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## Editorial By James Read



These summer months set Meppershall apart as a place to live. The harvest will soon begin in the fields of wheat and barley that stretch for miles and miles between our Mid Bedfordshire villages. Like a rippling sea of every shade of green and gold, the waves of the summer breeze roll across the ripening crops and that unique Meppershall sunset bathes our hilltop and the landscape around us in its warm, rural light. It comes at first in its yellow gold of the afternoon, darkening to the red gold of the evening and, finally, reaching its crescendo in the crimson skyline that we see, unbroken, across the open land in our heart-of-England countryside.

Within this beauty, we've accommodated more homes and continued to build a strong, well-defined village – enjoying its own strong identity, its rural location and its relationship to neighbouring villages and towns, separated by miles of fields. So, on the lanes and footpaths in the sunset, cyclists can make their way home on quiet lanes. Walkers can stroll back home on footpaths disturbed only by the lonely song of a yellowhammer, the mesmerising spell of a corn bunting's trill or a friendly nod from a village friend. Even the hares, normally bounding down the field margins, seem to stop and contemplate these magical summer moments.

People love this place for all sorts of reasons. None that love it would sell it. Owning a piece of this God-given landscape is a privilege, with the rich and rewarding responsibility of curating the countryside we stand on, carving out a living from the lush life of the land. I think that's why so many were deeply hurt and distressed to see landowners offering fields for development in blocks that linked Stondon, Henlow, Meppershall, Clifton and Shefford, in the Central Bedfordshire Council planning department's "Call For Sites". There can be no doubt that any development must preserve the distinct villages of our part of the world and the soft margins and open fields that separate them. Nobody wants the next generation to inherit a village where the song of rare birds is gone, the roads are never quiet, the crops no longer grow, hares disappeared and the sunset framed by suburban overspill on once beautiful hills stretching from the Hertfordshire border to Broom, Haynes and Clophill.

Big developers want to build blocks of similar houses, at high density, on land that is cheap to build on (green fields and wild areas). That's their model. We can oppose those schemes and still support the provision of additional homes. The homes that local people will more readily support are truly integrated with the village within our rural setting. They are green (in every sense), they are well connected, well served and they offer a dignity and a small-scale characterful beauty that denies the captivity and large-scale dystopia now blighting parts of the countryside. I am not deriding the recent builds in Meppershall. Planning for Woodlands Rest included restoration of the thick hawthorn hedge that once lined Shefford Road in that place. Some hope. Sold as a remedial conservation measure to console those with environmental concerns, let's see if that hedge ever meaningfully reappears.

If all this is too exciting (or emotional) for you, remember there's tea and cake at the village hall (page 10). That will make everything okay.



## Letters

**Dear Editor,**

Anyone interested in joining a newly formed Golf Society? Please contact Tony Clifton by email ([tonyclifton52@gmail.com](mailto:tonyclifton52@gmail.com)). We would look to have ideally 50 members initially and a meeting to agree fees, rules and a calendar for fixtures. Both men and women are welcome. First meeting to elect a volunteer group committee of 4 which would include myself and Gordon Cordes plus 2 others to oversee all decisions regarding finances and fairness within the group.

Thank you,

**Tony**

\*\*\*\*\*

## A Message From Alistair Strathern, Our MP

It has been another busy few moments for me working on behalf of Meppershall and all our towns and villages. While the last month included some significant moments in Parliament, including welcome announcements in the Spending and Defence reviews and votes on the Assisted Dying bill, the highlight as always was getting out and about across the constituency to focus on your priorities.

I'm incredibly grateful to everyone in Meppershall who came along to my village hall Q&A event at Meppershall Village Hall. These are an important opportunity for me to ensure I am on top of the priorities and concerns of each of the towns and villages I represent, and my work as your MP is always better for your input, support and challenge.

One big priority has of course been pushing for action from CBC highways to finally resurface Shefford Road. I was very glad to finally secure a commitment for action on this, but the battle continues to ensure CBC prioritise the much-needed investment so many of our local roads are crying out for.

Access to GPs remains a challenge for far too many too. Nationally, I have been glad to support the Health Secretary's work to hire over a thousand more GPs, but we need to see the impact of this locally. That's why I have been pushing the local NHS to invest in extra facilities for Shefford Health Centre. I am glad that work is now finally underway to provide a total of 4 additional clinical rooms on site by the end of Summer. When fully utilised, this should enable to surgery to hold up to 24,000 extra much needed appointments a year.

Championing our local schools like Meppershall Church of England primary is a big priority for me too. I was delighted we secured a space for Meppershall in the Government's free breakfast club pilot scheme. Recently it was a pleasure to join the team to celebrate Meppershall pre-school joining their trust, enabling greater support for fantastic childcare locally. I know CBC's stalled 3 to 2 tier transition, and pressures on SEND provision remain big issues, and I continue to campaign for action on these.

Fly-tipping continues to be a serious concern in Meppershall and across our countryside. It's not just an eyesore – it's illegal, dangerous, and deeply frustrating for those affected. I am glad the Government is taking these concerns seriously and that



under new measures, fly-tippers will now have their vans seized and crushed as a consequence. Rest assured I'll be pushing local authorities to ensure they make full use of these powers to protect our countryside from the blight of fly tipping.

Our villages matter. Whether it's defending our local environment or improving our public transport, I'll keep standing up for the issues that matter to you. If I can ever be of any help, please get in touch with me and my team at [Alistair.strathern.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Alistair.strathern.mp@parliament.uk)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **A Message From Meppershall Munchkins by Melanie Choonos**

This year is going so fast, the summer holidays will be sneaking up on us soon! As always we will do our best to remain open throughout the school holidays.

Over July and August we have a number of exciting dates for your diaries.

Flic from Tappy Toes Bedford will be joining us Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of July and Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> of August with a free demonstration of their Dance and movement class.

Katie from The Roaming Kiln will be back again on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July and Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July with a selection of pottery items suitable for hand and footprints as well as some ornaments for the older children to paint. Choose, paint and pay on the day and collect from group approx. 2 weeks later.

Emily Daniel Photography will be retuning with her camera for some more mini shoots on Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> and Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August. A great opportunity to capture some sibling shots for those whose older ones are usually in school. A booking link and more details will be posted to our Facebook page shortly

### **Meppershall Munchkins Baby and Toddler Group**

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## Meppershall Social Club

Here are the upcoming events for the next few months:

**Saturday 12th July:** Barbeque on the patio from 6PM

Markus and Adam in the bar from 8:30PM

**Sunday 13th July:** Our Monthly Quiz Night, 7.30PM - Teams max. of 6, £1 per person and 50% to the winners 50% to our charities.

**Sun 10th August:** 1PM-5PM - Summer children's treasure hunt and activity afternoon, £2 per Child, with BBQ on the Patio

**Sun 24th August:** Family Fun Afternoon, 1PM onwards. More details to follow.

You can keep up to date with upcoming events on our website, [meppershallsocialclub.co.uk](http://meppershallsocialclub.co.uk), and on our Facebook page.

And lastly, we want you to hear from you about how we run the club - so there is a comments form and suggestions box in the club or you can get involved by scanning the QR Code to the right.



\*\*\*\*\*



## Can You Help With Some Local Research About Village News?

Have you ever thought about how news reaches from Shefford Rd to Shillington Rd? What about how quickly you hear about what's going on in Henlow or Clifton? Where's the first place you go to find local events — The Sugar Loaf? The Village Hall?

I'm a former Meppershall resident now studying at the London School of Economics, looking into how Facebook notice boards and other online spaces have grown vital in our village information streams, as part of my studies.

From village event advertisements to road closures and accidents, to getting information about candidates in last summer's general election — communication is vital. I'm captivated by how villages have adapted to meet today's online information environments.

I'm looking for a few volunteers to have a chat in a completely friendly, open, confidential way (a "research interview") to discuss:

- Where your news comes from
- What information you find most valuable
- Online groups in the village
- Your thoughts on trust, accuracy and community

**Why this matters:** Through this kind of research, your insight could have a critical impact on helping researchers, policymakers and your neighbours better understand how news spreads in villages across the UK.

**Interested in a chat?** Please reach out to me (Gillian) at [g.s.rawling@lse.ac.uk](mailto:g.s.rawling@lse.ac.uk) or drop me a line on 07424 422833.



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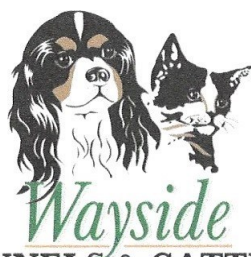
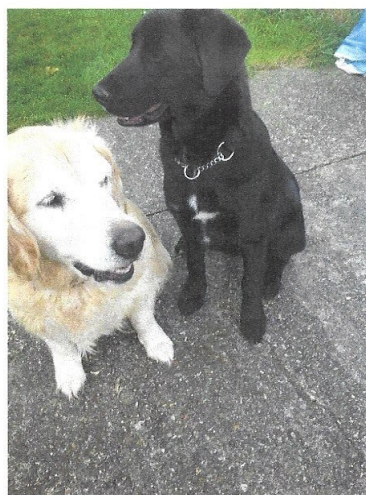
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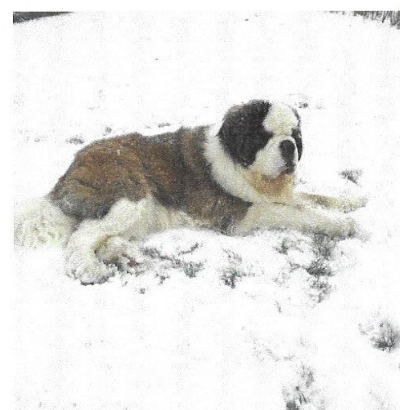
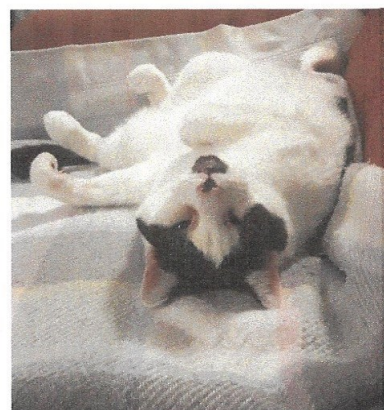


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**Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman**

01462 339962 – [ronigoodman@gmail.com](mailto:ronigoodman@gmail.com) – usual day off Monday

**Churchwardens:**

Chris Valentine 01462 815971 John Archer

**PCC Secretary:**

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: [annie10639@gmail.com](mailto:annie10639@gmail.com)

### A Message From St Mary's...

Today as I write I am rather tired. It is not my plan or desire to be miserable about the wonders of nature, but at about 4 o'clock this morning I was wakened by the loudest dawn chorus I have ever heard! The birds seemed to be singing, "The sun is shining. Wake up and praise God for the new day!" And my heart was replying "Yes! But please can I grab another 3 or 4 hours sleep first!"

Nevertheless, I lay for an hour or so, in wonder at the volume and the variety of the birdsong I could hear. And I wished that I was able to identify each performer or choir by the sound of their song! Some songs I know that I have never really noticed before.

I think life is often busy, so that I don't take enough time to appreciate the world around me. At the moment though, I am enjoying the roses that are glorious this year along with many other garden flowers, and I see that strawberries are bright and early and delicious.

As exam season finishes, many of us look towards some kind of summer break - time to pause, to breathe deeply and to look around, to relax and recharge our batteries... and then to do some of the things that we just don't seem to have time to do in the rest of the year. Andrew and I are looking forward to spending some unhurried extra time with our children, our grandchildren - and simply with each other.

I do hope you get some time to relax this summer - doing things that you love with people that you love.

I pray that you enjoy a break - whether it is walking in the woods nearby or in the sun on a foreign beach, and that your relaxation brings pleasure, healing, refreshment and restoration.

One of the things I invite you to do - if you haven't already - is to come up to the Church now that the work on the building is almost completed. I am so grateful to all those who made the work possible by funding it, planning and organising it along with the architect, and to the skilled craftsmen who have been repairing our windows and

stonework. For a variety of reasons the work has run very behind schedule - and I am so grateful for the patience of everyone who has been inconvenienced by the works.

It is very exciting now, to have all the scaffolding removed, the Churchyard tidied and re-turfed in places, most of the cleaning done, and to have the Church open daily again for visitors. It is wonderful too, finally to have the Lady Chapel and the organ back in use.

It is really important now, to ensure that the building continues to be “home” for a church family and a village who come to pray, to praise and worship and fellowship, to sit quietly and reflect, and who come to share life events - baptisms and marriages and funerals - with one another and with God. That it continues to be a centre of life - from which people are energised and equipped to reach out in love and service to share the good news of Jesus and to make a difference in our world.

Maybe you would like to come to a service on a Sunday? See times below.

Do look out for what is going on during the Summer and for our “it’s all done” celebration (well that bit at least!) in the Autumn.

And whatever you choose to do, do have a great summer!

**Rector Roni**

## Church Events In July

### Usual Pattern of Services

Sundays	11.00am	Morning Worship every Sunday Holy Communion: 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays
Every Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion in the Rectory
Church open to visit	10.00-4.00	Private prayer and quiet time – the church open for you to sit and visit each day (subject to ongoing works).
Online services:	9.00am	Morning Prayer using 24-7’s Lectio 365 App 7-days-a-week
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### Forthcoming Services

Wednesday 2nd July	9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory
<b>Sunday 6th July</b>	<b>11am Morning Worship</b>
Wednesday 9th July	9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory
<b>Sunday 13th July</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>

Wednesday 16th July	9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory
<b>Sunday 20th July</b>	<b>11am Morning Worship</b>
Wednesday 23rd July	9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory
<b>Sunday 27th July</b>	<b>11am Holy Communion</b>
Wednesday 30th July	9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory

**Please note '9and9' continues daily on our Facebook page.**

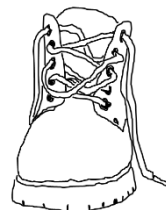
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## Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July we will leave the church gate at 2.00PM for a tour of Shillington – down to All Saints Shillington (the church on the hill in the vale between Meppershall and the Chiltern Hills at Pegsdon) and back. We will walk via Cow Bridge and along the River Hit to Shillington, returning via Shillington Bury and back up the hill to Meppershall. Importantly, there should be a chance to grab a Sunday tea at All Saints Shillington, which they serve throughout the summer on Sunday afternoons (although teddy bear abseiling will also be taking place – might be busy!)

In total the walk is around 5 miles, and this month it will kindly be led by Alan and Ann who are a familiar presence in our walking group and experienced long distance walkers!

Last month we had a great afternoon walking across to the recently opened Clophill Lakes Nature Reserve, situated just south of Clophill. Centred around the quarry lakes - which were created by many years of mining of Fuller's Earth at the site – The Greensand Trust acquired the site in February 2022. After 3 years of habitat restoration, conservation and site preparation, it opened to the public as a nature reserve on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2025, featuring a car park (fees raising income for the site) and a tea/coffee counter (please check opening times). The Trust also runs the adjacent Sandy Smith Nature Reserve. Our strollers returned on foot after a total of 8 miles.





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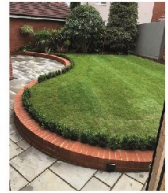
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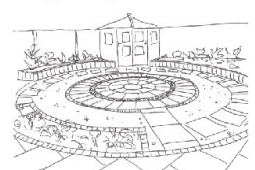
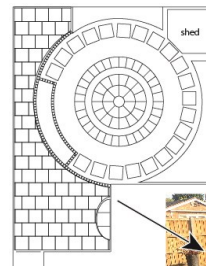
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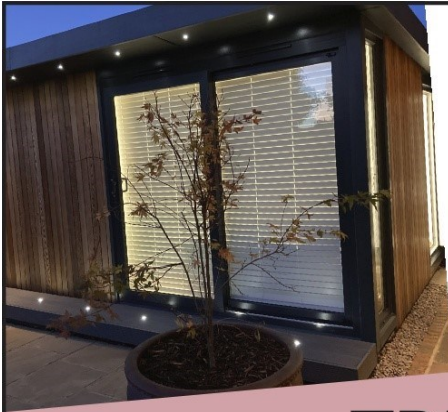
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# CAKE CAFE!

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**Saturday 12 July – 9.00am to 12pm**

**Meppershall Village Hall**



**If you can bake and would like to donate a cake, please bring your cakes to the Village Hall on Friday 11 July between 5pm and 6pm**

Please do not put your cakes in any containers that you would like returned as we cannot guarantee you will get them back.

Please put a note with your cake if you have used nuts.

Any questions email - [events@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:events@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk)

This is a Community event & proceeds will go to running similar community events at Meppershall Village Hall.

Also, Saturdays 9 August / 6 September

**Cake Café...** Somebody once said, “If Italy is a country fuelled by pasta, Germany by sausage and France by cheese, England would not remain as a functioning nation without regular servings of Victoria sponge and lemon drizzle cake.” I think it may have been the same person that said, “Keep calm and carry on.”

The monthly Cake Café at Meppershall Village Hall will take place again on 12<sup>th</sup> July. The Meppershall Messenger team can confirm that the cakes on display are a feast for the eyes as well as a great satisfaction for your appetite!

The Cake Café is also a wonderful social occasion – a chance for a café-style chat with village friends or to banter with someone new. The community feel also comes from the donation of cakes, made by Meppershall’s army of home bakers, sold in support of future community events at the village hall. This is an amazing example of people ‘doing their bit’ to make a really nice occasion for everyone to enjoy and to be part of fundraising for village facilities. Why not get along for half an hour this month – you won’t regret it (yum!)



## Meppershall Messenger AGM

The Annual General Meeting of your village magazine took place on 7<sup>th</sup> June. Approved minutes will follow in due course, but we wanted to share some of the key areas discussed.

After years of saving and astute financial planning, the magazine has replaced its printing machinery (please note the magazine can provide a community printing service for local organisations at a small cost – contact John Thompson for more information).

We are very thankful to our advertisers – along with donations and grants, they keep our finances on track. The magazine offers great value to advertisers – reaching every home in Meppershall for a modest annual cost, unchanged for several years now.

We are going to look at including informal summaries of Meppershall Parish Council meetings, courtesy of our roving reporter, since official MPC minutes cannot usually be accessed before the monthly deadline. The first example is included in this issue.

We receive good feedback on the magazine (thank you!) and we continue to build our online circulation. We are so grateful to all of the contributors to The Meppershall Messenger and we recognised them in the Editor’s Report at the meeting.

Covering every home in the village at no cost to the reader, the magazine has a print run of some 1,090 copies each month, which are delivered in 37 volunteer delivery rounds. The importance of the physical printed magazine was highlighted by the recent successful village survey, which was predominantly returned on paper rather than online (both were easily available).

New ideas raised at the AGM included a crossword, a “Wild Meppershall” page, recipes, info from local attractions and partnerships with local schools. We also discussed the opportunity to provide info and news focused on specific age groups across the village – particular the older community (eg. New Meppershall Care Home) and the younger community (school-age and young adult). If you can help in any of these areas, if you would like to write for the magazine occasionally or regularly, please get in touch!

At the meeting we clarified how we are governed by revising the constitution, confirming that there are three principal roles responsible for the magazine. They are the Editor (James Read), the Treasurer (John Thompson) and Advertising and Distribution Manager (Andrew Pain). Each of these roles was re-elected at the meeting. We are additionally fortunate to have a great group of volunteers supporting all sorts of other processes and roles in support of the magazine. Patrick O'Connor recently joined the team as an Assistant Editor. Anyone who would like to help with the magazine but could not come to the AGM should reach out via the contact info on the last page – we would love to hear from you.



The photo shows our Treasurer and Advertising Manager after the AGM, engaged in high-powered strategic discussions in the executive boardroom of your prestigious village magazine (or, to you and me, putting the world to rights over tea and cake in the bar area at the village hall!)

A big thank you to everyone who came to the AGM and who support the magazine in so many different ways.





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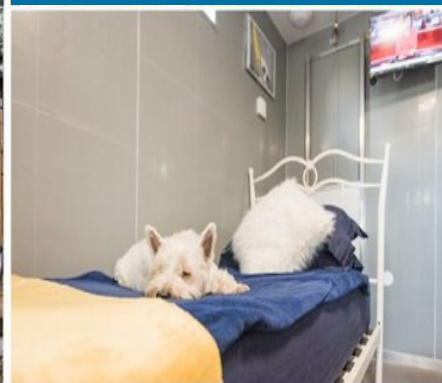
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## Meppershall Parish Council (MPC) – Key points and summary of recent meetings

MPC meetings took place on 12<sup>th</sup> May and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025

### Elections

Mr John Parsons was elected Chairman for the year 2025-2026

Mrs Roma Avrili was elected Vice-Chair for the year 2025-2026

### Chairmans Announcements

- Successful Annual Parish meeting noting it would have been nice to have more residents present, but that attendance by organisations was very good. Village organisations making presentations included MAPTA, Munchkins, Wanderbus, Meppershall Messenger, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Village Hall. Minutes of the meeting in draft are available on the Parish Council website: <https://meppershall-pc.gov.uk/annualparishmeetings/>
- Meppershall has been shortlisted in this year's CPRE Bedfordshire Living Countryside Awards! The winners will be announced at the beginning of July.

### Questions / comments from the public:

- Property owner at the top end of Fildyke Road is concerned with parking in the off-road bays and further down the road. A resident is parking at least 5 cars in these bays therefore making it impossible for anyone else to park there. This results in cars parking on the road at a very narrow point on Fildyke Road opposite the pub, or on the bend opposite the entrance to Brookmead. This parking causes problems for the flow of traffic through the village and is potentially an accident waiting to happen. Is there anything that can be done to prevent this one resident taking up so many parking spaces? *Council agreed that there is nothing they can do to help alleviate this situation as highways is not an MPC remit. Council suggests that the property owner contact CBC and the Police regarding dangerous parking and possibly Grand Union Housing Group if the resident parking so many cars is one of their tenants.*
- Would the Clerk be able to provide draft minutes for publication in the Messenger? *Council agreed that the Clerk would provide minutes in a summary form.*

### Consultations and Legal

#### Stocken House

- Planning discharge of conditions applications regarding site levels and play equipment installation are currently pending a decision with CBC. It is evident from reports submitted by officers on the planning portal that there are objections to the amendments requested by Davidsons as part of the request to discharge planning conditions. The Clerk will monitor this and seek to provide accurate information to residents.

### IT and Communications

- Creation of the Meppershall.org website and amendments to the MPC gov.uk website is now in progress after the Clerk met with Miss Standbridge of Iris Web Media. The Clerk also advised of a request to provide email addresses to



members of the Meppershall FC management team. It was noted that all organisations in Meppershall can apply for a meppershall.org email address.

## **Finance**

### **Purchase orders approved for**

- Dog poop bags.
- Goal clips and ties, and jack for goal post removal.
- Chain and lock for access from track to Centenary Field
- Welding for repair to Storage Container
- Pallet load of topsoil for Centenary Field
- All purchases included within budget and in Schedule of Delegation to Clerk.

### **Grant applications approved**

- Purchase and gift 2 rainbow coloured picnic benches to MAPTA.
- Gifting of PC Stores to Meppershall Village Hall.

### **Document approval**

- Approved to amend banking mandate

### **Budget v Actual**

- The Clerk provided Council with a budget v actual report for 2024-2025. Councillors raised no questions.

### **Annual accounts**

- The Clerk presented the current Asset Register to councillors for review and its' contents as of 31st March 2025 were noted to be valued at £155,179. Additional play equipment purchased after this date to be added. It was noted that MPC insurance needs to be amended due to new play equipment.
- Review of earmarked reserves conducted and amended as required.
- The Clerk provided both the signed AGAR Internal Auditor Report and the separate report to councillors. Council expressed thanks to the Clerk for having received an Internal Auditor Report without issues.
- Council approved the Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements for submission to the External Auditor checking the bank reconciliation to accompany it.

### **Orders for the payment of money**

- Schedules of payments as presented to Council were approved and authorised for payment

### **Planning applications**

- Objection to CB/25/01405/FULL - Land North of Fildyke Road, Meppershall - Erection of four dwellings (Use Class C3) including two bungalows with associated private drive and landscaping. Reasons for objection due to but not limited to; outside settlement envelope, change to visual appearance and character of village. Councillors agreed that after reviewing revised drawings submitted for this planning application that there was no reason to alter the previous objection submitted.
- No objection to CB/25/01102/FULL - 5 Church Road, SG17 5NA - Two storey part single rear and side extension, internal alterations and creation of Juliet balcony to front elevation.

- No objection to CB/25/01508/FULL - Hoo Farm, Chapel Road, SG17 5NQ - The closing up of two existing accesses and the creation of a new singular access.
- No objection to CB/25/01407/FULL - 1 Orchard Close, SG17 5LW - Conversion of garage into a habitable space and the change to a pitch roof, with roof lights.
- No objection to pre-consultation request from WHP Telecoms Limited regarding Meppershall Water Tower, Stondon Road, Meppershall, SG17 5NG – replacement antenna and associated works. Councillors noted that whilst the water tower is referred to as Meppershall Water Tower it is actually in the parish of Stondon and WHP should be advised of this.

### Neighbourhood Plan

- The Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group advised the Village Questionnaire closed on 18th May with only a few questionnaires still to collect. There are now 583 paper responses that need to be input into the MPC website. Each survey takes just under 5 minutes to input therefore there is circa 49 hours of data entry work required. Council approved hire of data entry clerk to input the data.
- Responses to the Youth survey have been disappointing so another approach for this may be required.
- Next steps are to contact CBC regarding SEA screening and to organise Housing Needs survey and Design Codes.

### Highways and Transport

- **To consider how to address issue of some wheelchair users using the road instead of the footpaths on Shefford Road due to the poor state of the footpaths.** The Chairman advised that this issue was raised at the Annual Parish meeting, and it has since been confirmed that some residents have resorted to purchasing off road wheelchairs due to the state of the footpaths. Those in the poorest state are those at the junction of Shefford Road and Hoo Road, on Shefford Road in front of the old Foresters cottages, near the Care Home opposite 80 Shefford Road and between Emery Croft and Orchard Close. Councillors agreed that it cannot be acceptable that people must push wheelchairs in the road due to the poor state of footpaths as this creates a health and safety issue. The Clerk was asked to contact Ward Councillor Stephenson to request help in raising the issue with CBC Highways.
- **Update on Shefford Road repairs / re-surfacing** - Shefford Road will be closed from 23rd June from the roundabout up to Stocking Drive to enable Civils, resurfacing works with Paco and road marking works to take place in safety.
- **Woodlands Rest raised tables on site** – CBC's Highways Agreements Team Leader confirmed via email that CBC are not satisfied with the speed table in its current state and have communicated this to Davidsons Homes. It does not meet CBC's adoptable standard but has also not been flagged as a safety issue. As the estate roads are not yet ready to be put forward for adoption (and there is no Section 38 agreement in place at present), the roads remain private. As such, Davidsons retain full autonomy to do their works in the order of their choosing. CBC can again tell Davidsons that this work requires doing, but the only timescale that they need to work to is prior to offering the road up for



adoption. Therefore, there is little that CBC can offer in terms of a date by which remedial works be done.

- **Footpath on Shefford Road / High Street (from Poppy Gardens to Crackle Hill Road)** - The Clerk has written to CBC's S278 Agreement Team for an update on the progress of the construction of a footpath on Shefford Road / High Street (from Poppy Gardens to Crackle Hill Road) that was part of conditions of planning approval given for CB/21/00053/FULL - 1 Shefford Road, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LJ. Update pending.
- **Footpath on Fildyke Road** - The Clerk has written to CBC's S278 Agreement Team for an update on the progress of the construction of a footpath on Fildyke Road that was part of conditions of planning approval given for the following sites: CB/17/02409/FULL- New Close Nurseries, Fildyke Road, Meppershall – see also CB/19/02994/VOC and CB/18/04569/FULL - Tower View Nurseries, 81 Fildyke Road, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LU – see also CB/19/02679/VOC. Update pending.
- **Damaged street signs.** Marywells and Church Road damaged signs reported to CBC who advise they will not repair.

## **Environment and Leisure**

### **Update on allotments**

- The Clerk needs to issue some new contracts.
- Mrs Thorne advised that two notices to quit need to be issued.
- The allotment gate has been left open on several occasions.
- The Clerk is progressing with a new fence installation.
- Councillor Merryweather advised that he will be attending the National Allotment Society AGM.

### **Update on Old Road Meadow**

- UKPN will be carrying out works in Old Road Meadow to reduce the height of trees and hedges under power lines.
- Additional benches approved for purchase and installation near the play area of Old Road Meadow.

### **Update on Centenary Field**

- MPC staff confirmed that the top end of Centenary Field near the newly installed play equipment have always been areas where litter accumulates due to the wind pushing it into the hedging etc. Councillors agreed that an additional bin in this location would not resolve this problem and noted that there were already 5 bins on Centenary Field.
- Council approved request from Shefford Children's Centre to hold a free play in the park session on Wednesday 28th May (am) free of charge.
- Council approved a pitch hire agreement with new Meppershall FC to use pitch on Sundays free of charge.

## **To consider maintaining grounds, boundaries and hard spaces around the Village Hall.**

- At the Village Hall Management Committee meeting on 12.05.25, members agreed that they should contact MPC to ask whether MPC would be willing to

maintain the grounds, boundaries and hard spaces around the Village Hall as a service to the village and to enhance recreation areas. Within the grounds there are several seating areas / benches which are used by people visiting the social club as well as friends and families watching / waiting for their children whilst playing. Councillors agreed that more information was required on this matter and that it would be better to appoint a working group to liaise with the Village Hall Management Committee to better understand their request and what the possible cost implications might be.

#### **Update on all other environment and leisure issues**

- The Clerk has found that the East Anglian Air Ambulance service runs free of charge defib / CPR training and would like to progress with organising a session for the village later in the year. Councillors agreed that this would be a great idea.
- Mr Hirst is investigating the availability of electricity for use by the village from the old box for the old temporary Village Hall.

Full meeting minutes can be found here: <https://meppershall-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/meetings/>

#### **John Parsons - Chairman - Meppershall Parish Council**

\*\*\*\*\*



### **The Players @ STMA**

**July 2025**



The Players had a great time at the STMA Summer Fete on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025. With our 'Pick a Card' win a prize every time stall and performing a selection of WW2 songs from our V.E Day Show. The weather (although a bit windy) was sunny and warm, and a great day was had by all.

If you missed the read-throughs for 'A Christmas Carol' the Panto 2025, and you were interested in taking part in this years' Pantomime fear not, you can still attend the auditions on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm at the STMA (18yrs & over)

Dates for your 2025/2026 diary:

- Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm at the STMA, Auditions for 'A Christmas Carol' Panto (18yrs & over)
- Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2025 Panto A Christmas Carol performances at 3pm & 7.30pm
- Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2025 Panto A Christmas Carol performances at 3pm & 7.30pm
- Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026 The Big Quiz & Cabaret evening (quiz starts at 7.30pm)

\*\*\*\*\*

Find the Players on Facebook (The Players @ STMA) and Insta-gram

The Players meet every Monday evening at 7.30pm at the STMA, 10, Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA. Membership is free and we welcome people 18yrs and over who have an interest in amateur theatricalities, whether it be on stage or off



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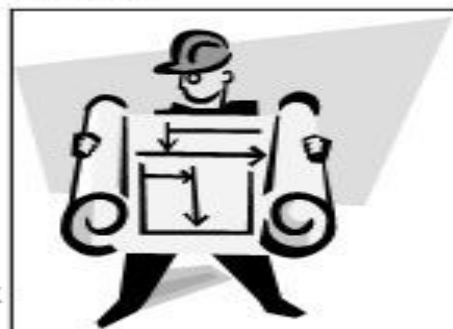
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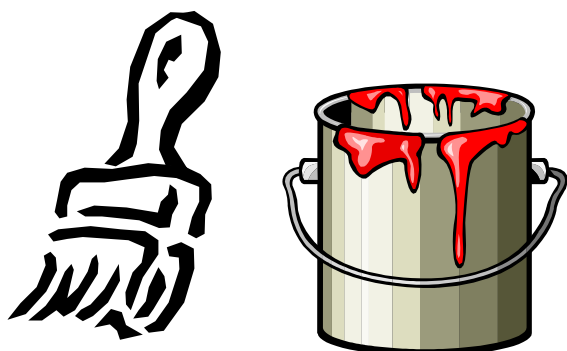
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\*\*\*\*\*

## **Summer Time By Donna Cameron**

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Gardens are now in full flow with endless colour and scent adorning the beds. This is the time of year when gardens get used the most - enjoyed as an extra room of the house and an extension of the indoor space... be it for barbequeues, entertaining, hot tub parties, a quiet cuppa, afternoon teas, paddling pools a game of swing ball or hide and seek. They are such versatile places so make sure you make full use of yours. Give some thought to where you normally sit. Where the sun and shade are for the type of area you want to create.

A customer recently asked for a quiet corner for relaxing in the

morning - to have a cup of coffee and set herself up for the day looking out on the garden and giving a different aspect to view the garden.

Another customer wanted an unused area of the garden for her children to have some raised beds so they can grow some vegetables. Once a wasted space, it is now an area of productivity.

I love my job because no two gardens are the same and you can make a unique impact on each one. There is an unused shady woodland at the back of their garden, for example, which I have now designed into a magical fairy woodland walk.

Whatever type of garden you have, it can be made into your haven. If you have a long garden try breaking it up into different garden rooms or zones. Use hedges or trellis to add intrigue to the next part of the garden.

Lots of customers since Covid now have home offices in their garden. I recently designed one such garden so the customer can look out on a calming planting scheme - a perfect atmosphere in which to work creatively and productively.

Colours of plants can also enhance the mood of the garden you are trying to create. For a tropical feel, use hot colours reds oranges and purples. For a relaxed feel, pastel shades and white gardens are tremendously soothing.

Garden accessories and types of furniture also help you create the style of garden you desire. Use natural materials for a cottagey or wildlife garden. For a contemporary look go modern with corten steel, clean lines and metal furniture. Lighting can also be used to highlight areas of interest. Be it a few solar lights to give a fairy-like glow or festoon lights around a patio to use whilst entertaining – these all enhance the garden and means you can use it in the evening too.

Whatever you choose there is something for everyone's taste, so you can make the most of your space and enjoy your garden to its fullest, regardless of size and aspect.

Donna x

<b>Jobs In the Garden For July and August</b>	
Keep on top of watering morning and night if hot	Thin out crops of Apples, Pears and Plums
Weed often	Cut Lavender back
Deadhead	Give lawn a feed
Cut perennials down for a second flush eg Hardy Geraniums and Delphiniums	Pick Courgettes before they get too big
Sow biennials eg Forget-me-nots, Wallflowers and Foxgloves	Keep a check on pests, eg. snails and lily beetle
Prune Plum trees	

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Trugs And Trowels (Campton Gardening Club Newsletter) - July**

Summer is in full swing and hopefully your gardens are performing splendidly to the warm weather. Gardening club members were delighted with their visit to Gravenhurst to Lynda Cole's commercial flower growers - a truly inspirational insight to what can be achieved locally, the sky's the limit. In the many years of organising local speakers it never ceases to amaze me what we have on our doorstep, the vast knowledge, talent and enthusiasm. The second half of 2025 is no exception - including a speaker talking about historic usage of herbs.

July is a time to be enjoying the fruits of our labour, taking some time to sit back and having a little me time with friends and family.

If not done already, it's the best time to assist our blooms and vegetables with plant foods regularly. Many different types are available – and don't forget your indoor plants. Keep deadheading to create new growth also pinching out your tomatoes. Do your daily watering - early morning or evening, never during the day. Ensure you lift your mower height throughout the warm weather, this will help prevent grass burning in the hot sun.

Now, there's lots of advice out there on how best to care for and enhance your tomatoes... I have seven tips here, but I must say I have not tried them all:

1. Epsom salt: two tablespoons in a hole before transplanting.
2. Baking soda: sprinkle around the base, adjusting acidity for a sweeter taste.
3. Pinching out.
4. Used coffee grounds mixed into soil.
5. Adding kelp meal to compost.
6. Egg shells in hole before transplanting or planting prevents rot.
7. Bonemeal – adds the much-needed nutrient phosphorus for healthy juicy fruit.

Happy growing to you all whichever methods you use.

I must take this opportunity to thank all our lovely members who opened their gardens to help celebrate our tenth anniversary of Trugs and Trowels. Also Peter and Clare for hosting us for refreshments and entertainment at the Manor. A wonderful setting which we all enjoyed.

All are welcome to join us for gardening club, on the first Monday of the month at 7.30PM, with a free and a swap table if you have an abundance of home grown plants or produce or if you just want to pass on any garden items/magazines, plus a raffle and refreshments.

**Maryika Wilding 01462 851729**

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Winter Warmth Agents can provide support and information on services available locally in Central Bedfordshire to help reduce fuel poverty for anyone over the age of 50.

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- Access a Warm or Welcome Space
- Joining a local group or voluntary opportunity
- Access a Foodbank

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Winter Warmth Agents are funded by Central Bedfordshire Council and employed by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity.


Winter Warmth Agents are DBS checked and are Data Protection compliant.





## Police & Crime Commissioner: Stop & Search Scrutiny

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) oversees policing in Bedfordshire. In this role, the PCC runs a Scrutiny Committee to advise on the way the police use 'stop and search' and 'use of force'. You could be part of that committee...



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## **We are meeting Face to Face and Online**

Informal cancer group for patients, families, friends, carers who wish to meet others for support, sharing & information. People with valuable experience and from relevant organisations have been of great benefit to us all.

**We meet on the first Saturday of every month -**

Meppershall Village Hall, Walnut Tree Way,  
Meppershall, Shefford, Central Beds, SG17 5AB

**Do join us on  
from 11am-1pm either in person  
or via zoom.**

For Zoom log in details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3348518015>

Meeting ID: 334 851 8015

Password: cancertalk

We are always available to speak to individuals anytime.



[midbedscancersupport@survivingcancer.co.uk](mailto:midbedscancersupport@survivingcancer.co.uk)



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07961 377526



## **AirBnB Adventures By Patrick O'Connor**

After the very expensive business of my divorce I needed to find money to pay off my debts. About a year ago I decided to let two of my rooms on AirBnB. The results have been pleasing and surprising, leaving me with a string of memories and friendships.

Guests have come from America, Colombia, China, Kashmir, India, South Africa, Spain, Hungary, Romania, Australia, Ireland, and even the UK. Why would they visit little Meppershall in the English countryside? Actually, it is a convenient location for many reasons: handy for airports, good rail links to London and the north, halfway between Oxford and Cambridge. They come for work, to visit friends and families, or on holiday journeys.

A Swedish couple stayed with their two dogs. I joined the lady for a dog walk around the church, and had to explain how to use the kissing gate. Just explained. Two lovely ladies were attending a weekend course on horse massage at a farm in Shillington. When they asked about transport I could not resist offering to provide it, and in return they took me out to dinner. Win-win!

I have had children and dogs to stay. My sons' old toys, boxed for years, have enjoyed a second spring.

Almost without exception they have been remarkably excellent guests, friendly and interesting. I let them use the kitchen and living room, and several of them have taken over the cooking. A charming Chinese family told me "please leave the kitchen, we are cooking". I backed out, they brought in boxes of food. I laid the table with bowls and chopsticks, and they prepared a wonderful Chinese dinner. They insisted on clearing the kitchen, and next morning made a tasty Chinese breakfast, noodles and dimsums.

Other guests have helped with jobs in the garden and indoors. Ladies in particular have generated helpful suggestions for improvements: "you should fit a shelf here"; "this frying pan needs replacing"; "you should have an information sheet in the rooms, with details of Wi-Fi, local attractions, etc." Computing specialists have provided expertise to solve internet mysteries. One guest, who had grown up in Meppershall and returned after nearly thirty years, provided me with an app which transforms my Alexa into an awesome AI, which can engage in detailed discussions on any subject.

I was discussing cars with another guest, and told him my dream car was a Jaguar XK8. "I am selling mine" he said. My dream has come true.

There have been dramas. Three Americans called at ten at night to say they were in A&E after a car crash. Another kind guest and I raced there to help, they were in pain and shock. Fortunately there were no serious injuries and they were discharged at three AM and we brought them back here to recover. Two different guests were escaping marital problems, so I provided counselling based on my experiences. A young couple had an argument, but I believe they have made up since!

What are the downsides? Hardly any. My washing machine and dishwasher are very busy and my water bill has risen. I do a lot of bed making. But otherwise life continues normally, and with more sociability. And the money rolls in!

## CBC Community Grant Funding Applications Are Open

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) has announced a third round of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF/REPF) community grants – aiming to support local economic and community development. The initiative aims to improve or provide new community spaces and facilities, with grants available up to £25,000, to be spent by the end of the year.

Voluntary, community and social enterprise groups, and town and parish councils in Central Bedfordshire are able to apply for a portion of the £150,000 fund. The deadline for applications is Friday 25 July 2025. This UKSPF scheme supports the council's commitment to invest in the well-being and development of local communities. With a focus on inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability, this scheme provides financial support to projects that address community needs and create lasting impact.

There is a 'match funding' requirement of 20% and things like planning permission etc must have been previously sought. Applications must meet at least one of the following UKSPF intervention objectives:

- Create or enhance community and neighbourhoods, such as buildings, facilities, or green spaces, and increase resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding
- Support local community-based groups and organisations to develop their capacity and infrastructure, such as equipment, sports equipment and engagement, or improvements to facilities
- Establish or improve local green spaces, such as parks, gardens, or woodlands, and promote their environmental, community and social benefits
- Invest in capital assets that support local arts, cultural and creative activities, such as venues, equipment, or materials.

CBC and Community Voluntary Service (CVS) have run 'Meet the Funder' sessions to help groups understand the grant criteria and submit effective applications. Recordings are available – contact [community.grants@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:community.grants@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk). Find out more at:

[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/252/uk\\_shared\\_prosperity\\_fund\\_and\\_rural\\_england\\_prosperity\\_fund/1520/uk\\_shared\\_prosperity\\_fund\\_and\\_rural\\_england\\_prosperity\\_fund\\_community\\_grants\\_scheme](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/252/uk_shared_prosperity_fund_and_rural_england_prosperity_fund/1520/uk_shared_prosperity_fund_and_rural_england_prosperity_fund_community_grants_scheme)

Please use the online copy of this issue of the magazine (available via [www.Meppershall.org](http://www.Meppershall.org)) to click on the link.

Councillor Tracey Wye, Chair of the UKSPF Local Partnership Group, described the success of the scheme in previous years, saying, "We saw some brilliant investment locally with these grants in the first two rounds; from upgrading local children's parks, to improving facilities by renovating them and giving them a new lease of life."

She encouraged those interested to use the 'Meet the Funder' sessions, to check eligibility and get advice on submitting a good application.



## **Receiving A Windfall: Personal Finance By Paul Savuto**

The phrase 'windfall' is used to refer to a sum of money that is received suddenly or unexpectedly. This could take the form of a lottery win, for example, or more commonly an inheritance, lifetime gift, large bonus or redundancy lump sum. The receipt of what can be a life-changing sum of money can be challenging even for those who consider themselves to be relatively financially astute.

From understanding specific tax rules relating to your windfall, to deciding how to best invest the proceeds to meet your financial goals, dealing with a windfall requires careful planning and consideration, which can prove stressful without professional financial advice. You may wish to deposit your windfall into a separate savings account so that it can accrue interest until you decide what to do with it. Depending on your financial goals, you may wish to consider:

- Paying down debt or reducing your mortgage
- Using your tax-free allowances to pay into an ISA and/or pension
- Building up an investment portfolio
- Buying a property or investing in buy-to-let.

Depending on the source of your windfall, there may also be tax to pay on the money you receive.

### **Handling an inheritance**

If a loved one passes away and leaves you an inheritance in their Will, dealing with your windfall at an already emotional time may feel overwhelming. This is where professional financial advice can really help. For example, there may be Inheritance Tax (IHT) payable on the money or assets you receive, depending on the size of your inheritance. IHT is currently payable at 40% on estates over the value of £325,000. The main residence nil rate band is currently £175,000 and applies when a residence is passed on death to a direct descendant, such as a child or grandchild. When added to the existing threshold of £325,000, this could potentially give rise to an overall allowance of £500,000 for those who are single or divorced, or £1m for those who are married or in civil partnerships. Larger estates will find that residence relief is tapered. It will reduce by £1 for every £2 of value for estates valued over £2m.

IHT will usually be paid from the funds of your loved one's estate before you receive it, so there normally won't be any further tax to pay on your windfall once you receive it. Although there are some circumstances where this isn't always the case, so it is best to consult a financial adviser to fully understand the tax due on your inheritance and the best way of funding any potential IHT bill which may arise.

If a loved one gifts assets while they are still alive, there will be no IHT to pay if they live for another seven years after gifting it to you. This is called lifetime gifting and is a common method of passing down assets tax-efficiently. However, it is best to put some money aside for a potential IHT bill in case your loved one were to pass away before the seven-year period has passed. IHT-free gifts can also be made, although these involve smaller sums – limits and conditions apply. It is advisable to place your inheritance money in a separate, easy-access and high-interest savings account while you take financial advice and decide what to do with it. The money will be protected

by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), which protects 'temporary high balances' up to the value of £1m for a period of six months.

### **Top tips for making the most of your windfall**

When you receive some unexpected money, follow our top tips for capitalising on your newfound wealth:

#### **1. DON'T SPEND IT STRAIGHT AWAY**

Separate it from your regular income by placing it in a high-interest savings account. This will give you the time you need to consider your options.

#### **2. TAKE FINANCIAL ADVICE**

Even if you know what you want to do with your windfall, professional financial advice can help you put a plan in place that will minimise tax and ensure your money is working hard for you.

#### **3. UNDERSTAND THE TAX IMPLICATIONS**

We can explain the tax due on your windfall, and any strategies you can use to minimise it.

#### **4. LIST YOUR SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PRIORITIES**

In the short-term, you might be looking to pay off debts or build an emergency fund. A medium-term goal might be helping a child onto the property ladder or overpaying on your mortgage. While long-term goals are likely to relate to building up your pension for a comfortable retirement, for instance, or even buying a second home abroad.

#### **5. TREAT YOURSELF!**

While the majority of your windfall should of course go towards improving your lifestyle and meeting your financial goals, you may want to use some of it for fun. Once your financial plan is complete, you can set some money aside for that very purpose. Financial advice will help ensure you make the most of your windfall and meet your financial objectives.

### **GET IN TOUCH**

DGS IFA Ltd are Independent and Chartered Financial Advisers. I am a Chartered Financial Planner with over 30 years financial services experience, so you are in safe hands. To discuss your financial situation and to discuss your plans and goals, please contact me, Paul Savuto, AFPS, Chartered Financial Planner. DGS Independent Financial Advisers Ltd. 07834 499 595 or email [ps@dgsifa.com](mailto:ps@dgsifa.com), I'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have. FCA 225814. Please note: This blog is for general information only and does not constitute advice. The information is aimed at retail clients only.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **In Memoriam**

We remember Rob O'Reilly who sadly passed while visiting Meppershall in May. Rob lived with his family in Taylor's Close until they moved from the village some 30 years ago. We send deepest condolences to Brian, Gwen and Jenny in this time of loss.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Birthdays

This month we send sincere greetings for a very happy birthday to...

Margaret G - 90 !!

Jean P - 83

Maureen V - 81

Wishing you all a wonderful day and a great year ahead.

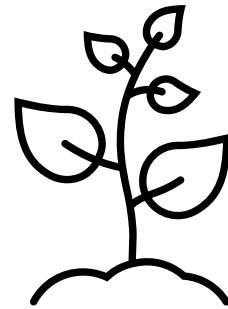
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## Top Tips For Pain Free Gardening

### Shefford Osteopathic Clinic

Activity in the fresh air can make us feel healthy and happy. Gardening offers both physical and mental benefits. But... frequent bending, twisting, lifting, pulling and pushing may result in back pain.

Try our **top ten tips to avoid back pain** whilst enjoying your garden:



1. Warm your muscles and loosen your joints before starting.
2. Gradually build up your gardening time, starting with an hour or two.
3. Take small breaks every 10-20 minutes, stretching hourly.
4. Focus on time and not task.
5. Vary your tasks regularly, reducing the amount of time you spend using the same set of muscles - e.g. follow digging with mowing.
6. Dig in front of you using your foot to push the shovel into the soil. Lean into the spade from above, pushing down rather than out in front of you.
7. When raking, keep your back straight and pull the rake towards your body rather than to the side.
8. Try to swap your hands when using tools – avoiding overusing one side of the body.
9. Use a kneeling pad or cushion, and don't overreach.
10. Lift with your feet at least hip-width apart. Bend your knees, hinge yourself at your hips and keep your back straight.

Do you have niggling pains that limit your gardening?

The Shefford Osteopathic Clinic team can help to alleviate aches and pains... and ensure that you enjoy your garden as much as possible. Visit [SheffordOsteo.com](http://SheffordOsteo.com) or call 01462 811006.



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## NHS Changes to Cervical Screening: Update

*Ivel Valley South PCN*

*Covering Dr Baxter & Partners, Lower Stondon Surgery, Larksfield and Arlesey Medical Partnership*




**Changes to  
cervical screening  
in England for  
those aged 25-49**


Cervical screening is moving from 3 to 5 year intervals for those aged 24-49 who are at low risk of developing cervical cancer. Anyone who has had a recent history of an HPV positive test, or any changes to cells, may also be followed up more often – even if they are negative on their next test.

This decision is based on strong clinical evidence and recommended by the UK National Screening Committee, bringing England into line with Scotland, Wales and other countries across Europe.

If you've already been given a date for your next test, attend your appointment – the changes only apply to screening done or after July 1st 2025.

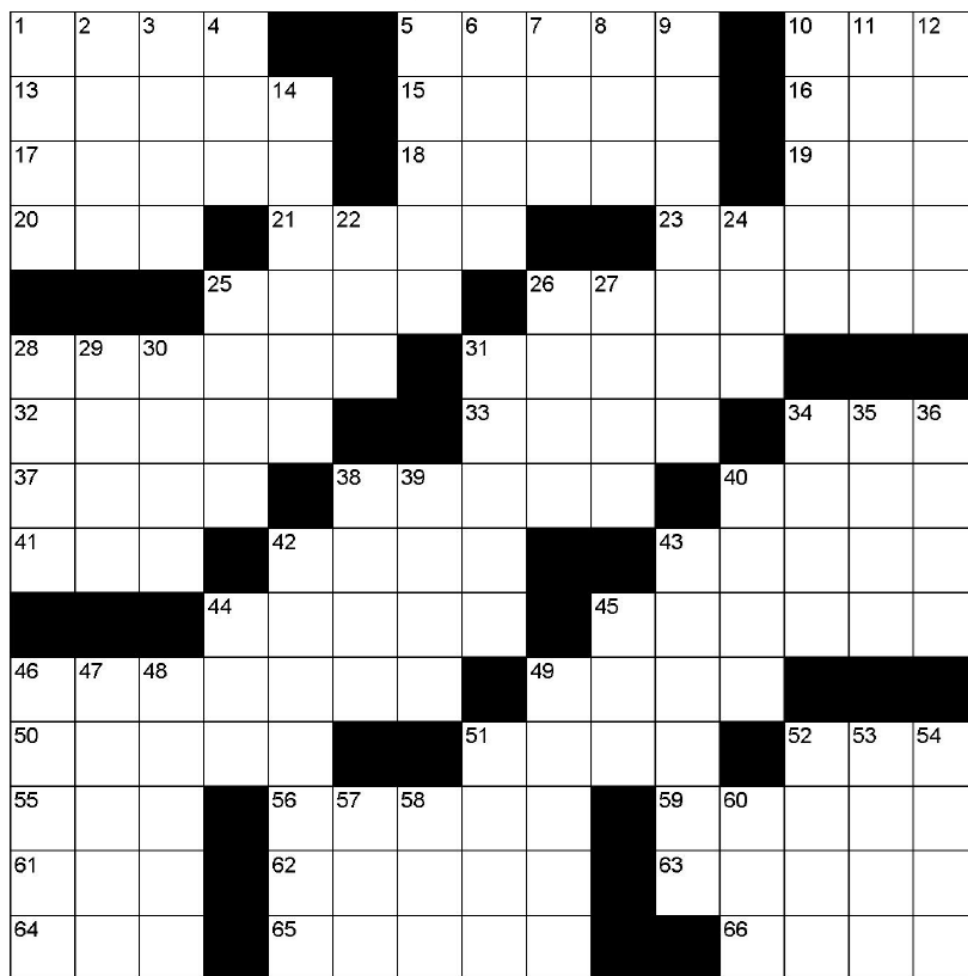


**Cervical screening  
is moving from 3 to 5  
year intervals for those  
who are at low risk.  
This decision is based on  
strong clinical evidence  
and recommended by the  
UK National Screening  
Committee.**



**If you've already been  
given a date for your  
next test, then that  
won't change either.  
These changes only  
apply to screening done  
on or after 1 July.**

## July Crossword



### Across

- 1** Raps lightly  
**5** Clean thoroughly  
**10** Compass point  
**13** Junk  
**15** "Remember the \_\_\_"  
**16** Standard or average  
**17** Stadium  
**18** Grassy plain  
**19** Possessive pronoun  
**20** Representative  
**21** Destroy  
**23** Cake  
**25** Ground  
**26** Teased playfully  
**28** Part of "Colorado"  
**31** Flying machine  
**32** Entertain  
**33** Called  
**34** Before (prefix)  
**37** Financial obligation  
**38** Neutral color
- 40** Churn  
**41** Whichever  
**42** Group of people with musical instruments playing together  
**43** Slips  
**44** Legion  
**45** Chicken sound  
**46** Missions  
**49** Be angry  
**50** Book holder  
**51** Asian dress  
**52** IBM Competitor  
**55** Cap  
**56** Raging  
**59** Blood sucker  
**61** Vane direction  
**62** Crow-like bird  
**63** Rumormonger  
**64** Conger  
**65** Water retention  
**66** Blow

### Down

- 1** Despot  
**2** Land unit  
**3** Secondary  
**4** \_\_\_ Francisco  
**5** Agreeable to the mind  
**6** Tribe  
**7** Cram  
**8** Referee  
**9** Using a boat for pleasure  
**10** Frolic  
**11** Fry lightly  
**12** Goofed  
**14** Public procession of people  
**22** Spanish "one"  
**24** Lode yield  
**25** Final  
**26** Piece of cloth used as the symbol of a country  
**27** Path  
**28** Pater  
**29** Sign
- 30** July birthstone  
**31** Inherent feeling of dignity  
**35** Brook  
**36** Otherwise  
**38** Shakespeare's occupation  
**39** Tails  
**40** Competition of speed  
**42** Large outdoor fire  
**43** Group consisting of parents and their children  
**44** Movie 2001's talking computer  
**45** Mongrel dog  
**46** Sugar-free brand  
**47** River  
**48** Disgust  
**49** Passes at the bull  
**51** Plant trunk  
**52** List of meals  
**53** Deeds  
**54** Make small talk  
**57** Radiation dose  
**58** Street abbr.  
**60** Electroencephalograph (abbr.)



## Supporting Age Without Limits Day

### *Celebrating the contributions of older people*



Central Bedfordshire Council was proud to support Age Without Limits Day on Tuesday, 11 June 2025, a national awareness day dedicated to challenge the clichéd headlines, language, and imagery and the often-harmful ways older people are portrayed and discussed.

The day served as a powerful reminder of the value of diversity and dignity of older individuals across our communities — and the need to replace outdated stereotypes with more inclusive and respectful images and narratives. Age discrimination is still one of the most widely accepted forms of

prejudice, and it's often hidden in plain sight in the words we choose, the pictures we publish and the assumptions we make.

The campaign aims to challenge clichéd headlines, language, and imagery. Older people are frequently depicted as frail, out of touch, or dependent - representations that fail to reflect the vibrant, active, and multifaceted lives many older adults lead.

As part of the council's commitment to inclusion and equality, they are encouraging companies, media outlets, and individuals alike to reflect on the language and images they use, and to promote fairness and dignity at every age.

Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Cllr. Mark Smith said: "Older people make a huge contribution to our community – as workers, volunteers, carers, and active citizens. Age Positive Day is a chance for all of us to stop, listen, and do better. Older people are an essential part of our communities, not a burden or a stereotype, but leaders, workers, carers, volunteers, and friends. It's time our language and images caught up with that reality. Age Without Limits Day is a fantastic opportunity to recognise that value and challenge the stereotypes that hold people back. As a council, we are proud to support this campaign and stand against ageism in all its forms."

For more information about Age Positive Day and how you can get involved, visit [www.agewithoutlimits.org/day](http://www.agewithoutlimits.org/day). For more information contact [geraldine.mcilwaine@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:geraldine.mcilwaine@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk).

The national campaign day is part of the wider Age Without Limits campaign, which aims to change the way people think about aging and to tackle age discrimination across society. From volunteering and caregiving to business leadership and mentorship, older people continue to play a vital role in the social and economic life of the UK. [www.agewithoutlimits.org](http://www.agewithoutlimits.org).



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# MEPPERSHALL - WANDERBUS

Bookings & Info : Tel :0300-123-3023 [www.wanderbus.org.uk](http://www.wanderbus.org.uk)



RR = Return  
on request

## TIMETABLE - VALID FROM 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Time/Days have changed – please check & new W16 Stevenage

As from 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024		“Stops at all Bus Stops on Request”	
<b>W2 BEDFORD</b>	<b>- 2nd Wednesday of Month</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Shefford Rd, / High St., / Rectory Rd. - all stops		09.00 / 09.02	RR
<b>Interchange Retail Park</b>		<b>09.40</b>	<b>12.15</b>
<b>St Pauls Square / Corn Exchange</b>		<b>09.55</b>	<b>12.00</b>
<b>W3 BIGGLESWADE</b>	<b>- Every Monday</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Rectory Rd / High Street, / Shefford Rd., - all Stops		09.36 / 09.40	RR
<b>Biggleswade – A1 Retail Park</b>		<b>10.10</b>	<b>12.15</b>
<b>Station / Town Centre - pick up Church St. Bus Stop o/s Asda</b>		<b>10.15</b>	<b>12.10</b>
<b>W5 BIGGLESWADE - A1 Retail Park/Town Centre</b>	<b>- Every Friday</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Rectory Rd / High St. / Shefford Rd – all stops		10.00 / 10.03	RR
<b>Biggleswade A1 Retail Park / Station &amp; Town Centre</b>		<b>10.25 / 10.30</b>	
<b>Church St bus stop o/s Asda / A1 Retail Park</b>			<b>12.10 / 12.15</b>
<b>W6A CAMBRIDGE</b>	<b>- 4<sup>TH</sup> Wednesday of Month</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Shefford Rd. / High St. / Rectory Rd. - all stops		08.48 / 08.52	RR
<b>Cambridge, Downing St. – o/s John Lewis</b>		<b>10.15</b>	<b>14.10</b>
<b>W8A ST ALBANS</b>	<b>- 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of Month</b>		
Shefford Rd. / High St. / Rectory Rd. – all stops		08.48 / 08.52	RR
<b>St Peters St. o/s Santander Bank / pickup opp Bank Stop 13</b>		<b>10.15</b>	<b>14.00</b>
<b>W10 ST NEOTS</b>	<b>- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of Month</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Rectory Rd. / High Street, / Shefford Rd. All stops		09.18 / 09.20	RR
<b>St Neots - Market Place</b>		<b>10.15</b>	<b>12.20</b>
<b>W11 MILTON KEYNES</b>	<b>- 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of Month</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Rectory Rd. / High St., / Shefford Rd. - all stops		09.08 / 09.10	RR
<b>MK - Midsummer Blvd / M&amp;S (Stop J3) / o/s John Lewis Stop E3</b>		<b>10.10</b>	<b>13.15</b>
<b>W12 HITCHIN</b>	<b>- Every Tuesday</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Shefford Rd. / High Street / Rectory Rd - All stops		09.18 / 09.20	RR
<b>Bancroft Stop D</b>		<b>10.05</b>	
<b>Bancroft Stop G (Outside Oliver Bonas)</b>			<b>12.10</b>
<b>W14 WELWYN GARDEN CITY</b>	<b>- 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of Month</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>RETURN</b>
Rectory Rd. / High Street, All stops		09.14	RR
Shefford Road, All stops		09.16	RR
<b>WGC Central Bus Station</b>		<b>10.00</b>	<b>12.15</b>
<b>W16 STEVENAGE</b>	<b>- 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each Month</b>		
Rectory Rd. / High St. / Shefford Rd. – all Stops		09.34 / 09.37	RR
<b>Tesco Extra, The Forum Centre (opp Station)</b>		<b>10.05</b>	<b>12.10</b>
<b>M&amp;S, Roaring Meg Retail Park</b>		<b>10.10</b>	<b>12.05</b>

**EXCURSIONS – 4<sup>TH</sup> Thursday of Month – call For Details – 0300-123-3023**

**E: [Thewanderbus@gmail.com](mailto:Thewanderbus@gmail.com) Web: [www.wandrbus.org.uk](http://www.wandrbus.org.uk)**

**Buses available for PRIVATE HIRE – Call for Quote.**



# WANDERBUS

## 2025 Excursions

### 4th THURSDAY OF MONTH!

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Full payment is required 10 days before departure. A cheque to Wanderbus, 5 The Pastures, Upper Stondon, Beds SG16 6QB or a bank transfer to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code 40-52-40, Acc No. 00013118 Name: Wanderbus Ltd (Use your name in Reference). Cancellations must be made within 7 days or refunds will be discretionary.

	PROGRAMME OF VISITS ( <i>prices correct at print time</i> )	BUS FARE
<b>24<sup>TH</sup> JULY</b>	<b>Old Warden - Shuttleworth and Swiss Gardens £16.00</b>	<b>Fare £6.50   Pickups 10.15/10.30 a.11.15 d.16.00</b>
<i>Explore the world's oldest flying aeroplane and other vintage aircraft, cars, buses and motorbikes at Shuttleworth. Walk through ornate ironwork gates into the Swiss Gardens, a delightful Regency and Victorian layered garden and discover a green and pleasant idyll.</i>		
<b>28<sup>TH</sup> AUG</b>	<b>Althorp House, Northants. £23.00 House &amp; Gardens</b>	<b>Fare £15.00   Pickups 10.00/10.15 a.11.15 d.15.30</b>
<i>Althorp has been home to the Spencer family for more than 500 years, and contains a fascinating variety of pictures, furniture, ceramics and fine interiors. Located in beautiful surroundings, it houses an exhibition commemorating the Life of Diana, Princess of Wales.</i>		
<b>25<sup>TH</sup> SEPT</b>	<b>Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable  Concession £26.50.</b>	<b>Fare £10.00   Pickups 09.45/10.15 a.11.00 d.16.30</b>
<i>Explore the world of wildlife like never before at Whipsnade Zoo, the largest in the UK. Experience thousands of amazing animals and learn how, as a ZSL conservation zoo, we are protecting their future.</i>		
<b>23rd OCT</b>	<b>Milton Keynes Museum.  Entry £17.50</b>	<b>Fare £10.00   Pickups 11.00/11.15 a.12.15 d.15.30</b>
<i>The Museum is made up of a number of buildings and barns. Explore 'old' Milton Keynes with Victorian farmhouse, Street of Shops, Telephone Gallery, Hall of Transport, Print Room and a café! A surprising and highly interesting museum.</i>		
<b>Nov</b>	<b>To be confirmed</b>	





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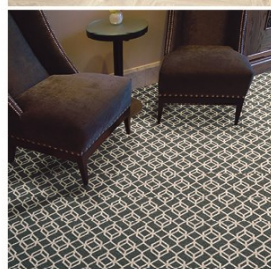
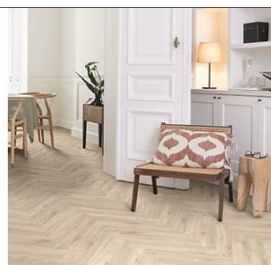
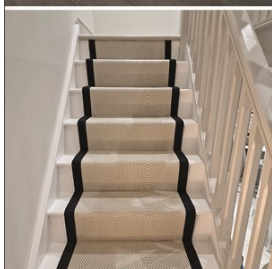


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\* Subject to availability.



## Useful Contact Details In Meppershall

**DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School, Village Hall and Budgens**

**DOCTORS, DENTISTS, PHARMACIES**

**NHS Direct                      111**

Dr Baxter & Partners

Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive, Shefford SG17 5FS

Appointments 01462 810034

General queries, prescriptions etc. 01462 818620

Lower Stondon GP Practice

109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ 01462 850305

Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford 01462 814020

Shefford Dental Clinic, 99 Hitchin Rd Shefford 01462 648465

Jardines Chemist, 7 High St Shefford 01462 813283

Shefford Pharmacy, Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive 01462 818633

### Police:

**Emergency 999, non-emergency 101**

### Hospitals

Bedford Hospital 01234 355122

Lister Hospital, Stevenage 01438 314333

Luton and Dunstable Hospital 01582 491166

### Utilities

Gas Emergency 0800 111999

Anglian Water 03457 145145

Electrical (power cuts, overhead cable down etc) 0800 3163105

(Or 105 from a landline)

### Central Beds Council

0300 300 8301

CBC Councillor for Gravenhurst, Meppershall, Shillington:

Blake Stephenson [blake.stephenson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:blake.stephenson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

[hello@blakestephenson.uk](mailto:hello@blakestephenson.uk)

0300 300 8526

### Parish Council Clerk

Alessandre Marabese [clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk)

### Member of Parliament:

Alistair Strathern MP

C/O House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

020 7219 6004

[alistair.strathern.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alistair.strathern.mp@parliament.uk)



**St Marys Church**

Rev. Veronica Goodman, The Rectory, Church Road 01462 339962

See full details in the church pages of The Meppershall Messenger

**Library:** High St Shefford

0300 300 8067

Tuesday – Friday 9am – 6pm, Saturday 9am – 4pm, closed Monday & Sunday

**Whitbread Wanderbus service**

Stephanie Kirby

[thewanderbus@gmail.com](mailto:thewanderbus@gmail.com)

**Food and Supplies**

Budgens Stores, Post Office, High Street

Rogers Bakery, High Street

01462 813398

The Sugar Loaf, 25 High St

01462 239231

**Schools**

Samuel Whitbread Academy, Clifton

01462 629900

Redborne Upper School, Ampthill

01525 404462

Henlow Academy

01462 813733

Robert Bloomfield, Shefford

01462 628800

Meppershall Academy, High Street

01462 813293

Meppershall Pre-School Village Hall, Ella Carey-Butler

07816 357159

[meppershallps@gmail.com](mailto:meppershallps@gmail.com)

Meppershall Munchkins, Melanie Choonos

[meppershallmunchkins@gmail.com](mailto:meppershallmunchkins@gmail.com)

**Organisations**

The Players @ STMA, Karen Mitchell

01462 816336

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

HATS Drama Group, Linda Winfield

[lin.winfield5@gmail.com](mailto:lin.winfield5@gmail.com)

Meppershall Village Hall Trustees

[trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk)

Meppershall Village Hall Bookings

[bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk)

Bookings Tel.

07485 102727

## 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 submitted. Contributions should run to not more than one A5 page (except by prior arrangement) and should ideally be received by the Editor not later than the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month, for publication at the end of that month (or by the later deadline date publicised by email or Facebook). 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.

### THE TEAM

Editor	James Read	Email: <a href="mailto:mepp.messenger@gmail.com">mepp.messenger@gmail.com</a>
Co-Editor	<b>Vacancy</b>	
Assistant Editor	Patrick O'Connor	
Advertising & Distribution	Andrew Pain	<a href="mailto:andrewgpain@hotmail.com">andrewgpain@hotmail.com</a> 07875 580069
Treasurer	John Thompson	<a href="mailto:meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org">meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org</a>

### PRODUCTION DATES AND DEADLINES

*The table below shows the dates for collation of the magazine. The collation team generally meets at 2.30pm in the Village Hall on the collation date. Printing takes place 7 days prior to collation. The deadline for submissions is two Fridays prior to collation. Please look out for updates and alterations to usual plans when occasionally necessary. Can you spare some time to help produce the magazine? We would love to have you on the team! Use the contacts above to find out more.*

Issue date	Collation date	Issue date	Collation date
Aug-Sept 2025	Tues 29 <sup>th</sup> July	April 2026	TBC
October 2025	Tues 30 <sup>th</sup> September	May 2026	TBC
November 2025	Tues 28 <sup>th</sup> October	June 2026	TBC
Dec-Jan 2025-6	Tues 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	July 2026	TBC
February 2026	TBC	Aug-Sept 2026	TBC
March 2026	TBC	October 2026	TBC
<b>Contact John Thompson to confirm arrangements (contact information above).</b>			