

# MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER



**MARCH 2008**

# THE MEPPERSHALL MESSENGER

Volume 23 Issue 10

March 2008

Not so much to say in this issue, except to note sadly that there has been no response so far to my request for ideas and contributions. I hope this is just a time lag and that material will come in. Don't forget that there is a folder behind the counter in the PO Stores where any contributions can be left. In the hope of receiving floods of material, the closing date for copy for the April edition is March 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Committee, as set out below, has met twice since last month, to review advertising rates and banking arrangements for the Messenger. The revised advertising rates, which will be effective from the April issue, are very slightly increased from last year, except for the 1/8 page size, which is unchanged. Christine Elbourne will be writing to past advertisers to take orders for the coming year. Anyone wishing to place an advertisement should contact Christine at the address below. The new rates are shown in the box opposite.

The messenger's policy is that notices of village interest are not classed as adverts and are included without charge. Any more commercial notice, such as notice of a garage sale, would be classed as a casual advert. The charge would be for agreement with the Editor, depending on the degree of commerciality involved, but could be around £25.

I would recommend that all village car drivers take note of the Police Report on page 2, and that those who cause hazard to pedestrians and other drivers by selfish and thoughtless parking mend their ways before someone, perhaps a child, gets hurt. Those who are parking near the School could seriously consider the Walking Bus (see last month's School Report) and potentially improve their health and that of their children.

*Dick Bulley*

## CONTENTS

Village News	Pages	1 - 9
School Report	Page	10
Calendar of Forthcoming Events	Page	11
Who's Who & Village Organisations	Pages	12 - 14
Church News	Page	15 - 19
Birthdays	Page	23
Garden interest	Pages	20, 21 & 24

Editor:	Dick Bulley, 116 Shefford Road	815114
	e-mail: richard@bulleyr.fsnet.co.uk	
Advertising Manager:	Christine Elbourne, 5 St. Mary's Place	817409
Distribution Manager:	Colette House, 90 Fildyke Road	815585
Treasurer:	Chloe Peetz, 74 Fildyke Road.	851656

## POLICE REPORT

During the February council meeting at Meppershall Lower School several concerns were raised by the community. The main issue was parking and the main problem areas are as follows:

- Fildyke Road junction with Buxton Close.
- Fildyke Road junction and dangerous corner with Brookmead.
- High Street bend prior to Rectory Road.
- Outside Meppershall Lower School at peak times turning the High Street into a single carriageway.

Please avoid parking in these areas for the safety of both pedestrians and motorists. Should these problems continue I will have no option but to restrict parking by introducing No Waiting Cones which will remove the privilege of parking on the road completely.

I hope residents will help me and help the community of Meppershall to make it a safer place to live.

Pc 355 Steve Busby  
Neighbourhood Officer  
Sheffield SNT

Tel: 01234 842567

[SNT.Sheffield@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:SNT.Sheffield@Bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk)



Bed  
and  
Breakfast

### Old Joe's

90 Fildyke Road

Meppershall  
Sheffield

Beds. SG17 5LU

Telephone: 01462 815585

Mobile: 07831 111062

Email: [oldjoes@btinternet.com](mailto:oldjoes@btinternet.com)



## READER'S LETTER

Dear Editor,

*I had looked forward with keen anticipation to the installation of the "vehicle activated speed signs" and was very happy when a parish councillor and a highways engineer marked a site outside my house for the sign at the Shefford end of the village. It was therefore a considerable surprise when the sign actually sprouted 400 yards further up the road! This means that the traffic goes un-reminded for at least half a mile along one of the most dangerous stretches of Shefford Road, where there is no pedestrian footway.*

*I wondered whether the positioning of the sign was a mistake and if so who made the mistake? If it was the contractors' mistake, should it not be corrected at their expense?*

*When I visited the Village Plan open day I noted that I was not alone in regarding speeding traffic as one of the major hazards in our village, so I hope that the sign can be moved to a position where it will make a useful contribution.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Linda Parker  
116, Shefford Road.*

## MEPPERSHALL PLAYERS

The Players workshop for our junior members (9-16 year olds) has been very well attended and finishes on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March.

Some of our Adult members are rehearsing a one act play which they will be performing for several W.I groups at Houghton Regis on April 17<sup>th</sup>; we are hoping to have a workshop for our adult members sometime in April/May (more information in April Messenger)

The Players A.G.M is to be held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 7.45pm for 8pm start. This meeting is open to anyone interested in the Meppershall Players Age 9 to 90+ years, we're a sociable bunch and enjoy meeting new people, so why not make a note in your diary to spend a evening with us.

The players meet every 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month and every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7pm-8.45pm juniors (for a limited time only) Adults only 8.45pm onwards 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, 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.

---

### **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

---

## Meppershall Parish Council Report

At our last meeting we had a visit from Sgt Nigel Conroy who is responsible for the co-ordination of the 'No Cold Calling' initiative in our area. He is permanently assigned to the Trading Standards Department where they are successfully apprehending and prosecuting 'Rogue Traders' in Bedfordshire. The Parish Council has agreed to adopt this initiative and you will shortly receive a booklet explaining the scheme.

We also received a report from our Beat Manager PC Steve Busby on behalf of our PCSO James Killen about reported crimes in the area and the action that the Police are taking. It was pointed out to him that although we have installed the electronic speed warning signs there is still a speeding problem in the Village. We have been promised an enforcement campaign in the near future.

### Highways & Lighting

Councillor Bryant advised the meeting of the current issues with the roads in the Village and the action being taken County Council. He will now receive a monthly bulletin from the Highways Department on work that is scheduled and completed.

### Environment & Leisure

There is additional work and routine repairs to be carried out in the Children's play area this month together with rectification of damage caused by vandalism. We understand that if you see vandalism taking place that it is difficult to take action, however, please consider reporting it to the Police and notify the Parish Clerk of any urgent repairs that may have become necessary. The Council caretaker is now undertaking weekly inspections of the equipment, which has previously been carried out by Councillor Waite.

### Planning & Housing

On February 11<sup>th</sup> Councillor Crossley and I attended a Mid Beds District Council briefing on the Local Development Framework (LDF). This will ultimately set out the plans for house building in the district from 2009. The Framework public consultation period started on 12<sup>th</sup> February and ends on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Every household will receive a booklet and there is a web site where you can register your views on individual plans. In addition there will be exhibitions, a telephone help line and consultation documents can be sent to you if you do not have Internet access. There are 14 planning proposals for Meppershall but I stress that this is only an initial consultation period. Across the whole of the District between 10% and 15% of these proposals will result in actual building projects. However, this is your first opportunity to make your comments known to the Planning Department and ultimately the Planning Inspector who will make the final decisions. Once agreed the LDF will set the development sites for the area until 2026 and it is unlikely that

any additional proposals will be introduced from this point. Please use this unique opportunity to let the authorities know what your views are.

Finally, at the meeting it was categorically stated that a 'Parish Plan' (that will be published shortly) is a key piece of evidence in the selection process for the developments in an area and will form part of the considerations by all concerned.

David Foskett, Chairman, Meppershall Parish Council.

The next Parish Council meetings are Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 19:45 Meppershall Lower School. The Annual Parish Meeting where the Council presents its annual report will be held in the Methodist Chapel on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 19:45.

---

## **Biggleswade & District Art Society**

### **9<sup>th</sup> Spring Art Exhibition**

**Northhill Village Hall (opposite the Church)**

**Saturday April 19 (10-4.00)      Sunday April 20 (10-4.00)**

**Free Admission      Original Paintings for Sale      Refreshments**

## WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The ecumenical service for the Women's World day of Prayer in this area will be on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 2.15 PM in St Francis of Assisi church in Shefford.

The speaker will be the Rev, Stephen Copson of Hitchin. There will be a bookstall and refreshments after the service. Transport can be provided – tel: 01462 816446.

Brenda Wright.

## THANK YOU

I would like to thank my many friends and neighbours for the lovely cards and gifts I received on the occasion of my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I was totally overwhelmed – thank you all again.

Phyl Kidger

Stacey Bateup

Mobile Beauty Therapy

01462819522 - 07969978616

Dip I.H.B.C I.I.H.H.T



ESTABLISHED  
1954

MA  
VITRU

- Waxing
- Manicures
- Pedicures
- Susan Molyneux Facials
- Eye Treatments
- Swedish Masaage
- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology

*In the  
comfort of  
your own  
home*

*Fully Insured*



## Village Plan

Once again the villagers of Meppershall showed that they are interested in their village. . Thank you to the 168 villagers that turned up at the two Open Days in January, to check on what was happening and for the most part to give constructive input and feedback.

We have been talking to a number of partners (those teams, individuals & organizations), both in and outside the village, that will be key in moving the plans forward. All but one have been very positive.

Locally the Parish Council have accepted the draft plan and the Village Hall team see the response from the questionnaire as positive. At the Open Day I also met with Rev John and he had taken the results we had given him from the questionnaire in a constructive manner.

We had a good meeting with The Dog Warden, or rather with the Senior Supervisor, Craig Siddle, who was surprised at the amount of problems.

Following our meeting, I had this email from Craig:-

- Marsha, the Dog Warden, visited the day of the meeting and patrolled the area.
- *The Dog Warden will also be undertaking this every week or two, pending workload, between approximately 8am and 4pm, weekdays.*
- *We (The Contracts Department) will clear any areas of fouling on the highway (or highway footpath) when reported to us.*
- *We will speak to Chris Waghorn at the Parish Council regarding laminated signs for use around the Village Hall.*
- *It looks like there has been sufficient provision of dog waste bins in the area.*
- *The contact details for customers to report fouling are (01462) 611222 or [customer.services@midbeds.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@midbeds.gov.uk)*

[Please note that they can only clear the highway areas, not the fields – access, equipment limitations, knowing where to look etc limit what can be done -- JW]

They have also taken on a new member of the Dog Warden Team, which will mean we get more patrols.

We had suggested that there should be a doctor in the village and, whilst the PCT have consulted on this and feel there is not “a critical mass” to justify such a move, they do see the possibility of a Nurse Practitioner being here, even if part time. David Foskett (representing the Parish Council) and I will be continuing discussions with the PCT to see what can be done. More on this as we get information.

The one group that seem to have taken things very negatively are Bedfordshire Police. Their reaction seems even more strange considering the very positive response there has been to having a PCSO in the village. We were told, amongst other things “We are expending great effort to achieve a policing service with which the public are satisfied, however we have targets and priorities, which are not and cannot be aligned with public desire”. I translate this to mean that we can ask all we like but the police will do their own thing.

It is also understood, that having waited so long to get a PCSO, there are now to be changes that will affect his work. What these changes are is not yet clear as the Police Authority have still to finalize them, but one can guess that it is not going to be to our benefit. Again once we have more information I am sure the Parish Council will let everyone know what is happening.

More on when the report will be issued in the next Messenger.

Thank You - John W

SCHOOL REPORT - MARCH '08  
A Meppershall VA Lower School Welcome

Welcome to the new families that have moved into the village and joined us at the school. The younger children have settled quickly and happily into our new Foundation Stage classroom and we also welcome the older children who have joined other classes throughout the year. We have a healthy roll with one hundred and thirteen children and some of our year groups are full.

We always try to make places available for children who live in the village under the criteria outlined in our Admissions Policy. We also welcome children from outside the catchment area if we have places available.

We are currently developing a new prospectus and website but in the meantime, if you wish to find out more about the most recent achievements at the school, you can access our 'School Profile' on [www.school-index.co.uk](http://www.school-index.co.uk). This shows, amongst other information, that our most recent Key Stage 1 results were excellent, at well above the national average with exceptional performance in reading and writing. (source: Bedfordshire Lower Schools Performance Data)

We do still have places available for children starting school in September 2008, so if your child's birth date falls between 1/9/03 and 31/8/04, please contact the school office on 01462 813293 and Mrs Hepburn, our secretary, will help you.

# Calendar of Forthcoming Events

## March 2008

<b><u>Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March</u></b>		
Vauxhall Male Voice Choir	7.30 PM	St Mary's Church
		Meppershall
<b><u>Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March</u></b>		
Meppershall Parish Council	7.45PM	School Hall
<b><u>Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March</u></b>		
Women's World day of Prayer	2.15 PM	St Francis of Assisi Church, Shefford
<b><u>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March</u></b>		
Live music from Four Play	8.00 PM	Meppershall Social Club
<b><u>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March</u></b>		
Stainer's Crucifixion	6.00PM	St Mary's Henlow
<b><u>Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March</u></b>		
Easter time lunch	11.15 AM	St Mary's Rectory

## April 2008

<b><u>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April</u></b>		
Meppershall Parish Council	7.30 PM	School Hall
<b><u>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April</u></b>		
Annual Parish Meeting	7.45 PM	Methodist Chapel

**ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC CHURCH  
HIGH STREET  
SHEFFORD**

**HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES.**



**PALM SUNDAY  
(16 March)**

**9.00am**

**BLESSING & PROCESSION OF PALMS  
MASS, with Reading of Passion of Christ**

**5.15pm**

**As above.**

**MAUNDY THURSDAY  
(20 March)**

**8.00pm**

**EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER  
Followed by Watching at Altar of Repose  
until Midnight. Compline at 10.00pm**

**GOOD FRIDAY  
(21 March)**

**10.00am**

**MORNING PRAYER**

**10.45am**

**SHEFFORD TOWN WALK OF WITNESS**

**3.00pm**

**SOLEMN LITURGY OF PASSION OF THE LORD**

**HOLY SATURDAY  
(22 March)**

**10.00am**

**MORNING PRAYER**

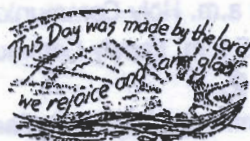
**11.00 – 12 noon) CONFESSION  
3.00 – 4.00pm )**

**8.00pm**

**THE EASTER VIGIL**

**EASTER DAY  
(23 March)**

**9.00am & 5.15pm MASS.**



# **ST MARY THE VIRGIN, MEPPERSHALL PARISH CHURCH (CHURCH RD)**

Rector: (Meppershall & Shefford) Rev John Harper,  
The Rectory, Church Rd, Meppershall. [revjohnharper@talktalk.net](mailto:revjohnharper@talktalk.net) 01462  
813334

Curate: Rev Patsy Critchley; 01234 381510  
(Patsy's usual ministry days are Weds, Fri & Sun)  
Churchwardens: Brian Bellamy – 815944 (Pastoral Assistant);  
Brenda Wright 816446

## **SERVICES FOR MARCH**

- Mar 2      Lent 4    Mothering Sunday .**  
11.15 Parish Communion and  
Sunday School at Rectory, followed  
at 12 noon by giving of posies to Mums in Church
- Mar 9      Lent 5.**  
8.30a.m. Holy Communion.  
11.15a.m. Family Service
- Mar 16     Palm Sunday**  
8.30a.m. Holy Communion  
6p.m. Evensong  
(also Palm Sunday procession and family  
service at *St Michael's*, 9.45a.m.)
- Mar 20     Maundy Thursday.**  
8p.m. at *St Michael's* – Commemoration of Last  
Supper and feet washing
- Mar 21     Good Friday :**  
2-3p.m. Before the Cross  
Devotional service with hymns
- Mar 23     EASTER DAY**  
8.30 a.m. Holy Communion  
11.15 a.m. Family Communion & Sunday School
- Mar 30     Easter 2.**  
11.15a.m. United Benefice Family Communion followed by  
buffet lunch at Rectory  
(See details further on)

Weekday Services:**Wednesdays**

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

**Fridays**

7.30p.m. Compline (Evening Prayer)

**Saturdays**

9.30a.m. Morning Prayer.

**LENT EUCHARISTS**

in Shefford Deanery.

Tuesdays at 7.45p.m., followed by refreshments

**Sermon themes :** 'in good faith...' living the creed in daily life.**March 4**

St Michael and All Angels Shefford

theme: 'The Lord of the Church'. preacher:

Canon Robin Brown – Diocesan Local Ministry Officer.

**March 11:** All Saints Church Southill ".The Lord of time and eternity"

Preacher: Rev Patsy Critchley

**LENT LUNCHESES, at Shefford Community Hall, Ampthill Rd.****Saturdays March 1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>** From 12.30 – 1.30 P.M. -

Come along for a simple wholesome lunch, and give what you will for Christian Aid's work with those facing hunger across the globe.

Includes 'Thought for the day' at 1p.m. approx

Organised by Shefford Churches working together

**Also coming soon:****Sunday March 9** 6p.m :

'Stainer's Crucifixion' at St Mary's Henlow (rehearsal 3.30p.m.)

**Tues April 1,** 7.30p.m :

Service of Prayer for Healing and Wholeness: at St Michael's Shefford

Organised by Shefford Churches working together.

*Dear friends,*

Easter beckons – earlier this year than any since 1913. Before it dawns we enter the darkest days of Jesus' journey - betrayal, arrest, trial, torment, and a criminal's death on a cross. Not really what our world expects in the run up to a public holiday! And yet through all this trauma and grief comes – surprise! The disciples are taken aback, not only by an empty tomb but by a risen Lord. They were not prepared for this – God turned out to be greater than any of their expectations, and life for them was to change irreversibly.

Easter is one of those fixed points in the yearly round that we can depend on. We've never know anything different. So it's good if we can sense something of the surprise element that greeted those first Christians. The fixed point in their calendar was Passover – the reminder of their ancestors' release from captivity in Egypt . They rehearsed their history. But when Jesus was raised from death, so unexpectedly, it felt as though God was bringing about a new kind of release. Not this time from a foreign land of exile, but a release from an inner exile, a freedom from all that had prevented those first Christians from being their true fulfilled selves.

What God did at the first Easter I believe he continues to do. Yes, Easter is an annual reminder of what happened 2000 years ago, but it also says that God goes on making all things new. He goes on springing surprises for our good. The change that the first followers of Jesus encountered was not just reserved for them – it's offered to us also; namely the assurance that we are loved and valued not for what we deserve but because of who God is. So Easter is the greatest of festivals. Without it there would be no Christmas, no New Testament, no Christian Church or faith. And it is in its light that we see God's true nature, and our own.

With good wishes for a very happy Eastertide,

John Harper, Rector.<sup>†</sup>



## Summer Holiday at Lee Abbey?

Would you like to join a local group at the Christian holiday centre in the beautiful setting of the North Devon coast? Sandra and I would be delighted if others would like to join us for the week August 2 - 9. Lee Abbey is especially suitable for families, and the community do their utmost to ensure that all ages have a very memorable stay. During this week Roger Jones, the composer, will be giving us the chance to take part in one of his most popular musicals, though as ever a stay at Lee Abbey gives opportunity to participate as much or little as preferred.

If interested either let us know soon so that we can tell you more and show you a film, or else contact Lee Abbey direct on 01598 752621 as rooms are being booked rapidly. As with our previous trip we would hope to arrange transport by car sharing.

John & Sandra 813334

# **Sunday March 30th, 11.15 a.m.**

Do join us for an *Easter time lunch* at The Rectory following the United Benefice Family Communion and Sunday School

Buffet style roast main course

Bring either a pudding or a bottle - all welcome. Just turn up

# Bedfordshire Gardens Trust



## Spring Talks 2008

At The Chapter House, St Andrew's Church, Church Street,  
Amphill

Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm

Twigs Way

"Gardens Lost and Found: Researching Garden History"

Wednesday April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30pm

Caroline Holmes

"Follies of Europe: Architectural Extravaganzas"

Tickets for each talk are £5 for members of the Bedfordshire Gardens Trust, £7 to guests and others. Any unsold tickets may be available on the night at the door.

Please book by sending an A5 SAE together with your name(s), address and appropriately valued cheque, made payable to "Bedfordshire Gardens Trust" to:

The "Spring Talks" Event Coordinator, Bedfordshire Gardens Trust,  
8 Hooked Lane, Wilstead, Beds, MK45 3DL

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

Sean Biggings who will be 15 on the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Archie Underwood who will be 4 on the 6<sup>th</sup>

Tyler Ball who will be 10 on the 7<sup>th</sup>

Alexanda Cocks who will be 6 on the 7<sup>th</sup>

Genevieve Cocks who will be 5 on the 7<sup>th</sup>

Marcus Hart who will be 5 on the 12<sup>th</sup>

Ella Bryant who will be 3 on the 12<sup>th</sup>

Emma Burr who will be 11 on the 14<sup>th</sup>

Katherine Gower who will be 10 on the 14<sup>th</sup>

Emma Horsford who will be 6 on the 14<sup>th</sup>

Aaron Vernon who will be 4 on the 16<sup>th</sup>

Sam Edwards who will be 15 on the 18<sup>th</sup>

Brigid Holmes who will be 12 on the 18<sup>th</sup>

William Roberts who will be 11 on the 19<sup>th</sup>

Daisy Lucas who will be 6 on the 27<sup>th</sup>

Kate Aberdein who will be 13 on the 28<sup>th</sup>

Chloe Scott who will be 11 on 30<sup>th</sup>

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

## MARCH IN YOUR GARDEN

(With acknowledgements to the RHS)

- Mulch bare soil in beds and borders
- Move evergreen shrubs
- Prune bush and shrub roses
- Propagate shrubs by layering
- Increase stock of perennials by taking basal stem cuttings from the new shoots
- Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials
- Split polyanthus after flowering
- Take cuttings from dahlia tubers
- Plant summer-flowering bulbs
- Sow sweet peas out of doors, or plant out young plants raised under cover. Pinch out growing tips of young sweet peas to encourage side-shoots
- Sow hardy annuals where they are to flower
- Reseed bare patches in the lawn
- Start mowing lawns regularly
- Take pumps out of store and put them back in the pond; begin feeding fish
- Sow vegetables outside and harden off young plants to put outside
- Plant early potatoes and asparagus
- Protect fruit blossom against frosts
- Sow half-hardy annuals and other frost-tender bedding plants under cover
- Water indoor plants regularly, now that the weather is warming up.

### LAST CHANCE

- Finish planting bare-root trees and shrubs and new fruit trees and bushes
- This is the latest time to plant snowdrops and winter aconites

### GET AHEAD

- Put grow bags in the greenhouse to warm up before planting
- Put stakes and other plant supports in to support new growth before it really needs it.