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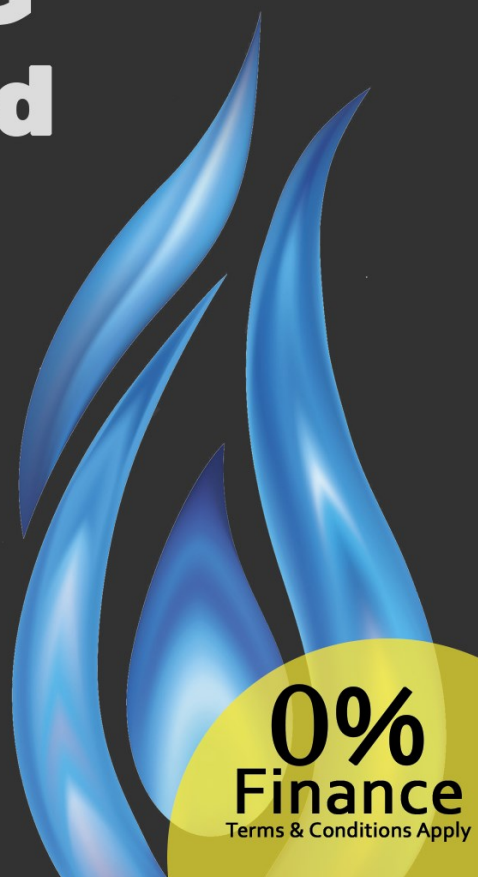
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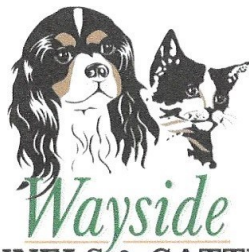
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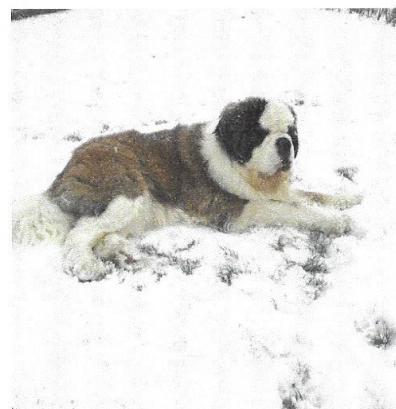


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Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

There was some talk of trees on the Meppershall Noticeboard on Facebook recently. Passions were running high... some construction work was threatening the safety of a much-loved pine towards the edge of the village on Shefford Road. Not long ago the death of a well-known and much-loved walnut tree on Fildyke Road was being mourned by others. It was destroyed to make way for new houses on the Ivy Cottage site. There can be so much love for these big green friends.



But they can be tricky things, trees. Growing up in South London, my family had to move into a shed in the garden (I kid you not) for a period of around 6 months, so that extensive internal underpinning could take place. This was all thanks to a willow tree that had grown wild near the house for decades and eventually proved to be stronger than the foundations. Here in Meppershall we have planted an oak, taken from that same spot in London, in a corner of our modest garden. It is a good distance from the house, but still some well-meaning friends often glance at it, tut, and warn me not to let it get too big. It is already friends with a century-old crab apple tree on the wild ground beyond. Nearby, an enormous sycamore on a field margin reminds me of that giant tree in the film 'Avatar' – a whole ecosystem in itself – buzzing, tweeting, squawking and rustling all year long.

In Iceland, people have even been encouraged by the authorities to hug trees as a remedy for lock-down loneliness. It's not as crazy as it sounds – they are full of the essential processes of life, just like us. Who knows what science will tell us in the future – but it is already proven that being amongst wildlife helps our wellbeing.

Trees are important to many of us but are less common in these vast arable fields of central England. So it's great to read about new trees being planted at Polehanger, later in this issue. Adding to Polehanger River Woodland, the article describes the creation of a yet longer green 'corridor' between Meppershall and Shefford.

Looking at the centre of the village, it is also good to know that this month's Meppershall Parish Council meeting will include a Q&A session with a senior Planning Enforcement officer from Central Beds (see the Parish Council article). Preservation of trees and hedges can often be a condition of planning permission; a breach of planning conditions that destroys a protected tree is subject to an unlimited fine and is a criminal offence in many circumstances. But enforcement is at the discretion of the council and will rarely attract the attention of the police. So witnessing and recording what happens, for investigation and prosecution, is important.

In Europe, trees cover 44% of the land. In the UK it is just 13%. So let's relish the woods we have nearby – Campton Plantation, Rowney Warren, Chicksands Wood, Warden Warren... and let's also fight to protect what we have here in the village.

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

PLEASE - CLEAN IT UP!

We're lucky to be surrounded by so much open space, and have so many footpaths to access it. It's been invaluable this last 12 months, and will continue to be. But our footpaths are becoming spoiled by piles of dog mess, left behind by inconsiderate and thoughtless owners. When walking your dog, even if it's off the lead, it's still *your* responsibility to clean up after it. Part and parcel of dog ownership today.

So please, when you walk your dog, clean up after it, and use the bins provided around the village, even if it means carrying the bag for a while. Rather than just hanging it on a hedge.

Your dog, and *you're* responsible.

And thanks to all the owners who already clean up after their dogs...

Copied from Central Beds Council's website:

Dog fouling

It is an offence to allow a dog, which you are responsible for, to foul and not clear it up immediately when in a public place such as:

- footways and paths, including public footpaths
- play areas, picnic sites and outdoor eating places
- sports playing pitches
- formal parks and land where the grass is cut
- land outside schools and hospitals
- car parks, public transport bays and surrounds
- cycle ways and surfaced areas near to houses
- shopping areas, markets and public circulation areas
- cemeteries and war memorials
- land surrounding toilets, recycling sites and public buildings

A Meppershall Resident (Name supplied)

Editors comment: One or two people do seem to think that dog poo can just be left where it falls if you are on a field-side path such as Crackle Hill. Please, if the poo will be there for someone else to see, bag it and bin it.

Dear Editors

Yesterday the litter bin by the bottle bank was overflowing with several additional bags of rubbish lying around it and several 'doggie' bags on top of the bin. If a bin is full please do not leave additional rubbish - find another litter bin - as this is a health hazard and attracts rats and is not fair on the refuse collection guys to expect them to clear up after us!!.

People need to be a little bit more sensible when disposing of rubbish and using the proper receptacles for dog waste that are placed around the village.

A Meppershall Resident (Name supplied)

Meppershall Messenger Grant Award

The Meppershall Messenger (Magazine Committee) are delighted to have received £250 towards capital expenditure projects from the Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Councillor Grant Fund.

Our sincere thanks go to Ward Councillor's Tony Brown and Mark Liddiard who supported the application and to Victoria Smith, Community Engagement Officer for processing our application and notification of our successful application. The grant will be put towards future capital expenditure and follows a grant of £750 received from Meppershall Parish Council for like capital expenditure.

John Thompson, Treasurer, The Meppershall Messenger

Parish Council Precept

In addition to the Police, Fire Services and Central Bedfordshire Council, our Parish Council receives money from your council tax bills. This is called the precept.

At the Parish Council meeting on Monday 11th January, Meppershall Parish Council agreed to request a precept of £52,316 for the financial year 2021-2022 to be raised through council tax payments from all the dwellings within the parish area to help support parish council services and activities.

This is an increase of 2.0% compared to the previous financial year's contribution. Using a Band D Council Tax dwelling as an example, this is a £1.20 increase over the whole year. In 2021-2020 it will be £61.33 per year, in 2019-2020 the contribution is £60.13 per Band D dwelling.

In the financial year April 2021 to March 2022 we expect to spend over £200,000. This includes:

- £75,000 on new play equipment at Centenary Field
- £17,000 on new outdoor gym equipment at Centenary Field
- £13,000 on a track around the fenced pitch at Centenary Field linking to existing pathways
- £2,000 on bench renovations across the village
- £11,500 on allotment renovations

There are general running costs of the village too including grass cutting, upkeep of recreation areas including Old Road Meadow, allotments as well as other expenses.

As always Councillors have looked carefully at what is needed in order to keep any increase to a minimum, and to ensure that the reserves are sufficient to cover any

unforeseen expenses as well as the agreed level of running costs. We will continue to make use of grant applications and funds secured from developers to support our expenditure.

Alessandra Marabese – Clerk to Meppershall Parish Council

Pinpoint the Pothole Position (and other highways issues)

You can now report highways issues quickly and easily, and track their progress, through a new online system launched this week by Central Bedfordshire Council.

CBC has partnered with 'mySociety', creators of 'FixMyStreet', a system that allows residents to make reports directly against certain council assets, like gullies, streetlights and trees. We are reliably informed that this user-friendly reporting system allows reports to be pinpointed on a map, photos to be added and shows residents' reports that have already been created, plus any planned roadworks, which saves time and avoids multiple reporting.

CBC also assures us that the level of updates you'll receive is much improved too. You'll now receive an update during every step of the repair, meaning you'll know when works are booked in and when the repair is complete.

The new system allows residents to report highways concerns such as potholes, faulty streetlights, blocked drains and roadside ditches, overgrown roadside hedges and trees and more.

It's not just highways issues that can be reported, the new system allows reports on fly-tipping, weeds, litter and dog waste bins and graffiti.

FixMyStreet Pro apparently already works "seamlessly" on smartphones, tablets and desktop computers and can be downloaded on Android and IOS devices. It's free and easy to do and doesn't take long to create a report.

To start reporting issues you see on the roads and for more information please visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/reportit.

Parish Council Update

Meppershall Parish Council have been in correspondence with Central Bedfordshire Council with regards site traffic management issues involving housing developments in the village. MPC feel it is important that our residents understand what the Parish Council is pushing for, what CBC is responsible for, what enforcement officers can deal with and the course of action residents need to take to complain about breaches. We will be following up the letters with other info on Facebook.

We are also pleased to confirm that Richard Proctor (Planning Enforcement, CBC) will be attending the Parish Council meeting on 8th February to take questions from councillors and residents on planning enforcement issues. The meeting will start as

usual at 7:45pm with a Q&A session with Richard. Details of how to join the meeting via Zoom are on the www.meppershall.org website in the Parish Council section.

Letter to Central Bedfordshire Council from Meppershall Parish Council :

Andrew Davie
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands.
SG17 5TQ

c.c.: Cllr Kevin Collins

Thursday, 05 November 2020

Dear Mr Davie,

I am writing this letter to register Meppershall Parish Council's frustration regarding building site traffic management issues experienced in our village.

Over the last few months we have seen the commencement of two new development sites in Meppershall. Residents have had to endure amongst other things:

Mud spread on roads due to no wheel washing facilities provided on site, despite this being a condition of the CEMP.

- Sites starting work before 7:30am, without the necessary permissions to do so.
- HGV Lorries navigating the narrow streets of the village, despite the CEMP's directing traffic via alternative main roads and routes.
- Site vehicles taking up residential parking spaces and even blocking in residents, despite CEMP's specifying that all site vehicles are to be parked onsite.
- HGV Lorries blocking roads as they queue up to enter a site.

We know that these issues are not specific to Meppershall as discussions with other local Parish Councils makes it clear that our frustrations are replicated elsewhere.

Despite making representations to Planning Enforcement Officers who are more than diligent in investigating and reporting back on identified issues, we find that things never change or that worse still planning enforcement are unable to resolve the problem due to a lack of powers available to them. We receive responses that tell us to contact the Police or Pollution officers, or worse still that nothing can be done about it. When conditions have been added to CEMPS we then find that the planning conditions have been poorly worded and hold little if any legal power.

Furthermore we understand that site specific CEMPs are no longer used as developers should follow the CBC Construction Code of Practice for Developers and Contractors, which lacks detail and the ability for the Council to take action. For example 84 Fildyke Road - CB/18/03306/FULL, has caused residents no end of problems with work commencing before 7am, no wheel washing facilities, contractors blocking residents driveways and delivery lorries blocking the road.

The Parish Council also questions why CBC did not force construction traffic to enter Fildyke Road from Chapel Road especially as the Council had spent over £100,000 resurfacing the first part of Fildyke Road only to have a huge number of lorries drive down it depositing mud all over the road. After complaining to the Councils Planning Enforcement team, they reply that nothing can be done to enforce this!

We know that our Ward Councillors share our frustrations and would kindly request that you confirm to us:

- How does CBC propose to deal with issues like this in the future?
- How will you protect the serenity of residents from inconsiderate developers in the knowledge that a CEMP or the Code of Practice is unenforceable?

Yours sincerely

Alessandra Marabese, Clerk to Meppershall Parish Council

Response received from Central Bedfordshire Council to Meppershall Parish Council

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands
SG17 5TQ

15th December 2020

Dear Miss Marabese

I write with regard to your letter dated 05 November 2020; I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Your letter raises concern in respect of two recent developments in Meppershall and the impact that the developments are having on residents of the village in terms of construction work. You raise specific concerns in respect of the lack of enforcement action being taken and that, in raising concerns, you have been directed to other bodies – namely Highways and the Police. You seek clarification as to how construction management will be dealt with in the future.

The majority of construction sites have, in our experience, been well managed with a view to minimising disruption to local people. However, we are aware that in some cases, including those most recently in Meppershall, there has been disruption to residents, and with better on-site management some of the problems experienced could have been avoided.

As you have noted in your letter, there are limitations on the extent of enforcement powers available to the authority to control some of these problems. Local Planning Authorities' powers to enforce against contravention of planning control are limited to those within the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) – namely the carrying out development without the required planning permission or, failing to comply with condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted.

The Council, through its adoption of the Construction Code of Practice for Developers and Contractors, has sought to take proactive measures setting out the Council's expectations to developers and their contractors to ensure that they undertake their

works following agreed guidelines and thereby minimising local impacts. It encourages developers to act responsibly and in a neighbourly way by requiring the developer to provide key contact details for reporting any issues and to communicate with residents and the community on the timing and nature of works.

Where a developer complies with the code or where development is carried out in accordance with an approved CEMP (Construction and Environmental Management Plan), the Council cannot take any further action.

I understand that the Parish Council are concerned about the routes construction vehicles use to access sites in Meppershall. The Code does not include provisions relating to construction traffic routing. Planning conditions are not considered an appropriate means of controlling the right of passage over public highways because any vehicle or person has a right to use this (subject to any particular restrictions, such as weight of vehicle).

In situations where there is no breach of planning control but there is a highway safety issue with, for example, parked cars on the public highway or mud on the road, it is appropriate for Planning Enforcement or Compliance Officers to direct the matter to the Highway Authority or the Police. In communication from Cllr Liddiard, I am aware of a recent accident in the village outside a development site at 84 Fildyke Road. Whilst the details of how the accident happened are not clear, a highway incident such as this is for the Police to investigate and take the appropriate action. It has also been reported that a site contractor was injured, and this would be a matter for the Health and Safety Executive to investigate.

Since the Council have adopted the Code, we have seen a significant number of positive and proactive discussions with developers which has led to improvements to the management of construction sites. Our Compliance Officers have been working particularly hard in Meppershall and have dealt with a number of complaints regarding the sites being developed by Bovis Homes and Blakeney Estates. The Council have also served a breach of condition notice on Blakeney Estates which demonstrates that we will not hesitate to take the appropriate formal action where discussions do not resolve the issue.

Construction work will always inevitably have some degree of impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties and the wider community. I hope my explanation above assures the Parish Council that we are actively trying to minimise that impact through the Construction Code but that we will use the powers that we have available where we are not able to resolve issues through discussion with developers or will refer matters to the appropriate authority, e.g. Highways where necessary.

Please do not hesitate to report concerns and potential breaches to the Planning Enforcement Team and they will look to respond to these concerns and act where there is something that they can act upon.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Davie - AD Development and Infrastructure



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Are you struggling to cope?

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The Coronavirus pandemic is tough on all of us. It can be especially hard for people living on their own and people who cannot get out and about as much as others.

Help with getting food

The easiest way to get food without visiting a shop is to order online for delivery. Perhaps you can ask family and friends to help you to do this if you are unsure.

If you already have a priority delivery slot, that will continue; you don't need to do anything further.

If someone else is going to the shops for you, most major supermarkets have ways you can pay for your shopping, such as e-vouchers or gift cards. You can buy these online and the person shopping for you can use them in store. To find out about payment options, visit your supermarket's website.

If you don't have anyone who can help you with your shopping, contact your local Good Neighbour Scheme or local volunteer scheme for help (see below).

Help with medicine

In the first instance, ask a friend, family member, carer to collect your medicines for you. If no-one else is available to collect your medicines, contact your local Good Neighbour Scheme for help (see below).

Good Neighbour and local volunteer schemes

We have a network of volunteer-led groups and local Good Neighbour Schemes, who might be able to assist you with shopping, collecting medication and checking that you are OK.

You can contact them directly at gns@bedsrcc.org.uk or call 01234 838771.

You can also locate other volunteer schemes that cover your area at www.cvsbeds.org.uk or contact Advice Central (see contact details opposite).

Help if you are self-isolating

Making sure those who have COVID-19 (and those who have been in close contact with them) can self-isolate is one of our most powerful tools for controlling the spread of coronavirus.

Self-isolating, where friends and family or delivery services bring supplies to your door, helps prevent your family, friends and community from catching the virus, as well as helping to protect the NHS.

The government has introduced a new grant to support people in work on low incomes to self-isolate. You may be able to claim a £500 lump sum payment if you cannot work from home and are required to self-isolate.

For more information visit www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/self-isolation-payments

Financial advice and support

- Department for Work and Pensions - www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/#east
- Advice Central – www.advicecentral.org.uk or call 0300 303 6666
- Citizens Advice (Dunstable) - www.dunstablecab.org.uk or call 01582 670003 or 07367 457 834
- Citizens Advice (Mid Bedfordshire) - www.midbedscab.org.uk or call 01525 402742, 01525 841217 and 01767 601368
- Citizens Advice (Leighton Linlade) - www.leightonlinladedcab.org.uk or call 01525 373878
- Bedford Credit Union - www.bedfordcreditunion.org.uk or call 01234 346352
- Money Matters Credit Union (Luton) - www.mmcu.co.uk or call 01582 666877



Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

Safe and Well Visits

A Safe and Well visit includes fire service personnel offering you guidance on fire safety in relation to your home, this can include; advice on cooking, smoking, testing your smoke alarm and planning an escape route. We can also offer advice on doorstep security and falls. If required we can give you equipment such as smoke alarms.

Safe and Well visits can take place in a variety of ways including visiting you in your home; this will usually be to install equipment or if we are really worried about your welfare. Sometimes it may not be possible for us to enter your home, instead we may talk to you at your door, call you or write you a letter.

If we visit you in your home we will be wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which may include a face mask, gloves and apron. When we are inside please keep a safe distance of 2 metres away. Allowing for ventilation by opening windows and having doors that we need to pass through already open will be really helpful.

To help keep everyone safe before visiting you in your home we will ask you the following questions ;

- Are you or anyone in your household currently self-isolating?
- Do you or anyone in your household have a new or continuous cough?
- Do you or anyone in your household have a high temperature?
- Are you or anyone in your household experiencing a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste?

If you would like to request a Safe and Well visit please complete an on-line form.

To talk to us please call 0800 043 5042 and leave a message alternatively please email safeandwell@bedsfire.gov.uk

The Bedfordshire Fire Service also offers free smoke alarms to residents who either don't have, or cannot afford, smoke alarms in their homes. It is recommended that at least one fire alarm be fitted on each floor of a building. The alarms can be supplied for fitting yourself or the fire service can fit it for you. It may also be possible to obtain carbon monoxide monitors. For more information contact Stacey.Moore@bedsfire.gov.uk.



A Quick Reminder Regarding Burglar Alarms

If you are considering the installation of a burglar alarm system at your property, we would like to remind people to take a bit of time to research the best product and deal for their requirements. Alarm systems are not “one size fits all”.

Intruder alarm systems in the UK have to conform to European Standards BS EN50131 series. EN50131 defines four grades of Intruder alarm system, Grade 4 being the highest. The grade is measured by how resilient the alarm system is to attacks by intruders and other outside influences. All components of the system are graded, including the control panel, motion detectors (PIRs) and signalling equipment.

Whilst most installers will design a system using components of the same grade, it may sometimes be appropriate to mix grades of components. However, the overall system will be graded of that of the lowest graded component. Residential installations will typically require a Grade 1 or 2 with larger homes falling into Grade 3. Most commercial premises will require a Grade 2 or 3 alarm system.

- Always get 3 quotes and remember you have the right to a cooling off period, particularly important if you feel you have been pressured to sign a finance agreement.
- Also remember to ask the supplier if their products are Secured By Design accredited.
- Never take a company that cold calls you at face value - if you were not looking to improve home security, ask yourself why would you buy from a door-to-door salesperson?

Word of mouth recommendations are great but we strongly advise checking if the company has the proper accreditations first. They should be registered with the National Security Inspectorate (nsi.org.uk) and/or the Security Systems & Alarms Inspection Board (ssaib.org). Both these organisations offer an search facility on their websites to find a local accredited installation company.

New political map for Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire is set to have new boundaries for its council wards.

Following a review, the Boundary Commission has today (12 January 2021) launched its final recommendations for the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

It says residents should be represented by 63 councillors. This is four more than there are now.

There will be 31 wards, comprised of nine single-councillor wards, 12 two-councillor wards and ten three-councillor wards. The boundaries of the 19 wards should change, 12 will stay the same. You can view a high-resolution boundary map [here](#).

The Local Government Boundary Commission is the independent body that draws these boundaries. It has reviewed Central

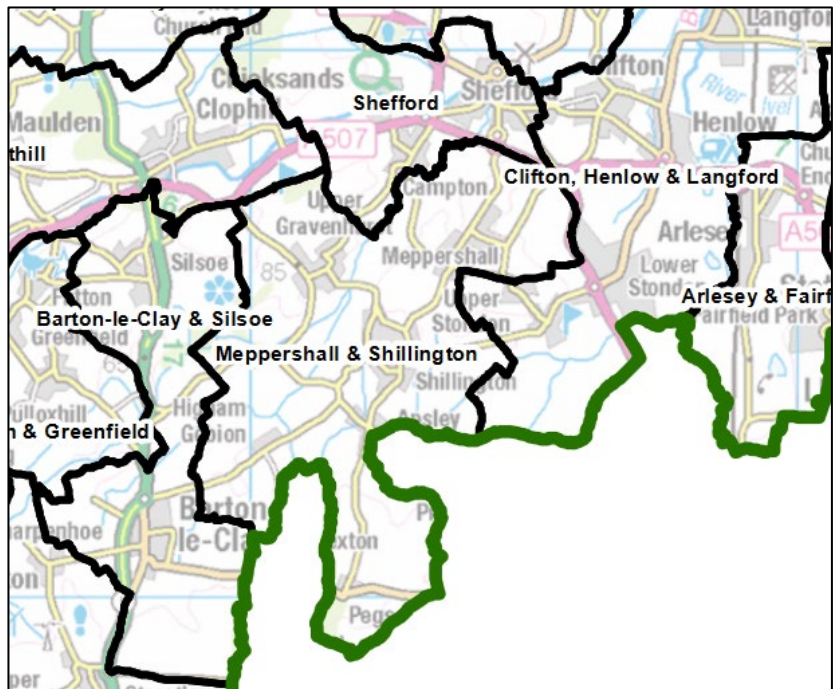
Bedfordshire to make sure councillors will represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements will help the council work effectively.

According to the Boundary Commission, local residents and organisations made 375 comments to help decide the new wards. Changes in response to what local people said include:

- renaming the proposed Arlesey ward to Arlesey & Fairfield
- recommending a revised pattern of wards for Dunstable that more closely resembles the existing warding pattern

The Commission has made further changes to its earlier proposals. Details can be found on here <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/bedfordshire/central-bedfordshire>

Parliament now needs to agree the changes. The new arrangements will then apply for the May 2023 council elections.



GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)



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Meppershall Gnomes would like to wish you all a Happy New Year and as we continue with the various Covid-19 restrictions, the GNOMES, are still around and willing to help where we can.

Currently, we can undertake jobs that do not involve close contact but cannot undertake transport jobs or any which require entering a client's home.

Whatever your need, call us on **07760 793921**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm and if we cannot help then we will try our best to find someone or some organization that can. **We can help with;**

Collecting Prescriptions, groceries, and other essential provisions, for the Over 70's, vulnerable and self-isolating residents.



Telephone Befriending, a listening ear when you need one.

Helping direct you to other organisations and support services where needed and help with advice and information on local suppliers of food and other essential supplies.



Please keep an eye out for those around you and if you think they need help, but you are unable to give it, then please call the **GNOMES** on **07760 793921**.

If you would like to help people in your community and could volunteer on a one-off or regular basis then give us a call and join our friendly team of volunteers.



To the nation

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

26 January 2021

Dear friends

As we reach the terrible milestone of 100,000 deaths from COVID-19, we invite everyone in our nation to pause as we reflect on the enormity of this pandemic.

100,000 isn't just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God.

We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.

We therefore encourage everyone who is feeling scared, or lost or isolated to cast their fears on God. We also know that poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities have been afflicted disproportionately and cry out for the healing of these inequalities. During this pandemic, we encourage everyone to do all they can to live within the guidelines and constraints given by government following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser. We show our commitment, care and love for one another by ensuring we do everything we can to stop the virus spreading.

None of this is easy. Very many of us are experiencing isolation, loneliness, anxiety and despondency like never before. Many people have lost their livelihoods. Our economy struggles. Also, the necessary restrictions we live with have also prevented us from being alongside loved ones as they died, or even at their graveside. All grief profoundly affects us, but this pandemic grief is so hard.

Therefore, we need to support each other. We do this by following the guidelines. But we also do it by reaching out to each other with care and kindness.

One thing we can all do is pray. We hope it is some consolation to know that the church prays for the life of our nation every day. Whether you're someone of faith, or not, we invite you to call on God in prayer. Starting on 1 February we invite you to set aside time every evening to pray, particularly at 6pm each day. More than ever, this is a time when we need to love each other. Prayer is an expression of love. A number of resources will be made available at www.ChurchofEngland.org/PrayerForTheNation.

Finally, we write of hope. We are grateful for the hope we have because of the service of our NHS and social care staff. What a blessing and lifeline for our nation. We are grateful for the service given in local communities by clergy, other frontline workers and so many good neighbours. We are grateful for the hope of the vaccine. It is a testimony to the God-given wisdom and gifts of scientists and researchers. We urge everyone to take the vaccine as soon as it is offered to you.

Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter. We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn't have the last word. In God's kingdom every tear will be wiped away.

Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Welby".

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Cottrell".

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of York

Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin (Church of England)

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www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk ✝ facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – ronigoodman@gmail.com – usual day off Monday

Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962 Chris Valentine 01462 815971

Email: Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Message from St Mary's

Firstly I hope the new year has got off to a good start for you. It is hard to know what that could mean when we have been locked down for fear of COVID and to protect ourselves and our NHS so far. But although that is probably one of the most major features of our lives, it is not everything. Even in these difficult days there are still highlights, joys and blessings - which I hope you are experiencing and able to take time to enjoy.

Although most of us will have put away our Christmas decorations on 12th night - the Christmas and Epiphany Seasons are only coming to an end in Church on the 2nd February when we remember Jesus being presented in the Temple... And then it is time for us to finally pack away the Crib until next year.

This is also the time I must gently remind you to remove Christmas wreaths and decorations from the Churchyard and check that your graves are being looked after according to the guidance laid out in the Diocese of St Albans Churchyard Regulations 2020. Please remember that your memorial stone, if there, remains your responsibility: please check that it is securely in place and not "wobbly". I believe that some of the stones in the Churchyard are in need of attention so if you know that one of them is yours, please do talk to me.

We aim to maintain the churchyard as a place that is safe and welcoming for all who wish to use it. We hope that our care, and the care of relatives, for the churchyard and the graves will maintain it as a place that very much honours the memory of all those buried here.

In the middle of February this year - we find ourselves already heading into Lent and towards quite an early Easter. Shrove Tuesday was always the day, when my

children were growing up, when we feasted on savoury pancakes for our main course and sweet pancakes for dessert. I wonder what your favourite pancake topping is?

Ash Wednesday falls on the 17th February, although I am not sure if we will be able to worship together on that date.

Lent is that time of prayer and fasting and almsgiving (giving to charity) - a time set aside to enable us to grow closer to God and closer to one another.

If you would like to observe / keep Lent you might find these free resources helpful:

You might like to have the Church of England Lenten programme delivered free to your phone or computer. It is called 'God's Story Our Story'. It is based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2021, 'Living His Story' by Hannah Steele, and from Ash Wednesday (17 February) to Easter Sunday (4 April), there will be six reflections for each week, written by Stephen Hance, the Church of England's National Lead for Evangelism and Witness. Each reflection will include a short passage from the Bible, a brief exploration of the reading, and a prayer. Additionally, each week will have a unifying theme and an action to be taken during the week. Register online to have the meditations delivered free to your phone or computer (Just Google Live Lent 2021)

The daily reflections can also be bought as a booklet from Church House Publishing (£1.99) (you can preview online before you buy!)

Also Keith Callard will be leading a weekly Zoom discussion for those who would like to share their Lenten journey - please ask for details if you are interested.

'Together at Home' have produced a sheet encouraging self-care in Lent. In these particularly difficult times, it is more obvious than usual that we need to love and care for ourselves so that we have the strength and energy to love and care for one another. Their simple sheet "Love yourself through Lent" is available on their Website <https://www.tath.co.uk> along with another Family sheet of ideas about how to be Together as a Family with God in Lent.

However you choose to keep Lent... as the days get lighter and warmer and the hope and joy of Easter approaches... I pray that we all find that Lent renews and restores and refreshes us - energises us to generosity still / again - and does indeed bring us closer to God and one another.

Church News and Events in February

After an optimistic 'Table of Events' in the last issue of The Meppershall Messenger, lock-down restrictions have again stopped face to face services in church. At the time of writing, we continue to monitor the situation with a view to returning to some face to face services at an appropriate time. For now, everyone, please stay safe and stay connected in some of the following ways.

The church is open for private prayer, 10.30am-6.30pm, on Wednesdays. Safety is the priority so please carefully support all the measures in place – such as distancing, sanitizing on entry and exit, leaving one of the little cards in the place where you sit so that others will not re-use that space. If you need a quiet moment in a deeply peaceful place, it is there for you. St Michael And All Angels on the High Street in Shefford is similarly open, on Fridays.



Online, join our Sunday services at 10.30am. To join, please [click here for our Facebook page](#); [here for our website](#); and [here for our YouTube channel](#).

These services bring together not only our church community right here in the village, but also our friends from Shefford and

neighbouring villages – as well as regular visitors from across the world. You can just watch and listen (we won't even know you're there!)- although lots of people add comments and it is getting quite interactive these days. The services include music and hymns – some created locally, some played with permission from sources including St Martin-in-the-Fields – really beautiful. You can even join by phone (see the number here on the right).

Listen-in Worship

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while we're
apart

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Love From St Mary's Meppershall & St Michael's Shefford

Huge thanks again to everyone who sang for our amazing online Christmas Carol service in the lead-up to Christmas. It was just wonderful to see so many village faces and voices being part of that moment – despite the lockdown. Enjoy it again at <http://bit.ly/MeppershallCarols>.

You will also find the church online, everyday, for “9-and-9 Prayer”. At 9am and 9pm you will find us sharing reflections and prayers, led by Roni and Andrew and sometimes others. Come and be part of it! Use the facebook link above. Bring your own tea, coffee, morning (or bedtime!) snack!

For those of you who would like to be prayed for specifically and/or by name - we have a small group of intercessors who will continue to pray **confidentially** for those who ask for prayers. If being held in prayer in that way is something you would like, please talk to Roni 339962 / 07533376880 or Chris Valentine 07701 039324.

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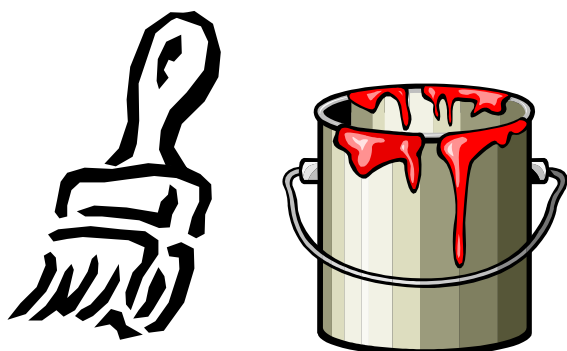
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Those who read the recent article about hedge laying at Polehanger Farm will have spotted that we are due to be planting even more trees this year.

2020 saw us plant over 1000 trees and hedge plants as part of both Woodland Trust grants and also planned planting for our upcoming wedding and glamping plans.

However, 2021 will dwarf this achievement with the planting of 8,676 trees across 4.82 hectares of land. This will be made possible using a HS2 woodland creation grant.

The construction phase for HS2, the hugely controversial high speed rail project, is set to destroy or irreparably damage five internationally protected wildlife sites, 693 local wildlife sites, 108 ancient woodlands and 33 legally protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), according to a survey by The Wild Trust.

Although nothing can make up exactly for this loss of established ancient woodland, funds have been allocated for woodland creation to compensate for the loss of trees.

Polehanger Farm falls within the area covered by this grant funding, which gave us the opportunity to apply. The successful application will allow us to extend our very own semi-ancient woodland, provide a green corridor for wildlife across the southern boundary of the farm and reduce the impact of heavy rainfall such as flooding and soil erosion.

Nunswood semi-ancient woodland is private woodland comprised of primarily Ash and Oak, with trees estimated at dating back between 120 and 140 years. More recent introductions include Field Maple and Hazel, which are between 50 and 70 years old. The woodland also supports additional woody shrubs from boundary hedges such as Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Guelder Rose. The woodland supports a variety of plant and animal life at both canopy, understory and woodland floor level. This includes a large rookery that calls the taller trees home, a variety of thrush species, tree and ground-nesting birds, foxes, muntjac deer, rabbits, voles and other rodents. Insect life is also abundant within the woodland, particularly in areas with fallen veteran trees and in larger concentrations during Spring when the carpet of native bluebells blanket the woodland floor. The addition of this HS2 planting will provide further future habitats for all of this wildlife and help to protect and sustain them for years to come.

Since October, we have received huge amounts of rainfall in the local area. The ground has been saturated for weeks and this culminated in recent weeks with flooding and standing water the like of which I have not seen in this area for 30 years. The unpredictable nature of our climate is likely to continue even if global warming can be slowed. In the meantime, the planting of these trees at the top slopes of Polehanger Farm will provide some protection from future heavy rainfall. This will be through canopy cover slowing the speed of rain and it's impact on the soil, root systems helping water penetrate further in to the soil and also water storage in the trees themselves ensuring less surface run-off and a delay to water transferral into waterways.

Extending the woodland creation across the southern boundary of our farm will allow wildlife to travel along a green corridor almost uninterrupted over a distance of 2km from near Meppershall Village Hall all the way to the A507.

The planting itself will be taking place from the middle of February over the course of three to four weeks and will see native trees and shrubs planted including wild cherry, hornbeam, oak, field maple, rowan and silver birch, hazel, hawthorn and dogwood. The planting map below highlights the planting areas. Each tree and shrub will have protection but initially will not be fenced, so please help us in protecting them as they grow by keeping to footpaths and refrain from walking amongst them.

Here's hoping for some improved weather to make planting conditions easier. I think we have enough groundwater for a while!

Additional links:

HS2 and trees - <https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/hs2-and-the-natural-environment/environment-sustainability/hs2-and-woodlands/>

The link to the HS2 survey is here - <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/hs2>

The Woodland Trust: Trees and flooding - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/flooding/>

You can find out more about our woodland and environmental work by contacting us or following us on social media:

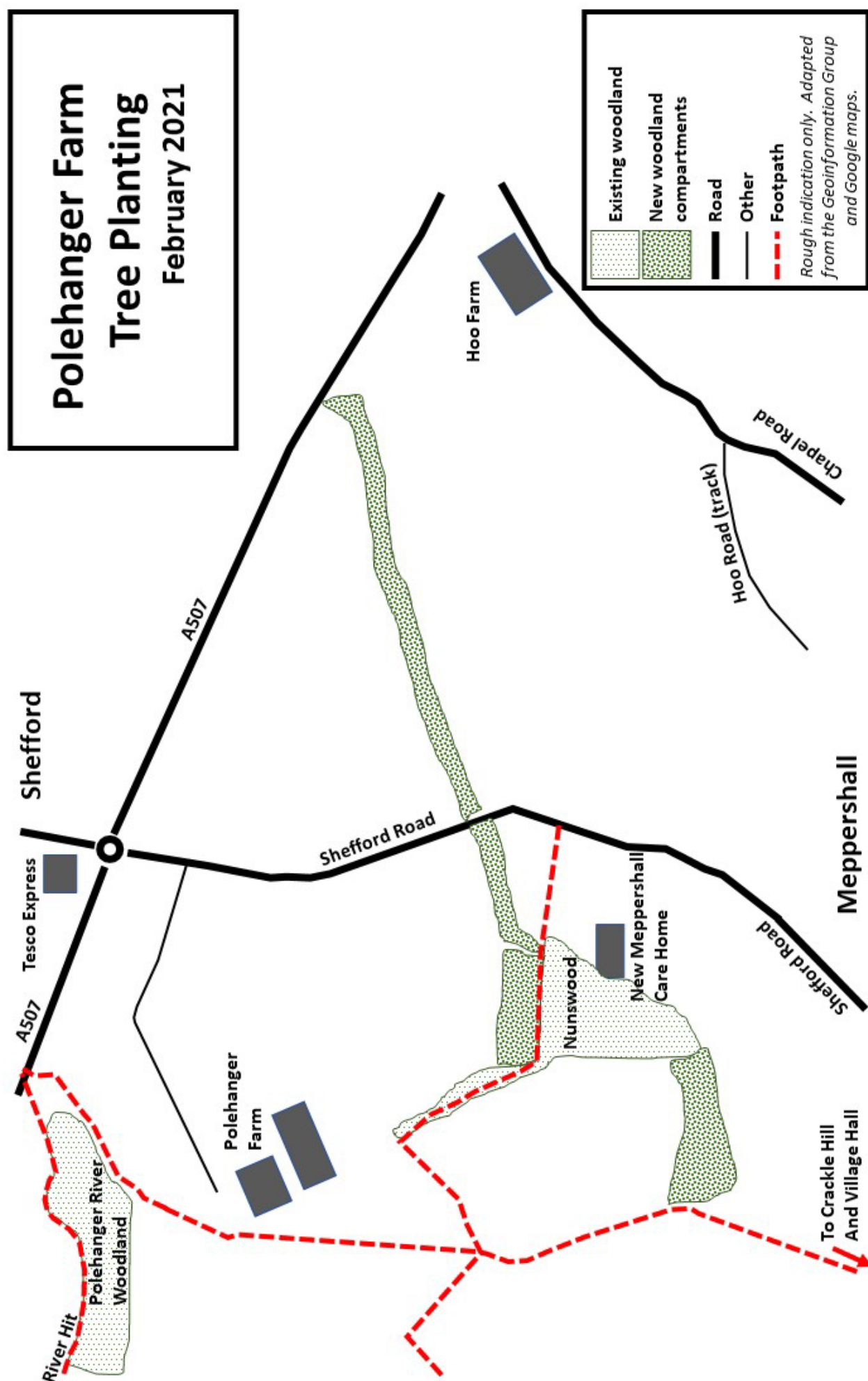
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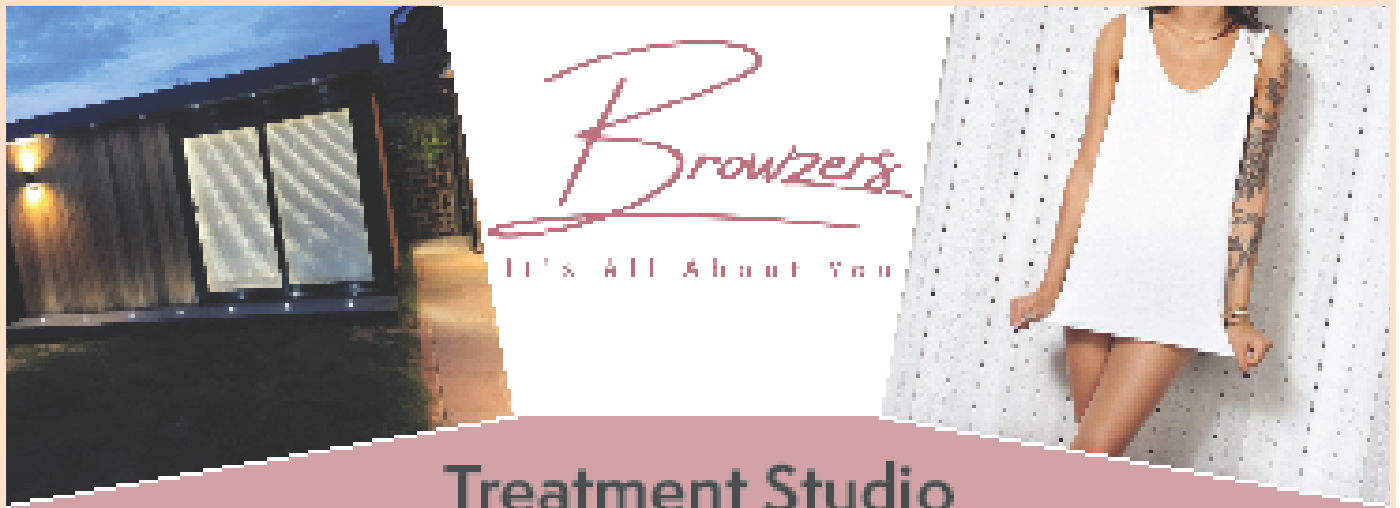
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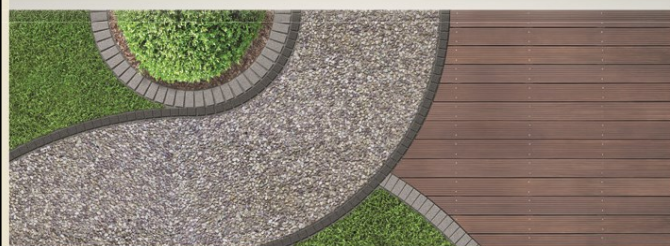
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As things stand, our next online meetings will be on Saturday 6 February and 6 March 2021, 11am.

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Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland



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For more information and advice, please contact Autism Bedfordshire via our email: enquiries@autismbeds.org or our enquiry phone line on 01234 214871 or visit our website: www.autismbedfordshire.net.



The Meppershall Players



February 2021

Well, a New Year 2021 has arrived and Covid-19 continues to dominate all we do at the moment with the latest lockdown continuing and likely to do so for some time. Whilst we were sorry that we had to cancel last year's Pantomime Jack & the Beanstalk and we were unable to perform our spring production of "When The Lights Go On Again", we are not disheartened; our programme for last year will be performed in 2021. All those who were cast in the two productions last year retain their roles.

Last year was definitely not one that anyone planned for, and plans we did make had to be cancelled. It is a crying shame that we were unable to put on any productions last year, but fingers crossed complete with the casts from last year, they will be performed this year. So the dates for 2021 are as follows:

- **When The Lights Go On Again**

A V.E Musical Play: - performing Saturday 15th May 2021.

Matinee 3pm, Evening 7.30pm. Tickets all £10 (food included).

- **Jack & the Beanstalk**

A Pantomime: - performing Saturday 4th & 11th December 2021.

Matinee 3pm, Evening 7.30pm. Tickets £5 Matinees, £8 & £10 Evenings.

All performances at the S.T.M.A Shefford. Look out for our posters!

We also hope to be hosting another **Ultimate Decades Disco** incorporating all the great sounds of the 60's, 70's & 80's as the last one was great fun, and a great trip down memory lane. Tickets £5. Look out for our posters!

We are still looking for a pianist/keyboard player. Backing tracks at our pantomimes and modern variety shows give the Players a much wider range of music that we might otherwise have overlooked, but we would still very much like someone who loves to play piano for our V.E production as backing tracks are few and far between for songs of these eras and do not give the same atmosphere to the proceedings.

The Players usually meet Monday evenings 7.30pm-10pm at Shefford Town Memorial Hall (suspended at present). Membership is currently free and we welcome people to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc. Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Find the Meppershall Players on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) Instagram and Twitter.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336.

Diary of an Allotment – February 2021

As days start to lengthen minds turn to the allotment once again and the familiar comfort blanket of seed catalogues, gardening books, plot plans and propagating trays come out.

The shadow of 2020 is still being cast over 2021. The year has started with another lockdown and some people have questioned why garden centres are allowed to stay open during the new lockdown. I can see why it seems an odd thing to anyone who doesn't do gardening and would view garden centres as an unnecessary risk. There is perhaps a difference between the garden centres which sell all manner of things to those which trade mainly as nurseries with outdoor areas being the main site. However, it would be difficult to separate the two out. I can see why the government has allowed garden centres to remain open at the moment because after nearly a year of on and off restrictions mental health is also frayed and for some people being able to do their garden or allotment is important therapy. The start of the spring sets the scene for the rest of the year so being able to get supplies is important but if we do end up stricter restrictions then we will need to find alternatives and dig out all our old seeds to give them a go and see if they still germinate.

This year I am approaching the allotment with optimism because all the indoor maintenance tasks were done during lockdown 2. This allows maximum time on the allotment in the coming year and as usual for this time of the year I have high hopes. My allotment new year's resolution is to conquer my perpetual brassica failure.

Although I am keen to get started all the advice around gardening is not to disturb the ground too soon. It is often too wet to work with at this time of the year. The start of this year brought us quagmires of mud pools everywhere so it is definitely unworkable as I write. For the first time I am looking over at my neighbouring allotment plots and wondering whether covering the beds with plastic sheeting is a good idea so the digging can start early and weeds have been kept down. I am very much in the camp which leaves the frost to do its job during winter but it means waiting until the soil is dry enough to start digging. The gardening reason to delay digging is to preserve the soil structure but my own reason is so I don't want to walk around with a foot of soil under my boots.

In our area the clay soil takes longer to warm up so I have found a bit of patience before sowing any direct seeds is not a bad thing. I go by the temperature and conditions rather than the information on the seed packet.

I normally begin indoor sowing for my greenhouse crop in February with chilli and pepper seeds being the first. Tomatoes will be next. The big change I am making this year is that I shall sow onion seeds rather than onion sets because I have some spare seeds packets and I would like to use them up but also experiment on whether it is

better to sow seed. I am fully expecting to lose my nerve and will also plant sets because vegetable growers get very attached to their ways and stick to whatever has worked before. Any change makes us feel we are asking for failure and it is like having a jacket potato without your favourite filling – it will turn out fine but why not stick with what you like in the first place?

I look forward to catching up with allotment friends and starting our 2021 journey together. If you are thinking of taking on a plot take the plunge and join us.

Walking in Bedfordshire

Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks?

Walking in Bedfordshire www.walkinginengland.co.uk/beds is the website for you!

With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Bedfordshire (part of the Walking in England suite of websites – one for each county in England) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

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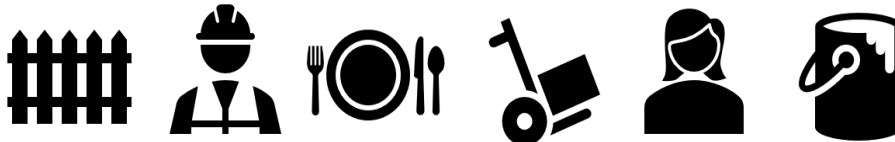
So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris

john@walkinginengland.co.uk

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

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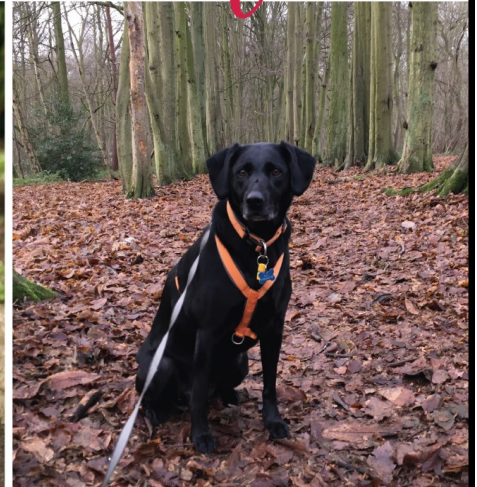
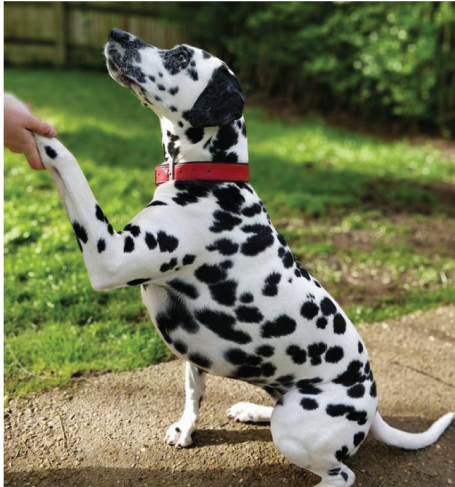
We owe many of them special thanks for being available despite the recent very difficult months. Show your appreciation by “going local” whenever you can.

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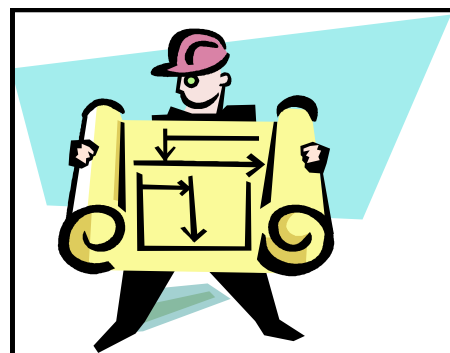
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Shefford Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

Before I talk about the 'Leisure Group', thanks really must go to John Thompson for the beautiful Christmas picture of St Mary's Church, taken the previous year when we had snow. The picture, produced on the front cover of the December-January 'Meppershall Messenger,' was also used on a village Christmas cards. A big 'thank you' to our editors of the Messenger for including it.



Here we are nearing the end of January 2021 and sorry to say nothing much has changed, just trying to do as we are asked – stay in and only venture outside if we have to! We really are fortunate living in Meppershall as we are being looked after and arrangements made for us to have our COVID vaccination. The staff at our local Doctor's surgeries have really worked hard in arranging appointments for us. We really cannot thank everyone enough for looking after our welfare.

All this unrest seems to have upset the gardens as well. The weather is cold (expected for this time of year), I can see a few snowdrops but why do we have four roses out! I thought they came in May/June time! I'm beginning to wonder what day it is when I get up! Good job I have a calendar! all very confusing!!

I have received calls from some of the people who join us on outings (well in normal times) and they ask me when the next trip will be! but I have explained it would not be enjoyable as there would be too many restrictions and certainly not worth taking any unnecessary risks. A couple of day trips I transferred until later in this year, but will have to see how the year goes. The majority of people would rather wait until later and just keep patient for a while longer. Rest assured as soon as 'life' starts moving again it will be 'all systems go!'

In the meantime, how about a bit of 'Spring Cleaning'? Keep warm, stay safe and when the sun comes out try and take a little walk!

Enid xx

Financial Matters by Paul Savuto

Retirement – it's not ALL about your finances

Whenever we talk about retirement, the focus tends to be on pensions, with an assumption that everything will fall into place, providing there is enough in your pension pot when you retire.

Preparing emotionally

Many retirees simply aren't prepared for how significantly their life will change, and many, while not missing work, will certainly miss the sense of purpose that comes with the organisational structure to which they have become accustomed. Suddenly stopping work after spending a lifetime focused on your career could be the catalyst for depression and other mental health issues. That's why it's important to prepare ahead to become mentally ready for retirement.

Visualise your retired self

You are likely to still want the same things in life: a sense of purpose, social interaction and activities that interest and stimulate you. Consider these tips to help prepare for a fulfilling retirement: Wind down in stages – instead of going from full-time to retired overnight, you could try a gradual retirement to keep the fulfilment of work combined with the free time to pursue other interests Exercise - we all know the benefits of exercise for our physical and mental health. Getting into the habit could help your emotional state when you retire Review your interests – in addition to solitary hobbies and interests, joining groups and clubs can help you develop new social networks.

Get your finances in order – while preparing emotionally is a big part of retirement, you need money to allow you to live life to the fullest.

Sorting out the finances

This is where we can help, so that you can rest assured you have the resources to spend your retirement free from money worries, allowing you to enjoy your later years.

Struggling to save for retirement? Try this tip

More than ever, UK savers are struggling to prioritise their pension, with over half saying they are likely to review or reduce their pension contributions in the wake of the pandemic⁵. It's true that it can be easy to think of pension contributions as a drain on your resources. And yet, despite travel restrictions, Britons were still expected to spend £46.8bn on staycations last year, according to Visit Britain forecasts. So why not think of your pension as saving up for holidays, too – just a bit later in life?

Retirement – longer and healthier than ever

Life expectancy at birth is now 79.4 years for males and 83.1 years for females, according to ONS figures. And this is just an average; in 2019, the number of people aged 90 and over rose by 3.6% to 605,181. This means that many people are now living 20 to 30 years beyond retirement age – many of whom enjoy very good health due to improved living standards. So, you're still likely to want to enjoy holidays, meals out and other treats when you retire! Prioritising your pension With so many demands on our income, it's not surprising that many of us struggle to prioritise our pensions. That's what we're here for. We can help you balance your finances now, so you can make those holidays a reality in the future. ⁵ BlackRock, 2020

Get in touch

DGS are Independent and Chartered Financial Advisers. I am also a Chartered Financial Planner with over 28 years financial services experience, so you are in safe hands. For a free review of your financial situation and to discuss your plan, please contact me, Paul Savuto, AFPS, Chartered Financial Planner. DGS Independent Financial Advisers Ltd. 07834 499 595 or email ps@dgsifa.com, I'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have. FCA 225814.

Birthday Greetings

Errata from previous issue. Apologies, the birthday greetings should have read:

Brenda - 90

Phyllis - 94

Barbara - 85

Belated Birthday wishes from all at the Meppershall Messenger.

This month, a very happy 94th birthday to Pat! Have wonderful day!

Bedford Model Engineering Society Summerfield Miniature Railway

In light of the epidemic social distancing advice, public running days at the miniature railway are postponed and we will publish further information in future editions of The Meppershall Messenger. Please refer to www.bedfordmes.co.uk.



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Remembering Janet Thorley

Many people in the village will be sad to hear that Janet Thorley died over the Christmas holidays following a long illness. Janet's funeral took place at St. Mary's on January 21st, and she will be missed by her family and many friends.

Together with her husband Trevor they played an active role in the community after moving to Meppershall in 1972 from Luton in search of a quieter life and somewhere safe to bring up their family. They lived together in the village and celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in the village hall in 2010.

Many people will recall Janet & Trevor's fundraising activities for the Friends of St Mary's where they put on concerts in the church to raise money to restore the tower and fund improvements from time to time. Acts included Kenny Ball's Jazz Band, who played two sell-out concerts, as well as an Abba tribute band, Vauxhall Male Voice Choir, a rock band named Stealworks and many more. Trevor and Janet became well acquainted with Kenny Ball himself, as well as his assistant.

With Trevor presiding over the popular Village Quiz every January (typically in DJ and black tie), Janet would never be far away, helping with the raffle or refreshments or, as always, being a perfect host. They made people feel right at home, wherever they were. They were very much stalwarts of the community, spending time in the church and doing what they could to raise the profile of the village. The Friends of St Mary's Meppershall in particular owes a great deal to Janet and to Trevor.

Janet could often be seen riding up and down the high street on her bicycle as she created a flower arrangement at the church for a wedding, christening or service. She was creative and enjoyed her garden. They were also both active members of the Ivel Valley walkers and took part in many of the local walks together with their collie dog, Poppy. They also joined many Meppershall Second Sunday Strolls – a more local walking group starting from the church gate each month.



Janet was born on the Isle of Wight and her early life was spent in Southampton before her parents moved to Bursledon, a busy boat building village on the estuary

of the Hamble River. It was here that she developed a life-long passion for swimming. But her real obsession was ice skating and she would often skip school to skate at the Southampton ice rink. She met Trevor in Southampton and they married in 1960 at St. Leonard's in Bursledon. Janet was the mother of three children, Ian was born in 1971 followed a few years later by Claire and subsequently Martin.

Travel was incredibly important to Janet and the film South Pacific had formed a lasting impression on her. Together with Trevor she visited many of those exotic Pacific islands as well as the Seychelles, the U.S. and Canada and they enjoyed many ski trips in Europe. One of their last trips together was to the Amazon rainforest but when they were fitter they also managed to trek in the Annapurna mountain range in Nepal, putting their experience with the Ivel Valley walkers to good use.

On occasions when it snowed in the village, they could also be seen skiing down Crackle Hill or Janet would don her skates and ice skate on the local ponds when they were frozen over. Despite the onset of Parkinson's Disease, Janet would still attempt to ski while on holiday. Trevor encouraged her, remarking that she could ski better than she could walk at the time.

Janet helped cater for many of the events at St. Mary's and was known for her spicy



curries as well as a delicious lemon tart or Victoria sponge. The last few years were pretty tough for Janet, she had battled Parkinson's for twenty years, a phenomenon almost unheard of, her zest for life keeping her going. After Trevor died in 2015 she moved to Milton Ernest Care home near Bedford and she was happy spending time directing the gardeners to clear parts of the land and fill the flower beds with shrubs and flowers.

As an only child, Janet had craved to be part of a big family. She achieved her dream leaving behind her three children, her son-in-law Steve and two daughters-in-law Sarah and Michelle as well as four grandchildren Holly, Lily, Byron and Ottilie. She will be missed by everyone who knew her.

Many thanks to Ian Thorley for helping with this great tribute to a wonderful lady. We will miss Janet so much. Many people will have such happy and appreciative memories of everything she and Trevor did for village life over so many years and all the fun they brought to so many activities. Donations in memory of Janet, in support of Parkinson's UK, can be made at <https://www.memorygiving.com/janetthorley>



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Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford	01462 814020
Shams Moopen Dental 99 Hitchin Road, SG17 5JB	01462 648465
Lloyds Chemists, 7 High St Shefford	01462 813283
Shefford Pharmacy	
Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive	01462 818633

Police Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

Report crime online at www.bedfordshire.police.uk/report

Hospitals

Bedford Hospital	01234 355122
Lister Hospital, Stevenage	01438 314333

Utilities

Gas Emergency	0800 111999
Anglian Water	03457 145145
Electrical (power cuts, overhead cable down etc)	0800 838838

Central Beds Council 0300 300 8301

CBC councillors:

Tony Brown	anthony.brown@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Mark Liddiard	mark.liddiard@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Meppershall Parish Council

Parish Council Clerk Alessandre Marabese clerk@meppershall.org

Member of Parliament

Nadine Dorries MP dorriesn@parliament.uk

St Marys Church

Rev. Veronica Goodman, The Rectory, Church Road 01462 339962
(see the church section of The Meppershall Messenger for full details)

Library

High St, Shefford 0300 300 8067
Check times: Tues - Fri 9am – 1pm, Sat 10am – 1pm. Pre-order for collection.

Whitbread Wanderbus Service

Stephanie Kirby thewanderbus@gmail.com

Shops

Village Stores, newspapers, Post Office, High Street 01462 811252
Rogers Bakery, High Street 01462 813398
Mobile Fish & Chips, Tuesdays 3.30 -7.00, Sugar Loaf car park

Schools

Meppershall Academy, High Street 01462 813293
Meppershall Pre School (Village Hall) Tamsin Osborn 07816 357159
meppershallps@gmail.com
Robert Bloomfield Academy, Shefford 01462 628800
Samuel Whitbread Academy, Shefford 01462 629900
Etonbury Academy, Stotfold 01462 730391
Henlow Academy 01462 813733
Redborne Upper School, Ampthill 01525 404462

Organisations

Meppershall Players Karen Mitchell 01462 816366
Meppershall Good Neighbours (GNOMES) 07760 793921
Meppershall Brownies, Suzanne Brightwell 07817 392325
Shefford Guides, Angie Griffiths 07957 462519
Shefford Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers)
Kathy Georgiou 01462 629313

The Team and Collation Dates

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes contributions to the Messenger, whether as letters, articles or notices. Contributions should preferably be as attachments to e-mail (address below) but handwritten contributions may be sent by post, or left in the folder kept at the Village Stores. Contributions should run to not more than one A5 page (except by prior arrangement) and should be received by the Editor not later than the 12th of the month for publication at the end of that month. Contributions received after the deadline may be held over.

DISCLAIMER

The Editor reserves the right to omit or alter any advertisement or article and to change the content, format or issue date of the magazine without prior notice. The Editor cannot be held responsible for the factual correctness of, or for any libellous comment or statement made in any advertisement, article or other contribution published in this magazine. Every effort will be made to avoid any deliberate attempt to mislead or otherwise cause harm or damage to any person or persons by any advertisement, article or any other contribution published in this magazine.

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Collating Dates 2020-21			
March Issue	March 1st	June Issue	June 1th (Tues)
April Issue	March 29th	July Issue	June 28th
May Issue	April 26th	Aug-Sept Double Issue	July 26 th
Please contact Colette to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			

Please note that dates in the above table USUALLY show when collating will take place, at 2.30pm in the Sugar Loaf, for the corresponding month, displayed to the left. The issue being collated usually relates to the following month. However, during the coronavirus social distancing measures, our collation procedures have changed and we will review our plans for the printed magazine in line with government guidance.



MEPPERSHALL IN THE SNOW





LOOKING DOWN CRACKLE HILL



BRITTANY DOWKER - OUR LOCAL MASCOT



NATALIE BERTINA - MINI SNOWMAN



ERIN TIDEY - "SID" BEHIND THE VILLAGE HALL



ST MARY'S - CHURCH ROAD



CAMPTON ROAD



RECTORY ROAD



LOOKING UP CRACKLE HILL



THE ALLOTMENTS



ST MARY'S CHURCH



A VIEW FROM CRACKLE HILL



A VIEW DOWN CRACKLE HILL