

Contents

Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read	2
Letters to the Editors	3
Meppershall Parish Council – Approved Minutes	5
Centenary Field Update	12
Join Meppershall CERT WhatsApp Group	13
Parish Council Needs New Team Members	14
Central Bedfordshire Agrees 2022/23 Budget	15
Central Bedfordshire Council Shefford Action Day	15
Office of the Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner – Precept 2022/3 ...	16
GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)	18
Trugs and Trowels	19
Friends of St Mary’s Right Royal Village Quiz	20
Tulip Mania By Donna Cameron	21
Jobs For April In The Garden	22
What’s That Space? (Can You Fill It?)	22
Meppershall Craft Club – 3 years on!	23
An Evening of Health Awareness From Your Local NHS	24
Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin (Church of England)	26
Church News and Events in April	27
Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers	28
Churchyard Clear Up Day – Saturday 9 th April	28
Meppershall Preschool	29
NEED SOMETHING DONE? LOOK IN THE MESSENGER FIRST!	30
Meppershall Social Club	31
The Meppershall Players	32
The Jubilee Variety Show	33
Financial Matters by Paul Savuto	34
Meppershall Wanderbus Timetable	36
Wanderbus 2022 Excursion Programme	37
Useful Contact Details In Meppershall	38
The Team And Collation Dates	40

Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

Enid Pamment has been a regular contributor to The Meppershall Messenger for as long as I can remember. She has always been, and continues to be, at the heart of this publication. That is not only because of the way she has organised adventures from this little corner of the world to all manner of wonderful places, keeping us updated in her regular 'Shefford Leisure Group' articles. It is also because of her volunteering on The Meppershall Messenger Committee, working hard every month to get the magazine out, managing the collation team.



Enid, thank you. It is great to see the thanks from the village here in the letters pages. We're sure you'll have a great celebration at the Sugar Loaf, 6th April (2.00-4.30pm), marking the end of an era for Shefford Leisure Group. Details of that special get together, for anyone wishing to attend, can be found on the letter page overleaf.

I happened to see a couple of village friends outside Roger's Bakery one morning when I was sitting down to write this. Our dogs chatted to each other and we chatted too, freshly baked sandwich loaf clutched under my arm and a paper bag containing two pieces of flapjack flapping from my hand. They kept me on track with two other important things to mention here for April...

Firstly, as you see on our cover and in the pages that follow, the village has been saying goodbye to probably its best-known dog of recent years: the much-loved Badger. We love all of our village dogs, but it was amazing to see so many comments, expressions of sympathy and fond memories of Badger shared on the village Facebook noticeboard in the days after his passing. If ever there was a dog that connected with people on a 'deeper' level, it was Badger. Daksha Trivedi's cancer journey, about which she has written in this magazine previously, was touched by Badger who became a reassuring companion to her over the years. When he was around, you definitely knew it – handsome, imposing, but always docile, charming and highly communicative. Thank you, Sharon and Paul, for making Badger such a treasured part of village life, with all the love and support you heaped on him, especially in recent years. You can be so very proud. We send all our love and sympathies.

Secondly, the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II: with its historic Trooping The Colour on Thursday 2nd June, a National Service of Remembrance on Friday 3rd June and the Platinum Party At The Palace on Saturday 4th June (an entertainment extravaganza broadcast live by the BBC). Jubilee Bank Holiday events culminate on Sunday 5th June with the Big Jubilee Lunch. This is a national coming-together, in which we are all invited to share friendship, food and fun with neighbours as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. A whole street party or just a picnic, a few cakes or an entire barbeque, over 1400 people have registered to host Big Jubilee Lunches so far across the country. We hope Meppershall will be well represented. What are your plans? We will be capturing photos and sharing the celebrations in our July issue. Please let us know what you are planning!

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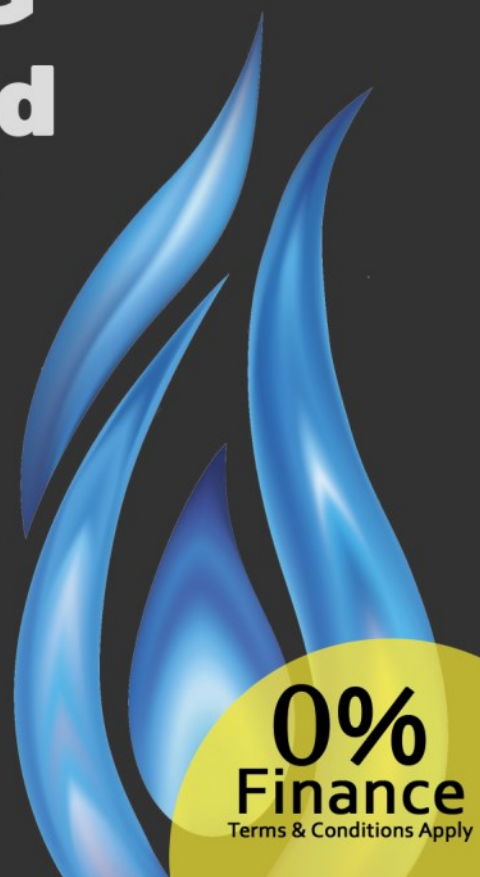
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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

We're writing on behalf of the Meppershall community who'd like to extend a huge Thank You to Mrs Enid Pamment for organising so many wonderful events over the past thirty years. Many were sad to hear that Shefford Leisure Group is now disbanded but understood what a huge commitment it was for Enid, so we all wish her a relaxing "retirement" from the Group.

Haven spoken to people who regularly went out with Shefford Leisure Group, I've gained an insight into how much this meant to people and the pleasure it gave. Comments like "so well organised", "such good value for money" and "happy memories". A huge range of places and venues were organised by Enid ranging from gardens, historic houses, theatre trips and holidays abroad – something for everyone.

Shefford Leisure Group was running for over thirty years and as well as providing such a fantastic and friendly service, everybody also knew they were in safe, capable, and trustworthy hands. It's no mean feat to be responsible for organising so many events for so many people and that's one of the reasons Enid was a finalist for Volunteer of The Year Award in 2017, illustrating how highly she was thought of.

Even if we've not been on a SLG outing, we want to let Enid know how valued and appreciated she is so let's give her a big round of applause for dedicating so much of her time over so many years for the benefit of others.

Many thanks Enid!

J Wright, B Horwood and E Lambley

In celebration of almost 40 years of
Shefford Leisure Group

An informal drop-in will take place
 with Enid Pamment

At The Sugar Loaf, Meppershall
6th April 2022, 2.00 – 4.30pm

Keech Hospice Care for Children will attend,
 reflecting the fundraising accomplished
 through the group over the years.



Dear Editors

Has anyone else noticed the decline in wild bird life around Meppershall particularly in Walnut Tree Way?

Since the Davidson Homes development and the removal of trees, bushes and hedging none of the Sparrows, Starlings, Robins, Blue Tits and others now visit my garden even though plenty of bird feeders are present in my garden. What a shame when developments take place some of the original vegetation is [not] left in place. Let's hope the bird life lost will return in the near future to give us the pleasure of watching nest-building and new life emerging.

Sincerely

Walnut Tree resident

Dear Editors

It is with great sorrow that we announce the death of our beloved Badger on Friday the 18th March. His iconic presence in Meppershall will always remain in our hearts. While we grieve his loss, we know that he is at peace.

Our thoughts are with Sharon and Paul Hudson at this difficult time. We thank them dearly for allowing Badger to be part of our lives. He will be greatly missed but always fondly remembered.

Daksha Trivedi

Editors Note : Our condolences to Sharon and Paul. Badger was a well-known and cherished presence to young and old in the village. We would love to hear your memories of Badger for our next edition – email us or message us on Facebook.



Badger

Meppershall Parish Council – Approved Minutes

An Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council (MPC) took place on Monday 14th February 2022.

Chairman's announcements

- The MPC-organised litter pick will take place on Saturday 26th March, 10am-12noon .
- The Clerk has contacted both Shillington and Gravenhurst Parish Councils and Ward Cllr Graham regarding the suggestion of a village Special Constable and the questions raised by MPC. Subsequently the Clerk will be writing to Beds Police Chief Constable.
- The Clerk has received a request to hire the MUGA or similar green space for use of a BoxFit class from end of March that arrived too late to be part of this agenda. The Clerk will provide a draft Hire of Open Spaces Policy for MPC to consider at the next meeting.
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has notified NALC (National Association of Local Councils) that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for local parish and town councils in England for 2022/23 is £8.82 per elector.
- Reminder that the installation of new water pipes by Anglian Water will result in road closures in the village.

Public Session

CBC Ward Councillors Liddiard and Brown provided an update on Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) activities:

- CBC population – Predicted population growth figures for CBC have been released. 294,000 currently. 329,000 predicted for 2031.
- Council tax collection – In 2021 CBC collected 96.1% of council tax due. The average in England was 95.7%.
- Council tax 2022-23 – CBC council tax consultation is currently underway. CBC wishes to increase council tax by an overall 1.95% (1% of social care and 0.95% for frontline services). Despite revenue from council tax CBC will still need to find savings of £5.9million.
- Grass cutting subsidy – The contribution received by local councils from CBC will increase by 6% in 2022/23 and will then increase by the rate of inflation year on year thereafter.
- Schools for the Future – The Shefford and Stotfold cluster will be the first to transition to two-tier and CBC are awaiting the outcome of a meeting with BEST Multi Academy Trust (responsible for Robert Bloomfield, Samuel Whitbread and many other schools in the local area). A new primary school is to be built in Shefford off Hitchin Road. It will form part of the BEST Multi Academy Trust.
- CBC have appointed BP Pulse to provide electric charging points in the CBC area.

Questions / comments from the public:

- What is happening with the provision of Year 5 and 6 schooling at Meppershall Lower for those who wish to remain in a local church ethos school? AB – Meppershall Year 5s are currently being schooled at Henlow Academy and Meppershall children should be able to attend the new school to be built in Shefford. But that new school will not be in our village, what is happening to the expansion of Meppershall? AB – *This has not yet been decided.*
- CBC have advised that potholes off Shefford Road on the way to the Care Home are not their responsibility. Can the Parish Council assist in asking the road owner to fix the potholes? JT – *The Clerk will be asked to write to Meppershall Care Home and ask that they make the repairs.*
- Is there an update on the removal of the Acacia tree on Fowlers Drive? Clerk is chasing contractor for a new date.
- Who is responsible for fixing the street lights on Walnut Tree Way as one light is not working? Clerk – *It is the responsibility of either the Management Company or Croudace. Clerk to write to Management Company.*

Procedures, Consultations and Legal

a. Co-Option – No new requests received

b. Consultations

- Councillors considered their response to NALC Policy Consultation Briefing - OFCOM Postal Regulation Consultation. Councillors agreed that any review of OFCOM postal regulation of postal services from 2022-2027 must take account of the need to retain and support services for rural and village communities. *Resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Addy work together on a response to NALC and the OFCOM Postal Regulation Consultation. Carried.*
- Councillors considered the completion of NSALG 2022 AGM Delegate and Proxy. *Resolved, Cllr Merryweather be appointed as MPC delegate. Carried.*
- Councillors considered their response to Luton Rising (London Luton Airport) consultation on plans to expand the airport. *Resolved that the Clerk respond to the consultation with regards to the negative impact that expansion proposals will have on the wider community (e.g.: additional flights overhead and noise pollution). Carried.*

c. IT – Website and Email

- Cllr Standbridge reported that the gov.uk domain changeover has taken place. Four councillors are yet to set up the new gov.uk emails (Clerk and Cllr Standbridge to assist where necessary). Visits to the website continue to rise. Cllrs Standbridge and Morgan have also filmed the Centenary Field video message but it requires refining. This will be provided to the Clerk ASAP for distribution during March.
- Councillors considered a new MPC logo. The Clerk and Cllr Standbridge provided all those present at the meeting with the opportunity to indicate which of the proposed new MPC logos they preferred. Councillors agreed that

the preferred logo needed to be altered to replace the lion with the one currently used by MPC in gold. *Resolved that the Clerk and Cllr Standbridge make changes to the preferred new MPC logo and then issue accordingly. Carried.*

- Councillors considered request from The Comet to feature Meppershall in weekly village news. The Comet have been running a weekly village news page each week, and would love to feature Meppershall. They have asked if we have any news we would like to share or information on what the village has to offer, or anything about the village's history. They would also ideally need a picture to go alongside this. Councillors agreed that this was a great idea but that the Comet is not distributed to Meppershall residents (if distribution is an issue, then copies could be left at the Village Shop, Social Club, Bakery, Care Home etc.) *Resolved that the Clerk respond positively to the request and assist where necessary. Carried.*

d. Stocken House Green Space

- Clerk and Cllr Thompson met with Davidsons on 3rd February to discuss issues concerning finalisation of the Management Agreement. Our agreed version of the Management Agreement has been forwarded to both solicitors requesting that they make necessary changes ready for signing. Note:
 - Timber knee rail around green space will be on Parish land and therefore the PC will be responsible for this.
 - Davidsons will install gates at the main entrance to the land (across the retained land) and at the side entrance points. These are to assist with access but also to prevent unauthorised access and encampments in the future. Davidsons' solicitors will need obtain a legal agreement (grant of rights) to do this.
 - MPC to receive a phased plan of planting to assist us with arborist visits.
 - Defects both pre- and post-handover / completion will be organised and paid for by Davidsons.
 - The management company dealing with the SUDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems) do not need access over what will be Parish lands.
 - MPC have provided details of standpipes installed at Centenary Field so that a similar product can be installed on site.
 - Clerk to arrange meeting on site between our arboriculturist and Davidsons to inspect tree and shrub planting at end of March.
 - Davidsons to advise MPC re. additional defibrillator on site, contribution to new mower and planting of 2 Oak trees (Cambridge trees).
- Councillors considered approval of arborist costs. Mr Alderman's costs for surveying on site are £150 per day (£80 for half a day) and £30 for a written report with images. He has suggested perhaps a maximum of 2 visits per year at Stocken House unless requested otherwise. The Clerk proposes appointing Mr Alderman as MPC's Arborist as he also assist with works required to Old Road Meadow and Centenary Field. *Resolved to appoint Mr Alderman as MPC Arborist at costs quoted. Carried.*

e. Collaboration with Gravenhurst Parish Council

Councillors considered approval of Sharing of Resources Agreement between Meppershall and Gravenhurst Parish Councils. The Clerk and Cllr Thompson provided councillors with a proposed agreement for review with meeting papers. Questions raised have been responded to and amendments as requested made to the agreement. It is proposed that the agreement, if approved by Gravenhurst Parish Council, starts on 21st February 2022. *Resolved to approve signing by Cllrs Crossley and Standbridge of the Sharing of Resources agreement between Meppershall and Gravenhurst Parish Council. Carried.*

f. Futures Working Group

Councillors considered remit, set up and membership of the Futures Working Group. Cllr Parsons has prepared an article for publication that was circulated to councillors with meeting papers regarding a request for residents to join the Futures Working Group. *Resolved that the Futures Working Group article as prepared by Cllr Parsons is released for publication. Carried*

g. Electrical Connection from Old Road Meadow

Councillors considered a request from UKPN to provide electricity connection from Old Road Meadow to The Mow site and Wayleave Agreement. The Clerk met with UKPN who have advised that MPC do not have to agree to this request. UKPN are obliged to provide customers with the nearest connection point but if MPC do not give permission then they will simply have to look elsewhere. This may prove difficult as the nearest connection is on the High Street and would incur road closures. UKPN will not play middle man but will forward on our details to their customer asking them to reach an agreement with us regarding access. This may afford MPC leverage with the developer of the MOW to agree terms permitting a direct connection from the pole currently in ORM e.g.: installation of fence on the boundary between us, a monetary contribution to the Parish Council etc. MPC need to be mindful of any legal fees required to draw up a contract but costs could be covered by the developer. The Mow's 13 dwelling application would have contributed just under £94k in s106 – they will contribute nothing for the 9-dwelling application. *Resolved that the Council agrees in principle to a connection subject to the developer agreeing to MPC terms, Clerk to negotiate terms on behalf of MPC and agreement with the developer to be made via MPC Solicitor at Ross Williams Solicitors at developers cost. Carried*

h. Honours nomination

Councillors considered whether MPC wish to nominate a Meppershall resident for an Honour. A resident has asked MPC to consider nominations for Honours. There is clear guidance from the Government on who can be nominated and how the application should be completed. *Councillors were asked to consider and bring forward nominations to the Clerk at a later date.*

i. Invitations

Councillors considered an invitation from CBC to a Civic Service hosted by the Chairman in celebration of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee on Sunday, 8th May at 3:00pm – St Mary's Church, Park Street, Woburn. *Councillors agreed that the Chairman, Cllr Thompson would attend on behalf of MPC.*

Finance

- a. Document approval** - *Council resolved to alter the banking mandate to include Cllr Addy and that Bank Statements and Reconciliation reports 153 Current Account and 027 Savings Account be approved and signed.*
- b. Orders for the payment of money** – *Council resolved that the schedule of payments as presented be approved and authorised for payment by Cllrs Thompson or Parsons.*

Planning and Housing

- a. Planning applications for consideration**
 - CB/22/00199/FULL - 1 Rectory Road, SG17 5NB - Rear Conservatory roof and wall glazing replaced with tiled lean-to roof and 3 roof windows, external cavity walls built up with new doors and window. *Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 22/00199. Carried.*
 - CB/21/05392/ADV – Robinson Grove, SG17 5QR – Attaching two street signs to timber sleepers set in the ground and up lighting via a spike light. *Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 21/05392 on the grounds that; the signage does not conform to CBC street furniture guidelines and design policy, the MNP makes reference to conformity of the street scene in Meppershall, the sign and lighting seeks to urbanise the rural village, the sign and lighting are adjacent to the Meppershall Conservation Area, contributes to light pollution. Carried.*

Neighbourhood Plan - The plan is under review by the Clerk and Mrs Chapman.

Highways and Transport

- a. OPCC grant funding update from Clerk (traffic monitoring and VAS installation)** – The Clerk, Cllr Morgan and Ward Cllr Liddiard met with CBC Portfolio holder Cllr Ian Dalgarno in Meppershall on 21st January and together they walked the village and showed Cllr Dalgarno current traffic issues concerning residents and MPC. Cllr Dalgarno made suggestions regarding potential proposed solutions, however he noted that as data from the recent traffic monitoring and speed assessment was not yet available it may be best to organise a meeting with our Highways Officer so that we could discuss concerns, data from the traffic monitoring and potential solutions.

Traffic Monitoring and Speed Assessment Data summary

Speed Monitoring conducted at the following sites in December 2021:

- High Street (Between Fowlers Drive and Gregory Close - (Survey location - L/C 13))
- Fildyke Road (Between Chapel Road and Lyspitt Common – (Survey Location - Opposite No. 53)
- Shefford Road 1 (Survey location - Village Sign to North)
- Shefford Road 2 (Survey Location - Existing VAS - 32 Shefford Road, L/C 37)

CBC have undertaken an initial assessment of the locations in line with the Speed Indicator Device Guidance Document which has recently been adopted by CBC (Jan 2022). The Speed Limit at all the locations required is 30mph, therefore the 85th Percentile is 35mph. The speed data for the four locations can be summarised as follows:

- High Street (L/C 13)
 - Northbound 28.4 mph
 - Southbound 28.8 mph
 - Personal Injury Collision in the last 3 years - One serious outside No. 44.
- Fildyke Road (Opposite No. 53)
 - Eastbound 27.9 mph
 - Westbound 29.1 mph
 - Personal Injury Collision in the last 3 years – None
- Shefford Road 1 (Village Sign to North)
 - Northbound 37.5 mph
 - Southbound 36.7 mph
 - Personal Injury Collision in the last 3 years – Two - One Serious Collision on the approach to the speed limit change and one slight accident on the bend.
- Shefford Road 2 (Location of existing VAS (L/C 37)
 - Northbound 31.0 mph
 - Southbound 29.1 mph
 - Personal Injury Collision in the last 3 years – None on this stretch of road.

The data collected shows that the locations on High Street, Fildyke Road and Shefford Road 2 do not meet the criteria for a SID to be installed and therefore these locations cannot be recommended. The location on Shefford Road 1 just south of the Speed Limit change demonstrates that the speeds are above the 85th percentile at Northbound 37.5 mph and Southbound 36.7 mph direction. There have also been 2 recorded personal injury collisions in the vicinity. Following the assessment, it is considered that a replacement VAS at Shefford Road 2 would be the most appropriate use of the funding that has been received from the OPCC Grant and can be purchased and installed in the restrictive timescales that have been specified.

Online meeting with Cllr Dalgarno, CBC Highways officer Lisa Wright, Cllr Liddiard, Cllr Thompson and the Clerk held on 3rd February. The proposals made previously by Cllr Dalgarno were discussed in the light of the speed assessments results, report and CBC guidelines. Conclusions as follows:

- a) CBC to install at the Shefford Road gateway entrance to the village a VAS (solar powered if possible) with 30mph and bend ahead alternating signs, appropriate 'other' road signage including but not limited to bend chevrons, road markings, new road layout signage etc.
- b) MPC to apply via the RMF grant scheme for a village gateway at the Shefford Road entrance to Meppershall with signage that can be altered periodically and a 40mph buffer zone on Shefford Road from A507 to village entrance (2 applications).
- c) It would be our intention to install both the VAS and gateway at the same time.
- d) CBC to provide costings to MPC for both.

- b. To consider applications to the Rural Match Funding – Integrated Programme 2022/23 and 2023/24** - The Clerk had prepared and circulated with the agenda two RMF applications and confirmed that MPC could fund a successful application in the next financial year albeit the budget would need to be amended accordingly. *Resolved that the Clerk submit two RMF applications – village gateway and 40mph buffer zone. Carried.*

Environment and Leisure

a. Centenary Field

- Revised quotes received from Sherriffs. Meeting requested with Sherriffs and to involve MVH so that we can plan a date for start of works, material storage areas etc. MPC to communicate works pending to residents in March 2022. Cllrs Standbridge and Morgan have prepared a video and this will be supported with an article in the Messenger. The Clerk met with Fresh Air Fitness regarding new gym equipment installation and to agree on order, installation etc. Padlock codes to pitch have been changed as a resident had worked out the code and was opening the locks to let his dog into the fenced pitch area.
- Councillors considered action required post tree inspection report. Mr Alderman has assisted with guidance of tree health on Centenary Field and ORM. 26 trees are dead on Centenary Field and will require removal and consideration for re-planting. He has provided us with information on best trees to plant and is willing to assist Mrs Thorne with trees at ORM. *Resolved that the Clerk put together a plan of action over the summer for re-planting in winter 2022/23. Carried.*

- b. Section 106 Cycle Network contributions** – Councillors considered use of £1,012 of s106 Cycle Network contributions to be spent by May 2023. The Clerk advised that current unallocated s106 funds will be lost if not used by May 2023 and that MPC could seek to use funds to provide cycle and scooter parking at Centenary Field. *Action: The Clerk was asked to investigate options available for installation.*

Council agreed at its meeting on 14th March 2022 to hold the Annual Parish Council Meeting on Monday 25th April 2022, at 7pm in Meppershall Village Hall.

John Thompson – Chair – Meppershall Parish Council



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Centenary Field Update

MPC are working on refurbishment, management and maintenance of Centenary Field.

Councillors and volunteers have already removed the Heras Fencing behind the Village Hall allowing unobstructed access to the field. Unfortunately, as some dog owners were using the fenced games and pitch area (even though padlocked) and not removing their dog poo from site this area has been secured pending pitch levelling, grass seeding and signage installation.

In the coming weeks (dependent upon weather conditions) our contractor will begin works that will restrict access to certain grassed areas of Centenary Field and adjacent to the Village Hall. Where possible we will ensure that areas are open for use by residents and Village Hall hirers but, for safety reasons and also to ensure that works carried out are successful (such as grass seeding, grass growing time and re-establishment), some areas will remain fenced off even after works have taken place. Please remember that we do not envisage closing play areas although they may be fenced off field side to prevent entry into the field whilst works are happening.

We hope that people will respect areas that are cordoned off and do not intentionally access fenced off areas, as not only does this have safety implications but it will result in more cost to residents for repairs and extended closure of areas.

As a reminder, our planned works include:

- Installation of land drainage on Centenary Field and to the rear of the Village Hall.
- Landscaping repairs on Centenary Field and around the Village Hall together with re-seeding and measures to prevent unauthorised encampments.
- Creation of a track/path around the fenced pitch that links to current paths.
- Refurbishment of pitch including new top soil and reseeding.
- Installation of new outdoor gym equipment.
- Necessary signage and information boards.

Later in the year we also plan to:

- Install new play equipment
- Plant trees to include two oaks to commemorate HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- Clear areas of the copse with a view to starting on creating an area of contemplation and remembrance for future use.

As work progresses, we will provide updates for residents in the Messenger, on our website www.meppershall-pc.gov.uk, on Facebook (MPC and Meppershall Noticeboard) and obviously at our monthly meetings (every second Monday of the month at the Village Hall from 7pm). You can also contact the Clerk at clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk for more information.

Meppershall Parish Council

Join Meppershall CERT WhatsApp Group Can you help?



What is a CERT?

A CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) is made up of 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! **Who would have thought that we would see trees uprooted on the roads of Meppershall?**

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?

Want to join our WhatsApp group who react and assist in the event of an issue in the village? 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.

NEW TEAM MEMBERS REQUIRED

Meppershall Parish Council needs 2 new team members; if you think you would like to join the team contact the Clerk on 07930 813808 or email clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk

What is a councillor?

Councillors are elected or co-opted to represent a 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 due to previous resignations.

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-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/members-of-the-council/> for more information and contact the Clerk to the Council on 07930 813808 or email clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk

GO ON, GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY!

Central Bedfordshire Agrees 2022/23 Budget



Next year CBC anticipates spending some £470million on a full range of services. Even with £12million of efficiencies planned for next year, it is necessary to protect services and meet the increasing demands to provide care for more older people and provide more support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). To bridge the gap between what we need and what we anticipate in terms of income, we propose to apply the Adult Social Care Precept of a 1% increase on council tax to contribute towards funding care services and increase council tax by 0.95% for fund other services.

The budget also includes £240million of capital investments in a range of building and infrastructure initiatives including:

- The M1-A6 link road and rail freight interchange at Sundon
- A new transport interchange at Flitwick with a similar one soon to start at Biggleswade railway station
- The new Arlesey relief road and associated development
- A major new independent living scheme, All Saints View, in Houghton Regis
- Marigold House, a new state-of-the-art residential home for older people in Leighton Buzzard
- A brand-new secondary school in Houghton Regis, Houstone School
- The transformation of Sandy Secondary School and expanding other schools to accommodate more pupils

For more info on the budget go to www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/budget2022. A new strategic plan has also been adopted, setting out CBC priorities for the next five years, aiming to make Central Bedfordshire a great place to live and work. View the plan online at

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/27/about_your_council/1108/our_strategic_plan_2022-27

Central Bedfordshire Council Shefford Action Day

A 'Shefford Community Action Day' (for Shefford Ward – which includes Meppershall) is being planned by CBC's Safer Communities Team for Friday 22nd April (market day), 10am – 4pm. As part of the event, CBC teams and partners will be conducting high visibility patrols, visiting businesses, litter picking and giving crime and fire prevention advice (including bike marking). Various CBC teams will be there, along with the Police, Town Council and Safer Neighbourhoods teams.

In advance of the Action Day, CBC officers will visit to find out what local residents want to see done during the Action Day. They will be at the Market Square on 7th and 14th April. More information on the Action Day and the information gathering visits are available from Elaine Mountfort, CBC safer Communities Team, Direct Dial 0300 300 4382, email elaine.mountfort@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Office of the Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner – Precept 2022/3

From Festus Akinbusoye, Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire Police

Part of my role as being your Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire means that I am responsible for securing the annual budget for Bedfordshire Police.

One of my focuses is to determine the local policing priorities for the Chief Constable based on listening to what local residents tell me. These priorities are set out in my Police and Crime Plan and I hold the Chief to account, on your behalf, for their successful delivery.

The priorities in the Police and Crime Plan reflect what local people tell me are important, which is why I created the consultation survey to hear from you about changes to the budget.

You will probably know that we are facing rising costs across the public sector because of inflation. This means an increase to the Bedfordshire Police Council Tax (otherwise known as precept), is needed for Bedfordshire Police to maintain its current position and meet the costs of pay and price increases.

With higher costs for some everyday items and the impact of the pandemic affecting everyone, I know that any increase for 2022-2023 for some people will be hard. I also know, that you want to see more officers in our communities and our rural areas, taking more criminals off the streets and protecting our towns and villages. To do this, as well as maintaining other services, we will need to increase the precept.

This is the first budget of my first term as PCC and I have worked closely with the Chief Constable and his senior leadership team to understand the operational needs of Bedfordshire Police and the increase in demand that the force continues to experience.

Based on the analysis of crime trends and criminality in the county, there is no doubt in my mind that the Force requires additional investment, so that more criminals can be taken off our streets and put before the courts.

Amongst the survey, I asked if you thought these were important areas for us to direct additional resources into and I can positively say, the majority agreed with these directions, with 58% in support of the precept.

I have also welcomed support from the Police and Crime Panel to increase the precept. I want to reassure the public, that the use of taxpayer's money is one that I take very seriously.

I am fully committed to holding the Chief Constable accountable for delivering on these priority areas and will do everything within my power to help him and his team deliver these for the people of Bedfordshire.

Thank you for your continued support in helping to make Bedfordshire a better place to live and work.

Festus Akinbusoye, Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire Police

A £10 increase (per band D property) will enable the Chief Constable to:

- Recruit an extra 72 Police Officers to strengthen the front line
- Increase our rural crime capability to protect our villages and farms from criminals who target our rural communities
- Improve the way 999 and 101 calls are answered, which you have told me takes too long
- Continue to prioritise drug related serious organised crime to dismantle county lines
- Increase our victim engagement officers to support victims of rape, serious sexual offences and domestic abuse
- Leadership of the local criminal justice board
- Improving links with local authorities to work closer in partnership on shared priorities
- A swifter commissioning process to distribute funding to local organisations to support victims of crime
- Invest in the Professional Standards Department to improve vetting and ensure the highest standards of professional behaviour
- Invest in the sustainability agenda including the use of low and zero emission vehicles, and alternative forms of energy

Public consultation

Before implementing this council tax increase, the PCC consulted local taxpayers. The consultation survey was sent to:

- All commissioned partners
- All councillors, town councillors, parish councillors, ward councillors
- Media contacts across Bedfordshire
- Members of the public subscribed to the PCC's newsletter
- Published on the PCC's website
- Regular social media updates via Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn

Of those who completed the survey, 57.58% supported an increase of precept (which works out as 84p per month, per average Band D household).

To be notified of future consultations about policing and crime in your area, sign up to receive the PCC's newsletter here: pccevents@beds.police.uk



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GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)



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The Meppershall Good Neighbour Group is now in its 9th year helping the community. Identified by the acronym **GNOMES** - *Good Neighbours Offering Meppershall Excellent Services*, our logo – a friendly Gnome offering a hand - says what our volunteers are all about. Since starting in 2013, our **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) cleared volunteers** have carried out hundreds of jobs, helping many residents of the village.

Whether that has been through befriending visits, helping people access their local GP or hospital, checking fire alarms or changing light bulbs and many other varied tasks to help residents when they needed that helping hand. For more information, please read our leaflet, search for, and join our Fb 'Meppershall Good Neighbour Group', and on the village website <https://meppershall-pc.gov.uk/gnomes/>



Without volunteers we can't provide our services or even run the organisation. **Do you have some spare time to help someone?** Believe it or not even an occasional hour makes a big difference. You can help us with our webpage, FB page and our research, give practical help to local people, help get an elderly resident to their GP appointment or become a regular phone-holder. Please contact the GNOMES on gnomes.secretary@meppershall.org or call 07760 793921. **We welcome support from students on their Duke of Edinburgh awards. Please contact us if you are interested and speak to your school/college.**

In March 2015, GNOMES held their **first Coffee Morning**, and this has become a regular feature, after a break for Covid lockdowns, we resumed in October 2021. It continues to be held on **the 2nd Thursday of every month, from 10.30am – 12pm** at the Meppershall **Walnut Tree Café**. Everyone is welcome to have a chat, so please come along and just ask for the Gnomes, Caroline, Carolyn, Martin, and Kim when you arrive. We usually sit at the back right of the café.



Gnomes have been actively involved in several of the village events, *Christmas Advent Window, Scarecrow Festival, Meppershall Lower School events and village fetes*. In 2022 we will be undertaking research about neighbourliness in the village.

We would love to hear ideas and suggestions from the residents and even better if you can help us with this, please contact the secretary (continues...)

Do you need assistance? Whatever your need, call us on 07760 793921, Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 6.00pm. If we can't help directly, we will do our best to try and find someone or some organisation who can. Keep the leaflet that's with this issue somewhere handy so that if you ever need our help, you have our number close.

Please look out for Gnomes events and support us. Join our FB page, helping us with our research and social media by joining our friendly group of local villagers and calling us if you or a neighbour needs help (Please ask them first!). Thank you from the Gnomes and their Committee Caroline, Carolyn, Martin, and Kim.

Good Neighbours Offering Meppershall Excellent Services

Find us at www.meppershall-pc.gov.uk/gnomes

Trugs and Trowels

On the 7th March we had a great informative evening delivered by Martin Towsey and I am certain Woburn estate will be viewed completely differently with our new found knowledge.

April 4th we look forward to our in house competition. Show off your spring blooms, four categories 5 golden blooms, 5 pastel blooms, up to 8inch diameter pot spring plants, any 3 tulips.

We will also have a shrub swap on the evening so divide your perennials.

Thank you.

Maryika 🌸 Contact 01462 851729



Saturday
21st May 2022

Meppershall Village Hall

7pm bar

for 7.30 start

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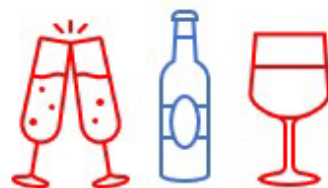
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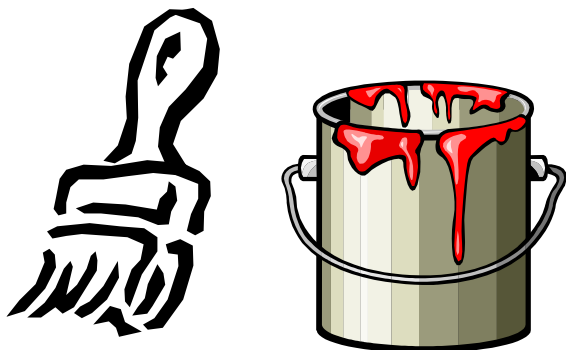
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Tulip Mania By Donna Cameron

We are now beginning to feel the sun on our faces and the soil is warming up and in return everything is growing before our very eyes!

These longer days ensure the garden is well and truly awake!

Colour is bursting out all over the garden, none so more vibrant is the tulip, with its many varieties. Ranging from pastel shades to hot showy colours. There are over 150 species and over 3000 naturally occurring.

Tulips bulbs and flowers can be obtained relatively cheaply but when first imported to England this was not the case and bulbs sold for thousands!



The Tulip comes from Central Asia, and are related to the Lily. They have been cultivated by the Turks as early as 1000AD.

Tulip means turban and thought to derive from when people would wear them in their Turbans.



Tulips are a holy symbol in Iran and features on their flag.

They were introduced into Western Europe in the 16th century by the botanist, Clausus from Vienna. His friend introduced him to the flower he had seen growing in the palace gardens at Istanbul.

Tulips became highly prized and sold for ridiculous amounts. Holland was the major trading centre. Hybrids were grown to make rare varieties. By 1636 bulbs were being sold for the price of houses.

This became known as 'Tulip Mania' and was one of the most famous market bubbles in history! The market crashed in 1637 and many people were left bankrupt.

By the 20th century frilly petals were produced, although later it was found this was from a virus. Stable varieties now exist.

The Tulip represents 'perfect love'.

Top Tips for Growing Tulips

Grow in moist, well drained soil in a sunny position.



Many varieties only flower reliably for one year so best to plant new bulbs every autumn, especially ones in pots.

Plant 3 times the depth with pointed end up.

Deadhead flowers and after flowering let the leaves yellow before cutting back.

Enjoy! They cannot help but bring a smile to your face!

Donna's Garden Designs
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	Jobs For April In The Garden	
Divide perennials		Check for aphids on roses
Sow hardy annuals and wild flower seeds		Add aquatic plants to ponds
Protect fruit blossom from late frosts		Prune hydrangeas back to a healthy bud
Tie in climbing and rambling Rose's		Deadhead spring bulbs
Keep on top of weeds		Sow sweetpea seeds at base of support
Feeds shrubs and roses		
Prune fig trees		Protect Delphiniums, Lupins and hostas from slugs and snails
Leave out water and cat or dog food for hedgehogs		

What's That Space? (Can You Fill It?)

What... you mean this space? Oh! Yes... this is a space that we couldn't fill. We just didn't get the right article to include. And that's where YOU come in!! If you enjoy the village magazine, why not be part of it? We want your ideas, comments, letters and articles. It's your magazine, after all. You can be anonymous if you prefer. But go on... email us! Join in the fun, be part of the village conversation.

Mepp.Messenger@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you 😊

Meppershall Craft Club – 3 years on!



Lorraine, Diane & Kim would very much like to thank everyone who has made The Meppershall Craft Club such a success! We cannot believe it's over 3 years since we started this club – Yes, we had breaks due to Covid, but we are still going strong with around 25 members attending each week.

It's been a while since we posted in the Messenger - so we thought it was time for an update. We meet on Wednesday mornings (10am to 12 noon) in the Meppershall Village Hall to share a coffee & our crafts. This is made possible with the kind support from The Meppershall Village Hall and The Walnut Tree Café - who bring our refreshments in on a trolley!

Our crafts include Water colour painting, Crochet, Jewellery making, Knitting, Needlepoint and various Paper Crafts. There have been so many crafts we cannot list them all!

People work on their own crafts, or, as we often do, share crafts with others. We run regular workshops where our members can join if they wish. The most recent ones have included Black stitch and Card making.

In addition to our crafting each week we share information on many interesting local events & activities. We also arrange some group outings – our next being an Afternoon Tea to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Thanks to the kind generosity of our members we are able to make many donations to charities: So far this year we have donated to The Cinnamon Trust, Alzheimer's Association and Anglia Air Ambulance. It's worth noting that even during lockdown our members continued crafting and made many handmade goods from masks & scrubs to baby hats & blankets for local organisations.

Our current project is knitting blankets for The New Meppershall Care Home – photos to follow next month.

If you would like to join us just pop along to the village hall on a weds morning - we are a very friendly bunch!

Finally, a huge Thank you to every one of our members – you are all so kind and generous. You make The Meppershall Craft Club what it is xxx.

We love our Wednesday mornings and very much look forward to many more to come. Kim Tyler, Lorraine Jarvis & Diane Hughes the Organisers.

Contacts: Kim 0795 255 7203, Lorraine 07811 865 259, Or Diane 07473 828488.

An Evening of Health Awareness From Your Local NHS

Wednesday 20th April from 6.30-7.30pm at Shefford Health Centre

During the evening, we have a team of specialists, GP's and nurses, along with the personalised care team. There will be information areas, along with talks by guest speakers, with time to answer questions about health screening.

Our specialist speakers will offer short presentations including:

- Understanding and living with diabetes.
- Be breast aware (this includes men too)!
- Prostate and PSA testing
- Bowel and FIT testing
- Cervical Screening

...and will cover screening queries such as:

- When and how will I be invited?
- How do I decide if I want screening?
- How do I book an appointment?
- What happens at my appointment?
- Can I bring someone with me?
- How will I get my results?
- What are the differences between type 1, type 2 and pre-diabetes?
- How does diet affect diabetes?
- Is blood pressure monitoring important, and what does it tell me about my health?
- When and where can I get my blood pressure tested and can I do this myself at home?

There will be an opportunity to ask your own questions to our specialists, and to gather lots of information to help you make informed decisions.

Our invitation extends to all patients at Shefford Health Centre, Lower Stondon Surgery, Arlesey Medical Centre and Larksfield Surgery - there's no need to book, just turn up for a free, full evening of health awareness.

Remember, screening can prevent serious illness. Be aware by understanding your health and wellbeing; by spotting the signs, treatment is more likely to be successful when diagnosis is made early.

You can email any enquiries about this event to bedccg.carecoordinator.ivs@nhs.net

We hope you are able to join us.

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Information from guest speakers

- ✓ Delve Into Diabetes
- ✓ Be Breast aware (this inc men too)
- ✓ Prostate & PSA Testing
- ✓ Blood Pressure
- ✓ Bowel & FIT Testing
- ✓ Cervical Screening

**WHO
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THERE...**

For the evening we have a group of specialists, GP's, nurses and the personalised care team. There will be information areas on all of these topics, followed by talks with guest speakers with time to answer questions about screening.

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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 write, it is beginning feel as though Spring has really sprung. Today the heating is off and the door into the garden is open - the birds are singing, spring bulbs are in flower, the buds are bursting on the branches and the garden is definitely 'springing' back to life. We even had lunch in a pavement cafe in the sunshine a couple of days ago... for that continental feel!

April is also bringing with it Easter and the promised new spiritual life which it affords. After the discipline and the solemnity of Lent, especially of Holy Week when we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples, his journey to Calvary and his death on the cross, the Church too will burst into new life with Easter flowers and cries of "Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!" Do look out for special Holy Week and Easter services and events, and do come and join the celebrations.

I think, in the fraught times we are in, it can be difficult for us to think of celebrating when our relatives, and our christian brothers and sisters around the world, are in such deep distress - as war ravages homelands and people flee for their lives (according to Amnesty International there are currently something over 25.9 million refugees - and half of that number are children!). One of the most moving film clips I have seen recently, was of people in Ukraine gathered in a subway - to worship together.

I think our worship too, needs to be rooted "in Spirit and in truth"... A truly joyous Easter will be the fruit of praying for peace, working for peace, sending and spending to support those who are fleeing their homes - desperate for physical safety and peace.

Many of those who are living a "Good Friday" experience right now, amid war, sickness, fear, and death, will celebrate the Easter message - of suffering and death giving way to life and hope - again this year. As Christians all over the world continue to look for the coming of God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, Easter reminds us that - by grace - God keeps blessing the world, making possible a kind of life which we

all, in our deepest being, hunger for. As Easter 'Alleluias' ring out around the world once more, I pray that Easter hope, Easter joy and Easter peace will fill our hearts and minds and strengthen us to serve God and one another in the days to come.

In preparation for Easter we will be tidying the Churchyard once again. Churchyard Clear Up Day is Saturday 9th April - do please come and help if you can, even if only for an hour or two!

As summer approaches I would like to thank again, all those who look after their loved ones' graves and the churchyard as a whole. I would ask everyone please to check that there are no glass vases, to remove any mini-conifers (they do not stay mini!) and to consider whether any artificial flowers can now be replaced with the summer annuals and perennials much preferred by the Diocese. (If in doubt, please ask me or consult St Albans Diocese Churchyard Regulations - August 2020 Updated October 2021). Visitors to our Churchyard so often comment on just how beautifully it is kept and so many pause there to find a moment's peace.... so my thanks once again, for helping to keep this such a tranquil space for all.

Wishing you every blessing, Rector Roni

Church News and Events in April

Sundays	11.00am	Morning Worship every Sunday including Holy Communion on the 2 nd and 4 th Sundays (13 th and 27 th March)
Every Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion in church
Maundy Thursday 14 th April	7.00pm	Holy Communion Benefice Service at St Michael's Shefford
Good Friday 15 th April	11.00am 2.00pm	Walk of Witness in Shefford Good Friday Service at St Mary's, Meppershall
Easter Saturday 16 th April	7.30pm	The Easter Vigil Benefice Service at St Mary's Meppershall
Easter Day 17 th April	11.00am	Easter Sunday Holy Communion
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>

This Easter, why not come and enjoy your local, historic Parish Church on your own, or with friends, or with your family? The church in Meppershall is a diverse bunch of people of all ages and you are bound to find new friends. A warm welcome awaits you in the beautiful setting of the oldest building in the village.

Do you need prayers? We have a small group of intercessors who pray confidentially for those who ask for prayers. If you would like to know more, please talk to Roni (Tel. 339962 / 07533 376880) or Chris Valentine (telephone 07701 039324).

Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers

The Strollers' walk this month is on April 10th and it is a loop of Pedley and Chicksands Woods, starting/ending in Clophill. We will meet at 2pm at the east end of High Street, Clophill (here: <https://goo.gl/maps/L36HuVUbz1ZsLs6T9>) - heading up Old Church Path past the ruin of St Mary's Clophill and entering Pedley Wood at its southwest corner. It's a 3.5 mile loop with some moderately hilly bits. We will pass the Osborn Memorial and walk through the heart of Chicksands Wood, probably seeing bluebells and a whole range of spring flowers, before returning on part of the Greensand Ridge Way. Message us for more info. More info from Miriam or James on 857836 or find the Strollers at <https://www.facebook.com/MeppershallStrollers>.

Churchyard Clear Up Day – Saturday 9th April

Are you someone who doesn't mind helping out a bit to keep our much-loved community spaces and historic corners well cared for? The church relies on volunteers a few times a year, to help tidy and trim the churchyard space. It's a beautiful spot in Spring, with violets blooming under the yews (pictured) and Meppershall's historic manor house looking on. A small group will while away the day



trimming, pruning, sweeping, raking and managing the removal of garden waste from the churchyard. If you can spend just a small amount of time, anytime between 9 and 4 on 9th April, do come along! All ages welcome, bring your own tools if possible, fun and friendship guaranteed. More info from Miriam or James on 857836.

A little Spring update from Meppershall Pre-School

We have had a busy few months at the Pre-School with plenty of activities for the children to get involved in.

In January the children learnt about the history of Burns night and made a collage of a Scottish flag. The Pre-School was also set up with some role play where the children were 'vets'. They all chose to bring in a stuffed animal to learn how to treat their animals and about the importance of caring for them.

In February the children began the month by joining in the Chinese new year celebrations by making their own lanterns. They also had lots of fun participating in RSPB week where they went out looking for different species of birds and making their own binoculars.

During March the children enjoyed helping to bake pancakes on pancake day and took part in sponsored pancake races. The weather was good to us so the parents were able to come in and cheer the children on in our playground! They have recently been very busy preparing Mothers Day to celebrate mother's day. In the winter they planted some Daffodil bulbs each which have now flowered for our Pre-school Mummy's just in time to be gifted. The children also really enjoyed dressing up for World Book Day at the Pre-School!



We are all looking forward to some Easter activities leading up to the end of term!

The highly qualified diverse team at Meppershall Pre-School is dedicated to offering the best possible care to all our children by creating a safe and stimulating environment, encompassing all individual needs.

We are currently open every weekday from 9am till 3pm and welcome all children from in and around the surrounding areas. (term time only).

Due to many of our children moving up to school in September we have some spaces available from the Autumn term. Please ring Tamsin on:

07816 357159 or email: meppershallps@gmail.com
to enrol your child or join our waiting list.

You can also visit our website: www.meppershallps.co.uk
for more information.

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Carly Ruffhead, one of our Committee Members is organising a fundraiser to benefit the Pre-School. A group of 6 will be climbing Mount Snowdon on Saturday 23rd April.

Any donations will be gratefully received and can be made by following the link below.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/climb-snowdon-for-meppershall-preschool?utm_medium=email&utm_source=product&utm_campaign=p_email+4803-donation-alert-v5

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Look in the Messenger first. It may even be the only place you need to look!

Meppershall Social Club

MSC hopes this finds you all safe and well.

The lighter nights and warmer weather have enticed many of you out to enjoy our lovely patio area. It has been great to see so many of you after winter hibernation... long may it continue!

Our 'Karaoke & Vinyl' nights are proving ever-popular, so put the dates in your diary.

Friday 8th April: Karaoke with Stuart.

Saturday 30th April: 'Andy n Belinda's Vinyl Night'

Both will be great night nights to enjoy a song and a dance over drinks with friends. There will be no pool or snooker available on those dates.

Don't forget we have bingo every Friday, eyes down from 7pm.

Snooker is available at just £2 per hour. Due to a regular darts event, snooker is not available on Tuesday evenings. If you're interested in joining the darts event, please pop along on Tuesdays from 7pm.

Membership is still available to those that have not yet joined/renewed.

On a difficult note, with companies experiencing higher running costs, the brewery are increasing their prices by 6% from April 1st. This sadly means that our prices will have to increase too, by approximately 20-25p per pint. However, all our beer, across 11 pumps, remains below £4 per pint.

We wish you all a happy and safe month and we look forward to welcoming you soon.

MSC

Birthdays

We send best wishes this month to...

Pam H

Shireen L

Peter L

Derek P

Ruth C-K



Many happy returns to you all and best wishes from everyone at The Meppershall Messenger!



The Meppershall Players



With only a few weeks to go we are putting the final touches to our spring production 'The Jubilee Variety Show' at the STMA Digswell Hall, 10 Hitchin Rd, Shefford SG17 5JA. On Saturday 14th May 2022, for the first time (other than Pantomime) we're having a matinee performance at 3pm. All tickets for the matinee are **£5**. We also have an evening performance at 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.

The seating for this show is that of a street party with two long tables. It will be unashamedly decked out in red, white and blue. In years gone by we used to provide a ploughman's supper as part of the ticket price, but due to so many food allergies, we feel we cannot take the risk with any member of our audience... but we encourage you to bring your own picnic/afternoon tea to the matinee, and your own supper to the evening performance.

I don't want to give too much away about the show, but there are many opportunities for audience participation and patriotic flag waving (flags supplied)!

In this, the Players' 50th anniversary, we will be attending some fun events. One such event is the STMA Annual Summer Fete on Sunday 5th June (on the STMA Digswell recreation grounds). We are planning to have the ever-popular Tombola stall and a piece for the arena.

We're also hoping to have another Ultimate Decades Disco with more of a Party feel. We'll be encouraging you to bring your own supper and shake your booty to all the amazing sounds of the 60s, 70s and 80s. All tickets will be £5. Again, it is another fun for all the family event (the same price for the young and young at heart).

The Players AGM will be held on Monday 6th June at 7.45pm at the STMA Digswell Hall. This is open to members and non-members and it is a great way to meet the Players if you're interested in finding out more about us.

Find the Meppershall Players on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community), Instagram and 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 to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song and dance, etc. Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

**The Meppershall Players
Presents**

The Jubilee Variety Show

**Performing at S.T.M.A. Digsweil,
10 Hitchin Road, Shefford, SG17 5JA on
SATURDAY 14TH MAY 2022**

Matinee Performance: 3pm—All tickets—£5

Evening Performance: 7.30pm— Tickets—£10 – Concessions [Under 17yrs/Over 60 yrs] – £5

Tickets are on sale NOW* at: www.ticketsource.co.uk/themeppershallplayers

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This event is table seated—like a street party

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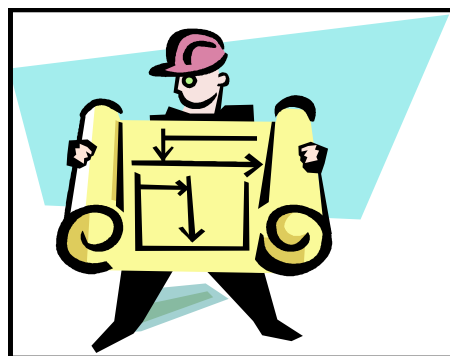
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Financial Matters by Paul Savuto

Have I Saved Enough to Retire?

Difficult one to answer. It requires a lot of information about you, your family, your income needs in retirement, and an understanding of the various financial vehicles available for saving and investing before it can be answered definitively.

It's hard to know exactly how much you'll need in later life because everyone has different circumstances and different expectations. But by planning how much you'll need and working out how best to build up your pension pot, you'll be in a better position to live your best life in later life.

Most people know they should save money to fund their retirement. But they may not know, however, how much money they should be saving in order to retire comfortably. So what should you consider?

What will my life look like when I retire?

While this might seem obvious, it's easy to forget about all of the little details when thinking about retiring or what your daily life will look like after retirement.

Your budget is aimed at having a certain standard of living now, while working. Will that standard of living carry over into your retirement years? Will you need to scale back? Or will you be able to enjoy more of the finer things in life after you retire?

How much am I currently saving towards retirement each month or year?

This is always a good metric to know how well your current savings are holding up, especially since you can compare it with other metrics later on.

Saving early means your money is invested for longer and has more time to grow – and any returns your savings make are also reinvested and have a chance to grow too. If you know how much money is being put away for retirement now, it's easier to estimate how long it will take before that particular goal has been reached.

How would my daily life change if I had less income coming in?

By looking at your current income and expenditure, you can start to get a picture of what life would look like with a smaller income. Your expenses will likely decrease as you retire if it's only necessary to pay for the essentials, such as housing, food and utilities.

You may be able to save more or spend more on things that make you happy (within reason). If most of your lifestyle doesn't change much after retirement, chances are that you're doing all right with your savings. But be mindful that people are living longer than ever, and that will create some challenges for retirees.

How long will my money last in retirement?

This is where it starts getting complicated because there are several questions involved:

- How much money do we plan to live on each month (that includes any and all expenses)?
- How long will that money need to support us?
- How much income do we expect to have throughout retirement?

It may take several years of research but being aware of your 'magic number' for retirement is a good way to see how well you are doing with saving. Turning your dreams into reality will take careful planning and budgeting.

Once you've got a good idea of your life expectancy, pension pot and any other retirement income, we can help you make an informed decision about when the right time to start your retirement is likely to be.

How certain am I that my savings are enough?

No one has an exact answer as to how much money they should be saving towards retirement – everyone's situation is different. Knowing your savings certainly can help you better understand whether or not it's enough for your needs. This metric may require some thinking about what type of lifestyle you want in the future, what expenses will change or go away, and how long you might live if nothing changes.

Retirement can be a long time, so it's important to think about how you plan to spend your golden years. The common perception is that you'll need between half and two-thirds of the final salary you had when you were working, after tax, to maintain your lifestyle once you retire.

Need help putting a retirement plan in place, and keeping it on track?

If it looks like what you have won't cover the lifestyle you want in retirement or you want to review your current retirement plan, speak to me.

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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	- 4TH Wednesday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd – all stops		08.48	RR
High St - all stops / Rectory Rd		08.50	RR
Cambridge, Downing St. – o/s John Lewis		10.10	14.15
W8A ST ALBANS	- 2nd 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	- 2nd 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	- 3rd 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	- 1st Thursday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd. / High Street, All stops		09.14	RR
Shefford Road, All stops		09.16	RR
WGC Central Bus Station		10.00	12.15

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

E: Thewanderbus@gmail.com

Buses available for PRIVATE HIRE – Call for Quote.

 WANDERBUS 2022 Excursion Programme			
DATE	DESTINATION	Entrance Fee as per current website	Bus Fare
Thursday 28th April	AUDLEY END HOUSE & GARDENS, near Saffron Walden. One of the largest and most opulent Jacobean houses. Set in idyllic gardens (Capability Brown design) with a beautiful parterre and walled kitchen garden.	£16.50 House & Gardens. Free to English Heritage	£13.50 p.p. Pick up 10.00/10.30 Depart 15.00
Saturday* 28th May	NORTH WEALD MARKET, Epping. Huge outdoor market with over 200 traders selling everything from fashion to house & garden and street food. All facilities on hand standing.	Free Entry	£16.50 p.p. Pick up 10.00/10.30 Depart 14.00
Thursday 23rd June	GOTHNA GARDENS, Ashwell. Private tour of the gardens with tea. Country house garden with wildlife walk and formal garden surprises. These include a topiary garden, rose garden (over 150 species) a woodland garden and tea lawn with cottage garden in the style of Gertrude Jekyll.	£12.50 including tea.	£7.50 p.p. Pick up 13.00/13.30 Depart 17.00
Thursday 28th July	CASTLE ASHBY GARDEN, Northants. Ancestral home of the Marquess of Northampton. Extensive gardens including the romantic Italian garden, the unique Orangery, Arboretum & Menagerie. Excellent café.	£10.00 entry.	£12.00 p.p. Pick up 10.00/10.30 Depart 15.00
Sunday* 14th August	PITSTONE GREEN MUSEUM/HERTIAGE PARK, nr Tring. A fascinating blend of attractions from the past capturing the spirit of a bygone age. Regular attractions include: Pottery Demonstrations, Tractor rides to Windmill, Lace Makers, Craft Stalls Model Railways, Avro Lancaster Cockpit, Crossley Gas Engine. Hot snacks and drinks, filled rolls, sandwiches& cakes.	£9.00 p.p.	£12.00 p.p. Pick up 11.30/12.00 Depart 16.15
Thursday 29th Sept	ASCOTT HOUSE & GARDENS, nr Leighton Buzzard. An old English black & white timber manor house dating back in parts to C17 th . Acquired by the Rothschild family in 1873. Housing an exceptional collection of paintings, fine furniture and superb porcelain. Extensive gardens.	£13.00 p.p. House & Gardens or £8.00 Gardens only. Free to National Trust	£12.00 p.p. Pick up 11.30/12.00 Depart 15.30
Thursday 28th October	BICESTER VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTRE, Oxon. Home to more than 160 luxury fashion & lifestyle boutiques of many of the leading brands offering savings of up to 60% off the recommended retail price. Dine at Soho House & Co's farmhouse restaurant and café, or the splendour of Café Wolseley.	Free Entry	£20.00 p.p. Pick Up 10.00/10.30 Depart 15.15.
Thursday 24th Nov	CHRISTMAS MARKET - TBA		
<p>*Please note that the May trip takes place on a Saturday, August on a Sunday</p> <p>To Book: Call 0300-123-3023 or email: thewanderbus@gmail.com. We require a deposit of £5.00 p.p. for any excursion. Post a cheque to Wanderbus, 5 The Pastures, Upper Stondon, Beds SG16 6QB or bank transfer to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code :40-52-40 Acc: 00013118, Wanderbus Ltd. (Use your name as reference).</p>			

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Heather Walkley

Clinical Hypnotherapist

*BSc Hon's Psychology
DCH, DHP, MNCH acc
GHR reg*

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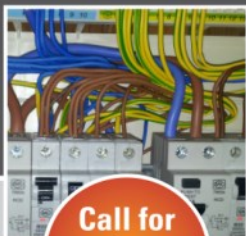
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* Subject to availability.

Useful Contact Details In Meppershall

DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School and Post Office/Village Stores

DOCTORS, DENTISTS, PHARMACIES

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

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
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CBC councillors:

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

Parish Council Clerk

Alessandre Marabese	clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk
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Member of Parliament:

Nadine Dorries	Nadine.Dorries.MP@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.

THE TEAM

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Collating Dates 2022			
May 2022 Issue	April 25 th	Aug-Sept Double Issue	July 25 th
June 2022 Issue	May 30 th	October 2022 Issue	September 26 th
July 2022 Issue	June 27 th	November Issue	October 31 st
Please contact John Thompson to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			

Please note that dates in the above table show when collating will take place, at 2.30pm in the Village Hall, for the corresponding month, displayed to the left. The issue being collated usually relates to the following month. However, please continue to look out for updates and alterations to usual plans during the coronavirus social distancing measures.