

THATCHAM

Keeping in touch

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New bus shelters

PLANS to install six new bus shelters in Thatcham are going ahead.

West Berkshire Council has awarded Thatcham Town Council a grant of £47,604.37 to install six shelters, including four with grass roofs, under its Bus Services Improvement Plan, provided by the Department for Transport.

The shelters will be located at Flagstaff Square southbound (costing £7,591.24), Braemore Close westbound (£7,417.05), Nevil Court westbound (£4,719.06), Glebelands westbound (£5,279.17), the Garden Centre, Pound Lane eastbound (£7,719.92) and at Paynesdown Road westbound (£8,457.94).

The grant also includes funds to contribute towards cleaning and maintenance costs for the next five years.

The town council said neighbouring residents have been consulted at each locations.

Police find firearms

POLICE have found firearms at a property in Cold Ash.

A Thames Valley Police spokesperson said: "Officers attended an address in Cold Ash Hill on Thursday, February 27, and made an arrest.

"During the search, officers found a number of firearms at the property, some of which were licenced, so more officers were required to make them safe."

They completed this on Friday, February 28. Their investigation is ongoing.

Pupils get hands-on in British Science Week

Talks, workshops and interactive demonstrations at Downe House

PUPILS at Downe House enjoyed dabbling in robotics, medical engineering and astrobiology recently ahead of British Science Week, which runs from March 7 to March 16.

The week included a series of talks, workshops and interactive demonstrations at the Cold Ash school's Murray Centre, and pupils and staff were welcome to join at their leisure.

It kicked off with pupils learning how to program robot cars to navigate a maze, while the first evening concluded with a lecture on the impact of computer gaming on our world.

Pupils also took part in a chemistry challenge quiz before learning about joint prostheses, including hip replacements, in a hands-on workshop led by medical engineering company Stryker, based in Newbury.

During this session, pupils had the chance to replace the hip joint on a model leg bone using a large drill and hammer.

Dr Lucille Mathers, from The Living Rainforest in Hampstead



A whole week of STEM innovation at Downe House

Norreys, delivered lectures around sustainability and biodiversity.

Author and astrobiologist professor Lewis Dartnell, from the

University of Westminster, also delivered lectures on finding extra-terrestrial life, how to rebuild society after an apocalypse and how human evolution has directly impacted the shape of society today.

Head of STEM at Downe House Rick Hollingworth said: "Throughout the week, there were demonstrations by members of the science, maths and computing departments, everything from experiments that made students' hair stand on end with a Van Der Graaf Generator to demonstrating how subjective and easily confused our five senses are.

"An enormous number of staff and students worked tirelessly to make the week a success. My heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone involved."

The event concluded with the final of the school's Inter-House Maths Competition.



Students enjoyed some innovative demonstrations

Partnership to build on early reading foundations

A MULTI academy learning trust has partnered Master Readers to extend reading beyond phonics for early years.

Equinox Learning Trust, which currently supports Kennet School and the Whitelands and Francis Bailey primary schools in Thatcham, hopes the collaboration will enable pupils to continue building on their early reading foundations through their education and beyond.

Recognising that a love of reading extends far beyond phonics, Equinox has partnered with Master Readers to ensure that primary pupils continue to develop strong literacy skills.

Master Readers is designed to help pupils transition to focus on learning advanced reading skills.

Equinox Learning Trust CEO Francois Walker said: "We are committed to embedding a culture of reading that lasts a lifetime.

"Our partnership with Master Readers is a key step in ensuring that pupils not only learn to read but read to learn, strengthening their confidence and enthusiasm for literature well beyond the phonics stage."

And celebrating World Book Day last week schools across the trust embraced book-themed activities and reading initiatives, reinforcing the importance of literacy in unlocking future success.



Mayor of Thatcham Suzanne Adamantos

Full house at mayor's bingo night

THE mayor of Thatcham's charity bingo evening was a big success.

A fantastic turnout at Frank Hutchings Community Hall last Friday, February 28, helped raise £625 for Thatcham Youth and Cruse Bereavement Support.

Thatcham mayor Suzanne Adamantos, who organised the event, thanked everyone who attended, donated and volunteered to make the evening possible.

She said: "I am absolutely delighted with the success of the bingo night. It's always inspiring to see so many members of our com-

munity come together to support such worthy causes."

But the town council's fundraising efforts aren't stopping there.

Mrs Adamantos is also supporting the upcoming Thatcham 10k Race, organised by Ben Schiffer-Harte (Lib Dem, Thatcham North East), taking place on Sunday, April 6, with funds raised being donated to her charities.

Visit www.thatcham10k.co.uk for further information or take part in this event.

This will be the final fundraising event before Mrs Adamantos' mayoral term ends in May.

Council approves bank conversion amendment

A NON-material amendment to the ongoing conversion of the former NatWest bank in Thatcham High Street has been approved.

A proposal by RG Berkshire Properties to convert the bank to two ground floor retail units with four flats above was conditionally approved by West Berkshire Council in May 2022.

It also included two separate doors and shopfronts and rear extensions for both floors.

The council has now approved a proposed amendment by Transhomes LTD to amend the wording of Condition 5 (that no demolition or works can begin without an



Only the front façade still stands

agreed programme of archaeological work) to reflect Wessex Archaeology taking over from Independent Archaeology Consultants with a second phase of archaeological investigation onsite.

The purpose of the written scheme is to detect and



record any archaeological features or artefacts within the application boundary.

The council's archaeologist previously suggested the site may contain archaeological remains from the medieval and post-medieval period.

Its conservation officer

also raised concerns about the amount of alteration proposed at the pre-application stage, but later felt the Heritage Impact Assessment addressed their concerns.

The building itself likely dates to the 18th century date and was Grade-III listed until a 1980s review.

The landowner must turn over any finds recovered, except human remains, to a museum under the Treasure Act 1996.

Thatcham's NatWest branch closed in June 2018.

The town also lost its Lloyds branch in 2022, Barclays branch in 2020 and HSBC branch in 2016.

Will you sponsor one of the town's events?

THATCHAM Town Council is inviting businesses to sponsor its roster of community events happening this year.

Sponsors can get involved with supporting events from just £300.

These include the council's flagship Thatcham Festival, Family Fun Day, KidsFest and Warming Up for Christmas.

Sponsors benefit through event advertising, social media and newsletters dis-

tributed by the council to more than 11,000 households.

On-the-day perks include on-site branding, prime vendor space and public acknowledgments.

Businesses interested in

supporting these events can find out more by contacting the events manager Sarah Newman.

You can email events.manager@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk or phone (01635) 863592.