

The all new www.Meppershall.org

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Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

I'm just back from an evening dog walk, under those special Meppershall skies that tonight have gathered to greet August with a blend of bright blue and granite grey – leaving a letterbox strip on the horizon for the sunset to burst through and wash the gently waving seas of wheat with red and gold.



“This is an amazing place to live,” says a neighbour who I bump into as we stand gazing out to Gravenhurst, Pulloxhill and beyond. She isn't wrong.

But we live in a delicate balance between the need to have places to live amid this beauty and the risk of building all over the very land we love. There is good news in this issue for anyone who cherishes those unique rural views around the village.

Some of that good news is available via the all-new village website where you can find a whole section on the Neighbourhood Plan:

<https://meppershall.org/neighbourhood-plan/>

(By the way, well done Councillor Lucy Stanbridge and Parish Clerk Alessandra Marabese for all their work on the new village website – read more on page 13-14. We're delighted to show the village website homepage on our cover this month).

The Neighbourhood Plan is a document that expresses what the village wants in terms of development and environment and more – and it has a legal standing that means it must be taken into account in future development decisions. It will be voted on in a village referendum in November with a view to it being adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) by the end of the year.

The plan for the wider region (Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035) was recently adopted by CBC – see page 16. It enshrines a vision for how people here want to combine the need for new housing with the protection of the scenic beauty and rural environment that are the very reasons why people move here in the first place. Together, these plans are there to help manage development in a way that aligns with the wishes of local people, through our councillors and councils.

So this summer we hope you get many chances to enjoy this wonderful spot in the English countryside. More and more people are walking or cycling some of the beautiful routes in and around the village. It is great to read that the Police and Crime Commissioner has made funds available to improve road safety right here in Meppershall (page 3) – and we can all help. When it comes to our cars, whether you're enjoying a relaxing summer drive or pelting along Stondon Road late for work one morning, please take it easy. We read (from Meppershall Parish Council) that any change in speed limits on our surrounding 60mph roads is unlikely because there have not been many accidents lately (page 11).

Let's keep it that way. Please, stay safe.



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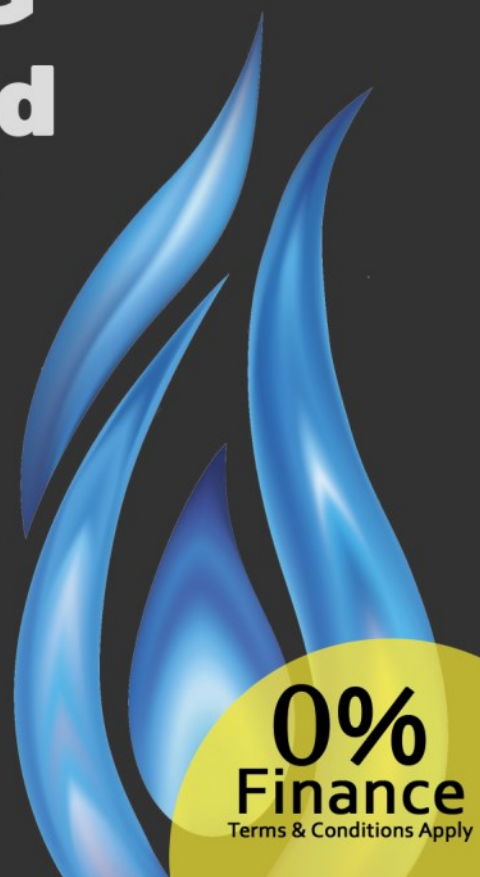
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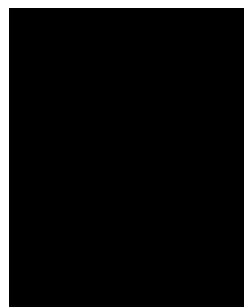
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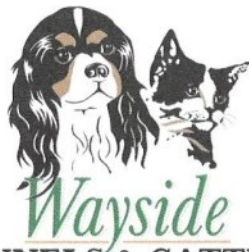
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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

I would like to inform the residents of Meppershall that Festus Akinbusoye the incoming Police and Crime Commissioner through the OPCC Grant scheme has awarded Meppershall Parish Council the some of £20K for road safety improvements in and around the village.

In the meantime our Ward Councillors are pursuing monies through the Rural Matched Grant Scheme to further enhance the money available to undertake the traffic calming recommendations to be made by the Traffic Department officers of Central Beds Council.

Yours faithfully

Cllr Anthony Seaman, Speed Watch Team Member

Village Shop Updates

As we bid farewell to Steve and Carolyn Ansell at the village shop, we are delighted to welcome a new family team to the village who kindly shared the following info.

A locally based family (the Chandarana's) have just taken over the shop and aim to open a Budgens branded store by the end of September! They currently run another Budgens based in the village of Walkern between Stevenage and Cottered. The family have been involved in the community of Walkern for the last 15 years and have bought Meppershall's village store with the same aim of staying in the village for a long long time!

The following timescales are currently in place for upgrades to the shop:

21 July 2021 - store closure

24 Sep 2021- Budgens of Meppershall to open along with the Post Office

During the period of the closure, there will be no services because of the extensive structural works needed to get the store into shape. Currently the entire roof of the shop is open to the elements!!

They will be providing more information about what to expect in the new store and also an update on the re-opening dates from mid August on Facebook (and in the Meppershall Messenger!)

"We thank you all for all the short term inconvenience the store closure will cause and hopefully the long term benefits of the new store will make up for this!" said Sanjay Chandarana.

Sanjay and family – we thank you for sharing this information and we send you a very warm welcome. We wish you every success in the project of work going on at the shop premises this summer and we look forward to you becoming part of village life here in Meppershall.



We have also received the following information from the Post Office network provision lead:

Meppershall Post Office, 6 High Street, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LX

Branch Temporary Closure

We are writing to inform you that due to extensive building work at the above location, the branch will need to close temporarily.

The safety of our customers is of paramount importance to us, therefore, to allow for the building work to take place, it will be necessary for the service to close, temporarily on Wednesday 21 July 2021 at 17:30.

It is envisaged that the work will take approximately 10 weeks to complete, following which the service will re-open on Friday 24 September 2021 at 09:00. The Post Office will not close for lunch anymore once it is re-opened and the new hours will be Monday to Friday 09:00 – 17:30 and Saturday 09:00 – 12:30.

Should the dates change, posters will be displayed in branch to let customers know.

We would like to apologise for the inconvenience the temporary closure may cause. In the interim, we hope that our customers will continue to use Post Office services. The branches listed below will happy to provide customers with Post Office services during this period, and this information will be made available locally.

Details of three possible alternative Post Office branches in the area are provided below for your convenience:

- Shefford Post Office, 6 South Bridge Street, Shefford, SG17 5DB
- Shillington Post Office, Old Methodist Church Hall, High Road, Shillington, SG5 3LP
- Henlow Camp Post Office, 197A Station Road, Lower Stondon, SG16 6JE

The latest branch information can be found at www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder.

This notification is being carried out in line with our Principles of Community Engagement which have been agreed with Citizens Advice, Citizens Advice Scotland and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland - the independent statutory consumer watchdogs (a copy of those Principles is available on request).

Anthony Bayley, Network Provision Lead



COVID-19

Let's wear face coverings in crowded places to protect others.

Covid 19 is still with us. Even if you've been vaccinated, you can still get the virus and you can still pass it on. Let's keep protecting each other. Let's keep life moving.

gov.uk/coronavirus

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COVID Info: Have You Had the Jab?

Anyone over the age of 18 is now being invited to get their COVID-19 vaccine by calling 119, through local walk-in options (at <https://bit.ly/2U4IYGT>) or through the National Booking Service: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/>

It's the largest vaccination programme in the history of the NHS. The vaccine is being offered to more and more people in our area every week.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines teach your immune system how to protect you from diseases. It's much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and attempting to fight them.

Can I catch Covid-19 from the vaccine?

No. You cannot catch Covid-19 from taking the vaccine but having the vaccine could stop you from becoming seriously ill if you catch the infection.

Should I be concerned about the speed the vaccine was made available?

The speed in which the vaccines have been developed does not mean that they are unsafe. The technology used to develop the vaccine is not new. It's been tried and tested for decades. It is with this technology and massive global investment to develop a Covid-19 vaccine that has allowed it to be available so quickly.

Any coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through lots of clinical trials and safety checks, like all other licensed medicines, before it is approved. The Covid-19 vaccines used in the UK have been declared as effective by the UK's independent Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulator (MHRA) after extensive trials. Read more at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/vaccinations.

What about getting a Covid-19 test?

Find information about using the simple rapid lateral flow self-test conveniently in your own home at <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests-or-by-calling-119>. Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms. Rapid lateral flow tests help to find cases in people who may have no symptoms but are still infectious and can give the virus to others. The test usually involves taking a sample from your tonsils (or where they would have been) and from your nose, using a swab. You can get a result in 30 minutes. Please consider testing if you are going to be with other people, whether or not you have been vaccinated.

Your Chance to Become a Councillor

Meppershall Parish Council needs two new team members; if you think you would like to join the team contact the Clerk on 07930 813808 or email clerk@meppershall.org

What is a councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical ward or parish, in Meppershall it is the entire parish. They are generally elected by the public every four years, but there are Co-option spaces available on the Parish Council at the moment as Councillors Karlake, Austin and Thomason have given their resignations to the Parish Council.

What do councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work:

1. Decision making - Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
2. Monitoring - Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
3. Getting involved locally - As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:
 - Going to meetings of local organisations such as the Beds Police Priority Setting Meetings
 - Reviewing planning applications
 - Participating in litter picks
 - Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public

How much time does it take up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about an hour a week. Obviously, there are some councillors who spend more time than this - and some less, but in the main, being a parish councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to village life, and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

As a councillor representing the parish you will help keep it a great place to live and work. You will be supported in your role and will be expected to undertake training. You should be comfortable working electronically. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team.

If after reading this notice you are interested in applying please visit our website <https://meppershall.org/parish-council/> for more information and contact the Clerk to the Council on 07930 813808 or email clerk@meppershall.org.



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Our 2021 AGM took place as planned via Zoom on Saturday 19th June and we would like to say thank you to those who joined us to review the last 12 months. One of the main things that came out of the AGM was a feeling that as we emerge from the restrictions we have been living with, the village might need re-acquainting with what GNOMES is here for. In the not too distant future we hope to be able

to host an informal "Hello Again !" event, an open house for anyone to come along to and find out about us or perhaps just remind themselves of what we do. Keep a look out for details !

Also, we urgently need additional committee members. In particular, we need someone who would like to take on either the role of Secretary or Treasurer. Neither role is especially time-consuming but you'll need to be interested in promoting community life in the village. If you want to find out a bit more, please mail gnomes.secretary@meppershall.org

By the time you read this, Ansell Village Stores will have changed hands. Steve and Carolyn Ansell have been of support to the GNOMES right from the start and we want not only to thank them for that but also to wish them well in the future. Whilst the shop is closed for refurbishment, please remember that GNOMES are able to help with emergency shopping for anyone who cannot get out of the village and who needs a bit of extra help. And, if you have a neighbour who you think might need some help like this, you don't have to be a GNOME to ask them.

Whatever your need, call us on **07760 793921, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm** and if we cannot help then we will try our best to find someone or some organization that can. Please keep an eye out for those around you and if you think they need help, but you are unable to give it, then please call the **GNOMES** on **07760 793921**.

Meppershall Parish Council – Updates from Meeting 12th July

An Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council (MPC) took place on Monday 12th July.

Public Session - CBC Ward Councillor Mark Liddiard (ML) provided an update on Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) activities as follows:

- Bedfordshire's Chief Fire Officer, Paul Fuller, has passed away. Mr Fuller had worked for the authority since 2002 and was highly regarded in his role. His deputy is covering the role at present and service delivery is unchanged.
- COVID cases in Central Bedfordshire are rising and the number of PCR tests taken is increasing. Everyone must be mindful and remain aware of current

issues with the spread of the Delta variant. Services are becoming overstretched due to the isolation of staff. Street cleaning and waste collection are being service priorities. Grass cutting is behind but CBC contractors are trying to catch up. Despite the ending of furlough and redundancies, recruitment is proving to be difficult especially for HGV drivers which has a knock on effect with CBC contractors such as Ringway Jacobs. Some staff when possible are working 18 hour shifts.

- CBC has taken the decision that there will be no changes to the opening of council offices at present. It is likely that CBC will reduce the number of offices across CBC which will provide a saving to tax payers. Priory House will not close.
- CBC's 5yr housing supply is currently at 6-7 years as of the 1st April 2021. This is an important figure as in Planning Inspector Inquiries the balance is now tilted in favour of CBC and not developers.
- The Local Plan has now passed from the Planning Inspectorate to the Housing Minister for sign-off. The DIO (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) is now carrying out more research into the re-development of RAF Henlow - a knock-on effect from the last questions raised by the Planning Inspectors.
- Regarding pooling water and flooding outside 55A-55C High Street, the CBC Highways Officer has advised that the area will be reviewed when appropriate weather conditions occur.

Questions / comments from the public:

- Can s106 (Section 106) monies not be used to cover the cost of traffic calming in the village? *s106 money from developers is allocated to specific funds and cannot be diverted from one funding pot to another. Meppershall has s106 funds (in the form of 2 raised tables yet to be installed) from the Bovis and 32 Shefford Road sites. Unfortunately the Planning Inspector at the time of the inquiry removed s106 funds for highways improvements from the Stocken House, 59 Shefford Road, Unilateral Undertaking.*
- Please confirm closure dates for Shefford Road and will pedestrian access still be permitted? *Clerk - Shefford Road will be closed from 19th to 21st July for resurfacing and then from 22nd July to 3rd September for installation of a new storm fallout. Rectory Road will be closed from 22nd to 24th September for BT to carry out works.*
Action: The Clerk was asked to add to Facebook details of proposed road closures.
- Is it possible to have a 'no construction traffic sign' at the entrance to Fildyke Road? *ML will request this.*
- Will The Pigling planning application be discussed this evening? *Clerk – No, as it arrived after issuing the agenda.*

Clerks Report - Meeting of Environment and Leisure Group held on 5th July to discuss Old Road Meadow (ORM) play area re-development, tree planting in ORM and tree planting at Centenary Field. Notification from Shefford Town Clerk of appointment

of new Mayor and Deputy Mayor (*Clerk to send letter of congratulations*) and notification of two planning applications after issuing current agenda, namely CB/21/03056/RM - The Mow, SG17 5LP - Reserved Matters: following Outline Application CB/20/02860/OUT (Outline: Demolition of one dwelling & erection of 13 dwellings and ancillary works.) Reserved matters for Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale relating to conditions 2, 3, 4 and 9 and CB/21/02885/FULL - The Pigling, SG17 5LL - Replace existing mobile home with a single storey two bedroom permanent dwelling. Both have a deadline date for responses prior to the next MPC September meeting.

Procedures, Consultations and Legal

- i. **Councillor Co-Option** – An expression of interest in co-option had been received. The application was welcomed but as the applicant was not present at the meeting a decision will be made at the next meeting.
- ii. **Website** – Work has continued on the new website and Cllr Standbridge will make the new site live this coming week. The Clerk thanked Cllr Parsons for his street naming article. The Messenger will be publicising the new website in their August / September edition for which Cllr Standbridge will provide an article and front cover picture.
- iii. **Meppershall.org email addresses** – reference made to a press article regarding the use of private email address by Government officials and ministers and that similar issues concerning transparency, data protection and freedom of information applied to parish councillors and the parish council as an organisations. The Clerk and Cllr Standbridge will assist in the set up and use of their Meppershall.org emails. Councillors also discussed how best in future to tag emails as official, sensitive etc.
- iv. **Consultation** – The Boundary Commission for England is consulting on revised constituency areas that would see Meppershall move from Mid Bedfordshire CC to Hitchin CC. Councillors resolved to object to the constituency proposal on the grounds that Meppershall and the surrounding area is a rural community whereas Hitchin is an urban town and therefore linking the two is not in the best interests of residents as it would mean changing representation from a rural to urban focus. Also the proposed constituency crosses county borders which raises further issues in representation.
- v. **Centenary Field Parish Facilities** –The working group met with our solicitors on 5th July and a response was sent to Croudace from them to confirm that Croudace should retain structural responsibility for large scale defects that may arise over a certain value. A response from Croudace is now pending.
- vi. **Stocken House Green Space** – A review of documents forwarded by Davidsons concerning the open green space has been undertaken and identified a number of concerns. The Clerk is still awaiting feedback from CBC Planning Officers. Cllr Liddiard was asked to arrange a meeting with the Clerk, Cllr Thompson and CBC Officers to discuss CBC requirements on the area in question.
- vii. **Delegation of powers** – The Council resolved to delegate powers to Clerk to make decisions on planning applications, payments and all other matters that

cannot wait until the 13th September MPC meeting after consulting with the relevant working group or committee members.

Finance – MPC approved the purchase of software back up for the Clerks computer systems and approved payments to be made.

Planning and Housing - MPC considered planning applications relevant Meppershall as follows:

- i. CB/21/02300/FULL - Polehanger Farm- Erection of an agricultural storage shed – *No objections.*
- ii. CB/21/02083/FULL - 11 Fowlers Drive - Garage move of 1 mtr away from the boundary - *No*
- iii. CB/21/02471/FULL - Bandland Nurseries Bungalow - Erection of 8 dwellings to include all associated ancillary works following the demolition of existing bungalow. *Objections raised. Clerk in conjunction with the Planning working group to submit the response.*
- iv. CB/21/02516/FULL - 43 Walnut Tree Way - Retrospective Change of use: Extension of rear garden boundary from unmaintained agricultural land to domestic garden. *No objections.*
- v. CB/21/02897/FULL - Fowlers Farm - Variation of the design to the garage so that it no longer shares a party wall with the neighbouring garage. *No objections.*
- vi. CB/21/02838/FULL - 84 Shefford Road - Erection of single storey rear extension. *No objections.*
- vii. CB/21/00459/OUT - 100 High Street- Outline Application: Development of up to 34 dwellings and associated works following the demolition of 100 High Street with all matters reserved except access (Revised Design and Access Statement, Sketch Layout, Site Access Plans). *Objections raised. Clerk in conjunction with the Planning working group to submit the response.*

Highways and Transport - Regarding speed of traffic on Chapel Road and also the lack of signage indicating walkers on the road, the Clerk contacted CBC Highways Officers to ask if there is anything that could be done to a) reduce speed of traffic and b) warn of pedestrians in the road. Response confirmed that adjustments to speed limits have to be justified with fact-based information including speed data and a documented collision history over a 3 year period. Where there is neither a demonstrated speeding issue nor collision history, such locations are unlikely to be progressed. Where speed limit changes are supported with fact-based information, a statutory consultation and a Traffic Regulation Order are required, which requires the full support of the Police and can be a lengthy process. CBC Highways will consider the issues raised and will carry out a speed survey on Chapel Road and an initial assessment. An update will be provided once CBC have completed their assessment.

The Clerk also reported on Hoo Road Bridleway flooding due to backwash from drains and sewers. CBC have been in contact with Anglian Water who have CCTV'd the sewer along Hoo Road and up to the inlet of the pumping station. They found a

significant amount of debris in the sewer line including lumps of concrete, some drain rods and a large amount of unflushables. These have now been removed, and the sewer has been restored back up to full capacity. This should reduce the risk of future flooding. Anglian Water are also looking to see if any improvements can be made to the pumping station to pass forward more flow especially in periods of heavy rain. CBC have requested a site visit with Anglian Water to further their own investigation of the flooding (including of the ditch network) and will keep us updated.

Cllr Seaman raised again the issue of pending highways improvements by the 15 Shillington Road developers. Cllr Liddiard confirmed that enforcement were dealing with the footway installation, replacement VAS and road markings.

PCC (Police & Crime Commissioner) Grant Fund Application – The Clerk reported that the OPCC advised on Wednesday 30th June that they had awarded MPC a £20k grant subsequent to the application submitted by Cllr. Seaman. Council agreed that the Clerk signs and returns the OPCC Grant Agreement and Acceptance of Grant form, but requests a 12-month extension to the funding deadline and that the Chairman writes to the CBC CEO requesting assistance in ensuring funds can be spent within the deadlines. CBC Highways policies and procedures will be a limiting factor in delivering traffic safety measures within the deadline. It is hoped that up to three further Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) devices can be installed in the village in strategically significant locations with CBC Highways assistance and support.

Environment and Leisure - The Clerk reported that Meppershall Social Club wish to use Centenary Field for a Family Day on 29th August to include stalls, picnic areas, bouncy castle, demonstrations etc. however at present the land is not ours and as soon as handover takes place landscaping works are due to commence. MPC agree to offer the Meppershall Social Club alternative land to use e.g.: Cemetery area for their Family Day on 29th August and asked Clerk to create a Centenary Field Hire Agreement for future use.

The Clerk reported that she has been approached by a men's Saturday league team currently using a pitch in Clifton for use of the Meppershall pitch and potentially use of the changing rooms and social club. Councillors discussed works required to the pitch and when it may be made available to teams. MPC asked the Clerk engage with the team on the understanding that the pitch may not be ready for use until at least spring 2022.

Old Road Meadow (ORM) - The Clerk advised that quotes received to date were in the region of £1.7k which seems expensive for the work required. MPC agreed to approve spend up to £800 on an alternative solution to be found by the Clerk.

The Environment and Leisure working group had met on 5th July to discuss the play area at ORM and its potential redevelopment. The Clerk will present a fully costed proposal for a re-developed play area at ORM in September.

MPC were in agreement regarding planting of special trees at ORM and Centenary Field in honour of HM The Queen and the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The Clerk was asked to include Elizabeth and Philip trees and benches with tree planting plans for the September meeting.

Tree planting plans - The Clerk reported that tree planting plans were discussed at the Environment and Leisure working group meeting and that a resident was advising on potential new trees for planting. Once the 'shopping list' is complete costs will be presented to Council.

Identification of important trees in the village for potential protection – A local resident is currently helping with this and will report back to the Clerk with information.

Village benches – MPC agreed to approve repair and maintenance required to benches

Community Safety and Risk Management - Cllr Seaman attended a virtual Cyber Crime meeting today and will be providing an article for publication in the next Messenger.

The next meeting of Meppershall Parish Council will take place on Monday 13th September 2021 at Meppershall Village Hall at 7.45pm.

John Thompson, Chairman - Meppershall Parish Council

Meppershall Parish Council: Focus on Information and Technology Working Group

Members are: The Clerk and Cllr Standbridge.

Role of the working group:

The front cover of this month's Meppershall Messenger shows the endeavours of the IT working group in completely redesigning and updating the www.meppershall.org website for Council (see separate article). Keeping the website up to date is no simple task because the Parish Council as a Local Government organisation must abide by a multitude of laws on accessibility, compliance and transparency.

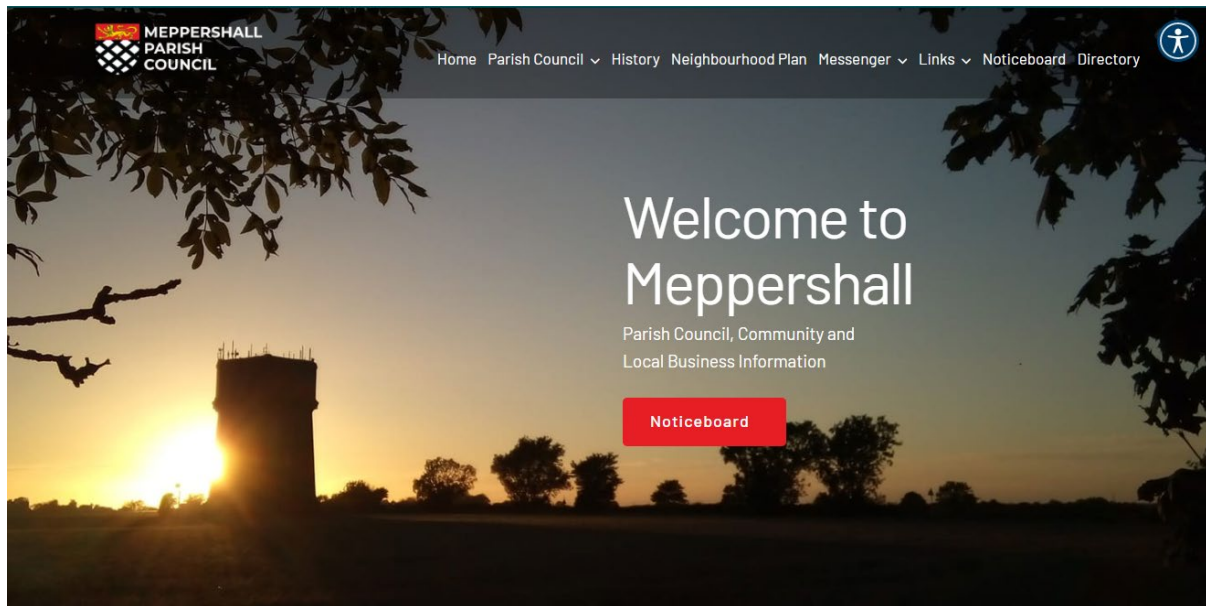
The key focus of the working group is to increase dissemination of important council information to village residents, and thereby resident-council engagement, both through our website site and appropriate social media avenues.

In addition, the working group manage the Councils' communication systems that are also provided to some local organisations and IT infrastructure and back-up systems. They are also responsible for reviewing and proposing changes to relevant council policies and procedures e.g.: Data Protection Policy.

Cllr Standbridge has encouraged us to adapt to the digital age and modernise in a slow and structured way, whilst the role of the Clerk ensures we do this within the legal parameters that govern our activities.

Alessandra Marabese - Clerk to Meppershall Parish Council

PS: Meppershall Parish Council have a number of working groups and committees who assist the council. Membership of these can be found at on our website <https://meppershall.org/parish-council/members-of-the-council/>



Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) News

Internship for 18-22 year olds

The OPCC understands that there are barriers to young people gaining entry to employment, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic which caused a significant rise in unemployment rates.

We want to empower our young people of Bedfordshire and provide an opportunity for 18-22 year olds to join the OPCC Internship Programme where they will gain experience and professional development. Interns will work on projects regarding safety and criminality issues that affect our younger communities. They will be paid above the national living wage whilst delivering positive outcomes for the people of Bedfordshire.

Each round of the programme will run for one month with a team of four interns. There will be three rounds of the programme with a team of four new interns in each round:

- Round 1: 01/09/2021 – 30/09/2021 (closing date 18th July 2021)
- Round 2: 01/11/2021 – 30/11/2021 (closing date – 12th September 2021)
- Round 3: 10/01/2022 – 04/02/2022 (closing date 31st October 2021)

The role will be based at Bridgebury House, adjacent to Bedfordshire Police HQ:

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If you are interested, please apply via the application form (link below). If you prefer, you can answer questions via videos taken on your phone or other device and email them to pcc@bedfordshire.pnn.uk

For more information about the role profile please go to <https://bit.ly/3BxOFyh>

Summer of Fun and Focus

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will be hosting a 'Summer of fun and focus' across Bedfordshire. This initiative, funded by the OPCC, aims to give young people between the ages of 4 and 16 the opportunity to learn skills in focus, confidence and health by attending Boxing and Martial Arts classes run by local businesses in the community. The OPCC have commissioned Boxing and Martial Art instructors across Bedfordshire to offer free sessions to young people over the summer holidays.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Festus Akinbusoye, said "In response to community meetings I've been holding across Bedfordshire, I am funding these free activities to support families and young people this summer. I hope those attending the sessions will acquire skills in a healthy and balanced lifestyle for the mind and body.

Our young people

deserve some fun after the last 16 months and our communities will also be supported by the work our partners will do with them."



Local Plan gets the go-ahead



Central Bedfordshire Council have adopted the 'Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035' at Full Council, following extensive public consultation, public hearings, and a lengthy examination by independent Planning Inspectors.

The Local Plan sets out how and where new homes, jobs and infrastructure will be delivered in Central Bedfordshire; outlining the strategy for ensuring that growth is delivered in the right place and is of the right character and quality.

It is a government requirement for every local authority to have a Local Plan, and our prime location and excellent transport connectivity means that we have particularly high growth pressures. We need to provide more homes and in particular, homes that you and your families can afford to buy and to rent. The Local Plan seeks to ensure a range of different homes are provided, and includes a policy requirement for 30% to be provided as lower cost options, such as affordable rent and shared ownership.

As well as planning for approximately 39,350 homes, the Local Plan sets out plans for new and expanded employment sites, which will create a minimum of 24,000 new jobs. The Local Plan also sets out the requirements for supporting roads, schools, retail, leisure and community facilities, such as new country parks, to help our new communities thrive.

Cllr Kevin Collins, Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration said: "This is great news for residents and businesses across Central Bedfordshire, and I want to thank the thousands of participants who helped shape the plan over the last few years. Producing a Local Plan that balances the conflicting pressures of ambitious government targets for new homes and jobs, whilst protecting the countryside and green belt isn't easy. We need to plan for homes and jobs, and the Local Plan gives us greater control over where they will be built and helps to ensure they have the associated infrastructure to make them great places to live."

Commenting on this news, Meppershalls's Ward Councillor Mark Liddiard said:

"I am pleased to report that the Council agreed to adopt the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035. I voted in favour of supporting the plan because I believe it is the only way to control speculative development. Whilst no plan is 100% perfect and it will be impossible to appease all residents views, it does allow us as a Council to shift our planning teams time onto higher quality design and focus on placemaking as planned developments come forward. For the last 4 years the Council has spent a considerable amount of time and resource of defending speculative developments. I

am pleased to say that we have won more than we have lost but I recognise that some development has been allowed on appeal which has caused frustration in the ward.”

The plan now carries full weight in the determination of planning applications and we will be using this to defend the application in the High Street amongst others.

All Garden Waste Collections are Suspended



Due to severe staff shortages, all garden waste collections are now suspended across all of Central Bedfordshire until further notice.

Despite our best efforts to keep garden waste collections going for as many people as possible, unfortunately, we are experiencing staff shortages at similar level to the early part of the pandemic and we need to prioritise the more critical collections like everyone's black bins, recycling and clinical waste.

The staff shortages are due to a national shortage of qualified large vehicle drivers, this is affecting the whole economy, not just waste services. An increase in staff needing to self-isolate due to COVID-19 is further compounding the staffing issues.

The Council will keep this decision under constant review and update residents through its website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/waste-disruption

We apologise for any inconvenience caused and ask residents to please bear with us at this difficult time.

Use a tidy tip instead

Garden waste can still be recycled at any of the Council's four Household Waste Recycling Centres which are open seven days a week from 9am -5pm, including Bank Holidays.

Additional appointment slots have been added to help residents. Find out more and how to book a slot online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/tidytips

Try composting

Residents with enough space in their gardens could also start home composting their garden waste. Home composting is an excellent way to not only dispose of your garden waste, but also reuse it.

Meppershall Social Club

WOW! Apart from the final result of Euros 2020, the football was enjoyed by young & old on our giant screens. MSC wish to thank you all for your support. A particular thank you must go to the young youths who attended. They often get tarred with the same brush. However, their behaviour was impeccable. Well done England on reaching the final.

MSC have a bumper August for you all, which we hope will appeal to all.

Saturday 7th August, Family BBQ (from 5pm) & Family Disco (from 7.30pm) -free entry, open to all

Thursday 19th August, Eat Feast are back (bar open from 4pm) and we have the mighty voice of Markus to entertain you on the patio, free entry & open to all.

Sunday 29th August, MSC Family Fun Day from 3pm, lots to keep the family entertained, face painting, bouncy castle, magician/childrens entertainer, games, Eat Feast, craft stalls, music from the mighty Markus & the beautiful Gemma Nicole on the patio, followed by the amazing Redneck Jammers (blues, rockabilly, rock n roll) in the main hall from 8.30pm. please note fun day entry is free, ticket required for Redneck Jammers priced at £7.50 available from the social club.

For all events and further details keep your eyes peeled on Meppershall Notice Board & Meppershall Social Club Facebook pages.

MSC are delighted to announce that Quiz Nights, Karaoke & Vinyl Nights will be returning in the very near future

Don't forget we have Bingo Fridays eyes down 7pm, as well as Snooker, Pool & Darts available for your enjoyment.

MSC are committed to keeping you & our staff safe, although restrictions have been lifted please respect other people's space, please continue to wash your hands & use the sanitiser provided to help keep COVID out of Meppershall, above all stay safe!

Finally MSC are striving to become a family friendly venue, where you can enjoy a pleasant afternoon/evening with your children & with the village forever growing there are lots of new families we would like to welcome into the club, MSC therefore remind you that foul language & abusive behaviour carries a zero tolerance approach & you will be asked to leave the premises, the same applies to overly intoxicated patrons displaying unruly behaviour and the staff reserve the right to refuse service.

It's YOUR club, please enjoy it responsibly & with respect, thank you.

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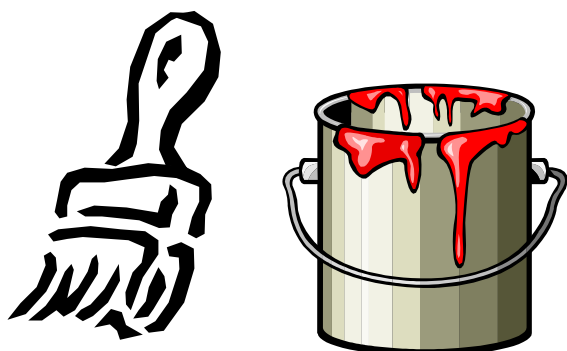
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Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

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

Churchwardens:

Chris Valentine 01462 815971 Pete Clarke 07586 945870

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Message from St Mary's

At this time of the year I usually find myself writing about Summer and our plans for our Sparks Holiday Club for example.

Unfortunately this year it is not possible for us to run Sparks - and still Summer won't seem the same without it - although we are looking towards 2022 with enthusiasm!

I wonder what you have planned for the summer? Andrew and I were fortunate to be able to go to see the sea recently.

Although Andrew likes to travel I am usually quite content around my home - but this time I was, in truth, quite desperate to see the sea! We were able to borrow a lovely cottage near Bridport from a relative - and to explore the beauty of Dorset for a few days.... Bridport, Weymouth and Lyme Regis.

We had hoped to come back via Bristol and the M5 to see our eldest son and his wife and our grandchildren - but sadly Joey was sent home from school to self isolate and all plans had to be re-written.

Beautiful as Dorset was - and it is beautiful - we did come home thankful that we live in one of the most beautiful parts of God's earth anyway!

We have arrived back to an interesting time for Church. So called "Freedom Day" has come and gone, people are asking "What does that mean for Church?", and the Church wardens, the PCC and I are busy trying to work that out!

The approach taken by the Government now is to remove most coronavirus legislation but to strongly promote guidance that emphasises the personal and corporate responsibility of individuals and organisations to protect others and themselves.... so that as churches we have to decide how best to manage the risk to ourselves and others.

This may be a bit confusing as there is likely to be a range of feelings about fear and risk / safety and security, and measures taken to reduce risk will now vary from place to place and event to event. Mindful too, that despite vaccination rates, cases are up, hospital admissions are up and long covid remains an ongoing concern we are advised that our approach needs still to be “cautious and careful.”

We are now busily engaging in new risk assessments and hope that we will get things “as right as possible!” And we hope that you will support us as we seek to make local decisions to keep our community safe as we move forward.

Our hope - our vision - and our goal - as we ease the final lockdown restrictions, is (as Keith said) that we will rediscover again the joy of being together, worshipping together, singing together and yes, having an after church cup of tea and catch up together.

Hoping you have a wonderful summer!

God bless you, Rector Roni



Church News and Events in August and September

We will be considering new arrangements for September, so please check the website/facebook or just give us a call for details. We carefully observe COVID-safe practices and hope to return to a service in church every Sunday in September.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Alternate Wednesdays | 10.00am Holy Communion in church (11 th , 25 th Aug) |
| Sundays | 9.00am Holy Communion in church (15 th Aug) |
| Wednesdays and Sundays | Private prayer and quiet time – the church open for you to sit and visit during the day, 10.00-3.00pm |
| 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 10.30 am Online Morning Worship (Sunday) |

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>

Do you need prayers? We have a small group of intercessors who will continue to pray confidentially for those who ask for prayers. If being held in prayer in that way is something you would like, please talk to Roni (Tel. 339962 / 07533 376880) or Chris Valentine (telephone 07701 039324).



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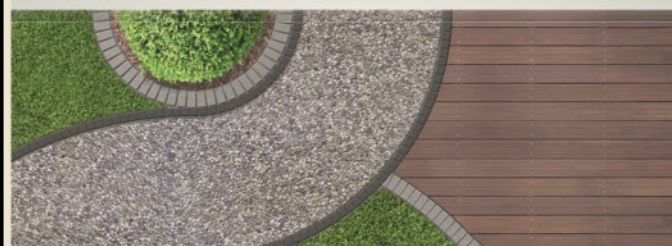
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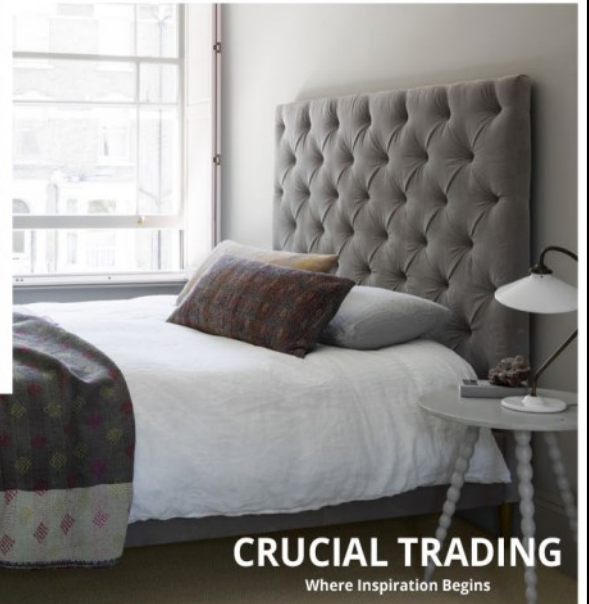
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Financial Matters by Paul Savuto

Reasons to be cheerful

As the country emerges from lockdown, an increasing sense of optimism seems to have filled the air with a much more familiar feel returning this summer. And there's plenty to look forward to over the coming months, with a host of major sporting events including the Olympics to excite and enthral us, audiences returning to theatres and concert halls across the land, and the rearranged Chelsea Flower Show set to extend summer into late September.

Faster recovery predicted

There also appears to be a similar air of optimism in relation to economic matters, with data across the first half of this year proving to be stronger than analysts had expected. As a result, there now seems to be a good chance that major economies on both sides of the Atlantic will have recovered the lost ground caused by the pandemic before the end of 2021.

Global growth forecasts upgraded

This has led to a string of renowned international forecasting agencies upgrading their global growth projections during the past few months. The UN's mid-2021 World Economic Situation and Prospects Report, for instance, revealed an annual growth forecast of 5.4% for this year, up significantly from January's 4.7% estimate. This brighter outlook largely reflects the rapid vaccine rollout in a few large economies, principally the US and China, as well as an increase in global trade.

Diverging fortunes

UN economists, however, warned that inadequate availability of vaccines in many countries was threatening a broad based global recovery. The report struck a note of caution, suggesting that, 'the economic outlook for the countries in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean remains fragile and uncertain.'

Advice remains paramount

While the outlook has certainly improved significantly across the first half of this year, the UN forecast reinforces how the pandemic continues to create a relatively uncertain economic backdrop. This inevitably means the provision of expert advice is a vital component of investor success. We can help you make the most of any investment opportunities that do arise

Dividend decline slowing

From Q2 2020 to Q1 2021, the pandemic cost investors almost £45bn in lost dividends. After such a tumultuous year, the good news is that the latest UK Dividend Monitor¹ highlights that in Q1 this year, dividends fell at their slowest rate since the beginning of the pandemic. In a positive sign, half of UK companies either restarted, increased or maintained their dividends in Q1, compared with a third of firms doing so in the previous quarter. For 2021, expectations are that underlying dividends will rise by 5.6% year-on-year to £66.4bn. The report outlines that banking dividends are returning at low levels and 'there are positive signs from miners, insurance, and media companies.' Managing Director of Corporate Markets EMEA, part of Link Group, Ian Stokes, commented, "During the pandemic, many companies that had been over-distributing, permanently reset their dividends to more sustainable levels.

Most of these now hope to grow their dividends from this lower base. For others the effect of the cuts is more transitory so they will bounce back quickly.”

Equity release availability hits record high

The number of equity release products on the market is the highest it has ever been, with rates over two percentage points lower than five years ago. Data⁷ shows that the number of equity release products now exceeds 500 – the highest on record. The analysis also reveals that the maximum available LTV has remained constant over the past five years, standing at 49% . A competitive market And, with a report from the Equity Release Council⁸ revealing that customers took out 19% more lifetime mortgages in the second half of 2020 than in the first half of the year, the market is proving resilient to the impact of the pandemic, showing that equity release is still a popular method of accessing funding in later life.

Assess your options

Despite growing choice and competitive rates, many equity release customers are paying too much because they are unaware they can switch to a cheaper rate. This is likely due to the fact that equity release brokers aren’t required by the Financial Conduct Authority to keep in touch with borrowers once they’ve taken out a loan, or to inform them if there is an opportunity to switch. However, switching could save you a significant sum. [⁷Moneyfacts, 2021, ⁸Equity Release Council, 2021].

Long-COVID pension pot peril

The pandemic has affected almost everyone in myriad ways, medically, socially or financially; its death toll has been appalling and overshadows all other consequences. The vast majority have fortunately come through the pandemic, but the speed of recovery from its consequences has been variable. Medically, many patients have recovered well, but some with prolonged symptoms have been diagnosed with ‘long COVID’. It’s a similar picture financially. Many people have lost earnings or even their jobs, but economic recovery could help restore their financial health. A minority, however, may suffer the financial equivalent of long COVID.

Insurer and pension provider Legal & General (L&G) has monitored the financial effects of COVID-19 during the pandemic, particularly the long-term impact on the prospective pension income of workers over 50 and thus closest to retirement. In the early months of the crisis, the picture wasn’t too disturbing; last August, only 2% of this group envisaged cutting their pension contributions. Numbers crunched Fast-forward eight months to April this year, when L&G research revealed that some 12% of workers over 50 were paying less into their pension pots because COVID-19 had disrupted their finances. This led L&G’s number-crunchers to work out just how severe the impact could be on the retirements of those one-in-eight (about 1.7 million) 50-plus workforce members.

The message from L&G’s figures is simple: anyone, whether over 50 or under, who has economised on pension contributions during the pandemic should restore them as soon as they can. To give L&G the last word, “A 50-yearold opting out of a workplace pension could be £50,000 worse off by the State Pension age of 67 if they never opted back in and continued working full-time throughout.”

Get in Touch: DGS are Independent and Chartered Financial Advisers. They also hold the Gold Standard for Pension Transfers. I am also a Chartered Financial Planner with

over 29 years financial services experience, so you are in safe hands. For a free review of 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, I'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have. FCA 225814.



The Meppershall Players



Hallelujah and hello Pantomime. (I know I was going to bring you the next part of the Players' history but we'll defer it till the October issue) because.... the Players are back at the STMA getting as much prep done in August as we can - that's sorting costumes, make-up, set, seating plan etc., before we start rehearsals in September for 'Jack & the Beanstalk', a fun for all the family Pantomime.

We'll be performing on Saturday 4th & 11th December 2021 and keeping our tickets at the same value-for-money prices. Matinees 3pm, **all tickets £5**. Evenings 7.30pm, tickets £10 (concessions £8). On sale from Wednesday 1st September - purchased online at <https://ticketsource.co.uk/themeppershallplayers> or call 01462 816336.

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

We are constantly asked two questions when putting on our pantomimes

1. How old do children have to be to watch a Pantomime?
2. What age groups class as concessions?

On the first question, it is very much down to the parent to decide. I (Karen) started taking my sons when they were 3 years old. They loved it, although it was touch and go sometimes when their Uncle Paul was playing the villain as to whether they remembered to boo and not cheer. The Players welcome all ages and charge for tickets from 3 years onwards. Sometimes bringing the family includes young babies and toddlers (as baby sitters aren't always available). We like to call these 'babes in arms' and no charge is made.

On the second question, at any of the Players' productions concessions are 3-17 years and over 60s. Once you hit the ripe old age of 18, you are an adult in the eyes of the law and therefore have to pay full price until you reach the even riper age of 60 (when we believe you deserve 20% discount - especially if like me you started work at 16 and still have a few years to work until the the law of the land sees you as a senior citizen).

Find us on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community), Instagram and Twitter. The Players meet every Monday evening at 7.30pm at the STMA, Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA. Membership is currently free and we welcome people from the age of 9 to 90+, to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc. Interested? We look forward to meeting you. **Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336**

Diary of an Allotment by Zoe Cox

This month I have been talking to some of the people who are in the first year of allotmenting. These are some of the things they have said;

What made you decide to take on an allotment?

I moved to Meppershall a year ago and I always wanted an allotment. Where I lived before you couldn't get an allotment for many years so I couldn't believe I could walk onto one almost immediately. We used to grow vegetables in the garden and ran out of space.

How often do you come down?

In first couple of months we were here all the time but then other things got in the way so now we come down at the weekend and maybe once during the week (apart from the watering which we do most days). We have been told it is better to do little and often but that hasn't worked for us.

How did you decide on which plot to take on?

We were offered a choice of two plots and we took the one which was nearest the water tap. The plots had been ploughed up so we could just get on and make a start.

What has been your greatest learning point?

Weeds grow in all conditions at all times.

What is your top tip to anyone wanting to take on an allotment?

Preparation of the plot is everything so don't rush that bit. Clear the weeds and then wait and see what comes up. Then clear them again. We made the mistake of planting without doing a major weed clearance so it has been tough.

What have you enjoyed the most?

I have enjoyed meeting people. Everyone is very friendly. It has been fun to have somewhere to go during all the covid lockdowns. Of course, we have also enjoyed the produce.

What was your greatest success?

Broad beans and not falling out with the wife over where to plant things.

What was your greatest disappointment?

The slugs getting the lettuce. They munched through the whole lot in one night.

Are you organic or ghostbusters level chemical pack?

We didn't use any weedkillers this year but will do a big weed clear next year to give us a fighting chance and then will think about keeping ourselves organic.

Would you recommend an allotment to friends and family?

100% yes because there is nothing like munching on strawberries picked from your own allotment.

Shefford Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

The gardens surrounding us are very colourful and in full bloom with the green of the grass enhancing the colours of the flowers which shows everything at their best.. We can also enjoy the evenings with beautiful skies we are experiencing showing the sun sinking in the West.



By the time this newsletter reaches you we will be two thirds of the way through the year with the wretched Covid still showing it's evidence and reminding us not to take chances. People do seem a little more relaxed especially with the majority of people sticking to the guidelines given us by the Government and it is only a few who decide they will do as they want!!! and spoiling it for everyone else.

People have been telephoning me enquiring about trips that had to be cancelled. I am trying to re-instate these trips during the early part of 2022 and will let you know as soon as possible..

The ever popular Thursford which was due to take place on the 15th November (Sunday) was sadly cancelled but we have been issued with a date for 2021 which is Sunday 14th November so hopefully by March 2022 we can see most things return to 'as it was' or as well as can be!

The Warner's break at Gunton Hall is booking well and not too far to travel. I have been assured that everything is in place for your safety and included two day trips possibly the Tuesday and Wednesday during that week, one to Gt.Yarmouth on Market Day and the other to Wroxham & Norfolk Broads leaving a free day on Thursday. The price is £289.00 depending on the type of chalet. Optional Insurance is £14.95.

In 2022 I intend to book a visit to Audley End House and Gardens – not too far to travel but lovely surroundings. Also to Lavenham. Further details of these trips will be given in the next newsletter hopefully October 2021

My grateful thanks to everyone who kindly sent postage for replies, this was a great help and very much appreciated..

In the meantime, enjoy the Summer months, Look after yourselves and keep safe and let us hope the weather will continue to be kind.

Enid x

In Memoriam

The whole Messenger sends deepest condolences to the family and friends of :

Ronald (Ron) Mitchell on Saturday 29 May aged 88. Condolences to Mary and family.

Jean Ford on Wednesday 7 July aged 88. Condolences to Jill, David, Rae-Anna and family.

Doreen Lawrence on Monday 19 July aged 96. Condolences to Wendy, Peter and family.

Birthdays

The Messenger sends birthday best wishes and greetings for the coming month to...

August

Joan B - 85

September

Derek M - 93

Jennifer P - 83

If you would like your birthday to be mentioned in The Meppershall Messenger, just drop us a line. If you are over 80, we will present you with a card and birthday cake!

Introducing Safer Communities Involvement Officers

CBC's team of three Safer Communities Involvement Officers provide a reassuring link for residents and Town and Parish councils, and are committed to ensuring that Central Bedfordshire is a great place to live and work. They proactively respond to concerns about a range of community safety issues, including low level anti-social behaviour, dog fouling, fly tipping and much more.



The officers give advice, support and guidance while providing a visible presence within communities across Central Bedfordshire. Working with partner agencies, including Bedfordshire Police, local councillors, other CBC departments and independent charities enables them to research, design, and support delivery of positive community safety solutions. When out and about in our community they value the chance to engage with residents, so please stop them for a chat and take the opportunity to raise any community safety concerns you have. Your feedback is enormously useful to help them respond to local needs.



Latest News From Your Local Library



No changes to Covid Secure arrangements after 19 July

Please be aware that in line with Central Bedfordshire Council's current policy, we will **NOT** be making any changes to our Covid Secure arrangements after Monday 19 July. Many thanks for your co-operation.

If you are planning to visit your local library may we remind you of the following:

- Face coverings must be worn when using the library (unless you have an exemption).
- Please sanitise your hands as you enter the library, there are also hand sanitising stations available within the building.
- The number of visitors will be limited. So If possible, please visit alone, or in your household or support bubble.
- Please scan the QR code as you enter, alternatively you will be asked to complete a Track and Trace form.
- You may find that the layout of the library has changed. Please take note of any directional signage and floor markings that have been put in place aid queuing and movement around the library.
- You will need your library card to use our Self-Service equipment.
- Computer usage is limited to 45 minutes per day for essential usage and needs to be prebooked. Please telephone your local library to book your 45 minute slot.
- Please do not enter the building if you feel unwell or should be self-isolating.

Library facilities not yet available

In order to help with the flow of customers within the library the following facilities are not yet available, study or reading areas, use of laptops or tablets and magazines and newspapers.

In order to maintain social distancing library activities and events will not be restarting at this time and staff will not be able to provide technical support to customers using library computers.

Public toilets remain closed.

Bedford Model Engineering Society - Summerfield Miniature Railway

We Are Open!

BUT "Normality" has not yet resumed.

We had hoped and intended to re-open to the Public after July 19th and run our separate railways for you in much the same way as we did pre-Covid including removing the need to prebook and the re-introduction of longer trains. However, having announced this shortly after the Government's confirmation that the regulations were to be done away with from July 19th, it has become increasingly apparent that the Covid infection rate is getting much worse and likely to continue to do so. This has led to a great deal of disquiet amongst both our members and the public. So what to do?

Well, we apologise for any confusion these late changes might cause, but we have decided on the following :

We will attempt to run all three railway rides on the pre-Covid routes.

The Summerfields Line (main line) will remain as single carriage trains with extended couplings (as we have them already) and in order to even out the flow of passengers we will go back to pre-booking on-line.

Summerfield Line trains will stop at Hammer Hill for passengers to alight and enjoy the other rides and facilities at that station.

Train and platform staff will continue to wear face coverings, and, in common with many other organisations from shops through to airlines and London Transport, we would ask that passengers do likewise, for the protection of others when in close proximity.

The Station Buffet will remain a take-away service.

The picnic tables at Hammer Hill will be available for your use, as will those at Haynes End.

Things you need to know.

Prices for 2021 are:

Summerfields Railway (return ticket from Haynes End to Hammer Hill) £2.50

Springfield Line £1.00

Winterfield Line (the raised track) £1.00

We will continue to offer the card payment option introduced during the Pandemic - in fact it is now our preferred payment method.

Toilets - as you may know the toilets do not belong to Bedford MES but are provided as a communal facility by our landlord for those on the Summerfields Barns site.

Although they are not our responsibility, we will endeavour to check them on a regular basis. We will be providing hand sanitiser in a dispenser just outside the toilet block.

Hand sanitiser will also be available at various points.

In common with other visitor attractions we have had to move to booking in advance in order to better manage passenger numbers on our site, and **all** payments will have to be made using contactless card.

We use your details to process your booking and facilitate your visit, but we are no longer required to take contact details of visitors for Track and Trace purposes. Data will not be retained beyond one month after your visit and will not be used for purposes other than those stated.

Therefore, we are asking that everybody who wants to ride our trains, first makes a booking online. Payment will still be taken at our Ticket Office but, again as other venues, **only** by contactless card.

Our trains will carry a maximum of six passengers with a maximum of four adults. Please do not attempt to book more than this on one train.

So, please pick a time and date on the booking form on our website, complete with your details and submit. You will receive a confirmation email by return.

In the event that you have to CANCEL we would **really** like you to let us know (before your day of travel if at all possible, please), by clicking the REPLY button to the confirmation email and dropping us a note.

Since we started on-line booking, we have often been fully booked well in advance. However we have found that between 15% and 20% of the folk who have booked simply do not bother to show up, thus denying others the chance for a ride (and us some much needed funds).

We prefer not to take payment at the time of booking but what we will do is reserve the right to offer the slot to anyone waiting for a ride if you are not checked in at the ticket office entrance a minimum of FIVE minutes before your train departure time. Please, please make sure that you are checked in at least five minutes before your train is due to depart – if you are later than that, we will not be able to guarantee your ride.

And lastly, it is a *railway* so, just like the "big" trains, departure times may slip a bit from your booked time due to operational circumstances. We will do our very best to be on schedule, but please be patient with us if we should be running late!

Thank You for your understanding and for supporting our railway - as always, we are looking forward to seeing you.

For further details and booking please refer to www.bedfordmes.co.uk.



Mid Beds Cancer Group
MEPPERSHALL & ALL surrounding areas

Now during Covid restrictions, log in 'Online' from anywhere!

Informal cancer group for patients, families, friends, carers who wish to meet others for support & information. Due to Covid-19 lockdown, we continue to provide support via telephone and our **online 'group meet'** and individually for those who wish to connect during this difficult time.

As things stand, our next online meetings will be on Saturday 3 July and 5 August 2021, 11am.

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 334 851 8015

We'd love to hear from you! Daksha & Phil Trivedi,

Email: daksha.trivedi@btconnect.com

Tel: 01462 813943; M: 07961 377526

The Countryside Code



Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
- take care with BBQs and do not light fires
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo - bag it and bin it - any public waste bin will do
- care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory



MEPPERSHALL - WANDERBUS

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| As of 6 th MAY 2019 | | “Stops at all Bus Stops on Request” | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| W2 BEDFORD | - Every Wednesday | OUT | RETURN |
| Shefford Rd, all stops | | 09.00 | RR |
| High St., all stops | | 09.01 | RR |
| Rectory Rd | | 09.03 | RR |
| Bedford - Corn Exchange (St Pauls Square) | | 09.45 | 12.00 |
| W3 BIGGLESWADE | - Every Monday | OUT | RETURN |
| Rectory Road | | 09.27 | RR |
| High Street, All Stops | | 09.28 | RR |
| Shefford Road, All Stops | | 09.29 | RR |
| Biggleswade - London Rd Retail Centre | | 10.05 | 12.05 |
| Asda Superstore | | 10.10 | 12.00 |
| W5 A1 RETAIL PARK, BIGGLESWADE -2ND & 4TH Fridays | | OUT | RETURN |
| Outside Entrance of New Village Hall | | 13.38 | RR |
| Shefford Rd – all Stops | | 13.40 | RR |
| Asda Superstore | | 14.11 | 16.05 |
| A1 Retail Park, Biggleswade | | 14.16 | 16.00 |
| W6 SHEFFORD | - Every Friday | OUT | RETURN |
| Rectory Road | | 09.18 | RR |
| High Street, All stops | | 09.19 | RR |
| Shefford Road, All stops | | 09.20 | RR |
| Shefford - St Francis Way nr. Morrisons Supermarket | | 09.26 | 10.50 |
| W9 ST NEOTS | - 2 nd Thursday of Month | OUT | RETURN |
| Rectory Rd | | 09.16 | RR |
| High Street, All stops | | 09.17 | RR |
| Shefford Rd, All stops | | 09.18 | RR |
| Roxton Garden Centre (On request) | | 10.00 OR | 12.20 OR |
| St Neots - Market Place | | 10.10 | 12.10 |
| W11 MILTON KEYNES | - 3 rd Thursday of Month | OUT | RETURN |
| Rectory Rd | | 09.16 | RR |
| High St., All stops | | 09.17 | RR |
| Shefford Rd, all stops | | 09.18 | RR |
| MK - Midsummer Blvd / Debenhams & M&S | | 10.10 | |
| / John Lewis | | 10.12 | 13.15 |
| W12 HITCHIN | - Every Tuesday | OUT | RETURN |
| Shefford Rd, All stops | | 09.18 | RR |
| High Street, All stops | | 09.19 | RR |
| Rectory Road | | 09.20 | RR |
| Hitchin – All stops to Bancroft Stop D | | 10.05 | |
| Hitchin – Bancroft Stop G (Outside Paperchase) | | | 12.10 |
| W14 WELWYN GARDEN CITY | - 1 st Thursday of Month | OUT | RETURN |
| Rectory Road | | 09.14 | RR |
| High Street, All stops | | 09.15 | RR |
| Shefford Road, All stops | | 09.16 | RR |
| WGC Central Bus Station | | 10.00 | 12.15 |

EXCURSIONS – 4TH Thursday of Month – call For Details – E: Thewanderbus@gmail.com

**NEW TIMETABLE AND NEW SERVICE ROUTES COMING SOON FROM 3rd OCTOBER 2021 TO THE FOLLOWING PLACES:
BALDOCK, BEDFORD INTERCHANGE RETAIL PARK, CAMBRIDGE and St. ALBANS.**

UPDATED EXCURSIONS 2021 - See The Christmas Market Trip on 25th November

| DATE | DESTINATION : Subject to change should Government guidelines become restrictive again. | ENTRANCE FEE as per Current Website | BUS FARE |
|--|--|--|--|
| Thursday 22nd JULY | Cottesbrooke Hall and Gardens, Northants. Cottesbrooke is a wonderful Queen Anne house dating from 1702, set in delightful award winning gardens in rural Northamptonshire. | £10.00 guided tour of house & includes gardens | £10.00 Pick Up 12.30/13.00 Return depart 16.30 |
| Thursday 26th AUGUST | Castle Ashby Gardens. Castle Ashby is the ancestral home of the 7th Marquess of Northampton. Wander through its gardens and take a walk through history. Set in the heart of a 10,000 acre estate, the 35 acres of gardens are a combination of several styles including the romantic Italian Gardens, the unique Orangery and impressive Arboretum. | £10.00 for Gardens | £10.00 Pick Up 10.00/10.30 Return depart 15.00/15.15 |
| Thursday 23rd SEPTEMBER | Wimpole Hall, Cambs. The mansion, at the heart of this estate, is evidence of Elsie Bambridge's success in creating a home. Intimate rooms contrast with beautiful and unexpected Georgian interiors, including Soane's breathtaking Yellow Drawing Room and wonderful plunge bath. The fascinating basement corridor offers a glimpse into life below stairs. Stroll around the colourful parterre garden and wander through the Pleasure Grounds to the Walled Garden, abundant with fruit, vegetables and beautiful herbaceous borders. Free for National Trust members | £18.95 House & Gardens. £10.00 Gardens only. Free to National Trust Members | £5.00 Pick Up 10.00/10.30 Return depart 15.00/15.15 |
| Thursday 28th OCTOBER | Stockwood Discovery Centre & Gardens, Luton. The former Stockwood Park Museum was transformed in July 2008 into the Stockwood Discovery Centre - a spectacular visitor attraction and museum for the 21st century. A paradise for garden enthusiasts, Stockwood Discovery Centre is one of the few places in the country where the work of acclaimed artist Ian Hamilton Finlay can be seen on permanent display. His Improvement Garden is a classical garden in which the sculptures are an integral part of the landscape. Once part of the original Stockwood House walled areas, the Period Gardens reflect the changing styles of gardening in this country. New areas include a contemplative Sensory Garden, a colourful World Garden and a Medicinal Garden highlighting the usefulness of plants. | Free | £5.00 Pick Up 10.00/10.30 Return depart 15.00/15.15 |
| Thursday 25th NOVEMBER | Waddesden Manor - Buckinghamshire - Christmas Market The fair will be set against the backdrop of the floodlit North Front of the Manor with its 20ft Christmas trees. Soak up the sights, smells and sounds of Christmas with hand-selected stalls all housed in charming wooden chalets, surrounded by twinkling trees. | £15.00 p.p. entry. | £10.00 Pick-up 11.00/11.30. Return departure 19.00 |

To Book : Call 0300 123 3023 or email: thewanderbus@gmail.com

We do require a deposit of £5.00 p.p. for any excursion. 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)



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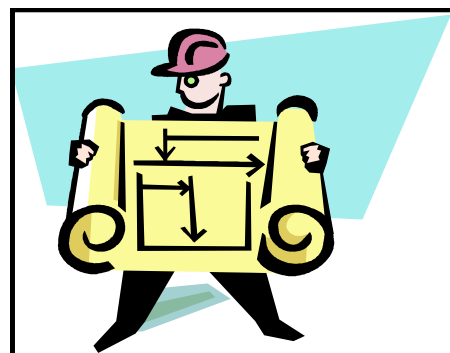
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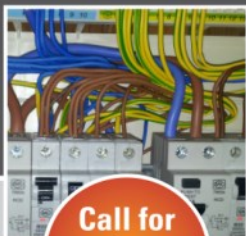
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Useful Contact Details in Meppershall

DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School and Post Office/Village Stores

DOCTORS, DENTISTS, PHARMACIES

| | |
|---|--------------|
| NHS Direct | 111 |
| Dr Griffiths & Ptrs | |
| Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive, Shefford SG17 5FS | |
| Appointments | 01462 810034 |
| General queries, prescriptions etc. | 01462 818620 |
| Drs. Collins, Garragher and Neal | |
| 109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ | 01462 850305 |
| Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford | 01462 814020 |
| Shefford Dental Clinic, 99 Hitchin Road, SG17 5JB | 01462 648465 |
| Lloyds Chemists, 7 High St Shefford | 01462 813283 |
| Shefford Pharmacy | |
| Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive | 01462 818633 |

Police Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

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

Hospitals

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Bedford Hospital | 01234 355122 |
| Lister Hospital, Stevenage | 01438 314333 |

Utilities

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

Central Beds Council 0300 300 8301

CBC councillors:

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

Meppershall Parish Council

Parish Council Clerk Alessandro Marabese clerk@meppershall.org

Member of Parliament

Nadine Dorries MP dorriesn@parliament.uk

St Marys Church

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

Library

High St, Shefford 0300 300 8067
Check times: Closed Mondays. Tuesday - Friday 9 - 6, Sat 9 - 4.
Pre-order for collection.

Whitbread Wanderbus Service

Stephanie Kirby thewanderbus@gmail.com

Shops

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

Schools

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

Organisations

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

The Team and Collation Dates

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

DISCLAIMER

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

THE TEAM

| | | | |
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| Co-ordination | | Email: enid.pamment@gmail.com | |
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| | | Email: meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org | |

| Collating Dates 2020-21 | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| October Issue | September 27 th | February 2022 Issue | January 24 th |
| November Issue | October 25 th | March 2022 Issue | February 28 th |
| December-January Double Issue | November 29 th | April 2022 Issue | TBC |
| Please contact Colette to confirm arrangements (contact information above). | | | |

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