

Hamstead *Hornet*

Hamstead Marshall's quarterly newspaper since 1996

June 2025

issue no 114

LOCAL LINKS

[Parish council](#)

Dogs Trust at
Plumb's Farm

Good Hope Farm

**HM Wildlife
Group FB**

WhatsApp groups

Community chit-
chat, news, tips,
alerts, requests.
Contact [Sarah
Stevenson](#)

HM Growing Tips
gardening
triumphs and
disasters. Contact
[Lanie Allen](#)

Dogs to go

Spotlight on dark skies

Parish assembly and council

Village hall

Hamstead's councillor to be WBC chair

Planning and property

What's on in the village

New role for Plumb's Farm

The Dogs Trust at Plumb's Farm will now not close (as was reported in April) but will instead become a dog-fostering hub. The decision was reached following a staff consultation about restructuring the charity.



In 2019 the Dogs Trust spent a significant sum of money on improving facilities at Plumb's Farm, including underfloor heating for the 70 kennels.

This means that dogs will no longer be housed in the kennels on site (apart from occasional emergencies, for which a few kennels will be retained).

Plumb's Farm staff, currently around 30, will reduce to 15, who will switch to administration of the fostering scheme. Local volunteers will no longer be needed for dog-walking.

Abandonment, death or eviction of former owners, or an owner needing to flee domestic abuse can render a dog

homeless, sometimes temporarily. The trust's practice of dog-fostering is growing in response to evidence that some dogs do not settle in kennels, and fostering can better prepare a dog for its ultimate forever home. Fostering may last a few days or several weeks, and costs are covered by the Dogs Trust. More information can be found on <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/rehoming/fostering>.

When Craven-owned, Plumb's Farm was sometimes farmed in conjunction with Elm Farm, latterly by the Punter family.

In the 1970s, the eighteenth-century farmhouse was tenanted by a breeder of Pekinese dogs, before the National Canine Defence League's rescue kennels was opened by Lady Craven.

The NCDL annual open day here used to attract hundreds of visitors, and throughout the year drivers seeking the kennels were a regular feature of village life. Local volunteers regularly walked the dogs across village fields.

In 2023 253 dogs were rehomed from Plumb's Farm. A BBC news report of 4 April 2025 announced its planned closure due to "low service demand".

The changes are likely to begin in the autumn. The future of Plumb's Farm land-holding (the trust is believed to own adjoining fields) has not been announced.



The importance of dark skies *illumination for the ignorant*

They left better informed than when they arrived. The 40 or so visitors who came to Val Russell's Dark Skies event at the village hall on Saturday 10 May were mainly non-astronomical, but they found much to learn.

Val and her colleagues from the Newbury Astronomical Society had laid on an impressive display of photographs, leaflets, charts, posters, an interactive light map, models and equipment, together with a programme of speakers on a variety of subjects. There was a continuous live feed from the international space station and outside, three solar telescopes for visitors to try out safely sun-gazing. After dark, visitors could star-gaze with expert help and professional equipment.

(And, of course, there were refreshments and tombola.)

The purpose of the event was to promote the campaign for dark skies*. Light pollution is bad for human health and animal life, disturbing natural nocturnal cycles. It's also often a waste of energy.

Hamstead's lack of street lighting makes it attractive to astronomers. There have occasionally been suggestions that a streetlight here and there might be advantageous for security or night navigation, but villagers have usually confirmed their preference for continuing without light pollution. Long may it remain so.

* The Commission for Dark Skies (CfDS) is the UK's largest anti-light-pollution campaign group, forming part of the international [dark-sky movement](#), and run by the [British Astronomical Association](#).



Parish assembly

The parish assembly in the village hall on Thursday 15 May involved a full turnout of the present parish council, no district councillors (the date clashed with a council meeting) and a handful of parishioners. The assembly was followed by a regular parish council meeting.

Proceedings of both meetings will eventually be issued in the formal minutes which will give more detail, but these cannot be published until approved at the next council meeting. Meanwhile, these were some of the points under discussion:

Anne Budd was re-elected to the chair, with **David Hadnutt** as vice-chair. There are still two **vacancies** for parish councillors, but there's a possibility that one may soon be filled. Parish council **meeting dates** may be revised to avoid clashing with WBC meetings.

Speedwatch volunteers last year recorded 25 speeding motorists (two of which were Highways vehicles). More **volunteers** are needed, because each session requires three people. A **20mph speed limit** for the village was mooted, but was thought to have little chance of WBC consent. **Electronic speed monitoring signs** were discussed, as was the question of whether the village needed additional **signage warning of horses**.

Sgt Jo Willoughby has joined the neighbourhood policing team for the Hungerford and Lambourn area.

Planning discussions covered a recent new roadway application, Elm Farm, the Sutton Estates application for a large chicken unit at Marsh Benham, and Rickety Gate Farm's application for another mobile home.

Local government reorganisation into larger units looms. It may mean West Berkshire combines with either south Oxfordshire or Reading.

WBC has approved the change of **black bin collection** three-weekly instead of two-weekly, starting in the autumn. The council says 43% of black bins contents are recyclable, and that consultation last autumn gained 52% acceptance of three-weekly collection.

Emergency measures

The village emergency plan has now completed local consultation, and in July the final version will be put to the parish council for adoption. Thereafter it will go to WBC, and be circulated to Thames Valley Police, GP surgeries, and fire and ambulance services.

It will also be posted on the [parish council website](#), with printed copies delivered to those unable to access it online.

Volunteers are still needed. In particular the emergency group is seeking someone willing to train for first-aid certification (at the parish council's expense).

Defibrillator

A defibrillator has now been bought for the village by the parish council, at a cost of £1,854. It's to be installed on the front outside wall of the village hall.

Although the device comes with full voice-recorded instructions, and is operable by anyone, the parish council is arranging a (free) awareness course for anyone interested. This is likely to take place in June. Keep an eye on the community WhatsApp for details.



Village hall news

Village hall hire rates have increased and are now as shown below, per hour:

	Jun-Aug	Sep-May
general	£16	£20
community	£11	£15

More details can be found [here](#).

Two new trustees have joined the committee: Simon Moore is vice-chair, and Geoff Watts is secretary. Another member is still needed.

The Circle of Friends will be meeting on 5 June and 3 July.

Summer events in the hall include a Bollywood dance workshop and a yoga workshop organised by Good Hope Farm, a sale of pre-loved designer and high-street clothes and accessories organised by Larissa Hawkins, and a yin yoga session with Emma Downie. See the What's On listing at the end for times, dates and contact details.

Jenny Carter's Pilates sessions will end this term.

The village trustees' request that funds from the Hamstead Marshall Relief in Need Charity might be allocated to the provision of broadband in the hall was turned down on the grounds that the charity's registered purpose could not legally cover such expenditure.

Hamstead's district councillor rises to the top

Hamstead has three representatives on WBC: Dennis Benneyworth, Denise Gaines and Tony Vickers, who between them cover the ward of Hungerford and Kintbury, which includes Hamstead.

Tony Vickers has recently been elected to chair WBC for the coming year. As such, he is West Berkshire's "first citizen", with additional duties of officiating at civil functions and welcoming distinguished guests to West Berkshire.

Hopefully this will not take too much time away from his ward representation. In his inaugural address he specifically mentioned Good Hope Farm and his intention to promote its work.



Planning applications

Details taken from the WBC planning portal on 30 May 2025. To see more details visit [this site](#) and search on the application number.

APPROVED

3 Elm Farm Cottages RG20 0HR 5/00429/HOUSE

Validated 25 February 2025
Proposed single storey side extension.
Approved 8 April 2025

Fishery Cottage RG20 0JD 25/00491/COND

Application for approval of details reserved by condition 21 (CEMP) of planning permission 21/02912/FUL - Section 73 application to vary/remove conditions 2 (plans) and 3 (materials) of approved application 20/00320/FUL: Demolition of current dwelling to be replaced with larger dwelling. Shortening of the southern fish pool. Demolition of the barn to be replaced with a new barn of the exact design and size.
Approved 1 May 2025

Elm View RG20 0HW 25/00597/HOUSE

Erection of annexe for ancillary use to the main dwellinghouse.
Approved 22 May 2025

Elm Farm 25/00654/COND

Details reserved by condition 3 'Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan', 4 'Tree Protection Scheme', 5 'Updated Ecology Survey' and 6 'Ground Levels and Finished Floor Levels' of approved application 23/02550/FULMAJ.
Approved 20 May 2025

Land adjacent to Gore End Bridge 25/00886/TELE28

Light wooden pole re intention to install fixed line broadband apparatus.
Approved 25 April 2025

SPLIT DECISION

Watery Lane Farm RG20 0JH 25/00763/COND

Validated 9 April 2025
Application for approval of details reserved by condition 1 'commencement', 2 'plans', 3 'mobile home dimensions', 4 'access surfacing', 5 'parking', 6 'SuDS', 7 'agricultural tie' and 8 'temporary permission' of approved application 23/02799/FUL: Application for a temporary dwelling for a rural worker.

Part approved, part refused 21 May 2025

AWAITING DECISION

Land approximately 30 metres N of bridleway on Park Lane 25/00457/FUL

Construction of a new agricultural vehicular access.

Elm Farm 25/00838/COND

Application for approval of details re 25/00782/AGRIC application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed agricultural barn.

Fishery Cottage RG20 0JD

25/00390/COND Validated 26 February 2025

Approval of details reserved by Condition (4) CMS of approved application 21/02912/FUL: Section 73 application to vary/remove conditions 2 (plans) and 3 (materials) of approved application 20/00320/FUL: Demolition of current dwelling to be replaced with larger dwelling. Shortening of the southern fish pool. Demolition of the barn to be replaced with a new barn of the exact design and size.

Rickety Gate Farm, Holtwood RG20 0JH 25/00683/FUL

Validated 25 April 2025

Retrospective siting of a mobile home.
Objection from HMPC.

Two planning applications in neighbouring parishes are raising hackles in Hamstead Marshall

Bradford's Farm, Marsh Benham 24/02641/FULMAJ

Erection of an agricultural building for free range egg production removal of existing free range egg units.

This proposes the replacement of the existing mobile chicken barns with an industrialised unit housing up to 32,000 chickens.

The documents section of <https://publicaccess.westberks.gov.uk/> lists 68 items, including indication that local opposition has been conducted through a petition (submitted by Gill Butter, but here with signatures redacted) and legal advice. There are also letters from individuals and organisations contesting the proposal.

Fears have been expressed about the unsuitability of such an operation within a National Landscape (formerly AONB) close to registered parkland and historic features, pollutant waste run-off into the river Kennet, inadequacy of environmental safeguards, footpath rights, harmful effects on local wildlife and residents' tranquillity, the unlikelihood that 32,000 housed chickens could be "free range", and more.

The application is still at the consultation phase.

Long Copse Farm, Enborne 23/02596/FULMAJ

Use of land for the siting of up to 24 travelling showpersons' plots.

This hotly contested application from the owner of Zippo's Circus has been running since 2023, and currently has 175 documents filed online, many being letters of personal objection. Around a dozen are from Hamstead Marshall residents. There are a further 81 public comments. Hamstead Marshall Parish Council has objected to the proposal on grounds of lack of supporting infrastructure, lack of community benefit, environmental impact and lack of change from previous applications.

The application is currently at the committee stage.

Property



White Hart: with planning permission for redevelopment of the existing buildings into four separate dwellings of approximately 1,539, 3,272, 1,603, and 861 square feet, each with private parking and a garden. The layout plan can be seen [here](#).

Currently shown on Carter Jonas as sold subject to contract (guide price of £1.2million).

#3 Hamstead Mill: two-bedroom ground-floor apartment offered by Jackson-Stops at a guide price of £425,000.

What's on in the village

(Events in the village hall unless otherwise stated)

June

Thu 5	19.00-21.00	Circle of Friends (Sue Watts)
Sat 7	10.00-12.30	Bollywood dance workshop (Good Hope Farm)
Thu 26	14.00-16.00	Community café (Chris Moss)

July

Wed 2	time tba	Garden Society visit to Enborne Valley Farm garden Details to follow from Penelope Lake
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Thu 3 19.00-21.00 Circle of Friends ([Sue Watts](#))
Fri 4 16.00-17.00 Yin yoga restorative class ([Emma Downie](#))
Sat 5 10.00-12.30 Yoga workshop ([Good Hope Farm](#))
Sat 28 10.00-15.00 Pre-loved fashion sale (Larissa Hawkins)

Jenny Carter's Pilates class will close at the end of July.

The *Hamstead Hornet* is published quarterly online, in March, June, September and December. Back copies can be seen on <https://www.hamsteadmarshall.net/social-life/hamstead-hornet/>. Readers who have supplied their email addresses to the editor receive a link as soon as each issue is posted. News stories are updated between issues on the [village website noticeboard](#). The *Hamstead Hornet* is edited and published by Penelope Stokes
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