

# *Mere Matters*

*& so does*

*West Knoyle*



*Special*

Your community magazine  
including a guide to local events

*April 2020*

## USEFUL LINKS

The following links provide useful, factual and regularly updated information on COVID-19, please feel free to share these with your communities.

- Follow the latest stay at home advice at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice)
- Overview of COVID-19 – what is it? [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)
- Number of COVID-19 cases in the UK, including the affected areas – information can be found on our website, [wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus)
- Common questions and answers on COVID-19 including advice for families, prevention, how it's caught and spread, self-isolation, testing and treatment, foreign travel – [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/common-questions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/common-questions)
- NHS 111 – information can be found on our website, [wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus)
- Wiltshire Council's COVID-19 information page – [wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus)
- This sort of incident could cause undue pressure and anxiety. The NHS Every Mind Matters website has some really simple useful tips and advice to support good mental health – [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)
- Public Health Campaign Resource Centre (you'll need to register) – <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns> for the latest posters, videos and social media graphics. Some are enclosed.

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

- NHS 111 – only call **111** if you cannot get help online
- Education queries –phone the Department for Education on **0800 046 8687**
- Wiltshire Council – **0300 456 0100**



## **The Editor Writes**

We all know that life has suddenly changed. Having been working very closely with your Town Councillors, local businesses and public services in coordinating our local resilience to Covid-19, I have witnessed a lot of very positive community spirit, local people all wanting to do their bit.

You will probably be aware that we have established a volunteer group and a system to give help to those who have enforced Self-Isolation imposed on them. Cards have been distributed around the town, are on the Town Council website, Mere Mutters and on the Chamber of Commerce web site. A copy is also printed on the back cover of this edition so everyone has a list of the contacts to use in the case of emergency. These volunteer lists will change as people fall ill, need to have a break etc so keep looking out for the latest information.

**If you are voluntarily self-isolating please DO NOT use this service.** Our volunteers are risking infection by assisting those who cannot get out and we have to minimize this risk.

This edition has been hand delivered to every residence in the town via yet another group of volunteers – thanks to those who organised and delivered it. The following is a medley of updates with best and current advice. I feel like I need to add a disclaimer just in case the advice is wrong or inappropriate so please just read and make your own decisions! Keep safe and well.

Richard Jefferies 📞 863425 📠 07950 797273 ✉️ [rajefferies@btinternet.com](mailto:rajefferies@btinternet.com)

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## **Mere Town Council**

### **Mere Town Council – Business Continuity Plan to retain essential services during Covid-19 outbreak – March 2020**

In the current troubling times I was heartened by the tremendous response from the residents of Mere to our call for community support volunteers. Mere is a fabulous place to live with great community spirit which has been proven once more and I am proud to live here. I would like to thank Richard Jefferies, Chairman of the Local Resilience Forum and Lindsey Wood the Town Clerk for their tremendous effort and time spent to get this scheme up and running. We are well aware that there are also a great number of good neighbours looking after residents in their area and our thanks go out to you all.

As you know, government guidance is changing on a day-to-day basis. Mere Town Council will be taking immediate action to protect the public, councillors and staff from the risk of Covid-19. It is important to note that we will continue to work hard to maintain a service to the public while switching some of our efforts to providing support to the isolated and vulnerable in our community. We

are therefore faced with making some difficult decisions during this extraordinary time

As of today (Monday, 23rd March) the following buildings will be closed – Andy Young Pavilion & Duchy Manor Changing Rooms. We will also be closing the public toilets, the children's play areas and the Multi Use Games Area. The Town Council office will be closed to public access until further notice. We aim to keep a presence in the office and can be contacted by telephone on 01747 860701 or email [lindseywood@merewilts.org](mailto:lindseywood@merewilts.org). We also have intercom between the office and the outside entrance to the building.

There will be no Town Council meetings until further notice. Obviously, the Town Council will still be making decisions and will still be consulted on planning applications etc. These decisions and consultation responses will be posted on our website under Delegation Report.

We hope our parishioners stay safe and well and will try to do our best to help you to do so. In the meantime we can only urge you to follow the national guidelines.

Clive Hazzard, Chairman, Mere Town Council  
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.  
 860701  [lindseywood@merewilts.org](mailto:lindseywood@merewilts.org)  [merewilts.org](http://merewilts.org)

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### **Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes**

Many councillors locally and nationally are very busy on the front line, establishing self-help groups of residents and making sure local resilience forums have the contacts for the volunteer co-ordinations, for which I must thank all those involved locally.

Corona Virus or Covid-19 is the main focus of Wiltshire Council at present as they are responsible for Public Health. Some of the council officers are in self-isolation and the rest are focused on the current situation. We are living through extraordinary circumstances and our officers are facing extreme demands on their time. The leader has stated, *"I am therefore asking that you do not e-mail officers with questions/suggestions while we are dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak. Officers are not going to be able to respond to e-mails and must prioritise the Council's response to the rapidly evolving situation so if you do e-mail them you are unlikely to get a reply. The response to the pandemic is the main focus of the Council and Wiltshire will not be able to continue with all areas of business as usual."*

All Area Board meetings, JNSA meetings and all current by-elections and neighborhood planning referendums are also cancelled with immediate effect with other meetings likely to follow suit. Residents are encouraged to regularly

check the council's calendar here for updates as the situation is changing day by day.

All services are running. However, the Council are aware of some delays to mixed dry recycling collections, following the introduction of new services. If your blue-lidded bin or black box has not been emptied on your new scheduled collection day, please leave your containers out and our contractors will visit as soon as they can.

Waste tissues produced by someone who has or suspects they have COVID-19 should be placed in a plastic bag which should be tied when full. Disposable cloths or wipes used to clean hard surfaces such as kitchen worktops and bathrooms should also be placed in the same bag. This plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag, which should also be tied when full. The bags should be kept in a secure place until the individual's test results are known. The bags should not be put out for collection or placed in communal waste areas until negative test results are known or the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours (three days). After being stored for at least 72 hours (three days), please place these in your normal wheeled bin. If you don't receive a wheeled bin collection, please make sure a council-issued bag label is placed on the outside of the double-bagged waste.



Important for many in need of housing is the 'Housing options service'. As a precaution, the drop in service has been temporarily suspended until further notice. For the time being, Wiltshire Council will be operating a telephone and email service to respond to advice enquiries. Extra advisers are being deployed to operate the telephone helpline during this time. Contact details for the temporary service are as follows: WEST 01225 718005, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm NORTH 01249 706666, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm SOUTH 01722 434233, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm Also contact the service on [homeless@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:homeless@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Where possible Wiltshire Council staff affected by these closures and changes will be redeployed to help protect our essential services to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

Many councillors have enquired about the provision to hold committee meetings online, at the current time the council are bound by legal requirements in the 1972 Local Government Act which require members to be physically present at public meetings in order to be able to vote and be part of the quorum. The provision for 'remote attendance' is something that many local councils are lobbying for in the Coronavirus Bill, this is not currently contained within the draft Bill, however this may be subject to change. Please note the current requirement is legislative, and not something councils have discretion over in their constitution.

Wiltshire have made changes to existing policies, working patterns and practices. This includes supporting home working and are promoting social distancing strategies for staff who continue to work in council buildings and deliver customer-facing services. There are likely to be a number of changes to front facing services over the coming weeks.



Wiltshire Council's education team is working with schools to ensure that education provision is available across the county for school age dependents of critical workers and vulnerable children until further notice.

For those out walking their dog at a social distance, please be aware if you let your dog or dogs off the lead, by law you should still have control of the dog. I have been contacted by a resident who has had a bad experience with a dog off of a lead in the open country and over the years I have heard of several other incidences.

For those in need of the local food bank, a voucher can be obtained from the local Vicar Carol Green for a food box or myself when the Reverend is not available, a single or family parcel can then be collected from Mere Library or Mere Post Office.

📞 07710 441599 ✉️ [george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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### **Be Safe and Thwart the fraudsters**

- Be a good neighbour - keep an eye on an elderly or vulnerable person living near you.
- Check ID - volunteers working with the health and emergency services will be in possession of the necessary documentation to prove they are genuine.
- If you are not sure about someone, don't engage with them and report any serious suspicious behavior.
- Online fraud - don't click on links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details.
- Shopping online - if buying from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. If you decide to go ahead with the purchase, use a credit card if you have one as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.
- The majority of groups are well intentioned and will be working with charities or a local authority and should have proof that they are doing so.
- Remember police officers and medical professionals are not doing door-to-door checks or administering tests.
- Report any suspicious person or activity by telephoning the Police on 101 straight away.

- At the petrol pumps – good idea to wear gloves or use sanitary wipes on the nozzle handle, door handles etc!

### **Self-Isolating? Preparing for, and if we fall ill**

We should probably all accept that we are all going to be house bound at some time in the future and we should ALL prepare now. The BIGGEST problem is not so much the logistics of getting help to you but if you need someone to collect paid-for prescriptions or shopping, then you will need to have some cash (preferably notes) in the house to give them. You will need to do this whilst able to get out and about.

Do not consider giving your 'shopper' your bank card etc.

Please be cautious about asking and receiving help from people you do not know or who may not be on an approved list of volunteers. There are many wanting to take advantage of people during these difficult times. If you suspect a caller then contact the Police on 101 immediately.

### **Getting help**

On the back cover of this edition is a list of Volunteer Telephone Coordinators. Pick any 1 and make contact between the hours of 8.00am – 6.pm. They will take your details first and then after your call they will select from an approved list of volunteers and contact someone best placed to give you assistance. That person will then be in touch with you.

Volunteers are working hard. Please do not abuse their help. If you have family, friends or a neighbour able to do the shopping for you, collect medications, post your letters etc then please **DO NOT** telephone anyone else for help.

This service is NOT a replacement for existing NHS and Social Services.

This service is NOT for dog walking etc.

Be considerate when you contact others for help. The community volunteers are not a 24/7 service.

If you can, then disinfect your post box regularly.

Please do not take or give medical advice to others unless qualified to do so.

If you have children at home then keep them at home. If they do get the virus then they are likely to spread the virus without knowing it.

The government are clearly saying to all – STAY AT HOME unless you really have to go out or are helping others.



## **Open for Business in Mere (at the time of writing!)**

### ***Mere Dentist***

We are reserving 9.00am – 10.00am for those who may be self-isolating. Please phone the Dentist to make a booking. Other appointments as normal for now at least.

### ***Mere Pharmacy***

Managed openings – only 3 people at a time. If someone else is collecting your prescriptions please think:

- Will your prescription be ready for collection?
- Has at least 72hours elapsed since you requested it from the surgery?
- Will your helper need money from you to pay for the prescription?
- If you have an exemption certificate then your helper will need to show evidence of this.
- If your medications fall into the 'controlled' group then the person collecting them for you will need to show ID and sign for your prescription.
- Opening Hours.
  - Monday to Friday 9.00am – 12.00. and 2.00pm to 5.30
  - Saturday 9.00am – 1.00pm

### ***Sprout & Flower***

Plenty of stock of all the usual things, willing to deliver where absolutely necessary. In emergency they are even willing to include some Co-op goods into any delivery they undertake. Card payments can be made over the phone.

### ***Milk supplies***

You can get it at all the usual places but also:

Madjeston Milk Station, Newhouse Farm, Cole Street Lane on the B3092 just after Loddon Lakes OR if you are going to Frome, try Tytherington Farm Milk Station just after West Woodlands.

## **Businesses in and around Mere Closed or Offering Limited Services**

### ***Walnut Tree - Closed***

Closed but available to help with 'foodie things' – yum, yum!

### ***Co-op in Mere***

Reduced opening hours – open until 8.00pm

### ***Visit Hillbrush***

Closed but offering takeaway and deliveries

### ***Library - Closed***

If people have any borrowed items from our libraries, they will be renewed automatically throughout the closed period and Wiltshire Council will not be



issuing or enforcing any fines or charges. People can also still borrow eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines from [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries-ebooks](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/libraries-ebooks). The mobile library service will also be suspended during this time.

### ***Angel Tea Rooms - Closed***

Able to serve 'takeaways at present. Menu on Facebook and on the shop window.

### **Cancelled Events:**

The Grove Building AND The Lecture Hall are closed for all groups hence all groups who meet in these venues will not be meeting until further notice so the centre-fold diary is not present this month.

In addition these organisations/groups are not meeting:

- Church Services
- Community Lunch
- Craft Group @ St Michaels
- Hearing Clinics
- Mere Amateur Dramatics Society
- Mere Film Shows
- Mere Theatre Trips
- Railway Modeler's trip to Alexandra Palace
- Short Walks
- Tea @ 3
- Traidcraft
- Ukulele Club

### **Keeping Up To Date**

The situation is changing very quickly. Do tune into the national TV News and/or listen to the radio news at least once a day. You really shouldn't listen to it every hour as it will probably make you very depressed.

If you have the technology then you can get updates from:

Mere Town Council's own website:

 <http://www.merewilts.org/>

Wiltshire Council's website:

 <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/>

Mere Mutters:

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/408000345955459/>

Chamber of Commerce website:

 <https://merechamberoftrade.co.uk/mere-local-resilience-forum/>



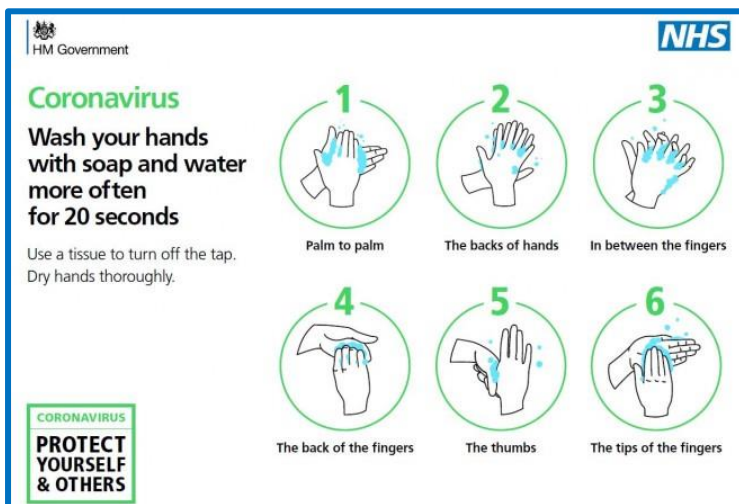
### **Mere Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

Mere PPG help provide our local doctor's surgery with the patient's perspective, finding out what matters most to you and helping to solve common issues. **Due to the current Coronavirus situation, the PPG will not be holding any events for the next few months.** Mere Town Council is managing a list of volunteers and vulnerable people, so please see their separate articles.

The upcoming talk on Bowel Cancer, due to be held at the George Inn on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm, has been **postponed** due to Coronavirus. Please watch this space for the new date to be announced in the autumn.

Date for the diary: PPG will be holding a Wellbeing Day on Saturday 3rd October from 2.30pm in the Grove Building

**If you have any further questions or ideas for us or would be interested in joining the Committee, please email: [MerePPG@gmail.com](mailto:MerePPG@gmail.com)**



## **From Mere Surgery**

We understand the anxiety caused by the current COVID-19 outbreak. Clearly these are challenging times for us all. It has been a great encouragement to us to see how the whole community has worked so quickly and effectively to mobilise resources to support each other.

At the surgery, many of you will have noticed that our systems have had to change to meet the increase in urgent health conditions and to ensure that we minimise the transmission of all types of infectious disease. As a consequence, we have had to defer treating and advising on routine conditions. Our processes have changed at the moment (and may continue to evolve as the situation develops). Currently:

We are no longer booking appointments in advance.

If you need to speak to, or potentially see a doctor, our receptionists will book you in for an initial “triage” phone call.

Our nurses and phlebotomy appointments will also be triaged to ensure people are not unnecessarily putting themselves at risk through visiting the surgery.

It is useful for you to provide an up to date mobile telephone number at the point of booking your call as we may be able to use video consulting as an alternative to meeting in a “face-to-face” consultation.

Our dispensary will continue to provide medication but we would ask that people remember to be considerate with social distancing when entering the surgery premises.

We have revised our opening times to allow for the extra demand we are experiencing with home visiting.

**Mon-Fri 08.30-12.00 and 14.00-17.00**

Telephones will remain open as normal.

We are essentially focusing on urgent medicine and ask for your consideration with this. There are other resources which may be helpful to manage demand including advice about employment and self-isolation.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

If you think you may be infected with coronavirus, please follow the advice:

**Category 1:** Severely unwell. Call ambulance for transfer to hospital and inform call handler of COVID-19 risk.

**Category 2:** Need further clinical assessment. Phone the surgery.

**Category 3:** Mild symptoms: stay at home, follow self-care advice and contact NHS 111 if needed. This will greatly help in avoiding pressure on urgent and emergency services.

Thankfully, we are advised that the majority of patients will fall into Category 3 which is reassuring! It is obviously vitally important that we support each other in observing social distancing and handwashing.

We thank you all for your patience and cooperation at the moment and hope that a normal service can be reinstated as soon as possible!

The Doctors at Mere

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### **Mere Tiddlers and Toddlers**

**The Toddler group / Mere School Foodbank :** Run within the charity Fareshare's guidelines ( nothing to be sold, or taken to sell on) is for parents of all babies and children under 12, and will be continuing as an open air market on Saturdays/ Sundays / Mondays, for half an hour only, 3.15pm- 3.45pm outside The Gallery , Holt , Water Street, always dependent on the donations from Waitrose and ASDA .

These can be very variable in quantity, and are usually mostly 'just' out of date items, so they come with a disclaimer, and we ask you bring your own bag. Thank you to Laura and David Rich, to our wonderful volunteers who go and collect, and also to those kind people who have donated extra items, which will be invaluable. Pop by and check out what we have weekly - all free.

Anne Rich 📞 07413 512023 📞 861493 arich4@icloud.com

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### **Mere Historical Society**

All April and the May Outing events are cancelled.

Caroline Cook 📞 861797 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

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### **Mere Gardening Club**

Meetings cancelled for 12 weeks along with the trip to RHS Wisley,

**Scarecrow Competition:** Do you remember all those wonderful Scarecrow designs in our Garden Festival last year? Well now is your chance to really show your creative spirit. There is plenty of time to conjure up your ideas as we will be holding this in June with the results being publicised in time for the Open Garden Weekend on 20/21st June. Entries from families, businesses, Clubs and Organisations will all be welcome and entry forms are now available in the library or from me. .Entries need to be in by the end of April so we can work out the trail and in situ be the 6th June for judging

Janet Way 📞 860884 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk

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### **Warminster Food Bank**

A big thank you to everyone who donated to our March collection - final total next month. The permanent collection point in the Library is a big success. So please, can you consider buying one more food item either packet, tin or box for the collection. We are also always in need of toiletries, baby products (not formula milk) & pet food. Warminster Food Bank covers the Mere area and this is where the emergency boxes come from.

If you, or know of someone, are in need of an emergency food box please contact either Rev Carol Green ☎ 861859 or George Jeans 📞 07710 441599.

Penny Fennon 📞 07833 131712 (after 6pm please).

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### **Mere Silent Auction**

The launch of the Mere Silent Auction was an amazing day... and there is still time to grab yourself a fantastic lot and help 3 local charities - The Rosemary Goddard Centre, Warminster Food Bank and Mere & Gillingham Cats Protection. Local businesses and individuals have donated some fantastic lots.

So go on ... have a look and if you would like to place a bid, there are envelopes in the Library and a box to put them in or message us on facebook.

On Easter Sunday we will announce the winners of each lot! No money will be asked for until the winner of each lot is announced.

Updates on the bidding each week, so keep looking as we have some fantastic lots coming in and some are unique to Mere!

All monies made will be split equally between the 3 very worthy causes and no expenses will be taken. Thank you and we hope you find yourself a bargain!

Steve 📞 077527 15288 - Facebook: Mere Silent Auction &

✉ [meresilentauction@mail.com](mailto:meresilentauction@mail.com)

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### **Hearing Aid Clinic**

'Action on Hearing Loss' the charity which organises the Hearing Aid Clinic is suspending all clinics until further notice. Should you require new batteries you can get these from the Surgery on production of you hearing aid/ battery card. Should you require new tubes you will need to contact Audiology (Tel 01722 429335) and they will post them out to you.

Gillian Drayson ☎ 01722 580014

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### **Breaking News for April 1st**

A team of armed robbers expecting to get away with thousands of pounds were astonished at their stroke of good luck when they found the bank vault filled with vintage IZAL toilet rolls. They are now reported to be on the run!

## **Open Gardens Weekend – Behind the Gate**

Have you ever wondered what is behind those gates and walls as you wander through the town? Well here is your opportunity to have a peek as Mere Garden Club and Friends of St Michael's are again joining together and arranging an Open Garden Weekend on **June 20/21st**. So put the date in your diaries and invite family and friends to join us. And if the gardens are not enough there will of course be lots of cake and even cream teas to tempt you! Further details of the Garden Club's Scarecrow competition, which will be taking place at the same time, can be found under the Garden Club entry!

Ann Dethick ☎ 863498 and Janet Way ☎ 860884

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A very big thankyou to everyone who helped with and supported our almost-famous Shrove Tuesday Quiz and Pancake evening which was a terrific success, both in terms of the enjoyment of the event (I've never known so many spontaneous expressions of appreciation) and in terms of the money raised: £780. Amazing!

It's just as well, for this special little project in West Bengal, India, that the quiz night was so successful, as it looks as if our next three planned events (at least) will have to be cancelled. Our Mere fundraising group provides about a quarter of the annual income for the project, so our fundraising efforts, so generously supported by the people of Mere, will be sorely missed.

Suchana itself has had to close at present because of coronavirus precautions, but the hope is that with temperatures rising rapidly in India at this time of year, that the virus may be eradicated quite quickly and Suchana's good work be able to resume. Up until now it has continued to grow and expand its work, particularly in the provision of reading material for children in their own first language, which – as you might expect - benefits their whole educational experience and boosts self-confidence and a sense of worth and value. We have received an excellent annual newsletter giving more information about this and the way Suchana has helped many of its ex-students to succeed. If you would like a copy of the newsletter or to make a small donation to help tide things over until we can resume fundraising, please contact me by phone or email [judithvthompson@aol.com](mailto:judithvthompson@aol.com)

Judith Thompson Tel 860553

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### **Mere & District Railway Modellers**

The trip to Alexander Palace on the 22nd March is cancelled. Mere Exhibition at the end of June is at this time still on.

Tom Snook ☎ 861977

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### **Mere Theatre Club**

Sadly due to the virus we have cancelled all our outings for March, April and May. We shall see how things progress before we cancel June. If you have booked for any of the trips, we will be in touch with you in due course to let you know if we get any refunds. Keep safe and well and hope to see you soon.

Madelaine Morris ☎ 861833 Wendy Horne ☎ 861712

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### **Mere Museum**

The current exhibition "Mere Union Workhouse" has had a few additions made and I have been changing the pages in the books to provide new information. Please do visit and leave your comments.

A new set of photos will be posted soon so again we welcome your help in identifying the people.

It is now two weeks since we received the Rutter Scrapbooks back in Mere. They have been conserved by the History Centre and we are now processing approximately 750 items onto the catalogue. Our thanks go to everyone who helped raised the funds to preserve these documents and posters which will be the subject of a future exhibition.

Rose Heesom 📠 07791 559674 ✉ roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk

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### **Community Lunch**

The Community Lunch, which was to be held at the Walnut Tree Inn on Tuesday 14 April is cancelled.

Lindy Elliott ☎ 861646 ✉ lindyelliott22@gmail.com

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### **Mere Carnival**

While we are hoping that the Carnival will run this September (Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>), we have put our fundraising activities on hold. Most people do not realise that the committee spend much more on the carnival day than we take in donations. We hold events through the year like bingo and quizzes to raise the money needed. All of this, and the day of Carnival itself, takes a lot of planning and needs many hands to help make it happen. Our chairman wrote last month asking for some new volunteers and I am writing this month to ask again. I am hoping that this edition will reach a wider audience.



Do please think about donating some of your time and capabilities to what is a worthwhile cause. A day of great entertainment and memories, particularly for the children of Mere and the surrounding area. The committee needs new members all through the year – come and join us, we do have fun in amongst the work and there is a great feeling of satisfaction as it all slots into place and a good Carnival goes through Mere. We might not be meeting but let our secretary Penny know and we will be in touch.

Penny Allen, Secretary  pennyinmere@gmail.com  
John Gammie  07831 572831  john@gammie.info  Mere Carnival

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### **Healthy Mere Walking**

Like many others, we had to cancel some of our walks but we did enjoy great support from Mere walkers in the first two weeks of March. We had been planning another Bottom sponsored walk with a view to raising money for Seeds4Success but June looks too likely to be certain of so mark your September calendar for the All Clear Bottom walk and join us in being optimistic.

Meanwhile we would encourage you to get out and walk the paths of Mere and we shall be putting links to guides for some of our favourite walks on our Healthy Mere Walking facebook page [www.facebook.com/Healthy-Mere-Walking](https://www.facebook.com/Healthy-Mere-Walking) and the website of the Mere Footpath Group at [www.merefootpathgroup.btck.co.uk](http://www.merefootpathgroup.btck.co.uk).

John Jordan  07840722835

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### **Mere Bell Ringing Festival Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May**

This year within the Salisbury Diocesan Guild of Ringers, the Mere Branch are hosting the annual Bell Ringers Guild Festival and AGM on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May**. The general public are welcome to listen to the ringing and attend the Festival Service at St Michael's Church, Mere at 4.00pm, which will be attended by the Rt. Revd. Dr Andrew Rumsey, Bishop of Ramsbury. There will also be ringing at Chilmark, Shaftesbury, Gillingham and Mere on the same day, with approximate times as follows:

Gillingham 8 bells striking competition from 9.30am at St Mary's Church, Gillingham

St Mary's Church, Chilmark 10.30-11.30 am

St James' Church, Shaftesbury 11.15-12.15 pm

St Michael's Church, Mere 12-1 pm and 6.30-7.30 pm

There will be a variety of demonstrations and displays to which all are invited from 11.00am to 1.00pm in St Michael's Church, Mere. These will include icon painting, rope splicing, floral displays, hand bell ringing and video displays. Shaftesbury Town Silver Band will be playing around lunchtime and there will be

a model railway exhibition in the Model Railway Club premises, off Castle Street car park from 11.00am to 2.00pm.

Anyone who has an interest in any of these activities is most welcome to attend, where they will have the opportunity to ask questions and obtain further information.

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### **Dressmaking in Mere**

As our sewing machines quieten for a while at The Grove Building we are pleased that we so enjoyed our last two lessons when remarkably nearly every garment was completed. There were so many buttonholes being sewn, final hems being completed. We even had a tiny Fashion Show and everyone clapped as Comfort one of our favourite members, whom you will see on our Facebook page had her photo taken wearing a fabulous jumpsuit. It really was the Mere version of The Sewing Bee.

We look forward to being able to restart our courses but of course not sure when. In the meantime when we are able to we will be using our newly learnt skills to prepare for a special show and tell. There is something very relaxing when sewing, knitting or in my case Spinning and Weaving, taught by Mere's own very special teacher the late Ann Lander.

If you would like to know more about our courses which will take place at the Grove Building in Mere please contact us or look at our Facebook Page "Dressmaking in Mere".

Carol Lord ☎ 861923 or Susanne 📠 07788 595434 📘 Dressmaking in Mere

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### **The Butt of Sherry Preservation Society.**

**Mere Community Benefit Society.** Our shares are now available! The Mere Community Benefit Society Ltd (formerly the Butt of Sherry Preservation Society) launched the sale of its shares to the public on Saturday, March 21st. The funds raised are to be used to buy the Butt of Sherry and make it a community-owned pub. Due to the corona virus outbreak we aren't holding any public events to provide information about the share offer. However, we will be updating our Facebook page regularly - Butt of Sherry Preservation Society - and we have a new website with our share prospectus and business plan on it. Please help us to save this historic local pub and place its ownership in the hands of the people of Mere. The new website is [www.merecbs.co.uk](http://www.merecbs.co.uk). You can also contact us by email at [secretary@merecbs.co.uk](mailto:secretary@merecbs.co.uk) or by phoning the Secretary at 07986 222447. We're happy to answer any questions and we can post out copies of the documents if desired. The shares will be on sale until May 1st.

✉ [bospreservation@gmail.com](mailto:bospreservation@gmail.com)

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### **Friends of Mere Museum**

The April Quiz (cancelled) will most certainly be rescheduled the minute we have the 'all clear', and we'll keep you posted on that.

But all is not lost! We have already one exciting event planned for October 9th so please put this in your diaries in brightly coloured ink. Martin Papworth, the local National Trust Archaeologist, will talk about his work on the archaeology of the Stourhead Estate, and link it to images of the LIDAR survey that has recently been completed. LIDAR stands for Light Detection and Ranging is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure variable distances to the Earth. We think that this is really a prospect to help to get us through the next several months!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908

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### **Mere Amateur Dramatic Society**

It will come as no surprise, I'm afraid, that very reluctantly, MADs have had to postpone their much heralded and eagerly awaited production of 'The Happiest Days of your Life' at the end of March. We are as disappointed as we are sure you are; even 'Happy Days' would be welcome just at the moment. But fear not! We have safely preserved the set, carefully hung up the costumes and are constantly going over our lines, and we shall burst onto the stage in the Lecture Hall in the autumn to the delight of one and all. There will, of course, be no monthly meetings during this period, but we shall certainly meet again.... In the meantime, enjoy your gardens and stay well.

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908

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### **Mere and District Link Scheme**

We have been considering how the Link Scheme can provide help during the coronavirus outbreak. Unfortunately, only 6 of our 38 volunteer drivers are under 70 and many have said they do not want to drive in order to keep their social contact to a minimum in line with strong Government advice. This will leave us short of resources. We have potential new drivers who may be able to help although some have said they will be available only at weekends or in the evening. Many non-essential medical appointments have been cancelled reducing the demands on the Link but we still have requests to take people to appointments which the NHS consider essential. In these circumstances, we have decided that the Link should concentrate its resources on taking people to medical appointments and our weekly dossette box (prescription medicines) run for those not covered by the Town Council's help team. We will ask our drivers who want to help with food and ad hoc medicine deliveries to contact the Town Council support group to offer their services.

If you would like to become a Link driver please call us on 860096. Keep well.

## **Mere Rivers Group - Wildlife Sightings for February**

It is early March as we write and we have had the wettest February on record following a long dreary winter. Nevertheless, some of our intrepid wildlife watchers have been out and continued to let us have their sightings. As a result there is quite a variety recorded, as you can see below:

Little egret seen 7 times, moorhen 5 times, trout 3 times. The following were all seen once: goldcrest, mistle thrush, wren, kingfisher, chaffinch, grey heron, sparrowhawk, a pair of coal tits and a pair of mallards, water vole, a ladybird and, finally, three buzzards were seen circling above the Shreen.

### **Nature Notes**

The sparrowhawk reported above was seen taking a blackbird. Whilst upsetting, this is nature, and the sparrowhawk, like everything, has to eat to live. All of the raptors have been finding this winter particularly hard, as it is challenging for them to hunt in the rain. Owls, in particular, suffer because their feathers are not waterproof and so they get waterlogged very quickly. They also struggle in windy weather, of which we have had our fair share, because they cannot hear their prey in the undergrowth. At this time, last year, we had regular sightings of barn owls in our wider area, but so far this winter there have been none recorded!!

On a brighter note, one of our regulars has reported seeing frogspawn in their pond, so spring is definitely on its way! It shouldn't be too long now before we start to see the first swallows appearing in our skies over Mere so keep your eyes open and please report these and any other sightings to us .... details below. We are always very grateful.

Lynne Bann ☎ 860174 ✉ [mereriverwildlife@btinternet.com](mailto:mereriverwildlife@btinternet.com)

## **Booking Meeting Venues**

Grove Building:	Derek Fisher <a href="mailto:administrator@grovebuildingmere.com">administrator@grovebuildingmere.com</a>	☎ 07935 266375
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685

## Mere Information Point @ The Library

The following Support/Advice Centres are held on a regular basis:

Wiltshire Dementia Adviser Service	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday	2.00pm – 4.00
Registrar of Births & Deaths	By appt. only Thursdays	☎ 0300 003 4569 9.30am – 11.30
Health Trainer	Last Tuesday in month	10.00am – 12.00

## Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



We are all aware that our meetings of every kind have been postponed but Mother's Union members and leaders have all been in our minds and prayers. We really enjoyed our last meeting and look forward to when our lives can get back to normal and we pray that everyone keeps well, that we cope with either a quiet house where we are isolating or maybe a very noisy household where children are now at home unexpectedly. Either way there are many phone calls taking place, it is so nice, as everyone just used to send text messages. It really is good to talk and if you would like a listening ear please contact one of us. We can't I am afraid do your shopping etc. as most of us are isolating to stay well. We particularly think of those in the NHS, particularly our own GP's and Pharmacy or the many other front-line positions and thank them all without missing those who work in the many other industries particularly food retail to keep us fed.

We hope some of you will be able to enjoy a short walk either in the garden or in this beautiful town of Mere, keeping that safe distance but still offering a smile.

I thought a small prayer would be a positive thing to add to this. May you all feel the blessing of God's love at this rather difficult time, **"don't feel alone just pick up the phone."**

*"The Lord is my star, I am enfolded by his love. As I open my eyes each day to a version of heaven, trees, birdsong, flowers and sky I will feel a surge of joy, I am complete.*

*In times of anxiety I hear his voice. Trust in God and don't be afraid. Go on with the knowledge of his presence in your heart."*

Carol Lord ☎ 861923

## **THOUGHT Hope & Triumph in Adversity! From Duncan Goldie**

Sometimes there are pieces of Music of music that provide a backing soundtrack to life and events. For contesting brass bands between the beginning of the year and now, it is the annual Area Test piece that is set for section or division. This year for Sherborne Town Band, it was a piece called Legacy by Tom Davoren. It is a piece that was written to celebrating Aneurin Bevan and the creation of the National Health Service on the 5th of July 1948. In the notes about the piece it was portraying the triumph in Adversity.

In the mist of this Coronavirus Pandemic, it seems to me that as Christians we might have something positive to contribute in the form of the hope and triumph Jesus gives in the face of adversity.

### ***READING Mark 10:46-52. Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus***

The story of Jesus' entry into blind Bartimaeus is a story of triumph of hope of adversity. Bartimaeus know what it was to see and have sight, and knows the difference between the darkness his eyes now transmit to him. It is clear that he has not given up the hope of seeing again, and when Jesus passes by the place where he is begging from pilgrims, he will not be silent. His hope of seeing again is fulfilled and adversity of his blindness is banished. Bartimaeus will go on to see another even greater triumph of God and hope over the adversity of death and human sinfulness, in Jesus death on the Cross, and Jesus' resurrection after three days.

As Christians what we have is hope, not immunity to adversity. Hope for today and for eternity.

### ***READING Psalm 23:1-6.***

In recent days we have seen some of the best and the worst of humanity, there have been people that have been stealing dispensers of antiseptic hand wash from hospitals where it is most needed. Stockpiling and panic buying. In Wincanton, the Roman Catholic Church had its toilet rolls stolen. But we have also seen others that risked themselves contracting the virus in order to care and look after those who are ill with Covid-19.

Yes we may have to self-isolate at times, and speak on the phone or via the computer, but with God with us, it will not drag us down into fear and selfishness, for hope of the Cross will triumph in this Coronavirus adversity.

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## **Another Appeal**

Mere Town comprise some 66 roads/streets.

I can possibly see a point in time where we may have difficulty in communicating with everyone. Despite emails, websites, telephones, social media and all the other ways of keeping in touch, there is nothing that can replace the human touch. In a bid to be pro-active I think it would be useful to compile – for each

and every road in Mere, a list of people who would be no more than a link to a central hub. The personal data will NOT be used for any other purpose. If you would like to help in this regard please just email me an email using 'MERE MAPPING' as a subject heading and include your name, email address and phone number. Many thanks

Richard Jefferies 📞 863425 📠 07950 797273 ✉️ [rajefferies@btinternet.com](mailto:rajefferies@btinternet.com)

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### **Mere Information**

For full information on the businesses, organisations, societies, attractions and activities in Mere, together with current and back numbers of "Mere Matters", please visit 🌐 [merewilts.org](http://merewilts.org)

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### **Letter from the Churches - Deacon Michael writes:**

Pestilence scythes through our country from time to time. Famous ones are the Black Death, the Great Plague of the 1660s and the Spanish flu a century ago. And now it is the turn of our generation to respond, for well or ill, to the Coronavirus.

The virus shocks us into the truth that we are not in control of our destinies: that despite our cleverness, our computers, nuclear science, and space rockets we are not in control. Mankind is defenceless before an enemy so small you need a microscope to see it. So if we are wise, we will pray to God for deliverance.

How will we as a nation and individually respond? To help our front line heroes, (doctors, nurses and others) not to be overwhelmed by a tsunami of infected people. We are asked that if we are over 70 or have a medical condition, to self-isolate. That means not going into shops, and never getting nearer than three paces to anyone else. Difficult. To do it, we need spiritual help.

If we are younger and healthy, we can either ignore the need of others, or offer to help in this time of crisis. How will you answer when in 30 years' time when they ask "Daddy what did you do in the 2020 pandemic – volunteer to help, or panic-buy loo paper.

Will the history books write of a selfish society that fell apart at the coming of the virus, or how faced with a profound challenge, we British grew stronger, and responded to this plague with heroic love and care for one another?

There is something you can do to gain the courage to act for the best (by either rigorously self-isolating, or volunteering to help in the battle).

It is a simple thing: a thing that needs doing. Somewhere in your home, put a candle or a Cross or an image of Jesus. This is your Place of Peace. Go there every day and spend time with God who loves you. You may remember prayers from your childhood or find prayers online. Pray for those who choose to risk their lives working in our hospitals and pray you can have their courage and endurance. Look at the love Jesus has for each of us and desire to be part of that love. And your fear and panic, or your selfishness in risking the lives of others, will leave you. For Love casts out fear.

There is much fear about. If I can help, do call me, or one of the help team. I will be praying for the people of Mere every day. God bless you and keep you safe.

Deacon Michael 01747830461. michael@faithandjoy.co.uk

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### **Message from the Priest in Charge of St Michael's Church, Mere and St Mary's West Knole Rev. Carol Green**

Dear Friends

We are living in challenging times where many are fearful, anxious and living with financial and health worries. It is as though our whole world has changed in almost an instant and looks like it will continue that way for some time. In Mere

and West Knoyle we greatly value friendliness and supporting each other, but the physical closeness to neighbours we enjoy is suddenly removed. We must “socially isolate” and this includes churches. There can be no public worship for the foreseeable future, instead the Archbishop of Canterbury is asking us to be a different sort of church in these coming months: “hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.”

There are so many stories of acts of kindness and thoughtfulness throughout the country and especially amongst people in our communities which is incredibly encouraging. I’m sure you have been thanked but I’d like to say “thank you” too.

Although we can’t meet as a church, our prayer for all the community goes on – it’s a bit like remembering absent friends at New Year. I will pray in church and ring the bell at 9.30am on Monday and Thursday (Never thought I would say as a Vicar don’t come to church!) I really hope you will hear the bell in your homes and feel assured of God’s presence.

Keep us, good Lord  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Whilst the government has closed churches to public services (23/3/20) the are when I shall be in St Michael’s church:

- 5 Sun 10:30 am Palm Sunday Prayer in church
- 9 Thur 07:00 pm Maundy Thursday prayers
- 10 Fri 10:30 Good Friday carrying cross in the town and up Castle Hill
- 12 Sun Easter Day 10:30 am Parish Prayer
- 19 Sun 10:30 am Parish Prayer
- 29 Sun 10:30 am Parish Prayer

and I shall be in Maiden Bradley church:

- 5 Sun 09:30 am
- 12 Sun Easter Day 09:30 am Parish Prayer
- 19 Sun 09:30 am
- 29 Sun 09:30 am

Rev Carol

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## **WALK OF WITNESS ON CASTLE HILL on Good Friday 10th April from 10.30.**

Please note this is in the public space but I CANNOT and do not invite you to attend not even with social distancing. I am not encouraging anyone to break the strict recommendations of care for others by the Government.

Everything is different this year. Self-isolating is something we are all doing or contemplating. This year we hope to walk round Mere perhaps past your house with the cross.

It is to remember Jesus' sense of isolation as he too carried the cross for humanity. We hope the presence of the cross will give comfort to the lonely, the sick and anxious remembering that God's love is all around us.

(Plans may have to change subject to Government guidance and our health.). We will advertise the route on posters around the town.



Rev Carol

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## **Obituary – Jill Colman**

I would like to thank all the friends who have stopped me in the town and the team at Charles Farris who all gave support during Jill's recent illness.

Jill never gave up fighting after she was diagnosed with cancer September last. After two major operations and a third one pending we were told in mid- January that the disease had spread too far.

Against all adversity she was able to laugh and joke with her visitors nearly to the end. She loved the visits from Peppa, our pet dog and loved to have her next to her in bed in the hospital and stroked her right up until the last few days. Despite the pain. Jill was strong until the end.

She left the world on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January in Westminster Memorial Hospital, Shaftsbury, cared for by their excellent nursing staff and was cremated on the 12th February.

Thanks for all your kind words and support.



Aubrey Colman and 'Peppa'

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### **Church Contact Details – No services until further notice**

*The Parish Church, St Michael's the Archangel:*

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

[vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk) *Saturday is Rest day*

Churchwarden: Mrs Lynette Elliott ☎ 861646

PCC Secretary: [office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk)

*West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:*

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

[vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk) *Saturday is Rest day*

Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall ☎ 830534, Mr Colin Seaford ☎ 830263

*All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley – Services Cancelled until further notice*

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

[vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk) *Saturday is Rest day*

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

*The United Reformed Church*

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

*The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.*

Father Louis Beasley-Suffolk: ☎ 01963 34408 [hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk](mailto:hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk)

Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

During Lent Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 9.15am. Please note there will not be a Saturday evening Mass on 11 April Easter Saturday.

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### **Copy date for MAY 2020 Issue**

Closing deadline is: 4:00pm on TUESDAY 20th April.

Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425.

Via: ✉ [editor@merematters.co.uk](mailto:editor@merematters.co.uk) or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

Please be sure to state your name and a contact telephone number to ensure inclusion.

## Mere Town Council's - Local Resilience Forum

If you are self-isolating due to Covid-19 and need help with:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription pickup | <input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call |

Just get in touch with one of our telephone co-ordinators listed on the back of this card between 8.00am and 6.00pm and we will do our best to find someone nearby to help you (for free!)

This is not an alternative to the NHS or Social Services, it is simply residents trying to look after each other.

[Contact details see over](#)





<b>Name</b>	<b>Home Phone</b>	<b>Mobile</b>
Ann Rich	01747 861493	07413 512023
Isabel Page	01747 860297	
Jane Batten	01747 860583	
Joanne King		07740 858923
Julie Morris		07503 525954
Mary Willson	01747 229609	07550 076240
Rachael Hansford	01747 860168	07989 470278
Rose Heesom		07791 559674
Roy Bewis		07878 903178

If you are self-isolating and have absolutely no other family, friends or neighbours who can help you, then please contact one of these between the hours of 8.00am - 6.00pm.

If you can volunteer in any way or wish to make any comment then please contact:

Richard Jefferies

 01747 863425

 07950 797273

 [rajefferies@btinternet.com](mailto:rajefferies@btinternet.com)



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