

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of purple bellflowers in bloom. To the left, a portion of a tree trunk is visible, covered in bright yellow-green moss. The overall lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the textures of the flowers and the moss.

More Matters

*& so does
West Knoyle*

April 2024

Your community magazine
Including a guide to local events

Editorial

I don't think we have ever published where our monthly copies can be obtained. If you have your newspapers delivered by the Waltons Post Office you should get a copy delivered to your door.

We leave the major stock at:

Waltons Post Office and the Co-Op together with smaller numbers at St. Michaels Church, Mere Dentist, Mere School, Walnut Tree Pub, Angel Tearooms, the George Inn and Sprout and Flower.

You can always nominate one person in an area to organise collection on behalf of neighbours and save on shoe leather!

You can also read an e-copy as they are all stored on the Town Council's website.

Does this work for you?

I would be interested to hear if you have any suggestions to better manage circulation?

Who's Who in the Mere Matters Team:

Mere Matters is managed by a team of 5 volunteers:

- Advertising: Jane Kennedy jane.kennedy83@btinternet.com
- Circulation for Mere: Vivien Sheppard vivsheppard@outlook.com
- Treasurer: Alison Beall ajbpebble51@gmail.com
- Circulation for West Knoyle: Jane Howard
- Editor and Publisher: Richard Jefferies rajefferies@btinternet.com

Richard Jefferies ~ Editor 📞 863425 editor@merematters.co.uk

Mere Town Council

During August this year Mere Town Council will be organising an event that promotes activity and fun.

The Activities in Mere (AIM) event will take place between **9th and 11th August** and will encourage, this year, the over 50's in Mere to try or retry sports and leisure activities. Some of which will be adapted to promote participation. We hope that the event will not only encourage people to try something new, but that they may boost the membership of clubs and societies in Mere, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. We are providing this event using funds we have obtained from the Wiltshire Towns Fund.

More details will be provided in the coming weeks, in the meantime we would be grateful for any offers of assistance to help organise or provide a sport or activity. For further information please contact Roger Pipe Project Co-ordinator at Mere Town Council Tel 860701.

Each month, the Town Council looks at planning applications and we decide on our support or objection with reasons. I must make it clear that the decision is made by the Wiltshire Planning team based on planning regulations but they do take into account comments made by us and by interested parties. Your voice can be heard on planning applications so do take the opportunity to go to the Wiltshire website and add your comment.

Feedback from residents has prompted us to consider a new approach to the format of the **Annual Town Meeting**. This will take place on the **Wednesday, 24th April from 6 to 8 pm** in the foyer at Duchy Manor where we will be providing information boards with details of the various groups in Mere like the Carnival and the Link Scheme. There will be information boards, and councillors to talk to, on the work of the Town Council and how this relates to the work of Wiltshire Council. There will be boards with ideas and future plans with space for your comments and, importantly, a suggestions board where you can add your suggestions. We are hoping that this format will give residents more of an opportunity to ask questions, comment and generally participate, rather than at a formal meeting. We are required to have some formalities and so at 6:15pm, I shall give the Chairman's report and minutes from last year. Comments posted on the boards will be gathered together to form minutes and will be considered at our next council meeting.

In our last meeting we considered the implications of Martyn's Law (which relates to the protection of premises in acts of Terrorism) for Mere and commented on the public consultation website. We also took note of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Community Safety plan. One interesting fact is that they are attending fewer emergency callouts and spending more time going out to residents and companies to discuss safe measure in the home and business.

As a result of a recent announcement made by Gillingham Town Council that their cemetery is now closed for new burials as they have run out of space, Mere Town Council has taken the decision not to permit any burials for non-residents. This means that if you do not live in Mere, you will not be able to be buried in Mere cemetery unless you have already purchased a plot. This decision has been taken to preserve our cemetery space for Mere parishioners. We will, however, still permit the purchase of cremation plots by non-parishioners, at double-fees as per the previous policy.

I was determined not to mention it but must say... I do hope that, after this wet winter, we are spared the April showers!

Due to the fact that the Clock Tower is a Listed Building in the centre of the town which is in the centre of the Conservation Area, the Town Council has a policy for the erection of display banners on the Clock Tower. The Town Council will only permit a maximum of 4 banners for community/charity events held within the town per year. The four banners for 2024 have now all been allocated as follows:

- Mere Spring Fair & Family Fun Day – 20th April 2024
- Proms in Mere (Tower Stories project) - 13th July 2024

- Activities in Mere (Activity event for weekend of 10th – 11th August)
- Mere Annual Carnival – 14TH September 2024

John Jordan, Chair, Mere Town Council

for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.

lindseywood@merewilts.org ☎ 860701 🌐 merewilts.org

Creative Mere

16th & 17th November – Save the dates for our third expo highlighting the **Creators and Makers of Mere**. We are planning to be in both the Grove Building and the Lecture Hall and having listened to feedback; entrance will be **FREE** to the public this year.

Don't buy Christmas presents before this weekend as you will be spoilt for choice from locally made items and hopefully be able to see some of them being made.

Janet Way ☎ 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Grove Building Administrator

Hamish Bell has decided to step down as Grove Building Administrator and we would like to thank him for his dedication to the role over the past years.

We are now looking for someone new to take on this key voluntary role. Main responsibilities are managing the bookings and general management of the hall and liaising with the treasurer.

If you are interested, please contact:

Paula Loxton administrator@stmichaelschurch.org.uk

From Times Gone By!

W. BARNES respectfully informs the Inhabitants of Mere, and its vicinity, that he has opened a SCHOOL, in a commodious Room over the Market House, in that town, where teaches Reading, plain and ornamental Penmanship, Geography, Arithmetic, and English Grammar, at Three Guineas per annum; and, if required, Drawing, Music, and Latin, 3 Guineas each per annum...

Salisbury & Wilts Journal 28 April 1823

Committed to Fisherton Gaol.—John Gray of Mere, charged with having committed an act of bestiality.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette 4 April 1844

Martyn Beardsley

Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

Wiltshire Council's budget for 2024/25 was formally approved at a meeting of Full Council on 20 February 2024. The council is forecasting a small underspend of around £634,000 for the 2023/24 financial year. This coming financial year, 2024/25, an additional £36m has been added into the council's service budgets. Overall, the council's budget for 2024/25 stands at around £490m. More than half of that is spent on adult and children's social care services. The most significant spending in 2024/25 will be on: Adult services - £179.4m, Families and children - £70.8m, Environment - £49.6m, Highways and transport - £43m, Education and skills - £38.9m

Wiltshire Council has allocated an extra £10m over the next two years to spend on filling potholes and a road resurfacing programme that will help to prevent potholes and other highways defects in all areas of the county. The investment will also fund more small, local repairs to the highways and verge repairs on rural roads. This is in addition to the £20.7m the council receives from the Government's Highways Maintenance fund for 2024/25, plus the £5.2m from the Department for Transport's recently announced Road Resurfacing Fund. The budget puts in an additional £1m investment into extra gully cleaning work and reactive pothole filling. This is on top of the £1m that was invested into improving drainage in 2022 and will effectively treble drain-clearing work since 2021.

The rolling out of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) is a project that will revolutionise the way support services may be delivered to adults, which will deliver savings but ensure people are still empowered to live good lives.

The capital programme for 2024/25 has been budgeted at around £285m. Some of the capital spend in 2024/25 will be on: Building and refurbishing council houses - £45m, Structural maintenance and bridges - £21m, Trowbridge and Salisbury Future High Streets - £11m Highways investment plan - £7m, Property carbon reduction programme inc. solar canopies - £5m, Investment in leisure centers - £3m.

The council will also invest an additional £10m in creating additional SEND school places including creating resource bases at mainstream schools to provide young people with access to enhanced support, spending time in the base for specialist intervention while also joining mainstream classes. There is particularly high demand for adults' services, children's social care and SEND.

Wiltshire Council has secured a multi-million-pound agreement to support special educational needs and disabilities after a five-year investment plan has been rubber stamped by the Department for Education. The agreement will mean providing an additional 500 special school places to ensure children stay closer to home in Wiltshire, as well as investment in more resource bases which provide SEND support in mainstream schools. It will also fund new teams to provide early support for children and young people with SEND, and their families.

The council receives nearly 84% of its core funding from local taxes, business rates and council tax, and is dependent on increases in these to deliver services to Wiltshire's residents, communities, and businesses. Wiltshire Council has confirmed a 2.99% increase for its element of council tax, plus a 2% levy to be spent solely on

adult social care. This will mean an increase of £1.65 per week for those with a Band D property at an annual charge of £1,805.73. A number of other measures will be introduced by the council during 2024/25, including an increase in some fees and charges for some services such as leisure, some planning services and the garden waste collection cost going to £70 per year (around £1.34 a week).

Wiltshire Council's Design Guide, which will help to ensure future developments in the county are consistently of a high-quality design, was approved for adoption by Council on 20 February and is now a supplementary planning document. The guide has been structured around the '10 characteristics of good design', as described in the National Design Guide. As a Supplementary Planning Document the Wiltshire Design Guide is afforded weight in the determination of planning applications.

Hundreds of Ukraine guests continue to find a safe place to stay in Wiltshire after the second anniversary of the invasion in Ukraine, some found accommodation in Mere. Since the Homes for Ukraine scheme was announced by the government, over 1600 Ukrainian guests have arrived safely in Wiltshire. 405 guests still remain in active sponsorship, whilst more than 600 have now moved into independent accommodation, moved out of Wiltshire or returned to the Ukraine.

Don't forget you now need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections, including UK Parliamentary elections, general elections, local elections and by-elections, Police and Crime Commissioner election – which takes place on 2 May. The Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the 2024 Spring budget to Parliament. Some points within of the budget which affect local councils etc. and may not of come to the reader's attention.

- An additional £5 million for the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund to support Village Halls throughout England.
- The government will increase the cap from 40% to 50% on the percentage of the cost of a replacement home that can be funded from Right to Buy receipts.

Emergency Contact Hubs provide a place where the community can go to help each other in the event of an emergency. Primarily they are designed to enable communities to help themselves, but also to provide a link to emergency services in the local area. Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and emergency services will know where all hubs are located and how to contact them. The hubs will become 'active' in emergency situations like flooding, fires, or widespread damage to utilities. It is up to communities to decide when to activate their hub and they do not need to seek authorisation from emergency services. Communities can publicise the activation of hubs through social media, posters in community spaces and shops, and by notifying local community groups. Each hub will be different, but they will generally provide warmth and shelter, welfare provision, information, resources, and volunteers to help respond to the incident and coordinate support locally. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF), known publicly as 'Wiltshire and Swindon Prepared' is delivering this scheme. People interested in setting up an Emergency Contact Hub for their area are encouraged to contact wiltshireandswindonprepared@wiltshire.gov.uk

Penny Fennon gave February rainfall for Salisbury Street in February as 31cm with 18th February being the wettest with 6cm of rain. Pam Baldock gave rainfall for Lordsmead area as 150.25mm, (6.01) the wettest being 17th February with 33mm. For Southern England the average monthly precipitation in January is 13 days in Bristol with 73mm. Positioning of rain gauges may explain the differences. The Met. Office states unusually heavy rainfall (over entire UK) in February as against last February for 30 years, (9.75mm, 0.4 inches). To help clear the highway of water, you can report blocked gullies using the My Wilts app.

Wiltshire are still short of placements for foster children and looking for those interested. There are situations that arise unexpectedly which mean young people need emergency care and support at short notice. Foster carers under this scheme provide temporary emergency care to any child or young person needing a safe place to stay until a suitable home is found. Young people in this situation are dealing with uncertainty and may also be traumatised and will need extra support. Emergency foster carers receive £900 per week per child when they have a child to stay with them and £500 per week when they don't have foster children to care for. The council would like to recruit more carers to help meet the demand.

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

Can you please help?

When a child loses their hair to cancer, the Little Princess Trust will be there with a free, real hair wig to help restore their confidence and identity. I'm raising money in aid of The Little Princess Trust to accompany my hair donation. Anything you are able to give would be greatly appreciated and put to good use in the wigmaking process. Hair donation for the Little Princess Trust helping children with Cancer.



Positively supported by Mere Matters

Please donate at <http://gofund.me/7a0021cc> Type this into your Browser Address line. Thank you.

Freya Nixon-Davingoff

Mere Jelly

If you are a freelancer, self-employed or working from home, the Mere Jelly is your place to meet. Come along to share, network and support others in your area. We meet at The Brush & Broom at Hillbrush on the last Wednesday of the month, from 9am until 12 noon, in April, that is the 24th. Come for the whole morning, or just drop in for a quick chat, we'd love to see you.



Jenni Bell ☎ 860400

What's been going on in West Knoyle?

Early last year, a large section of the Village Hall's front boundary fence had blown down during a storm. As many of the posts were rotten it was decided a replacement fence was needed. Fortunately, Committee Member Dave volunteered to undertake the work, including making new gates, on a cost only basis. He did a fantastic job and saved the Social Club a considerable amount in labour costs.

Then mid-October work commenced on replacing the concrete path to the Village Hall, which had been deteriorating over a number of years and Nick Loxton did a great job. Prior to this, Committee Member Marcus had replaced the grass to the left of the path with shingle and recently Magna Metal Craft fabricated and installed a handrail alongside the path.

The Social Club foots the bills for maintenance and running costs on behalf of the Village Hall and we endeavour to put on events to raise monies to keep the Village Hall fit for use. So, your support is important and appreciated.

Back in July the Social Club picked the perfect evening to hold a BBQ & Boules Night members and friends enjoyed a fun Boules Tournament. A month later we gathered to watch the Women's World Cup over a drink or two and lunch. As usual we held our popular Harvest Supper in October followed by a Sausage Supper Quiz Night in November. At our Christmas Get Together a Hamper Draw took place where Mel won first prize with further prizes going to Yvonne, Ian, Harri and Stu. We enjoyed a Chinese takeaway on New Year's Eve and had a lot of laughs with games and a quiz taking us up to Midnight.

Once again, our Burns Night Supper was a great success. The hall and tables were decorated with a Blackwatch tartan theme and 'Burns Night' music played. After the Selkirk Grace and Address to the Haggis we enjoyed a fabulous four-course supper with entertaining Toasts to the Lassies and Laddies.

Last month we held a Casino Night where members could try their luck at the Roulette and Craps tables. A £10 ticket included chips to play the tables and a buffet supper. With music from the James Bond theme tunes and players 'dressed to impress' the mood was set for an entertaining evening.

Players were guided through the simplified 'West Knoyle Rules' of the tables by our dapper croupiers, Martin and Simon, and were quick to build up their 'winnings'. The evening ended with a count up of chips and prizes were awarded to the top players, Stu, Ben, Ali and Fred, with a 'best dressed' prize going to Cass. It was a fantastic fun evening, enjoyed by all and one which, no doubt, will be repeated in the future.

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

1st Mere Brownies recycling project

We are still continuing to earn extra money for the unit funds by recycling any unwanted selected items you may have

Gadgets including sat navs, games consoles etc.

Old mobile phones (not house ones) - please remove SIM card for safety.

Old currency, coins and notes uk or foreign

All types of Jewellery including costume and watches including broken ones.

Stamps loose or albums including first day covers.

Please ensure that you do not donate anything that is sentimental to yourself

Donations can be left at the library, Jeans electrical shop or Chapel showroom

The proceeds enable us to help pay towards fun activities and badgework within our meetings and lovely extras like our upcoming Pack holiday which enables the girls to participate both individually and within a team and helps provide lasting life skills.

Girlguiding in Mere is flourishing with all units doing very well with leaders, helpers and participating members. Good news with the Guides unit reopening before Christmas

Thank you for your support

Sue Jeans Barn Owl leader

News from St Michael's Church

Repair of West Gate – The church wardens and congregation are very grateful to and would like to say thank you to Jeremy Davis for kindly welding and repairing the West Gate.

PCC treasurer – Sadly, Ann Dethick has made the decision to resign as PCC treasurer. We would like to say a huge thank you to her for being an excellent and efficient PCC treasurer for many years and also for taking on the role of PCC secretary for the last year.

The PCC are now looking for someone to take on the role of treasurer from May. This will be a paid position of about 3 - 4 hours a week.

If you are interested, please contact either:

Kit Stallard 📞 860736 07803 086161 kitstallard@mac.com or

Ann Dethick 📞 863498 accounts@stmichaelsmere.org.uk for further information.

Mere School

I wanted to share with readers the fantastic results Mere School achieved at the end of the last academic year.

The main headline is that the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths has consistently been above average over the last 3 years and is most often well above and in the top 20% of schools nationally. Attainment is currently significantly above average and in the top 8% of schools nationally.



EYFS

- The proportion of children reading a Good Level of Development is well above average at 81% (65% nationally).

Phonics

- 93% of our children achieved the phonics expected score, this was 68% nationally

KS1

- Reading – 83% achieved the expected standard (69% nationally)
- Maths – 83% achieved the expected standard (72% nationally)
- Writing – 83% achieved the expected standard (61% nationally)

KS2

- Reading – 90% achieved the expected standard (73% nationally), and 30% achieved greater depth (29% nationally)
- Maths – 83% achieved the expected standard (73% nationally), and 20% achieved greater depth (22% nationally). Our maths outcomes at KS2 are slightly lower as we had 5 children who were unable to take the test. All of the children achieved at least the expected standard.
- Writing – 83% achieved the expected standards (71% nationally), and 20% achieved greater depth (13% nationally).
- Reading, maths and writing combined at the expected standard – 80% (59% nationally).

Our children and teachers, supported by our parents, achieved these amazing outcomes. We are all incredibly proud!

Catrina Williamson Head Teacher

Mere Croquet and Boule Club

Croquet is great fun, a game for all ages to play.

You can drop into the Club at the top of Steep Street in Mere, meet the lovely members, find out about the game and play croquet, boule and table tennis. We play on Saturdays and Sundays at 2.30 pm for a couple of hours from 13th April to the end of September.

We would love to see you. Please come and try, it's great fun. You'll love it.

Avril Fletcher - Secretary 📞 861285

Rubber Bridge

Have you enjoyed playing card games in the past?

Whatever your age, why not join a small social group at the Lecture Hall, Mere, every Thursday at 2pm for a couple of hours.

We play Bridge: a mini sport for all. Whist is the direct forerunner of Bridge

So if you can play whist, don't be daunted, you are close to learning how to play Bridge. When people accuse us of not playing to a high standard, we don't care, we view it as a compliment, it is a game to be enjoyed, it keeps our minds healthy and active in a friendly social environment.

David Coultter 📞 07977 048395

Mere Mortals Petanque Club

Mere Mortals Petanque Club have continued playing throughout the winter at the pool site beside the School, attracting a trickle of new members. Evening play on Tuesdays at 6.30pm in the lighter evenings is eagerly looked forward to when more folk might be attracted to this growing sport (in England) and to the Mere terrain.



Colin Senneck 📞 706008 colin2423@sky.com

Mere Theatre Club

And so to our summer programme which includes a visit to Berkeley Castle, a medieval gem in Gloucestershire, and a trip to Chichester to see a new production of Oliver!

Unfortunately, by the time you read this, booking will have closed. But there will be more on offer this autumn, so if you fancy getting out and about with some friendly people, do get in touch. Coach travel from Mere provided for all outings.

Madelaine Morris 📞 861833 madsmorris@gmail.com

Mere and District Day Centre (The Rosemary Goddard Centre)

Lynch Close Community Room, Mere, BA12 6EL

Information for Members, Stakeholders and Supporters

Mere Day Centre has been working to counter loneliness and social isolation in older people since 1988. It currently operates as an Unincorporated Association, the most basic charity structure.

With increasing pressure on Local Authority budgets, the previous funding for Day Centres and Lunch Clubs is no longer available. That means we have had to seek additional external grants and donations, to ensure the services we provide for guests in our area remain affordable.

As a result of this and other long-term considerations, the trustees recommended to members at the **AGM on 16th October 2023** that it would now be more appropriate for the charity to operate within a corporate structure. A resolution to register a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the Charity Commission, to replace the current charity, was unanimously passed.

That application has been approved by the Commission, and the new CIO, which retains the same name, **Mere and District Day Centre (new Registered Charity No. 1207117)**, has been entered onto the Register of Charities.

The current charity will continue to operate until the end of our financial year on 31st March 2024, with management and assets transferring to the new CIO from 1st April 2024. There will be no change in the way we provide services, and our existing members, volunteers, staff, and trustees all remain in place.

We believe the new structure will open up further potential opportunities and help to secure our aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of older people in Mere and the surrounding area for years to come.

Correspondence to Jane Mason, Chair of Trustees, Rosemary Cottage, Dark Lane, Mere, Warminster, Wilts, BA12 6DT chair@meredaycentre.org.uk

Friends of Mere Museum - plant sale and quiz in May

We hope you are enjoying the current exhibition on show: Mere Youth Band. A reminder that we have two fundraising events in May. Our annual plant sale on **Saturday 11th May from 10am in the Grove Building**. Following on from that we will be holding another quiz evening with raffle on **Friday 17th May from 7pm also at Grove Building**. We hope to see lots of you at those events helping us to raise funds to support the running of the museum.

For more details feel free to get in touch with me.

Rose Jordan-Barr 📞 861567 rjordanbarr@hotmail.co.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	18:00	Yoga	L
		19:30	Slimming World (Book with Sally) (every Mon)	L
2	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic	GB
		09:30	Little Angels	GB
		19:00	Historical Society (AGM)	GB
		18:20	Zumba (every Tues)	L
3	Wed	09:30	Tai-Chi (every Weds)	GB
		10:45	NHS Diabetes Prevention	GB
		14:00	NoWaxEar	GB
		18:30	Karate (every Weds)	L
<i>Railway Modellers</i>				
4	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reformed Church	URC
		11:00	Rhyme Time (every Thurs)	Lib
		14:00	Quilters (every Thurs)	GB
		14:00	Rubber Bridge (every Thurs)	L
		19:30	Shreen Harmony (every Thurs)	URC
				Butt of Sherry
5	Fri	10:00	Walking Zumba	L
		10:00	Merely Women	GB
		13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start. Every Fri)	GB
<i>Dup Bridge</i>				
6	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning (every Sat)	URC
7	Sun			
8	Mon	<i>Slimming World, Yoga</i>		
9	Tues	09:00	Little Angels (every Tues)	GB
		14:30	Mothers Union	GB
<i>Zumba</i>				
10	Weds	14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
		19:30	Gardening Club	GB
<i>Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers</i>				
11	Thurs	10:30	Harmony for health Respiratory wellness thro' music (every Thurs)	L
<i>Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Rubber Bridge, Shreen Harmony</i>				
12	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	GB
13	Sat	14:30	Croquet and Boule Season starts - (every Sat)	
		<i>Coffee Morning and Fair Trade Stall</i>		
14	Sun	14:00	Mere Walking Group (Laidler & Wilson)	CP
		14:30	Croquet and Boule Season starts - (every Sunday)	

15	Mon	09:30 18:00	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon) Scouting (every Mon) <i>Slimming World, Yoga</i>	L GB
16	Tues	08:00	Foot Clinic <i>Little Angels, Zumba</i>	GB
17	Weds	14:00 19:00	Pilates (every Weds) Merekits Womens Institute <i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Railway Modellers</i>	L GB
18	Thurs	17:00	Girlguiding (every Thurs) <i>Harmony Health, Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Shreen Harmony</i>	GB
19	Fri		<i>Dup Bridge</i>	
20	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
21	Sun			
22	Mon		<i>Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Slimming World, Yoga</i>	
23	Tues		<i>Little Angels, Zumba</i>	
24	Weds	10:45 14:00 14:30	NHS Diabetes Prevention Fitness & Friendship Pennybank Writers <i>Tai-Chi, Karate, Pilates, Railway Modellers</i>	GB GB L
25	Thurs		<i>Harmony Health, Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guiding, Shreen Harmony</i>	
26	Fri	10:00	Merely Women <i>Dup Bridge</i>	GB
27	Sat			
28	Sun			
29	Mon		<i>Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Slimming World, Yoga</i>	
30	Tues		<i>Little Angels, Zumba</i>	

Times, events and venues shown cannot be guaranteed as being correct

Fair Trade in Mere

Fair Trade Stalls: As I am away during April, I am only able to hold my stall at the URC Coffee Morning on Saturday April 13th so please come along and see what tempt you

It is now a year since the new company, We are Fair Trade, set up after the sad demise of Traidcraft in January 2023. Gradually more items are being added to their stock and I have been able to purchase other items from 3 other companies to fill the gaps. Original Traidcraft goods left in the warehouse last year were auctioned off and now they are nearly all exhausted so favourites will no longer be available. As it is a movement very close to my heart in being able to support groups and smallholders around the world to a fairer price for their crafts and products, I have struggled on to be able to maintain my monthly stalls. I am so very grateful for all of you who have continued to support me even if it is only to buy a card or bar of chocolate! 'Every little helps' (!!)

Janet Way ☎ 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Mere Short Walk (J Way)

April Short Walk: As I am away this month, my walk was combined with March and took place on 25th. See you all in May!

Janet Way ☎ 860884 jwaywitsend@gmail.com

Shreen Harmony

The choir meets as usual every Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m. in the United Reformed Church, Boar Street and all are welcome to come along and join us. There are no auditions you do not need to read music just a love of singing. Singing in a group with friends can be such a positive thing. Everyone is welcome on a Thursday evening.

The first concert this year is in Dementia Week on the 16th May at 7.30 p.m. in the United Reformed Church.

We are singing for the Mindful Café in Gillingham.

The café works with those with memory loss and dementia and will offer support and advice and friendship. It is a very worthwhile cause, please do come along.

It will be free admission, good concert with both the choir and guests and of course refreshments. There will be a collection at the end of the evening.

Sandra Fisher ☎ 861980

Mere & District Link Scheme

One of our passengers Brian Robinson, whom I had the pleasure of taking to Salisbury District Hospital on a Sunday afternoon recently, has kindly offered some comments about the Link Scheme. Brian says "since moving to Mere some five years ago the Link Scheme has been a Godsend. I have had many medical appointments at hospitals and the dentist which would have been very difficult to get to without the Link. The drivers are very friendly and they wait for you until your appointment has finished! Since using the Link Scheme I feel the drivers have become friends."

With 95 trips in February we are averaging 100 trips per month so far in 2024. As usual most trips, 25, were to Salisbury District Hospital.

We are a local charity and our volunteer drivers take clients to medical appointments, including Covid vaccinations, and even shopping when resources allow. New drivers are always welcome. You choose when you want to drive, use your own car and we pay 45p/mile to cover your costs. If you are interested in volunteering as a driver, please call our co-ordinator on 01747 860096.

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 – we do not have an office - so please keep calls to 9-5 Monday to Friday and only use the **01747 860096** number. Also, it is a great help if you can give us a minimum of 48 hours notice (not including Saturdays and Sundays). Our co-ordinator has to ring round to find a driver who is available to take you to your appointment and we cannot guarantee our co-ordinator will be at home to arrange last minute requests.

Don't forget that the Link AGM will be held on **Friday 7 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

Ukes at The Butt of Sherry

Our next session is on Thursday 11th April at 7.30pm.

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month for an informal evening of strumming and singing. We play a wide range of popular songs and welcome all abilities. If you don't have a ukulele, but would like to come along you would be most welcome. We do have a ukulele for you to play. An evening of fun and laughter guaranteed!

You can check out our Facebook page 'Ukes at The Butt' for our song list.

Maggie Holmes maggieholmes101@gmail.com



Mere Carnival Committee

Well here we are in April and the year is marching on but here at Carnival headquarters (my living room actually, but that's just between you and I) things aren't moving quite as quickly or positively as we would like.

Following on from our last few dispatches we are still desperate for new committee members and volunteers. I may have falsely claimed that this year's carnival is indeed safe but... that is only the case as long as we can also find volunteers to help out on the day itself.

Financially we are fine which led me to make my statement but we are short of personnel. We desperately need the following positions filled:- Vice Chairperson, Assistant Secretary and any number of volunteers. Please consider getting in touch with our Secretary Jaïne and join our team no matter how much time or special skills you can offer secretary@merecarnival.co.uk

On a brighter note we will be carrying out a survey on whether we try again to put on a funfair this year, talks are ongoing but nothing has been finalised.

Last month we had a disaster at our temporary storage when we had a severe flood, however Sturdy Storage have stepped in to help with facilities at their Townsend nursery site so we are most grateful to them. On that note you will notice that much of our advertising and announcements will feature their logo and be named as our principal sponsor. thank you to Sturdy Storage for the way they have stepped up to help.

We sincerely hope that this year will be bigger and better than ever before for Mere Carnival but as I have previously said "Mere Carnival needs you"

Mel Wilkinson melvinwilkinson@gmail.com

Castle Hill Quilters Open Day with Coffee and Cake

We are inviting you to an Open Day with Coffee and Cake on **Saturday 4th May** from 10am until 4pm in the Grove Building.

This event is not only to showcase our work but to raise funds for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Our members will be demonstrating quilting techniques both traditional and contemporary. There will be a display of our work on show and the opportunity to purchase items handmade by our members.



Tea, coffee and cake will be served throughout the day.

Please come and join us, all proceeds will be donated to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Historical Society

There are 2 more talks to come in our current programme in March and April.

In a change to the previously advertised programme, on Tuesday 2 April our speaker is Malcolm Wells MBE, who will give a talk entitled So Far So Good – an Amusing Take on Military Life. This talk will be at about 7.50pm following our AGM. (See details below.) This is in place of Julia Mottershaw, whose talk about Francis Faugoin, the Forgotten Gardener of Stourhead, based on her recently published book of the same title, has had to be postponed due to Julia's indisposition.

Finally on Tuesday 16 April at 10.30am, Dr Francis Burroughes BEM will give a talk on The History of Glass.

We welcome both current members and non-members for whom a charge of £3 is payable on the door. All our talks are held in the Grove Building.

The AGM

Our AGM will be held on **Tuesday 2 April at 7.30pm in the Grove Building**. Membership subscriptions of £10 for 2024-25 will be due then. Cash or cheques will be collected before the AGM from 7.00pm when a glass of wine will be offered. Cheques should be made payable to Mere Historical Society and may also be sent to the Chair, Peter Landymore, at Whispers, Pettridge Lane, Mere BA12 6DG. Alternatively subscription payments can be made by bank transfer to Mere Historical Society Sort code 30-93-45, Account No 01735722.

Notices and/or Committee Nominations for the AGM must be submitted in writing to the Secretary or a member of the Committee by Friday 15 March 2024.

For current Committee members please see www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk where you can also view minutes of our last AGM held in April 2023.

Peter Landymore, Chair ☎ 228819 *Diane Ellis, Secretary* ☎ 861541

Mere Art Group

Arts Group attendance has been good, despite inclement weather. However, things are turning to a hint of Summer - Hooray!!!

This month's contribution is by Aubrey Colman - a 'Silhouette' of Matt Smith Playing the role of Dr Who.



Helge Brock helgewallenbrock@gmail.com

Mothers' Union and Open Members' Group

Our last meeting was extremely interesting. We had a talk by Julia Coles from Mere Surgery talking about "Health and Wellbeing". We were delighted to hear that she is at the surgery every week for two days offering a listening ear to patients who obviously are benefitting from the support she is giving them. Yet another plus for our Surgery.



This meeting will be on **Tuesday 9th April at 2.30 pm at The Grove Building in Mere.** This month's meeting is our Annual General Meeting when a new Leader will be elected and Committee members of which we are lucky to have plenty of nominations. We will follow this with a social time organised by Christine Marsh our retiring Leader and Christabelle Kriticos who have served us extremely well for a few years including the time of Covid for which we are all extremely grateful. We wish our new Leader, when elected, a time of feeling the support of us all.

Please contact one of those listed below for more information.

Carol Lord 📞 861923. Christine Marsh 📞 861212 Christabelle Kriticos 861067

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 Gardening Club

At our AGM last week all the Committee were re-elected to serve for another year. We were pleased that so many members renewed for another year. Membership is still only £10 per year entitling members to attend our talks and social events with the added bonus of 10% off Plantworld plus special offers from Castle Gardens including 25% discount at certain times of the year. Anyone renewing their membership before or on the April meeting will be entered into a draw to win two free tickets to Gardener's World Live at Beaulieu in May.

Our next speaker on Wednesday 10th April at The Grove Building will be National Trust Senior Gardener Jess Usher, talking about the Engleheart Daffodil Collection. The meeting starts with refreshments at 7pm with the talk starting at 7.30pm. We have an exciting programme for the next 12 months including the Hidden Gardens of Mere on 15th and 16th June.

Visitors are most welcome with a charge of £5.00.

Remember to start planting all those seeds and looking forward to a great harvest. Happy gardening

Les Manwaring Chai 📞 861 941 lesmanwaring@yahoo.com

Rose Heesom 📠 07791559674 roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk 🌐 meregardenclub.org.uk

Mere Day Centre

We have been having lots of fun at the day centre and it has been wonderful to see some new guests and volunteers recently. One of our guests, Vera, asked for a sausage tasting session so we spent an afternoon trying out different types of sausages and rating them. It was a surprise to discover that the vegetarian one came first! We have had music from our regular guitarist Peter Baker and fun craft sessions with Sue Wilcox. We also enjoyed a talk from Steve Slack, a retired police officer, which was an interesting insight into his career with a few funny stories chucked in for good measure. As always, we have enjoyed our regular bingo, brain training, exercise and games afternoons.



We have a load of different activities coming up so if you would like to join us, please give me a call on the number below, we currently have a few spaces on either a Monday or a Friday. The cost for each session is only £10 and that includes all your hot drinks, your two-course meal and any activities! We are currently looking for another volunteer who would be able to pick up the lunches in the hot box from The Walnut Tree, wash up after lunch, then take the box back. This would be once a month, please call/email if you can help us out.

Sandie Hawkins MDC Manager 07835 272406 manager@meredaycentre.org.uk

Merekits - Womens Institute


Merekits WI meet on the third Wednesday of the month in the Grove Building at 7pm. We are a group of ladies who want to get to know other like-minded people in the local area and have fun.

In February we held an open meeting where Professor Helen Pankhurst gave us a fascinating talk around women's rights and how far we have come in the last 100 year. Prof. Pankhurst is a direct descendant of Emille Pankhurst one of the original suffragettes. It was an informative and highly interactive evening which stimulated discussion and conversations about the actual and perceived place of women in society today. The majority of those women present appreciated that we have gone a long way in the last one hundred years but there is still more to do.

Our March meeting was based around activities for Easter including a flower arranging demonstration followed by an opportunity to have a go ourselves and/or try our hand at other Easter themed activities. We had a competition entitled "How many things beginning with the letter E can you fit inside a medium eggshell?" which produced some imaginative entries!


As a group we enjoy different social activities which include various walks, crafts and dining out. We attended the Bourton Pantomime and are planning to support the MADS production 'allo, allo'. We also supported the Wiltshire council silent disco event, serving tea and cake which was enjoyed by all.

On **April 17th** we will hold our **AGM at 7pm in The Grove Building**. Do please come and join us to find out more about the friendship and events the Merekits WI can offer you – it won't all be AGM, there will be an opportunity to have a natter afterwards and learn more about our fun filled programme of events for 2024 with talks, demonstrations and lots of different activities planned. Alongside our monthly meetings we meet up and enjoy purely social activities which include various walks, crafts and dining out. With Merekits WI there's always something going on both locally and nationally for you to get involved and participate in as much or as little as you would like.

Verena Cooper  07971790256 verenacooper2@gmail.com

Copy date for the **May** issue

Closing deadline is: **16:00hrs on Tuesday 23rd April**

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 Social Club

Good News - Our doors are once again open on Sundays from 12 noon until 8 pm. April brings us to the end of the league skittles season, but we have our Summer skittles taking place in June/July. This is open to anyone who wants to come and have a go at skittles. Get yourself a team of four people (no experience needed!) and come along to join in the fun. Entry costs £16.00 a team and there is a prize pot of £500.00. Entry forms are available from the club or call for more information on 01747 860463 The closing date for entries is Saturday 12th May.

On **Saturday 20th April** we once again host **Mere Spring Fair and Fun Day** organised by Louise Padfield in support of the Neonatal Unit at Salisbury hospital.

Live music this month will be supplied by Don't Frett. This takes place on **Saturday 27th April**

Elaine Laurence, club steward.

Mere Bowls Club

As you are all aware we have had a very wet winter and as such the green is not in as good a shape as we would wish at this stage of the season. At the end of last year we had the green Drilled and Filled, 40,000 holes each one filled with a sharp sand type substance to aid drainage and cut down on moss growth. We have purchased our own scarifier and have already used it in preparation for reseeding. A busy end to March if the weather is kind. We aim to open the club on the **20th April** but we may have to delay opening due to the seed not germinating.

If you would like to try bowls, please join us either on our opening day (give me a call to check the day) or on **Saturday 25th May** between 2.00pm and 5.00pm when we will hold a Big Bowls session for members of the public to come along and have some fun on the bowling green. Fun is the operative word here as there will be no mention of the Laws of Bowls or the etiquette of the sport during the time we are open.

If you are at all interested in trying the sport of bowls yourself, or the whole family for that matter, please do not hesitate to get in contact with Don on the number, or email, below and he will take it from there.

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

Mere Walking Group

We have one walk this month, **Sunday afternoon on April 14th**, meet 2pm in Salisbury Street Car Park to share cars, if required. We welcome all ages; walk will be around 3 to 4 miles.

Roger Laidler 📞 863447 roger46laidler@talktalk.net

Mary Wilson 📞 229609 wilsonsmere@gmail.com



A sincere thank-you to members of the Mere Suchana Support Group and all other supporters in Mere from Kirsty Milward who founded Suchana and still visits regularly and monitors and enables its continuing development.

Greetings from Khanjanpur in West Bengal, the home of the Suchana Uttor Chandipur Community Society!

Many of you will remember when a group of Mere residents started holding events to raise money for Suchana in 2009. At that time, Suchana was a small, young organisation working with 150 disadvantaged children, exploring supplementary education inputs that could support them in their school lives and enrich their wider learning. Over the 15 years since then, the Mere Support Group has raised over **£33,000** for Suchana, providing consistent, reliable funds to help the organisations strengthen and grow.

Suchana is now a well-established organisation with a loyal and hardworking local team running a number of programmes in the Centre and in more than 30 nearby villages, reaching nearly 2000 *adivasi* children. It has gained a reputation for innovative work establishing opportunities for children to access education in their first languages of Santali and Kora, and for integrating technology into the learning of children in remote areas so that they too can learn computer skills. And it has moved gradually into advocacy, contributing to progress on wider opportunities for first language education through the public education system in the local area, and in West Bengal more widely. Suchana's first students are now in their early twenties and have found their way to a variety of livelihoods, variously working for: a Japanese tech company; in local government; as welders; in motorcycle maintenance; as artisans; as farmers; and a few are working in Suchana.

These achievements would simply not have been possible without the contributions that the Mere Support Group and others have made to our work. We remain deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in our team, and hope that some of you will stay in touch even though the Mere group is formally closing this spring. Anyone is of course always welcome to make a donation or even hold an event in aid of Suchana at any time. Any such donations or money raised can be sent to Friends of Suchana using information at <https://suchana-community.org/donate/> or by cheque to *Friends of Suchana, 18-19 Welton Rd. Radstock, BA3 3UA*.

I would like to add my heart-felt thanks to all the members of our little committee who have worked so hard and effectively together, and to everyone in Mere who has contributed so generously to Suchana over the years.

Judith Thompson ☎ 860553, Chair, Mere Suchana Support Group

Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church St Michael's the Archangel:

Priest in Charge: Vacancy

Churchwardens: Mr Kit Stallard ☎ 07803 086161

Mr Richard Wilson ☎ 07966 244373

Admin Secretary: administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk

7 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Informal Worship
14 ^h	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Informal Worship
21 st	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Informal Worship
26 th	Fri	10:00	Roman Catholic Mass
28 th	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Palm Procession

West Knoyle Parish Church St Mary the Virgin:

Priest in Charge: Vacancy

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

14 th	Sun	09:30	DIY Service
17 th	Sun	09:30	Communion
21 st	Sun	09:30	Matins
28 th	Sun	09:30	Communion

The United Reformed Church

Minister - Vacancy

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

14 th	Sun	11:00	Ms Jane Hurd
17 th	Sun	11:00	Mrs Christine Marsh
21 st	Sun	11:00	Rev Judith Thompson
28 th	Sun	11:00	Mr. David Burfitt

The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

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

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

Mass at St Michael the Archangel, usually on the last Friday of each month but please check with John FitzGerald

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

Contacts: John Fitzgerald ☎ 860867

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 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



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