

Mere Matters

& so does

West Knoyle



December/January 2021/22

Mere Town Council

I have previously mentioned the problems with the public toilets in the Salisbury St Car Park. The general consensus is that this amenity must prevail in Mere. In order to fulfil this obligation, the Council has to consider, seriously, the costs involved. Setting budgets to cover costs and expenditure on everything from salaries to stationery, maintenance, rentals, machinery, groundwork, cleaning products and much more will be discussed at our Annual Budget Meeting to be held on November 24th. This meeting is undoubtedly the most important meeting of the year. All decisions made at that meeting will go before the full council in January for approval.

The Town Council are currently in consultation with Wiltshire Council regarding their proposed expansion of Mere School and alterations to green amenity areas to make more car parking spaces. We have approached all user groups of the site for their opinion and shall be collating their comments and ours in our response.

Can I please remind dog owners that dogs are not allowed on the Duchy Manor Site - not even on a lead.

The Council are following up a request from a member of the public for a light at the back of the Salisbury Street Car Park by the steps down to Dark Lane. We are looking into the feasible options and costings and this will be another topic for discussion at the Annual Budget Meeting.

I am sure many of you have seen the excellent work being carried out by our groundsmen in the cemetery? They shall be returning to finish off the project, in the next few months, weather permitting.

On behalf of the Town Council I wish you all a Very Happy and Healthy Christmas.

Lesley Traves, Chair, Mere Town Council
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.
lindseywood@merewilts.org ☎ 860701 🌐 merewilts.org

Happy Christmas
everyone



Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

About 8am on a Sunday morning I received a phone call re flooded property at Castle Street and Water Street, Mere, I then had calls from Southbrook and Limpers Hill and returned home at midday. Local residents cleared leaves from gullies at Ivy Mead and Castle Street. At Castle Street, Mr Hazzard a Town Councillor cleared several gullies of leaves, the water level dropped at once. Unfortunately the near one meter in depth of claimed water at Limpers Hill did not clear as easily, in one house the residents not only had it in outbuildings as others did, but in their house through the doors and rising out of the floor. I have photos supplied by residence at Lordsmead where in places the water was above the pavements. I subsequently learned the north east dwellings of the Walnut development had some gardens flooded.

Since the above event an officer with technician has looked at in excess of 60 highway gullies between and including White Road and Castle Street, Hazzards Hill, Water Street, The Lynch and Pettridge Lane and Boar Street etc.

Of those 3 were found to be completely blocked (but in low risk locations, which is possibly why that hadn't been reported specifically before), another 20 that had silt etc in them, partially or largely filling the pits, but the gullies were still functional because the outlet pipes are set above those levels; the remaining majority were found to be clear and running. If just a moderate amount of water can be seen at the bottom of a pit, that doesn't always mean the gully is blocked, just that the pit or "trap" is doing its job in keeping the outlet pipe set higher up in the gully clear, so that the system can keep running. There are some shallow or "series" gullies that don't have a trap.

With regard to storm capacity of existing highway drainage, unfortunately there is no realistic way of working out a meaningful measurement of the volume of water that can be drained by apparatus already existing in the highway. New drainage systems however are subjected to precise calculation of their capacity, which essentially is a formula of the square meterage of the road to be drained, the worst storm predicted for 50, 100, or even 150 years and the nature and velocity of the discharge – these known figures then allow the correct size of pipe to be calculated.

Most of the "older" Mere and highway drainage generally throughout most of the county and indeed the country, is of relatively small diameter and will not capture or accommodate the extreme amounts of rainfall we are now experiencing, however clean the system is – and that is without then factoring in the surface water runoff from private land and agricultural land, the washout of silt, soil and gravel etc that once in the systems obviously reduces capacity further, or when discharge is then into a river course, where once levels rise the discharge pipes become covered and virtually stop discharging. Correspondingly when discharge is into a ditch or a soakaway, once the ground around these become saturated due to the water table rising, often where there's clay soil (much of Mere and particularly Limpers Hill, Southridge, Burton and the Knoyles) then those stop working temporarily too.

Should these heavy storms continue to cause flooding, it would appear much funding could be needed and indeed possibly investment by individuals, this possibly also would be a nationally political issue.

I continue to get complaints in regard Planning site notices or lack of them. Site notices in future will only be displayed near listed buildings or some other important developments. Officer site visits will not now legally take place however they will try when they can.

A meeting was held on the 9th November in regard residency issues at Lynch Close and rumors about people being moved. I have now received written assurance from Wiltshire Council that there are no plans to remove tenants from Lynch Close without a court order.

Wiltshire Council have had quite a few incidents of some tenants using communal space to dump their extraneous furniture and similar items. Storing items in this way is a danger to others and should stop.

Wessex Broadband are now supplying fibre cable on the South Side of Mere. I know of one remote property that has been offered fibre broadband in that area, others may benefit.

Any trees planted as part of the as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative can be added to the QGC Map, which will create a digital record of the green canopy of tree planting projects across the country. <https://queensgreencanopy.org/map-education-hub/qgc-map/#/> More information about the Queen's Green Canopy initiative and how you can get involved is available at the website The Queen's Green Canopy (queensgreencanopy.org)

I am pleased to say Wiltshire Council have repaired the existing lights and are working with Mere Town Council towards possible improvements of lighting in the area of the central steps to the rear of Salisbury Street Car park, Mere.

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

Mere Theatre Club

From all of us on the committee, we hope you have a thoroughly enjoyable Christmas and a much more 'normal' new year!

We shall be reviewing the situation early in 2022 and hopefully returning to the theatre soon after or at least in the spring.

Happy Christmas.

Madeline Morris 📞 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

Waling in Mere Cards

For those who are planning to get out and about over the festive season, don't forget our walking cards with circular walks as well as some places of interest and history on the way. £3 for 6 cards from Angel Cafe, Sprout & Flower, Jeans Newsagents & the Library. Ideal stocking fillers!

Madeline Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

Ukes at The Butt

We are a newly formed casual group of Ukulele enthusiasts meeting up for shared learning and strumming sessions. We meet at The Butt of Sherry on the second Monday of the month at 19.30. Bring your ukulele and have some fun. You will be most welcome.

Maggie Holmes maggieholmes101@gmail.com

Tiddlers & Toddlers

Our Christmas party is on **Monday Dec 13th. 9.30-12.30**. If you wish to attend and have not already put your name down, please contact Anne by Dec 6th at the latest.

Anne Rich ☎ 07413512023 arich4@icloud.com

Mere Museum

We will shortly be putting in a new exhibition based on Postcards of Mere. Some of them date from the 19th century and feature many different aspects of Mere. Members will be advised of the opening date and we welcome new members who will find application forms at the Museum.

We always welcome donations of items to the Museum which have a direct link to Mere and the surrounding villages.

Our photo board has been renewed and I would ask you to have a good look and see if you can fill in the missing names. We have had some success to date with previous photos and it is so important to record the information for our future historians.

Rose Heesom ☎ 07791 559 674 rmeremuseum@btinternet.com

Mere Gardening Club

We are planning a social evening in December with refreshments and light hearted quizzes and challenges. It will be on **8th December at 7.30pm** at the Grove Building and we welcome garden club members and their partners. Our next meeting will be on 9th February, details to follow.

Rose Heesom ☎ 0779 559674 roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk

Mere Snooker Club

The Club Open Night, for members and non-members will be held on **Tuesday 14th December**, and again on **Tuesday 11th January**, from **19.30**. We have openings for new members, so if you would like to find out more about the club and our facilities, without obligation, do come along when members will be ready to welcome you.

Kevin Smith ☎ 07803 006077 meresnookerclub@gmail.com

Mere Bowls Club

It is with the utmost sadness and shock that I report the passing of three member's wives in just over one week at the beginning of the month, all our thoughts and prayers are with those three club members at this very upsetting time.

The club is always on the lookout for new members, especially if they are younger than the ones we have on the register right now. If you are interested in, or curious about, the sport of bowls why not put it in your diary for next year for when we open in the middle of April 2022, we have registered coaches who can take you through the basics of the game and get you started, all you need is a pair of flat soled shoes, we can do the rest.

Don Butchers – Club Secretary ☎ 860775 don.butchers@btinternet.com
🌐 hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/home/

Mere & District Railway Modellers

Christmas Open Day on 4th December

Entrance is free.

There will festive mulled wine together with the trimmings.

On sale will be a selection of books together with loco's and rolling stock in OO and N gauges. There will further be a collection of model buildings and kits.

The club is situated to the rear of Castle Street Car Park and the opening times are from 10.00 to 14.00.

The club will next be on public display with a layout at the '**Frome Model Railway 2022 Exhibition**' in the Cheese & Grain, Market Yard, Frome on the **8th and 9th of January 2022** organised by the Wessex Association of Model Railway Clubs.

Tom Snook ☎ 861977 tomsnook29@hotmail.co.uk



MERE AND DISTRICT LINK SCHEME

WANTED

LINK DRIVERS



ARE YOU THE

MISSING LINK

Volunteer drivers needed to take local people who do not have transport to medical and other necessary appointments.

For more information call the Link on 01747 860096

Mere and District Link Scheme is a registered charity 1062328 www.merelink.org.uk

Mere Art Group

The Art Exhibition held on 13th November was a very pleasing success. There was a total of 164 exhibits demonstrating a wide range of subjects, styles, materials, techniques and a general brilliance of colour.



Refreshments were kindly provided by Judy Bickerstaff - ably supported by Jill Turner.

The images shown here reflect the recent beauty of Autumn and the prospect of lower temperatures to come - 'Autumn' was painted by John Peek using acrylics-on-card, and the 'Winter Scene' by Kathleen Holden using watercolours-on-card.

Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

Mere Historical Society

In December and January there will be 3 talks, with a 4th following swiftly on 1st February. The first is a morning talk, on **Tuesday 7th December** at 10.30am in the Grove Building and will be on "The Wreck of the Halsewell on the Purbeck Coast, 1786," by Philip Brown. Sensitive members might wish to note that this was previously titled "The Freezing Hell of the Halsewell".

On the following **Tuesday 14th December** at 19.30 we have "The archaeology of the Deverills Valley" by Dr. David Roberts. Next, two more morning talks: "Nepal and the Ghurkhas" by Johnny Fenn, on **Tuesday 4th January** at 10.30am; and on **Tuesday 1st February**, "The Gate Lodges of Wiltshire" by James Holden, also at 10.30am.

Details of the Programme, and plenty of other information, can be found on our website.

We look forward to welcoming current members for whom membership is extended to the end of March 2022 and non-members for whom a charge of £3 is payable on the door. New members may join us for just £10. We ask you please to remember to bring your face-covering.

Unfortunately we had to cancel all summer visits for 2021 but aim to reinstate these in 2022. With this in mind, we would welcome your suggestions for places to visit and would love to hear from anyone who would like to run a trip or take up the role of Visits Co-ordinator, which is currently vacant, on our Committee.

To get in touch please contact me or Secretary, Diane Ellis on 861541 or visit the website.

Peter Landymore ☎ 228819 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.

The Old Ship Inn

As a result of a joint effort by Mere Town Council, local fabricator Jeffery Paul, voluntary roofer Dan Weeks and permission from The Old Ship through Peter Harding the Old Ship sign has been reinstated after it became detached.

The painted sign of the Old Ship is small compared with the elaborate size of the supporting bracket. The beautiful designed bracket incorporates a golden coronet with fleur-de-lis. Hanging down is an ornate bunch of grapes. Flowers and leaves. There is the head of what looks like a sea creature with a spring-like body. It has survived from the mid-18th century. Historic England suggest it is the work of Kingston Avery. He was a clock maker and blacksmith who lived at Mere from 1730-63.

George Jeans



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022

We all hope The Queen will celebrate her Platinum Jubilee next June. No other monarch has reigned for seventy years so it will be a special occasion.

National guidelines have been provisionally issued for the celebrations to take place over an extended bank holiday week 2nd to 5th June. Saturday 4th June has been identified as the appropriate day for our community in Mere and its surrounds to put on a real party, open to all and free of charge. A small committee including representatives of both the Town and Parochial Church Councils has been formed to coordinate the Saturday event but other organisations have already agreed to play their part in the weeklong celebrations.



The Town Council will arrange lighting of the Beacon on Castle Hill on Thursday 2nd June as part of the nationwide chain of Beacons to be lit that evening.

The Friends of St. Michaels will be holding a flower festival in the Church and the Mere Museum Committee will put on a display of past Jubilees in the Library. Mere Dramatic Society are planning a show.

It is hoped that other societies, businesses and groups of residents will come up with ideas that they can organise for inclusion in the overall commemorative programme, which we hope to produce as a bumper supplement within Mere Matters, including a calendar of all events, map etc.

House and street decoration will no doubt play a part although we should all be aware there are strict safety rules about impeding signs and highways.

The Platinum Jubilee Committee's plan for Saturday 4th June is that it should take the form of a Grand Fete from 12 noon to 5pm linking Church Street, St Michaels Churchyard, and the Vicarage field. Emergency access will remain but for safety reasons and to enable some elements of the event it will be necessary to close part of Church Street to vehicular traffic. Every effort will be made to identify alternative parking for residents. A street Market is planned for Church Street. In the Churchyard there will be Teas, competitions, activities, charity stalls and music. Vicarage Field will host more music, food, beverages and representation from our Emergency Services plus a classic car show. Some demonstrations from local groups are planned.

As a permanent memorial to the Jubilee there will be ceremonial planting of trees on a date to be agreed.

Anne Rich ☎ 3512023 arich4@icloud.com



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

December 2021

1	Wed	09:30	Ta-Chi (every Wed)	GB
		13:45	Stretch Class	L
		18:00	Karate (every Weds)	L
		19:00	Railway Modellers (every Wed)	RMC
2	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Quilters (every Thurs)	GB
		17:00	Girlguiding (2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th /5 th Thurs) <i>Art, Quilters</i>	GB
3	Fri	13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. Every Fri)	GB
4	Sat	10:00	Railway Modellers Exhibition	RM
		10:30	Coffee Morning	URC
5	Sun			
6	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	L
		18:00	Scouting (every Mon Term Time Only)	GB
7	Tues	09:45	Historical Society	GB
		13:00	Pilates (JL) (every Tues)	GB
8	Wed	11:30	Mothers Union Carol Service	GB
		19:30	Gardening Club <i>Tai-Chi, Stretch, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	GB
9	Thurs	08:00	Foot Clinic <i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	GB
10	Fri	10:00	Merely Women <i>Dup Bridge</i>	GB
11	Sat	18:00	Oasis Carnival Club Bingo <i>Coffee Morning</i>	L
12	Sun			
13	Mon	19:30	Christmas Ukes at The Butt' <i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting</i>	Butt of Sherry
14	Tues	14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		19:00	Historical Society	GB
		19:30	Snooker Club Opening Evening <i>Pilates (JL), MADS, Zumba</i>	Snooker Club
15	Wed		<i>Stretch, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	
16	Thurs		<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	
17	Fri		<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
18	Sat	19:30	Shreen Harmony - Concert <i>Coffee Morning</i>	URC

19	Sun	Fair Trade Stall after morning service	StM
20	Mon	<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting</i>	
21	Tues	<i>Pilates (JL), Zumba</i>	
22	Wed	<i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	
23	Thurs	<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	
24	Fri	10:00 Merely Women	GB
		<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
25	Sat	<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
26	Sun		
27	Mon		
28	Tues	<i>Pilates (JL), Zumba</i>	
29	Wed	<i>Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	
30	Thurs	<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	
31	Fri	<i>Dup Bridge</i>	

January 2022

1	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning	URC
2	Sun			
3	Mon	18:00	Scouting (every Mon Term Time Only)	GB
4	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB
		10:30	Historical Society	GB
		13:00	Pilates (JL) (every Tues)	GB
		18:20	Zumba (every Tues)	L
5	Wed	09:30	Ta-Chi (every Wed)	GB
		13:45	Stretch Class	L
		18 :00	Karate (every Weds)	L
		19:00	Railway Modellers (every Wed)	RMC
6	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Quilters (every Thurs)	GB
		17:00	Girlguiding (2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th /5 th Thurs)	GB
			<i>Art, Quilters</i>	
7	Fri	13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. Every Fri)	GB
8	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
9	Sun			
10	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	L
		19:30	Ukes at The Butt'	Butt of Sherry
			<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting</i>	
11	Tues	14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		19:30	Snooker Club Opening Evening	Snooker Club
			<i>Pilates (JL), MADS, Zumba</i>	
12	Wed		<i>Stretch, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	
13	Thurs		<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	
14	Fri		<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
15	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	

16	Sun	Fair Trade Stall after morning service ??			StM
17	Mon	Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting			
18	Tues	Pilates (JL), Zumba			
19	Wed	Tai-Chi, Stretch, Karate, Railway Modellers			
20	Thurs	Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS			
21	Fri	Dup Bridge			
22	Sat	Coffee Morning			
23	Sun				
24	Mon	Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting			
25	Tues	Pilates (JL), Zumba			
26	Wed	Pilates, Karate, Railway Modellers			
27	Thurs	Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS			
28	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	Dup Bridge,	GB
29	Sat	18:00	Oasis Carnival Club Bingo	Coffee Morning	L
30	Sun				
31	Mon	Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting			

St Mary's Catholic Mass Centre in Mere

A well-known landmark in the town. A nissen hut given by the Canadian forces stationed at Zeals and built by them in 1946 on land donated by Mrs Eucharis Glencross using the estate of her son Roger who was lost at Dunkirk. Unfortunately, the Mass Centre is closing down and the land will be sold but, in a fitting tribute, Mrs Glencross's grandson Fr Christopher Basden said what could well be the final Mass at St Mary's on Friday 29 October 2021.



Some 90 people attended the Mass including Fr Christopher's cousin (also Roger Glencross). Afterwards a small group gathered at the Butt of Sherry in Mere for a buffet lunch. This was an appropriate venue as Mass was celebrated in a room at the Butt before St Mary's was built.

It was lovely to see the building so full of people who were happy to be able to come to Mass in Mere for one last time. Inevitably, there was some sadness and also the odd tear at the end of Mass. It was such a shame that Fr Louis our Parish Priest from SS Luke and Teresa in Wincanton was not well enough to join us.

Whilst it is sad to see our lovely and distinctive Mass Centre close, we are all very grateful for the many years of worshipping in our special building which would not have been possible without the generous donations from Mrs Glencross and the Canadian forces.



Re-ordering of St Michael's the Archangel

March 2021 was the date for the completion of the internal works within the church. These works included the installation of two toilets within the tower, a servery area, ramps to allow free movement, improvement to the North Door entrance and the removal of one set of front pews to provide a larger area for concerts etc.



A magnificent contribution by locals and some key funders such as Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust; the Fudge Trust; Garfield Weston; enabled these works to go ahead.



These church improvements now mean that the church is open for all, including those with limited mobility.



St Michael's Appeal Update

The Fundraising Appeal for St Michael's was launched 2 years ago. The town's response to the appeal was generous with 25 four figure donations & a total of around £175,000 has been raised. I have attempted to thank everyone who has contributed to this, but in case of oversight I would like to thank you all again now.

This has enabled the internal works to be completed during lockdown. The entrance is now more welcoming and the servery and internal loos have been well used. The internal circulation space has been enlarged.

There is about £15,000 leftover which is earmarked for the pinnacle repairs, for which we now have the faculty. Before embarking on another round of grant applications we have requested up to date quotes for this work..There will be more fundraising to do.

If you haven't given yet, your donations will still be gratefully received. Please contact Fiona Jukes Treasurer of The Friends of St Michael at St Andrews, North Rd, Mere.

Cheques should be made payable to Friends St Michael the Archangel Church

Bill Price Appeal Chairman

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

Mere had a busy weekend. One event was the return of Mere Amateur Dramatic Society (MADS)) being in memory of Peggy Jukes, Melody Parfitt and Bill Pike who had been part of MADS. The production providing entertainment locally at the Lecture Hall, Mere on Thursday the 18th November through to 20th November 2021.

Four 30 minute plays made one performance. All actors and helpers were very professional, one actor Mary White did about 30 minutes on her own without forgetting any lines, the play My Boy Jonah was written by Adrienne Howell.

Another play, the "Plaster" by Richard Harris, was very light hearted, acted by Les Manwaring and Lesley Love started with the wife bringing her husband a trifle after he had a road accident, it emerged amongst other indiscretions despite being cut from the wreckage his trousers were found intact beside him and a



lady witness was just becoming conscious after the accident, the play ended with the wife going off to see the lady witness and the husband had the trifle in one go, on top of his head.

Day Trippers by Jean McConnell, played by Rose Heesom and Penny Allen who found themselves on a nudist beach. New Year Resolution by Dorothy Paterson, it was nice to see youth acting, amongst other young helpers and actors, Ben and Tom Cassidy, Tom Bath and Hailie Keay. Photos attached.



George Jeans ☎ 07710 441599

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



We are very pleased to invite our members and anyone who would like to join us to our Annual Carol Service which will take place in St. Michael's Church on **Wednesday 8th December at 12 noon**. This will be followed by refreshments in The Grove Building.

We are so delighted that we can again enjoy friendship, socialising and of course celebrating Christmas by singing Carols and listening to the Readings and look forward to the mince pies which are always popular.

We have been pleased to see the numbers joining us at our monthly meetings in person and if you would like to meet some of us in this informal way you would be most welcome.

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

Mere School Cop 26.

Mere School Council were excited to host Mere's own Cop26 conference earlier this month.

Representatives from the school's governing and parent body, Mrs Williamson, Dr Andrew Murrison MP and Rachel Hansford (Parish Council) met with the School Council via Teams to discuss how the school and the local community could work together to reduce our carbon footprint.

The children on the School Council posed questions and discussed how issues such as littering, recycling and saving energy could be addressed.

The children will now take away the recommendations from the meeting and use them to make an action plan. Our aim is to get Mere School as close to Net Zero by 2030 as possible and we are all excited about working together to achieve this.

Sarah Cocker, Year 5 Teacher.

Q: In your position as Town Councillor what are you planning to do in the future to help us protect our environment?

A: The Town Council are supporting plans for electric car charging points in Mere, and for an electric car club - so people can hire a 'green' car when they need one.

We will be supplying a drinking water, refill station in the town car park so that residents and visitors can refill their own drinks bottles - reducing the need to buy drinks in plastic bottles.

We are about to install LED lighting into the public toilets with sensors so that the lighting only comes on when someone walks in, and goes off again when they go out – this should help to save some electricity.



Engrossed in the Teams meeting



Mrs Williamson with children around the computer in her office.



Letter from the Churches ~ Judith Thompson (St Michael's) writes:

It's been a tough old year: worries about Covid and Climate change – floods, wildfires, earthquakes, together with violence in our own country and everywhere, have made the world feel rather unsafe: quite apart from personal losses and disappointments, and the sadness for Christians at the decline of the Church in this country – and, locally, the closure of Mere's Catholic Church. How to respond to all this?

Maybe indirectly, we can take something from the story of Odo Nobunaga a wily and ruthless general who helped unify Japan in the 16th century. It is said that on one occasion his enemy outnumbered his own troops by ten to one, and they were understandably demoralised. He went into a shrine and prayed, then emerged with a coin in his hand saying, "Let the gods pronounce their will for us. If we are destined to win, let the coin turn up heads; if we are to lose, let it be tails." He tossed the coin, and it showed up heads. Thus emboldened, the troops proceeded to win the battle.

Next day, Nobunaga's assistant commented that nothing can resist the power of destiny. "No indeed" smiled Nobunaga as he took the coin from his pocket to show him that it had a head on each side.

Very often we assume life's coin has a head and a tail side. Life is a win-lose situation. If the others win, I lose. So people compete to win – in careers, in war, sport, one-upmanship or whatever – just in order not to lose. And sometimes life feels like a lose-lose situation: life's coin has a tail on both sides. In the battle against Covid, either we lockdown and lose many businesses and a lot that makes life worth living, or we don't and the virus triumphs. In the climate change battle, either we keep alive the industries that are heating our planet till climate change destroys us all, or we shut them down and risk unemployment and economic ruin.

But God is like a coin with heads on both sides. He offers us win-win situations. Giving generously to others, brings joy to the giver as well as the receiver; forgiving those who have hurt us frees us from bitterness. If we give away more of our vaccines to poorer countries, they will be better inoculated and we and the rest of the world will be safer. Only if we work *with* other nations, as at the recent summit, can *any* of us win the climate struggle.

The Psalm-writer says, "If I climb up to heaven, you are there. If I make the grave my bed, you are there also." (Psalm 139.8). God is present in all situations, no matter how bleak or how joyful. Think of a new born child. Christmas tells us God shines from such a face. Think of a refugee family driven from their home by a murderous government. Christ was in such a family, driven by Herod into homeless exile. Think of a dissident tortured and left to die. Good Friday tells us God was such a man.

Whatever our situation, however difficult or painful, and no matter how far we have gone wrong, God is with us, and we all have an unalterable calling to life in the glory of God. So may Christmas be full of joy and the New Year full of blessings.

Pennybank Writers

Due to unforeseen circumstances the story structure session planned for PennyBank's November meeting had to be postponed and will now take place in the New Year. Our apologies to any visitors but we hope to see you back at the Lecture Hall for our meeting on **Wednesday January 26th** along with any secret scribblers who make a New Year resolution to join the local writing group.

PennyBank end this year on a high note with success in the Blandford competition. Mary White's entry, Woodpecker Willow, gained third prize in the Poetry Section and Adrienne Howell won the Short Story competition with Waiting for News.



Mary also gave the premier performance of Adrienne's monologue play, My Boy Jonah, at the Drama Society's autumn production, The Return of MADS. A review of the production is available on www.thefttr.co.uk

PennyBank Writers wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

*Adrienne
Howell 860475*

Mere Brownies

Julie Gulliver organized a cake stall for Mere Brownies to run on the Clock Tower Island. **£102.00** was raised for **Children in Need**.



Sophie Batchelor, Connie Reeves, Eleanor Wagland, Mollie Gulliver, Ava Broom



As we go to press we're getting ready for our 'Sleigh Drive' evening which we hope will be enjoyed by all and help to round off what has been a surprisingly successful fundraising year – thanks to the generosity and care of the good people of Mere. Meanwhile, as the schools in West Bengal have at last reopened – having been closed continuously for almost two years – the Suchana project is now also able to reopen fully and resume its complete programme for all ages. Because this provides the way in for many previously excluded children and communities to learn and flourish, the reopening has been welcomed with great joy.

Whether or not you came to the Sleigh Drive, you are very welcome to the Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy to be held at Downside, North Street (home of Joan and Hamish Bell) on **Tuesday 18th January from 10.30am**. Please come if you can and help us get the New Year off to a good start!

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553 judithvthompson@aol.com

Church Contact and Service Details**The Parish Church, St Michael's the Archangel:**

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwarden: Derek Fisher ☎ 861980, Jean Knapp ☎ 860142

PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

December

5th	Sun	08:00	BCP
		10:30	Family Service inc. Christingle, please stay for coffee after the service
8th	Wed	12:00	Mothers' Union Deanery Carol Service
12th	Sun	08:00	BCP HC
		10:30	Parish Communion
16th	Thur	18:00	Lessons & Carols Service followed by wine and mince pies
19th	Sun	08:00	BCP HC
		10:30	Parish Communion
24th	Fri	16:00	Crib Service, come along dressed as a character from the nativity and join in as we hear the well-known story of Jesus' birth – for children and their adults.
		23:00	Midnight Mass
25th	Sat	08:00	BCP HC
		10:30	Parish Communion with Carols
26th	Sun	10.30	Parish Communion with Carols

January 2022

2 nd	Sun	08:00	BCP HC
		10:30	Parish Communion
9 th	Sun	08:00	BCP HC
		10:30	Parish Communion
16 th	Sun	08:00	BCP HC
		10:30	Parish Communion
		18:00	Songs of Praise
18 th	Tues	09:30	WPCU Service
23 rd	Sun	08:00	BCP HC
		11:00	Churches Together Week of Prayer Service at URC (no 10:30 service at St Michael's)
30 th	Sun	08:00	BCP
		10:30	Matins

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

West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

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

December

5 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion
12 th	Sun	09:30	Matins
19 st	Sun	18:00	Carol Service
25 th	Sat	09:30	Holy Communion

January 2022

2 nd	Sun	09:30	Lay led Service
9 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion
16 st	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion
19 th	Thur	09:30	WPCU Service
23 rd	Sun	11:00	Churches Together Week of Prayer Service at URC
30 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

December

5 th	Sun	10:00	Coffee & Catch Up in the hall
12 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Service
19 st	Sun	18:00	Lessons & Carols Service
24 th	Fri	23:00	Midnight Mass

January 2022

2 nd	Sun	10:00	Coffee & Catch up in the hall
9 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Service
16 st	Sun	10:00	Morning Service
20 th	Thur	09:30	WPCU Service
23 rd	Sun	11:00	Churches Together Week of Prayer Service at URC
30 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Service

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

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

December

12 th	Sun	11:00	Rev. Colin Marsh Holy Communion
19 th	Sun	11:00	Carol Service
25 th	Sat	10:30	Christmas Day Service

January 2022

2 nd	Sun	11:00	New Year Service
4 th	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning
9 th	Sun	11:00	Mr. G. Hitchcock
16 st	Sun	11:00	Rev Peter Clark Holy Communion
23 rd	Sun	11:00	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
30 th	Sun	11:00	Mr. D. Coates

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

**ALL liturgies will in future be at SS Luke and Teresa, South Street,
Wincanton BA9 9DH.**

Christmas Mass times:**Friday 24th December 18:00****23:30 Midnight Mass (preceded by carols)****Saturday 25th December 10:30****Sunday 26th December 10:30**

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN MERE & DISTRICT WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (WPCU) SERVICES - all open to everyone of any denomination or none:

Tuesday 18 th January 9.30am	St Michael's, Mere
Wednesday 19 th Jan 9.30am	St Mary's West Knoyle
Thursday 20 th Jan 9.30am	All Saints Maiden Bradley
Friday 21 st January 9.30am	St Peter's, Stourton
Saturday 22 nd Jan 9.30am	Mere URC – followed by AGM
Sunday 23 rd Jan 11am	Mere URC
Monday 24 th January 9.30am	St George's Bourton
Tuesday 25 th Jan 9.30am	St Martin's Zeals

Mere Library

Mere Library opening hours:

Monday: 10:00 – 12:00* and 15:00 – 18:00

Tuesday: 10:00 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 16:00

Wednesday: 10:00 – 12:00*

Thursday: 14:00 – 17:00

Friday: 10:00 – 13:00 and 14:00 – 16:00

Saturday: 10:00 – 13:00

* Volunteer operated opening hours.

*Sally-Ann, Mere Senior Library Assistant*Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	Derek Fisher administrator@grovebuildingmere.com	☎ 861980
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685



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