

MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



March 2007

THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

Volume 22 Issue 10

March 2007

Thank you for all the kind comments received about last month's Messenger. Yes, it was packed with some very interesting articles and it is a great comfort to me that so many people read it and, indeed, look forward to the next edition! We will be preparing the new adverts this month to appear in the April edition for the coming year. I should like to apologise to any advertisers who have not yet appeared on the coloured pages – this will be rectified next month and I hope you can bear with us at this extremely frantic time (a time of the year I dread, to be honest); Steve and I will be busy with our Pritt Sticks and sissors preparing the advertising pages in our spare time between our "day" jobs!

Following my plea last month, I should like to welcome Louise Huxton onto "the Team". Louise has agreed to take over the Birthday Page from Tracey Norris; thank you to Louise for volunteering and many thanks to Tracey for doing such a good job over a period of many years.

I was amazed to learn how many people read The Messenger "on-line". It is nice to know that although many have left the area to go to far away places, they still want to keep in touch with our village. Welcome to all those out there; the world is not such a big place after all, and thank you to those who update the website – your time and efforts are obviously much appreciated!

Finally, I've been asked to mention dog mess again. Several Mums have run over the stuff with their pushchairs and people have walked in it, especially along the High Street. Not a pleasant job picking the smelly muck out of treads – PLEASE CLEAR UP AFTER YOUR DOG! Thank you.

The deadline for articles for the April 2007 edition of The Messenger is 12th March 2007. Please either leave them at the Post Office or drop them through my letterbox at 7 Brookmead. If you prefer, you can send articles to me at my e-mail address lindagoldl@aol.com. Thank you.

Linda Gold (Editor)

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Dear Editor

I would like to thank all my relations, friends and neighbours for the cards and letters of sympathy I received after the death of Bob. Also, for the donations to Cancer Research which came to a grand total of £1,117.20. Thank you all so much.

Joan

I have noted the comments made by Mr. Sykes in the February Messenger and would point out that the Village Hall has needed and still needs more money to be spent to bring it up to an acceptable standard. This includes repairs to the roof, and new chairs for the main hall would be very welcome.

Regarding coffee mornings, the two that were very poorly supported were both on Saturdays when most people are not working. Perhaps Mr. Sykes would like to organise an event that would attract more support.

B. Mather

Yvonne, Jamie and Sarah-Louise Mountcastle would like to thank everybody for their kind messages of support, prayers and cards received following the sad loss of their much loved Dad and Grandad.

Why worry? There are only two things to worry about; either you are well or you are sick. If you are well, then there is nothing to worry about; but if you are sick there are two things to worry about. Either you will get well or you will die. If you get well, then there is nothing to worry about, but if you die then there are two things to worry about, either you go up or you go down. If you go up, then there is nothing to worry about, but if you go down you will be so busy shaking hands with old friends you won't have time to worry!

M.T.

Joanne Smart

Many of you are aware that Jo passed away on 11th January 2007. This was a great shock to us and Jo will be sorely missed by all who knew her well.

Jo was a loving wife, mother and friend who touched many people's lives and this was clearly demonstrated by the number of people who attended her funeral and remembrance service on 26th January – 267 in total. Although a very sad occasion, this was also a celebration of Jo's life and there were many happy reminders of wonderful times spent with her.

We would like to thank everyone for their cards and kind messages of condolence. They have been of great comfort to us through this difficult time.

We would also like to thank Rev. John Harper for accommodating our wishes throughout. He and many others contributed to a wonderful service for a wonderful lady.

Jo will never be forgotten and will remain in our hearts forever.

Steve, Becky and Michael Smart.

Village Hall News

Since our last newsletter, things have been going well on the fundraising front, but first let us give you an overview of what's been achieved over the last eighteen months or so since we started our major campaign to raise funds. We have received £2,094 in donations and £2,390 from fundraising events. We received a Bedfordshire grant for £1,000 and a lot of work was carried out by volunteers which would have cost the village hall approximately £7,568. As agreed by the Parish Council, the fundraising was matched pound for pound, and in fact at our last meeting, we were informed that we will be receiving £3,000 match funding, which is actually more than our fundraising total for the year.

We are pleased to recognise the support of everyone who helped, including the Parish Council in very difficult times during the 18 months since the major fundraising action became necessary, as a result of the electrical installations needs costing some £14,000 to meet safety standards.

The Parish Council have again agreed to match fund all our fundraising, pound for pound and already we have had 2 very successful events in February. The live band, 'The Rock Factor' went down very well and was a sell-out. Also the Tea dance was a great success and in fact had the highest turn-out to date!

We have our table top sale on March 31st from 10.00am until 2.00pm. *There are just a few tables left, so if you would still like to book one, please call Gemma Chapman on 07870 697407.*

There will be more events during the year, so please continue to look out for the posters and details in the Messenger and if you can, come along and support your village hall.

One final note is about the glass bottle recycling bins outside the village hall. Please could everyone ensure that only glass is put in them and not any other waste, which has unfortunately happened recently.

The Village Hall Committee

Meppershall Parish Council Report

Finance

Our Precept request has been submitted to Mid Beds District Council for the forthcoming year, which is the same amount as last year £28,500. This is less than the budget costs of running the Parish therefore addition monies will be taken from reserves. The meeting also discussed and agreed the Section 107 payments, which are the Grants and Donations to local organisations for the current financial year.

Planning & Housing

The Council reviewed four applications, three were approved and one objected to on a number of grounds.

Highways & Lighting

We were pleased to welcome to our meeting an Officer from Beds CC Highways Dept. to discuss highway safety in the Village. He has agreed to implement the traffic survey requested a year ago, which will probably be undertaken at the end of February. You will be able to see when this takes place as 2 rubber strips are laid across the road to measure traffic statistics in 2 places for a period of one week. Following the survey he will be meeting with the Council to discuss the results and provide an action plan. The Council already has a sum in excess of £22,000 for the work required.

Additionally during February, the work we are doing to extend the footpath in Shefford Road towards the end of the 30-mph limit will be started. This is being paid for by the Parish Council, unfortunately the footpath down the hill towards Shefford is not yet in the County Council improvement plans due to lack of funds.

Environment & Leisure

The group is currently working on a project to light the multi-use play area and youth shelter with solar lighting. No final decisions have yet been made.

Other Matters

As usual our District and County Councillors reported to the meeting on activities in their Councils.

Elections

As you will have read Council elections take place in May and we will have a number of vacancies. If you interested in exploring the possibilities of becoming a Councillor please contact Pete Chapman 01462 813497 who can provide you with lots of useful information and advice without any obligation to stand for election.

David Foskett
Chairman

The next Parish Council meeting is Wednesday 7th March 19:45 Methodist Chapel

**MEPPERSHALL LOWER SCHOOL
NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

As you know, we are in the middle of a building project at school to provide a new classroom, an outdoor play area for our younger children, and a brand new library for the whole school. Most of the finance for this project has come from central government but we also have to resource it and raise 10% of the cost ourselves - about £20,000. We have done well so far with a grant and with the help of our School Association but we still have a long way to go.

We know that there are many demands on your cash but we would be very grateful for any donations that you could make to our cause, particularly if any member of your family has attended or currently attends our school. If you would like to make a donation, please make your cheque payable to Meppershall Lower School Buildings Fund and send it to: Richard Bulley, The Clerk to the Governors, Meppershall V. A. Lower School, 107 High Street, Meppershall, Beds SG17 5LZ or drop it into the school. All donations will be gratefully received. Thank you.

MELODIES from the SHOWS

Yes it is true! On Saturday, 10th March, at 7.30pm in St, Mary's Church, the Friends of St. Mary's are delighted to welcome back to Meppershall, The Woburn Sands Band, who, by popular demand, are returning for a fourth visit, to play for you this time, a delightfully entertaining, spine tingling programme of 'Melodies from the Shows'. You will no doubt enjoy the show and will possibly want more and more, but when it does come to a close, and the applause has subsided, you can relax afterwards with a glass or two of wine and your choice of refreshments from the buffet available to you in the 'all inclusive' ticket of £10.

We sincerely look forward to welcoming you. Tickets are available from Trevor Thorley on 01462 813357, The Rectory 01462 813334, The Bakery, The Post Office and other Committee members.

The Wanderbus needs a Co-ordinator. Can you help?

The Whitbread Wanderbus is a Community Bus Service running scheduled services from many Mid-Beds villages – including Meppershall - to the shops in neighbouring towns and is run by volunteer drivers and management. Due to impending retirement we are seeking a new Co-ordinator whose main duties are; to be a point of contact for passengers (answer phone provided); prepare the driver schedules and; book servicing and maintenance appointments for the bus. The Co-ordinator is also a member of the Management Committee which meets quarterly. The Co-ordinator receives a small honorarium.

If you have a few hours to spare and an interest in helping us maintain our service please contact Mrs Kathy Morley on 01462 701700. Basic computer skills (*Emails, Word*) and a driving licence would be helpful.

P.S. In addition we are always keen to recruit new drivers please call the number shown above



MEPPERSHALL PRE SCHOOL

Meppershall Pre-school would like to say goodbye to Timothy Newman, Chloe Thorne, Niamh Fairweather, Lewis Savuto, Robert Andrews, James Metcalfe, Kerys Henderson and Thomas Clark who will be leaving Pre-school at Easter. We wish them luck in their new schools and hope they enjoyed their time at Meppershall Pre-school.

From all the staff.

Biggleswade & District Art Society

8th Spring Art Exhibition

Northill Village Hall (opposite the Church)

Saturday April 14 (10-4.00) Sunday April 15 (10-4.00)

Free Admission Original Paintings for Sale Refreshments

MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS

We will be putting on an evening of entertainment on 21st, 22nd and 23rd June 2007. Rehearsals have already begun but if you wish to participate on the stage with the rest of us, it is not too late for you to join in (see below for rehearsal times).

The Players will also be helping young Gemma Chapman at the Quiz Night on Saturday 28th April. Tickets will be £3 per person which include supper and Paul Carne as your Quiz Master. Definitely not a night to be missed, not only will you have a great night out, but you will also be supporting your Village Hall, so make a note on your calendar now and start swotting (more details in next month's Messenger).

We have a few people interested in directing this year's Christmas production and are in the process of selecting the director and show. Hopefully we will be able to reveal what the 2007 panto will be next month.

The Players meet every 1st, 3rd and 4th Wednesday of the month and every 2nd Thursday at 8pm at the Village Hall. Our current membership fee is Juniors £2, Seniors £5 (per year) and we welcome anyone from the age of 9 to 90+ years to participate in any of the following activities: acting, set building, painting, costumes, directing, sound and lighting, backstage and front of house.

If any of the aforementioned appeals to you why not stroll over to the Village Hall or ring me, Karen Mitchell Players Secretary on 816336. We look forward to meeting you.

Meppershall Pre-school



A local and friendly pre-school
closely linked to the
Meppershall Lower School and
Mothers & Toddler group.

Our highly skilled and experienced **staff** are focused to ensure your child **reaches their full potential** based on the Early Learning Goals.

Start from 2 years 9 months* to **5 years** of age.

Funding for 3 and 4 year olds.

Open Monday to Friday, 9.30 – 12.00 noon (Term time).

Intake from Meppershall and surrounding areas.

* Subject to available spaces.

Come for a free visit to see the wide range of **activities** we provide.

Contact Viv Thorne
Pre-school registrar
For a registration form
Tel: 01462 850821



Calendar of Forthcoming Events

MARCH 2007

Saturday 10th March	<i>Friends of St. Mary's The Woburn Sands Band St. Mary's Church</i>	7.30pm
Monday 12th March	<i>Bible Society Group 3 Pinemead, Shefford</i>	7.45pm
Friday 23rd March	<i>Meppershall Pre-school Salsa Night at Village Hall</i>	7.30pm
Saturday 31st March	<i>Meppershall Village Hall Committee Table Top Sale at Village Hall</i>	10am
Sunday 22nd April	<i>Parish Walk Meet at Village Hall</i>	2pm

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH HIGH STREET, SHEFFORD

Sunday Masses

First Mass of Sunday

Saturday Evening

6pm

RAF Henlow

9am

Shefford

5.15pm

Shefford

Weekday Services

See notice at Church or telephone

Parish Priest:

Parish Secretary:

Fr. Bennie Noonan 813436

Rose Boulton 811547

***ST MARY THE VIRGIN,
MEPPERSHALL PARISH CHURCH***

Rector: Rev John Harper, The Rectory, Church Rd, Meppershall. 01462 813334

Churchwardens: Brian Bellamy – 815944 (also Pastoral Assistant);

Brenda Wright 816446

Children's Worker : Sandra Harper 813334

SERVICES FOR MARCH

**Sunday 4 11. 15 a.m. Parish Communion
with Sunday School (in Rectory)**

**Sunday 11 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion
11.15a.m. Family Service
with Meppershall Brownies**

**Sunday 18 Mothering Sunday
8.30 a.m. Holy Communion
3p.m. 'Sparks Special' – see advert
4p.m. Family Service, with Junior Choir
5p.m. 'Daffodil' Tea in Church
also. 3p.m. United Service at Methodist Chapel**

**Sunday 25 8.30a.m. Holy Communion
11.15a.m. Family Communion
with Sunday School**

**Sunday April 1(Palm Sunday)
11. 15 a.m. Parish Communion with palm crosses
Sunday School (in Rectory)**

Weekday Services:

Wednesdays : 10a.m. Holy Communion (B.C.P.)

Fridays : 7.30p.m. Compline (Evening Prayer)

Saturdays 9.30a.m. Morning Prayer

Lent 2007: Lent Communion services at different churches in the Shefford Deanery on Tuesdays at 7.45p.m. The theme of each address will be "nearer God's heart in a garden". Please ask for lifts - 813334

Mar 6 St Peter's Arlesey. Preacher Very Rev John Morley, Vicar of Henlow

Mar 13 All Saints Lower Stondon. Preacher Rev Pat Quint. Vicar of Stotfold

Mar 20 All Saints, Campton. Preacher : Bishop Richard of Bedford

Mar 27 St Mary's Henlow. Preacher: the Archdeacon of Bedford.

There are also ecumenical **Lent house groups** meeting at 17 Oakwood Rd, Shefford every Wednesday evening in March, starting at 8p.m. These are organised and introduced by ministers representing the four Shefford churches. All welcome - details - 813334. Theme 'Life Source' - the role of prayer, as commended by the Bishop of St Albans.

Spring Alpha. A new Alpha course has just started at Shefford Methodist church on Tuesday evenings, and it's not too late to join in. Come for a supper, a presentation and an opportunity to think and chat through a key aspect of Christian belief. Alpha is a practical introduction to the Christian faith. It's free and for everyone including non-churchgoers and those who may not call themselves Christians.

If you plan to come please tell Phil Vass - 01462 626101 or e-mail shefford.alpha@ntlworld.com.

St Mary's Meppershall:

Do you want to join St Mary's Church Electoral Roll?

Every few years every Parish Church is required to renew its register of electors – the Church Electoral Roll - (nothing to do with the civil register of electors). 2007 is one of those years.

Do I need to be on the Roll in order to play a part in the life of St Mary's?

No – you can be involved in all kinds of ways as well as participating in worship without having your name on the Roll.

So what difference does it make to be on the Roll?

You become qualified to attend/propose/vote and stand for election at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. (Thurs April 26, 7.30p.m. in the Methodist Chapel). Elections take place annually to the Parochial Church Council (the P.C.C.) , and every third year to the Deanery Synod.

By enrolling you become a voting member of the Church of England, not just of the local Church. As such you help to ensure that the representative ('synodical') system of the national Church – the P.C.C., Deanery Synod (Shefford in our case) Diocesan Synod (St Albans) and General Synod has meaningful communication with all its members. So synodical government is designed to give opportunity for effective partnership between bishops, clergy and lay people in the life of the church, and for all to play their part in its decision making.

Who is qualified to join the Electoral Roll?

Anyone who is:

- a) baptised
- b) is a member of the church of England or a Church in communion with the Church of England.
- c) is 16 or over.
- d) is resident in the parish, or if not, has habitually attended worship in the Parish Church during the six months before enrolment.
- e) has completed the application form.

Though not a condition of joining the Roll, if it is to fulfil its purpose effectively it matters that members take to heart both their responsibilities and privileges. I would suggest that this might well include:

A desire to go on developing my relationship with God through prayer, worship with others, and by reflection on His Word

To participate in the church's life, and to nurture it's work and witness through the giving of time, skills and money. God loves a cheerful giver!

To try to make real connections between my personal faith, the role of the church, my home, work and family life, and the world around me.

What do I need to do to join the Roll?

Collect a form from Church or from Mrs Christine Bartlett, the Electoral Roll Secretary, 14 Taylors Close, Meppershall, 01462 811191, or ask for one to be delivered to you.

Complete it and return it to the Church or to Mrs Bartlett by **Thurs April 5**, in order to be on the new Roll in time for this year's Annual Meeting.

What if I am already on the Electoral Roll?

This year everyone needs to make a fresh application – no names are carried forward from the 2006 Roll.

Finally, if you have any queries about the Roll please don't hesitate to contact Christine Bartlett or myself. I would add that new faces would be welcome on the Church Council this year, and also that I would be delighted to hear from anyone who would consider acting as a PCC Secretary, to succeed Linda Chillman, who has served St Mary's so well.

John Harper, Rector.

THE FRIENDS of St. MARY's

A huge THANKYOU is extended to the many people who supported our Quiz Night on Saturday, January 27. It was great to welcome the regulars, and also new faces of people who have recently moved into our village. Our apologies to the six who were involved in 'musical tables' as we hastily arranged extra space to make a record total of nineteen tables for the evening. We hope that we will see you all again at our next Quiz Night in 2008! To the people who donated raffle prizes, the cake from Roger's Bakery, and the generosity of people who bought raffle tickets, a total of £194 was raised from this alone. This included £61 raised from the auctioning (four times) of a bottle of whisky, which looked as though it would go on all evening, but everybody was a great sport. Thank you to a member of our society who made a very generous donation to our cause and to Roger's Bakery and The Post Office who helped to sell tickets. Thanks too to Rev John Barrall and Joan who so kindly and expertly Quiz Mastered again for us. When all is finally accounted we will have raised a healthy sum of money which will go into the fund for our beautiful St. Mary's Church and which will eventually benefit us all at some point in our lives.

Our next event is on March 10 when The Woburn Sands Band will be playing 'Melodies from the Shows. There is nothing to swot for on this occasion, all you have to do is buy your ticket, sit back and enjoy the music and then relax afterwards with a glass of wine and buffet refreshments, all included in the ticket. It is an event not to be missed, hope you will come! Thank you again.

Trevor Thorley (Chairman)

SHEFFORD LEISURE GROUP

It hardly seems possible two months of 2007 have now passed and we are now looking forward to our 'Get Together' in March which takes place on Saturday 31st March at The Memorial Hall in Shefford. A fish & chip supper combined with entertainment, together with the presentation of a cheque to Keech Cottage Children's Hospice, looks to be a fun-filled evening, meeting old friends and new. Commencing at 6pm until 10pm, please come and join us. Other trips available include Audley End Mansion in April and on Saturday 28th April, we are supporting Letchworth Garden City & Baldock Lions at the Jackmans Community Centre in Letchworth for a Rock'n'Roll evening with live entertainment provided by Gerry & The Attricks, a buffet supper is included in the ticket price. All proceeds are in aid of Keech Cottage Children's Hospice. Woburn Abbey & Safari Park also London Museums and Broxbourne Boat Trip – both in June.

Our holidays have now taken shape with Canada and Niagara Falls in April, the Isle of Wight in October and our Turkey & Tinsel which will take place at Grange-over-Sands.

Theatre trips are becoming more popular, both in London and locally, with the London Theatres we work alongside our colleagues in Stevenage and if there is a particular show you would like to see, then please contact me and we will see what can be arranged. Tickets have already been purchased for Sound of Music, Mama Mia, Mary Poppins and Dirty Dancing, there are several others but far too many to mention. We do try to arrange a Shefford pick-up point, occasionally it may not be practical and therefore it may mean collecting the coach from Stevenage. This situation we are working on and hope to improve as time goes on.

Everyone is welcome giving the chance to travel, meeting old friends and new and visiting places of interest without too much hassle!! – Just give us a try!

For further information regarding dates, prices and availability, please contact Enid on 01462 851397 or e-mail Enidpamment@aol.com

A very Happy Birthday to those of you celebrating birthdays in March

Sean Biggings who will be 14 on the 6th
Archie Underwood who will be 3 on the 6th

Tyler Ball who will be 9 on the 7th

Alexanda Cocks who will be 5 on the 7th
Genevieve Cocks who will be 4 on the 7th

Marcus Hart who will be 4 on the 12th

Ella Bryant who will be 2 on the 12th

Emma Burr who will be 10 on the 14th

Katherine Gower who will be 9 on the 14th

Emma Horsford who will be 5 on the 14th

Aaron Vernon who will be 3 on the 16th

Sam Edwards who will be 14 on the 18th

Brigid Holmes who will be 11 on the 18th

William Roberts who will be 10 on the 19th

Reece Osborne who will be 15 on the 23rd

Daisy Lucas who will be 5 on the 27th

Kate Aberdein who will be 12 on the 28th

Chloe Scott who will be 10 on 30th

If you are under 16 and would like your name added to the birthday page, please call Louise Hutson on 814148

