

This year was one of new beginnings for our community station. The completion of a new studio complex in the grounds of Great Marlow School gave us the ability to get more guests through the door and on air, and to give more young people hands-on radio experience.



Before...

Great Marlow School's former caretaker's garage. The community came together to help us raise tens of thousands of pounds to convert and extend this eyesore of a building, which stood forlornly by the entrance to the school.

After...

Two state-of-the-art radio studios, a computer and control room, a kitchen area, and a salubrious loo. It was finally somewhere we could be proud to invite people to - even local resident Lorraine Kelly, who opened the new studios in July 2024. She was impressed.



The daytime ceremony marked the culmination of months of hard work. In the evening, some 150 presenters, supporters, and dignitaries gathered in the school to continue the celebration and tour our new building.

Three local businesses sponsored the two studios and the building as a whole. It was amazing to get this level of support from business as well as contributions from individuals.

# Marlow FM – Station of the Year 2025

The community radio station for the town of Marlow, Buckinghamshire



## Your very own brick in the wall

We sold more than 100 ‘bricks’ as part of the fundraising effort - which take pride of place by the front door.

Here is Henry Pop, who travelled over from his home in Florida to see his brick, which celebrates a reunion in Marlow with his teenage sweetheart after some 47 years.

Our volunteers organised other fundraising activities, including a night walk with Olympian Greg Whyte, and a one woman 24-hour karaoke-thon.

## A station welcoming to all



Our original home on the banks of the Thames had an attractive setting. But it was some way out of town. It flooded often and got muddy. And it was cramped. We had to turn away guests with mobility issues over the years, and this was a big disappointment on both sides.

Our new building solves this issue. At last, we can welcome everyone in Marlow into our fully-accessible building and hear their stories.

On the left, presenter Kelly is joined by Paralympian Ben Pritchard in his wheelchair in Studio 1. On the right, presenter Mary comes and goes on her mobility scooter.



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This year was jam packed with events and guests - as usual!



We were at the Santa's Fun Run charity event in Marlow, entertaining some 3,000 Santas

We broadcast live from Tom Kerridge's Pub in the Park in Marlow's Higginson Park for 22 hours over four days



We broadcast Marlow's Remembrance Service live from the War Memorial



Local band Debts came in to see Nikky and Tom on *The New Music Show*



And Matt Richardson and Bill Pollard dropped in to see Mary and Geoff on *Good Morning Marlow*, before cycling from Henley to Paris on penny farthings, dressed in appropriate costume, to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support



## Marlow FM's Hidden Gems of 2024 revealed

Our celebration of the best in Marlow was back for another year. We ask listeners to nominate and vote for individuals, organisations, and businesses in different categories. More than 2,500 of them got involved this year, the most ever in the event's history.

The worthy winners were:

- Best Cuppa - The M Café
- Best Pub - The Duke (Queen's Road)
- Best Breakfast - Fego
- Best Event - Santa's Fun Run
- Best Night Out - Rebellion Members' Night
- Best Sports Club - Marlow United Juniors
- Best Therapist - Mike Banks, The Marlow Club
- Best Teacher - Mrs Boyle, St Peter's
- Best Local Producer - Rebellion Beer Company
- Services to Charity - Sharon Gunn (Marlow Donkey weekly quizzes) and Harmony Belles
- Services to the Community - Claire Street (Child Matters) and The Ark Café



## Making the move from Marlow Library

After we left our original location in 2023, Marlow Library was our temporary home while we raised money for, and built, our new studios at Great Marlow School. We made friends and great contacts while we were there, but the single upstairs room wasn't a long-term solution. It was a technical feat to keep on air while moving all our equipment to the school, but we pulled it off without missing a single programme.

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## Opening up the airwaves to the next generation

This year we started to fulfil our ambition to get younger voices on air, largely because of the convenience of our new home at Great Marlow School.

Drama teacher Stuart Ross appeared as a guest on Marlow FM in November 2024. Inspired by the

experience, he joined the station as a presenter himself, and saw an opportunity to bring his students with him. His energy and rapport with young people made him a natural choice to lead a new show from the school site. *Stuart on Sunday*, tagged with the line *Sir on Monday*, launched at the beginning of June 2025.

*"My daughter, India, has been involved from the outset, and we've seen such growth in her. She absolutely loves it. She's so much more confident and she just thrives on it."* – parent

*"I think the radio show has been a great opportunity for Kayla and her friends. It could open a lot of doors for them."* – parent

*"I was so excited to hear about the radio writing project. I'm really looking forward to going cross-curricular with English, so the students can see writing in real life, which is what education is all about."* – Keely Houston, English Lead Practitioner, Great Marlow School



The school's head of music, Ollie Kidd (right), brought along students Paul, Elia, and Hugo to *Breakfast* one morning to perform.

We also have a strong link with Marlow's other secondary school, Sir William Borlase's Grammar School. This year we did an outside broadcast from their 400th birthday party. Both schools have joined forces through the Marlow Education Trust, making cooperation easier.



## App update increases listener interaction

This year we added a new feature to our app. Listeners can now record a voice message inside the app and send it straight to our studios for the presenter to play out on air. This has proved very popular! But if you're shy, you can send us a text message from inside the app instead.

The Marlow FM app is maintained by one of our volunteers, who codes for a hobby.

In other tech news, we also introduced an Alexa Skill for the first time. This means listeners can play Marlow FM on Amazon smart speakers even faster, without hearing lots of ads from TuneIn first.

## What Marlow FM is all about

- We serve all the people of Marlow, Buckinghamshire and the surrounding area, whatever their background or age. We aim to have a programme for everyone.
- We provide opportunities for local residents and organisations to get their voice heard, tell their story, or publicise their event.
- Everyone at the station is a volunteer. Some 80 presenters produce just over 100 hours of local content a week - that's more than 14 hours a day.
- Each year we do at least 10 outside broadcasts and events.

