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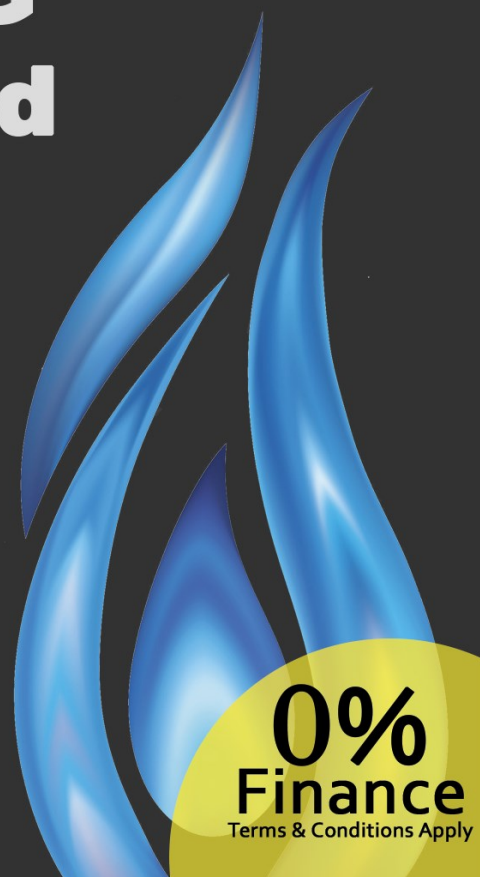
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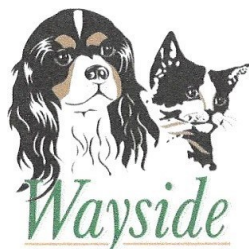
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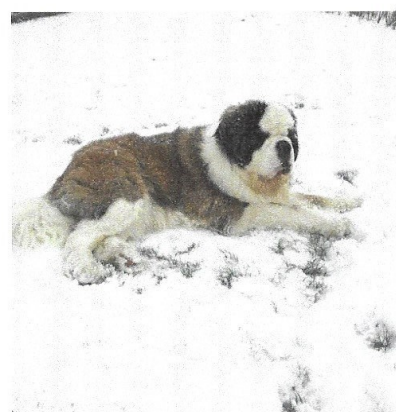
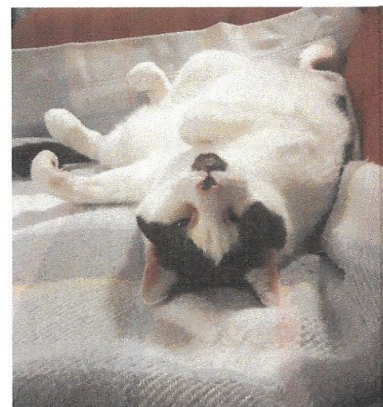


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## Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

We have had some wonderful contributions as part of Operation Optimism – huge thanks to Nicola Seago, Richard Ivory and anonymous contributors for sharing little articles that are interesting or helpful or funny or poetic... we certainly want to keep that going. Please



do send us anything that you think will put a smile on people's faces, raise some eyebrows or give us that "OOOH" moment. It's easiest by email ([mepp.messenger@gmail.com](mailto:mepp.messenger@gmail.com)). You can also post a note through one of our doors. We very much hope that you are all doing well through these very difficult times.

Another positive is that the team putting together Meppershall's Neighbourhood Plan are close to showing a draft version to the village. They are keen to illustrate it, so as well as photos of relevance to the text, they also thought it would be good to have some pictures from children at the school showing what they like and what is important to them. Some of these are shown in the magazine - thanks to all those who participated and to Roz Bond at the school for organising and collating them.

Our cover this month reflects the very special 100-year anniversary of the origins of the Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday commemorations that have become part of our national life each year (see page 14). The photo on the cover came to light as part of the 1918 Centenary Exhibition staged by the church. It shows the village War Memorial when it was first unveiled some 100 years ago and I believe it was kindly contributed by the Dilley family. Read more about arrangements for Remembrance Sunday in the church section of this edition. The church website and Facebook page will be providing a strong connection to Remembrance on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November, even if we can't gather in person as many of us would usually do.

This month we also remember the very sad loss of Dave Hankins, renowned village painter and decorator and a much-missed and long-standing member of the village community. You'll find some thoughts on page 29 and our hearts are with his family.

Many people and organisations have been working so hard and thoughtfully to help others get through this pandemic era. If you know a person or a group that deserves recognition and thanks, please tell us about it! You'll see some recognition of a phenomenal milestone for the church (page 3) as well the regular info from The GNOMES (page 8). Andrew Goodman also shares the story of his pilgrimage, exploring John Bunyan's story (page 17) – inspiring, even for the non-religious!

Finally as the nights draw in and the cold and rain gather around us, road safety gets a mention in this edition. See page 9 for some important thoughts about saving lives on our roads. Go a bit slower and look out for cyclists and walkers/runners – especially on the national speed limit lanes around the village ... PLEASE.



## Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

Following our Parish Council Meeting I am in complete agreement with some residents suggestions for a 20mph speed limit for Coneygate/ Gregory Close.

The best way forward would be to make the total length of the High Street signed as a 20 mph section of road. This has the advantage that all roads coming off the High Street (Coneygate/Gregory Close etc. ) would also have to be included in the 20mph scheme. I will also pursue speed reduction methods on Shillington Road as I am also very concerned about this dangerous section of road especially for pedestrians.

I am putting an article in this edition of the Meppershall Messenger about the advantages of having 20mph schemes within the village in the hope of raising enough interest by residents in order to pursue the scheme with Central Beds Traffic department.

I believe there may already be a petition started in the village regarding speeding village but I am not sure who has started the petition.

Unfortunately due to Covid 19 Speed watch members have not been allowed to carry out regular speed checks in the area which has not helped matters. In the meantime I will start investigating the proposal for a 20mph scheme but from experience this can take many months to come to fruition .

Best regards

**Anthony J Seaman**  
**Meppershall Parish Councillor**  
**Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator**  
**Speed Watch Member**

Dear Editors

When it comes to OOOH, nothing could be more inspiring than the 9-and-9 daily online church services that Roni and Andrew have led since the suspension of normal church services in March. Hosted on the St Marys Meppershall church Facebook page, you don't have to be religious to recognise the amazing commitment and leadership that this represents. The services themselves involve some ancient prayers and have provided a quiet, serene and spiritual moment not just for people with a Christian faith but for many others in Meppershall and beyond (around the world!) It has been such an important beacon in these very turbulent times.

Amazingly, we estimate they will reach their 500<sup>th</sup> 9-and-9 service on the evening of Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November. That's something to celebrate! Thanks Roni and Andrew!

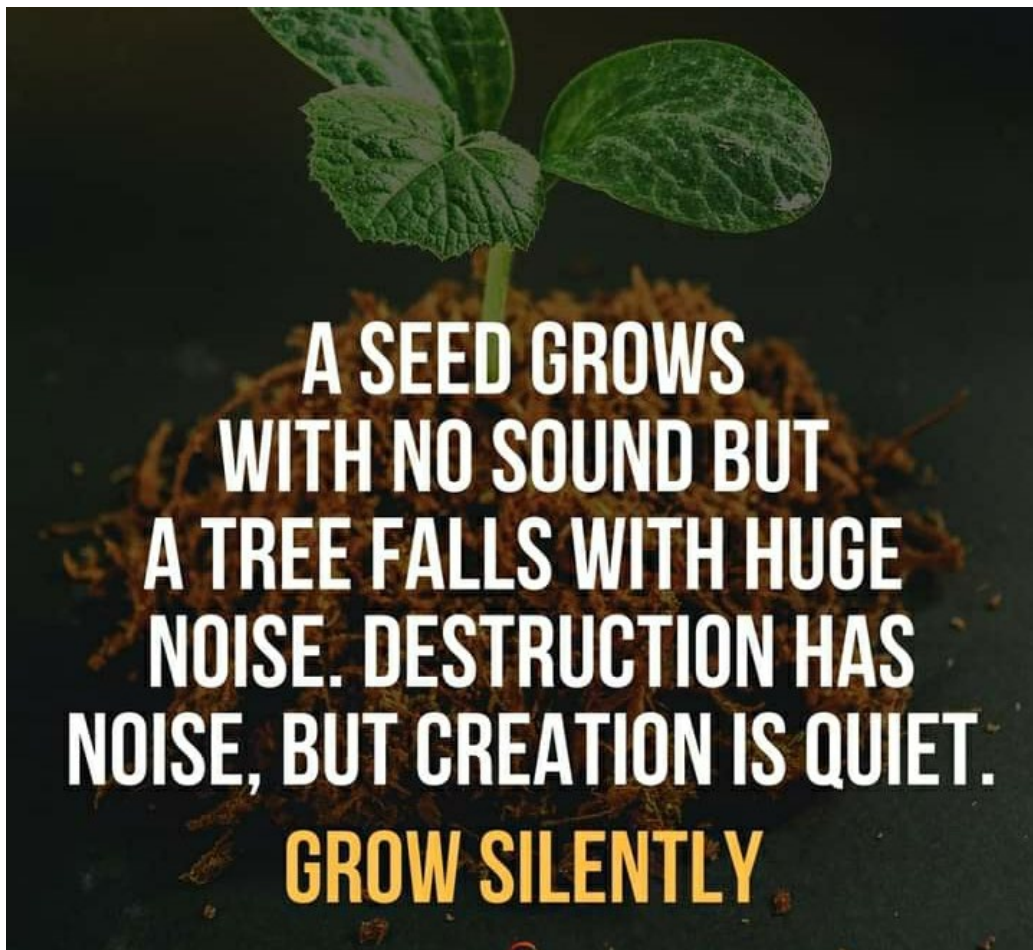
**Everyone at St Mary's Meppershall and all who have joined a 9-and-9 service**

## Motivation by Nicola Seago

During these difficult times we have so many activities to keep our minds positive:

- Learn to bake/cook
- Enjoy a new exercise regime eg walking, yoga, pilates, cycling etc etc. Yoga and pilates and aerobics are available on You Tube
- Read more books
- Switch off social media/ news
- Zoom meetings with family and friends if we can't physically meet up
- Do kind acts for our neighbours eg offer to tidy their garden / fetch shopping for them
- Watch films/series on Netflix, Iplayer etc
- Have a pamper with a beautician or have a massage or a trip to the hairdressers (if you're not self isolating)
- Order a lovely take away meal at least once per week
- Relax in the bath whenever you can!

**There's no time to be bored !!**





## That old bit of wood by Richard Ivory

There's something grand about that old oak post,  
It could tell quite a tale, of life and love, no need to boast.  
It started life as an acorn, born on its parent tree  
That was the start of its history.

Taken by a red squirrel and buried for its larder,  
When the snow came, to find it again, was harder.  
So, in the earth it sprouted and slowly grew,  
Right next door to a neighbouring yew.

Lovers came to tryst beneath its boughs,  
Making laughter, love and sometimes rows!  
It gave shelter to the roaming sheep and lambs  
As they suckled from their fleecy dams.

The bark was thick and fissured too,  
As year by year it grew and grew,  
Until it had reached such a size,  
That to the woodsman it became a prize.

Felled, sawn and planed and used thereafter,  
To make tables and chairs and the odd rafter  
That held up the roof, for a century or more,  
'til a fire broke out during the first World War.

Half burnt and looking very sorry,  
It was put upon a farmer's lorry,  
Sawn in half and sold for pence,  
It became, before I got it, a piece of fence

I left some of it rough and turned the rest,  
Though I admit, not one of my best.  
It reminds me, that once, it was a grand old tree.  
An English oak, with a proud history.



## Nature's Flatulence (or "The Day the Roof Fell In") by Richard Ivory

We live at the Old Police House,  
 The one in Shefford Road.  
 Built in 1927, it's quite a nice abode.  
 Well! It was until the winds came and broke our chimney off,  
 Sending soot, bricks and rubble into the lounge – my, did it make me cough!  
 The roof was shifted over as the chimney clattered down,  
 Made it look just like a drunken monarch's crown.  
 People as they passed looked up and said "That's bad".  
 And I'm sure they felt for us inside, feeling rather sad.  
 Patched up rather quickly, to stop the weather getting in,  
 All we could do was sit and wait, and bear it with a grin.  
 Came insurance men and engineers and builders more than two,  
 To assess, quote and examine deciding what to do.  
 Time went on, we waited patiently it must be said,  
 Although sometimes the worries got to us as we lay there in our bed.  
 The scaffolders arrived one day and started to erect  
 A huge unsightly cocoon thing, but it did have an effect.  
 People driving past all gazed at this monstrosity in awe,  
 You could hear them walking past just say the one word "Cor".  
 We looked like a block of flats of steel and plastic made,  
 It certainly put our little house completely in the shade.  
 They came and took the slates off first to see the damage done,  
 "You need new rafters and purlins here and here my son."  
 The plastic rattled in the wind, kept us awake at night,  
 And underneath the great tin roof it really was a sight,  
 Bare wood sticking upwards looking oh so sad.  
 But at least they've got it started which makes us feel so glad.  
 Now felted and battened down the slates are going back,  
 The only thing missing now is that BLASTED CHIMNEY STACK!!





## Parish Council Update

# Garden waste collections

**Kerbside garden bin collections will be suspended between Monday 7 December 2020 to Friday 26 February 2021 inclusive**

The last collection date for your area will be either week commencing Monday 23 November, or 30 November 2020

For more information, please visit  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/garden-waste](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/garden-waste)



The Tidy Tips in Ampthill or Biggleswade can be visited throughout the winter to dispose of garden waste but pre-booking is required. Find out more and book at:

[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/2/waste\\_and\\_recycling](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/2/waste_and_recycling)

Central Beds also offers help for Tidy Tip users with a disability, available by emailing [customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk).

## GNOMES (Meppershall Good Neighbours)



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As we all continue with the impact of various restrictions, locally & nationally, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when you read this be assured that we, the GNOMES, are still around and willing to help where we can.

Currently, we can undertake jobs that do not involve, close contact but cannot undertake transport jobs or any which require entering a client's home.

Whatever your need, call us on **07760 793921, Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm** and if we cannot help then we will try our best to find someone or some organization that can. **We can help with;**

Collecting Prescriptions, groceries, and other essential provisions, for the Over 70's, vulnerable and self-isolating residents.



Telephone Befriending, a listening ear when you need one.

Helping direct you to other organisations and support services where needed and help with advice and information on local suppliers of food and other essential supplies.



Please keep an eye out for those around you and if you think they need help, but you are unable to give it, then please call the **GNOMES** on **07760 793921**.

If you would like to help people in your community and could volunteer on a one-off or regular basis then give us a call and join our friendly team of volunteers.



## Making our village roads safer

In the next few weeks HML the local maintenance company of Croudace Homes Ltd and with the permission of Central Beds Council will be installing 20mph signage within the Orchard estate of Walnut Tree Way and associated roads. The village hall and pre-school will hopefully benefit as will the residents of the Orchard Estate. Should other areas of the village have concerns about speeding traffic contact should be made with traffic department of Central Beds Council. ROSPA have provided an article below on road safety concerning 20mph speed limits

**Anthony J Seaman**



### 20mph Zones and Speed Limits

In 2018, 806 people were killed, 17,839 were seriously injured and 98,000 were slightly injured in reported road collisions on built up roads in Great Britain. A large proportion of these accidents occurred on residential roads, with 108 deaths on B roads in built-up areas and 316 deaths on other minor roads in built-up areas.

Speed significantly increases the chance of being injured in a collision. Research has shown that the risk of death for pedestrians struck by cars increases at higher impact speeds, although exact risk levels varied between studies.

One of the first studies of pedestrian injury and car impact speed found that at 20mph there was a 2.5% chance of being fatally injured, compared to a 20% chance at 30mph, although this study is now regarded as having overestimated the risks. A recent review identified the studies which had produced the most reliable modern estimates.

As well as road safety benefits, it is important to highlight the contribution that 20mph zones can have in improving air quality, reducing noise pollution and encouraging more physical activity, such as walking and cycling, by contributing towards a safer environment. The money spent on the schemes can also greatly improve the residential area.

A recent study calculated casualty rates and the effects of vehicles on air pollution in 30mph zones in Wales. The researchers then estimated the casualty rate and the impacts of vehicles on air pollution in 20mph speed limit areas.

Evidence from the study suggested that a default speed limit of 20mph would substantially reduce road traffic casualties, and at worst would not lead to a direct change in air pollution. However, indirectly, if reduced traffic speeds encourage

people to switch to active modes of travel, such as cycling and walking, there are likely to be greater reductions in air pollution. The study concluded that health and costs savings are likely to be substantial, and the costs of implementing 20mph limits are likely to be far lower than the benefits reduced speeds bring.

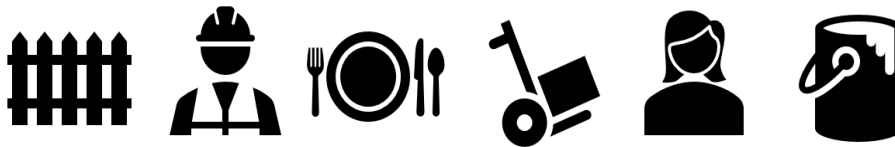
***This information is taken from "Road Safety factsheet: 20mph Zones and Speed Limits". Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. January 2020.***

The full document is available online at:

<https://www.rosipa.com/media/documents/road-safety/20mph-zones-and-speed-limits-factsheet.pdf>

\*\*\*\*\*

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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.

***Take a moment NOW to look through the useful ads in the centre section and also in the colour section. Our advertisers make this non-profit -volunteer magazine possible.***

\*\*\*\*\*

### Working From Home – an anonymous reader's poem

Good morning laptop – the world I call home

Stuck in your keyboard and screen, here alone.

Far distant faces peer into the room –

The zoo-keeping wide-eyed parade we call Zoom.

Silicon microchip email attack,

Work's instant messaging whipping my back,

My brain enslaved to the great online boss,

My day a torrent as I swim across

The whirling and rushing and flow of the deep

Till the land of the evening; the refuge of sleep.

Anon, Meppershall October 2020.





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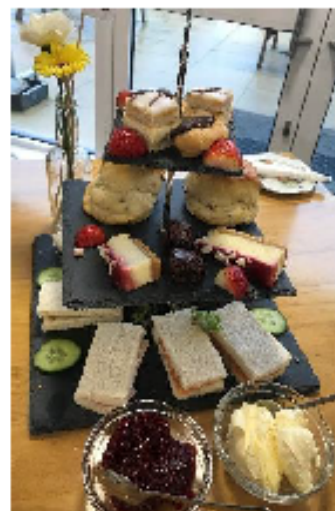
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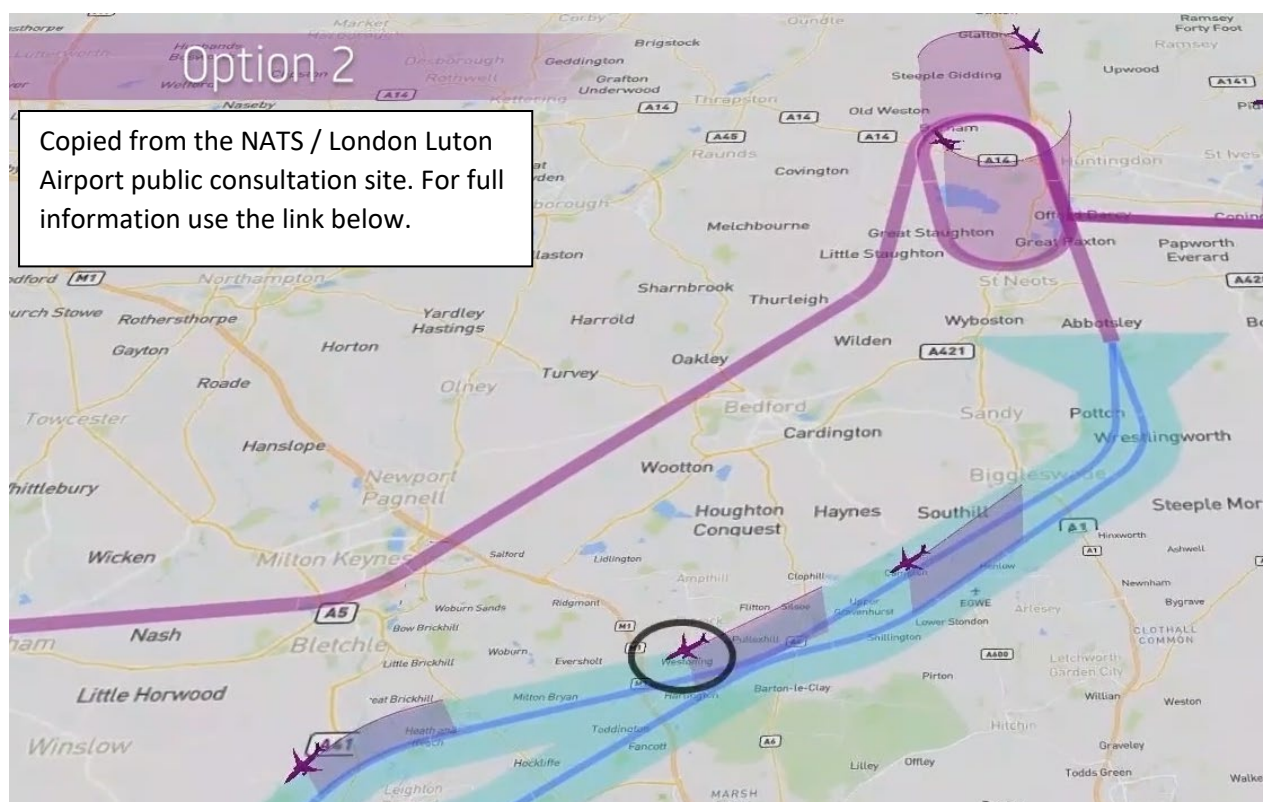
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## Changes to London Luton Airport Flightpaths

A consultation has been launched by London Luton Airport for plans to change arrival flight routes. You can read more information on the link below. The information covers flights landing from the west (towards the east = "easterly") as well as flights landing from the east (towards the west = westerly).

In each case "Option 1" disperses aircraft over a wider area and "Option 2" directs aircraft over narrow corridors. For Meppershall, it is the **EASTERLY** approach that we need to really think about. The proposal means aircraft will fly south from a new "stack" or holding zone near Huntingdon and approach LTN by flying south to Wrestlingworth/Dunton and then, apparently, straight over Meppershall before turning onto their final approach out near Aylesbury/Tring.

Don't panic, we see aircraft on that kind of route already, today. But we could expect the new plans to send more aircraft that way much more of the time - especially in Option 2. There could be a constant stream of aircraft at busy times, and - overall - the easterly approach to LTN is used 30% of the time (so on average that's about 10 days every month).



Option 1 would spread the aircraft out more. What do you think about these proposals? Go ahead and click the link and tell them your thoughts, and comment below if you like too.

There is some good news. The proposal for the westerly approach doesn't seem to come so near us - and that's the route used 70% of the time.

Use this link for more information and to give feedback: <https://bit.ly/31AEPLo>



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**Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman**

01462 339962 – [ronigoodman@gmail.com](mailto:ronigoodman@gmail.com) – usual day off Monday

**Churchwardens:**

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962 Chris Valentine 01462 815971

Email: [Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com](mailto:Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com)

**PCC Secretary:**

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: [annie10639@gmail.com](mailto:annie10639@gmail.com)

### ***Message from St Mary's***

First of all I would like to say thank you so much to you all for your harvest gifts which are now being taken to the Need Project. Please remember that although we celebrate harvest only once a year – but the need is an all year round need!

November is here, now and our season of remembering.

Sadly, it is not possible for us to hold our usual Service of Special Memories this year. However, the Church will be open for personal prayer on the 4th November and on this day we will remember by name those whose funerals we have been privileged to conduct in the past year. We are inviting their families and friends to come to light a candle and spend a quiet moment with God and their memories in the Church. It is an opportunity open to all.

Remembrance Sunday (8<sup>th</sup>) will look different this year too. These COVID times do not allow us to gather for our usual Service of Remembrance at the War Memorial. The online morning service on our Facebook page at 10.30am on that day will be a Service of Remembrance; please join us online.

In addition, a representative from each of the Community Groups who normally present wreaths will be able to do so at the usual time, the church bell will toll for the service men we lost in WW1 and WW2, and the Ode of Remembrance and Kohima Epitaph will be recited. However, we ask this year that people do not gather in the churchyard but allow the few to represent the many on this occasion. If you normally lay a wreath please contact Rev Roni (01462 339922) ASAP to facilitate that. (Please note that these arrangements may change at short notice, subject to government guidance).

All those wishing to pay their respects at the War Memorial are very welcome to do so but please come at other times during the day and ensure social distancing.

The Royal British Legion have recognised the need to find 'COVID safe' ways to remember and honour those who have served, and continue to serve, to defend our democratic freedoms and way of life. They have put together a wide range of suggested COVID safe activities for 2020 that are inexpensive to create. Take a look at their website <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/> for more information and to get involved.

On Sunday 22nd November we celebrate the feast of Christ the King in a glorious end to the Church's year - the feast of the reign of Christ. Celebrating that, as one writer (Tom Wright) puts it:

*"The governance of the whole universe is now in the  
utterly safe and scarred hands of Jesus, the one who alone will  
use power exclusively in the service of love."*

Our new church year begins on the 29th November with the 1st Sunday in Advent - the Church linens are turned to purple, the colour of preparation, repentance and drawing closer to God - as we start looking forward to Christmas.

**Mid-week Communions:** You might like to know that we are planning to restart Wednesday Communions, but at 10.30am, with 2 Wednesday services each month starting on the 11th November. We are hoping that this will give a later alternative to some, recognising that for all sorts of good reasons, 9am does not suit everyone!

At this time of remembering... **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 (phone 339962 or 07533 376880) 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.

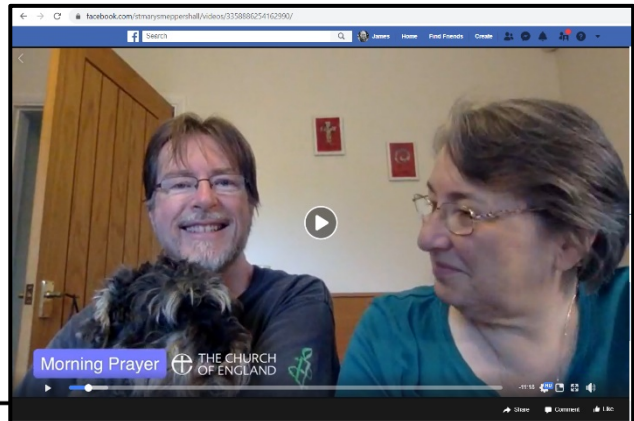
**Rector Roni**

## **Church News and Events in October**

The church continues to be open on Wednesdays for private prayer (10.30am-6.30pm). From Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November there will also be a fortnightly 10.30am Holy Communion service on Wednesdays, as well as the 9am service also currently held in the church on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month. ***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. Based on "Lectio365" (mornings) and the Church of England Daily Prayer App (evenings), you can also just tune in, relax, reflect and enjoy with any particular preparation.



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Love from St Mary's Meppershall & St Michael's Sheppord

Please also join our Sunday services, 10.30am LIVE on Facebook or use our phone-in service – see the advert here – call **559112**. Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November will be our **SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE** at 10.30am online. The normal commemoration at the memorial at 11am will take place but will be limited to those with formal roles (leading the event and laying wreaths). Why not come to the

memorial later during the day to pay your respects, ensuring social distancing?

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.

## A Century of Remembrance

This year's National Act of Remembrance at the London Cenotaph on Whitehall will not be accompanied by the usual parades nor the attendance of both serving military personnel, veterans and members of public. Yet it is a very significant anniversary.

It is 100 years since a two-minute silence was observed throughout the country, marking the funeral of the Unknown Soldier, at that very spot.

While there was spontaneous jubilation in November 1918 at the end of the Great War itself, followed by a royal feast in November 1919 to mark the first anniversary, it was the sombre reflection of the 1920 Remembrance that defined the way we



commemorate the Armistice and Remembrance Sunday right up to today, a century later. It was a profound and moving moment in world history.

As the nation continued to grieve the unspeakable losses of the first world war, the funeral of the unknown soldier resonated deeply and perhaps permanently with the country. During the war, a chaplain had seen a simple wooden cross hurriedly assembled in the mud to mark the resting place of a fallen soldier on the battlefields. Knowing how many had fallen in that way, when the war had finished the chaplain insisted that one “unknown soldier” should be brought home from the battlefield mud and buried alongside royalty in Westminster Abbey with all the honour of the nation’s greatest leaders and heroes. That one burial was to be a symbol for hundreds of thousands of lost soldiers from across what was then The British Empire.

On 7<sup>th</sup> November 1920, four such unknown soldiers were brought to a chapel near Arras in France and one was brought to the castle at Boulogne on the following day, under guard, where it was watched over in an overnight vigil mounted by the prestigious French 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. Undertakers transferred the remains to a casket made of oak from Hampton Court Palace. A medieval crusader’s sword was laid on top of the casket with a shield fixed to it, inscribed with the words “A British Warrior who fell in the Great War 1914–1918 for King and Country”. The sword had been personally chosen by King George V.

On 9<sup>th</sup> November 1920, that unknown soldier was transported to the waiting HMS Verdun with full military honours, its route lined by 1,000 French children and its passing marked by French cavalry trumpets and infantry bugles. It crossed the channel escorted by six battleships and as it approached the English coast a 19-gun salute was fired from Dover Castle. On 10<sup>th</sup> November it was taken by train to London Victoria railway station.

On the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> November 1920, the casket was laid on a Royal Horse Artillery gun carriage and drawn by horses from the station through huge and utterly silent crowds. Its arrival at Whitehall was marked by the unveiling of The Cenotaph – the national memorial – by King George V. The King and Royal Family then followed the casket on its final journey to be laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, watched over by a guard of honour comprising 100 recipients of the Victoria Cross – our country’s rarest and highest honour. The ceremony at Westminster Abbey also had 100 special guests: all of them women who had lost their husband and sons in the war.

This year in Meppershall, just as at The Cenotaph, normal attendance is not possible for Remembrance. But let’s make sure that we remember those events of 100 years ago and reflect on that unknown soldier. They are a symbol of the quiet dedication of so many who serve our nation, in the name of the peace and security from which we all benefit. For every name on our own memorials and others in more distant places, at the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.

## Macmillan Cancer Support – Meppershall Village Support Group



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We have also set up an **online 'group meet'** and individually for those who wish to connect during this difficult time.

**Our next online meetings will be on Saturday  
7 November and 5 December 2020, 11am.**

We'd love to talk to you! Daksha & Phil Trivedi,

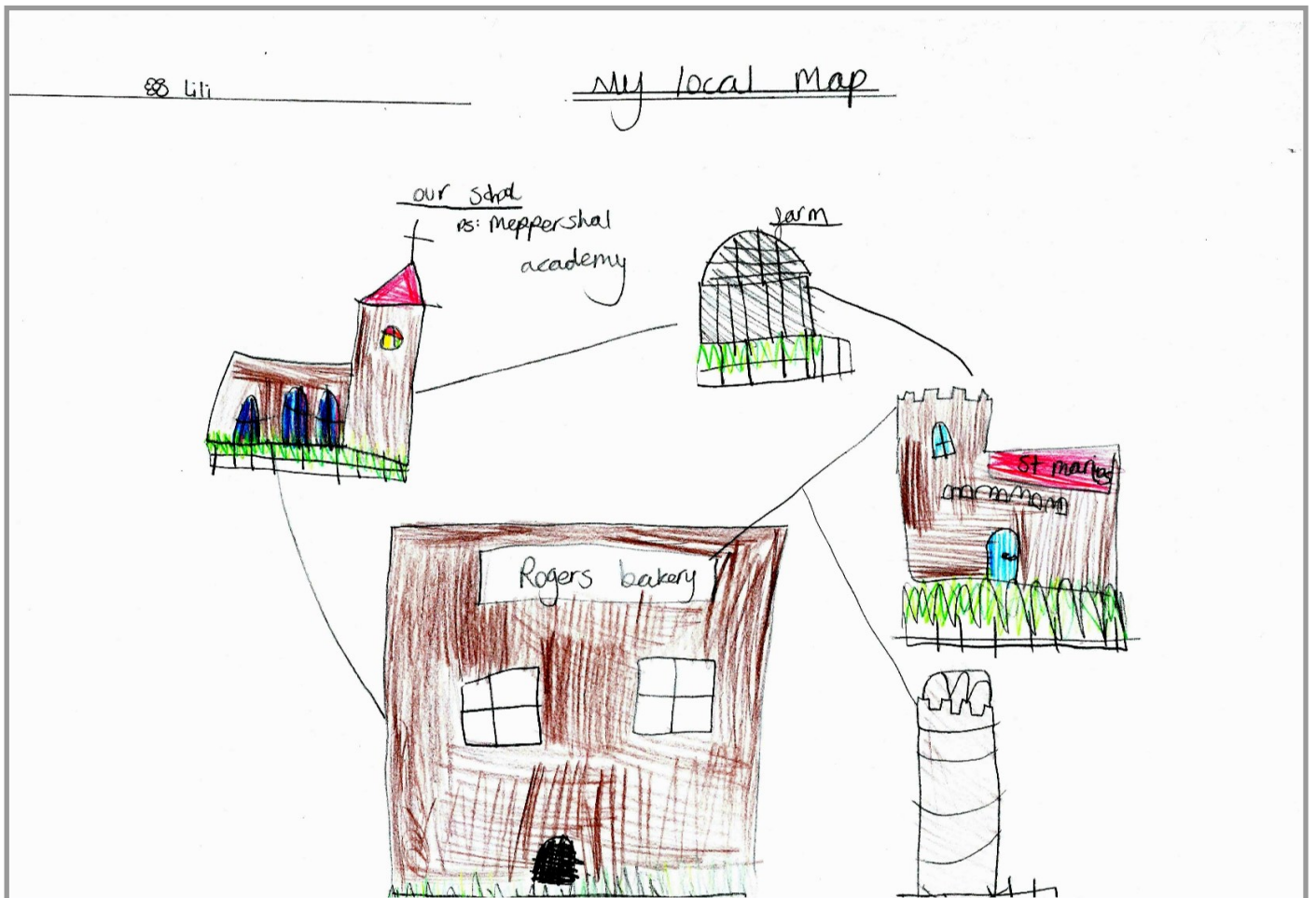
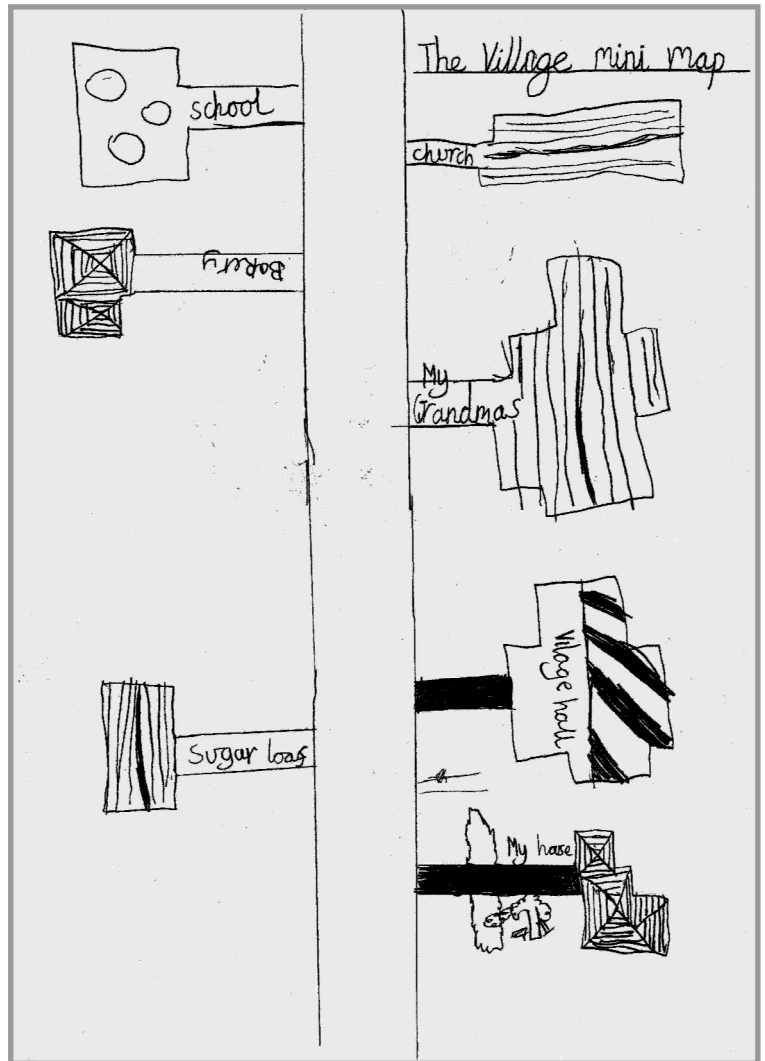
Email: [daksha.trivedi@btconnect.com](mailto:daksha.trivedi@btconnect.com)

Tel: 01462 813943; M: 07961 377526

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland

## SOME IMAGES OF OUR VILLAGE, DRAWN BY PUPILS OF MEPPERSHALL CofE ACADEMY

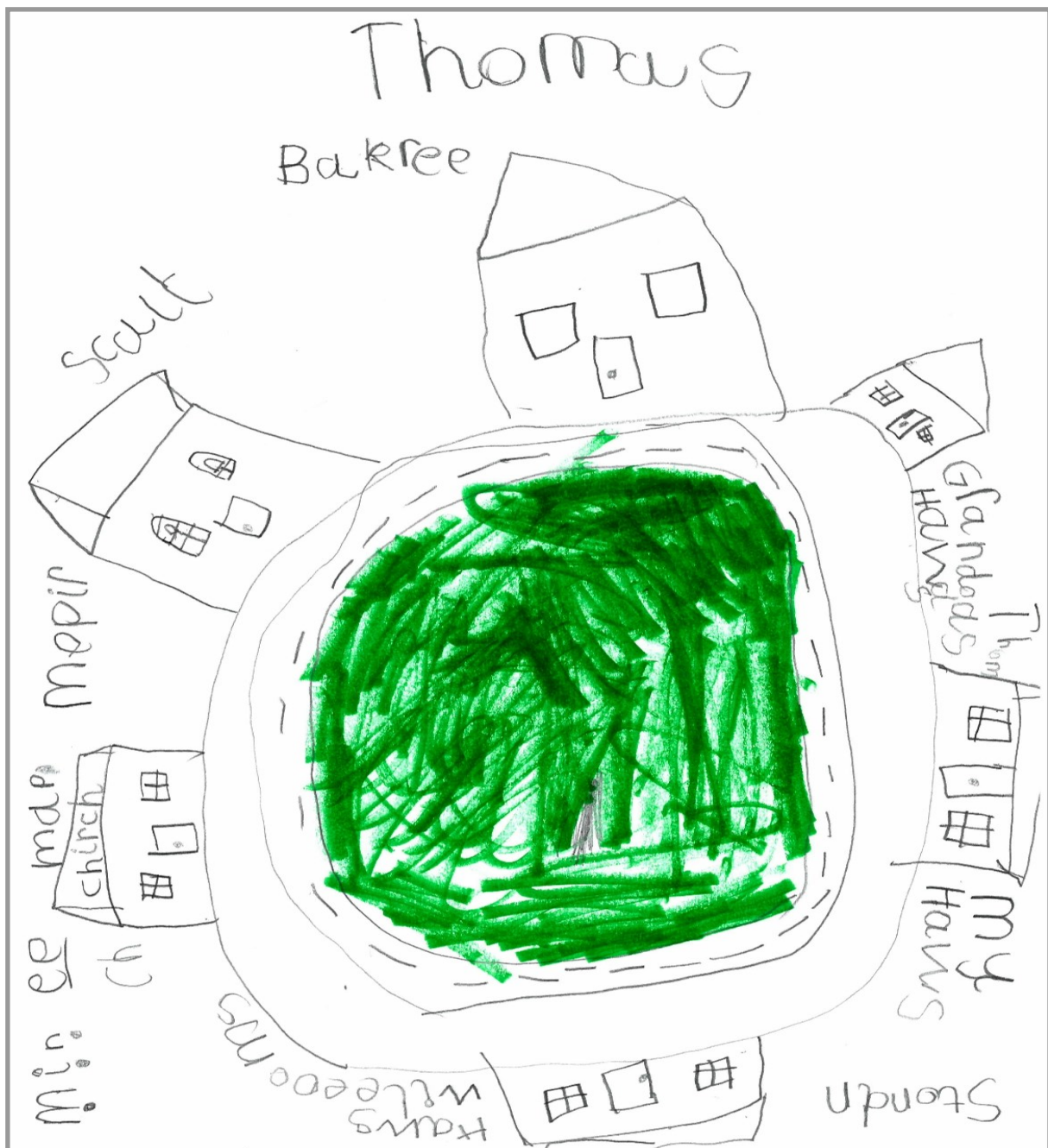
The team putting together the Neighbourhood Plan are close to having a draft version to show the village; and were keen to illustrate it with pictures. As well as photos of relevance to the text, they also thought it would be good if they could get some pictures from the pupils at the school illustrating what *they* liked, and what was important to *them*, and some of these are shown in the magazine. here..with thanks to all those who participated, and Roz Bond at the school for organising and collating them.



Pictures drawn by pupils will feature in The Meppershall Neighbourhood Plan

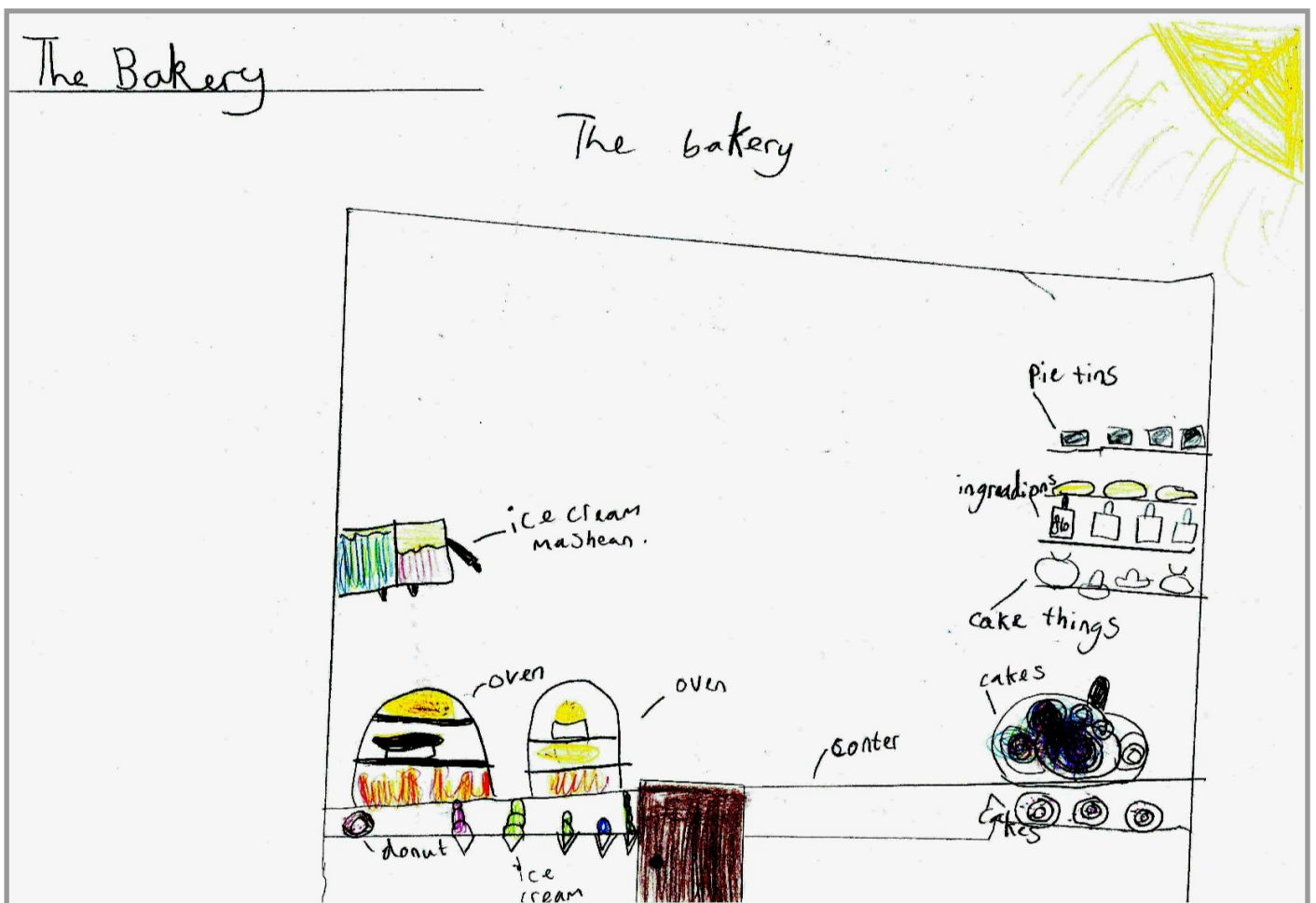






Pictures drawn by pupils will feature in The Meppershall Neighbourhood Plan







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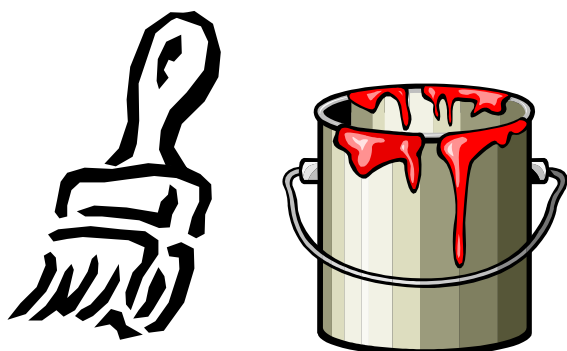
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## Story of a Pilgrimage: Harlington

It seems that the ancient practice of Pilgrimage is enjoying a resurgence. The people of England used to be a pilgrimaging people until the dissolution of the monasteries under King Henry VIII - the land was criss-crossed with ancient walking routes we still use today like the Icknield Way to sites such as Canterbury and St Albans. You may have heard of the Camino de Santiago route in Spain. In the 1980's a few hundred pilgrims a year walked it - now there are half a million - many of them young people searching spiritually.

I have been walking the John Bunyan Trail in 'micro' pilgrimages of one day, or overnight trips, since last year. This year I found myself on the stretch from Streatley to Harlington. I'm ashamed to say I called on the off-chance at very short notice to ask if I could 'champ' (church camp). Champing, as a practice of hospitality, is where a church kindly lets pilgrims sleep on the floor somewhere, or in the churchyard by way of accommodation, and the pilgrims can get their dinner at a local hostelry. Thankfully permission was granted for my 'wild camp' in the churchyard and I chose the branch of an ancient Yew to hitch up the basha under which to sleep. It was the



night of Tuesday 1 September, by happenstance the feast day of St Giles of Provence. Wikipedia tells me *'Giles founded the abbey in Saint-Gilles-du-Gard whose tomb became a place of pilgrimage. It was a stop on the road that led from Arles to Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrim Way of St. James.'* Such 'Godincidences' as I like to call them, happen when you pilgrimage.

Why become a pilgrim, putting yourself through the effort and sometimes hardship? There's a deep human urge to set out on journeys, of discovery, to visit sacred sites like churches, cathedrals, ancient monuments, beauty spots, healing springs of water, and great trees. It's a chance to slow down to the pace of a walking rhythm (if you're walking), to get away from distractions and even listen to the God who we find is speaking to us already - when we listen. Jesus himself invited his followers *'...because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'* Mark 6:31 Pilgrimage then, is sabbath-time.

What did I learn? He teaches us about life when we're on pilgrimage:

- that the interior journey often mirrors the exterior journey; sometimes my pace is too fast to 'just be' and reflect on life and God - I need to build in dedicated times or they may just not happen. Enjoy the journey, savour it's giftedness, rather than rush to the destination as some sort of 'achievement'.
- that John Bunyan's life and his amazing novel Pilgrim's Progress inspire me...

How courageous of him in November 1660 to not swerve from his calling to preach at Lower Samsell farm by Harlington. He was warned that a warrant was out for his arrest. Deciding to continue, he was arrested and brought before the local magistrate Sir Francis Wingate at Harlington House, followed by 12 years in Bedford gaol.





His dear wife was pregnant at the time and later gave birth to a still-born baby. In our times Bunyan is honoured in St Mary's Harlington church - there's been a kind of reconciliation or vindication in the church that once persecuted him - symbolised by the thick branch of the famous Bunyan's Oak now supporting a beautiful wooden altar table. There's even a stained glass window for him.



- humility and dependence on others. Thirsty, I had to stop and knock on a door to ask for water. The householder kindly showed me the tap and trustingly left me to myself to drink. The kindness of strangers.

- enjoying the simple pleasures of creation (I like to call it that, rather than 'nature'). Plucking sweet and bitter blackberries from hedgerows. Boiling up a cup of tea on my woodstove to the scent of wood smoke. Innocent farm animals staring at me wide-eyed in curiosity. Looking out in wonderment from under my basha and seeing the stars in the vast dark sky above the church.

- circling the church in an evening prayer-walk and wondering if, (maybe sensing?) the presence of angels on the battlements, strong, 'other', and reassuring.

- a delightful morning surprise; the ingenuity and cheerful, sheer, *carrying on-ness* of the folk outside in the sunshine, gathering for Morning Prayer undeterred by COVID-19. An unexpected gift - the opportunity to view the beauty of the church interior.

And a dream to end with; that one day, there might be our own little version of the 'Way of St James, Santiago de Compostella' on our own patch of this beautiful earth in Bedfordshire. This would be that the John Bunyan Trail might become a contemporary Pilgrim Way along ancient footpaths trod by our ancestors, and John Bunyan himself. A path affordable by anyone, not just those who have cash to travel, for young and old, believers and seekers. A pilgrim Way of wholeness/holiness, healing and restoration, doable because local, supported by hospitable churches, unseen Prayer, and people of generosity and good will along the route. Thank you, Harlington church of St Mary, for kindness to a stranger. Read more at [www.britishpilgrimage.org](http://www.britishpilgrimage.org)





**Editors comment...** Thanks Andrew for sharing this journey and the spiritual connection that can come from pilgrimage. If you've read this article and you feel inspired, whatever your faith or spirituality, tell us more! Here are some more pictures from Andrew's adventure.



Among these pictures you can see Andrew's tent ("champing"), plus the John Bunyan window and Bunyan oak table at St Mary's church, Harlington.



The Bunyan Trail passes right through Meppershall and its route goes north through Shefford, Haynes and Elstow to Bedford. A 77 mile loop in total, south of Meppershall it heads through Shillington, Hexton and Barton before heading through the Chilterns to Sundon and then turning north back to Bedford in its western loop.







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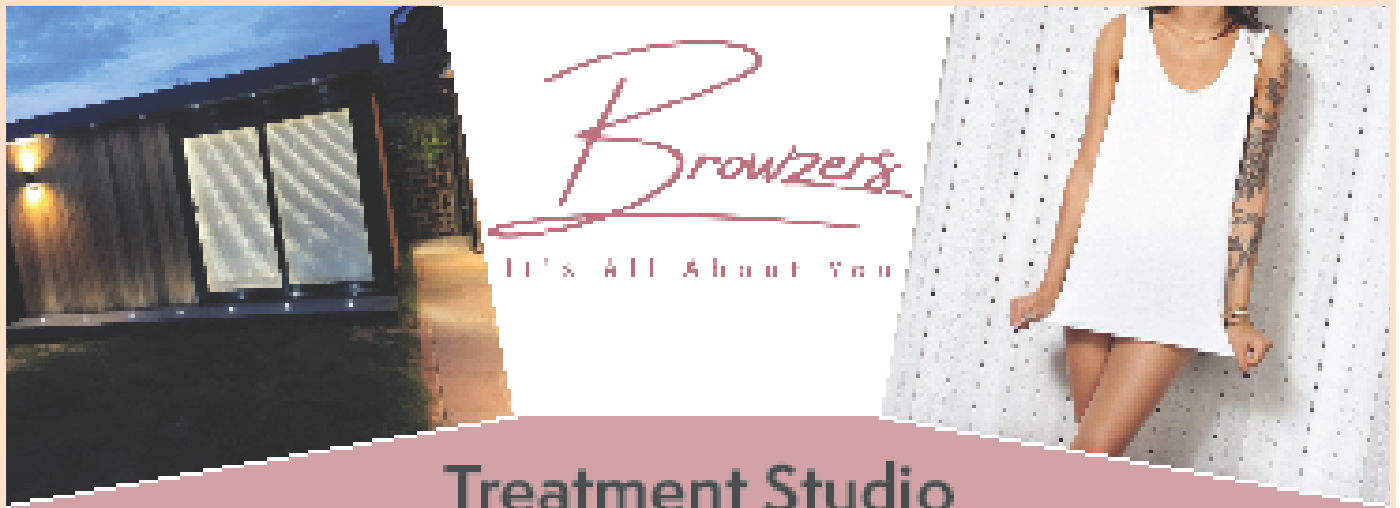
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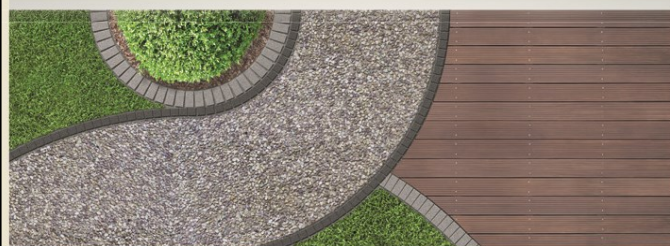
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## The Meppershall Players



Well, it's November and we've been rehearsing as best we can with all the current dos and don'ts. We still plan to go ahead with our Pantomime Jack & the Beanstalk, performing at STMA on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December: matinees 3pm, evening performances 7.00pm. Because current dos and don'ts can change at a moment's notice, we'll be changing the way we sell tickets for this production. We can only seat 30 people at each performance. We will be taking bookings for seats in advance as usual, but instead of paying with your booking we ask that you pay when you arrive at the STMA for the performance.

The reason for this is twofold: firstly our online bookings would not be able to provide a seating plan that would accommodate our family groups and our individual audience members in line with current government guidelines; and secondly, if government guidelines change, we can change too. Tickets are the usual price: £5 matinees; £10 evenings (concessions £8). You can book tickets by ringing 01462 816336 or message us on our community Facebook page with your booking. Look out for our posters (prices not shown on posters but will be on our Facebook page).

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 matinee at 3pm and evening performance at 7.00pm. The Players have commemorated V.E every five years since 1985 - and we'll be celebrating 50 years of the Meppershall Players in 2022.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 someone who loves to play piano for our V.E. production as backing tracks are few and far between for songs of these eras 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 and more.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you

**Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336**

A colorful illustration of a young boy with blonde hair, wearing a red vest over a white long-sleeved shirt and brown trousers, climbing a massive green beanstalk. The beanstalk is thick and has large green leaves. In the background, a small wooden house is visible on a yellow hill under a bright yellow sky.

The Meppershall Players present

# JACK

## & The Beanstalk

A pantomime by Karen Mitchell

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> December

At Shefford Town Memorial Association Hall

Matinees 3pm-All seats £5

Evenings 7pm-Seats £10 Concessions £8

TO BOOK YOUR SEAT

Telephone 01462 816336

Or

Message us Via The Meppershall Players  
Community Facebook Page

(Social distancing & government regulations will be  
observed for your safety)

## Sheffield Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

In the beginning of this year, we had hoped that by now life was near normal. Unfortunately this has not been the case and with more restrictions along the way we really do have to be aware of the current situation. We are fortunate where we live as we have the lowest number of people suffering with coronavirus in our area which enables us to carry on with our lives with the minimum of hardship.



Although we are safer staying in our homes, we can take a walk and pass the time of day with friends and neighbours at a distance. Although the evenings draw in earlier, the weather is being kind to us at the moment. So long as that 'fluffy white stuff' stays away we will still be able to take our walks and admire the changing colours of our Autumn countryside which are beautiful.

Our 'Leisure Group' people have not managed to go out on any trips and quite frankly do not wish to take the risk. There will be no group outings for the rest of this year, also for the first part of 2021. I have just sent out a newsletter for October and the next one will be December. A cheque for £700.00 was sent to Keech Hospice Care for Children and a lovely letter in acknowledgement has been received.

Now to the future – and there is one!!! I am looking forward to 2021 and I am not going to reminisce, well not about 2020 anyway!

Regarding trips – there are three which are booked:

Creeks, Cockles and Cockneys – new date: Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

The Tower of London – new date: Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Thursford Christmas Spectacular – new date: Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Prices for the above will be available when transport costs are advised.

Day trips in the pipeline - a trip around Wembley where you will see the Wembley Stadium

Keep safe and looking forward to hearing from you,

**Enid xx**

PS: Sheffield 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 on 01462 851397 or e-mail [enid.pamment@gmail.com](mailto:enid.pamment@gmail.com).





## RESUMPTION OF ALL SERVICES

**October 2020**

### ALL SERVICES ARE NOW FULLY OPERATING

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W3 BIGGLESWADE – Campton – Gravenhurst – Shillington – Stondon –  
Meppershall – Clifton Park – Henlow

W3S BIGGLESWADE – Stotfold – Astwick

#### TUESDAYS

W12 HITCHIN – Meppershall – Shillington – Barton Le Clay

W12S HITCHIN – Campton – Gravenhurst – Barton Le Clay

#### WEDNESDAYS

W1 BEDFORD – Stotfold – Henlow – Langford – Broom – Southill – Stanford

W2 BEDFORD – Clifton Park – Meppershall – Stondon – Shillington –  
Gravenhurst

#### THURSDAYS

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the Month : WELWYN GARDEN CITY

W4 Shefford – Clifton – Southill – Broom – Langford – Henlow – Stotfold

W14 Gravenhurst – Shillington – Stondon – Meppershall – Shefford

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the Month: ST NEOTS

W9 Shefford – Clifton – Henlow – Langford – Broom – Southill – Caldecote

W10 Stondon – Clifton Park – Stotfold – Astwick

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the Month : MILTON KEYNES

W11 Meppershall – Stondon – Shillington – Gravenhurst – Clophill

W13 Stanford – Southill – Broom – Langford – Henlow – Clifton – Shefford

#### FRIDAYS

W6 Shefford – Campton – Gravenhurst – Meppershall – Southill-Broom

W7 Letchworth – Shefford – Clifton – Henlow – Arlesey

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of the Month – A1 RETAIL PARK

W5 Meppershall – Shefford – Clifton Park – Clifton – Henlow – Langford

*For any further clarification : Call 0300-123-3023 or email*

[thewanderbus@gmail.com](mailto:thewanderbus@gmail.com)

## Financial Matters by Paul Savuto

### **Titanic disaster led to historic life insurance payouts**

When the 'unsinkable' Titanic hit an iceberg and sank in 1912, life and accident insurance companies lost \$3,464,111, according to a contemporary article published in The Shore Press. The accident led to some of the largest insurance payouts ever, with the beneficiaries of business magnate John B. Thayer receiving a total accident insurance payout of \$120,000 (equivalent to around \$3.2m today) from insurance firm Travelers and his widow on the receiving end of a \$50,000 life insurance payout (around \$1.3m today). According to another article from 1912, Herbert F. Chaffee of North Dakota held the largest life insurance policy of all those who perished, with his beneficiaries receiving a staggering \$146,750 (around \$3.9m today)!

**No less relevant today** - The Titanic may have been considered as a once-in-a-lifetime disaster, but recent events show us that life insurance is every bit as important in 2020 as it was in 1912. The coronavirus pandemic has led to the tragic loss of over 40,000 lives in the UK alone, with many grieving families left financially devastated.

**Peace of mind** - Don't leave your family's future to chance. Life insurance is often cheaper than many think and ensures your dependants will be financially secure if the worst should happen

### **Age 20 or 50+? Maintain your retirement focus**

Research\* has revealed that almost a fifth of people aged 50 or over believe their retirement will be affected by the pandemic. Of these, a quarter say they have not been able to retire due to their finances, a fifth have had to use some of their retirement savings whilst out of work and a tenth have retired sooner than expected due to redundancy.

**Playing catch up** - Separate data\*\* shows employees in certain industries, who were already struggling to save into a pension, could be particularly hard-hit and face a lifetime of 'playing catch up' with their retirement savings. More than a quarter of those working in travel and the arts have not yet started saving into a pension, while two-thirds of retail workers are concerned they would soon run out of money if they did retire.

**The impact of auto enrolment** - It's not all doom and gloom, however. Thanks to auto enrolment, more than 10 million people have saved into a workplace pension, and those putting away the minimum has reached a record high. However, there are signs the positive impact of auto enrolment is starting to wane, with almost half of

22 to 29-year-olds still not doing enough to prepare for later life and many potentially facing retirement poverty.

**It's all about you** - It's never too early or too late to get your retirement plan on track, whatever stage you're at and whatever sector of the economy you work in. If you're younger, don't allow any dips in income to impact your pension contributions if at all possible. Small, frequent contributions throughout your life add up and make a difference to the quality of your retirement. If you're older, you may be considering postponing retirement or if you lose your job, you might choose to retire earlier than you had originally intended. If you still have a job but your savings have been impacted, delaying retirement to give yourself more time to prepare may be an option.

**Don't rush into making life-changing financial decisions.** Of course, it all depends on your individual circumstances. The key takeaway is that for many people, decisions about their retirement, now more than ever, have been driven by the financial impact of the pandemic, rather than personal choice. We want you to be able to call the shots, to be in control of your retirement and to have options. Whatever your circumstances, we're here for all your financial planning needs.

\*Co-op,2020, \*\*Scottish Widows, 2020

### **Private pension age rise confirmed**

In September, the government confirmed the private pension age will increase from 55 to 57 in 2028, meaning those retiring in future will have to wait longer to access their pension.

### **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. 07834 499 595 or email [ps@dgsifa.com](mailto:ps@dgsifa.com), I'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have. FCA 225814.



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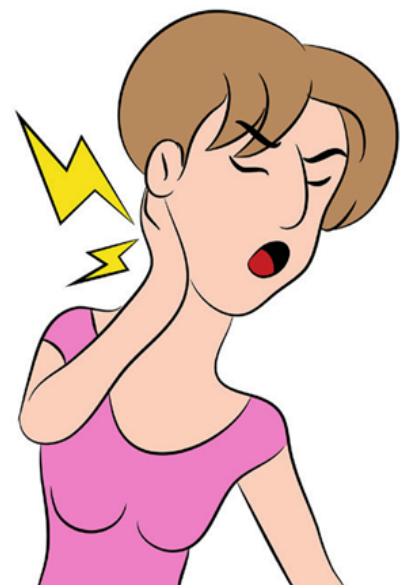
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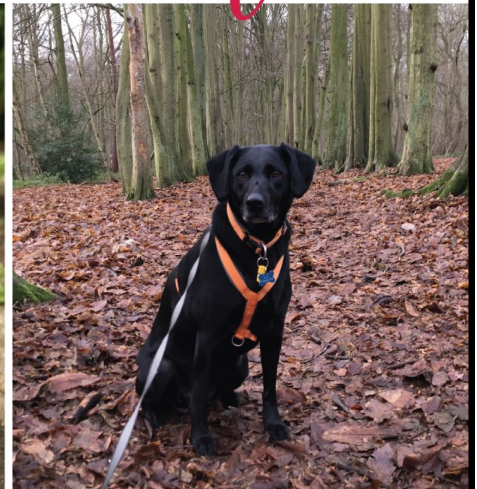
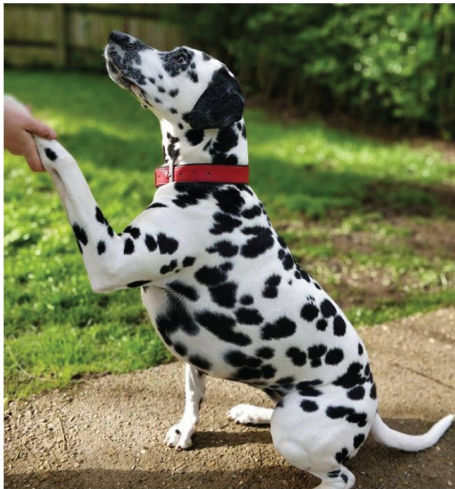
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## Shefford Osteopath Clinic

As I write this article, parts of the country are going back into lockdown. We are surrounded by fear and uncertainty. This is unsettling and anxiety producing, so not good for our health.

So what can we do during these times to remain healthy?

These tips can be applied generally, and are especially important in relation to COVID:

- Have good levels of Vitamins C and D and the mineral Zinc in your daily diet.
- Be a good, healthy weight.
- Be physically active, with good muscle tone and function.
- Reduce the number of illnesses/conditions you have.
- Improve the health of your immune system.

I would add:

- Watch your lifestyle, such as food, exercise, media intake.
- Take care of your mental and emotional health, connecting with people socially and safely.
- Reconnect with nature and get outside each day.
- Get a good amount of sleep each day - at least 7 hours.
- Limit your time on technology.
- Discover what you love doing, and do more of it!
- Educate yourself and question what you are being told.

During these times it is especially important to take care of yourself. Please make sure you get any aches and pains treated, minimizing their impact on your physical and mental health. We are pre-screening and triaging patients enabling everyone, including those who have been shielding, to have hands on, face to face treatment in a safe environment.

For more information, please visit our website [www.SheffordOsteo.com](http://www.SheffordOsteo.com).

**Karen Robinson**

## **Birthday Greetings**

The whole Meppershall Messenger team sends birthday wishes to:

Jennifer

Mary

Jean

Stephen

Ann

Anne

## **In Memoriam**

It saddens us to announce the death of Dave Hankins, aged 67, who passed away unexpectedly last month. His wife Kathy and children Peter & Amy would like to thank the village for their kind messages and continuing support during this difficult time. A memory giving page in support of the East Anglian Air Ambulance has been set up in Dave's memory and will remain open until 26/11/20 if people would like to donate:

<http://www.memorygiving.com/davidhankins>

Everyone on The Meppershall Messenger team would like to add our condolences and send thoughts and best wishes to Kathy, Peter, Amy and the whole family.

## **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](http://www.bedfordmes.co.uk).



## Useful Contact Details in Meppershall

### DEFIBRILLATORS – outside School and Post Office/Village Stores

### DOCTORS, DENTISTS, PHARMACIES

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Drs. Collins, Garragher and Neal	
109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ	01462 850305
Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford	01462 814020
Shams Moopen Dental 99 Hitchin Road, SG17 5JB	01462 648465
Lloyds Chemists, 7 High St Shefford	01462 813283
Shefford Pharmacy	
Shefford Health Centre, Robert Lucas Drive	01462 818633

### Police Emergency 999, non-emergency 101

Report crime online at [www.bedfordshire.police.uk/report](http://www.bedfordshire.police.uk/report)

### Hospitals

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Lister Hospital, Stevenage	01438 314333

### Utilities

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Anglian Water	03457 145145
Electrical (power cuts, overhead cable down etc)	0800 838838

### Central Beds Council 0300 300 8301

CBC councillors:

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Mark Liddiard	<a href="mailto:mark.liddiard@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">mark.liddiard@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a>

**Meppershall Parish Council**

Parish Council Clerk Alessandre Marabese [clerk@meppershall.org](mailto:clerk@meppershall.org)

**Member of Parliament**

Nadine Dorries MP [dorriesn@parliament.uk](mailto: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)

**Library**

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**Organisations**

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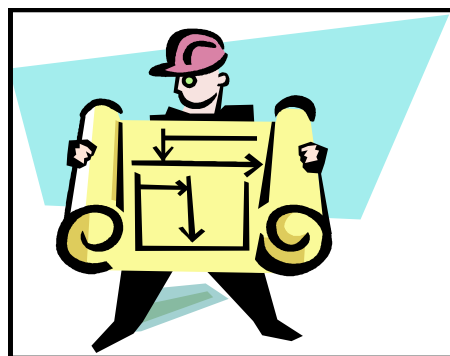
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## The Team and Collation Dates

### 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 12<sup>th</sup> of the month for publication at the end of that month. Contributions received after the deadline may be held over.

### DISCLAIMER

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

### THE TEAM

Joint Editors	James Read & Mick Ridley	Email: mepp.messenger@gmail.com	
Assistant Editor	<b>Vacancy</b>		
Advertising	Andrew Pain	26 Fildyke Road andrewgpain@hotmail.com	07875 580069
Distribution	Colette House	90 Fildyke Road Email: colettehouse@gmail.com	07831 111062 / 815585
Production	Enid Pamment	112 High Street Email: enid.pamment@gmail.com	851397
Co-ordination			
Treasurer	John Thompson	16 Brookmead Email: meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org	812983

Collating Dates 2020-21			
Dec-Jan Issue	Nov 30th	April Issue	March 29th
February Issue	Jan 25th	May Issue	April 26th
March Issue	March 1st	June Issue	June 1 <sup>st</sup> (Tues)
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.***