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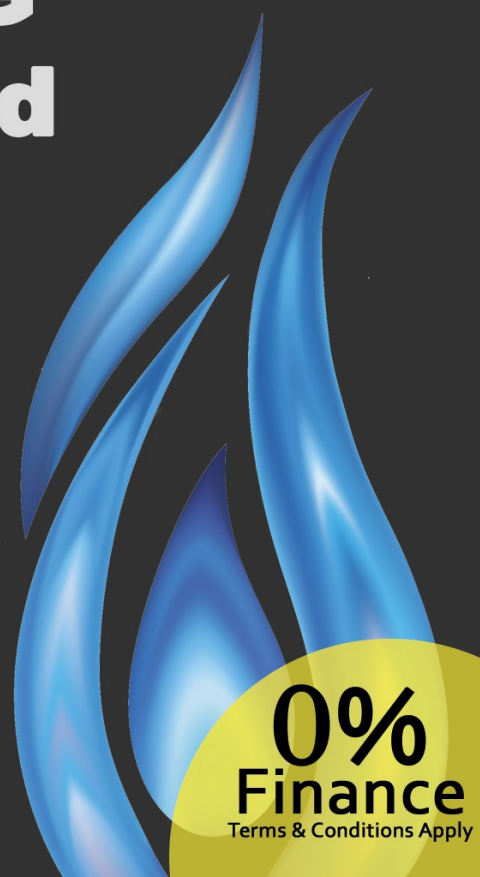
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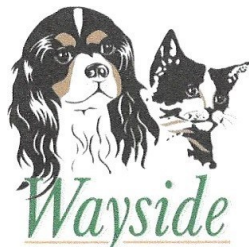
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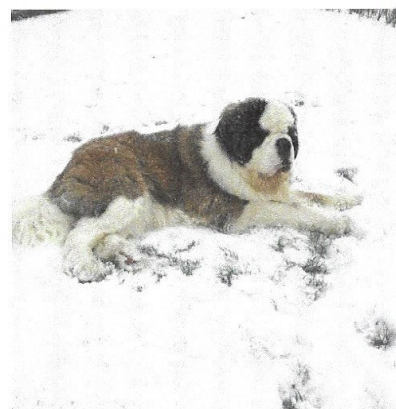


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Editorial by Mick Ridley and James Read

As spring turns to summer, we're whole-heartedly behind the call from the council to "keep it local" – see page 8. Councillor Richard Wenham reminds us in that article of the support and dedication that many local business have shown during lockdown. Some have



had to be very patient as lockdown measures deprived them of customers and forced prolonged closures. We benefit from having big brand shops and restaurants in nearby towns, but a pound spent nearer to home may be one of the most important things you can do in the coming months.

It makes a lot of sense on so many levels. Looking to regain some fitness? Sitting in the car won't do it for you. Take to your heels, or pedals, instead. Want to do your bit for the climate? Don't turn your engine on. Don't buy goods and services that have travelled around the globe to reach you. Buy as locally as possible. Looking to do your bit to put back some community spirit, after a year of having to avoid each other and cancel village events? Find your friends and neighbours right on your doorstep, have a chat with the people you live alongside here in the Mid Bedfordshire landscape.

You'll find a wonderful antique picture of The Sugar Loaf in Jean Holden's memoirs later in this issue. The Sugar Loaf is very much back in action – now very much a food pub (a "gastropub" as they are known these days!).

The Walnut Tree Café is due to reopen on Tuesday 18th May. We've all missed those friendly community lunches, good soup, nice teas and coffees and very good cake. Using our new Village Hall in this way is really enjoyable – when will you visit?

And what can we say about Roger's Bakery? On some of the greyest, coldest lockdown days, the bakery team were serving up warm, village-baked loaves and other essentials. With a range of baked goods, no table in Meppershall is complete without a freshly baked sandwich loaf from Roger's this spring.

There are other options besides. You can get an authentic Turkish meal to take away down at The Airman Kitchen. Or slightly further afield, The Railway Steamer on Clifton Road in Shefford might be worth a try – or the outdoor café of Clophill Heritage Trust at the serene ruined church of St Mary's on the hill above Clophill. So much to try – why not drop us a message with your local favourites? Keep it local.

Finally, the Messenger owes particular thanks to the Village Shop which has kindly hosted the small set of printed copies of this much-loved village magazine, each month. Those with limited internet access have been able to take a free copy – while getting their essential supplies. Next time you're tempted to hop in the car, stop for a minute, think about it, and "keep it local". Check out the ads in this issue for details of many more local businesses that need your support, now more than ever.

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

Meppershall Church of England Academy is delighted to announce that they have entered into the newly formed Poppy Hill Church of England Multi-Academy Trust with Henlow Church of England Academy.

This relationship will afford Meppershall pupils a wealth of opportunities and facilities as the school moves forward in this exciting new phase.

Meppershall Church of England Academy welcomes applications for reception September 2021 and in year applications for all other year groups.

To arrange a visit contact the school office on 01462 813293 or email our new Head of School, Margaret Newman at mnewman@meppershallacad.org

Margaret Newman

Head of School

Meppershall Church of England Academy

Neighbourhood Safety – Can you Help?

Meppershall Speedwatch team need volunteers to assist in running Speedwatch sessions within our village.

Speedwatch is designed to increase awareness of the necessity to obey speed limits within our village for the safety of pedestrians and other road users.



Using calibrated equipment supplied by Bedfordshire Police, the Speedwatch team record motorists exceeding the speed limit. The record is then processed by Bedfordshire Police with a letter sent to the vehicle owner emphasising the safety aspects of obeying speed limits. Should the vehicle user be reported 3 times then it is possible that Bedfordshire Police will take further action.

Sessions are usually run weekday mornings or afternoons and last for no more than 1.5 hours, so if you have spare time and would like to help keep our village safe please contact us. Very little training/instruction is required and sessions can be arranged to suit members' commitments.

If you are willing to help please send an SMS to : 07831 111062 or 07936 181683 with your name, number and the word 'Speedwatch' and we will get back to you to discuss your involvement.

Please note all communication/data will be kept anonymously

Parish Council – The Great British Spring Clean!

The Million Mile Mission 28th May – 13th June 2021 Let's bin the litter together!

Over the last year outdoor spaces and places have mattered to us more than ever, so this spring Meppershall Parish Council are joining the charity Keep Britain Tidy and their Great British Spring Clean campaign.

We have worked with Keep Britain Tidy on this initiative for a number of years and are delighted to be part of a campaign that in 2019 saw just under a million bags of litter collected.

From **28th May - 13th June 2021**, we are encouraging all residents to pledge to support this very special campaign and their million mile litter picking mission.

Taking part is not only good for the environment, but for our mental and physical health too. Last year, 79% of people who took the Great British Spring Clean reported improved mood, and 51% said it encouraged them to move more.

Whether you pledge to take part alone, with your families or bubbles, it's a great excuse to get outside. All you need is a litter picker, some gloves and a bag to collect your litter in.

To help Keep Britain Tidy reach a million mile mission, please pledge as many of as few hours as you can. Ready to get started? Here's how:

1. Visit keepbritaintidy.org to [pledge to support](#). On the pledge form, you will find all the advice and information you need to get started.
2. Please share your images/stories with lovemeppershall@meppershall.org.
3. Help inspire others to take part by making some noise about the campaign on social media. Share your good news stories, videos and pictures using the hashtags #GBSpringClean #MillionMileMission @keepbritaintidy

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the challenges we have faced this year, but small acts of kindness – to our planet and ourselves – can help us improve our surroundings and our mood.



Thank you

Let's play litter bingo!

As part of the Great British Spring Clean, we're asking you to collect and safely dispose of as much litter as possible. If you're taking part as a family, find out how well you score on our Litter Bingo and see who can collect the most items!

 <p>CRISP PACKETS</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>	 <p>PPE (facemask)</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>	 <p>PPE (gloves)</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>
 <p>PLASTIC BOTTLES</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>	 <p>CIGARETTE BUTTS</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>	 <p>CARRIER BAGS</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>
 <p>ALUMINIUM CANS</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>	 <p>FAST FOOD LITTER</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>	 <p>SWEET/CHOCOLATE WRAPPERS</p> <p>How many did you find?</p>

I COLLECTED

PIECES OF LITTER



NAME:

#GBSpringClean

Keep Britain Tidy is a registered Charity No. 1071737

What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccination



The Covid-19 vaccination programme is the largest in the history of the NHS. The vaccine is being offered to more and more people in our area every week.

Vaccines can reduce or even eliminate some diseases, if enough people are vaccinated.

Since vaccines were introduced, diseases like smallpox and polio that used to kill or disable millions of people are gone from the UK.

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines teach your immune system how to protect you from diseases. It's much safer for your immune system to learn this through vaccination than by catching the diseases and attempting to fight them.

Can I catch Covid-19 from the vaccine?

No. You cannot catch Covid-19 from taking the vaccine but having the vaccine could stop you from becoming seriously ill if you catch the infection.

Should I be concerned about the speed the vaccine was made available?

The speed in which the vaccines have been developed does not mean that they are unsafe. The technology used to develop the vaccine is not new. It's been tried and tested for decades. It is with this technology and massive global investment to develop a Covid-19 vaccine that has allowed it to be available so quickly.

Any coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through lots of clinical trials and safety checks, like all other licensed medicines, before it is approved. The Covid-19 vaccines used in the UK have been declared as effective by the UK's independent Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulator (MHRA) after extensive trials.

When will I be able to get vaccinated?

The NHS will announce when different age groups can book their vaccination, you can check who is eligible at any time and book your appointment online at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. You can also book appointments by calling 119.

You may also receive an invitation to book your vaccination from your GP and you can book an appointment directly with them.

You can read more about the vaccination and common misconceptions at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/vaccinations

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Library update:

Shefford Library

Following the latest Government Guidance, we are busily working towards the re-opening of all our Libraries across Central Bedfordshire.

The safety of all our customers and staff is extremely important to us and we have a number of measures to put into place to allow for the safe re-opening of our libraries.

Whilst we do not have an agreed date for re-opening, we will endeavour to provide regular updates via our Social Media Channels, Website, and through local publicity at our libraries.

We thank you for your valuable support and look forward to welcoming you all back very soon.

Please visit our website for more information on our Select and Collect service, alternatively please call us on 0300 300 8057.



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As we continue the current national lockdown measures and restrictions **GNOMES** would like to remind everyone that we are still around and willing to help where we can.

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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.

“Shop local” urges council leader

As the high streets and towns across Central Bedfordshire start to reopen, the Council Leader is calling on residents to “shop local”. Councillor Richard Wenham, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council, said: “The lockdown has had a massive impact on the local economy. We now need to help local businesses to get back on their feet.

“During the lockdown many of us turned to local providers who stepped into the breach to prevent shortages and to provide home deliveries. Many of them quickly adapted to providing an online or take-away service. This has given us a new insight into local businesses and how they can innovate to support us.

“I think the lockdown has helped us to not take local business for granted. They have had to work against the odds to support and keep our community safe. Now, we need to show them that we will nurture them as they try to rebuild.

“I want to encourage everyone, wherever possible, to spend their hard-earned money with local businesses, whether that’s for food, items for the home or a much-needed and missed service such as having your hair cut. Without that support our independent local businesses may not come through this and that would be a bad thing for all of us, for our local economy and our jobs.”

On safety, he added: “Whether you are visiting a local beautician or shopping, there is absolutely no room for complacency. Every one of us must continue to play our part by taking personal responsibility to follow the new golden rules: Hands. Face. Space. Fresh Air, keeping up good habits such as washing your hands regularly, wearing a face covering and giving others space are even more important as we move into this next phase. The next few weeks will be critical in setting the direction of the ‘new normal’ and we can all play our part. It will be tough, but with vaccines offering a light at the end of the tunnel, we all need to continue doing the right thing for a while longer. We owe it to ourselves and to the NHS to keep going. Whatever your plans for enjoying the easing of lockdown, please shop local and stay safe.”

The Village of Glass by Jean Holden

I moved in to Meppershall during 1964 and thought it a most welcoming village.

I soon learnt that it was known as the village of glass. On exploring I found that for a small community, somewhere around 600 people, it had everything that one needed. A village dairy, owned by the Jepps family delivered milk every day. The bakery, owned by the Roberts family, a long-established concern, also delivered round the village. This was later sold, becoming today’s wonderful “Rogers Bakery”. Wonderful local vegetables grown by another family, G&A Harris, in their glass houses, came round twice a week.

On a walk about the village I found some 10 small holdings providing a living for local families, growing salad produce and flowers all of which went to various markets around Meppershall and some as far as London.

The High Street boasted two shops, one was at 36 High St., the Olde Shoppe, which when I arrived was still in operation and run by Mrs. Mabel Peck. It is now a private residence and has been since 1974. The second was the one we all know today, although it was much smaller and had no Post Office in the early days. This was owned by Annie Harris, but has had many owners since.

Later the Post Office was operated from 51 High St., a private residence. Mrs. Amy Millard ran it from her front room.

I must not forget our local garage and fuel pumps run by Mr. Overton, a very handy facility for necessary vehicle servicing and repairs.

Lastly we had three public houses. The Barley Mow where you were served straight from the cellar. This stood on the corner of Hoo Road and was a favourite of the locals who used to play dominos, cards and darts there after their hard day's work.

The Sugar Loaf which was just a small cottage fronted building with one bar but two rooms – pictured below. It was opened as a beer house in 1870. The first licensee according to records from 1876 was Moses Cakebread. The pub was refurbished and extended in 1991.



Then there was the Five Bells on the corner of Taylors Close, lived in and run by the Taylor family in which their large family all grew up. The premises became derelict and was demolished in the mid- 70s, hence the arrival of Taylors Close in 1974 built on the lovely wild pub garden. Also a beautiful old house called Moonrakers went at the same time. This house was originally called Coneygate which you will hear of later.

On arriving in Meppershall in 1964 my husband Eddie and I soon settled in to village life in our bungalow on the High Street, one of eight built in 1962 on the meadow known as The Acres. This meadow had always been used for village events.

One of the first friends I met was Elsie Lawrence who you now know came as a newly wed in 1958 to live in Fildyke Road with her new husband and also her father in law. Both pregnant at the same time we both had baby boys. That was 56 years ago!!

The Acres still had a small holding behind the bungalows which was still producing crops. On entering the Common Market most of the small holdings had to close and our lovely village started to change as sites were sold off for housing estates, so sad.

Originally The Acres small holding was opened in 1938 by Mr. William Taylor and at the same time his brother Charles Taylor had a coach company based at The Crown in Shillington, of which he was the licensee. They decided to bring the coach company, Reliant Coaches, up to The Acres and share the land. Both brothers were in business until 2000 when the land was sold, the land cleared and along came Coneygate Estate, 76 houses completed around 2004.

Before all this happened and still in the High Street we had Mr. Maurice Simons a local builder and Undertaker ...Yes, we really did have everything – from cradle to grave. His yard was opposite Fowlers Farm cow sheds, where cows were milked every morning. Now the sheds have gone and there are five houses standing in Fowlers Drive, built in 1973 by Meppershall builder, John Clayton.

Looking down into Fowlers Drive, one can see the beautiful farmhouse 'Fowlers Farm' listed by English Heritage as a late 16th century timber framed building, some of the timbers still visible. It has red brick walls and a clay tiled roof. It was listed as of special interest in 1985, grade 2.

Our well known and very popular farmer Mr. Michael Foster who farmed the nearby Polehanger Farm lived here with his wife Kathleen, from his retirement in 1982 until he passed away in 2009. They had exchanged homes with his eldest son, Chris who until recently ran Polehanger Farms Ltd with his wife. The farm is now run by one of Chris's sons, Andrew.

I was once told that during the 1960s, before I came to Meppershall, Michael Foster kindly gave land to the village for a village hall. Many of the locals then gave their time and trades and worked to raise funds to build one. Jumble sales, cake stalls, bring-and-buy stalls followed - anything to raise the cash to build it.

I remember seeing a painted thermometer registering the amount raised so far on the front of the slowly rising building. What a lovely community spirit, I felt very pleased to have become part of it.

Coming from London as a teenager into Stevenage New Town during 1951 was a great experience. Seeing the town grow and then after 13 years arriving in this small village of Meppershall was a tremendous change. Today, I could not wish to be anywhere else.

This has always been a very friendly and outgoing village. I do hope it stays that way although it is constantly changing with all the new building estates.

I would like to say a warm welcome to all the new families and hope that they join in and enter into the community spirit.



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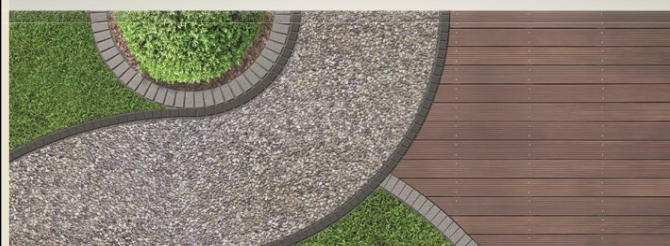
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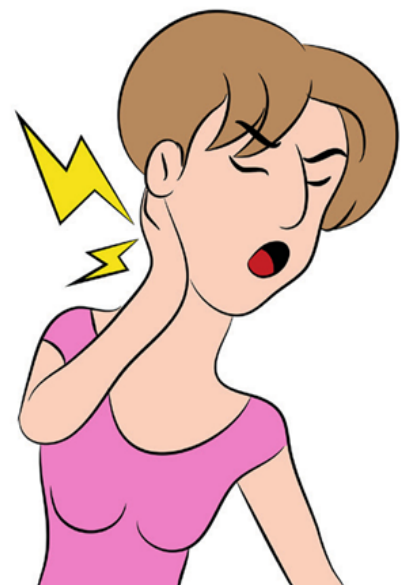
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Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

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

In May, this year, the church holds its Annual meeting (Annual Parochial Church Meeting, APCM) when we look back over the previous year, and it's when I write to give my thanks for so much to so many!

This has been a very challenging year for the Church, for me personally, the Churchwardens and the PCC (Parochial Church Council)... because of COVID we have had to learn about being versatile and adaptable!

17th March 2020 - with the first Lockdown fast approaching, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York closed Churches for public worship.

On 23rd March the Prime Minister announced that Churches were to close completely with immediate effect.

On Tuesday 24th March, the Archbishops wrote to all clergy stating:

"Our church buildings must now be closed not only for public worship, but for private prayer as well, and this includes the priest or lay person offering prayer in church on their own."

So on Saturday 21st March we began our "Lockdown" pattern of Online Services:

9am Morning Prayer using 24-7's Lectio 365 App

9pm Night Prayer/Compline from the C. of E. Daily Prayer App

And **10.30 am Online Morning Worship on a Sunday** - (Service Sheets for this service are delivered to those in the parish without computer access)

Listen-In Worship: The Sermon and The Hymn of the Day - is made available on a local phone number - and this podcast is uploaded on 9 platforms including Spotify and Apple. Records of attendance at these services (the number of people participating) has been kept separately.

A weekly **Hymn of the Day** - Audio has been sung and a video prepared for us by James and Miriam Read - (with the occasional help of others).

When allowed, the Church began opening for **Private Prayer** one day per week on Wednesday 17th June. On 2nd August 2020 St Mary's opened again additionally on alternate Sundays for **9am Holy Communion** - in an interim service pattern.

A Zoom Cafe has been held weekly in Meppershall after the online Sunday Service.

Rectory Teas have continued to make fortnightly contact with its regulars plus a few others - and through the kind and thoughtful ministry of Ruth and Keith Callard gifts ranging from puzzle books and newsletters to Chicken Stew and Apple Crumble have been delivered to the group! **Rectory Teas** held some Walnut Cafe meetings in the Autumn when that was allowed.

Prayer Ministry has remained available in the church via a confidential **Prayer Chain**.

We have continued to hold funerals at the graveside, at the crematorium and in church when allowed - and even managed to fit one wedding into last summer!

We have also continued to provide Morning Worship/ assemblies in our school using Zoom and Google Teams. Sadly we were unable to hold our Sparks Holiday Club last year... but the Living Advent Calendar still lit up our windows at Christmas, Santa still toured the Village, and Carols by Candle light in Church was replaced by "Meppershall Sings Carols" on Facebook and YouTube - my thanks to all those brave villagers who led our singing!

Additionally our church bells tolled for the funeral of Captain Tom and also more recently, at the announcement of the death, and for the funeral, of HRH The Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.

We currently continue to hold services in Church and on line - and to try to respond quickly and imaginatively to the ever changing demands of this time.

My thanks to all who have offered their many and various gifts and talents to continue to keep Church alive and well - especially to the cleaners without whom we could not have managed - and I am conscious that there are many who have not been able to fulfil their usual roles in these extraordinary circumstances.

We have also successfully undertaken emergency repairs to the Church building and the Church wall. However, a current priority is the huge challenge of remaining building repairs to the sum of around £450,000.

Our overall aim continues to be that we should be people growing deeper into God together - known as followers of Jesus, spreading the Good News, "with a heart for the community, at the heart of the community, making a difference in the community". My thanks to all who share this vision and work hard to make it a reality.



Reverend Roni

Church News and Events in April

We have returned to a limited number of face to face services - check the website/facebook or give us a call. As always, we would LOVE to see you.

We carefully observe COVID-safe practices. Please contact Reverend Roni (well in advance) if you intend to be at one of our Communion services so we can plan seating. Always remember to wear your mask and – if you have one - bring your red service book (or get one at the service as needed).

Alternate Wednesdays 10.30am Holy Communion in church

Alternate Sundays 9.00am Holy Communion in church

The service is provided at St Michael's Shefford and St Mary's Meppershall alternately, week-by-week

Wednesdays and Sundays Church available for private prayer during the day

Online services: **9.00am Morning Prayer** using 24-7's Lectio 365 App
7-days-a-week

9.00pm Night Prayer/Compline from the C. of E. Daily Prayer App 7-days-a-week

10.30 am Online Morning Worship (Sunday)

Service Sheets for this service can be delivered to those in the parish without computer access or obtained by email from Rector Roni (email address above)



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 (telephone 339962 / 07533 376880) or Chris Valentine (telephone 07701 039324).

Try an online service - you can just watch and listen (we won't even know you're there!)- although lots of people add comments and it is getting quite interactive these days too! Bring your own tea, coffee, morning (or bedtime!) snack!

Find us on Facebook

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Counselling at Sandy Helping Hands is provided by a group of counsellors who are either fully qualified or in the later stages of their professional qualification and are carrying out their placement at Sandy Helping Hands.

All counsellors are members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and work to BACP professional and ethical standards, are DBS checked, have full liability insurance and receive regular clinical supervision.

There is a small charge for counselling in the form of a donation, which goes towards the running costs of the centre.

However, it is a priority for us that no one is prevented from receiving counselling because of a lack of means and the fee for counselling is negotiated in each case based on what is affordable for the client.

Please be aware that Sandy Helping Hands is adhering to Government Guidelines and we have a Covid 19 Risk Assessment and other procedures in place.

If you know someone who may benefit from our services in these unusual times, please do not hesitate to pass on our details.

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The Meppershall Players



Well at the time of writing this nothing has changed re. The Players being able to meet up again (fingers crossed for June) So I thought I'd pick up from where I left off last year in the August/September Issue of the Messenger and the history of the Players, Now where were we..... Ah yes I remember, Autumn 1983 and the Players had gathered in the Meppershall School Hall (the Village Hall having been booked out for that night) to discuss the possibility of putting on a 3 Act play in the spring of 1984. I arrived with my brother Paul, I remember feeling excited and equally nervous at meeting those I had seen on the stage (them being seasoned troupers and me a newcomer) I remember Mr Trundle coming in and remarked to Paul, "Mr Trundles here" to which Paul replied "Call him Mick". "But I've always called him Mr Trundle" I said (back in the day as a child I was always told to call my elders by their surname) To which Paul replied "Well you're a grown up now so call him Mick" so as Mr Trundle approached I said "Hello Mick" to which he replied "Hello young Karen" (I'm smiling as I write this as Mick always called me "young Karen" very much tongue in cheek after I turned 40) I soon got to meet everyone and my nervousness evaporated but the excitement of joining the Players remained.

We were a man or two short of what the Play's cast required, but the general consensus of the seasoned troupers was that men could be found and the roles filled, so it was agreed that we would meet up again in January 1984 at the village hall to read through and cast the three act play The late Christopher Bean. Would I get a part in this play and be a member of the cast or would I be a crew member helping backstage or front of house? Would we get the men to fill the roles? I would have to wait till after Christmas to find out. And who would have guessed what a momentous year 1984 would be for the Meppershall Players. Find out what happened in next month's issue of the Messenger

Jack & the Beanstalk - a Pantomime performing Saturday 4th & 11th December 2021. Matinee 3pm, Evening 7.30pm. Tickets £5 Matinees, £8 & £10 Evenings. All performances at the S.T.M.A Shefford. Look out for our posters!

Find the Meppershall Players on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) Instagram, 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. The Players will be closed until Monday 11th January 2021. Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

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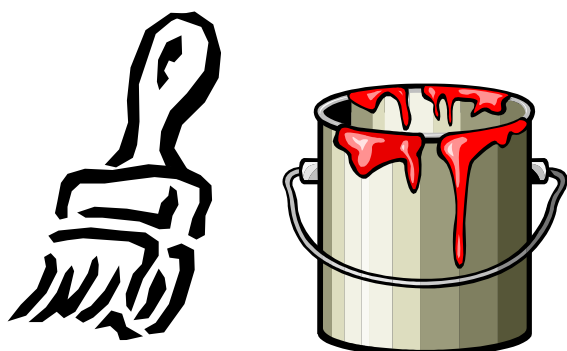
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Birthday Greetings

The whole Messenger team sends birthday best wishes and greetings for the coming month to...

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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.

Trugs & Trowels

Trugs & Trowels are not meeting due to covid at the moment but the web page is updated weekly with tips and ideas for your garden, have a look. Gardening club members are invited to an event on the 3rd July taking place on Campton recreation ground, Picnic in the Park from 4pm. To be entertained by a Acoustic guitarist and a 6 piece band.

If interested please call Maryika on 01462 851729.

Happy Gardening 

May Day – a quick history

Although Meppershall has not had May Day celebrations in recent years, villages up and down the country still celebrate this festival of the beginning of summer. It is believed to be originally linked to the ancient Celtic and Pagan festival of Beltane. Marked with bonfires, traditional dancing, singing and folk plays – and a range of customs that have become unique to particular places in the UK – May Day festivities did not always enjoy the support of Kings and Queens. In fact they were banned completely during the English Civil War and the rule of Cromwell. King Charles II reinstated national support for May Day revelry and installed a 40 metre high Maypole on The Strand which stood for 50 years. Today, nearby Ickwell has one of England's finest Maypoles and Ickwell May Day is well worth a visit – postponed for 2021 but returning on 2nd May 2022.

Sheffield Leisure Group by Enid Pamment

Hopefully by the time the May 2021 edition of the Meppershall Messenger lands on your doormat life should be more or less back to normal! and a little of what we remember! Adjustments are needed but let us hope they will prove for the better! During the lockdown I was able to make several different adjustments in my life thus making my daily routine quite a bit easier.



Some of our suppliers have been in touch and we have put finishing touches to a few of the excursions where interest has been shown. Regarding costs, it is difficult to be precise as it depends on the size coach and number of passengers allowed, However, this is changing and the rules may be entirely different by the time the events take place. If you would like to join our party on any of the following outings, just give me a call on the telephone and I will write your names down. Please do not send any money at this stage, I will phone you when full payment is required. This way it will save paperwork and postage!!.

I now have further details for our proposed trip to **Lavenham, Tuesday 6th July 2021** Day trip to Lavenham with Blue Badge Guides. We plan to leave Sheffield at 9.15, and meet the Guides at 11.45am. This trip includes a two course lunch at midday and stop for tea or coffee afterwards before making our way home at 3.45pm. (lunch choices: Fresh Haddock & chips & mushy peas, Beef burger with fries, Butternut squash risotto. Feta, pine nuts or beef & ale pie with cream potatoes) . *(Please note: lunch orders required two weeks before the date of the tour including payment) The full cost of coach. tour and lunch is £40.00.*

Wednesday 28th July – Day trip to The Tower of London leaving Sheffield at 10am to meet our Blue Badge Guide at 11.45am. There will be time to buy a snack lunch before joining our Guide once more for the tour which commences at 1.30pm. After the tour at about 4.45pm we will leave the Tower and join our coach taking us to the restaurant for a fish & chip supper (included in the price), We anticipate leaving London at about 6.30pm to arrive back to Sheffield by 8.30pm. The inclusive price is £60.00.

Monday 11th October to Friday 15th October 2021 Warner's (Gunton Hall) – 5 days & 4 nights. The inclusive price is £289.00. Further details upon request.

Sunday 14th November 2021 – The ever popular Thursford Christmas Spectacular, Leaving Sheffield at 9am and arriving back between 8.30 and 9pm. Cost with coach £63.50.

Thank you to those who have requested newsletters to be sent on a quarterly basis. These do incur a small charge of £12.00 a year which covers postage. This subscription will carry you through until March 2022. Many thanks for your messages of appreciation.

Keep well and keep safe, Enid x

Diary of an Allotment by Zoe Cox

Having said last month that my children did not share my love of gardening, my son has now started to do a paid garden weeding job for a neighbour! This has also meant that he now refuses to do anything for me on the allotment without being paid as he is now “a professional”.

The allotment plots are looking spring fresh like a washing line of white bedding. There is lots of digging and clearing going on. It is a great time of the year because every possibility can be turned into a reality as all it will take is the summer which stretches ahead of us. There seems to be a special quality to the summer this year after the year we had and I intend to savour as many moments as I can as I am so grateful to have got through Covid with all my loved one here when so many have not. I intend to appreciate the warmth of the sun while I sit in my garden, the bees buzzing around, the laughter of children in the school playground, the views as I go for walks, the sweet scent of flowers as they bloom and watch my family and friends share drinks and BBQs. I feel this is fitting way to move back to normality.

It has been a challenging month for the allotment. The very wet soggy weather has been followed by a dry spell which has created conditions which makes digging very difficult. In fact, a friend on a neighbouring plot showed me how his fork had bent when he tried to dig because the ground was so hard. It is disconcerting when you strike a fork into Meppershall ground and it bounces and vibrates for some time like a cartoon animation.

The other challenge for this month has been the frosts which delayed propagation of plants. So the main talk is about how the greenhouses are already at full capacity and there is no room. I have finally learnt to delay the sowing of my seeds and I must admit I feel as smug as a person who has managed to do a 10 mile run by breakfast!

The easing of lockdown has given us an opportunity to do other things and like complete fools we went away for a week during the crucial spring period so it feels like we should offer up this year already to the gods of horticulture and all thing green because there is a strong chance we won't catch up. We have only managed to get the onions in and strim the grass around the beds.

The end of May is a significant red letter day for allotment holders as it is the time when anything can be planted out without the risk of frost coming down like the sleeping beauty fairy and casting the spell of doom on the plants. As trays and trays of plants get unloaded from the back of cars or wheelbarrows the correct etiquette is to admire the cultivator's skill and wish them luck.

There are so many tasks to get on with in May. Beans, peas and brassicas can be sown. Courgettes can be given the freedom to take over and sweetcorn put into the rows like sentry guards. Early sown broad beans will be ready to pick. Not forgetting the highlight of the moment when the asparagus can be picked.

The social side of the allotment has been very much cemented over the last year. The new arrivals have created a community which is vibrant, supportive and fun. During the discussions it has been decided to hold an allotment social on the last Sunday of each month at 4pm so people can bring a flask of tea/a beer and share ideas or provide encouragement to each other. The first social will held on 30th May and the host plot will be sign posted from the gate. So come along if you have an allotment plot, used to have a plot and want to see what the new plot holder has done or if you are interested in getting a plot and would like to talk to current cultivators about their experience.

Businesses urged to apply for CBC Restart Grants

Businesses are able to access further grant funding following the launch of the Central Bedfordshire Council Restart Grant Scheme. The Restart Grant Scheme enables rate-paying businesses, trading on 1 April 2021, to apply for a one-off payments to help them reopen safely.

Grants of up to £6,000 will be paid to non-essential retail businesses and grants of up to £18,000 will be allocated to hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses. Only certain non-essential retail businesses are eligible for the grant. There are specific exclusions, including food retailers, garden centres, vehicle repair and MOT centres, laundrettes and dry cleaners. Businesses can view the full Government guidance including eligibility and exclusions on the Government website <https://bit.ly/3nkJpY2>.

Businesses can apply for the Restart Grant Scheme via our website <https://bit.ly/2R04ZEX> until 30 June 2021.

Financial Matters by Paul Savuto

Vaccines put a spring in investors' step

The arrival of spring is generally a time of great optimism and this year more than ever we are all certainly in need of a fresh bout of positivity. Thankfully for investors, there do seem to be increasingly hopeful signs on the horizon, with a growing belief we are now at least starting on the road to economic recovery.

Reasons to be cheerful

The successful development and rapid rollout of COVID-19 vaccines has provided hope that we will soon be able to live with the virus. As well as protecting vaccinated individuals, there are encouraging signs the immunisation programme will slow transmission in the community. This has raised hopes of a significant, vaccine-powered revival in economic activity later this year.

Global growth rebound

This vaccine-fuelled optimism is reflected in recent economic forecasts with the International Monetary Fund's latest projections suggesting the global economy is set to expand by 5.5% in 2021. This represents an upward revision of 0.3% compared to the organisation's previous forecast made last October. Vaccine-induced euphoria also saw equity funds enjoy a strong quarterly inflow during the final three months of last year.

Negative rates?

A further boost to equity investments could stem from negative interest rates. Although it remains unclear whether or not such a policy will be introduced, in early February the Bank of England gave banks and building societies six months to prepare for such a possibility. If enacted, sub-zero rates would reduce the incentive to save in cash deposits and thereby potentially increase demand for shares, placing even greater emphasis on investment portfolios.

Time for a spring clean

While the economic outlook remains uncertain there are positive signs for investors and this means ensuring your investment portfolio is working hard for you is more important than ever. It could therefore be the perfect opportunity to review your portfolio and rebalance the allocation of asset classes, if necessary, in order to ensure your investments are well-diversified and performing in line with your long-term requirements and objectives.

Planning to retire in 2021?

Whether you had always been planning to retire this year, or COVID-19 has forced your hand, it's never too late to get organised. We believe that retirement is something to be looked forward to after a lifetime of hard work – so don't let it be overshadowed by financial concerns. We can help you quantify your finances and get straight, ready for an enjoyable retirement. Even if you're not planning to retire this year, it's important to engage with your finances – don't just sweep them under the carpet and hope that things will work out.

Don't know where to begin? Here are some pointers to get started with;

- Get a State Pension forecast Visit www.gov.uk/check-state-pension to find out how much State Pension you'll be entitled to and when you can receive it
- Check what's in your pension pot... Calculating the value of your pension pot(s) is essential to start planning your finances in retirement
- ...including any 'lost' pension pots. You may have lost track of a pension over the years, perhaps as you moved between jobs and workplace pension schemes. We can help you track down lost pensions and potentially provide a welcome boost to your retirement income
- Quantify your savings, investments and debt. Calculating the value of your savings and investments, and quantifying any outstanding debt, will help provide a holistic understanding of your overall financial circumstances

- What will you need in retirement? We can help you calculate your income requirement in retirement, by thinking about the lifestyle you want, your living costs and other potential expenses
- Watch out for scams. Don't risk losing your lifetime savings to scammers. Pension fraud is on the rise – so make sure you know how to spot the signs
- Take advice In this period of uncertainty, financial advice has never been more important. We can help you make those big retirement decisions easier by guiding you through your available options, taking into account the tax implications and giving you the confidence that you're making the right choices for your future.

GET IN TOUCH

DGS are Independent and Chartered Financial Advisers. I am also a Chartered Financial Planner with over 28 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, I'll be happy to talk to you and answer any questions you have. FCA 225814.

Clophill Heritage Trust Update May 2021

April has been busy at The Eco Lodges with our refurbishment of the accommodation lodges nearly complete ready for our reopening on 10th May. Those of you that walk past regularly will have seen our Wardens moving furniture, sanding and painting, jet washing and more!

With Covid restrictions lifting we are now able to welcome volunteers back onto site. If you would like to get out of the house into some fresh air, we have plenty of different activities to take part in, such as helping with the cafés, gardening, events and tower tours!

There is no minimum number of hours a month and anyone is welcome. So, if you would just like to join us for an hour to do some outdoor gardening or if you are completing your Duke of Edinburgh award and looking for a regular volunteer opportunity – we would love to hear from you! Call one of the Wardens, Emily or Louise, on 07935 911207 or email info@ClophillEcoLodges.co.uk

We will be open as an outdoor & take away café from 11.30 – 2.30 on Sunday 30th & Monday 31st May, serving hot and cold drinks, homemade cakes and ice creams as well as local jams, chutneys, honey and other retail items. Cash and Card accepted and dogs on leads are welcome. We hope to have the tower of old St Mary's church open for tours as well £3 Adult & £2 Child – please call on the day to confirm. Parking spaces are limited please call if you would like to book a blue badge space.

We have a few events planned for the end of May and more will be added for the summer, keep an eye on our Facebook page or website www.ClophillEcoLodges.co.uk/Events. We hope to see you soon!

The CHT Team



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Please mention the Meppershall Messenger when responding to advertisements



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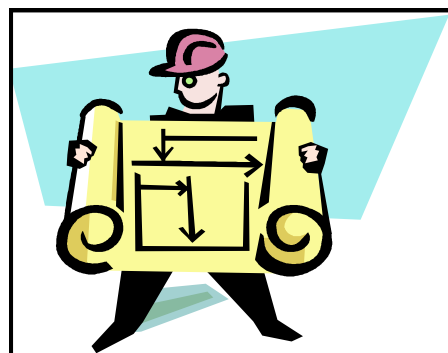
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The Countryside Code



Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

Respect everyone

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit
- take care with BBQs and do not light fires
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo - bag it and bin it - any public waste bin will do
- care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

www.gov.uk/countryside-code



The Countryside Code



Follow advice and local signs

In some cases, additional higher rights of access or permissive access could exist.

Footpath



Bridleway



Restricted Byway



Byway open to all traffic



Permissive Path

Follow advice on local signs as landowners voluntarily provide access to these paths and choose who can use them. Some open access areas are also made available in the same way.



National Trail

National Trails are created for walking, with horse-riding and cycling possible on some trails or trail sections.

www.nationaltrail.co.uk



Open Access

You can walk and explore away from paths.

www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk

For further information visit www.gov.uk/countryside-code



**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**

Mid Beds Cancer Support Group MEPPERSHALL & ALL surrounding areas

Informal cancer group for patients, families, friends, carers who wish to meet others for support & information. Due to Covid-19 lockdown, we continue to provide support via telephone and our **online 'group meet'** and individually for those who wish to connect during this difficult time.

**As things stand, our next online meetings will be on
Saturday 1st May and 5th June 2021, 11am.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bit.ly/3srw7ur>

Meeting ID: 334 851 8015

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

Email: 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

Raising awareness and preventing animal cruelty

As a nation of pet lovers, it's unimaginable that anyone would want to hurt an animal. But sadly, animal cruelty is incredibly common, and it happens everywhere. Every year thousands of animals suffer from neglect, abandonment, cruelty, as well as physical harm. While animal abuse and neglect are heart breaking and difficult to face, if we all work together, we can put an end to the mistreatment of any innocent creature.



Panic buying pets during lockdown

The pandemic has not only affected existing pets and their owners. With people being confined to their homes, many have decided that now is the perfect time to purchase a new pet.

The Kennel Club has seen a 180% increase in enquiries from potential dog owners whilst the RSPCA has seen a 600% increase in visits to its puppy fostering pages.



This rush to get a pet has had negative consequences. The UK is facing a puppy shortage, with breeders' waiting lists full and prices doubling. This has fuelled an increase in puppy farming, dog thefts and animals being smuggled from abroad. There have been reports of scams involving people paying deposits for animals online that they never receive or being forced to hand over extra sums of money when they pick up their new pet.

Offer to help pet owners in need

Even the most loyal, loving pet owners sometimes require assistance. Major life events can result in stress, along with other mental or physical health concerns. In some cases, people simply can't continue to care for their pets due to unforeseen circumstances.



If a loved one or neighbour is struggling to offer their pet(s) basic care and attention why not offer to pet sit for them or foster their pet(s) until life returns to normal?

Enforcement of animal abuse

The introduction of the Animal Welfare Act in 2006 has enabled enforcement agencies and RSPCA inspectors to act sooner, advising and educating owners before their pets suffer.

Previously they had to wait for an animal to suffer before they could take action. Thankfully, there are now many more times when situations can be prevented from getting worse.

If the advice given is not followed or the animal's needs are still not being met, then action can be taken whether through a formal warning or in some cases a prosecution to prevent animals suffering a life of neglect or cruelty.

Signs of cruelty and abuse

Signs of abuse and neglect are varied and range in extent. The most common examples are:



Untreated ailments



Starvation



Untreated injuries



Living conditions

Reporting cruelty and abuse

As we move out of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, there have already been cases of animals being returned to animal charities or abandoned and charities have said that they fear that this will increase.

If you ever witness or suspect that a person may be treating an animal badly, it's crucial to take note of the events and contact the RSPCA on the 24-hour cruelty line 0300 1234

999, or contact Bedfordshire Police on 101. You can report anonymously. Don't ignore cruelty, animals cannot call for help. Remember to always note down any incident you witness including dates and times when possible. If you can take photos without putting yourself in harm's way, this evidence could be the proof needed to complete a full investigation. If possible, take photographs of the abused or neglected animal, along with photos of the immediate and surrounding areas. Never risk your own safety, and don't enter a private property without permission. While photos are helpful, they aren't required to launch an investigation.

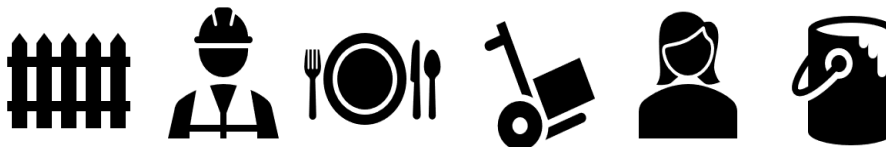


Anyone considering buying a puppy should always contact the local authority for a list of licensed breeders. You can see a list of local licensed breeders at:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/directory/37/register_of_animal_licences.

John Thompson, Treasurer

Let's Hear It For The Advertisers!



When it comes to looking for good local services, tradespeople and businesses – look first in The Meppershall Messenger. We are proud to carry advertising from a range of local contacts supplying a wide variety of goods and services in our area and **who are often part of the community**. Why not try them out?

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.



RESUMPTION OF SERVICES

As of **Monday 29th March** we will restart the following services based on the current Government roadmap:

MONDAYS

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

FRIDAYS

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

W7 – LETCHWORTH – Shefford-Clifton-Henlow-Arlesey

W5 - A1 RETAIL PARK (2nd & 4th Fridays of the Month) Meppershall-Shefford-Clifton Park- Clifton-Henlow-Langford-Biggleswade

As of **Monday 12th April** we will restart the remaining services:

WEDNESDAYS

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

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

THURSDAYS

WELWYN GARDEN CITY 1st Thursday of the Month :

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

W14 – Gravenhurst -Shillington- Stondon – Meppershall – Shefford

ST NEOTS 2nd Thursday of the Month:

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

W10 – Stondon – Clifton Park – Stotfold – Astwick

MILTON KEYNES 3rd Thursday of the Month :

W11 - Meppershall –Stondon – Shillington – Gravenhurst – Clophill

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

EXCURSIONS – The excursion programme will begin as of the 4th Thursday of July.

For any further information : Call 0300-123-3023 or email thewanderbus@gmail.com



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Dr Griffiths & Ptrs	
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Appointments	01462 810034
General queries, prescriptions etc.	01462 818620
Drs. Collins, Garragher and Neal	
109 Station Rd Lower Stondon SG16 6JJ	01462 850305
Shefford Dental Practice, 34 High St Shefford	01462 814020
Shefford Dental Clinic, 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

Hospitals

Bedford Hospital	01234 355122
Lister Hospital, Stevenage	01438 314333

Utilities

Gas Emergency	0800 111999
Anglian Water	03457 145145
Electrical (power cuts, overhead cable down etc)	0800 838838

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 Alessandro 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)

Library

High St, Shefford 0300 300 8067
Check times: Closed Mondays. Tuesday - Friday 9 - 6, Sat 9 - 4.
Pre-order for collection.

Whitbread Wanderbus Service

Stephanie Kirby thewanderbus@gmail.com

Shops

Village Stores, newspapers, Post Office, High Street 01462 811252
Rogers Bakery, High Street 01462 813398
Mobile Fish & Chips, Tuesdays 3.30 -7.00, Sugar Loaf car park

Schools

Meppershall Academy, High Street	01462 813293
Meppershall Pre School (Village Hall) Tamsin Osborn	07816 357159
	meppershallps@gmail.com
Robert Bloomfield Academy, Shefford	01462 628800
Samuel Whitbread Academy, Shefford	01462 629900
Etonbury Academy, Stotfold	01462 730391
Henlow Academy	01462 813733
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.

DISCLAIMER

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

THE TEAM

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Co-ordination			
Treasurer	John Thompson	16 Brookmead Email: meppershallmessenger@meppershall.org	812983

Collating Dates 2020-21			
June Issue	June 1 th (Tues)	October Issue	September 27 th
July Issue	June 28 th	November Issue	October 25 th
Aug-Sept Double Issue	July 26 th	December-January Double Issue	
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.