a range of energy efficiency measures including, for example, insulation and heating system upgrades, all of which will help lower energy bills. Grants are available for those with a lower annual combined household income of £31,000 (gross) or less, and/or

receiving specific benefits, and living in an 'off-gas' property with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating from Band D to G.

Applications can be made online at:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/homeenergyhelp or by post. To request a paper copy please call Cheshire West and Chester Council's Contact Centre on 0300 123 8 123 and ask for a Home Upgrade Grant application form from the Climate Change Team.

Please note as part of the application process evidence of a household's combined annual income is required. This will include, for example, copies of a resident's last three months' pay slips, three months' bank statements, benefit letters, pension statements etc. More information about this grant can be found on the web link above and in the Frequently Asked Questions leaflet shared separately





Spring brings the welcome sight of new born lambs and other livestock into the fields. The number of reported dog attacks on livestock is sadly increasing and the impact of worrying on livestock causes unnecessary suffering in the form of stress, injury or death. The stress of being

chased can cause pregnant ewes to miscarry.

A new Private Members Bill has been introduced through Parliament. The new Dogs (protection of livestock) (amendment) Bill aims to introduce measure that will make it easier for the police to catch offenders and secure more prosecutions.

Please keep your dog on a lead when near livestock.

A consultation on the future for wildlife in Cheshire has just launched. For details, please visit: [Working together for a Wilder Cheshire and Warrington | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) In summary the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is intended to provide a blueprint to help wildlife thrive, improve our ecological network, but also target where investment in nature could help us adapt to climate change or improve the quality of the local environment, for people and the economy. As many views as possible are sought about what matters and what a Local Nature Strategy of Cheshire and Warrington needs to achieve to help nature. We are also asking landowners to put areas forward where they could be interested in attracting investment in helping nature to recover, through a **call for sites**. We can then put them in touch with organisations that can help them access government related grants or

for support to develop biodiversity units (that could be sold to developers, when they need to invest in local opportunities to improve nature as part of Biodiversity Net Gain - *the extra 10% that needs to be delivered for nature as part of major planning applications from 12th Feb and scheduled for minor applications from the start of April*). After this consultation there will be rounds of online and in person workshops across Cheshire and Warrington to confirm the priorities, targets and agree ways we can work together, across the Local Nature Partnership, with other organisations, landowners and individuals to support nature’s recovery over the next 10 years (with known pressures and future opportunities in mind). Details on this will follow when available. If you have any questions, please email: naturesrecovery@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.



Potato & spring onion breakfast pancakes

Prep: 15 mins Cook: 30 mins plus cooling Easy Serves 2 (makes 6 pancakes)

Ingredients

140g floury potatoes (weighed after peeling),
cut into large chunks

50g self-raising flour

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

3 large eggs

5 tbsp milk

3 spring onions, finely chopped

2 tsp sunflower oil, plus extra if needed

knob of butter

6 rashers streaky bacon (smoked or unsmoked)



Method

Step 1 Put the potatoes in a large pan of salted water and boil until tender. Drain well, tip back into the pan, shake for 1 min over a gentle heat to dry them off, then mash and leave to cool.

Step 2 Put the cooled mash in a bowl with the flour and bicarb. Whisk 1 egg with the milk, season, tip into the bowl and whisk until smooth. Stir in the spring onions, reserving some to serve.

Step 3 In a non-stick frying pan, heat half the oil and butter until sizzling, then spoon in half the pancake batter to make 3 pancakes. Cook for 1 min or so on each side until browned and set underneath, then flip and cook the other side. Keep warm in the oven while you make 3 more pancakes.

Last year Marston Parish Council was given a grant from the Freedom Fibre Fund, this award was to encourage wildlife into our village. With this in mind we are able to give every household a packet of wildflower seeds for you to grow.

Sow/ plant more wildflowers – providing nectar heaven for insects and seed heaven for birds. Sow wild flower garden seeds in March and April, or



September if your soil is light and well drained. They prefer an open position in full sun.

Prepare the ground by clearing away all existing plants and grass. It's particularly important to remove vigorous perennial weeds such as stinging nettles, docks and couch grass. In wildlife areas this is best done by hand.

Dig the soil over and firm it well before raking to create a level seed bed. Don't incorporate any fertilisers or manure as this encourages grass growth which crowds out the wild flowers. If your soil is very fertile and you'd like to grow a perennial wild flower meadow you can try stripping away the top 5-10cm (2-4 inches) of soil to reduce fertility. 1 gram of pure wild flower garden seeds is enough for 1 square metre of soil. Mixed wild flower seeds with grass should be sown at 5g per square metre. Try mixing the seed with silver sand to help you see where you have been and make your distribution more even. Rake the area lightly after sowing and

cover with netting to protect from birds and cats. Ensure the soil is kept moist during hot, dry periods for the best germination.

Aswell as sowing wildflower seeds here are some other ways you can help create a little haven for wildlife in your garden – love nature and nature will love you back.

Create a Pond – Doesn't need to be big, even a sunken washing up bowl will do. You can also do similar if you have a balcony.

Put up bird boxes – and also bat boxes if you have bats in your garden. Swallows, house martins and swifts, in particular also need our help so consider putting up boxes for them too.

Create or bee and bug shelters / hotels - Collect handfuls of stems, twigs and sticks from the ground – make sure to leave plenty behind for the wildlife. Tie the bundles of stems, twigs and sticks in two places. Push them into a bush, or hang them in a sheltered place. Get ready to welcome your insect guests!

Don't be too tidy in your garden – leave stems on over winter to provide shelter for ladybirds and other insects.

Don't mow – leave an area of grass unmown to see what wildflowers come up.

Create a log pile – in a sheltered part of your garden to attract insects and perhaps reptiles.

Hedgehogs – consider a hedgehog box and creating a doorway in your fence to provide access for hedgehogs to come and go between gardens.

Gardening in March

Spring usually arrives by mid-March and the frequent sunny days provide the opportunity for an increasing range of gardening tasks. It's time to get busy preparing seed beds, sowing seed, cutting back winter shrubs and generally tidying up around the garden.

Prune bush and climbing roses These general tips for rose pruning will help you improve the health and lifespan of any rose.

Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes. Onions are such a versatile vegetable – they feature in so many recipes, and growing your own means you'll always have them to hand.

Perennials: dividing

Dividing perennials regularly will ensure healthy, vigorous plants that will continue to perform year after year. It also offers the opportunity to multiply your plants.

Pruning for colourful stems or large foliage

When some shrubs are pruned hard, they regrow vigorously producing more colourful stems that brighten up the garden in winter. Others can also be hard-pruned to create a large-leaved effect. These methods, when applied to trees, are often called coppicing and pollarding, but when applied to small shrubs the term 'stooling' is commonly used.

Slugs

Slugs are widespread animals which can cause problems in the garden, eating holes in leaves, stems, flowers, tubers and bulbs. They can cause damage throughout the year on a wide range of plants, but seedlings and new growth on herbaceous plants in spring are most at risk.



Non-chemical control

Biological control

A biological control (Nemaslug) specific to molluscs, with no adverse effect on other types of animals, is available in the form of a microscopic nematode or eelworm that is watered into the soil. The nematodes (*Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita*) enter slug's bodies and infect them with bacteria that cause a fatal disease. A moist warm soil (temperatures of 5-20°C (41-68°F)) is required; therefore, control is most effective during spring to early autumn. Best results are achieved by applying in the evening to moist but well-drained soils; control may be less successful in heavy soils, such as clay. The nematode is available from refrigerated cabinets in some garden centres or by mail order from suppliers of biological controls.

Other non-chemical controls

There are many preventive measures that have been used by gardeners to minimise slug damage. Most of these do not have any scientific evidence to prove that they are effective.

These measures include: Transplanting sturdy plantlets grown on in pots, rather than young vulnerable seedlings. Transplants can be given some protection with cloches

Torchlight searches on mild evenings, especially when the weather is damp; hand-picking slugs into a container. They can then be placed in another part of your garden such as the compost heap or areas with less vulnerable plants, or killed in the freezer before being added to the compost heap or put in the bin

Garden compost is a soil improver made from decomposed plant waste, usually in a compost bin or heap. It is added to soil to improve its fertility, structure and water-holding capacity. Seed or potting composts are used for growing seedlings or plants in containers a wide range of commercially produced peat-free composts are available, made from a mix of various ingredients, such as loam, composted bark, coir and sand, although you can mix your own.

Some birds, frogs, toads, hedgehogs, slow-worms and ground beetles eat slugs and these predators should be encouraged in gardens. Raking over soil and removing fallen leaves during winter can allow birds to eat slug eggs that have been exposed

Traps, such as scooped out half orange, grapefruit or melon skins, can be laid cut side down, or jars part-filled with beer and sunk into the soil near vulnerable plants. Check and empty these regularly, preferably every morning. Proprietary traps are also available from garden centres and mail order suppliers

Barriers, thought to repel slugs, include rough or sharp textured mulches and substances thought to be distasteful or strong smelling. Copper-base barriers have been shown to repel slugs in some studies. A recent RHS study in a garden-realistic scenario however, found no reduction in slug damage from barriers made of copper tape, bark mulch, eggshells, sharp grit or wool pellets

Hall Hire

The Church Hall on Ollershaw Lane is a great place for parties, band practice or events and activities. To hire contact Angie or Angela. Hall costs just £10 per hour to hire.



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Your Contributions and ideas are welcomed! Please send to the editor or any one of the councillors or even give us a ring.

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Quiz about the Month of March

Quiz Questions

1. What is the birth flower of March?
2. Which UK Saints Day is on March 1st?
3. The lives of the four March sisters feature in which famous novel?
4. March is called *maaliskuu* in which European language?
5. The March Hare is a character from which book?
6. Which annual health awareness day takes place on the second Wednesday in March?
7. What is the full name of the actor that won Academy Awards for Best Actor in both 1946 and 1932?
8. Symbolizing courage, name March's birthstone?
9. March is named after Mars; what is Mars the Roman god of?
10. What's the zodiac signs for early March until March 20? And what about the sign for the latter part of March?
11. On the first Thursday in March every child in full-time education in the UK is given a voucher to spend on what?
12. The Ides of March is a day on the Roman calendar that corresponds to which date?
13. Complete the saying: 'March comes in like a lion and goes out like a'?
14. On the 5th of March 1946, what did Churchill warn was falling across Europe?
15. 'Dear March - Come in', was a poem by which reclusive 19th Century American poet?
16. On what date in March is Saint Patrick's Day?
17. In British tradition, which quarter day falls on March 25th?
18. St Piran's Day, held on 5 March every year, is the national day of where?

Answers:

1. Daffodil
2. St David
3. Little Women (Louisa May Alcott)
4. Finnish
5. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (by Lewis Carroll)
6. National No Smoking Day
7. Fredric March
8. Aquamarine or bloodstone
9. War
10. Pisces (until March 20) and Aries (March 21 onwards)
11. Books (it's World Book Day)
12. March 15th
13. Lamb
14. An 'iron curtain' (he speaking in Fulton, Missouri)
15. Emily Dickinson
16. 17th March
17. Lady Day
18. Cornwall



Hopefully by the time you receive your copy of Marston Murmurs, the daffodils will once again be glorious around the fingerpost.

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