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Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

Everyone here on the Meppershall Messenger team wishes you a very happy Christmas and a positive, productive and peaceful new year, 2022. This double-month issue of the village magazine gives you lots to read over the holidays!



Special thanks to Andrew Pain for several of the feature articles included here. Thanks also to Ben Jarvis for his important thoughts on mental health that we can all learn something from – and congratulations on his amazing Scottish Highland adventure and fundraising effort for MIND. You will also find an article on the BBC Children in Need achievements of a group of local young people, reaching an astonishing fundraising total. These efforts of our young people make me feel good about the future – despite all the challenges we seem to face locally and nationally at the moment. Well done.

Christmas and New Year will hopefully bring us all a chance to stop and breathe – hopefully a chance to enjoy the company of the people we love. Getting older, financial hard times, illness, bereavement or just plain old bad luck can mean Christmas is not quite so warm and cosy for some people. And some folks will be working through the holidays, some may be serving the nation in places near or far. So if you are in a fortunate position, look out for neighbours and friends – let's try to spread the Christmas joy just that little bit further this year.

Last month we covered several regional stories and it is great to see the more local village feel this month. The things you read in the Meppershall Messenger are really all down to YOU – your articles, info and letters – so PLEASE keep them coming. This is your magazine and we are proud and pleased to cover YOUR news. However, there are some regional topics that you won't find in the articles but we do want to mention. Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF) will be running its annual fundraising appeal in support of its hardship fund which supports people living in poverty in our region. See www.blcf.org.uk for more info. Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) is offering a Green Homes Grant Scheme for those with a combined household income below £30k in homes with poor energy performance ratings – for example to support insulation in walls or lofts. For more info call 0300 300 8767. Lastly, CBC is running a scheme to support Skills and Qualifications for Work, providing a whole range of fully funded online courses for those aged 19 and over (subject to eligibility). Whether it's business, retail, hospitality, IT, community work, health or social care, drop a line to customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk to find out more.

Finally... sheep! There will have been some raised eyebrows at the new electric fence in the field behind the manor house and church, where Meppershall will be visited by a new flock in the coming months. But seeing livestock and new farming activities in the village will be wonderful. Please remember to keep dogs on leads in that area and take good care of our new fleecy friends. There are minor diversions to footpaths (but maintaining the paths which are public rights of way plus other courtesy routes). Thank you to the land owners and farm workers whose hard work makes the rural aspects of our village so beautiful. Baaa, humbug (...and a Merry Christmas).

Christmas

HAZARDS

Have a
Pet-Safe
Christmas

Christmas, always a busy and chaotic time of year, has the potential for large quantities of food and presents to be left unattended. Curious pets, particularly dogs, may investigate and eat gifts, including non-edible ones left under the tree, food in the kitchen or chew on plants decorating the house.

TOXIC FOODS

Contact your vet for advice if your pet has eaten any of these foods:

- Chocolate – never leave chocolate on or under the tree if there are pets in the home. This would include boxes of chocolates, chocolate advent calendars and chocolate yule logs.
- Grapes and dried fruits (currants, sultanas, raisins) including Christmas pudding, Christmas cake and mince pies.
- Onions (and garlic, leeks, shallots and chives) including sage and onion stuffing.
- Alcohol.
- Macadamia nuts.
- Leftovers, particularly mouldy foodstuffs.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS

The following are generally considered of low toxicity and may cause mild gastrointestinal upset:

- Silica gel.
- Christmas decorations.
- Wrapping or crepe paper.
- Candles.

Contact your vet if you are concerned about your pet after eating these substances.

The following is more hazardous and can cause significant gastrointestinal effects:

- Pet poun – contact your vet for advice.

CHRISTMAS PLANTS

The following are generally considered of low toxicity and may cause mild gastrointestinal upset:

- Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*).
- Holly (*Ilex* species).
- Mistletoe (*Viscum album*).
- Christmas trees: pine needles are also a mechanical irritant.
- Ivy (*Hedera* species).

Contact your vet if you are concerned about your pet after eating these plants.

The following is extremely hazardous and can cause severe kidney effects in cats:

- Lilies (*Lilium* species) – all parts of the plant are toxic to cats, including the pollen. Contact your vet immediately for advice.



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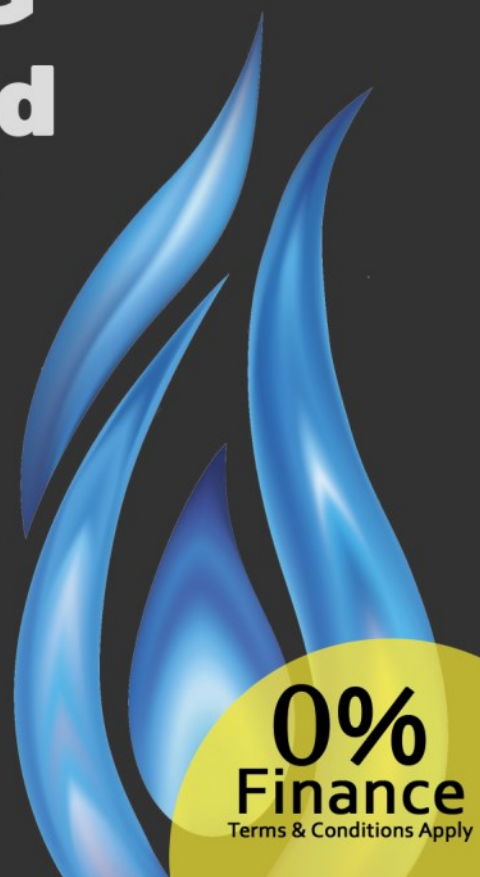
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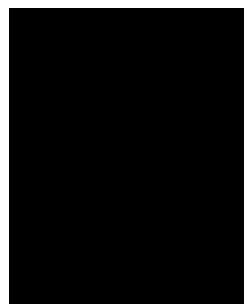
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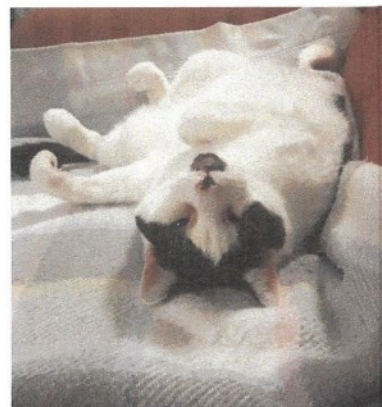


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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

It is now nearly a year since Mr Kevin Cadd and 300+ residents of Meppershall raised a petition on road safety concerns with Central Beds Council Traffic Department. At the traffic meeting on the 15th December the Chairman Councillor Delgado who has ultimate responsibility for all road safety improvements stated the following: new vehicle speed measurements would be undertaken on Shefford Road and other approach roads to the village. He agreed that 40mph buffer zones should be installed ahead of the 30mph signage at entrances to the village this to ensure that vehicles were not leaving a 60mph zone to immediately enter a 30mph section.

All other actions required in the petition would await the findings of the vehicle speed measurements. To date the only actions I have seen are the painting of Dragon teeth and 30mph signage on Shillington Road. What happened to the other traffic calming measures on this road such as pedestrians on road warning signs (no footpath here) and the replacement of the VAS signage warning approaching vehicles of their speed? Is the excuse here the delay of having an S278 raised on the developer? What happened to the requests for 20mph signage on the High street and roads off, also Fildyke Road and the length of Shefford Road? Pedestrian crossing points (especially for children) seemed to have been ignored? Nothing done on Chapel Road 60mph, especially at the junction with Fildyke Road 30mph.

I am led to believe the Parish Council have been awarded £20k by the Beds PCC for traffic safety initiatives so let's hope Beds CC Traffic department will work with the Parish Council to ensure this money is put to good use within Meppershall. Perhaps our Ward Councillors Brown and Liddiard will help in this matter? One can only hope by the time the December issue of the Messenger is published Central Beds Council has at least completed some of the residents' concerns.

Yours Faithfully

A concerned resident

Highland Hike for MIND by Ben Jarvis

In August this year I took on the challenge of walking from Edinburgh to Inverness across 7 days in aid of MindUK. Across the 7 day period I traversed 134.4 miles, took over 233 thousand steps, and raised £805. But alongside the statistics and stories of the trip, I also went on a completely different type of journey. Prior to the trip I lived a life of distractions (both positive and negative) which never allowed me to think too deeply into things. Upon being alone with only my thoughts to keep me company, I began to delve deep into troublesome thoughts and without the aforementioned distractions, it was hard to pull myself away.

Throughout the trip, many difficult times arose. Tears, panic, and sleepless nights occurred. But for those I am thankful. It was these times that allowed me to take a step back from the chaotic normality we all usually dwell within and really think about what I have to



appreciate in life. Many things came to mind of course, some that I do not think about or let alone show my appreciation for enough.

Ever since returning, I feel as though I am more in touch with my mental health.

Within our society, mental health is seen as a taboo and a lot of us find it difficult to talk about. However, as with most things, the start is always the hardest. That being said, speaking out is the best decision I made. More than that, it is the only action I have taken so far that has provided me with a long-term coping mechanism and led me to meet some incredible people. A common misconception is that people no longer care about each other, but this strictly is not true. Since opening up and seeking help, I have felt more loved and accepted than ever. I now partake in regular meetings to talk with other people experiencing similar mental battles, a weekly group session where I am educated on how to live with anxiety and cope in heightened situations, as well as carrying out routine practices to maintain a healthy mindset and lifestyle.

The point of this message is not to just tell my story, but also to let it be known that you can talk about this, and there are people who will listen. I urge you, if you are suffering, please seek assistance because you do not have to suffer alone. The more that we talk individually, the more that society talks as a whole.



In accompaniment to my efforts collecting charitable donations, the young and talented local artist, Chloe Thorne (pictured left) has painted a picture replicating one that I took whilst in the Cairngorm National Park of the Scottish Highlands. To raise further donations, together, we are raffling this amazing painting to be won by one of you. Raffle tickets will be £1 each and can be purchased by calling Lorraine Jarvis on 07811865259.

24-Hour “GAMEATHON” Smashes its Target Again

A group of local teenagers from Samuel Whitbread Academy have smashed their fundraising target for the 4th year running.

Jack Careem, of Meppershall, created the 24-hour Gameathon back in 2017 to raise money for BBC Children in Need. Each year Jack assembles his Gaming Team and they take on the challenge to play board games and video games for 24 hours. Making up the team this year were Jack Careem, Charlie Williams, Finley Hampson, Ivan Barns, Ben Miles-Graham, Luke Stevenson, Joseph Stevenson, Daniel Bookbinder, George White, Benjamin Mercado, Beau Casey, Jake Racher, Harvey Carter, Daniel Batchelet, Kiera McGilley, Ben Springett, Owen Barnett, Zephyr MacGregor and Milo Nizzardi.

The Team had been fundraising for several weeks before the Gameathon which resulted in a spectacular amount raised. The total stands at £4236 for Children in Need.

Also, Jack was nominated for the Sir Terry Wogan Fundraiser of the Year Award. He made it to the final 4 and was interviewed by Michael Ball on BBC Radio 2. The winner was revealed on the Children in Need Live Appeal Show and although Jack did not win he was the runner up which was amazing!

Jack and the team have received some great support this year including some celebrity messages from Harry Potter’s Professor Sprout, Miriam Margolyes, former Prime Minister Theresa May and former high jump Olympian Dalton Grant.

Jack and his friends want to say a massive THANK YOU to the local businesses that kindly and very generously supported the 24hr Gameathon 2021. Special thanks to:

- Meppershall Village Hall
- Mary Revels and Rogers Bakery for the sandwiches, doughnuts and sausage rolls that helped keep them going
- Marcia Bairstow for the yummy chocolate cake
- Sanjay at Budgens Meppershall for the donation of “supplies”
- Shefford’s Tesco Express, Morrisons and Co-op who also chipped in to help
- Shefford Mayor Ken Pollard, who dropped by to support, and ended up joining in
- AND - the 219 people who have donated so far....

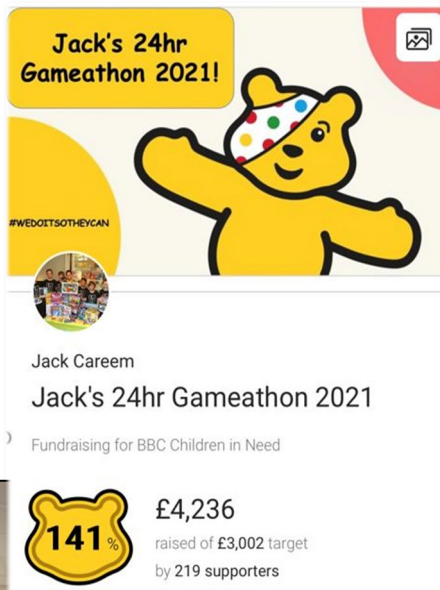
Thanks to you all

Playing a variety of board and electronic games for 24 hours straight is tough. It takes dedication and commitment to dig deep and keep going for so long. But Jack and the

team did, and they raised a spectacular amount from the local community. And you can STILL donate. The Gameathon website is here:

<https://www.the24gt.com/>

Jack and his team say “We do it so they can”. They play games for the 24-hour Gameathon so that other, less-fortunate children can also play one day. Whether through illness, poverty, or just sheer bad luck, not every child *can* enjoy playing. By giving their time and their effort, Jack and the team raise money to provide help for other children that need it. And well done to them for it. Great effort, and a terrific result for a terrific charity. Roll on 2022...



Left: Jack's Just Giving page, and Jack with BBC Children in Need host Michael Ball at the BBC:

Below: The “24 Hour Gameathon” 2021 team in the Village Hall. Not tired at all...yet!





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Meppershall Parish Council – Approved Minutes

An Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council (MPC) took place on Monday 11th October.

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

- Garden Waste – Collections will take place from 18th to 30th October. During this time there will be no food waste collections.
- Tidy Tips – Booking no longer required although some waiting time is evident at peak usage hours.
- Adults Carers Survey – A survey will be sent to unpaid carers of adult social care customers in October 2021. CBC, as part of a National Survey, will be sending out the survey to a sample of around 800 carers, who look after a family member, partner or friend in need of support or services. The survey asks for views on whether services received by carers help them in their caring role, their life outside of caring and the Carers' perception of services provided to the cared for person. There are also questions to find out what effect the pandemic has had on them since March 2020. Any queries regarding the survey should be forwarded to insight@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- Free School Meals – The Government has provided more money for Free School Meals and CBC / Schools will be providing eligible families with vouchers up to the February 2022 half term.
- CBC Parking fees and charges consultation is currently under way and residents are encouraged to respond.

Questions / comments from the public:

- The draft Neighbourhood Plan is a good piece of work, however it refers to two pubs in the village. The Airman is not situated in the centre of the village but on the A507 far away from village residents and refers to itself as a Hotel, Bar, Restaurant and Wedding Centre, not a pub. *Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group requested that the comments be submitted online so that they could be recorded with any others received.*

Procedures, Consultations and Legal

- i. **Co-Option** – One application for co-option received, however the applicant has not contacted either the Clerk or the Chairman regarding their application. They have been asked to do this prior to Council considering the application. Another email indicating interest has been received.
- ii. **Procedures**
 - a. **Creation of a Community Emergency Response Team**
CBC would like every parish to have a CERT WhatsApp Group to assist and provide information in times of need. There are 80 listed 'emergencies' when they could contact the CERT group from flooding to things like a gas or electricity outage, mains water burst lasting number of days, snow blocking roads, unexploded bomb etc. *Council resolved to create a CERT WhatsApp Group and publicise.*

b. Council resolved to re-adopt MPC Meeting Recording and Filming policy v1.0

iii. Representation on Village Hall Committee

The Meppershall Village Hall 1960 conveyance and trust deed states that MPC (together with four other village organisations) shall appoint a representative member to the MVH Committee. The Committee is the Trustees and as such the MPC representative will become a Trustee. Councillors agreed that it is very difficult to act in the best interests of both organisations. However, a central focus of both roles is to act in the best interest of the village and its residents. If MPC is not represented on the committee then it cannot participate in decision making. The Clerk reminded councillors that any representative of MPC appointed to the MVH Committee must update their declarations of interests. *Council resolved to appoint Cllr Thompson as MPC Representative to MVH Committee.*

iv. Meeting invitations

Council resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Thompson attend the BATPC AGM and that Cllr Thompson attend the CBC Town and Parish Council Conference.

v. IT – Website and Email

Cllr Standbridge reported that the website and all emails have been moved to the new hosting supplier and that an application has been submitted and paid for the Meppershall-pc.gov.uk domain. There have been 517 total individual website users and the top page is the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation. The Chairman wished to repeat the councils thanks to Cllr Standbridge for the work required to change over hosting supplier.

vi. Centenary Field Parish Facilities

a. The Chairman was pleased to report that the Settlement Agreement between MPC, MVHT and Croudace is acceptable to all parties and that the Settlement Agreement and Land Transfers involving MPC, MVHT, Polehanger Farms and Croudace can now be prepared for signing. Once signed the Clerk will initiate remedial works however the timing of those works will now need to be clarified with the contractor. Huge sincere thanks were expressed to the Clerk for the considerable amount of work put into getting all parties to reach an agreement and for the work ahead. *Council resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Morgan engage with contractors to organise work required to Centenary Field and installation of gym equipment.*

b. The Clerk received an email from a reporter at the COMET newspaper, requesting a statement on the transfer of land to the Parish Council for a story to be published by them. After discussion with the Chairman it was agreed the Clerk should respond confirming that due to the nature of the request and the sensitivity of the situation, at present the Clerk was not personally able to provide any sort of statement or “words, quotes or extra background information” on behalf of the Parish Council “for a story”. *Council resolved that the Clerk prepare an announcement to the village on the handover to be issued via Facebook, website and Messenger.*

vii. Stocken House Green Space

The Clerk and Cllr Thompson met to review an email from Davidsons regarding handover and to revise the draft Management Agreement provided by them. Councillors asked the Clerk and Cllr Thompson to agree the specification of the land at handover e.g. stone picking, seeding etc., and to check the CBC defects period on landscaping.

Council resolved that they appoint an Arborist to assist in monitoring works at Stocken House.

Finance

i. Budget Review

The Clerk provided Councillors with reports on budget versus year-to-date actual. No issues were identified although it was noted that some expenditure is higher than budgeted for but was approved at time of purchase.

ii. Reserves

The Clerk provided a breakdown of current Earmarked Reserves including details of any movement in or out in this financial year. Councillors were satisfied with current Earmarked Reserves.

iii. Orders for the payment of money - A schedule of payments was distributed at the meeting for approval and authorisation.

Planning and Housing

i. CB/21/04236/FULL - Vimyridge, SG17 5LN - Proposed garage conversion to habitable space.

No objections

ii. Ox-Cam Arc Spatial Framework Consultation - Councillors discussed the Ox-Cam Arc and the Clerk noted that Meppershall will be one of the villages within the Ox-Cam Arc. *Council resolved that the Clerk register MPC for receipt of correspondence from the Stop the Arc Group.*

iii. Development Management Committee meeting on Wednesday 20th October in relation to CB/21/02885/FULL - The Pigling, Woodview Nurseries, SG17 5LL - Replace existing mobile home with a single storey two bedroom permanent dwelling - Councillors discussed their understanding of previous negotiations between the residents of The Pigling, CBC and MPC that dated back to 2008. It is the understanding of Ward Councillors and MPC, that CBC would take ownership of the site whilst a farm tenancy was in place. Once the farm tenancy was no longer in place the land would be transferred to MPC for the benefit of the village. Whilst councillors accept that every planning application is to be judged on its' own merits and material planning considerations, they also consider that a decision on the granting of planning permission for this site should be delayed until the current and future ownership of the site is confirmed. MPC currently consider themselves to be the future beneficial owner of the site and CBC will be required to list the mechanism of transfer to MPC. *Council resolved that pending any legal update on the status of the Pigling, Cllr Crossley attend the DMC meeting and make MPC representation, and that the Clerk write to CBC Estates Team, CBC CEO, CBC Leader and CBC*

Chair of DMC asking for a response to our previous correspondence requesting clarity of ownership of The Pigling and that consideration of the application at DMC is deferred.

Neighbourhood Plan - The Chair to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group reported that the consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14) has started and that 2 drop in sessions have been held at the Village Hall. There were only 4 visitors to the drop in sessions and currently only one submission has been received. Advertising of the Draft Plan consultation has taken place with banners erected in locations around the village, via Facebook (both via MPC and the Village Noticeboard), an email has been sent to previous subscribers and a leaflet will be distributed to all homes in the village with the Messenger. After the consultation ends on 31st October the Steering Group will need to consider the responses received, update the plan and then request its' examination by CBC.

Highways and Transport - The Clerk advised that the grant of £20k from the OPCC for highways improvements has been received into the MPC bank account and moved to Earmarked Reserves.

The Clerk was asked to write to the CBC Highways Officer requesting an update on traffic monitoring to assist in deciding on possible positioning of the VAS's as previously requested prior to the school summer holidays.

The Clerk reported that CBC had carried out a speed survey on Chapel Road. Results of the speed survey and assessment were issued in August 2021:

- The traffic count was conducted over a period of 7 days from 23 – 29 June 2021 and the location was selected as an appropriate position by an experienced Highways Engineer.
- The results indicate that the majority of vehicles are travelling well within the 60mph limit, with mean speeds of around 41-42mph and 85% of vehicles travelling at or below 48 mph, see summary results below:

Report ID	Site	Direction	Start Date	End Date	Posted Speed Limit (PSL)	Total Vehicles	Mean Speed	85%ile Speed	(24 Hour) 5 Day Ave	(12 Hour) 7 Day Ave	(24 Hour) 7 Day Ave	%age HGVs
Site	Site 35 - Chapel Road (10m south of waterworks cottages), Meppershall	Northbound	Wed 23 Jun 2021	Tue 29 Jun 2021	60mph	6855	42.0	48.9	1093	853	979	0.39%
Site	Site 35 - Chapel Road (10m south of waterworks cottages), Meppershall	Southbound	Wed 23 Jun 2021	Tue 29 Jun 2021	60mph	7322	40.9	47.5	1165	901	1046	0.27%

- Two minor incidents have occurred at the A507 end of Chapel End over the past 3 years and a serious accident took place in the evening, close to Fildyke Road. These incidents are not considered to be related to the existing speed limits and signage.
- CBC have also looked at signage and road markings along the road and do not consider that further signage is required. There are warning markings and signs present on the bends in the road to the north of the waterworks cottages.

- CBC recommend that when walking along rural lanes, pedestrians should stay on the right-hand side of the road to see oncoming traffic and wear bright clothing to ensure maximum visibility.

CBC will not be progressing any further action with regards to speed limits or warning signs along Chapel Road at this time. A resident is disputing the location of the assessment equipment however CBC Highways have responded to say that the location of the automatic traffic count was assessed and selected by an experienced highways engineer and that adjustments to speed limits must be justified with fact-based information, including speed data and a documented collision history. Where there is neither a demonstrated speeding issue nor collision history, such locations are not progressed. CBC have confirmed that the traffic count results provided do not support the need for any further assessment and do not consider that a speed limit reduction is required for Chapel Road in Meppershall.

It was also noted that the footpath adjacent to the 15 Shillington Road development has been completed but the replacement VAS, village entrance sign and road markings have not been installed, the bell mouth entrance to the site is missing its final surface and street signage is still not compliant with CBC specifications. *The Clerk was asked to contact CBC enforcement again regarding the above matter.*

Environment and Leisure - Councillors discussed a request to consider the purchase of planters and flowers to be installed under village signage at village entrances from a resident who currently maintains the planter at the Shefford Road village entrance. Councillors believe that the village entrance signs are installed on highways land and therefore planters should not be placed under them. There is also a potential health and safety issue in maintenance and watering of planters.

Health and Safety - Councillors had previously received reports of the play areas inspections and noted that although there were no issues of high importance requiring action a quotation for remedial work suggested in the reports was to be obtained.

Staffing - Community and Environment Officer - The Clerk advised that an interview for the role was planned for tomorrow. Councillors agreed that if the Clerk and Cllr Merryweather were not happy with the candidate, the Clerk should arrange to re-advertise the role. If the Clerk and Cllr Merryweather are happy with the candidate then the Clerk will call an extra-ordinary meeting to consider the appointment, terms and conditions, and all other relevant matters. As this meeting will require discussion on the suitability of the candidate and particulars of their employment it was suggested that members of the public and press be excluded.

John Thompson - Chairman - Meppershall Parish Council

Shefford Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

Christmas greetings from Enid and team – no updates this month.
More in the new year!





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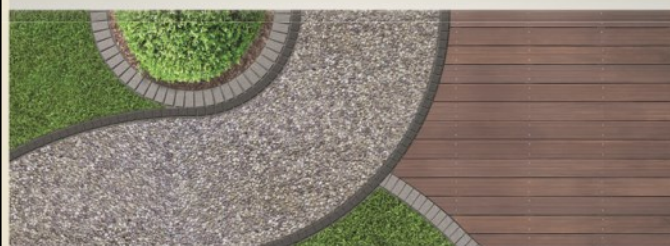
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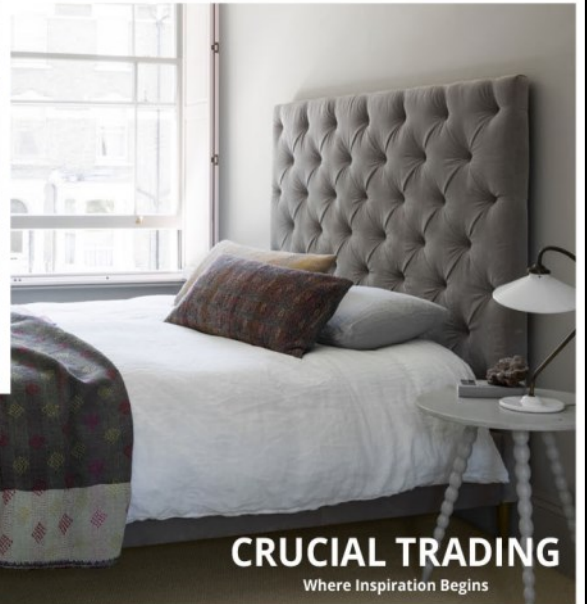
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CBC Wants Your Views on its Adult Carers Strategy

Central Bedfordshire Council has launched a public consultation on its new Adult Carers Strategy, which outlines how it will support unpaid carers who are caring for family, friends and neighbours living in Central Bedfordshire.

Did you know?

Estimates suggest that there are around 30,000 unpaid carers in Central Bedfordshire - around 10 per cent of the local population – providing care for a



few hours a day, a few days a week or around the clock. This has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with Carers UK reporting that 81% of carers across the UK are providing more care than before lockdown.

How CBC will support unpaid carers

The Council's new strategy Adult Carers Strategy contains four priorities the Council hopes to put in place over the next five years to ensure unpaid carers:

- are offered more appropriate information, advice and support, and are given opportunities to share their views and to help to shape local services
- have the opportunity to have a family and community life that includes things of interest to them alongside their caring role
- remain emotionally and physically well
- receive training to enable them to support their cared for person better

It was developed with input from Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (BLMK CCG), carers and voluntary and community organisations that deliver services and help represent the views of people they support.

Have your say

CBC is keen to hear from as many people as possible, but in particular they want to hear from people who provide care and whose lives are impacted by their caring responsibilities, and those who receive care.

The consultation document and the consultation questionnaire are available online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations. The consultation is open until 3 March 2022.

Meppershall Parish Council is looking to set up a CERT WhatsApp group.



What is a CERT?

A CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is made up for organisations and volunteers willing to respond to a village emergency and to provide support. They are vital in increasing our resilience during emergency incidents such as fires, flooding, disease outbreak, major transport disruption or a loss of utilities.

How does a CERT help the community?

During an emergency, a village CERT may be called in to action by Central Bedfordshire Council to work alongside other emergency responders. As volunteers members are all local, they bring a level of expertise and local knowledge that the emergency services often rely on. We spend the vast majority of our time preparing for large scale emergencies that fortunately rarely occur, however it is often the small-scale emergencies that can have a negative impact on a community and cause disruption.

Who knows what's going to happen?

What would we do if our village water supply suddenly ceased together with the gas supply because a burst water main has ruptured a medium pressure gas main? Water should be restored within 2 days, but the gas supply could take up to 5 days. It's freezing and the forecast is -2 degrees at night over the next week. Snow is also predicted. Villagers need to be careful not to overload the electricity network as this could blow the sub-stations causing widespread power outages. Who will help our vulnerable residents and help the emergency services co-ordinate help for all? The residents of Lockerbie never imagined a 747 falling from the sky and landing in their village!

What makes a good CERT volunteer?

Essential Qualities

- Effective communicator and able to follow instructions
- Logical problem solver and team working
- Aware and respectful to the Emergency Services
- Respectful, friendly and honest
- Willing to work in the elements

Desirable Qualities

- Able to work under pressure
- Knowledge of local area
- First Aid Trained
- Full UK Driving licence

Want to join us?

Initially we would like to set up a WhatsApp group who could react and assist in the event of an issue in the village. We will then consider setting up an official CERT. If interested in joining us please email the Parish Clerk at lovemeppershall@meppershall.org with your contact details and how you think you can help the Meppershall CERT. The Clerk will then contact you with more information.

GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)



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On **Thursday 9th December** the GNOMES are hosting our regular monthly coffee morning in the **Walnut Tree Café** at **Meppershall Village Hall** from **10.30am**. We will be having a festive theme to get everyone into the Christmas spirit: there will be Christmas Carols and festive songs, **so come along, have a cuppa from the Café, and get into the Christmas spirit with our singalong.**

Our November coffee morning was well attended and had a Remembrance theme. Everyone marked the 2-minute silence and shared memories. As we approach Christmas, we would like to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas.



The **GNOMES** are available to help even during the festive period. The phone will be manned, and our volunteers are ready to assist where we can. Our Facebook page is regularly updated with useful information on help and resources available locally and please remember we are here to help.

Whatever your need, call us on **07760 793921, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm** and we'll try our best to assist. 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. If we can't assist, then we will try to find someone or some organization that can.

Have some spare time? Like to help people in your community? Then please consider volunteering on a one-off or regular basis. Give us a call or email gnomes.secretary@meppershall.org and join our friendly team of insured and DBS checked volunteers to help those who need a helping hand at times.

Trugs and Trowels Gardening Club

Trugs and Trowels enjoyed a fabulous Christmas flower arrangement demonstration in November which was presented professionally by two of our talented members, Carolyn Cranswick and June Martin. The produced designs were raffled off at the end of the evening.

Our December meeting will round off the year with a Christmas artwork and picture quiz social evening. Everyone welcome - mulled wine and mince pies will be available and we shall be holding a raffle.

A very important reminder: our first date back in the new year is Tuesday 11th January 2022. Our speaker is Robert McCleud who will be talking to us about pruning. We are fortunate to have him as a speaker which is why we have changed the usual meeting day.



I wish you all a fabulous Christmas enjoying time with your family and friends,

Maryika, 01462 851729



Meppershall Village Hall

Notice of Annual General Meeting

To be held on Sunday 5 December 2021 at 6pm in the New Village Hall, Meppershall, SG17 5AB

AGENDA

1. Receive & Approve the minutes and summary of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 27 October 2019
2. Receive and approve the Trustees & Treasurers reports with accounts for the years to 31st March 2020 & 2021
3. Update on uses and finalisation of construction of the New Village Hall
4. Election of trustees
5. Any other business:
 - Notified before the meeting
 - Arising at the meeting

Notes:

Item 1:

The report of the previous meeting is available by request or on the website:
<https://www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk>

Item 2:

The accounts will be available prior to the meeting on request by post or email:
trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk or via the website
<https://www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk>

There was no AGM in 2020 due to Covid restrictions.

Item 3:

Updates have been available in The Messenger, on the website or discussion with the Trustees on a regular basis including Covid restrictions and mitigation procedures.

Item 4:

Details of the current trustees are:

TRUSTEES

David Birch
 Dave Foskett
 Graham Jones
 Graham Walker
 Gordon Cordes

Specific responsibilities

(Property construction & treasurer)
 (Property construction & maintenance, IT)
 (Property construction & legal matters)
 (Premises Maintenance, Bars & Licensee)
 (Entertainment & Bars)

Nominations for the role of trustee and if available details of specific skill sets that can help in the running of the Village Hall are welcome, preferably ahead of the start of the AGM. Nominations can be sent by email to trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk or to one of the addresses below.

Item 5:

Items for other business should preferably be sent by post or email to trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk at least two working days before the AGM so that appropriate research or obtaining information to respond fully can be collated before the meeting.

Postal details:

David Birch
The Brook, 18b Shefford Road
Meppershall
SG17 5LJ

Graham Jones
10 Taylors Close
Meppershall Beds
Beds SG17 5NH

Email contact details: trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Website details: <https://www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk>

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Update from Festus Akinbusoye, Police and Crime Commissioner



Since being elected, I have met with over 100 Town and Parish Councils online, attended four Parish Council meetings, and a Full Council meeting at each of our three local authorities.



In addition to my weekly visit to commissioned partners and organisations, I have held six Community Engagement meetings across the county so far and been on patrol duties with our officers.

At a recent Annual Parish Council meeting organised by my office, which was attended by Senior Leadership Team from Bedfordshire Police, I shared the following with councillors:

Community Policing Plan

As part of my Police and Crime Plan, priority number one is 'investment in community-based and community-led policing for rural and urban areas'.

Together, the Chief Constable Garry Forsyth and I are committed to focussing on 'proactive policing'. Residents have told me they want to see more of a visible, proactive, problem-solving police presence in our communities.

It is therefore my responsibility to hold the Chief Constable accountable for delivering on the people's policing priorities.

In response to this, we have agreed to increase the number of our Community Policing Team in Bedfordshire to:

- 67 Community Police Officers
- 51 PCSOs
- 14 Sergeants

The focus will be on the officers being visible, proactive, dedicated to their local areas.

I recognise there is still more to do in tackling speeding, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour. However, I need to ask your help in continuing to provide us with data and activity about crimes. This helps with the deployment of officers. To report a crime, you can do so by calling 101 or anonymously by contacting Crimestoppers.

We are also now recruiting for Community Special Constables. These are volunteer police officers who will be trained and deployed to carry out policing duties in their local area.

Early intervention and prevention

A big focus of mine is early intervention. One of my campaign pledges was to roll out 'Out of Court Disposal Orders' which allow officers to refer low risk, persistent offenders to local support services.

What this means is, we keep persistent offenders outside of the criminal justice system while referring them to support services to deal with issues such as drug and alcohol addiction as a condition of the order. Since launching this, I am pleased to say 100% of those referred so far have not re-offended since the scheme started.

This frees up police time, saves tax-payers money and reduces repeat victimisation of our residents.

I've also been spending lots of time at schools across the county and have weekly visits in my diary. I believe it is important for young people to have a positive understanding about policing and know that they have power to make positive choices.

Due to recent covid guidelines from Local Authorities, we have postponed our inaugural Bedfordshire-wide schools debating competition to early 2022. The competition is for 15–18-year-olds. This will create opportunities for developing confidence, critical thinking, and life skills.

Plans are also well under way for the Summer of Fun 2022 initiative which is part of investing in early intervention programmes to safeguard our young people, encourage healthy choices and improve self-esteem.

I am also investing money to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence by focussing on perpetrators, while changing the narrative from advising victims on personal safety.

Force Control room

I am working with the Force to invest in the effectiveness of the Force Control Room.

They are the first point of contact along with the Community Policing team. We've recruited nine new members recently with almost 20 police officers providing expert support. By April 2022 we will be above our establishment level for the first time in several years.

I will be reviewing this towards the end of the financial year to see what more can be done to improve retention and quality of service to the public.

Speed Watch Volunteers

Our Speed Watch team is currently looking for more volunteers. Speed Watch is a fantastic, educational scheme aimed at raising awareness of speed restrictions and road safety. Those captured speeding receive a warning letter from Bedfordshire Police and persistent offenders' details are passed to our local policing team for further action. If you're interested, you can email WatchSchemes@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

I remain optimistic about the future of Bedfordshire Police and our plans to cut crime, prevent harm, and protect victims. Our concerted effort on tackling crime as well as its root causes will pay off.

As ever, if you'd like to get in touch, you can contact my office by calling [01234 842064](tel:01234842064) or by emailing pcc@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

COVID Info: Have You Had the Jab?

It is easy to book a vaccine appointment online (www.nhs.uk) for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy or to find a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site. You may also be contacted by your GP surgery to book an appointments with them. You can call 119 free of charge or use the NHS textphone service on 18001 119 or the NHS 119 BSL interpreter service. The following info is correct as of 29 November – but please check NHS information for the latest details.

Everyone from the age of 12 will now be able to get a 1st and 2nd dose of a vaccine.

Booster vaccines (a third dose) are being offered to those over 18 and are given at least three months after the second dose.

Getting the vaccine protects us individually and it protects the people around us. Wearing a mask also helps you as well as the people around you. Let's make it a COVID-secure Christmas and New Year, keeping our village life going by playing it safe.

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. Many 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.

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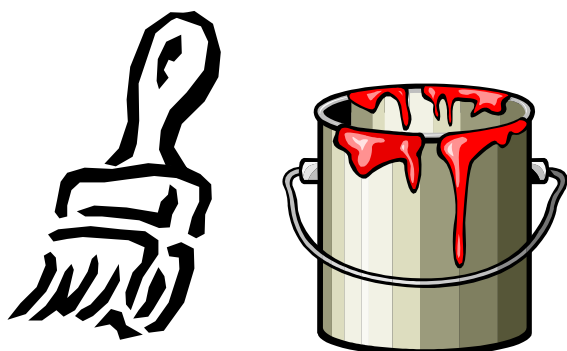
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Please visit our website www.blmkccg.nhs.uk/PolicyConsultation
for further details of the consultation.

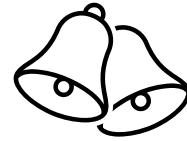
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of the consultation documents please email
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www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk † facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

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

Churchwardens:

Chris Valentine 01462 815971 Peter Clark

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Message from St Mary's

As I was thinking about Christmas and New Year I was reminded of the old saying "You don't know what you've missed until it's gone."

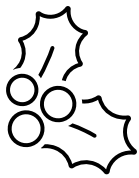
One year ago we were all making plans for the festive season, putting our decorations up, filling the freezer and cupboards with food and planning where everyone was to sit around the Christmas dinner table. But if you recall, quite close to the event, Christmas was cancelled. Turkeys remained in the freezer, guest lists vanished and many of us experienced a much smaller, cosier event than we have perhaps ever experienced. It was a "Lockdown Christmas!"

Having had plans ruined last year, my hope is for something more normal this year! Many of us will be looking forward with extra expectation to the festivities; looking forward to the time spent with families and the joy of Christmas lights adorning the streets. For some people however, Christmas is a time of loneliness and exclusion, for others it is a time still to work whilst others relax and rejoice. Our thoughts and prayers are for all those who will not be able to celebrate, relax and spend time with others over the coming weeks.

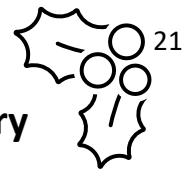
But it reminds us of the first Christmas. A young couple forced to undertake a long journey, far from home and on arrival, no accommodation to be found. And so, on that first Christmas day a young couple were forced to bring a new life into the world in the squalor a dirt of a stable, filled with animals. And yet, from the squalor of that Bethlehem stable, Christians believe that Jesus, God's only Son, was born. Surrounded by the now familiar donkeys, angels, shepherd and wise men, the saviour of the world came to reconcile us to God.

May you find this coming season to be filled with love and laughter, food and friendship.

Keith Callard, Reader, St Mary's Church Meppershall



Church News and Events in December and January



Sundays	11.00am	Morning Worship and/or Holy Communion
Every Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion in church
Tuesday to Saturday	10.00-3.00	Private prayer and quiet time – the church open for you to sit and visit during the day
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>

Santa's Float Touring the Village	Sunday 12th December (Shefford Road end – from 4pm) Monday 13 th December (High Street end) – from 6pm
Come and Sing Carols	Sunday 19th December, 7pm - in the Village Hall
Christingle	24th December, 3pm
Christmas Midnight Communion	24th December, 11.30pm
Christmas Morning Service	25th December, 11.00am
Boxing Day (Sunday)	26th December, 11.00am

The church is here for you this Christmas – please come and enjoy it on your own, with a friend or with your family. A warm welcome awaits you in the beautiful setting of the oldest building in the village. Please come and say hello 😊

We observe COVID-safe practices and have returned to a service in church every Sunday. If you are planning to come to a service, it is helpful if you can drop us an email or phone call so we can plan seating to ensure social distancing.

Online services also still continue every day.

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).

Meppershall Social Club

Hello everyone, MSC hope you are all keeping safe and well.

For those new to the village, we extend a warm welcome. Meppershall Social Club at the Village Hall is a multi-use facility. The Social Club hosts regular family-friendly entertainment and features a well-stocked bar, a large patio area and games room. We are child and dog friendly with all-ability access. No membership required until January! Please do pop in and enjoy the facilities.

Our opening hours are:

Mon – Wed	18:00 – 23:00
Thur	17:00 – 23:00
Fri	17:00 – 23:30
Sat	14:00 – 23:00
Sun	13:30 – 22:30

Don't forget, we have snooker, pool & darts for you to enjoy!

Friday 3rd December, Soul Vibes Radio, present a night of soul, jazz, funk & disco with DJ Paul Baker, 8-late.

December 10th will be a Karaoke Night with CLUBSOUND Karaoke hosted by Stu. December 10th is also the date for Xmas Bingo and don't forget that bingo takes place every Friday, eyes down 7pm. (over 18s only).

With Christmas fast approaching, plans are afoot to entertain you on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. On Christmas Eve we have a kiddies early disco followed by a late disco (children are welcome to stay). On New Year's Eve we have a disco where you can dance into 2022. Please look out for further information on Meppershall Social Club and Meppershall Notice Board Facebook pages.

Membership will recommence at MSC from 1st January 2022, this entitles you to reduced price drinks and enables us to provide you with entertainment for all - members will receive a reduction on entry fees for any entertainment we may charge for. Fees are as follows:

Membership Type	Annual Fee
Family (inc children aged 16 and below)	£15
Single (Aged 17 years – full 12 months)	£5
Single (18 years and over)	£7.50
OAP Single (60 years and over)	£5
OAP Joint (one member must be 60 years or over)	£10

Please purchase your membership by 31 January 2022.

All that's left is to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas & a Happy and Peaceful New Year. We look forward to welcoming you soon. MSC.



The Meppershall Players



It's Panto time (Oh no it's not) Oh yes it is. I can't believe it! The year seems to have gone so quick. The Players are so looking forward to being back on the stage again with our New Panto 'Jack & the Beanstalk' performing at the STMA Digswell Hall, 10 Hitchin Rd, Shefford SG17 5JA on Saturday 4th & 11th December 2021; Matinees 3pm **all tickets £5**, evenings 7.30pm, tickets £10 & Concessions £5 (3yrs-17yrs & 60yrs and over)

Tickets are on sale **NOW** and can be purchased online at ticketsource.co.uk/themeppershallplayers or call 01462 816336 to reserve. Online ticket sales will cease 24hours before each performance Tickets may be purchased on the door (cash sales only) for any of the performances, providing there are vacant seats. (Look on our fb community page on Saturday 4th & 11th December for availability)

You'll notice we have dropped the price for our Evening concessions from £8 to £5. This decision was taken as one of our members asked "what if a family can't make the matinees or the matinees sell out"? We thought that a valid point and with the price of so many things going up at present, it might make a difference to a family if the price came down for 17yrs and under & 60yrs and over.

Come and see if young Jack and his Mum can save their farm and the village of little simpleton and keep rags the dog, or lose it all to the despicable Jasper De Villeman

In this fun for all the family show suitable for all ages, start the Christmas festivities early with the Meppershall Players' JACK & THE BEANSTALK

The Players will meet on Monday 13th December at the usual time of 7.30pm at STMA Digswell hall and will then break for the Christmas season, resuming their meetings on Monday 10th January at the aforementioned usual time & place

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a beautiful Christmas & a bright New Year

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

The Players meet every Monday evening at 7.30pm at the STMA, 10, 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

THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS PRESENTS

A pantomime
by
Karen Mitchell

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Sat 4th & Sat 11th Dec 2021

At the



Matinees 3pm – All seats £5

Evenings 7.30pm – Seats £10 (Concessions £8)

Seats are on sale at ticketsource.co.uk/themeppershallplayers

Or call 01462 816336 to reserve tickets only

Follow the Players via The Meppershall Players' Community Facebook Page




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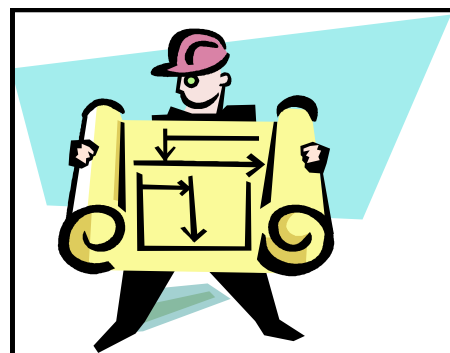
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Behind the Scenes and Henlow Vets by Andrew Pain

Those of you who have had occasion to visit Henlow Vets recently will have noticed building works going on. And probably wondered what they were up to. Well, they've more or less finished now, and we were invited for a tour to see what has been done. The answer is – a lot.

Graeme Mason, who with veterinary surgeon business partner Dr Anna Marshall-Brown, started the practice in 2017, showed me round the other day, and the changes and improvements in the 4 years since are astonishing. From a start-up with just Anna, Graeme and 2 staff, there are now state-of-the-art facilities, including 4 consulting rooms, operating theatres/treatment rooms, laboratories and testing facilities, laser therapy, a specialised ultrasound/scanning area, an isolation unit, temperature-controlled dispensary, dedicated dental room/theatre, separate areas for cats and small animals away from dogs, a dedicated area for wildlife and RSPCA rescues – and 37 strong team!

It's a bit like the Tardis in there - incredible what they have built in this modest space.



Two of the new rooms, a lab and the dental theatre

They have also launched an in-house 24-hour emergency service, run by the many of the same team who see your pet normally, so he believes that the care they offer will be far better than the contracted-out facilities generally offered out of hours. The continuity of care is seamless, they have all your pets' records to hand and a dedicated care plan for each pet being kept in.



Graeme is rightly proud of the fact that Henlow Vets have been only marginally affected by the effects of Brexit and Covid. He told me how they adapted to remote working, team bubbles and carpark consulting. The practice is now a decent sized local employer “Almost all of our staff are local, and we have a lot of part-time working mums who are happy to work around school times etc. It suits them, and it works really well for us”.

Amongst these staff are 9 vets, 11 qualified nurses, 4 veterinary care assistants (who free up the nurses for the specialised tasks, rather than admin and constant cleaning jobs), ensuring the best care possible. Henlow Vets is also a nurse training practice, providing keen youngsters with a career path.



Dental Suite



Cosy cages



Walk-in kennels



Laboratory

Soon to come are a second ultrasound area, specialised clinics for cats and dogs as well as a “crash room” for staff on emergency duty overnight (complete with shower room). A particular innovation he told us about involves an intriguing use for leading-edge facial recognition software. Not for identifying Fido, but in the lab, to identify different crystal structures in urine samples! Weirdly, different conditions result in distinct crystal shapes, and this software delivers a faster and more accurate diagnosis there and then, rather than sending samples away and waiting for results. Who knew?



Dog minor ops and preparation

It was a fascinating insight into a well-equipped facility, offering great services and care to our pets, right on the doorstep. Graeme is also keen and willing to help out with injured wildlife, as some of you will have seen on the village Noticeboard recently. They will always try their hardest to keep any animal alive, and will never euthanise a healthy animal. Another benefit to living in Meppershall, given the wildlife all around us!

So a big thank you to Graeme Mason and the team at Henlow Vets for showing me round and explaining all the facilities they’ve managed to install. The Messenger wishes them all the best for what will be a very successful future.

10 Christmas Hazards All Pet Owners Should Be Aware Of

It's so tempting, isn't it – giving your beloved pet an extra-special Christmas treat! After all, it's a special time; it's only once a year, a little bit won't hurt them, he loves it, etc etc...

But Vets Now reported almost EIGHT TIMES the normal number of chocolate poisoning cases last Christmas and Boxing Day. Most owners know it's poisonous for pets, but animals can help themselves if we're not careful. And chocolate isn't the only hazard....

1 Chocolate. Well, we knew that. Didn't we? Just don't...unless it's a specific pet chocolate. And don't leave them around the tree or dangling. Too tempting.

2 Mince pies and Christmas pud. Raisins, sultanas and currants are all toxic to dogs. So no nibbling!

3 Blue cheese. Contains Roquefortine C. Not at all good for dogs. Even too much cheddar can be harmful...but especially blue cheeses.

4 Tinsel. Loads of fun to play with, perhaps, but can cause dangerous intestinal blockages when eaten. So be careful when playing.

5 Macadamia nuts. Often used in biscuits, but toxic to dogs. Stick to dog treats.

6 Garlic, chives, onions. Common in stuffing. All are poisonous to dogs. Keep it on the plate!

7 Snowglobes. Ok, nobody's going to feed their cat a snowglobe. But they can get dropped and broken, and imported versions (and what ISN'T imported?) probably contain antifreeze, a spoonful of which can kill a cat...

8 Candles. Look lovely on the hearth and table. But pets don't realise they can burn when nosed. Brushing up against them can singe fur. And if knocked over...? So be careful.

9 Fairy lights. Cats in particular are curious, and have been known to chew on the wire, and this can have consequences. Be especially careful with higher voltage sets.

10 Alcohol. Even a small amount (a spoonful) can cause liver and brain damage for cats and dogs.

We're sure that all our readers love their pets, and will do right by them at Christmas. Find out if your vet offers an emergency service over the holiday, just in case. And make sure every pet has a good Christmas. If they get hold of the carrot left out for Santa's reindeer you might be fine... but the mince pie and sherry could be a different story...!



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Shefford Osteopathic Clinic

Identifying Tension Issues

During stressful periods, a lot of us hold tension in our shoulders. Beyond the obvious pain and tenderness, other problems can arise from this.

Neck Pain and Headaches

The muscles on the tops of your shoulders attach to the neck. Tension here can quickly lead to tighter muscles in the neck itself.

Some headaches are caused by problems in the neck. Tight neck muscles can also cause tooth clenching and jaw problems. Prolonged desk work can multiply the problem if it encourages craning the neck forward. This stretches the front of the neck, pulling the jaw open. Our bodies subconsciously make the effort to keep the jaw closed, so the muscles tense up around the joint.

Your osteopath works to release the muscles in question, but also to get to the root cause. This may involve changes to your desk set-up.

Breathing Problems

The role of some of those tight shoulder muscles is to assist with breathing. This may be why stress caused them to tense up in the first place. Good, efficient breathing is led by the diaphragm. When the diaphragm is tight or limited, the shoulder muscles work harder. However they become fatigued more easily than the diaphragm and may ultimately even restrict the movement of the upper ribs.

Diaphragm dysfunction can also play a role in acid reflux.

If you've been under more stress than normal and noticed these symptoms, we may help you get to the root cause. Find out more by visiting SheffordOsteo.com or calling 01462 811006.

Birthdays

The Meppershall Messenger team sends best birthday wishes in December to:

Jean H who will be 82 and Joyce S who will be 93

And in January...

Barbara C who will be 86 Brenda W who will be 91 and Phyllis C who will be 95.

In Memoriam

With great sadness at the death of Kenneth James Vintner (Ken) on 29th October aged 80. Our deepest condolences to all the family.



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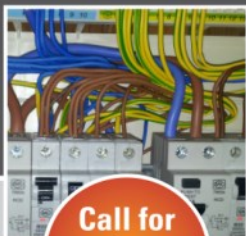
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TAKE A RIDE ON THE..... WANDERBUS

Check out
all the
photos on our
blog

We continue our monthly journey... John, the Editor of LivingLife Magazine, catches the Wanderbus to Hitchin!

THE ROUTE

This time round I decided to catch the W12 service from Meppershall to Hitchin.

THE JOURNEY

I jumped on the bus at the bus stop outside the Sugar Loaf pub on the High Street in Meppershall, which arrived promptly at 9.18am, as always, I headed for the row of seats at the back of the bus. Today's volunteer bus driver was Graham, and on all accounts, he gets amazing reviews from his regular passengers.

On the bus I got chatting to Jean, Vanessa, Pat and Linda, a friendly bunch of ladies who seemed quite excited about their trip to Hitchin. Jean said, "We've been using this service since it started, which is probably about 10 years ago". Clearly very loyal Wanderbus customers!

The route picks up passengers at Shillington, Higham Gobion, Barton-Le-Clay, Hexton, Pegsdon and finally arriving in Hitchin at just after 10am, with the return bus departing at 12.10pm, so you have just over 2 hrs to explore.

THE DESTINATION

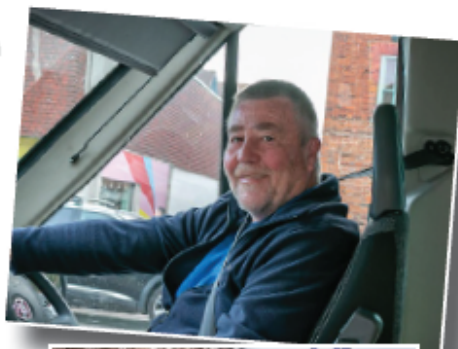
We arrived at Hitchin, alighting at Bancroft, right in the town centre. I asked the group of ladies why they get the Wanderbus to Hitchin, their response, "Shopping, but mainly for the chat and the social on the bus. Once off the bus, we split up, otherwise none of us would get anything done, but we usually meet up at 11.30am in the Market Square for a coffee or even Greggs. Our first point of call is always the charity shops." Fortunately, the Wanderbus stops right outside the Garden House Hospice Shop, and off they went into the shop. "It's great for books, DVDs and the staff are lovely people".

I decided to explore Hitchin town centre. At the end of Hermitage Road I found a Thai food shop, called 'Thai Food Store'. It's a fab shop, I was in there for about half an hour, chatting to the lovely shop owner called Candy, who explained the amazing array of Thai food stocked on the shelves. I left with a carrier bag of various noodles, miso soup, ingredients for Panang curry and much, much more!

I then climbed up Windmill Hill to take in the fantastic views it offers of the town centre, which was followed by a walk to Hitchin Market. I then visited St. Mary's church grounds, and then headed over to the Market Square to get a coffee. I discovered a really good bakery called 'Quotidian' at the end Sun Street, here I bought the most amazing sausage roll, truly delicious, I even went back into the shop to thank the baker.

Hitchin is the perfect place for shops, there is such a broad and mixed variety, from bars and restaurants, cafes, fine art and furnishings, hair-dressers, solicitors, bookshops, jewellers, and estate agents.

So, why not come and visit Hitchin on the Wanderbus, you will have a fantastic time and if you are entitled to a bus pass then your journey is free of charge.



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High St. / Rectory Rd - all stops		09.00	RR
Interchange Retail Park		09.40	12.20
St Pauls Square / Corn Exchange		09.55	12.00
W3 BIGGLESWADE - Every Monday		OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd / High Street, All Stops		09.27	RR
Shefford Road, All Stops		09.29	RR
Biggleswade – A1 Retail Park		10.00	12.05
Town Centre - pick up o/s Asda Superstore		10.05	12.00
W5 BALDOCK (Town Centre / Tesco) - Every Friday		OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd / High St. – all stops		10.00	RR
Shefford Rd. – all stops		10.03	RR
Baldock – Tesco		10.25	12.15
W6A CAMBRIDGE - 4 TH Wednesday of Month		OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High Street, All stops		08.48	RR
Shefford Road, All stops		08.50	RR
Cambridge, Downing St. – o/s/ John Lewis		10.10	14.15
W8A ST ALBANS - 2 nd Wednesday of Month			
Shefford Rd. – all stops		08.48	RR
High St. / Rectory Rd – all stops		08.50	RR
St Peters St. o/s Santander Bank / pick up opp Bank		10.25	14.00
W10 ST NEOTS - 2 nd Thursday of Month		OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High Street, All stops		09.18	RR
Shefford Rd, All stops		09.20	RR
St Neots - Market Place		10.15	12.20
W11 MILTON KEYNES - 3 rd Thursday of Month		OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High St., All stops		09.08	RR
Shefford Rd, all stops		09.10	RR
MK - Midsummer Blvd / M&S (Stop J3)		10.10	
/ John Lewis (Stop E3)			13.15
W12 HITCHIN - Every Tuesday		OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd, All stops		09.18	RR
High Street, Rectory Rd All stops		09.19	RR
Bancroft Stop D		10.05	
Bancroft Stop G (Outside Paperchase)			12.10
W14 WELWYN GARDEN CITY - 1 st 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

EXCURSIONS – 4TH Thursday of Month – call For Details – 0300-123-2023

E: Thewanderbus@gmail.com

Buses available for PRIVATE HIRE – Call for Quote.

Useful Contact Details in Meppershall

DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School and Post Office/Village Stores

DOCTORS, DENTISTS, PHARMACIES

NHS Direct	111
Dr Baxter & Ptrs	
Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive, Shefford SG17 5FS	
Appointments	01462 810034
General queries, prescriptions etc.	01462 818620

Drs. Garragher, Neal and Akhtar	
109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ	01462 850305
Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford	01462 814020
Shams Moopen Dental, 99 Hitchin Rd Shefford	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

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 3163105
	(Or 105 from a landline)

Central Beds Council 0300 300 8301

CBC councillors:

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

Parish Council Clerk

Alessandre Marabese	clerk@meppershall.org
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Member of Parliament:

Nadine Dorries	dorriesn@parliament.uk
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St Marys Church

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

See full details in the church pages of The Meppershall Messenger

Library

High St Shefford 0300 300 8067

Tuesday – Friday 9am – 6pm, Saturday 9am – 4pm, closed Mon & Sun

Whitbread Wanderbus service

Stephanie Kirby thewanderbus@gmail.com

Food and Supplies

Budgens Stores, Post Office, High Street 01462 811252

Rogers Bakery, High Street 01462 813398

The Sugar Loaf, 25 High St 01462 654334

Mobile Fish & Chips (Happy Plaice), Tuesdays 3.30 -7.00, Sugar Loaf

Schools

Meppershall Academy, High Street 01462 813293

Meppershall Pre School Village Hall Tamsin Osborn 07816 357159

meppershallps@gmail.com

Robert Bloomfield, Shefford 01462 628800

Samuel Whitbread, Stotfold 01462 629900

Henlow Academy 01462 813733

Redborne Upper 01525 404462

Organisations

Meppershall Players, Karen Mitchell 01462 816366

Meppershall Good Neighbours (GNOMES) 07760 793921

Meppershall Brownies, Suzanne 07817 392325

Shefford Guides, Angie Griffiths 07957 462519

Shefford Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers

Kathy Georgiou 01462 629313

Meppershall Village Hall

Trustees trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Bookings bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk 07485 102727

The Team and Collation Dates

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

DISCLAIMER

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

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Collating Dates 2021-22			
February 2022 Issue	January 31 st	May 2022 Issue	April 25 th
March 2022 Issue	February 28 th	June 2022 Issue	May 30 th
April 2022 Issue	March 28 th	July 2022 Issue	June 27 th
Please contact Colette to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			

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