

# Mere matters

... along with all our Neighbours

April 2026

Your community magazine  
including a diary of local events



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HESPERI**

# ENSEMBLE HESPERI

At St. Michael's Church, Mere



**SUNDAY 3RD MAY 2026**

**5PM**

**Tickets: £30 **\*\* (Book before 19<sup>th</sup> April: £25) \*\*****

Free admission for 21 and under

Tickets available at: Sprout and Flower and  
[www.friendsofstmichaels.org](http://www.friendsofstmichaels.org)

The concert "A gift for your garden" is based on  
works by Oswald, Handel, Telemann & Graun.

CHURCH OF  
**St Michael**  
THE ARCHANGEL IN MERE 

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## Mere Town Council

I and my fellow councillors have been very busy attending and organising events. I am very grateful to the community for coming out attending and supporting the current issues we are facing.

### Proposed closure Mere Fire Station

Cllr. Rachael Hansford and I have attended a further presentation in Salisbury for councillors and MP's to give us more of an understanding of the reasons behind the consultation for the proposal to close eight fire stations. This has led to the Chief Fire Officer Andy Cole and his team completing two presentations in each of the eight areas to present to the public. I was so proud of the turn-out at the Lecture Hall, how our community had good solid questions and voiced their concerns. I would also like to thank our MP, Dr Andrew Morrison, for attending, speaking and going back to the House of Commons and speaking up in support of Wiltshire and Dorset Stations. We have a long way to go, as a council we have put together a working group whose objective is to set out an evidence-based strategy to respond to the consultation to try and save our fire station. We will advise more on this in the near future, in the meantime please take the time to write to our MP with your objections.

### SAFE DAY Community Engagement in Mere:

Thank you to all of the community that came to this event to meet with the Neighbourhood policing team, the Bobby Van plus online safety, Mere Fire Service and Crimestoppers. For those that are not online the feedback from the police below says it all:

On Friday 13th March, Inspector Oakley and Sergeant Smith from the Warminster Neighbourhood Policing Team were pleased to join Mere Town Council at their community event held in Mere Lecture Hall.

The event, organised by Sandra Catley, Chair Mere Town Council, brought together a range of local partners including Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Bobby Van Trust, and our policing team. Throughout the day we welcomed a steady flow of residents who took the opportunity to speak with all agencies present, seeking advice, support, and guidance on the issues that matter most to them.

Both Inspector Oakley and Sergeant Smith were able to spend valuable time listening to community concerns, discussing practical ways forward, and exploring how we can continue working together to tackle local issues.

Events like this are a great reminder of the strength that comes from partnership working and open conversations with the public. Thank you to everyone who attended and to our partners for their continued support.

### **A303 Flooding:**

I was privileged to join Cllr Rodney Coward at a meeting with National Highways and their drainage specialist. Cllr's Coward's knowledge of this area was second to none, I was so very interested in the history of the area spoken of. Please view the feedback and update.

Eastbound. We aim to undertake works, in the new financial year, to repair the pond outlet pipe in order to restore flow and enable the entire pipe to be surveyed. If further defects are then found following these repairs, we will consider replacing & upsizing the outfall pipe. Depending upon our findings, any replacement & upsizing will either be included as part of the ongoing feasibility study, or if deemed more urgent as works prior to the conclusion of the feasibility study. This should reduce the risk of flooding to the eastbound carriageway in the vicinity of Manor Road overbridge. It is worth noting that upsizing of this pipe is likely to be included as part of the feasibility scheme, even if we repair the pipe in the meantime.

Westbound. Additional CCTV surveys are scheduled for April 2026. It is anticipated that these surveys will highlight defects / connectivity issues in relation to the culvert that connects the westbound highways drainage ditch to the stream that runs through the village. Once we have a clearer idea of the culvert issues, we will then arrange works to address those issues and restore connectivity / flow to affected assets. This should reduce the risk of flooding to the westbound carriageway in the vicinity of Manor Road overbridge.

As already mentioned, we currently have a feasibility study being undertaken, which is looking at a much wider area of drainage assets along the A303 between B3092 junction and the large cross carriageway culvert that feeds the stream through the village at MP168/1. Please note that this feasibility study is not likely to be taken to construction for several years yet.

Please do pass on our sincere thanks and appreciation to Rodney. His insight to the area is invaluable.

### Adrienne Howell:

Lindsey Wood and I attended the funeral of Adrienne Howell. Rightly so the church was full of those that knew, loved and respected our very own Mere Advocate. I wanted to write of what I heard. When listening to her achievements I realised that what Adrienne had achieved by 1963 (seven years before I was born) was outstanding, let alone what she went on to achieve throughout her life. I have reflected on this and my conclusion is that 'Life is for Living'. Love and support the community you live in let your voice be heard don't waste a minute. I will miss you Adrienne.

### Council Vacancy:

We currently have a vacancy on the council, if this is something you would like to do, please contact our Clerk for an application form. I have found being a councillor a joy and getting my voice heard. We will be co-opting a new councillor at our next meeting which, because of the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, will be held on **Monday April 13th**.

### Diary Date:

The Annual Town Meeting will be held at 6.30 pm on **Wednesday, 22nd April** at Duchy Manor, Springfield Road, Mere. This is very much a meeting for the public to attend and to participate in. There will be displays on the work of the Town Council as well as presentations from other groups and organisations. Please do come along and have a cup of tea or coffee.

Sandra Catley, Chair, Mere Town Council  
for information on Town Council activities, minutes, agendas etc.

Lindsey Wood 860701 [lindseywood@merewilts.org](mailto:lindseywood@merewilts.org)  [merewilts.org](http://merewilts.org)



**FOOT HEALTH PRACTITIONER**  
Good quality care. Nails, Corns, Callus etc  
Tuesday at Mere Osteopathic Clinic or Home Visits  
**Karen Lester**  07939305369

## Wiltshire Councillor ~ George Jeans Writes

### 2026/27 Budget Approved

All 98 councillors attended the annual budget-setting meeting on 24 February at Full Council. Money remains tight, but the Wiltshire Council 2026/27 budget has now been approved, setting out how £567 million will be invested in services supporting residents, communities, and businesses.

### Council Tax

Full Council approved:

- 2.99% general Council Tax increase (Wiltshire Council element)
- 2% Adult Social Care levy

**Total increase: 4.99%**

For a Band D property, this is an increase of £1.81 per week, bringing the Wiltshire Council Band D charge to £1,981.15.

The average total Band D bill in Wiltshire for 2026/27 is £2,571.78, made up of:

Component	Amount (£)
Wiltshire Council	1,981.15
Police & Crime Commissioner	298.27
Fire & Rescue Authority	96.95

### Parish/Town Precepts (Band D)

These vary significantly by parish:

- Mere – £173.07
- Kilmington – £107.63
- Stourton with Gasper – £73.99
- West Knoyle – £82.05
- Zeals – £22.74

### Waste & Recycling Changes

Approved changes include:

- Three-weekly residual waste collections
- Weekly food waste collections

- Fortnightly recycling collections
- Recycling centres will move to a booking system

If visiting **Shaftesbury**, please note that **payment will be required** unless or until a reciprocal agreement is reached.

### **PEAS Scheme Changes**

The long-running PEAS scheme (providing free salt/grit and related support to parish councils) will change. A year's notice has been given that parish councils will need to precept for this themselves in future if they wish to maintain supplies.

### **Roads & Highways**

Spending on roads will reduce in real terms for one year, but over a three-year period it will increase, with millions being borrowed to support improvements.

Road condition has been one of the most frequent issues raised with me—until the proposed closure of Mere Fire Station overtook it.

### **Local Plan – Major Update**

Last month I reported that the Wiltshire Local Plan was progressing. However, following a letter from the independent planning Inspectors requiring further work, the situation has changed dramatically.

- The Inspectors have revised their view completely.
- The Local Plan developed over the last nine years has, in effect, been rejected.
- Wiltshire Council is likely to issue a Notice of Intention by 30 June to begin a new Local Plan.
- The earliest adoption date is now April 2029—a year later than if the current plan had continued.
- This delay will increase the risk of speculative development.

### **Return of Regional Planning**

A return to higher-level regional planning is proposed, covering four counties under the name "Wessex Region". Two Development Plan Documents currently sit outside the Local Plan:

- Gypsies & Travellers DPD
- Minerals & Waste DPD

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It must now be decided whether these will be incorporated into a single Local Plan. Wiltshire remains well short of housing sites, with 50,000 dwellings required over the 15-year period to around 2042.

### **Proposed Closure of Mere Fire Station**

The consultation runs for **13 weeks**, from **13 February to 15 May 2026**.

For those unable to complete it online, I have placed **printed copies** in:

- Mere Library
- Mere Post Office

Both include pre-paid envelopes. A handwritten petition is also available in the Post Office and in Brainwave.

I remain **strongly opposed** to the closure of Mere Fire Station.

- It is close to the A303, and response times could be around 10 minutes longer.
- We have nearby properties of significant importance, including Stourton House.

When completing the consultation, please give **clear reasons**—not simply "I don't want it closed".

### **Dementia Awareness Group**

Funding has been awarded from the South West Wiltshire Area Board to help establish a Dementia Awareness Group in Mere.

A meet-and-greet event is planned for around June, hosted by the new Castle Lodge Care Home, who have kindly agreed to host for the first year. More information will follow.

### **Dog Fouling**

Complaints are increasing again. Raising the issue here may help reinforce the message, though improvements often fade quickly.

### **Emergency Foster Carers Needed**

Wiltshire Council continues to call for **emergency foster carers** who can offer a warm, safe home at short notice.

Support includes:

- £900 per week per child when caring

- £500 per week when available but without a placement

There are children waiting, and roles are flexible: full-time, short-break, or emergency care.

People can find out more at: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering) or contact the fostering team directly.

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

## **Creative Mere 2026 - Calling All crafters and artists.**

At the recent meeting there was much support and enthusiasm for organising another Creative Mere weekend. It is such a popular event in Mere and a wonderful opportunity to showcase your work and talents so we do hope you will consider taking part. However, it is essential to know what support we may have from you all in booking a stall (at £10 – a bargain!) We are hoping to hold the event on a weekend in November/December (dates still to be confirmed)

A meeting of all potential stall holders is to be held on **April 27th** in the URC, Boar Street at 7p.m. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Two people have volunteered to help organise the event but we really need two or more to join them to help make the event a success. Do consider whether you could help.

Please get in touch if you think you may be interested Many thanks.

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

## **Ukes at The Butt of Sherry**

Our next session is on Thursday, 9th 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 try. An evening of fun, laughter and song is guaranteed. You can check out our Facebook page 'Ukes at The Butt' for our song list.

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

# Mere Surgery

## COVID CLINIC – SPRING BOOSTER



Please find details of the Surgery's vaccination programme below

### WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE CLINICS BE HELD?

Saturday 25 April at Mere Surgery between 8.30am – 1.00pm

### WHO IS ENTITLED TO A COVID BOOSTER?

- Anyone aged 75 and over
- Any adult with a weakened immune system due to chemotherapy or auto immune disorders

### HOW TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

Anyone with a mobile phone registered with the surgery to accept text messages will be sent a text message containing a unique link to book an appointment.

If you need to contact the surgery to make an appointment, please wait until you have been contacted with an invitation to book an appointment. Please **DO NOT** contact the surgery until you have been sent an invitation. We apologise if you receive more than one message.

**IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO HAVE A COVID VACCINATION THIS YEAR, PLEASE LET THE SURGERY KNOW OR RESPOND VIA TEXT WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE INVITATION.**

**Please bear in mind we are reliant on the vaccinations arriving as planned, so please check our website for any updates.**



## Fern Brook Lodge

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residential and dementia care



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CQC rating

**Good**

February 2022

Fern Brook Lane | Gillingham | SP8 4QD

01747 449812 | [care-south.co.uk](http://care-south.co.uk)

Proud to be part of Care South, a not-for-profit charity and leading provider of residential, dementia and nursing care, as well as care at home services across the south of England.

Registered Charity No. 1014697. \* Correct at time of print.

Care  
South

*It's the care that counts...*

## Merely Women

Ladies, perhaps you've just moved to Mere and getting to know people? Or maybe you're early retired and find yourself with a bit more leisure time? Merely Women is an ideal place to meet other ladies for socialising. Our group is undemanding, no subscription required, just £3 on the day towards refreshments. We are fortunate in finding interesting speakers to entertain us. At other times we enjoy a variety of activities from quizzes to crafts. We meet on the second and fourth Friday each month in the Grove Building 10am. In June there will be a chance to wear your best hat for our 'Ascot Ladies Day' and we end the summer events with a lunch at The Walnut Tree.

Guest speakers for our summer programme include the following topics:

- German occupation of the Channel Isles WW2
- The life of a Victorian Gardener
- Mere Museum
- Growing up in apartheid South Africa
- Whatever happened to the Romanian children?

We look forward to seeing you at Merely Women. Regrettably, we are unable to accommodate children.

Angela [McDonalda4.mcdonald@btinternet.com](mailto:McDonalda4.mcdonald@btinternet.com)

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## Gillingham Singers Spring Concert

"Music, all powerful"

16th May 2026 7:30 pm

**St Michael's Church, Mere**

'Please contact Carole on 07572 786416 or via email to reserve tickets.

A drink is included.

Ticket price: £10 in advance £12 on the door

Carole [carole.brooks049@gmail.com](mailto:carole.brooks049@gmail.com)

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Water Street, Mere. 01747 860361

### 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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## Lent Lunches

We will be serving Lent Lunches again this year in the Grove Good Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12.30 p.m.

We will be offering Jacket potatoes with a variety of toppings, salad, fruit and tea and coffee for £7.50. All



money raised will be sent to Christian Aid and CAFOD who desperately need help with their work in Africa and the Middle East.

**Your support would be much appreciated.**



Sandra Fisher & Judy Bickerstaff

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## Mere Jelly

Home working can be great, but it can also be a bit isolating. If you're self-employed or spend most of your week working from home, why not step out for a morning and join us at the



Mere Jelly? We're a friendly group of local business owners, freelancers and home workers who enjoy sharing ideas, swapping experiences, and supporting one another along the way. Some people bring a laptop and get a bit of work done, others come just for the conversation and the company, which is often where the best moments happen.

We meet on the last Wednesday of the month at The Brush and Broom at Hillbrush from 9am to noon, so come along for the whole morning or just drop in for a coffee and a chat.

Jenni Bell 07956-869699

 Find us on Facebook



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**Remember, you can also visit our website,  
[www.fjchalke.co.uk](http://www.fjchalke.co.uk) or call our team on 01747 860244.**



**FJ Chalke**

Talbot Garage, Salisbury Street,  
Mere BA12 6HE



Customer  
Experience Award

2025

## Mere Primary Celebrates Exceptional Academic Success

Pupils at Mere Primary School are celebrating after new performance data showed attainment consistently above national averages across reading, writing and maths.

Figures covering the past three years indicate particularly strong outcomes in reading, with 92% of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Key Stage 2 – well above national figures. Phonics results were also high, averaging 94%, placing the school among the top-performing schools nationally. Disadvantaged pupils achieved especially positive outcomes, with all meeting the phonics standard over the period.

Writing attainment has also remained strong, with 88% of pupils achieving the expected standard at Key Stage 2 across three years. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 83% of children reached the expected level in writing, again exceeding national benchmarks.

Mathematics results showed similarly positive trends. A three-year average of 90% of pupils achieved the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2, with earlier key stage outcomes also above national averages.

The combined measure of pupils achieving expected standards in reading, writing and maths has remained significantly above national figures, including a peak of 91% in 2024.

Headteacher Catriona Williamson said the results reflected the commitment of the whole school community.

"We are delighted with these outcomes, which reflect the hard work of our pupils and the dedication of staff," she said. "We are particularly pleased to see disadvantaged pupils achieving so well, demonstrating our focus on ensuring every child can succeed."

Catriona Williamson



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

# Castle Lodge Care Home

## *Opening January*

Welcome to Castle Lodge Care Home, a brand-new home in the heart of Mere, designed with comfort, care, and community in mind.

Our services include:

- ✓ **Residential Care**
- ✓ **Dementia Care**
- ✓ **Respite Care**

With modern facilities, welcoming lounges, landscaped gardens, and a dedicated care team, Castle Lodge offers a place where residents feel truly at home.



For more information call

# 01733 911 570

Norwood Park, Castle Street, Mere,  
Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 6LA

[www.countrycourtcare.com](http://www.countrycourtcare.com)



## Mere & District Link Scheme

The Link Scheme is a local charity and our volunteer drivers primarily take clients to medical appointments. New drivers are always welcome. If you would like to find out more about volunteering as a driver please call our co-ordinator on 01747 860096.

We were busy again in February with 111 trips. In a sign of the difficult economic times in which we live it was disappointing that transport donations covered only some 75% of our payments to drivers. Luckily, thanks primarily to donations from the Mere Literary Festival we have sufficient reserves to cover such shortfalls in the short term

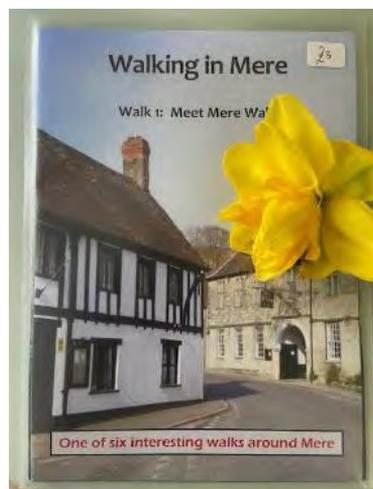
Once you have an appointment please call 01747 860096 to book a Link driver. As a charity we do not charge for trips but ask for a donation. Please remember that our co-ordinators work in their own homes – we do not have an office – so please keep calls to 9–5 Monday to Friday and only use the 01747 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.

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

## MERE FOOTPATH GROUP

To help you explore Mere during our glorious (we hope) spring, get a set of the Walking in Mere cards for walks short and long and lots of useful information. Available from the Sprout & Flower, the Angel Cafe and the Library, only £3 for 6 cards in a waterproof wallet, in case!

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



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

### Venue Key:

AYP - Andy Young Pav	BS - Butt of Sherry	Drs - Surgery
GB - Grove Building	L - Lecture Hall	Lib - Library
MSC - Social Club	RMC - Castle St Car Park	SCP - Salisbury Street Car Park
StM - St Michaels Church	URC - United Ref Church	VH - Visit Hillbrush
WT - Walnut Tree Inn		

1	Weds	09:00	<b>Chair Yoga</b> (every Weds)	L
		10:00	<b>Get Wiltshire Walking (GWW - every Weds)</b>	SCP
		12:30	Antique Valuations	GB
		14:00	<b>Pilates</b> (every Weds)	L
		14:30	Lent Study Group	GB
		18:30	<b>Karate</b> (every Weds)	L
		19:30	MoverHer Ignite <i>Railway Modellers (every Weds)</i>	GB RMC
2	Thurs	09:00	<b>Walking Zumba</b> (every Thurs)	L
		10:00	<b>Art Group</b> (every Thurs)	GB
		10:00	Hearing Aid Clinic	URC
		10:30	<b>Harmony 4 Health</b> (every Thurs)	L
		11:00	<b>Rhyme Time</b> (every Thurs)	Lib
		14:00	<b>Rubber Bridge</b> (every Thurs)	L
		19:00	<b>MADS</b> (every Thurs)	L
19:30	<b>Shreen Harmony</b> (every Thurs)	URC		
3	Fri	12:30	Lent Lunches	GB 14:00
			<b>Duplicate Bridge</b> (every Fri)	GB
4	Sat		<b>Coffee Morning</b> (every Sat)	URC
5	Sun			
6	Mon	09:15	<b>Pilates</b> (every Mon)	GB
		09:30	<b>Tiddlers and Toddlers</b> (every Mon)	L
		16:30	<b>Seated Strength and Stretch</b> (every Mon)	GB
		16:30	<b>Brick Creators Club</b> (every Mon)	Lib
		17:45	<b>Yoga</b> (every Mon)	L
		18:00	<b>Tone, Balance &amp; Flex</b> (every Mon)	GB
7	Tues	09:15	<b>Jade Deverill exercise</b> (every Tues)	L
		09:30	<b>Little Angels</b> (every Tues)	GB
		10:30	<b>Craft &amp; Chat</b> (every Tues)	Lib
		18:20	<b>Zumba</b> (every Tues)	L
		19:00	Historical Society Meeting	GB
		19:30	<b>MADS</b> (every Tues)	L
8	Weds	19:00	Gardening Club AGM	GB
			<i>  Yoga, Pilates, Karate   GWW   RM  </i>	
9	Thurs	19:30	Ukulele	BS
			<i>  Art, Guiding   Zumba, MADS, H4H, Bridge   Shreen Harmony, Rhyme Time  </i>	
10	Fri	10:00	Merely Women <i>  Bridge  </i>	GB

11	Sat		Coffee Morning	
12	Sun			
13	Mon		Pilates, Seated Strength and Stretch, Tone, Balance & Flex   Tidd & Todd, Yoga   Brick Club	
14	Tues	14:30	Mother's Union	GB
		19:30	Full-Body Function for Women: Bands, Balls & Boards   Little Angels   Exercise, Zumba, MADS   Craft & Chat	GB
15	Weds	09:30	Tai-Chi (every Weds)	GB
		19:00	Merekits (WI)   Yoga, Pilates, Karate   GWW   RM	GB
16	Thurs	17:15	Girlguiding (every Thurs)   Art   Zumba, MADS, H4H, Bridge   Shreen Harmony, Rhyme Time	GB
17	Fri	18:00	Friends of Mere School Supper Club   Bridge	GB
18	Sat	10:30	Fair Trade Stall   Coffee Morning	URC
19	Sun		Fair Trade Stall after morning service	StM
20	Mon		Pilates, Seated Strength and Stretch Tone, Balance & Flex   Tidd & Todd, Yoga   Brick Club	
21	Tues	19:30	Full-Body Function for Women: Bands, Balls & Boards   Little Angels   Exercise, Zumba, MADS   Craft & Chat	GB
22	Weds	14:00	Pennybank Writers	L
		19:30	Move Her Ignite: HIIT   Tai-Chi   Yoga, Pilates, Karate   GWW   RM	GB
23	Thurs		Art, Guiding   Zumba, MADS, H4H, Bridge   Shreen Harmony, Rhyme Time	
24	Fri	10:00	Merely Women	GB
		19:30	Cine Club   Bridge	GB
25	Sat		Coffee Morning	
26	Sun			
27	Mon		Valuation Day with Paul Martin (FlogIt!)   Pilates, Seated Strength and Stretch, Tone, Balance & Flex   Tidd & Todd, Yoga   Brick Club	Angel Tea Rooms
28	Tues	18:00	Pétanque	Mere School Ground
		19:30	Full-Body Function for Women: Bands, Balls & Boards   Little Angels   Zumba, MADS   Craft & Chat	GB
29	Weds	am	Jelly Group	VH
		19:30	Move Her Ignite: HIIT   Tai-Chi   Yoga, Pilates, Karate   GWW   RM	GB
30	Thurs		Little Angels   Exercise, Zumba, MADS   Craft & Chat	

Any events shown in **RED** are unconfirmed  
Repeat events implied order: | [Grove Building](#) | [Lecture Hall](#) | [Other](#) |

## A few extra dates

1st to 9th Passover, or Pesach	One of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar, commemorating the anniversary of the Exodus from Egyptian slavery.
2nd World Autism Awareness Day	Autism-friendly events and educational activities take place all through the month of April to increase understanding and acceptance and foster worldwide support.
3rd International Children's Book Day	Held on or around Hans Christian Andersen's birthday, which is celebrated to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children's books.
3rd Good Friday	A bank holiday in the UK, this Christian celebration commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus and his death at Calvary. Hot Cross Buns are traditionally eaten today.
5th Easter Day	Easter is the Christian celebration of Christ's resurrection. It has been adopted across the world as a secular spring festival,
6th Easter Monday	Easter Monday, the day after Easter Day, is a Bank Holiday in the UK and is a national holiday in many countries around the world.
9th Unicorn Day	A Day to celebrate the most popular mythical creature ever, which is also the symbol of Scotland.
10th Siblings Day	Based on traditional Indian festival of Rakshabandhan, which is hundreds of years old, honoring the relationships of siblings.
11th National Pet Day	National Pet Day was created to celebrate the joy pets bring to our lives.
12th Space Day	The International Day of Human Space Flight, anniversary of the first human space flight by Yuri Gagarin (USSR).
13th National Scrabble Day	National Scrabble Day is observed annually on April 13th. April 13th specifically was chosen in honor of Scrabble's inventor, Alfred Mosher Butts.
17th International Haiku Poetry Day	The day the whole world honors the Japanese poetry form of haiku. A haiku is a poem consisting of 3 lines and a seven syllable structure. Events including poetry readings, a film festival and haiku gatherings around the world.
17th Bat Appreciation Day	Bats are the only mammal which can fly. Today is a day to appreciate these amazing creatures and celebrate the role that bats play in the Earth's ecosystem.

18th World Heritage Day	International Day for Monuments and Sites, better known as World Heritage Day, promotes awareness about the diversity of the cultural heritage of humanity.
18th World Circus Day	Celebrated on the third Saturday each April, World Circus Day is a special day to celebrate Circus Arts and Culture.
22nd Earth Day	Worldwide event to raise awareness of the environmental issues which face the whole of planet Earth. The Earth Day organisation campaigns on environmental issues worldwide and promotes sustainability and reducing pollution.
23rd National Shakespeare Day	23rd April was both Shakespeare's birthday and date of his death. Celebrations are held in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon and around the UK.
23rd St. George's Day	The annual celebration of England's patron saint
23rd World Book Night	World Book Night brings people from all backgrounds together to inspire others to read more. Each year books are donated to organisations across the UK that can reach people who don't regularly read for pleasure or have access to books.
25th Penguin Day	Awareness day to highlight the dangers that penguin's habitats face, as well as the number of penguin species which are endangered.
29th International Dance Day	A celebration day for those who can see the value and importance of the art form "dance", and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians and institutions which have not yet recognised its value.
30th International Jazz Day	International Jazz Day brings together communities, schools, artists, historians, academics, and jazz enthusiasts all over the world

Copy date for the **May 2026** issue

Closing date deadline is: **16:00hrs on Monday 20th April 2026**

Email contributions are preferred, to the Editor, Richard Jefferies 863425  
[Editor4MM@Outlook.com](mailto:Editor4MM@Outlook.com) or deliver to 16 Underhill, Mere, BA12 6LU.

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## A word from the Churches - Easter

As I write, the sun is streaming through the window, the grass and trees have taken on a beautiful lighter green colour, as new life bursts forth again. The birds are nesting again and all is aglow with hope, warmer, better days are coming again. The evenings are longer; darkness itself is in retreat. And happily, for Christians, Easter is here again.

The events that took place in Holy Week are truly extraordinary and miraculous, the greatest to have ever happened, the ultimate triumph of light and new life overtaking death and darkness, but at the start of the Easter account, they seem anything but. When Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as a man to live amongst us, the world rejected his love and goodness and he was betrayed by someone close to him, subjected to a sham trial and condemned— for doing nothing but shining a light upon injustice and corruption. As Jesus was scourged and mocked, he didn't attack back, when he was finally nailed to a Cross on Good Friday to die in agony, he responded by praying to His Father for his enemies, that they would be forgiven. When he said it was finished and he died, wrongdoing and evil had been eternally defeated. He died to forever undo their curse, on behalf of all humanity. Good Friday is seen as good, by Christians, because of Christ's death in our place, but it is particularly good because of what comes later.

On Good Friday, as Churches Together, the Christians of our area, Catholic, United Reformed, Anglican and others, take turns to carry a large wooden cross from the town square up onto Castle Hill, to remember Jesus' journey to his death. As we do so, we sing, we pray, we imagine what he suffered for us. We set up the cross to remind us of these events. We wait.

Then on Easter Sunday, happiness overtakes sorrow as we rejoice that Jesus forever conquered death by rising again, gaining eternal life for all who will believe. His tomb was empty, numerous eye-witnesses attested to having seen him alive again. 2000 years on, Christians the world over sing and shout Alleluia! in joyful praise of the God who gave all to forever dispel our darkness. As we see the new life of spring all around us, we celebrate the new life he gives to each of us, a new perspective, power to do good, to overcome evil and to forgive our enemies as he did, a new heart and eternal life.

I pray that for all who read this, that you know God's peace with you and that the joy of the Risen Christ will be yours this Eastertime.

The Rev'd Michael Molano



## In Mere & District

Because of a mistake I made **twice**, the Churches Together pieces for February and March Mere Matters weren't included. This means that we are very late in recording with great sadness the death of Celia Blay of Maiden Bradley who died, unexpectedly on 21<sup>st</sup> November. She was a stalwart and faithful supporter of Churches Together for at least twenty years and was unfailingly cheerful, positive, imaginative and hard-working. She will be much missed by Churches Together, as well as by her family and friends and the people of Maiden Bradley. Her funeral was on 3<sup>rd</sup> January. In spite of this loss and sadness, 2026 got off to a good start for Churches Together in Mere and District, when the nine member churches held a beautiful united service for the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at St Michael's, Mere. with a very full congregation and active participation. Our Chair, The Revd Michael Molano, preached a challenging but encouraging sermon on the need for unity and understanding in all areas of life, including the Church. The service, this year prepared by the Armenian Orthodox Church for use throughout Britain and Ireland, concluded with the lighting of everyone's candle from a single candle representing the risen Christ – faith in whom unites us all.

And now we're already well in to Lent: a time traditionally for prayer and reflection and growing in faith and commitment. By publication time it will be Holy Week, and we'll be preparing for our annual walk of witness up Castle Hill on **Good Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April**. As usual, anyone of any denomination or none is welcome to join us: we set out from Mere Clock Tower at 11am. This will be followed by the last of this year's Lent Lunches from 12.30–1.30 in the Grove Building where you'll have a good lunch in a convivial atmosphere and you'll also be helping to raise money for two good causes: Christian Aid and CAFOD. If you've missed this year's other Lent Lunches, make sure you don't miss this one. And a date for your diary: Songs of Praise at Stourhead will be held this year on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm. More details next month.

Judith Thompson, Secretary 860553

## 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)

HOLY WEEK- EASTER			
1 <sup>st</sup>	Wed	19:00	Compline with address
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Maundy Thurs	19:00	Maundy Thursday – Nave Communion, with washing of feet and Watch
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Good Fri	11.00 14:00	Good Friday Procession of the Cross to Castle Hill Last Hour at the Cross– Liturgy
4 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Sat	20:00	The Easter Vigil- Holy Communion with sung Exsultet
5 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Easter Sunday -Parish Communion
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Parish Communion
19 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Parish Communion
26 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	08:00 10:30	BCP Communion Parish Communion
Roman Catholic Mass is usually at 10:30 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month but may change. Contact John FitzGerald to join his email list for updates.			

### 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

5 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:15	Easter Sunday- Communion
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	DIY
19 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Communion
26 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	09:30	Matins

### The United Reformed Church

Minister: Vacancy

Mere Contact: Derek Fisher – 07935 266375 [delfisher@btopenworld.com](mailto:delfisher@btopenworld.com)

5 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	TBC
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	TBC
15 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	TBC
19 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	TBC
26 <sup>th</sup>	Sun	11:00	TBC

### The Roman Catholic Church: St Mary Queen of Peace.

Parish Office: 01963-34408 [hope.stlukeswincanton@outlook.com](mailto:hope.stlukeswincanton@outlook.com)

St Mary's has closed and weekend Masses are on Saturday 5.30pm and Sunday at 11:00am and take place at SS Luke and Teresa, South Street, Wincanton BA9 9DH.

Mass at St Michael the Archangel is usually on the third Tuesday of each month at 10.30am.

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

John FitzGerald 860867

### Loxton Landscapes - Garden design and features—just for you



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Nick 07702 363672 [nickloxton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nickloxton@yahoo.co.uk)

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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)

## Mere Library

Monday: 10:00 – 14:00\* and 14:00 – 19:00  
 Tuesday: 09:30 – 17:00  
 Wednesday: 10:00 – 13:00\*  
 Thursday: 09:30 – 17:00  
 Friday: 09:30 – 17:00  
 Saturday: 09:30 – 13:00

\* Volunteer operated opening hours.

## Merely Books Reading Group

Merely Books – reading group at the library, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month 2–3:30pm. If you are interested in joining, please speak to a member of staff.

Julia Upton 01985 216022 [julia.upton@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:julia.upton@wiltshire.gov.uk)

## Booking Meeting Venues

Grove Building:	<a href="mailto:administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk">administrator@stmichaelsmere.org.uk</a>	07942 291266
Lecture Hall:	Sally Johnson	861063
URC Church Hall:	Derek Fisher	07935 266375

### Family and Community Learning

Discover Opportunities - Develop Skills - Achieve Ambitions



Online Course  
**Supporting My Teen with Anxiety**  
 Thursday 16 April 10am - 12pm



Book by 9 April

Understand the challenges teens face and how anxiety affects them. Discover strategies to help your teen manage anxiety and boost wellbeing. Know when and where to seek further support.

For bookings scan the QR code or contact: 01225 770478  
[familyandcommunitylearning@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:familyandcommunitylearning@wiltshire.gov.uk)  
<https://workwiltshire.co.uk/family-and-community-learning/>



Courses are no cost to learners who meet our eligibility criteria. Learners must be aged 19+ years, have a Wiltshire postcode, and meet residency requirements. Learners must also be able to tick one of the following criteria: individual income less than £25,750 a year; in receipt of benefits (other than child benefit); be a care leaver, foster carer or carer; be a military family or ex-armed forces personnel; have refugee or asylum seeker status; have a learning difficulty or disability; be looking to work, now or in the future.



### Family and Community Learning

Discover Opportunities - Develop Skills - Achieve Ambitions



Online Course  
**Supporting My Teen with Study and Revision**

Tuesday 14 April 10am - 12pm



Book by 7 April

- Techniques for effective study and revision
- Support your teen with planning and time management
- How to promote a healthy study life balance

For bookings scan the QR code or contact: 01225 770478  
[familyandcommunitylearning@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:familyandcommunitylearning@wiltshire.gov.uk)  
<https://workwiltshire.co.uk/family-and-community-learning/>



Courses are no cost to learners who meet our eligibility criteria. Learners must be aged 19+ years, have a Wiltshire postcode, and meet residency requirements. Learners must also be able to tick one of the following criteria: individual income less than £25,750 a year; in receipt of benefits (other than child benefit); be a care leaver, foster carer or carer; be a military family or ex-armed forces personnel; have refugee or asylum seeker status; have a learning difficulty or disability; be looking to work, now or in the future.



## Mere Toddlers Foodbank – Annual Quiz

Firstly, thanks to all who participated and helped us raise a wonderful £572.05! Record crowd size and amount of funds raised! Thanks for being such a very generous bunch. What a really great atmosphere too, all because of Penny's jokes obviously.

Secondly a huge thanks to the amazing Quizmaster Penny Fennon who works very hard to create and deliver the brilliant quiz, and to all who helped invaluable, in various ways, by raffle prize collecting, cake making, adjudicating and collating answers, running the aisles to collect team sheets, doing the refreshments, and setting up/ packing away.



The winning team: Purple Pants

The prize-winning team name: "Universally challenged"

Anne Rich [Tel:07413512023](tel:07413512023) email: [arich4@icloud.com](mailto:arich4@icloud.com).



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Help us save printing costs by having Mere Matters delivered direct to your Inbox.  
Register here: <http://eepurl.com/i44fBo>, it costs nothing.

## Mere Art Group

I thought I felt 'Spring had arrived', but I was wrong!

Our Group has pressed on anyway, with an attendance of 18 on a lousy day.

We have a new Member who is very keen, and finds our group very friendly and helpful.

Why not join her and come along for a 'first free' session.

Any Thursday 10-till-12 session is £4.00 including tea, coffee and cakes and biscuits. What more do you want?

This month's contribution is by Sandra Fisher, painted in Acrylics.



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

## Friends of Mere Museum

For those of you who have visited and enjoyed Mere Museum over the years, this is to let you know that Clive Hazzard has retired as Chairman of the Friends of Mere Museum. Clive has been Chair for the best part of 30 years. He has given so much time, energy, wisdom and resources and this can be seen everywhere as you look around the museum. I want to give a huge thank you to him, from all of the Friends, for all of this. I know that he would say that he just did what was needed but for these many years the museum has had so much more than that from him. Thank you, Clive.



## Plant Sale

There are few corners of Mere that have not been graced with the quality plants on sale at our Annual Friends of Mere Museum Plant Sales. Put the date in your diaries for this year's sale. 10 am on Saturday 9th May at the Grove Building.

John Jordan [friendstreasurer@meremuseum.org](mailto:friendstreasurer@meremuseum.org)

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## Mere Theatre Club

Spring sees us out and about again with an April visit to Southampton to enjoy that well known musical 'Top Hat', followed in May with a trip to Bath for Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife* and then in June off to Chichester for the fabulous flower festival in the Cathedral.

If you don't want to miss out, join our mailing list, membership still only £8 per household per year.

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

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## Mere Mortals Petanque Club

Now the light evenings are here, the petanquers of Mere have resumed evening play from 6pm on Tuesdays. Another opportunity for anyone who fancies a game to come along to the piste by the Primary School. Other times Mere Mortals gather are 2.30pm on Wednesdays at 10.30am on Saturday mornings. There is no obligation to play on all these occasions, just come when it suits you. The four lane terrain is open all day everyday for anyone to use. If anyone would like a private try out session, just get in touch and times can be arranged at your convenience. Boule and tuition (if needed) provided free



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

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## Fair Trade in Mere

I have some delicious new products preserves from Eswatini, South Africa: supporting women farmers and creating wonderful tastes from their produce, and cashews from Mozambique: being grown and processed on site avoiding extra air miles and arriving fresh- directly from the factory. Why not come and try some?

My stalls this month will be on:

Saturday 18th at the URC Coffee Morning and

Sunday 19th after the Morning Service at St Michael's

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

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## Gardening Club

Our meeting in March was well attended with two of our show judges informing members of what they are looking for when they are judging the entries. The meeting on **Wednesday 8th April** will be a talk and demonstration on orchids by Geoff Hobson from Westbury.

If you have an orchid in need of a bit of TLC then bring it along to the meeting. We will NOT be renewing subscriptions at the April meeting but you can still renew by using BACS.

Our Hidden Gardens of Mere will be held on **13th and 14th June** so if any of you or anyone you know would like to take part in this community event then please get in touch.

Advance Notice: Arthur Cole, Head Gardener of The Newt will be our guest speaker on **Wednesday 13th May**. We have a full 12 month programme for 2026/2027 all for a membership fee of £12.00 per year which includes all our meetings, 10% discount at Plantworld and 25% vouchers several times a year from Castle Gardens.

We meet at the Grove Building in Church street starting at 19.00 for refreshments with our speakers starting at 19.30. Guests are welcome (£5.00) and new members.

Les Manwaring, 07827 671653 Chairman [lesmanwaring@yahoo.com](mailto:lesmanwaring@yahoo.com)  
Rose Heesom 07791 559 674 [roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roseheesom@yahoo.co.uk)

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## Mere Museum

There are some new photos up in the Museum on the boards which need identifying. We have made great progress recently and I am so pleased so many of you respond to my requests.

In May I will be working alongside the library staff promoting History Month and I will be looking at various elements of Mere. We are hoping to organise an afternoon to welcome you to the library and have a chat with a chance to look at the collection and new additions to the displays. Keep an eye out for posters.

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

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Discover the charm of Mere on a relaxed walking weekend. Enjoy six enjoyable walks in and around this beautiful historic town, taking in peaceful countryside, hidden paths, and wonderful views. A perfect chance to stretch your legs, explore somewhere special, and enjoy great company along the way.

Fancy a challenge? Complete all of the walks, about 18 miles, and earn a medal!

For more information and to book your place on one or all of the walks please use the QR code below.

The event is being organised by Mere Town Council with support from Mere Footpaths group, and the Wiltshire Towns Fund.



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**THE RT HON ANDREW MURRISON VR MD MP  
HOUSE OF COMMONS**



**PRESS RELEASE from: THE RT HON ANDREW MURRISON VR MD MP  
MP RAISES THREATENED WILTSHIRE FIRE STATIONS WITH PM**

South West Wiltshire MP Dr Andrew Murrison raised the threatened closure of 8 fire stations across Wiltshire and Dorset - including Mere and Wilton - with the loss of 96 retained firefighters under Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority proposals with Sir Keir Starmer at Prime Minister's Questions today.

The PM said he would arrange a ministerial meeting to hear funding proposals from local MPs that would save the stations.

Speaking afterwards Dr Murrison said;

***"I'm pleased with Sir Keir's undertaking and look forward to discussing a rescue plan with ministers urgently that will save our threatened fire stations and the dedicated firefighters that staff them."***

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## **The Mere Literary Festival**

2026 is the National Year of Reading and local volunteers with a love of books met recently over cheese and wine for the first glimpse of exciting newly published works that will be showcased at The Mere Literary Festival in October. From Siberia in Putin's Russia to the mountains of Nepal, from wartime adventure to narrow boat living, from good food to crime fiction and more, the 2026 Festival is taking shape and we are appealing for local volunteers to join us. If you have a love of literature or just enjoy a good read, join us as we prepare for an exciting week of events, competitions and workshops between 12th and 18th October. This year we will be fundraising for three important local charities: The Mere and District Link Scheme, Seeds for Success and Read Easy Blackmore Vale.



If you would like to join our team of volunteers please email:

[volunteers@Mereliteraryfestival.com](mailto:volunteers@Mereliteraryfestival.com)

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Ashley Gray 07872171111 [admin@mereliteraryfestival.com](mailto:admin@mereliteraryfestival.com)

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## Merekits - Women's Institute Upcoming Events and Activities

At this month's meeting we welcomed a local Photographer, Chris Lock to give us an interesting talk about some of the photos he had taken around South Wiltshire. All the members enjoyed seeing his talents and hearing some useful photography tips.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **April 15th**, from 7–9 pm at the Grove building. House of Colour will work with a member to determine their colours for clothes and fashions. Brainwave will support the event and bring along some fashions for member to learn how to boost their individual colours. As always, these meetings are a great way to connect with like-minded women, have fun, and make friends.

If you're interested in learning more about Merekits, feel free to attend one of our regular meetings. We gather every third Wednesday of the month at the Grove building from 19:00 to 21:00. We hope to see you soon!

Gentle reminder on the **18th April** we will be holding a Spring sale at the Mere Lecture Hall between 12 – 3 pm. There is £1 entry fee which will include a free entry onto a raffle to win a food hamper.

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

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## Walking in Mere

### Short Walk

Hopefully the bluebells will be out by now so join me for a 3 mile walk on Friday 24th April to see them in the woods nearby. (There is a stile to negotiate.) Meet in the Surgery Car Park at 2pm and enjoy a cuppa afterwards in the Angel Tea rooms

Janet Way 860884

### 'Get Wiltshire Walking', Starter Walk

These walks continue every Wednesday, we meet by the surgery at 10.00am for a 40 minute gentle stroll around our lovely town. Unfortunately, for safety reasons only assistance dogs are allowed on these walks.

### Mere Walking Group

Members of the group met last month and have set dates for our Sunday walks for the rest of the year. All walks start from Salisbury Street car park at

2.00pm with car sharing to the start point. The dates are: 19th April, 28th June, 26th July, 20th September and 18th October.

Our next walk, on Sunday 19th April will be 3.5 miles around the northern edge of Frome. It is a circular walk, mostly flat with a couple of stiles. Refreshments an option in Frome at the end of the walk.

All are welcome to join us, including well behaved dogs.

Wendy and Dave Drewett 07508 340105

## South West Wiltshire Community Support

- Would you like to go out and socialise if you had some information about what's going on, support with transport options or someone to go along with initially?
- Do you feel lonely or isolated?
- Are you worried about how you can afford to pay for the things you need?
- Would you like to check you're receiving all the income you're entitled to?
- Do you feel, with a little support, you could be more active?
- Do you find it difficult to get the things you need from the shops or chemist?
- Would you like information about aids and adaptations for your home?

If you said YES to any of these, or if there's any other way we can support you, please make contact with us on 01722 444840 or use our [online contact form](#) by searching 'South West Wiltshire Community Support Age UK Wiltshire'



Support for Older People

Wiltshire Council

## South West Wiltshire Community Support

Age UK Wiltshire is working to improve the wellbeing of older people living in South West Wiltshire, by offering support, access to information and practical help.

Please get in touch on 01722 444840  
or use our [online contact form](#) by searching  
'South West Wiltshire Community Support Age UK Wiltshire'



At Age UK Wiltshire, our mission is to inspire, support and enable older people - helping people to stay safe, make informed choices and be independent yet connected.



Wiltshire Council

Support for Older People

## **Age UK Wiltshire's Community Support service is helping older people in South West Wiltshire**

Age UK Wiltshire's South West Wiltshire Community Support service is here for older people who need a bit of extra help.

Our Community Connector offers face-to-face support, practical help, and access to information for older people in the South West Wiltshire area who may be feeling lonely, isolated, or worried about managing day-to-day.

Some clients want to get out and socialise but don't know where to start.

Others worry about money or bills and want to check they are receiving all the income they are entitled to. Some find it harder to get to the shops or chemist. Many just want a little support to be more active.

We have helped people reconnect with their community by finding local social activities and volunteering opportunities. We have provided information about reliable cleaning and gardening services when these jobs became difficult. We have offered advice about grab rails and home adaptations to make everyday life safer. We have helped people explore community transport to get to shops, appointments, and local events such as Daytime Discos. We have also shared information about home security and telecare for those feeling vulnerable.

People who contact us often feel worried and unsure what to do next. After a home visit and advice, clients tell us they feel reassured, more confident, and more in control.

If you are an older person living in South West Wiltshire, or know someone who could benefit from this service, please get in touch. Call 01722 444840, email [communitysupportsw@ageukwiltshire.org.uk](mailto:communitysupportsw@ageukwiltshire.org.uk), or visit <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/our-services/swwcommunitysupport/> to find out more.

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## Avoid Scams

To avoid scams, stop and think before sharing money or personal information, as scammers rely on urgency and fear. Always verify requests by contacting companies directly through official channels, **never** click suspicious links in texts or emails, and use strong, unique passwords

### Key Strategies to Protect Yourself:

- **Stop and Think:** If a call, text, or email creates a sense of panic or offers a "too good to be true" deal, it is likely a scam.
- **Verify Independently:** Do not use contact details provided by the person who contacted you. Find official phone numbers or websites to verify the claim.
- **Never Click Links:** Avoid clicking links or downloading attachments from unknown or unexpected messages, as they can lead to malware.
- **Guard Personal Data:** Never share PINs, passwords, or bank details with anyone, even someone claiming to be from your bank.
- **Use Secure Payments:** Use credit cards for online shopping to gain better purchase protection, rather than bank transfers or gift cards.
- **Secure Accounts:** Create strong, unique passwords for different accounts and enable multi-factor authentication.

### Common Red Flags:

- **Unusual Payment Methods:** Requests to pay via cryptocurrency, gift cards, or wire transfers.
- **Unexpected Contacts:** Calls or emails from "government officials" or "bank staff" asking for urgent action.
- **Pressure Tactics:** Scammers often try to rush you into making a decision

### What to Do If Scammed:

- Contact your bank immediately to report fraudulent transactions.
- Report the scam to local law enforcement or national reporting bodies (e.g., Action Fraud in the UK).
- Change passwords on affected accounts immediately.

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**Stay Safe!**

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