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Editorial by James Read

We welcome new enterprises to village this month – along with new friends and neighbours coming to live at Woodlands Rest. You'll see info about Meppershall Munchkins on p5 – a new baby and toddler group and an



important addition to the community. We wish Melanie and team every success. We are also welcoming The Butterfly Café to the village hall (p4) – a new venture aiming to keep us well supplied with tea and cake (and more besides!) in a local spot for meet-ups and chat. We look forward to seeing 'The Butterfly' really fly!

Speaking of which, you'll also find a hugely expressive and inspiring account of what it is like to soar into the skies as the pilot of a light aircraft – thanks to local pilot Martin Blandy for some great photos and a wonderful account on p24.

It is great to have some new ideas for things to watch and quality film reviews from Dave Peters (p26) – continuing this month with Scarlett Johansen playing the role of a predatory alien undergoing something of an awakening.

Those who have purchased parts of the village as prospective developers were likely disappointed with the outcome of the planning appeal regarding 100 High Street. This was their last attempt to get someone to say “yes” when Meppershall Parish Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and many others had repeatedly said “no.” The appeal was refused, the proposal is not permitted, and it is good to note the reasons.

The Planning Inspectorate ultimately acknowledged that, in our locality, new houses are being supplied at more than the rate required, on a 5-year basis. Many of us have children. We want them to have houses in the future. We are not against new homes. But they must be the right number, of the right kind, in the right place.

So, considering the 100 High Street site, they recognised the “smaller fields and paddocks contained by the tree line on the ridge that acts as a buffer between the built-up area and the expansive countryside to the west.” They noted this is now different in the south of the village compared to the north, where Woodlands Rest and Walnut Tree Way have sadly lost that “buffer”. They said the 100 High Street development “would severely erode the rural setting which characterises this part of High Street” and concluded that a number of planning policies (HQ1, HQ8, EE5 and SP7) would be contravened. The entrance way would “detract from the rural village character of the area” and “the unoccupied and increasingly natural site would be replaced by an urban, estate type development.”

We can be grateful for this outcome and the support of Councillor Blake Stephenson. No doubt another planning proposal will follow. We can only hope it will be a more beautiful and fitting proposal for a handful of appropriate houses that improve the village environment.

Rest in peace, Mike France – who for so many years presided over the beautiful garden at 100 High Street. Mike passed away on 18 August 2023. That was the very day that the formal planning decision was issued.



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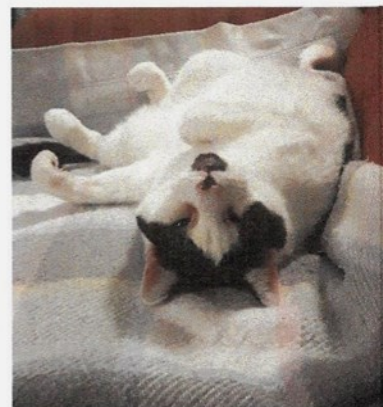


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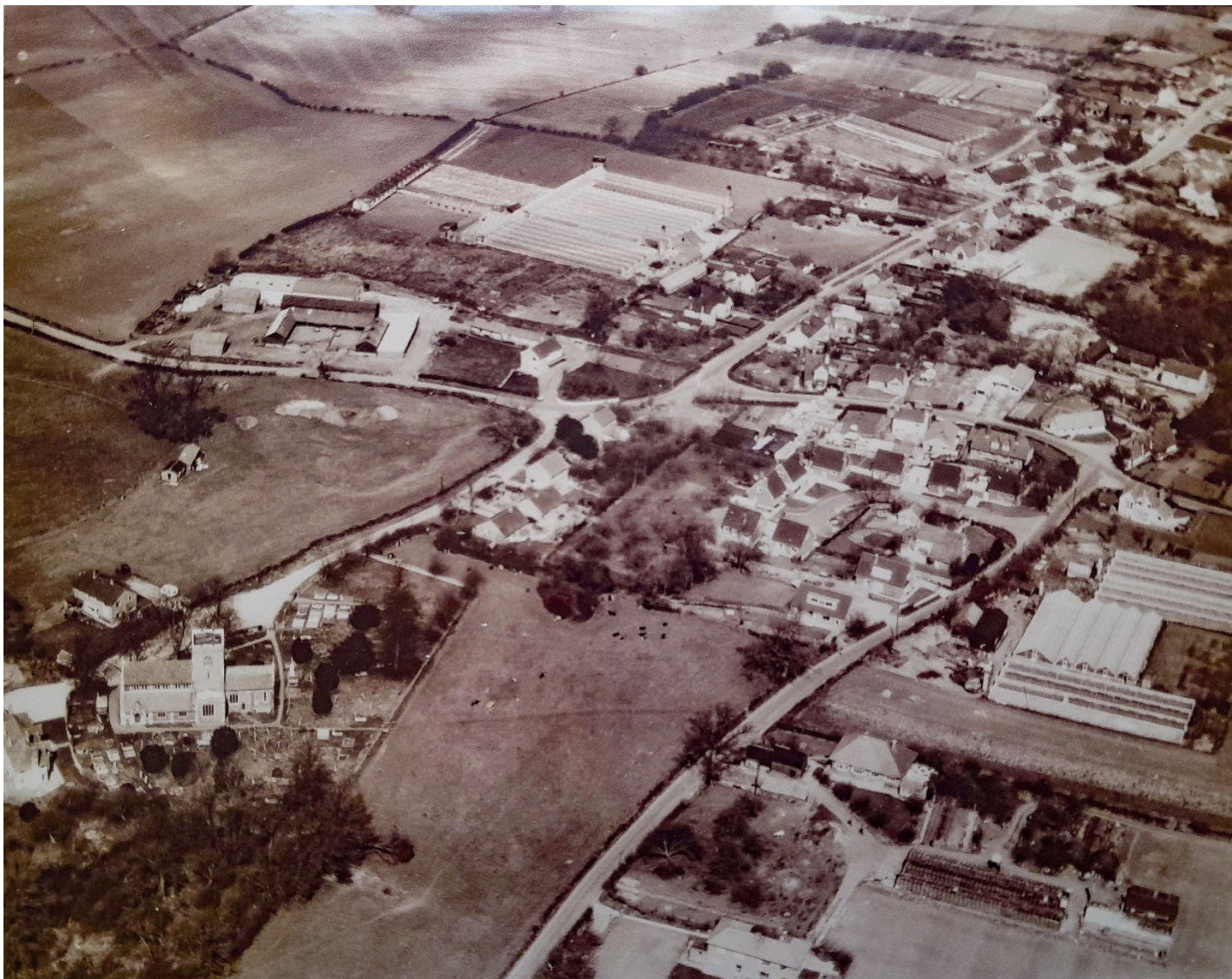
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Another Little Bit Of History



Thanks to Trevor Wilkinson for sharing another wonderful aerial picture of the village – this one taken from the south over Shillington Road and – again – taken in 1966. You might want to zoom in and enjoy it in our online edition at <https://meppershall-pc.gov.uk/the-meppershall-messenger/>. What differences can you spot, compared to the village today in that part of Meppershall...?

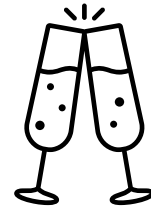
- Bury Farm and its surrounding were very different
- Animals being kept on the fields that are now Woodhall House, off Church Road
- A wide variety of agricultural enterprise going on around the village – fields, glasshouses
- Top left – Taylors Close not yet built, and some of the wildlife area behind what is now Coneygate is also visible
- The yew and lime trees in the churchyard are all very visible – and these remain beautiful features of the village environment today
- 100 High Street was a thriving horticultural site

We would love to hear your other reflections and observations from this photo – email us at mepp.messenger@gmail.com.

Meppershall Social Club

Hello everyone!

Summer finally arrived in September, and it's been wonderful to see so many families enjoying our patio whilst the children have fun in the park.



We have yet to confirm some dates for our October entertainment, so please look out for posters and information on our Facebook page & Meppershall notice board page.

We can confirm the following:

- Bingo Fridays, Eyes down 7pm (18+) cash prizes, £10 for your books.
- Sunday 8th Oct, Quiz night, max teams of 6, £1 to play, 50% to winners 50% to charity.
- Saturday 21st October, Johnny Red Rock & Roll Legends Show, tickets £15, in aid of Keech Hospice, contact Helen 07989 914941.
- Wednesday 25th October, get a taste of Indie as the fabulous SNUBCAT rehearse in the social area for their forthcoming gig in November at MSC, they went down a storm at the charity ball.
- Saturday 28th October, we have spooky goings on for HALLOWEEN, a children's fancy dress disco from 5-7, prizes for boy/girl best costume, followed by family disco with prizes for man/woman best costume. DANS VAN will be in attendance with their amazing fresh wood fired pizzas & hog roast rolls. Entry for children's disco £1 per child.

Don't forget we have Sky & TNT (BT) sports on 3 screens and the giant 10ft screen.

Pool & darts (not available when event in social area)

Child, disabled & dog friendly.

Just a few niggles:

- Will smokers please use the ashtrays provided, it is unsightly and unnecessarily to use the floor! Vaping is banned everywhere within the building.
- You are welcome to order take away food to be delivered, but please dispose of your rubbish in the bins provided.
- Please do not allow your children to run around the building and corridors.
- Anyone displaying threatening, aggressive, violent behaviour and frequent foul language will be asked to leave the premises and dealt with accordingly, this is a family club.

That's it for this month, we extend our thanks for your continued custom and support.

MSC

A Message From The Butterfly Café

Hi everyone it's been 6 weeks now since the Butterfly café opened and what can I say to all the lovely people in the village and surrounding villages... *thank you so much* for all your support. I hope everyone is enjoying having the cafe open again as we are running it. It's super busy (just how we like it!) What can I say about the cakes?! We have never cooked so many, you must be enjoying them! Let's hope this continues. Once again, thanks for your support. ***From the Butterfly cafe.***

Meppershall Pre-School

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR AN EXCITING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY
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Meppershall Preschool is an Ofsted rated 'Good' (2020), Committee run Preschool, within the Village Hall of Meppershall which serves the Village and surrounding areas. The Committee is essential to the everyday running of the Preschool and is made up of parents current and past. We are looking for a new Chair to run the Committee and ensure the Preschool continues to provide the friendly, safe and excellent childcare in our community.

Duties include:

- Fundraising events
- Recruitment and staffing
- Monthly meetings
- Support for staff

Our AGM will be held on October 2024 at 8pm, all welcome!!!

Please email meppershallpschair@gmail.com with any questions and to register interest for the AGM - or just come along!

Nikki Hudson

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Festival for Older People 2023 celebrates 10th Anniversary

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will once again be hosting the Festival for Older People, now in its 10th year:

Friday 6th October 2023

**Drop in any time between 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
at The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick**

The focus for the day is to celebrate older people and the contribution they make to society, with this year's theme being, 'Resilience of an Older Person in a Changing World'.

We will be joined by representatives from many statutory and voluntary organisations, and local groups who offer advice and information about local services for older people, such as social care, health, housing, leisure activities, holistic services and much more. We will also offer entertainment throughout the day such as musical interludes and other activities.

There will also be the opportunity to purchase locally made goods and to support the Macmillan Cake Stall.

The Festival for Older People is a very popular annual event, and it is open to all. Please share with colleagues, friends and family to save the date.

To express your interest in attending, please email info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk, or call 0300 303 8554.



FESTIVAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE

'Resilience Of Older Persons In a Changing World'



Friday 6 October 2023



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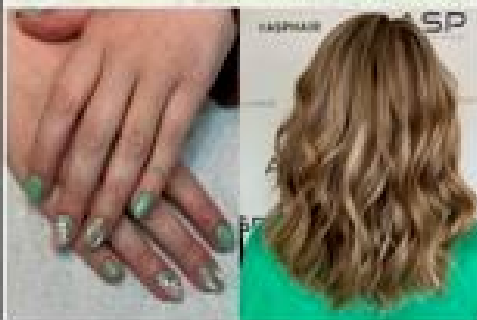
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Meppershall Craft Club



It's been a while since we posted in The Messenger!

Here is an update:

Following our successful daytime Craft Club which we started over 4 years ago, last Autumn we began an evening Craft Club which is developing very well.



Our members cover a very wide range of crafts. Some of us work on our own crafts, or, as we often do in the daytime club, share our skills with others in mini workshops.

All crafts and crafters are welcome - currently our crafts include water colour painting (plus a workshop soon!), jewellery making, needle felting, paper craft, black stitch, crochet and knitting.

In addition to our crafting, we share information on many interesting local events & activities.

We also arrange some group outings. These have recently included a Coronation 'street party', and an evening meal.



Thanks to the kind generosity of our members we are able to make many donations to charities:

Our most recent donations have been to Autism Bedfordshire, Trigeminal Neuralgia, British Heart Foundation and The Brain Tumour Charity.

Thanks to the Trustees, all of our meetings are held at **The Meppershall Village Hall.**

If you would like to join us for the **Daytime club it is on every Wednesday 10.00 to 12noon.** Please do pop in to meet us.

Our **Evening club is held once a month on a Monday** –We have a waiting list to join this group, This is due to the room size.

If you are interested in joining us please do give us a call.

Kim Tyler, Lorraine Jarvis & Diane Hughes the Organisers.

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

Meppershall Parish Council – Approved Minutes

Approved Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Meppershall Parish Council (MPC) on Monday 24th July 2023.

Election of Chairman / Vice-Chairman

- a. **Election of the Chairman for the year 2023-2024.** *Resolved to elect Councillor Parson as Chairman for the remainder of the year 2023-2024.*
- b. **Election of the Vice-Chairman for the year 2023-2024.** *Resolved to elect Councillor Wright as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the year 2023-2024.*

Apologies

- a. *Resolved to accept apologies for absence from council meetings from Councillor Thompson until the end of December 2023.*

Chairman's announcements

- Councillor Morgan has chosen to stand down from the Council. His input will be missed and he is thanked for all his hard work over his term as councillor. CBC have been advised of the vacancy and all notices have been published as required.
- Mrs Thorne has decided to resign from her role as MPC Community and Environment Officer with a finish date in mid-August. Mrs Thorne has grown into and shaped this role and the Personnel Committee will find it difficult to replace her. The Chairman wished to thank Mrs Thorne for her hard work and commitment to the village in her role with them.

Public Session

Questions / comments from the public:

- The positioning of the new MPC noticeboard is poor as not everyone walks via the MPC Crackle Hill roadways from Shefford Road to the Village Hall. *The reasons for putting it in this location are understandable but it is disappointing that room nearer to the Village Hall could not be found. The Chairman advised that if issues are continue to be raised, MPC will review the location.*
- Who at CBC allowed the closure of Shefford Road and Shillington Road at the same time? *Clerk to investigate.*

Procedures, Consultations and Legal

- a. **IT and Communications** - A report on website usage was circulated to councillors at the beginning of the month. The Clerk advised the councillors that Councillor Standbridge has provided the Clerk with access to Canva in order to create the Dog Barking campaign posters for Social Media. The MPC computer also required the emergency purchase of a new Mini Wireless adapter as the old one had stopped working.

Finance

- a. **Purchase orders**
 - i. *Resolved to book SLCC Clerks Finance training (Local Government Act 1972 s.111), cost to mark our pitches and install goal posts (Local Government*

(Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19, to trim Carne's copse (open Spaces Act 1906 s.10), to purchase solar powered security camera and signage for Centenary Field (Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s.31).

b. Grant applications

- i. To consider grant request from new Neighbourhood Watch scheme for marketing materials. *Councillor Seaman did not participate in this agenda item. Resolved to purchase and gift marketing materials promoting Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Meppershall (Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s.31) up to cost of £125.00 +VAT.*

- c. **Banking Mandate** - *Resolved that the Clerk action the following changes to the MPC banking mandate: remove Mr Crossley and Mr Chapman, add Councillors Avrili and Russell, provide Councillor Wright with online access to view, approve and setup payments.*

- d. **Document approval** – *Deferred to next meeting.*

- 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/23/01808/FULL - 23 Hoo Road, SG17 5LP - Two storey side and rear extensions. *Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/01808.*
- ii. CB/23/01724/FULL - The Old Coach House, 10-12 Rectory Road, SG17 5NB - Front extension to garage including insertion of roof lights, alterations to garage door, additional window to first floor and timber cladding. *Resolved that the Council has no objection to planning application 23/01724.*
- iii. CB/23/02119/FULL - 113 High Street, SG17 5LZ - Single storey front, side & rear extensions. Part two storey side & rear extension with loft extension & conversion. *Resolved that the Council objects to planning application 23/02119 on the grounds of overbearing size, change to street scene, parking and other issues identified by the Clerk.*

- b. Applications responded to under delegated powers – For information only.

- i. CB/23/01374/VOC - Woodview Nurseries, SG17 5LL - Variation of condition number 12 of planning permission CB/22/02944/FULL Construction of two dwellings and ancillary works. Variation is to change the approved drawings to enable revisions comprising of improved layout, provision of accommodation within the roof void and detaching previous semi-detached garages. *Objection submitted to this VOC.*
- ii. CB/23/01199/FULL - 53 High Street, SG17 5LX - Proposed single storey rear extension. *No objection raised for this application.*

c. Appeals

- i. Update from Cllr Wright on appeal hearing held on 27th and 28th June for APP/P0240/W/23/3317603 - CB/22/01261/OUT - 100 High Street, Meppershall, Shefford, SG17 5LZ - Outline Application: Development of 23 dwellings and associated works following the demolition of 100 High Street with all matters reserved except access, and to discuss letter to be sent to CBC concerning issues raised during the appeal. *Councillor Wright attended this appeal hearing on behalf of MPC. CBC were represented by a Senior Planning Officer and consultant whilst the appellant was represented by Kings Counsel and a team of consultants. The CBC requested a postponement as they had no Kings Counsel, however after deliberation this was refused by the Inspector. The appellant's team took issue with CBC's housing delivery figures and the CBC team were unable at times to defend their position or issues raised by the appellant's team. The Clerk was asked to write to CBC to clarify their actions on the day by more importantly their housing delivery figures.*

Neighbourhood Plan

- a. **Report** - The Clerk is progressing with this.

Highways and Transport

- a. **Update on meeting with CBC Highways.** The Clerk met with the Interim Head of Highways, Councillor Stephenson and Councillor Seaman on 19th June. They discussed:
 - Invoice from CBC. *More information to be provided to new Highways Team Leader.*
 - Old VAS on Shefford Road removal.
 - Replacement of VAS on Shillington Road. *To be discussed with new Highways Team Leader.*
 - State of Shefford Road.
 - Bollard installation outside village stores. *Solution to be reviewed for best option by CBC Highways.*
 - Resurfacing of footpath outside 1 to 13 High Street and 2 High Street near the junction with Hill Top View. *Request passed to Highways officer to action.*

As a result of this meeting the Clerk and Councillor Thompson met with the Highways Team Leader, Traffic Management (06/07/23) to discuss:

- Invoice from CBC and reasons for MPC refusal to pay. *CBC to investigate and respond with proposed solution.*
- Redundant VAS outside 60 Shefford Road to be removed. *CBC to arrange this.*

- Requirement to reinstate VAS on Shillington Road.
- Update required on bollard installation outside village stores.
- Update required on footpath re-surfacing Brookside and Brookmead.
- Update required on footpath re-surfacing High Street.
- Update required on when Shefford Road will be resurfaced.

- b. OPCC and RMF grant funding and works update including dispute raised with CBC regarding invoice received for part of the works.** The issue of the disputed invoice for highways improvement works excluding the VAS costs was discussed with both the CBC Interim Head of Highways and the new Highways Team Leader. On both occasions MPC representatives explained that the invoice received for £20,746 excluding the cost of the VAS would not be paid until all invoices had been received. If the cost of all invoices exceed the original budget proposed by MPC for the works of £23,250 then MPC would continue to dispute cost for works. The Clerk reported that she had discussed the matter with the CBC Highways Team Leader today and was expecting revised invoices in line with MPC's budget.

Resolved that the Clerk and Finance Committee arrange for payment of invoices from CBC for Highways works prior to the next meeting in September if the sum of all invoices does not exceed £23,250.

- c. Review of Survey 5 Meppershall Village Plan 2017-2027 and progress made so far.** Councillors reviewed the Village Plan 2017-2027 survey results on highways. *The Clerk was asked to obtain updates on Section 278 agreements from CBC.*
- d. Update on road safety improvements on new developments – Cllr Seaman,** Vistry Homes (Emery Gardens) have confirmed that 20mph signage will be erected when other highways works are carried out on site. Councillor Seaman is awaiting an update from Davidsons and CBC regarding Woodlands Rest. *The Clerk was asked to email Davidsons regarding this.*

Environment and Leisure

- a. To consider potential hire request for Centenary Field for fireworks display.** The Clerk advised that adverts had been issued confirming a fireworks display on Centenary Field in November without the organisation making a formal application. They have been contacted regarding this. Whilst the Clerk has delegated powers to accept bookings for Centenary Field, she requested Council guidance on this matter. *Resolved that MPC agree to the use of Centenary Field for a fireworks display subject to receipt of a formal application and the fulfilling of conditions including use of field (no vehicles), insurance, post event clean up within 24 hours, leafleting of neighbours, agreement of adjacent farmer, provision of risk assessment and site plan etc.*

b. Update on all environmental and leisure issues.

- The Clerk has arranged the repair of the cemetery standpipe and is organising the repair of the water pipe between the water meter and new stop cock.
- The large noticeboard has been erected at the end of MPC's Crackle Hill roadway (Village Hall end) and a small noticeboard has been erected on the allotments.
- Bollards - The newly installed bollard on the Crackle Hill roadway has been removed as the concrete did not set properly. The contractor is aware and will reinstall on 7th August when installing the Centenary Field path bollard. The bollards installed on Parish Council land at the entrance to Old Road Meadow have been knocked down within 24 hours of installation. An alternative solution is required that protects the gate from unauthorised access and children from vehicles using the entrance as a turning area. *Resolved that the Clerk arrange the purchase and installation of a stronger bollard positioned further back together with appropriate signage and leafleting of residents.*
- The pitch fencing has been damaged and will require remedial works to rectify. The Clerk may be able to complete this.
- The secondary gate of the toddlers play area is leaning in due to the corner post moving. The Clerk will arrange to have this re-concreted.
- Archie's bench on the High Street had been sanded and stained by Mrs Thorne but it is showing signs of damage to the wooden feet. Councillor Wright will look at this.
- Pitch markings and installation of goal posts will be carried out in August but this will not provide an area for playing football on the main field. *Resolved that the Clerk arrange for the purchase and installation of 5 a side goals on Centenary Field.*
- The Clerk advised that a new dog poo bag dispenser has been installed on the PC stores (provided free of charge by Shefford Town Council) but specific bags were required. *Resolved that the Clerk arrange for the purchase of dog poo bags.*

NOMINATION OF MEPPERSHALL VILLAGE HALL TRUSTEE

• **To discuss and consider nomination of Meppershall Village Hall Trustee**

Resolved in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at Agenda Item 939 namely to discuss and consider the nomination of a Meppershall Village Trustee it is advisable in the public interest that the Public be temporarily excluded from this meeting and they are herewith instructed to withdraw (9pm). Carried

Redacted minutes (for full minutes see Private and Confidential meeting minutes).

Councillors agreed that the role of Parish Councillor can conflict with the role of Village Hall Trustee and that individuals taking on both roles are inadvertently put in a position of potentially failing one organisation or another in the eyes of their respective colleagues and residents. In the best interests of councillor wellbeing this is not a position that MPC can continue to support and therefore it was agreed that MPC would not nominate a current councillor as Meppershall Village Hall Trustee. *Resolved that MPC seek a Meppershall resident to nominate as Meppershall Village Hall Trustee until the next Village Hall AGM.* The Clerk and Councillor Addy were asked to work together on seeking nominations.

John Parsons - Chairman - Meppershall Parish Council

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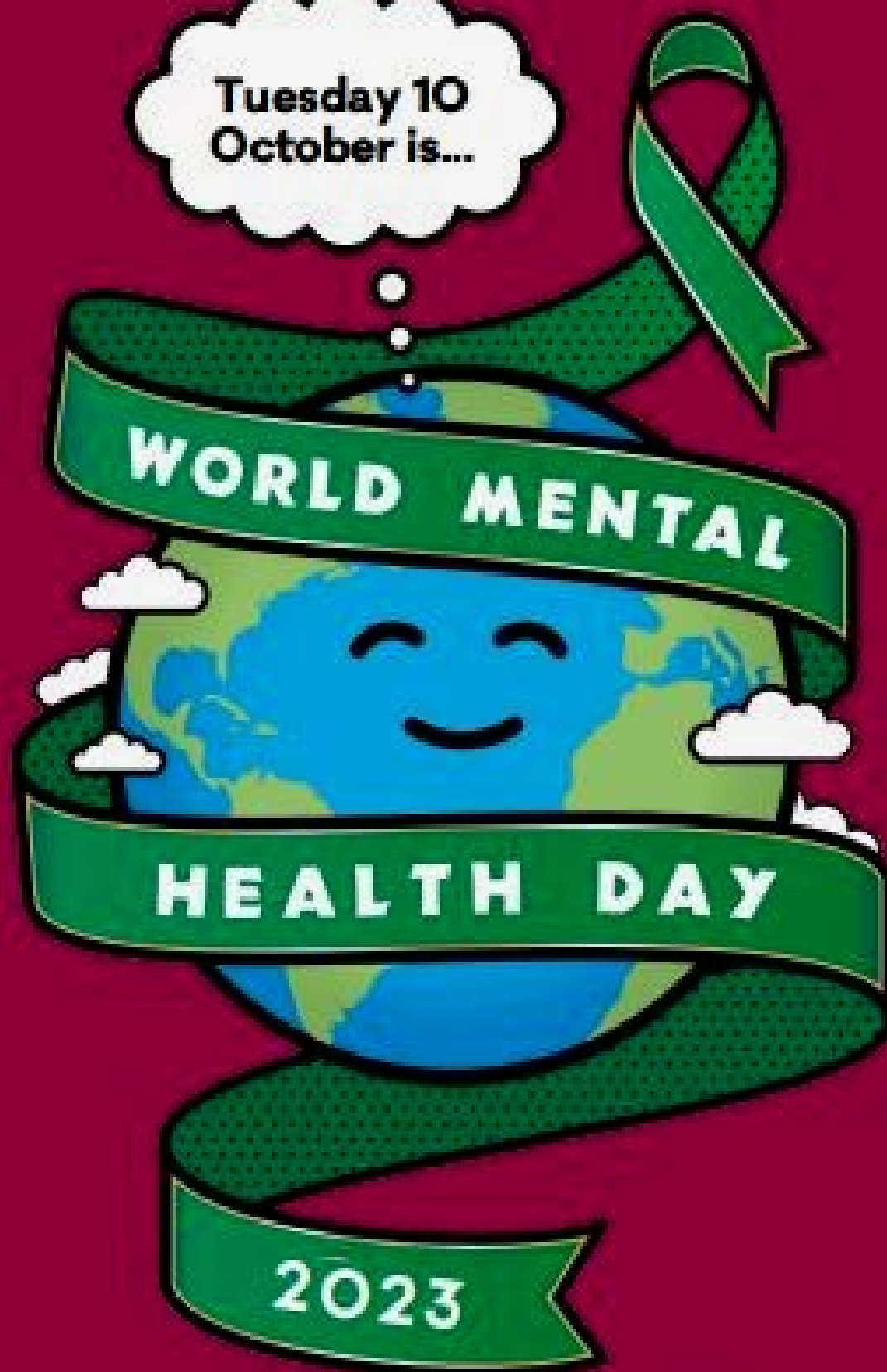
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What help can we offer?

Here are some of the jobs we have completed in the last month:

- ✓ Lifts to Doctors, Appointments, Shops etc.
- ✓ Weekly Befriending visits for a chat & a cuppa.
- ✓ Collection of Prescriptions, and the odd pint, or litre, of milk!
- ✓ Lifts to our monthly Coffee Mornings.



One of our most important jobs is our Phone holder – they answer the phone, find a volunteer, and record all the jobs.

? Unsure if we can help you? Do call and ask.

If we are unable to help you ourselves, we try to point you in the right direction.

Gnomes Coffee Mornings

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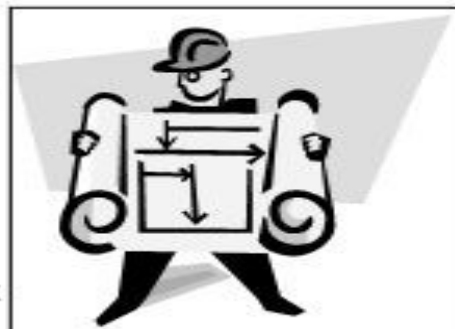
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Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

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

Churchwardens:

Chris Valentine 01462 815971 Peter Clark

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Message from St Mary's...

It's hello again from me - Rector Roni - after some time away having a new left hip this time....And it is lovely to be back and already walking so much better.

My thanks again to all those who sent prayers and good wishes, who offered practical help and support, and who worked extra hard in Church in my absence. A special thank you to Keith and Gillian for all those extra services!

September was a "Welcome back" month for us all after the summer. We had our Patronal Festival on 10th September and National Back to Church Sunday on the 17th September. But if you are new to Church, or coming back having been away for a while we hope that you will always feel just as welcome! We aim to be a committed family at St Mary's - meeting and worshipping together, loving God, looking after one another, welcoming new members and reaching out in love and service...

1st October is our Meppershall Village Pet Blessing Service - the nearest Sunday to the day we remember Francis of Assisi, his great love of God and animals, and our Harvest Festival on 8th October with a visit from Bishop Richard the Bishop of Bedford.

October is characterised I think, by thankfulness... thanking God for the beauty of the earth, for the Harvest, for his many gifts in creation, and thanking God for the joy and the comfort brought to us by those animals we call our pets.

As usual our harvest appeal is twofold. Firstly the Need Project remains our local focus. With so many in our villages experiencing "Food Poverty" please do bring tinned and packet goods to the church to contribute to this local initiative. 773 food parcels were provided locally during August 2023 with the number of food parcels delivered up by 56% on the same time last year. Our worldwide focus is the Bishop of St Albans Harvest appeal which this year will support Mission Direct in their work in Kumi, Uganda, by providing materially poor families with chickens. The chickens provide a sustainable and low cost food source, and also provide a new income stream because families can sell some of their eggs and new chicks that hatch. If sufficient money is

raised some funds might also support other food poverty projects, like planting orchards for schools to supplement the diets of their pupils. Donations of money can be given during the Harvest Festival or 'google' Bishop of St Albans Harvest Appeal - and go to making donations.

You may also like to know that 9th - 15th October this year is *Baby Loss Awareness Week* (see baby-loss-awareness.org) - "Breaking the silence around baby loss". On Friday 13th October prayers will be included during the morning service at St Michael's in Shefford at 10.30am - and there will be an opportunity to light candles and for quiet reflection through the day. St Michael's church will also be open from 7.30 - 8.30pm for those who want space to light a candle, to pray, to chat or to have a coffee in the evening.

On a different note, as many people will be thinking about their family graves for the autumn - please look out for our next Churchyard clear up day in early November. If tending your family grave please check that your memorial stone stands tall and firm and ensure your grave accords with St Albans Churchyard Regulations 2020 (updated 21). If in doubt, give me a call (contacts above).

Caring for the whole churchyard is a responsibility of the Rector and the Parochial Church Council. We see this as an important part of offering continuing, loving, spiritual and practical care to bereaved families. We aim to maintain the churchyard as a safe, welcoming place for all who use it. We thank the Parish Council and all our volunteer mowers and carers for all their hard work. We hope that together we can maintain the churchyard as a place which truly honours the memory of those buried there. (Please note: To achieve that from time to time we may remove items which do not comply with regulations, are hazardous, or which appear way past their best). Hoping that your October is filled with much to be thankful for.

Best wishes, Revd Roni

Church News and Events In October

Usual Pattern of Services

Sundays	11.00am	Morning Worship every Sunday Holy Communion: 2 nd and 4 th Sundays Sunday 1 st October – Pet Blessing Service Sunday 29 th October is a United Benefice Service at St Mary's Meppershall
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

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 autumn, why not come and enjoy your local, historic Parish Church on your own, or with friends, or with your family? 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 it. Please talk to Roni (01462 339962 / 07533 376880) or Chris Valentine (07701 039324).

Meppershall Second Sunday Strollers

Our walk this month is on Sunday 8th October. When you look south from Meppershall to the hills of the Chilterns at Pegsdon, have you ever wondered about the walking down there? That's where we are headed. It's just 3 miles south but a very different landscape. We will meet at 2pm outside The Raven pub in Hexton for a 4.5 mile loop heading south near Ravensburgh Fort on Gravel Hill, east on the Icknield Way to Hoo Bit, returning to Pegsdon through Pegsdon Hills and looping back to The Raven on Mill Lane. It's October, so consider the mud under foot and the wind on your back – but with refreshment at The Raven to finish at around 4.30pm. This route is also a little bit hilly with some ascents into the hills.

For more info or to share lifts (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>.

Shefford Osteopathic Clinic: Why Do We Get Injured?

When we exercise and move we stress our tissues, causing damage. We need rest to allow our muscle fibres, tendons and ligaments to repair and become stronger. If we cause too much damage in one go – or allow too little time for that recovery – then niggles start.

If you're feeling pain, something needs to be addressed and corrected.

Tips to prevent injury:

- 1) **Increase activity by 10% a week.** Keep your weekly runs the same distance, increasing your weekend run by 10% each week. Increase weights only as your technique allows.
- 2) **New equipment.** Initially, mix your old and new equipment (bike, trainers, racket) but avoid increased training intensity during this transition.
- 3) **After you've been ill or injured** reduce your training initially. Avoid doing too much too soon. You can build back up again quickly; give your body the chance to catch up.

- 4) **Rest days** – ideally, rest for 1–2 days weekly.
- 5) **Change only one variable** of your training each week. Time, distance, speed, weight ... master one, then challenge another aspect.

The most important thing is to love your body:

- Move because you can.
- Rest to get stronger.
- Fuel your body with the foods it loves and needs.

Plus – try some Sports Therapy when you need a bit more help along the way. You'll feel the difference! Visit www.SheffordOsteo.com for more details or to book an appointment online - or call us on 01462 811006. Enjoy your hobbies and live life!

World Mental Health Day – Tuesday 10th October

Every year 10th October marks World Mental Health Day to raise awareness of mental health, drive positive change and encourage discussions about looking after our mental health. This year the theme is 'Mental Health is a universal human right'.



At **Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity**, we have a number of services that can help those feeling isolated and alone or struggling with their mental health.

If you feel you need one-to-one support, our Social Prescribing service can help. Our team of Community Wellbeing Champions help people to take control of their health and wellbeing and to connect with their local community, improve physical activity, and empower them to make decisions to support their health. We have a range of Green Social Prescribing activities and courses available - free to attend and helping you spend time in nature and look after their wellbeing.

Our Community Agents make home visits to older people living in towns and villages across Bedfordshire to help them with free support and assistance. Our Good Neighbour scheme supports groups to provide a 'safety net' for their local area, responding to requests from residents in need of a bit of extra help. We also provide wellbeing walks which are free and open to all.

Online resources: There are also many online resources available if you or someone you know needs support.

MIND: You can access lots of information on the MIND website, including tips for everyday living with mental health and for staying well at work.

Visit the MIND website (www.mind.org.uk) to find out more about looking after your mental health, the local support available and about World Mental Health Day.

Samaritans: If you feel like you need to talk to someone, you can contact the Samaritans. Call 116 123 any time, from any phone for FREE. Find out more: www.samaritans.org

Mental Health Foundation: The Mental Health Foundation website has some tips on talking about your mental health, and talking to others about their mental health so you can have useful conversations and help each other. Visit www.mentalhealth.org.uk for more information.

Find out more about Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and the ways we can help people struggling with their mental health at www.bedsrcc.org.uk or call us on 01234 838771.

GP Practices: Accurx Patient Triage Update

We are fortunate to have all our local GP surgeries (Shefford, Lower Stondon and Larksfield Partnership) now using the Accurx online triage system for non-urgent appointments and query requests. Thousands of triage requests have been processed and the feedback from both staff and patients has been positive. This system enables patients to make requests in their own time, instantly accessing NHS self-help resources and avoiding the morning telephone queues.

The online form is quick and easy to use for appointments, medical and admin queries such as recent blood test results, repeat prescriptions, requesting a fit note etc.

Your practice will contact you by the end of the **second working day** after submitting your form, and quicker if it is more urgent. You will be offered an appointment, advice, or help accessing the appropriate healthcare service.

If you do not have access to the internet or struggle with completing online forms, please call the surgery and they will complete the form on your behalf.

Please note: When submitting a triage request it may be 48 working hours for a response, staff will red flag any urgent clinical queries. If you are unable to wait because your condition is urgent then consider the walk-in Centre or A&E.

Please do not submit several requests for the same issue, this impacts the time it takes for the triage team to get through the queries.

111 online offers advice online if you're not sure whether you need to see a doctor or nurse, please visit [Get help for your symptoms - NHS 111](https://111.nhs.uk/)

Ensure your surgery has your up-to-date mobile number when submitting your request and keep an eye for a response message or appointment details. You may be called directly by the clinician triaging. When offered an appointment, please do all you can to attend the appointment or cancel the appointment to ensure it can be offered to another patient. Please remember all queries are triaged by a clinician, if the advice is to attend UCC or A&E this is because this has been deemed the appropriate clinical advice; occasionally you may be signposted to a walk-in centre or urgent care if there are no same-day appointments available.

We are mindful that winter will soon be upon us, prepare now for your family during winter months; be aware of which conditions can be seen or treated by your local pharmacy or other NHS services.

How to stay well in winter - [The NHS website - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/)

Jaqui Derrick. Care Coordinator Ivel Valley South Primary Care Network blmkicb.carecoordinator.ivs@nhs.net

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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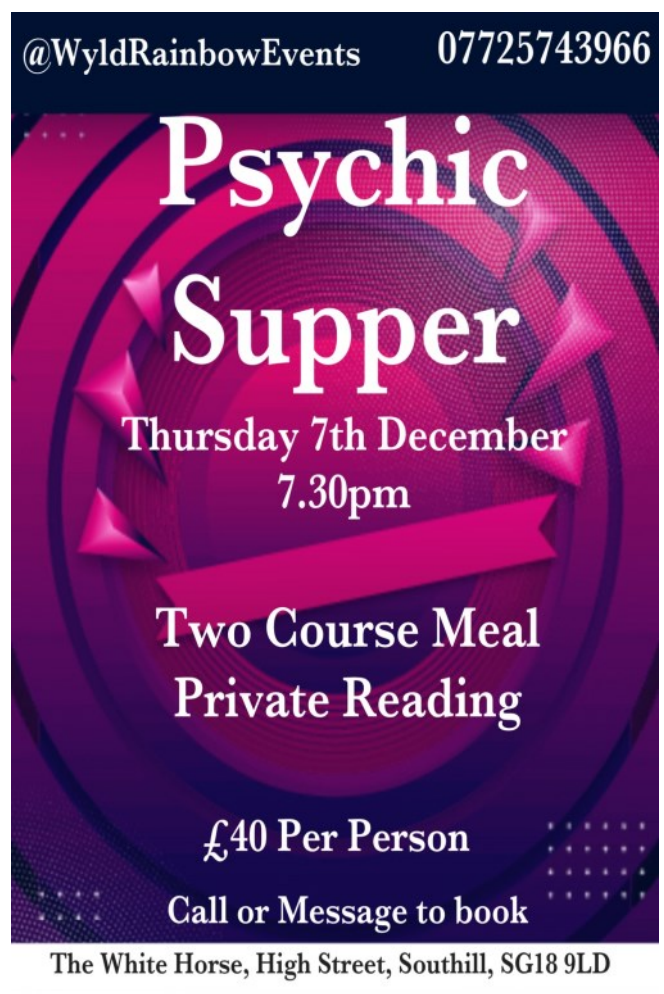
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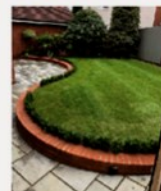
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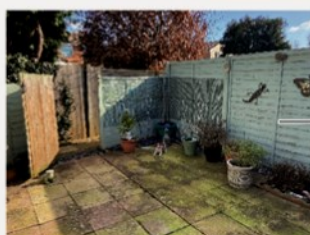
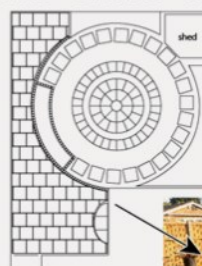
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Autumn Colours by Donna Cameron

Donna's Garden Designs 07833670934

After September's Indian Summer with the hottest day on record, we can now enjoy the rich colours of Autumn.

I love this time of year, the light is so soft and the misty mornings roll over the fields. There is a nip to the air, which - when the mist burns off - reveals hedgerows dripping with berries and trees in vibrant shades of oranges, reds and yellows.

Cooler days are coming and in the garden it's a case of tidying for the winter, cutting back perennials and maybe dividing some to different places around the garden to enjoy next year.



Of course, with gardening you are always looking ahead to the next season and this time of year is when you can plant spring bulbs. I have a bulb catalogue that I am constantly flicking through, looking for something a little bit different for my customers. There is such a variety and they are so easy to plant for years of enjoyment to come. The bulbs may look boring now but wait until spring when these mini-miracles spring to life!

Plants that give seasonal interest now, that you can have in your garden whether it is big or small, are Japanese acers. These can either be kept in pots or replanted in the ground. They have a graceful dome-like canopy, spectacular colours and gorgeous foliage. They like to be mulched with ericaceous soil and kept somewhere sheltered and shady. I have a customer that has two acers that were planted in 1914 in her lawn and are breathtaking. They are underplanted with bulbs, so pretty in the Spring.

Sedums are great and are very low maintenance. Just cut back once a year after the frosts, as they look attractive with frost on and also this helps to protect the plant.

They have succulent fleshy leaves with flat nectar rich pink flowerheads that the bees love.

These are lovely alongside Michaelmas Daisies and ornamental grasses and you may also have some sunflowers still hanging on that would complement this selection of plants. You can leave the sunflowers so the birds can enjoy foraging the seeds.

Enjoy your garden and your produce and buy some spring bulbs!

Happy Gardening! Donna x

Jobs in the Garden for October	
Tidy up garden Harvest pumpkins for Halloween Mow lawn for the last time and lay any turf Trim hedges Collect seed from the garden Cut back perennials and divide	Move tender plants somewhere safe Harvest apples, pears and grapes Prune climbing roses Plant out spring cabbages Enjoy the autumn colour



Because we don't publish a September issue, we missed this wonderful illustration from Donna.

Thank you Donna for sharing this beautiful artwork alongside your articles.

Communion of the Infinite by Martin Blandy



A view from the cockpit of a CT2K aircraft. Thank you Martin for this inspiring account of what it is like to see the sky – and the world – as a private pilot.

Passing through 7,000 feet the cold traces around my shades - focused forever skyward, each mirrored lens duplicates the azure infinity. There is no place I would rather be.

Above, other than the atmosphere, all that sits between me and space are microscopic shoals of sifting ice crystals forming cirrus clouds. Ahead, though cumuliform canyons and over the toothpick turbines of the 'Middle Levels,' I can see as far as the Wash. The blues of the sky and the sea fuse at the horizon.

The temperature continues to drop as we continue our lonely excursion. I could switch on the heater, but I prefer the cold - it helps me focus. This is important as to be a pilot is to be utterly present. Every sensation matters.

Beyond the cold, more agreeable sensations include the reassuring vibration of the CT's engine through the seat, the supportive weight and heft of invisible air made tangible through the control surfaces and stick, as well as the whisper of rarefied air as it speeds over the wings. A meditative mix of sinusoids and white noise.

'Grounding' me further in airborne meditation is the repetitive cycle of the 'pilot scan'. In this you are forced to tenaciously inspect the world. The horizon is first packaged into frames in your mind then each frame is scanned with your eyes for fellow aircraft like sweeping a RADAR, taking perhaps 10-15 seconds. After breathing deeply of the sky, the pilot then turns their gaze inside for a second, sweeping quickly over the instruments to check the aircraft's vitals - airspeed (speed = life), engine temperatures and the remaining fuel level – eyes hypersensitive to any yellows or reds. The cycle then repeats.

Another 10 scans of focused attention and the altimeter ticks past 10,000 feet. Meditation paused, it's time to stop.

Trimmed to climb the CT resists my forward push - it knows it has more to give and is sending a playful "Come on" challenge through the stick.

"Very Funny CT," I mutter, sidetone coming back into my headset. I want to continue too; however, I'd soon start to become faint for lack of oxygen risking motor control, judgement and a gradual but ever tightening spiral back to earth (permanent Shavasana!).

Winning the juvenile arm wrestle (and promising to come back with an oxygen canister) I level off and re-trim. The CT quickly shakes off its disappointment and, totally unfazed by the climb, accelerates to a true air speed of 170 knots.

It is just thankful to be flying - and so am I.

Arcing across our invisible plateau and purified of petty concerns, we hold communion with the infinite.



The CT2K is a Three-Axis Microlight – Three-Axis refers to the controls surfaces you would have in a traditional aircraft permitting pitch, roll and yaw. A preconception that people have when they hear the word microlight is the image of a hang-glider with a human and a lawnmower engine suspended under it – this type is called a Flex-Wing. There is nothing wrong with those! But these are also available. Why not give either a go.

I will write more details in another article but in the meantime check out [The British Microlight Aircraft Association \(bmaa.org\)](http://bmaa.org)

In Memoriam

Pamela Grace Halliwell who passed away in August aged 95. She served as a Reader at St Mary's, Meppershall for some years after she came to live here. Condolences to Peter and Debbie, Mary, Vincent and Rachel.

Michael David France (Mike), once of Bury Nursery, 100 High St, August 2023 aged 93.

Birthdays

Betty Mather will be 95

Dora Surridge will be 96

Birthday greetings and best wishes

from the whole team at The Meppershall Messenger!

How (Not) to Become a Secret Agent (Part II) by Patrick O'Connor

A year or so after our Russian military friend had been sent home I received a phone call. It was from my government minder. Nikolai (not his real name) was back in London, apparently a very unusual event. Could we find a way to “accidentally” make contact? As it happened, I had spotted that there was to be a memorial service for the World War 2 Pathfinder force, the bomber crews who led the raids on German targets, at the RAF church at St. Clement Danes in London. My minder confirmed that Nikolai was scheduled to attend as his country’s representative.

A plan was hatched. My wife and I would attend: long ago while in the RAF I had been a member of the Pathfinder Club, just because it offered cheap London accommodation. So I positioned myself in the Clement Danes car park, joined by another agent. He had his radio on, and I could hear the reports of Nikolai’s progress to the church. It was a bitterly cold morning and I was shivering. My wife was being taken care of by a lady agent in a café nearby.

“He is just arriving at the church” I heard on the radio. I saw the big black car turning off the Strand. My agent vanished. Nikolai stepped out. “Nikolai” I said, in great feigned surprise. He greeted me heartily (maybe it was not a surprise to him?) I explained that I was waiting for Ina to join me for the service. Sure enough, my wife just happened to arrive. We all went happily into the church.

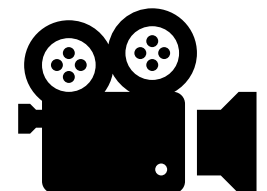
After the service Nikolai drove us to his London apartment, and contact was happily re-made. Later I reported the good news to my minder.

So our social round with the Warsaw Pact and with the British government agency picked up again. Doing one’s duty for Queen and Country was not burdensome. But, despite further hints and inducements, Nikolai remained loyal. Then again he was posted back suddenly, and we did not manage to say our goodbyes.

I often wondered what happened to him in the years after the end of the Cold War. I tried Googling him, but to no avail. Maybe now, an old man like me, he tells his version of this story over a vodka.

Cineaste’s Corner: Under The Skin. by Dave Peters

Director Jonathan Glazer’s “Under the Skin” (2013) is a sci-fi film that, although a great critical success, was a relative commercial failure. I thought it was terrific when I first saw it and repeat viewings have reinforced this opinion. A disturbing and erotic sci-fi story, it stars Scarlett Johansson as a predatory alien driving around the streets of Glasgow picking up unattached men to lure back to an abandoned house where they meet a grisly fate. Johansson is excellent in the lead role; she doesn’t say much but is on screen the whole time and is a compelling presence.



The film starts with an impressionistic birth sequence where the alien appears to be transforming into a human being and learning to speak. Once ‘born’ and standing naked in a bare white room a mysterious motorcyclist delivers the comatose (dead?) body of another young woman who Johansson strips and uses the clothes to dress

herself. We don't know who the other woman is, but the suspicion is that she is being 'replaced' by Johansson.

The motorcyclist gives Johansson the keys to a white van which she then uses to tour the streets of Glasgow seeking out and picking up her victims. She uses her sultry beauty to lure them to an abandoned house, but as they follow her in, and as she walks ahead sensually removing her clothes, they slowly sink into a still pitch-black pool where they are literally consumed.

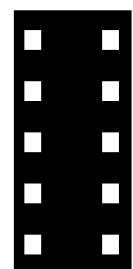
An unusual feature of the film is that Glazer placed hidden cameras in the van and filmed some interactions between Johansson and real Glaswegian men as she improvised dialogue about being in need of directions while attempting to get them to join her in the vehicle. Glazer only sought the men's permission to use this footage after the scenes had actually been shot. Johansson's black wig and soft English accent were obviously enough to disguise from them that they were potentially being picked up by a genuine Hollywood A-lister.

The alien initially displays no emotion as she lures her victims to their doom. Probably the most shocking demonstration of this is where she is at a beach, the sea is very stormy, and she is talking to a man in a wetsuit who has been swimming. He sees another man trying to rescue his drowning wife who in turn was trying to rescue their dog. He runs off and is able to pull the man out of the sea, but is too exhausted to save the woman, inevitably the husband runs back into the sea in a forlorn effort to save her. Meanwhile the man in the wetsuit is lying exhausted on the shore. Johansson picks up a rock and callously knocks him out before dragging him off to her van, oblivious to the tragedy happening only yards away.

It gradually becomes apparent that the alien is undergoing a form of awakening and is starting to become more human the longer she inhabits human form. This becomes evident when she picks up a man with a major facial disfigurement and, after leading him into the house, decides to release him due to her compassion for his physical condition and obvious loneliness. Knowing that her motorcyclist minder will discover this she abandons the van and heads into the Scottish countryside where she tries to blend in by eating human food (not a success), watching TV, and attempting to have sex with a guy who has offered her shelter (this also doesn't go well).

This is a riveting, challenging and visually breathtaking film about what it means to be human - do we ever really see who and what is under the skin? It is also one of Scarlett Johansson's best performances as she conveys so much while saying so little. The brilliant sound track by Mica Levi also deserves a special mention.

"Under the Skin" is an underrated film that will hopefully one day be recognised as the sci-fi masterpiece it is. It's available to rent on several platforms but with its adult themes and content, and its genuinely shocking ending, it's definitely not one for the kids.





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Please check to ensure we do not miss you!

As from 5th 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
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<p>As we move through the year, please consider the remaining excursions we have on offer and why not join our friendly outings. Pick-ups will be close to your home and our drivers will always do their best to make it a totally enjoyable day!</p>		
28 th Sept	Audley End House & Gardens, nr Saffron Walden, Essex Free to English Heritage	£16.50 House & Gardens. Bus £13.50. Pickup 10.00/10.30 D. 15.00
26 th Oct	Bletchley Park, Bletchley, MK	£19.50 Entry + Bus £8.50 Pickup 11.00/11.30 D.16.00
23 rd Nov	Bury St Edmunds Christmas Market	TBA

Volunteering Opportunities!

Looking for new ways to make the most of some spare time? Consider some of the volunteering opportunities available across village life! Meppershall Parish Council still requires an additional councillor. Parish councillors are a crucial part of how the village is run and how we are represented with other organisations (police, Central Bedfordshire Council, etc). For more info visit the website <https://meppershall-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/members-of-the-council/> and contact the Clerk to the Council on 07480 251746 or email clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk. The Meppershall Messenger also needs an assistant editor and/or a co-editor – see our contact info on p32. If you're community-minded, creative, with Microsoft Office skills and an interest in communications, we'd love to hear from you!

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hello@blakestephenson.uk

0300 300 8526

Parish Council Clerk

Alessandre Marabese clerk@meppershall-pc.gov.uk

Member of Parliament:

Ms Nadine Dorries has resigned as our Member of Parliamentary. A byelection will be held on Thursday 19th October to elect our new MP.

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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
November 2023	Tues 31 st Oct	June 2024	Tues 28 th May 2024
Dec-Jan 2023-4	Tues 28 th Nov	July 2024	Tues 24 th June 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 26 th Mar 2024	November 2024	TBC
May 2024	Tues 2 nd April 2024	Dec-Jan 2024-5	TBC
Contact John Thompson to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			