

MUNCHKINS
Tues. & Fri.
9:30am to
11:30am
At
Meppershall
Village
Hall
SG17 5AB

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Editorial by James Read

Our corner of the world rarely makes the national news, but our by-election in October certainly hit the headlines. Our constituency moved away from the Conservatives for the first time in 92 years, with 13,872 votes cast for Labour, 12,680 Conservative, 9,420 Lib Dem and 1,487 Reform, and 732 Green. That's the top-5. Less than half of us actually voted (44%) - general election turnout in our area has typically been above 70%. And this is likely to be the last election within our current boundaries - the next general election places Meppershall within a constituency centred on Hitchin. We want to thank each candidate for their campaigning in our area – they all came to talk to people and lots of information, ideas and opinions were shared. We welcome Alistair Strathern, our new MP.



Politics in 1605 was even more turbulent. As we mark Guy Fawkes' treasonous plot this bonfire night, let's stay careful and safe as always while we enjoy the fires and fireworks. We've included some firework safety info in this issue, and let's be especially KIND TO ANIMALS. Horses are very vulnerable at this time. Let's be kind to the horses behind the village hall and off Fildyke Road (and in other places).

Remembrance in Meppershall will be marked on Remembrance Sunday at the memorial in the churchyard, meeting at 10.45am on Sunday 12th November. Thanks to Keith for his thoughtful piece in the church section this month. Open to all, this Act of Remembrance in our village is a moving and important way to recall those who left this village and never came back, serving the nation and giving their lives to protect our future all those years ago. It is also an important time to remember everyone who serves today, and we are respectful and grateful to everyone here with connections to, and roles in, British Armed Forces and allied organisations.

Looking to the next generation, this month we say a special "well done!" to Melanie Choonos who has started the new Meppershall Munchkins group for parents and toddlers. She – and parents – kindly allowed us to feature the Munchkins on our cover here. They are growing in numbers and would welcome more support. Along with Melanie's excellent work to run the group, Meppershall Village Hall Trustees and Meppershall Parish Council have both provided start-up help.

The village benefits from many different contributions that demonstrate care for the people around us and concern for the place where we live. Thank you to Larry for sharing his personal story that highlighted a significant road safety issue in Meppershall and led to the promise from the Highways Department at Central Bedfordshire Council to protect pedestrians outside the village shop with bollards. We will watch keenly for the completion of the work.

As our nights get longer and darker, let's all have a think about road safety. If you're walking or riding, make yourself very visible with hi-viz and lights. If you're driving, go slow. Take time. Never drink. Put down your phone. Buckle up. Be generous to walkers and riders on the road. And please don't drive on the pavement outside the village shop. It could be your child or friend that will be running out of the door.



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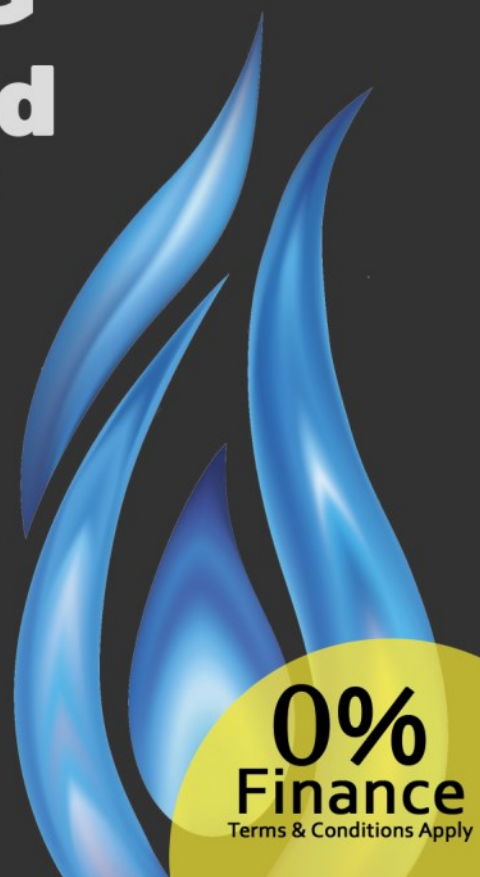
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Letters

Dear Editor,

Having read in the Meppershall Messenger about the proposed bollard recommendation outside Budgens, I thought it prudent to forward all emails/conversations with Central Bedfordshire Council Highways Department.

I am the person that instigated this.

As I stated originally in my first email to the council I was nearly run over by someone mounting the kerb just as I was exiting the shop. If a child or mother with a pram had done this I'm certain they would have been badly injured.

It is not acceptable that nothing has been done about this.

It should not be about parking, damage to cars or traffic hold ups - it's about safety !!!

That should be your responsibility.

Regards

Larry Porter

Here is a summary of Larry's previous correspondence with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) beginning with his first report to them in 2022:

To Central Bedfordshire Council Highways Department

"I live in Meppershall. The new post office (Budgens) has a drop kerb either side of the shop. Yesterday as I walked out of the shop a car mounted the kerb approx. 3 feet from the front door almost running into me. I have mentioned a number of times to the shop that it was dangerous. If a mother had gone out with a pram they would have been hit. If a child walks out they would have been injured. When you leave a shop you're not expecting to have to look both ways. Many times cars/vans mount the kerb, either to go into the Shop or if a vehicle is coming the other way they would not pull in [on the road] but drive along the kerb. Please could you look into this, either way, as someone will be badly injured someday. Thanking you in advance. Larry."

4 October 2022: A Senior Highways Officer at CBC replied to confirm they would visit the location over the coming weeks to determine if there is a safety issue outside the Budgens and provide after that inspection.

6 December 2022: Larry chased up with CBC, explaining that a number of complaints had been posted on the Meppershall Facebook site about parked cars on the pavement, obstructing buses, refuse collection vehicles etc and causing hold-ups.

8 December 2022: A Senior Highways Officer at CBC confirmed their intention to install bollards in the New Year (2023) – but noting the work was on a long priority list to be completed by the end of the financial year [we assume that meant March 2023].

23 May 2023: Larry again chased up and confirmed the problems are ongoing.

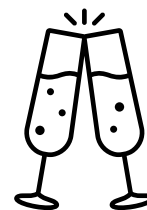
26 May 2023: CBC explained that the previous highways officer had left their job but that the order for the work had been placed. However the contractor for the work changed in April and they arrived to "a rather large backlog of work". It was hoped that the bollard work would be done by July (based on a 3-month contract timescale).

11 August 2023: Larry chased up again – the story continues...

Meppershall Social Club

A warm welcome from MSC!

The colder weather has finally arrived, but we hope to have something to keep you entertained and warm during the long cold evenings!



We will be having our regular discos and karaokes on dates yet to be decided, so keep an eye on Facebook for announcements.

As usual we have bingo on Fridays, eyes down 7pm, 18+ only.

November 12th: our last quiz of 2023, so get your gang together to see if you can triumph all!

November 17th: the return of SNUBCAT, a live 5-piece band that which went down a storm when they played for free at our charity ball back in August. Please come and support this fantastic local band playing predominantly 90s Indie, we promise you won't be disappointed. Entry is free, open to all, definitely a night not to be missed.

Winter opening hours from November 1st:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6-10	5.30-11	7-10.30	5-11	5-11.30
Saturday		Sunday		
1-11		1-10		

There may occasionally be slight variations to timings depending on what's on.

A few gripes: whilst we welcome children, please do not allow your children to run around the building and corridors, it's an accident waiting to happen, for both your children and for other users of the social club. Please supervise your children at all times.

Foul, abusive language or threatening aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and you will be asked to leave immediately.

As always, thank you for your continued custom & support.

MSC

Shefford Community Choir

We are changing our dates slightly in November, since the hall is not always available. We will meet in November on 1st, 8th and 22nd, singing 7.15pm-9.15pm, Robert Bloomfield Academy Theatre. Cost is £4 per session (includes tea & coffee from 7pm and during the break – if possible please bring your own mug, there are no washing up facilities). New members are always welcome, no audition required, just a love to sing. See us singing on, Saturday, 25 November, Shefford Christmas Lights Switch on! Plus details coming soon on our first concert, Friday, 15 December, at the RBA Theatre. For more information, email Sheffordcommunitychoir01@gmail.com or find us on facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089163432831.

Another Little Bit Of History



This third contribution from Trevor Wilkinson shows a map of Meppershall and its surroundings in 1805.

It is fascinating to see a landscape at that time made up of farms, manors and a few clusters buildings in between. What do you think is most interesting about the landscape at that time? Let us know! A few interesting features that we spotted:

- Stondon Road was just a track ambling down between farms
- Parts of Meppershall to the north of Chapel Farm were enclaves of the county of Hertfordshire!
- The track to Campton from the south end of Meppershall wound its way over what is now farmland – and Bury Farm is not even marked!
- Shillington Bury Farm, Chibley Farm, Polehanger, Woodhall, Shefford Hardwicke, Meppershall Hoo and Chapel Farm all clearly marked
- Rectory Farm (east of Hoo Farm) is marked – which is now The Airman and part of RAF Henlow
- No railway at Arlesey

Thanks again to Trevor for sharing these very interest historical images.

Thank You From Meppershall Munchkins



As a mum to 3 wonderful children I am all too aware of the importance of having somewhere you can walk to with babies and toddlers, a safe space for them to burn off their endless streams of energy whilst you enjoy a much needed moment of hands free time to munch on a biscuit and chat to another human. When I complained to the village hall trustees about there being no baby groups running from the hall, I never could have envisioned the rabbit hole it would lead me down.

A quick appeal on Facebook had donations and support flowing in thick and fast from lots of kind souls in our village and with the support and some financial backing from the village hall and parish council we were able to open our doors and welcome our first families at the end of September.

It has been so lovely meeting parents, grandparents and carers in the village and getting to know some more faces in our local community. We look forward to meeting a few more of you soon.

To everyone that has helped make this group happen I just wanted to say a huge, heartfelt thank you.

Melanie Choonos

Meppershall Church Of England Academy

Welcome to Meppershall Church of England Academy, part of Poppy Hill Church of England Multi Academy Trust

The new academic year has got off to a flying start at Meppershall Church of England Academy.

We are delighted to welcome all the new children and their families to our school community but also it was a real joy to see our other children (noticeably taller than when they left for the summer holidays!) eagerly returning back to school. All the staff have enjoyed reconnecting with them and hearing about their adventures over the summer.

It was also lovely to see our Year 5 children, who have moved as Meppershall pupils to our Henlow site, settling in so well. We wish them continued happiness and success and to all the pupils who have moved up into their new year groups.

The children are to be commended for how quickly they have settled into school and everyone has been busy getting familiar with their new classrooms, teachers and expectations.

As our school community continues to grow, we would like to remind parents who are looking for their child to join us, you can apply by contacting Central Bedfordshire Council Admissions.

For a September 2024 school place the deadline is 15th January 2024.
https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions/496/apply_for_a_new_lower_or_primary_school_place

We highly recommend families who are interested in their child joining us, either in our Reception class through to our Year 4 class at Meppershall or Year 5 & 6 classes based at our Henlow site, to visit our schools at Meppershall Church of England Academy or Henlow Church of England Academy by arranging an appointment. Please contact the School Office on 01462 813293 or email us on office@meppershallacad.org.

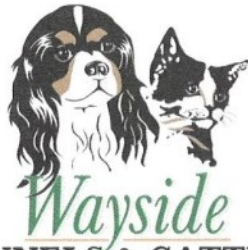
You can also find more information about our schools on our websites.
<https://www.meppershallacademy.org.uk/web>
<https://www.henlowacademy.co.uk/>

We have also included a link to our recent SIAMS Inspection Report:

https://www.meppershallacademy.org.uk/storage/secure_download/elRhUHZGZjd mTTd1WUh2bUs5MDdzUT09

Ann Halford, School Business Manager





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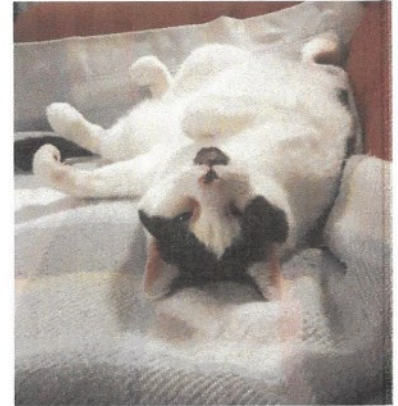


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Staying safe with fireworks

As the fireworks season approaches, the night sky will be lit up with firework displays.

With all the sparkle, it's easy to forget that fireworks can be dangerous if not used correctly and responsibly. This advice will help everyone to stay safe while celebrating.

Neighbourhood Watch



With crime rates still increasing in and around Meppershall especially with thefts from sheds and outbuildings with the long dark nights now upon us I feel the need to once again remind you all of the value of being members of Neighbourhood Watch (NHW). Having NHW stickers on doors or windows and having NHW road signs attached to lamp posts all helps to deter those intent on crime. The value of neighbours keeping an eye on others' property whilst at work, on holiday etc. can play an important part.

NHW members also support more roads in Meppershall being signposted 20ph particularly where there are no pavements causing mothers with prams, children and the elderly to have to walk along the road e.g. Fildyke Road. Hertfordshire County Council have plans in place (following consultation) to have many roads signed 20mph with traffic calming measures put in place. The programme would make it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle and to improve safety for all road users. Once again pedestrians hit by a vehicle travelling at 30mph have a 20% chance of being killed whilst at 20mph this is reduced to just 2.5%.

The only way 20mph zones could happen here is for residents to raise yet another petition to Central Bedfordshire Highways Department.

NHW members are made aware of crimes in their area and what to look out for, including different types of scams. At present we have two police-approved groups in Meppershall: Walnut Tree Way (which includes Harriots Field and Banland Croft) and Emery Gardens (Emery Croft).

Joining NWH is easy and free - visit <http://www.ourwatch.org.uk/Bedfordshire> - see below. You can of course join one of the existing groups but it would be great if someone could start their own group, for instance in Woodland Rest (Davidsons Homes), Shefford Road, High Street, Fildyke Road, Orchard Close or other estates in the village. Once joined, it is very simple to start your own group and full instructions are given. It could consist of as little as three people if you want.

How To Join – Info From Neighbourhood Watch. *Neighbours by chance. Working together by choice.* We make this a better place to live. Our different membership models offer flexibility to suit you. At the heart of each one are you, your neighbours, and your community. Once you have joined as an Individual Member, you have the option to become a Scheme Member by joining a local scheme or starting one up.

Sign up at: <https://members.ourwatchmember.org.uk/join>.

Individual Member: an Individual Member is anyone wishing to be part of the biggest voluntary crime prevention movement in England and Wales, approved by the Police and Police and Crime Commissioner. Once you are a registered member of NHW you may be invited, or you can request, to join a local NHW group; or volunteer for NHW.

Individual Members can continue their membership even if they move areas or change groups; and there are a range of other benefits: BE PROTECTED • Feel and be safer • Receive expert, easy-to-follow local and national crime prevention advice • Be invited to crime prevention webinars • Be consulted on your crime and community opinions • Receive discounts in our shop and partner product offers BE CONNECTED • Request to, or be invited to, join a Scheme or start a new Scheme • Manage your membership options and opt-in to police and other updates • Remain an Individual Member even if you move home or become a Group (or Scheme)

Member: A Scheme Member is someone who joins their local Scheme, headed by a volunteer Coordinator. We have over 90,000 Coordinators leading Schemes across England and Wales. Schemes can be physical Schemes covering your home, or virtual Schemes such as a Neighbourhood Watch Facebook group. Scheme Members can belong to one or more Schemes. You'll receive all of the Individual Member benefits PLUS: BE PROTECTED • Look out for your neighbours • Resolve local issues with others in your • Neighbourhood Watch group • Improve your relationship with local • police and partners • Look out for your community • Receive and share crime prevention information with your group • Free Public Liability Insurance for registered groups when running Neighbourhood Watch activities • BE CONNECTED • Increase your networking by engaging in regional discussions and activities • Feel a greater sense of belonging and connection to a tighter-knit community • Feel increased pride and satisfaction with where you live or work.

In conclusion, it would be great if some of you would join as members or better still as new coordinators with you own group within Meppershall. We all want this great village of Meppershall to be free of crime and joining NHW would be your contribution to this aim. More NHW signage around the village would help with this aim.

Deputy PCC Attends National Neighbourhood Watch Conference

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) Ian Dalgarno attended the neighbourhood watch crime and community conference in September. The purpose of the conference is to reflect on the impact of work over the past year, celebrate achievements of the NHW volunteers across England and Wales and share best practice moving forward.

Ian Dalgarno, DPCC, said: "NHW is more than volunteering, it makes a huge difference in cutting community crime and not only that it is proven to increase community well-being and alleviates isolation and loneliness."

"The conference was an amazing opportunity to network with colleagues in the NHE community and hear from other watch schemes on their projects and innovations."

Watch schemes feature the police and crime plan under Priority 1 - to invest and support watch schemes as part of community safety.

Cllr Anthony Seaman Walnut Tree Way NHW Coordinator.

Please mention the Meppershall Messenger when responding to this article.

Household Waste Recycling Centres – ID Now Required

From 1 November 2023, all visitors to Central Bedfordshire Council recycling centres (also known as HWRCs or tidy tips) will be asked to present a valid form of I.D. as proof of residency in Central Bedfordshire.

This brings Central Bedfordshire Council in line with many of its neighbouring authorities and means that visitors to sites at Ampthill, Biggleswade, Leighton Buzzard and Thorn Turn (Houghton Regis) will need to bring along valid ID to gain entry to the tidy tip.

What are the current forms of accepted I.D.?

- Current UK driving licence (photo card or paper licence will be accepted) *
- Council Tax bill - from the current financial year*
- Utility bill (gas, electricity, or water) - less than a year old*
- Letter from HMRC or the Home Office - less than a year old*
- Current bus pass
- Current disabled parking permit

*May be displayed electronically via a mobile phone

Where are our Household Waste Recycling Centres?

Ampthill - Abbey Lane, Off Oliver Street, Ampthill, Beds, MK45 2SA

Biggleswade - Bells Brook, Biggleswade, Beds, SG18 0NA

Leighton Buzzard - Shenley Hill Road, Leighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 3BT

Houghton Regis and Dunstable - Turn Thorn, Grendall Lane, Houghton Regis, Beds, LU5 6GJ

When are they open?

All sites are open seven days a week between 9am- 5pm including Bank Holidays, except Christmas Eve 9am - 1pm and New Year's Eve 9am-1pm.

All sites are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day

Meppershall Parish Council – Approved Minutes

An Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council (MPC) took place on Monday 11th September 2023.

Chairman's announcements

- The Chairman apologised to meeting attendees who had problems accessing the room for the meeting. Tonight's meeting was the second meeting in a row for MPC where keys for the room could not be found and the meeting start delayed. The room was also not cleared for the meeting further delaying the start time. *The Clerk was asked to contact MVHT to express displeasure.*
- Councillor Merryweather will be attending the National Allotment Society Eastern Region AGM on 14th October on MPC behalf.

Public Session

Ward Councillor Stephenson's update:

- CBC Strategic Priorities – The new Independent administration is reviewing these.
- Schools for the Future - Update expected in the autumn.
- 100 High Street Planning Appeal – Refusal of the appeal was a good outcome.
- CBC Highways – The 2023/24 Annual Plan has been published with a lack of work scheduled for Meppershall. Not even the Brookmead and Brookside footpaths are included. Discussions ongoing with Highways. *Councillor Stephenson, Councillor Seaman and the Clerk to work together on Highways issues requiring CBC action.*
- Local Plan – full review starting after approval of Full Council post October 2023.
- CBC Fees and Charges – An increase to CBC fees and charges has been proposed with increases above the rate of inflation. The proposals require CBC Executive approval before implementation.

Questions / comments from the public:

- Regarding 100 High Street, is it possible to have a summary of the Planning Inspectors report written in layman's language? *Councillor Stephenson to request this from the Planning Officer involved.*
- Where is CBC Highways money being spent? *Councillor Stephenson – The information is available online with strategic projects listed by village / town. The plan is very officer led and councillors are requesting more involvement.*
- Is it possible to make a complaint about the lack of Highways action in our village? *Chairman reminded everyone that during this part of the meeting no decisions can be made by Council and therefore this should be an agenda item for our next meeting.*
- Can MPC please not forget re-surfacing of Shefford Road? *This will not be forgotten.*
- Residents have asked members of the Messenger delivery team about who does what within MPC? *The Chairman advised that the proper channel for all communication with the Council is via the Clerk but that membership of working groups and committees is shown on our website.*
- A tree was removed by CBC contractors on Fowlers Drive but the stump is still there despite contractors advising they would be back to deal with it in a week. *The Clerk will chase CBC.*
- Individuals on electric bicycles and scooters are speeding through the village and have been seen using the track around the pitch on Centenary Field as a race track. They are covering their faces with black masks. Can the Parish Council do anything about this? *The Clerk reported that she has run into these individuals on Centenary Field and advised them that motorised and electric vehicles / scooters were not permitted on the field. Please pass any information of anti-social behaviour on to the Clerk and she will pass on to the relevant authorities.*
- Has the Council found a replacement for Mrs Thorne? *No not yet but Mrs Thorne will be staying with the Council as Allotment Co-ordinator.*

Procedures, Consultations and Legal

- a. Co-option** – No interest received.
- b. Invitations** – Councillor Parsons to attend the Area 5 Police Priority Setting Meeting, Councillor Addy to attend the PCC Annual Parish Council Conference, the Clerk and Councillor Wright to attend the BATPC AGM and Councillor Parsons and Seaman to attend the Remembrance Day Service.

- c. **Procedures** - *Resolved that MPC Asset Register, MPC Dealing with Complaints, MPC Dealing with Habitual and Vexatious Complaints Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy are re-approved.*
- d. **IT and Communications** - A report on website usage was circulated to councillors at the beginning of the month. The Clerk advised all IT issues are up to date and the renewal of the Gov.uk domain name is on the payments lists for approval. The Clerk and Councillor Standbridge have a 'nice to do' list that they will work through when time allows.

Finance

- a. **Purchase orders**
 - i. *Resolved to book SLCC Clerks National Conference (Local Government Act 1972 s.111) if Clerk can attend.*
 - ii. *Resolved to purchase new phone and SIM for Community and Environment Officer (Local Government Act 1972 s.111).*
 - iii. *Resolved to repair play area gate and wet pour (Open Spaces Act 1906 s.10).*
 - iv. *Resolved to approve financial support for Village Hall in opening early for pitch hirers and to review situation after 6 weeks. (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19).*
 - v. *Resolved to purchase of 5-aside goals and installation on main Centenary Field. (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19).*
 - vi. *Resolved that the Clerk purchase new locks keyed alike with master key. (Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s19).*
- b. **MPC Insurance** – The Clerk and Councillor Wright reviewed quotes from 3 providers for a 3 year long term agreement and provided a summary of the comparison. Councillors chose to select supplier A but requested that the Clerk and Councillor Wright find a company who can provide a standalone policy to cover the cost of the Clerks salary if they were to be ill for a substantial length of time. *Resolved that the Council insure themselves for a 3 year LTA with BHIB (Local Government Act 1972 s.111 and s.140) and that the Clerk arrange payment of the £996.40 premium.*
- c. **Grant applications** - To consider grant request from new Meppershall Munchkins for £500. The Clerk advised that Meppershall Munchkins are a new baby and toddler group run by villagers for the local community. As a recently formed organisation they are yet to set up their bank account etc. but are working with MVHT on this new initiative. The clerk further advised that if Council were minded to allow the grant, funding would come from general reserves. *Resolved to purchase and gift items required by Meppershall Munchkins (Local Government Act 1972 s.137) up to cost of £500.00 +VAT.*
- d. **Document approval** – *Resolved to approve Bank Statements & Reconciliations Current Account 176, 177 and 178/ and Bank Statements, Reconciliations Savings Account 044, 045 and 046 and MultiPay Statement and Reconciliation 26/06/23 and 26/07/23.*
- e. **Orders for the payment of money** – *Resolved that the schedules of payments as presented be approved and authorised for payment by Councillor Parsons. Carried.*

Planning and Housing

- a. **Planning applications**
 - i. CB/23/02838/FULL - 65 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LU - Proposed two storey front and two storey rear extensions. *Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/02838 pending Clerk review.*
 - ii. CB/23/02675/FULL - 114 Fildyke Road, SG17 5LU - Erection of two detached dwellings. *Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 23/02675.*

- b. Applications responded to under delegated powers – For information only.
 - i. CB/23/02452/FULL - Sandy View, Shefford Road, SG17 5LL - Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of a four bed dwelling. *Objection submitted.*
 - ii. CB/23/02413/FULL - 59 Fildyke Road - SG17 5LU - Erection of a detached double garage to front of dwelling. *Objection submitted.*
- c. Appeals
 - i. CB/22/01261/OUT – APP/P0240/W/23/3317603 - 100 High Street, SG17 5LZ - Development of 23 dwellings and associated works following the demolition of 100 High Street with all matters reserved except access. Appeal dismissed although it was noted that the Inspector noted CBC's 5 year forward housing land supply at 5.01 years.
 - ii. CB/22/02025/FULL - Standalone House, Campton Road, SG17 5PB - Two storey side extension. Appeal granted with conditions.

Neighbourhood Plan

- a. **Report** - The Clerk is progressing with this slowly. A meeting of the NP Steering Group was requested.

Highways and Transport

- a. **Update on dispute raised with CBC regarding invoice received re. highways works** - The Clerk reported that revised invoices have been received from CBC as requested that formed part of the payment list already approved by councillors. The matter is now considered closed.
- b. **Update on road safety improvements on new developments** - Councillor Seaman reported that Vistry Homes (Emery Gardens) have erected 20mph signage but that it is just one small sign. Councillor Seaman is awaiting an update from Davidsons and CBC regarding Woodlands Rest. *The Clerk was asked to email Davidsons regarding this again.* Elsewhere the VAS on Shillington Road has been re-installed, however the bollards outside the Village Stores are not yet in place.

Environment and Leisure

- a. **Update on dog fouling campaign and issues arising** - New FaceBook and Social media posts have been prepared by the Clerk and will be scheduled for publication shortly. The Clerk is ordering bags for the new dog fouling dispenser on the PC Stores. Councillor Avrili has reported that dog fouling on Centenary Field is seemingly better but she and other residents are constantly picking up other dogs mess. The Council wished to thank residents for cleaning up after other irresponsible dog owners and hoped that improvements would also be seen elsewhere in the village, especially Old Road Meadow.
- b. **To consider participation or commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day on 6th June 2024** - Councillors agreed that a funding for marking the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June 20254 would be set aside in the 2024-2025 budget that village organisations could request access to via grant funding.
- c. **To consider signing up to 'I Dig Trees' free tree giveaway** - Councillors agreed that an application for trees was to be submitted to 'I Dig Trees'. Once delivered the whips are to be planted at the allotments to allow them to grow before planting elsewhere in the village.
- d. **To consider supporting allotment orchard installation** - The Clerk reported that together with Mrs Thorne they were proposing the creation of an allotment orchard in an area of the allotments not used for cultivation that would be tended to by plot

holders. Sufficient interest and support had already been provided by current plot holders to the idea. Councillors agreed to support the idea with the Clerk and Mrs Thorne asked to prepare costings and investigate possible grant funding for the project.

The Clerk was disappointed to report that in the Community Orchard in Old Road Meadow residents had stripped all the plums even before they were ripe. In addition, trees had been damaged to pick fruit. Councillors asked the Clerk to arrange for signage and a note in the Messenger that asks residents to respect the trees and that the fruit is for all to enjoy and not for a few to take advantage of.

e. Update on all environmental and leisure issues.

- Play Inspections are currently being carried out by the Clerk with Councillors Avrili and Wright having agreed to be trained to do this.
- The Clerk was asked to arrange a village litter pick after the 5th November.
- The re-installation of the benches on Centenary Field has not been successful and therefore an alternative solution using some sort of ground anchors will be required. The Clerk was asked to progress this.
- Councillor Seaman will be leading a group to paint the PC Stores shortly.
- A allotment working party day is to be arranged to carry out tasks in the allotments with the assistance of allotment plot holders e.g.: installation of plot posts, strimming, hedge cutting etc.
- Bollard installation is scheduled for Crackle Hill and Centenary Field. The bollard at Old Road Meadow is still pending purchase.
- The Clerk has discussed with our grass cutters the creating of a wildflower area at the rear of Centenary Field and the trimming of the hedge. A quotation for this is pending.
- The wildflower area at Old Road Meadow can now be cut. Councillor Parsons advised that the cut grass should be left in situ for 10 days prior to raking off.
- Mr Alderman has contacted Davidson Homes to arrange an inspection of the green space and planting.

NOMINATION OF MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL TRUSTEE

- **To discuss and consider nomination of Meppershall Village Hall Trustee** – The Clerk and Councillor Addy are working together on seeking nominations.

PERSONNEL

- a. Allotment Co-ordinator update** - After discussions with Mrs Thorne, who had previously expressed a wish to resign from the Council and her role as Community and Environment Officer, she was offered and accepted the role of Allotment Co-ordinator working 2-3 hours per week covering the allotments and the Community Orchard at Old Road Meadow. Her new role started on 1st September 2023. Councillors supported the creation of this new role and the opportunity to retain Mrs Thorne as an employee.
- b. Community and Environment Officer update** - No applications have been received for this role which has now been modified to take into account the Allotment Co-ordinator role. Councillors asked the Clerk to re-advertise the role and emphasise the flexible working hours that could fit in with school timetables, training provided, pension contribution and paid holidays.

John Parsons – Chairman – Meppershall Parish Council

How to use fireworks safely

2021

Only buy from licensed sellers

Check before you buy. Make sure you buy fireworks from a licensed retailer, both in-store and online. Do not buy fireworks from unknown retailers on social media sites. It's illegal for anyone under 18 to buy or carry fireworks.



Don't disturb wildlife, horses or farm animals



Just like pets, wild animals, horses and farm animals may be affected by fireworks. Notify nearby farms and stables if you are planning to use fireworks. Don't let off fireworks if they'll disturb wildlife habitats, or roosting bats and birds.

Stick to celebration dates

Did you know that you can't let fireworks off between 11pm and 7am? The only exceptions are Fireworks Night, when the cut-off is midnight; and Diwali, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year, when it's 1am. People expect fireworks around these dates, so they're more likely to have planned ahead to protect pets and other animals. Timings may be different in Scotland. Search **'fireworks'** on **gov.scot** for more advice.



Read all the safety instructions



The box of fireworks will tell you important things like how far away people need to stand back once the firework is lit. If you don't understand the instructions and warnings, don't use the firework.

Be considerate

Let your neighbours know in advance if you plan to let off **any** fireworks, so they can make arrangements for pets that might be affected. If you live close to horses, make sure you let their owners know well in advance. Site your fireworks well away from them and aim them in the opposite direction. Please be considerate as horse owners cannot easily move them away from fireworks.



Keep pets safe

Keep dogs and cats inside with somewhere to hide. Give small animals who live outside lots of extra bedding and nesting material to burrow in.



Dispose of fireworks safely

Ensure that fireworks are out, soak them in water overnight, then put them in a rubbish bag and in the bin.



Which fireworks can I use at home?



Category information can be found on the label.

Category F1, F2 and F3 fireworks are on sale to the general public. Consumer fireworks fall into either category F2 or F3 depending on how much of a **safety distance** is required. Check you have enough space to safely use a firework before you buy. Always follow the Firework Code.

Go to www.gov.uk/fireworks-the-law for more advice

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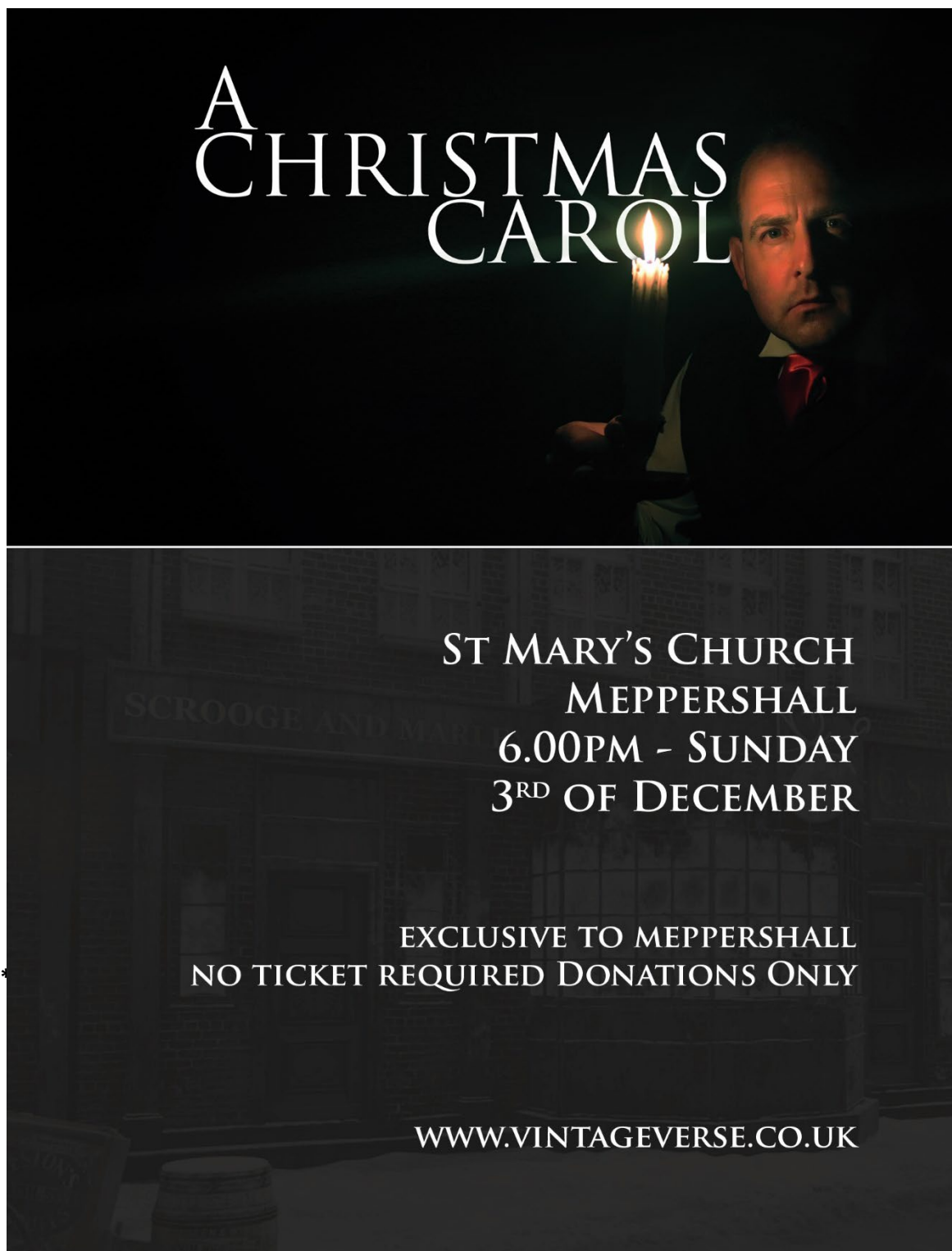
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Churchyard Working Party – Saturday 4th November 2023

A team of volunteers will again be doing their bit to maintain the churchyard on Saturday 4th November. Can you spare some time to help? It is always a fun and rewarding day – raking, pruning and clearing ready for autumn/winter and for Remembrance Sunday on the following weekend. Come for as little or as much time as you wish – between 9am and 3.30pm – bring your own tools if possible. Refreshments provided. Volunteering is a key part of how the church keeps going – the only regular income to the church is the donations of time and money from its members and from the wider community. Just turn up! :)



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How Time Flies!

**The GNOMES are looking forward to celebrating our
10th Anniversary in December!**



**To mark this special occasion we will be having an
Afternoon Tea and Christmas sing a long in
The Meppershall Village Hall on Tuesday 12th December.**

Invites will be sent out shortly!

In the meantime - if you need our help

Give us a call on 07760 793921



Parish Church Of St Mary The Virgin (Church Of England)

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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...

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

Each year, as November comes round, I am reminded of the words of John McCrae, a Canadian doctor serving on the Western Front during the Great War. Also, each year, I take a group of young people who are studying the First World War to Essex Farm, just outside the Belgium town of Ypres to look at the small, damp, concrete bunkers where McCrae treated the wounded and dying as the Battle of Passchendaele raged outside. It is a poignant moment of the visit, especially as we discover the grave of a 15 year old boy killed during the battle.

This year we are reminded that war and violence are still part of our ongoing human story, with distressing scenes of men, women and children being caught up in the horrors of war, terrorism and conflict appearing on our televisions and in our newspapers. McCrae's war, the First World War has failed to live up to its name of being 'The war to end all wars.' We might therefore feel helpless and unable to know how exactly to respond to such scenes. But Christians believe that God calls us to respect and honour each other, to affirm that every life is important to God. In Matthew Chapter 5 Jesus himself says "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Let us therefore pray for those who seek peace wherever they are in our world and let us pray that their words and actions speak loudly and with clarity to a world which is hurting as much today as in its past.

On Remembrance Sunday (Sunday 12th November) at St Mary's we will pause, along with our whole nation to reflect on the cost of war and on those whose lives were cut

short by the conflict. As usual we will gather at the war memorial in our churchyard at 10:50am for a short service. The names of all those on our memorial will be read out and the church bell will toll for each one of them. Along with our nation we will observe the two minute silence. There will then be a time for organisations and individuals to lay poppy wreaths at the memorial before we go into church for our Service of Remembrance. Everyone is welcome.

Let us remember all those who give their lives in the service of others, those who are the innocent victims of war; those who we love but see no longer.

*"At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
we will remember them."*

With best wishes, Keith, Reader, St Mary The Virgin, Meppershall

Church News and Events In November

Usual Pattern of Services

Sundays	11.00am	Morning Worship every Sunday Holy Communion: 2 nd and 4 th Sundays Sunday 12 th November – Remembrance, meeting at the war memorial in the churchyard at 10.45am with a Service of Remembrance to follow in the church.
Every Wednesday	10.00am	Holy Communion in the Rectory
Church open to visit	10.00-4.00	Private prayer and quiet time – the church open for you to sit and visit each day.

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

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Advanced Notice of Christmas Dates for December!

This year Santa's Float will tour the village on 10th and 11th December. The village carol service (Carols by Candlelight) will be on Sunday 17th December at 6pm. On Christmas eve, Sunday 24th December, come to Christingle around the Crib at 11am (instead of Communion) - Midnight Communion will be in the evening at 10pm. Carols at Christmas will take place at 10.30am, Christmas Day (no Communion).

Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers

Our walk this month is on Remembrance Sunday, 12th November, and we will start at 2.15pm from St James Church, Silsoe (at the memorial). We will return to our memorial in the churchyard at Meppershall by just after 4pm. The route takes us through Wrest Park and past the manor house, through Whitehall Plantation (a peaceful woodland which can be a bit muddy at this time of year) and via the road to Lower Gravenhurst, then following the River Hit to the Cow Bridge and climbing back up into Meppershall.

To get a lift over to Silsoe for the start (or to offer a lift to others), please meet at 1.45pm at the church gate in Meppershall. Or just meet us at St James church, Silsoe. We will arrange to run drivers back to Silsoe to retrieve any parked cars at the end of the walk.

For more info, or to coordinate a lift (there are always spare seats!) please get in touch. We're an informal, dog-friendly group and we would love to have you along for a walk. Find us on 857836 (James and Miriam) or at <https://www.facebook.com/MeppershallStrollers>.



Toddington Poetry Society

We have resumed our regular meetings on the second Tuesday evening of each month. (8pm, at Luton Irish Forum, Hitchin Road Luton.)

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th November. The theme for this evening will be a discussion of a selection of poems by a particularly popular poet from the 19th century, Alfred Lord Tennyson. We will look at the classical and the mediaeval strands in Tennyson's writing, and some of the reasons for his popularity. The discussion will be introduced and led by a regular member of TPS, and is likely to include readings of 'Tithonus', 'Ulysses', and at least parts of 'The Lady of Shalott'. Members of the audience are encouraged to bring any of Tennyson's shorter poems which they particularly like.

We charge an entrance fee for our meetings – this is to cover room hire and to help us bring in external speakers to some of our sessions.

Admission on Tuesday 14th : £4 for non-members. (If you decide to become a member, admission reduces to £3 for evenings when we don't have an external speaker.)

We are a friendly group, and are always very pleased to see new members.

Sheffield Osteopathic Clinic: Is Your Car Seat Causing You Pain?

Unlike normal seating, when a vehicle is in motion your body is subjected to different forces. These are typically acceleration, stopping/starting and lateral movement swaying from side to side and up and down over bumps. Your feet are constantly moving on the brake/clutch/accelerator pedals.

Do you have difficulty reversing due to stiff neck and shoulders?

Or low back pain after driving for long periods?

You may need to adjust your car seat...

3 tips to improve your posture and safety in the car:

1. **Your seatbelt** should be sitting over your pelvic bones rather than your stomach to prevent internal injuries. It should be in contact with your shoulder to prevent serious neck injury. Sitting too far from the belt can lead to slipping under the belt, risking catastrophic injuries.
2. **Head restraints** work by catching and supporting your head during a rear-end crash. Your head restraint should be as close to the back of your head as possible and as high as the top of your head.
3. **The steering wheel should be at least 12 inches** away from you to avoid receiving the full force of an airbag deployment, (which can be over 200mph, in a front-end collision).

If you have pain or stiffness in your back, shoulder or neck, call the Sheffield Osteopathic Clinic on 01462 811006 to make an appointment. We can offer advice about your driving position and alleviate unnecessary pain.

Drive comfortably and be safe!

Diabetes Awareness

One in 15 people in the UK have diabetes, including one million people who have type 2, but have not been diagnosed.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, with a special focus this year on World Diabetes Day on 14th November 2023, as it marks 100 years since scientists Frederick Banting and John Macleod were awarded the 1923 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in recognition of the discovery of insulin.

Diabetes is a condition where your blood glucose level is too high. There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 diabetes is when you are unable to make insulin at all. Type 2 diabetes is when the insulin you make cannot work effectively, or you cannot produce enough of it. There are other types of diabetes including gestational diabetes which can develop during pregnancy and rarer types of diabetes too.

With all types of diabetes glucose cannot get into your cells properly, so it begins to build up in your blood, too much glucose in your blood causes a lot of different



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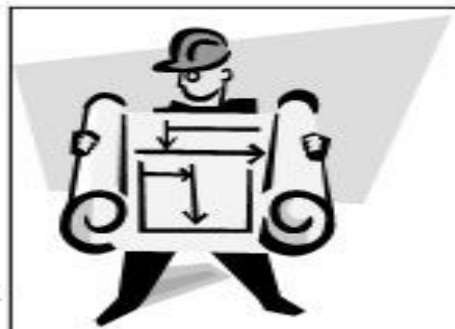
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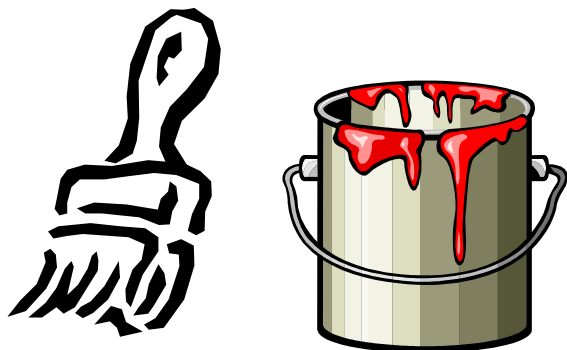
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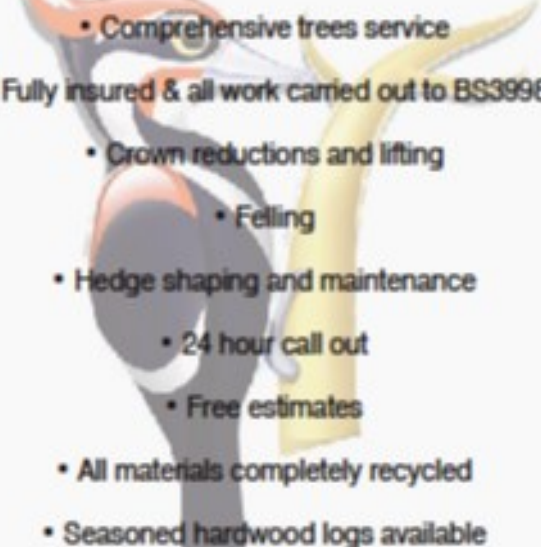
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problems. All types of diabetes cause people to have too much glucose in their blood, although we all need some glucose to give us energy. We get glucose when our bodies break down the carbohydrates which is released into our blood. We also need the hormone insulin, which is made by our pancreas and allows the glucose in our blood to enter our cells and fuel our bodies.

The most common symptoms of diabetes include:

Going to the toilet a lot, especially at night	Being thirsty	Blurred vision	Feeling more tired than usual
Losing weight without trying to	Genital itching or thrush		Cuts and wounds taking longer to heal

Over a long period of time high glucose levels in your blood can seriously damage your heart, eyes, feet, and kidneys. With the right treatment and care, you can live a healthy life by reducing the risk of experiencing these complications.

For more information about complications and reducing the risk of developing complications, check out the online info from Diabetes UK: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics>

Prediabetes is when your blood sugar level is higher than usual, but not high enough to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, therefore having an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The good news is that some people with type 2 diabetes can put their diabetes into remission. This means your blood sugar levels are healthy without taking any medication. For many this can be life-changing. Find more info from Diabetes UK at the link above.

Getting used to life with diabetes can be difficult. Diabetes UK have lots of information to help you learn how to treat and manage your condition effectively, including advice about what to eat, guidance about driving and lots more: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes>.

Find out your risk factor with Diabetes UK (<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/types-of-diabetes/type-2/diabetes-risk-factors>) or contact your GP surgery for advice. You can call Diabetes UK on 0345 123 2399.

Jaqui Derrick, Ivel Valley South Care Coordinator

Information brought to you by Ivel Valley South Primary Care Networks, Care Coordinating team at blmkicb.carecoordinator.ivs@nhs.net. You can follow us on Facebook at Ivel Valley South PCN.



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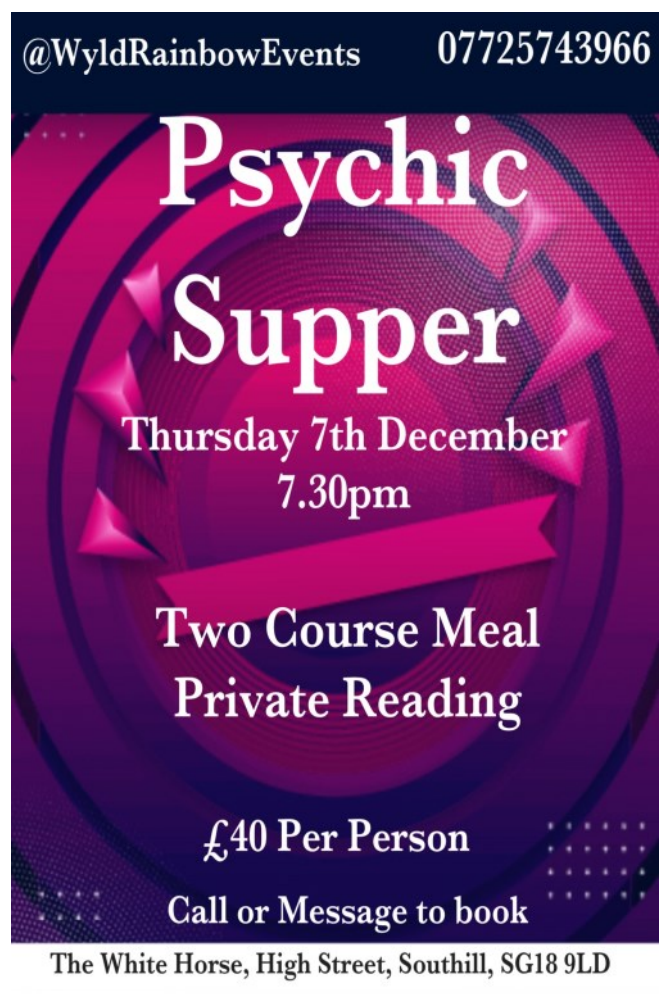
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Mental Health - Safe Talk Counselling



Hello... I am Kerrie Hipgrave, a Psychotherapist with a private practice called Safe Talk Counselling and Tics Talk.

Mental health has sadly been stigmatised for many years in the UK, however this is now changing following the psychological impact of Covid on so many people of all ages and celebrities publishing their personal struggles with mental health issues.

Regarding mental health, the most popular searched terms in google are anxiety, panic attacks, depression, relationship issues, low self-esteem and ADHD. These are only a few of the mental health issues that impact life, often causing unhappiness and a feeling of helplessness. I will be writing monthly in the Meppershall Messenger about different mental health and behavioural issues to give greater insight and understanding.

I have vast experience working with and supporting all age groups and genders and I have been fortunate to train and work with children and young people through creative therapy and play both privately and in a school setting. I volunteered for several years in the addiction centre in Stevenage offering counselling for drugs and alcohol addiction. I am also an accredited Breathwork Coach having experienced how differing emotional states alters breath. Having the tools to regulate breath is very powerful and provides an effective way to self-regulate.

I trained with Tourettes Action UK/GOSH in CBIT therapy for Tourette's Syndrome and tics, a neurodiverse disorder. I work with clients nationally and abroad making a difference to people's lives by providing psychoeducation and means of controlling their tics through CBIT therapy. My behavioural support also includes Trichotillomania (hair pulling) and Dermatillomania (skin picking).

Therapy is a confidential service and a weekly commitment. I am ICO registered for data protection with an enhanced DBS and safeguarding trained. Should you wish to engage in therapy either in my private practice or online, please contact me via my website: safetalkcounselling.com or by email safetalkcounselling@gmail.com

Kerrie Hipgrave

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**For more details contact us through our facebook page –
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A message from Meppershall Events Team:

Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances we have been unable to
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Please do support our events by attending our Christmas Fair.

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The Meppershall Players @ STMA November 2023



Apologies for no Players page last month readers - my fault I'm afraid... clean forgot about it and sent it in way, way too late! So what did I want to tell you.....

Don't miss 'The Big Quiz' on Friday 3rd November. Doors open 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start at the STMA hall, 10, Hitchin Road, Shefford SG17 5JA. £2 per person, teams of up to eight people, cash prize for winning team (along with bragging rights). A fun night out for all ages with family and friends.

We are now well into our rehearsals for 'Sinbad the Sailor.' Costumes are being primed and pressed, scenery being painted, props being sorted, songs and dances practised. And we are all trying to learn our lines before scripts aren't allowed on stage! 'What's it all about?' I hear you ask! Well....

...Sinbad is gathering a crew to sail the seven seas trading goods at all the different ports they land in, seeing the world and having the adventure of a life time, but who is Black Flynn? A pirate perhaps?! And why is he interested in Sinbad and his crew?! And can Sinbad's ship *The Topsy Turtle* avoid the attention of the Sea Demon and return home safely? Want to know the answers to these questions?

Our performance dates are Saturday 2nd and 9th December with additional afternoon (3pm) and evening (7.30pm) shows. Admission is £10 (adults aged 18 - 59yrs); £5 concessions (aged 17 years and under; 60 years and over).

Tickets for our 2023 pantomime 'The Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor' are on sale **NOW!** Go on-line at ticketsource.co.uk/themeppershallplayers. For non-internet sales contact 01462 816336

If you're over 18 and would like to be involved in our pantomime front of house, phone Karen on the number below or come to one of our meetings on Monday evenings at the STMA 10, Hitchin Road, Shefford. We're a friendly bunch who enjoy entertaining our audiences

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 free and we welcome anyone aged over 18 who have an interest in amateur theatricalities, whether it be on stage or off, indulging in all areas of theatrical performances - set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you!

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336



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A Pantomime by Karen Mitchell
At S.T.M.A., Digswell Hall, 10 Hitchin Road
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Tickets on sale at:
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Online ticket sales will cease 24 hours before the event starts.
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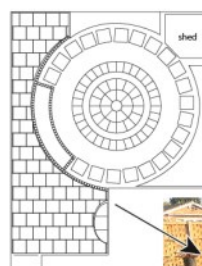
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November's Floral Fireworks by Donna Cameron

Donna's Garden Designs 07833670934

We have had a glorious October with plenty of sunny days to enjoy all the vibrant Autumnal colours. Having got the plants for the newly opened Sugar Loaf pub in Meppershall it was great that on the opening night, it was such a mild evening so the many locals supporting this great venture could spill out and enjoy the garden. Great to see everyone having fun! Good luck to the Sugar Loaf team!

As I wandered around my garden today in the soft autumn sunshine, I couldn't believe how much is still in bloom. Whilst I was on holiday in the summer, I bought some Chrysanthemums. I had always thought of them as old fashioned, half-dead petrol station bouquets, but these have really changed my mind!



They have brought me so much joy, watching them bloom. One is a vibrant orange, another is a dusky pink and I also have a cream one with a yolk yellow middle. They have flowered for ages and look gorgeous accompanied by the Asters and Crocosmia.

They were a great buy as they come back every year and should fill out, so I can use them as cut flowers next year. I will definitely be buying more as they are great for keeping the colour going in the beds moving into Autumn. As the garden slows down for the winter these are definitely the fireworks for November!

We know Chrysanthemums today as the Garden Mum and were often found in 1940s and 1950s allotments. Originally from China, dating back to the 15th Century BC, by the 8th Century Japan was using them as the Crest of its Emperor. They represent a long and happy life. By the 18th Century, Robert Fortune had brought them to Europe - the Pompon type, like the pompons on soldiers hats!

Today, there are many different varieties and colours. They are an easy plant to put in the beds. Just cut them back when they die back in the Autumn and new growth will come for next year's display. They are half-hardy, so if your garden is exposed, it is best to lift and store them in a greenhouse over the winter. In the Spring when they reach 20cm, pinch them out to encourage side shoots and more blooms. Water them regularly and feed them from late spring. They will last 3 weeks in a vase, just keep refreshing the water.

Donna x

Jobs in the Garden for November	
Gather up fallen leaves and make leaf mould	Plant Lillies and Tulips
Plant bare root Roses	Mulch Nerines and Agapanthus to help protect them and move to a sheltered position
Protect tender plants from frost	Winter prune deciduous trees and shrubs
Plant hedges	Clean out bird boxes
Lift and divide herbaceous perennials	

Trugs n Trowels Gardening Club (Campton)

What a beautiful October, unseasonably warm and great weather to get the whole family involved prepping your spring garden. The soil is warm and moist for bulbs, and our shrubs will have a great start.

There is still a little window to get your spring wow factor by creating fantastic displays in borders and containers or try a natural method, throw your bulbs in the air over your lawn and plant where they fall. Currently I saw a mixed bags of daffodils 2.5 kg for £4 in our local supermarket.

It is well worth thinking ahead as after a long winter, the arrival of spring is signalled by the appearance of Snowdrops and like Crocuses look their best naturalised in grass under trees.

Growing your own is well worth the effort undertaken this autumn and results in producing wonderful flavoursome food. Now is the time to plant onion sets, garlic, and broad beans.

Purple sprouting broccoli planted in Autumn will grow happily outdoors through winter for a spring harvest.

October a prime month to begin work if you dream of borders filled with an abundance of flowers throughout spring and summer. Planting this month will give plenty of opportunity to get established ahead of next years growing season. Choose plants that will flower at different times of the year which also sit happily beside each other. PLAN your purchases and water in dry weather. This is also a good time to add organic matter to your beds and borders.

October and November are the best months to trim beech hedges and results in a good shape, start at the top and taper to the base.

We are enjoying an extended floral display from our Dahlias this month which are semi hardy but generally do better when lifted but in the south we can get away leaving them in, the general rule is lift before the first frost. Gaps can be filled with wallflowers or some beautiful hellebores.

We have some spaces left for our Christmas Market Trip to Bury St Edmunds on 25th November. We shall leave church corner in the morning and the cost is £17.50 return. Please get in touch to book your space.

Our next meeting, all welcome, on 6th November 7:30pm is a hands on demonstration to create a door sash, I will need to know if you are attending if you didn't receive the list of items you need to bring.

Raffle and Refreshments at all our meetings. If you're splitting any shrubs or sorting seeds, remember our free and swap table. Look forward to seeing you.

Maryika 01462 851729

Finance by Paul Savuto

Achieving your long-term financial goals

After more than a decade of putting up with paltry savings rates, the sharp increase in rates over the past two years has certainly brought considerable cheer to savers. However, while the rise is welcome, it is important savers do not overly rely on cash savings but carry on investing if they are to maximise returns and achieve their long term financial goals.

Think holistically

Although the availability of higher rates has provided a boost to cash savings, assessing the appropriate amount to hold in rainy-day funds is always difficult, particularly given recent cost-of-living pressures. However, history suggests holding too much money in cash can hold back your future wealth, as returns on both bonds and equities have a better long-term record in terms of outpacing inflation.

Time in the market

History also suggests long periods out of the market increase investors' chances of underperforming. This is because, while cash rates may look attractive, knowing when to sell and buy back into the market is extremely difficult if not impossible, particularly when markets are volatile. The best approach is therefore usually to stay in the market and build a portfolio capable of capitalising on any improved outlook in order to maximise potential long-term gains.

Don't be intimidated

Another reason why some people might shy away from investing is because they feel overawed. Indeed, a recent survey found that half of the UK population admits to being intimidated by investing, with more respondents saying it would be easier to learn a new language than start investing. On a more positive note, however, other research recently showed growth in the uptake of regulated financial advice, with 4.4 million UK adults seeking advice in 2022, up from 3.8 million two years earlier.

Lifetime Allowance removal provides pension boost

Several months have passed since the Spring Budget, which, although not necessarily packed with good news stories, held one announcement that certainly did bring considerable cheer to higher rate taxpayers. A recent survey has revealed the dramatic impact that Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's decision to scrap the pension Lifetime Allowance (LTA) is having on people's retirement planning strategies.

Purpose of the move

In his first Spring Budget Statement delivered on 15 March, the Chancellor announced that the LTA charge would be removed from April 2023 and that the LTA would be abolished altogether from April 2024. This decision was essentially designed to remove a disincentive for retirement saving amongst higher earners and dissuade an increasing number of this group from retiring early.

Boosting pension contributions

New research suggests the change has already had a significant impact on higher earners' pension saving and retirement planning decisions both in terms of spurring more contributions and encouraging retirement delays. According to the survey, 51% of higher rate taxpayers have restarted, increased or made plans to increase their pension payments since the announcement, with average additional payments amounting to £650 a month.

Extending working lives

In addition, 23% of respondents said they had delayed their planned retirement or are likely to delay their retirement due to the fact that they can now save a higher amount in their pension pot without facing a heavy tax charge. Furthermore, around 10% said they had actually come out of retirement as a result of the change, while another 6% were planning to come out of retirement.

Advice is paramount

While abolition of the LTA has undoubtedly simplified some decisions in relation to retirement and estate planning, it has also effectively increased the need for clients to seek professional advice on their pension arrangements due to the change in tax treatment. There is also always an element of political risk in financial planning which means clients may need to act quickly if they are to make the most of the opportunity the Chancellor has provided.

GET IN TOUCH

DGS IFA Ltd are Independent and Chartered Financial Advisers. I am a Chartered Financial Planner with over 30 years financial services experience, so you are in safe hands. For a free review of your financial situation and to discuss your plans and goals, please contact me, Paul Savuto, AFPS, Chartered Financial Planner. DGS Independent Financial Advisers Ltd. 07834 499 595 or email ps@dgsifa.com, I'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have. FCA 225814.

Birthdays

Congratulations to

Margaret E. who will be 93

Anne G. who will be 92

Stephen N. who will be 87

Birthday greetings and best wishes

from the whole team at The Meppershall Messenger!

How (Not) To Impress The Royal Family by Patrick O'Connor

My last tour in the RAF before retiring was to a main operational station in Suffolk. My job, however, was not very exciting: I was responsible for a wide range of supporting functions, including transport and workshops. Pretty boring, mostly. I had excellent staff who got on with their work without needing coaxing from me. Then the powers that be decided that we were due for a Royal Visit. Princess Anne would grace our station with her presence for a day. A major highlight would be a display of all of the Station's non-military activities. I was put in charge of this.

An entire aircraft hangar was allocated. I called a meeting of all the people involved: sports, hobbies, activities, as well as my chaps who would be making, painting and erecting everything. We worked for over six months, most of my carpenters, metal workers and painters doing little else. One of my team distinguished himself by arranging for a little old biplane from the RAF Museum to be delivered, in a huge Beverly transport plane, to be a centrepiece, complete with a cutout Peanuts pilot in the cockpit. We took over the huge hangar in good time to move all the exhibits into place.

Of course we were not the only busy people on the station. Every flowerbed had to be filled with blooming rose bushes. All grass was verdant green. All signs of contractors' ditches had to be filled in. Everything stationary was painted. We had rehearsal lunches in the Officers' Mess so that we could be briefed on manners. ("Elbows off the table, O'Connor" was one instruction I received). (Interestingly, the food served by our excellent catering staff was not considered good enough, so the lunch on the day was delivered over a hundred miles by Fortnum and Mason. It was a very bland chicken dish).

After lunch was the visit to my hangar. I dashed down to be ready to greet Her Royal Highness at the hangar door. Ahead of me stretched a long red carpet, laid by an RAF team whose job it was to go from place to place laying the thing. I stood there in my "best blue" uniform, conscious of the importance of the occasion to the reputation of the RAF and to my future career. The fleet of limousines arrived, very senior officers and ladies in waiting exited, accompanying the Princess. They advanced towards the red carpet and me. I stiffened and gave my best salute. Then the red carpet blew away in a gust of wind.

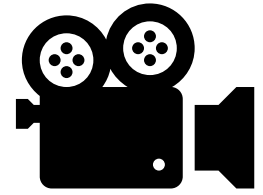
My RAF training had not equipped me for this. I quickly thought of Sir Walter Raleigh before the Armada laying down his coat for the Queen. I decided that we must straighten the errant carpet. "Quick, men, get down and fix it" I ordered the guards, and I got down with them and pulled it straight. While this was happening the illustrious party stood and waited, and the local press photographers clicked away. In a few moments we were ready. I stiffened into a salute again. The carpet blew away again.

This time Princess Anne took the initiative. "Never mind," she said, "we will walk around it".

The display was deemed a success. But Princess Anne has not spoken to me since.

Cineaste's Corner: Cinema Paradiso by Dave Peters

Giuseppe Tornatore's 1988 film "Cinema Paradiso" ("Nuovo Cinema Paradiso") deservedly won the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar in 1990, it also won a Golden Globe. A story of community, love and lost love, home, family, and friendship, it is one of my favourite films. Set in post-war Sicily, and told mainly in flashbacks, it tells the story of a young boy called Salvatore (played by Salvatore Cascio) who lives with his sister and widowed mother in a rural village. This village is unusual as it also boasts its own cinema, which is great for Salvatore who is fascinated not only with film but also with the mechanics and magic of the projection booth.



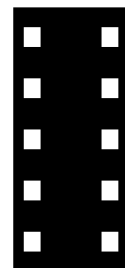
Young Salvatore regularly sneaks into the cinema when films are being previewed to watch for free, and he eventually befriends the projectionist, Alfredo (Philippe Noiret). Over time the pair build a strong bond, during which time Alfredo also teaches Salvatore the skills of a cinema projectionist. Unfortunately, this is a role that Salvatore is obliged to take over permanently after a tragic accident invalids Alfredo.

The village cinema itself shows a wide range of films, from Jean Renoir dramas to John Ford westerns and, in this pre-television era, it serves as the primary source of entertainment for the whole village. Unbeknown to the villagers, and in advance of each new film being shown, the local priest turns up to preview and censor it. As Alfredo shows the film to this lone audience member, the priest sits grasping a bell which he rings vigorously every time there is any form of physical intimacy shown on the screen, such as a kiss. When the bell is rung, Alfredo is obliged to cut that section out of the film and throw it onto an increasingly large pile of similar footage in a corner of the projection booth, this obviously creates a few strange jumps in narrative in many of the films being shown. It is only when this process has been completed and the film reassembled is it allowed it to be shown to the wider village population.

Some of the best and funniest scenes in "Cinema Paradiso" are those which show the cinema audience and their responses to the films they are watching. The "enthusiastic" reaction of a group of teenage boys watching Bridget Bardot is particularly amusing. Elsewhere romances are started in the stalls, red wine is drunk, and food is eaten, a lot of cigarettes are smoked, and the local prostitute plies her trade behind a curtain at the back.

After some years working as the Cinema's projectionist the teenage Salvatore (now played by Marco Leonardi) is called up to do his national service in Rome. He returns a much more mature person and Alfredo takes him aside and persuades him to leave the village for good and make a better life for himself in the wider world. Thirty years later the adult Salvatore has become a successful and wealthy film maker in his own right but is lured back to the place of his birth to attend Alfredo's funeral. Here he learns that The Cinema Paradiso is scheduled to be demolished to make way for a car park. Many of the old cinema audience regulars are in attendance at the funeral and after the ceremony Alfredo's widow gives Salvatore a last bequest from Alfredo that, when it is finally revealed had me both grinning and dabbing my eyes at the same time.

This film is full of interesting and colourful characters who serve to make it a fascinating story, each is fully brought to life by great writing, directing, and the wonderful acting of the entire cast. If like me you love cinema, then I'm sure you will enjoy this funny yet at the same time moving film with its great performances and emotive score by Ennio Morricone. "Cinema Paradiso" is available to stream on Freevee via Amazon Prime and is also available to rent on a variety of other platforms.



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New Timetable - Certain Days/ Routes/Times have changed

VALID FROM 5th March 2023

Please check to ensure we do not miss you!

As from 5 th March 2023		“Stops at all Bus Stops on Request”	
W2 BEDFORD	- 2nd & 3rd Wednesdays of Month	OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd, all stops		09.00	RR
High St. / Rectory Rd - all stops		09.02	RR
Interchange Retail Park		09.40	12.15
St Pauls Square / Corn Exchange		09.55	12.00
W3S BIGGLESWADE	- Every Monday	OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd / High Street, All Stops		09.37 / 09.38	RR
Shefford Road, All Stops		09.40	RR
Biggleswade – A1 Retail Park		10.05	12.10
Station/ Town Centre - pick up Church St. Bus Stop o/s Asda		10.10	12.05
W5 BIGGLESWADE - A1 Retail Park/Town Centre - Every Friday		OUT	RETURN
Rectory Rd / High St. – all stops		10.00	RR
Shefford Rd. – all stops		10.03	RR
Biggleswade A1 Retail Park / Station & Town Centre		10.25 / 10.30	
Church St bus stop o/s Asda / A1 Retail Park			12.10 / 12.15
W6A CAMBRIDGE	- 4TH Wednesday of Month	OUT	RETURN
Shefford Rd – all stops		08.48	RR
High St - all stops / Rectory Rd		08.50	RR
Cambridge, Downing St. – o/s John Lewis		10.10	14.10
W8A ST ALBANS	- 1st 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		10.15	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 – 0300-123-3023

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Thursday 23 rd Nov	St Edmundsbury Cathedral Christmas Market. Bury St Edmunds Suffolk	Free Entry Bus Fare - £17.50 p.p. <u>Pick Up</u> – 10.30/11.00 <u>Arrive</u> – 12.30 <u>Depart</u> – 16.00
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IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

The Christmas Market on Thursday 23 November is NOT operated by Bury St Edmunds Town Council but only by the Cathedral.

There will be 50+ stallholders from Suffolk and beyond will be here to showcase their products. You'll get the chance to browse stalls while also taking in the beautiful setting of the Cathedral. In addition to the shopping experience, there will be daily entertainment for visitors.

Useful Contact Details In Meppershall

DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School, Village Hall and Budgens

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NHS Direct 111

Dr Baxter & Partners

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

Appointments 01462 810034

General queries, prescriptions etc. 01462 818620

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109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ 01462 850305

Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford 01462 814020

Shefford Dental Clinic, 99 Hitchin Rd Shefford 01462 648465

Jardines Chemist, 7 High St Shefford 01462 813283

Shefford Pharmacy, Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive 01462 818633

Police:

Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

Hospitals

Bedford Hospital 01234 355122

Lister Hospital, Stevenage 01438 314333

Luton and Dunstable Hospital 01582 491166

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Anglian Water 03457 145145

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

(Or 105 from a landline)

Central Beds Council

0300 300 8301

CBC Councillor for Gravenhurst, Meppershall, Shillington:

Blake Stephenson blake.stephenson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

hello@blakestephenson.uk

0300 300 8526

Parish Council Clerk

Alessandre Marabese clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk

Member of Parliament:

Alistair Strathern MP ali@alistairstrathern.com

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

We await further contact info following Alistair's recent appointment to the House of Commons as our MP

St Marys Church

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

See full details in the church pages of The Meppershall Messenger

Library: High St Shefford

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

Whitbread Wanderbus service

Stephanie Kirby

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Henlow Academy

01462 813733

Robert Bloomfield, Shefford

01462 628800

Meppershall Academy, High Street

01462 813293

Meppershall Pre-School Village Hall, Ella Carey-Butler

07816 357159

meppershallps@gmail.com

Meppershall Munchkins, Melanie Choonos

meppershallmunchkins@gmail.com

Organisations

Meppershall Players, Karen Mitchell

01462 816336

Meppershall Good Neighbours (GNOMES)

07760 793921

Meppershall Brownies, Suzanne Brightwell

07817 392325

Shefford Guides, Angie Griffiths

07957 462519

Shefford Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers)

Kathy Georgiou

01462 629313

HATS Drama Group, Linda Winfield

lin.winfield5@gmail.com

Meppershall Village Hall Trustees

trustees@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

Meppershall Village Hall Bookings

bookings@meppershallvillagehall.co.uk

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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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PRODUCTION DATES AND DEADLINES

The table below shows the dates for collation of the magazine. The collation team generally meets at 2.30pm in the Village Hall on the collation date. Printing takes place 7 days prior to collation. The deadline for submissions is 14 days prior to collation. Please look out for updates and alterations to usual plans when occasionally necessary. Can you spare some time to help produce the magazine? We would love to have you on the team! Use the contacts above to find out more.

Issue date	Collation date	Issue date	Collation date
Dec-Jan 2023-4	Tues 28 th Nov	July 2024	Tues 2 nd July 2024
February 2024	Tues 30 th Jan 2024	Aug-Sept 2024	Tues 30 th July 2024
March 2024	Tues 27 th Feb 2024	October 2024	Tues 1 st October 2024
April 2024	Tues 2 nd April 2024	November 2024	Tues 29 th October 2024
May 2024	Tues 30 th Apr 2024	Dec-Jan 2024-5	Tues 3 rd Decembr 2024
June 2024	Tues 28 th May 2024	February 2025	TBC
Contact John Thompson to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			