



Mere Matters

& so does

West Knoyle

Your community magazine including
a guide to local events

February 2022



Mere Town Council

I was very pleased to present Bill and Kathleen Foster of 45, Bramley Hill with their prize as winners of the best Christmas lighting display. The runners up were:

2nd - Mick & Karen Hurst of 5, Denes Avenue

3rd - Dick & Brenda Morris of 47, Downside Close

Highly recommended- Geoff & Pat Sams of 38, Lynch Close

The Judging of the residential Christmas lights is organised by the Town Council.

The Town Council held its Annual Budget meeting in November. This challenging meeting involves a lot of preparation and thought and decisions made affect every household in Mere. At this meeting, members have to consider likely expenditure and income over the next financial year in order to determine the council's share of the council tax. After much deliberation, a set of recommendations were agreed and subsequently approved by the full council at the December meeting. The implications of the budget approval are that the Town Council portion of the Council Tax bill will rise by £7 per year on a Band D property.

It was brought to our attention that there was some misinformation and confusion on local Social Media pages, before Christmas, relating to flooding and in particular to responsibilities over blocked drains etc. The Town Council will be writing an article on "What to do if you think your property is at risk of flooding" in a future edition of Mere Matters and will also publish this on the Town Council's website.

There is no doubt that social media plays a big part in people's lives and while I do see that it can be an important and effective communication tool, inevitably, "misinformation and confusion" does occur. The council is aware that these events are becoming more frequent. In the July 2021 edition of Mere Matters, there was a pull-out leaflet, compiled by the Vice Chairman, Kate Symonds, explaining the workings and responsibilities of the Mere Town Council and the Wiltshire Council. This leaflet is available on the Town Council's website along with regular updates and factual information. The council is approachable. As well as, phoning and emailing, appointments can be made with any of us to discuss concerns, problems and ideas.

The Council has been contacted re: prolonged parking in The Square, Mere. Parking bays in The Square are restricted to 30 minutes only. This time restriction on town centre parking was intended to help the local town centre businesses and shops, to allow short-term parking for shoppers and deliveries/collections. I realise that parking can be difficult in Mere, particularly in the town centre, but we want to try and help our local businesses and we don't want to lose any more town centre shops so please could you all do your bit to help keep our little town lively and vibrant.

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

 860701  merewilts.org

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

During the extended Christmas Holiday, I decided to clean the “Welcome to Mere” Chamber of Trade sign on the B3092 coming from Frome to Mere, I thought it would be quiet, how wrong I was, raining and traffic spray being thrown at me, I cleaned the text side and forgot the rest!

Wiltshire Council proposes to enlarge the premises of Mere School by 105 places/0.5 Form of Entry (FE) from 1 September 2022, through repurposing the former Children’s Centre rooms located on the first floor of the Mere School building, which closed in 2019. No physical extension to the building will be required to support the expansion. The current capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity will be 315. The current admission number for the school is 30 and the proposed admission number will be 45. As a community school, the admissions criteria for Mere School gives priority to children that live in the catchment area above those that do not.

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. The parking will be also be available for wider users of the site, including sports clubs and will be managed by the Town Council. Mere Town Council was one of the initial respondents to consultation and confirmed that it was in support of the proposal for the expansion of Mere School but hoped that the increased car parking and drop off zones would succeed in addressing some of the problems with existing school drop off causing congestion and safety concerns on White Road and Hazzard’s Hill. They hope that once the proposals are implemented, more parents will use the main front entrance to the school and not the side or rear entrances. I as Wiltshire Councillor with others, will be erecting a sign on or near Hazzards Hill indicating the road is private that runs along the rear of the school and has a public footpath over it.

Since May 2020, Wiltshire Council has been running a campaign to recruit 100 additional foster carers by spring 2023 to help ensure young people who need a loving home have the support they need to face life and its challenges. More than 50 foster carers have already been recruited but more are needed – particularly to foster teenagers.

People interested in becoming a foster carer must have a spare bedroom, and be over 21 years old. For information on the ongoing support from a supervising social worker and training as well as payments, start by visiting www.fosteringwiltshire.uk email fostering@wiltshire.gov.uk call 0800 169 6321 or text the word Foster to 60002.

I would like to see a B3092 Acceleration Lane at Coombe Barn Farm junction – the Clerk of Kilmington Parish Council has written to Paul Shaddock at CATG (Community Action Transport Group, that may be renamed shortly) and is Traffic Engineer of the Salisbury Transportation Team asking if there would be any funds available from WC for improvements at this junction. Any monies would most likely have to be awarded on a

substantive bid application. Kilmington Parish Council resolved that they would support me on this issue.

Bowls in Mere attract people of all ages as proved by “Tom” who although playing for another club, celebrated his 100th BIRTHDAY on CHRISTMAS DAY and Tom still enjoys his bowls and continues to play in leagues and runs the Tea & Biscuits

A survey for a Mere electric car club is now in circulation on the web and door to door. Please complete a survey, an electric car based in Mere for a club membership of £25 approximately per year and very reasonable usage charges will help some. Also, I hope we can get a DC/AC public charger installed in Mere. The firm I have met takes card payment which is preferable to a phone app in my opinion, with an app, “if your phone is flat, so is your car”.

I am making residents aware that their general waste collection day may change in February.

A meeting was held at Lynch Close community hall on 9th December 2021 which I attended. This meeting was being held due to an earlier meeting held by a representative of Wiltshire Council. After the initial meeting a lot of the residents who are elderly went away under the impression that they would be removed from Lynch Close to a new development in Angel Lane, to which many were upset and worried. Hence the meeting called for the 9th December. I have now received in writing Wiltshire Council cannot remove any tenant from Lynch Close without a court order. No one at the meeting expressed an interest to move at the present time.

Council officers have informed me that they will continue working with residents of Lynch Close to understand their concerns and future wishes for their homes.

Lynch Close if ever redeveloped also needs to respect the conservation area and be low density. Any proposals will be subject to statutory planning and consultation process.

Fives Court in Angel Lane is being considered for development and one of the options is to build flats aimed at older people. I have pointed out an adequate footway is required and the buildings need to be low in height and respect the conservation area. I would like to see somewhere on the site some provision for medical use, even if it is only for visiting medical persons.

I will continually do my own consultation and try and represent the wishes of the local majority. Lynch Close and Mere Day Centre (The Rosemary Goddard Centre) are at the heart of Mere.

Wiltshire Council spend more than one million pounds a day. Adult and social care, some authorities are now spending over 80% on this service, Wiltshire also is impacted by the increasing need. Another impact on the budget is Ash tree Dieback.

While discussing finance, Seeds for Success an important local youth group require another mini bus and is asking for any support that can be given.

I attended the Mere Carnival Christmas Dinner, which was after Christmas. It was explained to me that more committee members are desperately required. I have always

supported The Mere Town Council calling the AGM, should one year a committee not be found, next year the council would try again.

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

Mere Surgery - 'A New Normal'

We all hope that we are finally emerging from the pandemic that has influenced how we manage the services at Mere Surgery. Evolved from these changes are something called 'a new normal'.

To access Mere Surgery services, most commonly, people still phone the reception desk. You might then be redirected the most appropriate member of staff, for example the administration team for referral enquiries, the nursing team for dressings and chronic disease management or perhaps the physiotherapist for sprains and injuries.

Enquiries can also be emailed into the surgery through the practice website or via the NHS app. These enquiries are routinely replied to via email, it does not replace a consultation but can be helpful for a simple question. Attached to emails, it is also possible to send in photos.

Meresurgery.co.uk also has various forms that can be electronically submitted ranging from blood pressure results, asthma questionnaires and travel enquiries.

The nurses and health care support workers have a combination of pre-bookable appointments, telephone appointments and some urgent appointment that can be accessed on the day. The doctors are not providing pre-bookable appointments partly because of previous difficulties with timings (running so behind time!) and to allow fairer access for everyone. Instead, telephone appointments can be made for a chosen doctor, either pre-booked via the website or requested on the day, following which a face-to-face appointment can be made by mutual agreement.

During the last year we have been promoting permissions to contact yourselves via messaging services on your mobile phone. This allows greater efficiencies for advertising health promotion ventures, such as vaccination clinics, or for the invitation to annual reviews.

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) will be collating feedback about these new working practices and the different forms of communication. If you wish to join the PPG to become more involved with the practice development please use the contact form on our website meresurgery.co.uk

It is important to reiterate that we are open for all routine and urgent work, but here's to a healthy and more 'normal' 2022.

Mere Surgery ☎ 860001

COME TO SUCHANA'S - QUIZ & PANCAKE EVENING

Shrove Tuesday 1st March 7.30pm
In the Grove Building

Tickets £7 including supper (Children £3) ****Licensed Bar****

☎ 860533 or ☎ 861168 or sign list in St Michael's Church



Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations:

Fair warning for all you bunting makers, lovers of window dressing, dashing dog dress designers and would be milliners! Hopefully everyone will consider joining in the competitions in the last week of May, first week of June this year, which include Best dressed Hat, Best dressed Dog and Best dressed Window and /or House.

I'm sure you are frantically creating amazing innovative puddings as we speak, but do keep these other opportunities to celebrate in mind.

Anne Rich: QPJ Committee: ☎ 07413 512023: arich4@icloud.com



Mere Celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee



Would you like to have a stall at the **Mere Market Street** on **Saturday 6th June** raising money for your favourite charity or for your summer getaway?

We will provide the table and the pitch you decide what you want to sell.
Perhaps some home baked cakes or your crown jewels.

The contents of the kids toy cupboard – ask them first or your vast collection of paperback books.

Please get in touch to book your free table.



☎ 860 163 or email margaretdurkee5@gmail.com

Mere Meander

Please meet at 14:00 in the Surgery Car park on **Wednesday 9th February** for a walk of 2-3 miles around Mere's footpaths and lanes with tea at The Angel Café afterwards for those who wish to indulge

Janet Way ☎ 860884

Evelyn Flower

Generous donations amounting to £500 were received in memory of Evelyn and have been divided between Mere Doctor's Surgery and Codford Doctor's Surgery. Thank you to those who donated and attended Evelyn's service in December at Mere Parish Church.

Sue Adams

The Mere Walking Group

We are now looking forward to many lovely walks in 2022 and would like to invite all walkers to come along to a planning meeting at the Butt of Sherry, on **Tuesday Feb 22nd at 7pm.**

All the walks will be listed on the website: <https://hmw.org.uk/>

Roger Laidler ☎ 863447 Mary Wilson ☎ 229609 wilsonsmere@gmail.com

Fair Trade in Mere

It has been lovely to be able to return to holding my regular monthly stalls again and stock up on everyone's favourite goodies! Through people's orders, donations and 'keep the change' offerings I was able to send nearly £80 to Traidcraft Exchange for their Christmas Appeal supporting smallholders combat the effects of Climate Change. So thank you everyone for supporting me.

At the beginning of December I joined the Traidcraft team in Newcastle helping with the Christmas rush by packing some of their special Christmas hampers. I had a lovely week seeing the beginning of the journeys of the many parcels I have received over the past 41 years!!! New skills learnt and conquered – like snapping the parcel tape and not getting wound up in the cellophane wrapping around each basket! Being part of the organisation and meeting the faces at the end of the phone was a joy and reaffirmed my commitment to such an amazing organisation dedicated to working towards a fairer world.

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT: February 21st – March 5th – Why not pop a couple of Fair Trade goodies into your shopping basket either at the Co-op or from one of my stalls in the knowledge that you are helping someone to a more sustainable life.

Janet Way ☎ 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Who's interested in a new electric car club for Mere?

Have you ever needed to use a car for just a few hours or day? Maybe you have a second car that isn't used much but costs a bomb to get through the MOT every year? In fact, simply owning a car costs around £3,000 per year in terms of running costs and depreciation – and all for something that doesn't even move 95% of the time.

That's why Co Cars are talking about bringing shared, electric cars to Mere. Co Cars is a not-for-profit cooperative social enterprise that already successfully runs a network of shared, low and zero-emission cars across the South West. The company also runs the Co Bikes electric bike sharing scheme.

As a Co Cars member, you can book any car in their network from as little as half an hour for an all-inclusive price. Their Band 4 small electric cars cost £5.50/hour or £40/day which includes insurance, tax, maintenance and roadside assist¹. There would be a small mileage charge of 4p per mile.

The cars would each come with a dedicated charge point, with the cost of charging included in the hire². Public charging would also be available, helping locals make the switch to electric cars whilst giving people travelling on the A303 a reason to stop and spend time in our town.

Electric car share is a great way to save the time, money and hassle spent on maintaining a private car, particularly a little used second car. It would help supplement our limited public transport options, benefit those who cannot afford to run their own cars and help to reduce our carbon footprint as each shared car club car removes, on average, 9 private cars from the road.

Interested? Then please complete this short survey <https://bit.ly/ElectricMere> which will be live until **25th Feb 2022**.

If you would like further information on Co Cars or Co Bikes, visit www.co-cars.co.uk and www.co-bikes.co.uk.

¹Pricing correct as of December 2021.
Liable to change without further notice.

²If you use our dedicated charge point, there are no charging costs to pay. However, if you need to recharge at any other charge point, you are responsible for the cost.



FR LOUIS BEESLEY-SUFFOLK RIP

Catholics in Mere were saddened before Christmas to hear that our beloved Parish Priest Fr Louis had died peacefully after a short illness. Fr Louis was a wonderful priest who always had time for you, saw the positive side of issues and smiled a lot. He also had seven children which is rather odd for a Catholic Priest!



Fr Louis came to the priesthood after a long and happy marriage to Mary who sadly died at a comparatively young age. He was nearly 60 when he went to become a priest at the Beda Pontifical College, a seminary for English speaking men in Rome, and subsequently became Parish Priest at St Luke's in Wincanton where he stayed for over 17 years. It seems incredible to have seen him looking so fit and well in the sunshine at an outdoor Mass in Yarlinton in June to celebrate his 80th birthday and then for him to die in December.

We had two lovely Masses in St Luke's, firstly to welcome his body into the church and the following day Bishop Declan and some 30 priests concelebrated his Requiem Mass on 13 January. A fitting send off in packed churches.

Many of you may have seen the lovely flowers anonymously left outside St Mary's in Mere in a lovely tribute to Fr Louis. The message with the flowers said "In deeply loving memory of our wonderful priest Fr Louis and with heartfelt appreciation of his devoted care for the congregation of St Mary's Mere ("The Tin Hut"). May he rest in peace. You are so missed." On behalf of St Mary's congregation, thank you to whoever left the flowers for your fitting tribute and lovely message. We couldn't have put it better.



John Fitzgerald

CREATIVE MERE 2

Pre-Covid in 2017 we held a very successful weekend showcasing all the talented artists and craft folk in and around Mere. These included a potter, knitters, woodworkers, sewers, embroiders, quilters and even a chocolatier together with a wealth of local artistic talent. The web-site is still constantly being visited and we have always wanted to organise a similar event.

We are hoping that there will be no new restrictions this year in order to be able to hold the second Creative Mere weekend this time in November which will be in good time to buy some hand-made Christmas presents. The dates booked are **November 26/27th**.

There will be an inaugural meeting of any people interested in taking part in this exciting event (within a 3 mile radius of the town) at the **URC, Boar Street** on **Monday March 14th at 7p.m. for a 7.30 start.**

Our aim was to encourage other people to take up an activity or craft so we particularly asked people to demonstrate their skill and hopefully many people were inspired to try something new which may have helped in the long lockdown days!

We look forward to seeing and meeting many people but if you are unable to attend but would like to be kept informed please let us know at the address below. Should anyone with good IT skills be able to help with the production of the brochure (the format is already in place) please contact the editor.

Susanne Hayes, Michael & Anne Malleson, Janet Way & Richard Jefferies

Janet Way ☎ 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com



Government
Counter Fraud
Function



The **NHS COVID Pass** is **FREE**



The NHS will **NEVER** ask for payment or any financial details



The NHS will **NEVER** issue fines or penalties relating to your NHS COVID Pass

Link Scheme

As we enter 2022 we are able to look at the 2021 statistics for the Link Scheme and it seems like we are getting closer to “normality”. Link drivers did 982 trips in 2021 compared with 595 in 2020 and 1,261 in 2019. A great effort from our reduced number of drivers.

So, although we welcomed three new drivers recently we continue to have difficulties finding drivers for all the requested journeys and **we still need more drivers**. Link drivers

- use their own cars,
- give their time for free,
- are reimbursed 45p/mile to cover their expenses,
- don't need special car insurance,
- only make a commitment when they accept a drive, and
- 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 hours' 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.

We were at last able to hold an AGM and volunteer social evening on 8 November 2021. Around 30 people attended and I am grateful to those who agreed to continue on/join the Management Committee. Wine and nibbles made for a convivial atmosphere for the social.

John FitzGerald, Chair ☎ 860096 🌐 merelink.org.uk

Mere Theatre Club

The committee are meeting in the early part of February to review the situation and hatch a plan! We shall try and arrange some kind of get together, theatrical or not. Watch this space... Happy 2022.

Madeline Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

PRESS RELEASE

A303 upgrade heads for the long grass as MP slams Highways Agency

Andrew Murrison has reacted with horror to the announcement by Highways England that it intends to long grass much of its plans for the strategic A303 corridor. Instead, the Highways Agency says it may improve a stretch of the A303/A358 near Taunton - although it will be years before motorists are able to benefit from even that.

Andrew has been calling for the Chicklade Bottom to Mere stretch to be dualled for years, particularly to give relief to his constituents in the village of Chicklade.

The MP said "Its now clear that any improvement locally will be several years away at best. Meanwhile the Agency's Stonehenge bypass plans appear to have been scuppered by the High Court.

"It's all looking like a bit of a mess. I will be writing to the Transport Secretary to point out his department and agency can't shunt more and more traffic down a spindly single carriageway whilst pretending it's a strategic route.

"There is an alternative if you're not going to invest in the A303 which is to confirm the M4/M5 as the strategic route into the South West and push traffic, especially the heavy stuff, along the motorway network.

RT HON DR ANDREW MURRISON MP

Mere Rivers Group

According to the Environment Agency the rainfall in December was normal. Which was a surprise because it felt very wet, anyway both our streams flowed well and the winter wildlife reacted accordingly. Voles, Kingfishers and Egrets have been seen almost every day. It shows that, given the depth of water, the streams will blossom.

If you wondered why the Ashfield has been running well all summer and the Mill Pond at Burton has had water in it, it is because Wessex Water are trialling a system called Stream Support. A pipe has been laid from the pumping station at Burton under the A303 and along to the source of the Ashfield. When the natural flow drops, water is pumped into the stream from bore holes deep under-ground.

The system seems to work as there has been a strong flow on the river all last summer. The trial will run for one more year and if deemed a success it will be introduced on the Shreen. We will wait and see.

Ian Sheppard 863370 IanJSheppard@outlook.com

Mere Museum

The new exhibition opened at the beginning of the month entitled, '*Those were the days..*' *Postcards recalling the History of Mere*. The collection includes different aspects of life from the military, environment and buildings to education. The permanent exhibition has also been updated with new items on show.

Thank you to everyone who donated items to the museum in 2021, please do keep the museum in mind when turning out cupboards.

Rose Heesom 📞 07791 559 674 rmeremuseum@btinternet.com

Mere Gardening Club

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 9th February at 19.30 pm** at the Grove Building and we will be welcoming Katherine Crouch from the BBC and Chelsea Gold winner. Visitors are welcome and there will be a charge of £3 for non-members.

This summer we will be running a scarecrow competition in conjunction with the Jubilee celebrations. The theme is Royalty and can be interpreted as you wish. All scarecrows must be situated well within the boundary of your own property to comply with the law. They will need to be in place by mid-May and the committee will come round and view them all. More details to follow but get your thinking caps on soon.

A date for your diary, the **Open Gardens weekend will be 11th and 12th June** this year.

We always welcome new members to the club and if you would like to join the committee please let us know at the next meeting.

Rose Heesom 📞 07791 559674 roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk

Rubber Bridge

We are a small friendly group and play rubber bridge. We meet in the small hall in the Lecture Hall, every Thursday from 14:00 – 16:30. We welcome anybody who wants to play and help beginners. At the moment we charge £1.50 but may have to increase the amount depending on the numbers that come. We stop for tea or coffee with biscuits during the afternoon and have a good laugh. Please come along, we would love to see you.

Avril Fletcher ☎ 861285 avril.fletcher52@gmail.com

Diary Dates (*Recurring events are first shown in **Bold** then in **Blue***).

Venue Key for Diary :

ATR - Angel Tea Rooms

Drs - Surgery

Lib - Library

StM - St Michaels Church

AYP - Andy Young Pavilion

GB - Grove Building

MSC - Social Club

URC - United Ref Church

CP - Main Car Park

L - Lecture Hall

RMC - Castle St Car Park

WT - Walnut Tree Inn

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

20	Sun	Fair Trade Stall after 10:30 morning service	StM
21	Mon	<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting</i>	
22	Tues	9:00 Mere Jelly <i>Pilates (JL), Zumba, MADS</i>	WT
23	Wed	14:00 Pennybank Writers <i>Stretch, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	L
24	Thurs	<i>Art, Quilters, Rubber Bridge, Girlguiding, MADS</i>	
25	Fri	10:00 Merely Women <i>Dup Bridge</i>	GB
26	Sat	19:00 Oasis Carnival Club Bingo	L
27	Sun		
28	Mon	<i>Tiddlers & Toddlers, Scouting</i>	

MERE AND DISTRICT LINK SCHEME

WANTED

LINK DRIVERS



ARE YOU THE MISSING LINK

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

For more information call the Link on 01747 860096

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



In recent years Mere Town Council and West Knoyle Parish Council have organized a Christmas lights awards for their parishes. This year especially helping to cheer up this

Christmas period, with a great displays. Voluntary judges have been found again this year, also the prizes have been donated. A shield and a gift for first prize plus donated prizes for first second and third were awarded after Christmas by their Chair of the Council.

The judges for Mere, Mr Nick and Mrs Debbie Beale for Mere Christmas lights came forward as a result of discussion from Mere Town Council at their November meeting regarding the need for voluntary judges. Mr and Mrs Beale stated:- "We have had a very enjoyable time driving around looking at all the amazing lights and decorations around Mere. It has been uplifting to see the effort people put into their displays for the enjoyment of others, from beautiful window scenes in Mill Lane to the community effort in Denes Avenue.

We decided on the criteria being:

wow factor, effort made, creativity and additions

Each criteria had a maximum of 10 points giving a total of 40."

West Knoyle Parish Council also organized a Christmas lights "competition" with a volunteer judge and donated prizes and shield sponsor, encouraging Christmas Lights on private houses in West Knoyle. The private houses in West Knoyle have again given pleasure to many in these difficult times, this year more Christmas lights have been displayed in West Knoyle. West Knoyle as has been the case in recent years, has put on a really effective display between those participating.

The First prize winners were awarded a shield and wine. West Knoyle awards were made by Paul Yates, West Knoyle PC Chairman on Tuesday 28th December, 2021, which was a fine weather evening. The Mere presentation was on Thursday 30th, 2021 by Lesley Traves, Mere Town Council Chair, the weather was not as amenable that evening.

West Knoyle, Denes Avenue, Downside Close, Lynch Close and Bramley Hill Mere had many visitors to the lights. Many other areas put on good displays, in my opinion it was one of the best years.

Mere Winners Mr Bill Foster, Mrs Kathleen Foster and Lesley Traves, Mere Town Council Chair.



Results for West Knoyle 2021

1st: - Mr Phil and Mrs Shirly Singer of 2 Stoney Bridge

2nd - Mr Richard and Mrs Paula Hull of 6 Oderne

3rd - Mrs Janet Howard of Dhuli Fou

Highly Commended, Mr Ivan and Mrs Diane Gover of Frickers Mead



West Knoyle winners Mr Phil, Mrs Shirly Singer and Mr Paul Yates
West Knoyle PC Chairman.

Text and pictures by George Jeans Mere

Please park sensibly

This fire engine could be trying to get to you!

If you park in such a way as to cause an obstruction for emergency vehicles you can be fined up to £1000 and have 3 points put on your driving licence.

Similarly parking on a pedestrian crossing zipzag lines is illegal. It is also a contravention to park within 10 metres of a corner or a junction



Please be considerate!

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

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group



We were so pleased that our Annual Carol Service which took place in St. Michael's Church on Wednesday 8th December was so popular both with our members and guests from throughout our Deanery but also so many people from Mere who really enjoyed singing Carols, taking part in the service and enjoying warm refreshments afterwards.

Our next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 8th February at 2.30pm in The Grove Building**. We look forward to having a speaker who is a local Forester, his name is Peter Oliver and he will talk about trees and their vital importance to the environment and our well- being.

As we go ahead into a new year and hopefully more normality in meeting each other we are very aware of the need to protect our precious town and the surrounding countryside and to learn more about that will be a wonderful start for us all. We meet in the large hall so there is plenty of room and we will make sure everyone feels safe.

We warmly invite anyone who would like to join us for our small service followed by our Speaker and refreshments.

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

Read Easy Blackmore Vale North.

Could you read when you left school? You might have replied 'Of course!' So did I, but not everyone could. Did you see the recent BBC1 documentary of Jay Blades, the Repair Shop presenter? He learnt to read at the age of 51 with the free one-to-one help and encouragement of a trained Read Easy coach.

Read Easy BVN is active in Mere and has readers in the whole area. We have a team of volunteers who manage the local group, who fundraise, who find readers through agencies and find neutral, safe venues for readers' coaching sessions. However, our trained coaches are the real stars who make the difference. Making the link between the coaches, readers and the local team are the coordinators. Each volunteer coordinator will 'look after' up to 15 coach and reader pairs, carefully matching them, supporting the coach looking for extra ideas to encourage their reader and bringing the coaches together to share good practice.

The coordinator is the person who makes the whole thing work and we are looking for two more to join the team. Yes, we have grown! If we have caught your imagination, please get in touch, we would love to give you more information. Here's who to contact: Murray Walker

blackmorevalenorth@readeasy.org.uk Registered Charity no. 1188282

Mere Day Centre (The Rosemary Goddard Centre)

A happy New Year to all our supporters!

We are delighted to be able to confirm that the Day Centre is up and running again after the Christmas break. We continue with our infection control measures to ensure a safe working environment for all our guests and volunteers. Our Centre Manager, Sandie Hawkins, has devised a lively programme of activities over the coming months, while guests can continue to enjoy the delicious hot lunches supplied by The Walnut Tree Inn.

We do have some vacancies for new guests, so if you, or a family member or friend who might be feeling a bit isolated, would benefit from a day out once a week, please contact Sandie on 07835 272406, or email: manager@meredaycentre.org.uk Do have a look at our web-site www.meredaycentre.org.uk to find out more about us.

On the funding front, Wiltshire Council is changing the way they support day services across the county, and we have been informed that our annual grant will be phased out over the next two years. However, thanks to the generous support of our local businesses and community, we are financially in good shape, so there will be no change to our service in the coming months.

Our long-delayed AGM is now planned for the early Spring. We will publish the date as soon as we know we can safely gather in larger numbers. By then I hope I will be able to present a clearer picture of the longer-term plans for our day centre.

Jane Mason, Chair of *Trustees*

Mere Historical Society

The Talks programme resumes on 1 February in the Grove Building, starting with **“Gate Lodges of Wiltshire”** by James Holden, on **Tuesday 1 February at 10.30 a.m.**. This is followed by an evening talk, on **Tues. 8 March at 10 a.m.** by Ian Caskie on **“The S.S. Great Britain”**. **Please note that the programme has changed from what was previously listed on our website, which will be changed shortly.**

More details of forthcoming attractions can be found on our website at www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk.

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

To get in touch please contact the Chair, Peter Landymore on 228819 or Secretary, Diane Ellis on 861541 or visit the website.

Peter Landymore ☎ 228819 🌐 merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

Ukes at The Butt

We are a newly formed casual group of Ukulele enthusiasts meeting up for shared learning and strumming sessions. We normally meet at The Butt of Sherry on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm. (Except 14th February 2022 when the session will be on 7th February). Bring your ukulele and have some fun. You will be most welcome. Check out our Facebook page 'Ukes at The Butt'.

Maggie Holmes maggieholmes101@gmail.com

Mere & District Railway Modellers

The club participated in the Wessex Association of Model Railway Clubs exhibition at Frome over the weekend of 8th/9th January. It was a busy and successful weekend with 1,100 visitors, of which 220 were children. Notionally an annual exhibition, the event had regrettably been cancelled in 2021 on account of the Covid 19 epidemic.

Most of our club members attended to help in operating our large '00' gauge layout, which visitors to the very successful exhibition seemed to enjoy, judging by their encouraging comments. But our Mere club had a larger part to play in staging the event as we provided the Exhibition's Manager and Pay Desk people and one of our promising young members operated the Exhibitions Manager's personal layout throughout the show on his behalf.

Operating our large model in the concentrated atmosphere of the exhibition provided us with a list of improvements we could make, which we will now attend to in time for our next show. This will be our 10th Anniversary Exhibition over the weekend of '18th/19th June in the Lecture Hall. There we will be joined by a good number of other Railway clubs from our local area and further afield. We had publicised our exhibition at the Frome event and a good number of visitors there expressed an interest in attending.

We meet in our Clubhouse at the back of the Castle Street Car Park, every Wednesday evening from 7.00pm until 9.00pm, and visitors and prospective members are always welcome.

Graham Avory Club Chairman ☎ 860439 graham.avory@btopenworld.com

Mere Snooker Club

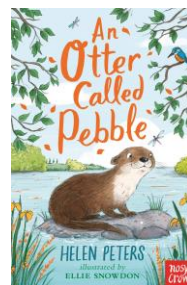
The Club Open Night, for members and non-members will be held on **Tuesday 8th February, from 7.30pm**. We still have openings for new members, so do come along and members will be ready to welcome you and tell you more about the club and our facilities, without any obligation. The club's AGM, for members only, will be held on **Friday 25th February at 7.30pm** in the club rooms, followed by some snooker.

Kevin Smith ☎ 07803 006077 meresnookerclub@gmail.com

Mere School

Friends Fabulous Book Project at Mere School

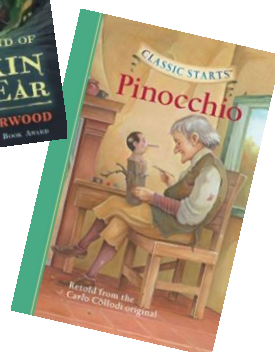
Mere School encourages children to read as often and widely as possible, and with luck they will learn that reading for pleasure is a wonderful thing. Parents and children reading together creates special childhood memories, while reading alone can provide an escape from boredom and stress. Plus, as Dr Seuss said, "Reading can take you places you have never been before." When lack of money and a pandemic restrict travel, flights of imagination become even more important.



The Friends of Mere School (FoMS) Fabulous Book Project, organised by mums Sam Cotton and Emma Broom, recently invited each child in the school to recommend their favourite book. The books were then bought by FoMS and given to each child, to be kept and shared in their classrooms.

The school has a large, well-stocked library, but these books have a personal connection to the children. Each one has a special sticker plate that tells the reader who chose it, and the reason why the book was chosen.

Each class at Mere School has received some beautiful books, as chosen by the children, and they will give pleasure to many in the years ahead.



Mere School - Proposed School Enlargement

The formal notice is available to view on the Mere School website at www.mereschool.co.uk. A copy can also be requested by emailing SchoolOrganisation@Wiltshire.gov.uk. Paper copies of the full proposals can also be obtained upon request from the school.

Letter from the Churches ~ Duncan writes:

UNUSUAL TIMES.

We are living in unusual times, as we come to terms with living with Covid, and the impact it is having on our lives. It is good that restrictions are becoming no longer necessary but is also good that we continue to take care and do are best not to pass on the virus if we become infected with it. 1 Corinthians 8, Paul talks about the eating of meat that had previously been offered to idols and his advice is it is problem for someone else present don't do it even it is not an issue for you, and act of love and respect towards others.

It is unusual times for the churches in Mere as we seek to move forward again and seek to resume some of the activities we have done in the past. This will be dependent on people being able and willing to organise them.

It has been good to come together for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and some expressed the wish for more joint services in the future. It is hoped that at the time of the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations it will be possible to have a joint service that will be part of our celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee.

Duncan Goldie.



Just as the Schools in West Bengal had re-opened and Suchana was able to open fully at last, India's Omicron wave began, resulting in another lockdown as from 5th January. Hopefully this won't last too long. In the meantime Suchana has reverted to maintaining children's learning as far as possible through teaching 'bubbles' in local villages. In addition a new initiative is being developed to follow up on Suchana alumni who are now young adults, to help find jobs or appropriate training for those who need it. Suchana is also setting up a project in a village in a deprived area too far for children to walk to the centre, so that they, too can benefit from Suchana's unique first language approach, combined with fun, creativity and inclusion, by twice-a-week sessions for all learning levels.

Our fundraising efforts here in Mere in 2021 were remarkably successful resulting in over £2,000 to continue and develop Suchana's work for very marginalised and very appreciative children and families. Our next event is our ever popular **Shrove Tuesday Quiz and Pancake evening on 1st March** in the Grove Building. Tickets £7 (children £3) including pancakes. Licensed Bar. Please be sure to book (and pay) in advance, by phoning 860553 or 861168 or emailing judithvthompson@aol.com, or you can sign the list at the back of St Michael's Church. We look forward to welcoming you.

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553 judithvthompson@aol.com

Mere Art Group

"The recent passing of Alan Spencer brought great sadness to our Group. Alan contributed so much to all members - humour, banter and entertainment. He was truly a very gentle man and will be missed enormously.

Our image for this month is by Mary Horton. It was shown at The Art Exhibition held on 13 November. Mary is a long-standing Member of the Group and has painted a number of animal portraits."

Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com



Mere Carnival Free Cheese and Wine Evening

After the extremely successful Fun Day that the Mere Carnival Committee held last September, which enabled us to donate £1000 to local community groups, we are funded and ready to put on the usual Carnival Procession in 2022.

But there is a chance that carnival day or any of the other events planned for this year might not happen due to a lack of committee members! Unfortunately, due to health reasons and other commitments, three or four of the current committee will be standing down at the upcoming AGM.

Therefore we are appealing to anyone who has a little bit of spare time to volunteer to be part of the great tradition that is Mere Carnival. The existing members will still be available to give help and guidance to make sure no one has any worries about how things work or what has to be done.

Please come and meet us for an easy going, non-formal, non-committal chat at our cheese and wine evening at the Grove Buildings on **Friday 18th Februar 19:00 to 21:00..**

Admission Free!

John Gammie Chairman, ☎ 07831 572831 john@gammie.info

Friends of St Michaels Church – Save the Date

On **Sunday 20th March at 15.00** there will be a concert of Music and Poetry in St. Michael's Church. Composed and compiled by David Perkins and Caroline Dooley, and reflecting on Life, Love, Heartache and Hope - a musical and poetic journey through difficult times. More details next month.

Raising funds for the Church pinnacles, by the Friends of St. Michaels.

Interested in becoming a Friend?

Mary Wilson ☎ 0755 007 6240

Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church, St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwarden: Derek Fisher ☎ 861980

PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

6 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Family Service
13 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion
20 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion
27 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Parish Communion

West Knoyle Parish Church, St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

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

6 th	Sun	09:30	Lay Led Service
13 th	Sun	09:30	Matins
20 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion
27 th	Sun	09:30	Holy Communion

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: TBA

vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwarden: Mrs Celia Blay ☎ 01985 844817

6 th	Sun	10:00	Coffee & Catch-up in the hall
13 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Service
20 th	Sun	10:00	Morning Service
27 th	Sun	10:00	Communion & Baptism

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Molly Burden ☎ 860007

6 th	Sun	11:00	Mr D Burfitt
13 th	Sun	11:00	Rev. J Thompson
20 th	Sun	11:00	Mrs C Marsh
27 th	Sun	11:00	Mrs J Hurd

The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

Father Louis Beasley-Suffolk: ☎ 01963 34408

hope@stlukeswincanton.org.uk

Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

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

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:	admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk or text on:	0771 471 8625
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	☎ 861063
URC Church Hall:	Eileen Burfitt	☎ 860685

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



Exciting news!



A new Age UK Wiltshire Fitness and Friendship club is being launched at the Grove Building, Church Street, Mere on **Wednesday 16th February 2pm-4pm** and fortnightly thereafter, for a small charge of £5 per session.

Whilst called Fitness and Friendship Clubs, the emphasis is very much on fun and laughter with gentle encouragement to take part in gentle chair-based exercises in a safe and friendly environment. The chair-based exercises are followed by a refreshment break and then the opportunity to take part in further activities such as Kurling, Skittles, quizzes and gentle Tai Chi with plenty of time to socialise.

We welcome older people of all abilities – all we ask is that you come along and join in, if only a little bit, and have a huge amount of fun!

We are also looking for volunteer helpers and club leaders to help run the club. If you live locally, have time on a Wednesday afternoon and would like to help deliver the sessions, please do get in touch – full training at your own pace will be given.

For further information please contact:

E: fitnessandfriendship@ageukwiltshire.org.uk

T: 07754 612569

W: www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk

Copy date for **March** Issue

Closing deadline is: 4:00pm on **MONDAY 21ST February.**

Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies ☎ 863425
editor@merematters.co.uk or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

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

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

A new year and a new project! We are already well into rehearsals for our Spring Production, which we hope will lift everyone's spirits. It's a farce (we think we're rather good at farce!) called 'Post Horn Gallop'. In fact it is a sequel to 'Wild Goose Chase' which MADS presented in 2001 (hard to believe it was that long ago!). It features a blunderbuss among other things, though we can assure you that no-one is injured during the performance. The dates of the performances are Thursday to Saturday evenings, 24th-26th March at 7.30 p.m., with a matinee on Saturday at 2.30p.m. Tickets will be available from the Library and 'Sprout and Flower' at the end of this month. Performances will be in the Lecture Hall as usual, and we look forward to welcoming everyone then.



Jenny Wilding ☎ 860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk



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