

# Mere Matters



## Mere Town Council

The Wiltshire Council draft Climate Strategy consultation closed on October 17th. Thank you to all who responded. As a collective response, Mere Town Council stated that it agrees with all the objectives and aspirations and looks forward to finding out more information about how the objectives and actions can be delivered and implemented, including the sources of funding that might be available. We requested that Parish and Town Councils be given the resources to assist in the delivery of these strategies and support the request for Good Green/Environmental Practice Guides for Town and Parish Councils.

Following a grant application, the Town Council has received funding for a water bottle refilling station and we are hoping to have this installed in the Salisbury Street Car Park in the near future.

At the September meeting, the Town Council discussed projects that they would like to put forward as priorities for the use of the Section 106 funds we have received from the development at Woodlands Road. The Town Council decided to prioritise two projects for the time being – those being the refurbishment of the Walnut Tree Play Area and also to explore the possibility of widening, surfacing and amenity improvements to the footpath leading from Clements Lane to Angel Lane via Lordsmead Mill. These projects were chosen as priorities in view of the fact that they would be of most benefit to the residents of the Woodlands Road housing development which is, of course, the source of the funding. Other suggestions for use of the funding will be considered for further prioritisation once these two projects have been assessed, considered and costings attained.

The Council has asked for a professional assessment of the two beech trees closest to the tennis courts in the Recreation Ground as there has been a report of potential root damage to the tennis courts.

I am pleased to say that the clock on the Clock Tower is now working again following its annual service and I would like to thank Richard Coombs from the Bowling Club, who has got the two clocks on the Andy Young Pavilion working again.

*Lesley Traves, Chair, Mere Town Council  
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.  
[lindseywood@merewilts.org](mailto:lindseywood@merewilts.org) ☎ 860701 🌐 [merewilts.org](http://merewilts.org)*

## Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

Full Council still functions with strict Covid-19 measures in place. The Council chamber is still not considered suitable for full council meetings and as a consequence, Full Council was held again at Lansdowne Hall, the Civic Centre, Trowbridge. To ensure Covid-19 public health guidance was adhered to, a capacity limit for public attendance at the meeting was in place. It was an interesting meeting, the chairman suspended the meeting twice because of public intervention. This meeting was also live streamed for all members of the public to watch online.

I have had many complaints in regard the lack of light on the steps to the rear of Mere Salisbury Street Car Park. I am meeting with Wiltshire Council who in principle seem positive to address the situation.

I stated last month that non-commercial intervention aid for broadband in our area has finished. The Mere area has benefited from this program but it is now down to individuals and commercial forces to provide what fibre broadband is required. Our Wiltshire Area Board (SWWAB) hosted a meeting presenting how Bishopstone intended to obtain fibre to the premises, giving them super-fast broadband. Also Wessex, a local provider gave a presentation regarding their progress across Dorset and beyond, providing fibre broadband. You may wish to visit [www.communityfibre.openreach.co.uk](http://www.communityfibre.openreach.co.uk), to view Openreach's roll out. During the coronavirus pandemic many people have used the internet to work from home and for shopping and entertainment services. Children have had on-line learning. Internet communication services have become vital. The Government's aim is to have "Gigabit capable" (one gigabit = 1000Mbps) broadband connections available to all. To achieve this aim it is necessary to have an optical fibre connection from the telephone exchange to the property - known as Fibre To The Property (FTTP), some of the Mere area already have this capability, others have what is known as fibre to the cabinet (FTTC), which has helped many in the Mere area. FTTP is the next step and its roll out is indicated by the above web site. Under the Government's Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme homes and businesses should be eligible for funding towards the cost of installing gigabit-capable broadband when part of a group. These homes and businesses can establish a Community Fibre Partnership (CFP). Rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers worth £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small to medium-sized enterprises (SME) to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections. However these vouchers may not meet the full cost of installation.

I attended a Blue Plaque unveiling displaying the name Hugh Wolfe Frank on Friday 1st October at 2pm at The Malt House, Castle Street, Mere. I was representing the Mere Town Council as well as being present as Wiltshire Councillor. Paul Hooley, MBE is the author of a book about Wolfe Frank at the Nuremberg trials and Paul was present at the presentation. A large number of people assembled on the sunny afternoon. It is

pleasing that Mere has been honoured to receive this Salisbury Civic Society Blue Plaque in honour of Wolfe.

Dennis Walters died on the 1st October. He was MP for Westbury which covered the



Mere area, which he represented as Member of Parliament (MP) for 28 years from 1964 onwards.

One of only 69 schools in the country, Pembroke Park Primary School, Salisbury, was selected to receive a Celebration Tree as part of The Queen's Green Canopy. It was planted on the school playing field on Tuesday, October 5. A Time Capsule was also buried – filled with items chosen by the pupils to represent day-to-day life in 2021. The Chairman of Wiltshire Council attended.

As has become custom now, the Wiltshire Council leader has requested and provided a wreath to be laid on behalf of Wiltshire Council on Remembrance Sunday in Mere, the 14th November.

Wiltshire Council believes that anyone can teach anyone, that is why Wiltshire Council want to recruit young people who can explain what it is like to be on the receiving end of services. Wiltshire Youth Council will give young people the chance to have their say on decisions that are made by the local authority. Area boards have funding allocated for projects for young people. Youth councillors will be helping to allocate money to such projects that are important to them and their peers. They will also have the chance to inspect council services, ensuring that these represent young people's best interests. Wiltshire Council are asking young people aged 11 - 17 years old to put themselves forward. Our Secondary School area is serviced by Gillingham Dorset, I trust a representative can be found.

Since 2014, the number and rate of children in care in Wiltshire has steadily increased up until the most recent year, 2020/21, when it started to reduce. At full council a report was given by the Cabinet member for corporate parenting, he stated, there is still too big of a gap between birth homes and in care homes regarding educational

attainment. The report captures the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for children looked after and care experienced young people.

The Stone Circle companies were formed in 2019 and with two principle aims.

Firstly, to provide homes to residents whose financial circumstance enabled them to afford rents somewhere between council house levels and the private sector, with rental levels offered at above the local housing allowance as well as allowing access to the homes outside the Council's allocation policy. Secondly, to create homes for sale through developing council owned land. At Full Council it was asked and agreed to delegate approval of terms of reference for the Shareholder Group as a Cabinet Committee to the Monitoring Officer. Stone Circle have about 47 properties at present.

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

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### Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



On **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November** we are meeting once again at **14.30** in the Main Hall at **The Grove Building**. We are looking forward to a talk from the Reverend Jo Naish from Tisbury. She will talk about her travels through her life.

Last month we had a very enjoyable afternoon listening and taking part in Hand Bell Ringing and thank the team of bell ringers from "Mere Melodies". How nice it was to sing again to a very varied selection of tunes. They played beautifully.

If you would like to join us you would be very welcome. Our next meeting will be our Annual Carol Service which this year we really hope will take place at **St. Michael's Church on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December**. There will of course be more details in the next Mere Matters.

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

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## Mere Doctors Surgery – Flu Clinics

### **Adult clinics**

This year we are inviting adults to book their flu appointment via responding to an SMS text message. If you have your mobile number as preferred method of contact, you will receive a text message over the next couple of weeks from Mere Surgery. By clicking the link provided you will be asked to confirm your date of birth and then you will be able to select from the drop-down menu a date range where you will be able to book into these specific clinics:

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November

If you do not have a registered or preferred mobile number with us, please telephone reception to book your appointment.

### **Eligibility:**

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

- People aged 50 years or over (including those becoming age 50 years by 31 March 2022)
- People living in long-stay residential care homes
- Those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or who are the main carer of an older or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill
- Close contacts of immune-compromised individuals
- All pregnant women (including those women who become pregnant during the flu season)
- Those aged from six months to less than 50 years of age, in a clinical risk group such as those with:
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory disease, such as severe asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or bronchitis
  - chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
  - chronic kidney disease at stage three, four or five or chronic liver disease
  - chronic neurological disease, such as Parkinson's disease or motor neurone disease,
  - learning disability
  - diabetes
  - splenic dysfunction or asplenia
  - a weakened immune system due to disease (such as HIV/AIDS) or treatment (such as cancer treatment)
  - morbidly obese (defined as BMI of 40 and above)

Flu clinics will be held in the surgery but we must continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

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

### **Child clinics – 2-3 years**

These clinic dates will be set up over the next couple of weeks and again you will either receive SMS text message to book your child's appointment directly or a letter inviting you to contact the surgery to book the appointment.

School age children outside of this age group will be vaccinated in School.

There is a Facebook video showing how to book your appointment available by following this link: <https://m.facebook.com/mere.surgery1/>

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Mere Surgery ☎ 860001

### Mere Forest Charity applications 2021

All existing applicants have been written to. If you have not had a letter please contact Sonia Booth on 01747 854700/07841 748399 or email [mereforest@gmail.com](mailto:mereforest@gmail.com)

Any new applications for this annual distribution please also contact Sonia Booth by the 15th November.

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### Battle of Britain Week



Many thanks to all those who recently donated in support of the amazing work for our veterans. £262:00 was raised locally towards this worthy cause.

*Roy Sims Hon President* ☎ 863328

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### Mere Snooker Club

We have openings for new members, and will be holding an Open Night for non-members. If you would like to find out more about the club and our facilities, without obligation, do come along on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> November** from 19.30 when members will be ready to welcome you.

*Kevin Smith* 📞 07803 006077 [meresnookerclub@gmail.com](mailto:meresnookerclub@gmail.com)

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### Mere Meander

Are you new to Mere? Do you wonder about the history of some of the buildings? If so why not join me for a short wander around the town to learn something about its history. Meet in the Parish Churchyard at **14:00 on Wednesday 17th November** with tea in the Angel café afterwards for those who wish to indulge.

*Janet Way* ☎ 860884

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### Pennybank Writers

Meetings of PennyBank Writers – the Mere and District Writing Group – have recommenced after lockdown. Members meet in the **Lecture Hall at 14.30** on the **last Wednesday** of the month except in December when they treat themselves to a pre-Christmas lunch.

This month three members will be travelling to Blandford Forum for the Award Ceremony of the Rotary Club's 2021 Short Story and Poetry Competition. Mary White and Lis Brown are shortlisted in the poetry section and Adrienne Howell in short story and flash fiction. They will receive certificates, read their work to an audience in the Parish Rooms and hear the prize-winners announced by the judges. Nerve-racking stuff! The subject for discussion at PennyBank's November meeting on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** is Story Structure. Guests welcome @£2pp.

*Adrienne Howell 860475*

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### Fair Trade in Mere

I am so pleased to be able to hold my monthly stalls after the 10.30 morning service at St Michael's again! After almost 2 years, packing the boxes, pricing and checking my stock was a joy. This month it will be on **November 21st** with Christmas cards and goodies, small gifts and lots of chocolate!!!

*Janet Way ☎ 860884 [jwaywitsend@gmail.com](mailto:jwaywitsend@gmail.com)*

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## Mere surgery - Supporting Carers in our community

Mere Surgery are pleased to have been awarded the Gold Plus Carers Award. The scheme, funded by Wiltshire Council and the NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group aims to raise awareness of carers' issues in GP practices and provide a system of awards to recognise their support to carers.

Mere surgery provided evidence that criteria set out by the accreditation scheme were met, such as having an up-to-date carer register, a carer lead, provide flexible appointments for carers and to offer registered carers an annual health check.

A Carers Clinic is being held at the surgery twice a month. Carers will be contacted by Mere surgery to book their annual Health check.

All registered carers are offered a flu vaccination and can book an appointment via the online booking system.

Community Connectors at CSW have set up a Carers Café in Mere. The Community Carer Café is designed to give carers a safe space to step back from the pressures of everyday life, meet new people and socialise with others in similar circumstances over a cup of tea.

Visit the CSW website at: <https://carersupportwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on/carers-cafe-mere/> for further details of future Carer café dates and venues. Information can also be found on the Mere Surgery website and Carer Noticeboard at the surgery.

The **Mere and District Day Centre** has also reopened its doors and provides a safe place for older people from Mere and the surrounding area to meet for social and stimulating activities and lunch. This support can extend to respite for carers as they have a few hours to attend to their own needs knowing their relative is safe and enjoying themselves.

The Centre is open Monday and Friday from 10am to 3pm. contact Sandie Hawkins [rgcorganiser@outlook.com](mailto:rgcorganiser@outlook.com)

*Rachel Harrison. Carers Lead. Mere surgery [rachel.harrison11@nhs.net](mailto:rachel.harrison11@nhs.net)*

## Mere Annual Carnival



The carnival has two roles: to put on the Carnival each year and to raise funds for local causes. The kind generosity of our sponsors and the successful Fun Day in September means that we can carry out both. We are very pleased to have been able to make charitable donations to two deserving, local community groups: **Seeds 4 Success** and **Mere Day Centre** (*formally known as the Rosemary Goddard Centre*).

So, a massive thank you to the wonderful community of Mere and local area and those from further

afield for turning out in their hundreds to support Mere Carnival and the deserving community groups of Mere!

Chairman John Gammie presenting a cheque for £500 to Jaki & members of Seeds 4 Success and £500 to Sandie and residents at the Rosemary Goddard Centre.



## The Queen's Jubilee Celebrations

The Queen's Jubilee will be celebrated in various ways over the extended Bank holiday weekend of June 2nd- 5<sup>th</sup> 2022. There will be an opportunity for stall holders to join a street market on the Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>. The Flower festival will be held in St Michael's Church, plus a tree planting, newly composed bell ringing celebration, and plans for a community picnic and live music, with a celebratory hat design competition, so keep an eye out for that hat to embellish...

Anne Rich ☎ 861493 [arich4@icloud.com](mailto:arich4@icloud.com)

## New Stars Appeal funded Maternity Entrance Opens at Salisbury Hospital

Salisbury Hospital is delighted that the new entrance and reception for its maternity unit is now up and running.

The new building, which cost £120,000, has been funded by the Stars Appeal, Salisbury District Hospital's Charity, and is the latest in a series of projects designed to improve the experience of expectant mothers and families.

Hannah Boyd – Acting Head of Midwifery and Neonatal Service said *"It's great to be able to welcome expectant parents to the maternity unit with a modern friendly reception area. For many years the entrance was via a gloomy entrance bay shared with ambulances. This new area is much more in keeping with a modern busy maternity unit."*

Consultant Surgeon and Chairman of the Stars Appeal Ambassadors Mr Graham Branagan said *"We are thrilled that this new building, that will provide a warm welcome to tens of thousands of local families, is now open and in use. I'd like to thank everyone who donates to and fundraises for the Stars Appeal for their ongoing support. We never forget that without them, Stars Appeal projects like this simply wouldn't be possible"*.

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## 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.

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Tom Snook ☎ 861977 [tomsnook29@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tomsnook29@hotmail.co.uk)

### Shreen Harmony

Shreen Harmony are delighted to be back singing together again and are gearing up for their Christmas Concert on **Saturday December 18th**. **SAVE THE DATE!** More details will be in the December/January issue of Mere Matters and advertised around the town nearer the time.

If you think you have an alto or bass voice and would like to join our friendly, fun choir please contact the choir director - Caroline Radcliffe - email: [radhouseis@aol.co.uk](mailto:radhouseis@aol.co.uk)

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Angela Siderfin 861370 [angelamsiderfin@gmail.com](mailto:angelamsiderfin@gmail.com)

### Mere Bowls Club

The club has closed for the winter this year, now the hard work on getting the green in shape for next year has started in earnest, whilst your scribe was away in Italy on holiday, a team of volunteers cleared the resultant debris away after Richard Coombs and Trevor Mead had scarified the green in both directions thus freeing up a mass of thatch and moss. The club thanks all those who took part in this arduous task, but notes that there is still a lot of work to complete before the green is ready for play next season.

The club will continue to meet periodically for social evenings throughout the cold times that we have ahead, the first of these being at the end of November when we will raise some funds to help towards the holding of the Presentation Dinner to be held on the **8th February** next year.

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Don Butchers – Club Secretary ☎ 860775 [don.butchers@btinternet.com](mailto:don.butchers@btinternet.com)  
🌐 [hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/home/](http://hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/home/)

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

1	Mon	09:30	<b>Tiddlers and Toddlers</b> (every Mon)	L
		18:00	<b>Scouting</b> (every Mon Term Time Only)	GB
2	Tues	13:00	<b>Pilates (JL)</b> (every Tues)	GB
		18:20	<b>Zumba</b> (every Tues)	L
		19:00	Historical Society	GB
		19:30	<b>Mere Amateur Dramatics</b> (every Tues)	L
3	Wed	09:30	<b>Ta-Chi</b> (every Wed)	GB
		14:00	<b>Pilates</b> (every Weds)	L
		18 :00	<b>Karate</b> (every Weds)	L
		19:00	<b>Railway Modellers</b> (every Wed)	RMC
			<i>Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers</i>	
4	Thurs	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB
		10:00	<b>Art Group</b> (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	<b>Quilters</b> (every Thurs)	GB
		17:00	<b>Girlguiding</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> Thurs)	GB
		19:30	<b>Mere Amateur Dramatics</b> (every Thurs)	L
			<i>Art, Quilters</i>	
5	Fri	19:00	Self Defence	L
			<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
6	Sat			
7	Sun			
8	Mon	10:00	Quilters	GB
			<i>Tiddlers &amp; Toddlers, Scouting,</i>	
9	Tues	09:45	Historical Society	GB
		14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		18:00	Oasis Carnival Bingo	L
		19:30	Snooker Club Open Evening	Snooker Club
			<i>Pilates (JL), MADS, Zumba</i>	
10	Wed	14:00	Short Walk	CP
		19:30	Gardening Club	GB
			<i>Tai-Chi, Pilates, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	
11	Thurs	09.17	Mere Walking Group	Bus Stop
			<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	
12	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	GB
		18:00	Festival Band	GB
			<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
13	Sat	13:00	Mere Art Group Exhibition	GB
		18:00	Oasis Carnival Club Bingo	L
14	Sun			
			<i>Tiddlers &amp; Toddlers, Scouting</i>	
			<i>Pilates (JL), MADS</i>	
15	Mon			
16	Tues			
17	Wed	14:00	Mere Meander	Parish Churchyard

<i>Pilates, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>					
18	Thurs	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB	
		14:00	Short Walk	CP	
		19:30	MADS Production	L	
<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS(Production)</i>					
19	Fri	19:00	Mere Link Scheme AGM	GB	
		19:30	MADS Production	L	
<i>Dup Bridge, MADS(Production)</i>					
20	Sat	14:30	MADS Production	L	
		19:30	MADS Production	L	
21	Sun	Fair Trade Stall after morning service			StM
22	Mon	<i>Tiddlers &amp; Toddlers, Scouting</i>			
23	Tues	<i>Pilates (JL), Zumba</i>			
24	Wed	14:30	Pennybank Writers	L	
<i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>					
25	Thurs	<i>Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, MADS</i>			
26	Fri	09:00	Book Sale	L	
		10:00	Merely Women	GB	
<i>Dup Bridge</i>					
27	Sat	09:00	Book Sale	L	
		10:00	Friends of St Michaels - Table Top Sale	StM	
28	Sun				
29	Mon	<i>Tiddlers &amp; Toddlers, Scouting</i>			
30	Tues	<i>Pilates (JL), Zumba</i>			

**As from 8th October, Mere Lecture Hall has opened up all its halls for hire once again so The Small Hall, The Large Hall and The Green Room are available for hire.**

### The Mere Walking Group

We plan to squeeze one more walk in before the winter, on **Thursday 11th November**.

Catch bus from Mere at 9.17 (at the turning circle near the post office) to Gillingham, then walk 5 miles home along a varied footpath through meadows and woods - flat, no stiles, lovely views. Be prepared for some mud underfoot. The route can be found on [beta.slowways.org](http://beta.slowways.org) and is named Gilmer1 - SlowWays is a project promoting off-road walking routes between towns.

Do join us if, like me, you have not yet found a good route between Mere and Gillingham!

Mary Wilson ☎ 229609 [wilsonsmere@gmail.com](mailto:wilsonsmere@gmail.com)

## Mere Amateur Dramatic Society



Well, here we are, on the brink of our first production for almost two years! We are working hard, and trying not to get too excited because in these uncertain times, predictions are best treated with caution. However, all being well, **we will be presenting 'The Return of MADS**, the promised four short pieces, two by local writers, on **Thursday - Saturday November 18th to 19th, at 19.30** and **November 20th at 14.30 and 19.30** in the Lecture Hall. To reassure you, each play requires very few characters so that social distancing recommendations are adhered to in rehearsal as well as in performance. The production will be dedicated to three, much-missed members of MADS who died during the months of lockdown: Peggy Jukes, Melody Parfitt and Bill Pike.

We are happy to confirm that to welcome you back, tickets will be FREE, though you are of course welcome to leave a donation. Everyone will need a ticket, however, as places will be strictly limited in order to comply with Covid restrictions. You can get yours by phoning 01747 861257 or 07539329798. Don't delay; book today! We look forward to getting back to normal, both on and behind stage!

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

## Mere School - Consultation

Wiltshire Council, working with the leadership team at Mere School, are proposing that the school is expanded to provide an additional 105 places from September 2022. From September 2022, total numbers at the school would grow gradually, allowing the school to adjust to the larger size.

Due to demand from within the catchment area, Mere School already has more than 30 pupils in some year groups and is full to the current capacity of 210 pupils. There are still around 100 houses with planning permission to be built in the school's catchment area which will generate approximately 30 additional primary age pupils.

Of those primary age children that live in the Mere School catchment area, 93% attend Mere Primary School. This demonstrates that local families want to secure places at the local school rather than travel out of the area to other schools. Pupil forecasts indicate that numbers are expected to continue to grow at the school, with an increasing shortfall of spaces if the school does not expand. Expansion of school capacity is needed to meet the forecast demands of the growing population in the area, and to allow for population fluctuations and movement into the area by new families, including the new homes to be built in the town.

The Children's Centre located on the first floor of the Mere School building closed in 2019. The space has been vacant since and with minimal internal refurbishment can be converted to create the additional classrooms needed. The space can also accommodate a design and technology room with cooking facilities to expand the

current curriculum offer in these subjects. No physical extension to the building will be required to support the expansion.

Externally, at pick up and drop off times the access road to the school and neighbouring roads can become congested. There is currently no separation between vehicles and pedestrians which is a safeguarding concern and insufficient parking for both school staff, parents and visitors. As part of the expansion project the council will work with Mere Town Council to create a dedicated drop off area for parents and significantly more parking spaces. This will reduce local congestion and make pick up and drop off safer for all. This element of the scheme will require planning consent and will be the subject of further separate consultation.

At this stage, consultation responses are sought regarding the principal of expanding Mere School. The full consultation document and feedback form will be available on the schools website at [www.mereschool.co.uk](http://www.mereschool.co.uk) from 1 November 2021 and responses are required by the **29 November 2021**.

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### Mere Theatre Club

We are still proceeding with caution but aim to review the situation towards the end of the year and hopefully make some bookings for early spring.

In the meantime, here are a few ideas for home entertainment:

National Theatre at [nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntathome](http://nationaltheatre.org.uk/ntathome) for a choice of plays from Romeo & Juliet, A Streetcar Named Desire to Under Milk Wood and others.

The Bristol Old Vic at [bristololdvic.org.uk](http://bristololdvic.org.uk) for Emma Rice's adaptation of Wuthering Heights

Metropolitan Opera at [metopera.org](http://metopera.org) for free streaming of a range of productions including Porgy & Bess, La Boheme, Tosca, The Magic Flute and for Christmas, Cinderella.

Enjoy and hope to see you soon.

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

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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](mailto:jane.kennedy83@btinternet.com) ☎ 860450

## Mere & District Karate Clubs

Like everything else, Covid put the brakes on many of our annual events over the past 18 months, but it is good to get back to normal training again although junior club levels are still running with lower than normal numbers. We followed guidelines as set down by our governing body NAKMAS to ensure a safe return of our students at our clubs and we still operate under these rules.

Despite lockdown restrictions we have had some great achievements through the last few months. Firstly, Peter Manning, who was born and bred in Mere, was promoted to 8<sup>th</sup> Dan. This is a high accolade, making him one of the most genuine graded karate masters in the UK - a position held by very few people. He started his karate journey as a bullied child nearly 50 years ago, studying Japanese Shotokan Karate, and he has remained loyal to this martial art throughout his life.

We hold our Mere Club every Wednesday at the Lecture Hall. New junior and senior students are always made welcome and we also invite any students who have lapsed in their training to come back and join. Our senior club is near capacity so do get in touch before turning up.

Lastly, we are aiming to run a women's self-defence course in the near future. If this is of interest please get in touch to get your name added to the list.

For more information on our clubs please call 01747 860144 or email [pmanning20061973@gmail.com](mailto:pmanning20061973@gmail.com).



### The Perfect Christmas Gift

With only a few weeks before Christmas  
Come and enjoy Fair Trade Nibbles, make a wish  
as you stir the Christmas Pudding

[Wits End, North Road](#)

November 18<sup>th</sup> 08.30 - 17.30

November 19<sup>th</sup> 08.30 - 17.30

& 19:00-20.00

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 09.00 - 12.00

Pop in at any time

There will be the opportunity to buy those little gifts from Traidcraft knowing that they will not only bring pleasure to those who receive them but also make such a difference to the lives of producers from around the world.

Janet Wav 01747 860884



*Left to Right:  
Sensei Ian Reason 4<sup>th</sup> Dan, Sensei Pat Manning 4<sup>th</sup> Dan and Sensei Ray Dubras 5<sup>th</sup> Dan from Jersey.*

## Friends of Mere Museum

This is a very last-minute reminder that the Friends will hold their **AGM on Tuesday November 2nd at 18.30** in the United Reformed Church. We would love to see as many people as possible. If you aren't a member yet, this is a very good time to join the Friends as you will receive a full year's membership for your subscription. Everybody is very welcome to attend, and to tempt you, there will be wine and nibbles after the meeting!

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

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## Link Scheme

We need more drivers as the number of requests is increasing. In September we did 92 trips (up from 71 in August and 60 in July) including 31 to Salisbury District Hospital and 7 for Covid booster vaccinations.

We have just 25 available drivers, down from 38 before the pandemic, and it can be very difficult to find drivers for all the requested journeys. Link drivers use their own cars, give their time for free and are reimbursed 45p/mile to cover their expenses. You only make a commitment when you accept a drive. All drivers have a free DBS Safeguarding check. If you would like to find out more about volunteering as a driver please call our co-ordinator on **01747 860096**.

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. As a charity we do not charge for trips but ask for a donation. Please try to give us 48 hrs notice, if possible, as we cannot guarantee to arrange last minute requests. Also, please remember that our co-ordinators work in their own homes so keep calls to 9-5 Monday to Friday and only use the 01747 860096 number. Any other number you have recorded will most likely be a co-ordinator's private number. Please do not use it.

The Link will continue to take people to medical appointments over the Christmas period but please note that our phone will not be "manned" between 23 and 29 December inclusive. So if you have an appointment between these dates please let us know by 22 December.

I hope many of you were able to enjoy the Mere Literary Festival this year; I certainly did. It was a very successful event with a wide range of books presented by the authors. A big thank you has to go to Gail Garbutt who organised the Festival again this year and, along with her husband Peter, put in a tremendous amount of work to make it such a success. You may know that the Festival is the main fundraising event for the Link Scheme and we are extremely grateful for the money raised.

John FitzGerald, Chair ☎ 860096 🌐 [merelink.org.uk](http://merelink.org.uk)

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## Mere & District Chamber of Trade

It feels as if Mere Chamber of Trade has been asleep for 20years like Rip Van Winkle, instead of only 18 months. Early on in the pandemic we took the view that supporting the excellent Town volunteer resources led by Richard Jefferies and others and not duplicating effort was our best tactic. Advice to businesses from Government was changing so frequently that any attempt by us to review and advise would only have complicated matters further. We encouraged Individuals and businesses to help in whatever way they felt comfortable.

Now we're looking forward to resuming our support of local business and tourism, although like Rip we find the world has changed. Small businesses have been formed and found the power of the internet. Working from home is widespread. New people have come to live in the Town, bringing new ideas, products, and enterprises based on the digital world. What services can we provide to them that is meaningful and value-added? This is the core of our discussions for the immediate future.

In the meantime we intend to organize the First Aid course again shortly, and assess the need for the Health and Hygiene course. Both of these have been useful in the past to local businesses and fulfil legal requirements. Even individuals have realized that a certificated first aid skill can be useful in their ordinary daily life. More details shortly on our website, in Mere Mutters and elsewhere around the Town. More information to follow on our website [merechamberoftrade.co.uk](http://merechamberoftrade.co.uk) where you will also find details of local businesses, a useful facility for residents new and old.

Hamish Bell ☎ 861717 [hamishbell@gmx.com](mailto:hamishbell@gmx.com)

## Mere Art Group

The Group has been active in planning an Art Exhibition to be held in the **Grove Building** on **13 November** between **13.00** and **16.00**.

We look forward to greeting you at this, our first independent presentation of our work.

We were intrigued, and impressed when Gilly Payton recently presented her 'Textile Art' work to the Group - an instantly recognisable portrait, and so pertinent to this time.



Helge Brock [helgewallenbrock@gmail.com](mailto:helgewallenbrock@gmail.com)

## Water Wheel

Lordmead Mill in Mere has seen the return of its small water wheel, up to the 1950s it provided the water for a large farm at a distance from the pump. The farm being Mere Down Farm and is elevated somewhat above Mere and the River Shreen which travels on to the River Stour. The wheel was originally cast and made locally by E. S Hindley of Bourton Dorset in 1899. The wheel produced 3/4 of a horse power and worked a triple action pump - advanced for its time.



*Photos with kind permission of Martin Bielby*

## St Michaels: Finding a new vicar

The church had a good week hosting events from the successful Mere Literary Festival. It will continue to play a central role in events in Mere, the next being Remembrance Sunday (be at the War Memorial on the 14th by 10:45) Many of you will have seen the vicarage is up for let. This is whilst there is a vacancy. The Church Council (PCC) has been asked to make a plan for the future ministry in Mere and a working party has been set up. It is making good progress and is planning to report by Christmas. Meanwhile things will continue as normal and we look forward to welcoming you to St Michael's.

Kit Stallard [kitstallard@mac.com](mailto:kitstallard@mac.com)

Letter from the Churches ~ Michael Hughes writes:

Once upon a time there were no Christians in Mere.

Little by little the Catholic Faith moved people's hearts and more and more became Christians. The Catholics built a church dedicated to St Michael, which grew in size and splendour down the centuries. Full of colour in tapestries, statues and wall paintings, lit by many candles, it moved hearts to prayer. Then the Catholic Church was outlawed, and the churches stripped of their colour and beauty. A new religion, more a matter of the head than the heart, took its place.

Those few who courageously held to the old English faith had to meet in secret. Lord Stourton built a little chapel at Bonham, hidden in the fields between Mere and Stourhead, where the faithful of Mere could share in the Mass. Eventually, the Catholics moved into our village, and met in the upper room of a pub.

It is still possible to find Bonham down a lane towards Gasper: the chapel is now a private house, but next door to it is a place of Catholic gravestones, where prayer comes easily in the great silence of our wonderful countryside.

In 1940, Britain's darkest hour, the Germans were threatening to annihilate our army on the beach at Dunkirk. Among our soldiers who died there was the son of Eucharis Glencross, a Catholic of Mere. In memory of her son, she provided the money to buy land in the village, and put up a Nissen hut on it as a temporary Catholic church, St Mary, Our Lady Queen of Peace.

The church flourished, and there are many Catholics in the area today. However, there are very few vocations to the priesthood, and Fr Louis, our parish priest, has announced it will close and Catholics from here now go to Wincanton or Gillingham to be part of Holy Mass. They still meet to pray for peace in the church on Thursdays at 10am, and once a month to talk, in the brush factory café.

Mrs Glencross's grandson, Fr Christopher Basden, is a Catholic priest in Ramsgate. At the end of October he came here to offer a last Mass for his grandmother in the church she gave us. As the first Mass in the 1940s was celebrated in Latin, it was fitting that this Mass was also celebrated in Latin. The church was scrubbed, polished, filled with flowers, bright with candles and packed with people for what may well be the last Mass in this little Nissen hut.

So the Mass has been celebrated here from the first little hut of a church a thousand years ago, to the glorious St Michael's, then to Bonham chapel in the fields, then in the upper room of the pub and finally in the Nissen hut.

In the future will there be another Catholic church in Mere? It depends on how energetically we tell new generations of the love of God which comes close to us in the Holy Mass. Christ is alive, and calls us to be the messengers of His love to our troubled world. Nothing is impossible to God!



Lots of good news! Our very enjoyable and successful Quiz and Pudding evening, which made over £600, was followed by an equally enjoyable and very successful coffee morning. Those events, together with £400, a third of the money generously donated at Mark Lillie's funeral, mean that we are on course to provide almost as much as usual this year towards the ongoing work of Suchana. This project in West Bengal is dedicated to enabling very marginalised children from 'tribal' villages gain basic skills in numeracy and literacy in their own mother tongue, as well as creative and social skills, so that they can participate more fully at school and beyond. Recent successes among Suchana 'graduates' have shown what a valuable difference this can make.

One exciting development is that contact has been established with an additional local village of a different tribal group who speak different language, Kurukh, whose children will be welcomed to join the Suchana 'family' as soon as the centre can be fully opened. This will mean that this little pioneering project will operate with five different languages: Bengali, Santali, Kora, Kurukh – and, of course, some English: a challenge accepted by teachers, volunteers and children alike as a price worth paying to enable good communication and understanding between different groups and cultures in scattered local villages.

Our next big fund-raising event is a 'Sleigh Drive' to be held in the **Grove Building at 19.30 on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November**. Tickets are £7 (children £3) to include a ploughman's supper, and there will be a licensed bar. A Sleigh Drive – in case you're wondering – is a Christmassy version of a Beetle Drive and great fun. We held one in 2019 and it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening: so please come and join us if you can. Phone 860553 or 863324 to book.

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

## FRIENDS OF ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

### Want to de-clutter – buy or sell gifts for Christmas?

# Table Top Sale

**Saturday 27 November 10:00am – 12:00pm**

**Grove Building, Church Street, Mere**

Table rent: large £10 (5'x2.5'), small £5 (3'x2.5').

*Set up for sellers from 9:00*

**Tea & coffee refreshments.**

Elisabeth Barrett [elisabethbarrett4@gmail.com](mailto:elisabethbarrett4@gmail.com)

or text to 07866 102551

## Church Contact and Service Details

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

Priest in Charge: TBA

[vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk)

Churchwarden: Derek Fisher ☎ 861980, Jean Knapp ☎ 860142

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

7 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion
14 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:45	BCP Remembrance Sunday starting at the Clock Tower for the two minutes silence, followed by the main service in the Church
21 <sup>st</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion
28 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion First Sunday in Lent

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

Priest in Charge: TBA

[vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk)

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

7 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	18:00	Holy Communion
14 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Remembrance Sunday Service
21 <sup>st</sup>	Sun	09:30	Lay Led Service
28 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:30	Holy Communion

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

Priest in Charge: TBA

[vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk)

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

7 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:00	Sunday Catch-up in the hall
14 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:45	Remembrance Sunday Service
21 <sup>st</sup>	Sun	10:00	Morning Service
28 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:00	Parish Communion <i>First Sunday in Lent</i>

**The United Reformed Church**

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

7 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	Please see church notice board
14 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:45	Remembrance Sunday. Meet in The Square
		11:00	Service in St. Michael's
28 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	Church Anniversary - Rev. Colin Marsh

**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

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 <a href="mailto:administrator@grovebuildingmere.com">administrator@grovebuildingmere.com</a>	☎ 861980
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685



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