

Mepal Matters

The newsletter for Mepal

July/August 2022



This issue includes the Parish Council Annual Report in the centre pages.

www.mepalparish.org

Village Hall News

We were pleased to make our contribution to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, and glad to welcome so many of our fellow residents to the Hall on the Saturday to enjoy refreshments while serenaded by our guest singer with songs from throughout the Queen's reign and earlier. Hearty thanks are due to One Stop for generously supporting our celebrations, to Amanda Cox and volunteers for the hard work that made the event such a success, and to others whose stalls and displays added to the enjoyment and interest of the occasion.



Cream teas, Mepal Camera Club and singer in full swing at the Village Hall

Our Annual General Meeting on 27th April saw a further change in membership of our Committee. We said goodbye to Kristi Stewart-Elliott who has represented the Parochial Church Council for the past year. We are grateful for her contribution and we wish her and Andy well for their impending move away to parts distant from the Fens. In her place we are welcoming Lesley Sculthorpe. Changes in membership over the past two years or so have reduced our average age by several decades.

Our financial situation is quite satisfactory at present, thanks to the grants distributed to businesses and community organisations like ours to make good the loss of income because of Covid restrictions. However, like everyone we are faced with steep rises in costs for items such as gas and electricity. The Hall is occupied during large parts of each week for regular events and private parties and there are hardly any slots for which we could try to get new regular bookings. Our income is therefore likely to fall well short of our expenditure and we shall regretfully have to review our charges, which we have not done for a number of years.

Chairman: Allen Sallis, Treasurer and Bookings Clerk: Lynne Woodward: 776272 LDSWoodward@hotmail.co.uk, Secretary: David Stazicker 778129 david.stazicker@gmail.com Other members – Amanda Cox, Alan Fayers, Lesley Sculthorpe.

Friendship Club

Mepal Friendship club meetings have held some excellent events over the last couple of months and there are also some not-to-be-missed ones for the coming month.

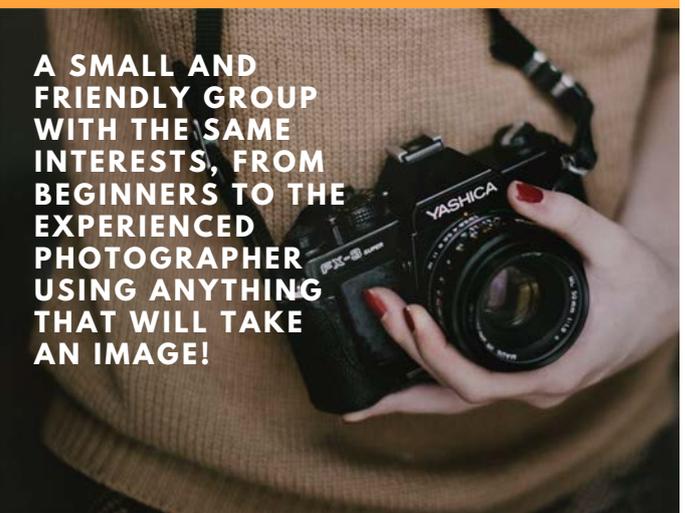
We did quite well on our plant sale in May with the added benefit of selling the teas. We have enjoyed our meals out at Arbuckles in Ely and the Village Inn in Witchford. In our opinion both of these restaurants served us some great food. We also had a brunch to celebrate the Queens Jubilee and we visited Stow Hall gardens. These days out supplemented our regulars of Bingo, book/ jigsaw swap and lots of other things.

We have lots of plans going forward so just have a look at our dates to remember for the coming months.

Our club meets every Wednesday 10-12 at the Village Hall, if you fancy coming just pop in and join in a meeting and see what you think. It is a great way of meeting people and making friends especially if you are new to the village.

MEPAL AND DISTRICT CAMERA CLUB

A SMALL AND FRIENDLY GROUP WITH THE SAME INTERESTS, FROM BEGINNERS TO THE EXPERIENCED PHOTOGRAPHER USING ANYTHING THAT WILL TAKE AN IMAGE!



Meetings are held in Mepal Village Hall, School Lane CB6 2AJ once per month on Friday evenings. Dates are published on our Facebook page. Scan this QR Code or simply search Mepal & District Camera Club.

Alternatively email: mepaldcc@gmail.com



St Mary's Parish Church

At the Annual Meetings held on May 8th Elizabeth Stazicker and Lesley Sculthorpe were elected as Churchwardens; members re-elected to the PCC were Jane Edmenson (Treasurer), Jo Hamilton (Secretary), Wendy Smith and John Carey.

The PCC are very grateful to all those people who keep family graves and other areas in the graveyards mown and maintained. Recently we said a big 'thank you' to Derek Martin who has mown the old churchyard for many years and is now taking a well deserved retirement. If anyone is willing to help with regular mowing and maintenance in the old churchyard please contact Elizabeth Stazicker – a heavy duty mower is available and a modest payment can be made.

Sunday services are at 11.30 every week. For details of all services and church events please see the Diary Page and notices at the church and at Mepal PO & Stores.

For all enquiries regarding weddings, baptisms and funerals please contact Elizabeth Stazicker tel 01353 778129 eliz.stazicker@gmail.com



Photo Credit: Mepal and District Camera Club

£1 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
MEPAL YOUTH CLUB
SUMMER TERM
~~JUNE 9, 23~~ JULY 14
MEPAL VILLAGE HALL
6.15 - 7.15 YEAR 3-6
7.30 - 8.30 YEAR 7-10
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MEPAL MAKERS

**LOVE MAKING THINGS?
WANT TO LEARN A NEW SKILL?
NEED SOMTHING REPAIRING?**

Woodworking, CNC machining,
Laser engraving, coffee,
Power tools, glass kiln,
Biscuits, electronics lab,
Software, people,
Crafting, painting,
Poster printing,
Space, fun

Mepal Makers is a new community workshop in the village for people wanting to make things, repair things, upcycle or recycle. Whether it's a hobby you've always wanted to try but didn't want to buy the tools until you were sure, or a side hustle to earn some money, or just for the family fun of building things. Membership is free, materials are free- just bring your enthusiasm.

Meet Learn Build Play

For more information:
www.mepalmakers.co.uk
info@mepalmakers.co.uk
07801 892331

Phoenix Trust Milton – a better place for your used inkjet cartridges!

Local resident Pam Collins recently let Mepal residents know through her Mepal People Facebook group that her son was collecting used ink cartridges for Phoenix trust. The Phoenix Trust (Milton) Ltd, which they abbreviate to just Phoenix, is a vibrant charity, founded in 2006 and situated on the outskirts of Cambridge, in Milton. It is a social enterprise and charity offering experience of the world of work to young people and adults with a range of learning disabilities and special, additional, or complex needs.

Phoenix is now a collection point for empty inkjet printer cartridges, with each one raising money for the charity and protecting the environment by recycling and not sending to landfill. They accept used inkjet printer cartridges without packaging and new, unopened and out-of-date inkjet cartridges in packaging.

If anyone in Mepal has any used inkjet cartridges, Pam can be contacted via Facebook or 07920520930.

Read more about the wider activities and products on sale at Phoenix on their website: www.phoenixtrust.org and please spread the word, the more the merrier!

Mepal's young entrepreneur makes quite a splash with his car washing and valeting business

13-year-old Tyler Rayner launched TJs Washes at his home in Mepal on March 12 and by all accounts his new business is going from strength to strength.

Initially, with some financial backing from his family, Tyler was able to self-fund the purchase of the start-up products needed and after a slow start quickly gained enough business to move into a modest profit. In fact, as he now has the equipment, Tyler is already looking for ways to expand his business by branching out and offering a Patio Cleaning service.

Tyler's prices start from £15 for small cars, £20-£25 for medium cars and anything from £20-£35 for larger vehicles/vans. His usual working hours are Thursdays and Fridays 5pm-7:30pm and Saturdays and Sundays 10am-4pm. For more information on TJs Washes, you can contact him via his Facebook page: @TjsWashes or email: tjswashes@gmail.com



The bimonthly market is held at the Village Hall between the hours of 10 am and 12 noon and entry is free. Refreshments are served by local community groups or individuals raising money for their own group or their chosen charity.

Please get in touch by emailing Evelyn at mepalmarket@gmail.com if you would be interested in having a stall or providing the refreshments.

Dates for 2022

July 17th refreshments by Friends of the School
September 18th refreshments TBC
December 11th refreshments TBC



Can you kindly donate a bottle of wine* to the Friends of Mepal and Witcham School?

We are running a wine or water* stall at AcquaFest on 3rd July.

Please get in touch

friends@mepalwitcham.cambs.sch.uk

*We will accept bottles of beer or bottles of unwanted unopened spirits as well.





Mepal Parish Council ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

The 2020/21 financial year has been a hard year for the councillors and staff of Mepal, partly due to the low numbers of councillors but mostly due to the amount of work that has been undertaken.

The Council have shared the increased workload, but I would particularly like to thank the vice chairman and staff for their hard work and dedication to the Parish.

Throughout the last 12 months we have seen improvements in many areas including the pavilion, the recreation field, and other amenities, and assets in the village. None of these improvements are overnight fixes as it takes time to work out the most effective solutions and put approved plans in place to correct things, but every small move is a step forward. As a Parish Council we must follow due process and we all appreciate how frustrating it may seem to those outside of the Council that we can't do things quicker, but rest assured that we are acting as quickly as budgets, rules and long terms maintenance demands allow.

The councillors are very diligent on how the monies are spent and are always making sure that the most is gained from any expenditure. Due to all their hard work the council tax precept increase requested for this year was nowhere near that of any of the neighbouring towns or villages.

Mepal is a very complex village due to its large assets and their locations, all of which have to be run and managed by the Parish Council. This has meant that long term plans must be developed to manage and maintain them, whilst minimising the resources needed. Additional work to resolve some long-standing deficiencies to bring the standards in line with the current regulations has also been necessary.

Brian Rollason, Chairman 2021/22

WHO & WHAT IS THE PARISH COUNCIL?

Mepal Parish Council has 7 unpaid Councillors representing an electorate of 832. Once elected, parish councillors sit on the council for a maximum of four years and if they then want to stay in the post they can stand for re-election. Currently only 4 of the 7 vacancies are filled and we are urgently looking for three new Councillors to join us.

The legislation allowing Parish Councils to meet remotely was not renewed in May 2021, so official Parish Council Meetings in 2021 from May could no longer be held via Zoom. We took the decision to hold virtual meetings including the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council before the legislation expired on 6th May 2021 and to instate a delegation scheme that allowed the Clerk to conduct official business until we felt it was safe to hold public meetings. Official meetings resumed on the Recreation Field outside the Mepal Community Pavilion on 10th August 2021, due to rising Covid cases in the parish. Agendas and information about Parish Council meetings are displayed on the Parish Council Website. <http://www.mepalparish.org>

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings and may speak during Public Forum on matters that are on that meeting's agenda. The Parish Council is not permitted to decide on matters that have not been duly advertised to the public unless any matters are considered urgent or are authorised in the Parish Council's standing orders.

The Parish Council's major role is to represent the parish on issues affecting us to the District and County Councils, and to regional and central government, and other agencies. It is responsible for the Community Pavilion, some parish grass cutting, its own street furniture (noticeboards, litter bins, dog waste bins, seats, bus stops and some street lighting) and through the Parish Paths Partnership, ensures that registered Rights of Way are open and maintained. It maintains open spaces: The Recreation Field and attached children's play area, the Village Green, the Laurel Close Green, Brangehill Drove and Lilibet Woods. The Parish Council considers and comments to the Local Planning Authority on all planning applications (statutory consultee). The Parish Council supports other charitable groups and organisations which work within the village.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2021/22

Actual Year Ended 31/03/2022		Budget ⁸ Year Ended 31/03/2023
	INCOME	
£37,300	Precept	£38,792
£15,026	Community Infrastructure Levy ¹	£6,750
£35,725	ECDC Covid & other Grants ²	£0
£4,985	Other Income ³	£4,005
£7,849	VAT Refunds ⁴	£5,000
£100,885	Total Income	£54,547
	EXPENDITURE	
£5,021	Office Administration ⁵	£5,235
£29,776	Staff and employment costs ⁶	£32,740
£375	S137 Payments (inc. Grants)	£3,537
£898	Loan Interest & Repayment	£898
£9,337	Parish Maintenance inc Pavilion	£8,363
£54,817	Projects (playpark & field) ⁷	£17,125
11,098	VAT component	£3,425
£111,322	Total Expenditure	£71,222
£57,202	Balance b/f	£46,765
£100,885	Add Total Income	£54,547
£158,087		£103,312
£111,322	Less Total Expenditure	£71,222
£46,765	Balance c/f	£30,090

Notes to the financial report

1. An additional £5,715 CIL receipts were received over the level predicted by ECDC last year.
2. The grant from Mick George for the recreation field and car park improvement work was paid in the 2021/22 financial year.
3. Due to FIT meter reading issues during lockdown, no FIT payment was received in 2020, double payment was received in the 2021/22 financial year.
4. We have been advised to record expenditure as net of any VAT refund owed for the approved budgets. The VAT reclaim and the VAT component of the expenditure is therefore recorded separately. An amount of the VAT reclaimed this financial year was in relation to expenditure in the last half of the previous financial year. VAT refunds for Q3 & Q4 of this financial year will be claimed in the following financial year.

5. Office Administration covers the basic costs of running the Parish Council office, including annual costs of office equipment, software and consumables, subscriptions, newsletter and other printing costs, telephone, training and annual website costs for the domain and email accounts.
6. Mepal Parish Council now has two part-time staff and self-manages repairs and maintenance to reduce and control the costs of third-party contractors where possible. Salaries and the levels of annual increases are agreed nationally retrospectively so must be estimated. We do not have a separate caretaker for the Pavilion, so staffing also includes considerable management of this asset. The 4 parish councillors also all work full-time and are unable to support the Clerk during the working week. Staffing estimates for 2022/23 includes contractually agreed CiLCA training for the Clerk.
7. We had to defer a substantial grant and the expenditure related to it for a project on the car park and recreation field from Mick George into the 2021/22 financial year. The work was completed before 31st March 2021, but the invoices were not paid, and the grant not received until after the year end.
8. The 2022/23 budget proposal was initially approved in December 2021 to be able to set the Precept from ECDC. It is available on the website under the Parish Council Finance tab. The 2022/23 budget was reviewed after the year end and adjusted to take account of the final audited figures. The final budget will be agreed, adopted and minuted via a resolution taken at the May Annual Parish Meeting.

Lorna Williams, Finance Working Group.

2021 ACTIVITIES

RECREATION FIELD AND PAVILION CAR PARK

The work to improve the access to the recreation field was completed and safety fencing added to the attenuation pond at the back of the field. We continue to work on the quality of the grass and carefully monitor compaction and aeration. This additional work will be required for a further 2 years to make sure that the grass growth is knitted in fully.

We have more work to do on the path up to the entrance to the Pavilion to improve disabled access and will be looking for any available grant funding to achieve this, in addition we will be looking at the current double or triple doors at the back of the Pavilion to ensure that they meet the required access regulations. Work to resolve the non-compliant electrics in the Kitchen have been carried out and the non-working extractor fans for the showers have been replaced and put on timers. The non-working hand driers are now all replaced, and the internal redecoration work was started just before year end and will be completed for 1st June 2022.



LAUREL CLOSE PLAY PARK

We carried out work to repair the zip wire and to refresh the safety bark. We had planned to install some new equipment, but this project is postponed until we have new Councillors to help with the project.



BRANGEHILL DROVE

The Parish Council engaged contractors to carry out maintenance on the Drove and clear the rubbish. There was complete overgrowth of the drainage ditch and clear fly tipping amongst the bushes and brambles resulting in the need to cut these areas right back. The intention is to put in place an annual maintenance programme to stay on top of the area and there is still work to be done.



MEPAL VILLAGE SIGN

The sign located on the verge opposite the Village Hall was suffering from wear and tear and was showing its age, so the Parish Council Maintenance manager decided to use lockdown in early 2021 to carefully refurbish the sign. Complete with new emblems from 75 New Zealand Squadron the sign was re-installed and is back to taking pride of place in the centre of the village.



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Following requests to have a Mepal Neighbourhood Plan, and a poor response to the article in the October 2021 Mepal Matters newsletter for new Councillors, we have decided to apply for grant funding and have engaged a specialist consulting company to help us put the plan together. This will require engagement from the community to successfully bring the project to its conclusion and publish a plan.

PARISH TREE SURVEY

Did you know that we have more than 92 trees and another 8 large groups of trees along Brangehill drove and Lilibet woods? In December we decided to undertake an Arboriculture Condition and Hazard Assessment of the trees located within the Parish owned land and have carried out urgent work to remove dead/dangerous trees. We have more work to try to plan over the next 12 months and now have a baseline survey to work with.

YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS 2020/21



Brian Rollason
(Chairman)



Lorna Williams
(Vice Chairman)



Jack Hickman



Samantha Foord

As of April 2022, we have three Parish Councillor vacancies.
Please contact the Parish Clerk for more information.

To contact the Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Karen Peck. Mepal Parish Council

Tel: 01353 741066

Email: clerk@mepalparish.org

District and County Councillor contacts

District Councillors:

Mark Inskip: mark.inskip@eastcambes.gov.uk

28 The America, Sutton, Cambs, CB6 2NY. Tel: 07764 566319

Lorna Dupre: lorna@lornadupre.org.uk

Inglefield, 119 High Street, Sutton CB6 2NW. Tel: 07930 337596

County Councillor:

Lorna Dupre: lorna@lornadupre.org.uk

Inglefield, 119 High Street, Sutton CB6 2NW. Tel: 07930 337596

Copies of this report are available online <http://www.mepalparish.org>

Any enquires regarding this publication please contact the Parish Clerk (details above)

Help improve health and care services

Book your free place at Healthwatch in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's 'Championing Access' event this summer.

It's on Thursday 7 July, 10am to 3pm at the KingsGate Centre, 2 Staplee Way, Parnwell, Peterborough, PE1 4YT

This year the spotlight is on equal access to health and care services and on the big changes to how services are working.

Health and care services are under huge pressure and are working hard to meet the needs of local people. But many people still find it hard to get the care they need, such as older and disabled people. And people from our poorer communities are dying ten years earlier than their richer neighbours.

We've got guest speakers, a mix of interesting workshops and a free lunch!

And local health and care decision makers will be there to hear your feedback and share their plans for the future.

Find out more and book your place at: www.healthwatchcambridgeshire.co.uk/championing-access or call 0330 355 1285 (local call rate) or text 0752 0635 176



Best Boob Forward Dawn Walk 2022

A group of family and friends - generally from Sutton and Mepal, started their 13 mile walk at 5am on 11th June around the fens that surround our Cambridgeshire village in aid of Cancer Research and in memory of so many close to us.

You can still support them at: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/>

This year marks 15 years since our first Dawn Walk in 2007. In that time, we have raised a fantastic £42,160.94 (with Gift Aid) For CRUK.

Every picture tells a story and as you can see, today we did it! Congratulations to all who took part, making our Dawn Walk a great success.

The weather & the views were glorious as 22 walkers set out on our Dawn Walk. In our usual style, we ate our way around our local fens, refreshment stops being provided along the way, a welcome comfort break & a celebratory breakfast on our return to the village of Sutton, Cambridgeshire. The Jubilee flags were still flying in the village to welcome us back.



Mepal Sports Football Club & MPC Jubilee Event

Mepal Parish Council held a joint Jubilee event with Mepal Sports Football Club on Sunday 5th June, opening the newly decorated Community Pavilion on the Recreation Field. The weather had unfortunately turned very grey after a sunny Saturday, but despite the rain, the Football Fun Factory attracted a good audience of kids.

There was an around the field quiz highlighting some of the Parish Council projects including the new tree planted for the queens jubilee, improvements to the car park thanks to a grant from Mick George, and a larger attenuation pond.

Refreshments including platinum Jubilee cupcakes, a coffee cake, Bakewell slices, a Jubilee Battenberg cake and biscuits were served by volunteers Helen Lee and Rebecca Williams (thank you for your efforts) whilst the Parish Councillors, Parish Council staff and their families talked to residents.

Members of the football club ran two tombola's , a beat the goalie competition and a plant sale. The Parish Council received donations totally £87 for the refreshments which will go to the Sutton and Mepal Community First Responders.



Jubilee celebrations weekend at The Three Pickerels

Mepal residents had a great weekend celebrating the Queen's Jubilee.

Photos from The Three Pickerels BBQ & Band evening with The Casuals.

The winner of the village duck race was Mr Harvey Lawrence. There was a great turnout and they managed to raise £155 for the village hall!



BOOK IN JUNE & JULY
Get a free Cheesy Garlic Bread &
Chips Per 2 people



Bottomless Brunch

For only £30 each
you get a 12" Pizza
each and bottomless
prosecco for 90
minutes

TO BOOK

Call or email us at
(01353) 777777
info@thethreepickerels.co.uk

DIARY DATES

July

Fri 1st	Mepal & District Camera Club Monthly Meet	19:30
Sun 3rd	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 6th	Friendship Club Bingo and Book/Jigsaw Swap	10:00
Sun 10th	St Mary's Holy Communion	11.30
Tues 12th	Mepal Parish Council Meeting	19:00
Weds 13th	Friendship Club Coffee and Chat	10:00
Thurs 14th	Mepal Youth Club	18.15
Sun 17th	Mepal Market at the Village Hall	10.00
Sun 17th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 20th	Friendship Club Meal at The Three Tons	10:00
Sun 24th	St Marys Holy Communion (Morning Prayer 11.30am)	09.30
Weds 27th	Friendship Club Meet at The Maltings Ely for morning coffee	10:00
Sun 31st	St Marys Joint Service	TBA

August

Fri 5th	Mepal & District Camera Club Monthly Meet	19:30
Weds 3rd	Friendship Club Bingo and Book/Jigsaw Swap	10:00
Sun 3rd	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 10th	Friendship Club TBA	10:00
Sun 14th	St Mary's Holy Communion	11.30
Tues 16th	Friendship Club Trip to Wroxham	10:00
Weds 17th	Friendship Club Meal out	10:00
Sun 21st	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 24th	Friendship Club TBA	10:00
Sun 28th	St Mary's Holy Communion (Morning Prayer 11.30am)	09.30
Weds 31st	Friendship Club Games Morning	10:00

September

Fri 2nd	Mepal & District Camera Club Monthly Meet	19:30
Tues 13th	Mepal Parish Council Meeting	19:00
Sun 18th	Mepal Market at the Village Hall	10:00

A short video of Mepal Past

All of these photos and more can be seen and downloaded from here:

<https://mepal.ccan.co.uk/>

<https://youtu.be/gVJOnXPOoRw>



Scammers are clever. We're all worried about money - don't let them take yours.

Find out how to spot scams, report them and get help at citizensadvice.org.uk/ScamsAdvice

If you've been scammed:

Call our Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 for support

Report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040



Mepal Matters Print Deadlines

August 9th - September/October issue

October 11th - November/December issue

December 8th - Jan/Feb 2023 issue

Mepal Parish Council:
 Clerk: Karen Peck - 01353 741066
 Chairman: Brian Rollason
 Vice Chair: Lorna Williams,
 Councillors: Sam Foord, Jack Hickman



Mepal Matters is provided by the Parish Council
 Send articles to: mepalmatters@mepalparish.org
Next copy deadline: 9th August 2022

We rely on a team of volunteers to deliver the 465 copies, please let us know if you can help distribute.