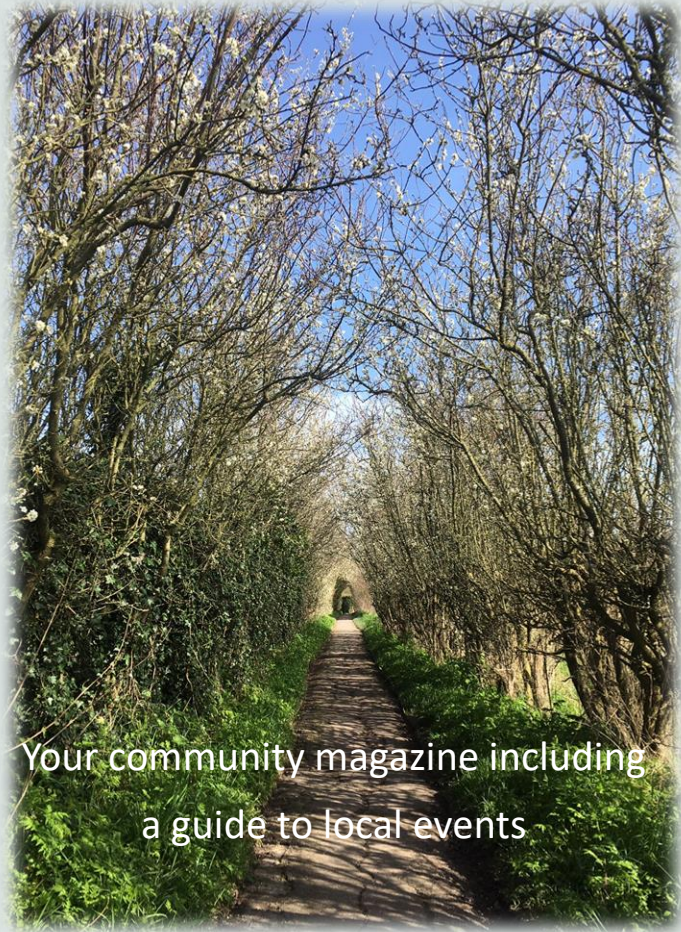


Mere Matters

& so does West Knoyle



Your community magazine including
a guide to local events

July/August 2020

The Editor Writes

Our last edition was in April 2020 which we endeavored to hand deliver to every house in Mere with the help of volunteers – apologies if you didn't get one. In the absence of the May and June editions we felt this edition was important so as to keep everyone informed. Hand delivered again!

The emphasis in the intervening period has been on maintaining the health and well-being of the community through the work of the Mere Local Resilience Volunteers which I was asked to coordinate on behalf of the Town Council. Little did I realise what I was letting myself in for and Mere Matters just had to take a back seat.

Our community thrives because there are so many who invest their time in organising groups, socials and events. Whilst activities have changed, the last few months have seen even more people coming forward as volunteers to help in all sorts of ways – some of their stories and anecdotes you will find within these pages – some may make you laugh and others may make you cry. Thanks to each and every one of you no matter how much or what you have done. I cannot say you have saved lives; but life has been more bearable for many because of you.

Most of us will have joined in the collective expression of gratitude on Thursday evenings to the NHS and others. I am hopeful that when we can shake hands or dare I say, have a hug with friends and family again (do you remember what it was like to have and give/receive a hug?), the town will come together to celebrate and formally acknowledge the efforts of those who have gone that extra mile. Keep safe and well. Back in September, I hope!

Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 📠 07950 797273 rajefferies@btinternet.com

Mere Town Council

I would like to start my report by saying how proud I am of the people of Mere over the last three months. A new generation of volunteers came forward to support the community and we are extremely grateful. Although some of these have now gone back to work or resumed other commitments, it is estimated that at one time we had a workforce of 150 volunteers on the Community Support Group register. The Mere Community Support Group (or Local Resilience Group), headed by Richard Jefferies, who has worked tirelessly throughout the last 3 months, has been a tremendous success. So much so that it has been recognised by higher authorities and emulated by others. As mentioned in Richard's report, the volunteers have carried out numerous tasks, which have all helped to ease the worries and burden on those that needed help. At this time, when lockdown measures are being relaxed, we don't know how much of this support will still be needed but it is very reassuring to know that we have an effective volunteer force who are prepared to step up and help. I am not going to single out any individuals but want to thank you all and as soon as we are allowed to do so, we

shall be organising some kind of thank you party in recognition for all your help. The two foodbanks in Mere have been tremendous and their supporters and volunteers have put in hours and hours to help provide this valuable and much needed resource.

I would like to thank the dedication of our doctors and all at Mere surgery, all at Mere pharmacy including their 'bouncers on the door' for their patience, smiling faces and their co-operation with the community support group. I also want to mention and thank all the care workers in Mere. I am aware that we have a number of residents who have been busy during lockdown producing PPE, whether it be scrubs, bags for scrubs or face masks and whether that be directly or indirectly for the NHS and key workers. There has been a national drive to support, protect and thank our NHS, health workers and other key workers and the clapping and cheering at 8.00 pm on a Thursday evening has been very moving along with the varied displays of rainbows, teddy bears and, of course, our unique Covid snake in the churchyard. All this has demonstrated our amazing community spirit and desire to support one another. Mere is renowned for its vibrant community spirit and I know a lot has been done by neighbours and friends for neighbours and friends that has largely gone unrecognised. I also know that it would be impossible to try and thank everyone who has made a difference. I would just like to thank all the residents of Mere and to say how grateful I am to live in this little town.

I don't know how we would have coped had the businesses in Mere not been resourceful and found ways of staying open and supplying the essentials necessary for day to day living. Special thanks go to the management and staff at Mere Co-Op, Mere Post Office and Sprout & Flower.

I would like to thank the Town Clerk, Lindsey Wood and her assistant Sonya Ward, for working throughout the Covid-19 crisis, responding to the government guidelines by shutting down facilities as required and then gradually reopening them, some with restrictions following risk assessments. Also ensuring that other essential services could continue in order to meet the new demands placed upon them by the lockdown situation. I am aware that some difficult decisions needed to be made at a time when it was not possible to hold physical Council meetings and that time resources were extended to concentrate on supporting the community and also to meet the ever increasing administration deadlines. We are anxious to get back to holding regular meetings just as soon as government guidelines will allow. To keep everyone involved and aware of what has been going on – the Town Clerk has produced decision reports in lieu of Minutes – these are displayed on the Town Council website www.merewilts.org I also want to thank the grounds staff for finding ways to work safely in order to keep facilities and open spaces available for us all to use and enjoy. It is regrettable that we had to scale down our VE Day celebrations but I was extremely grateful to Peter, Mary & Michael for coming along on 8th May and playing the Last Post at the War Memorial which proved to be a very moving experience.

Another recent occasion that I found very moving was the way that everyone came together to say farewell to John Hancock as his funeral procession drove through the town. John was a key figure of the community who selflessly helped and supported Mere in so many ways and was well loved by everyone. The people of Mere will miss him dreadfully and we will be discussing, with his family, proposals for a local memorial. Our thoughts go out to his family at this sad time.

Clive Hazzard, Chairman, Mere Town Council
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.

☎ 860701 ✉ lindseywood@merewilts.org 🌐 merewilts.org

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

My wife Sue has suffered a stroke which has been very distressing. However, after over three weeks the outlook is now positive. I still spend several hours a day regarding council casework and I have spent some of this time helping local businesses with Covid-19 grants. Please look at Wiltshire Councils website for information on Covid-19, some of which may help local businesses as well as private individuals. I have continued to support those with housing applications, despite the difficulties imposed by lockdown.

I was sad to have learned of the passing of John Hancock. He was our policeman for decades until retirement when he stayed on in the community. He lived and worked with us when the area still had a police house combined with a police station and took an active part in our community. John won the South-West Region's Police Support Volunteer of the Year award last year.

The national pandemic emergency has resulted in a substantial hole in Wiltshire Council's budget, probably around fifty million pounds and it is hoped the government will bridge this gap.

It is that time of year when Councils and Committees hold their Annual meetings and elect Chair & Vice-Chairs. Jose Green will remain Chair of our local South West Wiltshire Area Board with Tony Deane as Vice-Chairman. Richard Gamble is now Chairman of Wiltshire Council with the Vice-Chairman being James Sheppard. Wiltshire Council has also just approved steps to change its senior leadership structure and the proposed change will see a reduction from two Chief Executive Officers to one Chief Executive. I am sorry to hear that Robin Townsend, Director of Corporate Services at Wiltshire Council, will be leaving. He was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours and I have known him for many years.

Wiltshire Council are now holding virtual meetings and the Southern Area Planning Committee will soon be doing the same. The weaknesses of broadband infrastructure in some areas of the South West Wiltshire Area Board have become more apparent since people have been working from home and holding virtual meetings etc. The board is considering what it can do to improve the situation.

Dog Fouling - I am still receiving complaints about. Please clean up after your dog in public areas. Dog excrement can cause blindness in children and it is not nice for others to step in. The Wiltshire Council Dog Warden will visit offenders if requested

☎ 07710 441599 ✉ george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk

Town Clerk's Report

It is not usual for me to write a report for our parish magazine but then we are living in unusual times. I just wanted to add how proud I have been at the way the community of Mere has pulled together and joined forces to help one another. When we initially called for help and volunteer support we were amazed by the response we received and were able to put together a very efficient and resourceful community support group that gave us the confidence to say that we were making a real difference to the lives of our residents. Indeed, in the early days I received a number of emails from worried offspring saying that their elderly parents were living in Mere and they needed to self-isolate and they were unable to get provisions or prescriptions and they didn't know how they were going to manage. I was able to reassure those people and give them the information they needed to stop them worrying. Thank you to all involved and particular thanks must be given to Richard Jefferies who has gallantly managed the support group and supervised the volunteers.

As Clerk to the Town Council I have received regular emails from Wiltshire Council giving the latest news and advice on Covid-19. I know that all this information is available to view on numerous websites and we do try to put some of the relevant information out on local social media pages in order to keep you informed. At the moment they are trying to reach out to help communities recover from the pandemic and Wiltshire Council would be particularly interested to know if the Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant impacts that the community feels it cannot recover from. What is it that Wiltshire Council can do to enable communities to recover from this pandemic and the lockdown situation? For example, I have suggested that they might try and source some bite size digital e-learning – something that may help people who feel a bit inept or who wish to hone their skills in order to keep pace with the new way of communicating or holding virtual meetings or shopping or banking etc. We may find that there are unemployment issues or mental health issues that need addressing. If you feel that there is something that Wiltshire Council can help us do, to enable us to recover as a community, please let me know and I will pass it on to them.

I have also received much communication about economic recovery and the funding that is available to help businesses and shops. Businesses re-opening their premises can benefit from a COVID-19 Business Recovery Pack launched by Wiltshire Council. The pack contains a round-up of government guidance, helpful tips on how to implement the guidance and safety advice posters and

social distancing floor spots for businesses to use to keep their staff, customers and visitors safe. These resources have been created to support businesses across the county as they adapt their premises to provide a safe and welcoming experience for customers. They also complement additional signage being used across Wiltshire high streets to encourage people to follow social distancing guidelines. There is also funding available to help shops on the high street reopen safely.

Floral Sponsors

The Town Clerk would like to report that once again, the Town Council will be keeping up appearances by planting the tubs around the town to give impressive floral displays. Last year we were very grateful to the various sponsors (business and members of the public – see below) who helped to make these floral displays possible. The scheme was a great success. There are 14 tubs within the town and they are planted twice a year for summer/autumn displays and winter/spring displays. Mr. Clive Hazzard has graciously agreed to replant the tubs again this year and I should point out that this is done at cost price and at no profit to him and we thank him for this generous offer. We also thank the willing volunteers who water the tubs. We estimate the cost of planting each tub is £40 per year and once again, we are looking for sponsors and we would be grateful to any businesses or members of the public who would like to sponsor a tub. We will publish a list of all sponsors in a future edition of Mere Matters. If you would like to help with Mere's floral enhancements, please contact:

Mrs. Lindsey Wood, Town Clerk, Duchy Manor, Springfield Road, Mere. Tel: 01747 860701

We would like to thank the following, who sponsored the tubs last year:

Southern Co-Op, Hill Brush Company, F. J. Chalke Ltd.
David & Judith Hope. Mrs. J. Hurd. Mr. & Mrs. R. Welch
+ 2 other sponsors who wished to remain anonymous

Lindsey Wood ☎ 860701 ✉ lindseywood@merewilts.org 🌐 merewilts.org

Angel Corner Tea Rooms

We will be continuing to offer takeaway and delivery locally, providing breakfast, light lunches, cream teas, high teas, home baked cakes and treats. We can cater for special occasions you may have coming up for your socially distanced garden party's. Following government guidelines we are hoping to move onto the next phase of opening the tea rooms further with the use of our garden where we will be able to provide table service as from the 4th of July. We will continue to monitor the guidelines carefully and we will keep you updated through social media and notices on our windows. The Angel Team would like to say a huge thank you to all our local customers for their support over the last few months.

Paul Farrow ☎ 860524 paulfarrow1966@hotmail.co.uk

Mere Local Resilience to Covid-19

It is interesting to note that at the time of writing, the volunteer workforce comprising telephone coordinators and isolation volunteers have been involved in over 1000 telephone calls, made 154+ 'one off' support visits, and made in excess of 350 repeat support visits to assist with shopping, collecting prescriptions and generally just being a really caring Mere Neighbour, some have even helped look after the dog walking etc. In addition we have a group of volunteers who make daily contact with a few people who have needed that extra bit of support. The total volunteer workforce has comprised 80+ people, some of whom have now had to go back to work and some who have taken a break. Without their individual efforts life would have been very different – my personal thanks to you all and for putting up with me!

Who knows what is around the corner? Will we get a second wave? Rest assured that we shall keep the local resilience group going for the foreseeable future and be ready to respond to the needs of the community as best we can.

It has been a stressful for time for our Doctors and local businesses which have remained open and our thanks go to them all. Where would we be without our wonderful Pharmacy, the Co-op, Sprout & Flower our Post Office and others?

Finally I have to thank everyone in Mere. There have been a few dissenters but Mere has really responded well in exercising patience, consideration and compliance with requests in regard social distancing, hygiene etc etc. It is the community which has minimized any infection and hopefully it will stay that way.

Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 📠 07950 797273 rjefferies@btinternet.com

From Mere Surgery

As you are aware, Coronavirus has impacted on how we provided services to our patients over recent months, so we thought it would be helpful to keep you updated with some of the changes we have implemented to keep patients and staff safe.

The priority still remains for us to look after our patients' health and would encourage anyone who has concerns about their health to contact the surgery.

Pre-booked appointments

There will be no access to the reception area unless you have a pre-booked appointment. If you arrive early for your booked appointment, please wait outside the surgery until your appointment time.

Face to face appointments are only available once you have spoken to a doctor or nurse via a telephone call or video consultation.

Please attend your appointments on your own where possible

We are not currently using the touch screen to confirm you have arrived, so please check in at Reception.

Booking on-line appointments

You are able to book Video / phone consultations only at present. As the situation improves, our aim is to release more appointments online when it is appropriate to do so.

Face coverings, masks and gloves

Please do not be alarmed our staff are wearing face coverings, this is to protect our patients and staff. We would ask if you have to attend the surgery at any time, you wear a face covering.

Hand sanitiser is available in the foyer, it is vitally important that you use this on entering and leaving the surgery, EVEN if you are wearing gloves we would request you still use the hand sanitiser available.

Social distancing

Social distancing measures are in place throughout the surgery so please ensure you maintain 2 metres apart. We have restricted the number of people permitted in the foyer at any one time, so it may be necessary for you to wait outside the surgery until such time that someone leaves to allow you to enter.

Sample pots

If you have been asked to collect a sample pot these are available in the foyer for patients to collect. A return box is also available in the foyer for you to place your sample in and this will be collected by a member of the clinical team to process.

All samples have to be received at the surgery by 11.30am.

How to contact the surgery

Please contact the surgery by telephone or email via our website in the first instance -

Website: www.meresurgery.co.uk

Email: meresurgery@nhs.net

If you feel that your enquiry cannot be dealt with over the phone or via the website please phone reception first to be given instructions on how best we can assist you. If we need to make changes at short notice, please visit our website for the latest information.

Thank you for your understanding during this time

The Doctors at Mere Surgery 📞 860001

From a Mere volunteer:

..... we have just thoroughly enjoyed helping and making new friends. It was a challenge one day shopping for 5 households & with 2 trolleys, all whilst adhering to social distancing rules!

Mere Surgery Update for Carers in the Community

There are a number of people registered as carers in our Community who are caring for a partner, spouse, friend or neighbour.

At Mere surgery we understand the impact that the current COVID-19 pandemic has on your health and well-being and we are committed to continue to support you and those you care for during these difficult times. If you need help or advice about your carers role please call Mere surgery on 01747 860001 and speak to Rachel.

Mere surgery is working closely with Carer Support Wiltshire to ensure that we all support our patients in the role of carer in our community.

Our plans to open a Carers Café are in place and hopefully we will be able to update you in due course when current restrictions are lifted.



**Carer Support
Wiltshire**

Although face to face visits are not possible at the current time Carers Support Wiltshire are offering a Talk and Support service.

Call us on Freephone 0800 181 4118 and ask to be included on our Talk and Support service for:

Time to talk and be listened to; Informal friendship, reassurance and support;
Help you find ways to lessen your feelings of isolation.

All our Talk and Support volunteers will have an understanding of the difficulties carers face. Many of them will have experience of caring themselves. Call today to talk to someone to get started.

SOLVE 4 SUCCESS.....



BRIDGE CROSSING PROBLEM

Alice, Brian, Carol and David are on an outdoors team building course. They have to cross a bridge in 17 minutes. The bridge will collapse if there are more than 2 people on it at the same time. It is dark and it is too dangerous to cross the bridge without a torch. There is only one torch. Alice can cross the bridge in 1 minute. The others are wounded or injured to varying degrees which means that it takes:

Brian 2 minutes to cross the bridge

Carol 5 minutes to cross the bridge

David 10 minutes to cross the bridge

If there is more than one person on the bridge, the bridge can only be crossed at the speed of the slowest person. How can they cross the bridge in 17 minutes?

Tiddlers and Toddlers Foodbank

Hopefully everyone in Mere knows about the group's FareShare Foodbank. It has been running for three years now, and has been an even greater asset during these difficult times.

I would like to thank everyone who has given to the stall. Our FareShare plus Walmart total collections from stores come to over 300 trips, collecting over 4,000 kgs of food and tripling recently due to extra food banks being run 5 days a week at least for the first two months of the crisis; a big difference from the original just once on a Monday, school's term time only.



Individual people's donations have included regular entire weekly shops from a couple of lovely local benefactors, plus generous cheques and cash, as well as swapping tins for a loaf to help out. Any leftover tins have been donated to the Church Foodbank parcel service every week, plus after one extra trip was recently made to

Warminster Waitrose (who having already allocated all their perishables to their local charities) donated an extra two trolley loads of long life items as well.

Waitrose Gillingham have been the most amazing regular generous resource; very few collections have been cancelled even during the most difficult times of low stock and some staff shortages. Local Asda (Walmart) and Tesco stores have also been donating.

With the Lecture Hall where we normally meet being shut, special thanks go to Laura and David Rich for saving the day, for all the setting up and manning of the Bank outdoors at The Gallery, Holt, Water Street, then for collecting and passing on the leftover long life stuff to the



church every week, and for sharing their valuable space which has been at a premium during lockdown with a big family all needing space to work.

There is a small but stalwart team of volunteers doing the regular store collections, and also making local deliveries, some to elderly people, or those too ill to go shopping. This help has been invaluable; kindly giving up their time and petrol money, so special thanks to Helen Lucas, Poppy Hall, Amber and Sam Willis, David and Steve Rich.

We have just learnt that a further amazing large



donation has been received from the Golden Bottle Fund which will enable us to organise vouchers from local shops to give to families in need. Thanks so much to the ever generous Hoare family.



Finally I would like to thank the Lecture Hall Committee for enabling us to store so much there and for helping to make the Toddler group such a focal point of the village and as popular as it is.

Oh, and even the goats on the hill and local pigs and birds have benefitted from the leftovers, so nothing has been wasted.

Current Foodbanks are Saturdays and Mondays, but we will be setting up more sessions if needed, 10.30am - 11.00am for young families, and then open the rest of the day for everyone else. See Mere Mutters for any changes / extra days.

NB: Any family in need can also contact the Church Foodbank to arrange delivery or collection of a food parcel of the long life Foodbank items. Please contact: Richard/ Penny/ Carol - also on Mere Mutters.

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

Warminster Food Bank

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).

Mere Historical Society

Although all our activities have been brought to a halt, the committee have been busy behind the scenes and we thought you would like to know what we've been doing. Although this summer's programme of outings has had to be cancelled most of the programme has been provisionally rebooked for 2021. We have been working on our programme of talks and have been in touch with speakers booked for our current programme and they are all willing to change dates if necessary, including Paul Atterbury who is due to give our first talk at the beginning of October. Fingers crossed!

Many of our members had paid their subscriptions of £10 for the current membership year 2020/21 before the lockdown so given the uncertainty about the future we have decided the best solution is to extend the validity of all membership to include 2021/2022. For those of you who have already paid, we

suggest you alter your card to 2020/22. For those of you who haven't paid and would like to remain members please send your fee to Gerry Cook (861797).

With our 50th anniversary on the horizon we were very disappointed that for the first time in its history Mere Historical Society has had to cancel this year's AGM. The Chair and Treasurer have written their reports and the accounts have been signed off, so please click the AGM tab to have a look at this year's papers.

Our best wishes to you all, we miss you!

Caroline Cook ☎ 861797 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Salisbury District Hospital



My name is Duncan Murray. I am an Intensive Care Doctor at Salisbury District Hospital and an Ambassador for our hospital charity, the Stars Appeal.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, nurses, doctors, porters, cleaners, catering staff, office workers, and my many other NHS colleagues at Salisbury Hospital, are all working hard to ensure patients receive the best possible care.

Throughout this difficult time, the Stars Appeal is funding a range of projects that are really helping our staff and our patients. The Stars Appeal staff counsellor and mental health nurse are helping staff cope with what they are going through.

Stars Appeal Wi-Fi is keeping staff and patients connected with loved ones.

Specialist simulation training is ensuring we are well prepared for whatever we may face and Hospital chaplains are offering comfort and reassurance. The Stars Appeal is also working to provide staff with morale boosting care packages, and their garden spaces offer peace and tranquillity away from the busy wards.

The support offered by the Stars Appeal at this incredibly challenging time is more valuable than ever, but the lockdown restrictions have meant much of the charity's normal fundraising has had to stop. If you can, please donate to enable our charity to continue to help us all through this crisis. You can do so by completing the form overleaf or by going online

at www.starsappeal.org/coronavirus

Every donation, large or small, will make a difference for staff and patients at this difficult time for our hospital. With your help, the Stars Appeal can continue its vital work and react quickly with new ways to help as things progress.

..... Being of mature years, and unable to get out and about, it has been so reassuring that someone has telephoned me each morning to make sure I have woken and to check I have food and drink. Thank you to my Angels.

Dressmaking in Mere – Operation Scrubs






Community members pulling together has been a feature of the COVID-19 pandemic - and all over the UK, dressmakers have been sewing scrubs for healthcare workers.

There are some very talented dressmakers in and around Mere, so 'Dressmaking in Mere' members were delighted to be involved in sewing 18 sets of scrubs for the Bruton branch of the Somerset Scrubs group. They were even more delighted to be able to supply Mere Surgery with 15 sets of scrubs, featuring special **"Made by a Dressmaker in Mere"** labels.

The task was shared among 20 different sewers who cut out and sewed tops, bottoms, and laundry bags for each set, over a period of several weeks. It was a great team effort, resulting in some beautifully made garments and a great sense of achievement for everyone involved.

Now on to making bunting from the scraps...



-  = Landline telephone
-  = Mobile telephone
-  = Email Address
-  = Website Address
-  = Facebook

Mere Silent Auction

A massive thank you to everyone who took part and placed bids for our Mere Silent Auction. We are absolutely delighted to let you know that the auction raised a magnificent £638.50p :)

This means that each charity, The Rosemary Goddard Centre, Warminster Food Bank and Mere & Gillingham Cats Protection have both received £212.50.

A big thank you to all the generous companies and people of Mere and the surrounding area who kindly donated the 26 amazing lots.

Thank you everyone, and the good news is we will be back to do it all again sometime soon - so please keep an eye on the facebook page - Mere Silent Auction.

Steve 📞 077527 15288 - Facebook: Mere Silent Auction &
✉️ meresilentauction@mail.com

Mere Bowls Club

I must start by saying how shocked and saddened the Club was by the sudden passing of John Gripper Hancock. John was a member of the local Police, a past Captain of the Club, a member of Dinton Short Mat Bowls Club and also an active member of Gillingham Bowls Club; he will be missed by a lot of people within the local district. Our thoughts and prayers are with Rita at this very sad time.

Now to the better news - Hooray! Mere Bowls Club is open for social bowls only, and even more good news - there are no fees to pay and no membership to pay either (however this is under constant review). Should members wish to bowl then there are a few new rules to be adhered to, they are as follows:

All bowling must be pre-booked with John FitzGerald on 📞 860867 or via fitzgerald.jns@sky.com. All equipment in the shed must be wiped down prior to and after each use, do not assume that the person before you did it. There is a supply of wipes in the shed for this purpose.

All Bowls England guidelines must be followed; they are displayed in poster form on both of the club notice boards.

Take any food/drink with that you may need, remove all your waste from site and dispose of it at home. The toilets and wash basins only in the pavilion may be used but please do not enter the club cupboard or kitchen areas.

Cutting of the green normally takes place on Tuesday and Friday mornings, John FitzGerald will know when you book if there are any anomalies and timings have to be changed.

Coaching is available on a one to one basis for new or existing members; this is to be arranged via Don Butchers.

Don Butchers on 📞 860775 also ✉️ don.butchers@btinternet.com

Link Scheme

The Link Scheme has remained open throughout the coronavirus lockdown to take clients to hospital or other medical appointments or to deliver prescription medicines in our weekly dossette box run for Mere and Silton surgeries. The number of available drivers reduced from 38 to 5 as many of our volunteers are over 70 but most of our clients' medical appointments were cancelled so we have been able to cope with the reduced demand. Our Friday medicine deliveries have continued and, indeed, increased both in the number of addresses visited and their spread. We primarily cover people living in the local villages but have been to new places like Cucklington. Trips have been taking up to 4 hours and have covered over 50 miles. Hospital parking has generally been easier during lockdown although Warminster remained as busy as ever.

We have spent much time going through the regularly changing advice from the Government and Community First who oversee Link Schemes for Wiltshire Council. Using this we have introduced safety guidelines to protect both clients and drivers from the risk of spreading the virus. Both have to wear a face covering while in the car and clients have to sit in the back where this is practical. Drivers carry hand sanitiser and wipe down all surfaces that may have been touched by the client while in the car.

During the lockdown we have kept in touch with our volunteers by regular update emails (and post to those not on email). We know these updates have been appreciated by the responses and that many of our volunteers are frustrated at being unable to help.

One disappointing outcome of the coronavirus restrictions has been the cancellation of our 2020 AGM. The Trustees of the Mere and District Link Scheme have agreed unanimously that the 2020 Link Scheme AGM should be cancelled. The AGM was pencilled in for Friday 5 June but it was not possible to proceed because of the coronavirus restrictions. All the Management Committee have agreed to carry on for another year and our accounts for 2019/20 have shown a small loss of £309.57. A copy of the 2019/20 accounts can be requested by calling the Link on 860096.

We remain in a sound position and our volunteers are looking forward to taking clients to their hospital and other medical appointments when the coronavirus pandemic allows. Stay alert!

John FitzGerald, Chair 📞 860096

..... I am humbled to think that whilst I am forced to stay at home, the people of Mere have rallied to help collect my shopping and collecting my tablets. Thank you one and all – you are heroes.

Mere School

Mere School, like the rest of the country, had to adapt to the challenges presented to us by the outbreak of Coronavirus. During lockdown the school remained open, playing its part to support the vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Then more year groups were allowed to attend which meant all staff taking the infamous 'bubbles' of children throughout the day. We are incredibly proud of all the children, including those who have stayed at home completing home learning. We have worked successfully as a team to ensure that learning and children's well-being has been at the heart of the support we have given.

During this time we have received many positive messages from parents thanking us for all the work we have done. One parent wrote:

"I just wanted to write and say thank you for everything you are doing to help keep our kids safe whilst educating them at school. After my poor attempts at home schooling I am even more in awe of what you do for them on a daily basis. I totally appreciate the difficulties of opening up your classrooms to very small children. Your efforts are much appreciated."

Finally Mrs Williamson and the governors would like to thank all the staff working in school and the parents at home for all their hard work. Have a great summer everyone!

Mere Museum

Our current exhibition which began in February will hopefully be on display for a few weeks once the library re-opens. I am still planning our next events and would welcome resident's memories of their days at school. Input from all ages would be wonderful to give variation and interest. Please email me with your memories.

We still have plans for a couple of fund raising evenings and as soon as we can we will notify you of new dates.

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

Support all your local Businesses

Use them or lose them. They have supported us, now it is time for us to support them!



From a Mere volunteer:

..... Another new friend was short of flour, we couldn't get any from anywhere & were kindly helped out by The Walnut Tree Pub and ended up with 32kg!!!

Mere pop up Food Bank

It seems a long time ago but in March we did a collection for Warminster Food Bank outside the Co-Op one Saturday morning and, as always, the good folks of Mere were very generous. Then on the next Monday the world stopped and we could not get the food to Warminster. On the back of this we started up Mere Emergency pop up Food Bank as the Food bank in Warminster had shut temporarily.

We did a very quick set up of facilities in the Church and we had weekly collections for 11 weeks and were able to issue over 40 emergency food boxes for families and individuals. The amount of food we had donated was massive and in the light of demand slowing up to almost none, in the last couple of weeks, we took the decision to take all the unused supplies to Warminster Food Bank at the beginning of June and there was just over 500kg!

We cannot thank you all enough for your generosity by donating a massive amount of food and some very generous financial help as well.

For the foreseeable future all requests for food bank boxes can be made through both Rev Carol Green ☎ 861859 or Mr Mark Dunham 📠 07852 724512.

If the need arises in the future we are in a position to reopen the Mere Emergency food bank but for now its back to the previous system via Warminster. Meanwhile the Fairshare food bank at Water Street run by the amazing Rich family is still running - Anne Rich 📠 07413 512023 ☎ 861493
✉ arich4@icloud.com

Once the Library reopens the donation point will be up and running in there for your donations for Warminster Food Bank.

A big thank you to everyone who has helped over the last few months with this vital community venture, the positivity of all our supporters was a source of joy each time we spoke to you.

Thank you Richard Wilson, Mark & Lucy Dunham and Rev Carol Green.

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

Mere Gardening Club

At present we have had to cancel events up to June. We will keep members informed as time progresses. Any members who have paid this year's membership fee will have it carried over to 2021. At some point we will hold the scarecrow competition too which had been planned for this summer, so keep thinking of ideas.

Rose Heesom Membership Sec 📠 07791 559 674 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk

Shreen Harmony

Although not meeting as usual, our Musical Director, Caroline, has arranged some YouTube sessions where she is teaching us some new songs, with her husband, Nick, acting as the "choir".

Caroline has also organised two "Singalong" sessions on Zoom, in aid of charity. The first one was to replace the concert which we usually hold in May, in aid of the Alzheimer's Society but as we were unable to do this, this first Zoom session was in aid of this charity so close to our hearts, when we were able to donate £595.

The second was in aid of Canine Partners, who bring greater independence and quality of life to their owners, offering security, companionship and practical help with everyday household tasks. We were able to donate £375.

We are so delighted with these results, achieved by the generosity of Shreen Harmony choir members and our wonderful Friends.

Judy Fray (Chairman)

Mere Theatre Club

An update for our members: as you know all outings have been cancelled and we are negotiating for refunds from the theatres. 1 or 2 have been very slow in paying out, perhaps understandably, which is why you have not as yet received your money back. We are aiming to repay everyone in one go, rather than piecemeal, hence the delay. We hope to finalise this soon.

Fingers crossed for something this autumn! Keep well and hope to see you soon.

Madeline Morris 📞 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

The Battling Butt

Well here we are still in lockdown but do you know what, I can honestly see some real benefits in the situation. OK so we haven't yet raised the amount of money we had hoped to from the share issue but I guess that was to be expected under the circumstances, but this has all reinforced our thinking that buying the pub for the community is the right thing to do. I'll explain why as I go through a few of the things that have brought us to this conclusion.

Firstly we've seen some glorious weather, warm sunny days which means that people off work have been able to get on with the garden tidy up season, and I know many of them look fantastic. Brenden and Dawn at the pub have done exactly that, planting cleaning and painting all the public areas in the garden and inside the pub. But they have been just as busy on other things. The Church and Pub have joined forces and have been collecting for local food banks with the Butt of Sherry being the drop off point for donations between 10 and 2

Thursdays but in addition while you are in the side room dropping off food why not pick up or drop off a book or two. Yes the Butt of Sherry book exchange is up and running, no fee just pick what you want or drop off something that you have

already enjoyed.

The Thursday Quiz has been a great success. We wanted to keep our friendly quiz going during lockdown and would like to think we were one of the first to organise such an event. Why not join us on the Thursday Night Pub Quiz Facebook page and who knows you may want to carry on in person once this coronavirus is all done and dusted.

We are all re-evaluating the important things in life, our families, friends and of course our community, we are enjoying our surroundings and nature itself, we are keeping an eye on our neighbours and the vulnerable and to be honest we hope that these are some of the benefits of the situation that will be with us even after we get back to normal.



We still need your help here at the Mere Community Benefit Society primarily by buying shares, please visit The Butt of Sherry Facebook Page, telephone 07851 963293 or visit www.merecbcs.co.uk for more information on how to become part of this exciting project.


PS. As we start to come out of lockdown we are delighted to announce that we have passed the 50% milestone we had hoped for in the share issue. Thanks to the people of Mere, however your continued support and purchase of shares is still required to secure the project.

Melvin Wilkinson  bospreservation@gmail.com

Healthy Mere Walking

It has been pleasing to see how many Mere residents are regularly out walking on our footpaths as part of their exercise. We are fortunate and do not need to drive hundreds of miles to find a pleasant place to take gentle exercise and fresh air. Oh, and there is plenty to see should you wish to check your eyesight. If you are struggling with a route to follow then please buy our set of 6 maps for £3 available from Sprout and Flower (and as the following venues open - The Library, Angel Cafe, The Butt of Sherry).

Our friends, the footpath group (maintenance) are waiting for the OK from Wiltshire Council to go out and work - so you may find a bit of bramble or nettles, so a pair of gloves etc. could prove useful on some of the rights of way. The more popular walks though are clear. As the summer arrives, we will be working on a programme of walks to make up for the loss of some of our March Hare walks - look out for our September Strolls, October Outings and December Delights! Volunteer required - the Mere Footpath Group website has become stagnant and we could do with someone with a bit of time and interest to help revise and update it - contact below. Hope to see you out walking.

John Jordan  07840722835 merefootpathgroup.btck.co.uk



The Mere Suchana Support Group is very much looking forward to resuming its fund-raising support for this small but vital project in rural West Bengal, India which enables children from

very disadvantaged communities to get a grounding and support in basic educational skills, as well enjoying sport and creative activities and gaining in confidence and a sense of self-worth. Recent results of a survey tracking the progress of Suchana 'graduates' have been impressive, underlining the fact that this is a project that really makes a difference.

Suchana itself has had to remain closed during lockdown, but hopes to re-open in early July. In the meantime Suchana teachers have been working on translating and preparing more stories and other books and teaching materials in Santali and Kora, which are the first languages of many Suchana children. This is pioneering work and so far Suchana has distributed over 4,000 such books to schools and other projects further afield where these languages are spoken by 'adivasi' children.

Sadly this year's local fund-raising events, apart from a coffee morning in January and our very successful Shrove Tuesday Quiz, have so far had to be cancelled. However we are going to hold a lockdown-compliant coffee morning in the garden of Grove Cottage (opposite the Library in Barton Lane) on **Tuesday 18th August** from 10.30am. Taking an idea from the National Trust, we are asking anyone who would like to come to book a time-slot in advance, by phone or email (see below) so we can ensure we keep carefully to whatever regulations about permitted numbers and distancing are then in place for meeting outside. We have room for four well-distanced tables in the garden. (We will have problems if it rains, but, here's hoping!)

No Strawberry Tea this year, but we're hoping to hold a cake-stall on a Saturday morning by the Clock Tower in Mere Square as soon as this can be permitted. (Offers of cakes very welcome!). Please keep a look-out for this event.

Looking further ahead, we are planning a repeat of our enjoyable pre-Christmas 'Sleigh-Drive' in late November. Details later. Meanwhile, very many thanks to those who have sent donations or supported in other ways during lock-down.

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553 judithvthompson@aol.com

From a Mere volunteer:.....

We didn't do it for thanks One lovely couple gave us 15 cuttings/plants from their own garden as they knew we were working hard on ours and trying to fill the borders!
We collected them by wheelbarrow!

Fair Trade in Lockdown

As I have been unable to hold any of my usual stalls and sales over the past weeks, I had a number of items which were nearing their sell-by-date. Rather than put on weight by eating all the biscuits ourselves, I sent an appeal out to all my regular customers and things 'flew off the shelves' (well out of my boxes!). Everyone was so generous that I was able to donate the remaining items to the Food Bank together with a cheque for nearly £30! It is good to know that Traidcraft, through Fair Trade, is able to continue to support those who struggle to survive in this pandemic; where they may rely on daily work, have little access to clean water and where social distancing is almost impossible living in a slum area.

So thank you for your continual support all you good people of Mere and I look forward to selling you more goodies soon.

Janet Way ☎ 860884 ✉ jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Castle Hill Quilters

The members of the quilting group have been keeping themselves busy during the lock down by sewing Linus quilts, quilting, embroidery and knitting. Some members have been making scrubs, scrub bags and masks. It has been an ideal opportunity for us to complete all of our unfinished projects and try new challenges.

Our president, Tania, has kept in touch with us by email and we are being given sewing challenges to keep us going one of the them is to make an individual block in pastel colours that will later be made into a charity quilt.

We are all looking forward to the day when we can meet again and I personally I am looking forward to seeing all the lovely work that our members have been making during lockdown.

Coral Pickles ✉ coral.pickles@virginmedia.com

..... Having been made aware that a young Mum was struggling by herself with two children, within an hour she had 4 boxes of food from the 'Holt' Foodbank and informed how to access the Church based 'Pop Up Foodbank'.



Mere Carnival

Carnival 2019 was a great success and having the fair at the end of Angel Lane proved popular. The memories of 2019 will have to stay with us through to 2021 as Mere Carnival, along with all carnivals on the Wessex Grand Prix Circuit, has been cancelled this year due to the Covid-19 crisis.

The Mere Carnival Committee are working on some new ideas to make our carnival an even better event, not just on carnival day in September but at other times of the year too. The afternoon procession didn't have many entries in 2019 and this is something we will be working on hoping to encourage youngsters of Mere along with their families to get creative, have some fun and show the Town what they can do.

The first events to look forward to will be Carnival Bingo and Carnival Quiz which hopefully will be back before the end of this year. We are always looking for help to organise the carnival and its associated events, if you would like to be involved with the biggest show in town please contact our secretary using the email address below.

Penny Allen, Secretary ✉ pennyninmere@gmail.com

John Gammie 📞 07831 572831 ✉ john@gammie.info 📘 Mere Carnival

Tiddlers & Toddlers

One collection trip we had to return to Waitrose with a man-with-a-van (thank you Colin Brown) as we couldn't get the 12 crates of bananas in a car, let alone the other 14 of bread and veg. It was noted that half of Mere probably made banana bread that week, people were swapping recipes for it at the stall, and we gave two crates to each of the Mere homes for the elderly too that weekend.

I don't know if they realised where they came from- we imagined them thinking that Longleat had been dropping them off as the monkeys weren't eating as much in lockdown, plus they had no-one to throw them at anymore.

Then there were the very popular berries galore, and also innumerable dozens of eggs - that was a cracking couple of weeks. When the stores asked if we would like to take leftover flowers we said 'yes please' and have been donating those to Fives Court and Bramley House for both the residents and staff to enjoy.



St Michaels Church – Appeal

The response to the Appeal has been typical of our warm hearted community with 20, four figure donations from private individuals, as well as many smaller ones. Many thanks to all those generous people who have contributed so magnificently to the Church Appeal.

In addition to the local contributions we have received some grants from the following trusts Wiltshire CC Area Board had granted £1000

The Baer trust £1,000, The Tanner Trust £ 1,000, The Fudge Trust £5,000, The Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust £5,500 and Wilts CC Area Board. £1,000.

Our current total stands at **£132,000**

It is most encouraging to have received these generous grants & we have several other applications which are still outstanding at the time of writing.

The Heritage lottery fund expressed interest in receiving an application for a contribution towards the pinnacles, but as a result of the coronavirus have stopped processing any applications until at least October.

The Diocese have granted planning permission for the internal works & we are awaiting their permission to repair the pinnacles.

The repair of the pinnacles is work that can only be done during summer months because of their height, and the Cathedral masons are too busy to do it this year. We hope that this will be able to be done next summer.

For work done before the end of this financial year a full refund of the VAT is available, a saving of about £30,000.

We therefore have a tentative start date for the internal works to begin on October 1st provided funds permit. We are still a little short of this target, so please consider donating if you haven't already done so.

Appeal Treasurer: Mrs E Barrett, Hillcrest, Hazzards Hill, Mere BA12 6EU

Cheque (Made payable to Friends Of St Michael's - Appeal A/C) Bank transfer (Lloyds Bank, Sort code 30-65-21, A/C no. 47879860)

Bill Price Appeal Chairman ✉ william.price15@btinternet.com

Pennybank Writers

Members miss the monthly meeting but keep in touch by email and phone with news of writing achievements, competitions and a literary quiz.

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

According to the impressive production lists in MADS's archive, the only year in its long history during which MADS was unable to produce even one play for its enthusiastic audiences, was 1963! Then there was no Spring Production

(apparently the 'weather intervened') and in the autumn we simply couldn't find a Producer. But we're hoping very much that 2020 won't be added to this unfortunate record; there's hope yet for 'The Happiest Days of Your Life' (and won't the First Night be a Happy Day!) However the Society bounced back, and since its foundation in 1946 has produced no fewer than 188 plays or dramatic events of all sorts for varying occasions. The history of MADS productions is also liberally sprinkled with prestigious awards for individuals and casts, achieved at any number of play festivals. It's a society that Mere can be proud of.

But even if we're not able to actually put on play for the delectation of our audiences in 2020, there is a permanent performance to be enjoyed on the Society's developing website www.mereamdram.co.uk. You can browse recent programmes and reviews, read about how MADS started way back in 1946, and even watch a video made to celebrate 60 years of local drama in Mere in 2006! And on Facebook (en-gb.facebook.com/MereAmateurDramatics) there are hundreds (probably) of photographs of recent productions which will bring back memories of just how resilient, gifted and diverse MADS' members are. Just watch out - we'll be back!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

VE Day in Lynch Close

To celebrate V.E Day in Lynch Close Mary Burfitt and I baked cakes and scones and asked residents to bring a drink with a chair and join us for a socially distanced afternoon.

Mary along with Peter and Michael Gatehouse entertained the residents with songs from the war time years and thankfully the sun shone on us making it a pleasant couple of hours. Several of us had decorated our houses with bunting and the residents also decorated the area outside the community day centre. For some of the residents it was the first time they had been out for a few weeks so I think everyone's spirits were lifted including a few drinks.

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



Maps of Mere

Can't find a named property in Mere? You know the house/business name but haven't a clue where the property is – Wall maps and booklets will hopefully be available in the not too distant future.

Extract of the almost 48" (1.2m) square map below.



Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 editor@merematters.co.uk

Dressmaking in Mere

Our dressmakers have in over more than five years of courses, gained knowledge, experience and importantly confidence in adapting patterns, making clothes that fit well and are comfortable to wear, using charity shop finds to make something wearable or ideal for the home and mending and altering their clothes or those of their families. Most importantly we have had fun, meals out together, many friendships which will obviously be long lasting have been made, especially people who had recently moved to Mere or the surrounding area.

Many of those same dressmakers and others have been busy making NHS Scrubs with support from each other as they are not that easy to construct, overseen and cut out by mostly Rachael Hansford and patterns altered for fit by Susanne. We were delighted to make many sets for Mere Surgery and you will see those used if you visit the surgery in the future.

There is a season for everything and Susanne has quite rightly decided to now concentrate on her busy shop and giving a little more time to her family. She has been an excellent tutor and we have all valued her expertise. So therefore Dressmaking in Mere has come to a successful and happy end. We have all enjoyed the experience and still have a Whatsapp Group so some of us can keep in touch by popular request. When it is possible a gathering of dressmakers might take place.

I have really enjoyed this as a follow-up from creating Castle Hill Quilters when I moved to Mere. I will enjoy now some time to create my own clothes, do a little patchwork, spinning and weaving. I have enjoyed knitting in the lockdown and friends

are suggesting a very informal Knit and Natter or something on those lines, a little informal sewing but for me the knowledge that both of these groups have really brought sewing and creativity to Mere has been a real blessing.

Keep well everyone, keep sewing or whatever your passion be it old or new which helps you to be creative and calm – I really can recommend it.

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

Silly Squad Summer Reading Challenge

Despite libraries not being open at the moment, children can still enjoy the Summer Reading Challenge with support from Wiltshire Council – with this year's campaign having a very 'silly' theme. The challenge, organised nationally by The Reading Agency, is being carried out digitally this year with children being encouraged to join the 'Silly Squad' – a colourful array of cartoon animals.

There will also be a forum to chat to friends, play games, download and print activities, as well as family activities with rewards and unlockable content to keep children and families engaged throughout the summer months. The platform is FREE for children and families to use.

Visit Wiltshire Council's eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines page, which has an extensive list of e-reading materials. See page 27 for poster.

St Michaels Reopening for Private Prayer

Who would ever have thought it churches closed completely for 3 months! Now as with so many things there is a cautious easing of arrangements and I'm delighted to say we feel confident about opening the church again.

In St Michaels we have decided after carefully assessing the safety situation that we will open the church for private prayer on Sunday from approximately 10.00am to 4.00pm. The area set aside is the Still Chapel to the front and left of the church and there will be hand sanitisers and clear instructions as you enter the church.

The only seating will be in the chapel – please don't use the pews. There will be a sign on the seat which we ask you to turn over to indicate that no one else should sit there. This is really important as the virus has been passed on by using a chair from a Covid sufferer within even 6 hours.

We really want to keep you safe as you worship and are so looking forward to opening our doors again. We haven't got a clear idea of when we can gather for full services yet but we can hold small funerals. We will keep the frequency of our opening under constant review.

I hope you have been able to stay hopeful during the stringent times of lockdown. I like Henri Nouwen's thoughts on this from *Here and Now*. Joy and hope are never separate he says. Wishes and happiness on the other hand usually refer to things and events. I wish it would stop raining then I'd be happy

again. Hope and joy are spiritual gifts, for we hope in God and rejoice in his presence even when your wishes are not realised and you are not very happy with the circumstances of your life. But joy doesn't simply happen to us we have to choose it every day and *keep* choosing it. It is a choice based on the knowledge that we belong to God and have found in God our refuge and our safety and that nothing can take God away from us.

Don't forget we are broadcasting virtual services most weeks on St Michael's Facebook page or www.stmichaelsmere.org.uk. Blessings and love

Rev Carol

Do you need some financial help? An organisation called the Fudge Trust and based in Warminster invites applications from people in need who meet their confidential criteria. Please complete an application form which needs to be seconded by a recognised member of the community eg councillor or Vicar Rev Carol. <http://www.fudgetrust.co.uk/> upcoming deadline 15th August. Questions to Fran Pearson 01985 213440.



I chose these photos because I wanted to remind people of the fact that even if there are bad things going on right now the sun will keep shining. There's still something beautiful in this world and the sun will continue to go up and down, each and every day. And that we will still work together to fight the bad things that are happening to all of us right now.

Look what else our young people have been up to....

Mia-Lousie created a Facebook group called 'digging for Britain' and gave out over 200 seeds starter packs to local residents who couldn't get out and get their own but wanted to try growing their own fruit and Veg as well as providing leaflets on how to grow and care for them. Whilst staying with her Grandparents she has also been helping local elderly residents with shopping and dog walking.



Jack has been helping his Mum make masks for key workers, and now children, in the local community as part of the 'Tisbury Miracle Makers'. Jack has been sewing, ironing and delivering masks. They have received requests from members of the public who have been buying the masks with all funds going to Salisbury District Hospital.



JC donated £40 to 'Kick Coronavirus Out'

Mere Youth Centre, The Recreation Ground, Queens Road, Mere BA12 6EP // 07585 723824
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Seeds4Success

What's this all about?

This time last year our leisure credits team were working hard on path clearance and helping the environment and bringing smiles to peoples faces. Even though we cannot go out and do our normal work we still want to help people and bring the world to you hopefully putting a smile on your face. We have accomplished this by working together with different years of young people. This project helps us in different ways surviving as a welcome distraction to the year it's worrying about their GCSE results. And a nice break and a therapeutic activity for the lower and older years that are still completing school work daily. Even letting all of the young people hear their friends and give them the satisfaction of completing something and helping people even if it is not much.



We are missing practical work so for our next leisure credits session we will be making our own bug houses. Libby has sent us a photo of one she has already created. We would like to donate some of the bug houses to older people who are self-isolating so if you know of a deserving local resident, please do get touch.



I started at juniors (every second Wednesday of the month) then I was the right age I able to move up to Friday nights. Everyone was really nice and I felt really welcome. At the age of 12 my friends and I were old enough to do leisure credits. The first one felt a little weird because I did not know anyone but soon I felt like I was enjoying it and achieved something. I cut down my first tree that day. I was so happy and the best thing is we do it with our friends.

Hailie

Mere Film Shows

First of all, apologies to everyone who was looking forward to seeing Mrs Lowry & Son. However, the [film] show must go on, and it will in some form, hopefully later this year. Moviola, who provides the films, has not sat back either doing nothing and has set up a **#MoviolaTogether** initiative which you might be interested in. They offer a selection of films to choose from, and those taking part watch the winning film over a week and share (good, bad, indifferent) thoughts on the film through Moviola's social media channels. They are choosing films that are readily available for free through YouTube, BBC iPlayer, All4 and other free platforms so that there is no expense for anyone who wishes to watch along.

Further afield the BFI is celebrating the rich and diverse history of Japanese cinema. I highly recommend checking out the huge variety of films on offer. Details can be found here: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/japan>.



In the mean time we would love to know what you feel about a suitable date to begin offering Mere Film Shows dates again. Normally we show films in September/October/November and start again in February of the next year. Please email me your thoughts

by sending a message to rosiejb77@gmail.com or phoning me after 6pm weekdays on the number below. I look forward to hearing from you.

Rosie ☎ 861567

..... We heard that there were several elderly people under lockdown who needed something to do. They were receptive to the idea of having some jigsaws to do. A plea for jigsaws was put out and within a few hours we had a stock of some 15 boxed jigsaws which have now been sanitised and loaned out several times.

Anyone want to do a jigsaw??



Fives Court



We won't lie, life in Fives Court is far from the norm during these difficult times. However, the way the team and our wonderful residents have adapted is beyond amazing.

We are very thankful for the beautiful sunshine, our ladies and gents have been making the most of the warm weather, topping up their tans and enjoying a cuppa and a natter in the garden.

Although most are social distancing in their bedrooms, they are kept active with personalised activity packs, corridor sing-alongs, one-to-one room visits and documentaries on the iPad.

The Order of St Johns Care Trust have been outstanding, as well as the community outside. The support and love from you all has been so comforting to us.

Celebrations have continued for Birthdays, VE Day and other special occasions. Without the tradition of blowing out the candles of course.

There has been a lot of learning for us all, with so many adaptations to our new normal. Team Fives are simply incredible, we are so proud of the hurdles they have faced head on.

If this has taught us anything, it is that we are stronger than ever and capable of more than we ever knew. We literally can't wait to open our doors and see visitors filling the home again.

Until we do eventually meet again, we are safe, we are well and we are smiling.

Bella Guy. Head of Care at Fives Court.

Merely Women

I hope you have all been keeping well and have had plenty to keep you occupied. Just to keep you informed, Merely Women will resume our regular meetings on the 2nd and 4th Fridays each month, as early as possible. However, because of social distancing, this will not be until large groups can start meeting again and the Grove Building has reopened. I am currently assuming that this will not be before September at the earliest.

Once we have resumed, we will have some serious catching-up to do, particularly celebrating Easter and VE day! We will try to let you all know our restart date, In the meantime keep safe and hope to see you soon.

Jean Eyles ☎ 863450 jseyles2@aol.com

Thinking of Advertising in Mere Matters?

To find out the costs or to book an advert, please contact Jane Kennedy directly by phone or email.

jane.kennedy83@btinternet.com ☎ **860450**

Friends of Mere Museum

The Friends are approaching an impressive anniversary! We were founded in October 1990, which means that in October 2020 we shall be celebrating 30 years of fund-raising for the Museum. It has been astonishing to discover that the total in grants given by the Friends to the Museum during that period was rather more than £36,000. An impressive £22,500 of this was donated during the past 10 years! This is all made possible by the generosity of you, the residents of Mere and district, who so generously support all the events the Friends organise. Thank you!

So October 2020 is a significant date for us. In fact we have already one enticing event planned (in hope) for October, on the 9th in fact, which we're sure you've already noted. Martin Papworth, the local National Trust Archaeologist, plans to talk about his work on the archaeology of the Stourhead Estate, using images of the recent LIDAR survey. (LIDAR = Light Detection and Ranging; it's a remote sensing method that uses pulsed laser to measure variable distances to the Earth. State of the art stuff!) But we are also hoping to mark this anniversary with one or more other events, in October, or as and when circumstances permit.

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

According to the impressive production lists in MADS's archive, the only year in its long history during which MADS was unable to produce even one play for its enthusiastic audiences, was 1963! Then there was no Spring Production (apparently the 'weather intervened') and in the autumn we simply couldn't find a Producer. But we're hoping very much that 2020 won't be added to this unfortunate record; there's hope yet for 'The Happiest Days of Your Life' (and won't the First Night be a Happy Day!) However the Society bounced back, and since its foundation in 1946 has produced no fewer than 188 plays or dramatic events of all sorts for varying occasions. The history of MADS productions is also liberally sprinkled with prestigious awards for individuals and casts, achieved at any number of play festivals. It's a society that Mere can be proud of.

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Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mere Rivers Group - Wildlife Sightings for May 2020

This article is being written in early June as lockdown is beginning to ease and some of us are returning to work. People's greater mobility seems to have shown in a lower level and range of sightings reported on our waterways! The sightings reported were:

Seen Daily:

Female mallard and her eight ducklings on the Shreen, Slow Worm seen four times
Pair of Moorhen seen three times, Seen once were: Pair of treecreepers, Pair of Greenfinch, Juvenile Kingfisher, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Canada Goose, Water Vole, Roe Deer, Common Frog, Eel, Trout, Beautiful Demoiselle.

The call of a cuckoo was also heard.

Nature Notes

There is no doubt that many of us have reaped the proven physical and mental health benefits of being able to access the open countryside and seeing Spring unfold around us.

I am sure we all agree how fortunate we are to live in an area with such a range of easily accessible countryside habitats including our fabulous waterways. This has meant we have been able, over the last few weeks, to watch birds nesting and fledging, bees and other insects being busy, and indeed to hear and see a great range of wildlife. Much of this has been in closer proximity to our residential areas than we would normally expect because it has been so peaceful. Many people have commented, in particular, on being able to hear far more because of the absence of traffic on the A303!! We sincerely hope that as 'normal life' is returning many of you will be able to recall and continue to reap the benefits that you enjoyed from our countryside during lockdown.

Observations from the wider area in May were the calling of a tawny owl and sightings of swallows, house martins and lastly swifts seen in ever increasing numbers.

Lynne Bann ☎ 860174 ✉ mereriverwildlife@btinternet.com

Mere Literary Festival

It is with much regret that it's been decided that we won't be hosting the Mere Literary Festival this year.

We very much hope to bring a great Literary Festival to Mere in 2021

Gail Garbutt 📠 07940 381004 mereliteraryfestival.com

**This edition was hand delivered by
community volunteers.
Thank you all.**



The Churches and the World's New Normal.

There are dates that have particular significance. For Americans the 4th July with their celebration of American Independence, has long been a significant date. For us this year it has potential new significance, in that it is the day when hairdressers and other shops will be allowed to open, and also Churches and places of worship.

Our worship will not be quite the same as before the lockdown began, as the social distancing required will affect how many people we can safely allow in the building, where we sit, how we enter and leave the building, whether we can sing hymns, or take a collection, and whether Holy Communion can be participated in. One possibility is that depending on how many people wish to attend worship, we initially have a shorter service.

I am sure we will get back a more recognisable pattern of Church life together, but that will take time before we can safely meet together, in the way we have been accustomed too.

There is another date that is going to change things, 25th May 2020, and the murder of George Floyd by four police officers in the American city of Minneapolis. Phrases like 'Black Lives Matter', 'I Can't Breathe', '8 Minutes And 46 Seconds', have been repeated in protest in America, in the UK, and around the world. It is a call and chance to create a new and more just normal for everyone. The future unlike the past can be changed. Jesus in his teaching, such as the parable of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10:25 - 37.] and Lazarus and the rich man [Luke 16:19 - 31.], makes clear we cannot remain silent. Minneapolis can seem like different world to the one we live in and experience here, but as Paul reminds us in Galatians 3:28 in Christ the differences between us and George Floyd who lived life in a very different situation, do not continue to exist.

Without justice there can be no peace, for all of us.

Duncan.

Parking charges to be reintroduced at all Wiltshire Council car parks

We are reintroducing parking charges at all car parks, and on residential and on-street parking areas in the county from Monday 1 June. All parking permits and season tickets will also restart from this date, and parking wardens will enforce any parking contraventions in the county.

On 25 March, the government gave NHS and care workers free use of all council parking and this will continue until further notice, however, we went one step further and suspended all parking charges, including in residential areas, from the 27 March which was to be reconsidered when the government issued new guidance.



Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group

The members of the Mere Mother's Union and indeed members throughout the country and the world have been in touch through email and in some cases Zoom to support each other in prayer and to try to keep a sense of togetherness at this time. The Mere group has been very happily supported by many long phone conversations from Christine and Christabelle checking up and keeping close in our own way. We realise it will be a while before we can meet again but really look forward to that whenever it will be. We have a very interesting programme that will be restarted as soon as we can and you will read about that hopefully soon.

We were pleased to hear that following the collection made quite a while ago for Spurgeons the charity that supports children and young mothers at a time of need, they were able to buy some essential supplies which were warmly welcomed by mothers in Wiltshire.

There is a time of prayer at 11am each Sunday when many members have a cup of coffee or tea and say the Mother's Union prayer which has become a time of real unity. There is a wave of prayer, where anyone can pray or just maybe a time of quiet at 2pm and 8pm each day, please join us if you would like to, in our own homes.

Christabelle Kiriticos ☎ 861065 Christine Marsh ☎ 861212 Carol Lord ☎ 861923

Booking Meeting Venues

| | | |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Grove Building: | Derek Fisher administrator@grovebuildingmere.com | ☎ 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 st Friday | 2.00pm – 4.00pm |
| Registrar of Births & Deaths | By appt. only Thursdays | ☎ 0300 003 4569 9.30am – 11.30 |
| Health Trainer | Last Tuesday in month | 10.00am – 12.00pm |

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

Letter from the Churches - Dn Michael Hughes writes:

Back in March, we braced ourselves for the coming of the virus. Now that infections rates are falling, we can look back over the three months and see how it was, and how we did.

In the plague of 1348 “the infected perished almost immediately... dropping down while talking”. In Siena, Italy, 50%, *half the population*, died.

Thank God this virus was not like that. Probably not even 1% of our population have died, and the huge majority of those who got it badly have survived. You will, according to your nature, be full of wonder at the many acts of kindness, heroism and self-denial – or you will dwell on the selfish sad acts which the media love to report. Try to look on the bright side.

We Catholics, as well as the other denominations, have noted the staggering number of people who are sharing in on-line church services – many times the number who were coming to church before the lockdown. Millions of people have discovered they have spiritual needs which are not met by Netflix or social media.

Prayer is conversation with the God who made and loves each one of us. Confined to our homes, prayer has become part of the lives of many people who previously thought they were too busy to pray. And in prayer they have been comforted and given courage to endure. Their prayer has been heard, and we have come through the worst of the pandemic, and here in this beautiful part of God’s creation, we have been given the best weather we could possibly have wished for, which has made lockdown so much more bearable.

What happens next? The virus may come back again: we pray fervently that it will not. We trust we will continue to regain those freedoms we always took for granted. In either event, Christians will strive to make a better world than the one before all this started. One where Jesus’ revolutionary statement that all people, being equally valuable to God, should be equally loved by us, and those most in need receive most care. All people matter equally.

God invites us into a community, a communion, which is the Church. How we long for the day when we will be allowed to meet together and meet Jesus in the Sacraments in church. Catholics of course have known long centuries in the past when the government made it illegal for us to meet together in the Mass. We hope this closure of our churches will end very soon.

With our prayers, after the troubles of the virus and the coming recession are over, we *will* build a better world.

Let us rejoice as we try, each in our own little way, to build a new world of Hope, Faith and Love. To a united Christian people, working to do God’s will, **nothing is impossible.**

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 *Saturday is Rest day*
Churchwarden: Mrs Lynette Elliott ☎ 861646
PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859
vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk *Saturday is Rest day*
Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall ☎ 830534, Mr Colin Seafood ☎ 830263

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

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859
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

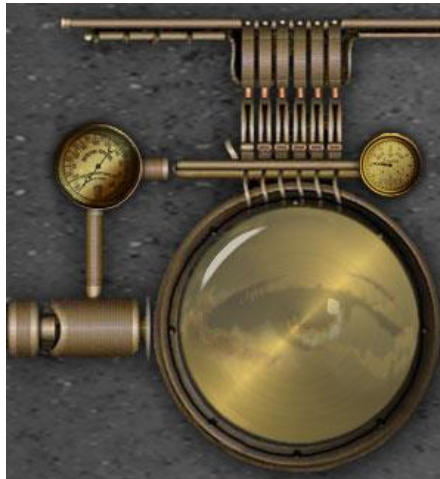
The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

Father Louis Beasley-Suffolk: ☎ 01963 34408
hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk
Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

Copy date for September 2020 Issue

Closing deadline is: **4:00pm on MONDAY 17th August.** Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 ✉ 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.



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