

Mere Matters

& so does

West Knoyle



Your community magazine

Including a guide to local events

May 2023

The Editor Writes

I wish to consult the readership in regard the value you, the reader, place on these monthly publications. We are grateful that both the Post Office and the Co-op act as distribution points for our magazine – thank you both. The Post Office also circulate a copy with deliveries of papers and our volunteers facilitate deliveries to other locations around the area.

In recent months we have witnessed a reduction in the number of magazines collected from our distribution locations and this is prompting us to review the appropriateness of continuing. It is also relevant to mention that the number of articles submitted for inclusion has diminished over recent months. It is worth noting that copies of Mere Matters are available on the Town Council's website although I have no way of knowing at present to what extent this facility is used.

Has social media overtaken the need for a town magazine?

Is the content and/or presentation no longer relevant or required?

Do you have any ideas for things to be included? Would you like to get involved?

Some people have suggested only publishing every two months but that would complicate the diary and church service information, on which we think many currently depend.

For clarity it should be noted the whole operation is run on a voluntary basis, the costs of production being funded through donations and advertising.

Comments please to: Richard  863425 or editor@merematters.co.uk

A Special Thank You

May I thank all the lovely people who attended the memorial get together at the Jubilee Gardens to remember my partner Tony Guy. It was a lovely day, the weather stayed fine and afterwards refreshments were held in the Grove Buildings. A collection for Salisbury Hospice amounted to £420. A big thank you to Rose Heesom, Sue Fitzgerald and Penny Allen for the catering.

Les Manwaring

Mere Town Council

After a long dismal winter, how wonderful to have some sunshine, at last. I have heard many compliments about the magnificent tulips in the square and must thank Cllr. Clive Hazzard, once again, for the planting and those of you who sponsor these lovely flower tubs every year. Please see the Town Clerk's notice in the magazine for details of last years sponsors and how to sponsor this year.

I am fully aware that there are a lot of concerns about parking, potholes, speed limits and the need to re-paint lines in Mere. Over the last two years this has been the most discussed topic by Town Councillors and residents alike. The Town Council regularly reports potholes to Wiltshire Council and following a report by a working group of our councillors, we are awaiting a response from Wiltshire Council regarding, amongst other things, the re-painting of yellow and white lines and other road markings and a re-assessment for parking restrictions, loading bays and parking enforcement. Wiltshire Council has a policy for setting 20mph speed limits and zones and will only do so where they can be "self-enforced" and, depending on the local environment, this usually means that a range of vertical and horizontal engineering features, such as road humps and raised junctions, would be required.

Please see [https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s63658/HSB-007-13 -
Appendix_1_Wiltshire_Policy_on_20_mph_speed_limits_and_zones1.pdf](https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s63658/HSB-007-13_-_Appendix_1_Wiltshire_Policy_on_20_mph_speed_limits_and_zones1.pdf)

Parking is a different sort of problem. Through the Town Council's efforts, there are two free car parks for people to use in Mere and a lot of the local businesses support these free car parks by providing some sponsorship. Physically, Mere does not have the benefit of available land in a central position for a new large car park. Widening streets, installing roundabouts, one-way systems and traffic lights are just not feasible and I am absolutely sure there would be an uproar by residents if this was suggested. We have alerted the police to our concerns over the parking on Hazzards Hill and their response is *"since the Police have had parking powers taken away from them there really is little for us to action. If there is a clear obstruction then we would deal with it, however, parking on Hazzards Hill causes no more of an obstruction than anywhere else in the County - drivers need to drive to the conditions of the road and this includes dealing with parked vehicles, in some respects parked vehicles slows traffic down."*

On the subject of potholes, I understand that Wiltshire Council has now changed its highway maintenance contractor and that their workforce are concentrating on filling potholes at the present time. Let's hope that they get around to attending to the potholes in Mere fairly soon or... we could always do what an enterprising young chap elsewhere in Wiltshire has done - open up a crazy pothole golf course!

More seriously, in short, we are trying our best to get the correct authorities to deal with these highways and parking issues but the truth is that the lack of resources and difficulties in communication is very frustrating for us all. In the meantime, I can only ask that people take care in parking and driving sensibly and with due consideration for the safety of others.

Mere is a pleasant country town and with this comes compromise and concession.

Perhaps, if Wiltshire Council were to charge for on-street parking like some of the bigger cities in this country, then people would change their parking habits!

I was tempted to end my report by asking if anyone with a good idea about improving parking would contact the Council, but I chickened out!!

Goat Update:

I have been asked why there are no goats on the hills, at the moment. This is due to a change of goat ownership. The goats will now be owned and managed by Neil Maitland and discussions are ongoing about the necessary grazing licence. Neil is very keen to get his goats on the hills, as soon as possible. Stephen Horn, our previous goat farmer, has written to the Council, thanking us for our husbandry and asking us to pass on his appreciation to all members of the public, who have been diligent in informing him of any problems.

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

Coronation Day - Mere Bell Ringers

Mere Bell Ringers will be celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III on the morning of the Coronation.

Providing we have a good turn out of ringers all 8 bells will be rung from **10.15 to 10.45**. Then you will see us all rushing home to watch the spectacle on the TV.

If anyone would like to watch the bells being rung please contact me.

Maggie Durkee, Tower Correspondent margaretdurkee5@gmail.com

Mere Spring Fair & Family Fun Day

Bands, Kiddies Activity and much more took place at Mere Social Club all day on Saturday, 15th April, being Mere Spring Fair & Family Fun Day. Fundraising in support of Salisbury District Hospital Charity Stars Appeal. Around 200 people attended throughout the day.

A good time was had by all. The weather was very kind for April, "catch up" was had by many. A really nice spring event.



Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

With the help of a few stout and strong colleagues we are erecting around 60 flags around Mere as my contribution for Mere Town Council to celebrate The Coronation of Charles III. I am very pleased that the other parishes in the Mere Division of Wiltshire Council are well underway with their celebratory events, West Knoyle and Kilmington have joined with Stourton and Gasper plus Zeals all having organized events, well done to all.



The Wiltshire Strategic Planning Committee occasionally decide planning applications rather than the more local Southern Area Planning Committee which I sit on. The decision of either committee as a generalisation of fact can also be appealed or taken to judicial review. Applications when decided can also still be appealed or called in by the secretary of state to decide. Recently an application for a proposal in Mere has been put before the Strategic Committee. The planning process can be complicated.

I am pleased Mere Town Council have been awarded funds from Wiltshire Council to improve a link from The Walnut Inn in Mere to the centre of the town.

Wiltshire Council has been awarded £22,924,000 from the Government's Highways Maintenance Fund for 2023/24 to pay for a range of highways maintenance and improvement programmes including resurfacing, new road markings, replacing traffic signs and signals, and filling potholes. The council has also received an additional £3,684,800 from the Department for Transport's

(DfT's) Pothole Fund which we will use to target pothole hotspots around the county.

Most would agree that the highways of Wiltshire in many areas, are in poor condition. Wiltshire Council is working with a new local highways maintenance contractor from Saturday 1 April, known as Milestone and begins its £80m, five-year contract to help make the county's highways more resilient. The Milestone



Infrastructure team will help to keep Wiltshire moving by maintaining streetlights, cleaning and emptying gullies and drains, repairing potholes, gritting in winter, undertaking emergency maintenance and maintaining carriageways, footways, bridges and verges. Milestone Infrastructure will also employ the council's Parish Stewards, who work closely with Wiltshire's town and parish councils to fix small highways issues in their communities. Focusing on Wiltshire's carbon and social value commitments will be a key driver for Milestone. People with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and care leavers, will be offered employment and training opportunities.

Businesses and organisations from around Wiltshire raised a total of £63,573 recently for local sports stars at Wiltshire Council's ninth Wiltshire Business and Sports Gala Dinner, which celebrates the county's finest sporting talents. So far, 55 elite athletes and 55 up-and-coming young sports stars have benefitted from the Funding Future Olympians and Paralympians Foundation.

Wiltshire Council's FUEL programme has formed a partnership with the British Olympic Foundation delivering Olympic Sport taster sessions as part of the FUEL camps that took place during the Easter holidays. Wiltshire Council ran ten FUEL camps across the county during the Easter school holidays for children eligible for benefit related free school meals. The FUEL camps provided children with a nutritious lunch each day and the opportunity to take part in a range of practical, physical and hands on activities including robotics workshops, circus skills, sporting sessions, talent shows, and arts and crafts workshops. The partnership with the British Olympic Foundation also gave children in four of the FUEL camps across the county the opportunity to take part in Olympic Sport taster sessions including judo and table tennis.

Four sites in and around Salisbury are actively being considered as possible locations for a new Southern Policing Hub. Sites actively being considered are: Land at High Post, near Salisbury. Conversations are also taking place with landowners in the Fugglestone Red and Old Sarum areas of Salisbury. The final location for consideration is on land joined with Salisbury District Hospital.

The pocket-sized Time for Wiltshire Towns and Villages Map is part of VisitWiltshire's tourism recovery campaign to encourage locals and visitors alike, to explore Wiltshire high streets; to help boost the county's tourism economy; and to encourage people to explore the whole of the county. Pre-pandemic, Wiltshire towns, villages and businesses benefitted from £1.5bn visitor spend per annum, supporting 29,000 jobs. This has fallen by 30% and with a difficult year being forecast for tourism and hospitality businesses and tourism campaigns like this are essential in helping the sector and Wiltshire high streets recover.

All Wiltshire guides and maps are available to download from the VisitWiltshire website www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/plan-your-visit/maps-and-guides.

Young people starting university this year, can apply for a university bursary if they are under 24 years old, have lived in Wiltshire or Swindon for at least 2 years, parents or guardians receive 2 means-tested benefits (2 elements of Universal Credit), eligible for funding through Student Finance England studying for first undergraduate degree at a UK university or college. Applications close on 15th May 2023. Apply today by visiting: www.wiltshirecf.org.uk/grants-and-support/individuals/university-bursary-one-degree-more/

Wiltshire Council has submitted a bid to Active Travel England (ATE) for funds to support walking and wheeling routes in the county. ATE looks to fund active travel infrastructure that promotes walking, wheeling and cycling as an alternative to



taking the car. The bid is part of ATE's Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 (ATF4), the focus of which is on walking and wheeling, rather than cycling, which was the main focus in previous tranches. ATE had indicated a funding allocation of £878,366 for Wiltshire. I have been asked, if as Milton on Stour to Gillingham has a cycle way, could this be extended to Mere. Much of such a cycle way would be in Dorset and the probable cost would be high, however I have posed the question to officers.

Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council are part of a multi-agency pilot to help address issues of child exploitation in the county. The government announced Wiltshire would pilot a new scheme where a local panel makes decisions using local expertise on who may be vulnerable to child slavery or exploitation so action can be taken to safeguard and support them. The recommended decision of the local panel would then go to the Home Office for sign off. The panel will mean quicker decisions using the local knowledge and understanding of modern slavery. Children under the age of 18 who are identified in this way will receive specialist support and intervention. This month the first panel to consider local cases will meet with representatives from Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Police and health partner Great Western Hospital. Children and young people wanting support with mental health issues can call a new number from 1 April. The new number **0300 247 0090** (option 4) will be available for families and children and young people to call for mental health support including advice and information, arranging therapeutic activities and therapy/counselling.

Wiltshire Council has provided an update on its work to allocate the latest round of the **Household Support Fund** and ensure it gets to those who need it most. The Household Support Fund is Department for Work and Pensions and is in place to support households that struggle to buy food or pay bills, or meet other essential living costs to help them during the current cost-of-living challenges. Wiltshire Council also has a range of cost-of-living advice and support, and this can be found at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living.



Have you or someone you know considered fostering. Wiltshire Council still campaign to find more foster carers for children in Wiltshire. Fostering with your local council means all money is spent on frontline services and the child is more likely to be able to stay close to their school, friends and family networks. On my travels I note this campaign is not just limited to Wiltshire.



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

Floral Sponsors

The Town Clerk would like to report that once again, the Town Council will be keeping up appearances by planting the tubs around the town to give impressive floral displays. Last year we were very grateful to the various sponsors (business and members of the public – see below) who helped to make these floral displays possible. The scheme was a great success. There are 14 tubs & four planting displays within the town and they are planted twice a year for summer/autumn displays and winter/spring displays. Mr. Clive Hazzard has graciously agreed to replant the tubs again this year and I should point out that this is done at cost price and at no profit to him and we thank him for this generous offer. We also thank the willing volunteers who water the tubs & deadhead the flowers. We estimate the cost of planting each tub is £40 per year and once again, we are looking for sponsors and we would be grateful to any businesses or members of the public who would like to sponsor a tub. We will publish a list of all sponsors in a future edition of Mere Matters. If you would like to help with Mere's floral enhancements, please contact:



We would like to thank the following, who sponsored the tubs during the 2022/23 financial year:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Michael, Joy & Grandchildren | Johnnie & Georgie Moore |
| Rod & Shirley Coward | Frank & Geraldine Legge |
| Jane Hurd | Roy Sims in memory of Millie Ann Sims |
| Post lady Alison | Mr. & Mrs. C. J. Stephenson |
| Dr. David Longbourne | Di Potter |
| Chris Mills | The Hill Brush Company Ltd |
| F. J. Chalke Ltd | Jeans Electrical |
| + 2 other sponsors who wish to remain anonymous | |

lindseywood@merewilts.org ☎ 860701 🌐 merewilts.org

St Patrick's Race Night at West Knoyle

Another great evening at West Knoyle's Social Club in March when the St Patrick's Race Night was held. Members enjoyed a chat over drinks and were given betting tokens before settling down to study the race card. Deciding on which horse to place a bet was no mean feat, however, it was probably a case of which horse's name was the most appealing!

With easy to understand 'West Knoyle betting odds' our 'bookies' for the evening were Martin and Simon. Once the bets were place, the pre-recorded races were shown, to the sound of much encouragement from the punters. After each race the bookies paid out tokens for 1st and 2nd places.

The racing paused mid-way for a supper of Guinness Beef Stew or Vegetable Stew with Colcannon (mash potato and cabbage) followed by a choice of Chocolate Guinness Cake or Apple Crumble. Supper was only £10 a head which also included the betting tokens.

After 10 races there was a count up of betting tokens and a selection of prizes were awarded to the top five winners, Jill, Jinny, Fred, Harri and Wendy. Whether a horse racing follower or not, it was a fantastic evening with a lot of good humour, enjoyed by all.

The Social Club is responsible for the repair and general up-keep of the Village Hall building. And so, we put on regular events such as Race Night and last month it was a Fish 'n' Chip Supper and Quiz, not only to have some fun and enjoy a meal together, but to ensure there are funds to keep this Victorian building in good condition to be enjoyed by villagers and club members.

Everyone is welcome to join the Social Club, annual membership is only £5 and members are the first to hear about future events. The Club, which has a licensed bar, is open Friday 7.30-9.30pm and Sunday 1-3pm - so why not come along?



Corinne Leonard 07783 157361

TechTrowbridge

Andrew Murrison MP to host Access to Finance event to boost small tech businesses

Andrew Murrison MP is hosting **Access to Finance on 12 May** to help boost small and growing businesses. The event is part of his TechTrowbridge campaign, following the Google Digital Garage skills training day he arranged at Trowbridge College in February. This initiative was inspired by research that shows the county town to be home to an innovative and fast-growing tech cluster.

The latest event is aimed at small businesses and entrepreneurs, especially those involved in tech or embracing tech in their business models. It's specifically aimed at greater awareness of funding opportunities. Anyone who wants a better understanding of the financial landscape and what support is available to help grow their business is encouraged to join.

Andrew has organised Access to Finance in cooperation with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the University of the West of England's Bristol Business School who will bring together experts and local businesses that use tech for a morning of networking and panel discussion on accessing finance.

The event will include speakers from FSB's Funding Platform, The British Business Bank, SWIG Finance, Francis Clark Accountants, Tech South West, Fintech West, Tech Spark and the Swindon and Wiltshire Growth Hub. Attendees will also have the opportunity to talk to these experts directly and network with other entrepreneurs.

This session will take place at Elevate Online Marketing, a long-established Trowbridge tech business. You can sign up to attend for free here:

<https://www.fsb.org.uk/event-calendar/techtrowbridge-access-to-finance-event-120523.html>

Ed

Walk of Witness

Good Friday the 7th April saw a Walk of Witness, carried out in the morning from The Square and on to the top of Castle Hill. The cross of sorrow was carried and erected on Castle Hill. The weather was kind and the Walk was well attended.

Picture by Frank Connolly.



Mere Bowls Club

It is with much disappointment that I report in these pages the vandalism of the Bowls Club changing rooms, mirrors were smashed, bowls vandalised and windows and blinds broken to kingdom come. Thanks to the hard work and commitment by a few of the members it has all been cleaned up, glass from the windows was all over the top end of the green and this would have damaged the mowers had the grass been cut as planned, once the green was cleared the green was cut as usual. Once the crime was discovered a report was made to the police who have agreed to mount additional patrols in the area. Due to this act of unprovoked violence we are now looking at the installation of video surveillance and other security measures for the club grounds.

Roll up times stay as normal 5.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the 3pm on Saturday afternoons, new members are always welcome at either the times shown above or by calling Don on the number below – all you need is a lot of enthusiasm and a pair of flat shoes, otherwise the green keeper will be after you!

Club web site at "<https://www.hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/home/>".

Don Butchers – Club Secretary 📞 860775 don.butchers@btinternet.com

Fair Trade

By the time this goes to press, I will be able to order from this new company rescued from Traidcraft, which is upholding its original principles and ethos. So my sadly depleted stalls should once more be brimming with Fair Trade goodies I will therefore be at:

The URC Coffee Morning on **Saturday 20th May** and after the Morning Service at St Michael's on Sunday 28th May

Janet Way 📞 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com

St Michaels

An evening of **Classical Favourites and 'Songs from the Shows'**..

Gregory Stewart – Professional Tenor presents.

Les Miserables, Carousel, South Pacific.

St Michael's Church

Tuesday 30th May 7.00pm.

Tickets £12 – refreshments available.

To book please contact William.price15@btinternet.com, Mere Library 860546
OR pay on the door.

Proceeds in aid of the Friends of St Michael's



Mere School

FIREWORKS EVENT 4th November - save the date!!

We are very lucky at Mere School as we have a small team of volunteers who run The Friends of Mere School (FOMS). This group organises fund raising events for the school funds so that we can provide 'the little extras' for our children.

They are a very busy group and their fundraising events just during this academic year have included discos, a beetle drive, a huge fireworks extravaganza, Christmas cards, non-school uniform days, class raffles, Christmas Fayre and Ice Cream Fridays. Regular income is also gained from a monthly lottery, Just Giving and Amazon Smile.

The Friends also organise a uniform exchange to help during these challenging financial times.

Our children have benefitted from a trip to Salisbury Playhouse to see the pantomime, a visit and gift from Father Christmas, a Coronation memorabilia gift, a Go-Pro and new digital camera, new thermoplastic playground markings and an incredible 4 days with an artist in residence.

The school would not be able to afford these extra things and events from the budget and are extremely grateful for the time our volunteers give up to make education at Mere School so special.

The Friends are currently raising money to replace 20 aging iPads and a 'revamp' to our Quiet Area in the playground.

There are plans for an even bigger and better Fireworks Event on **SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER**. Please do come along and enjoy this **FREE** event.

Catriona Williamson. Head Teacher

Petanque in Mere:

The old swimming pool at Duchy Manor next to the Primary School has, by kind permission of the Town Council on a trial basis, been turned into a petanque (French boules) terrain of four pistes. The **Mere Mortals Petanque Club** has been formed and a team has been entered in the local Keystone Brewery Petanque League for the coming summer. This fascinating French game is played worldwide by people of all ages. Club sessions will be advertised at the venue and on social media and all are welcome.



Colin Senneck 📞 706008 colin2423@sky.com

Mere Social Club

Mere Social Club presents **Up N' Running** on Coronation day **6th May** together with an excellent local covers band with two outstanding female vocalists.

Come and join us 8.30 pm free entry

Please note -back by popular demand **Jack's Karaoke 27 May** everyone welcome

Mere Art Group

The Arts Group contribution this month is from David Aslett. This Watercolour-on-Paper Painting of a Derelict Farm Building was initially photographed from the 'pull-in' on the North side of the A303 by Winterbourne Stoke.

We meet each **Thursday** from **10.00 till 12.0** in **The Grove Building**. Coffee, Tea and Biscuits are included at £3.00 pay-as-you-go attendance.



Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

Merekits - Womens Institute

WILTSHIRE WI: Connecting & Inspiring the Women of Wiltshire



WFWI Office:
WI House, 17 Couch Lane, Devizes, SN10 1EB
Telephone: 01380 739340
Email: fedsec@wiltshirewi.org.uk

Website: wiltshirewi.org.uk
Facebook: WiltshireWI
Instagram: wiltshirewi
YouTube: wiltshirewi

Wiltshire Federation of WIs, Charity No. 1197142



Newly formed group meeting on the evening of the 3rd Wednesday of each month in the Grove Building starting 17th May.

Alison Comlay ☎ 01980 653750 alisoncomlay@wiltshirewi.org.uk

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

Venue Key for Diary :

AYP - Andy Young Pavilion
 CP - Main Car Park
 Drs - Surgery
 GB - Grove Building

L - Lecture Hall
 Lib - Library
 MSC - Social Club
 RMC - Castle St Car Park

StM - St Michaels Church
 URC - United Ref Church
 VH - Visit Hillbrush
 WT - Walnut Tree Inn

| | | | | |
|----|-------|--------------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Mon | 17:45 | Yoga (every Mon) | L |
| | | 18:00 | Scouting (every Mon) | GB |
| 2 | Tues | 09:00 | Foot Clinic | GB |
| | | 09:00 | Little Angels (every Tues) | GB |
| | | 18:20 | Zumba (every Tues) | L |
| 3 | Wed | 09:30 | Tai-Chi (every Weds) | GB |
| | | 14:30 | Pilates (every Weds) | L |
| | | 18:30 | Karate (every Weds) | L |
| | | | <i>Tai-Chi, Pilates, Karate, Railway Modellers</i> | |
| 4 | Thurs | 10:00 | Art Group (every Thurs) | GB |
| | | 10:00 | Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reform Church | URC |
| | | 11:00 | Rhyme Time (every Thurs) | Lib |
| | | 14:00 | Quilters (every Thurs) | GB |
| | | 14:00 | Rubber Bridge (every Thurs) | L |
| | | 17:00 | Girlguiding (every Thurs) | GB |
| | | 19:30 | Shreen Harmony (every Thurs) | URC |
| 5 | Fri | 13:45 | Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. Every Fri) | GB |
| 6 | Sat | 10:30 | Coffee Morning (every Sat) | URC |
| 7 | Sun | | | |
| 8 | Mon | 09:30 | Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon) <i>Scouting, Yoga</i> | L |
| 9 | Tues | 14:30 | Mothers Union <i>Little Angels, Zumba,</i> | GB |
| 10 | Wed | 14:00 | Fitness & Friendship | GB |
| | | 19:30 | Gardening Club <i>Tai Chi, Pilates, Karate, Railway Modellers</i> | GB |
| 11 | Thurs | 14:00 | Health Diabetes Prevention <i>Rhyme Time, Art, Rubber Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Guiding</i> | L |
| 12 | Fri | 10:00 | Merely Women <i>Dup Bridge</i> | GB |
| 13 | Sat | 09:00 | FOMM Plant Sale <i>Fair Trade Stall & Coffee Morning</i> | GB |
| 14 | Sun | 19:20 | MADS Rehearsal | L |
| 15 | Mon | | <i>Scouting, Yoga</i> | |
| 16 | Tues | 09:00 | Foot Clinic <i>Little Angels, Zumba</i> | GB |
| 17 | Wed | 19:00 | Merekits Womens Institute <i>Karate, Pilates, Railway Modellers</i> | GB |
| 18 | Thurs | | <i>Rhyme Time, Art, Rubber Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Guiding</i> | |
| 19 | Fri | | <i>Dup Bridge</i> | |

| | | | | |
|----|-------|----------------|--|----------|
| 20 | Sat | | <i>Coffee Morning Fair Trade Stall</i> | |
| 21 | Sun | 19:20 | MADS Rehearsal | L |
| 22 | Mon | | <i>Scouting, Yoga</i> | |
| 23 | Tues | 14 :00 | Mere Walking Group (Janet Way) Starting from Church! <i>Little Angels, Zumba</i> | StM |
| 24 | Weds | 09:00 14:00 | Mere Jelly Fitness & Friendship <i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Pilates, Railway Modellers</i> | VH GB |
| 25 | Thurs | | <i>Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Girlguiding, Rubber Bridge, Shreen Harmony</i> | |
| 26 | Fri | 10:00 | Merely Women <i>Dup Bridge</i> | GB |
| 27 | Sat | 09:30 | Tiddlers and Toddlers <i>Coffee Morning</i> | L |
| 28 | Sun | | Fair Trade Stall after morning service | StM |
| 29 | Mon | | <i>Scouting, Yoga</i> | |
| 30 | Tues | | <i>Little Angels, Zumba</i> | |
| 31 | Weds | 14:30 | PennyBank Writers <i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Pilates, Railway Modellers</i> | L |
| | | | <i>Times, events and venues shown cannot be guaranteed as being correct</i> | |

United Reform Church

Since the alterations to our building, the Saturday Coffee mornings at the URC are going well, but with a small congregation we are very short of helpers to make tea and coffee.

If there is anyone who could spare time between 10am and 12noon, once a month or so to help, they would be most welcome.

If you are wondering, perhaps come along one Saturday morning and share with us, and see what happens. Thank you."

Aileen Maitland

Mere Short Walk (Janet Way)

Meet at the **gate into St Michaels Church** at 2p.m. for a Royal themed walk around the town on **Tuesday 23rd May**.

Janet Way ☎ 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Mere Snooker Club

Mere Snooker Club is thriving, but still looking for new members. Whatever your skill level, you would be welcome to join this friendly club.

Mike ☎ 860163 meresnookerclub@gmail.com



Our **MyWilts** reporting smartphone app makes it quicker and easier to report issues such as road defects, fly-tipping, graffiti and more.

The MyWilts app is available for Apple or Android devices and is also accessible through our website.

The app includes mapping technology for streetscene and enforcement reports, which makes it easier for our engineers to find reported issues; and improved email communication, so you will receive regular updates about the progress of your report.

Read Easy South and East Wiltshire - Celebrating six readers

Read Easy South and East Wiltshire are delighted that in their first six months they have recruited and trained six coaches who have started to teach six adult readers. Team Leader, Julia West said, 'It is really encouraging that our efforts are already paying off. We know that there are potentially hundreds of adults in the area who could benefit from this service, so we are doing our best to try to find them and convince them to give it a try. They have nothing to lose! Please encourage anyone you know who struggles to read to give us a ring. It is entirely confidential and free.' Contact the group via their website

<https://readeasy.org.uk/groups/read-easy-south-east-wiltshire> Based in Salisbury, the Management Team cover an area from south of Fordingbridge, the Chalke Valley, north to the Salisbury Plain and east to the Wiltshire/Hampshire border.

Mere Gardening Club

We had a splendid talk in April by Fred Swift, "The Wiltshire beekeeper". The next meeting will take place at the **Grove Building on Wednesday 10th May** at 19.00 with refreshments. The evening will consist of exchanging ideas about our growing successes and failures.

Membership renewals are now due and the subscriptions are still £10 per year which entitles you to attend all our meetings plus as an added bonus you can get a 10% discount at Plantworld with a current membership card. New members are always welcome and guests may attend at a cost of £3.00.

Our Scarecrow Festival entry forms are now available from the Library and the Angel Tea Rooms. There are six prizes including a first prize of £100.00 which has been made possible by the competition sponsors. So put the date in your diaries for the Scarecrow Festival over the weekend of 17th and 18th June. (See full page advert in this edition of Mere Matters.

Les Manwaring Chair Mere Gardening Club

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

FearLess recommissioned to provide vital domestic abuse support

Alongside the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, we're continuing our productive relationship with FearLess, as the domestic abuse support service has been recommissioned to provide services in the county.



FearLess, formerly known as the Splitz Support Service, has been working across Wiltshire for more than 30 years and the new service will build on and expand their existing offer, delivering holistic support to victims, survivors, their children, and those who behave in a harmful way.

More information about the services that FearLess provide can be found at <https://www.fear-less.org.uk/>.

Thinking of Advertising in Mere Matters?

To find out the costs or to book an advert, please contact Jane Kennedy directly by phone or email. jane.kennedy83@btinternet.com 📞 860450

Mere Theatre Club

Crazy as it may seem, we shall soon be planning for the autumn. If we don't book early, we don't get the tickets. Will it be trips to Bath, Bristol, Salisbury, Chichester, Southampton or somewhere else? Will it be a musical, a comedy, a drama or a who dunnit?

If you fancy getting out and about this autumn and meeting some new people, come and join us. Membership still only £5 per household per year. Contact details below for more information.

Madelaine Morris ☎ 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group

On Tuesday 9th May at 2.30 pm in The Grove Building we will have a very interesting Speaker from the Tusk Trust, based in Gillingham. Dan Bucknell will be telling us about the work the Trust does in response to the poaching crisis of the 1980's which pushed the black rhino to the brink of extinction and saw 100,000 elephants slaughtered each year. Since then this highly efficient and effective force in African wildlife conservation which has achieved so much. The Prince of Wales became Patron of the organisation in 2005. We will have a short service and we enjoy coffee after our talk.

We now have a new Committee with several new members and we look forward to another interesting and friendly year ahead. We had an excellent speaker in April from "Wheels for the World", a charity that provides upcycled wheelchairs and other walking aids to people in areas around the world where they are so welcomed as there is no provision otherwise.

If you think you might enjoy Mother's Union on the second Tuesday of the month, please visit us and see if it is for you. We are a very friendly, caring group and enjoy a small service followed by interesting speakers and seasonal events.

Carol Lord ☎ 861923. Christabelle Kriticos ☎ 861065 Christine Marsh ☎ 861212

St Michaels

A service to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III –
Sunday 7th May at 11:00am @ St Michael's Mere.

We hope that you will stay after the service to toast the health of our new King.



Mere Matters – Grove Building Volunteers

We need help!

Do you have some spare time and would like to help run the Grove Building? We are looking for volunteers to help with bookings, maintaining the Calendar updates, and invoicing and simple book-keeping for events. All of these tasks can be done from the comfort of your own home with only the occasional coordination meeting. Help with light maintenance tasks suitable for competent DIY-ers is also needed.

GB is owned by St Michael's Church Mere PCC, and operated as a community resource for the town and surrounding district. It is available to hire at reasonable rates to cover running and repair costs only. There are currently 14 different groups using it on a regular basis. They range from a Fitness and Friendship meeting for the older generation, and Tai Chi for all ages, through to youth groups such as Rainbows, Brownies, and Scouts. New this year has been Little Angels, a pre-school group for new mothers and babies. Gardening, Historical, Bridge, Art, and Quilting Societies hold regular meetings. Merely Women brings together old and new residents in a social setting for talks, games, and coffee. Private children's parties (and others) are often run at weekends. Look at the website grovebuildingmere.org.uk for information about the building and its resources.

The present volunteers are reaching that age when body and mind are creaking. We need a few people who can begin to take over and operate this facility for the benefit of the town for the next few years. There are no age restrictions but it's likely you are retired, possibly having come to Mere in the last three years, and haven't had the opportunity due to the Covid restrictions of offering your spare time to assist others. This is a community project and there is no obligation to be affiliated to St Michael's Church.

Hamish Bell, Chair Grove Building admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk

Mere Jelly

Working in groups gets you away from the isolated experience of working at home, and the Mere Jelly is a chance to meet new people in your environment. The Mere Jelly meets on the last Wednesday of the month at Visit Hillbrush from 9 am - 12 noon. Join us on the **31st May** for the morning or just drop in for a coffee and a chat.

Jenni Bell ☎ 860400



**Bison Farm - Woodland service For Rogation Sunday,
14th May 10.30.**

**At Bush Farm Bison Centre
West Knoyle. BA12 6AE**

ALL WELCOME

**Followed by refreshments and chance to enjoy
the Woodland Gardens and to walk around the Bison Farm
Dogs on leads please.**

Easy parking. Tel: 01747 830263

Castle Hill Quilters

Castle Hill Quilters based in Mere had an exhibition/open day on Saturday, 22nd April. There were items for sale, a tombola, quilt raffle, and a pop up cafe. The Grove Building, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m saw many visitors in a steady flow to the exhibition, to see what the group members have been making.



Ever wondered what an artist looks like?

Come and meet them all on the Wylde Valley Art Trail!



The Wylde Valley Art Trail kicks off at the end of April and runs until 8th May, a wild and wonderful mix of arts and crafts shows all around the southwest corner of Wiltshire, from Westbury in the north down as far as Donhead St Andrew in the south. Over 250 exhibitors - painters, sculptors, jewellery designers, furniture makers, you name it - are strutting their stuff, some grizzled practitioners and others fresh-faced graduates, all eager to talk about their art. Grab your free brochure from shops, cafes, libraries, pubs and many other places, and head on down to the Wylde Valley Art Trail.

For more information please contact info@wvat.co.uk or phone 07730 400784.

Letter from the Churches - URC

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Yes, I know it's May. I don't know who decided the New Year would begin on 1st January, rather than any other month.

The Chinese New year begins at the new moon that falls between 21st January and 20th February, a moveable date.

The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah is on "the Anniversary of the Creation of Adam and Eve, the Birthday of the Universe", thus in 2023, 15th to 17th September. Another moveable date.

As a Christian, I see the New Year as Easter Sunday, yet another moveable date in our calendar, but without the resurrection would there be any Christianity?

Church Anniversaries are usually celebrated on the 'birth' of our buildings, which for us at Mere URC is in November.

Each of us begin a New Year on our Birthday, which gives us a chance to restart the New Year resolutions that we haven't managed to keep from 1st January- not a lot of help to those born in the early part of the year, I know.

As we have Christmas Day on 25th December, this is yet another New Year's Day.

God has given us a new Dawn every day, and as every day is someone's Birthday and therefore New Year, we have every reason to thank God for the opportunities to make new beginnings in our lives.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Aileen Maitland

Copy date for the **June 2023** Issue

Closing deadline is: **16:00hrs on Wednesday 24th May**

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.

Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: TBA vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Churchwardens: Mrs Elizabeth Howden ☎ 863424

Mr Richard Wilson 📞 07966 244373

PCC Secretary: office@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|---|
| 7 th | Sun | 08:00 11:00 | BCP Communion Service for the Coronation of King Charles |
| 14 th | Sun | 08:00 10:30 | BCP Communion Benefice Communion at the Bison Farm, West Knoyle (no service at St Michael's) |
| 18 th | Thurs | 07:30 08:00 | Ascension Day – Hymns up the Tower Communion |
| 21 st | Sun | 08:00 10:30 | BCP Communion Parish Communion |
| 28 th | Sun | 08:00 10:30 | BCP Communion 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

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------|-------------------------|
| 7 th | Sun | 09:30 | Lay led service |
| 14 th | Sun | 09:30 | Communion at Bison Farm |
| 21 st | Sun | 09:30 | Matins |
| 28 th | Sun | 09:30 | Holy Communion |

All Saints Church, Maiden Bradley

Priest in Charge: TBA vicar@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

Contact: diana@dianabourne.co.uk

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------|---|
| 7 th | Sun | 10:00 | Coronation Weekend – no service or catch up |
| 14 th | Sun | 10:30 | Benefice Communion at the Bison Farm, West Knoyle |
| 21 st | Sun | 10:00 | Morning Worship |
| 28 th | Sun | 10:00 | Parish Communion |

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Rev'd Duncan Goldie

Mere Contact: Elaine Laurence ☎ 0740 3845711 elainelaurence57@gmail.com

| | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 7 th | Sun | 11:00 | Civic service at St. Michaels |
| 14 th | Sun | 11:00 | Rev. Colin Marsh (Holy Communion) |
| 21 st | Sun | 11:00 | Mrs. Christine Marsh |
| 28 th | Sun | 11:00 | Mr. James Hepburn |

The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

St Mary's has been closed and ALL liturgies are now at SS Luke and Teresa South Street, Wincanton BA9 9DH.

Parish Office: 01963 34408 hope.stlukeswincanton@outlook.com

Coffee morning at Visit Hillbrush on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10.30am.

Contacts: Carole Marshall ☎ 861905 or John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

Mere Library

Monday: 10:00 – 14:00* and 14:00 – 19:00

Tuesday: 09:30 – 17:00

Wednesday: 10:00 – 14:00*

Thursday: 09:30 – 17:00

Friday: 09:30 – 17:00

Saturday: 09:30 – 13:00

* Volunteer operated opening hours.

Sally-Ann, Mere Senior Library Assistant

Booking Meeting Venues

| | | |
|------------------|--|-----------------|
| Grove Building: | admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk | ☎ 0771 471 8625 |
| Lecture Hall: | Sally Johnson | ☎ 861063 |
| URC Church Hall: | Mrs E Laurence | ☎ 07403 845711 |

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

Mere Gardening Club

Mere, Wiltshire. BA12 6DS

Scarecrow Festival

Following on from the success of last year's inaugural competition we are looking forward to an even bigger and better event in this year's Scarecrow Festival.

We will be producing a trail map of Scarecrows with a marking sheet on the reverse. Marks out of 10 to be awarded to each Scarecrow.

This year the competition is being sponsored by *F J Chalke, L C Hill Funeral Services, Jeans Electrical, The Beauty Box, The Butt of Sherry and Walton House Antiques*. There will be bigger cash prizes and the public will be invited to judge the competition.

The Scarecrows will be up by the **10th June** with judging taking place in the week of the **12th June** leading up to and including the weekend of **17th and 18th June 2023**. Members of the public will be able to purchase Scarecrow Trails for £1 from **the Library** and **The Angel Tea Rooms** and on the weekend from the United Reformed Church, Boar Street, Mere.

The Angel tea Rooms will be open to welcome you for meals and refreshments. The Gardening Club will offer light refreshments at the United Reformed Church along with a plant sale.

Please come along and enjoy a great day out, there are prizes for the public too as ten completed trails will be selected from all those returned to win a prize.

Any queries please contact 07791 559 674

Photos showing last year's winners.



Mere & District Link Scheme

March was a bumper month for the Link with 109 trips including 30 to Salisbury District Hospital and a further 16 trips to visit patients in various hospitals. This was the busiest we have been for over a year. A big thanks to our co-ordinators and drivers for all their efforts to meet the increased demand.

At the time of writing in the middle of the four-day junior doctors' strike it looks like April could be a quieter month but we are likely to be busier again as the NHS catches up on cancelled appointments. We are always looking for new drivers and **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 even 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 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. Also, please try to give us 48 hours notice, if at all possible, as we cannot guarantee our co-ordinator will be at home to arrange last minute requests.

Don't forget that the **Link Scheme AGM** will be held on **Friday 23 June at 7pm** in the Grove Building. After the meeting we will have a drinks and nibbles social. Everyone is welcome.

John FitzGerald Chair  860096  merelink.org.uk

Shreen Harmony (Community Choir)

The Choir is back this week beginning our rehearsals for the next concert. We are singing in the **Gillingham Methodist Church on May 18th at 7.30 p.m.** Refreshments served in the interval admission free but donations gratefully received for our charity this time. It is Dementia Awareness Week and we are singing to raise funds for **MINDFUL** in Gillingham and we would really appreciate your support. Mindful provides help to those living with memory loss or dementia and they rely on donations to survive.

On **Saturday July 1st** the choir and guests are performing in St Michaels Church in Mere and we would also love to see you there.

We meet every Thursday night in the United Reformed Church in Mere at 7.30pm if you would like to join us just come along and see, you would be certain of a warm welcome.

Sandra Fisher  861980

PennyBank Writers

PennyBank members are busily working on a poetry project – as yet unnamed – to accompany their successful prose booklet, 'Merely Flash'.

Congratulations go to member, Mark Grant, who continues to add to PennyBank's successes. He was one of the seven writers chosen to read their short stories at the recent Novel Nights Fresh Fiction event held at The David Hall in South Petherton.

PennyBank Writers plan to be at the St. Michael's Church Fete on Saturday, June 10th. Do come and visit our stall. We look forward to seeing you.

Adrienne Howell  860475

Mere Museum

The latest exhibition, The Rutter Scrapbooks, is the collection of posters and documents which the Friends of Mere Museum raised funds to have conserved. It took the best part of a year for the work to be done and has taken a long time to catalogue at the Museum.

Some of the posters are unique and the collection by Dr Farley Rutter covers the end of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. There are so many items that I will, during the course of the exhibition, change them. So please visit more than once!

Hopefully you will also spot some changes in the displays and the boards on the back wall have been cleaned and now have spotlights on them.

Rose Heesom  07791 559 674 meremuseum@btinternet.com

Friends of Mere Museum – The Great Plant Sale

The weather has (at the time of writing) suddenly become spring-like, and The Friends' famous and popular PLANT SALE is nearly here! It will be held in the Grove Building on **Saturday May 13th at 10.a.m.** Don't forget that it's THE SALE to go to for bedding and patio plants, geraniums and plant for hanging baskets, as well as much more for your summer garden. You are also very welcome to bring plants or cuttings for us to sell which are surplus to your own requirements and which will help to swell the funds this sale raises for the Museum. And this year you will even be able to pay by cash or card! Please bring any contributions to the **door at 9:45am** or, if you would prefer, we can arrange to collect these from you. Just let us know: jenny@flaxmill.org.uk, or judithmyapp@gmail.com **860676** If you are able to volunteer to help us on this very busy day, you will be most welcome! Please contact Judith, details above. *Trying to obtain this number.*

Jenny Wilding  860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Mere Amateur Dramatic Society

We are happy to say that there are there are two events to announce this month. First, MADS will hold its **AGM at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday May 9th** in the Small Hall (**Lecture Hall**). Come at 7p.m. for coffee (or tea) and biscuits which will set you up for the lively discussions ahead. There is always a satisfying review of the past year's accomplishments and, of course, an exciting outline of plans for the future. The AGM is followed by the regular monthly meeting for May. This is also a very good time to pay your subscription for 2023 - 2024 as you get an absolutely full year of membership, which still costs only £10 (or £1 for a junior member). A real bargain!

Next, we would like to remind you of an extra, special event! Come to the **Grove Building at 7.30 p.m. on Friday June 30th**, to take part in an entertainment we have called '**Would MADS Lie To You?**' Teams of four (or three or five, it's up to you!) will attempt to decide which of several statements presented by a panel of MADS members are true (or false - also up to you!). Points can be won, and prizes awarded! What is more, your ticket, costing £10, will include a Ploughmans' Supper. Wine will be available also for a small donation. Tickets will be available from June 1st from the Library, 'Sprout and Flower' or at the door. You're welcome to come as a ready-made team, or just as you are and we can assemble teams on the night. We look forward to seeing you for a thoroughly enjoyable, light-hearted evening's entertainment! Don't forget to put the date in your diary!

Jenny Wilding  860908 jenny@flaxmill.org.uk

Press Release

For release 17 April 2023

**Chelsea Flower Show Plant Sale - Horatio's Garden announces special plant sale featuring plants from the charity's RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden at Longford Castle
Sunday 4 June, 10am-2pm**



Longford Castle and the surrounding Longford Estate, home to Patron of Horatio's Garden, The Countess of Radnor and her family, who have supported Horatio's Garden since 2012

The beautiful Longford Estate will host a special Horatio's Garden plant sale featuring perennials from the charity's prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show garden on Sunday 4th June.

Stunning and rare large perennials, including contemporary favourites such as Geums, Sanguisorba, Rodgersia, Baptisia, irises and lilies, as well as unusual species of aquilegia, ranunculus, and thalictrum will be available. Grass species will also be for sale, alongside unusual hydrangeas and roses. All the plants have been grown in the UK especially for Horatio's Garden Chelsea and hand-picked by the garden's award-winning designers Harris Bugg Studio,

Everything will be available to purchase on a first-come first-served basis. All profits will support Horatio's Garden, helping the charity to continue nurturing the wellbeing of people after spinal injury.

Light refreshments, artisan crafts handmade by the charity's volunteers, and a full collection of the charity's bespoke merchandise will also be on sale.



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