

Mere Matters

& so does

West Knoyle



Your community magazine
including a guide to local
events

March 2020

Mere Town Council

The next meeting will be on **Monday 2nd March** at 7.30pm in the Andy Young Pavilion. You may attend for the whole meeting and raise questions in a public session before the meeting starts.

Mere Town Council -The Chairman Writes

At the February Town Council meeting, we received a presentation from agents regarding proposals to build a large-scale out of town residential care home on land adjacent to the new Hill Brush Factory. The Town Council expressed mixed views on this since the site has been allocated for employment use for many years and though this proposal was not quite what we were expecting in terms of employment use, the agents anticipated that this proposal could create over 70 local jobs. I should stress that this was just a pre-planning presentation and we shall need to wait and see if we get a formal planning application with more details for consideration.

Also in attendance at the February meeting was Sgt. Kevin Harmsworth and PC Richard Salter. They outlined their roles in the Local Neighbourhood Police Teams with Sgt. Harmsworth being based in Warminster and leading the team for our Neighbourhood Area and PC Richard Salter, who many of us are familiar with, returning as our Neighbourhood Co-ordinator covering Mere & Tisbury. We look forward to seeing PC Richard Salter & PCSO Pete Tcherniawsky out and about in Mere and have confidence in the liaison links between the Town Council and the local Neighbourhood Policing team.

Friday 8th May marks the **75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day** (VE Day) and this day has been designated by the Government as a Bank Holiday with licensing hours extended to enable people to join in the VE Day 75 celebrations and organise events over the VE Day weekend of the 8th – 10th May. I mentioned in last month's report that the Town Council would be interested in hearing from groups and organisations, streets and residents groups on what you are planning to do to celebrate this occasion. The Town Council will consider the programme of events at the March meeting.

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

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

☎ = Landline telephone

📠 = Mobile telephone

✉ = Email Address

🌐 = Website Address

📘 = Facebook

MERE SOCIAL CLUB Presents 'STAMP'

Another great local band.
21st March 9pm onwards.
All welcome - free entry.

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

Waste Bin Collections

The way in which recyclable materials are collected will change and this means that many households will see their collection day change. The changes will enable more materials to be placed in the blue lidded bin. More efficient routes will also see fewer collection vehicles on the road, which will further reduce the council's impact on the environment as part of its pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030. Letters are being sent to every household in Wiltshire to inform them of their new collection day. Once residents have received their letters they can also go online and check their collection day and print off a bespoke collection calendar.

- In the blue lidded bin you can recycle: cans, tins, aerosols, paper, cardboard, cartons, foil, plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
- In your black box you can recycle: glass bottles and jars and bagged, dry textiles
- The blue lidded bins and black boxes will be emptied fortnightly on the same day, using new recycling collection vehicles.

Coronavirus

I registered on PHE (Public Health England) website as Wiltshire Council are responsible for public health. I was interested in advice regarding Coronavirus (COVID)-19 which I hope will not impact on us. PHE have posters that Pharmacist, Doctors Surgeries and others can print, dedicated to their business. I hope we all realize we should take extra care when coughing and sneezing, catch in a tissue, bin it and wash hands is the best advice.

Wiltshire Budget

Wiltshire Full Council will soon be setting their precept, at present the Council draws its funding from two main sources – local taxation and Government grants. The Council no longer receive any Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The main areas of Government grant are, Baseline Funding - Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS); Additional ring-fenced grants, such as Public Health; New Homes Bonus; and Other one-off grants, such as social care, rural support grant etc.

It is proposed NOT AGREED AS YET to set the Wiltshire Council's total net expenditure budget for 2020/21 at £344.023 million, Set a Council Tax increase of 1.99% and Social Care Levy increase of 2%; Delegate changes in fees and charges, Set a 2.7% increase for social dwelling rents (CPI plus 1%); Set the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2020/21 at £30.302 million pounds expenditure; and all service charges related to the HRA being increased to recover costs, capped at increase of £5 per week for those not on housing benefits and garage rents increased by 1.7% (CPI).

Buses

The government has announced extra funding for busses. Four types of funding including formula-based funding can be applied for. Wiltshire should be able to bid for a substantial sum from the formula-based funding. No one knows where it will be spent as yet, I just hope and have asked for the rural routes to be considered. We do have a demand response bus of which there are few in Wiltshire and the total cost is twenty million pounds a year to run. Salisbury Park and Ride London Road now have three electric busses charged from the Park and Ride depot. I was informed that expansion of electric busses in Wiltshire is not easy. Many of the routes out across the plain are long distance, for instance Devizes to Salisbury. For interest a fast bus is being considered between Salisbury and Devizes, with a

time of less than one hour. 90% of busses in Wiltshire can take contactless payment. The Government is forcing greater electronic information for busses. Apps for smart phones have and will be developed enabling passengers to see where a bus is on route and more. A complaint often voiced, children cannot stay for after school activities without paying to get home To correct this would be a very high cost to Wiltshire Council and is unlikely to happen. It is good that Wiltshire still finance some post 16 transport; many counties now do not. Some may be interested that spare seats on school busses can be purchased in some instances. For more information you will need contact Wiltshire Council directly should you be interested.

Housing

I attended a presentation with regard to the Housing Site Allocations and Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy. I could see no new housing development sites specified for Mere except windfall sites. I did take the opportunity to ask if some of the smaller settlements considered non sustainable could be allowed a small number of houses for key workers and local people. The plan identifies land which should be used for house-building throughout Wiltshire, to allow the creation of 42,000 new homes from 2006 to 2026, many of which have already been built. The government also says a minimum of 40,500 homes must be built to meet

the housing needs for Wiltshire between 2016 and 2036. The latest changes made to the plan are final and now the council must choose to adopt the plan with the inspector's recommendations or not. If adopted, the plan will ensure an improved housing supply which will be used alongside the Wiltshire Core Strategy when making planning decisions. I note some Councils across the UK have criticised rising housing targets, which are accompanied by threats from Housing Secretary, Robert Jenrick to remove their power over planning decisions. South Oxfordshire Council has been threatened with a Government

intervention and other worried local leaders have requested an emergency meeting with Mr Jenrick. Targets by the Government are for 300,000 new homes a year. Sevenoaks DC - where 93% of the

land is designated green belt - has asked to meet with Mr Jenrick after its local plan was rejected despite committing to a 300% increase in housing.

Parking in Mere

I frequently receive complaints in this regard, The Square, Castle Hill Crescent, North Street, Water Street, top of Hazzards Hill and Bramley Hill and outside of Bramley House being those areas of most complaint. Over the next year Mere Town Council are looking at reviewing parking restrictions, parking restrictions in some instances may move the problem into other areas. More car parking space is required which will not happen quickly. As many older ambulant disabled or otherwise abled people cannot walk very far from their vehicle please exercise patience and consideration when parking.

Taxi Fares

Wiltshire Council control maximum taxi fares, Wiltshire only have 2 enforcement officers for all of the Wiltshire Council area, they rely on passengers informing them of any overcharges. The licencing committee on which I sit, have voted to put revised maximum charges out to consultation with Wiltshire's residence. If the officers arrive at a new set of maximum charges after consultation of less than 10% increase or decrease, the charges can be implemented without need for the matter to be returned to The Licencing Committee.

Area Board

I was in attendance at the South West Wiltshire Area Board. Police funding comes approximately 40 percent from Wiltshire and approximately 60 percent from central government. Wiltshire should see 41 more PCs and 49 Police Staff to help solve cyber crime for one. The youth were present regarding mental health, school exclusions and more, they spoke well. We learned of the work of i-Thrive. A grant was requested for £5000 from Salisbury, Amesbury and our SWWAB for work and a building with Children

in our area, I argued with our rural population we should give £3000, the applicant left the room upset and two of our members were determined to give £5000 which eventually was awarded. Please attend an area board occasionally it can be interesting.

For those in need of the local food bank, a voucher can be obtained from the local Vicar Carol Green for a food box, that can be collected from Mere Library or Mere Post Office.

 07710 441599  george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk

West Knoyle Parish Council

The Council met in December to consider the likely expenditure over the next financial year in order to determine the precept requirement (parish council's share of the council tax) for 2020/21. Members were mindful that there is pressure on Parish & Town Councils to help with financial support to provide services that are under threat or being cut by Wiltshire Council. After careful consideration, the Parish Council made the decision to increase its precept by a modest 2.76%.

The Xmas lights throughout the village were incredible this year and were judged independently. The winners were Richard & Paula Hull who received a couple of bottles of wine, kindly donated by George Jeans. We would like to thank everyone for making the effort to provide such a fabulous display throughout the village.

The Parish Council is going to arrange a First Aid and Defibrillator training event to take place in the Village Hall in the near future – hopefully in the Spring. We are currently exploring the possibility of grant funding for this.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday 10th March** at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall. All welcome.

Mere Historical Society

“Escape or Die”: King Charles II Escape after the Battle of Worcester Paul Cordle. **Tuesday 3rd March 7.30pm in the Grove Building**

Paul will talk about the fascinating story of King Charles II's six week escape to France following the Battle of Worcester in 1651. He will explain how, against all odds, 'Charles Stuart'; the most wanted man in England, dodged the Parliamentary Army looking for him and made it to freedom. His family has a personal connection to the heroine of the story he tells.

£3 entry for non-members who are very welcome

Morning talk: Tuesday 10th March, 'Lady Butler – 19thC Battle Artist' by Felicity Herring. To be held in the **Grove Buildings** at 10.15am for 10.30am. ***(Visitors welcome, suggested donation, including coffee, £3)***

Note: our AGM will be on **Tuesday 7th April** 7.10pm for a glass of wine while you pay your sub for 2020/21 which will be £10. The AGM will be followed by a talk. Please see our website link for AGM Report to view minutes of the AGM 2019.

Caroline Cook ☎ 861797 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Mere Silent Auction

We are delighted to announce the launch of Mere Silent Auction in aid of The **Rosemary Goddard Centre, Warminster Food Bank** and **Mere & Gillingham Cats Protection**.

From 1st March to Easter Sunday we will be advertising all the amazing lots on Facebook, Instagram and a folder in The Library.

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 and Instagram.

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.

Keep looking as we have some fantastic lots coming in and some are unique to Mere!

All profits 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!

Penny Fennon, Steve & Sandi Hawkins

☎ 077527 15288 (Steve)  Mere Silent Auction  meresilentauction@mail.com


Warminster Food Bank


We are having a collection in aid of the food bank on **Saturday 21st March** 9am to noon at The Clock Tower.

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.

The permanent collection point in the Library is a big success so please don't forget to buy an extra tin, packet or box or 2 and drop them in there if you cannot make the 21st collection.

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).

Hearing Aid Clinic - temporary change of venue.

The next Hearing Aid Clinic will be held on the in the **Lecture Hall**, from 10.00am until 11.30am.

Lyn Snook ☎ 861977



We're back with a one off talk on **Friday 20th March** at St. Michael's Church.

Will Theakston will be talking about his experience of rowing the Atlantic in 2018 and Why Adventure Matters. Tickets are £12.00 pp and available at Mere Library or via the website

www.mereliteraryfestival.com If you are a 'Friend' of the Mere Literary Festival then tickets are £6.00 pp

Gail Garbutt ☎ 860446 📠 07940 381004 🌐 mereliteraryfestival.com

Fair Trade Pop-Up Shop

What makes a good coffee? Is it the brew? the bean? the process? the plant? Write down your ideas and bring them along to my Big Brew Pop-up Shop at the Angel Cafe during Fair Trade Fortnight on **Thursday March 5th**. Anyone with the correct answer will be entitled to free biscuit! There will be Fairtrade goodies to try, Paul's delicious Fair Trade Chocolate cake to eat and Fairly traded gifts to buy. You can also order your fair Trade Easter Eggs - the perfect gift for a loved one or family. By supporting Fair Trade Fortnight (February 24th - March 8th), you know you are helping those around the world struggling to make a living particularly in the light of Climate Change.

Janet Way ☎ 860884 ✉ jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Short Walks

Meet at 2.00pm in the Surgery Car Park on Thursday **March 12th** for a walk of 2-3 miles around the footpaths of Mere with a refreshing cuppa at the Angel Tea Rooms afterwards.

Janet Way ☎ 860884 ✉ jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Mere and District Link Scheme

More Drivers, Please! Do you have some free daytime, a car and would like to help someone get to their hospital or doctor appointment? The Mere & District Link Scheme is looking for more drivers. Being a Driver is not an onerous commitment and helping others can be very rewarding. You say when you are available and our coordinator arranges journeys accordingly. Car mileage expenses are paid.

Phone 860096 from 9-5pm Monday-Friday to learn more. We are a local charity financed by donations and entirely run and operated by volunteers.

Hamish Bell, Secretary, Mere & District Link Scheme ☎ 860096



Community Lunch

The next Lunch will be held on **Tuesday 10 March** at the **George Inn**, The Square Mere at 12.30pm. The two course meal will cost £11.95, drinks not included. Please ring and book directly with the George Inn (860427).

The lunch is for anyone in the community, who may wish to meet more people, catch up with the local news and events in the town or just enjoy a good meal in pleasant company. Look forward to seeing you there.

Lindy Elliott 📞 861646 ✉️ lindyelliott22@gmail.com

Mere Carnival - Annual General Meeting

This will be held at **6.45pm** on **2nd March** at the Andy Young Pavilion will precede the Town Council Meeting. Anyone attending for the Mere Carnival AGM only can leave before the Town Council begin their meeting.

We are still looking for extra help and volunteers to keep Mere Carnival running smoothly. If you would like to be involved please come to the AGM or contact us using one of the options below.

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

West Knoyle - Burns Night Supper

The annual West Knoyle Burns Night Supper was held at the end of January by the Social Club and once again it was a great success. The hall and tables were decorated with a black and tan theme for the 36 diners. The men were smartly dressed many in their DJ's with one Scotsman resplendent in highland dress. The ladies sparkled elegantly with many a tartan sash to be seen.

Our Master of Ceremonies too was dapper in his Army Officer's evening dress and ably led the evening giving the Selkirk Grace and, after piping in the Haggis, the Address. The fabulous supper started with Cock-a-Leekie Soup, followed by Haggis, Neeps, Tatties, Carrots and Peas. And after an entertaining Toast to the Lassies and humorous Response to the Laddies there was Cranachan Raspberry Cake, Cheeseboard, Coffee and Mints.

The Master of Ceremonies was then joined by his two talented musicians for the After Diner Entertainment of excellent music and song.

Thanks go to everyone involved for putting on a fantastic evening which was well supported and enjoyed by all.

Corinne Leonard 📞 07783 157361

Mere Museum

The new exhibition "**Mere Union Workhouse**" opened on 4th February. This part of Mere's history has not been covered before and we do hope you find it interesting as well as informative. If you visit the Museum please leave a comment in our visitor book.

We continue our photo wall and I am delighted that yet again many names have been added.

The next Friends of the Museum Event is a Quiz on **3rd April** at 7.30 pm in the Grove Building. Teams of 4 at £2.50 per person and refreshments will be available.

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

Mere & District Railway

N gauge modelling has taken off within the club with three new layouts being modelled. The small American layout will be exhibited at our exhibition in June.

We have a coach trip planned to the **London Festival of Railway Modelling** at **Alexandra Palace** on **22nd March**.

The coach will depart from the club house at **7.45am** and depending on the traffic, will return by 6pm. The cost is £25 per head with children being given a discount. Non-members are welcome.

Your club is situated in Castle Street Car Park and opens from 7-9pm on a Wednesday evening. Should this be inconvenient for anybody who wishes to have a look around before visiting, then please contact the author to arrange a suitable time.

Please note: **14th & 15th March**, Wessex Assoc Ex at QE2 School, Wimborne.

20th & 21st June Mere Model Railway Exhibition



Tom Snook ☎ 861977

Mere Theatre Club

The 2020 programme is now under way with drama in Salisbury, singing in Southampton and thousands of flowers in Chichester! When you read this we may have a few tickets left for the Flower Festival at Chichester Cathedral - contact details below.

If members haven't paid their subscriptions, still amazing value at £5 per year, they may miss out! See you soon

Madeline Morris ☎ 861833 Wendy Horne ☎ 861712

The Mere Lecture Hall Trust Grants Available for 2020

This independent Christian Trust was established in 1924 to promote the spiritual, moral, educational and social welfare of the inhabitants of the town of Mere and the surrounding area. The Trust supports a number of small schemes, charities and voluntary groups with grants for practical action.

The Trust is benevolent in a broad sense and seeks to help people of all ages to enjoy facilities they would not otherwise be able to access. It operates within a Christian ethos for the benefit of the whole community and welcomes a wide range of creative initiatives.

Applications for grant support are now invited for activities or projects based within 8 miles of Mere. The closing date is **31st May** and successful applicants will normally be paid within three months of this date.

For further details and an application form please write enclosing an A5 stamped and addressed envelope to: The Grants Committee, The Mere Lecture Hall Trust, c/o Monkswell Cottage, Mill Lane, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6DA.

Mere Film Shows

It was nice to see a good number of people at our first film of 2020. Our next film is **The Good Liar** [15] on **Friday 6th March** at 7:30pm. A conman (Ian McKellan) has set his sights on a wealthy widow (Helen Mirren). However, this seemingly simple swindle soon escalates into a cat-and-mouse game. Do come along and enjoy the ever-excellent lead performers who are in their element in this film. Free cake and tea will again be available! Tickets are available from the library or phone me for further details.

Rosie ☎ 861567

Community Tea @ 3

Come and join us on Wednesday 18th March. You know the time.

Paul Farrow ☎ 860524

Mere Snooker Club

We are still looking for new members in an attempt to save the oldest club in the town. If you are a budding Ronnie O'Sullivan or a complete beginner we can help to hone your skills. Membership is £40 per year and we ask for £3 per visit in order to cover the cost of lighting and heating.

Mike Gladding Secretary ☎ 861733 Mike Durkee Chairman ☎ 860163

March 2020 Diary Dates (*Recurring events are first shown in **Bold** then in **Blue***).**Venue Key for Diary :****ATR** - Angel Tea Rooms**Drs** - Surgery**Lib** - Library**StM** - St Michaels Church**AYP** - Andy Young Pavilion**GB** - Grove Building**MSC** - Social Club**URC** - United Ref Church**CP** - Main Car Park**L** - Lecture Hall**RMC** - Castle St Car Park

1	Sun	19.30	Fund Raising Auction for Butt of Sherry	MSC
2	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers & Toddlers (every Mon Term Time Only)	L
		18:00	Beavers & Scouts (every Mon Term Time Only)	GB
		19:30	Parish Council Meeting	AYP
3	Tues	09:00	Baby Moo	L
		10:00	Moo Music (every Tues Term Time Only)	L
		10:30	Dressmaking Group (every Tues)	GB
		15:00	Pilates (every Tues)	GB
		18:20	Zumba	L
		19.30	Historical Society	GB
4	Wed	11:00	Really Sing	L
		18:00	Karate (every Wed)	L
		19:00	Dressmaking Group (every Wed)	GB
		19:00	Railway Modellers (every Wed)	RMC
5	Thur	10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic	Lecture Hall
		10:00	Crafting Group	StM
		10:00	Art Group (every Thur)	GB
		14:00	Bridge Club (every Thur)	L
		14:00	Quilters (every Thur)	GB
		17:00	Girlguiding	GB
6	Fri	10:00	Rhyme Time (every Fri)	Lib
		10:00	Movement for the Mind (Alternate weeks)	GB
		13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14.00 start every Fri)	GB
		17:45	Diabetes Prevention (every Fri)	GB
		19:30	Mere Film Show	L
7	Sat		Coffee Morning (URC)	
8	Sun			
9	Mon	15.00	Afternoon Tea for Butt of Sherry	GB
			<i>Beavers & Scouts (GB), Tidd & Toddlers (L)</i>	
10	Tues	10.15	Historical Society	GB
		12:30	Community Lunch	The George
		14.30	Mothers Union	GB
			<i>Dressmaking (GB), Pilates (GB), Moo Music (L), Zumba (L)</i>	
11	Wed	09:30	Ta-Chi (every Wed)	GB
		14:00	Short Walk	CP
		14:00	Friends Together - Whist	GB
		19:30	Gardening Club	GB
			<i>Dressmaking(GB), Really Sing (L), Railway Modellers</i>	

12	Thur	<i>Art (GB), Quilters(GB), Bridge (L)</i>		
13	Fri	10:00	Merely Women <i>Duplicate Bridge (GB), Diabetes Prevention Rhyme Time (Lib)</i>	GB
14	Sat	19:00	Oasis Carnival Bingo <i>Coffee Morning (URC)</i>	L
15	Sun			
16	Mon	<i>Beavers & Scouts (GB), Tidd & Toddlers (L)</i>		
17	Tues	<i>Dressmaking (GB), Pilates (GB), Zumba (L)</i>		
18	Wed	<i>Tai-Chi (GB), Dressmaking (GB), Really Sing (L), Karate (L)</i> <i>Railway Modellers</i>		
19	Thur	<i>Art (GB), Quilters (GB), Bridge (L), Zumba (L)</i>		
20	Fri	<i>Rhyme Time (Lib), Diabetes Prevention Movement for the Mind (GB), Duplicate Bridge (GB)</i>		
21	Sat	<i>Coffee Morning (URC) Fair Trade Stall</i>		
22	Sun	Fair Trade Stall after 10.30am am service Railway Modellers trip to London		StM
23	Mon	09:30	Antique Valuations <i>Beavers & Scouts (GB), Tidd & Toddlers (L)</i>	GB
24	Tues	<i>Dressmaking (GB), Pilates (GB), Moo Music (L), Zumba (L)</i>		
25	Wed	14:00 14:30	Friends Together - Games Pennybank Writers <i>Tai-Chi (GB), Dressmaking(GB), Really Sing (L), Karate (L), Railway Modellers</i>	GB L
26	Thur	<i>Art (GB), Quilters (GB), Bridge (L)</i>		
27	Fri	10:00	Merely Women <i>Movement for the Mind (GB), Diabetes Prevention Duplicate Bridge (GB), Rhyme Time (Lib)</i>	GB
28	Sat	<i>Coffee Morning (URC)</i>		
29	Sun			
30	Mon	<i>Beavers & Scouts (GB), Tidd & Toddlers (L)</i>		
31	Tues	<i>Dressmaking (GB), Pilates (GB), Moo Music (L), Zumba (L)</i>		

Thinking of Advertising in Mere Matters?

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

jane.kennedy83@btinternet.com  860450

Mere School

Local Links

The children in Reception have been busy learning all about the people who help them in and around Mere. They have had very exciting visits from the PCSO, a local vet and the Fire Service. Then they took themselves off (with their teachers of course!) to visit the post office and the dentist. We would like to thank all the lovely services in Mere for the continuing support they show our children. Who knows.....you may have inspired some of them to be the police officers and dentists of the future!



Dance Festival

One of the highlights of the month was the annual Gillingham Family Dance Festival which was hosted by Mere School. The children opted to perform two dances this year, a Year 3/4 and Y5/6 dance which meant very busy Friday afternoons! The children all worked incredibly hard to learn their complicated routines, including the amazing lifts, every week. Then on Wednesday 12th February it was performance time. Four other local schools attended the event and all the dances were absolutely fantastic! We are biased.....I know.....but we were especially proud of all of the Mere dancers, some of whom had never attended a Gillingham Family event before. Move over Strictly.....the Mere School dancers are taking over!

The Butt of Sherry Preservation Society.

We have applied to become a Community Benefit Society (CBS) named The Mere Community Benefit Society Ltd. We want to create a community hub that everyone who has contributed to can be proud of.

You may have noticed posters announcing the pending **Fund Raising Auction** at **7.30pm on Sunday March 1st** at Mere Social Club, White Road to raise money to help buy the pub for the community.

We have secured the services of a professional auctioneer and there will be many lots to bid on including a ride in a classic E Type Jaguar to Electrical work or decorating by local tradesman.

Fancy **Afternoon Tea with their Majesties?** A delicious afternoon tea, sandwiches, savouries and cakes, with a fascinating talk from a real pearly king and queen. **Monday 9th March at 3.00pm** in the Grove Building. Admission is £5 and this includes the afternoon tea. Tickets from the library, Butt of Sherry or phone ☎ 07986 222447

✉ bospreservation@gmail.com

Friends of Mere Museum

The Friends are now planning fund-raising events for 2020 and would like to give advance notice of the first two.

Quiz Night **Friday April 3rd** at 7.30pm in the Grove Building.

Plant Sale is **Saturday May 16th**. More on both these events in future issues.

Our new series of booklets on subjects relating to Mere are proving to be extremely popular. We're delighted to announce the publication of two new booklets: Mere Castle and Clock Tower by Jean Booth and The Old Brewery - home of Yapp Brothers by Robin Yapp. These and all the other titles are on sale at the sales desk in the Museum for £2.50 each where you will also find cards featuring elegant, sepia scenes of Mere, and very attractive, handy bookmarks. Everything sold raises vital funds for the Museum so your purchases are much appreciated.


Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908

Dressmaking in Mere

Our next course which starts on **3rd** and **4th** March will be completed in time for Easter and we are hoping there will be some Spring and Summer clothes made to celebrate the end of our rather wet and windy winter. We had a good number attending this winter and the slightly longer days are always popular for creating something new. We are delighted that up-cycling has been a very big feature of our courses and we are constantly looking for natural materials to create clothes to last.

We teach those with new sewing machines and overlockers to become confident and use all the features they offer, sometimes straight out of the box!

Do get in touch if you would like to join us on a Tuesday morning or Wednesday evening or whether you would like to do a two week taster course when space allows.

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

Mere Bowls Club

A big date for your diaries, **Saturday 11th April** (Easter Saturday) when Mere Bowls Club will host a 60s & 70s night, with The ReBBLeS playing live again in the Grove Building starting at 7pm. This year the proceeds will be in aid of the Mere Link Scheme. So get dressed up (not mandatory) and make a night of it. Ticket price will include a Fish & Chip supper, there will be a bar and a raffle as well.

Don Butchers ☎ 860775 ✉ don.butchers@btinternet.com

Mere Gardening Club *Spring Show and AGM*

Wednesday 11th March 7.30pm Grove Buildings

Schedules for this year's Spring Show are in the Post Office window and anyone is welcome to take part except for the Mere garden Club items (MGC).

Subs will be collected at the AGM and are £10. This includes 8 monthly talks, discounted shopping at local Garden Centres, summer visits, and a mid-summer Garden Party. New this year is MGC's membership of RHS which entitles us to a free visit. We are therefore planning a trip to **Wisley** which has now been booked for Thursday **11th June**.

The AGM is a very relaxed occasion and fun as we vote for our favourite exhibits to determine the winners and while the votes are being counted there will be a fun quiz

£2 entry for visitors who are very welcome.

Date for your diaries:

Open Garden Weekend 20/21st June - Further details and for the **Scarecrow Competition** taking place at the same time, in next month's magazine.

Don't forget to visit our website for information about all our activities and to see photos of our summer garden evening last year to remind you of warmer days!

Janet Way ☎ 860884 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk

Fives Court

Coffee Morning with the lovely Becky from Kiddley Divey – Music and sing-long on **Monday 2nd March** from 11am to 12pm. Join us for some refreshments and sing along to some good time favourites.



Holy Communion – We have a Communion Services this month lead by Rev.Carol and Christine Marsh , in the library on **Monday 6th March** and **Monday 20th March** 2020 starting at 1030am, please feel free to join us and stay for tea/coffee after.

Knit and Natter group, we will be holding our new group on the first Friday of every month. This month it will be on **Friday 6th March** from 10am to 12pm in our sun lounge. Please feel free to bring along your own knitting or sewing projects or join in with our project, we have plenty of wool and knitting needles available. Refreshments and cake provided.

Brenda Martin ☎ 860707

Mere Rivers Group - Wildlife Sightings for January

With January being a wet and dark month it looks like not many of you were out and about seeing our wildlife. Those of you who did venture out would, no doubt, have been pleased to see the first snowdrops, primroses and lesser celandines in the hedges and banks.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to send us your sightings, they were: little egret 5 times, kingfisher 3 times, grey wagtail twice, and seen once only were moorhen, wren, goldcrest, two long-tailed tits, 18" eel and a 9" trout.

Nature Notes

At the time of writing we have just experienced Storm Ciara but, as you read this in March, with longer and lighter days, hopefully our muddy footpaths will be much drier enabling us to get out and about more! Spring on the horizon will hopefully bring warmer days, so keep your eyes open for the first blossom, insects and mammals. Early blackthorn flowers will provide food for the first bumble bees, brimstone and orange tip butterflies. We can also expect to see the reappearance of our hedgehogs and birds pairing ready for the breeding season. Please do report any of these or any other wildlife to us if you see them when you are out and about.

Lynne Bann ☎ 860174 ✉ mereriverwildlife@btinternet.com

The Earth Beneath Your Feet

Mere has the rare distinction of having a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the town boundary. It is behind the Quarry Industrial Estate near the Gillingham corner. The estate buildings are on the floor of the quarry and the back wall of the site was notified as the Dead Maid Quarry SSSI in 1951 under the Access to the Countryside Act and re-affirmed in 1987 under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. SSSI status gives the wall of the quarry legal protection with penalties for any damage caused to it.

The site is important geologically because it is the best place in England to actually see the junction between the Upper Greensands and the Chalks laid down very slowly in the Cretaceous period between around 150 and 65 million years ago. At the time the bit of the Earth's crust we live on lay more to the south, around where Spain is now. When the Upper Greensands were laid down there was a shallow continental shelf sea but by the time the chalk was forming as an oozy seabed composed of the remains of marine algae the water was much deeper. The wall of the quarry became famous in the scientific literature in 1901 when a geologist called Jukes Brown first interpreted what he thought he could see there. Others joined in a debate because it was a time

when geologists in our area were refining a description of what lay beneath their feet.

So Dead Maid Quarry SSSI is a cultural icon where visits can be linked to footpaths closer to the Mere Fault where you can enjoy great views while seeing other aspects of Mere geology. Unfortunately it is not advisable to visit just now because the wall is overgrown with vegetation so you cannot see much and a safe path around the businesses there has not been defined. A small group of Mere residents has been working with Natural England and their preferred contractors to see what can be done to restore the site. Mere Town Council has given a foundation grant and an application for further restoration funds will be made soon to the South West Wiltshire Area Board. Before next summer's growth gets established it is hoped that you can visit and maybe then you may think of becoming a supporter of this special place. You will be kept posted in Mere Matters!

Dr. Paulette M. McManus 📞 861524

Mere Healthy Walking

The Mad March Hares strike again!

So many Mere people joined us last year on our March walks covering all of the paths in Mere Parish that we have decided to do it again. Plans are still being finalised but make a note of these dates when there will be walks. **March 4th, 8th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 22nd, 25th and 29th!** We will post details at the beginning of the month in the library, the surgery, the Clock Tower and on posters in as many shops as possible as well as on Jean's notice board.

We will be doing some of last year's walks and some new ones for those who want a challenge – The Long March (from Hindon on the Monarch's Way) – The Rollercoaster (up and down the bottoms to the Caterpillar) – The Butt of Sherry (going past Mere's SSSI to view millions of years of Hard Rock) – as well as East of Eden, The Walnut Tree Walk and others. On present weather form we are going to suggest good watertight boots or wellies.

Further details on our Healthy Mere Walking facebook page www.facebook.com/Healthy-Mere-Walking and the website of the Mere Footpath Group at www.merefootpathgroup.btck.co.uk. If you have ideas about helping others to enjoy the benefits of walking use our contact page on the website or call John on the number below.

John Jordan 07840 722835  Healthy-Mere-Walking  [merefootpathgroup.btck.co.uk](http://www.merefootpathgroup.btck.co.uk)



We've saved a generation, help us save the next. This year is a particularly special one for Wiltshire Air Ambulance as we celebrate our 30th year

of operation. Countless lives have been saved since we began operating in 1990. As a result, a generation of people have been able to resume their lives and celebrate special milestones such as birthdays, wedding anniversaries or the birth of children and grandchildren.

To highlight our work, former patients whose lives we have saved are featured in videos each month throughout 2020 on our social media channels and website, along with an opportunity to make a donation.

We are only able to provide our vital service thanks to the generosity of people, community groups, schools, businesses and grant-making trusts who make donations.

Our charity is not funded directly by the Government and receives no National Lottery grants. It costs £3.75 million a year to keep our lifesaving service operational. Last year we undertook 1,233 missions – an increase of 12% on 2018.

We are honoured to serve Wiltshire and the surrounding counties. With your help we can be here to save the next generation.

To donate, head to:  wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/generation

Registered charity number: 1144097

Women's World Day of Prayer Service 6th March 2020

Everyone – men included – is welcome to come to this service at St Michael's Church, Mere. The theme 'Take your mat, and walk!' has been chosen, this year, by the women of Zimbabwe, and we are fortunate to have a speaker who originates from Zimbabwe: Tatum Johnson, activities organiser at Fives Court. Please wear bright colours for this service, if you would like to. There will be refreshments afterwards.

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



Our meeting in February had a really good attendance. We were all interested to hear Janet Way talk about her lone visit to Bhutan. Her passion for the country, wonderful photographs and description was enjoyed by everyone.

Our meeting on **10th March at 2.30pm** will be a little different. We will learn about **Mary's Meals**, a charity which provides one good school meal a day for children living in poverty in 18 countries worldwide. As a very caring organisation Mother's Union is always interested in the wonderful work done by other charities. We will have a short time of worship, a talk and then tea and biscuits.

We will be holding our AGM a week earlier than previously advertised next month on **Tuesday 7th April** at 2.30 pm at The Grove Building, our usual time and place of our meetings each month. All very welcome.

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

Rosemary Goddard Centre

A huge thanks to Ben Avery and Steve Hawkins for donating from their calendar sales to the RGC. The Wiltshire Air Ambulance are the other beneficiaries and each charity received £645! Thank you to all that purchased the 'Our little corner' 2020 calendar and what a great result. The money will go into activities so we can carry on delivering a diverse and enjoyable programme of activities that our guests can benefit from.

'Mere Silent Auction'. Please see article towards the front. The facebook auction page goes live on **Sunday 1st March** and runs through until Easter Sunday, there will also be a folder containing 'Lots' in the library along with a box to make your bids for those that don't use Facebook or the internet. Head over to the 'Mere Silent Auction' Facebook page to grab a bargain!

Sandie Hawkins 07835 272406 <http://www.meredaycentre.org.uk>

Sandie Hawkins, RGC Organiser ☎ 07835 272406 meredaycentre.org.uk

Mere Amateur Dramatics Society

Good news from MADS! Our next production is to be a comedy - to cheer us all up while we endure the last of winter! **The Happiest Days of Your Life** will be performed on **Thursday - Saturday, March 26th - 28th** (evenings only) at 7.30pm in the Lecture Hall. Tickets, at £8 each, will be on sale from the beginning of March at the Library and at Sprout and Flower. Don't miss it!

Next meeting: Monday March 9th at 7.30 in the Lecture Hall (Green Room)

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908

Employment & Careers Event

This will be of interest to anyone seeking employment, training or changing career. There is an Employment & Careers Event taking place on Wednesday, **18th March** at The Nadder Centre, Weaveland Road, Tisbury, SP3 6HJ. Doors open at 2.30 p.m. and the event closes at 5.30 p.m. There will be a range of employers from across the south of the county on hand to discuss job vacancies and give advice. The event is open to all age ranges.

Fundraising for St Michael's

Just a reminder that we are fundraising to enhance our beautiful church and repairing the tower pinnacles. This project will make the church a community space more suitable for a wide range of functions while safeguarding the building for future generations.

Thank you to everyone who has given so generously to this worthwhile community project. With a pleasing amount of money in the bank account we can now apply for matched funding from national grant givers, such as the Heritage Fund, but we need to continue with our fundraising from events and donations. There is an **exhibition** in the church showing the plans and documents from **9.00am to 5pm daily until 17th March** Any donations we receive specifically for the pinnacles will be used for that repair only. Donation forms are available in the Appeal Brochure to be found in the post office, library and church, or from the Treasurer, Hillcrest, Hazzards Hill, BA12 6EU.

The excellent 'Love Changes Everything' concert by Top Brass & Wind Concert Band and guests played to an appreciative audience who battled Storm Ciara to attend. £636 was donated towards repairing the pinnacles. Other events are being planned for this year so look out for information and posters.

[✉️ elisabeth@hillcrest.me.uk](mailto:elisabeth@hillcrest.me.uk) or Bill Price, Chairman of the fundraising group.

Letter from the Churches Rev Carol from St Michaels writes:

Saying YES to life and being hopeful.

Recently I was talking to a colleague about the climate crisis, in particular the anxiety and fear it is creating. She said that Greta Thunberg is great at telling things as they are but lacks hope in her message. Christians are always called to be hopeful.

For Christians the season of Lent has just begun and at St Michael's we are giving away the 40-Day Challenge booklet called "Care for God's Creation" as a way of highlighting this issue. It contains a daily reading, reflection and action point. Please collect yours free in church.

For a more in depth look we're using the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book "Saying Yes to Life" by Ruth Valerio (£8.50 Sarum College bookshop). She takes a fresh look at the Bible's wisdom and understanding of our relationship with the world. The Creation myth in Genesis has two aims firstly for ancient peoples to explain how we came into existence AND as a profound reflection on humanity's ability to self-destructiveness, greed and acquisitiveness. So whilst we were given "dominion" and great power over the earth we have an equal amount of responsibility to care for it. Valerio particularly commends the wisdom of ancient peoples whose care for the world ensured their survival.

Study group details in the pewsheets or church website. Tuesday evenings from 6-7.15 starting in the Vicarage Tuesday 3rd March. Do come all welcome.

I am supporting the **Butt of Sherry Preservation Society** with their bid to buy the pub. The Butt is a great community asset; a place to go to share your news, your grumbles and your joys and to find a friendly face - a bit like the church only it is warmer and has beer! At the Silent Auction I'm offering to do 2 hours behind the bar to raise funds, please can you do something?

Spectra Musica in Wincanton

“Colours of Spring” is full of beautiful music from the 18th to the 21st centuries. We will take you from Russian churches to Abbey Road with great variety in between including, Begin the Beguine, Swonderful and Tea for Two! Two of the early pieces were written by Maria Rosa Coccia at the age of fifteen as a test in writing strict counterpoint, such talent! Other pieces to enjoy are by Morten Lauridsen, James MacMillan and Giovanni Paisiello.

The evening will be led by our talented Musical Director, Peter Leech and concert pianist Anita D'Attellis will feature throughout.

Join us on **Saturday 21st March** at the Church of **St Luke and St Teresa** in Wincanton at 7.30pm. Tickets, priced £12, are available from ☎ 01963 31607, from tickets@spectramusica.co.uk or on the door.

St Michaels News

West End Project is the name we are giving to the plan to enhance the church's facilities. In consultation with the steeplejacks who survey the pinnacles we have decided to put fencing around the base of one of the pinnacles because there is a moderate risk of falling masonry.

Saturday Club for children. We held a Candlemas Party in the church and Vicarage in early Feb and the next event is at the Vicarage on Sat 29th Feb from 5.00pm-6.30. We'll be cooking pancakes and talking about the Christian response to environmental issues, also giving children a book. Do book through Rev Carol.

Mothering Sunday 22nd March. All welcome to our special service for mums everywhere. This will be an all age worship service with short communion and gift for the congregation.

Organist for St Michaels. We are looking for someone to help us with music in the church. We need someone to play for Sunday services and to help at choir practice on Thursday evening from 5.30-6.30. We are willing to be flexible in these arrangements and offer support too. Please ring Rev Carol

Thank you to Top Brass and Concert Band for a fantastic concert on 15th Feb and for raising around £600 for the enhancement project.

Rev Carol ☎ 861859

March Church Services in Mere and West Knoyle

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

1 Sun 10:30 am Sunday Worship for All (30/35 mins with no communion).
06:00 pm Evening prayer

6	Fri	11:00 am	Woman's Day of Prayer
8	Sun	10:30 am	Parish Communion CW
15	Sun	10:30 am	Parish Communion CW
22	Sun	10:30 am	Parish Communion (Special Mothering Sunday service)
29	Sun	10:30 am	Parish Communion CW

Every Sunday 08:00am - Holy Communion BCP

Every Friday 08:00am - Holy Communion CW

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 Seaford ☎ 830263

1	Sun	09.30 am	Holy Communion
8	Sun	09:30 am	DIY
15	Sun	06:00 pm	Evensong
22	Sun	09:30 am	DIY
29	Sun	09:30am	Matins

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk *Saturday is Rest day*

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

1	Sun	10 a.m.	Coffee and croissants in the hall
8	Sun	10 a.m.	Morning Service
15	Sun	10 a.m.	Communion
22	Sun	10 a.m.	Mothering Sunday
29	Sun	10 a.m.	Parish Communion with baptism

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

1	Sun	11.00am	Mr Martin Heal
8	Sun	11.00am	Rev Duncan Goldie Holy Communion
15	Sun	11.00am	Mr Peter Kirshaw
22 & 29	Sun	11.00am	TBA

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

Every Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri	9.00am	Morning Prayer of the Church
Every Thur	10.00am	The Rosary of Our Lady
Every Sat	5.30pm	Holy Mass

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.

Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	Derek Fisher administrator@grovebuildingmere.com	☎ 07935 266375
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685

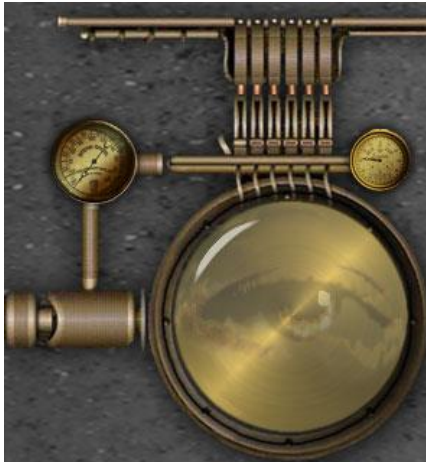
Mere Information Point @ The Library

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

Wiltshire Dementia Adviser Service	1 st Friday	2.00pm – 4.00
Registrar of Births & Deaths	By appt. only Thursdays	☎ 0300 003 4569 9.30am – 11.30
Health Trainer (As from Jan 2020)	Last Tuesday in month	10.00am – 12.00

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.or

A detailed steampunk-style illustration of a mechanical device. It features a large, circular, brass-colored lens in the center, reflecting a cloudy sky. Above the lens is a horizontal bar with several vertical rods or pistons. To the left of the lens is a small, round gauge with a needle. To the right of the lens is another similar gauge. The entire device is set against a dark, textured background.

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