

The exact split has yet to be decided, but you will be the first to know! I hope to arrange a Parish Forum in the coming weeks, at which the Sector Inspector, Arthur Saville, will be able to answer any queries or concerns you may have regarding the proposed policing of this area. Details of the venue, and date, will be publicised, so watch your parish notice boards! That's about it for this time-I'll look forward to seeing you around.

One final thought. I was recently requested not to park outside somebody's house because of their concern that their friends might think they were in trouble with the police. Please be assured that we do sometimes visit homes where the occupants are not in any trouble - if the lady who spoke to me could pass that on to her friend, I'd be obliged! 'Bye for now.

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MARTIN MAGIC

Here we are, a pair of born and bred city dwellers, happily transplanted to Shipton. Imagine our excitement and surprise when we discovered a house martin nest under the overhang of the roof in a perfect vantage point for us to observe the birds without disturbing them. Previously, my only experience of bird watching was avoiding the nasty pigeons which litter London, and leaving a wide berth for the swans who foul the footpath around the Serpentine. Clearly, birds were not my favourite creatures, but all that changed when Martin magic happened at our house.

I know so little about house martins' habits that I consulted books from the Wychwood Library and elsewhere. As well as preferring human structures for nesting, apparently they like humans too. Could it be that vestiges of the city linger with us which attracted the birds to us? Whatever the reason, we consider it a positive omen that they chose our house.

Although wild, house martins are enormously affectionate, I read. My husband carefully removed a baby bird from our lawn to a higher place after its first attempt at becoming airborne failed. We hoped flight would be easier from the new position. Hours later the bird had disappeared so we were pleased the second attempt had been successful. I read of an avid bird watcher who was highly complimented by a house martin which landed on his left shoulder, walked across the back of his neck, settled on his right shoulder, closed its eyes, tucked its head in its wing and went to sleep. Could I have that treat to look forward to next year?

I understand that house martin families still go home to their nests to sleep well into the autumn, but they are much tidier now, so I'm off to scrub the window sill of all the muck they have left behind for us to clear away. Never mind, its a small price for such a lovely experience.

We wish them Godspeed on their long migratory journey and hope they feel welcome again at our house next year.

Peggy Walmsley.