

Scruton News

Scruton Parish Council

Feb. 2021



www.scruton.net

'Scruton Solar Farm'

Lightrock Power - are proposing to develop a solar farm on 150 acres of land between Leeming Bar and Scruton. Originally called 'Leeming Bar Solar Farm', the development is now to be named '**Scruton Solar Farm**', as a result of early public feedback.

The company wrote to all residents on 11 January and invited feedback via their online exhibition and public consultation which runs until 8 Feb. A planning application will be submitted in the spring. For more details, go to: www.scrutonsolarfarm.com

Scruton Parish Council - are opposed to this project which they warn would be disproportionate, obtrusive and intrusive. Distributed with this newsletter is a paper written by SPC, the purpose of which is to 'state the threat to the area this project poses and to provide background in order for people to form their own opinions'.

Scruton Solar Farm Action Group - has been set up as an independent forum for anybody wishing to express an opinion, offer suggestions or seek guidance on any matter relating to the solar farm proposal. For details go to: www.scrutonsolarfarmactiongroup.org.uk

Online Public Meetings - have been announced which will be held on **Wednesday 3 Feb at 7:30 pm and Thursday 4 Feb at 8 pm**. Details of how to take part in these virtual public meetings can be found on the Solar Farm website (see above).

Candlemas - 2nd Feb.

This Christian festival commemorates the Presentation of the child Jesus at the Temple. Traditionally manger scenes are put away at Candlemas. It is the midpoint of winter and an old weather-lore saying could predict the coming weather! - *If Candlemas Day be fair and bright, Winter will have another flight. If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain, Winter won't come again.*



Snowdrops are sometimes known as Candlemas Bells - look out for them now, blooming in their hundreds on the village green. And don't forget Shrove Tuesday (Pancakes!) on 16 February.

Snowmen made in Scruton (including a snow-dog!)

Following this year's first snowfall on 2nd January, Scruton children (with a little help from some young-at-heart adults) set forth to make the wonderful snowmen pictured below.



Snowmen photos thanks to: Tracey Astwood, Chalky & Matilda Burton-White, Greg & Elliot Clapham, Judi & Ted Elmer, Beth Foxton, Jane Holder, Richard Meeres, Thomas Stubbs and Peter Williams (who 'cheated' with a plastic one!)



Scruton Sky at Night (Mars Special) by Peter Williams

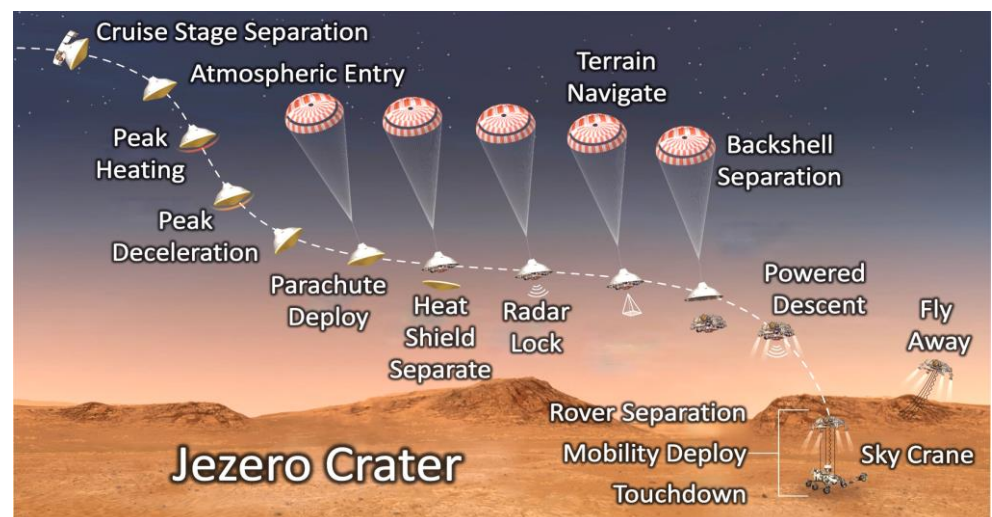
The night skies are fairly 'quiet' this month with a full Moon on the 27th. There is, however, a close encounter on the evening of the 18th between the crescent Moon and, just above it, the planet Mars. But a far more interesting event at about 7:15 pm on the 18 Feb is the arrival at Mars of NASA's Perseverance mission. This mission was launched last July and will land in Jezero crater for a planned year-long exploration in an attempt to answer the question 'Was there ever life on Mars?'

Landing on Mars involves a nail-biting descent, which NASA describes as *seven minutes of terror*. This has to slow the craft from an entry speed of 12,000 mph. There is deployment of a huge parachute followed by firing of powered descent rockets to slow it to 2 mph. A

sky crane then lowers the rover on 3 bridle cords for the final 50 feet, until it lands gently on its 6 wheels. It all has to be autonomous and NASA's control centre will only find out 11 minutes later if the landing has been successful.

The primary purpose of this mission is to gather and store soil samples for collection by a future mission. The rover will also dispatch a small helicopter called 'Ingenuity' to test the technology and to scout various targets for further investigation. All very exciting, and the landing will be streamed 'live' on NASA's YouTube channel.

So, when you look up at the close encounter on the evening of the 18th, you will be looking at Mars just after the arrival of the new explorer.



Jezero Crater



Nature Notes

by Andy Johnston

The main physical feature of Scruton is the river Swale which essentially forms the eastern boundary of the parish. It is a fast-flowing river which has created spectacular meanders and is, on a geological time scale, rapidly changing its course. Walking along Common Lane onto the embankment and looking to the right, you will see the remnants of a meander in the field at least 30 or 40 metres from the present river. It is here that some older residents of the village used to swim as children. Following the Swale downstream the river has cut a 3 metre wide channel in the last five years, creating a sizeable island. The last two floods have seen the neck of the next meander broken through, which may well lead to the creation of an ox-bow lake.

The Swale is home to a diverse variety of fish: chub, trout, grayling, barbel and pike in excess of 25 pounds! An exciting addition to the river is the return of salmon, which, as an indicator species, confirms the improved purity of the water. In early spring river lamprey swim upriver to spawn on the gravel beds; they turn over the gravel and leave large areas clear of weed.



With all this food in the river there has been a significant resurgence of otters in the past decade, in addition to cormorants, kingfishers and the occasional mink! The next few days should see the return of the first oyster catchers and with increased daylight, more bird song and spring flowers.



Farming News

by Malcolm Barker

The phone call came out of the blue. Was I interested in renting out some land for a solar farm? This was pushing at an open door with me because I have heated our house for the last 30 years with logs gathered from our own woodland and have always tried to find the most environmental route to follow.

Land has for centuries been used to provide energy in the form of firewood for heating. Historically, one third of arable farmland grew oats, which were used as fuel for the heavy horses who powered the machinery. As oil became plentiful and cheap, the horses were replaced by cars and tractors but by the 1970's the environment was starting to suffer.

As electric vehicles become more numerous, they will need power which has to come from either nuclear or renewable energy. If we are to counter the effects of global warming, homes may someday also need to be carbon neutral. If the Scruton Solar Farm is developed this would mean changes on my farm. Sheep would still be able to graze the land beneath the solar panels, but my cows would have to stay out of those fields.

As for farming news, the sheep have started lambing, but I am keeping them all indoors until the weather improves.

St Radegund's Church

St Radegund's Church remains open for private prayer, but all churches in the Benefice of the Lower Swale are closed for public services of worship.

For details of how to join others for online prayer, worship, study and community life, go to: www.lowerwalechurches.org.uk

To join in the weekly services on Zoom call Jenni Lane on 01609 631122 or email: jennilane2013@btinternet.com

From the Parish Council

Although official Council meetings are suspended due to Covid-19, the Council has nevertheless continued to operate on behalf of Scruton residents.

Monthly risk assessments have been carried out. Grass has been cut on the village green, Pittfields Corner and highway verges, with additional work on the green to enhance growth and maintain the trees.

Road grit bins have been refilled and an additional dog waste bin provided at the end of Common Lane. Holly bushes have been planted at Pittfields Corner and trees in Station Road have been trimmed to enable large vehicles to pass safely without damage.

With the aim of keeping the village in a clean state, negotiations took place with the Community Rehabilitation Groups. Discussions also continued with both NYCC Highways and the Environment Agency regarding the A684 flooding and diversions through Scruton.

The Council strives to keep the parish precept low compared to adjoining parishes. It continues to finance the village newsletter and contributions are encouraged. The Council will publish more information to keep residents informed of its activities. The thriving property market in Scruton is testament to the fact that this is a desirable settlement in which to reside.

Parish Council Meetings 2021

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 Feb.

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

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