

Mepal Matters

The newsletter for Mepal

September/October 2022

Please complete the Mepal Parish
Neighbourhood plan survey
on pages 5-8
Make your voice heard!

www.mepalparish.org

Village Hall News

Because of illness we had to postpone the quiz night planned for 24th June, and as often happens we haven't organised any other events over the summer holiday period. We're taking the opportunity of the lull in activity to give the interior of the Hall a much-needed coat of paint. We start again on Saturday 3rd September with cream teas, and on the evening of Monday 31st October we shall serve soup, tea and coffee, aimed at children engaged in Trick-or-Treat and their parents. Our Committee is meeting on 17th August and we have all sorts of plans for future activities, but that will be too late to announce anything in this edition. Look out for further details.

Friday 5th August saw the Hall packed with friends from far and wide on a sad occasion - refreshments, following the funeral of Sandy Jackson at St Mary's Church. Sandy had been a mainstay of the local community over very many years, notably playing a major part in organising the annual Produce and Craft Show until shortage of other helpers led to its demise. Her husband Jim chaired the Village Hall Committee with commitment and determination at a critical period in its history from 1995 to 2001. Mepal owes a great debt to them both.



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

How quickly the year is passing, doesn't seem that long since last Christmas and already we are thinking of things to do at the club for the next one!

I hope you are all faring well with the heat, keeping cool indoors and out of the sun and drinking plenty.

We are looking forward to the coming months and have lots of plans for our meeting activities for the rest of the year. We have our bingo and book/jigsaw swap at the beginning of the month, quizzes, meals out and lots more in store, so if you are new to the village, please pop along and join us. We meet every Wednesday at 10am.

Neighbourhood Watch New Logo

For this year Neighbourhood Watch has launched a new logo to celebrate 40 years since it started in the UK.



It started in Cheshire and rapidly spread throughout the country. It had previously begun in the States as a result of a young lady being attacked in the street and many people passing by and doing nothing.

You might think that would not happen in this country, well it did, and it became known as bystander syndrome. The problem is not limited to serious incidents, but it is common for people to see graffiti, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and other unwanted incidents and walk past with nothing more than a "tut tut". We should care about our locality and report such matters to the authorities. Neighbourhood Watch through its coordinators and members aims to do just this.

Although you can take positive action without joining Neighbourhood Watch, why not join like minded people and become a member.

For more information call Kevin Evans on 01353 614892 or email, kevin.g.evans@ntlworld.com.

St Mary's Parish Church

For enquiries regarding funerals, baptisms and weddings please contact the Churchwardens: Elizabeth Stazicker on 01353 778129 or Lesley Sculthorpe on 01353 777367.

Services

Our services are at 11.30am every Sunday. On the 4th Sunday of every month, we have Holy Communion at 9.30am and a Family Service at 11.30am. Sunday September 11th is the Patronal Festival when we celebrate the birth of St Mary, our patron saint, and Sunday October 9th is Harvest Festival. Our team of flower arrangers will be decorating the church for both these special services – even if you can't attend the service do come and see the flowers; the church is always open on Sunday afternoons and on Thursdays for private prayer or a time of quiet reflection.

Please see notices at the church and at Mepal Stores for more details. You are all very welcome at all our services and events.

Events

Safari Lunch - Sunday August 21st at 1.30pm at The Willows, Low Bank.

Entrance is by reservation in advance only; to book your place contact Jo on 01353 778871 or by email jo.hamilton@outlook.com by August 18th please. The cost is £12 pp.

Ride & Stride Day - Saturday September 10th

Please see the poster at Mepal Stores for details of this sponsored fundraising activity.

Tea at the Church - Sunday 11th September at 3pm

Harvest Supper - Friday 14th October – look out for details on October notices.



Photo Credit: Mepal and District Camera Club

Mepal Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Survey

We're asking for your help to shape the future for Mepal through the proposed Neighbourhood Plan by completing the (anonymous) survey in this issue. There are many ingredients that make a village a great place to live: its rural setting, the amenities, and facilities available, and the approach that is taken to housing development. By responding to this survey, you'll be making your voice heard in decisions on these important topics.

Please go to the survey from pages 5 to 8 and fill it in. You can return your completed surveys to the shop or email to mnhp@mepalparish.org.

There is also an online version that can be completed on the website: www.mepalparish.org

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



Friends of the School

A massive thank you goes to all those families and community members who came to our Fete and made it a really special day.

We were overwhelmed with the turn out and are delighted with the amount we raised. This will go a long way to enriching the school children’s education and give them opportunities to grow and flourish.

Thank you to Pro Martial Arts, Bazandhisguitar, Warwick, the Violin Students & Margaret for entertaining us all. We also really enjoyed seeing the whole class performances and hope this becomes a tradition of our Fete.

Many thanks to the stall holders who took part and to Ant for bringing the birds to visit! Thank you to all the amazing bakers for entering the inaugural Mepal Bake Off – it will be back next year!

We look forward to planning our next Fete and hope you will join us again next year!



We would like to sincerely thank Martin Waterfield, Michael and Edith Thorley, Kieran and Kate Kennett for their impressive hard work and stamina in keeping children’s faces painted and stomach’s full with pizza throughout the Fete.

We would also like to give a special mention to the Helping Hands, who provided much needed support to the committee members.

We made an absolutely fabulous £1,508.90



Thanks to our sponsors: Jockey Club Rooms, Newmarket; Cole & Day, Somersham; KD Theatre Productions, Soham; Play 2 Day, Guyhirn; The Three Pickerels, Mepal; Twenty Pence Garden Centre, Wilburton; Cutlacks, Ely; Sainsburys, Ely; Co-op, Sutton; Ely Grazing Company, Ely; Pimp My Fish, Burwell; Whatley Landscaping & Garden Maintenance, Sutton; Helen Lee Beauty, Mepal; Wood Fen Lodge Spa, Little Downham; The Parents of Mepal & Witcham School.



We made £299.02



Thank you to all those that visited our AquaFest stall. We had a busy day playing “Booze or Bluff” with the adult visitors to our stall, whilst the children enjoyed getting a lollipop and prize or having a go in the Lucky Dip. We are really pleased to say we made all but £300, which was excellent.

Thank you to the Helping Hands, who came to support the committee and run the stall with us. A big thank you to the members of our community who donated booze- it was amazing how many people helped provide prizes and we are very grateful for your support.

MEPAL PARISH COUNCIL



SHARE YOUR VIEWS

Help us build a
Neighbourhood Plan
for **our** village

Mepal Parish Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Mepal to highlight what will make our village a better place to live and work in. A Neighbourhood Plan gives local people a say in the future of the village.

We need to hear from you. Capturing views from across the local community is essential- so that we can develop a plan that represents everyone.

All we need is a few minutes of your time- by filling in our short questionnaire below. This is just one stage in the process- there will be further opportunities to comment on our Neighbourhood Plan work in the future. We look forward to hearing from you.

1. ABOUT YOU

(a) Your Age (tick) 12-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75+

(b) Enter the total number of children and adults in your household in the below boxes

Children (pre-school)
Children (school)
Adults
Adults (retired)

(c) Please tick to indicate the area where you live

Sutton Road & Rectory Fields Brick Lane Witcham Road Chestnut Way
High Street & Wilton Gardens Laurel Close New Road Bridge Road
School Lane St Marys Close Brangehill Lane River Close Meadow Way
Other (eg The Willows, Low Bank Farm, Paradise Cottage, Walnut-tree Cottage, The Gate House)

(d) How Many people in your household work from home at least 2 days a week now or expect to in future?

Already working from home
Likely to do in next 5 years
Don't expect to work from home

2. VIEWS ON LEISURE, COMMUNITY & GREEN SPACES

(a) Do you think Mepal has good leisure and community facilities for

Young People	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Couples	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older Residents	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unsure	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) Tick if you use the following green spaces (please tick all that apply)

Recreation Field Play Park on edge of Recreation Field (entrance in Laurel Close)

Play Park in Meadow Way Footpath through field at the back of the school

Footpath through the churchyard and field from Church to School Lane

Brangehill Drove Byway and Lilibet Woods Laurel Close Greens Village Green

(c) How would you rate the green spaces in Mepal?

Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor

(d) How would you like the current green spaces in Mepal enhanced?

(e) What would you like to see more of?

Structured play equipment Parks Dog Walking Dog exercising (off lead)

Sports areas Wildlife Conservation areas Cycle trails

Exercise areas (outdoor fitness equipment)

Other (please specify)

(f) Do you use the Recreation Field Yes / No (circle your answer)

(g) What do you use it for?

(h) In your view how strong is the sense of community where you live in Mepal

Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor

(i) What other local facilities or services should be considered to enhance life in Mepal?

(j) Which of the following social and leisure facilities are important to you?
(please circle, 1 = not at all important 5 = very important)

Village Hall	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation Field	1	2	3	4	5
Village Pub	1	2	3	4	5
Village Shop	1	2	3	4	5
Village Church	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-School	1	2	3	4	5
School	1	2	3	4	5
Youth Club	1	2	3	4	5

(k) What is the one additional amenity / change you would like to see in the village?

3. VIEWS ON TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

(a) How many people in your household travel to work from Mepal, enter the number of people in the boxes

Work in Mepal	<input type="text"/>
By Car or motorcycle	<input type="text"/>
By Bus	<input type="text"/>
On Foot	<input type="text"/>
By Cycle	<input type="text"/>

(b) Think about your and your household's use of public transport into and out of the village. Which of these statements best reflects your position?

The bus doesn't run when I need to get to work	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't use the bus because it doesn't run to the railway station	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't use the bus because it doesn't go to the places I need	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use the bus to go shopping in Ely/Chatteris	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would not use the bus whatever the service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	

4. VIEWS ON NEW HOUSING

(a) Do you think any future housing developments should be located within the current boundaries of Mepal or in the surrounding areas?

Inside Surrounding Areas Unsure

5. HIGHWAYS

We are aware of transport issues that the parish faces, speeding and on-street parking being two of them. Some steps have been taken, including a speed awareness camera and a proposal to bid for LHI funding in relation to the speed limit along Bridge Road. We are keen to understand your views on this important topic.

(a) To what extent are the following of concern to you? (1 = no concern, 5 = cause of great concern)

	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic volume	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Traffic speed	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Traffic noise	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Car parking	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pedestrian safety	<input type="checkbox"/>				

(b) Please elaborate on the points regarding highways that cause you the most concern. Be as specific as possible (e.g. speed of traffic crossing the bridge entering the village, noise of HGVs on Main Street, people parking outside my home on xxx Road).

And finally...

What are the three best things about Mepal and that you would like the plan to safeguard

1

2

3

What three things could be better in Mepal that the plan could help address

1

2

3

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE MEPAL PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SURVEY!

If you're interested in contributing to developing the Neighbourhood Plan, please send an email to: mnhp@mepalparish.org

There's a lot of work to do, and the more involvement we get from our community, the better the plan will reflect your views!

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY BY 30th SEPTEMBER 2022





Mepal Market

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

September 18th refreshments TBC

December 11th refreshments TBC

Please think before you park in Mepal!

Many residents in Mepal don't have or use Facebook so may not be aware that their parking is causing concern.

In particular due to a number of near misses, residents are being asked once again not to park so close to the corner on School Lane near the Village Hall. Other areas of concern that have been mentioned is paths (please remember that whilst it is not illegal to park on the pavements, the highway code Rule 242 states that you **MUST NOT** leave your vehicle or trailer in a dangerous position or where it causes any unnecessary obstruction of the road).

Please be considerate and remember that pushchairs and wheelchairs should still be able to safely pass by your parked car if it is partially on the pavement.



Returning Football to Mepal



What do I need to do?to see football back in the village?

Some of the residents in Mepal will have lived through the difficulties that the Mepal Sports Football Club and the Parish Council have experienced in terms of the deterioration of the recreation field surface quality and the eventual loss of the junior team in 2017. There has been a huge amount of debate (and work) over the years about what to do and the lack of consistent expert advice who have been consulted has paralysed the process.

In 2019 the current Parish Councillors, having spent a considerable amount of time talking to the Football Club and reading the huge amount of literature in the paper files relating to the project and the problematic drainage lines, resolved to use the earmarked reserves that the previous Councillors had been holding for this project. A successful grant from Mick George was applied for to supplement the project funds and also to improve the car parking and path to the field.

The original project to build the pavilion to improve the football and sports facilities and the required drainage of the field was driven by the Mepal Sports Action Group (MESSAGE), who were a charitable trust able to fund raise, and sadly since MESSAGE folded, the management responsibility has defaulted to the Parish Council as no other party was willing or able to assume the liabilities. As a public body Mepal Parish Council cannot operate in the same way as a Charitable trust and must rely on the Precept.

What are the costs of maintaining a football pitch?

The annual cost of maintaining a football pitch is between £4,500 - £18,000. These figures are provided by the FA, the Football Foundation and numerous contractors who we have consulted in the last 2 years. It is not reasonable to expect

the Parish to find this sort of expenditure. A Memorandum of Understanding in 2007 made it clear that Mepal Parish Council would maintain the Recreation Field as a village recreation field for the use of the whole Community with regular grass cutting for the use of the community at large. Any Football Club using the field needs to agree and demonstrate that they can meet the annual pitch maintenance costs.

Why can't we have goalposts for the community?

The current goal posts are owned by the football club and the Parish Council is not responsible for their use. Nets cannot be left in place due to the danger to children and wildlife. The Parish Council are looking at alternative grants that may be available to fund this purchase in the future

So where are we in 2022?

Having completed the remedial work, the recreation field is now suitable for general community use. Mepal Parish Council have made it clear that it cannot pass on additional pitch maintenance costs to the community given the relatively low demand we have been made aware of. The full costs of maintenance cannot be passed on to a football club as the cost would be unsustainable (we have a good recent quote for £390 + VAT per month excluding grass cutting from a specialist pitch maintenance company). The only path forward is annual fund raising and grant applications to cover the costs. Mepal Parish Council is not eligible to apply for the Football Foundation pitch maintenance grants.

The Parish Council will cut the grass regularly from April – October (as needed depending on weather and grass condition) to maintain the surface as a community recreation field. If there is a desire for regular football to be returned to the village, the costs of maintenance to use the field as a football pitch will need to be met by the community who will need to drive this project, with the football club.

The answer to 'Who do we have to speak to, to return football to Mepal?' is simple.

You need to speak to whoever is prepared to pay for it and also to support the process by volunteering to organise and fund raise where needed.

A full statement regarding the situation is available on the website in the draft minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 9th August.



What is a Parish Council?

A parish council is a local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in the parish and as the authority closest to the people, we are invariably the first port of call people go to with their concerns or ideas and for this reason, we are a vital part of any community BUT some of your concerns or ideas may not be within our remit and are better addressed to Cambridge County Council or East Cambridgeshire District Council. Sometimes it is a numbers game so 3 complaints from the community to CCC or ECDC may get more results than just one from the Parish Council

Why become a Parish Councillor?

As a parish councillor, you become someone your community will look to for help, guidance and support, a community leader with the power to influence decisions for the benefit of the people you serve. Seeing your community change for the better as a result of decisions you have helped make, is something that will give you a sense of achievement and pride.

What decisions do Parish Councils make?

Probably the most common topics that parish councils get involved with are planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention, managing open spaces and campaigning for and delivering better services and facilities. On their own, parish councils have limited powers to make decisions, however, they do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence, those other organisations that do make the final decisions and, in this respect, parish councils are extremely powerful. The organisations that make the final decisions know that a parish council gives the best reflection of how a community feels about something and our views are taken seriously.

Parish Duties

Mepal Parish Council can have up to 7 Councillors. As this article is being written we now have 5 Councillors. The duties and functions of a parish council are many and varied so it is an interesting position to hold. We try to meet once a month although this is only possible if we have a quorum of three councillors in attendance and meetings are currently scheduled to last for one-two hours. We discuss and decide upon planning applications and any other matters referred to it by local residents. There is also an annual parish meeting which all parishioners are invited to, and all meetings are advertised on the website, linked to the village Facebook group and posted on the council notice board. Residents should bring to the attention of the parish council anything that concerns them, either directly or through the clerk, but if matters raised are not the responsibility of the council, the clerk can only bring them to the attention of the proper authority; direct reporting by residents to the proper authority is encouraged so that more priority is given.

How much time does it take up?

In addition to the regular meetings, some councillors have specific duties (requiring them to attend other meetings to represent the council, e.g. acting as a representative on an outside body, or helping develop a new project for the community. Such meetings don't happen often, so it's not going to take over your life.

How long does a parish councillor serve for?

Once elected, parish councillors sit on the council for a term of four years, but if they then want to stay in the post they can stand for re-election. Councillors can also be co-opted, and this requires the prospective candidate to write a brief resumé and attend a parish meeting for a short informal interview. The councillors will then take a vote and appoint the most suitable candidate.

Am I eligible to be a Parish Councillor?

To be able to become a councillor for Mepal Parish Council, you must:

- be an elector of the parish, or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months have occupied (as owner or tenant) land or other premises in the parish, or;
- during the previous 12 months have worked in the parish (as your principal or only place of work), or;
- for the whole of the previous 12 months lived in the parish or within three miles of the parish boundary.
- be a least 18 years old.

The best way to find out what it's like to be a parish councillor is to talk to someone who's doing it now.

Come along to the next parish council meeting or speak to one of our councillors and find out what they think of the job. Find all the details at www.mepalparish.org



DIARY DATES

September

Fri 2nd	Mepal & District Camera Club Monthly Meet	19:30
Sat 3rd	Cream Teas at the Village Hall	
Sun 4th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 7th	Friendship Club Bingo and Book/Jigsaw Swap	10:00
Sat 10th	St Mary's Ride & Stride	
Sun 11th	St Mary's Patronal Festival Eucharist (Tea at the Church 3pm)	11.30
Tues 13th	Full Parish Council Meeting at Mepal Pavilion	19:00
Weds 14th	Friendship Club Quiz	10:00
Sun 18th	Mepal Market at the Village Hall	10.00
Sun 18th	St Mary's Holy Communion	11.30
Weds 21st	Friendship Club Meal at The Three Kings Haddenham	10:00
Sun 25th	St Marys Holy Communion (Family Service 11.30am)	09.30
Weds 28th	Friendship Club Bring and Buy	10:00

October

Sun 2nd	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 5th	Friendship Club Bingo and Book/Jigsaw Swap	10:00
Fri 7th	Mepal & District Camera Club Monthly Meet	19:30
Tues 11th	Full Parish Council Meeting at Mepal Pavilion	19:00
Weds 12th	Friendship Club reading from our local Author	10:00
Sun 9th	St Mary's Harvest Festival	11.30
Fri 14th	St Mary's Harvest Supper at the Village Hall	19.00
Sun 16th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Weds 19th	Friendship Club Meal at Arbuckles	10:00
Sun 23rd	St Mary's Holy Communion	11.30
Weds 26th	Friendship Club TBA	10:00
Sun 30th	St Mary's Joint Service at St Andrew's Sutton	10.30
Mon 31st	Soup, Tea & Coffee at the Village Hall	

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



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We warmly welcome prospective adopters from many different ethnic backgrounds.



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Adoption

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Mepal Matters Print Deadlines

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: 11th October 2022

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