

ONLY ONE MORE MESSENGERS TO GO

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Editorial By Dick Bulley

I hope all our readers had a wonderful Christmas and have started enjoying a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Our front cover this month shows only 1 more issue to go before we have to shut up our shop. Since our December issue we have had various expressions of willingness to help, and one, at the very last minute, looks as though it might allow us to continue production after March. The people concerned need a bit longer to put together a coherent plan for consideration by the Committee, but we all very much want it to work. More details in the March issue which, hopefully, will not be the last one after all.

The other main topics of interest are the Planning appeals concerning Local sites. The hearing by a Planning Inspector of the appeal against the rejection of Gladmans' proposal for 100 High Street will have closed by the time you read this but a similar hearing concerning 59 Shefford Road is now scheduled for 10th to 13th April; see the notice on page 24 of this issue. MAG have been very active on our behalf lodging objections and co-ordinating objections from the public but attendance in person at those appeal hearings will speak louder than words. In a similar vein, CBC has published its revised Local Plan; make sure that you look at the draft plan on-line on the CBC website and let them have your comments. Local democracy can sometimes achieve more than the law!

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I wish to congratulate the Meppershall Players on producing a brilliant pantomime in the interim Village Hall. Staging such a show in the old Hall would have been challenging enough but to do it as they did in such restricted circumstances was simply outstanding. The logistics of building portable sets, stage and dressing rooms beggars belief. I can only admire the determination, commitment and ingenuity of the Players to give the village its annual pantomime despite the difficulties. I do believe many would have said it was too difficult to undertake. Thank you, Players, and well done.

Denis Neilson

Thank You to Nigel Mann



Many people will remember Nigel Mann's distinctive van in the village every Friday afternoon as people popped into the van to buy locally sourced produce and for a chat. Nigel always tried to buy fruit, vegetables, plants and eggs from local producers – I remember some delicious asparagus from Meppershall and potatoes from Shillington.

Not only was Nigel a weekly provider of fresh, locally produced food but he also provided an essential community service to his customers. He would pop into older customers living on their own to check how they were and stay for a chat and he would even change light bulbs! As a coach for Shillington Youth Football Club he also recruited aspiring young footballers to their growing squad and team members would often pop into the van for a chat about tactics whilst their parents bought supplies.

Towards the end of 2017 Nigel made the decision to end over 27 years of deliveries in his van. With his son Tom he continues to deliver to pubs and local businesses, but Friday afternoons are no longer quite the same without Nigel coming along the road in his van.

Piece contributed by Pippa Gibbs

Cycling World Time Trials

Meppershall represented in World Time Trials Championships in California

101 cyclists from around the world competed to cycle as far as possible in 24 hours in the Anza-Borrego Desert of Southern California on the 4th of November.

Graham Laming (56) from Fildyke Road rode in the solo division and covered 402 miles / 647km in the day, coming 6th out of 24 riders in the 50-59 age category.

Temperatures ranged from 6 deg C up to 30 deg C and Graham drank 16 litres of water and ate over 9000 calories of food during the gruelling event.

Apart from riding, he also had to deal with his own mechanical issues and food/drink re-stocking, as he rode entirely un-supported, using the same bike he commutes to work on in Sandy each day.

His next big event is the UK National 24-hour championships in July 2018, in preparation for the World Championships again in November 2018.

Graham rides for the Bedfordshire Road Cycling Club based in Cardington, which caters for cyclists of all ages and abilities. See <https://bedsroad.org>



roughly 18 hours into the event



The end of last term at Meppershall Academy was extremely busy as we prepared for Christmas.

We were really grateful to the parents who came up to the school one evening and put up our Christmas decorations – the children were so excited when they came to school the following morning.

The Key Stage One and Reception children gave a wonderful performance of their nativity play. The traditional story was turned into a play script by Year Two. Christmas carols and songs were then added to complete the show. Our Key Stage Two children prepared a Carol Service which was held in St. Mary's church. It was wonderful to see so many parents and grandparents enjoy the hard work of all the children. We are very proud of all of our performers, especially the youngest children in Reception, who took part in the nativity after only one term at school.

There were plenty of exciting events in the final week of school including Christmas dinner and a Christmas party with a visit from Santa. The final day of term ended with a special treat of a visiting theatre group who performed a selection of tales from Beatrix Potter. This was kindly provided by our PTA.

We have all returned to school this term, rested and excited to begin new topics. We welcome a new member of staff, Miss Mascaro, who will be teaching our Year One class and are delighted that Michelle Allen has been appointed as Assistant Headteacher.

Finally, we would like to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Nickie Moore, Headteacher

Wanderbus



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS URGENTLY REQUIRED

Can YOU help us to maintain our Community Bus Services?

We urgently require additional volunteer drivers for as little as 1 morning per month!

Wanderbus, based out of Meppershall, is run entirely by volunteers. We operate two 16-seater buses on weekdays (mainly mornings) with fixed routes collecting passengers in the rural villages around Shefford & Stotfold and going to local & regional Shopping & Town centres.

There we park up and wait for 2/2.5 hours before returning. This is of course your free time as well!

What Do You Need to Drive?

1. Group D1 on your Driving Licence – older licences will automatically have this grouping that allows you to drive a 16-seater bus.
2. Aged 25 – 70
3. A free weekday morning – bus departure times are around 08.45/09.00 and you will be back in Meppershall between 12.00 & 13.30 (latest). We can allocate routes to suit if you need the earlier return time.
4. A desire to help our local communities. Whilst we are a fixed route bus service open to all passengers the majority are elderly who rely on our services to get out and about and enjoy the social interaction of fellow regular passengers.

Full training will be given (classroom & practical - MIDAS) and you will can be accompanied by one of our regular drivers until you are totally happy to 'go solo'. Don't worry about routes – the passengers will tell you where to go if you are unsure!

If you want to spend a very rewarding morning

PLEASE contact us for more info on 0300-123-3023 or e mail

thewanderbus@gmail.com

Development Update
Report from the Trustees of Meppershall Village Hall

January 2018

Work is progressing well on the construction of our new Village Hall. At the time of writing this report in mid-January it can be seen that the roof above the hall is almost complete (left hand end of the photo below) but has been delayed due to the weather for the safety of the roofers.

Internally the walls are complete and being prepared for the installation of plumbing and electrical connections. The mezzanine storage area is nearing completion following the installation of the staircase last week.

Weather permitting the tiling of the roof will commence shortly, starting from the pre-school end of the building (shown on the right of the photo below). The windows for the entire building are being installed during February. As you no doubt know, once the building is watertight progress on the internal works move on very quickly. Overall the project is on target and moving forward each day. The works noted below should have been completed by the time you read this:

- Crackle Hill Path – the space from the end of the path to the back edge of the highway area will be surfaced by our contractors by 26th Jan 18
- The holes where possible (not required for utilities access) will be surfaced by this date also.
- The outstanding lighting bollard will be installed by 26th Jan 18, the other 3 are already illuminated.



Shefford Leisure Group By Enid Pamment

Our thoughts of Christmas and New Year are fast fading into the distance, and I can only hope you enjoyed the festive season with your families and friends.

So much change is going on with all the building and construction work in our village, but I would like to spare a moment to welcome our new 'neighbours' and hope they will settle and have a peaceful life with us all in Meppershall.



Current subscribers: I would like to thank the subscribers who have so promptly sent in their renewals, this is very helpful and will keep the continuity going which ensures nobody will be 'missed out'. Shefford Leisure Group currently holds a database for people who would like more details, prices, timings, etc. If anyone is interested in joining us, the subscription runs from January to December and for a small charge of £12.50 covers the household (not per person). The subscription covers newsletters, booking forms, postage, cartridges and paper. Newsletters can be sent either by post or by e-mail.

It was so sad and I really must apologise for having to cancel our Christmas lunch and show on Sunday 10th December due to severe weather (we were snowed in!). After I had made the painful decision to cancel (as I didn't want to be responsible for any broken limbs!), Wicksteed Park 'phoned me to say the show was off as the cast could not get to their destination! Likewise, our proposed trip around the Kent villages was also cancelled, but everyone received a refund, I am pleased to say. The only other trip in December which did take place was the visit to The Royal Albert Hall, for the matinee performance of John Rutter's Christmas Celebrations. The Royal Albert Hall was packed to capacity (approximately 5,500 people) when everyone was singing 'O Come of ye Faithful' accompanied by the superb organ with so many pipes – the strains of the singing could easily be heard outside the building. Certainly, something to remember!

Our first outing of the year was in style! Lunch at the Strand Palace Hotel followed by the matinee performance of the very popular '42nd Street' at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Landmark Coaches provided the transport, virtually door to door! Including a very pleasant and efficient driver! Then, some of our party are off to Warner's 'Nidd Hall' and will have the opportunity to visit Harrogate, The Dales, Skipton and Wensleydale. These two trips are in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel and St. Andrew's Ladies Luncheon Club.

Our first main trip booked for 2018 is 'The People's Post' on the 4th March. This is proving very popular and has been booking up quickly. To cheer ourselves up after the dull grey Winter months, we have booked an afternoon of Cockney (fun packed) entertainment on board the Tereza Joanne boat in the Royal Docks. This includes late lunch (or early tea)! And no bad language! Do please join us and enter into the 'Chas & Dave' era!

Another very popular choice is the London Museum of Water and Steam and afterwards a visit to the Musical Museum. This company is relatively new, taking groups of people to see the sights, which is extremely informative and educational.

Our Shefford Leisure Group Annual 'Get Together' once again has been booked for Wednesday 9th May – 2pm until 4pm, Please ensure this date is firmly fixed in your diary. We meet at the Mount Pleasant Golf Club, Lower Stondon for a friendly afternoon and chat, a well-stocked tombola, presentations and of course a delicious afternoon tea.

Rooms are still available for the Cotswolds sleepover which is proving popular, so although it is next May, single rooms are now in short supply. Flyers are available for anyone interested, just give me a call and I will send you one.

Whilst writing this newsletter, there are still many ideas waiting for confirmation before advertising the event. So, if there is anything further you wish to know, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will do my level best to help you. Always happy to include new ideas.

I look forward to meeting you sometime during the year but in the meantime, mind where you walk with uneven footpaths and building debris, we don't want any broken limbs!!

Next month it will be a little lighter and maybe we will be able to turn our attention on to Spring! We can but hope!

Good health to you all,

Enid

FORTHCOMING EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2018:

THE PEOPLE'S POST – Sunday 4th March 2018 – 100 years on! We meet our Blue Badge Guide for morning refreshments and afterwards the choice is yours to either do the 'walking tour' or a half walking tour and finish off by coach whilst hearing the tales of drunken poaching mailmen, corrupt politicians, the Victorian internet and a canny public, determined to avoid paying for their post. Exmouth Market will be the place where we can choose our lunch stop. During the afternoon we visit the brand new state-of-the-art Postal Museum to enjoy an incredible collection spanning five centuries. We will also ride the hidden tunnels of the Mail Rail – a unique piece of industrial heritage that has kept the capital's communications flowing for over 75 years.

THE MOUNTBATTEN FESTIVAL OF MUSIC – Saturday 10th March – Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines at the Royal Albert Hall. – Matinee Performance. Arranged in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel.

LIGHT HEARTED COCKNEY FUN AFTERNOON ON THE RIVER THAMES – Tuesday 10th April 2018.

THE LONDON MUSEUM OF WATER & STEAM PLUS A VISIT TO THE MUSICAL MUSEUM – Saturday 28th April 2018.

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP ANNUAL GET TOGETHER – Wednesday 9th May 2018 – held at Mount Pleasant Golf Club, Lower Stondon from 2pm – 4pm. Afternoon tea & presentation.

THE COTSWOLDS EXPLORER – 3-DAY TOUR – 27th May 2018 for two nights – We will be staying at the 4* Oxford Whitney Hotel, just a short walk from the historic centre of Whitney, this hotel is the ideal base for travelling throughout Oxfordshire. The hotel

features well-equipped bedrooms, a heated swimming pool, spa bath, steam room and sauna which are all free for the group to use throughout their stay. Day trips include The Downton Abbey Matinee Explorer, Cotswolds Gold and the Cotswolds River Thames Explorer. We also have a Blue Badge Guide to accompany us. Please contact for prices and any further details required. A flier is available if requested.

WINDSOR CASTLE & SAVILL GARDENS – Sunday 1st July 2018 (details to follow)

SMUGGLERS & STRAWBERRY JAM (Essex) – Monday 23rd July 2018

LITCHFIELD & THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM – Monday 3rd September 2018.

THURSFORD CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR – Sunday 11th November 2018.

2018 LONDON SHOWS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE – ALL MATINEE PERFORMANCES

(organised in conjunction with Stevenage Group Travel)

ANNIE (Matinee) – Thursday 8th February (including 2-course lunch at The Strand Palace Hotel) Piccadilly Theatre, Stall Seats. Leaving Shefford at 9am.

LION KING (Matinee) – Wednesday 7th March (including a 2-course lunch at The Strand Palace Hotel), Lyceum Theatre, Stalls Seats. Leaving Shefford at 9am

DREAM GIRLS (Matinee) – 7th March at the Savoy Theatre, Stall Seats. Leaving Shefford at 9.30am.

KINKY BOOTS – (Matinee) – Wednesday 7th March (including a 2-course carvery lunch at the Strand Palace Hotel), Adelphi Theatre, Stalls Seats. Leaving Shefford at 9am.

STRICTLY BALLROOM – THE MUSICAL: Wednesday 2nd May. The uplifting story that inspired the world to dance, based on Baz Luhrmann's multi award-winning movie *Strictly Ballroom*. Piccadilly Theatre – Stall Seats – Coach will depart Shefford at 10.15am.

Please telephone for prices and availability of any holidays, outings or shows listed above.

For all holidays, including transport from Shefford and hotel accommodation, Shefford Leisure Group acts as an agent for the Tour Operator; their terms and conditions apply.

Shefford Leisure Group is open to everyone in the local community, who feel they would like to join us on our ventures and see places they would not see under their own steam. We are always happy to meet new friends.

Raffles are held and all the proceeds are for Keech Hospice Care for Children. For further information regarding dates, prices and availability or to receive our monthly newsletter, please contact Enid on 01462 851397 or e-mail enid.pamment@gmail.com.

Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

Meppershall Parish Council

Report on January meeting

Open Meeting

The report from CBC Councillor Tony Brown included the news that the CBC customer service desk is moving from the Chicksands offices to Shefford Library: see the notice on Page 26 of this issue.

Cllr Brown also referred to the CBC Council tax precept: see the diagram on page 27 of this issue.

Members of the public queried what was happening about speeding on Shefford Road: The Chairman quoted a figure of £100,000 for 4 average speed cameras to cover the whole village. Investigations continue looking for an affordable solution.

Planning

Planning applications approved for a new bungalow at 79 Shefford Road and alterations to Standalone Farm House.

New applications: detached house adjacent to Sandy View on Shefford Road and revised application for New Close Nurseries on Fildyke Road: 10 houses revised down from 13.

Appeals: the 2 appeals by Gladmans against the rejection of their proposals for the site of Stocken House on Shefford Road will now be heard together by a Planning Inspector on 10th – 13th April. See the notice on page 25 of this issue.

Finance

The main business of the meeting was the review of the budget for 2018-19 and the adoption of a precept for inclusion in the CBC Council Tax demand. After a more accurate assessment of budget requirements than had been possible in previous years, a budget was adopted that raised the precept required from £37,000 to £42,390 for the year. This increase, amounting to 10.38%, is the first increase in 4 years; although it sounds a lot, it will only increase the Council tax paid by a Band D householder by **£5.46 in a full year**.

Next Council Meetings

12th February and 12th March 2018 at 19.45 hrs in the Interim Village Hall.

Cllr. Peter Chapman

Chairman, Meppershall Parish Council.



Our Village - We do Have a Say

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (CBC) DRAFT LOCAL PLAN – UPDATE

Your Support Matters

The Central Bedfordshire Council Local Plan (pre-submission) is available for consultation from 11 January (10am) – 22nd February 2018 (5pm).

“CBC’s Draft Local Plan 2035 calls for between 42,600 and 54,960 new homes to be built in Central Bedfordshire over the 20-year Plan period until 2035. This is massive and is equivalent to building 14 new towns the size of Ampthill (4,000 homes)”. CPRE – issue no 60.

On top of this, the Chancellor has given the green light for an Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor, thus backing the objective of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) to build one million homes across this largely rural area. All this is in addition to new homes currently included in the Local Plan. It is important that residents of all villages and towns in Central Bedfordshire read and comment on the ‘Pre-submission Plan’ as once this is adopted it means that CBC is committed in law to provide the houses suggested in the Plan.

Comments on the plan can be made by members of the public in one of two ways:

1. Online at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning/policy/local-plan/pre-submission.aspx>
2. Write a letter and post/deliver to Central Bedfordshire Council, Planning Department, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ

Please keep MAG posters clean, tidy and visible. If anyone would like a 'FRESH' poster/s, please contact a MAG representative.

Planning updates for Meppershall as of 7th January 2018:

100 High Street appeal starts 9th January 2018 – scheduled for 4-day hearing.

Stocken House, 59 Shefford Road appeal starts 10th April 2018 – both the 150 and 145 house applications at appeal - scheduled for 4-day hearing.

Any residents who are available to attend these appeal meetings on behalf of the village or MAG will provide a great support for the community. Inspectors will hopefully include a visit to our Village.

New applications: CB/17/05345/FULL Land adjacent to Sandy View, Shefford Road – erection of a detached house CB/17/04650/FULL Land R/O 6 High Street – erection of 4 new three-bedroom dwellings.

Awaiting decision: CB/17/05425/FULL The Pigling, Woodview Nurseries, Shefford Road – replace existing mobile home with a single storey two-bedroom permanent dwelling CB/17/02409/FULL New Close Nurseries, Fildyke Road – demolition of existing glasshouses and redevelopment with 10 residential dwellings and all ancillary works.

Granted applications: CB/17/05090/FULL 79 Shefford Road – new building 3 bedroom detached single storey dwelling with integral garage and detached garage CB/17/04537/FULL 10 Hoo Road – erection of 2 three-bedroom detached houses CB/17/02528/FULL 52 Fildyke Road – erection of two detached dwellings.

Withdrawn: CB/17/04782/FULL land adjacent to 15 Shillington Road – erection of 8 dwellings, formation of vehicular and pedestrian access with associated landscaping.

Meppershall Action Group – Our Village – We Do Have a Say!

Greensand Ridge Local Action Group

Are you looking for funding to help develop the rural economy in the Greensand Ridge area of Central Bedfordshire? Got some buildings that could be converted into holiday lets or B&B facilities? We are looking to help fund projects that create quality overnight stay accommodation and create jobs in [#Bedfordshire](#). Click here: <http://ow.ly/wld930hyNI4> [#funding](#) [#grants](#) [#rural](#) [#B&B](#) [#holiday](#). The Greensand Ridge Local Action Group (LAG), managed by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), has been awarded £1.443m LEADER funding to invest in local projects between 2015 and 2020, and is **now open for new project applications**.

What is LEADER?

LEADER is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). It's a French acronym which roughly translates as 'Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development'.

How Local Action Groups work

A LAG is made up of people from the local community and the local public and private sector.

LAGs decide which projects they will fund in their area. This depends on the priorities set out in their Local Development Strategy, but projects must also support one or more of the 6 LEADER priorities. These are to:

- support micro and small business and farm diversification
- boost rural tourism
- increase farm productivity
- increase forestry productivity
- provide rural services
- provide cultural and heritage activities

You can find out more about the Greensand Ridge Local Development Strategy and the application process by downloading the documents below.

If you would like to make an application for funding, please contact BRCC's Rural Development Team at leader@bedsrcc.org.uk, or call us on 01234 **832614** to discuss your project idea and request an Outline Application form.

Greensand Ridge Local Development Strategy – [Greensand Ridge LDS](#)
Applicant Handbook – [Greensand Ridge LEADER Applicant Handbook V4.1](#)



The Brownies finished off 2017 with a range of different activities.

We had a really interesting evening with a visit to Pets at Home. The Brownies were given a talk from a staff member about some of the animals there, including their more exotic animals and they were able to hold and stroke some of the animals, which the girls really enjoyed.



We also had our own Strictly Come Dancing-themed night, with, as you would expect, lots of sequins, and the girls all looked very pretty in their party dresses. We made sequin glitter balls; the brownies made up their own dances and we learnt about some of the more well-known ballroom dances and had a go at doing the cha cha cha, tango and waltz.

We then turned all Christmassy and made some Christmas crafts, we made Rodolph the Red Nose Reindeer Christmas decorations, Rockin' Robin Christmas cards and snowflakes for the Advent Window event which we took part in organised by the Church. Decorating windows for advent was a lovely idea and it was fabulous to see lots of windows in the village decorated and lit up over the advent period.

Our last meeting of 2017 finished with our usual Christmas party organised by Tawny Owl, where we played lots of fun games and had pizza, which turned out to be a firm favourite and jelly and ice-cream.

If you are interested in your daughter joining Brownies or volunteering yourself, then please contact Snowy Owl (Suzanne) on 07817 392325 or you can register online at www.girlguiding.org.uk.

The Meppershall Players



THE MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS



Like to start by saying a big THANK YOU to all our lovely audiences at the 2017 Pantomime 'A Christmas Carol'. You were all absolutely fantastic and made our performances so much fun.

We hope to perform a late Spring/early Summer comedy thriller 'whodunnit' entitled 'Murder at Little Hapnin'. At present it's a work in progress, which means at the moment not even the Players know who the villain, villainess or villains are. I know one thing - it will be funny, thrilling and entertaining; more details to follow (I just love the suspense!).

The Players will be attending Summer fairs throughout the sunny (we hope) season and will be doing a slightly different format with our stall as to previous years but we do need prizes, so if you have any unwanted gifts we would be most grateful for them.

Wanted! One Piano Player for future pantomimes (not this year's), variety shows, & musicals. Yes, we are still looking for someone who loves to play piano and would like to accompany the Players. Could you be the next Players' piano player? If yes, we'd love to meet you; drop in on any Wednesday or contact the number below.

Find the Meppershall Players on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) Insta-gram, Twitter, and Meppershall Village Hall Website.

The Players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Membership is currently free; we welcome people from the age of 9 to 90+, to indulge in all areas of theatrical performances, set-building, costumes, directing, acting, make-up, song & dance, etc.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 816336

QUIZ NIGHT

ON

SUNDAY 11TH FEBRUARY

STARTS 7.30PM



WITH QUIZMASTER

PAUL CARNE

*TEAMS AS BIG OR SMALL AS YOU
LIKE*

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

(At Meppershall Interim Hall)

(£1 ENTRY FEE PER PERSON, NON-MEMBERS WELCOME)

CLUB SOUND
KARAOKE
WITH
STU & DAVE
SATURDAY 3RD FEBRUARY
7PM TILL LATE
AT THE INTERIM VILLAGE HALL

1000'S OF TRACKS TO CHOOSE
FROM ALL YOUR KARAOKE
FAVOURITES



Police Advice

- **Make your house look lived-in** - burglars won't be tempted by a full house. If you're out during the night, keep your lights on a timer and consider keeping your radio playing so it seems like someone is home.
- **Lock up when you leave** - make sure all doors and windows on your house, vehicle and garages or sheds are securely locked at all times. Not only can valuable tools be appealing to burglars, they can also be used to force entry to a home.
- **Keep valuables out of sight** - keys, wallets, mobile phones and laptops left in view can entice opportunist thieves. Try to keep them hidden in a safe place or store them out of view of windows.
- **Don't give crooks an easy entry** - never leave keys under a doormat or in a flowerpot – it's the first place a would-be offender would look.
- **Look out for neighbours** - ask a friend to keep an eye on your house if you go away, and do the same for neighbours. Stay alert to suspicious activity on your street. Consider joining a watch scheme – to join or contact your local [Neighbourhood Watch team](#)
- **Security mark your property** - [security mark](#) high-value belongings such as laptops, tablets, smartphone and games consoles using UV pens, and make sure you register them on. This can help police to return any items that are stolen to their rightful owners.
- **Report incidents** - call 101 to report an incident, or 999 if a crime is in progress. You can also give information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or use our [online reporting form](#).
- **Complete the home security checklist** - take a few minutes to review the security in your home. Most domestic security issues can be improved quickly and cheaply, and will put your mind at rest.

You may have recently seen in the national news articles regarding the theft of vehicles when the key fob is in the house. Previously, thieves would break into a house to steal car keys but new technology means the vehicle can be removed without the owners being aware or any damage being caused.

Whilst this issue is being investigated by police on a national level, there are a few measures you can take to protect your vehicle by ensuring your vehicle cannot be removed - with or without a key - and to make your key fob unreadable by other devices. Please spare a couple of minutes to watch the following BBC news article which shows how the crime is committed and what actions you can take to prevent it.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-birmingham-42142023/how-to-stop-your-car-being-stolen-in-relay-crime-theft>

RFID key pouches are readily available online at around £5.00. Please make sure you buy from a reputable supplier who has Sold Secure or Secured By Design accreditation.

2484 Lara Curtayne

Crime Reduction Officer – North

Central Beds Recycling Advice



Recycle your reusable textiles & shoes separately

Simply put any unwanted but reusable textile & shoes in an old unwanted standard sized carrier bag (no black bin bags) and place next to either your recycling* or black waste bin.

<p>✓ Yes please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ clothing ✓ shoes (tied in pairs) ✓ sheets ✓ blankets ✓ towels ✓ household linen ✓ fabrics 	<p>✗ No thanks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ duvets ✗ pillows ✗ cushions ✗ torn or stained ✗ textiles <p>These should be put in your black waste bin.</p>
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***Please don't place bagged items inside your recycling bin as it won't be emptied.**

A great place to live and work.

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/recycling 0300 300 8302

recycle
for Central Bedfordshire

Meppershall Social Club

FEBRUARY AT THE SOCIAL CLUB

*BINGO- Every Friday. Doors open 6.45pm eyes down 7.15pm.

Members free entry, Non-members £1 entrance fee.

*MEAT RAFFLE- drawn every Friday night during the Bingo Interval.

£1 per square could win you your Sunday roast.

*KARAOKE Saturday 3rd February & Saturday 3rd March 8pm-late Sing-a-long to your favourite songs at this fun for everyone evening in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

*PAUL CARNE'S QUIZ NIGHT-Sunday 11th February at 7.30pm the most fun quiz on the planet, £1 per person, teams as big or small as you like, half of entry money to winning team, other half to the Social Club Charities for 2018, 'Meppershall Gnomes' & 'Mind'.

* Look out for posters on other Social Club events.

*SNOOKER at the Social Club, members can play every evening when the club is open. For more information pop into the Social Club any evening, or contact The Club after 8pm on 01462 815642. Club opens 8pm; we look forward to seeing you.

MEMBERSHIP for 2018 is available now (pick up a form at the Club).

Meppershall Social Club 01462 815642 after 8pm.

Meppershall Calendar of Events – February

Day	Date	What's on	When	Where
Fri	2 nd	Bingo	18.45 hrs	Social Club
Sat	3 rd	Karaoke	19.00 hrs	Social Club
Tue	6 th	Parents' evening	15.45 hrs	Mepp Academy
Wed	7 th	Parents' Evening	15.45 hrs	Mepp Academy
Thur	8 th	Gnomes Coffee Morning	10.45 hrs	New Mepp Care Home
Fri	9 th	Bingo	18.45 hrs	Interim VH
Sun	11 th	Quiz Night	19.30 Hrs	Social Club
Mon	12 th	Parish Council Meeting	19.45 hrs	Interim VH
Fri	16 th	Bingo	18.45 hrs	Social Club
Fri	23 rd	Bingo	18.45 hrs	Social Club
Mon	26 th	Messenger Collating	14.30 hrs	Sugar Loaf

Also see the calendar on the village website

Covers by Request

Only one more issue to go, under the current management, but see the March issue for news of April onwards.



She-Fit

Personal Training

- Struggling to lose weight?
- Need to get fit or tone up?
- She-fit personal training can help achieve goals
- Personalised exercises designed around you for results!

Fully equipped exclusive private studio based in the village of Meppershall, Beds

First consultation free

For more information visit www.she-fit.co.uk email: charlotte@she-fit.co.uk

(01462) 811386 or 07887 570193

KRUSADER

Kickboxing is a combination of Thai Boxing, Karate and Boxing.
The class consists of cardio warm-up, body conditioning using punches, kicks, elbows & knees: sparring is optional.

Meppershall Village Hall

Junior class. Tuesday 6pm – 7pm (6yrs-12yrs)

Tuesday 7.30pm – 9pm

Thursday 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Venue 360 – 20 Gipsy Lane, Luton

Saturday 10.15am – 12noon

£7.50 adults

£5.50 Juniors

(monthly payments discounted)

Contact Charlotte Robinson (6th Dan)

email: Charlotte@Krusader.co.uk

call: 01462 811386 mobile: 07887570193

www.krusader.co.uk

Notices

DEFIBULATOR TRAINING

The Parish Council is willing to fund a Defibulator training session during 2018 providing there is sufficient support to justify the cost. The GNOMES have undertaken to assess the level interest in the village to this training. Please email your interest to gnomes@meppershall.org by 20 Feb 2018 or by calling 07760 793921.

'TRUGS & TROWELS' **Campton Gardening Club**

Our next meetings will be on:

Monday, 5th February 2018;

Cheryl & Pip from Bromham Mill will be giving a talk on
'Garden Design' (making the most of your space)

Monday, 5th March 2018;

Bev Bond will be giving a talk entitled
'History of the English Garden'

New members are always welcome to come along to any of our
Gardening Club meetings; collectively we know quite a lot!

Campton Village Hall, 7.30-9.00pm

Everyone Welcome - Admission £3

(or annual membership £24)

For more information, please contact... Maryika 01462 851729

MISSING CAT APPEAL

HAVE YOU SEEN (or given a new/interim home to) MY MISSING CAT?

Location: Chapel Road end of Fildyke Road but he could have wandered across the fields as far as Coneygate.

“Toffee” went walkabout on 9 November and hasn’t been home since.

He is a micro chipped 2-year-old, slim, dark ginger boy with ginger eyes and white socks and is far too friendly for his own good.

Please contact **Colette** if you have any news on 01462 815585 / 07831 111 062

NOTICE FROM MEPPERSHALL PC

Appeals by Gladman Developments Ltd against the rejection of both its developments proposals relating to land at Stocken

House, 59, Shefford Road

Appeals references: APP/P0240/W/17/3185183 &

APP/PO240/W/17/3190584

The appeals are due to be heard by Mr. P. Rose, Planning Inspector, on 10th to 13th April at the CBC offices at Priory House, Monks walk, Chicksands. Starting at 10.00 AM.

This is a public hearing, open to anyone. Representatives of Meppershall PC and MAG have attended other appeal hearings and realised how important it is that the Inspector is left in no doubt about the strength of local opposition to the proposals. Come along on as many of the 4 days as you can manage; you will not be required to speak but your presence will lend weight to those who are speaking against the proposals.

Customer Services from Central Beds Council

The council has been looking into how we can improve access to our face to face customer service through our libraries. To test this approach, we are planning to move our face to face customer service function currently based in Priory House, into **Shefford Library from 30 January 2018**.

The current customer service offer at Priory House in Chicksands will need to be closed to accommodate some future building works so this presents the ideal opportunity to trial the offer in the nearest library and evaluate the impact.

The pilot will see the two Customer Service Advisors being based in Shefford Library. The Customer Service Advisor will be available at the same days and times as the current service in Priory House except Mondays when the Library is not open, however the other face to face customer service locations will still be available. Customers will not be required to make appointments and they will still be able to have private and confidential discussions.

There has been a steady decline in the number of customers accessing the face to face service over the last few years; up to a 50% reduction since 2014. Also, the four current centres do not provide good geographical coverage across the council area for customers. We know that the average distance customers visiting Priory House customer service centre is 8.7 miles.

If this pilot proves successful, we hope to extend this approach to Sandy, Flitwick, Leighton Buzzard and Biggleswade. This would provide more appropriate geographical cover for our customers and maximise the use of our own community buildings, making our libraries more of a central community facility than they already are.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me

Bernie McGill

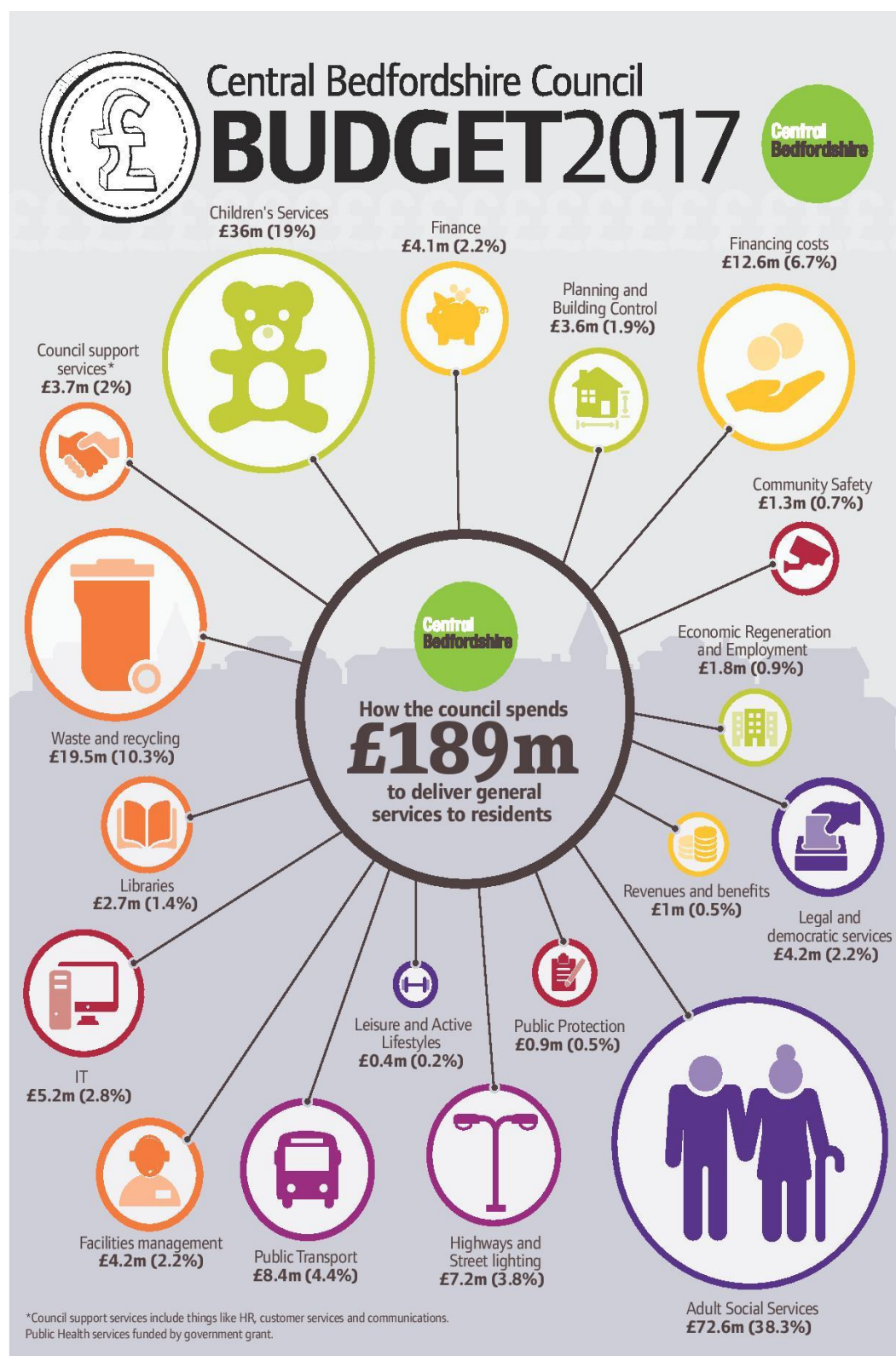
Head of Customer Relations & Service

Central Bedfordshire Council

Telephone 0300 300 5614

Email bernie.mcgill@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Do You Know How CBC Spend Your Council Tax ?



To find out more and to have your say, go to the CBC website.

The Summerfield Railway

Bedford Model Engineering Society
 Summerfield Miniature Railway
 Off the A600 just past Haynes Turn

Public Running Days in 2018 from 10.30AM to 4 PM

APRIL	Sunday 1 st		AUGUST	Wednesday 1 st *
	Monday 2 nd (Bank Holiday)			Wednesday 8 th *
	Wednesday 11 th (half term)*			Wednesday 15 th *
	Sunday 22 nd			Sunday 26 th
MAY	Sunday 6 th			Monday 27 th (Bank Holiday)
	Monday 7 th (Bank Holiday)		SEPTEMBER	Sunday 2 nd
	Sunday 27 th			Sunday 16 th
	Monday 28 th (Bank Holiday)		OCTOBER	Sunday 7 th
	Wednesday 30 th (half term)*			Sunday 21 st
JUNE	Sunday 10 th			Wednesday 24 th (half term)*
	Sunday 24 th		DECEMBER	Sat & Sun 8th/9th Santa Specials – pre-booking essential
JULY	Sunday 8 th			For further information, see our website: www.bedfordmes.co.uk
	Sunday 22 nd			
*On our Wednesday openings, only limited catering will be available.				

Junior Birthdays

**A very HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you
celebrating birthdays in FEBRUARY**

Keira Thomason who will be 15 on the 6th

Benjamin Saunders who will be 14 on the 16th

Alfie Curtis who will be 11 on the 25th

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to
the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148
or email at louhuts@gmail.com

Senior Birthdays

Pat Langan will be 91 on 5th February

John Winter will be 94 on 25th February

Congratulations to both of the above.

Deaths

We are sad to announce the following deaths:

Vivien Woodgate (Currell) on 19th November 2017. (see below)

John Pontin on 20th December 2017, aged 100 years, 6 weeks. Our
condolences to Jackie and family.

Kathleen Drummond on 29th December, aged 90 years. Our condolences to all
the family.

Vivien Woodgate (Currell)



Vivien's family are sad to announce of her passing on Sunday 19th November 2017, aged 72, after a long and inspirational battle against all the odds.

Vivien had lived in Meppershall and made it her home for 50 years.

Upon her marriage to Terry Currell she moved from Digswell, Welwyn into a bungalow on the High Street where she had her family, a daughter Nicola and son Paul.

In the 1970's Vivien and Terry purchased land opposite the bakery and built their own home which they called 'The Red House'. During this time, she worked in the village both part

time in the bakery and also as a rose picker for Will Hartog, a local grower who was based in Chapel Road.

Following Vivien's divorce from Terry she met and fell in love with her soul mate Bill Woodgate who was well known by many in the village, they were both involved in the local community until Bill's sudden passing in 1985. They would put on the New Year's Eve parties that were held in the village hall, helped out at the annual summer fete and other events too.

Those who knew Vivien would often see her on one of her many walks around the village and local countryside with her daughter Nicola and friend Gill and her dog Jake. Vivien would also often take Poppy, a springer spaniel who lived in the post office along with her too.

She made many friends in Meppershall over the years and is remembered fondly as she was always friendly and loved a chat. On asking after her she was often referred to as a 'lovely lady' and to those who knew her history as 'remarkable and an inspiration' and she was.

She will be greatly missed by all those who knew her, especially Nicola and Simon who cared for her at home for the last ten years of her life, upon losing her independence following a major stroke.

The family wish to thank all those who sent lovely cards, passed on their condolences and attended Vivien's funeral service.

Meppershall Pre-School Ponderings



Supported by

Croudace
HOMES.CO.UK



The year has started well with new families joining us, and lots of new ideas to engage the children in play and support their learning, as well as some fresh fundraising ideas from our fabulous new committee. We are also now being sponsored by Croudace Homes who are building the new village hall, pre-school, and housing development adjacent to the new hall. This support is invaluable on top of the care they have already shown when setting up the interim hall for all users including the pre-school, and building the brand-new hall and pre-school which will greatly benefit the entire community.

Some of the topics we will cover this term are 'Growing Up', 'Changes in our day', 'Germs and Hygiene', 'The Seasons', 'Life Cycles' and 'Spring/Growth'. We also plan to finish by talking about 'Our new Pre-school' with the completion date getting ever closer! We will be looking at pictures of the build from the start to the present day and hopefully going for a walk to view the new building. Simon from Croudace has been visiting and arranging exciting experiences like climbing a huge digger throughout the build, which has had a huge impact by allowing us all to feel a part of the entire process.

Thank you, Simon. We are also going to be celebrating Chinese New Year, Australia Day, Mother's Day & Easter too!

On 20th January 'Widdershins' performed a fantastic puppet show in the interim hall. Our Pre-school committee supported this event with refreshments and the show was enjoyed immensely by all who came! On 17th March the committee are planning to do a Nearly New Sale also in the interim hall. Further details to follow.

Sessions are filling up fast at Meppershall Pre-school. If your little one has turned 2 and is ready to make new friends and learn copious new skills, please ring Tamsin the pre-school leader during session time on the number below for more information. **We are open every weekday from 9:15am till 3:15pm (term time only)**

The highly qualified team at Meppershall Pre-school is dedicated to offering the best possible care to all our children by creating a safe and stimulating environment, encompassing all individual needs. We are open every weekday from 9:15am till 3:15pm (term time only) and take up to 24 children in each session from in and around the surrounding areas. Priority is given to funded children, and we have limited spaces for two-year olds.

Please ring Tamsin on 07816 357159, or email
meppershallps@gmail.com,
to enrol your child or join our waiting list,
or visit www.meppershall-ps.co.uk for more information.
OFSTED URN EY551988 Registered Charity: 1031913

Denis & Ruth Go Gallivanting with Gertie – Part 2



The following day we drove all the way around Barra island stopping off at various places for a look and a walk. We went to the airport, which is very unusual in that it is on a beach. This great sweep of beach, known as Traigh Mhor or the Cockle Strand is the main runway, in fact there is room for 3 runways on it which are all submerged at high tide. Flights, 2 a day from Glasgow, operate when the tide is out so schedules vary throughout the year. It is a visitor attraction to watch the twin engine Otter aircraft come and go. When we were there a coach load of tourists arrived to watch! We were particularly attracted by the baggage reclaim which was a converted bicycle stand against the exterior wall of the control tower. Yes, it has air traffic control and a cafe. There is also a runway marshal in a 4-wheel drive vehicle which hurtles along the beach making sure it

is all clear before any landings or take-offs. Quite the thing. There is talk of building a hard runway because suitable passenger aircraft, capable for beach landings, are becoming rare. There are mixed feelings about such progress amongst the local community for this is unique to the Western Isles and they want to treasure it.



The following day we headed for Eriskay which required us to catch a ferry. That was one of the nicest days, weather-wise, that we had. The sea was calm and made the 40-minute journey very enjoyable as we stood outside on deck and watched gulls and cormorants enjoying themselves. We went to the main village of Haun and walked on the beach that the Young Pretender landed on to begin the Jacobite Uprising in 1745. We attempted to find the stern of the SS Politician which sank in 1941 bound out of Liverpool for America, with gallons of whiskey on board which the local population “helped” to unload. It formed the basis of Compton MacKenzie’s novel Whiskey Galore. The only shop in the town is run by the community and it is as much a social centre as it is a shop, with a fair stock and a post office. The church stands on a hill above the village and was built in 1893 with the bow of a lifeboat from the aircraft carrier Hermes as its altar base and the church bell originally belonged to the German battle-cruiser Derfflinger which was scuttled at Scapa Flow. A lovely island, with mountains and lots of greenery. Pity it did not have anywhere for us to stay, no campgrounds at all so we crossed over the causeway onto South Uist and a campsite in a small village called Kilbride. We went to the birthplace (reputedly) of



Flora MacDonald who helped to ferry Bonnie Prince Charlie over the sea to Skye after the failure of the rebellion. It has a cairn with a plaque and stones creating an outline of what was believed to have been the site of her house. We had hoped to stay longer than 2 nights on this island but could not as the campsite was all booked up with cyclists and their supporters for the following 2 nights so we moved north to Benbecula. This was a fascinating site, pretty basic and obviously an old military camp. It still had the concrete bases of buildings (probably Nissan Huts) and lumps of concrete which I could only assume had been gun mountings. Facilities were clean but old. The toilet block however had more double coat hooks on the backs of the doors than I have ever seen before. One would have been able to hang their entire wardrobe behind one door! I really should have taken a photograph. The guide book was not over enthusiastic about this island nor was I. It is flat and uninteresting; no wonder it was a favourite of the military. We went back the following day to South Uist and climbed up to the column known as the Lady of the Isles. This 30ft high column, carved in granite depicting the Madonna and child, was sculpted by Hew Lorrimer in 1957 and is very impressive. Nearby is the village of Howmore which has some thatched houses. Their thatch is of various materials such as heathers, peat, straw and grass with some using reeds. We thought we would have a look at Lochboisdale, a village on the east coast at which a ferry calls. Unfortunately, there was a livestock auction underway and the streets were packed with 4x4s and sheep trailers - nowhere to park. We eventually managed to turn around and make our way out which was a pity as it would have been interesting to have witnessed the auction even though we most probably would not have understood a word.



The next island to visit was North Uist so we drove through Benbecula and crossed via another causeway. North Uist is low-lying and so sprinkled with lochs that half the total area is under water. Hills are few and far between, allowing the winds to blow totally unchecked (and in our case also the rain). We stayed on a campsite on a RSPB reserve right next to a nice sandy bay which proved ideal for dog walking. The reserve boasts the largest flock of corncrakes in the UK, but needless to say, we were there at the wrong time. We saw very little birdlife: the odd gull and a batch of starlings that gave us a good aerobatic display. Dunlins were also in abundance scampering along the water's edge until the dog forced them into flight. The reserve itself juts out into the Atlantic Ocean and a walk around the headland promised, according to the poster in the visitor centre, seal sightings but when we went the seals had gone elsewhere. What had not gone was the wind and the walk was somewhat breezy. That night it got stronger and tenters put in extra pegs, those with campers having elevated roofs closed them down, Gertie stood facing into the wind and we had a relatively quiet night with very little movement. Travelling around North Uist we saw a sign "Viewpoint for St Kilda". Off we went along this lane climbing up a hill which we realised

was heading towards a military listening station with aerials, ray domes and high fencing. Nearly at the top was a telescope and a seat. This was the St Kilda viewpoint! The island is some 40 miles away!!! Could we see it? No! It was drizzling and overcast so visibility was restricted. It did, however, enable us to see the lochs and all the water that is on the island. Carrying on to the top of the hill gave us an even more spectacular view of the island and its water. As we came down again the rain stopped so we turned towards the sea and found a lovely quiet inlet for a picnic. Not many birds around but the walk along a smooth sandy bay was very pleasant indeed and we were sheltered from the wind making it feel nice and warm. Returning to road took us to Berneray, another island, joined to Uist by a causeway. Its white shell beach about 4km in length is amazing. Near this beach is a monument to Angus MacAskill (1825-1863) who was known as the Giant. Born in Berneray he grew to a height of 7ft 9ins and weighed 425 lbs. He died in Canada and was buried on Cape Breton Island. For those who like trivia, Berneray is a rabbit free island. How long this will last is anyone's guess for now it is connected by a causeway and is only a hop and jump from Uist. It was from this island that we caught the 7.30 am (it was the only available one) ferry over the Sound of Harris to the island of Harris and Lewis. This is physically one island divided only by name. The distance is fairly short but the journey takes an hour because the Sound is one of Scotland's most difficult ferry routes as there are many skerries (rocky islands too small for habitation) and rocks so the route is like a slalom course. Also, similar to a slalom course, the route is marked with large buoys.

We landed at Leverburgh, a cluster of houses near a jetty. Lord Leverhulme, of washing powder fame, named this village, for when he owned the island he had intended it to have a large fish canning factory and distribution centre built there. However, changes in taste and economic factors put paid to the idea and there are now moves afoot to have the village name changed. From here there are two routes north, one (the quicker) goes up the west coast, but the one to the east is more spectacular and mountainous and the scenery and views are breath-taking. The official name for the road is The Bays because of all the small hamlets, known as bays, that the road links. It is also known as the Golden Road, attributed to a grumbling councillor who objected to the cost. Most people live on the rugged eastern side rather than the more fertile western side. This had not always been through choice. In the late 1800s the crofters were evicted from their crofts on the western fertile plain into the mostly grey rock and heather on the east side. The clearance, as it was called, was to make space for sheep grazing. Obviously, sheep were more profitable to the rich landowners than crofters' rents. The crofters were hardy people and managed to construct "lazybeds" which were raised plots between the rocks fertilized by seaweed and peat. Some of these are still in use today. Harris, the southern half of the island is more mountainous than Lewis in the north and therefore more attractive with its boulder strewn hills rolling down to lovely sandy inlets and the odd little cottages scattered here and there. We drove along this road with its dips and bends and at almost every turn we had to catch our breath. The scenery is really something to write home about. The disappointment is the lack of stopping places on this single-track road. There are some but they are few and far between and one is not encouraged to park in a passing place.

To be concluded next month

Financial Matters By Paul Savuto

ADDRESSING YOUR PERSONAL FINANCE WEAK SPOTS

No matter what age you are it's likely you have a financial weak spot. In fact, it's pretty much inevitable, no one's financial armour is infallible. What steps can you take to shore up your defenses?

MONEY'S TOO TIGHT TO MENTION

Younger people are often struggling to save, let alone contribute towards a pension, whilst trying to afford a foot on the housing ladder and possibly paying off student debt. The repercussions of the financial crash, staggeringly high house prices and pay stagnation, are just some of the pressures this demographic has to contend with.

Classic weak spots for millennials tend to include budgeting and saving, mortgage affordability and debt. A recent study¹ delved into millennials' attitudes and behaviours around saving for retirement. The research found that only 8% ranked pension savings in their top two savings priorities.

Top tips include spending time working on budgeting skills, start small and often with savings and pension contributions, you'll be surprised how quickly they add up. Don't opt out of a workplace pension, look to maximise contributions, if possible. Work hard to reduce any debt, this is key to a successful mortgage application.

SQUEEZED MIDDLE

For the squeezed sandwich generation, struggling with the pressures of caring for children and possibly elderly parents, weak spots can include credit card debt, protection insurance and mortgage debt, plus retirement planning.

Debt levels are usually high, combined with high living expenses, often stifling savings opportunities. Retirement planning is a low priority and some mortgage holders are financially stretched with little protection if their income falls.

The best approach here is to take advice – by taking a holistic view of your finances, including your mortgage, savings, insurance, investments, pensions, and savings and protection, you are able to take control of your finances in one; an ultra-efficient approach.

Also work on building savings, paying off debt, rediscover small pension pots you may have left behind when you switched jobs and consider consolidation. If you haven't started a pension, it's better late than never.

OVER 55 AND BEYOND

With the ability to access your pension from age 55, confronted with a range of options, you become the prime target for scammers. Often with healthy funds available, as time progresses financial vulnerability can creep in. Weak spots, therefore, include confusion regarding pension options, scams and losing confidence.

It's really important to take time to understand the different options for withdrawing a pension by taking professional advice, never underestimate the value of advice. Be scam savvy, never respond to unsolicited approaches regarding your pension.

SELF-EMPLOYED

Not to be overlooked, the self-employed can belong to any generation. The UK now has a record number of self-employed workers, 4.86 million, representing more than one-in seven of all in employment². Recent HMRC figures reported that personal pension saving amongst self-employed workers has fallen to an all-time-low of just 350,000. Pension saving for the self-employed is clearly a weak spot which needs prioritising.

¹ Royal London, *The Millennial Mosaic*, Nov 2017

² Aviva, *Oct 2017*

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AUTUMN BUDGET 2017

Stamp duty abolished immediately for first-time buyers purchasing properties worth up to £300,000

- To help those in expensive areas, the first £300,000 of the cost of a maximum £500,000 purchase will be exempt from stamp duty, with the excess of up to £200,000 incurring 5% duty
- Not applicable in Scotland unless Scottish government decides to follow suit
- Pension lifetime allowance to increase in April 2018 to £1,030,000
- Higher-rate tax threshold to increase to £46,350 from April 2018 (Scotland may differ)

- ISA limit for 2018/19 to remain at £20,000
- JISA and CTF allowance will be uprated in line with CPI to £4,260 in 2018/19

As part of the service at DGS, we take the time to understand our client's unique planning needs and circumstances, so that we can provide you with the most suitable solutions in the most cost-effective way. For a free review of your current pension plans and financial situation, please contact Paul Savuto, AFPS, Chartered Financial Planner. DGS Independent Financial Advisers Ltd. 07834 499595 or email ps@dgsifa.com. I'm based in Meppershall and I'll be happy to talk to you.

Film Review – Star Wars: The Last Jedi By Carlie Newman

STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI (cert. 12A 2 hrs. 38 mins.)

From the opening moments of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* and we hear John Williams' well-known music and then see the words on a slant announcing the film, we know that we are about to witness another very special Star Wars movie. And director Rian Johnson, has ensured that this film certainly is. I won't attempt to give a full synopsis of the film as it gets quite involved at times and, in any case, you will curse me for telling you what you are waiting to see. So, hopefully, no spoilers here!

Star Wars fans will have seen the last film, *The Force Awakens*, which finished with a glimpse of Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill).

This film continues from that point. Rey (Daisy Ridley) has been searching for Luke. She is somewhat surprised to find him living in isolation in a cave. She pleads with him to return to help his sister Leia (Carrie Fisher) – now General Leia Organa and leader of the Resistance – defeat the First Order.

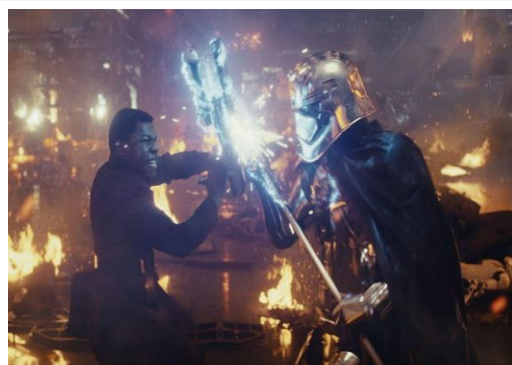
Meanwhile Poe (Oscar Isaac), a top pilot in the Resistance, Finn (John Boyega) originally in the First Order but he defected into the Resistance where he remains, BB8, a new little robot and newcomer Rose Tico (Kelly Marie Tran) a mechanic in the Resistance, set out secretly to disable the tracking device of the First Order.

The new characters are particularly impressive: Kelly Marie Tan seems as though her whole heart is laid bare for us to see and Laura Dern as Vice-Admiral Holdo, an officer in the Resistance, is equally impressive. Mark Hamill shows that he can act and not just look like the very attractive young man he showed us in the first film. It's sad to see Carrie Fisher in her last role. In one interview she said that she didn't know what was going on but enjoyed making the film!

Adam Driver is mesmerizing in the role of Kylo Ren, now Snoke's servant but famous for being the son of Han Solo and Leia. Snoke, is the Supreme Leader of the First Order and played in full disguise by Andy Serkis. Daisy Ridley continues to grow as an actress and she is self-assured in the part of Rey, a member of the Resistance. And I defy anyone to recognize the lovely Lupita Nyong'o as Maz Kanata, an ally of the Resistance. Allegedly Prince Harry and Prince William play Stormtroopers in one scene but as all the Stormtroopers wear helmets that completely cover their faces it is impossible to know if the scene survives in the final cut. Those who have followed the Star Wars saga carefully from the beginning know all the ins and outs of the characters, their back stories and what is happening in this alternative universe. For the rest of us we can sit back and appreciate the tremendous array of special effects, cute robots and beautifully staged set pieces with shiny computer-generated backdrops. Seeing it on an IMAX screen certainly enhances the scale of the movie and the music swells all around.

It's tremendously exciting to watch, particularly in a cinema full of enthusiastic Star Wars fans. Don't worry too much about the plot – sit back and enjoy!

Rating: ****



L to R: Finn (John Boyega) battling Captain Phasma (Gwendoline Christie)

Junior Church

St Mary's Church, Meppershall

Junior Church

Our next Junior Church sessions are:

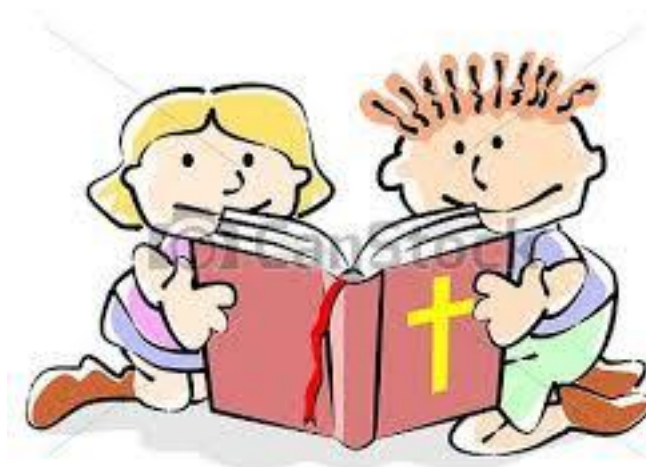
Sunday 4 February

and

Sunday 4 March

11am at St Mary's Church

(ages 3 to 12)



Message from St. Mary's - Services & Events

Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin (Church of England)

Church Road, off Campton Road, Meppershall

www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk † facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – ronigoodman@gmail.com – usual day off Monday

Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962 Chris Valentine 01462 815971

Email: Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: annie10639@gmail.com

Things to watch out for...

Lent! Doing anything to prepare for Easter? Why not join the St Mary's Lent Course – weekly on Wednesdays from 21st February at the home of Ruth and Keith. Based on the film, 'The Terminal,' in which Tom Hanks plays a man who ends up stuck living in an airport. Each session includes a film clip, group discussion, bible reading, reflections, prayer. Call them on 815482 for more info.

Message from St Mary's...

As February arrives, new year has come and gone and for most of us our New Year resolutions have probably come and gone too - if we made any in the first place!

Personally, I don't usually make New Year resolutions - but I do think that it is good now and again to make time for stocktaking - and to decide to make changes for the better if they are needed. It seems quite widely accepted in this culture that New Year (after the celebrations and maybe the excesses of Christmas?) is just such a good time. That kind of pattern is built into our working lives these days too isn't it, with annual reviews, statistical returns and the like. However, I don't think a once a year review is enough for me. And I find myself - picking myself up, brushing myself down and starting all over again rather more often than that! Wikipedia (if it is right!) tells me that there are at least 11 cultures who celebrate new year at times of year other than 1st January... Chinese New Year, Korean New Year, Balinese New Year, Iranian

New Year, Telegu and Kannada New Year, Sinhalese New Year, Tamil New Year, Marwari and Gujarati New Year, Jewish New Year, Islamic New Year and Aboriginal Murador New Year. However, even if I celebrated all of those and made resolutions 12 times a year I am still not sure it would be enough.

One of the texts I love in the Bible, praises the faithfulness of God and says:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;

his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning; Lamentations 3:22-23

And one of my favourite parts of the morning prayer of the Church that I am invited to pray every day says:

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;

let us pray with one heart and mind.

(Silence)

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,

so may the light of your presence, O God,

set our hearts on fire with love for you;

now and for ever. Amen.

I guess its origin is to be found in the Bible in Romans 13:12 which says:

The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armour of right living. (New Living Translation)

I for one, find comfort in the notion that each and every morning is a brand-new day, with new gifts and new graces, with the offer of new beginnings with new possibilities and new opportunities. That means that if - or rather when - I mess up, I won't have to wait to 2019 to start all over again!

Of course - if I want the gift and the chance of starting over - it's a gift and a chance I guess I must be prepared to offer to everyone else as well...

So let's welcome each other to a whole year of new beginnings.

With every blessing, Rector Roni.

Services and Events – February 2018

At St Mary's unless stated below

Date	Time	Service / Event
Sun 28 th January 4 th after Epiphany	11.00am	Holy Communion - Junior Church in the vestry
Weds 31 st January	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sun 4 th February 5 th after Epiphany	11.00am	Holy Communion - Junior Church in the vestry
Weds 7 th February	10.00am	Holy Communion
Fri 9 th February	9pm	Silent Together Come to enjoy the presence of God in the tranquillity of the church - 30 mins.
Sun 11 th February 6 th after Epiphany	8.30am 11.00am 2.15pm	Holy Communion Morning worship – all welcome! Second Sunday Stroll – 4.5 miles from the church gate to Pirton (Motte & Bailey) via Shillington and Apsley End. Arrange return lifts on Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com/857836 (James)
Monday 12 th Feb	7.15 for 7.30pm	Bible Society meeting: 9 Clifton Road, Shefford. God Speaks to Abram, with Revd Roni Goodman.
Tues 13 th Feb	2-4pm	Rectory Tea - Chat and a cuppa, all welcome
Weds 14 th Feb	10.00am	Holy Communion – ASH WEDNESDAY
Sun 18 th February 1 st of Lent	8.30am 11.00am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning worship – all welcome!
Weds 21 st Feb	10.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion St Mary's Lent Course – Week 1. The Terminal – watch the film! At the home of Ruth & Keith Callard – call 815482 for more information.
Sat 24 th Feb	9.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sun 25 th Feb 2 nd of Lent	11.00am	Holy Communion - Junior Church in the vestry
Tues 27 th February	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – Getting Serious over a cuppa. All welcome for chat and a catch up.
Weds 28 th Feb	10.00am 7.30pm	Holy Communion St Mary's Lent Course – Week 2. The Terminal – Identity: Who are we? Who is Jesus? How does our identity restrict us? At the home of Ruth & Keith Callard – call 815482 for more information.

The Team

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes contributions to the Messenger, whether as letters, articles or notices. Contributions should preferably be as attachments to e-mail but handwritten contributions may be sent by post, left at the Editor's address below or in the folder kept at the Village Stores. Contributions should run to not more than one A5 page (except by prior arrangement) and should be received by the Editor not later than the 12th of the month for publication at the end of that month. Contributions received after the deadline may be held over.

DISCLAIMER

The Editor reserves the right to omit or alter any advertisement or article and to change the content, format or issue date of the magazine without prior notice. The Editor cannot be held responsible for the factual correctness of, or for any libellous comment or statement made in any advertisement, article or other contribution published in this magazine. Every effort will be made to avoid any deliberate attempt to mislead or otherwise cause harm or damage to any person or persons by any advertisement, article or any other contribution published in this magazine.

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<u>Collating Dates for your Diaries</u>		
2018		
January	29	
February	26	

Please note that dates in the above table indicate the month in which the collating will take place, at 2.30 pm in the Sugar Loaf. The issue being collated will relate to the following month.