

# Mere matters

& so does  
West Knoyle

April 2025

Your community magazine  
Including a guide to local events



### The Tower pre-school fun party

April 1st 9.30 - 12.00 at Grove Building

A special Tower Stories party for pre-school children and their parents and child-minders. From Diddy Cars to Magicians, from crafts to face painting and not forgetting taking away your very own Paddington Bear! And of course, plenty of hot drinks and cakes for adults.



### Meet the Restoration team

April 3rd 19.00 - 20.30 at St Michaels's Church

Meet the experts who restored the Church Tower. Brian Watts (Church Architect), Leigh Dawson (Gilder) and Pete Michell and Marc Rose (scaffolders) tell the story of the restoration of St Michael's Church Tower 2024. Also see Steve Hawkins' magnificent photographs of the restoration.



### Training for new Tower guides

April 8th 19.00 - 21.00 or May 10th 10.00 - 12.00  
at St Michaels's Church

With the Tower restored more people are asking to know about Mere's heritage. We require more Tower guides to help us explain the heritage of the Church and help unlock the mysteries of the Tower. If you would like to join our team of tower guides and helpers please contact [elaine@thetowerstories.co.uk](mailto:elaine@thetowerstories.co.uk)

For our latest information go to  
[www.thetowerstories.co.uk](http://www.thetowerstories.co.uk)



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ST. MICHAEL'S  
CHURCH

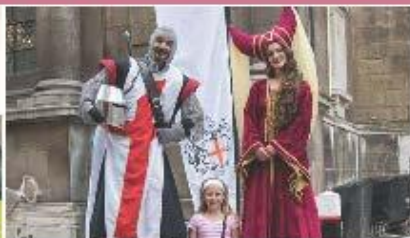


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10:30 - 17:00 JUNE 21ST  
NO NEED TO BOOK. ENTRY FREE

## MERE'S MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL OF FUN!



A SIMPLY EXTRAORDINARY DAY FOR ALL AGES

TO CELEBRATE OUR MEDIEVAL TOWER BEING RESTORED WE WILL BE TAKING MERE BACK TO MEDIEVAL TIMES WITH JESTERS, FIRE EATERS, HUMAN STATUES, KNIGHTS, MINSTRELS, FIGHTING KNIGHTS, SWORD SCHOOL, STILT WALKERS, COOKING DISPLAYS, EXHIBITIONS AND MUCH, MUCH MORE. MERE WILL HAVE THE MEDIEVAL DAY OF ITS LIFE.

During the day our Writer in Residence Jane Borodale will be giving readings from her stories that she has based on the Tower histories and Richard Nye, our Composer in Residence will be leading Mere School, Shreen Harmony and The Tower Stories choir in his commission "The Anthem for Mere".

A quarter peal will be rung by Mere Bell Ringers.

See Steve Hawkins photographs of the restoration and watch the Tower restoration film.

Made possible with  
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## The Editor Writes

The ongoing donations to help cover the costs of producing Mere Matters are very much appreciated. Very many thanks.

To those of you who run groups/events and make frequent or substantial demands on adverts/articles within our pages, please consider making a contribution to our funds – maybe review when you last donated/paid.

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

Make a Donation by BACS to support Mere Matters?  
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Treasurer - Alison Beall [Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com](mailto:Treasurer4MM@Outlook.com)

## In Memorium

*Jean Coward, beloved wife of Richard, passed away peacefully on 7 March, after a long illness. Much loved wife, mother, grandmother, and a friend to many. The funeral service will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> April at St Michael's Church, Mere, at 1:00pm. Afterwards at Hillbrush.*

*No flowers please. Donations, if desired, should be made to the NSPCC or the Alzheimer's Society.*

## Local Elections 2025



**Deadline for registering to vote – 11 April, midnight**



**Deadline to apply for new postal vote – 14 April, 5pm**



**Deadline to apply for new proxy vote – 23 April, 5pm**



**Deadline to apply for voter authority certificate (if you have no photo ID) – 23 April, 5pm**



**Polling day – 1 May, 7am - 10pm**

[wiltshire.gov.uk/local-elections](http://wiltshire.gov.uk/local-elections)

**Wiltshire Council**

## Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

At present Wiltshire Council have to organize the largest number of local elections in the county when compared to nationwide. At present local perspective or current Parish and Town Councillors in this area have to print out a nomination pack and for this area they have to hand deliver the pack to Salisbury by appointment as the preferred way, or sit and wait hoping for a slot. If the nomination should get seriously rejected, another trip is required, reinforcing from last month's news note new postal vote applications deadline is 5pm on the **14th of April**. 11th April deadline to register to vote.

Wiltshire Council budget for 2025/26 has been approved. The confirmed budget for 2025/26 is around £527m, compared to last year's £490m. There will be a net £37m increase in spending on services.

**Dog fouling**, I am getting increasing numbers of complaints about, by highlighting it here, hopefully it will send out a message again to reduce the problem, however any improvements always seem to be forgotten in a short time.

After Salisbury Street Mere has been resurfaced, I was hoping the yellow lines would be painted back as the traffic regulation order (TRO), as it has been annoying for some receiving parking ticket and to have to get them void, as in places the yellow lines are not enforceable. I have been informed the lines will get removed where they should not be, hoping this happens. I was informed "The lines have been placed there after the road was resurfaced and they should not have been. I have raised this with the person overseeing the resurfacing work and asked that they be removed as a matter of urgency." There is not a prescribed maximum length of the zig zags as they are not required to be on a TRO. If they have been extended, I am not sure this will be altered, I have asked for it to be looked at as if they are longer, it impacts on parking. With the extra £20 million plus becoming available for highways I am sure the Town Council will be pushing for our share of it, as Mere and the surrounding villages which include West Knoyle need improvement. To repeat from last month, an officer said we do not have the money for good maintenance, therefore we have potholes and have to repair them. Wiltshire has put £22 million towards highway repairs, which is extra this year to the Government's contribution of £20.7 million. Potholes are a problem nationwide.

Kilmington Common and others will see a reduced speed limit, which will be implemented by Traffic Orders 24th March 2025. The relevant orders for reference are, TRO 3590 - The County of Wiltshire (Various Roads, Kilmington and Stourton with Gasper) (30mph Speed Limit) Order 2025. TRO 3591 - The County of Wiltshire (Various Roads, Kilmington and Stourton with Gasper) (40mph Speed Limit) Order

2025. Stourton have been promised (or next to a promise) to have the 30MPH limit extended across its parish from Kilmington Common to the B3092 at a later date.

I attended Police Headquarters in Devizes with a fellow councillor, where we discussed speed enforcement on some roads in South West Wiltshire. I also was informed regarding Operation SNAP. Operation (Op) Snap allows members of the public to submit any type of footage directly to the Police Force where an offence occurs. Operation SNAP is a response to increasing submissions of video and photographic evidence relating to driving offences that members of the public have witnessed. Until now, these reports have been submitted to the police in all sorts of ways and so a streamlined process has now been developed to deal with them. This will hopefully make it easier for all involved. You can upload your footage to the Police.

Wiltshire Councillors did not debate the Gypsies and Traveler's Development Plan Document at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 25 February, which had been on the agenda, as the item was deferred to a future date. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, said: "This is a difficult decision, but we felt it was right to defer the decision about whether the Gypsies and Traveler's Development Plan Document is ready to be submitted for examination. We feel we need more time to further consider the plan and the points raised by our local communities. This is an important document for Wiltshire, so it is vital that we get it right and that sufficient time be given to scrutinise and consider local residents' concerns."

At the same Full Council Meeting the local transport plan (LTP4) was discussed. The plan which is a statutory requirement, was agreed, however some councillors wanted more detail in the plan. At the request of a local resident I have informed an officer besides public transport, cycle and vehicle use, horse use should be considered, that is all forms of transport. It was stated most accidents in Wiltshire occur on rural roads.

I attended a disability event at St Thomas's in Salisbury organized by Karen Linaker from the local area boards. It was well worth attending, examples of stalls were Adapted Cycling for all ages and abilities. Program commences summer 2025 at Salisbury Athletics track from 3pm to 4-30pm. Another stall was All Together, if you are a parent or carer or young person needing support and advice, for more information contact 08009704669. The same afternoon I attended a Wiltshire Council statutory function, at which I learnt that to provide a taxi for a person continuously is a large expense to the council, with sums sometimes approaching £100K over a period of time.

For information the Wiltshire Council has just launched a Traffic Surveys page on its website. The page can be accessed here - <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/traffic-surveys> . If you require a survey you need ask through your Parish or Town Council.

The Snooker club benefitted from AIM (Activities in Mere), which has now made the club viable. At its AGM it was stated both rooms are now used, membership has increased from 15 to 28 which includes 4 ladies.

There are currently around 590 staff car parking spaces available at County Hall. Following the decision to build the new Trowbridge Leisure Centre on the County Hall East Wing site, there will be a reduction in staff parking spaces of around 270 spaces. This change will take effect in the spring.

Wiltshire Council seeks more Shared Lives carers to provide a welcome home. Shared Lives and Shared Days Carers work from home, providing support and care for people while they live with them in their own home as part of the family. Placements can be either long term or for a shorter period of time. Alternatively, Shared Days Carers support someone for a few hours during the day. Shared Lives supports a wide range of individuals with varying abilities and support needs. Some are fairly independent and only need guidance, reminders or explanation, others need assistance with most day-to-day needs. "Carers get lots of ongoing training and support. Support is available 24/7 and the training is very flexible, it's a mixture of face to face and online so you can do it when you've got time."

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.

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



## Mere Guides

28 girls from the area had the opportunity of a lifetime to kip on a ship. HMS Belfast in London. Train from Salisbury to London. Girls responsible for carrying their own luggage, travelling on the underground. Arrival at HMS Belfast, dropped luggage, then went to the London Eye and a cruise on the River Thames. Back to HMS Belfast for supper in the mess, food served in the mess tins, followed by activities.



Slept in sailors' quarters in bunks. Girls raised the colours on board. Breakfast on board. Walking and sightseeing, Houses of Parliament, Downing Street, Horseguards Parade and Buckingham Palace.

The Girl Guiding Headquarters to meet the Chief Guide, all given a special badge. The on to visit the Tower of London, to see the Crown Jewels and the ravens, also they saw a re-enactment play. All very happy and exhausted for the return train journey.



Sue Jeans, Vicky Wagland Guide Leader

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## Mere & District Link Scheme

We continue to be busy with 100 trips in February including 32 to Salisbury District Hospital and one to Newport Hospital.

The Link Scheme is a local charity and our volunteer drivers primarily take clients to medical appointments in their own cars. New drivers are always welcome. Two of our committee members have said they wish to step down at our AGM in June so if you would like to join our committee to help run the Link Scheme or to find out more about 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. 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.

As a charity we do not charge for trips but we do ask for a donation.

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

## Mere Art Group

The group continues with an excellent attendance. We have a recent new member attending every week, since joining.

May I remind all that The Grove Building charge rate increases from 01 April. From the 01 April our rate increases to £4.00 for each Thursday. This covers the 2 hours, and refreshments, 10.00 till 12.00. The first attendance for a new member is FREE.

This month's Art Work is by Mai Robert, using Acrylics.



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

## Castle Hill Quilters

Castle Hill Quilters have moved to a new venue at

**Silton Village Hall, Church Road, Silton Gillingham SP8 5PR.**

We meet on Thursday afternoons from 1.30pm - 4.30pm.

Our Annual subscription is £20 plus £3 per meeting, visitors £4.

You are welcome to attend for two weeks after which we hope you will join us.

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



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**Karen Lester** ☎ 835012

Copy date for the **May 2025** issue

Closing deadline is: **16:00hrs on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April**

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 Theatre Club

Fancy a day out? Would you like to meet some new people? Our trips to the theatre take us to Bath, Bristol, Salisbury and sometimes Chichester or Southampton. We also organise non theatre outings, this summer we are going to Powderham Castle. There's usually time for shopping or lunch, so make a day of it. Coach travel always provided.

The autumn programme will be out in a few weeks so why not join us and get out and about. Membership £8 per household per year. Do get in touch to find out more.

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

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## Mere Bowls Club

We played an indoor match recently against Yeovil Bowls Club sadly losing by two rinks to one, but it was played in a great spirit of friendly rivalry, and we play them again, but outdoors, during the season. The outdoor season starts on **April 26th** which lasts until the end of September, and the greens team have been working very hard to get the green ready for the playing season with rolling, scarifying and cutting.

We held our AGM two weeks ago and Don Butchers has now retired from his General Secretary role which he has held since 2009; a big thank you to Don for all your hard work over 16 years and has now become President of the club. He has been succeeded by John FitzGerald as Secretary with Marie Wright becoming Chair.

If anyone is interested in taking up Bowls, which is great fun, played in a very friendly atmosphere and as competitively as you wish with club competitions and matches against other clubs, both home and away during the season, it is also great exercise and very good for mental wellbeing, please contact:

John FitzGerald 860867 [fitzgeraldjns@sky.com](mailto:fitzgeraldjns@sky.com)

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## Mere Mortals Petanque Club

Now we have the longer, lighter evenings, Mere Mortals are back to playing boules on Tuesday evenings. The proper summer season is gearing up and the local clubs are getting the rust of their boules, ready to take part in the Nadder & Stour Petanque League. Mere Mortals are hoping to go one better than last year and actually win the league title. The trickle of new members continues and we look forward to one day filling all four pistes. This will mean we have 24 players hurling their metal balls about at the same time. If you would like to join this growing band of petanquers, just come along on Tuesdays at 6pm, Wednesdays at 2.30pm or on Saturdays at 10.30am. Just choose your time and day.

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

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## The Year Clock. 27th April 2025, 5p.m. St Michael's Church

Friends of St Michael's are thrilled to be bringing this marvelous production to Mere.

It is a dramatic and musical celebration of the life of William Barnes written by Tim Lacock. How fitting to bring it here where he began his school teaching in the Market House (above where the clock tower is now) and later, with his wife Julia, in The Chantry and of course wrote Linden Lea in memory and celebration of the garden there. This production is in support of the campaign 'Barnes for All' to preserve the William Barnes Archive for the future. Tickets are available from Sprout and Flower and by e-mailing [margaretdurkee5@gmail.com](mailto:margaretdurkee5@gmail.com)

Adults £12/ Under 18s, £6

Refreshments will be available for a donation to The Friends of St Michael's.

Do come along to this unique event and support both the campaign and Friends of St Michael's while learning about one of Mere's famous residents.

Janet Way 860884

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## Mere Day Centre

On behalf of everyone here at MDC I would like to thank Mere School for agreeing to provide us with our lunches. Our guests have enjoyed tucking in to the delicious food created by the school kitchen. Head Teacher, Catriona Williamson, and our Chair, Jane Mason, are keen to develop this important community relationship between young and old in the locality – something that is not entirely new as the wonderful school choir came and sang for us at Christmas.

We really enjoyed our outing to The Old Brewery in Gillingham recently. The venue is very accessible, the staff went out of their way to provide us with everything we needed, and the food was fabulous.

I am putting together our programme of activities that runs until the end of August and am on the look out for any people who would like to come in and give us a talk. This could be about any hobby or interest you may have or something like a previous career or travel experience. You don't have to be a public speaker or have any experience in delivering any talks before, just passionate about your topic. If you quite like the idea of doing something like this or have any ideas, please get in touch with me.

We are currently looking for another volunteer who would be able to help during the session every Friday (9:45am-3pm), please call/email if you can help us out.

Sandie Hawkins MDC Manager 07835-272406 [manager@meredaycentre.org.uk](mailto:manager@meredaycentre.org.uk)

## Grove Building Audio Visual System

An outline specification for a complete replacement system with surround sound and a permanent remotely controlled projector was circulated to several suppliers and three quotations received. It was to be easily operated by non-specialists, accommodate hearing aid users, and have a life of at least ten years. A cost of around £13,000 was indicated. We are most grateful to Wiltshire Council, through the South West Wiltshire Area Board for a grant of £5,000, and Mere Town Council for a further £500. This funding encouraged other users of Grove Building to come forward with varying amounts, which with some £3,000 from Grove Building funds, accumulated over previous years, was sufficient to go ahead.

The system was installed in November last year by Audio Visual Direct and has been used to the benefit of Mere residents several days a week since. It has also stimulated the setting up of CineClub Mere which has brought film shows back to Mere.

The other funding contributors were Mere Historical Society, Mere Gardening Club, Friends of Mere Museum, Merely Women, Mere Art Group, CineClub Mere, and Grove Building.

Personally, and on behalf of Grove Building, thank you to everyone for this massive show of support for an asset which will benefit the community for many years to come.

Hamish Bell (Administrator, Grove Building, 2021-24)

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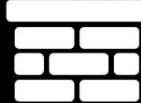
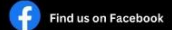
## MERE FOREST CHARITIES - Assistance Available

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)



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

We are very lucky here in Mere to be able to offer a range of organised walks which take place on a regular basis. They have been devised to suit all abilities and fitness levels so there should be something for everyone. The details of each walk are outlined below so if one or more sounds appealing then please join us. We love to welcome new walkers to our groups, as well as being brilliant for both physical and mental health they're a great way to meet new people and make new friends.

### “Get Wiltshire Walking”, Starter Walk:

**Every Wednesday** there is a 40 minute stroll for those who wish to become more active, or are recovering from illness, injury or surgery. All walks are on flat, stable terrain and finish at the Angel Tea Room. Meet by the surgery at 10.00am. Unfortunately, for safety reasons, no dogs are allowed on these walks, except assistance dogs.

Dave and Wendy Drewett 07508 340105

### Short Walk:

Meet at the surgery car park at 2.00pm on **Thursday 17th April** and enjoy a Spring walk of 2-3 miles around our paths and lanes, with a refreshing cuppa at the Angel Tearooms afterwards, and even indulge in a piece of Paul's delicious cakes.

Janet Way 860884

### Mere Walking Group

Our next walk will be on **Sunday 27th April**, meeting at **Salisbury Street car park** for a 2.00pm departure, with car sharing to **Ashmore**. This is a beautiful and varied walk of around 3.5 miles on flat terrain, going across open downland with views of Cranborne Chase, returning through deciduous woodland to enjoy the magnificent display of bluebells. All are welcome to join in, dogs on leads please.



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## Lent Lunches – 7<sup>th</sup> April and Good Friday

We are serving lunch in The Grove on Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> April and on Good Friday from 12.30 p.m. – 1.30 p.m.

Jacket potatoes with a good variety of fillings, salad, coleslaw, fruit, tea and coffee. £7.50 but all profit is for both Christian Aid and CAFOD, two charities working so hard in very difficult and deprived parts of the World where people are struggling and trying to live in war torn countries with very little to help them survive.

Please come along and enjoy a lunch with good company and help us at the same time.

Look forward to seeing you.

Sandra, Judy, Jane and Derek.

## Ukes at The Butt of Sherry

Our next session is on **Thursday, 10th April** 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 can 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 [maggiholmes101@gmail.com](mailto:maggiholmes101@gmail.com)

## Mere School

Our School Council regularly raises money for the Wiltshire & Bath Air Ambulance.

This organisation provides critical medical care by land and air, across Wiltshire and Bath. They give the same level of critical care as a hospital but bring the expert team and specialist equipment to the people in need as fast as is humanly possible.

The team are on call all year round for up to 19 hours/day and on average they respond to 4 incidents daily. This service is crucial for us in Mere as we are rurally isolated and a long way from a hospital.

We welcomed Andrew, from the Wiltshire & Bath Air Ambulance team, to Mere School and all of our children received emergency life-saving skills training. They had a lot of fun but also learned some important life-saving skills.



Catriona Williamson

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

## Venue Key:

**AYP** - Andy Young Pavilion**SCP** - Salisbury Street 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	Tues	09:00 Little Angels (every Tues) 19:00 <b>MADS (every Tues)</b>	GB L
2	Weds	09:30 Tai-Chi (every Weds) 10:00 Get Wiltshire Walking Group – Starter Walks (every Weds) 14:00 <b>Pilates (every Weds)</b> 18:30 <b>Karate (every Weds)</b> <i>Railway Modellers</i>	GB SCP L L
3	Thurs	10:00 Art Group (every Thurs) 10:00 Hearing Aid Clinic @ United Reformed Church 10:30 <b>Harmony for Health (every Thurs)</b> 11:00 Rhyme Time (every Thurs) 14:00 Rubber Bridge (every Thurs) 17:15 Girlguiding (every Thurs) 18:00 <b>Yoga (every Thurs)</b> 19:00 <b>MADS (every Thurs)</b> 19:30 Shreen Harmony (every Thurs)	GB URC L Lib L GB L L URC
4	Fri	13:45 Duplicate Bridge (14:00 start - every Fri) <i>Little Angels</i>	GB
5	Sat	14:30 <b>Croquet (every Sat &amp; Sun)</b> <i>Coffee Morning</i>	Steep Street
6	Sun	14:30 <b>Croquet (every Sat &amp; Sun)</b>	Steep Street
7	Mon	09:30 <b>Tiddlers and Toddlers (every Mon)</b> <b>Food Bank</b> Lent Lunch 14:30 <b>Croquet (every Sat &amp; Sun)</b> 17:45 <b>Yoga (every Mon)</b>	L L GB Steep Street L
8	Tues	14:00 Mothers Union 19:30 Historical Society <i>Little Angels,</i>	GB GB
9	Weds	19:00 Gardening Club <i>Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers</i>	GB
10	Thurs	19:30 Ukulele <i>Rhyme Time, Art, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH</i>	Butt of Sherry
11	Fri	10.00 Merely Women <i>Dup Bridge</i>	GB
12	Sat	18:30 Foodbank Quiz <i>Coffee Morning, Croquet</i>	GB
13	Sun	<i>Croquet</i>	

14	Mon	Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
15	Tues	Little Angels, MADS	
16	Weds	19:00 Merekits Women's Institute Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	GB
17	Thurs	14:00 Short Walk (J.Way) Rhyme Time, Art, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	SCP
18	Fri	12:30 Lent Lunch Dup Bridge	GB
19	Sat	Coffee Morning & Fair Trade, Croquet	
20	Sun	Croquet	
21	Mon	Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
22	Tues	Little Angels, MADS	
23	Weds	Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	
24	Thurs	Rhyme Time, Art, Guides, Bridge, Shreen Harmony, Yoga, MADS, Harmony FH	
25	Fri	19:00 Cine Club Dup Bridge	GB
26	Sat	Croquet	
27	Sun	14:00 Mere Walking Group Croquet	SCP
28	Mon	Scouting, Tiddlers and Toddlers, Yoga, Food Bank	
29	Tues	Little Angels, MADS	
30	Weds	14:30 Pennybank Writers Wiltshire Walking Group, Pilates, Karate, Tai-Chi, Railway Modellers	L

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

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## From Times Gone By!

### The Beech Clump Memorial Mystery

Many readers will know of the memorial on Beech Clump/Knoll, a wooded prominence on the track heading west from White Sheet Hill. It commemorates the airmen who died when their Dakota crashed shortly after taking off from RAF Zeals. (Even more tragically, the accident happened just three months before VE Day.)

On board were twenty-one men – mostly RAF personnel who had been attending a glider training course. Beneath the list of names on the memorial we are told that the pilot, F/Lt M.R.S. Mackay, survived but 'sustained severe injuries and subsequently died'. However, I have discovered that this is almost certainly not true.

The Accident Investigation Board blamed the pilot - but I was intrigued to read on the website where the report can be found says that Mackay (who had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for operations in Arnhem) did not die of his injuries, but went on to serve in the RAF in various posts for several more years. He eventually committed suicide, though whether this had anything to do with the crash isn't known.

Obviously, both versions of the story can't be true – and the answer may lie in an article by a modern researcher who received information from Mackay's descendants.

One clue is that Mackay was apparently thrown clear of the wreckage, indicating that he was not in the pilot's seat when the Dakota came down. (Bear in mind that there were other pilots on board.)

The key revelation is that Mackay told a family member that he wasn't flying the plane. Sensing that something wasn't right (probably the Dakota's extremely low height) he was making his way forward to investigate when the accident happened.

The Accident Report doesn't actually name Mackay, referring only to 'the pilot'. It's conceivable that, knowing the disaster would be put down to pilot error, he put the story about that he wasn't at the controls at an early point in order to save his career. However, it is my belief that there is a far more honourable and likely explanation – the story he told his family was true, but F L/t Mackay shouldered the blame in order to protect the posthumous reputation of a colleague who actually was responsible for the terrible loss of life on Beech Clump.



Martyn Beardsley

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## Powering Our Homes and Our Community:

### A Practical Introduction to Renewable Energy

With energy prices rising year after year, many of us are starting to explore ways to take more control over what we pay—and how we power our homes. Renewable energy might sound like a modern trend, but at its heart, it's a simple, sensible idea: using the natural resources around us, like sunshine, to generate our own electricity.

It's not about going “off-grid” or making dramatic lifestyle changes—it's about making our homes more efficient, more cost-effective, and a little more future-ready.

The most common and accessible technology for homes is solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, usually fitted on the roof. These quietly turn daylight into electricity you can use in your home, reducing how much power you need to buy from the energy companies. Once installed, solar panels effectively *lock in* a portion of your energy costs—giving you more certainty in a world where bills tend to only go in one direction.

Importantly, the cost of solar systems has come down significantly in recent years, making them more accessible to a wider range of households. What was once seen as a niche or expensive investment is now becoming a practical solution for many.

When combined with battery storage, the benefits increase even further. A home battery stores any unused solar power for you to use later—at night, for example, or during peak pricing hours. Some systems can also integrate with smart energy tariffs, helping households reduce energy bills by as much as two-thirds, simply by using stored energy at the right time.

Curious to learn more?

We'll soon be hosting a local Renewable Energy Drop-In Session, where you can come along for a relaxed chat, ask questions, and find out how these technologies work in a real-world setting. There's no pressure or sales pitch—just practical information to help you understand your options.

**Linden Stone** Sales & Design Engineer

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Thinking of Advertising in Mere Matters?

To find out the costs or to book an advert, please contact Ann-Marie Long directly by email or phone. [Media4MM@Outlook.com](mailto:Media4MM@Outlook.com) 07833-686742

## Historical Society

On **Tuesday 8th April**, beginning at 7pm, the Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place. Annual subscriptions will become due, at the current rate of £10. These can be paid by BACS (bank transfer) to Mere Historical Society, Sort code 30-93-45, Account No 01735722. Alternatively, payment can be made at the door with either cash or cheque, made payable to Mere Historical Society. Please come early so as to allow time for payments to be recorded and new membership cards to be issued. You will then be welcome to take a glass of wine with us!

Notices and/or Committee Nominations for the AGM must be submitted in writing to the Secretary or a member of the Committee by Friday 28 March 2025.

For current Committee members please see [www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk) where you can also view minutes of our last AGM held in April 2024.

Please come in large numbers, as this will be an important meeting: especially as regards future management, and future subscription rates. The AGM will begin at 7.30.

Following the AGM, at approx. 7.50, James Holden will give his talk on "Civic Pride, the Public Buildings of Wiltshire".

---

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

## PennyBank Writers

PennyBank Writers very much enjoyed the workshop with Jane Borodale, Mere's Writer-in-Residence, which took place at their February Meeting.

Our thanks go to The Tower Stories project for making this opportunity available to us. We all look forward to hearing Jane's tower stories later in the year.

Meanwhile, PennyBank's regular meetings continue in the Small Lecture Hall 2.30pm - 4.30pm on the last Wednesday of the month.

---

Adrienne Howell 860475 [howellatmere@aol.com](mailto:howellatmere@aol.com)

## Croquet and Boules Club

### **New Season begins on Sat 26<sup>th</sup> April**

Croquet is played from 2.30pm every Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting.

If you have never played before but would like to 'test it out' then come along any weekend and enjoy a free taster session. New members are always welcome and all equipment and tuition is provided by the club. We look forward to welcoming you.

For enquiries contact Hilary, Treasurer 861733 or Avril, Secretary, 861285

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Jill Beadle 07393 560459 [jill49jim@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jill49jim@hotmail.co.uk)



## West Knoyle Quiz Night

West Knoyle is a very friendly small village, this was demonstrated when the West Knoyle Social Club a Fun Quiz Night on the 8th March.

Sandy was the Quiz Mistress and Sandy is shown in the attached picture "invigilating", it was a fun night with music played and the quizzers had to say who was the artist with the name of the tune, one point for each answer. Queen with Bohemian Rhapsody was played which caused much loud singing. Speeches were played such as Edward V111 abdication, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1939 announcing that Britain was at war with Germany and more speeches, all quizzers had fun giving the answers. Many general knowledge questions were asked followed by a supper of Jacket Potato with various toppings followed by Dessert.



Text & Photos by George Jeans

## Stepping Out Again

Mere Pharmacy team are again challenging themselves and hoping to raise lots of money for charity! On the 26th of April 2025 myself and three members of the team are taking part in the midnight walk in Salisbury to raise money for The Salisbury hospice charity. We will be walking six miles in total in the dark!

They offer their patients compassionate, palliative and end of life care, providing comfort and guidance at every step of the illness. Their services extend not only to patients but also to their families and those closest to them. All of their specialised services are provided at no cost to those in need, however for this to continue they rely heavily on donations and money raised through fundraising.

If you would like to sponsor us, please pop into the pharmacy or look out for the link I will put on the **Mere Mutters Facebook page**.

Thanks in advance for your support.



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### *The Garden Café*

Situated within The Club at Holbrook Manor & Spa, The Garden Café is an ideal place to relax with family and friends whilst enjoying a selection of drinks, barista coffees, home baked cakes and freshly prepared light deli bites.

On warmer days you can sit outside on the café terrace which overlooks the Manor gardens.

Traditional afternoon tea is also available.



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## Shreen Harmony

We are delighted to have welcomed several new members to the choir this year and now have a large bass section which is great. We have been asked to sing during the Tower Stories on June 22nd and are currently learning the anthem to be performed during that weekend.

Our summer concert this year will be on July 10th in St Michaels Church to allow us to fit a large audience in comfortably as Christmas in The Grove was a squash due to numbers!! We are planning a "Pimms with a Song" so hopefully it will be a warm summer night. Do hope you will come along and support us we will be singing for a charity still to be decided.

Anyone who would like to come along and sing with us, there is no audition, no need to read music just a love of singing and you would be made very welcome.

Thursdays 7.30 p.m. in the United Reformed Church.

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

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## Mere Snooker Club

The club has just held it's AGM and membership numbers are now at 28 (24 active) which is the best it has been for years.

Due to ill health and age-related problems the secretary and chairman are both wanting to step down so we are looking for a new secretary, snooker interest is not essential, it involves about 10-12 hours work per year and monitoring members subscriptions, anyone interested?

The chairman needs some interest in snooker and will run two or three meetings a year, though much is done by email now.

New members are always welcome and we now have new eco heaters thanks to grants from Salisbury district area board, the Lecture Hall trust, and the Nadder community fund we are very grateful for their support. The club is in a positive place at the moment.

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

---

## Fair Trade in Mere

Fair Trade Thank you everyone who supported my Big Brew and Transform Trade's campaign to raise money to help tea farmers diversify in the difficult times brought about by Climate Change. I have been able to send £50 towards the campaign. What would we do without tea?

As the third Sunday this month falls on Easter Sunday, I will not be holding a stall at St Michael's so if you are desperate for that bar of chocolate, please come to the URC Coffee morning on **Saturday 19th**.

Janet Way 860884

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## Letter from the Churches: Easter Song

More than 1700 years ago Saint Augustine of Hippo said of the Church, "We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song." This is a phrase that has become so ingrained in me ever since Pope Saint John Paul II quoted it: "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and 'Hallelujah' is our song!"

The phrase has such a celebratory feeling, capturing something of what Christians experience on Easter Day (20<sup>th</sup> April this year). Christ is risen, our life is changed forever and a natural response is to rejoice and praise God for this gift – new life undreamt of.

Yet what happens in the weeks as Easter passes? A friend rings to tell you of a close family bereavement, your child has to go into hospital, you hear that a neighbour has been burgled. What does Resurrection mean in daily life; the mixed bag of our existence with its crises, its joys and its sorrows?

This has been true from the earliest days of the Church: the apostle Thomas doubting, the Church being persecuted and having to go into hiding, the martyrdom of early Christians for their faith, disputes between Christians about the way forward, about doctrine and behavior.

One of the most important aspects of Christianity is that it has a strong focus on hope; not a sort of blind optimism or the empty smile designed to smooth over even the most difficult situation. Rather it is something that might only be a tiny grain, a seed; with God, however, it is a distinct promise to us from an eternal future. The light of Resurrection shines in the world, however dimly it might be in some places. Our sense that God's love for creation goes to unfathomable depths makes it possible that human love can propagate like ripples across a pool.

Challenging, and emotionally draining life may be but where there is Resurrection hope there is also new life. And there are many signs of hope in our world; our hope this year for a new future for the people of the Middle east, Ukraine and Russia; our hope for fairer trade at home and abroad; our hope that fear will become a thing of the past. We may feel insignificant in the face of such need, but the message of Resurrection is that we are not. We can be bearers of hope, lighting beacons that will shine in the world's darkness. In the reality of our world, Christ has died for us and has been raised for us: "We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song."

The Reverend Dr. Graham Southgate (on behalf of Churches Together in Mere & District)

## Mere Museum

Over the next few weeks there will be some new items to view in the cabinets at the museum and we hope that residents of Mere will be able to help identify people from photos in the collection as we continue with our aim to ensure our records are accurate and meaningful. The photos will be on screens by the display cabinets.

The full catalogue is available on line at [meremuseum.org](http://meremuseum.org) and as always, we welcome donations of items relevant to Mere and its history.

Rose Heesom, Hon. Curator 07791-559674 [meremuseum@btinternet.com](mailto:meremuseum@btinternet.com)

## 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)

6 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10.30 18:00	BCP Communion Family Service Stations of the Cross
13 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Palm Sunday procession from Clock Tower followed by dramatised Passion Parish Communion
14 <sup>th</sup>	Mon	19:00	Compline with address
15 <sup>th</sup>	Tues	10.30 19:00	Roman Catholic Mass Stations of the Cross
16 <sup>th</sup>	Wed	19:00	Compline with address
17 <sup>th</sup>	Thurs	19:00	Maundy Thursday - Nave Communion, with washing of feet and watch
18 <sup>th</sup>	Fri	11.00 14:00	Good Friday Procession of the Cross to Castle Hill Last Hour - Liturgy
19 <sup>th</sup>	Sat	20:00	Easter Vigil
20 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Easter Sunday -Parish Communion
27 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion 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

6 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09.30	DIY Service
13 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Palm Sunday service
20 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Easter Sunday Communion
27 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Communion

The United Reformed Church

Minister: Vacancy

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

6 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:0	TBC
13 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:0	TBC
20 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:0	TBC
27 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:0	TBC

### 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



If you haven't already shared in one of our Lent Lunches held in the Grove Building from 12.30 to 1.30 there are still two to come: on **Monday 7th April** and on **Good Friday, 18th April** and you are very welcome to join us (no need to book).

As usual, the Churches Together Good Friday walk carrying the cross up Castle Hill, will start in the Square at 11am. It will be led by Rev'd Michael Milano, Mere's new Vicar, and supported by members of all the local Churches. Everyone is welcome to join us, whether or not you belong to one of our Churches – and to come to the Lent Lunch afterwards. And, of course, everyone is equally welcome to come and celebrate Easter at any one of our Churches on Easter Day, 20th April.

Our next Churches Together meeting is on **Wednesday 4th June** at 10.30am in the United Reformed Church (URC) in Boar Street, Mere.

Judith Thompson

## 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.

Sally-Ann, Mere Senior Library Assistant 860546

## Booking Meeting Venues

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

## Mere Jelly

On the **30th April**, you will find Mere's creatives, freelancers, home-workers and small business owners gathering together for our monthly co-working event.

We'll be armed with cappuccinos and shiny laptops at The Brush and Broom at Hillbrush between 9am and noon and welcome new faces. Join us for the morning or just drop in for a coffee and a chat.



Jenni Bell 07956-869699



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## Mere Literary Festival

This year, the Mere Literary Festival is putting on an extra event devoted to the authors and writers living in the three counties area. On **Saturday 4th October**, the Local Authors and Writers Fair will be held in the town and if you have written a book - fiction or non-fiction, published or self-published, adult or children's - we would love you to take part!

This will be a free event for visitors to come and meet you and will be a chance for less well-known authors to show off what they have written.

Please visit [www.mereliteraryfestival.com](http://www.mereliteraryfestival.com) for details or contact

Wayne Stevens - Festival Director: [organiser@mereliteraryfestival.com](mailto:organiser@mereliteraryfestival.com)





## Mere Gardening Club.

### Scarecrow Festival 14th and 15th June 2025

It's that time of year again and we are looking forward to seeing all your wonderful creations of scarecrows

The competition is open to all residents of Mere with BA12 postcodes and all scarecrows are to be up by the **6th June 2025**. In line with Wiltshire County Council rules they must be within the boundary of your own property and not on pavements or roads.

This years' theme is Historical Characters which gives a wide choice of ideas and we would like the scarecrows to remain up until the Tower Stories weekend the following week.

Judging will be by members of the public all week from the 9th June until the end of the festival weekend on the **15th June**.

Please email [roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk) with your name, address and contact number if you wish to enter this year. This will then form the trail for our residents and visitors over the Festival Weekend. No email, then ring 07791 559 674. Thank you.

The winner's names will be listed in the Grove Building and Mere Matters. Any queries contact Rose as above.

Our next **club meeting on 9th April** focuses on growing Dahlias, followed by a ticket only event on 14th May with our speaker Paul Martin. (members free). Remember membership renewal is now available at £12 per annum.

Happy Spring gardening

Rose Heesom, Membership Secretary [roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk)



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## Merekits - Women's Institute

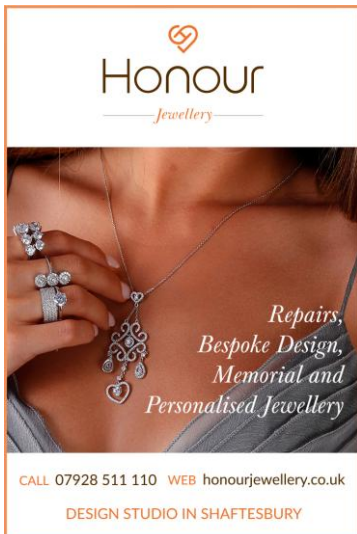
Great fun was had at our meeting in March, it was a craft orientated evening. Members and guests learnt how to make different lanterns from jam jars for their home or gardens. Everyone enjoyed the evening which was full of chatter and laughter.


Merekits WI are a fun group who 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. There is an opportunity to meet likeminded people and make new friends locally. There's always something happening for both nationally and locally in the WI that you can participate in as much or as little as you would like.

We have 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 **Wednesday 16th April at 7pm**, which will be an open meeting so anyone both male or female can attend. We have The Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust coming to talk to us. They provide information around home security and online safety supporting people in the community. The event will be free to members and £5 to non-members. You can reserve your ticket(s) by calling Yvonne (01747 860035; evenings or leave message) or via the comment's facility on Mere Mutters Facebook page and pay on the night. Pre booking advised.

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



  
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- ✓ Patios and driveways
- ✓ External walls
- ✓ Solar panel cleaning
- ✓ Claddings and signs
- ✓ Conservatories

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**SPECIAL OFFER** → Receive a **free window clean** when you order a gutter clear and fascia soffit gutter wash

## Make sure you've registered to vote

Local elections are taking place on Thursday 1 May and you have until midnight on Friday 11 April to register to vote.

Poll cards have been sent out in the post, so keep an eye out for them.

You will need ID to vote. You can check which forms of ID are accepted on the Electoral Commission website.



Don't miss out on having your say in the local elections on 1 May  
Register to vote by 11 April

wiltshire.gov.uk/local-elections

Wiltshire Council

## Food Waste Action Week 2025

We're proud to announce that we have once again been joining in with Food Waste Action Week.

Do you ever buy big packs of fruit and veg and then end up throwing some of the pack away? If you do, then you're not alone. Every year in the UK we throw away 1.7 million tonnes of fruit and veg. We buy too much and then don't get around to eating it in time. Isn't that ridiculous?

So, why not give it a try if you can? Buy Loose, Waste Less.



USE CHUCK

46% OF THE POTATOES WE BUY ARE WASTED

BUY LOOSE. WASTE LESS.

LOVE FOOD



THE  
BRUSH & BROOM  
RESTAURANT

# EASTER SUNDAY

20th April

ALL DAY BRUNCH

# BOOK NOW

Booking essential  
as limited availability



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