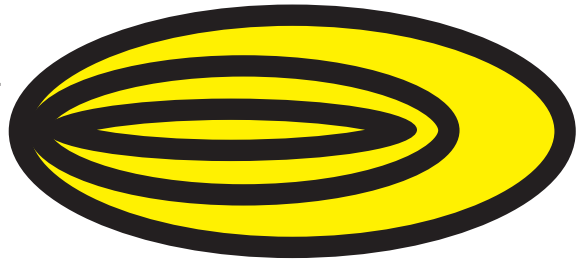


Hamstead Hornet



Issue no. 90

Hamstead Marshall's quarterly newspaper
published since 1996

June 2019

Elm Farm on the market for £3,250,000



Elm Farm, the agricultural heart of Hamstead Marshall, is being offered for sale freehold by private treaty, broken up into eight lots, with a total asking price of £3,250,00.

The brochure published by Carter Jonas in early June describes 213 acres (86 hectares) of mainly pasture, arable and woodland with agricultural, office and commercial buildings. The latter group includes the Grade II-listed barn, rebuilt in 2008 as a venue for conferences and social events. It has frequently been used for village activities.

The farmhouse ("period" unspecified) has five bedrooms, and is described as "in need of modernisation". In February the Organic Research Centre applied for and gained permission for change of use of the farmhouse from offices to dwelling.

Two of the farm's 1960s cottages across the road were sold some years ago. The third, still owned as part of the farm, is currently occupied, so is not included in the sale, but its possible future availability is implied in the agent's prospectus.

"Elm Farm is offered for sale freehold and with vacant possession available. There is a share farming arrangement in place across the farm at present and the Organic Research Centre occupy the offices." (Carter Jonas)

An earlier statement by the interim CEO Stuart Rogers implied that the ORC would probably move away from the village, although there is no mention of this, nor of the farm sale, on the ORC website as of 5th June 2019.

Vacant possession of the land may prove problematic for the vendors. The new tenant, shepherd James Edwards, recently signed a 10-year lease with ORC including a share-farming agreement on all the farmland, and says he was not advised of any imminent intention to sell up. He was and still is planning to stay in the village long-term, having sold his former house and ended other grazing arrangements. He recently moved into the Elm Farm cottage, although this lease runs only to December 2019. "They can make me homeless in December," he said, "but I'm not going anywhere and nor are my sheep."

The Organic Research Centre (ORC) was established in 1980 by David Astor, under its parent the Progressive Farming Trust Ltd, as an educational charity, and it gives Elm Farm as its registered address. *(company #1513190; charity #281276.)*

A brief history

This former Craven landholding has long been the major village farm tenancy. In the mid-nineteenth century it comprised 200 acres, employing 10 men and boys.

By the 1960s it had grown to 230 acres. Three new cottages were built across the road for farmworkers.

In 1980 it was acquired by the Organic Research Centre, which continued to use the farmland for organic dairying. Villagers became fond of the regular parade of Jersey cows up and down the road to the milking sheds, gracefully impeding the impatient commuter traffic.

In the 1990s a switch was made into beef cattle. Later in the decade ORC ended its own farming activities on the land, renting it to an organic tenant, but retaining the buildings around the farmyard. These were extensively renovated to the highest environmental standards in 2008.

Small plots of land were offered for sale to villagers in 2014, slightly reducing the overall farm holding. Some ambitious projects involving the village (community broadband, biomass heating) came to nought. The unexpected and sudden departure of the CEO at the end of 2018 has given rise to local speculation about the future of Elm Farm.

What's on in the village

for St Mary' Church services see [here](#)

09.15-10.15 6 x Mondays from 10 Jun	Pilates class with Paula Chandler	Village hall	Paula Chandler
Monday afternoons	Chris Turner's oil painting class	Village hall	01488 658587
17.15-18.15 Mondays	Hatha Flow yoga class with Neeta Madahar	Elm Farm	Neeta Madahar
12.30-13.30 Tuesdays	Hatha Flow yoga class with Neeta Madahar	Village hall	Neeta Madahar
18.00 1st Tuesdays of month	Saviour Pennies Beer Club night	White Hart	01488 657545
18.00-18.45 Thursdays	Tai Chi class with Paula Chandler	Village hall	Paula Chandler
20.00 1st Thursdays of month	Monthly Mindbender Quiz	White Hart	01488 657545
10.20-11.00 Thu 6 June	Mobile library	Village hall	WBC library service
19.00-21.30 Thu 6 June	Circle of Friends <i>informal ladies' group £3</i> <i>topic: recipes old and new</i>	Village hall	Sue Watts
10.30-13.00 Sat 8 June	Community market <i>home-made cakes, preserves, cheeses, eggs,</i> <i>refreshments, crafts, second-hand books</i>	Village hall	Lanie Allen 01488 658168
10.30 Thu 13 June	Ladies Who Brunch £15, <i>booking essential</i> <i>charity: Alexander Devine Hospice</i>	Halfway Inn	Lanie Allen
14.00-16.00 Sat 15 June	Newbury Death Café <i>please book</i>	Village hall	Neeta Madahar
09.00-16.00 Wed 26 June TBC	Woodturning class with Chris Allen	Village hall	Chris Allen
10.20-11.00 Thu 27 June	Mobile library	Village hall	WBC library service
19.30 Wed 3 July	Garden Society summer meeting	Enborne Valley Farm RG20 0JH	Penelope Lake
19.00-21.30 Thu 4 July	Circle of Friends <i>informal ladies' group £3</i> <i>strawberries & fizz</i>	Village hall	Sue Watts
10.30 Thu 11 July	Ladies Who Brunch £15, <i>booking essential</i>	Halfway Inn	Lanie Allen
10.30-13.00 Sat 13 July	Community market <i>home-made cakes, preserves, cheeses, eggs,</i> <i>refreshments, crafts, second-hand books</i>	Village hall	Lanie Allen 01488 658168
20.00 Mon 15 July	Parish council meeting	Village hall	parish clerk
10.20-11.00 Thu 18 July	Mobile library	Village hall	WBC library service
09.00-16.00 Sun 21 July TBC	Woodturning class with Chris Allen	Village hall	Chris Allen
10.20-11.00 Thu 8 Aug	Mobile library	Village hall	WBC library service
10.00-13.00 Sat 10 Aug	Community market <i>home-made cakes, preserves, cheeses, eggs,</i> <i>refreshments, crafts, second-hand books</i>	Village hall	Lanie Allen 01488 658168
10.20-11.00 Thu 29 Aug	Mobile library	Village hall	WBC library service
19.00-21.30 Thu 5 Sep	Circle of Friends <i>informal ladies' group £3</i>	Village hall	Sue Watts
10.00-13.00 Sat 7 Sep	Community market <i>home-made cakes, preserves, cheeses, eggs,</i> <i>refreshments, crafts, second-hand books</i>	Village hall	Lanie Allen 01488 658168
14.00 Sat 7 Sep	Garden Society show <i>fruit, flower, veg & other competition classes,</i> <i>East Woodhay Band, 23 craft stalls</i>	Hazel Pad- dock (oppo Enborne Sch)	Penelope Lake
20.00 Mon 16 Sep	Parish council meeting	Village hall	parish clerk

Planning applications taken from <https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk> on 5th June 2019. To see more details visit this site and search on the application number.

APPROVED

No 4 The Village, RG20 oHN

19/00880/NONMAT validated 11th April 2019
(vehicle access to property) amendment to
18/03126/HOUSE: to change area of driveway that
was designated gravel to block paving.
Approved 17th May 2019.

Lamellion RG20 oHH

19/00248/COND1 validated 4th Feb 2019
Application for approval of details reserved by con-
ditions (3) Surfacing and (4) Parking/Turning of
planning permission #18/02490/HOUSE
Approved 26th Apr 2019.

Elm Farm Research Centre RG20 oHR

19/00378/FULD validated 18th Feb 2019
Change of use from (B1) offices to dwelling house.

Supported by parish council, requesting that tie to
Elm Farm and agricultural use remains.
Approved 2nd May 2019.

AWAITING DECISION

Plumbs Farm, RG20 oHR

19/00703/FUL validated 17th April 2019
Wire frame steel sculpture of a dog on concrete base
below ground.
No comment from parish council.

Enborne Equestrian Centre, Holtwood, RG20 oJL

17/02878/FULD validated 18 Oct 2017
Section 73A: Variation of Conditions 3, 4, 5 & 7
of planning permission reference 16/00775/FULD
(Proposed dwelling to replace existing mobile home)
No objection from parish council.

Election results

With just four nominations for **Hamstead Marshall Parish Council**, the following became parish councillors in an uncontested election on 2nd May 2019: Susie Aromando, Peter Benest, Anne Budd and John Handy, who continues as chair, with Peter Benest as vice. Their contact details are here. Anne Budd has replaced Stuart Morton (who did not stand for re-election) as the parish council's representative on the village hall management committee.

The **West Berkshire Council** poll on the same day resulted in the following councillors elected for the newly expanded ward of Hungerford and Kintbury: Dennis Benneyworth, James Cole and Claire Rowles. All three are Conservative, and can be contacted via this page.

For details of the **European Parliament** election result see <http://europarl.europa.eu/unitedkingdom>.

Parish plan

update from Jane Arnold-Round

Following the 'show and tell' at the village market in February, the Parish Plan Working Group is working on an update to the parish plan, including new action items to cover the key areas of interest to the community: better footpath access around the village; traffic control; mobile phone signal; litter; and a possible village magazine complementary to existing forms of communication. Once the updated plan has been finalised it will be submitted to WBC for approval. Anyone with an interest in these areas is encouraged to get involved, as volunteers will be needed.

Annual parish assembly

At the annual parish assembly on 18th May John Handy welcomed a small group of villagers and Enborne residents. No WBC councillors attended, and there was no TVP representation. Reports from the chair and councillors covered planning applications, local government service cuts, the Relief in Need charity*, the White Hart, the parish plan and the village hall. The parish council maintains its own website here.

**The Relief in Need charity stems from two separate historic bequests of land to be administered in trust for the benefit of needy people in the village. The two charities were combined in the 1990s, and parish councillors are ex-officio trustees, organising the rental of the land and the distribution of income. Peter Benest reported that £150 was distributed to three parishioners last Christmas, and that the land is satisfactorily tenanted.*

In brief

Hamstead level crossing will be closed from 22.00 to 06.00 each night of Monday 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th June.

The village hall hiring rate rises to £10 per hour from 1st July. The hall will be closed from 29th July until 3rd August for resurfacing the floor.

St Mary's Church needs friends

St Mary's Church is much-loved by parishioners as a timeless village institution but, like most churches, it has been suffering from dwindling congregations. Its financial burdens, alas, have not been dwindling.

A generous legacy of some years ago was made specifically for the church fabric, and this has enabled the parochial church council (PCC) to keep the building in excellent repair, a condition attested to by a recent survey and report by the Church Buildings Council, which noted treatment against beetle attack, improved drainage, rewiring, new lighting installation, and the installation of a kitchenette. The report commended this work, and designated the church, which is Grade-II* listed, of high architectural and historical significance.



Nonetheless St Mary's is at risk, because the income generated by regular worshippers does not meet the day-to-day cost of keeping it open and holding regular services. Substantial dues are payable to the Oxford diocese. This is not a new problem: it has been a concern from some years, with various options being considered. At worst, it may mean St Mary's

being withdrawn from the benefice to be semi-mothballed in trust, holding only occasional weddings, funerals and festive services.

Less extreme measures may suffice if more support can be found. A high-level meeting is to be held on Tuesday 11th June, at which the PCC will explore options with representatives from the diocese of Oxford and the Church Commissioners.

A social centre for the village...

A small group of energetic parishioners have organised regular social events in St Mary's, but the capacity of the nave is a limiting factor. However, concerts and talks in recent years have been well supported. Last winter's series of Speakers' Corner talks not only raised money for St Mary's, but brought parishioners together for congenial evenings. Venetia Dunlop plans to repeat the series starting this October.



....And a visitor attraction

A guided tour of St Mary's was the highlight of a local visit by a small group of U3A members in April.

The church is also a stopping point for the *Walking with Jane* tours organised by Elizabeth Pask. These guided tours (which raise funds for charity) take in various local points of interest which would have been well known to Jane Austen. Several have been held in the past and two more are planned for this summer: for Tuesday 6th and Friday 9th August. See the details here.

The show comes back...

The Enborne and Hamstead Marshall Flower Show returns this September after a long absence from the village calendar: 2pm Saturday 7th September at Hazel Paddock, opposite Enborne School.

There will be competition classes for fruit, vegetables, flowers, crafts, cakes and more. Schedules are available from the society secretary, Penelope Lake (01635 48701).

The East Woodhay Silver Band will be playing, and there will be craft stalls as well, of course, as home-made refreshments.

...And so does the pub quiz

The White Hart Monthly Mindbender Quiz returns on the first Thursday of each month. Village brain cells will again pit themselves against all-comers.

As before, the prize will be minimal, because the prestige of winning is reward enough, but the winners do get to choose the charity which will benefit from the next month's quiz.

Picture questions are circulated to teams at 8.00, and the questions start at 8.15. Tables can be booked in advance on 01488 657545 or via the website.

Hamstead Hornet

The *Hamstead Hornet* is published quarterly online at <http://www.hamsteadmarshall.net/social-life/hamstead-hornet/>.

Readers who have supplied their email addresses to the editor receive notification with a link as soon as each issue is posted.

News stories are updated between issues on <http://www.hamsteadmarshall.net/social-life/noticeboard/>.

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