

Scruton News

Scruton Parish Council

July 2020



Farming News

by Malcolm Barker

The landscape has suddenly turned green since last month. The parched grass (which can reveal archaeological features) has become vibrant and is now growing fast. Every resulting bale of hay and silage will be needed to feed livestock next winter, because the corn yields will be low due to the harsh months before June. In a droughty spring, it is only the deep rooted plants which thrive. Plants such as thistles, docks and nettles dominate the shallow rooted grass with which they compete.

This spring, even some trees have suffered and one sycamore of mine lost all of its leaves before they had been on the tree for a month. Many trees have brown leaves this year, particularly those exposed to last month's arid west winds. The rains which came in June will benefit us well into next winter.

July is a month to finish making the first crop of hay and to start harvesting the winter barley. It is a dry month with a few thunder storms, which were said to ripen the corn in olden times.

Hedgehog Cam Success!

For his birthday, Ian Hobson bought himself a *Raspberry Pi*, which some of you may know is a small but powerful micro-computer, about the size of a credit card. He was also given a miniature camera and therefore needed a project ... Having made a hedgehog house the previous year, and with the sight of droppings on the lawn this spring, the inspiration came to make:- **'Hedgehog Cam'**!



After some technical wizardry, software was written to capture a full definition photo when movement was detected. Food was put out for many weeks and finally the camera switched on. The photo above was captured on only the second night!



Scruton Sky at Night

by Peter Williams

The earth is at Aphelion at mid-day on 4 July, which means that it is at the furthest distance it can be from the Sun. On 6 July, the full moon passes just below Jupiter in the SSE sky, and with Saturn to the upper left, this makes an interesting sight. With binoculars held steady, it is interesting to watch the 4 main satellites of Jupiter as they change position around the planet each night.

Look out for Earthshine on the dark hemisphere of the crescent moon between 21st and 26th, low in the West to Southwest sky. This is the light reflecting back from the Earth onto the dark side of the moon.

NASA will be launching the rover 'Perseverance' to Mars during a launch window from 20 July to 11 August. This will land in February 2021, and is particularly interesting because the rover will also carry a small Mars helicopter to aid in the mission. I have a *'boarding pass'* for this mission, which means that my name is included on a small micro-chip on board the craft. This is something that NASA regularly does for their missions, and I will try to alert everyone for the next opportunity.

The Benefice of the
**LOWER
SWALE**
.....+.....

St Radegund open for Private Prayer

To arrange access for private prayer please contact John Mainwaring-Taylor (tel. 748 617) to agree a convenient time. You will be welcome to enter the church at the pre-arranged time but you must maintain social distancing and follow strict hygiene rules. You will be asked to sign-in (using your own pen) on entering the church.

Please continue to look after each other, follow the official guidance and remain at home as much as possible in order to protect the vulnerable in our community. If you, or anyone you know, needs assistance, please contact Revd Jenni Lane on tel: 01609 631 122, or email: jennilane2013@btinternet.com

Our worship of God and our care for each other continues - You are welcome to receive a copy of our weekly Service by email or to join our 10.00 am Sunday 'Zoom' Service. Please contact our Lay Minister, Paul Chubb, to receive these, email: paul.anthony.chubb@btinternet.com



Nature Notes

By Andy Johnston

So far June has been anything but 'flaming' with strong north and easterly winds bringing cool, damp weather from the North Sea. Despite this the rooks have fledged and peace has returned to those who live near the Green! We have a good number of house martins nesting in the village, but only a few swallows and five swifts. Unfortunately we only have one pair of spotted flycatchers at the top of Ham Hall Lane. Normally there is a pair on the Green, but they failed to return.



On a brighter note Sandra and I have a pair of wagtails nesting in the garrya bush near our back door. This morning the female left the bush with an eggshell in her beak. Fingers crossed, local cats don't find the nest!

School House for Let

Scruton School House is available for letting on an Assured Shorthold tenancy. The rent is £475 pcm. Applications to John Mainwaring-Taylor Tel: 01609 748 617 or email: jmainwaringtaylor@gmail.com



Look Back in Time

by the 'Time Traveller'

In July 2000 - a time capsule was buried on the Village Green as part of the Millennium celebrations. A plaque commemorating its burial is stored at the Village Hall along with information about the capsule's exact location and instructions for opening in 2100.

July 2000 also saw the opening of Scruton's very own architect designed cricket pavilion-clubhouse. Club members raised £30,000 towards the building work, but completed much of the remaining work themselves. The grand opening ceremony was carried out by ex-Yorkshire bowler Arthur Robinson who captained a Grand Gala Match for the occasion.

Scruton's Environment

by Trevor Howe

Hopefully everyone is still enjoying their magnificent rural surroundings. After four months' display of bulbs and spring blossom, we can now enjoy hedges and trees in full leaf. Station Road is a fine approach to the village and was planted in the National Scheme of 1982 (same year the Playing Field was started). The new cedars in Scruton Park are slowly becoming established after being planted by the Parish over 10 years ago (see below). Beech Close & gardens all round the village are looking their best ever and attracting much birdlife.

Cedars of Lebanon by Judi Elmer

The old cedars, symbols of fruitfulness and strength, were planted at a time when cedars were a favourite ornamental tree in the parklands of grand houses (notice those in the opening scenes of Downton Abbey, filmed at Highclere Castle).

Scruton's cedars are all that remains of a bygone age, survivors of an estate which encompassed ornamental lakes, follies and avenues of trees, they have now become a worthy emblem of the village, which would have pleased Roger Gale who planted them around 300 years ago.

Village Hall May Reopen?

Although the Coore Memorial Hall remains closed for the time being, new Government guidance now allows village halls to reopen after 4 July.

The Coore Memorial Hall Management Committee will shortly undertake a risk assessment and prepare a plan with a view to reopening the village hall for bookings, provided Covid-19 security requirements can be complied with.

Suggestions Required for Community Levy Spend

As a result of the two new dwellings in Station Road, the Parish Council has obtained a sum of £1,353 under the **Community Infrastructure Levy Scheme**. Suggestions for a community infrastructure spend would be welcome, in writing please to the Clerk. The Parish Council is looking for something out of the ordinary and will consider all suggestions. Watch out for further details on Network Scruton.

Scruton Parish Council Annual Report 2019-20

By Mike Widmer (Chairman)

In these extremely trying times, the first thing that I must say is that I hope all of our parishioners are safe and well and that everybody stays that way. Let us all hope that at this time next year, Scruton has another reason to call itself a 'Thankful Village'.

After four years of serving on the Council, two of them as deputy chair, this was my first year as Chairman and, if I had to use just one word to describe the nature of the year it would be 'CHANGE'. Whilst reviewing the standing orders last Autumn I came across the minutes from an SPC meeting held in 2006. Three of the Councillors present at that meeting were still serving the Council in the spring of 2019, a full thirteen years later! Before the May elections, two of those Councillors plus one other, all relinquished their posts and decided not to stand for future service.

So around fifty years of combined experience was lost overnight and a new team had to be formed. In such situations it obviously takes time to get to know each other and to gain an appreciation of how each individual works. A 'bedding in' period was inevitable. I am very pleased to say that this period was a relatively short one and that the Council was working together as a close knit team pretty quickly. I would like to thank all the current Councillors for enabling this to happen and also for their input over the year. Of course, the same sentiments apply to our Clerk, Chris Barron.

Whilst on the subject of thanks, may I just say how much the Council appreciates the efforts of all the Parishioners who have helped to look after the more vulnerable amongst us, and have helped with shopping and medical supplies and a hundred other things including clearing the brash off the village green. So well done and thank you all.

Businesswise, it has been a fairly low key and routine year, with no major threats arising. All of the necessary contracts were quickly put in place, including the grass cutting contract which has been slightly extended from last year, although Covid 19 has affected the actual provision of that service.

On the plus side, the construction of two new bungalows in the village led to a 'community levy' of £1,353 being received by the Council. There are strict guidelines as to how this money can be spent and the Council will be looking closely at this in the near future. In the meantime, the money will be 'ring fenced' from the normal funding and once it is clear what it can and cannot be spent on Parishioners will be briefed on this and then be asked (via Network Scruton) for suggestions on how to use it.

Finally, most of you will be aware that this report is always issued in April and not June. I made the decision to defer it because I did not think it proper to issue it at a time when almost a thousand people were dying each day. I did not think the affairs of Scruton Parish Council would feature very prominently in the minds of many back then. Things have improved now but we are still not out of it. So please, take care and stay safe.

Parish Council Meetings 2020

All Parish Council meetings are suspended until further notice.

Do you have any items for Scruton News?

Please email: stephen.elmer@scruton.net

The deadline for the next edition is 23 July

The editor reserves the right to make changes for editorial purposes.

Scruton Parish Council

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