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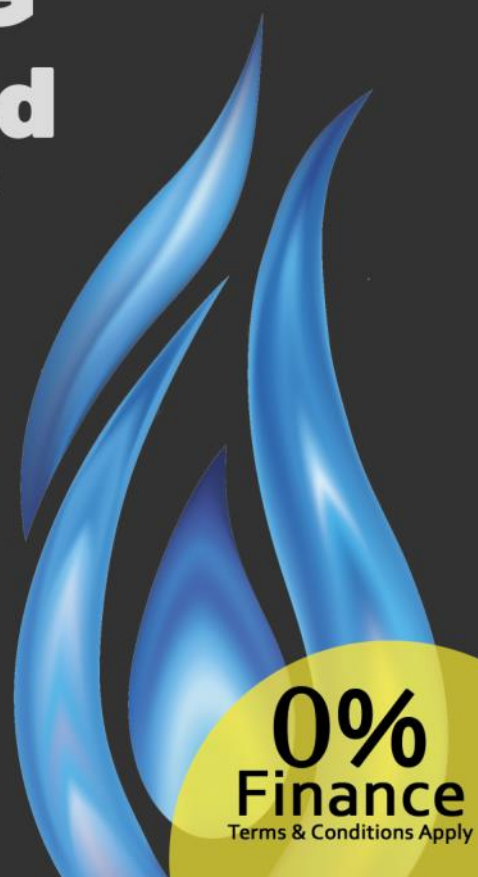
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Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

We would love to write about all sorts of other things but COVID-19 can't be ignored. Let's start with that and then try and take our minds off it... a bit like life in general at the moment!



We hope you had a wonderful summer. It brought new opportunities to do things, travel and meeting people – things we had missed so much since March and the coming of the lock down. So after all the challenges of the spring, and – for many of us - the busier days of the summer, October has turned up a bit too quickly. Many village organisations have been trying to find their way amid all the restrictions, while people working in education have been working flat - out lately to welcome students back and create safe places for them to be through the months ahead.

So in this ever-changing situation, a whole range of village favourites are not represented in this issue of The Meppershall Messenger. Our thoughts are with these organisations and the people who are so committed to leading and supporting them – Brownies, Pre-School, Craft Club, Social Club, Second Sunday Strollers, Events Committee... these are the lifeblood of the village and they will be back.

For now, the summer has ended with another new phrase that we are fast learning. ***“The Rule of Sixes.”*** We have seen the impact of the virus on how we each make a living, where we work, the services and industries of which we are part. The rule of sixes recognises that there may be a way to keep up a level of social and work activity and restrict “mass gatherings” to schools and colleges, while controlling the virus and protecting the NHS for its life-saving services. It places social activity at the back of the queue, with the priority on education and on work. That can seem confusing but we are in a pretty serious situation as a country and as individuals the messages are really the same. Use a mask in indoor public places (take it off to eat and drink!) Wash your hands in the new, thorough way, regularly. Stay 2 metres away from other people. If you have a new cough, temperature or change of taste or smell, or if you are notified as part of contact tracing that someone you've been near to has tested positive, isolate yourself at home and get a test. And now, additionally, do not meet with more than six other people. Unless we are really careful to follow these steps, we will risk a full lock down once again, with the economic disaster that would bring; and worse, the loss of life if COVID rises.

You can get the latest complete government info at www.gov.uk/coronavirus. Be part of our Great British response to COVID. Do what's right.

Optimism is our fuel to drive through these challenges. The Meppershall Players share their excitement about preparation for a Christmas Pantomime in this issue.

There are new ideas about outdoor weddings. The Meppershall Gnomes talk about their amazing ongoing work. The twice-daily live church get-togethers on Facebook continue and some special events are coming up in October (the church will reach its 500th online service in November! Huge congratulations to Roni and Andrew). Life goes on at the allotment. The Wanderbus is running. Central Bedfordshire Council is reaching out for nominations of an award that will recognise great community volunteering – see the information and link in the CBC article ('Cheering Volunteering').

Anyone taking a wander around the village will know the village spirit we have in Meppershall. If you don't, you'll find it by meeting eyes with the people you pass and offering them a greeting and perhaps even a quick chat. Within minutes, you may well have a new friend. Not everyone can get out for a wander, so please watch out for friends and neighbours who may be 'stuck inside', perhaps on their own. The phone is a wonderful thing and the doorbell is often even better.

We are in this together; let's be good to each other and to ourselves.

OPERATION OPTIMISM!

We don't even need to tell you how it feels to be trying to look forward to autumn. It is getting darker. It is getting colder. And windier and wetter and... need we say more?! The good news is that you are all part of the same wonderful Meppershall community that you always were. Let's share that through the Meppershall Messenger's OPERATION OPTIMISM and show these dark months that they can... errr... stick it where the sun doesn't shine?!

What is Operation Optimism?

OO (or to give it its full name Operation Optimism Organising Happiness... OOOH!) is a simple collection of your inspired or creative moments. We will share them in the coming autumn and winter issues of the Messenger. It can be anonymous if you like. Share a feeling, share your inspiration, your reflection, something beautiful or something moving and touching (we can't be happy shiny people all the time). A sentence, a story, a poem, a memory, a photo, a picture, an experience... anything goes (so long as it won't get us arrested).

How can I be part of Operation Optimism?

Please email your OOOH moment to us at mepp.messenger@gmail.com or post it through the letterbox at 33 Coneygate.

We aim to create our first OOOH for the November issue of the magazine. We hope this is not just an opportunity to express ourselves in these difficult times, but also a way of sharing support and connection with each other as we all find our own ways to get through. It will be Spring 2021 in no time.


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Parish Council Update

Council Meetings

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the Parish Council continues to conduct Council meetings via video link. Our upcoming meetings on 12th October and 16th November 2020 will be held this way.

Details of how the public can participate in the meeting are available on our website www.meppershall.org by viewing the meeting agenda in the Parish Council section. We would welcome any questions or comments that residents would like to put to the Council in advance of the meeting by emailing the Clerk at clerk@meppershall.org.

Appointment of New Parish Councillor

We are delighted to announce that at our Council meeting on 12th October 2020, Mr John Thompson was co-opted as a Councillor to Meppershall Parish Council. John has previous council experience and brings with him skills and knowledge that will benefit the Council and our residents.

John's appointment now brings the Parish Council back to its full complement of 10 councillors. The empty seat became available after the resignation of Mrs Sandra Read. Sandra had served as a councillor for many years and all members of the Parish Council would like to thank her for her hard work and commitment.

Planning Update

Planning appeals dismissed: Over the last month the Planning Inspectorate has dismissed a number of planning appeals and upheld the planning decisions made by Central Bedfordshire Council. These include the following:

- 19/02994/VOC – New Close Nurseries (and 18/04569/FULL) – Tower View Nurseries – appellant must install a footpath be it 2 metres 1.2 metres wide.
- 19/03758/FULL – Tower View Nurseries – appellant must contribute Section 106 funds (money given to the parish council for the provision of play equipment and other similar projects).

Pending planning appeal: – The developer of 19/02039/OUT – 40 Shefford Road – has advised the Planning Inspectorate that they wish to challenge the decision made by Central Bedfordshire Council to refuse permission for an outline application that proposed the erection of up to 103 no. dwellings with associated infrastructure, community building, landscaping, open space and access, including demolition of 40 Shefford Road and existing agricultural buildings. Due to COVID-19 the Planning Inspectorate has delayed issuing details of planning appeals and therefore we await details from them on dates for the hearing etc.

Centenary Field Update

The Parish Council is delighted to report that discussions with Croudace Homes Ltd are in progress. The aim for all parties involved is the handover of the land and facilities to the Parish Council. As a result, residents will have seen work being carried out on site (bench installations, paving slabs re-laid, work to play equipment etc). There is still much to do and agree on but the Council is encouraged by the outcome of recent meetings and is hopeful that a handover can take place by the end of the year.

Autumn Litter Pick

Unfortunately, due to a lack of volunteers, the Autumn Litter Pick scheduled for Saturday 19th September did not go ahead. If you are interested in helping with a future litter pick please let the Clerk know by emailing your details to : lovemeppershall@meppershall.org.

Volunteers Required - Woodland Tree Pack Planting

Volunteers are required to help with the planting of 420 new trees and saplings during November that have been given to the Parish Council by the Woodland Trust. We hope to plant these on and around the edge of Centenary Field. If you are interested in helping with the planting please let the Clerk know by emailing your details to: lovemeppershall@meppershall.org.

Community Champions

DID YOU KNOW...? You could make a massive difference in a really simple way – by sharing coronavirus information and advice with your friends and family.



Why we need Community Champions

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) talks every day online to thousands of people in our region via our social media and through email updates it sends out.

But the council is very aware that they don't reach everyone. There are local Facebook groups in communities. Friends and families chatting on WhatsApp. Plus lots of casual Zoom catch ups that are a crucial part of how we all connect with each other these days.

These are all great opportunities to reach more people - and that's where our council wants your help. Here's the information from Central Beds...

Imagine the simple scenario:

- we tell you – you tell 50 people – great
- we tell 50 people who tell another 50 people – that's 2,500 people. Now we're really talking!

You could help us get the latest information and advice out to friends and other people you know through sports clubs or social clubs for example.

Maybe you're not in an organised group but you are part of a wide social network and want to help out. You could share information via WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or just by word of mouth.

How would it work?

We'll give you information each week on the current infection rates and we'll give you information on messages we need to share.

We'll make this really simple, sending an email alert which with the tap of a button you can quickly share into your WhatsApp and social media groups. Bingo – we're up and running.

You don't need to create your own messages; we'll do that for you. With just a few clicks you'll be helping us to reach hundreds and thousands more people. The power is in your hands.

It's going to be a two-way conversation too

We also want to hear from you about how the information is being received – what works well and what doesn't, what questions are people asking and if there are any myths that need busting!

We'll organise online sessions so we can keep in touch with you regularly.

We are hoping to launch the Community Champions scheme in October 2020. For now, we are just asking people to sign up here

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/xfp/form/210>

Community Spirit Shines Through the Pandemic



Members of Central Bedfordshire Council unanimously supported a motion of appreciation for volunteers and voluntary organisations across the area, at a meeting of the full Council last night.

Dozens of neighbourhood groups, as well as more established voluntary and community organisations, have been crucial in helping residents through the challenges of the pandemic and particularly those who are the most vulnerable.

Cllr Tracey Stock, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Communities said: "One of really great things about Central Bedfordshire is how brilliantly local people get involved in their communities. This is not a new thing, but during the pandemic it has been truly spectacular to see how many people have created local support groups, joined existing networks such as the Good Neighbour Schemes or simply taken personal action in checking in with people in their areas to see if they needed help.

“As a council we are deeply proud of the efforts that people have made and enormously grateful to everyone who has been involved. Unanimously, we salute you!”

To support community action during the pandemic, the council has launched a special COVID-19 grant scheme. Local voluntary and community groups who want to do more to support those who have been adversely affected by the virus can apply for funds via their local Central Bedfordshire Councillor.

The council is also celebrating volunteering across the whole of the Central Bedfordshire through its annual awards scheme. The Cheering Volunteering awards are devoted to recognising and applauding the efforts of volunteers across the area. This year a special COVID-19 award has been created and nominations are invited for individuals who have demonstrated their commitment to support their communities, and particularly vulnerable residents through the pandemic. The closing date for nominations is 20 November and details are available on the council’s website.

For the community grant schemes:

<https://bit.ly/2G5Skv0>

For Cheering Volunteering:

<https://bit.ly/3i26LNK>

Son of Meppershall Becomes Terrific Trinity Tuberunner

Stephen Moules, who grew up in the village, has been completing a remarkable fundraising challenge in recent months. Now known as the “The Tuberunner,” Stephen’s Tuberunner Challenge saw him run between all 267 tube stations in the London Underground network – covering a distance of almost 300 miles.

He completed this feat in stages throughout the month of September, finishing after a day’s running and starting at the same spot on the next day in consecutive legs in an unbroken sequence. If you’re thinking Central London jogs between nearby stations in the West End – think again! The tube network extends well out into Buckinghamshire including the station at Chesham where Stephen began this epic journey. Running the length of all the lines – from Essex to Middlesex – Hertfordshire to Surrey – his full journey was the equivalent of a run from London to Durham or St Ives and he finished at Westminster on 26th September.

The charity benefiting from Stephen’s endeavours is Royal Trinity Hospice. With a particular importance during the COVID pandemic, ‘Trinity’ provides the best

possible end-of-life care both in its Clapham-based facility and in patients' homes. With services from clinical treatment to family counselling, it believes that every moment matters. Trinity spent £15m in 2019 providing their free service to 2,500 people. Fundraising through its 31 charity shops across London is crucial – but the shops are all closed due to Coronavirus. The London Marathon, another key fundraising event for so many charities, was postponed this year.

So we congratulate Stephen (and parents Val and Gary who hosted some local fundraising in support) on this amazing fundraising project and a magnificent commitment of time and tenacity. At the last count, more than £6,000 had been raised through the JustGiving page alone. There may still be time to lend your support by visiting <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tuberunner>.

Are you involved in a charitable project or fundraising of some kind? Why not let our community know? We would be pleased to share the news and give people the chance to support. Email us at mepp.messenger@gmail.com and tell us about it.

Safety in Neighbours: burglary 2020 campaign

Neighbourhood Watch (@ourwatch) have launched a new campaign due to the expectation of a rise in burglaries as lockdown eases in the UK. Life is so much safer when you know and can rely on your neighbours – with people looking out for unusual behaviour on the street especially when many houses are left unoccupied in the day and as the dark nights draw in.



The following can be viewed on the links below:

- Steps to take to prevent burglary:

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crime-prevention/crime-prevention-toolkits>

- Live crime stats in your area:

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crime-map> (localised - search by postcode)

With have only one area covered by the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, we really need a few new coordinators to help expand the scheme - making the village so much safer.

Even if you feel unable to be a coordinator please join the scheme as a member with its many free benefits. To do this visit:

<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/join>

Hoping you can join us and support your local community

Meppershall Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator



Burglary proofing your home

A comprehensive security checklist

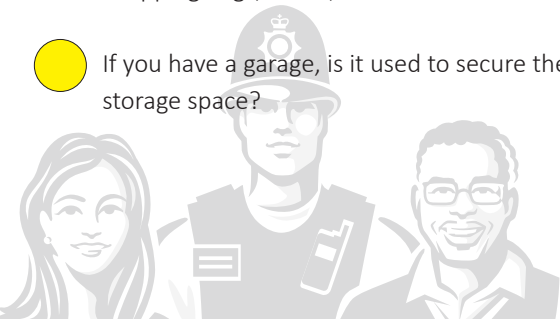
An effective way of improving the security of a property, is to consider each layer separately, like peeling an onion. The three layers to think about are perimeter (fences and walls, gardens, garages, outbuildings), shell (main building, locks, spare keys, alarms) and interior (high-value items, keys, timed lighting).

Use this checklist to take simple measures to keep your property secure.

Perimeter

(fences, walls, gardens, garages, outbuildings)

- ☐ Is the area around the house free from 'tools' that an offender could use i.e. bricks, rubble, ladders, garden equipment?
- ☐ Are sheds, garages and outbuildings always locked?
- ☐ Does the perimeter to the front of the house allow good surveillance from the road?
- ☐ Is all packaging from expensive items ie from laptops, tablets, phones, games consoles, hidden inside bins?
- ☐ Are vehicles at the premises secured when not in use?
- ☐ Are items always removed from vehicles when they are not in use ie laptops, tools, shopping bags, boxes, sat-navs or cash?
- ☐ If you have a garage, is it used to secure the vehicle(s) in, as opposed to being used as a storage space?





Burglary proofing your home

A comprehensive security checklist

Shell

(main building, locks, spare keys, alarms)

- ☐ Are spare keys left in a secure place – ie NOT under a plant pot, doormat or stone?
- ☐ Are ground-floor and accessible windows closed and locked?
- ☐ If you have euro-cylinder locks on your uPVC doors, do they meet TS 007 (3 star) or Sold Secure Diamond Standard (SS312)?
- ☐ If there is a burglar alarm is it always used?

Interior

(high-value items, keys, timed lighting)

- ☐ Are doors kept locked with the keys removed, kept out of sight/reach, but to hand in case of emergency?
- ☐ Are timer switches and/or a fake TV unit used when leaving the house unoccupied?
- ☐ Are attractive items such as jewellery, car keys, laptops, iPads, cash and phones kept out of sight?
- ☐ Are chargers and cables for laptops/iPads kept out of view?
- ☐ Have you created a written and photographic record of any items of value (financial or sentimental)?

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GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)



While our AGM this year was delayed because of Covid-19 the GNOMES were able to eventually hold it in August, via ZOOM video conferencing. With the help of modern technology 11 members met 'virtually' to say thank you to two of the groups founders; Dick Bulley stepping down as Chairman and Denis Neilson as Secretary, for all their hard work over several years, and to say welcome to our new Secretary Ruth Burns. The committee also wants to recognise and thank those GNOME volunteers who are 'retiring' this year, the work they have done over the last few years has made a difference. Thank you all.

Before the lockdown in March, the GNOMES had undertaken 97 jobs, mainly befriending and driving jobs as well as running our popular monthly GNOMES Coffee Mornings, with June's coffee morning last year commemorating D-Day 75, while the December coffee morning was a Christmas singalong, and you can see video clips of those events on our facebook page.



In September, GNOMES, had a stall at the Meppershall Fun Day with an apparently simple game of putting a ball into holes to score points.....turned out it wasn't quite so simple....

And no matter how hard he tried the GNOME fisher gnome didn't catch a fish, let alone a prize in the village scarecrow festival.

With the help of a grant via the Local Councillor's Fund we purchased a gazebo emblazoned with the GNOME Logo and our telephone number.

Its maiden outing was to have been at the village VE Day celebrations, but as we all know those celebrations didn't go ahead and our bright new gazebo will need to wait a while yet.

Despite the limitations imposed on us all, since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the GNOMES have remained active and in March, the Parish Council called upon us to provide the expertise and utilise our current practice to promote a village support scheme entitled Love Meppershall. Some of our GNOMEs became volunteers in that scheme along with other villagers and since March we have continued to provide essential help to those in time of need.



While the on-going restrictions continue to mean some jobs can't be undertaken at the moment, such as driving jobs, GNOMES are still around and willing to help where we can. Please stay safe and if you need help, please call us on **07760 793921** and if you could spare some time and are willing to volunteer as a GNOME then we'd love to hear from you too!

Polehanger Farm River Woodland maintenance and improvement works – Winter 2020/21 by Andrew Foster



Despite the current COVID-19 climate, it has been great to see many regulars and new faces enjoying the Polehanger Farm River Woodland on a daily basis. Events that meet current guidelines, such as Sammy the Rock Snake and Spoonville, have, we hope, also encouraged more young people out to enjoy the countryside.

We are now approaching the time of year when we need to undertake regular maintenance work – while making as many improvements as we can before Spring.

The following works are scheduled to take place within our woodland between September 2020 and February 2021.

We would greatly appreciate any volunteers who can spare any time to help with those tasks marked below.

Contractor work

- **Woodland ride clearance** – cutting sides of the access paths and coppicing Hazel.
- **Tree thinning works** – trees in poor health or those in areas where thinning will improve dominant growth will be felled and cleared. Note, that these works may require some temporary closures of the permissive paths within the woodland.
- **Woodland ride repairs** – some areas of the paths get very wet during winter months. We will be gradually repairing these over the next couple of years. Note, that these works may require some temporary closures of the permissive paths within the woodland.

Volunteer work

- **Litter pick** – sadly, the woodland is always in need of a litter pick on a regular basis. During the autumn and winter months a thorough pick-up of the path edges and deeper needs to be performed.
- **Fence vegetation clearance** – the woodland boundary fence is in need of tidying up as it is clogged with bindweed and grasses. We would be looking to trim or shear back to the fence line and any natural waste can be put inside the woodland.

- **Information board wood refresh** – we have had contact from a volunteer willing to sand down and re-varnish the wooden frames on our information boards.
- **River footpath bench re-location** – we had to remove a former bench that was dangerously close to slipping in the river. Pending approval from the drainage board, we will look to re-site this bench on the same meander next to the public footpath.
- **Den building areas** – the piles of deadwood within the woodland are intended for habitat creation for insects and small mammals. We don't want to discourage den building, so we will be looking to clear and create two areas where piles of wood can be left as building material. All other dens will be dismantled and returned to piles on the woodland floor.
- **Signage** – we will be looking to get additional signage for the woodland kissing gates providing clear information about ownership, rights of way and basic rules. We will also look to obtain signs for the den building areas.
- **Picnic area** – we are looking to clear and prepare an area for use as a simple picnic area. This will include stump seats and an area for our own litter bins.

There are likely to other items added to this list over the next few months.

If anyone is interested in volunteering for these or any future works, please get in touch, we will provide times and dates as well as a list of equipment you may need to bring along. We will of course need to adhere to whatever the current government guidance is regarding Covid-19.

You can contact us through any of the following methods:

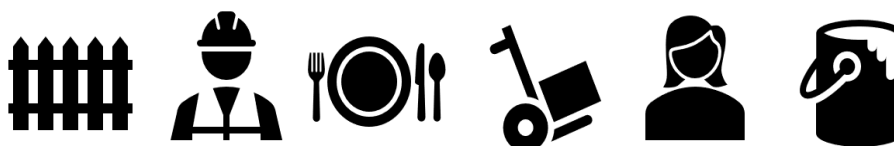
Email: woodland@polehanger.co.uk

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/polehanger_river_woodland/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/polehangerriverwoodland>

We look forward to further improving the Polehanger Farm River Woodland, it is great to see so many people use and enjoy it on a daily basis.

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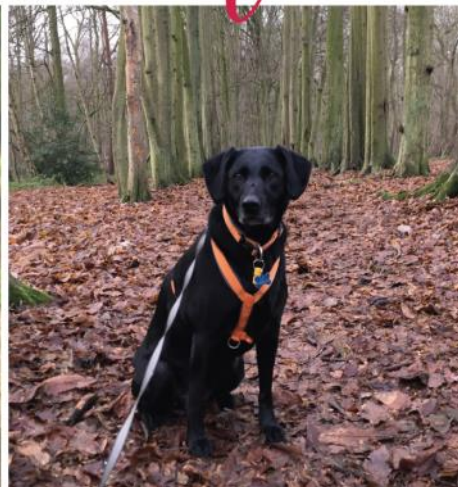
We owe many of them special thanks for being available despite the recent very difficult months. Show your appreciation by “going local” whenever you can.

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Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

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

Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962 Chris Valentine 01462 815971

Email: Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Message from St Mary's

October is upon us - and although Church isn't "back to normal" we hope to find ways of doing many of the things that are important to us all.

Morning and Night Prayer 9am and 9pm everyday continue online as does a Sunday Morning Worship at 10.30 am every Sunday. There is also a 9am Service of Holy Communion in St Mary's on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month (please let me know if you are coming so we can arrange seating and maintain contact tracing records).

In October, firstly we celebrate Harvest and give thanks to God primarily for the food grown on the Land - although in fact it is an opportunity to give thanks to God for all the good things he gives us. Part of the way we give thanks is to share what we have with others...

We will celebrate Harvest in our 10.30am online Service on 4th October.

As usual, we will be collecting in Church for the Need Project which helps to feed those in need locally. There will be collecting boxes at the back of the Church on 4th October or you can also drop off a gift at the Rectory by arrangement (call 01462 339962).

The Bishop's Harvest Appeal 2020 - "Creating A Buzz in Nepal"

It's only five years since Nepal suffered two major earthquakes - devastating lives, infrastructure and livelihoods. As a result, farming communities were in dire need of extra income to feed and provide for families. Beekeeping was the solution.

Bishop Alan writes:

“The UN tells us that, of the one hundred crop species that provide 90% of the world’s food, more than seventy are pollinated by bees.

“Promoting beekeeping is, therefore, not just good for the people of Nepal directly affected by this project, but also good for the well-being of their country and its ecology, and that of neighbouring countries. St John of Chrysostom said: ‘The bee is more honoured than other animals, not because she labours, but because she labours for others.’

“Please join me, this Harvest, in honouring not just the people of Nepal, but also the humble and essential bee who sets an example to us all in these times.”

To give to the Bishop’s Harvest Appeal use the online giving facility on the dedicated webpage: www.harvestappeal.org

You can also donate by bank (BACS) transfer as follows:

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Payment Ref: NEPAL4100101

Cheques can be made payable to **St Albans DBF** and sent to:

‘The Bishop of St Albans’ Harvest Appeal 2020’,
c/o Holywell Lodge,
41 Holywell Hill,
St Albans AL1 1HE

Our usual Village Pet Blessing Service will be online this year! We will celebrate our animal friends in our online service on Sunday 11th October.

Wednesday 28th October will be the time for “Special Memories” when we take time to remember particularly those we whose funerals we have conducted in the last year and those who mourn them.... Although it is a chance for all of us to remember those we have loved and lost. The Church will be open as usual - for private prayer. Names will be displayed and there will additionally be a chance to light a candle, to spend time quietly with God and/or your thoughts, and to take away a prayer card if you wish, to remember the occasion.

Do you need prayers? We have a small group of intercessors who will continue to pray confidentially for those who ask for prayers. If being held in prayer in that way is something you would like, please talk to Roni 339962 / 07533376880 or Chris Valentine 07701 039324.

Please let me know if there is anything more we can do for you at this time...

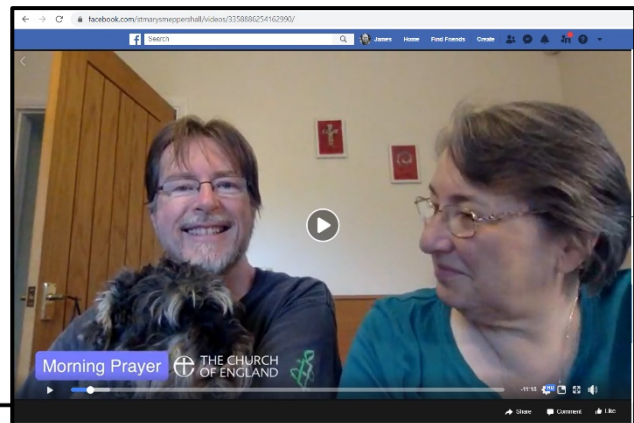
With my love and prayers, be safe, be well and God bless you,

Rector Roni

Church News and Events in October

The church continues to be open on Wednesdays for private prayer (10.30am-6.30pm). A Holy Communion service is also currently held in the church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 9am. ***Safety is, of course, the absolute priority. If you plan to come, please let us know so we can ensure appropriately distanced seating and keep up our contact tracing records. You will find a range of safety and social distancing measures and sanitizing in place – it will be different and we ask you very seriously to follow the instructions.***

Our LIVE services each day at '9and9' continue on the website and Facebook. Although these are based on "Lectio365" (mornings) and the Church of England Daily Prayer App (evenings) many people enjoy just tuning in and relaxing and reflecting.



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Please also join our Sunday services, 10.30am LIVE on Facebook or use our phone-in service – see the advert here – call **559112**. Sunday 4th October will be our **HARVEST** service and 11th October will be out **PET BLESSING** service! It should be fun – do join online!

Please [click here for our Facebook page](#); [here for our website](#); and [here for our YouTube channel](#). (where you

can find our weekly hymn and film). For those of you who would like to be prayed for specifically and/or by name - we have a small group of intercessors who will continue to pray **confidentially** for those who ask for prayers. If being held in prayer in that way is something you would like, please talk to Roni 339962 / 07533376880 or Chris Valentine 07701 039324.

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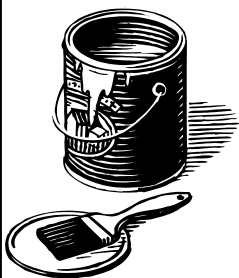
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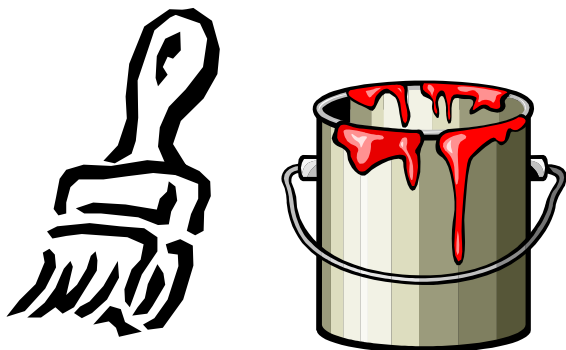
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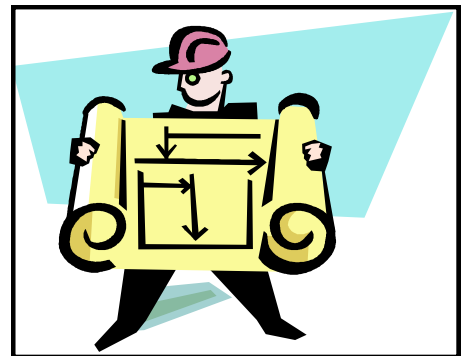
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Bike and Hike for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust



The village can again be very proud of its contribution to The Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust annual fundraising event, the 'Bike and Hike'. Back on 12th September, a total of 15 Meppershall participants took the chance to get some exercise and enjoy some of our amazing region and its history. Four families with several under-10s walked a loop from St Mary's in Meppershall, over the fields and past Meppershall Airfield to All Saints Campton and on into Shefford to St Francis and to St Michael and All Angels. Meanwhile a team of five cyclists did 60KM, visiting churches across Shillington, Higham Gobion, Hexton, Barton, Harlington, Westoning, Flitwick, Pulloxhill, Flitton, Silsoe, Gravenhurst, Campton and Shefford, as well as Meppershall of course.



But the greatest thanks go to Trevor Wilkinson who completed an even larger loop on his bike, single-handed – totalling 51 churches. Altogether, the Meppershall team as a whole has again raised well in excess of £1,000, half of which will be returned to our church for its own renovation and capital works plans.

Huge thanks to everyone who supported, donated and participated and if you are interested to join in next year please do get in touch via the church.



The Meppershall Players



I can't believe it's October already, it has definitely been a very strange year. The history of the Players will resume in February next year as we are very busy with our 2020 Pantomime Jack & the Beanstalk, which we will be performing at STMA (Shefford Town Memorial Association) Hall on Saturday 5th and 12th December - matinees at 3pm and evening performances at 7.30pm. Tickets will go on sale in November. We can't do it earlier than that as what we can and can't do in the present global situation tends to change on a weekly basis. But there definitely will be a Pantomime; we have a script, a stage and willing volunteers (yes no arm twisting was necessary) so look out for our page in the Messenger in November and on Facebook, as well as posters in shop windows with all the information for a fun show for all the family.

Our V.E musical play "When The Lights Go On Again" is booked for one day only next year on Saturday 15th May 2021 at the STMA. We will be doing a 3pm matinee and an evening performance at 7.30pm. We were all very disappointed when the date came and went this year as the Players have commemorated V.E. day every five years since 1985. The characters in the play were too much fun to leave it until 2025 to perform, although we do have to do a slight rewrite as our two junior characters have grown quite tall since May (as they do!)

We are still looking for a pianist/piano player. Backing tracks at our pantomimes and modern variety shows give the Players a much wider range of music that we might otherwise have overlooked, but we would still very much like to have someone who loves to play piano for our V.E. production as backing tracks are few and far between for songs of that era and do not give the same atmosphere to the proceedings.

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

The Players meet every Monday evening at 7.30pm at the STMA, Hitchin Road, Shefford, SG17 5JA. Membership is currently free and we welcome people from the age of 9 to 90+, to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you!

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336



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Shefford Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

In the last issue of the Messenger I felt there was a little more freedom and life was slowly resuming to perhaps near normal – how wrong I could be! Everything seemed to go awry – essential to ensure one always has a face mask in their bags, the way we shop – food shopping on line, purchasing personal items – no trying on with clothes – then having to queue up (2ft apart) to change them if not suitable or incorrect fit! The Royal Mail and other chartered delivery people must be very busy ensuring their parcels are delivered on time!!



None of the lovely Summer Fairs we so look forward to in the Summer months have been allowed to take place. The local village markets have been doing their very best but there have been several vacant stalls in between them. Fortunately the weather has remained very kind to enable us to potter in our gardens or take a walk. The evening sunsets have been really breath taking, especially seeing the sun sinking. The evenings really are drawing in very quickly.

Regarding our 'Leisure Group', I have spoken to a few of our people and they would rather not take chances having managed to 'keep safe' up to now. There were three trips we had to cancel or put on hold which we will transfer to 2021. They are 'Creeks & Cockles' 'Tower of London' I will inform you of the dates as soon as they are available. 'Thursford' will now take place on Sunday 14th November 2021 – price will be adjusted when transport has been costed.

As soon as we are a back a little to normality, there are a few outings I would like to share with you. I do keep a 'to do' file with all these ideas, so when the time is feasible I can put them to you.

Do hope your families have managed to get back to school and enjoying their new surroundings and class mates. Whatever you have planned to do, enjoy! Safe travelling and look after each other.

Enid x

Ps: Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community, who feel they would like to join us on our ventures and see places they would not see under their own steam. We are always happy to meet new friends.

Raffles are held and all the proceeds are sent to Keech Hospice Care for Children. For further information regarding the 'Leisure Group' please contact me on 01462 851397 or e-mail enid.pamment@gmail.com.

Diary of an Allotment – October 2020 by Zoe Cox

The rhythm of the year has moved to autumn now and the allotment has taken on an air of an end of season seaside town. A quietness is descending and there is a sadness of the year ending. The fun of the year settles into our memories for us to tell as stories and weave into the tapestry of our life.

The kindness and support from allotment holders towards each other continues to bind friendships. I was touched by all the offers of courgettes after my report of my courgette failure. I discovered this might have been a wider problem as lots of courgette failures were reported across the region. However, some people managed to produce bumper crops. Thelma and Stephen grew a courgette which weighed in at 7.9 lbs which was heavier than the birth weight of my babies!

The time on the allotment now turns to autumn clearing and digging. Autumn digging allows the frost to break down the soil and make the job easier in the spring. Any boundaries for fixed beds can be repaired and plans drawn up for crop rotation.

It is a very good time to take on an allotment because in the vegetable growing calendar now is the start of the year and the foundations laid in the autumn often dictates the look of the allotment next year. In fact, in no time at all the allotment starts to feel more like the beginning of the new school year. The bareness of the school walls provide a canvas of opportunity to showcase work into next year in the same way as empty allotment beds invite neat rows of vegetables.

If you get in quick there is still time to plant over wintering onions and some winter salad leaf. As plants move into their dormant period they can be moved so it is good time to move fruit bushes and rhubarb. Saving seed from runner beans and other plants also needs to be done now.

So as the old season comes to an end and the new one begins I will be taking a



moment to feel gratitude for the opportunity to mess around on a small piece of land and enjoy all that it offers when so many souls will no longer be in that position. This has been a year like no other and the continuity of the allotment has been a saviour to many people. It has provided space, exercise, focus and a community connection and has been a light of positivity in a world of uncertainty.



Top Tips for an Outdoor Wedding by Charlotte and Andrew Foster

With many people finding a new love of the Great Outdoors in recent months we think 2021 (and beyond!) is going to be all about the outdoor wedding.

The Gardens at Polehanger is a new outdoor wedding venue in Meppershall. Resident Events Manager, Chloe from White Button Weddings, gave us some Top Tips for outdoor weddings.

- An outdoor wedding, especially at a dry hire site like The Gardens at Polehanger gives you a massive amount of scope to create whatever you want for your day. But do not forget to use what is around you and work with it. If you are having your blessing/ceremony outdoors, the chances are you've chosen a pretty spot, so style your day to compliment your surroundings and let your guests enjoy the natural beauty your venue has to offer.
- Keep guests hydrated!! Weddings are often long days (often with lots of booze!), so it is important, particularly on a hot day, to keep everyone hydrated. Drinks dispensers filled with iced water are great.
- If you are having a blessing outdoors give the sound a thought. Sound does not travel as well outside so it may be that you need a mic set up for you to say your promises to each other. You want your guests to be able to hear you!
- Be prepared! The British weather can be unpredictable. A summer wedding in England could be the perfect warm sunny day, but it might be chilly or rain. Do not let this stop you though - a small stretch tent can offer that perfect additional bit of cover whilst still maintaining that connection to the outdoors.
- Make sure that guests know that your venue is outdoors rather than an indoor venue. You want everyone to be comfortable and knowing the day is outdoors may alter what guests choose to wear, particularly on their feet!

We are looking forward to welcoming lots of couples to the Gardens at Polehanger for their wedding celebrations.

Get in touch if you are interested in booking your celebration with us.

Charlotte and Andrew Foster

Website: <https://thegardens.polehanger.co.uk>

Instagram: @thegardensatpolehanger / @whitebuttonweddings

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Route: Stotfold, Henlow, Langford, Broom, Southill, Stanford

W2: BEDFORD - Market Square

Route: Clifton Park, Meppershall, Stondon, Shillington, Gravenhurst

W3: BIGGLESWADE - A1 Retail Park, Centre for Asda, Sainsbury's (on request only)

Route: Campton, Gravenhurst, Shillington, Stondon, Meppershall, Clifton Park, Henlow

W3S: BIGGLESWADE - A1 Retail Park, Centre for Asda, Sainsbury's (on request only)

Route: Stotfold, Astwick

W4: WELWYN GARDEN CITY – Bus Station

Route: Shefford, Clifton, Southill, Broom, Langford, Henlow, Stotfold

W5: BIGGLESWADE CENTRE & A1 RETAIL PARK

Route: Shefford, Clifton, Clifton Park, Henlow, Langford

W6: SHEFFORD

Route: Campton, Gravenhurst, Meppershall, SHEFFORD, Stanford, Southill, Broom, SHEFFORD

W7: LETCHWORTH – Centre & Sainsbury's Retail Park

Route: Shefford, Clifton, Henlow, Arlesey.

W9: ST NEOTS – Market Square

Route: Shillington, Meppershall, Shefford, Clifton, Henlow, Langford, Broom, Southill, Stanford, Caldecote

W10: ST NEOTS – Market Square

Route: Upper & Lower Stondon, Clifton Park, Stotfold, Astwick

W11: MILTON KEYNES – Central M&S/John Lewis

Route: Meppershall, Stondon, Shillington, Upper Gravenhurst, Clophill

W12: HITCHIN – Bancroft

Route: Meppershall, Shillington, Higham Gobian, Barton Le Clay, Hexton, Pegsdon.

W12B: HITCHIN – Bancroft

Route: Campton, Gravenhurst, Barton Le Clay, Hexton , Pegsdon

W13: MILTON KEYNES – Central M&S/John Lewis

Route: Stanford, Southill, Broom, Langford, Henlow, Clifton, Shefford

W14: WELWYN GARDEN CITY – Bus Station

Route: Gravenhurst, Shillington, Stondon, Meppershall, Shefford.

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Financial Matters by Paul Savuto

Spreading risk has always made sense

Almost exactly 50 years ago, a company few people had previously heard of was hitting the headlines as the price of its shares went stratospheric. A few months later it came back to earth with a crash. Fortunes were made and lost after mining company Poseidon announced the discovery of new nickel ore reserves in Western Australia just as world nickel prices hit a new high.

Poseidon misadventure

Poseidon shares had been trading at A\$0.80 in the second half of 1969 when they took off. The price climbed relentlessly for weeks as investors claimed their piece of the action. One day in February 1970, the shares touched A\$280.00. Then the profit-taking began and the share price crashed. Nickel prices later dropped back and the Poseidon nickel ore was low quality; receivership ensued in 1974. Fast-forward 20 years and a new 'rising star' of the stock market burned out. A minor fashion house called Polly Peck had been acquired by new owners in 1980 and used as a vehicle for ventures in Northern Cyprus. A series of deals in the 1980s brought such growth that the company's shares entered the FTSE 100. In September 1990, Polly Peck shares were suspended amid fraud allegations.

FOMO frenzy – 300 years ago!

The loss suffered by many investors in Poseidon or Polly Peck was a painful lesson about impossible returns and concentration of risk. There had been plenty of previous warnings, right back to the South Sea Bubble in 1720, about blindly following the herd in a FOMO frenzy. Speculative investment has always had particular risk attached and that is all the greater if it is not diversified.

The value of diversifying your portfolio with collective investments. As a general principle, any investment in shares needs to be spread around, so that if one share price slumps badly it only affects a proportion of your overall portfolio. For many investors, a sound way to achieve a spread of risk is through collective investment schemes with risk profiles aligned to suit their needs. We can advise on the investment strategies and products most appropriate for your objectives and needs.

Know your numbers this tax year

It's well worth being aware of the tax allowances and exemptions available in 2020–21 to be able to maximise them for your own individual financial planning. Here are a few figures worth knowing:

Personal taxation

The National Insurance threshold is now £9,500. The Personal Allowance remains at £12,500, while the £50,000 higher-rate threshold remains unchanged in parts of the UK where Income Tax is not devolved.

Pensions

A major attraction of paying into a pension is the tax relief available: 20% for basic rate taxpayers, 40% for higher rate and 45% for additional rate taxpayers.

The Annual Allowance for pensions remains at £40,000. It will begin to taper for those who have an income above £240,000 (the £200,000 allowance plus the £40,000 you can save into a pension). This means that for every £2 of adjusted income above £240,000, the Annual Allowance for that year reduces by £1. The minimum Annual Allowance has reduced from £10,000 to £4,000.

The Lifetime Allowance – the maximum amount you can have in a pension over a lifetime – has increased to £1,073,100.

Since 6 April, the new single-tier State Pension has risen to £175.20 per week and the older basic State Pension increased to £134.25 per week.

Savings landscape

The annual amount you can save into a JISA (Junior Individual Savings Account) or Child Trust Fund has increased substantially, from £4,368 to £9,000. The ISA (Individual Savings Account) allowance, including the Lifetime ISA allowance if used, remains unchanged at £20,000. ISAs represent a tax-efficient way of saving or investing and the JISA is a great way of building up funds for your child.

Inheritance Tax (IHT)

The current IHT nil-rate threshold is £325,000 for individuals and £650,000 for a married couple or civil partners. Beyond these thresholds, IHT is usually payable at a rate of 40%. The main residence nil-rate band, which applies if you want to pass your main residence to a direct descendant, has increased to £175,000 for individuals and £350,000 for a married couple or civil partners.

Planning pays

Whilst tax-efficiency can play a vital part in successful saving and investing, it's important not to make it the sole driver of your savings or investment decisions, or to steer you away from achieving your core goals. We can advise you on the sensible steps to reduce the amount of tax you pay, safeguarding your wealth for the future

Get in touch

If you're concerned about the recent stock market volatility, or you think it's time to review your long-term plans, please get in touch. DGS are Independent and Chartered Financial Advisers. I am also a Chartered Financial Planner with over 25 years financial services experience, so you are in safe hands. For a free review of your financial situation and to discuss your plan, please contact me, Paul Savuto, AFPS, Chartered Financial Planner. DGS Independent Financial Advisers Ltd.

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Daksha & Phil Trivedi

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Tel: 07961 377526

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Birthday Greetings

The whole Meppershall Messenger team wishes a wonderful 92nd birthday to Betty and to Dora in the coming month. We hope you enjoy the day!

Your Photos – Autumn Rosehips and the Watertower



Thank you to Candy Tingey for sharing this wonderful photo with us. If you have a good picture you would like to share, email us at mepp.messenger@gmail.com.

Bedford Model Engineering Society Summerfield Miniature Railway

In light of the epidemic social distancing advice, public running days at the miniature railway are postponed and we will publish further information in future editions of The Meppershall Messenger. Please refer to www.bedfordmes.co.uk.

Useful Contact Details in Meppershall

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Shams Moopen Dental 99 Hitchin Road, SG17 5JB	01462 648465
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Central Beds Council 0300 300 8301

CBC councillors:

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

Meppershall Parish Council

Parish Council Clerk Alessandre Marabese clerk@meppershall.org

Member of Parliament

Nadine Dorries MP dorriesn@parliament.uk

St Marys Church

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

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Redborne Upper School, Ampthill 01525 404462

Organisations

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

The Team and Collation Dates

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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Collating Dates 2020-21			
November Issue	October 26th	March Issue	March 1st
Dec-Jan Issue	Nov 30th	April Issue	March 29th
February Issue	Jan 25th	May Issue	April 26th
Please contact Colette to confirm arrangements (contact information above).			

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