

# ere **M**atters



& so does

## **West Knoyle**

Your community magazine including  
a guide to local events

**March 2021**

## Mere Town Council

Whilst I write this report, we are all waiting with baited breath to hear our Prime Minister's announcement regarding our roadmap out of lockdown III. I am full of optimism that there will be a gradual return to 'normal' life. This optimism was amplified as I came into the Town Council offices this morning in exceptionally mild weather and I saw my first tulip in flower on the clock tower island.

After twelve months of co-ordinating the Mere Resilience Forum on behalf of Mere Town Council, Richard Jefferies has handed over the reins to Rachel Hansford. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Richard for his dedication and hard work – we know that he does a considerable amount of community volunteer work and he will continue to do so as editor of Mere Matters and we are extremely indebted to him. We are very pleased that Rachel has agreed to take on the role of co-ordinator as she supported Richard actively throughout the last year and we are confident that she will continue to achieve the benchmark that was set by Richard.

Dog fouling seems to be the topic of conversation on the Mere Muttters social media site with some criticism as to the amount of support given shown by the Town Council. The Town Council works in parallel with Wiltshire Council on this issue and indeed, we spend a great deal of money each year on providing free dog poo bags which we put in dispensers in our recreation ground and at the top of Angel Lane, near the cemetery. The Chairman regularly writes about the problem and tries to encourage responsible dog ownership in these monthly reports in Mere Matters. The Town Council is responsible for emptying 80% of the litter bins within the Town and this takes up a considerable amount of our grounds staff time. We then have to pay to have the waste removed from our large waste container each week and this costs approximately £180 per month – our bins are always overweight and this is largely due to the weight of dog poo. In 2019 we joined forces with Wiltshire Council to monitor dog fouling in the area and encourage responsible dog ownership under an initiative called The Green Dog Code scheme. The aim was to provide a link between the local community and Wiltshire Council's Dog Control and Animal Welfare Officers to monitor and encourage responsible dog ownership through a friendly and informed approach. It required a number of local volunteers to sign up and monitor the area in which they walk and live and to give advice and encourage responsible dog ownership in a non-confrontational manner. Unfortunately, we did not receive that much interest from volunteers. We would be happy, however, to resurrect this if it is something that you would be interested in. Wiltshire Council's Dog Warden will visit offenders and the Town Council does have a standard letter that we send out to alleged offenders. However, we do need to be supplied with the contact details and address of the offenders in order to do these. We have obtained some 'Clean up after your dog' stickers/signs and can arrange for these to be erected in locations as requested. We have had an idea suggested to us and that is that residents may be willing to allow dog owners/walkers to put dog poo bags in their household bins as people walk by. There would need to be some way of identifying which residents' bins could be used and it may be possible to get some stickers to identify these bins.

If anyone is interested in this scheme, please let us know and we will explore it further. Also, we would be open to any other suggestions on how to tackle this ongoing problem.

I would like to remind dog owners/walkers also that Duchy Manor is a 'no dog' zone. We have a number of signs displayed on the gates and through the site but we are continuously amazed by the number of people that walk through the site with dogs. Although we are happy for people to come through the site as a short-cut to get to the Recreation Ground or Burton Path, please bear in mind that it is not a public footpath and there should certainly be no dogs.

As mentioned in last month's report, Wiltshire Council is undertaking a review of the Local Plan. Wiltshire Council has to allocate sufficient land to satisfy housing and employment needs up to 2036 and is seeking views of local communities and stakeholders to see if the suggested distribution of numbers across the county is correct and which of the proposed sites are most suitable. The Town Council will be preparing its response to the first round of consultation which ends on 9<sup>th</sup> March which would appear to set a requirement for Mere to accommodate 144 new houses over the next 15 years.

The Town Council continues to meet monthly and at the present time we are meeting via Zoom. At the March meeting we will be considering various planning applications. One of these is for a 70-bed care home that is proposed for land adjacent to Quarryfield Industrial Estate. Whilst this is actually within the parish of Zeals, Mere Town Council will be submitting a consultation response. For those of you who may not know, you can view all planning applications on the Wiltshire Council website – Google – 'Wiltshire Council Planning' – Click on 'Planning Home' – Click on 'Search by Address' – Put your postcode in and you can then extend the area of search and specify the dates for your search.

The Town Council will also be considering a set of plans being put forward by Seeds4Success for their project to rebuild and extend the Mere Youth Club building in the Recreation Ground. Obviously, this is at a consultation stage at the present time – between Seeds4Success and Mere Town Council as Trustees of the Mere Peace Memorial Sports & Recreation Ground Charity. There will be further opportunity for public consultation on this matter and, of course, if it progresses, there will be a formal planning application in due course. However, if you would like further information on this, please contact the Town Council office.

Mere Town Council works hard for the benefit of the community, we are non-political and councillors give up their time voluntarily. Town & Parish Council elections will be held in May this year and I would like to encourage anyone interested to apply. If you would like to know what would be expected of you as a Town Councillor, we do have an information pack which we would be happy to send out on request.

Finally, I would like to let you know that our PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky will be retiring at the end of March. I would like to publicly thank him for his hard work and dedication. PCSO Pete has been a visible, approachable and popular police presence in Mere and we would like to take this opportunity to wish him a very happy and long retirement.

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

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### Mere Historical Society

It is now a year since the Society was able to meet but, with the vaccination programme underway, I will keep our June visit to Forde Abbey on the calendar and fingers firmly crossed. Unfortunately current regulations regarding coaches mean that our group would be limited to 16 members approximately doubling of the cost of the coach per seat.

We look forward to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022 when we hope to have much to celebrate, and continuing with my mission to collect anecdotes around the Society's past I have had some interesting conversations with members. Two past committee members were Archdeacon Basil Stratton who had retired when he and his wife Fay came to live in Mere and was Chair sometime in the 1980s, and Kenneth Kendra a retired army padre who enjoyed being known as "Padre". He lived with his wife Katie in a bungalow along Back Lane, now known as Castle Hill Lane. He apparently organised and led tours to The Holy Land.

When he retired Basil and his wife Fay lived in Rook Street. Basil was an amiable gentleman and Fay was a tall good looking woman who made perfect meringues. Culinary skills always seem to be remembered, especially if they involve cake! It seems that Fay had a slightly condescending attitude towards those she thought were not her social equals and liked to run socials for the select few. A neighbour in Rook Street, Tina, owned a dishwasher and was nonplussed when Fay, who washed up by hand, decided to offer her the opportunity to earn a little money by doing Fay's washing up after one of her soirees. Tina took the dirty plates without comment. Basil and Fay moved to a bungalow in Pettridge Lane when Basil was quite elderly and losing his sight. Fay would guide him along to call on the select few without making a prior arrangement seemingly on the assumption their call would be welcomed.

*Caroline Cook* ☎ 861797 🌐 [merehistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://merehistoricalsociety.org.uk)

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## Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

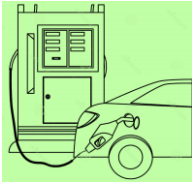
The emergence of footage of a Handforth Parish Council meeting catapulted the chief officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils Jackie Weaver into stardom. Since the remote meeting video went viral, Ms Weaver has arguably seen more media exposure than any other figure in local government this year, popping up on Good Morning Britain, BBC Breakfast and a song composed by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber in her honour. Ms Weaver feels that parish councils have been “brought back into the limelight” in the pandemic, as health and voluntary sector bodies have worked with them to deliver local needs and “organisations that wouldn't normally have that connection are recognising the work each one does.” A long time ago Mere and West Knoyle Clerk Lindsey Wood was famous, Lindsey made the national papers, after weeks of hard work, the Mere Parish Council as it then was, erected the Welcome to Mere signs which we still have, Wiltshire Council mistakenly decided to immediately cut one of the signs down. Lindsey ended up on page 3 of the Sun newspaper.

With many shops closed in Mere because of lockdown, “This and That” on occasion put books out to take for free. One such book I saw was a sizable AA hard back book dated 1968 called Treasures of Britain. Out of the 100s of notable places Mere was mentioned, noted for “Church of St Michael”, I have said before it is the “Notre-Dame” of Mere. I also noted one of Mere’s bigger neighbours did not get a mention.

**census 2021** Please note how the census will work this time. The 2021 census will mark the first time that the census is conducted primarily online. The ONS’ target is to have 75% of census returns completed online, with the remainder completed on traditional paper forms. Most households will receive a unique code in the post which will allow them to complete their census returns online.

On **6 May**, registered voters will be able to have their say in the Police and Crime Commissioner, unitary, and town and parish council elections. If you register to vote via post, to avoid the risk of fraud, a signature is required when applying for a postal vote. Anyone unable to print a postal vote application form at home should call Wiltshire Council on 0300 4560112 (Customer services 0300 4560100) and they can arrange for a copy to be posted out. I have provided some printouts in Mere Post Office for those who find it difficult to obtain an application form. The completed and signed form can be posted back or scanned and returned to [voting@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:voting@wiltshire.gov.uk) . You will need to complete a new postal vote application if you have moved house. To manage the amount of elections, and to keep everyone safe, the verification and counts will be spread over four days. The council will also do everything it can to keep polling stations and count centres as safe as possible for voters and staff by making sure venues are COVID-secure.

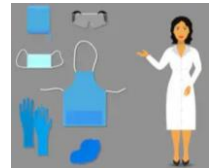




The community engagement manager of the South West Area Board and I have been in communication with possible providers of electric car (EV) public charging points for Mere. We also found to my surprise; the possible provider would provide an electric car for use of a local car club subject to a possible use survey. Tisbury and Frome have a car club. For instance, we all know of the lack of public transport in our area, for example should a family want use of a second car for shopping once a week, a shared car may be the answer.

I asked last month if someone is interested in helping making locally high profile again, the issue of Dog fouling and the depositing of plastic bags with excrement in public places. Two persons have come forward, I will keep you posted on progress.

Wiltshire Council is working closely with charity Carer Support Wiltshire to ensure unpaid carers receive the PPE they need to keep those they care for and themselves safe. Carers can request PPE if they care for or go into the home of someone, they don't live with to provide care or support.



Carers can ring Carer Support Wiltshire on 01380 908008 who will provide advice and arrange for delivery of the PPE complete with instructions on how to use it and dispose of it. If you are a carer and not currently registered with Carer Support Wiltshire, we encourage you to call them and talk through whether you may be eligible for PPE and find out about other support services they offer.

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a family member or friend who could not always manage without their support. They might look after someone with a physical disability, long term health condition, mental health issue or a problem with substance misuse.

The rewards of being a Specialist foster carer are more than the possible £650 per week allowance, the change you can make in a child's life is priceless. If you have been thinking about fostering and feel that you have the skills or background to become specialist foster carers, do enquire of Wiltshire Council.

At a virtual meeting I attended, the development of a new care home alliance was discussed. All providers who meet the quality eligibility will be able to come on the



alliance at any time during its 6-year contract. This will enable Wiltshire Council to commission with smaller and local providers. Officers were reviewing the Help to Live at Home Alliance which provides more care delivered in the community to enable people to live in their own home. It is hoped the Shared Lives team are looking at whether respite and shared days provision can be offered in the local area. In plain English, Shared Lives is when vetted householders are paid to take someone into their home. After that meeting I received the following email that I had permission



to make public. "Thank you very much for meeting myself and Helen Jones about the closure of Fives Court. As Helen said at the meeting, since the home was not economically viable, OSJ were within their contractual rights to give notice with no consultation. I confirmed that you were not informed of the closure in advance, other than a few hours before staff were notified." Shared Lives Wiltshire have now introduced new day support service – Shared Days. Shared Lives Wiltshire is broadening its reach so more people can benefit from its ethos of building



meaningful relationships with a carer and their family and connecting with their local community. While Shared Lives carers normally share their homes with the people they support on a long-term or respite basis, Shared Days carers share their days with them. From learning independent skills such as cooking and seeking employment, or pursuing a new hobby, this day support service empowers individuals to build meaningful relationships and do what matters most to them. Currently Shared Lives Wiltshire is looking to recruit to the local scheme and promote their new service – Shared Days. Carers will receive guidance and support from the Shared Lives team and are matched with someone based on one another's circumstances and location. This is to ensure that it is an enjoyable, fulfilling and valuable experience for all. Shared Days carers support people in pre-booked sessions. Shared Lives in Wiltshire will ensure all Shared Days sessions follow COVID-19 restrictions. The expansion and diversification of Shared Lives Wiltshire is part of the wider transformation of adult social care in Wiltshire. If you would like to find out more about becoming a Shared Days carer or make a referral, please call 01380 826451 or email [sharedlives@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:sharedlives@wiltshire.gov.uk).

Planning permission is at present being sought for a care home near Norwood House and close to Visit Hill Brush, I have asked if an improvement to the junction of the B3092/95 in Castle Street might be won from future developments in Mere, where it is this one or a future one in this area. The junction tolerates many large lorries, one has just lost its axle there plus the conflict between some pedestrians and vehicles when the pedestrians are returning to Mere.

Several local people have died while Covid restrictions have been in place over the last year, those wishing to show their respects now stand in the street while the hearse passes, I would like to express my thanks to those who have been able to do this, for it must be comforting to the families.

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

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### Mere – Ready For Action

In 2019, before the Covid pandemic, Mere established a Local Resilience Forum (MLRF). The idea was to make sure the town was prepared to respond in the event of threats to our lives and health, environment or local economy.

The small committee, chaired by Richard Jefferies, conducted extensive research and concluded that in the event of a major event, emergency responders and

Wiltshire County Council would be the ones to organise a formal response. A handful of recommendations were made to Mere Town Council in September 2019, but no-one thought that the planning would ever need to be used and the committee was discharged. How little we knew then!

What this meant, however, was that when Covid hit in early 2020, Richard Jefferies was perfectly placed to take on the role of coordinator of our local response – working with the Town Council and generating a team of telephone coordinators and volunteers. Eight telephone coordinators and up to 90 volunteers were involved at the peak, collecting prescriptions, shopping and providing a listening ear to lonely, anxious residents forced to isolate at home. New residents often comment on the strong sense of community in Mere, and this was a perfect opportunity to show that in action – our volunteer system was in place months before official support was available from elsewhere.

At the same time Richard continued to act as Editor of Mere Matters, pulling together essential information, writing content, typesetting, arranging print, and coordinating a separate team of volunteers to deliver 1700 copies to every household in Mere each month. Mere has a high proportion of elderly residents without access to the internet, so home deliveries of Mere Matters have been a lifeline for many.

It therefore shouldn't have come as a great surprise when in late 2020 Richard was awarded The British Empire Medal - given for meritorious civil (or military) service worthy of recognition by the Crown. Covid-permitting, he'll soon be collecting his well-deserved award from Sarah Rose-Troughton, the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen.

As you can imagine, this has been a massive amount of work over the past year and now that things seem to be calming down, Richard deserves a break – which is where I come in.

I've agreed to take over the co-ordination of the Resilience Forum. It's a well-oiled machine and I'm really hoping for all our sakes that we won't be needing it as much in future. However, rest assured that there are still many people willing and able to help if needed – please don't be afraid to ask. If you don't have other friends or family nearby, just contact one of the Telephone Co-ordinators listed on the back page and they will organise help for you.

Thank you to the huge team of people who have given their time so freely to help our local community, especially in the past year. I'm proud to have been a part of it.

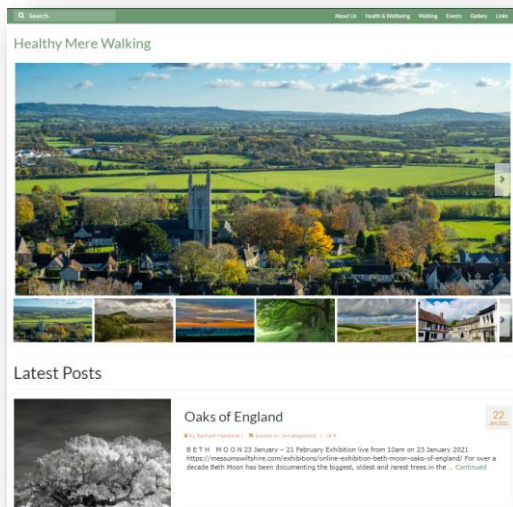
*Rachael Hansford Town Council MLRF Co-ordinator* ☎ 860168  
[mlrfcoordinator@outlook.com](mailto:mlrfcoordinator@outlook.com)



## Healthy Mere Walking

During the past year, being able to get outside and walk in beautiful surroundings has been more important than ever, both for our physical and for our mental health. We're incredibly lucky to have such lovely walks right on our doorstep in Mere, and it has been great to see so many residents out walking the footpaths – even in the rain and mud!

We're keen to promote walking in the area so that even more people can enjoy the benefits of this free activity. *Healthy Mere Walking*, a community organisation created by John Jordan, has been awarded money by the Health and Wellbeing account of the South West Wiltshire Area Board. The money will be used to publicise walking in our parish.



The first project has been to create a new website, [hmw.org.uk](http://hmw.org.uk). Many thanks to Rachael Hansford who is our lead with this. We hope that it will offer new ideas for walking in the area and encourage as many residents as possible to get out and enjoy the fresh air, views and camaraderie of walking in Mere. It will contain news of future events, as lockdown restrictions ease, and opportunities for you to join in.

Until then, you can enjoy browsing the gallery of fantastic photographs which local residents have kindly allowed us to use on the site – perfect therapy until you can next get outside!

John Jordan 07840722835 [hmw.org.uk](http://hmw.org.uk)

## From Mere Surgery

### **COVID vaccination update**

#### **Booking process**

NHS England are now writing to all patients as they become eligible for a Covid vaccination in line with the NHS priority groups listed below and therefore to avoid duplication we will no longer send letters directly from Mere Surgery.

The Groups:

1. Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. All those 75 years of age and over
4. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
5. All those 65 years of age and over
6. All individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at a higher risk of serious disease and mortality
7. All those 60 years of age and over
8. All those 55 years of age and over
9. All those 50 years of age and over

When you receive a letter from NHS England you can choose to book your Covid vaccination appointment at one of the Covid Vaccination Centres offered in the letter either by:

- Telephoning 119
- Following the link provided in the letter
- Or wait for us to contact you to make an appointment at Michael Herbert Hall, Wilton

When you are vaccinated at one of these centres the information is sent to the surgery so your medical records are updated. **There is no need to advise us if you have booked an appointment at a vaccination centre.**

We will continue to monitor patients who haven't been vaccinated at a vaccination centre and Mere Surgery will contact these patients direct to offer a vaccination appointment at our local Primary Care Network vaccination centre at Michael Herbert Hall in Wilton.

These appointments will be offered and booked by telephone or text message as clinics are released to us.

Mere Surgery have now offered vaccinations to all our patients in the first 4 priority groups and are moving onto the next groups which are patients aged 65-69 and those aged 16-64 with underlying health conditions and unpaid carers. If patients in these groups receive a letter from NHS England please book your appointment as detailed above.

### **Housebound patients**

All our housebound patients have received their 1<sup>st</sup> vaccination and we will make contact again when we have more information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination.

### **Attending for your appointment**

Please make sure you **keep your vaccine appointment**. If you are unable to attend, please remember to cancel as it is very important no vaccine goes to waste due to patients not attending for their appointment. Vaccinations appointments are limited and by cancelling your appointment it will allow another patient to be seen.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination clinics**

Patients who received their 1<sup>st</sup> vaccination at Michael Herbert Hall in Wilton will be contacted to arrange a 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination in due course.

As soon as appointments are released we will start contacting you. Please do not telephone the surgery.

### **Vaccinating People Under the Age of 18 Years Old**

Pfizer vaccination appointments have now been released so we will contact patients who fall within priority groups 4 and 6 to book an appointment.

### **Social Care Worker Vaccination**

If you are a Social Care Worker you can now self- refer for a vaccination by visiting [www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination](http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination)

You will need to self-declare you meet the criteria and provide evidence when you attend for your appointment.

### **Volunteers**

We continue to welcome vaccinators to help with the vaccination programme, so if you are interested please contact the surgery.

### **Gifts**

Thank you to everyone who kindly gave gifts to the staff at the surgery over the festive period. It was very much appreciated.

### **Contact details**

Please remember to update your contact details by visiting our website: [www.meresurgery.co.uk](http://www.meresurgery.co.uk)

Please help us to speed up contacting you by registering your mobile and land line number and if you have an email address as this will help with any referrals being made for you.

**Please remember the surgery is open, if you have any medical concerns**

*The Doctors at Mere Surgery ☎ 860001*

## PPG Announces - New services from the Mere Surgery PCN

Simon Hawkins, First Contact Physiotherapist, joined the Mere Surgery team in October. Simon is part of Mere's Primary Care Network (PCN) that benefits NHS patients by offering improved access to an extended range of medical services. Now Mere patients have access to next day care from a physiotherapist that they can book directly through the receptionist at Mere surgery.

First Contact Physiotherapists aim to take pressure off Doctors and add speed to diagnosis of patients. 30% of GP's caseloads are related to musculoskeletal injuries, they are the bone and muscle injuries that are often best treated quickly by physiotherapists. Simon Hawkins and his team can give initial advice, important reassurance plus any referrals that should be necessary.

After the initial telephone conversation Simon will send any exercise or information leaflets by same day email or through the post. 60% of his workload referred through Mere surgery is never referred on to another specialist service as quick initial advice and reassurance is all that is needed. However, should you need a second appointment it is quickly booked.

Dr Halsey of Mere Surgery says "This is an exciting new development allowing better access to the experts in musculoskeletal problems, our physiotherapists, and enabling these problems to be treated in a more optimum timeframe. If there is anything medical that Simon becomes concerned about then he will refer this back to ourselves."

Think you may need help from an NHS physiotherapist? If you are a Mere Surgery patient then call reception on 01747 860001 and ask to book an appointment with Simon Hawkins, your First Contact for all your physiotherapy needs.

*Elaine Stallard Chair PPG [esrstallard@gmail.com](mailto:esrstallard@gmail.com)*

## Mere Town Council Website

Did you know that all copies of Mere Matters are available on the Town Council Website? This could be useful if you don't want to manually type in all those long lines of letters and characters we call hyperlinks, like the one in this edition to get the Postal Vote Application Form:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/934119/Postal-vote-application-form.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/934119/Postal-vote-application-form.pdf)

You can just go to the website, <https://merewilts.org/> access the relevant edition of Mere Matters and click away.

Publications on the website do not carry the 'Contents' page or any adverts and hence have different page numbering.

## Lockdown Life at Mere School

Life at Mere School is very similar to pre-lockdown (2) but with less children.

We have about 60 children in school every day (the norm is just over 200) – children from vulnerable families or whose parents are key workers. Every member of staff is working and the teachers and teaching assistants are teaching their own classes either remotely or in school. The children spend their days in their 'class bubble'.



As a school we were well prepared for this lockdown. Staff and children had a lot of training during the Autumn term on TEAMS so that we could deliver the remote learning through this platform, and the children and teachers get together twice a week for a live session. Parents say the children really look forward to this.

We are delivering a 'blended' offer to our children. Some children are coming to school, others are learning remotely and another group collects work from school to complete at home. We very much adapt our approach to the needs of each child and their families and we are in regular contact with them.

We have acquired more devices for our families from the Department of Education, the Local Authority and the community of Mere, who have generously donated laptops and iPads to our families. Everyone who needs one, now has one.

Staff at Mere School are understandably anxious about the risks they are facing every day but are proud to be able to work on 'the front line' and keep our children learning. We test ourselves twice a week and adhere to a rigorous COVID risk assessment that has been formulated to keep our school community safe.

Every cloud has a silver lining though and we will be continuing with some of our COVID approaches when we start to get back to normal. For example there has been very little illness in school since the first lockdown – hand sanitiser seems to be keeping us healthy! Parents and children have a real appreciation for school now and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to school as soon as possible.

## Mere Theatre Club

Continuing the in-home entertainments, we are spoilt for choice! But here are a few thoughts:

More excellent productions from the National Theatre at [ntathome.com](http://ntathome.com)

At [bristololdvic.org.uk](http://bristololdvic.org.uk) you can see Sherlock in Homes: Murder at the Circus 19/2 - 27/3 or The Picture of Dorian Gray 16-31/3 or Mid Life: The Skin We're In 8-15/3

For serious opera fans the whole of Wagner's Ring Cycle is available at [operanorth.co.uk](http://operanorth.co.uk)

And the RSC have a fascinating sounding live experience called Dream: "A live online performance set in a virtual midsummer forest. Theatre, music and ground-breaking technology combine in an extraordinary exploration into the future of live performance". You can choose interaction or not! 12-20/3 at [dream.online](http://dream.online) I've booked for this already!

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*Madelaine Morris* ☎ 861833 [madsmorris@gmail.com](mailto:madsmorris@gmail.com)

## Rosemary Goddard Centre

Although the Rosemary Goddard day centre remains closed under the current coronavirus restrictions, we are pleased to report that all our guests have been well looked after during the last year by our organiser. Sandie Hawkins and her team of volunteer 'buddies' keep in touch with guests by phone every week to check on wellbeing and Sandie conducts quizzes and other verbal entertainments which keep everyone on their toes.

Of course we all realise that this does not replace the comfort and enjoyment of regular face to face social contact while sharing lunch and fun activities at the twice weekly day centre. However, as the vaccination programme rolls out and the infection rate falls there is light at the end of this long and tedious tunnel. The trustees are keeping a close eye on government guidelines as they evolve, and carefully assessing the feasibility of re-opening the day centre as soon as we can do so in a Covid-safe manner, safeguarding our guests, organiser and our volunteers. We will keep you posted with the latest information on our web-site: <http://www.meredaycentre.org.uk>

Chris Dillon, who has chaired the Board of Trustees of the day centre for nearly seven years is standing down, to be replaced by myself, Jane Mason. Chris has very successfully steered the day centre through many changes, always with humour and a caring but light touch. We are very appreciative not to be losing her entirely, as she will remain as Vice Chair - so we will still be able to benefit from her (now considerable) experience. Thank you Chris!

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*Jane Mason, Chair of Trustees* ☎ 861296 [jane.mason@gmx.com](mailto:jane.mason@gmx.com)



### Read Easy Grand Mere Garage Sale

We have decided to postpone the Garage Sale planned for April until September in the hopes that life will be a little more 'back to normal' by then. If there is anyone who would like to join us with their own garage sale in September please get in touch with Hermione on 07704 93708086 Judy Phillips

Judy [events.rebvn@gmail.com](mailto:events.rebvn@gmail.com)

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### Mere Bowls Club

It is planned that the Club will reopen as scheduled on the Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021 if the government allows and more importantly if the membership feels that it is safe to do so. We live in hope of a full season of both competitive and friendly bowling with the warm sun on our backs and in the company of the usual friendly and stimulating opposition.

If the County has only moved into tier 3 by the 17<sup>th</sup> April and the green is in a playable condition, it is hoped that the two coaches within the Club will be able to carry out one-to-one sessions with any new or prospective members, or even existing members who wish to improve their skills, so watch this space for any additional news on this, or any other topic of interest to our current and new membership. It is also hoped, if we are in tier two or tier three, that we will be able to carry on as last year with members participating in Social Bowling after pre-booking a rink with John FitzGerald.


For any other details about the Club please contact Don Butchers on 01747-860775 also [don.butchers@btinternet.com](mailto:don.butchers@btinternet.com) or visit the Club web site at <https://www.hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/home/>

*Don Butchers – Club Secretary*

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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

## If It Poops, Please Pick It Up.

I am flabbergasted at the outcry reported in Mere Mutters in response to a lady just asking for advice on how to deal with dog owners allowing their pets to defecate on her lawn. It is the fault of the owners of course and not the dogs. What is it about this subject that brings out the worst in people? We all know the law in this regard and there are some hefty fines for those who fall foul.



Britain is truly a nation of pet lovers but even the most ardent dog lover can't fail to grimace when they find they have stepped in another mutt's mess.

According to the RSPCA, there are more than eight million dogs in the UK and that means 1,000 tonnes of the stinky stuff befoul our streets every day.

Most dog owners are responsible and dutifully clean up after their four legged friend hunches down to do his business. 'Bag it and bin it' is the sacred rule of dog walkers but not everyone is so diligent in their doggy duties.

Dog fouling is one of the nation's most common pet peeves and when someone lets their prized pup take a poop on your property it really does takes the biscuit.

It shouldn't be necessary for anyone to take action in this regard other than the dog owners/walkers themselves, it is a legal requirement and the dogs can't do it themselves.

If you are plagued with repeated fouling on your property you could:

- Speak to the dog owner and ask them to comply with the law
- Try to take photographic or video footage as evidence – do not contact the Police but report to the Council.
- You could try to deter repeated messing by spraying some vinegar or any liquid citrus perhaps around the boundary

Come on everyone. Mere really Matters, stop Muttering. It is up to everyone to play their part. Dog walkers; please just be responsible. Thanks to those who are of course.

For those dog owners who may be in wheel chairs or not able to bend over to pick up, you can get a scooper with bags and the poo goes straight into the bag!

*Shout me for details but not complaints please.*



*Editor*

## May 2021 Elections

On **6 May 2021**, all eligible residents in Wiltshire will be invited to vote in a number of elections and referendums.

The Police and Crime Commissioner election, town and parish council elections, Wiltshire Council unitary elections, and nine local neighbourhood planning referendums will all be taking place.

Our top priority is for you to have your say in a safe way.

Given the pandemic, we understand that many of you may not wish to vote in person on election day. For this reason, we strongly recommend that you vote by post, as it is the easiest and most convenient way to vote.

If you wish to be able to vote by post then you **HAVE TO TAKE ACTION** now. You will need to download a form, print it, complete/sign and send to our local electoral registration office: Address below!

The following is the link to get the form:



[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/934119/Postal-vote-application-form.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/934119/Postal-vote-application-form.pdf)

If you don't have a printer then ask someone local who has or let me know and I will print one for you.

### **Get help with electoral registration**

Need help? Get in touch with your local electoral registration team. They can tell you if you're on the electoral register, or if you've registered for a postal or proxy vote.

Wiltshire Council, Electoral Services, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge

BA14 8JN. Phone: 0300 456 0112

Email: [elections@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:elections@wiltshire.gov.uk) or  
[wiltshire.gov.uk/](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/)

Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 [rajefferies@btinternet.com](mailto:rajefferies@btinternet.com)

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## Why we should be more careful when discarding disposable masks

The public are throwing away a huge number of masks each day in the UK. This tidal wave of face masks being dropped on the streets could create a major environmental crisis. Disposable masks contain ear loops and metal pieces used to grip the nose, raising fears that if not discarded properly they could become entangled around animals and wildlife. This is just one of the many reasons that the public should think twice before throwing their mask away onto the street and we should all make sure that masks aren't accidentally dropped.

Masks are being found in streams, rivers and the ocean; this is similar to single use plastic bottles as disposable face masks are typically made from plastic and most cannot be recycled. If this problem continues at this rate then it will get progressively worse.

Charlotte Green from TradeWaste.co.uk said – “*The way to tackle this potential environmental disaster is for everyone to move towards washable reusable masks, not only will this cut down on single use mask litter, but it also reduces the environmental impacts of manufacturing 19.5 billion plastic masks in the first place.*”



This problem isn't just in big areas and on beaches, for example I have seen multiple masks around Mere, especially outside of the Mere Co-op where people may have accidentally dropped them after using them in the shop. We must be more careful when discarding disposable masks so we don't add to this problem.



This is the first article from our young and intrepid reporter and photographer twins ***Molly & Poppy***.

## Link Scheme

We had a much busier month in January as the Covid vaccination programme swung into full action. We had 26 trips to the Michael Herbert Memorial Hall in Wilton enabling 28 local residents to have their first Covid vaccination. The organisation at Wilton is impressive and our passengers were delighted to be able to receive their vaccination and very grateful for the Link's help. These trips have continued during February and some of our "younger" drivers were able to go for their own vaccination to the Great Western Hospital in Swindon under a scheme to vaccinate care staff and volunteers.

Some of you may have seen one of our trips to Wilton on BBC 1's Morning Live on 19 February. The BBC were interested in showing volunteers taking people to their Covid vaccination and contacted Community First who oversee Wiltshire's Link Schemes. As we had drivers going to Wilton they selected us for filming. Unfortunately, although there was good footage of our driver Simon and his passenger, the BBC failed to mention he was driving for the Mere and District Link Scheme. Most disappointing!

Recruitment is looking five new drivers since Mutters and we hope able to start driving by We are really grateful for coming forward and Link journeys. We so if you would like to please call 01747 860096.



up as we have welcomed our last report in Mere that another one will be the time you read this. to our new volunteers hope they enjoy their always need new drivers become a Link driver

Our volunteer drivers are available to take you to medical appointments, including Covid vaccinations, and shopping, if resources allow. Once you have an appointment please call 01747 860096 to book a Link driver. Please try to give us 48 hrs notice if possible. Over the Easter weekend please note that the Link phone will not be manned from Good Friday to Easter Monday (2-5 April) inclusive. If you need to travel during that time please give us as much notice as possible so that we can arrange a driver.

We continue to use the safety guidelines we introduced to protect both clients and drivers from the risk of spreading the coronavirus. Both driver and passenger have to wear a face covering while in the car and passengers have to sit in the back where this is practical. Drivers carry hand sanitiser and wipe down all surfaces that may have been touched by the passenger while in the car at the end of each trip. Unfortunately, we are unable to take people from different households in the same car.

*John FitzGerald, Chair ☎ 860096*

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Many members of the Mere Mother's Union were so pleased to have met in February on Zoom and all said how nice it was to see each other's' faces again. It was quite informal and some of the members did a Show and Tell of what they had been making or possibly reading during lockdown with some interesting results including Reverend Carol's Dolls House in construction.

On **9<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30pm** we will once again meet on Zoom or you can phone in and listen which worked very well. We are pleased this month to be listening to a short talk by Janet Smith who has responsibility for rural ministry in the Diocese. Janet has been attending our St. Michael's Zoom Pastoral Meetings and was very impressed with the organising of the Christmas Lunches arranged by Mother's Union.

We look forward to listening to her and having our usual meeting together again and of course looking forward to meeting in person again one day. If you would like to join us at one of our Zoom meetings on the second Tuesday afternoon of each month then please get in touch and we will guide you through and you will be very welcome.

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

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### Mere Cricket Club

The New Season Approaches!

Hopefully by the time you read this we may have an idea as to when recreational cricket will begin again. With this in mind we are encouraging as many young (and old) players, either new to the sport or already playing, to join the club this year and enjoy some well-deserved fun in the sunshine!



As a club we aim to offer access to as much cricket locally in all formats, to as many players as possible, whatever age or ability. We work closely with our neighbours at KSCC to offer cricket to all

ECB "All Stars" club for 5-8 yrs old

Junior cricket coaching and matches for under 9's 11's 13's and 15's

Adult Saturday league cricket (over 14's)

Sunday friendly fixtures

Midweek T20 fixtures

Under 19 midweek cricket

For more details on joining, playing or helping out at your local club please contact Kevin Whitmore on 07528 875060 or

*Mark Cassidy on 07763 001119*

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The good news from the Suchana project in West Bengal this month is that there is a good possibility of negotiating a renewed contract with a publisher. This would be to expand the

published range of first language story books and teaching materials that Suchana teachers and supporters are so good at producing. While there is a great demand for these among the children and communities served by Suchana, it's never going to make a lot of money as there's not a huge worldwide market for books written in Santhali and Kora! However, the contract, if successful, could help Suchana to break even at a time when their key fundraisers – such as our little Support Group in Mere – have been so restricted in what we are able to do.

We're hoping to hold another cake stall near the **Post Office on 27<sup>th</sup> March**, if non-essential retail is allowed by then, or on a Saturday as soon as possible after that. Hopefully there will be other exciting possibilities later in the Spring and Summer!

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*Judith Thompson Chair ☎ 860553 [judithvthompson@aol.com](mailto:judithvthompson@aol.com)*

#### St Michael's Enhancement project.

The work in the church is nearing completion with just a few details to go like door handles and decorating. We are extremely pleased with the results as the finish is so good and the church is enhanced. I used to be rather embarrassed as couples walked through the tower for their wedding to see the miscellany of church paraphernalia as they walked in. Now there is as beautiful merging of old and new and having toilets on either side also gives a balance or symmetry to the area. Now as we enter the church through the north porch there is a feeling of light and welcome in the church from the fully glazed internal porch. The Coat of Arms has been moved lower and is now lit meaning that this precious artefact can be seen more easily. Thank you once again to all our benefactors and for the builders for their work and sympathetic treatment of our building.

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*Rev Carol*

#### Mere Snooker Club

We will re-open as soon as regulations allow, continuing to maintain regular cleaning and sanitizing so it is as safe as possible for members, but the rule of two persons per room continues until distancing rules are relaxed. We hope that members will use the club regularly once conditions allow and we welcome new members.

We are seeking some extra billiard team members to join us for the Sandford Orcas billiard league. Billiards is less well known but is a good gentleman's and ladies game; the league is based mainly in Dorset and they are a friendly bunch, Mike is happy to show you the game if you are keen but have not played before.

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*Kevin Smith 07803 006077*

## Friends of Mere Museum

As more of us become vaccinated and the days grow longer and even the sun sometimes shines, so we're all cautiously allowing ourselves to begin to contemplate the possibility that the Friends may, perhaps in the foreseeable future, feel confident enough to announce that we have a plan! But clearly not quite yet! So this month we have to follow Tennessee Williams's advice (found in his masterpiece 'The Glass Menagerie', though he was actually quoting Luke's gospel) to 'Possess our Souls in Patience'! There's little else for it but to do exactly that. We should be pretty good at it by now having had so much practice!

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 [jenny@flaxmill.org.uk](mailto:jenny@flaxmill.org.uk)

## Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

Since last month's reminiscence about MADS at 21, we've been having a look through the archive and discover that our second performance during our 21st year was 'Rock-a-Bye, Sailor!'. Then, (i.e. in 1968) it was a quite recent play by Philip King & Falkland Cary and at the time it was described as 'just over two hours of dramatic soap opera'! It is in fact a full-blown farce, revolving around what ought to have been a straightforward event: the christening of Able-Bodied Seaman Alfred's (and his wife's) new baby. But what ensues is utter mayhem, much of this revolving around Alfred's mother in law.... MADS has always been particularly adept at comedy and this production was extremely well received by Mere audiences. So much so that just a few years later, we put on another comedy by the same two authors, entitled 'Big Bad Mouse', of which more (perhaps) later.

Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 [jenny@flaxmill.org.uk](mailto:jenny@flaxmill.org.uk)

### **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:

Rachael Hansford

☎ 01747 860168

☎ 07989 470278

✉ [mlrfcoordinator@outlook.com](mailto:mlrfcoordinator@outlook.com)

### Letter from the Churches ~ *Michael Hughes writes:*

At the famous battle of Little Big Horn in America, General Custer was defeated by Sitting Bull and his braves.

A Mexican priest told me his story about one of those braves, who was called Silver Arrow (don't you wish we all had more interesting names like those Native Americans? I would swap dull "Michael Hughes" for "Bright Sunrise" willingly! What would you like to be called?)

Anyway, Silver Arrow had a habit which the other braves found weird. Every evening he would leave the camp and walk out into the desert. One evening they followed him to find out what he did there. With his bow, he was firing arrow after arrow into the West. They asked him why he was doing so, when there was nothing at which to shoot. He answered "I am trying to shoot the sun before it sets." They mocked him for this unachievable target. But he went right on going out each and every evening trying to shoot the sun, even though he was told he had no chance of succeeding as the sun was far beyond his bow's reach.

When the war with the white men seemed inevitable, Sitting Bull held an archery competition to see which of his braves was most accurate with the bow at long distance.

Silver Arrow won easily, for he had been trying to hit a very distant target for many years.

During Lent we try to be the way God made us to be: - loving, forgiving, selfless, and joyful. It is likely, very likely, that we will fail to be holy people. But if we spend the time between now and Easter **trying** to be the way Jesus wants us to be, the trying will not make us perfect – but it **will** make us a tiny bit better – in the same way as Silver Arrow, though he did not hit his target, did become a better bowman.

Lent is normally a time when Christians make some cut back in their lives: a time of self-sacrifice. But this year we have all (or most of us) already made huge sacrifices, living as virtual prisoners under house arrest, in order to save our Health Service, and protect the lives of others. So this year, we do not have to give anything else up. Instead discover whatever could fill your heart with more joy, more love, and then do whatever will add to your joy - every day without fail.

*For God desires you to have the deep joy that comes as love increases.*

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Copy date for April 2021 Issue

Closing deadline is: 4:00pm on MONDAY 22nd March. Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425 [editor@merematters.co.uk](mailto:editor@merematters.co.uk) or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

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

### Church Contact Details

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

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

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

Churchwarden:

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

We have taken the decision not to run physical services in Mere or West Knoyle during March but instead to keep going on line with live Zoom services or recorded ones. We do hope you will join us from our website the link is on [Stmichaelsmere.org.uk](http://Stmichaelsmere.org.uk). Services are subject to change, updates on posters or Mere Matters.

7		Sun		Lent 3 online
14		Sun		Mothering Sunday live on Zoom
21		Sun		Passiontide Online service
28		Sun	10.30am	Palm Sunday procession followed by dramatic reading of the Passion gospel

During Holy Week daily walk of the cross around Mere at 6.00pm

**Good Friday 11.00am** Walk of Witness. Subject to current Government guidance people will be able to walk with us or watch from a distance. Please check nearer to the time. **3.00pm** Final Hour in church

**Easter Day services.** We hope to have an outside service and gathering in the church.

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

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

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

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

#### *All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley*

Priest in Charge: Rev'd Carol Green ☎ 861859

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

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

7	Sun	10.00am	A Service of the Word
14	Sun	10.00am	Mothering Sunday
21	Sun		No Service
28	Sun		No Service

#### *The United Reformed Church*

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

There will be no services during March or Holy Week but we are hoping that any restrictions then in place will allow us to meet on **April 5th**, Easter Sunday. The service will be held in Balcony Lane Cottage, which will be used for all meetings until the alterations in the church have been completed.

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

Father Louis Beasley-Suffolk: ☎ 01963 34408

[hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk](mailto:hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk)

Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

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

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### Booking Meeting Venues

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

### Mere Information Point @ The Library

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

<b>Wiltshire Dementia Adviser Service</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Friday in month</b>	<b>2.00pm – 4.00pm</b>
<b>Registrar of Births &amp; Deaths</b>	Thursdays by appt only	☎ 0300 003 4569 9.30am – 11.30
<b>Health Trainer</b>	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](http://merewilts.org)

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