



"The Gardens at Polehanger", picture by kind permission, Andrew Foster ©

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Editorial by James Read



It is a real privilege to edit this magazine, looking at all the news from across the village. There is so much in this issue (first in a new volume), lots to read through Easter (with a busy time at church!) and beyond. Spring is arriving around the village.

With everyone, we share deepest condolences and sympathies with the family and friends of James whose funeral took place in March at St Mary's. His family have kindly included a beautiful tribute to him here, as well as details of the inspiring fundraising effort that they are driving on the back of the terrible events that have befallen them. There are others in the village who know the indescribable grief at losing a young family member with everything ahead of them. I know so many in Meppershall are thinking of them and reaching out in their hearts at such a very sad time. Their tribute, to a wonderful young man, truly speaks for itself.

I recently made a family visit to Woodstock, next door to Blenheim Palace – a beautiful place, gateway to the Cotswolds, with the magnificent landscaped park of the palace along its edges. I was reminded how Meppershall (which is beautiful itself!) is not so far from these other wonderful parts of the country.

Driving there past Bicester, I was struck by the major development taking place just outside, on the A4421 Buckingham Road. New housing, works on the East-West Rail (EWR) route and a major new research facility for Mercedes Benz (YASA) are all changing open countryside into an industrial and suburban area. YASA (Yokeless and Segmented Armature) is an important part of the UK's future climate change readiness – currently focused on high performance vehicles but heralding a new era in improved electric motors generally. Bicester, already a big place, is being developed at pace.

On the other side, the journey to Woodstock quickly returns to rural lanes, hamlets and villages. That's the same kind of environment as Meppershall – the environment people have carefully chosen to come and live in. As we await planning strategies and decisions for our area, I know we all trust that those in authority (and developers) understand. We are a Woodstock, not a Bicester.

That said, enterprise is just as important here – and it is just fabulous to see the return of Lucy Standbridge (once a young contributor to this magazine) giving us an update on her business career and her web media start-up. Lucy has also given us some excellent tips on QR codes in a short article. Often a convenient way to access online information, they also come with some cautions that Lucy explains more about.

Lucy is part of the long history of The Meppershall Messenger, and our Annual General Meeting (Saturday 9th May) is an invitation to everyone in the village to be part of that ongoing story. As you can read, your village magazine is set to become a registered charity, bringing various benefits and opening an opportunity for people willing to serve as a trustee. The AGM is also a wonderful yearly opportunity to look at how the magazine is doing, what we could add or change, bringing new ideas from across the community. Please will you consider coming along and sharing your thoughts?

Whether it is finance, cakes, golf, choir, good neighbours, cakes, church, hiking, gardening, health, cakes or volunteering, it's all here in your April Meppershall Messenger. Enjoy. (Oh, and did I mention the cakes? Saturday 18th April).

Letters

Dear Editor,

Meppershall Village Hall would like to thank and recommend Daniel from Tap That tanker services for his assistance and quick response to our plea following the recent situation regarding the sewer blockage at the Hall site.

Whilst it took us a few weeks to ascertain ownership and permission to operate on the land, owned by private householders, under which the village hall sewer pipes run, Dan’s reaction was incredible and he managed to get the village hall sewers clear within hours of us contacting him, not once but twice for different reasons.

Dan lives in Meppershall and has, at his disposal, tankers, unblocking jets and cameras for diagnosis. Meppershall Village Hall Management Committee can’t thank him highly enough, we were hours away from closing the entire building ceasing all functions within the village hall.

Dan can be contacted on the following number for all your sewer and drainage needs: “Tap That tanker services and drainage solutions”. Tel 07736273269.

Kevin Larsen

Chair, on behalf of Meppershall Village Hall

Dear Editor

Shuttleworth Playground

May I update readers on the Shuttleworth playground story that I described in the March issue?

Shuttleworth have written to our MP Alistair Strathern, in response to his requests for information, to describe their plans. They have removed the items they considered unsafe, leaving six. Work will be done to make good the areas with a small football pitch and a picnic area, with reopening planned for Spring 2027.

This is a remarkable turnaround from the initial statement that the playground was “permanently closed” and the refusal to provide any responses to my earlier requests and suggestions.

I am still waiting for the Parliamentary Ombudsman to deal with my complaint about the Charity Commission’s inaction. I have been promised a meeting with them this week and will keep readers informed.

Patrick O’Connor

Dear Editor,

I always look forward to the Messenger covers, but the March issue was particularly poignant.

The image of the field—which no longer looks the way we have been accustomed to seeing it for years—was beautiful.

I really appreciated seeing it brought front and centre; it is a vital reminder of how important it is to record our changing village spaces.

Best regards,

Carolyn Holmes

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the committee and all involved in the production of the Meppershall Messenger, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your sterling efforts getting the last issue of Volume 41 Issue 10, March 2026, edited and ready for production, despite the sad news of your dad's passing only hours before we went to print. Sincere thanks for all you do for our village magazine and for ensuring we had a magazine to print last month. Your efforts were greatly appreciated – Thank you.

John Thompson, Treasurer, for and on behalf of the Meppershall Messenger (Magazine Committee) and the Production and Distribution Teams

Betty Mather

With great sadness, we share the news that Elizabeth "Betty" Mather recently died. She lived in Meppershall for many years on Fildyke Road and was an important figure in Meppershall Women's Institute, serving as Press Secretary under Barbara Horwood's presidency of that important and much missed village organisation.

The Meppershall Messenger shared 90th birthday greetings with Betty in 2018.

Betty will be buried next to her sister Madge in the churchyard of our Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Meppershall.

From The Lucy Pages To Iris Web Media

Many of you might remember me as the 7-year-old behind "The Lucy Pages" in the Messenger. I've lived in Meppershall since I was 2, and while I was always called a bit bossy growing up, I've now channelled that into being my own boss!

I knew from a young age that I wanted to work with computers.

I followed that path through an apprenticeship and working

within an agency, but I eventually decided now's the time to build something of my own. That's how **Iris Web Media** started.

I offer website design and online marketing, but I don't just hand over a site and disappear. I love getting stuck into the whole strategy: social media, ad campaigns, SEO, and PR. I also collaborate with other local freelancers, so I can be a single point of contact for businesses that need a full marketing suite without the big agency fuss. Being a young entrepreneur definitely has its hurdles. I've always found maths a bit of a struggle, and trying to understand taxes is a whole other world!

Meppershall has been instrumental to this venture. Local support and

word-of-mouth are everything, and I'm already lucky enough to work with local companies like *Hing Opticians & Hearing Care* and *Mount Pleasant View*. Having a support network of friends and family is vital, too - not just for recommendations, but for telling me when it's time to switch off and stop working my life away. My vision is to grow Iris into a recognised brand and a leading specialist in the area.

If you're thinking of starting your own business, my advice is to just go for it. There's never a "good time," so use your network and just start talking to people.

If you want to learn more about the work I do, head over to iriswebmedia.co.uk, find me on social media, or just catch me in the village for a chat!

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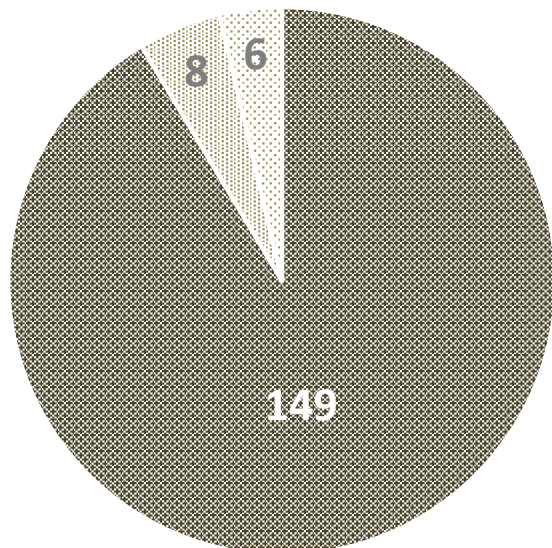
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Survey Results - Meppershall Conservation Area

In February your views were sought on whether you would support an extension to the Meppershall Conservation Area and, if you do support the extension, what area should be covered. You responded as follows:

Support Extension of Meppershall Conservation Area?

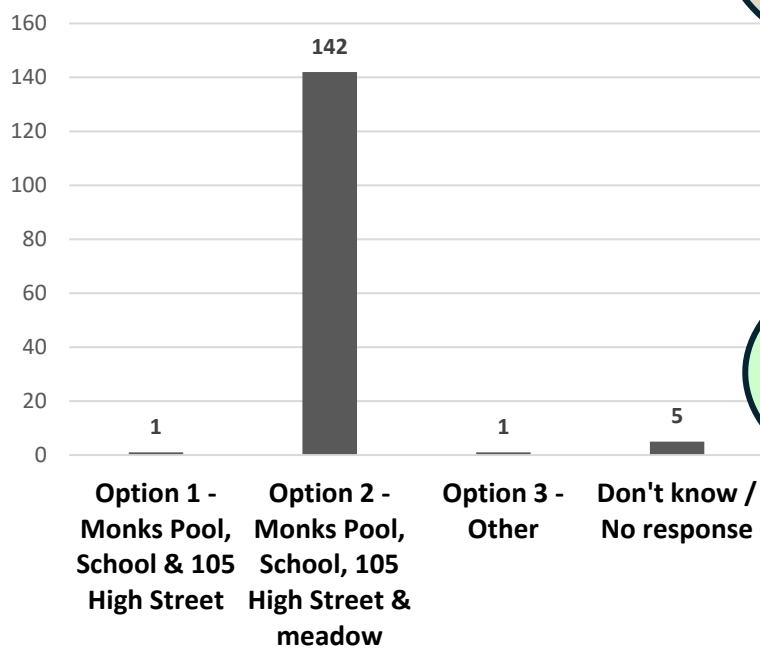


Yes No Don't know / No response

You also said

- The Cunegar holds a wealth of wildlife.
- As much as possible needs conserving.
- More conservation areas.
- Very important that area is extended.

If supporting, what area should the extension cover?



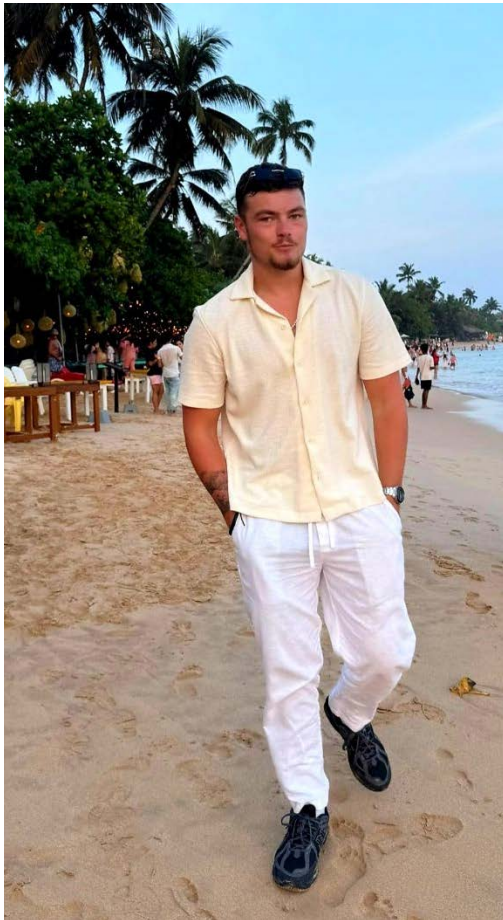
- Provide this landscape for future generations.
- Preserve wildlife and rural location around the village.
- Maintain the integrity of this rural historical village.
- Coneygate meadow is an elevated prominent feature to be protected.

What now? The results will be included in the Meppershall Neighbourhood Plan as evidence to support the proposal for the extension.

In James' Name...For The Chance He Never Had



James' Story



James Mann was just 21 years old.

He was an extraordinarily loving young guy - a phenomenal rugby player and golfer, an all-round sports nut, a personal trainer and a police officer. He was an adored little brother, a treasured son, a cherished nephew, an incredibly loyal best friend.

He was our everything.

In mid-November 2025, our world was shattered when James was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive, incurable brain tumour. There was no warning, no time to prepare, no gentle easing into the reality of what was coming. From that moment on, everything moved terrifyingly fast.

Over the next 12 weeks, James endured five brain surgeries. He faced each one with courage, utter determination and the quiet fortitude that absolutely defined him. But the truth we were forced to confront is that bravery alone is not enough when there are no effective options left to offer.

On 30th January 2026, James passed away...just 12 short weeks after being diagnosed.

We are still numb with the shock of losing him.

He didn't stand a chance. And that is the part that hurts the most – ***because he should have.***

There should have been something available to give James hope. A treatment. A clinical trial. A breakthrough. Something. But there wasn't. Not for his type of tumour. Not in time. Not at all.

In the UK, brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of children and young adults and survival rates remain devastatingly low. It's because research into brain tumours has been chronically underfunded for decades, with just 1% of national funding given to them.

It is unacceptable and it must change.

James should still be alive.

We are raising money in James' name for The Brain Tumour Charity, to fund vital research and clinical trials into aggressive brain tumours - so that one



day, families facing this nightmare are given real options, real hope and real chances. We want to help turn terminal into treatable.

Every donation, no matter how small, is a step towards a future where another young life is not brutally cut short and another family is not robbed of their beloved child & sibling.

Please help us, in James' name, and give as much or as little as you can afford. Help us prevent James' story becoming someone else's too.

You can donate online at: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/james-mann>

If love alone could have saved James, he would have lived forever.

We want to say a heartfelt thankyou to everyone who joined us to say a painful and emotional goodbye to our beautiful James on Wednesday 4th March at St Mary's Church, here in Meppershall...our village, which James loved so much. To see so very many of his friends, old teammates, teachers, colleagues, parents of his friends, packed into the church to honour James and support us, was just wonderful and helps us with our immense pain as we try and somehow now navigate our life without him, our cheeky, hilarious, vibrant, head mischief maker, heartbeat of our family.

We will devote the rest of our lives continuing to keep James' name & memory alive with events to celebrate everything about who James was to us, and to so very many other people , who also loved him dearly.



We will never ever forget a single thing about you James & we will always strive to make you proud & to continue with all the things you loved so much in life.

Until we meet you again, our incredible, beautiful James.

With love from,
James' Family x



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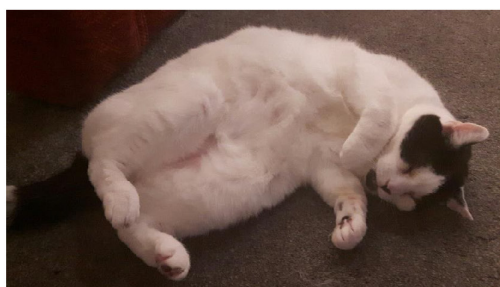


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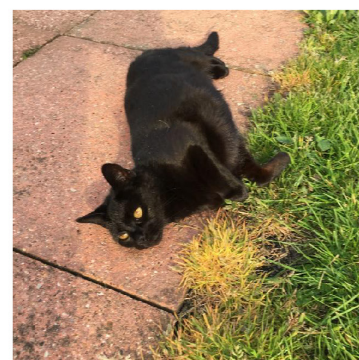


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An Important AGM For Your Village Magazine

The Committee of The Meppershall Messenger recently decided to transition the running of the magazine into a registered charity. So, our upcoming AGM, to be held at **10.30AM on Saturday 9 May 2026** at Meppershall Village Hall, will be an important milestone in the history of the magazine. We welcome everyone to this meeting, as always we would love to have a strong turn out. You can play your part in the charity.

Becoming a charity

Becoming a charity registered with The Charities Commission has significant financial benefits, for instance in terms of fundraising and VAT, and it reinforces the good governance of the magazine which is already our firm foundation.

An opportunity to be a trustee of the new charity

As a registered charity, The Meppershall Messenger will be supported by trustees, giving formal oversight, management and accountability to the newly formed charity.

This is an important new role in the life of the village and we would be pleased to consider anyone who wishes to volunteer as a trustee. Trustees will be formally agreed and endorsed at the AGM. Therefore, if you think this might be something you want to do, please contact us by 30 April. To learn more about being a trustee, have a look at the info and guidance issued by The Charities Commission online.

Our new charity will have a “governing document” that is essentially the existing constitution of the magazine and we will share that document with anyone interested once it is available. For more information, please contact John Thompson using the contact info on the final content page of this issue.

Come to the AGM

There’s lots more to talk about at the AGM. Bring your ideas, feedback and comments on the magazine as a whole. If there is something you would like to see on the agenda, just drop us a line (again, use the contact info on the final page). The magazine serves the community in Meppershall, and we need you – the community – to come and chat with us, to keep us on track and aligned to your needs and priorities for the magazine. That means you! We would love to see you at the meeting on 9 May.

James Read, Editor, The Meppershall Messenger, with the Committee

Parish Council Precept

In addition to Beds Police, Beds Fire Services and Central Bedfordshire Council, the Parish Council receives a portion of the council tax paid by all the dwellings within the parish area. This funding is called the parish precept, and it is the only tax directly controlled by and solely dedicated to your village and the services delivered via your parish council.

At the Parish Council meeting on 27th January, Meppershall Parish Council agreed to request a precept of £110,954 for the financial year 2026-2027.

Using a Meppershall Band D Council Tax dwelling as an example this means that:

- Annual council tax charge payable to CBC over 10 months will be £2,451.45

- £99.60 of the annual council tax charge will be given to the Parish Council.

When households receive their council tax bills this year you will see that the percentage increase in the parish precept is 20% which may seem high but actually this is an increase of £16.60 over the whole year (or £1.66 per month) for a Band D Council Tax dwelling. For comparison:

- Average Band D in Central Bedfordshire in 2025/2026 was £157.59
- Average Band D in England (2025/26) was £91.22 (Meppershall was £83.00)
- Average Band D in Gravenhurst for 2026/2027 will be £139.75
- Average Band D in Stondon for 2026/2027 will be £104.66

What will the Parish Council spend the precept on?

- Grants to local organisations e.g.: the Messenger, Munchkins, Gnomes etc.
- Grass cutting and tree / hedge maintenance across the whole village.
- Play, pitch and gym area maintenance and renewal.
- Allotment provision.
- Utilities (water and electricity).
- Organising events (Christmas Tree, Village Fayre 2027... and more!)
- New assets - benches at Old Road Meadow, footpaths information board, village sign, allotment toilet and shed, defibrillator for Woodlands Rest, 2 x vehicle activated signs, Crackle Hill lighting and much more.
- General running costs include things like staff salaries, insurance, maintenance of village defibrillator, legal fees, subscriptions, printing, postage etc

Councillors look carefully at balancing proposed project spending against keeping increases to a minimum. We retain reserves to build up funds year on year for high cost projects and certain unforeseen expenses. We continue to make use of grant applications and funds secured from developers to support our expenditure. A copy of the approved budget summary is available on our website for anyone interested.

Alessandra Marabese – Clerk to Meppershall Parish Council

Personal Finance by Paul Savuto

Have you got your mortgage covered?

Taking out life insurance may not be a legal requirement if you have a mortgage, but it certainly is sensible to have.

The benefits When applying for a mortgage, proof of cover could make you a stronger candidate in the eyes of a lender because they know that, in the event of your death, other members of your household would be protected. Therefore, not only does life insurance provide financial security in a hypothetical future, but it may also offer you some peace of mind knowing that your loved ones would be able to stay living in their home without debts to pay off.

Who needs it? Regardless of your circumstances, life insurance is advisable for all mortgage holders – whether you're a first-time buyer or moving up the property ladder and taking on a larger mortgage. Even those who are currently single with no

dependants should consider it, as circumstances could change in future (e.g. by getting married or becoming a carer for a family member).

Types of life insurance

There are two main options to consider – decreasing term or level term life insurance. Decreasing term is often used by those with a repayment mortgage, as the potential payouts decrease over time to reflect the amount left to pay on the mortgage. With level term insurance, you decide how much cover you want, and your loved ones will get the full payout if your death occurs within the term. Unlike decreasing term, level term life insurance can cover the costs of more than just a mortgage. We can advise on the most suitable protection for your unique requirements.

Crafting your retirement strategy

Have you developed a retirement strategy yet? Whether you're nearing retirement, or you still have many years of your working life ahead, careful planning is essential to secure financial stability and peace of mind when you stop working.

Active planning is important according to a recent report, individuals on average begin actively planning for retirement around the age of 36. At this age, 63% of respondents expressed confidence in their financial decision-making abilities, a notable increase compared to younger demographics where only 56% share the same level of confidence. With more than a decade of work experience under their belt by age 36, the 'age of responsibility' arrives for many people, with increasing awareness of the importance of financial planning, including actively thinking about their retirement. Whatever your age, a well-thought-out retirement strategy is a must!

Decades to go?

Younger individuals can afford to adopt a more aggressive investment approach with their pension pot, embracing riskier assets for potentially higher returns over time, if they are comfortable doing so. Although this strategy does involve exposure to short-term market fluctuations, the longer investment horizon allows ample time for recovery from any downturns (during which monthly pension contributions may be invested at the cheaper asset prices).

If you're closer to retirement

For those on the cusp of retirement in the next few years, a prudent approach involves creating a smooth, non-volatile investment profile which minimises risk for the first five to ten years of retirement, with the remainder invested in more volatile funds which have the potential to grow over the longer term. This approach should help to shield your pension pot from the unpredictable nature of market volatility, as witnessed during events like the pandemic or financial crashes. By maintaining a stable portfolio for the initial years of retirement, you minimise the risk, thus safeguarding your financial wellbeing.

How about the 'inbetweeners'?

For those falling between these two extremes, a balanced and risk-managed approach is advisable. The strategy here is to aim for a balanced mix of stable and more volatile investments, aligned to your risk tolerance and personal financial goals. Diversifying your portfolio across various asset classes helps mitigate risk while providing the

potential for growth. Regular portfolio rebalancing is vital for a sound retirement strategy. Market fluctuations and varying asset performances can cause your portfolio to deviate from its original allocation over time. Without intervention, this drift could lead to unintended asset concentration and increased risk exposure.

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, 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, 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.

The Square Truth: How Safe Are QR Codes?

Hello - I'm Lucy. If you've had a chance to read the editorial piece a few pages back, you'll see my story, but I'm back in the Meppershall Messenger to share some simple, practical advice for navigating the online world.

To kick things off, let's talk about those little black-and-white pixelated squares that seem to be everywhere lately: **QR Codes**.

Although they've been around since the late 90s, the pandemic saw them soar in everyday life. Now, you can hardly go to a restaurant without needing to scan for a menu! They're on bus seats, posters, and even in adverts (my own included!). But as they become more common, so do the risks.

The Good: Convenience at your fingertips

The "QR" in QR code stands for "Quick Response". Their purpose is simple: to save you from typing in a long, complicated web address into your phone. When they're used correctly - like on a menu at a trusted local pub, or a flyer from a known organisation, they are brilliant tools. They can take you straight to a booking form, payment page, or website with more information.

The Bad: The "Lamp Post" Trap

The problem is that anyone can create a QR code in about 30 seconds. Have you ever seen a random QR sticker on a lamp post or bus stop promising 'cheap train tickets' or 'win a prize'?

These stickers can be placed by anyone. A common trick is for scammers to stick a fake QR code directly *over* a legitimate one - for example, on a public parking ticket machine. You think you're paying for your parking, but you may end up sending your personal details straight to a fraudster.

The Ugly: How These Scams Work

QR Code scams are called Quishing (QR Phishing). A malicious code might trigger your phone to download a file, send an email, or reveal your location. Because we can't "read" the code with our human eyes, we have to trust that the destination is safe.

How to Stay Safe: The Test Run

The best way to stay safe is use your eyes before you use your camera. Here are three simple rules:

1. **Check for Tampering:** If a QR code looks like a sticker with the backing peeled behind, or stuck over the top of a permanent sign, leave it alone.
2. **Preview the Link:** When you point your smartphone at a QR code, a small link usually pops up on the screen before you click it. Take a second to look at it. Does it look like a real website (e.g., iriswebmedia.co.uk), or is it a random sequence of nonsense letters? Does it end in .com or .co.uk, or does it point to a different country code that doesn't match up?
3. **When in Doubt, Type it out:** If you're at a parking machine or restaurant, just type the website address into your browser instead, or ask a member of staff to check if it looks suspicious.

Give it a go!

You'll notice a QR code on my Iris Web Media advert in the Messenger itself. I promise it's safe! Use it as a risk-free test run. Open your camera, hover over the code, and look at the link preview that appears. You'll see it points clearly to my website. If the preview matches what you expect to see, you're usually good to go.

I'm looking forward to sharing more "Techy Bits" with you all each month. If there's a specific online question you'd like me to answer, feel free to drop me a message via my website.

Lucy Standbridge | *Iris Web Media* | iriswebmedia.co.uk



The Players @ STMA

April 2026



We are now putting the final touches to our "Big Quiz & Cabaret Evening". Lee has finished compiling the questions for the quiz which remain a tightly guarded secret that he's keeping close to his chest. The rest of us are honing the sketches, practising our songs and brushing the dust off our dancing shoes for the Cabaret

We start the evening promptly at 7.30pm with "The Big Quiz" - fun for people of all ages. Teams of up to six people (no extras/no exceptions) - £2 per person entry fee, with a cash prize for the winning team. This is followed immediately by an eclectic mix of entertainment to finish of your evening with a good chuckle and lots of smiles. Yes... a fun-filled evening with family and friends for just £2 at the STMA (main hall) 10, Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA. If you want to reserve a table for the evening contact 01462 816336 after 6pm (answer phone available before 6pm)

Dates for your 2026 diary:

- Saturday 25th April 2026. The Big Quiz & Cabaret Evening. Quiz starts at 7.30pm.
- Monday 8th June 2026. The Players @ STMA A.G.M. 7.30pm.
- Saturday 5th December 2026. Pantomime performances at 3pm & 7.30pm.

- Saturday 12th December 2026. Pantomime performances at 3pm & 7.30pm.

Find the Players on Facebook (The Players @ STMA) and Instagram.

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, indulging in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

Meppershall Munchkins

We are looking forward to a fun and creative month ahead as we welcome the spring season. Thank you, as always, for your continued support — it means so much to our lovely community. 🐣 🌻



Easter Themed Crafts

Throughout April, the children will enjoy taking part in a range of Easter-themed crafts and can't wait to see what they make.

Easter Holiday Fun



During the Easter holidays, depending on volunteer availability, we may have the bouncy castle out for the children to enjoy. Please note that this cannot be guaranteed, but we will keep families updated on the day.

Good Friday Closure



Please note that Meppershall Munchkins will be closed on Good Friday.

Volunteers Needed



Our group relies entirely on the kindness and support of volunteers.

We are always looking for extra help setting up, tidying up and supporting sessions.

If you are able to spare any time, please do come and speak to us — every bit of help makes a huge difference and helps keep this wonderful group running for local families.



Regular Sessions

Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30–11:30am

£3.50 for the first child; £1 for each additional child

Snack and squash included — Walk-ins welcome — Payment via cash or bank transfer

For updates, including emergency closures, please check the Meppershall Munchkins Facebook page.

We look forward to seeing you soon for plenty of fun, friendship and community spirit!

New Local Bistro

Mount Pleasant View's Six-Figure Relaunch



Just a stone's throw from Meppershall, a local landmark has undergone a six-figure transformation. The team behind Mount Pleasant View are celebrating a successful start to their new chapter following a total refurbishment that has turned the former golf club into the area's newest bistro and events destination.

The building has been completely reimagined, marking a firm shift away from the bunkers. Now under its third generation of family ownership, the venue has been repurposed into a relaxed, family-friendly space designed specifically to showcase those famous panoramic views across the Bedfordshire countryside.

Visitors will find a total reimagining of the interior, featuring a bespoke bar and high-end decor. "We wanted to create something that feels both comforting and sophisticated," says owner Carla.



"It's about high-quality food and a relaxing atmosphere where you can stay for a three-course Sunday lunch or just pop in for coffee and cake. This isn't just a fresh coat of paint! It has been exciting watching the change happen, and we can't wait to welcome our customers back."

The menu features locally-sourced produce, including Woburn Country Foods (Haynes), AB Fruits (Bedford) and Abbey Cheese (Leighton Buzzard). Almost every dish is made exclusively in-house, and all cakes and desserts are homemade.

The bistro remains one of the few in the area to offer a full breakfast service seven days a week, alongside highly-regarded Sunday roasts and a dedicated range of vegan and gluten-free options. The relaunch was a local effort in every sense. The family partnered with Meppershall-based Iris Web Media to develop the new brand identity, while local brand photographer Becky Kerr captured the transformation.

As we head into the warmer months, the final piece of the renovation is falling into place. A brand-new patio is being installed, providing an expansive outdoor space perfectly positioned to make the most of the spring sun and summer evenings. Whether you are walking the local footpaths or looking for a new dinner spot, the "new" View is ready and waiting.

**Book your table at
mountpleasantview.co.uk
or call 01462 850999.**





VILLAGE LITTER PICK

SATURDAY 18TH APRIL

10AM - 1PM

**MEET AT PC STORAGE CONTAINER
NEAR VILLAGE HALL BOTTLE BANK**

All equipment provided - Gloves, bags, litter pickers and refreshments.

Many hands make light work so
please help keep Meppershall clean and tidy.

To register attendance email clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk
or just turn up at 10am on the day.

See you there!



Easier recycling

From 30 March 2026:

- you can add glass bottles and jars to your mixed dry recycling bin
- flats receive a new food waste collection

Yes please

- ✓ **Glass bottles and jars (including lids and labels)**
- ✓ Plastic pots, tubs, trays and bottles
- ✓ Paper and cardboard
- ✓ Metal cans, tins and foil
- ✓ Aerosols
- ✓ Food and drink cartons

No thanks

- ✗ Drinking glasses
- ✗ Pyrex, mirrors, lightbulbs
- ✗ Ceramics or china
- ✗ Spectacles
- ✗ Food waste or nappies
- ✗ Batteries and vapes

Glass collected from
30 March 2026



Live in a flat?

Start using your new kitchen caddy for weekly food waste collections.

Not sure what goes in which bin? Check our A-Z guide:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/a-z-recycling





SHEFFORD COMMUNITY CHOIR



WEDS 8TH APRIL 2026

7.15 - 9.15PM £5 ON THE DOOR

EVERY FORTNIGHT

SHEFFORD METHODIST CHURCH

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email us gnomes.secretary@meppershall.org

Could YOU Help as a Gnome?

Have you have some spare time?

Like to help people in the community?

Then please consider volunteering as a Gnome.

To find out more about joining our friendly team of insured and DBS checked volunteers email us on **gnomes@meppershall.org**

We really do need more Drivers.

Many of our requests are for lifts to health appointments, often in Shefford and the surrounding area. We also take people to hospital in Bedford or The Lister Hospital.

Once you are signed up as a Volunteer, here's how it works:

When we get a request for a lift we send a message to our drivers with details of when the lift is required and to where.

If you can help, you let us know.

Our clients pay your mileage at 45p a mile, plus any car parking fees.

You may only be able to help us 3 or 4 times a year...

- **But every little helps...**

Please do consider becoming a Gnome!

Royal Mail Missing Meppershall - Updates

Following the shock reported in last month's Meppershall Messenger at the deterioration of postal deliveries in the village, we have some updates to share. While it is encouraging to see these issues receiving more attention, fears about missed NHS appointments and delayed financial and legal documents will continue.

The concern is only partly about the short-term harms inflicted by erratic deliveries. As we said last month, if people know that there are problems with deliveries, they can take action, for example by checking on NHS appointments in other ways. The real concern is more fundamental: Royal Mail is failing to provide information that could mitigate the impacts of staffing challenges on the public. It recently issued notices of delays in 38 areas – but that did not include us.

In a letter in March from the office of the Chairman and Chief Executive of Royal Mail, in response to a formal complaint, one Meppershall resident has been told “no instructions have been issued to stop delivering letters.” This is different to information provided by sources within the service. If sustained, this position will lead to a fracture between the position of the leadership of Royal Mail and the reality of the service on the ground – which is far more worrying than short-term delivery issues. In response to a separate complaint, another resident of Meppershall was specifically told in February by Royal Mail that they had “checked information on deliveries in your area and can confirm there are no reported issues with deliveries” - an even more misleading response, showing (at best) a lack of understanding at Royal Mail HQ.

Royal Mail admits that our Stevenage Delivery Office “has experienced some delays due to a high level of sickness among staff” with local teams “doing their best to maintain service levels during this challenging period.” We love our local postal teams, and we expect them to be supported by Royal Mail management and corporate leadership to ensure that missed deliveries are a “never event” - something that never happens. There is growing concern that, under its new ownership, Royal Mail may be testing the water, seeing what happens if they go soft on their Universal Service Obligation, developing a grey zone where they don't always live up to their duties.

The good news is that we understand Alistair Strathern MP is on the case. After recently meeting with senior Royal Mail representatives, he was assured that they are recruiting additional postal workers to help restore a more reliable service. They also acknowledged that staffing shortages have affected deliveries in our area. Alistair has requested performance data to track the issues and hold Royal Mail accountable. He would welcome additional examples from people experiencing issues.

Parliament's Business and Trade Committee has run a snap investigation into the national situation. In March it said, “Royal Mail's reliance on headline letter delivery figures can't hide service failures as 219 million letters arrive late.” Royal Mail says it delivers 92.1% of mail on time, but that drops to 74.9% for First Class this year. Royal Mail was fined £21million last year and told to make an urgent improvement plan. National figures, which are already unacceptable, may mask the neglect at local level – caring a bit less about villages and rural deliveries, to make the numbers in the cities.

THE PLAYERS @ STMA PRESENT

THE BIG



& CABARET EVENING

Saturday 25th April

Doors open 7pm for 7.30pm Start

@ THE STMA HALL

10, Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA

£2 per person, teams of up to six people

Cash prize for winning team

A fun night out for all ages with family and friends
(Cabaret starts approximately 9.45pm after quiz finishes)

Tables can be reserved in advance call 01462 816336

Licensed Bar

Bring your own supper/nibbles



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COULD THIS BE YOUR CALLING?

Do you live or work in Bedfordshire? Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is recruiting on-call firefighters near you.

Being an on-call firefighter provides a rewarding and flexible way for you to serve your community while balancing everyday life.

On-call firefighters are everyday people – parents, shift workers, freelancers, tradespeople and professionals – who respond to emergencies when needed. Whether attending a fire, a road traffic collision or carrying out a home fire safety visit, this is your chance to make a real difference without changing your whole life.

“You can be more than one thing,” says Stuart Auger, Head of Response. “We’re looking for committed, enthusiastic individuals from all walks of life. This role fits around your job, family and lifestyle – and delivers extraordinary impact.”

Abi, who serves as an on-call firefighter at Ampthill alongside her job in a local florist, said:

“Being an on-call firefighter is a juggling act – managing work, training and personal life – but it’s worth it. Being part of a great team and helping the community we love makes it the best thing I’ve ever done.”

On-call firefighters go about their everyday lives while staying within a short distance of their local fire station, ready to respond to emergencies when needed.

You’ll need to:

- ✓ To live or work close to an on-call fire station
- ✓ To be 18+, physically fit, and hold a full
- ✓ UK driving licence

Learn more:

www.bedsfire.gov.uk/careers/oncall

ARE YOU READY?



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| <p>A local friendly & professional mobile hairdresser with 17 years experience in hairdressing. I bring beautiful hair to the comfort of your own home at reasonable prices.</p> <p>A patch test may be required 48 hours prior to some colour services, and some colour services will need to be quoted on consultation.</p> <p>Please contact me to book and I hope to see you soon.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>hairbyclare11@outlook.com</u> 07428225857</p>  | <table> <tr><td>Full Head HL</td><td>£105</td></tr> <tr><td>Half Head HL</td><td>£75</td></tr> <tr><td>HCP</td><td>£50</td></tr> <tr><td>Flying Colours</td><td>£30</td></tr> <tr><td>Root tint</td><td>£40</td></tr> <tr><td>Full Head tint</td><td>£60</td></tr> <tr><td>Balayage</td><td>£105 POC</td></tr> <tr><td>Foilyage</td><td>£125 POC</td></tr> <tr><td>Toning</td><td>£20</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Cutting and Styling</p> <table> <tr><td>Cut & Blow Dry</td><td>£35</td></tr> <tr><td>Gents Cut</td><td>£20</td></tr> <tr><td>Kids Cut: 2-10, 10-16</td><td>£15/£20</td></tr> <tr><td>Restyle</td><td>£45</td></tr> <tr><td>Dry Cut</td><td>£25</td></tr> <tr><td>Curles/waves</td><td>£25</td></tr> <tr><td>Blow Dry</td><td>£25</td></tr> </table> | Full Head HL | £105 | Half Head HL | £75 | HCP | £50 | Flying Colours | £30 | Root tint | £40 | Full Head tint | £60 | Balayage | £105 POC | Foilyage | £125 POC | Toning | £20 | Cut & Blow Dry | £35 | Gents Cut | £20 | Kids Cut: 2-10, 10-16 | £15/£20 | Restyle | £45 | Dry Cut | £25 | Curles/waves | £25 | Blow Dry | £25 |
| Full Head HL | £105 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Half Head HL | £75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| HCP | £50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flying Colours | £30 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Root tint | £40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Full Head tint | £60 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Balayage | £105 POC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Foilyage | £125 POC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Toning | £20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cut & Blow Dry | £35 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gents Cut | £20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kids Cut: 2-10, 10-16 | £15/£20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Curles/waves | £25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Blow Dry | £25 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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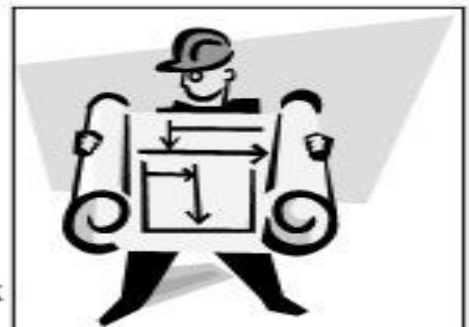
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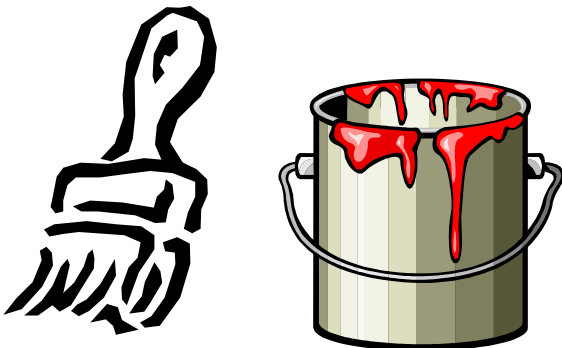
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CAKE CAFE

Homemade Cakes / Cookies / Traybakes

Tea / Coffee / Squash / Hot Chocolate



Saturday 18th April

9.00am to 12pm

Meppershall Village Hall

Homemade cake donations needed to support the cake café

If you would like to donate a homemade cake, please bring your cakes to the Village Hall on Friday 17th April between 5:15pm and 6pm - or on Saturday.

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

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



How can you get directly by bus, without any changes, to
**Cambridge or St Albans or St Neots or
Welwyn Garden City or Milton Keynes**
for a stay of 3-4 hours for just £6.00 return!?
Well, you can use the Wanderbus service
to each of these destinations
operating on a once-a-month basis.

Any restrictions? NO - **whatever your age**, the same fare applies.
(It could be even less if you are young enough!!)

All of the Wanderbus services are open to **everyone**,
just like any other bus operator!

In fact, our fares are £6.00 return to all destinations
under the current Government scheme.

We also accept concessionary bus passes on all routes.

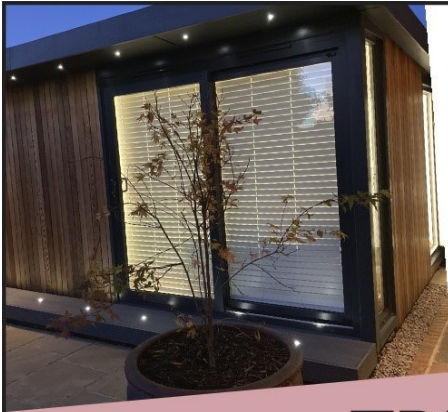
Check our timetable on www.wanderbus.org.uk, the CBC web site or
request a hard copy via: thewanderbus@gmail.com

*You can also find the timetable later in this issue of
The Meppershall Messenger.*

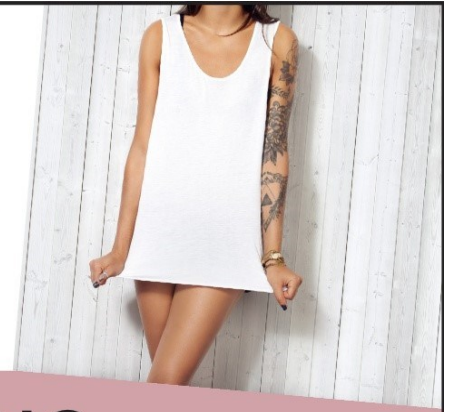


Take A Trip From Meppershall: Wanderbus Excursions

| 2026 EXCURSIONS — 4th THURSDAY OF THE MONTH | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Call 0300-123-3023 or e mail: thewanderbus@gmail.com for more info or to book your seat. | | |
| Full payment 21 days before departure. A cheque to Wanderbus, 5 The Pastures, Upper Stondon, Beds SG16 6QB or a bank transfer (Account details to be advised later). Cancellations 14 days before excursion date. Refunds will be discretionary. | | |
| DATE | DESTINATIONS & ENTRANCE FEE (Correct at time of print) | BUS FARE |
| 23rd April | Canons Ashby, Northants £14.00 p.p. | Bus Fare £12.50 |
| | | Pick up 10.00/10.31 |
| | | a. 11.45 d. 15.30 |
| <i>A tranquil Tudor manor house showcasing a mix of historic architecture, Eighteenth-century terraced garden including flowers, fruit, vegetables and paddock. Stables Tea-room</i> | | |
| 28th May | Castle Ashby Gardens, Arboretum & Animal Menagerie, Northants £13.75 p.p. | Bus Fare £12.50 |
| | | Pick up 10.30/11.00 |
| | | a. 11.45 d. 15.30 |
| <i>Home to gardens designed by Capability Brown , formal Italian Garden, an Arboretum, and a small animal Menagerie. The gardens are well maintained and among the best in the county. A tearoom with a lovely selection of hot and cold food, cakes and drinks.</i> | | |
| 25th June | Cottesbrook Hall & Gardens, Northants. Adult £17.00 p.p. (free to RHS Members) | Bus Fare £12.50 |
| | | Pick up 10.00/10.30 |
| | | a. 11.45 d. 15.30 |
| <i>The Hall contains the renowned Woolavington Collection of sporting art, along with fine furniture and porcelain. The award winning formal gardens surround the Hall with the Wild Garden flanking a meandering stream.</i> | | |
| 23rd July | Delapre Abbey, Northants £12.00 p.p. incl private tour | Bus Fare £12.50 |
| | | Pick up 10.00/10.30 |
| | | a. 11.30 d. 15.30 |
| <i>The Abbey is a former Cluniac nunnery founded in 1145 with a rich history spanning nearly 900 years. Once a family home and battlefield site, it has evolved into a stunning heritage destination offering a glimpse into its fascinating past. Beautiful gardens surround. Cafe for hot/cold food & drinks. Option to pre-order on arrival.</i> | | |
| 27th Aug | Hertford Castle & Old Town Free entry | Bus Fare £10.00 |
| | | Pick up 11.00/11.30 |
| | | a. 12.30 d. 15.30 |
| <i>Following the Christmas Trip several passengers requested a summer trip to the Castle grounds and time to wander the streets of the old town.</i> | | |
| 24th Sept | Mountfichet Castle, Stanstead Mountfichet, Essex £16.00 OAP / £18.00 Adult p.p. | Bus Fare £12.50 |
| | | Pick up 10.00/10.30 |
| | | a. 11.30 d. 15.30 |
| <i>Castle & Norman Village of 1066. Explore the Castle and roam through the Norman village hidden behind the walls and explore the many houses. Experience the ambience of an ancient bygone lifestyle including the House on the Hill Museum. Restaurant serving a wide range of food.</i> | | |
| 22nd Oct | Battle of Britain Bunker & Exhibition Centre, Uxbridge £12.50 / £10.00 OAPs p.p. | Bus Fare £12.50 |
| | | Pick up 10.00/10.30 |
| | | a. 11.45 d. 15.35 |
| <i>The Battle of Britain Bunker housed RAF Fighter Command's No 11 Group Operations Room throughout the Second World War. The bunker is a series of rooms on two levels some 60feet underground. The Operations Room with its large scale maps, squadron display boards, , balloon and weather states, is exactly how it was when Winston Churchill visited on 15th Sept. 1940. NB There are 76 steps into the Bunker but no rush! Cafe and Exhibition centre</i> | | |
| 26th Nov | Blue Diamond Garden Centre, Wyton, Cambs. Free entry | Bus Fare £10.00 |
| | | Pick up 11.00/11.30 |
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Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

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

Churchwardens:

Chris Valentine 01462 815971 John Archer

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

A Message From St Mary's...

As April comes, Spring has officially begun, our clocks have changed to Summer Time and our Holy Week services in our Churches are leading us up to our celebration of Easter. In fact, the Church will continue to celebrate Easter for 7 weeks and until Pentecost (24th May), and actually the whole year long... with each Sunday being a celebration of the Resurrection.

Sadly as I write, Easter is coming once again in troubled and anxious times for us all. Many people in our world are living what we might call a "Good Friday" experience, amid poverty, fear, sickness and war. Many others, many of us, amidst the joys and challenges of each day, are concerned about the rising cost of living, the security of employment, and whether or not we will be drawn into wars and conflicts elsewhere in our world.

However, as we turn our heating off, throw open windows and doors into the garden to hear the birds singing, to see the spring bulbs in flower, the buds bursting on the branches and to wonder as our whole world 'springs' back to life... it is time, for those who believe, to let the joy and the hope of Easter reverberate again throughout our world.

We can look at a grave and see both love and loss - happy memories come to mind surely - but turned to grief and uncertainty.

In Jesus' empty tomb, however, Christians see death yield to life; despair turn into hope; sorrow into joy; and uncertainty into the sure confidence of eternal life in the loving presence of God "who loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him may not die but may have eternal life". (John 3:16)

On Good Friday, as a large stone sealed Jesus tomb, it seemed, for the darkest of moments, that evil and death had had the final word. But death could not hold the Lord of Life... Jesus rose from the dead!

Those of us who have heard of the empty tomb and believe - we have made ourselves part of the story and the story part of us. Living in the hope and the joy of the resurrection is our great privilege, and it is a hope and joy that I believe our world still cries out for.

I pray that Easter hope, Easter joy and Easter peace will fill our hearts and minds and strengthen us to serve God and one another in the days to come.

With love, Rector Roni

Church Events In April

Usual Pattern of Services

| | | |
|----------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sundays | 11.00am | Morning Worship every Sunday Holy Communion: 2 nd and 4 th Sundays |
| Every Wednesday | 10.00am | Holy Communion in the Rectory |
| Church open to visit | 10.00-4.00 | Private prayer, quiet time – the church is open. |
| Online services: | 9.00am | Morning Prayer using 24-7's Lectio 365 App 7-days-a-week |
| | 9.00pm | Night Prayer/Compline from the C. of E. Daily Prayer App, 7-days-a-week |

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall/>

Find us on our website: <https://www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk/>

Find us on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRjDLGAY8GI6afkO8iALYOA>

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

Forthcoming Services and Events

Come and experience the warm welcome and friendly community of St Mary's, your beautiful village church 😊 We hope to see you soon.

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday April 1 st | 9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory |
| Thursday April 2 nd | Maundy Thursday 11am Chrism Eucharist at St Albans Cathedral 7.30pm Holy Communion - Shefford |
| Friday April 3 rd | Good Friday 11am Walk of Witness in Shefford (From Methodist Church) 2pm An Hour at the Cross (in St Mary's, Meppershall) |
| Saturday April 4 th | 7.30pm Easter Vigil at St Mary's |
| Sunday April 5 th | Easter Day 10am Junior Church - Egg Hunt and Crafts 11am Service - Easter Praise! Morning Worship |
| Wednesday April 8 th | 9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory |
| Sunday April 12 th | 11am Holy Communion with Junior Church |
| Wednesday April 15 th | 9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory |
| Sunday April 19 th | 11am Morning Worship |
| Wednesday April 22 nd | 9.45am Holy Communion in the Rectory |
| Sunday April 26 th | 11am. Holy Communion |
| Wednesday April 29 th | Sorry - no midweek Communion |

St Mary's Meppershall Junior Church

Join us on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month.
Call Gillian for more information on
07778 449051.



Junior Church Team

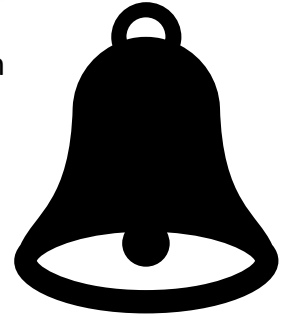
News From The Tower

News from the Tower

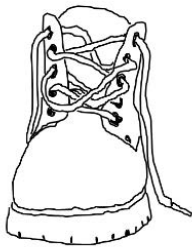
The band is looking forward to the privilege of ringing at a wedding on 18th April.

Practice nights are on a Thursday at 7.30pm. If you are interested in learning to ring the church bells, please get in touch: **07778 449051**.

Gill Marshall-Davies, Tower Captain



Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers



On Sunday 12th April it's an away game at Clophill, for a 10KM lap of Chicksands Wood. We start at 2.00PM at the current Parish Church (St Mary's, Clophill, High Street – MK45 4BJ). We'll leave Clophill via Little Lane, Kiln Lane and Great Lane to walk the whole eastern edge of Chicksands Wood on the Greensand Ridge Way to Appley Corner. Then we will return through the wood itself, hoping for bluebells and sure to see a variety of other early spring flowers, past the Osborn memorial, to emerge at the ruined church of St Mary, Clophill, where we drop back down to High Street, Clophill, by around 4.30PM.

There is plenty of on-street parking at the starting point. Message us on facebook (search @meppershallstrollers), by email or by phone (857836) if you want to find (or offer) a lift. It was amazing to have 30 people on our last outing (Meppershall to Haynes, in March – picture below, not behind bars, but on a bridge). We'd love to welcome you, whether you're new to the group or coming back for more.





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Sunday 5 April 2026

10 am, followed by service at 11am





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Seed Sowing Spring by Donna Cameron

Donna's Garden Designs | 07833670934

Recovering from surgery recently has made me appreciate this spring even more. The warmer days, bringing with them more and flowers opening each day, gives me such joy, getting out in the fresh air.



Seeing the new shoots and buds gives such hope. Mother Nature quietly gets on with her work for us all to enjoy.

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished " Lau Tzu

With these higher temperatures warming the soil my thoughts turn to planting seeds. Looking at all the colourful seed packets, I am visualising all the different scents and shapes and colours like a vibrant painting.

They are not only to enjoy in the garden but also to use as cut flowers to adorn your home. I love doing this, as bringing them in and putting them in a vase or jam jar means you can really study the shapes and forms of the different varieties. I love the informality cut flowers bring. A simple seed producing vases and vases of flowers throughout summer.

Cut some foliage or ornamental grasses or even vegetable foliage like asparagus foliage, to add interest.

Annual Seeds for Cut Flowers

Sweet peas

Calendula

Love in a mist

Cosmos

Ammi majus

Cornflower

Zinnia

Sunflower

For a couple of pounds you can add so much interest to gaps in the borders and have endless bunches of flowers too!

Have fun growing!

Donna x

Jobs In the Garden For April

Keep weeding and tidying beds

Sow Annuals, wild flowers and Veg seeds

Sow lawns and bare patches

Trim Penstemons and Salvia

Take off faded Hydrangea heads

Keep a look out for Aphids and Lily Beetle

Last chance to prune Roses

Divide Perennials

Clean Greenhouse

Add supports for plants as they grow

Trugs And Trowels (Campton Gardening Club) – April

Here we are, nearly time to start planting out - but before we do, let's be certain that any danger of frost has passed. Secondly let's get our beds in order; all dug over and enriched with compost and any other well-rotted organic matter.

Many vegetables, herbs, flowers and some root crops only do well if sown directly into their final positions. Soil preparation can be a major factor between success and failure. Few soils are naturally perfect so digging in advance and incorporating lots of goodness to improve the structure of heavy soils where roots struggle to bed is essential. This also helps with the water holding in a lighter soil. One week before planting, dress with a general purpose fertiliser which can benefit growth and importantly water the soil prior to planting out. One to try is seaweed fertiliser, a powerful organic bio-stimulant to enhance plant growth, root development and stress resistance through natural growth hormones, nutrients and trace minerals. This will help to increase yields, improve soil health and help plants endure drought, frost and disease. Seaweed fertiliser is environmentally friendly, it is a sustainable, organic, natural product that encourages a healthy, living soil ecosystem. It will also extend the shelf life of your fruit and vegetables, giving them a longer post-harvest life.

Liquid seaweed is diluted with water, sprayed directly on leaves or used to drench the soil. Seaweed fertiliser also comes in a dry meal form which is directly added to soil or added to compost. It is suitable to use for most plants, including vegetables, flowers and lawns. It can be used throughout the growing season for maximum effect.

Please join us on the first Monday of every month at Campton Village Hall at 19:30, except April and May which are Bank holidays. These months Gardening club will be on Tuesday 7th April and Tuesday 5th May. Everyone is welcome.

Maryika Wilding 01462 851729

How To Choose A Personal, Inclusive Celebrant For Your Ceremony

Carolyn's Celebrations And Memorials Of Life And Love

At Rites of Way, I create ceremonies that feel like home — whether you're exchanging vows under the trees, naming a little one with love, or honouring a life well lived. I'm Carolyn Holmes, a Meppershall based celebrant who leads with warmth, poetic care, and gentle inclusivity. Every ceremony is written for you and about you.



Celebrating Life's Milestones

I deliver: first/second/ third wedding ceremonies, anniversaries/ vow renewal, baby /adult naming ceremonies, memorials/celebrations of life and living funerals and ceremonies honouring pets and their impact

If you're exploring your options and want clarity, you're welcome to request a **free ceremony audit** — a gentle, no-pressure look at what you're hoping for and how to shape a ceremony that feels like you.

Why Choosing a Wedding Celebrant Near You Matters

A local celebrant brings more than convenience — they bring connections. Someone who knows your landscape, your community, and the places you love can help create a ceremony that feels rooted and real.

- **Personal connection** — meeting in person helps your celebrant understand your story and values.
- **Meaningful locations** — woodland clearings, and places only locals know.
- **Inclusive experience** — weddings, vow renewals, baby namings, memorials, and more.
- **Community knowledge** — trusted venues, suppliers, and traditions that add depth.
- **Easier planning** — local calls, quick meet-ups, and a relationship built on trust.

How to Find a Wedding Celebrant Near You

Finding the right celebrant doesn't have to feel overwhelming. These steps help you discover someone who genuinely fits your vision:

- **Search online** using terms like “wedding celebrant near me” or “celebrant Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire”.
- **Look at local magazines/boards** – for adverts/ articles
- **Check reviews** for verified information.
- **Browse social media** for ceremony photos/ videos.
- **Get recommendations** from friends, family, and venues.
- **Message/ meet** is the chemistry there?
- **Discuss your vision** — do they get you?
- **Check availability and fees** — is everything clear.

What to Look for in a Celebrant

Your ceremony begins with the right guide. Look for someone who brings:

- A vibe that matches you
- Creativity and flexibility
- Experience with diverse stories
- Good communication
- Positive reviews and testimonials

Working With a Personal, Inclusive Celebrant

Our collaborative process moves at your pace.

- Initial conversation
- Personalised script
- Revisions until it feels right
- Optional rehearsal
- Warm, grounded delivery on the day

I provide a vow-writing workbook and prompts to help you. To celebrate, I also plant a tree in your honour in Devon.

Wedding Celebrant Costs in the UK

Costs vary depending on experience, location, and ceremony style:

- **Basic: £300–£500** — consultation, personalised script, ceremony delivery
- **Standard: £500–£800** — extra meetings, rehearsal, more bespoke elements
- **Premium: £800+** — highly personalised ceremonies with extensive planning and travel

Want to know more? Read the full blog here <https://www.ritesofway.com/modern-ceremony-planning-tips> .

For a personal heartfelt ceremony, contact me, Carolyn, at ritesofw@gmail.com , **07305 002858**, or via <https://www.ritesofway.com/contact> . **Ask for a free ceremony audit** — Let's explore how to make your celebration truly yours. I'm in the village, so let's grab a coffee and chat about your ideas.

Meppershall Golf Society And Benefit Night

Welcome from the Meppershall Golf Society.

We kicked off the season at Mill Green WGC, and it was a great turn out. The course was amazing considering the inclement weather in the days leading up to our event. Congratulations to Ben Jones, Kevin Janczuk & Gordon Cordes our cash winners on the day. Well, every player was a winner on the day 😊



We now look forward to playing Aldwickbury & Stevenage in April.

2026 Events scheduled include:

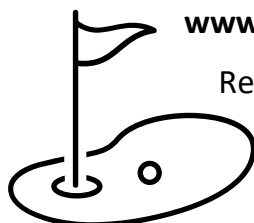
- Aldwickbury Fri 10 Apr, Stevenage Sat 25th Apr (Grandad's Trophy)
- Pavenham Sat 09 May, Wellingborough Fri 12th Jun.
- The Three Locks Sat 4th Jul, Whipsnade Sat 8th Aug.
- Redbourn Sat 5th Sep, South Beds Fri 02 Oct.
- Colmworth, Chesfield Downs (to be confirmed)

MGS trips outside the above events include:

- Mijas Spain (4 nights) end Apr - fully Booked.
- Cotswolds (1 night) end Aug - limited space at time of printing.

There's still room for golfers of all abilities to join in our wonderful Golf Society.

Ticket sales for our first Benefit Night in support of the British Heart Foundation in memory of Pete Cassidy (Grandad) on Sat April 25 in the Village Hall are selling well. We have a terrific live band – The Long Riders headlining with support acts Rose and Adam from 7pm. Tickets are on sale now at £12.50pp.

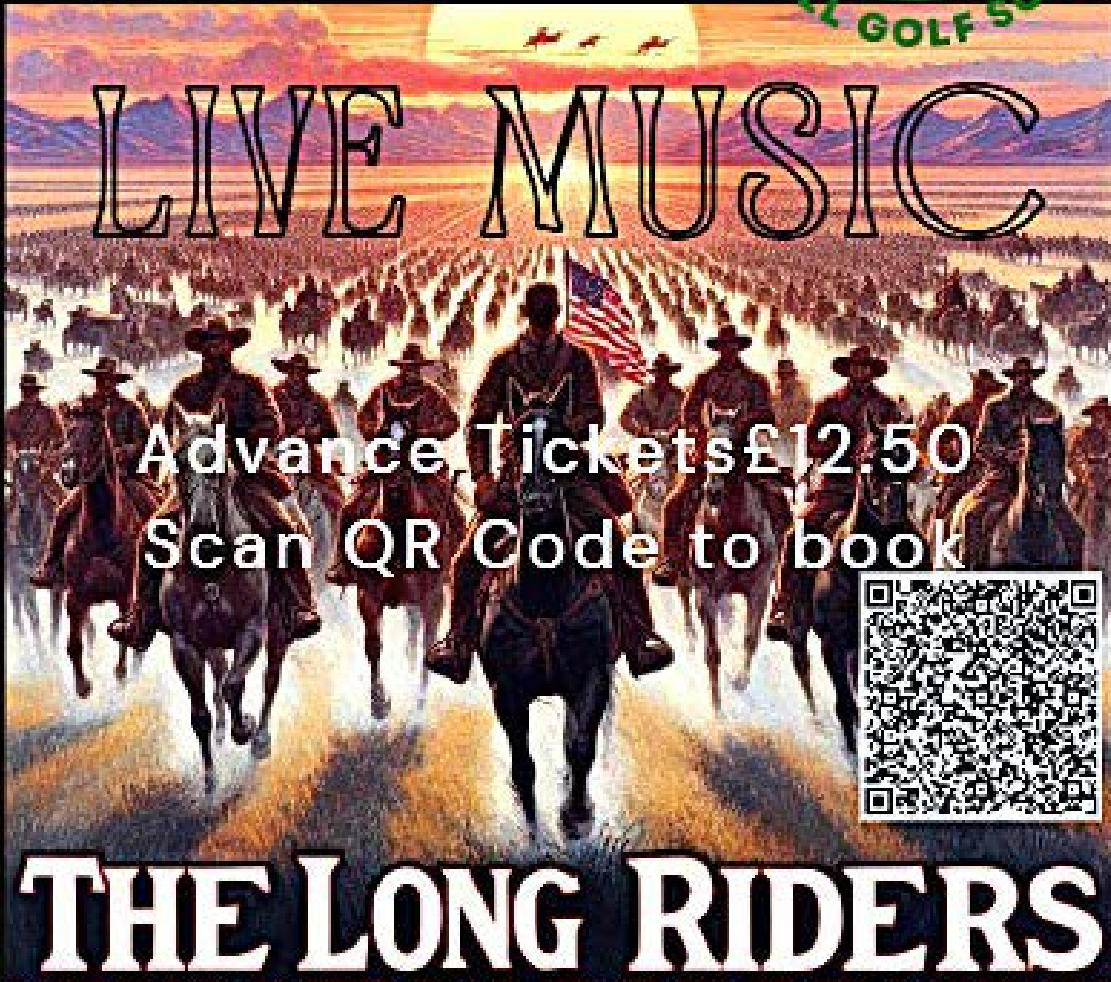


www.ticketsource.co.uk/meppershall-golf-society

Remember your dancing shoes!

For more info regarding the MGS & Events please feel free to contact. gordon.cordes67@gmail.com – 07807 674 609

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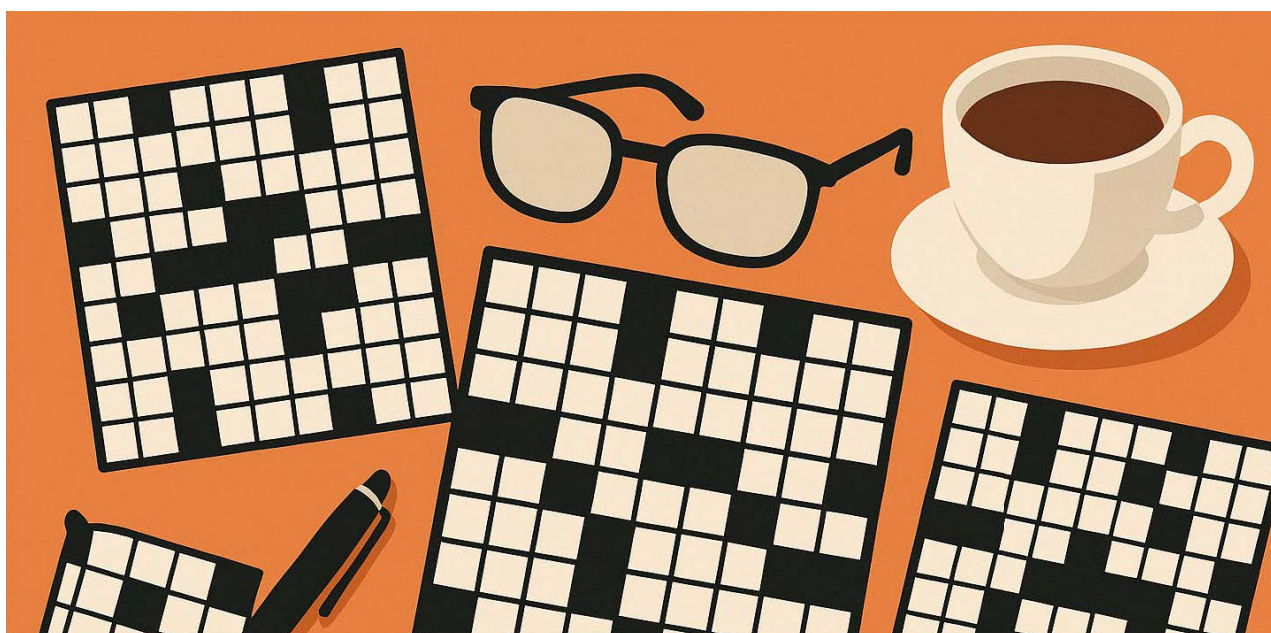
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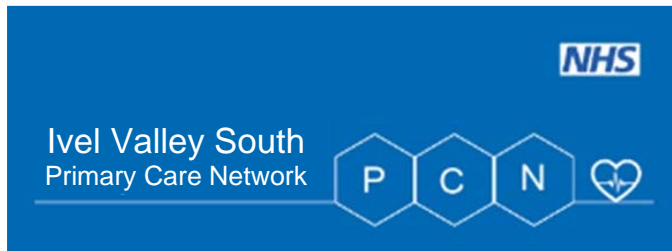
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Crossword Solution For March

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|----|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|---|
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| 16 | A | F | R | O | | | | | 17 | R | A | I | N | | | | | 18 | R | A | S | P | Y | | | |
| 19 | R | A | I | N | 20 | B | O | W | | | | | | 21 | E | 22 | B | O | N | | | | | | | |
| 23 | M | S | G | | | | | | 24 | A | S | L | | | | | | 25 | L | O | T | 26 | I | O | N | |
| | | | | | 29 | A | B | S | | | | | 30 | A | 31 | M | O | K | | | 32 | S | P | Y | | |
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| 66 | D | E | E | R | | | | | | | | | | 67 | S | P | U | N | | | | 68 | E | R | R | S |



What is abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening?



Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening is a way of checking if there's a bulge or swelling in the aorta, the main blood vessel that runs from your heart down through your chest and abdomen.

This bulge or swelling is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm or AAA. It can be serious if it's not spotted early because it could get bigger and eventually burst.

AAA occurs when the walls of the aorta weaken and expand. As the wall of the aorta stretches, it becomes weaker and can rupture, causing internal bleeding. Around 85 out of 100 people die when an aneurysm bursts. Men are six times more likely to have an aneurysm than women.

If you have an AAA, you will not usually notice any symptoms or be aware you have one. Screening finds aneurysms early so we can monitor or treat them.

Patients with a small aneurysm (3cm – 4.4cm wide) are screened annually; those with a medium aneurysm (4.5 – 5.4cm wide) are screened every three months. Those with an aneurysm 5.5cm or bigger (1 in 1,000 men) will be offered an appointment with a specialist team to discuss treatment.

The screening programme has been set up with the aim to reduce the number of deaths caused by AAA by up to 50 percent.

AAA screening is available locally within community venues and hospitals and screen men in their 65th year, using a simple, painless ultrasound scan. One in 70 men scanned is found to have an AAA.

Risk factors for this condition include smoking, high blood pressure or close family history.

In England, screening for AAA is offered to men during the year they turn 65. Screening for AAA isn't routinely offered to women, men under 65 or people who've already been treated for an AAA, because the risk of an AAA is much smaller in these groups.

If you are male and over the age of 65 and have not been invited for AAA screening or have missed your screening appointment, you can self-refer – see details below.

For patients registered at Shefford, Lower Stondon and Larksfeld Surgeries, contact Ivel Valley South PCN at blmkicb.carecoordinator.ivs@nhs.net

AAA Screening Office, call 01234 792207.

For further information about AAA screening including explanation videos, go to

www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/abdominal-aortic-aneurysm-aaa-screening/

Jaqui Derrick, Care Coordinator, Ivel Valley South Primary Care Network

Dr Baxter & Partners | Lower Stondon Surgery | Larksfeld and Arlesey Medical Partnership



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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



<https://survivingcancer.co.uk/>



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Bookings & Info : Tel :0300-123-3023 www.wanderbus.org.uk



TIMETABLE - VALID FROM 2nd September 2024

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

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

EXCURSIONS – 4TH Thursday of Month – call For Details – 0300-123-3023

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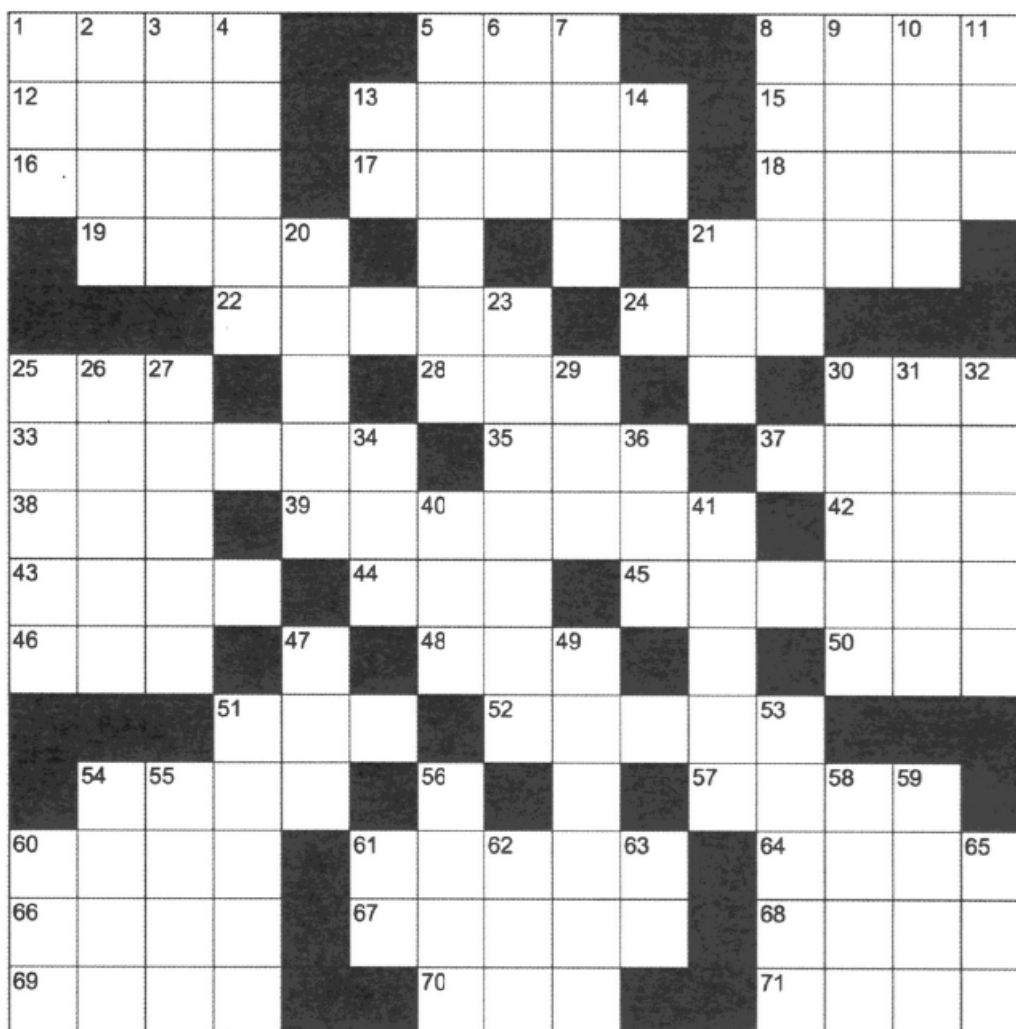
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**ACROSS**

- 1 Group of nations
 5 Small
 8 Curtsey's
 12 Elegant
 13 Break out of egg
 15 Wading bird
 16 African nation
 17 Western state
 18 What you do for the judge
 19 Treat with contempt
 21 Stair
 22 Kangaroo bear
 24 Car speed
 25 Kimono sash
 28 Wing
 30 Metric weight unit
 33 Cloth hat that is fastened with ribbons
 35 Scientist's office
 37 France & Germany river
 38 Epoch
 39 Admit (2 wds.)
 42 Killed in action
 43 Mail
 44 Milk maker
 45 Looms

- 46 Bard's before
 48 Ruby
 50 Distress call
 51 Fall mo.
 52 More often than weekly
 54 Cuts off "in the bud"
 57 Holler
 60 Secure
 61 Crick
 64 Electron, for example
 66 Negative (prefix)
 67 Pallid
 68 Canal
 69 Fossile fuel
 70 Scriptural your
 71 Structure used by a bird to lay eggs and rear young

DOWN

- 1 Tempo
 2 Soil
 3 Capital of Norway
 4 Newly hatched bird
 5 Swaying walk
 6 Airport abbr.
 7 Resound
 8 Act or fact of being born
 9 Off-Broadway award
 10 Bunch of hay

- 11 Compass point
 13 Hello
 14 Santa's laugh
 20 Divided nation
 21 Observe secretly
 23 Accepted
 25 Heavy-set
 26 Hole maker
 27 Sappy
 29 Rule
 30 Forces
 31 El Qahira
 32 Lawn plant
 34 Tender loving care
 36 Whit
 40 Record
 41 Stately
 47 Large vehicle
 49 Boggy
 51 Fourth month of the year
 53 Asian country
 54 Taboo
 55 Small particle
 56 Quarrel
 58 Decoy
 59 Superman's Ms. Lane
 60 McDonald's "Big ___"
 61 Compass point
 62 Tree
 63 Possessive pronoun
 65 Tulle

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

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01462 813293

Meppershall Pre-School Village Hall, Ella Carey-Butler

07816 357159

meppershallps@gmail.com

Meppershall Munchkins, Melanie Choonos

meppershallmunchkins@gmail.com**Organisations**

The Players @ STMA, Karen Mitchell

01462 816336

Meppershall Good Neighbours (GNOMES)

07760 793921

Meppershall Brownies

Meppershallbrownies@gmail.com

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

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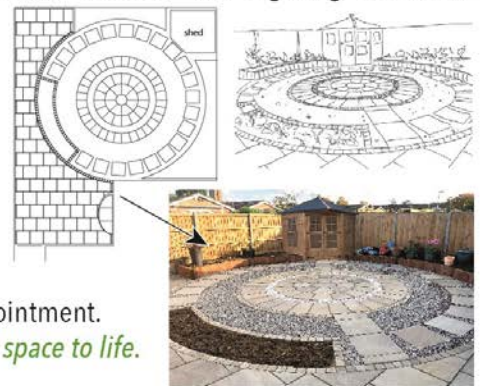
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The Team And Collation Dates

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 12th 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: mepp.messenger@gmail.com |
| Co-Editor | Vacancy | |
| Assistant Editor | Patrick O'Connor | |
| Advertising & Distribution | Andrew Pain | andrewgpain@hotmail.com 07875 580069 |
| Treasurer | John Thompson | meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org |

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 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| April 2026 | Tues 31 st March | November 2026 | Tues 27 th October |
| May 2026 | Tues 28 th April | Dec-Jan 2026-7 | Tues 1 st December |
| June 2026 | Tues 26 th May | February 2027 | TBC |
| July 2026 | Tues 30 th June | March 2027 | TBC |
| Aug-Sept 2026 | Tues 28 th July | April 2027 | TBC |
| October 2026 | Tues 29 th September | May 2027 | TBC |

Contact John Thompson to confirm arrangements (contact information above).