

OLD STRATFORD PARISH COUNCIL SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Report

The May elections saw all existing 11 Parish Councillors elected unopposed. It also saw Mary Clarke elected as our new District Councillor and elected the Leader of South Northants Council for the next 4 years).

Letter from Mary Clarke

Thank you to everyone who placed their trust in me at the election on the 5th May 2011. It's an honour and a privilege to have been elected to represent Old Stratford and I will do all I can to be the sort of Councillor that this part of South Northamptonshire deserves.

I remain firmly committed to addressing your concerns on which I based my campaign. I will welcome new ideas, challenging discussions, and rigorous debate on my work as your Councillor and the issues of all residents of Old Stratford.

I have set up my advice surgeries and will hold a monthly surgery on the fourth Saturday morning of each month from 11:00-12:00 at the Memorial Hall, Deanshanger Road. The first one will be on the 25th June just turn up and I will see you.

If you want to get in touch with me about anything, please email me at:

mary.clarke@southnorthants.gov.uk

or send me a text on 07747 757524. Again, I want to express my sincerest thanks for your support. I look forward to the challenges of the next four years.

JUNE 2011

Nature Yards from Your Door

Inspired by "The Country Man" in the last issue of the Parish Newsletter I wanted to add a few additional items regarding the nature on our own doorsteps. Spring / Summer is now fully in its element with gardens now brimming with bright colours and fragrances of lilac and blackcurrant. This is when our vast bee population is working its hardest with dozens of different types and size bees all looking for nectar to bring back to their own respective nests. Bumble bees occupying sites such as disused mouse or vole holes in the ground and mason bees making use of cracks in walls to make their nests. Unlike honey bees all of these types are solitary requiring very little space to nest. We have been delighted for some years to watch the mason, solitary and leaf cutter bees use the simple bee boxes we have in the garden. With bees being such essential pollinators I would encourage anyone to help them out by having a box.

The Country Man' hit on the plight of some of our song birds this year with it being a harsh winter would the effects be felt in the numbers of our song birds. From my location I can say I haven't noticed a reduction in numbers. This could possibly be as 80% of all our song birds spend the winter in Scandinavia returning in the spring they missed the worst of the weather. There is song being provided in the front and back of Deanshanger Road from robins (at all hours I might add) song thrushes and dunnocks. We have even been lucky enough to have been visited by blackcaps and bullfinches. It is the smallest birds that do suffer the most in winter with less ability to maintain body temperatures being so small. I think there may be a few less blue tits and long tailed tits in our gardens and I haven't seen the coal tit at all this spring. Smaller still the wrens and goldcrests have been rarely if seen so far this year. The winter months were not only hard on the birds but also the butterfly populations. I fear this may be a year where our normal butterfly abundance on the buddleia will be greatly reduced.

Species. like the brimstone and orange tip are in flight now as these over winter in the pupal state often well protected from the elements. For the tortoiseshell, red admiral, peacock and comma all of these are our most often seen species because unlike any others they are able to hibernate and appear in the warm spring days to kick start the summer breeding season. But numbers are very low this year. The nectar rich plants so often visited year on year are in full bloom and the sun has been constantly warm enough to wake them from their slumber but so far I have only seen one comma and the odd peacock and admiral.

This nice break of two long weekends enabled me to be in the garden more and I have been rewarded by a number of raptor sightings. There has often been a pair or three buzzards soaring high over Old Stratford looking for carrion. Over Easter after hearing the unmistakable cry, I was delighted to see seven of them circling together. This has subsequently been topped by two appearances of the red kite, three together the second time, flying across Deanshanger Road and down towards the river. On the first occasion the kite was joined by a sparrow hawk and the size difference becomes so apparent when they circle together. Last weekend our most common rapture the kestrel, hunted in the meadow hovering and swooping as it looked for signs of the voles in the field which are again abundant. Lastly the sighting of the year to date, a little owl roosting. Having spotted him roosting in the same tree for a week now I can only assume he has setup a nest site there. I'll keep you posted.

So it is all happening right outside your door, keep your eyes peeled and without having to go to nature reserves or sit in hides you will find all number of wonderful creatures just yards from your door.

The man from the meadow.

OLD STRATFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman:

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Vice Chairman:

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