

Mere Matters



& so does

West Knoyle

Your community magazine including
a guide to local events

November 2020

Mere Town Council

I have had a meeting with our MP Dr. Andrew Murrison to discuss our mutual concerns relating to three issues that are affecting Mere and as a result of this meeting, he has received the following responses:

1. The closure of Fives Court Care Home – the Town Council was very surprised to hear the news of the closure of Fives Court as we had received no consultation on this at all and no communication from Wiltshire Council. In response to our concerns, Wiltshire Council have stated that 'Fives Court is not a building that is fit for purpose for modern care. It was built in the 70s and rooms do not have en-suite facilities which are expected for our customers. Care Quality Commission's judgement is that the environment does not meet the standards of care. Additionally, its location means it is uneconomically unviable. The home is built for 39 residents and for some time the Council has been unable to place more than 19 customers. In respect of disposal of any property, a 6 monthly report goes to Cabinet to seek their consideration. As with any recommendation, Councillors and residents can raise questions on the recommendation which would be made following the service declaring it surplus.'
2. Concerns that Mere Library had not reopened – In response to these concerns, Wiltshire Council have said 'the library service is currently finalising plans to reopen Mere library, a date has yet to be confirmed as we are waiting information about volunteer availability, but is likely to be towards the end of October. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the service will operate for customers to browse and borrow for up to 30 minutes and book a computer for up to 45 minutes. Opening hours will initially be reduced but there will still be a mixture of library staff and volunteer sessions. The service and opening hours will be extended as soon as it's possible to do so safely. Wiltshire Council are committed to a library in Mere and would welcome working in partnership with the Town Council in this area.'
3. Concerns relating to the sale of land at Burton Field and unauthorised occupancy – as a result of our combined pressure and that of the local residents we can confirm that relevant authorities have been alerted and are involved and enforcement action is being taken.

We have had two Council meetings since my last report, the second of which was a hybrid meeting. Although Town Council meetings are exempt from the 'Rule of Six' – all our affiliate groups are advising against holding physical meetings and another difficulty is the unknown quantity of members of the public that may wish to attend our meetings. We are therefore holding hybrid virtual meetings. Although we will be sticking to our scheduled timetable of the first Monday of the month, these Council meetings are now being held at 6.00 p.m.. Any members of the public wishing to join the Town Council meeting will need to email the Clerk to be invited to join the meeting. Details will be given on the agendas which are displayed on the notice board outside the Lecture Hall and on the Town Council's website: www.mere.wilts.org

We called the second Town Council meeting so that we could consider our consultation response to an Outline Planning application that has been submitted for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of up to 70 dwellings at Beaumont Business Park, Woodlands Road, Mere. Whilst a large number of Councillors felt that redevelopment of this site may be inevitable and the majority of the councillors would prefer to see a brownfield site being utilised for development over a new greenfield site, the Town Council felt that they could not support this outline application as it was not offering any affordable housing and infrastructure improvements that would make this proposed development acceptable in planning terms. Also, members were concerned about the loss of an existing employment site and felt that the demands and impact that such a large development would have on Mere in terms of highways, drainage, amenities, utilities and services, needed some professional assessment.

I can also report that, sadly, Mr. Richard Pester has felt it necessary to resign as a Town Councillor due to time constraints. I would like to thank him for his valued contribution to the Town Council and the work he has done as a Town Councillor and wish him all the best for the future. The Town Council now has a vacancy for a Councillor and this will be filled by co-option as long as a request for an election is not demanded – please see Notice of Vacancy on the Town Council noticeboard (outside the Lecture Hall) or on our website: www.merewilts.org



Sadly, due to the current COVID-19 guidelines, the usual Remembrance Service in The Square cannot take place although we are planning something different this year to make sure we can have a town Act of Remembrance where wreaths will be laid by members of official organisations. The Town Council will be displaying large poppies around the town and erecting silhouettes in Castle Hill Approach. There will be no door-to-door poppy sales this year but poppies will be available at Mere Post Office.

On behalf of the Town Council, I would like to congratulate Mr. Richard Jefferies on having been awarded the British Empire Medal in The Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his contribution to the community in Mere during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from his volunteer work editing Mere Matters, early in 2019 Richard also stepped up to Chair a working group that was set up to make recommendations on proposals for Emergency Planning, should we be faced with a major event similar in nature to the Salisbury Poisonings or Shoreham Air disaster. As the Covid-19 situation emerged and lockdown measures were introduced the Town Council naturally approached Richard with a view to implementing the Mere Local Resilience Forum and setting up an Operational Plan to help vulnerable and self-isolating residents. We are pleased to say that Richard was happy to do this and made an excellent job of it too and we are extremely pleased that his efforts have been rewarded in this way. This COVID-19 support work has not stopped and Richard is happy to go on implementing the Resilience Forum and volunteer support for Mere which may be needed more as we see the numbers of positive cases rise nationally and indeed, locally.

Finally, we ALL want Mere to remain in the Medium Risk zone so as to avoid greater restrictions being imposed and we do not want to risk major outbreaks in Mere caused by planned events that may attract large social gatherings.

On this subject, I would like to urge all groups and organisations who are planning events to check that they will be complying with government guidelines in holding their events and that they have carried out their own risk assessments and checked with their insurance providers that they are happy for the event to go ahead. The Town Council has access to some support in relation to Covid-related queries for the community and if there are any organisations out there that would like to seek advice on whether their planned event would meet guidelines, please contact us and we will try and seek advice on your behalf.

Wessex Water

We have been made aware that Wessex Water have had to attend numerous call-outs for blocked sewer pipes in Mere recently. Around 75% of these blockages involve disposable items and can easily be avoided. For homeowners a blocked drain is a major burden and a financial inconvenience, but on an environmental scale it can be disastrous. Blockages can cause pollution in streams, rivers and on our beaches affecting local wildlife and the planet's ecosystems with waste potentially ending up in the ocean. Wet wipes and so-called "flushable" wipes are the biggest cause of blockages in our region. Sewerage systems are not designed to cope with today's disposable household products such as make-up, cleaning, toilet and baby wipes. Many wet wipes available are described as flushable but unless they have the Fine to Flush logo they will contain plastic and will not break down like toilet paper when flushed.

Flushing bathroom waste down your toilet can cause blockages, meaning what you flush could come back up through your toilet, sink or manhole. Sewage flooding is miserable and can cause damage to your or your neighbours' homes. It can also cause pollution in local streams, rivers and beaches.

To keep your home blockage free, only flush the three Ps:

- Paper
- Poo
- Pee

What to put in the bin:

- Wet wipes – cleaning, baby, make-up etc. – even if they say 'flushable', they aren't
- Nappies
- Cotton buds
- Plasters and bandages
- Tampons and applicators (both plastic and cardboard applicators)
- Sanitary and incontinence pads

Stay fatberg free

We've all seen reports of giant fatbergs in the news that can cause massive sewer blockages, leading to sewage backing up into homes and streets. To help keep your drains clear and your community free of smelly fatbergs, scrape leftover food and wipe grease from plates and pans before washing them. Sink strainers also help to catch any small bits of food that might otherwise get into your drains.

What to put in your food waste or rubbish bin:

Cooking fat, oil and grease

Leftover food from plates and pans

Coffee grounds

For more information on this please see: wessexwater.co.uk/stoptheblock

*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

If I remember correctly, a few years ago, Vernon Phillips of Mere attended Mere Town Council and suggested the town develop an emergency plan, I thought it would possibly not be needed in my life time. The idea was taken forward and a very able Richard Jefferies took on the chairmanship of the Mere Local Resilience Forum. Then came Covid-19 and Richard was asked to take the lead for which he has very deservedly been awarded a BEM (British Empire Medal) for services to the community of Mere during the Covid-19 pandemic. I would like to congratulate him and note that his award was also announced at the Full Wiltshire Council.

The rear of the **Butt of Sherry** has been the subject of a planning application that Mere Town Council have refused as consultees. It is sad to see this business closed along with **Fives Court** being the latest commercial casualty, I shall closely monitor what will become of the site.



Easy access to cash as a result of the Post Offices closing and banks no longer being on the high street, the Treasury have new proposals to safeguard accessibility to cash, which could mean shops would have to offer cashback even if customers do not make a purchase.

The Government aims to ensure no one is left behind in the move to digital payments, and argues that EU regulations have previously been a barrier to retailers offering cashback when people were not paying for goods or services.



The report states that the Government is considering changing the rules after the Brexit transition period ends at the end of 2020, freeing up more businesses to offer cash.

I attended Mere Town Council this month which was interesting being a hybrid meeting, part Zoom for public participation and part traditional meeting at The Duchy Site. With a continuing increase in use, the lack of a footpath at Clements Lane was noted.

Wiltshire Council are picking up some premises in and around Kilmington as part of Wiltshire Councils Ultrafast Contract with Openreach (so they will be given all Fibre To The Premises service). All premises are due to be upgraded by March 2021.

Wiltshire Council have an above average number of children looking for foster care arehence looking for foster parents.

Reflections

I recently came across a program of about 25 years ago for an Easter Extravaganza, raising funds for "Mere Sport and Leisure Centre" which eventually became The Andy Young Pavilion. The list of supporting businesses may interest some, R. M. Nurden butcher, F. J. Chalke Ltd., Ken Tillbrook, Hamilton Litestat Group, Jeans (Philips CTV), I and AJ Brockway, Hill Brush Company, Yapp Brothers, Blue Rider Bookshop, Southern Insurance and Mortgage Services, Welcome House, N R Howel, Waltons Newsagents, Edwards Supermarket, Gillingham and Mere Taxis, The Old Ship Hotel, Walworth & Co, The Pharmacy in the Square, The Mere Practice, Mere Telecottage and Castle Hill Service Station.

George Jeans ☎ 07710 441599 george.jeans@wiltshire.gov.uk

Keep playing your part and prevent increased restrictions being introduced in Wiltshire:



Keep washing
hands regularly



Wear face coverings
in enclosed spaces



Stay at least 2
metres apart



Follow rule
of six



Self-isolate
when instructed

#WiltshireTogether

Mere Local Resilience to Covid-19

Those of you who know me personally will know that I am not often lost for words. Surprised, embarrassed, humbled, and exhilarated - are just some of my reactions to being awarded a BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.



Whilst being delighted to accept the medal I have taken a huge amount of pleasure in thanking the Council Officers, businesses, volunteers and the community at large for all their support over the last 7 months. In my professional career I had to work with a great many people and agencies but I have never before had such support – thank you everyone once again it really has been an absolute pleasure to help. Mere is a wonderful place to live but it is the people who make Mere what it is.

Moving Forwards

As we look forward to Christmas and 2021, it is difficult to imagine our being able to resume a more normal life any time soon. The virus appears to be getting ever nearer and whether friends and family succumb, it is self-evident that we would be foolish to think of Mere remaining immune.

Whatever the advice reported in the media, the only sure way to minimize the risk is to adopt a common sense attitude. Please think before you mix with other people for whatever reason.

I would hate to think how I can convince our fantastic volunteers to continue with their efforts if groups of people or individuals, for whatever reason, are going to blatantly disregard the advice. At the time of writing this (19th Oct 2020) the regulations are very clear and I quote: **"you must not socialise in groups larger than 6, indoors OR outdoors (other than where a legal exemption applies)"**. I am aware of some planning for events in the near future which may not meet the legal exemption status – organisers beware please!

Volunteers continue in their availability to assist those who are not able to get out to collect prescriptions or do their basic shopping etc. If you are unable to get out due to the Covid-19 and if you do not already a 'buddy' then please do refer to the list of Covid-19 Telephone Coordinators printed towards the rear of this publication.

We have got used to what appears to be a new vocabulary this year, may I suggest a new maxim **"Virus about, don't go out"** - *unless you really need to*.

Best wishes and please keep safe.

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

From Mere Surgery

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, how you contact the surgery will be different at the moment. This is to limit face-to-face contact whenever possible and help stop the spread of coronavirus.

Mere Surgery is open and if you need to see your GP, please ring us on 01747 860001 or contact us through our website www.meresurgery.co.uk

You can also call NHS 111.

If you are waiting for a check-up, please be assured we will be in touch

Appointments are being delivered face-to-face and available to all patients, online and over the telephone. You may be asked to discuss your conditions over the phone or online first to assess what would be most appropriate for you.

Please do not come to the surgery unless you have a booked appointment and avoid arriving early for an appointment as we are trying to limit footfall within the surgery.

Please remember you can register for online access or download the NHS App to request repeat prescriptions or book an appointment.

If you are asked to come into the surgery for a face-to-face appointment, please remember to wear a face covering, sanitise your hands as you enter the surgery and respect the current social distancing guidance.

Measures are in place to keep you safe from infection during your visit to the surgery.

Flu clinics this year

Flu clinics will be held in the surgery but will be a little different as we must adhere to social distancing guidelines.

- Patients must have a pre booked appointment
- Please do not attend before designated appointment time as we will not be able to let you into the building no matter what the weather.
- Patients will be instructed to queue outside the surgery as limited numbers are permitted inside the surgery in order to maintain a safe footfall at all times.
- Please would all patients attending the surgery wear a face mask or covering.
- Please wear short sleeves so that it is easy for you to be ready for your vaccination.
- To enable us to comply with social distancing regulations and to manage our delivery of vaccine, we will only be vaccinating patients in the specified clinics.

Eligibility

This year flu vaccinations will be offered under the NHS flu vaccination programme to the following groups:

- All children aged two to eleven (but not twelve years or older) on 31 August 2020
- People aged 65 years or over (including those becoming age 65 years by 31 March 2021)
- Those aged from six months to less than 65 years of age, in a clinical risk group such as those with:
 - chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis
 - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - chronic kidney disease at stage three, four or five or chronic liver disease
 - chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease,
 - learning disability
 - diabetes
 - splenic dysfunction or asplenia
 - a weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)
 - morbidly obese (defined as BMI of 40 and above)
- All pregnant women (including those women who become pregnant during the flu season)
- Household contacts of those on the NHS Shielded Patient List, or of immunocompromised individuals, specifically individuals who expect to share living accommodation with a shielded patient on most days over the winter and therefore for whom continuing close contact is unavoidable
- People living in long-stay residential care homes
- Those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill

Child flu clinics

Most of the child flu clinics have now been run but we are holding a final catch up session on Wednesday 4th November. This will be for any children aged 2-3 years or those in an at risk group aged up to 17 years. All patients in this age group should have received an invitation email or letter. If your child falls into one of these groups please contact the surgery now to book an appointment.

Adult clinics

Adult clinics will be running until the end of November. If you are aged 65 and over or fall into one of the at risk groups please contact the surgery now to book an appointment.

Adult clinics for patients aged 50-64 years

Whilst we've received information that all 50-64 year olds may be eligible for a free flu vaccination as part of plans to protect more people against seasonal flu, these free vaccinations will be subject to delivery later in the year.

This allows us to focus on those who are in an at risk group, such as pregnant women and people with long term health conditions. They will be given priority and offered the vaccine first; if you are in this category you will be contacted and need to make your appointment now.

If you are aged 50-64 and not in one of the at risk categories you will be made aware in the coming months if you will be able to attend for vaccination. If the programme is extended this is likely to be November or December.

Of course if you wish to access a vaccine prior to this date you can pay to have this at your local pharmacy as in previous years, otherwise please wait for more information.

Thank you for your co-operation and understanding at this time.

The Doctors at Mere Surgery ☎ 860001

Warminster Food Bank

There is now a permanent collection box in the Mere Co Op - you can't miss the big green box!

We are always in need of all non-perishable food & drink items, all toiletries, baby products (sorry no formula milk), pet food and as the festive season approaches a seasonal gift or 2 would make an emergency food parcel recipient smile.

I am not sure when we will be doing a Clock Tower collection again, but we will be there once social distancing allows.

A big THANK YOU to everyone who donated to the new collection and the Co-Op for finding us such a wonderful prominent space.

If you, or you know of someone 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).

1st Mere Brownies and Mere Girlguiding.

A personal tribute to a loved and well respected **Susan Jean Luffman** (née INGS), with 40 years' service as a Mere brownie guider. Where do you start when a 40 year friendship suddenly comes to an end so suddenly? I have been privileged to work with Sue and Mere Brownies since making an apprehensive phone call to her after I moved to Mere in 1981 to enquire if the unit required any help as I had previous experience with Girlguiding in Bath both as a member, helper and leader.



I was welcomed with open arms and between us we worked as a team planning interesting and stimulating meetings for the girls in our charge. We've always been affectionately known as 'the two Sue's' because at meetings one of us would always answer!!

Thursday night was always Girlguiding night in Mere. In order to prepare, a lot of hours of forward planning behind the scenes was necessary to produce enough activities to fill a meeting with fun, enjoyment and skills that may be useful in later life for our girls aged between 7 and 11 in our charge.

We have experienced and survived over the years, major uniform and programme changes which we had to embrace, rapidly learn and deliver to deadlines. Much of the programme is now completed in stages and badges are earned during the brownie meetings. Previously badges could be worked for at home as well but now it is more through shared effort.

Whilst working towards their Duke of Edinburgh awards, many ex-Brownies have returned as helpers which has been lovely for us and also gives them time to organise and run valued games and projects for completion at the meeting and to see the fruition of their efforts.

Sue gained her 'pack holiday' permit to allow the girls to experience many pack holidays and sleep-overs to various destinations including Foxlease, Lyndhurst, Winterbourne Earls, Berwick St James and Dudsbury. These were all wonderful opportunities to work individually and as a team both indoors and outdoors. Some of the activities would not be available to a normal family outing so these were extra special for the girls and of course there was always the midnight feasts to arrange and walks in the dark!! Great fun for all.

Sue held Wiltshire south Senior County posts too as well as commissioner posts in our area. Leaders and helpers have come and gone over the years but Sue was always there for everyone to help them on their guiding journey

Myself and all the guiding units send our love and thoughts to Thelma, John, Jess, Emily, Matthew, James, Thomas their partners and the dear grandchildren.

Sue Jeans

Free, one-to-one Coaching

A recent Channel 4 programme, *The Write Offs*, has prompted me to put pen to



paper; a stunning programme about adults who have struggled to read all their lives. Eight adults volunteered for this reality TV programme, hosted by Sandi Toksvig. They had concentrated one-to-one reading coaching over four months, and were also challenged four times to tackle some reading well outside their comfort zones. How brave they were. I have every ounce of admiration for them all.

Locally there is a group, **Read Easy Blackmore Vale North**, who can give adults who struggle to read that self-same opportunity. Our coaching methods are very similar to those used in the programme; in fact we use the same book series, but our learning programme is not as concentrated. We offer every reader two 30 minute sessions a week with their personal coach and in a private venue so there are no interruptions. Our local coverage is Shaftesbury to Sherborne, with Marnhull, Gillingham, Mere, Wincanton and the villages in between.

If you know any friends or family members who would like to learn to read, do encourage them to give us a ring.

Jenny 📞 07748 977330

Shreen Harmony – ‘down but not out’ or ‘where there’s a will there’s a way’.

Yes, we are having to keep our numbers down but at least we are singing again. From early September we have been meeting in two sessions of 5 singers in each session plus Caroline Ratcliffe, our choir leader, enabling us to keep to the rule of 6. In the hall at Stourton, which has been passed as being Covid safe, we are able to double the distance between us to 4 meters and learn to sing various three part harmony pieces. Not quite the Shreen Harmony we were used to but enjoyable none the less.

Caroline Landymore 📞 228819

STOP PRESS - Mere Library

Mere library will be reopened from **Friday October 30th** for people to browse for up to 30 minutes, to select and loan books and book a computer for up to 45 minutes.



Wiltshire Council has worked closely with the library service volunteers to enable Mere Library to re-open sessions operated as usual by staff and some by volunteers.

Fridays 10.00 -1.00pm and 2.00 – 4.00pm (Staff session)

Mondays – 10.00am – 12.00 noon (Volunteer session)

Sally-Ann Hooper sally-ann.hooper@wiltshire.gov.uk

All phone numbers are STD code: 01747 except where otherwise stated

Mere Historical Society

With our 50th Anniversary in April 2022 approaching, you may like to read some long-standing members' recollections of our Society's early years, and last month we started with those of one of our founder members, Dr David Longbourne, and a member who joined the Society in 1981, Joan Sutton.

This month Daphne Tighe has contributed her memories:

In 1991 Michael and I were living in Sussex when we decided to go west to be nearer his Dorset childhood and my Wiltshire ancestors. In the course of our research of small country towns we dropped into Mere for a cup of coffee and bought a house instead.

We soon got to know Ben Elliott (vicar), and he invited us to the Society Annual Dinner at the Ship Hotel, so we met most of the members before we moved in. Once we were settled, and had signed up as members of the Society, we started making regular trips to the Record Office, at that time in Trowbridge.

While I was chasing my ancestors in the villages around Marlborough, Michael continued his interest in industrial archaeology and local history which became the basis of Mere Papers.

We both enjoyed the evening lectures and morning talks so we were surprised, and honoured, to be invited to contribute to them. We enjoyed doing them. Michael was used to addressing meetings and it was not as scary as I had feared! It was good to be among friends.

Note: Many of you thoroughly enjoyed Daphne's most recent talk morning talk about the Census: 13 March 2018: Stand Up and Be Counted – The Story of the Census by Daphne Tighe.

With our anniversary approaching we would welcome further recollections from members.

Caroline Cook ☎ 861797 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Battle of Britain Wings Week

80th Anniversary of the Appeal

Please accept our grateful thanks for your support during this year's Wings Week.

With your help, we managed to raise over £500 which was amazing in these difficult times. We rely on your goodwill and generosity, which you gave us so loyally this year. Thank you.



Roy Sims. President, RAFA Shaftsbury Branch. ☎ 863328

Mere Bowls Club

The Club is now closed for the winter and will not open until April next year, if allowed.

After contacting a specialist on maintaining bowling greens and sending in a soil sample for analysis, the Club has a plan of action to try and bring the green up to a higher bowling standard. To that end Richard Coombs, John FitzGerald, Trevor Mead, Ron Heesom and Tony Rankin have started coring and scarifying the green, thus completing the first part of the programme. Further works are planned for the early part of next year, with additional volunteers required to carry out the more labour intensive part of the tasks.

Both Peter Dethick and Jim Deering are to be thanked for all their hard work assisting in cutting the green during the summer months.

"Hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club".

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

Mere Theatre Club

At the time of writing we are very fortunate to have some live theatre and other live entertainments in our area. Although we are not organising anything at the moment, if you're feeling adventurous here are some to consider:

Theatre Royal Bath, www.theatre.royal.org.uk

Michael Frayn's Copenhagen 4-21 November David Mamet's Oleanna 25th November - 12th December Cinderella 15th December - 10th January The Play That Goes Wrong 17th December - 10th January

Salisbury Playhouse, www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk

A range of live entertainments mainly for 1 night from dancing to music to comedy, including some Christmassy offerings in December.

Bristol Old Vic, www.bristololdvic.org.uk

Their website currently only showing for October, so keep an eye open for November and December.

And have a look at the Lighthouse Poole where they have a fun sounding Christmas show.

Hope you get to enjoy something theatrical either at home or in a theatre!

Madeline Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

The very good news, just received as we go to press, is that the Suchana project we support in West Bengal is at last beginning to re-open – to the great delight of the children, their communities, and, of course, the teachers and volunteers. The covid infection rate is still very high in many urban parts of India, but low in the tiny villages in the very rural area where Suchana is situated.



Quite how opening up with proper precautions will work in practice we don't yet know, but Ishani, who is now based in the UK and is the daughter of Rahul and Kirsty who founded the project, has just started a 3-month visit there as part of her gap year before starting her university course next Autumn. This means that in the next edition of Mere Matters, we'll be able to bring up-to-date news of how it's going, and what it means to the children and their communities, after having to stay at home for so long.

Inevitably there are financial difficulties on the horizon because there have been so few opportunities for fund-raising but the organisers are optimistic that, with help from supporters, they will pull through. Here in Mere we're doing our bit to keep things going, after our very successful coffee morning in August, with a cake stall to be held on **Saturday 14th November** at the front of the garage of 1 Boar Street (Jean Young's house) from 10am. There will also be a limited range of other items for sale, including craft from West Bengal.

Please support us if you can. Cakes for the stall would be extremely welcome (but obviously need to be made and wrapped with carefully washed/sanitised hands). Please bring them to the stall between 9.30 and 10am on Saturday 14th November, or to Grove Cottage, Barton Lane, in the afternoon or evening the day before (phone & email below). Thank you – in anticipation!

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553 judithvthompson@aol.com

Friends of Mere Museum

Well, we hope everyone remembered to raise their glasses in honour of our virtual 30th anniversary!

Next is our **AGM on November 10th** via Zoom, about which Friends will already have been notified. More news we hope in the next issue.

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jennyv@flaxmill.org.uk

Vacancy for Parish Clerk

Upper Deverills Parish Council wishes to appoint a Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

This is a part time position, approximately 20 hours a month, working primarily from home. The Parish Council will supply a laptop for Council work.

The applicant should have good computer, administrative and communication skills and should be competent in bookkeeping. Local authority experience would be an advantage, but training is available.

The salary will be based on NJC pay scales plus agreed expenses.

If you would like an informal chat about the post, please call the Chair on 01985 844884 or email cllrflint@upperdeverills.co.uk or the current Clerk on 01985 844385. Full information about the Parish Council is available on the website: www.upperdeverills.co.uk.

For an application pack please email the Clerk: clerk@upperdeverills.co.uk

The closing date for applications is Friday 13th November 2020 and interviews are expected to be held in the week beginning 16th November.

Link Scheme

It is nice to know that our services are appreciated and many clients say so on our trips. One has gone further and written to us saying:

“On occasions I overheard a bit of conversation like this ‘Oh dear, what will you do, how will you get there?’ Answer ‘It’ll be fine, the Link Scheme will take me.’ Almost as if the Link Scheme grows on trees. Just like that!

Thank you all; those kind and thoughtful drivers and the patient, tactful and diplomatic people who can decipher phone messages. All of you give up your time freely and cheerfully.

Without Link – well, it is almost impossible to imagine.

The Link Scheme makes (sometimes) difficult, worrying events seem so easy. There are not enough thank yous to thank you all adequately.”

If, on reading this, you feel you would like to help, please contact the Link Scheme phone number below and let’s talk!

As Christmas approaches would clients please note that the Link phone (860096) will not be manned from Wednesday 23 December to Monday 4 January 2021 inclusive. If clients need to travel during that time they must make sure they give us as much notice as possible so that we can arrange a driver.

John FitzGerald, Chair ☎ 860096

Walking the Pilgrim's Way

At the end of my journey, walking ever eastwards, I arrived in glorious sunshine at Canterbury Cathedral on Friday 9th October to be greeted by my sister and brother-in-law holding a winning ribbon!!! They joined me for a welcome and blessing by a member of the cathedral's clergy as one of those who have made the pilgrimage over the centuries. It had been a wonderful 12 days walk following initially, St Swithun's Way and then the ancient Pilgrim's way itself. The first 2 days were along the River Itchen with wildlife reserves protecting the water meadows and herons, kites and birdsong and peacefully grazing cattle. I then passed into the Surrey Hills and my training on Castle Hill should have included carrying a pack (which I haven't done for years!) as I puffed my way up and down, up and down both these and the North Downs!!!! The Way led through all these small villages where the pilgrims of old would have stopped to rest or stay. Unfortunately all the churches were closed because of the Covid virus so I missed all the interesting, historical features but enjoyed the peace of the churchyards and had to rely on the guidebook for the descriptions. From Farnham some of the route followed the North Downs Way and much of the last days were alongside the railways and motorways now criss-crossing the path. (The scariest moment was in fact crossing a footbridge over the M25 with 8 lanes of traffic hurtling way below my feet!)

As the days passed and I crunched my way through acorns and conkers, through ancient woodlands, so the trees took on their Autumn hues and the hedgerows were bursting full of Nature's bounty – fruits (even a bullace!), nuts, seeds and berries. However it was so sad to see all of ash trees infected by ash die-back: some being felled as I passed, whole field edges already cut down and many other dead and dying trees. And so I reached Kent – the county where I was born, (a Kentish Maid!), and crossed the River Medway on the last stretch to Canterbury. I was delighted to see some hop fields still in production although all of the beautiful oast houses are now, no doubt expensive, derelict. However, the beautiful English orchards had mostly gone either to be planted with vines or derelict. How sad when our shops are full of apples from all over the world and our unique varieties left rotting on the ground! There was one huge commercial fruit farm with orchards stretching far in every direction and strawberries still fruiting under polytunnels. Here the pickers were from Rumania, living in caravans on site!



Now home I had the job of gathering together all my sponsor money with a final fund-raising event, a raffle outside the Post Office. (The winning ticket, by the way, was a resident of St Michael's View). In celebration of my 40 years association with the Fair Trade movement, I have been raising money for the

work of Traidcraft Exchange. They work with small-holders who grow all the commodities we take for granted daily, towards a Fairer Trade system and building a more secure future, even more important in the climate of today with the effect of Covid-19. The target set was £1,650 but through everyone's generosity and support I have nearly raised £2,000 – an amazing amount and I'd like to thank everyone who has supported me with my challenge and also as loyal supporters over the years of my stalls and sales.

Janet Way ☎ 860884

The Butt of Sherry Preservation Society.

Our campaign to have the Butt reopened as a public house continues and having learned that the new owner is intending to start redeveloping the site we have undertaken a process of opposing these plans.

The plan as put to Wiltshire Council Planning Department is for a large 3 x double bedroom dwelling that has been described as a holiday cottage at the top of the beer garden, but it is on a Castle Hill Lane which is within a conservation area, development of a listed property and on a road that was deemed not suitable for further development by the local council. We would urge anyone with any objections to lodge them on the West Wilts web site. This is the Planning application :- 20/07711/FUL

We have also engaged a specialist from Planning for Pubs to bolster our efforts in the current campaign.

We are still hopeful that the pub will reopen and with a little bit more of a push from the community it may even be put back on the market enabling us to re-launch the share option. Even if the pub is not put up for sale we are still hopeful that it will be open again as a pub in the near future after all it gained its Asset of Community Value on that basis.

Melvin Wilkinson melvinwilkinson@hotmail.com

Mere Museum

The new booklets which we launched in February are now available to purchase at £2.50 each. They include:

- Silk Road to Mere
- A Short History of Mere
- The Old Brewery - History of Yapp Brothers
- Mere meets Stourhead
- Mere Union Workhouse
- Schools in Mere

I also have some of our bookmarks for sale at £1 and the printed views of old Mere on blank cards for £2.00.

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

Fair Trade Christmas Sale.

Thanks to Paul, I am hoping to be able to hold a pop-up shop at The Angel Tea Room on Wednesday 2nd December from 9.30-4.00p.m. However, this will all depend on the guidelines at the time for any new Covid-19 restrictions and obviously we will abide by them within the shop as necessary. I will not be ordering any new gifts from the catalogue as I shall not be holding my usual stalls but I have a large stock of items from previous years which I will be selling at a 5% discount.

Should you wish to order your cards and gifts, please contact me for a catalogue but there would still be time on 2nd to get an order in by Christmas. And don't forget your Fair Trade dried fruits and nuts for all the Christmas baking!

Janet Way ☎ 860884

Fair Trade Christmas Pudding

Ingredients:

* Fairly traded ingredients.

*85g/3oz each dried mixed fruit, raisins and sultanas

*85g/3oz chopped dates

50g/2oz glace cherries halved (optional)

*75g chopped apricots

*2tbs orange juice

*Grated rind and juice of 1 orange and 1 lemon

*25g/1oz walnuts

100g/4oz softened butter, plus extra for greasing

*100g/4oz Muscovado or soft brown sugar

2 eggs beaten

1 eating apple, peeled, cored and diced

50g/2oz S.R. flour

½ tsp each ground ginger, nutmeg and cinnamon

1tsp mixed spice

2oz fresh white breadcrumbs

Mix fruit and juices together and leave for 2-4days. Lightly toast nuts without oil and chop roughly. Beat sugar and butter together until light and fluffy.

Add eggs, mixing well after each addition. Stir in the soaked fruits and all other ingredients. Mix well and put into a 1½lt/2pint greased pudding basin

Cover with double layer of greased greaseproof paper, tie with string and cover with foil. Simmer for 2 hours topping up water if necessary. Cool, cover with fresh paper and store in a cool, dry place for up to 3 months.

Steam again for 1½hrs on Christmas morning.

Mere School

The children have now been back in school for half a term after the long break of lockdown and the summer holidays. It is great to have them back and they have all adapted well to the new routines and are working extremely hard!



We would like to welcome all the children in Blue Class to Mere School. They have settled in really well and have enjoyed their first half term with their new teachers and classmates!

The highlight of the half term has got to be the visit of a Roman Soldier to the school.....yes a real one! The children in Red class had a fantastic morning with him learning all about the Roman army and the many battles they had with the Celts. Watch out next month as Henry VIII is due to visit the children in Gold class!

Life in all the classes is very busy as the children are also preparing for a very different Halloween and Remembrance Day experience. They are busy making pumpkins and poppies to be displayed in the windows of their houses for all of Mere to see. I wonder how many you can spot as you walk through the town!

Don't forget to look at our website for more details and pictures of what we have been up to:

www.mereschool.co.uk



Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

London is doing it; Bath is doing it; and soon we hope Mere will also be doing it. Putting on a show that is. MADS has a plan, though we are all very aware that things can change these days from minute to minute and so we are prepared to adapt said plans to whatever is then the current climate. But you might be cheered to know that we are planning an entertainment in December, to be held in the brilliantly Covid-ready Lecture Hall, with every precaution taken and all required restrictions in place. We shall hope to delight you with three or four short pieces, written by well-known home-grown Mere writers, each involving only one or two well-spaced actors at a time. It may delight you even more that entry will be entirely free, though you will need to acquire one so we can ensure that we limit our audience to the maximum of 26 properly spaced persons only. We shall of course update everyone in the December issue of Mere Matters, together with details of how to get a ticket for this epic event so be sure to look for us in the index!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



Here we are in November seven months since our last Mere Mothers Union monthly meeting. It would have been wonderful to say that we are now meeting once again but sadly, as Covid 19 increases, this is not the case. Although we may not be able to meet face to face in our regular monthly session that does not mean that we have been inactive and constantly bemoaning the situation. Far from it. What underpins the Mothers Union is its philosophy of Friendship, Fellowship and care for each other. Living out the Christian teaching of the Gospel message. Faith, Prayer and Worship being core elements of Mothers Union Groups everywhere.

We have been able to contact each other by phone, email, letter and where possible keeping within the Covid guidelines members have been able to meet as individuals for coffee. The bonds and links of the Mere Mothers Union members have helped reduce any feeling of isolation and provided support where possible.

It looks as though our ability to celebrate Christmas will be very different this year. In a show of optimism we have booked the parish church of St Michael the archangel for the MU Deanery Carol Service on **Wednesday December 9th at 11am**. We are, at present, able to hold services of worship. However if we are still able to go ahead with the service it is likely to be a service of listening to the Carols and readings of the Christian Story rather than all singing along with a choir whilst also following what Covid guidelines are in place in December.

Yes these are indeed challenging times but with challenge comes resolve, innovation and optimistic hope that things will get better so watch this space.

Christine Marsh ☎ 861212 Carol Lord ☎ 861923

Christmas Shoebox Appeal

For the last few years Wendy Horne has collected Christmas Shoeboxes for the FSCI Appeal. As Wendy has recently moved from Mere I have volunteered to take over this role.

These boxes will go to Southeast Europe for children and families that may not receive anything at all this Christmas. If you would like to support this cause, leaflets to explain how to help are available at the Post Office, 'This and That' and Sprout and Flower. Alternatively the leaflet is available to view or print online at www.fscinet.org

Boxes can be dropped off at Little Myrtle, The Fields, Mere or I can collect if easier.

Please have boxes ready by November 13th. Thank you.

Shelley Hunt 228590 or ☎ 07810 216833

Letter from the Churches ~ Deacon Michael Hughes writes::

Our beautiful countryside, and the animals that share it with us, are great blessings to us. Last month I visited a lady who was infirmed and housebound. She could not get into nature, so God in His goodness sent nature to her.

She was clearly in some pain, but a twinkle of delight came to her eye as she told me of the unheard-of blessing that had been given to cheer her up in her isolation.

She had gone to the toilet and on lifting the lid, to her amazement saw in the water below - a toad! After it had been photographed, it swam back round the u-bend to its home on some ledge further down the pipes. Such are the moments that God gives to make our isolation bearable. I am sure that many of you could also tell of wonderful surprises.

In October I went on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk. It is a merry place where for centuries those who governed our country, as well as ordinary people, would go to ask the help of the Mother of God in a crisis. This October seemed like a good time to go there and to pray for help for our country. Following the science, and listening to the economists are two parts of the wise response, but is not prayer a third? Might it not be a cracking good idea for our leaders also to encourage us all to pray to be freed from this plague?

Walsingham is on the north coast of Norfolk. Near the Wash the tide goes out the best part of a mile, revealing shining acres of flat sands, where the oystercatchers and gulls work the water's edge. These cockle hunters must break the shell of the cockle to get at the meat inside. The competent birds pick the cockle up in their bill, fly up to a great height above nearby rocks, and drop it. Then they land on the rocks and eat the meat from the cracked shell.

The particular gull we were watching had not fully got this procedure, and decided to do it the easy way. It got the cockle in its bill, flew up no more than 10 feet and dropped the cockle- which landed gently on the soft sand, not on the rocks. So the shell was not broken. We watched the poor bird do this at least 10 times. It may well be doing so yet. It had not determined to do the job properly.

And so with us. We must understand what needs to be done this winter, and determine to do it thoroughly and well. Having resolved to be merry whatever comes, we need to set out ways of keeping fear and despair away during the coming dark and difficult months. The Finns know about difficult winters and they use the word Sisu. It means a dogged refusal to be beaten. That is what we need. And we need strategies to keep cheerful. You will have your own list. Here is mine: Going for walks, even if only up Castle Hill, or driving to a high viewpoint like Winn Green; taking Omega 3 and Vitamin D; meeting friends safely; singing; praying; accomplishing small jobs; planning next year's celebrations for when it is all behind us; time with family; helping others.

Already next year's buds are forming within the trees, the snowdrop and daffodil bulbs are preparing beneath the earth.

Everything is going to be all right, we are safe in God's hands. Have a joyful winter and (I know it is a bit early) a right happy Christmas!

Deacon Michael Hughes

Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	Graham Ward 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 Centers are normally 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

Covid-19 Telephone Coordinators

Name	Home Phone	Mobile
Ann Rich	01747 861493	07413 512023
Isobel Page	01747 860297	
Jane Batten	01747 860583	
Joanne King		07740 858923
Mary Wilson	01747 229609	07550 076240
Rachael Hansford	01747 860168	07989 470278
Rose Heesom		07791 559674
Roy Beavis		07878 903178

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

If you would like to help in any way or wish to make comment then please contact:

Richard Jefferies

☎ 01747 863425

☎ 07950 797273

✉ rajefferies@btinternet.com

Church Contact Details

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:

PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

1	Sun	8.00am 10.00am 4.00pm	(BCP) Communion Benefice service (CW) in Maiden Bradley All Souls Service
8	Sun	8.00am 4.00pm	(BCP) Remembrance Service
15	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	(BCP) Communion (CW) Communion
22	Sun	10.30am	(CW) Communion Christ the King Christine Marsh
29	Sun	8.00am 10.30am	8am (BCP) Communion (CW) Communion

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	10.00am	Benefice Service at All Saints Maiden Bradley
8	Sun	9.30am	Remembrance Service
15	Sun	9.30am	DIY
22	Sun	9.30am	Holy Communion
29	Sun	9.30am	DIY

Copy date for December 2020 - January 2021 Issue

Closing deadline is: 4:00pm on MONDAY 23rd November. 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.

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	10.00am	Benefice Service All Saints Day
8	Sun	10.45am	Remembrance Sunday
15	Sun	10.00am	Morning Service
22	Sun	10.00am	Holy Communion
29	Sun	10.00am	Parish Communion

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

Our Masses are held in Wincanton at present due to COVID distancing instructions making our church in Mere too small. Fr Louis celebrates Mass in Wincanton on Saturday at 5.30 pm, Sunday at 10.30 am and 6.30pm

A little brain teaser to go with your coffee break

It is a 9 letter word: 123456789
If you lose it you die
If you have 234, you can 1234.
56 is one type of disease
89 indicates exact location and time
2 and 7 are the same letter
3 and 8 are the same letter
5 and 9 are the same letter
What is the word?

Cenotaph

This year is the centenary of the unveiling of the Cenotaph in London, on 11th November 1920.

The literal meaning of 'cenotaph' is Empty Tomb, and described by the OED as 'a memorial to a dead person whose body is elsewhere' – in this case well over a million British Empire troops who fell in the First World War.

In the early stages of the proposal for a national memorial the first question was: was it wanted or would people prefer to forget the war and 'move on' ?

What form should it take? Simplicity was preferred.

Where should it be sited? London obviously but in a Royal Park (eg Hyde Park), somewhere with a military background (eg Horseguards, where Trooping the Colour is held) or in a public thoroughfare? Whitehall was finally chosen but not fully supported being so close to the seat of government which many thought could have done so much more to end the war much earlier.

To test public reaction the Government built a mock-up cenotaph to almost exactly the same design and on the same site as at present, timber framed and finished with plaster. It was unveiled just before the Victory Parade on 19th July 1919, when over 16000 service personnel marched past and saluted.



Unveiling of the Cenotaph, 11th
November 1920

The event caught the public imagination and within a week 1¼ million members of the public had paid their respects and laid a huge quantity of flowers. Work then started almost immediately on building the permanent structure we know today. It was unveiled by King George V, our Queen's grandfather, on 11th November 1920, the second anniversary of the Armistice.

It is now the scene of the public remembrance service on every Remembrance Sunday, with extensive wreath laying and march past by thousands of service veterans, but cancelled this year due to the pandemic.

Here are a few facts and figures:

Designed by the renowned architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, whose work can be seen all over the world. After the war he specialised in war memorials.

Constructed of Portland stone quarried near Weymouth, and listed as Grade 1 in 1970.

Cost £7325 net of architectural fees waived, equivalent to nearly £300K in modern money. It would probably cost considerably more than that if built today. After the Second World War the 1939-1945 years were added to the inscriptions and the Cenotaph was again unveiled, this time by King George VI and rededicated on 10th November 1946.

Various other parades are held during the year, one in particular being ANZAC day 25th April, remembering the Australian and NZ troops who fell in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

It is ironic that official concern for the Whitehall site was the possibility of impact by traffic, even 100 years ago. In fact the only damage has been the relatively recent setting fire to the flags and paint spraying the stonework, during political protests such as BLM. What an age we live in!

Ben Carver

Remembrance Sunday 8th November

Something different this year to make sure we can have a town Act of Remembrance. In the morning we are having one service for wreath laying by a few members of official organisations, this is not being held in the Town Square. Though we can't be open to the usual gathering of people we are going to video the service so it can be seen on the church website and YouTube later. The wreaths will be moved to the War Memorial at a later time. Contact vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk or stewartwalker1@btinternet.com (860723)

At 4pm there will be a Service of Remembrance in the church which will include readings, the story of the Unknown Warrior memorial, the reading of the names of the fallen and a homily by Lt Gen. David Leakey.

St Michaels' News

The Enhancement project.

Work has begun in St Michael's to improve our facilities. The church is still open for services, weddings and funerals. It is also open for private prayer on Sundays after the service until 4pm.

Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859 vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

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

Businesses in MERE (There are others as well).

n h w g n u o y d n a h t i m s d l o g j z h g n b m i h z q j r j k
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Angel Tea Room
Beauty Box
Brainwave
Butt of Sherry
Castleton House
Charles Ferris
Co-op
Cornerways Cottage
Dentist
Dogwise
Engineering
F J Chalke
Fire Station

Fish and Chips
Garage
George Inn
Georgiana Millinery
Gilyard Scarth
Golden Valley
Goldsmith and Young
Hayleys Hair
Hillbrush
Jeans Electrical
LC Hill
Museum
Osteopathy

Peppermint Cloud Accountancy
Pharmacy
Police Station
Rosemary Goddard Centre
Sprout and Flower
Surgery
Trout Farm
Two Counties Golf
Walnut Tree
Walton House Antiques
Waltons
Yapp Brothers

Answers are towards the rear along with last month's answers

