



Marlborough Town Council  
In partnership with the  
North Wessex Downs  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
and  
Marlborough College



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

## **Marlborough Town Council and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are hosting the first Marlborough Dark Skies Fest in October.**

Marlborough will be the location for a fun festival of events opening on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and culminating in a jam-packed programme on the weekend of the 30<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> of science and art activities celebrating the night sky.

BBC's The Sky at Night presenter, Prof Chris Lintott, is the guest speaker and there will be an opportunity to visit the Blackett Observatory – the world's oldest computerised telescope at Marlborough College.

Cllr Don Heath from Marlborough Town Council said "We are really excited about the festival which will be a magical and memorable experience for all involved, especially for children. We hope to set people on a journey of discovery and future action to preserve dark skies."

Events across the week and weekend (mostly free) will stretch throughout the day and into the evening at a variety of indoor and outdoor venues across the town; including:

- Stargazing by night and Solar Astronomy by day
- A tour of the night sky in an immersive Planetarium
- Learn about the solar system and taking photos using your phone, try your hand at sketching the stars, create sand patterns from the sound of a star.
- Family fun includes art workshops, storytelling, become a space detective!
- A wide range of talks from getting started in astronomy, life aboard the International Space Station, to astronomical alignments of Stonehenge, wildlife of the night, and mapping & minimising light pollution.
- Exhibitions throughout the weekend from local astronomy groups, astrophotography, meteorites, protecting dark skies, astro jewellery and more.

## **More about Dark Skies**

Interest in the night sky has been growing in recent years, with TV series such as Prof. Brian Cox's Wonders of the... and The Planets, as well as the BBC's long running Sky at Night. Dark Sky festivals take place in several National Parks across the UK, and the International Dark Sky Places programme now has over 130 protected areas across the globe.

With financial help from The Arts Council England, The Royal Astronomy Society, British Astronomical Association, and Wiltshire Council Local Youth Network, Marlborough Dark Skies Fest is an opportunity to celebrate the night sky around Marlborough, a rural town in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and inspire both visitors and locals about keeping our dark skies Dark!.

## **More about the organisers**

Marlborough Town Council provides local services to residents and visitors of the Marlborough and Manton parish area, including hosting many annual and one-off community events. More information at [www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk](http://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk)

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 668 square miles (1,730 sq. km) of Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire and is the third largest AONB in England. It was created in 1972 to protect and enhance one of the largest tracts of chalk downland in southern England along with other beautiful landscapes. The AONB office at Denford Manor near Hungerford was established in October 2002. Visit [www.northwessexdowns.org.uk](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk) for more information.

Founded in 1843, Marlborough College is the largest co-educational independent full boarding school in the UK with over 1000 pupils, in 16 boarding houses, aged 13 to 18. The College is academically ambitious, committed to extending access, and offers a fast-paced, contemporary, challenging and enriching education within a warm, inclusive and spiritual environment. Visit [www.marlboroughcollege.org](http://www.marlboroughcollege.org) for more information.

Look out for festival news via:

### **Marlborough Town Council**

[www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/darkskiesfest](http://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/darkskiesfest)

@marlboroughdarkskiesfest on facebook

@VisitMarlborough on instagram

### **The North Wessex Downs**

[www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/dark-skies](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/dark-skies)

@northwessexdowns on facebook and instagram

Or contact Clare Harris - Assistant Town Clerk at Marlborough Town Council - for more information:

[charris@marlborough-tc.gov.uk](mailto:charris@marlborough-tc.gov.uk) or call 01672 512487

