



# Mere matters

& so does  
West Knoyle

February 2025

Eight page Supplement listing  
Clubs and Groups

Your community magazine  
Including a guide to local events

ENTRY FREE  
TO ALL EVENTS

# THE Tower STORIES

## DIARY DATES FOR FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025



### Discover the Peregrine Falcon

February 6th 19.00 at St Michaels's Church, Mere

A talk by Hamish Smith, Bath and Yeovil Peregrine Project Lead. Remember Roger, the Peregrine Falcon often seen on St Michael's Church Tower? This presentation tells you everything you need to know about this fascinating species.



### A Sound Walk through Mere

February 27th 19.00 at St Michael's Church, Mere

A workshop by Richard Nye, Mere Composer in Residence. Explore Mere in a unique way through sound. Places are limited so book your place on [www.thetowerstories.co.uk](http://www.thetowerstories.co.uk) or email [elaine@thetowerstories.co.uk](mailto:elaine@thetowerstories.co.uk)



### Mere's medieval wonder with Kit Stallard

March 20th 19.00 at St Michael's Church, Mere

Kit Stallard talks about medieval Mere and its fascinating history. How did Mere afford to build a 124ft tower on the church? What did Mere look like in the 15th century? How did our forebears live? Your questions answered in this illustrated talk.

For our latest information go to

[www.thetowerstories.co.uk](http://www.thetowerstories.co.uk)

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## The Editor Writes:

Just before Christmas I wrote seeking your views in regard the future of Mere Matters. Only approx. 6% of the community responded which does not bode well. Of those who took the time to respond, it was lovely to read the emails, a few handwritten letters and several telephone conversations. Thank you to all those who took the time to respond – I quote some of the views submitted verbatim!

- *“I’m happy to have my copy delivered via email and to donate say £20 annually”*
- *“I would be lost without Mere Matters putting a smile on my face every month and keeping me informed of what is going on”*
- *“I do not have access to the internet and implore you to keep Mere Matters going. Suggest we all make donations”*
- *“This is the one source where we can all see what happens in Mere. Why not get the Post Office and other outlets to sell copies direct? Why should free copies be the norm?”*
- *“I would prefer to receive it straight into my email inbox”.*
- *“A sad day for Mere if it goes. There is so much information about what’s going on in Mere which makes it unique and wonderful. Please keep up the good work and keep it going”*
- *“A paper copy is my preference. Charging sounds problematic, but I am happy to contribute to the financial cost”*
- *“A lot of similar news sheets/organisations/societies now seem to use a system of distributing on line/email with printed editions for those who don’t have suitable facilities. In this way costs are reduced and often people receiving the printed versions are asked to make a donation to part cover these costs”.*
- *“My suggestion would be to make a voluntary yearly charge of say £24, many would I am sure pay and those who don’t can still get it free”.*

Assuming these opinions are representative, then there is clearly a will to give financial support. Many thanks to those of you have already made donations.

### What we plan to do?

- *I invite everyone to make a donation – suggesting £20 for the year. BACS details below if you can contribute.*
- *For those who are happy to have a copy sent straight to their email address you can register online NOW by typing <http://eepurl.com/i44fBo> into your browser and filling in the form. (Please also donate if you can).*

**Make a Donation by BACS to keep Mere Matters going?**  
A/C Name: **Mere Matters** Sort Code: **30-93-45** A/C No: **00600262**.  
Please enter your surname in the Reference Field.  
Treasurer - Alison Beall [Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com](mailto:Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com)

- Please add [Editor4MM@225007398.mailchimpapp.com](mailto:Editor4MM@225007398.mailchimpapp.com) to your contacts as a safe sender and check your Junk/Spam folders in the future otherwise you won't get them. You cannot write to this email address!
- We will continue to make Mere Matters available via the Town Council website.
- We request that if you get a printed copy, could you share/pass your copy around your neighbours and friends as this will all help to reduce printing costs.
- Later in the year we will review everything and tell you how it is going.

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Richard Jefferies 863425 [editor@merematters.co.uk](mailto:editor@merematters.co.uk)

## Mere Town Council

At the January town council meeting it was good to have members of the public there to tell us of their concerns. Whether we will be able to respond in the way that they want remains to be seen but it is so important to hear their opinions and for them to hear how we deal with matters. In the same way, we as a council can go to air our views at Wiltshire Council meetings, mostly through our county councillor who also acts as a town councillor. I feel for George who has to work sometimes on both sides of an issue, indeed sometimes more sides as he also represents Kilmington, Zeals and more.

It is my ambition to try and persuade you, the reader of this, to think if you can join in with others and help to manage the needs of Mere residents and enterprises. We are fortunate to have an excellent team of staff both in the office and outdoors who make things happen. But - the fifteen town councillors are there to represent the needs and desires of residents in the town. Can you see yourself taking on an important but unpaid role? Do you have clear and workable ideas on how Mere can progress and how it can be a better place for all who live here? Are you the sort of person who can go out and gather opinions? Can you put your own personal viewpoint to one side and support the consensus view after a vote has been taken? And - most importantly, do you care about how this town provides the best it can for residents young and old and, also, how it supports the enterprises that provide goods, services and employment opportunities locally? I often hear, usually while walking about town, about what should be done for this or that issue (and, good grief, why hasn't something been done!!). I sometimes read, in letters or on social media the same sorts of thing. Well, to those people who bend my ear in the street or grace the screen of my computer with their typed comments - the opportunity to put some effort behind your words is coming in the next few months. Wiltshire Council will be putting up the notice of election on the 11th March and Nominations can be made from the 12th March until the 2nd April. I look forward to seeing some new names on the voting list and, who knows, may have to concede to those who attract more electors than me.

Realizing some of the bigger tasks, like removing the old flagpole, does involve help from volunteers and we are grateful to Dave Hill, Simon Nutt, Barry Hansford and Tony Shephard who helped our grounds staff and also to Danny Weeks who helps with the Xmas Lights. Thank you to them. We have taken advice on keeping our flag in good

order which means taking it down when very strong winds are forecast – this was very difficult with the old flagpole but is now manageable with the new.

I would also like to thank our grounds staff Simon & Paul for their help with gritting our roads, pavements and footpaths during the icy weather we experienced recently – their efforts were much appreciated. Wiltshire Council no longer salt the minor roads but they do supply the Town Council with a small supply of salt which we can use on priority areas. Wiltshire Council should fill the numerous yellow municipal grit bins around the town with rock salt so that residents can use this in icy areas and we are aware that there are some community-bought grit bins which should be filled up too.

I hope this finds you well and looking forward to 2025. I hope you found and enjoyed the many bright and beautiful decorations over the Christmas period. I and my family certainly did, many thanks to all who were able to contribute. I was honoured to make presentations to winners of the Xmas Light Competition, judged by Councillors Nick and Debbie Beale as follows:

- 1st - 38 Lynch Close - Pat and Geoff Sams
- 2nd - 26 Castle Hill Crescent - Neil Maitland and Claire Turner
- 3rd - 2 Angel Lane - Roger Sainsbury and Julie Coward
- Special Commendation - Denes Avenue

John Jordan, Chair, Mere Town Council  
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.  
[lindseywood@merewilts.org](mailto:lindseywood@merewilts.org) 860701  [merewilts.org](http://merewilts.org)

## Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

I was pleased to receive a New Year diary at Christmas which had a atlas showing Andover, Mere and Exeter along the A303 and no other settlements along that stretch. Mere was and is a stop off point, however I was pleased to see it is highlighted.

Wiltshire are at present preparing the budget for the coming year. The government have stopped the rural grant. Wiltshire was not fully covered against employers' National Insurance contributions especially for contractors etc. It was stated Wiltshire are £8m short of total grants from central government including the increase in national insurance contributions. £15m in savings are being sought. Government had previously confirmed that councils can continue to increase council tax in 2025/26 by 3% and a further 2% solely to support adult care services, making 5% in total. The Community Charge for Wiltshire Council is being proposed to increase by 4.5% which is approximately 0.5% less than could have been.

In the local government finance settlement for 2025/26 announced on 18 December, Wiltshire Council has seen an increase of 4.3% in its Core Spending Power, which is the amount the government assesses the council needs in funding. This is lower than the average increase seen across large rural unitary and county councils, which is 5.6%. These increases assume that council tax rises by 4.99%.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has stated last week that he feels he could be left with no choice but to ask for the maximum precept increase which will see a Band D property pay an additional £1.16 a month (£14 per year), due to the government settlement leaving funding gap of £11M with no precept increase, and a gap of £6.8M with the maximum precept increase of 5.2%

The Leaders of Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire Councils are optimistic that they can work with Government to progress proposals for the Heart of Wessex Mayoral Strategic Authority following the publication of the Devolution White Paper. Government has made it clear that if strategic authorities are going to maximise the funding opportunities available, devolution deals will require a mayor and ministers will be able to impose mayors and geographies on local councils. This may offer the opportunity for increased funding and investment to our council regions.

If the devolution proposal is approved, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire councils will continue to exist and are expected to have the same responsibilities as they do now. The offer to BCP Council and Swindon Borough Council to join the Heart of Wessex partnership remains open. The Heart of Wessex, if formed, will have a population of approximately 1.5 million. Following an extraordinary full council meeting on 16 January, BCP Council (Bournemouth and Poole) has submitted a letter to the Government to confirm they wish to be considered as part of the Devolution Priority Programme, joining Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire Council and would see Wessex encompass a population of approximately 1.9 million. Swindon Borough Council met on Thursday 16 January and agreed a motion which saw them commit to cross-party working with all 57 elected members and neighbouring councils, to ensure the best possible long-term resolution to devolution. Currently, they are not requesting to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme and are yet to decide if they wish to join the Wessex partnership.

Support has been given for Wiltshire to provide a letter of support to Visit England, as part of an application to establish a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for Wiltshire. Wiltshire's visitor economy generates significant revenues for the county, creating jobs. Being part of the LVEP programme will give Wiltshire access to Visit England support including expertise, data, knowledge, and experience sharing, access to future grant funding and opportunities to influence national visitor economy strategy. If successful the resultant LVEP would be overseen by a private-public sector Board,

Progress has been made to plant at least 20 community orchards throughout Wiltshire as part of a government tree initiative to celebrate last year's Coronation of King Charles III. Wiltshire Council was awarded a £50,000 grant from government and invited applications from those interested in taking part. As a result, the council distributed the fund among eligible projects. Orchards are already being planted and others will soon follow.

Wiltshire Council is keen to work with parents and carers to support children and young people who are struggling to attend school and is offering support and advice to help them get back into a routine. If a child is struggling, parents and carers can

speak to the school so that they are aware of what is happening. They may be able to offer additional support or adjustments. Contact Wiltshire Education Welfare and ask to speak to one of their advisors for guidance and support.

Wiltshire Council has invested in a 100% electric Refuse Collection Vehicle (eRCV) which will be trialled around the county by its waste collection contractor Hills in support of its objectives to reduce carbon emissions and modernise its fleet to include low carbon vehicles.

The Wiltshire Marque, a new county-wide food accreditation scheme has launched. The program that supports local businesses in Wiltshire. The program aims to increase the visibility of Wiltshire-made food and drink, and to help local businesses grow. Mere Town Council are informing local businesses.

On 12 December 2024 the Government issued an update to the National Planning Policy for Local Planning Authorities who are now required to demonstrate a deliverable supply of housing sufficient to meet five years against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies. Previously Wiltshire was only required to demonstrate a four-year housing land supply because its draft Local Plan had reached an advanced stage. Now assessed against the housing land supply which can be delivered within five years, the recalculation shows a significant reduction in the number of years supply. The council cannot demonstrate the requisite five-year housing land supply and can demonstrate a 2.03 years supply. As the housing requirement in the emerging Local Plan will meet less than 80% of the revised Local Housing Need, the council will be expected to begin work on a new Local Plan promptly, under the revised plan-making system provided for under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (when the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025), in order to address the shortfall in housing need. The changes introduced on 12 December 2024 mean that the council now has a substantial shortfall in its housing land supply position (2.03 years). This alters the weight to give to housing supply when giving consideration to planning applications for residential development.

A series of recent trading standards raids have resulted in the confiscation of a significant amount of counterfeit and unsafe goods. Illegal cigarettes, hand rolled tobacco and vape products were seized by officers who were responding to complaints to Trading Standards about the sale of illicit tobacco at these premises.

Wiltshire Council has agreed additional investment in speech and language services, addressing the growing demand for support in educational settings. The service assists children and young people with speech, language and communication needs providing direct therapy in schools and early years settings while supporting educators with training and resources. At a cabinet meeting it was agreed to invest a total of £2,280,000 over the lifetime of the contract period of two years, plus one to meet the growing need when the current contract expires in March 2025.

Wiltshire Council's Cabinet has confirmed a strategy that outlines its library service's vision, purpose and key areas of focus for the next five years. A high proportion of older people use library services and therefore demand is predicted to increase in the

coming years and therefore the library service is ensuring it can support the council's prevention agenda and help reduce demand for council health and wellbeing services where it can. It was a successful and productive year for the library services throughout 2023/24, which included 1.8 million items loaned, 1.27 million visits to its 30 libraries and mobile libraries, almost 30,000 children attending rhyme time sessions and more than 6,700 events attended by almost 129,000 people.

Ever-evolving technology also results in many of us throwing away unwanted electrical items as we receive new electrical items as gifts. Recycling these old or unwanted electricals is easier than you think! Some electrical items smaller than a 'shoe box' can be recycled using the small electricals collection service. You can simply leave these items beside their blue-lidded bin or recycling sack in a supermarket carrier bag. Large electrical items should still be recycled at household recycling centres. The council won the Environmental Campaign of the Year Award at the 2024 awards, this is the second consecutive year that the council's efforts to reduce fly-tipping in Wiltshire have been recognised.

Wiltshire Council is sharing first-hand experiences of sleeping rough and the difference support can make to encourage more people to contact Streetlink if they see someone on the streets. Streetlink will get in contact with the council's Rough Sleepers Team, which can then go out and support.

In the last 12 months the team has supported more than 275 people sleeping rough in Wiltshire. Through additional government funding, the council has added an additional 15 bed spaces and through the Building Bridges Programme a number of individuals have been supported to return to employment, voluntary work and college courses. Three long-term rough sleepers who in total had slept rough for a total of 54 years were moved into accommodation.

The future changes to the current collecting recycling arrangements are necessary as the council, and all local authorities, need to comply with new statutory requirements under the Environment Act 2021, which confirms that councils must offer households a regular collection of the following recyclable items: Glass, Metal, Plastic (including flexible plastics from 2027), Paper and card, Food waste (from 2027), Garden waste (charges for collection may be applied). Aside from food waste and flexible plastics, Wiltshire Council already collects all of those materials. It has been agreed with Defra to begin collecting food waste from August 2027 and flexible plastics must be collected from households by April 2027. Based on the evidence assessed, the council's waste service has recommended to Cabinet that Wiltshire Council adopt 'Three Stream' recycling collections during the next contract period. This means from 2027 it is anticipated that residents would be asked to present recycling in one wheeled bin or weighted reuseable sack for paper and cardboard, a second wheeled bin or weighted reusable sack for mixed plastics, cans, cartons, and bagged flexible plastics, and a box for glass. Currently, most Wiltshire residents already use a blue-lidded wheeled bin for mixed recycling and have a box for the collection of glass.



The Division I represent covers Zeals, Stourton and Gasper and those residents read local publications and will be interested to know Lisa Gilby is the new Parish Clark for Zeals PC and Stourton with Gasper PC.

A planning appeal for changes at Boyes Transport Yard, B3092, Zeals, BA12 6LJ - was Dismissed.

Wiltshire Council has shared an update on funding for Special Educational Needs and plans to provide a sustainable future. At a cabinet meeting on the 21st January, the latest progress on the Safety Valve programme was discussed. This is a multi-million-pound agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) to support SEND in Wiltshire. Originally the plan was for five years but the council is asking DfE to extend to seven years to help meet targets. The agreement means 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 is also funding teams to provide early support for children and young people with SEND, and their families.

Penny Fennon gave December rainfall for Salisbury Street as 17.5cm with the wettest day being on the 5th with 6cm. 2024 total 237cm with February and September the wettest with 8cm. The 2023 rainfall was 250.5cm.

Pam Baldock reports Lordsmead driest December for 5 years. Only 13 days could measure rainfall. The wettest day being Wednesday 4th December with 22mm. Total for the month 53mm.

Every month I publicise the fact Wiltshire Council is recruiting foster carers, (children are waiting) with a range of flexible roles on offer including full time, short break or emergency care. To find out more about fostering in Wiltshire, people can visit [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering) or contact the team at [fostering@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@wiltshire.gov.uk), I believe you can also call 0800 169 6321 or text the word Foster to 60002.

Every month I publicise the fact Wiltshire Council is recruiting foster carers, (children are waiting) with a range of flexible roles on offer including full time, short break or emergency care. To find out more about fostering in Wiltshire, people can visit <https://fostering.wiltshire.gov.uk/> or contact the team.

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

## Letter from the Churches - by Fr. Francis Eyo, MSP & John FitzGerald

The New Year began with the Churches Together Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service which was held at Mere URC on Sunday 19th January and the Catholic community was well represented and did two readings. The Liturgy was prepared by the ecumenical monastery at Bose in Northern Italy and to celebrate 1,700 years since the Council of Nicaea in 325, so it was a bit special! The Holy Father, Pope Francis has proclaimed that 2025 will be a year of Jubilee, something that happens every 25 years. The theme is "Pilgrims of Hope" and it will be a year of hope for a world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and a climate crisis. Pope Francis opened the Holy Door in the Basilica in Rome on Christmas Eve to mark the beginning of the Jubilee Year. It will finish on the Solemnity of the Epiphany 2026.

Bishop Bosco inaugurated the Jubilee Year in Clifton Diocese on Sunday 29th December at Clifton Cathedral. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

We celebrated Christmas 2024 with great joy. The family Christmas Mass and the midnight Mass were well attended. We witnessed the beautiful liturgy animated by Fr. Francis and the Parish Liturgy Team. There was a high level of participation by our parishioners from Mere, Bruton, Castle Cary, Wincanton, visitors and friends who gathered at St. Luke's Church, united in love, friendship, worship and service.

Fr. Francis and John FitzGerald were delighted to represent Mere's Catholic Community at the joyful ceremony of the Induction and Licensing of Reverend Michael Molano to the Benefice of Saint Michael the Archangel, Mere and Saint Mary the Virgin, West Knoyle. The Service was conducted by The Right Reverend Stephen Lake, Bishop of Salisbury on Tuesday 26th November at 7pm at St Michael's Mere. We are happy to have Revd Michael with us and we wish him and his family a fruitful and rewarding ministry.

Whilst we were all saddened by the decision to close St Mary's RC Church we are pleased to see that planning permission was granted just before Christmas. Hopefully, there will be quick progress with the sale and subsequent redevelopment of the site during 2025. We pray for those handling the project.

The parishioners who worshipped at St Mary's mainly go to St Luke's in Wincanton or St Benedict's in Gillingham for Mass but still meet up for a monthly Mass in St Michael's, which is followed by tea, coffee and biscuits generously provided by St Michael's. We are truly grateful for the wonderful welcome we have received from St Michael's and are looking forward to celebrating Mass on the 3rd Tuesday of each month throughout 2025. Our next Mass will be on Tuesday 18th February at 10.30am and all are welcome. We also have a monthly coffee morning at the Hillbrush and continue to be represented on Churches Together in Mere and District.

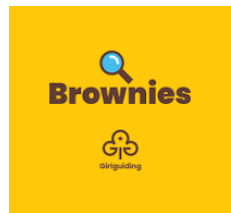
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## 1<sup>st</sup> Mere Brownies are recruiting!

Brownies meet each Thursday evening from 6.15pm – 7.30pm at The Grove Building, Mere.

We run a diverse, fun programme ranging from activities such as making dragons out of recycled objects to tutored painting classes, yoga, pamper nights, woodwork classes, Greek dance classes as well as visits from falconers, dog trainers, hairdressers and historians. We have parties, discos, cinema trips as well as summer camps and various day trips. It is also a great way to meet other children from the local area.

If your daughter is interested in joining our Brownie pack and is aged between 7 – 10 years old, please register your interest at the Girl Guiding website: [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk)



Tor Reynolds – 07764493441 [torreynolds@googlemail.com](mailto:torreynolds@googlemail.com)

## Patients Participation Group (PPG)

PPG is a group of patients who use Mere medical practice and are volunteers. The committee currently comprises eleven people who are listed below. The brief of this committee is to support the surgery and foster communication between practice staff and patients. It is a strictly non-medical brief.

We meet every two or three months and Michele Mason the practice manager always attends with Rachel McCabe-Harrison, the carer's lead and also, when possible, a doctor and a representative from the surgery staff.

Currently this committee is working on ways of raising its profile and assisting the surgery in its need to circulate information to the patients. We are also installing a permanent exhibition of past doctors of Mere – to be displayed in the reception area. We have set up a PPG email for patients wishing to communicate their ideas and views (non-medical) with any of the committee: [mere.ppg@gmx.co.uk](mailto:mere.ppg@gmx.co.uk)

Committee members:

Lucy Woolley (chair) Judy McCulloch (secretary) Judy Stutchbury, Susan Jeans, Geoff Knight, Steven Porter, Ann Courtney, Holly Baker, Julie Williams, Philip Paget, Julia Cole

Lucy Woolley (Chair) [lucywoolley1@gmail.com](mailto:lucywoolley1@gmail.com)

## Volunteering in Zanzibar

I put a piece in Mere Matters last year about my trip. I have now fully paid off the trip through saving and many fundraising opportunities; this would not have been possible without the kindness and generosity of our community.

I would like to firstly thank all the local businesses who donated prizes to my fundraising bingo: Angel Corner Tea Room, Charles Farris, Hayley's Hair Design, Jeans Electricals, Kia Chalke, Mere Fire Station, Sprout and Flower, and Mere Lecture Hall for allowing me to use their facilities.

I would also like to thank Mere Amateur Dramatics Society, specifically the chairman, Les Manwaring, for supporting me and allowing me to have a donation bucket at all the brilliant performances of 'Alice in Blunderland'. I know MADS is keen to know a total of what was raised, and I am overjoyed to say thanks to everyone's kind donations, we raised an impressive total of around £450! Penultimately, I would like to thank Mere PTA for allowing me to have a stall at their Christmas Fair.

Last but by no means least, thank you to everyone who attended these events and supported me, I couldn't have done it without your generosity!



Sophie Miller



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**Karen Lester** ☎ 835012

### **Heather Stone: DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE**

A useful treatment for problems relating to: muscles ~joints~ movement ~ posture~ injuries (old and new) ~ circulation~ hormone balance~ digestion~ nervous system~ or simply for relaxation and wellbeing. Practising at Mere Osteopathy Clinic.

**Heather: 07874 079 913**

## Mere School

It is lovely to share good news about our school with Mere!

During the Christmas break there was some excellent press coverage about our KS2 SATs outcomes.

Government figures were released revealing the best-performing primary schools in the county based on the number of year 6 children who reached the expected standard across reading, writing and maths when assessed at the end of the 2023-24 academic year.

The latest performance figures show 61% of children across England reached the expected standard across those subject areas. In Wiltshire this was only 57%.

The national figure is a small increase on the 60% who reached the expected level in the 2022-23 academic year. However, both represent a decrease on attainment pre COVID when 65% of the 2018-19 cohort attained the expected level of reading, writing and maths.

Girls continue to outperform boys at the expected standards in all subjects except maths, where boys outperformed girls by 1 percentage point.

Mere School's outcomes were excellent with us being in the **top 5 Wiltshire schools with 91%** of our children meeting the required standard in maths, reading and writing.

As well as incredible outcomes we had a very exciting festive period in school. The Friends funded a trip to Salisbury Playhouse for us all to watch Sleeping Beauty and organised a grotto and visit from Father Christmas. Christmas Lunch was delicious – thank you Mrs Gulliver. Families and friends enjoyed our two Christmas performances and our Carol Service in St Michael's Church.

Catriona Williamson



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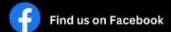
## MERE FOREST CHARITIES - Assistance Available

The charities exist to support those persons resident in the Parishes of Mere and Zeals who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress.

Currently supporting a number of individuals with an annual grant before Christmas, applied for in October. Applications for assistance are welcome at any time during the year. For further details and application form please write and enclose an AS stamped addressed envelope to:

9 Clements Lane, Mere. BA12 6DF

[Mereforest@gmail.com](mailto:Mereforest@gmail.com)



**HILL'S CHIMNEY**  
SWEEPING

**Call Tom on: 07725 354207**

[www.hillschimneysweeping.net](http://www.hillschimneysweeping.net)

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Register here: <http://eepurl.com/i44fBo>



## Fair Trade in Mere

A big Thank You to all my loyal customers who have supported my sales over the difficult year after the demise of Traidcraft - especially before Christmas. I had bumper sales of Christmas Cards which is heartening that people still want to send cards in our digital age. And as always my thanks go to Paul at The Angel Tea Rooms for hosting my Christmas pop-up shop.

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

## Wiltshire Police Come To Mere

The new Wiltshire Police mobile police station made a great effort to attend in the Salisbury Street Car Park, Mere. The team was out in the new mobile police station, all be it improvised as the van was not available on the day. It was advertised on social media that at 10am to 11-30am on Thursday 16th January, 2025 they would be present. I did point out some posters would help when they attend. They will continue to visit village and small town locations as well as community events, inviting the public to speak with local officers and share any concerns.



George Jeans 07710 441599

## Ukes at The Butt of Sherry

Our next session is on Thursday, 13th February at 7.30pm at The Butt of Sherry.



We are a group of ukulele enthusiasts who 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 join us you would be most welcome. Let me know if you would like to come along and we will have a ukulele for you to play. An evening of fun, laughter and

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

Maggie Holmes [maggieholmes101@gmail.com](mailto:maggieholmes101@gmail.com)

## Mere Snooker Club

The club membership has increased consistently since the AIM weekend. Thanks to generous grants from the lecture hall trust and the Nadder trust we have renewed the cushions on one table and we are progressing with the updating of the heaters which should be finished in March.

We welcome all our new members and it is nice to have the club being well used, please contact me if you are interested in playing.

Mike Durkee, Chairman 860163 or [mdurkee51@gmail.com](mailto:mdurkee51@gmail.com)



As those who were able to come will know, we had a wonderful gathering for our joint Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service held at Mere URC at 11am on 19<sup>th</sup> January. The Church was so full that we ran out of hymn books and service sheets and had to share. Grateful thanks to the URC members for being so hospitable and to the Revd Colin Marsh for leading the service and for his thought-provoking sermon.

I hope that service will have inspired a good number of those who attended to come to our AGM to be held at **10.30am on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February**, also at Mere URC. Everyone connected with any of our member churches is welcome to come, including the Roman Catholic community, who, though they no longer have a building of their own, were very well represented at the WPCU service and remain a significant part of our local Churches Together. At the AGM as well as the necessary business, we will reflect on what we have managed to do together in the past year and pray for God's blessing as we plan for the year ahead. Please come if you can to help us do that.

Judith Thompson, Acting Chair 860553



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

Venue Key:

<b>AYP</b> - Andy Young Pavilion	<b>L</b> - Lecture Hall	<b>StM</b> - St Michaels Church
<b>CP</b> - Main (Salisbury St) Car Park	<b>Lib</b> - Library	<b>URC</b> - United Ref Church
<b>Drs</b> - Surgery	<b>MSC</b> - Social Club	<b>VH</b> - Visit Hillbrush
<b>GB</b> - Grove Building	<b>RMC</b> - Castle St Car Park	<b>WT</b> - Walnut Tree Inn

1	Sat	10:30	Coffee Morning (every Sat)	URC
2	Sun			
3	Mon	09:30	Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)	L
			Food Bank	L
		17:45	Yoga (every Mon)	L
		18:00	Scouting (every Mon)	GB
4	Tues	09:30	Little Angels (every Tues)	GB
		19:00	MADS (every Tues)	L
5	Weds	09:30	Tai-Chi (every Weds)	GB
		10:00	Get Wiltshire Walking Group – Starter Walks (every Weds)	CP
		14:00	Pilates (every Weds)	L
		18:30	Karate (every Weds)	L
			<i>Railway Modellers</i>	
6	Thurs	10:00	Art Group (every Thurs)	GB
		10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reformed Church	URC
		10:30	Harmony for Health (every Thurs)	L
		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
		18:00	Yoga (every Thurs)	L
19:00	MADS (every Thurs)	L		
		19:30	Shreen Harmony (every Thurs)	URC
7	Fri	13:45	Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start - every Fri)	GB
			<i>Little Angels</i>	
8	Sat		<i>Coffee Morning</i>	
9	Sun			
10	Mon		<i>Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank</i>	
11	Tues	14:00	Mothers Union	GB
		19:30	Historical Society	GB
			<i>Little Angels,</i>	
12	Weds	14:00	Fitness & Friendship	GB
		19:30	Gardening Club	GB
			<i>Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers</i>	
13	Thurs	19:30	Ukulele	Butt of Sherry
			<i>Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH</i>	

14	Fri	10.00	Merely Women		GB
				Dup Bridge	
15	Sat		Coffee Morning, and Fair-Trade Stall		URC
16	Sun		Fair Trade after morning service		StM
17	Mon			Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
18	Tues			Little Angels, MADS	
19	Weds	19:00	Merekits Women's Institute		GB
				Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
20	Thurs			Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	
21	Fri			Dup Bridge	
22	Sat			Coffee Morning	
23	Sun				
24	Mon	10:30	Historical Society		GB
				Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
25	Tues			Little Angels, MADS	
		14:00	Fitness & Friendship		GB
26	Weds	14:30	Pennybank Writers		L
				Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
27	Thurs			Rhyme Time, Art, Quilters, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	
		10.00	Merely Women		GB
28	Fri	19:00	CineClub		GB
				Dup Bridge	

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

## Mere Theatre Club

By now all 2025 subscriptions should be paid. If you haven't paid but would like to remain a member, or become a member, please get in touch and check your junk box!

We're all booked up and off to a musical in February and a drama in March.

The spring programme will be out around the time you read this with more theatre outings and a non theatre outing - if you'd like to know where, do get in touch, details below.

Madeline Morris 07481-555101 [madsmorris@gmail.com](mailto:madsmorris@gmail.com)

## 2<sup>ND</sup> Update on Clubs and Groups in Mere follows:



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## Art Group

Helge Brock 01747 861972 [helgewallenbrock@gmail.com](mailto:helgewallenbrock@gmail.com)

Thursdays 10:00 – 12:00 Grove Building £2.50 per week

Come and join us and enjoy a couple of hours of art. This is an opportunity to learn some new techniques and to meet with kindred spirits. We have occasional instruction sessions where members may join in if they wish. We have a small selection of material available to get you going and advice on how to get started. Needless to say, refreshments and a chat are on hand as well.

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## Castle Hill Quilters

[castlehillquilters.org.uk](http://castlehillquilters.org.uk)

Coral Pickles 01373 827483 [coral.pickles@virginmedia.com](mailto:coral.pickles@virginmedia.com)

Thursdays 14:00 – 16:30 Grove Building

We are a friendly group of like-minded people who enjoy quilting and creative stitching using a variety of fabrics, threads and embellishment. We have visiting speakers, demonstrations and workshops organised by our committee and we offer group projects if you wish to participate in them. We welcome members of all ages and levels of competence as there are plenty of members willing to share their knowledge with less experienced quilters.

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## Cine-Club Mere

[cineclubmere.org.uk](http://cineclubmere.org.uk)

Rosie Jordan-Barr [membership@cineclubmere.org.uk](mailto:membership@cineclubmere.org.uk)

A new club aiming to show a wide variety of films and also with discussions and talks. The Club usually meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month excluding August and December in the Grove Building. Annual Membership is £10 with £6 per showing.

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## Croquet & Boule Club

Jill Beadle [jill49jim@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jill49jim@hotmail.co.uk)

Sat & Sun 14:00 Top of Steep Street

A group of people who like having fun playing these games in the fresh air.

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## Duplicate Bridge

Peter Landymore [plandymore@outlook.com](mailto:plandymore@outlook.com)

Every Friday 13:00 Grove Building

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## Food Bank – Mere & Zeals

Anne Rich 07413 512023 [arich4@icloud.com](mailto:arich4@icloud.com)

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Fresh food stalls: Mondays/Saturdays Families first: 10:30 -11:00 Open until 16:30 Saturdays – Open air at Ivymead – approach to Mere School. Mondays in the Lecture Hall

All welcome through a swap system for long life items. Donations: Mere Co-operative collection box. In affiliation with Warminster and Gillingham Foodbank we organise vouchers, collection or deliveries of food parcels - if you are in need of support, please ring Anne.

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## Friends of Mere Museum [meremuseum.org](http://meremuseum.org)

John Jordan [john.a.jordan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:john.a.jordan@hotmail.co.uk)

£10 (adult), £15 (family), £1 (children), £25 (corp) p.a.

We exist to raise funds for the Museum which has no other source of income. We hold preview evenings with refreshments exclusively for Friends before all new exhibitions. We also organise fundraising talks from experts on subjects ranging from history to art and archaeology, quizzes along with our famous Plant Sale. Leaflets and membership forms are available in the Library.

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## Friends of St Michaels

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

£7.00 p.a or £50 life membership

We are a registered charity to raise funds for the preservation, repair and maintenance of the fabric and furnishing of the Church of St. Michaels the Archangel, Mere, to promote its use as a place for worship and community events and to promote the appreciation of the building as one of architectural and historical interest. We raise money through subscription, concerts in the Church, social events, and the Open Gardens Scheme. You do not have to be a member of the congregation to be a Friend. Leaflets are available in the Church.

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## Girl Guiding

Thursday Evening (Term Time Only) Grove Building

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## Heathy Mere Walking [hmw.org.uk](http://hmw.org.uk)

John Jordan 861567 [john.a.jordan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:john.a.jordan@hotmail.co.uk)

No membership or regular meetings

We organise events which encourage walking in the Parish and raise funds for projects related to healthy walking. We provide information about walking and local walks.

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## Karate

Peter Manning Lecture Hall

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## Link Scheme for Mere & District

[merelink.org.uk](http://merelink.org.uk)

John Fitzgerald

860096

[fitzgerald.jns@sky.com](mailto:fitzgerald.jns@sky.com)

The Link Scheme is a charity whose volunteer drivers help people in Mere and surrounding villages to get to medical appointments (doctor, hospital, dentist, optician, audiologist etc.) and, where resources permit, shopping or daytime social events. There is no charge but passengers are asked to make a donation to help meet our costs. Drivers give their time for free and are reimbursed 45p/mile to help meet their vehicle costs. To arrange a trip or to volunteer please call.

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## Literary Festival

[mereliteraryfestival.com](http://mereliteraryfestival.com)

07940 381004

[contact@mereliteraryfestival.com](mailto:contact@mereliteraryfestival.com)

Annual event

The venues vary, from pubs, a variety of churches, and perhaps the Grove Buildings – shown in programme. Annual event in October, ticket prices vary and are shown in the programme and website.

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## Mere & District Chamber of Trade

[merechamberoftrade.co.uk](http://merechamberoftrade.co.uk)

The Chamber has two objectives; to encourage, support, and further the interests of all sizes of businesses in and around Mere, and to encourage tourism and community benefit. We cover Zeals to Maiden Bradley, West Knoyle to the Dorset border. Each year we host a number of business and networking meetings, giving members the opportunity to meet and benefit from talks on current issues. We provide training courses either directly or through other providers and have access to business, marketing, and financial advice. There is a modest annual membership fee. Our website provides a free online directory of local businesses.

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## Mere Gardening Club

[meregardenclub.org.uk](http://meregardenclub.org.uk)

Les Manwaring

861941

[lesmanwaring@yahoo.com](mailto:lesmanwaring@yahoo.com)

2nd Weds of each month 19:30 Grove Building £12 p.a. (from Jan 24)

We have informal talks, outings and a social each year running from February to November. Membership gives you discounts at some of our local garden centres. There is no age limit, new members are welcome.

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## Mere Footpaths Group

Alan Mead

861567

[facebook.com/MereFootpathGroup](https://facebook.com/MereFootpathGroup)

Weekly - Thursday morning

We work on maintaining the rights-of-way in and around Mere each week, clearing, repairing or replacing stiles and kissing gates, weather permitting. Contact us through our facebook page.

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### Mere Historical Society

[merehistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://merehistoricalsociety.org.uk)

Peter Landymore 228819 [plandymore@outlook.com](mailto:plandymore@outlook.com)

1st Tues 10:00 & 19:30 (Winter) Grove Building £10 p.a

Talks covering all aspects of general and local history. We also run relevant visits by coach during the summer (at cost). Non-members always welcome to talks for a small donation (just show up) and on our trips at a supplement. See website for past programmes and copies of our newsletters. Updates also appear in Mere Matters. New members welcome.

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### Mere Amateur Dramatic Society – MADS

[www.mereamdram.co.uk](http://www.mereamdram.co.uk)

Mary White 861257 [twhite615@btinternet.com](mailto:twhite615@btinternet.com)

2nd Mon of each mth at 19:30 Lecture Hall £10 adult, £1 junior p.a

We've been going strong since 1947, with two productions a year. We have a wide membership, both young and old with diverse skills and talents. Tuesday and Thursday evenings when we're rehearsing. We welcome everyone, whether keen to tread the boards or to work backstage.

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### Mere Bowls Club

[hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/information](http://hugofox.com/community/mere-bowls-club-10160/information)

Don Butchers 860775 [don.butchers@btinternet.com](mailto:don.butchers@btinternet.com)

Tues & Thurs 17:30, Sat 15:00 The Green £35 p.a. for 1st year £60 after first year

The Club is located at The Green, Springfield Road, Mere, BA12 6EW. Potential new members are offered three free sessions and are then asked to join the Club. We currently have around 50 members. There is no age limit and your ability to hold and deliver a bowl is the only criteria for joining.

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### Mere Carnival

Mel Wilkinson [melvinwilkinson@gmail.com](mailto:melvinwilkinson@gmail.com)

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### Mere Cricket Club

Mark Cassidy 07763 001119 [markcassidy661@btinternet.com](mailto:markcassidy661@btinternet.com)

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### Mere Jelly

Jenni Bell 07956-869699 [jenni@sugarweb.co](mailto:jenni@sugarweb.co)

Last Weds of each month, 09:30 – 12:00 Brush & Broom Café, Hillbrush

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## Mere Matters

Richard Jefferies                      07950 797273                      [editor@merematters.co.uk](mailto:editor@merematters.co.uk)

10 Monthly publications (combined December/January & July/August)    Free

The publications are financed by advertising and donations. They are seen as an essential means of communicating within the community in regard events and news. The centre fold usually carries a monthly diary of all activities

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## Mere Museum

[meremuseum.org](http://meremuseum.org)

Rose Heesom                      07791 559 674                      [roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk)

Opening times as per Mere Library (Same building)

The Museum gives an insight to Mere and the local villages with 3/4 exhibitions each year. Local information and researches can be undertaken.

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## Mere Rivers Group

Ian Sheppard                      [ianjsheppard@outlook.com](mailto:ianjsheppard@outlook.com)

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## Mere Mortals Petanque Club

Colin Senneck                      706008                      [colin2423@sky.com](mailto:colin2423@sky.com)

Tuesday 18:00 (light permitting), Wednesday 14.30, Saturday 10.30am

Old swimming pool site, next to Mere Primary School    £10 adult/yr. Under 18's free

A friendly club open to all abilities. Boule and instruction provided. 1 team currently in the Nadder & Stour Petanque League.

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## Mere Short Walks

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

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## Mere Social Club

Elaine                      [elainelaurence57@gmail.com](mailto:elainelaurence57@gmail.com)

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## Mere Snooker Club

Mike Durkee                      860163                      [mdurkee51@gmail.com](mailto:mdurkee51@gmail.com)

Castle Street

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## Mere Theatre Club

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

Membership £5 per annum

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We organise trips to theatres within approximately a 2 hour coach drive from Mere, throughout the year. We usually attend matinees and sometimes arrange a lunch beforehand. We always provide transport. New members always welcome.

## Mere Town Council

Lindsey Wood Town Clerk 860701

[lindseywood@merewilts.org](mailto:lindseywood@merewilts.org)

Mere Town Council, Duchy Manor, Springfield Road BA12 6EW

## Merekits - Women's Institute

Verena Cooper

07971-790256

[verenacooper2@gmail.com](mailto:verenacooper2@gmail.com)

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month in the Grove Building from 7pm to 9pm. The WI gives ladies an opportunity to meet likeminded people and make new friends locally. There's always something happening for both nationally and locally in the WI for you to participate in as much or as little as you would like. There is a varied programme of events throughout the year including talks and demonstrations as well as many activities outside of meetings such as walks; meals out; book club; craft group; skittles as well as trips to the local theatres and places of interest.

## Merely Women

Jean Eyles

863450

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fri 10:00 (not Aug)

Grove Building

Meeting donations

A group for ladies, meeting friends and making new ones. We have various activities, speakers and discussions covering both serious and more light-hearted topics, plus the occasional coach trip and arranged lunch. At every meeting, there is always tea, coffee and biscuits, along with a lot of chat and laughter. All ladies, either new or established residents, are most welcome to attend.

## Mothers Union

Carol Lord

685429

[carol@thelordfamily.com](mailto:carol@thelordfamily.com)

2nd Tues of each month in the Grove Building

## Pennybank Writers

Adrienne Howell

860475

[howellatmere@aol.com](mailto:howellatmere@aol.com)

Last Weds of the month 14:30 - 16:30

Lecture Hall

£12 p.a

A long-established group for those interested in the art of writing either for pleasure or profit, poetry or prose. We are a mixed group of writers both experienced and beginners and would welcome new members. We workshop



exercises, discuss, encourage, advise, share information on writing topics and participate in literary events.

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## Pilates

Jackie Loader

[wellbalanced@btinternet.com](mailto:wellbalanced@btinternet.com)

Tues 13:00 – 14:00

Grove Building

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## Railway Modellers

Graham Avory

[graham.avory@btopenworld.com](mailto:graham.avory@btopenworld.com)

Every Weds evening 19:00 – 21:00 Castle Street Car Park. Annual membership is £55 for all of the family or just single. Summer membership from April to October is £30.

The club aims to develop friendships amongst members, which creates interaction on all topics of model railways and the running of the club. The joint construction of model railways, of varying gauges, offers much in the way of learning from more experienced members and the opportunity, with one's own growing experience, to educate and encourage other and less experienced members.

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## Rosemary Goddard Centre

Sandie Hawkins

07835 272406

[rgcorganiser@outlook.com](mailto:rgcorganiser@outlook.com)

Mon & Fri 10.00 – 15:00

We are a registered charity whose aim is to reduce loneliness and isolation for elderly people from the locality. The Centre provides a safe and sociable environment for people aged over 60 to meet, enjoy a hot nutritious meal, stimulating activities and entertainments, plus the occasional outing chosen by the guests. Sessions run under the supervision of the organiser, enthusiastically supported by volunteers who assist with activities and help serve meals and drinks

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## Rummikub Group

Avril Fletcher

861285

[avril.fletcher52@gmail.com](mailto:avril.fletcher52@gmail.com)

Every Tues at 14:30

Lordsmead Barn, Edgebridge

£2 per session

A group of friendly ladies who enjoy getting together to play and chat

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## Shreen Harmony

Sandra Fisher

861980

[delfisher@btopenworld.com](mailto:delfisher@btopenworld.com)

Thursday Evenings

Usually in the United Reform Church

Shreen Harmony is a community choir based in Mere, Wiltshire. Under the musical directorship of Caroline Radcliffe, the choir meet during term time and perform

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throughout the year in the local area at different events, ranging from church fetes to more established organised gatherings, like fundraising concerts for local churches, the annual fundraising concert in aid of the Alzheimer's Society and a Christmas Concert in aid of a different charity each year. The choir sing a variety of musical genres from all around the world, including traditional British, African, Eastern European, Spiritual and American folk, fun being at the heart of it all. There is a wonderfully informal attitude in the group and there is no audition. Please contact Judy Fray for further information.

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### Cubs & Beavers

Garry Edwards (Cubs)    07958 529406    [c.edwards761@btinternet.com](mailto:c.edwards761@btinternet.com)  
 Mon evenings school term only    Grove Building

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### Tai Chi for Health

Sue Marks    631672    [bmmarks9575@btinternet.com](mailto:bmmarks9575@btinternet.com)  
 Weds 09:30    Grove Building

Tai chi is a very gentle exercise which helps improve balance, coordination, wellbeing, memory and helps prevent falls. It helps to encourage good posture in our daily life. Exercise can be seated or standing

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### Tiddlers & Toddlers

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

£1.50 per child over 1 year old.

Mondays term time: 09:30 -11:30    Lecture Hall

Drop-in session with toys, crafts, snacks and drinks included. Great place to meet and socialise. Foodbank at the end of each session.

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### Traidcraft

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

Monthly stalls    St Michaels Church & URC Coffee mornings

Various sales throughout the year. Orders can be made from the catalogue at any time

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### Ukulele at the Butt of Sherry

Maggie Holmes    [maggieholmes101@gmail.com](mailto:maggieholmes101@gmail.com)

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END OF SUPPLEMENT

## Mere & District Link Scheme

The Link Scheme is a local charity and our volunteer drivers primarily take clients to medical appointments.

In 2024 our volunteer drivers took 266 people (236 in 2023) from Mere and surrounding villages on 1,285 trips (1,094 in 2023) plus we did 52 medicine delivery runs for people in local villages. We covered a total of 50,773 miles (46,121 in 2023) in our own cars and gave up 4,283 hours (4,057 in 2023) of our own time for free. A big thank you to all our volunteers for this phenomenal service to our local community.

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, please try to give us a minimum of 48 hours notice (not including Saturdays and Sundays) as we cannot guarantee our co-ordinator will be at home to arrange last minute requests. If you have to leave a message please do so slowly and clearly.

New drivers are always welcome. Why not make a late New Year's resolution to find out more about volunteering as a driver by calling our co-ordinator on 01747 860096.

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

## Mere Jelly



Why is your group called a "Jelly". This is a question which is always asked!

Jelly was established in 2006 when two New York freelancers were talking about one of the major drawbacks of working alone; namely the lack of company. They decided to invite a group of freelancers to bring their laptops and work together in their apartment for the day, and called it Jelly as they were eating Jelly

beans at the time! Jelly started in the UK in the autumn of 2009 when events were set up in the Bristol area and we are very pleased to continue this resource for business owners, home workers and creatives in Mere and the surrounding areas.

We meet at The Brush and Broom at Hillbrush on the last Wednesday of the month, from 9am to noon.

Jenni Bell 07956-869699 [www.sugarweb.co/mere-networking/](http://www.sugarweb.co/mere-networking/)

## Philip Coward, Chairman of Hillbrush Company takes the lead at Wiltshire Bobby Van trust



**THE WILTSHIRE BOBBY VAN TRUST**  
Registered Charity No: 1153790

Mr Coward, who is chairman of one of the world's leading brush makers, Hillbrush in Mere, takes on the role from Robert Hiscox, who has stepped down after 25 years to become Honorary Lifetime President.

He is also set to become chairman of the Royal Warrant Holders Charity in April.

Our charity, which works in partnership with Wiltshire Police, has three vans operated by former police officers who visit homes across Wiltshire and Swindon. They offer and fit home security measures and fire safety assessments for people over 60, those at risk of domestic abuse or over 18 with a registered disability. The service is completely free.



"I just want to make sure that the charity at least carries on but then keeps growing," he said. "We have to ensure we've got sustainable fundraising because that's the most important thing, if you can't fundraise, the whole thing dies."

"I would like to reduce the six-week waiting time for visits, which is not really right. It shouldn't be more than two or three weeks really."

Find out more about the work of the charity at [wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk](http://wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk).

01225 256867 [BobbyVan@wbvt.org](mailto:BobbyVan@wbvt.org) [wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk](http://wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk)

## Walking In Mere (All ages are welcome to join in all of these walks)

### Short Walk:

Meet at 2p.m. in the surgery car park on Wednesday 12th February for a winter walk of a few miles around our lanes and paths and warm up with a welcome cuppa at The Angel Tea Rooms.

Janet Way 860884

### The Mere Walking Group (Sunday afternoons, 3 to 5 miles):

Will have a meeting at The George, 7pm, on Thursday Feb 13<sup>th</sup> to plan our walks for 2025, come along, with or without a walk, for a social get-together.

Roger Laidler 07749 230894

### "Get Wiltshire Walking":

Every Wednesday, a short 45 minute flat walk for those people who wish to become more active or are recovering from surgery, illness or injury. The walks finish with a visit to The Angel Tea Rooms. Meet by the surgery in the car park at 10am.

Dave & Wendy Drewett 07508 340105

## Merekits - Women's Institute

Merekits WI December meeting allowed all members to have some festive fun with seasonal quiz and a lovely buffet. In the tradition of a party, we even had a "Pass the parcel", with one member winning a gin selection box.

At our January meeting, we heard about the origins and work of the Fairtrade charity which was both fascinating and informative. We had the opportunity to purchase beautiful Fairtrade goods and also enjoyed some Fairtrade wines accompanied by cheese and biscuits.

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month in the Grove Building from 7pm to 9pm. New ladies are always welcome to come along to any meeting to find out more about us. The WI gives ladies an opportunity to meet likeminded people and make new friends locally. There's always something happening for both nationally and locally in the WI for you to participate in as much or as little as you would like. There is a varied programme of events throughout the year including talks and demonstrations as well as many activities outside of meetings such as walks; meals out; book club; craft group; skittles as well as trips to the local theatres and places of interest.

Our next meeting will be on **19th February** where we will be giving walking netball a go – do come along and join us!

Verena Cooper 07971-790256 [verenacooper2@gmail.com](mailto:verenacooper2@gmail.com)

## Mere Gardening Club.

Another year has started and its time to get your gardens ready for the coming season. Spring is around the corner and now is a good time to start some of your seeds.

The Club enjoyed an excellent talk by John Colten at its last meeting; it was very kind of John to stand in at the last minute for our cancelled original speaker. The speaker at the next meeting (**12 February**) is well known horticulturist **Martin Young** from Weymouth, his talk is titled "**Looking forward to Spring**".

We have a full diary of events for the ensuing twelve months including a visit to RHS Rose-moor. Our popular scarecrow festival/competition returns in June with a theme of **Historical Characters** so that it will tie in nicely with the Tower Stories. Look out for further details.

The Mere Gardening Club committee have decided to re-open membership of the club. If you would like to join please come along to the Club Annual General Meeting on **Wednesday 12 March** or call Les Manwaring.

All our meetings take place on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the Grove Building starting with refreshments at 7pm and the speaker at 7.30pm. Guests are most welcome to attend any of our meetings at a cost of £5.00.

Les Manwaring Chair 861941 [lesmanwaring@yahoo.com](mailto:lesmanwaring@yahoo.com)





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## Mere Social Club

A belated Happy New Year to you all and a big Welcome to any new club members.

Our opening hours are now as follows Monday – Friday 18.00 -23.30,

Saturday 18.00 – 00.00, Sunday 15.00 – 21.00. (On the days that Mere Town Football club play at home, we will be open from half-time onwards)

Live entertainment this month is provided by the band **Sitting Ducks**. This event is open to all so come along and join us for a good evening on **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**.

Elaine Laurence, club steward [elainelaurence57@gmail.com](mailto:elainelaurence57@gmail.com)

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## Mere Amateur Dramatic Society (MADS)

We are delighted to tell you that MADS is now well into rehearsals for our Spring Production which is a comedy drama entitled 'Lucky Balls' by Louise Roche. It takes place at a wedding reception where nine guests are the victims of a bad seating plan. But when one of them suggests buying a Lottery ticket - for which they all chip in - and their numbers come up, the trouble really starts! What happens next? Come and find out! Performances are in Mere Lecture Hall on Thursday 27th, Friday 28th and Saturday 29th March at 7.30 p.m. with a matinee on Saturday 29th at 2.30 p.m. Tickets are priced at £10 and will be available towards the end of February from The Library, Sprout and Flower and the Angel Tea Rooms, or by telephoning 07539 329798 to reserve tickets. They will also be available on the door, if any are left!

All of us at MADS would like to thank our wonderfully appreciative audiences who filled not only the marvelous Forest Forge Production of 'A Humbug Christmas Carol' in January but also all performances of our pantomime 'Alice in Blunderland' in November, also for their generosity in the donations made at those performances towards our young Sophie Miller's Zanzibar expedition later this year. We all look forward to hearing about her adventures on her return.

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

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## Mothers Union

Our January meeting was very well attended and we enjoyed an extremely interesting talk by Reverend Rodney Baxendale on his experience as a Chaplain in The Royal Navy.

**Our February Meeting will be held on the 11<sup>th</sup> at 2.30 pm** in The Grove Building. Carol and Vicky our Leader will be inviting you to make a Quilted Mug Rug for those necessary warm drinks at this time of the year. A lot of preparation has been done to make this easy and good fun. If you would like to do something different, we have some ideas to be shared at the meeting. We have a short service before our sewing and then refreshments after.

We look forward to seeing many of you again for a very sociable and enjoyable afternoon. For any enquiries, please contact us.

Vicky Goodfellow 840443 or Carol Lord 685429.

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Nick 07702 363672

Copy date for **March** issue

Closing deadline is: **16:00hrs on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies 863425  
[editor@merematters.co.uk](mailto:editor@merematters.co.uk) or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

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



## Mere Carnival Committee

Please, allow me first of all, to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.

We managed after all to have a great carnival last year; but I really am of the opinion it will be the last we see in Mere. As you know we have for a few years now been trying to recruit volunteers for the Committee but I am afraid that with the passing of time even with those who have been so dedicated over the years, our number has reached a level that means it is simply not viable to continue. At the end of March we have to report back to the Town Council at their AGM, however if we do not have volunteers by then, I'm afraid we will not be able to continue.

We are in desperate need of: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and a Public Relations Officer. In addition, we need people to help these people at events and indeed on the Carnival Day itself. We need volunteers to do many other bits and pieces throughout the year because Carnival is not just one day, we also do events fund raising.

Please be aware that there is support available for all of these positions both physical and in terms of documentation and instructions which will be made available. All the procedures are in place with electronic and paper instructions held centrally.

The committee meets every second Tuesday in the month so please contact us if you can help.

We will be advertising around Mere and on Social Media etc. so please either contact me at the email below or [secretary@merecarnival.co.uk](mailto:secretary@merecarnival.co.uk) or [treasurer@merecarnival.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@merecarnival.co.uk)

Please just remember "Mere Carnival Needs You"

Mel Wilkinson. Mere Carnival Chairman

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## From Times Gone By!

We had a very heavy fall of snow on Friday night last, and so great was the drift in the neighbourhood of Hindon and Mere that eight coaches travelling that road were blocked up together at the former place, until a passage could be cut through the snow for a mile and a half. The passengers by one of these coaches suffered much from the cold, remaining so long unassisted. On Marlborough Down the snow drifted in some places, on Saturday morning, to the height of 12 or 14 feet; the road was altogether undistinguishable, and nearly impassable; but through the persevering efforts the driver and guard of the Bath mail, that coach arrived within half hour of its regular time. The True Blue Coach, unable to make its way, had been abandoned.

Salisbury & Wilts Journal, 8 February 1821

The Very Rev. the Dean of Salisbury has given a piece of land, in the parish of Mere, in this county, for a site for a National School, which is about to be erected in that extensive parish. [The school building referred to now houses the library.]

Salisbury & Wilts Journal, 8 February 1841

Martyn Beardsley

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### *The Garden Café*

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## Mere Mortals Petanque Club

At the recent AGM of Mere Mortals Petanque Club, slow growth in member numbers was reported with 16 paid up, a few juniors and some prospective members. At least one team will be entered in the local Nadder & Stour League in the summer. Play continues all the year round (rain permitting) on Tuesdays at 6pm (when the clocks spring forward), Wednesdays at 2.30pm and Saturdays at 10.30am. However the terrain is a public facility and open for play whenever anyone cares to use it.



Colin Senneck 706008 [colin2423@sky.com](mailto:colin2423@sky.com)

## Mere Rivers Group

Both the Ashfield and Shreen flowed well and coped with the flood waters, although parts of the bank in the upper Shreen washed away and caused a wall to fall.

It will be interesting to see the effect of a continuous stream flow when both streams in the past have had periods of dry due to over abstraction.

Still a lot of fish, Bullheads and Sticklebacks, both the Egret and Kingfisher have had plenty of food.

December marked a shift away from the wetter weather of the previous three months with an average of 54mm of rainfall across Wessex, 58% of the long-term average (LTA). Despite the drier end to the year, 2024 was the fifth wettest year on record since 1871. Soil moisture deficit (SMD) remained close to zero during December. In river catchments on the Chalk most monthly mean flows recorded were notably high except on the Dorset Stour which recorded normal mean flows. Monthly mean flows recorded across all catchments not on the Chalk aquifer were normal. Groundwater sites monitoring to the north of Wessex reported notably high and exceptionally high levels at the end of December while those further south including sites monitoring the Chalk reported either normal or above normal levels. Reservoirs ended December at around 99% capacity and 94% capacity for Wessex Water and Bristol Water respectively. For Wessex Water this was similar to levels this time the previous year. Bristol Water levels were slightly lower than they were in December 2023.

Let's hope for a normal spring,( whatever that is)!

Ian Sheppard [ianjsheppard@outlook.com](mailto:ianjsheppard@outlook.com)

## Shreen Harmony

Thank you to everyone who came and supported us at our Christmas Concert.

With your help we were able to raise £617 for Seeds4Success.

We are back now learning new songs ready for our concert in May, rehearsals are every Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m. in the United Reformed Church. All are welcome to join us.

Sandra Fisher 861980 [www.shreenharmony.co.uk](http://www.shreenharmony.co.uk)



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## Mere Art Group

2025 has started with a significant increase in charges for occupying The Grove Building. The Arts Group plays a Community-role in Mere, and collectively we believe it is very important to maintain 'status quo' in The Grove Building, rather than moving to a lower-priced establishment. So we have split the new costs: £4.00 for the room per session, and an extra £1.00 for



Tea/Coffee/Refreshments (if required). Tom Beall proposed this 'splitting' solution. The first-session for new Artists remains free.

The Art sessions for both weeks in 2025 have been well attended, which is great.

The "Car-Boot" Sale, intended for March, has been postponed for the time-being. Please keep collecting your items for when it happens.

The Artwork presented this month is a first product for 2025. It was done by Bob Stevens using acrylic paint - it looks like Spring, which is just around the corner - thank goodness!

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

## CineClub Mere

CineClub's first movie is a sell-out

More than 100 cinema enthusiasts have joined CineClub Mere since its launch in December. And the inaugural film show, Cinema Paradiso on January 27, just after this edition of Mere Matters closed for press, was a sell-out.



"The film, set in Sicily just after World War 2, is about how a young boy fell in love with movies at the local cinema in his small village, and we couldn't think of a better way to get our programme for our first season under way -- so we're delighted at how well the launch has been received," said the club's joint chair Rosie Jordan-Barr.

The club has had huge support throughout its set-up, including from the team at Grove Building where the films will be shown; from a number of founder members; from David Bell for the website; Richard Jefferies for the logo; and by way of a grant from the Wessex Water Foundation Community Fund, managed by Wiltshire Community Foundation - which is being used to develop the way information about the club is made available to those in the community who are not internet users.

Films will be shown monthly, on the fourth Friday of each month. February's film is the 2024 comedy action-drama Thelma (2024).

For more information visit [www.cineclubmere.org.uk](http://www.cineclubmere.org.uk)

Rosie Jordan-Barr [rjordanbarr@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rjordanbarr@hotmail.co.uk)

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## Historical Society

We will be having two talks in February.

On **TUESDAY 11th February at 7.30pm** Graham Avory will recount the story of "The Seaton Tramway ". This narrow-gauge track in the Axe valley in East Devon was doomed to oblivion until....(see next month's exciting episode).

On an even more local note, on **MONDAY 24th February at 10.30am** Adrienne Howell BEM will offer "A Mere Family Story – the Laurences of Old Hollow ".

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.

Peter Landymore, Chair: 228819 Diane Ellis, Secretary: 861541

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## Mere Amateur Dramatic Society (MADS)

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

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## Mere Day Centre

If you don't already follow our FaceBook page please look us up (Mere Day Centre). We have lots 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 couple of 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 help during the session every Monday afternoon (12:30-3pm), please call/email if you can help us out.

Sandie Hawkins 07835-272406

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## Church Contact and Service Details

The Parish Church St Michael's the Archangel:

Vicar: The Rev'd Michael Molano 07396 979448

Churchwardens: Mr Kit Stallard 07803-086161 Mr Richard Wilson 07966-244373

Admin Secretary: [administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk](mailto:administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk)

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Family Candlemas Service with Communion
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:30	Parish Communion
16 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	10:30	Parish Communion
21 <sup>st</sup>	Tues	10:30	Roman Catholic Mass
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Sun	10:30	Parish Communion

West Knoyle Parish Church St Mary the Virgin:

Vicar: The Rev'd Michael Molano 07396 979448

Churchwardens: Mrs Jill Randall 830534 Sir Charles Burnett 01747 812089

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sun	09.30	DIY Service
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Communion
16 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Matins
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Sun	09:30	Communion

The United Reformed Church

Minister: Vacancy

Mere Contact: Elaine Laurence 07403-845711 [elainelaurence57@gmail.com](mailto:elainelaurence57@gmail.com)

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sun	11:00	Mrs Jane Hurd
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	Mr Dudley Coates
16 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	Rev Patricia Dent
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Sun	11:00	Mrs Christine Marsh



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](mailto:hope.stlukeswincanton@outlook.com)

Mass at St Michael the Archangel usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 10.30am but please check with John FitzGerald

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

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](http://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.

'Craft and Chat' Sessions at Mere Library are moving from Friday to Tuesday Mornings 10.30 -12.00 as from Tuesday the 3rd of September.

Bring Along your Knitting, Crochet or other Craft projects to the library and meet other Friendly, Creative People.

For more Information, call 860546

Sally-Ann, Mere Senior Library Assistant 860546

## Booking Meeting Venues

<b>Grove Building:</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk">admin@grovebuildingmere.org.uk</a>	<b>07714-718625</b>
<b>Lecture Hall:</b>	Sally Johnson	861063
<b>URC Church Hall:</b>	Mrs E Laurence	07403-845711

## THE MERE LECTURE HALL TRUST

### Grants Available for 2025

This independent Christian Trust was established in 1924 to promote the spiritual, moral, educational and social welfare of the inhabitants of the town of Mere and the surrounding area. The Trust supports a number of small schemes, charities and voluntary groups with grants for practical action.

The Trust is benevolent in a broad sense and seeks to help people of all ages to enjoy facilities they would not otherwise be able to access. It operates within a Christian ethos for the benefit of the whole community and welcomes a wide range of creative initiatives.

Applications for grant support are now invited for activities or projects based within 8 miles of Mere. The closing date is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and successful applicants will normally be paid within two months of this date.

For further details and an application form please either send an email request to [t.white615@btinternet.com](mailto:t.white615@btinternet.com) or write enclosing an A5 stamped and addressed envelope to: The Grants Committee, The Mere Lecture Hall Trust, c/o Monkswell Cottage, Mill Lane, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6DA.

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### Castle Hill Quilters

During Creative Mere Castle Hill Quilters raffled a quilt made and donated by one of our members, Kay Proctor.

The raffle was drawn on 5th December the winner was Brian Robinson of Mere.

Brian was delighted to have won the quilt and appreciated the time and work involved in making the it as his mother had been involved with crafting.



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*Lamb Croquette* with a harissa yogurt & chimichurri

*Crispy Burrata* with romesco sauce, basil oil (v)

*Mushroom Bruschetta*, oven-roasted mushrooms in a creamy white wine sauce, served on homemade garlic bread (v)(gfa)

*Sweet Potato & Coconut Soup*, served with toasted focaccia bread (v)(gfa)(vg)

## THE MAIN EVENT

*Salmon & Pea Gnocchi*, flaked salmon  
& garden peas served in a creamy white wine sauce

*Chorizo Passion Pizza*, hand-stretched sourdough pizza,  
San Marzano tomatoes, fior di latte mozzarella, & sliced chorizo

*Steak Frites*, sirloin steak, with rosemary salted French fries,  
a rocket salad & pink peppercorn butter - £3 supplement (gf)

*Smoked Duck Salad*, prosciutto ham, walnuts, caramelised figs,  
& micro leaves, with a Grana Padano sauce

*Paneer Butter Chicken* with pilau rice & homemade Naan (v)

*Mushroom Cassoulet*, slow-cooked bean stew  
with mixed mushrooms, topped with sourdough croutes (vg) (v) (gfa)

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*Cheesecake*, with strawberry coulis & citrus crème fraîche

*Strawberry Panna Cotta* (gf)

*Steamed Chocolate Pudding* with vanilla custard

*Cinnamon-Spiced Apple Crumble*  
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