



**Parish Church of St. Mary The Virgin, Meppershall**

**Meppershall Village Website: [www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org)**

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## Editorial

**Mike McConnell**

Firstly, may I welcome you back to your Meppershall Messenger. I hope you had a great holiday break and on behalf of the team I wish you all a Happy New Year.



It seems a long time since I wrote my last editorial and I'm feeling particularly rusty. Luckily, I'm assisted this month by all the interesting content that you will find between the covers. Alongside all the reports and announcements from our schools, clubs and church, which I see as forming the backbone of the magazine, we have important pieces from the **Meppershall Parish Council**, the **Village Hall Committee** and from the developers of the proposed New Housing and Village Hall - **Croudace Homes**. We have not published a report from the Parish Council for some time. I always find them of interest, as they mostly focus their discussions about the place where I live! I notice that, as usual, they have included the date of the next meeting – I'm ashamed to say I've never found time to attend; perhaps I can find time this month.

The updates from the Village Hall Committee and from Croudace Homes are about potentially the biggest event to affect Meppershall in years - housing development that will grow our community by 10% and renew the centre of our community by replacing the Village Hall. I've been trying to attend all the public meetings on this topic and have ensured that there is space in your Messenger for the updates. This year will be interesting, I think, as the planning process advances, in a way that I hope will be transparent to all of us in Meppershall.

I should also highlight two other pieces. First is the announcement from the **New Meppershall Care Home** concerning the opening of their new dementia wing. The home has been supporting our GNOMES group since it re-opened, and I applaud the investment they have made to care for those who suffer this horrible disease.

The second is the short article by David Foscett (on page 14) concerning the developments at the **village website**. David, who enjoys that much-sought-after job title of "Webmaster", has been busy updating and improving the village website and is now extending an offer of space to village clubs and organisations.

We do not have anything from the Village Forum in this addition of the Messenger, but I hope that we will hear from them this year.

Taking all this into account, 2016 looks like a promising year.

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## Readers' Letters

Dear Editor,

May I ask that you include a letter of thanks to the GNOMES in the next Messenger.

My 86 year old mother called me yesterday to ask if I could take her to a last minute doctor's appointment but I live 15 mins away and it clashed with the school run, so I suggested she contacted GNOMES. Mum had offered her help to GNOMES previously but now that she can no longer drive and is not in the best of health it was her turn to ask for help. May I say that Colette (House) came to the rescue, driving her to the surgery and helping her inside. It is so heart-warming to know that there are kind people out there who give up their precious time to help others. Mum helped run Befrienders in Biggleswade for 20 years so she is a deserving case, and I am thrilled GNOMES came to the rescue. Thank you.

Liz Anderson

Dear Editor,

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has raised this concern but just recently I am finding it increasingly difficult to pass the village shop without getting abused by inconsiderate drivers. Due to the parked cars it is sometimes impossible to see oncoming traffic and so often I am looked upon as if I have done something wrong when oncoming cars race towards me, even though they can see me coming. Just this morning I had the same problem and had to bump up the pavement as another inconsiderate driver was parked in the no-parking area.

Almost every day I am encountering this problem and see this as a real issue for the village and wanted to raise my concern.

Kind regards,

Jamie

Dear Editor,

First of all, I must thank all my friends and neighbours for my Christmas cards.

I have 2 cousins, one on Mum's side and one on Dad's, who visit me when they can but they live far away. I had 28 cards. I did not realise I had so many friends.

Pat bought me some cards but I'm afraid I didn't write them. Spirit willing but flesh is weak or just lazy.

I have very good friends and neighbours, John and Pat Fox and Shireen Longland. If anything goes wrong, John puts it right. I hope they realise how much I appreciate it.

Wishing everyone a Very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Yours sincerely, Doreen Lawrence.

ps. I have some very nice carers who come 3 times a day to make sure I have a good wash and get my meals. I put myself to bed so I please myself what time.

Dear Editor,

There have been complaints made by local residents regarding the level of noise and general antisocial behaviour of a few pupils from Henlow Middle school who wait for the bus in the mornings on the High Street in Meppershall. Their concerns include pupils shouting, yelling and screaming, pushing and fighting each other, kicking walls, running into the road and pulling at plants and trees in resident's gardens. The school has been informed.

Please can all parents ensure their children understand how to behave whilst waiting for the bus and how upsetting and disruptive this behaviour is to local people.

[Name withheld at the request of the correspondent]

# Meppershall Academy



## January 2016

We hope that you all had a Merry Christmas and would like to wish you a Happy and Peaceful New Year. This month's entry from the school shares news from the end of the Christmas Term.

We had our Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools on November 11th and are delighted that we have been graded as Good in all areas. The school has been on a journey since the last inspection and the latest report evidences the hard work and dedication of the staff throughout the past five challenging years.

"The dedication of the Headteacher, school staff and governors to provide a safe and inclusive education, based on Christian values, underpins the very good relationships between all members of the school community." SIAMS inspection November 2015.

If you would like to read more, please visit our school website: <http://www.meppershall.beds.sch.uk/>. There is a link to the report at the bottom of the home page. Some of the other activities at school have included:

A Thanksgiving Celebration on November 26th. Two turkeys were roasted and the children helped prepare and cook sweet potato mash, creamed sweet corn, carrots, peas, cranberry sauce and gravy. We finished the feast in a traditional way – Pumpkin Pie. The children also decorated the Year 3 Classroom and traditional Thanksgiving games were played. This was very enjoyable and is something we hope to repeat in 2016.

Year 4 attended Sports Leader Training at Derwent Lower School in conjunction with Redborne Sports Partnership. The children were very well behaved and were a credit to the school and local community. The children will be working with all classes as playtime leaders. Following a whole school review of our provision of support of health and wellbeing of children in our setting, we have retained our Healthy Schools status for the next 3 years. Well done to all those who are involved.

We were delighted to go to Meppershall Care Home to sing Christmas Carols to the residents there. We hope that it got the Christmas Season off to a fine start.

Our Early Years children, Year One and Year Two have performed twice to a packed hall. Our production was called 'The Landlord's Cat' and it was lovely. It told the story of the Nativity through the eyes of a cat. Our Years Three and Four children held a Carols by Candlelight Evening event at St Mary's. The church looked beautiful and the children wrote the service themselves. It was very special and the spirit of Christmas filled St Mary's.

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## **Meppershall Parish Council Report - 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

This was the first report for some time due to Council meetings being after the deadline for the Messenger, only just made it this month.

During the informal part of the meeting Tony Brown reported that due to an unexpected £7m reduction in the grant received from central Government the Council will, for the first time, be increasing Council tax by just under 2%. Plus, there will be another increase of just under 2% to safeguard care services for the elderly, as previously announced by the Government. Feedback questionnaires were available at the meeting and on-line. He also stated that the recycling site at Biggleswade should re-open before the end of January and then the site at Ampthill will close for modernisation. For the next 6 months green waste will be accepted at weekends in the Council car park at Monks Walk.

Reports from PCSO Gill Richardson showed there was only one reported incident in November which was the first cyber bullying crime for Meppershall. For December/early January there were three reported crimes all relating to motor vehicles, one attempted theft of the vehicle and two had property stolen from the vehicles.

During the period, 4 planning applications were received all of were for minor extensions to the properties plus a request for outline planning for 6 chalet bungalows on land beside 23 Shefford Road. A request for a new dwelling behind 5 Shefford Road has been approved.

The Council agreed to keep the precept for 2016/17 at £37000.

It was agreed that Highways at CBC would be asked to price two small schemes. First, to install two- or three-directional signs to St. Marys Church at the High Street/Campton Road/Rectory Road junction. Secondly, to make the 'keep clear' marking outside the school enforceable, with a 20mph speed limit in that vicinity.

Complaints have been received about footpath 12 slipping into the ditch near where it leaves Fildyke Road. Central Beds Rights of Way people are looking into the matter but as it may be a big job it was agreed that one of the Parish Council's people would see if a temporary repair could be undertaken.

Old Road Meadow – the Clerk is to meet with our Contractor to plan this year's maintenance of the site.

The Allotment Field – renewal letters will be out before the end of January and the padlock and chain should be in place by then.

All the seats and benches around the village are being checked and estimates obtained to overhaul/repair/replace as necessary. It is hoped to have all the work done by early summer.

As you may know the owners of the Sugar Loaf are considering closing the premises. Unfortunately an attempt to place the pub on the Village Asset Register has failed and the Council are looking at alternative solutions.

The Village Plan is continuing with the results of the second questionnaire now being evaluated. Although the closing date has passed the system is flexible enough to accept late entries so please if you forgot because of Christmas please go to the website where you will find both questionnaires.

The Whitbread Wanderbus has received a grant from Central Government to purchase a second vehicle and plan to increase services from Meppershall and the surrounding villages. As a result, their running costs will increase and they have asked if the Parish Council would increase accordingly the grant it gives annually. The Council agreed for 2015/16 and 2016/17 they would double the grant to £1000.

The next meeting is on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at 7.45pm in the Village Hall.

Peter Chapman

Chairman Meppershall Parish Council – [chairman@meppershall.org](mailto:chairman@meppershall.org)



## Village Hall Development Update

Following the resolution of the Parish Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015 to support the principle of the development, contracts have now been signed and there have been a number of meetings between the parties to discuss matters as well as public consultation at the Village Hall on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

Thanks to the work of Dave Foskett, all the information on display at that consultation is available on the village website [www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org).

Following concerns raised earlier in the process the plans now include parking by the temporary village hall from the start of its use, rather than several months into the project.

The detailed layout of the new hall has been given further consideration, and the revised plans as displayed at the consultation enable the same facilities to be provided in a more efficient and useable manner. There are some small changes still to be made to further enhance the facilities.

The new building will have a custom designed Pre-School room and play area with extended opening hours together with a larger and lighter Social Club area with a bar, with an adjoining games / meeting room. The new hall, complete with stage and theatre lighting is large enough to accommodate Carpet Bowls, Tea Dances, Bingo, Disco's, Plays, Pantomimes and Private Functions. The Hall is also served by a Function Bar and Catering Kitchen.

Attached to the hall is a Sport England compliant Changing Room with separate changing and showers for Home and Away Teams and a Referee. This facility can also be used for indoor sports or theatre productions.

Outside the Community Facilities provide full size and junior football pitches together with a cricket square. A new small children's enclosed play area is being installed near the social club and existing MUGA. The young person's play equipment is being refreshed and relocated. On the North East side is an area set aside as a non-denominational cemetery.

On the western side of the public footpath there will be housing development of 78 homes which will include 12 new affordable homes and a range of 2 to 5 bedroom properties. It is understood this has been tweaked following feedback from the consultation meetings that more starter homes were needed within the Village.

The new hall should open in Spring/Summer 2019. This will be followed by the Sports Pitches becoming usable which may require additional time for the grass to grow. During the construction phase there will be a temporary hall which can still accommodate the Pre-School, Social Club, Meppershall Players and other hall users.

Andrew Barr and the team from Robinson & Hall continued to liaise with Croudace on behalf of the Meppershall Village Hall Charity and the Parish Council to ensure that matters continue to progress as agreed.

If anyone has any queries or would like further information, please contact the trustees via the details on our website <http://www.meppershallvillagehall.co.uk/>

Trustees of Meppershall Village Hall

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## Croudace Homes New Village Hall & Housing Development – January Update

*Initially we would like to thank everyone who was able to join us at the village hall on 15<sup>th</sup> December. We felt the whole evening was very productive and appreciate everyone's comments at this preliminary stage of our process. For anyone who did not join us at the village hall, images of our exhibition have been put up on the [www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org) website.*

*The two main concerns at the exhibition were regarding the increase in traffic and the possible flooding risks for the village. These concerns will be considered during our process and when the full planning application is submitted it will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Flood Risk Assessment. These documents will assess the impact of the new proposal on traffic and drainage and will provide appropriate solutions where required. Additionally there were several comments welcoming the overall proposal and the designs of the new village hall and the new housing. All of these comments will help us move the scheme in a positive direction.*

*At this early stage of the planning process we are currently awaiting a pre-application response from Central Bedfordshire Council. This response and the public's comments will be incorporated into our proposal and we will undertake a second public consultation in March for the whole village before the full planning application is made. With that said these timings are subject to change depending on the pre-application response we receive.*

*If anyone has any further comments they would like to make, there is an email contact link on the [www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org) website or you can write to us at; Croudace Homes, The Spirella Building, Bridge Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire. SG6 4ET*

Christopher Evans - MArch, RIBA Part 2  
Architectural Assistant  
t. 01462 413470



The Spirella Building, Bridge Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4ET

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## Shefford Leisure Group - February 2016

2016 has commenced as we write this newsletter and we would like to wish you a happy and healthy year ahead. We would also like to thank you for your Christmas greetings which were very much appreciated.



We ended 2015 with our annual trip to Thursford Christmas Spectacular which proved a great success. On our way to the venue, we stopped at Elveden for a pre-booked coffee and a browse round the high quality farm shop. Re-boarding our Chambers coach we made our way to Thursford for their Christmas spectacular show where the dancers, singers and comedians entertained us. On our return journey home we stopped at 'Old Mother Hubbards' for fish and chips which was greatly enjoyed by us all, certainly a super end to a super day out.

'The Last Tango' performed at Milton Keynes Theatre was a delight and a spectacular performance by stars of 'Strictly come Dancing' Flavia Cacace and Vincent Simone.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> December we visited the 4\*\*\*\* Thistle Noke Hotel for a 1950's Christmas Lunch. On arrival we were greeted by tea/coffee and a mince pie, then it was time to visit the Christmas gift stalls. At 12 noon we enjoyed the first half of the 1950's Christmas Show, at 12.45 we were served a three course lunch which was followed by the charity raffle and the second part of the Christmas show. We then said our farewells, Christmas greetings to everyone and made our way home, still wearing their Christmas hats.

The final part of 2015 was our Turkey and Tinsel held at The Russell Hotel, Weymouth. The staff made us very welcome and food plentiful. The trips out were well supported despite the showers! Many of our group walked into Weymouth. All too soon it was time to say farewell and make our way back to Shefford. Unfortunately, although we made good time we were held up in a three hour queue due to an accident, thus making our time home later than anticipated.

We start 2016 with a visit to Milton Keynes Theatre to see *PRISCILLA Queen of the Desert* on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

Quickly followed by Anton and Erin ... 'Just Gotta Dance' on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS (At a Glance) 2016

Priscilla – Queen of the Desert	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> February
Anton and Erin – Just Gotta Dance	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb.
RAF Museum, Hendon	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> Feb.
Shefford Leisure Group 'Get Together' (Mount Pleasant Golf Course)	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March
Ideal Home Exhibition (Leaving Shefford at 8am)	Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> March
View from The Shard & City Cruises Tea Cruise	Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> March
The Mountbatten Festival of Music. Choir & Circle Seats. Royal Albert Hall – (Evening Performance)	Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> April
Camden Market with their usual hustle & bustle!	Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> April
The Bodyguard MK Theatre (Matinee Performance)	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> April
Dutch Waterways River Cruise	Tues 26 <sup>th</sup> Apr-Sun 1 <sup>st</sup> May
A Taste of Leicestershire	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> May
Dad's Army, Bressingham Steam Museum	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June
Sandringham Flower Show	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> July
Torquay – TLH Hotels – The Derwent Hotel	Mon. 10 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 15 <sup>th</sup> Oct

## LONDON SHOWS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE (with Stevenage Group Travel)

MATINEE PERFORMANCES – 2016 (Coach leaves Shefford at 10.45am)

MOTOWN THE MUSICAL Shaftesbury Theatre – Royal Circle Seats	Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
KINKY BOOTS – Adolphi Theatre – Circle Seats	Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March

EVENING PERFORMANCES 2016 - Coach leaves Shefford at 4.15pm

BEAUTIFUL – Carole King Musical — Aldwych Theatre, Stall Seats	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> March
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Please telephone for availability and prices of any outings or shows listed above.

For all holidays, which include transport 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](mailto:enid.pamment@gmail.com).

Enid Pamment – Shefford Leisure Group

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## **GNOMES – Dementia Awareness Training**

Recently a number of GNOMES attended Dementia awareness training presented by Rina Persaud who is a designated Dementia Friends Champion. The session was most informative and interesting and certainly achieved its aim of raising awareness of what dementia is and how it affects both the person suffering from this dreadful disease and their carer(s).

At the end of the session all attendees agreed to become 'Dementia Friends' and produced for themselves actions they would be taking to promote better understanding of dementia and the Dementia Friends movement.

Some of the key points learned were:

1. Dementia is not a natural part of ageing.
2. Dementia is caused by a disease of the brain.
3. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease but there are many others.
4. Dementia is not just about losing your memory – it can affect thinking, communicating and doing everyday tasks.
5. Dementia is progressive which means the symptoms will gradually get worse.
6. One in fourteen people over 65 have dementia at any one time.
7. Dementia affects each person in different ways.
8. Alzheimer's disease usually starts by affecting people's short term memory.
9. Dementia can also affect people's perception.
10. It is possible to live well with dementia.
11. There's more to the person than the dementia – with support, people with dementia can and do take an active role in life.
12. Dementia Friends is about turning understanding into action.

If you are interested in attending a similar training session then please contact Rina Persaud via email: [dementiafriendscranfield@gmail.com](mailto:dementiafriendscranfield@gmail.com)

For information about Dementia Friends go to [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk)

You can also find out more about dementia go to [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk) and [www.alzheimers.org.uk/factsheets](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/factsheets)

### **Advertisement**

A wonderful cleaner is looking for more work.  
Highly recommended by 2 Meppershall residents

Do ring her on 07710 404378



# The Meppershall Players



A big THANK YOU to all you lovely people that came to see 'Robin Hood' the Pantomime; we hope you enjoyed watching it as much as we enjoyed performing it.

Our next production 'A Mid-Summer Night's Dream' is now under rehearsal; performance dates are Friday 17<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016 (make a note on the calendar). This production is traditionally set, but is spoken in today's English as opposed to Shakespeare's.

The Meppershall Players are on Facebook (Meppershall Players Community) Insta-gram, the Web, Twitter ...the list is endless.

If you're not into computers, check out our notice boards in the front entrance. We always have plenty of information about the Players on the boards in the front foyer.

The Players are always welcoming to new members. We pride ourselves on having no Prima Donnas. Every one pitches in to make our rehearsals and productions fun. We encourage people to have a go at any part of a theatrical production they feel they want to participate in (just ask all our new members).

If you want to see what we're about, just drop in to the hall any Wednesday evening. You don't need a formal invitation, just walk in and say hello (we really are a friendly bunch).

The Players meet every Wednesday evening at 7.30pm at the Village Hall. Membership is currently free and 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.

Interested? We look forward to meeting you.

Karen Mitchell (Players' Secretary) 01462 81633

## Notices

### Village Forum

The Village Forum team is looking to recruit someone able and willing to run its website and social media feeds (Facebook and Twitter). If interested please email [forum@meppershall.org](mailto:forum@meppershall.org)

### Meppershall Festival

Due to changes in all our lives, Carolyn, Colette and Zoe regret to announce that there will be no Festival this year.

Thank you to all our artistes and audiences who have made it such a success for the past few years. All the organisations in Meppershall have benefitted from your support and generosity.

Following the ending of the Meppershall Tots, the Festival committee is very pleased to announce that their donation from last year's Festival of £300 has been returned and is now being presented to Meppershall Academy for the purchase of music folders for the choir (hopefully in time for their London 02 concert in February) with the balance to go towards a Charge & Sync. Tablet Cabinet.

### **[www.meppershall.org](http://www.meppershall.org)**

The Meppershall website has recently undergone a rewrite to introduce a new look and feel, and also incorporate new facilities for users and readers.

There is plenty of space available for Village Groups, Clubs and Organisations to publish newsletters, reports, advertisements or let the public know what they stand for or what they can offer members or the community.

These Village Organisation pages can be set up and managed on your behalf - all you need to do is provide the words and photos. Or there is now the facility for any member with basic word processing skills to carry this work out on behalf of the group (full training will be given). If you already have a website we can place a link in the menu.

This website is sponsored by the Parish Council and it is completely free to any organisation. If you are interested in this offer please contact me at the email address below.

David

[webmaster@meppershall.org](mailto:webmaster@meppershall.org)

## Significant Events

### RIP

We were sorry to hear that Arthur (Arbo) Flint died on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2015, aged 84. We send our condolences to Pam and Family.

Harry James Welham, formerly of Hoo Road, born 13<sup>th</sup> April 1922, died peacefully on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016, aged 93.

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On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2016 we were delighted to present Barbara Carne with a card and birthday cake from the Meppershall Messenger to mark her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday

### Birthdays in February:

John Winter will be 92 on 25<sup>th</sup>. Many congratulations to John

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If you know of a significant event in the village, please let the Editor know: we are looking for things to celebrate! 80<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays we mark with the presentation of a cake from The Messenger. We would also love to hear about big anniversaries or any other cause to celebrate.

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## New Meppershall Care Home – Press Release

20 January 2016

### **A CUTTING EDGE DEMENTIA FACILITY FOR BEDFORDSHIRE**

January 2016 has seen the introduction of a cutting edge dementia facility at New Meppershall Care Home, as the second phase of its £800,000 investment is launched.

The new innovative dementia wing was created by professionals trained at University of Stirling – recognised as the leading institution in dementia research - who specialise in designing environments which add real value to the lives and care of dementia patients.

The first floor facility will be home to 16 people. Features of the space include an outdoor roof garden so that residents can enjoy fresh air everyday all year round. The terrace has been screened with high glass walls so residents can have an unrestricted view of the gardens and the surrounding fields safely. In the spring, there are also plans to create an indoor village square for residents which will include the likes of a post office and shops.

Louise Yates, who is the manager of New Meppershall Care Home, said: “The creative design will add real value to the lives of residents with dementia. It has been very carefully planned out to help them recall memories and feel at home at New Meppershall. Simple daily activities like going to buy food and clothes will be re-created around the village green to give residents a real sense of normal daily life.”

The dementia facility is the second in a two phase investment from Pressbeau Care Homes which opened the home in August last year.

The initial phase saw a full refurbishment of the ground floor; a contemporary lounge created by a team of professional interior designers; a café; a hair salon; and a dining room with a restaurant-like atmosphere.

Louise added: “Our initial opening was really well supported by the local community and very warmly welcomed by health professionals in the area. We are optimistic that the new facility will be equally popular as we strive to create a first class care facility for Bedfordshire.”

To arrange a visit to New Meppershall, call Louise on 01462 851876 or email [manager@newmeppershall.co.uk](mailto:manager@newmeppershall.co.uk).

[www.newmeppershall.co.uk](http://www.newmeppershall.co.uk)

Further information available from

Abhinav Saraogi, Pressbeau Ltd, 07939 588177, [abz1306@gmail.com](mailto:abz1306@gmail.com)

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## Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living – Positive Movement



### *Positive Movement – coming to a venue near you*

A local healthy living centre is looking for 150 older people of all physical abilities to take part in a specially designed wellbeing programme to be held at venues in Stevenage, Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston and villages.

The friendly, weekly classes will combine gentle exercise and movement with time to socialise over tea.

Thanks to funding from Hertfordshire County Council, the cost to participants will be a nominal £2.50 per session.

Contact the Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living on 01462 678804, email [positivemovement@letchworthcentre.org](mailto:positivemovement@letchworthcentre.org) or visit [www.letchworthcentre.org](http://www.letchworthcentre.org) to enrol or for further details.

## **Denis Neilson – Where My Caravan Has Rested**

Moving on toward the Sunshine Coast we drove up to the top of Mount Dorrigo and once up there walked around in the National Park which is predominantly rain forest. We saw normal wallabies and also a miniature one, around 2ft tall with a reddish neck colouring. We managed to get about 5 ft from him before he hopped away. Cute little chap he was which we later identified as a Pademelon.

Back down on the coast we called at Coffs Harbour, the home of the Big Banana. It is in a banana growing area but the Big Banana is a fun park. Our main reason of visiting this 'Blackpool of Oz' was to go to Muttonbird Island to see wedge tailed Shearwaters which breed there. They should depart mid-April but they must have known we were coming and set off 3 weeks early, there were none around at all, not even a feather. Further along the coast we stopped at a campground which convinced me that surfing was almost a religion. The devotion that is given to it is amazing. I was up early (before 7am thanks again to the kookaburra) and went for a stroll. I was surprised to find the beach car park almost full and when I looked over the dunes, there were quite a few surfers in the water. What further surprised me was to see a fellow come out of the water, with his board, walk up the beach and over the dunes to his car. Here he removed his dry suit, put on a shirt, tie and smart business suit, stowed his board on the roof and drove off to work! This area not only produces very committed surfers but also a variety of crops which include coffee, tea, avocados, bananas, pecans and macadamia nuts. There are some lovely neat looking plantations around and the colours of the plants and trees were enhanced by the nice sunshine. Recently we had been experiencing some wet weather but right then the Sunshine Coast lived up to its name and all was aglow.

The weather stayed nice so it was time to go trekking. We decided to walk up the 1157 metre Mount Warning just because it was there. It was named by Captain Cook, on his voyage to map the coastline of this new found colony, and it is still used as a marker by many sailors who use the peak to navigate safely into Byrons Bay. The pathway to the summit is about 4.5 Kms. It is a difficult path at times culminating in a virtually vertical section where a steel chain is anchored to the rock face as a sort of banister to help you pull yourself up. If that had not been there I would never have got to the top. You pull yourself up it for about 60 metres, which does not sound far, but uphill, it is a bit of a strain and of course you have to find your foot holds too. It certainly got us huffing and puffing but the view from the top made it all seem worthwhile. The chain bit coming down is a real pull on the arms and knees because it can

only be done by coming down backwards! Needless to say we both slept well that night.

On the following day feeling a little stiff but otherwise ok we continued northwards and travelled along the coast, which is very much like the Costa del Sol in Spain. With wall-to-wall holiday high-rise apartments, plenty of fast-food, beachwear, surf and belly-board outlets and loads and loads of people. It is not all beach and bungee-jumping though, for a little way inland is the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, which has, as its highlight, an 'evening safari'. We were told we would need a torch for the event so that meant we had to do



some shopping. We got to the Sanctuary at 7.20pm (with torch) and registered. We were given a plastic tube which, when broken, gave off a vivid green light. The idea was to use this in case of an emergency so people could find you. The first half of the tour was mediocre and we both thought it had been a waste of money. We were shown snakes, an owl or two, the inevitable kangaroo and a crocodile. It did start to improve when we watched a demonstration of Aboriginal dancing and a

very interesting demonstration of breath control in playing the didgeridoo. It improved even further when we came to the koalas. These are our favourites and here we got up close, plus being night time, they were more awake and alert, well, for a koala. Ruth got very close but was advised not to try to hold one as their claws are really sharp and can quickly cause a nasty injury. One of the keepers held it and I snapped the picture. We were fascinated by the 'Gliders'. These are possums which have an excess of skin from the body to the rear legs so that when they leap the legs stretch out backwards and the loose skin forms a sort of 'wing' and they appear to glide through the air. Ruth stroked a snake for the very first and probably the last time but neither of us were brave enough to hold a baby crocodile! I got to feed a kangaroo; well you cannot have too much excitement in an evening now can you?

Next stop? Brisbane, sub-tropical capital of Queensland and the gateway to the Gold Coast and the north.

...to be continued



**Sudoku Puzzle 1424**

			3		4			
		2			5			
4	5		2				7	
8					2	6		
	2			6				
7								4
	7	5	9			2		6
	9		4			5		8
								7

The objective is to fill a 9×9 grid with digits so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 sub-grids that compose the grid contain all of the digits from 1 to 9.

## The Lucy Page - Meppershall History

Our village has plenty of small businesses, organisations, community events and is a very pleasurable place to live. So, for this issue, I will be exploring two questions; what was Meppershall like in the past? What is the potential future for the village with the new developments?



### The Past

- Meppershall and the Meppershall Manor House were both mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. The village is listed as *Malpertesselle* and *Maperteshale*.
- The manor belonged to the De Meppershall family for nearly 300 years following 1086. It used to be partly in Bedfordshire and partly in Hertfordshire due to it being separated into three cottages, but this was changed to completely Bedfordshire and into one building in 1844. The present manor house dates back to the early 17th century.
- St Mary's Church was built in the time of the Normans (10th and 11th centuries).
- Before greenhouses became popular in the area, the community was very poor. The majority of houses were thatched cottages, with brick walls and stone floors. Large families would live in these 'two up, two down' style houses.
- Soon after, greenhouses became much more common. Meppershall had so many that it became known as the 'Glass City, growing crops for local markets, and shipping some further by road and rail.
- Another popular job at this time was Coprolite Digging. This was digging fossilised dung from prehistoric creatures, which would then be ground down and treated with sulphuric acid to make a soil fertiliser. The



coprolite was worth about £3 a tonne in 1890, which covered roughly 300 tons per acre. A fossil digger could earn as much as £2 a week.

### The Future

We are expecting quite a few changes in the near future, with the new housing developments and village hall plans.

- The new building should have a custom designed Pre-School room and play area with extended opening hours, and a larger and lighter Social Club area with a bar, with an adjoining games/meeting room. The new hall, complete with stage and theatre lighting is large enough to accommodate Carpet Bowls, Tea Dances, Bingo, Discos, Plays, Pantomimes and Private Functions. The hall is also served by a Function Bar and Catering Kitchen. Attached to the hall is a Sport England-compliant Changing Room with separate changing and showers for Home and Away Teams and a Referee. This facility can also be used for indoor sports or theatre productions.
- Outside the Community Facilities provide full size and junior football pitches together with a cricket square. A new small children's enclosed play area is being installed near the social club and existing MUGA. The young persons' play equipment is being refreshed and relocated. There will be an area set aside as a non-denominational cemetery.
- There should be housing development of 78 homes which will include 12 new affordable homes and a range of 2 to 5 bedroom properties.

The new hall should open in Spring/Summer 2019; until then a temporary hall will be in use.

Sources: Wikipedia.org

Photo: Paulandhelenharris.co.uk

Meppershall.org

[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)

## Meppershall Calendar of Events

### February

Day	Date	What's On	When	Where
Friday	5	BINGO	6:45 pm, eyes down 7:15 pm	Social Club
Thursday	6	Evergreens	2:15 - 4:00 pm	Sugarloaf
Monday	8	Parish Council Meeting	7:45 pm	Village Hall
Tuesday	9	Rectory Tea	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Rector Roni's
Thursday	11	GNOMES Coffee morning	10:45 till 11:45	New Meppershall Care Home
Friday	12	BINGO	6:45 pm, eyes down 7:15 pm	Social Club
Sunday	14	Paul Carne 's quiz night.	7:30 pm	Social Club
Sunday	14	Second Sunday Stroll	10:30 am	St Mary's Church - Gate
Friday	19	BINGO	6:45 pm, eyes down 7:15 pm	Social Club
Saturday	20	Karen's Karaoke	8 pm - late	Social Club
Thursday	20	Evergreens	2:15 - 4:00 pm	Sugarloaf
Friday	26	BINGO	6:45 pm, eyes down 7:15 pm	Social Club



## What'sit No. 16 and Sudoku Puzzle 1424 Solution

Time for some 'light' relief? Now where do you think this might be found?...



6	8	7	3	1	4	9	5	2
9	3	2	8	7	5	4	6	1
4	5	1	2	9	6	8	7	3
8	1	9	7	4	2	6	3	5
5	2	4	1	6	3	7	8	9
7	6	3	5	8	9	1	2	4
1	7	5	9	3	8	2	4	6
3	9	6	4	2	7	5	1	8
2	4	8	6	5	1	3	9	7

## **Paul Savuto – Finance**

### **DON'T GIVE TOO MUCH MONEY AWAY**

More and more parents and grandparents are helping their children and grandchildren get a start in life, often by helping with education costs or a deposit for a property. However, there is some evidence that by doing so they may be putting their own standard of living at risk. A recent study\* found that 32% of parents and grandparents aged over 55 are currently planning or already giving money to their children and grandchildren at an average of £5,026 a year. Of these, 18% plan to take advantage of the new pension legislation to free up cash to give to their family. However, the danger is that in the process they are cutting back their own lifestyle expenditure - 18% believe that they are giving away too much.

### **INHERITANCE TAX**

Giving money away at the wrong time or in the wrong way could result in your children or grandchildren facing a tax bill at a later date. The new family home allowance is being introduced in stages over four years, with a limit of £100,000 from April 2017, rising to £175,000 per person in 2020. This is in addition to the individual allowance for Inheritance Tax (IHT) which remains unchanged at £325,000. Everyone has a £3,000 IHT annual exemption, and you can make gifts of £250 to as many people as you like providing they aren't also the recipient of your £3,000 allowance. Making gifts on marriage (up to £5,000 to a son or daughter, £2,500 to a grandchild and £1,000 to anyone else) and gifts from your surplus income can be good ways of reducing exposure to IHT.

### **A QUESTION OF BALANCE**

With the continued rise in life expectancy, it's important for donors to have enough capital for their own needs, remembering that there may be need for long-term care provision at some point in the future. Inheritance Tax is a complex matter and taking advice is essential as everyone's financial situation is different. \* Investec Wealth & Investment

## **THE NEW PENSION RULES – FAQs**

The new pension rules applying to defined contribution pensions can seem quite complex; there's a lot of information to take in. Here we look at some of the frequently asked questions.

**DO I HAVE TO RETIRE TO ACCESS MY DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION?** No, you don't. There's no need to wait until the state retirement age. As long as you're over 55 you can access your pension. It doesn't matter whether you're still in work, about to retire or already retired.

### **WHAT'S TO STOP ME WITHDRAWING MY ENTIRE PENSION POT AT AGE 55?**

Whilst it's true that you can from age 55 take up to a quarter of your defined contribution pension as a tax-free lump sum, withdrawals over and above this figure are taxable. They will be added to the rest of your income in that tax year, and so you could find yourself pushed into a higher tax bracket. It's also important to bear in mind that pensions shelter your savings from income tax and capital gains tax until you take that money out, and it makes sense to keep this tax-efficient status going for as long as possible. Remember too that life expectancy is rising and you could spend 30 years or more in retirement and you'll want your retirement income to last as long as you do.

**PUT SIMPLY, WHAT IS FLEXIACCESS DRAWDOWN?** Flexi-access drawdown is a way of taking an income from the money you have built up in your pension while still keeping it invested. As the remainder of your pension fund remains invested, you still have the potential for the fund to grow free of income and capital gains tax. You have the flexibility to take money as and when you need it – you can choose to take up to 25% of your pension pot as a tax-free lump sum or gradually over time taking a quarter tax-free each time. You then move the rest into a fund or funds to allow you to take an income at times to suit you.

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DRAWDOWN AND AN UFPLS?** An UFPLS is an uncrystallised funds pension lump sum, and is a one-off lump sum taken from an 'uncrystallised' defined contribution pension pot. In this case 'uncrystallised' means the benefits have yet to be accessed. The amount of the pot deemed 'crystallised' depends on how much of the tax-free lump sum has been taken. On the face of it, UFPLS are similar to drawdown, but you can't take 25% of the fund and leave the rest of the fund invested; for that to happen you'd need to go the drawdown route.

Under an UFPLS, 25% of each pay-out is tax-free, and each individual withdrawal is crystallised against the lifetime allowance (LTA). If you reach that threshold, you would have to pay tax on the amount over and above the LTA, initially at emergency rate, whereas with drawdown, the act of making a fund available for drawdown crystallises the whole pot from the outset. Taking an UFPLS will trigger the money purchase annual allowance, which would reduce the amount you could contribute to your pension from £40,000 to £10,000. As ever, taking advice is absolutely essential to help ensure you select the most suitable option for your individual needs and circumstances.

**IS MY PENSION FUND TAXABLE WHEN I DIE?** Any money left in your pension fund at your death can be passed on. This will be free of tax if you die before age 75 and the funds are paid out within a two year window. If you die at 75 or over, the person you name as your beneficiary will pay income tax on what they receive.

To review your particular requirements please contact Paul Savuto on 07834 499595 for a free financial healthcheck.

*It is important to take professional advice before making any decision relating to your personal finances. Information within this newsletter is based on our current understanding of taxation and can be subject to change in future. It does not provide individual tailored investment advice and is for guidance only. Some rules may vary in different parts of the UK; please ask for details. We cannot assume legal liability for any errors or omissions it might contain. Levels and bases of, and reliefs from taxation, are those currently applying or proposed and are subject to change; their value depends on the individual circumstances of the investor. The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated. If you withdraw from an investment in the early years, you may not get back the full amount you invested. Changes in the rates of exchange may have an adverse effect on the value or price of an investment in sterling terms if it is denominated in a foreign currency.*

## **Meppershall Social Club – February & March**

\* BINGO Every Friday Night.

Doors open 6.45pm eyes down 7.15pm.

Members free, Non-members £1 entrance fee.

\* KAREN'S KARAOKE Saturday 20th February 8pm-late, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March 8pm-Late.

Sing or sing-a-long to your favourite songs, at this fun for everyone evening in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, Non Members welcome.

\* SUNDAY QUIZ NIGHT 14<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm start, 13<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm start.

Paul Carne is our resident quiz master, with a highly entertaining quiz for all the family.

£1 per person entry fee, no set number in team (you can have as few or as many as you like in your team).

50-50 split of entrance fee, half to charity and half to the winning team. Non-Members welcome.

SNOOKER is becoming popular once more at the Social Club, and with two well-maintained tables 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 817359. Club opens 8pm. We look forward to seeing you.

More Events at the Club in next month's issue.

MEMBERSHIP for 2016 is due now (pick up a form at the Club).

Meppershall Social Club 01462 817359 after 8pm.

## Film Review – The Danish Girl

THE DANISH GIRL (cert. 15 2 hrs.) Director Tom Hooper tells an amazing story based on a real happening.

It's 1926 Copenhagen and landscape artist Einar Wegener (Eddie Redmayne) is married to a minor artist Gerda Wegener (Alicia Vikander), who works as Portrait painter. They are very much in love. When Gerda is unable to finish a portrait without her subject present she gets her husband to act as the female model. The touch and feel of the clothes and stockings affect Einar so profoundly that he pursues the idea of dressing as a woman just for fun. He becomes Lili, but soon Lili takes over Einar's life until he is no longer able to live as a man.



Eddie Redmayne & Alicia Vikander in The Danish Girl

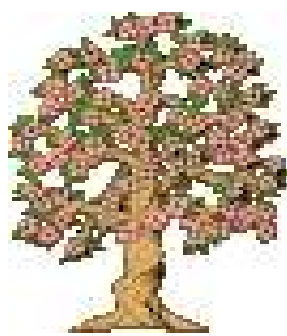
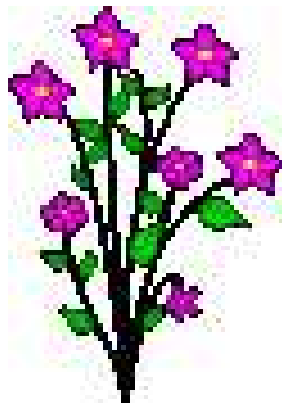
Both Einar and Gerda realise that this is what he truly is but both still love each other and Gerda supports her husband as a transgender woman. Tom Hooper tells the main story of the transformation of the artist from male to female but also shows us the profound effect it has on his wife and the journey she has to make to continue to love and support her husband.

The two central performances are acted superbly. Alicia Vikander is lovely looking with love for her husband shining out of her eyes. Redmayne's transformation is subtle yet completely believable. He should be a shoe-in for an Oscar except that he has only recently won for playing Stephen Hawking in The Theory of Everything. This movie is very highly recommended.

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## Meppershall Garden Club



Linda Parker  
01462 815114

Kim Lee Tyler  
01462 811750

Email:  
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@hotmail.co.uk

The New Year 2016 started with daffodils in bloom and the sound of lawnmowers. Not a seasonal sound with Christmas decorations and lights still switched on. We had the warmest December since 1910 the Met office informed us. Sadly, many parts of the country were flooded during the festive season.

The Garden Club celebrated the year gone by with a social get together at my house in December. Delicious dishes brought by members were shared and we reminisced about the year gone by.

For the November meeting the Garden Club members visited Bury Lane Farm shop near Royston. (burylanefarmshop.co.uk). The shop sells a variety of fresh and frozen foods. We were all tempted by the Christmas Shop which had some interesting and very reasonable seasonal items. Bury Lane has a garden centre and a large restaurant serving local produce. For those with children or grandchildren, there is a play-barn to amuse little ones.

January's meeting was held at the Mount Pleasant Golf Club where we planned the monthly meetings for the year ahead. Places for potential visits were discussed. We came up with a few places we would like to visit in addition to our regular meeting days such as RHS Wisley and the Luton Hoo walled garden

February's meeting will be a visit to Anglesey Abbey to enjoy the snowdrops.

If you would like to find out more about the garden club then please speak to any of our members or make contact via our email.

Inge McConnell

## **Lewis' Further Adventures - Export Orders**

Life in the MAG at Malvern was bliss, lots of time with the family, work consisted of writing the Electrical and Mechanical Regulations (EMER's) for the ZB298 and I was able to catch up with all the family demands to adapt the house to their needs!

Monday morning: The Head of Defence Sales was on the line, very excited! Two systems for the Danes and three systems for the Dutch, that is no problem - Elliotts have all the drawings. However both countries require repair vehicles, you are the only with the build knowledge of these, the line went dead whilst he awaited my reply!

"Tell me more, Jason". Evidently, three vehicles were required; chassis and bodies to be supplied by Mercedes, the Power Supplies and Air Conditioning by Siemens, and vehicle special test fitments to be built at Elliotts Borehamwood, where I would be the Design Engineer. I agreed to do it, subject to Elliotts' agreement. Two weeks later the vehicles arrived at Borehamwood and so did I, crammed into an office in the Main Workshop with the Foreman (as always immaculately attired in a white coat), who gave me a firm handshake. I also renewed acquaintance with the Purchasing Manager and established the status quo for all the items necessary to complete the task. I had known these two gentlemen for a number of years so it was a re-establishment of friendship.

Sleeves were rolled up and the initial drawing board work commenced. At the end of the first week with the first manufacturing drawings completed, I drove home to Malvern singing all the way.

The Technicians and Engineers at Borehamwood were first class and the vehicle builds progressed at a great rate. Four weeks into contract and we invited our customers to view their vehicles, and they happily signed the acceptance certificates. Lewis went home to Malvern - also happy.

Back in the MAG, I once more stuck into writing the ZB298 EMER, my only problem was the Editor, a somewhat difficult gentleman for whom perfection was essential - however such is life!

I received two letters on the same day: the first from the Head of Defence Sales, thanking me for all my efforts, the second from the Army Board, no less, confirming my appointment to W.O. 1. Artificer Sergeant Major. This was the only appointment of any rank made by the Army Board, and they were also the only Authority who could take it away. That evening I showed Fran the letters, she was cock-a-hoop and immediately telephoned my mother and father - they were also overjoyed! Naturally, on Friday lunch-time, the MAG personnel, Civilian and Military, repaired to our local pub in Barnards Green. Fortunately I had a few bob saved up to defray expenses!

Radar G.S. No 14 Mk 1 (Electrical and Mechanical Regulations)

We had a very accomplished Illustrator and he and I got together and produced a very professional document which even satisfied the Editor. I was very pleased when the four binders of the finished document rolled off the press. It had been a wonderful couple of months where all the projects in which I had engaged had been achieved.

However our eldest son was attending a special school at Hanley Swan some three miles from Malvern Wells where we lived; unfortunately he was too old to stay at the school and the Education Authority decided he should move to another special school in Yeovil as a weekly boarder, rather a lot of miles to travel each weekend to and fro! Fortunately I had completed my deployment at Elliotts in Borehamwood. I took Stephen down to the new School at Yeovil, and it turned out to be an Agricultural Establishment with a most pleasant and engaging staff. Stephen was familiar with farm animals and made friends with a couple of other students. I was happy to leave him there and confirmed the time of pick-up for Friday, which reassured him.

Friday came round quite quickly and I arrived at the school at 5.30pm. Stephen was waiting at the entrance and evidently had been there since 4pm, which would turn out to be a pattern for as long as Stephen was in residence there. However, it was not to be - a phone call from the War Office requesting my presence for an interview and discussion soon put a stop to that.

When I arrived at the main desk entrance the next morning and Col. Alan came down to greet me, I knew something was seriously adrift. We retired to his office and teas were soon called up. He recalled the comarderie we had built up together with our wives when we built and raced Go-Karts on the square at Ty-Croes. That was just to soften me up - the real problem turned out to be the REME Electronic Workshops at the Royal School of Artillery Larkhill, evidently the OC Workshop and the ASM were not up to scratch. The Workshop was in disarray, equipment waiting repair were more than I could recall at any of my previous workshops which I had run. Additionally there had been two NCO suicides which had created a very poor morale problem. I was still the prime Army serving member for ZB 298 in support of the Training Establishments. Quick thinking was called for: I said to Alan "I will need two adjoining rooms in the Mess, one with an AO drawing board".

The morale of the men was another problem which I would solve after having them all together, as with all Workshops there were quite a few "tiffies" who had created their own domains around particular systems.

ASM Lewis Birt REME. To be continued.



## Pre-School Ponderings - February

This term we have lots of new children starting, and a few changes on the committee or staff team to adapt to. It is always our mission to make any transitions as smooth as possible for all involved, and we work hard to create a positive and stimulating environment, so all children feel safe and supported throughout their learning and developmental journey. We would therefore like to offer a warm welcome to all our new children who started Pre-school this half term, and to our new Assistant Leader Andrea Gardiner. Michele Brennand sadly left us at the end of 2015 after 10 years of loyalty and hard work, and we wish her well in all her future endeavours. We also welcome her back anytime to visit our pre-school!

We set topics at pre-school and this term we are looking at 'winter', particularly changes in temperature, hibernation and migration, how people and animals keep warm, other very cold countries, and of course 'Disney Frozen'. However activities we plan are also related to the children's individual interests, so are not always connected to our topic.

Next week Yvoone Wong one of our wonderful relief workers is going to help us celebrate Chinese New Year by sharing Chinese food, doing Chinese writing, talking about 2016 being the year of the monkey, and telling a related animal story. Chinese New Year falls on a different date each calendar year usually in January or February and this years falls on the 8th February. Can anyone tell us why? I will answer this question in the next issue.

We would like to thank Karen Huckle for replacing Angela Ridley as treasurer, and Vanessa Freakley for offering to step up as secretary onto the management committee when Rebecca Davies steps down. We would like to say a huge thank you to Angela Ridley for her continuing support of our pre-school, and to Rebecca for all her hard work!

Meppershall Pre-school now has a few places left to fill. If your little one is ready to make new friends and enjoy our stimulating, safe environment, please ring Tamsin our fantastic level 4 leader any morning in term time on 07816 357159 to book a visit.

**Meppershall Pre-school located in Meppershall Village Hall, takes up to 24 children in each session from in and around the surrounding areas.**

**Priority is given to funded children,  
but we also have limited spaces for 2 year olds.**

**Please ring 07713 627376, or email [tamsin@meppershall-ps.co.uk](mailto:tamsin@meppershall-ps.co.uk), to enquire about the Early Years Foundation Stage and exceptional care we offer.**

## **Birthdays in February**

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

Keira Thomason who will be 13 on the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Benjamin Saunders who will be 12 on the 16<sup>th</sup>  
Alfie Curtis who will be 9 on the 25<sup>th</sup>

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](mailto:louhuts@gmail.com)

### **Meppershall Good Neighbours Group**

The Gnomes would like to hear from you if:

- You have recently moved to Meppershall and would like one of our welcome packs
- You would like our help
- You would like to join us.

Call our helpline: 07760 793921 or

Come to our coffee morning at 10.45 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at the New Meppershall Care Home on Shefford Road.

## 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](http://www.stmarysmeppershall.org.uk) ☩ [www.facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall](https://www.facebook.com/stmarysmeppershall)



Rector: The Reverend Veronica Goodman

01462 339962 – [ronigoodman@gmail.com](mailto:ronigoodman@gmail.com) – usual day off Monday

Churchwardens:

Dawn Abbatt 01462 816962

James Read 01462 857836 Email: [Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com](mailto:Meppershall.PCC@gmail.com)

PCC Secretary:

Anne Parsons 01462 813333 Email: [annie10639@gmail.com](mailto:annie10639@gmail.com)

### Things to Look Out For...

***Lent and the approach of Easter*** – How about joining us for some Lent services? Easter comes early this year, over the last weekend of March. Spring is on the way!

***Rectory Teas*** – Usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month, 2-4pm, at Rector Roni's, informal get together – chat and a cuppa and good company.

***Silent Together*** – every month, usually on the second Friday, for half an hour in the evening – come and enjoy the church in silence among friends. An opportunity to experience the church in a special way.

***Celtic Morning Prayer*** – every month, usually on the fourth Saturday, a short 9am morning service in the Celtic tradition.

***Second Sunday Stroll*** – returning on St Valentine's Day to a favourite walk for many – out via Crackle Hill, through Campton and across to Chicksands Wood to rise up into Haynes for refreshments at The Greyhound.

### ***A Message from St Mary's...***

I believe there are some who think of February - poor February! - as the month whose only purpose is to “mark a cold and dead and frozen time” between the joys of Christmas and new Year and the time when our world begins to warm

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up again in March; as the time in which winter hangs on too long and the world waits to spring to life once more.

There are others, of course, who think quite differently. Barbara Winkler writes, *“Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.”*

I know that the long dark days of winter - like the difficulties of life - can threaten our ability to find hope and strength and energy - our ability to wait for the sunshine that the days to come promise.

When I read what Barbara Winkler says, I think maybe February is a good month to practise holding on to hope, to dream dreams - to see beyond the darkness and to begin to wonder in anticipation of the miracle that has already begun beyond our sight...

I think that is the invitation of my Bible when it says *“For I know the plans I have for you,”* declares the Lord, *“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* **Jeremiah 29:11**; and:

*“Do not be afraid...*

*for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green.*

*The trees are bearing their fruit;*

*the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.*

*I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten”* **Joel 2**

Cynthia Adams practises that kind of wondering and anticipation in her poem ‘Winter Garden’ (first published in Birds and Blooms magazine, Dec/Jan 2003):

*“In winter's cold and sparkling snow,*

*The garden in my mind does grow...*

*. . . Woodland phlox and scarlet pinks,*

*Replace the frost, if I just blink.*

*My inner eye sees past the snow.*

*And in my mind, my garden grows.”*

Let's not mark February as a cold and dead time (frozen or not!) but as a time when we live warmed by hope, and alive with visions of the joys of sunnier days to come. .

**Rector Roni**

**Services and Events – February 2016** *At St Mary's unless stated below*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Service / Event</b>
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 4 <sup>th</sup> after Epiphany	9am for 10.00am	United Benefice Service at St Michael's, Shefford – free welcome breakfast from 9am!
Weds 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> Feb Last after Epiphany	11.00am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> Feb	2-4pm	Rectory Tea – chat and a cuppa – all welcome
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb	9.00pm	Silent Together – join friends to sit for a few minutes to enjoy the tranquillity of the church
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> Feb First Sunday in Lent St Valentine's Day	8.30am  10.30am	Holy Communion  Second Sunday Stroll – The Greyhound. Meet at the church gate for a walk of around 5 miles to Haynes via Campton. Arriving at the pub around 1pm (non-walkers welcome!) Return transport available, call James (857836).
Weds 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2 <sup>nd</sup> in Lent	8.30am  11.00am	Holy Communion  All Age Family Service
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	2-4pm	Rectory Tea. All welcome for chat, cuppa and - this week - “getting serious.”
Weds 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb	10.00am	Holy Communion
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	9.00am	Celtic Morning Prayer
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup> in Lent	11.00am	Parish Communion
Weds 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	10.00am	Holy Communion

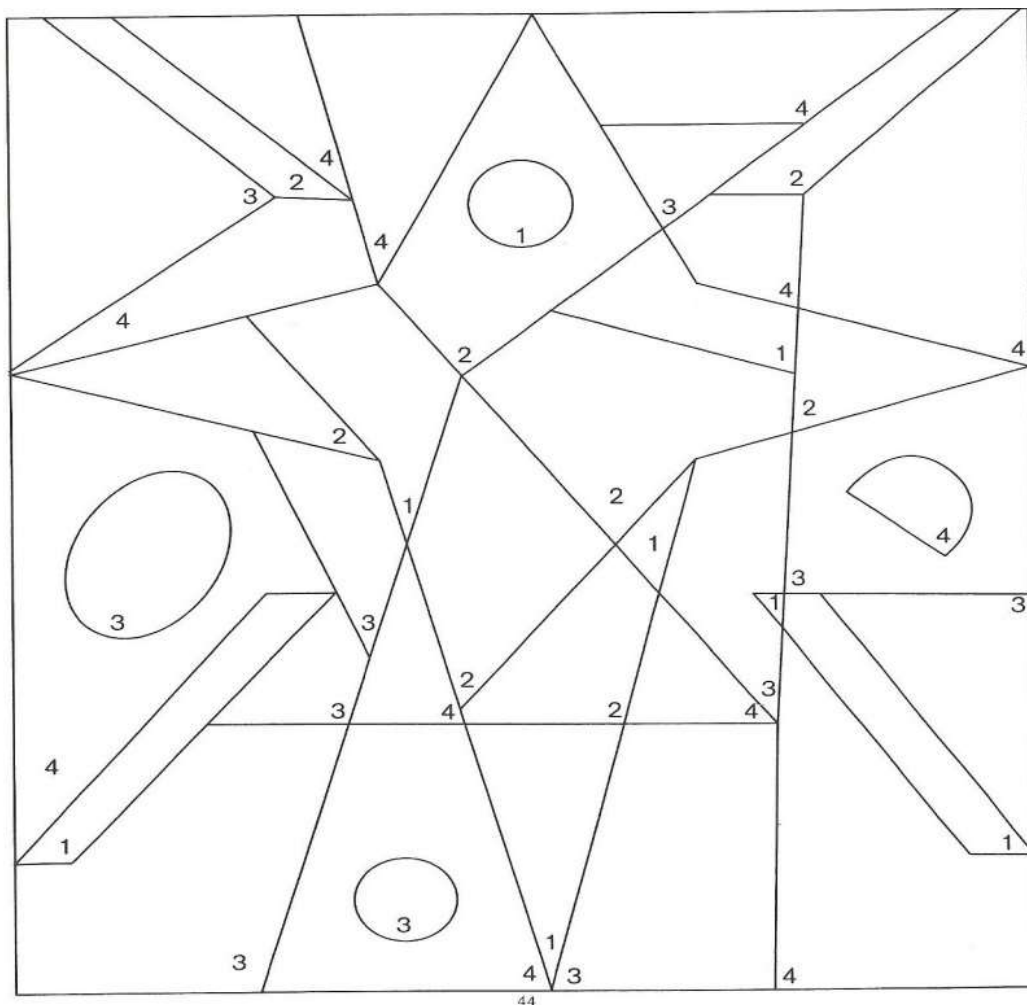
## St. Mary's Meppershall Junior Church

**Join JC 11am Sunday 7 February 2016 in Meppershall CE Academy Hall**

2016 is well on its way and already time feels like it's flying by.

No-one knows what the New Year will bring, what path we will tread or how quickly we will tread it, but rest assured whatever challenges are put before us on our journey through 2016, they will be much easier to deal with knowing God is with us.

Junior Church is held on the first Sunday of each month and offers fun, a safe, welcoming environment where the children learn about God. Let the children give it a try!



Today we celebrate the visit that three special kings made to the little Jesus. They came from far, far away. How did they know how to find Jesus? To give you a clue, colour all the shapes #1 and #2 yellow. Colour all the shapes #3 and #4 different shades of dark blue.

The JC team looks forward to welcoming you and your children!

Blessings The JC Team

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## Wanderbus - A Great New Year for Wanderbus!



Whitbread Wanderbus Ltd.  
94 High Street, Meppershall,  
Shefford, Beds, SG17 5LZ

Wanderbus, the Community Bus Transport operator serving the rural villages in the Shefford area, is proud to announce that they will be adding a second bus, Wanderbus II, for the benefit of our community.

A funding award from the Department of Transport (Community Transport Minibus Fund) will allow Wanderbus to operate a second bus from early summer 2016 offering a greater service to local villages in Central Beds and ensuring they can not only maintain rural services, that are under pressure from financial restraints, but increase frequencies.

Wanderbus, is a charitable organisation staffed entirely by volunteers and launched over 26 years ago. It has been providing essential fixed route services to our community offering villagers of all ages destinations including Milton Keynes, Bedford, Welwyn Garden City, Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock.

Wanderbus Co-ordinator Jenny Gilbert explained “The additional 16-seater bus will allow us to increase the frequency and destinations of our services from Shefford and the outlying villages. We hope to extend our services to include additional destinations such as Biggleswade, St Neots and Cambridge if the demand is there. Having two buses will also increase our private hire service capability for schools and local clubs.”

The Wanderbus can be used by anyone, just like a regular bus service and fare paying customers and concessionary pass holders are all welcome. The major difference is that their services will drop passengers as close to home as possible, adding an extra element so beneficial to those with mobility issues, heavy shopping or mothers with prams and toddlers.

Wanderbus will be publishing a new timetable early in 2016 with a planned launch of the additional services from late Spring/early Summer.

*Further information from: Clive Lester, Sponsorship Co-ordinator*

*E Mail: [thewanderbus@gmail.com](mailto:thewanderbus@gmail.com)*

*Web Site: [www.wanderbus.org.uk](http://www.wanderbus.org.uk)*

*T: 0300 123 3023*

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## 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 hand written 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

### THE TEAM

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<u>Collating Dates for your Diaries</u>					
<u>2016</u>					
February	29		June	27	
March	29	(Tuesday)	July	25	
April	25		September	26	
May	31	(Tuesday)	October	31	
			November	28	

***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.***

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