



Activities at Marleigh during Sept – Oct 2023

Social Media activity

Social Media continues to be the most popular way for residents to share and receive information. The members of the Marleigh Facebook group have increased from 236 (Aug) to 264 (Oct) and topics have included promotion of several events in Marleigh, Fen Ditton and nearby; regular activities at Marleigh; discussions on opening of commercial premises; queries from new residents and several commercial organisations advertising their services on a separate page called Marleigh Buy, Sell and Business. Companies offering services for snagging issues, cleaning (windows and houses) and general small scale building projects have all been popular.

A visit to the Cantonese market (runs every Friday outside the Community Centre) led to a contact who can promote things on the Chinese language WhatsApp group. Promotion of the Marleigh International Conversation Group (see below) was done to this social media group as a result.

There are many WhatsApp groups in Marleigh – either centred around a specific area in the development such as the Kingsley Building or around a special interest e.g. parents of the toddler group.

World Mental Health Day on 10th October gave an opportunity to share on FB a list of organisations providing support and resources to help the wellbeing of members of the community.

Support included personalised mental health action plans, on-line counselling, Lifeline, Mind and the Samaritans contact details, free financial advice to help with the cost-of-living crisis and Keep Your Head which brings together reliable information on mental health and wellbeing for children, young people, adults, professionals, and schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Commercial premises' opening in Marleigh

R3form Pilates is now open under the Kingsley Building and opposite the Sales and Marketing Suite in Marleigh Avenue. They offered some free sessions during the opening phase and have been well supported during their first few weeks.

The Coop premises has seen shopfitting activity during the month of October although no date for the start of trading has been shared so far.

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There is no further progress with Signorelli's café to report.

Healthy Planet, Healthy You event

The event took place at the Marleigh Community Centre on Sunday 22nd October from 13:00 – 15:00 and was intended to raise awareness for residents on topics relating to sustainability and the environment, as well as healthy living. This focus for the event was decided following discussions highlighting cultural differences amongst Marleigh's residents around sustainable living practice, and feedback received from some on the lack of awareness on access to health services.

The event was formatted as an open day in the Community Centre's main hall, with representatives from a range of organisations present. This included Locality, The Land Trust, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Healthy You, Darwin's Nursery, The School Run Centre and Tentshare. A leaflet combining the work of Darwin's Nursery with information on the Fen Ditton Gardening Club was produced and handed out.

There was a good range of stallholders present, each with different activities and resources for residents to engage with. The Land Trust, Darwin Nurseries stall and recycling activity with the spider bottle-top production stalls seemed to do well to engage residents, with attendees seemingly spending the most time speaking to these stallholders. Some attendees interacted with the waste team's stall and took their resources and at least one family appeared interested in the cargo bike from the School Run Centre.

There were approximately 15-20 attendees (including children) who fully attended the event by interacting with stallholders inside the Community Centre, whilst approximately another 5-10 engaged with the Darwin Nurseries stall outside but did not enter the Community Centre venue. The relatively low attendance was partly due to clashes with other large campaigns and associated activities focusing on sustainability elsewhere in Cambridge at the same time (the hall was available on the 22nd and the Land Trust had already promoted a harvest festival on that day which seemed appropriate to the theme) The proximity of the date and time to half-term may have been a factor clashing with residents' own plans and combined with it being a beautiful sunny Sunday.

Cambridge East Forum

The on-line meeting was advertised several times on the residents' Facebook page and about 35 people joined the meeting for an update with Hill/Marshall on progress of the development at Marleigh. Issues raised with the developers included poor maintenance of the landscaping in Phase 1 and on Gregory Park, turning on of the fountain in Jubilee Square, contractors' parking badly and not in designated spaces on site, ASB including break-ins into buildings not yet occupied, driving on footpaths, opening of football pitches and provision of allotments as well as a community garden. A video of the meeting is available here <https://youtu.be/znnTv7tHlf0>

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Marleigh Community Chest

Marleigh Community Chest (a grant of up to £500) has been given to two groups so far. The table tennis club (which was the first recipient of a grant) meets every week in the Community Centre and all newcomers are welcome. The 'Move and Relax' first session was held on 14th October for free with others planned up to and beyond Christmas (the second recipient). Everyone who attended the first session is coming back for the second. It is for all adult age groups to share gentle exercise, companionship and the chance to unwind.

Locality are working with a resident to set up chess tournaments using some Marleigh community chest funding and we have also arranged for a chess club to start at the school for children to learn to play chess.

Marleigh International Conversation Group

The idea of a language café has been part of the overall strategy for community development at Marleigh and a focus for the Task and Finish Group over the summer.

Having identified that there was already a group meeting at East Barnwell and through an introduction from Catrin at the Baptist Chapel the instructor Elizabeth agreed to start a conversation group in Marleigh. Elizabeth is a qualified teacher, now retired, but busier than ever with community work.

The community chest provided a small amount of money to pay for some printing and posters and the new group was widely promoted through social media channels.

The first meeting held on 1st November was a great success with so many people turning up to the foyer that it was standing room only for 5 people after the first 10 were seated. Maybe coffee and cake helped but the intention is to build a community of people looking to improve their English, as it is not their first language, and for them to make new friends.

Marleigh International

Conversation Group for those
whose first language is not English

Starts Wednesday 1st November
9.15am – 10.45 every week in term-time

In the Foyer of The Community
Centre

More information:

Elizabeth: 07766 266988

Catrin: 07732 752989

Improve your confidence in
English speaking and
listening

Make new friends

Eat cake, drink coffee



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Finally, we are expecting an application for the Marleigh Community Chest grant from the instructor who is now working with a group of youngsters, giving them an activity on Wednesdays of circuit training, which we are hoping can be provided free of charge and in part subsidized by the adult sessions being run later on the same evening. Hilary at the Land Trust has been the prime mover in getting this activity set up.

Whilst the low-level vandalism occurring in and around Marleigh may be lessening, with the work to give youngsters some positive activities in which to take part beginning, all residents are being urged to report any incidents they witness (including any concerns over the use or distribution of drugs) on the hotline 101 which will connect with Cambridgeshire police who log all calls (access is also available and often quicker on-line www.cambs.police.uk using the chat function), Crimestoppers is also an option where they undertake to provide anonymity to the person reporting the crime <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/our-guarantee-of-anonymity>

A leaflet drop to all Marleigh homes explaining how to report any concerns was undertaken during October. There is a team of professionals from different organisations now involved in trying to eradicate ASB.

Locality presence at Marleigh

As well as maintaining the social media platforms, sharing wide ranging information, working with partners and hosting meetings, Locality attends in person at least once a week at Marleigh (usually Wednesdays). The potluck lunch which has been delayed over the summer will start again in the autumn possibly with a Cantonese meal. A good citizenship theme, working with the school who already have it as part of their curriculum, is under development and Drop-in & Ask or Tell Us Anything sessions are planned for the final two months of 2023.

Debbie Wildridge
3rd November, 2023

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