

Mepal Matters

The newsletter for Mepal

March/April 2023



Can you guess the location of
this lovely walk in mepal?

www.mepalparish.org

Village Hall News

We have made various changes to the Hall in recent years that have made it more energy-efficient, but the core of the building was originally erected in 1874 and there is a lot more to do if we are to contribute fully to the drive towards Zero Carbon. We have signed up to the Low Carbon Support Programme for Community Buildings and through this we hope to learn more about affordable ways to reduce our carbon footprint, which should at the same time save money in the longer term.

The East Anglian Air Ambulance clothing bank is now in place beside the Hall. Please bring suitable items which they can sell to raise money and help to keep their vital service running. We are hoping in the near future to host a presentation by the Air Ambulance organisation about their work, probably in conjunction with the Friendship Club, but everyone will be welcome to attend, whether or not a member of the Club.

For a long time, we have been looking at the possibility of removing internal walls in the former toilet area so as to create a clear and useable space for storage, which is at present inadequate for our needs and those of our regular hirers. This is not straightforward, because at least some of the walls are load-bearing and if removed will need to be replaced by substantial steel girders to hold up the structure above. This all has to be done safely in compliance with Building Regulations with the advice of a qualified structural engineer. That all costs money. We are seeking estimates and we shall almost certainly need to obtain a substantial grant if the work is to go ahead.

We are very grateful to a Chestnut Way resident for a generous gift of fine quality china. This will be extremely useful, especially when we serve cream teas, and will give an added touch of style to those events.

“Pimp-my-Fish” mobile fish-and-chip service has re-established regular visits to the Hall car park on the fourth Thursday evening in each month. We encourage you to take advantage of this convenient and very good quality and value amenity. You can pre-order on-line at <https://order.pimp-my-fish.co.uk>.

Thanks to the support of Cambridgeshire ACRE and East Cambridgeshire District Council the “Warm Hub” sessions are continuing each Monday from 10 am until 1 pm until the end of March. This is a joint enterprise between our Committee and the Parish Council and we are grateful to parish councillors and others who have volunteered to help run these events. They are an opportunity to sit in the warm, enjoy a warm drink and a biscuit, and chat with fellow-residents. Children are welcome and there are some toys for them to play with. We can also put people in touch with advice of the sort you might think of seeking from the Citizens’ Advice Bureau.

There are a number of “regulars, but if you know of anyone – a friend, acquaintance or neighbour – who you think might benefit from coming to the Warm Hub, please do encourage them to come along

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

St Mary’s Parish Church

Interim Priest-in-Charge: Rev’d Canon Mark Haworth For enquiries regarding baptisms, weddings & funerals please contact the churchwardens: Elizabeth Stazicker 01353 778129 email eliz.stazicker@gmail.com or Lesley Sculthorpe 01353 777367 email lesley.sculthorpe@gmail.com

Annual Meetings – The Parishioners’ Meeting (Vestry Meeting) will be held on Sunday 26th March at the church at 12.15pm. The meeting is open to all parishioners to elect Churchwardens for the coming year. At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) which follows, all those whose names are on the Church Electoral Roll may vote for members of the PCC (Parochial Church Council). If you wish to vote at the APCM and your name is not already on the roll, which is displayed in the church porch, please contact Jo Hamilton on 01353 778871 by 8th March latest for an application form.

Services for Holy Week & Easter - We welcome everyone to all our services - please see the Diary Dates page and notices at the church and at Mepal PO & Stores for details of all our services and events.

Coffee Morning at St Mary’s – Come for coffee at the church on Saturday 15th April from 10.30am – see the Easter Garden made by the children. A Happy and Blessed Easter to all!



Save the Date!

The BIG Family Quiz

Friday 24th March 2023

Mepal & Witcham School

Hall

Your Quizmaster will be Jenna Gorham

[Start to recruit your quiz team now!](#)

Time to be confirmed

Hosted by The Friends of Mepal & Witcham School



PASTORAL LETTER

February 2023

“SEE IT, SAY IT, SORTED!”

Now living relatively near a mainline railway station has ingrained the rail network safety mantra in my mind, on my journeys to see family and friends in London and beyond, and it's value for us in our parishes.....

SEE IT.....Ash Wednesday, the Beginning of Lent, falls on the 22nd, and we have morning and evening services at a number of our churches, and which are of course open to all (see church service details), after which we are planning Lent Groups and some Lent Lunches during the 5 weeks of Lent. These bring us to Palm Sunday (April 2nd), Holy Week and Easter Sunday (April 9th). Keep your eyes on 'A Church near you', parish Facebook, noticeboards and pewsheets!

Ahead of Eastertide, we hold our annual Easter Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meeting.....Sunday 26th March 1215 over coffee. Please take this as an early invitation to simply be there, see and read the reports ahead of the day, and to cast your vote if you are on the church Electoral Roll (which closes for the two weeks before the meeting, then re-opens).

SAY IT....at the time of writing we are still in Epiphanytide, the post-Christmas season of 'telling it like it is'...the seasonal reminders of making the wonderful works of God known to a needy world. We need to imagine our common life without spaces for worship and prayer, and the marking of our life events, a moral compass, and beacon of hope in a world often lacking in Love. Our living churches (as opposed to the inherited fabric and legacy of previous worshippers) seek to do all this and more, and they need your support...we cannot do it on our own, and your very presence in church or at parish events is about encouraging others, making congregation as opposed to pleasing yourself

SORTED!....well are we? If only it was that easy. Perhaps like me you listen to Thought for the Day on Radio 4 around 0750 Monday to Saturday...the reflections of people across all world faiths, followed for me by Morning Prayer from the Church of England's Daily Prayer App....well I don't start my day empty-headed that's for sure, but it's what I do about it that counts. Do you long for a different route, like the Wise men 'not at ease in the old dispensation' (TS Eliot's prophetic words), seeking to return home by another route (Matthew 2:1-12)...if so, perhaps the Church actually has quite a lot to offer after all? You know where and who we are, so do please ask.

Your friend and parish priest,

Mark



Mepal Market

Market Dates for 2023

- March 12th
- May - 14th
- July - 9th
- September - 10th
- December - 10th

Please contact Evelyn at mepalmarket@gmail.com



FRIENDS OF MEPAL AND WITCHAM
PRIMARY SCHOOL

SUMMER FETE

SAVE THE DATE!!
SAVE THE DATE!!

17th JUNE 2023



Mepal Pantry

The Mepal Pantry has been the busiest it's ever been, with many more families reaching out for support. If you're finding it difficult to pay for food or your essential bills, it may seem like there's no help available. We can also signpost you to a range of practical local support for people who need financial help urgently.

You can contact the Mepal Pantry through the Facebook Page or 07460 337163. All calls are treated in confidence, and we can arrange for a food parcel for you, help with packed lunches for school aged children or add you to our list to receive our Meal Kits.

We have supported many residents in our village and there are many friendly villagers who have reached out to say they want to help by providing food or meals. Sometimes the hardest part is reaching out for support and struggling to ask for assistance. In this present day none of us are immune to needing a helping hand from time to time. ♡

Ruth Marley,
Mepal Pantry

Note from editor: we apologise for a mistake on page 7 in the January/February printed newsletter, where the number of times that Mepal Pantry had previously been vandalised was incorrectly stated.

Mepal Recreation Field Wildlife Corner



Inspired by the news that Mepal & Witcham Primary school received a Bronze accreditation in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus awards 2022-23. At the Mepal Parish Council meeting on 14th February the Parish Councillors agreed to continue with the tidying up of the triangle at the Laurel Close entrance to the field opposite the Play Park and set this area up as a lightly managed wildlife area.

We will not be chipping and removing the annual hedge trimmings but will be using this material to set up a large bug hotel.

Councillor Sam Foord (Knightley) and Councillor Hickman have agreed to lead a future community planting working group, so if you are interested, please let them know.

2023 Coronation Events - Use of the Community Pavilion and Recreation Field



It would be lovely to see a village effort to celebrate this occasion, and any village group planning Coronation Celebrations can contact the Parish Council regarding event hire at Mepal Community Pavilion.

Well done Mepal & Witcham School on achieving Bronze award



Mepal & Witcham School were awarded a Bronze accreditation for the Hedgehog Friendly Campus awards 2022-2023.

This is a national award scheme designed to protect hedgehogs, enhance their habitat, and create awareness, funded by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. Teams consist of students and staff members who work towards making impactful changes for hedgehogs and other wildlife around their university, college, or primary school.

www.hedgehogfriendlycampus.co.uk/blog

An incredible 92 accreditations have been awarded for 2022-2023! Congratulations on Mepal & Witcham School's achievements and well done for making your institution a place where hedgehogs and other wildlife can thrive!

Hedgehog Friendly Campus is funded by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability UK

Your Voice, Your Village, Your plan!



Consultation runs from **Wednesday 1st March 2023 to Wednesday 12th April 2023**

We are pleased to inform you that the draft Mepal Neighbourhood Plan has been completed and will now be published for public consultation. This six-week pre-submission consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan is the last time we will be asking people for comments before submitting the plan to East Cambridgeshire District Council.

A Neighbourhood Plan is an important tool for local communities to shape the development and growth of the village, over the next 10 years or so. When it is adopted any planning application in the village will be judged against the Neighbourhood Plan. It is an important part of the process that we keep the community informed and seek the views of various people at each stage. It is a substantial document, represents a great deal of work over the last year and sets out our vision, objectives and policies designed to ensure that Mepal maintains its uniqueness over the period 2022 to 2031.

The 'Neighbourhood Plan' is made up of the draft plan and the supporting documents:

- Mepal Neighbourhood Plan – draft
- Consultation Statement
- Basic Conditions Statement
- Designated Area and Explanatory Statement
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- HRA Screening Request
- SEA Screening Request
- Local Green Spaces Evidence Document
- Settlement Boundary Methodology

During March and April, the Parish Council are undertaking community engagement in the village through drop-in sessions where local residents can find out more about and comment on the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Paper copies of the draft plan and associated documents are available in the Village Hall and the Mepal Community Pavilion.

The draft plan and associated documents are also available on the Mepal Parish Council website:

<https://www.mepalparish.org/mepal-neighbourhood-plan/>

The Draft Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents are substantial and many of them by necessity are complex. Although the Plan has been written in a way designed to make reading it as easy as possible it will take time and effort to read and assimilate.

Following the consultation, the Plan will go forward to the next stages which will include an Independent Examination. Then finally, the Plan will be subjected to a local referendum requiring a majority “yes” vote of all those voting in order for it to be adopted, a process legally known as being ‘made’. In the event of a “yes” vote, it will then form part of ECDC’s wider statutory plan and will be used to determine planning applications across the Mepal Parish.

A list of the drop-in sessions to view the plan and ask questions:

The Village Hall during the Warm Hub sessions:

6th March from 10:00 - 13:00
13th March from 10:00 - 13:00
20th March from 10:00 - 13:00
27th March from 10:00 - 13:00

Mepal Community Pavilion:

Friday 24th March from 12:00 - 14:00
Saturday 1st April from 13:00 - 15:00
Monday 3rd April from 17:00 - 19:00

Mepal Neighbourhood Plan Response Form

Fill me in and drop me off in the black collection box in the Post Office

Contact Details (Block Capitals)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Question 1

Do you support the draft Mepal Neighbourhood Plan in its current form?

YES

NO

Question 2

Please write any comments you have in support of or against the draft Mepal Neighbourhood Plan

Comments can be continued on a separate sheet if necessary.

Question 3

Please detail any amendments that you would like to be made to the plan.

Comments can be continued on a separate sheet if necessary.

Signature:

Thank you for taking part in this consultation exercise.

This consultation provides you with the opportunity to comment on the details of the draft Mepal Neighbourhood Plan. This response form can be handed in at the Post Office Stores or can be posted to:
Mepal Parish Council Clerk
c/o 19 High Street
Aldreth.
Ely
CB6 3PQ

Alternatively, please email a scanned copy of the completed form to: mnhp@mepalparish.org
An online version of the form is also available on the Neighbourhood Plan section of the Mepal Parish Council Website <https://www.mepalparish.org/mepal-neighbourhood-plan/> with all of the supporting documents and a copy of the plan.

Parish Council News

Who are your current Parish Councillors?

The up-to-date list of your Parish Councillors is always available on the Parish Council Website, so please take a few minutes to look us up!
www.mepalparish.org/parish-council/councillors/

Mepal Parish Councillors



Brian Rollason
Chairman



Lorna Williams
Vice Chair



Lorna Delaney



Jack Hickman



Sam Foord
(Knightley)



Jim Stewart

be reported directly to the clerk, or via the Contact us function on the website. Faults or issues with verges have to be dealt with by Cambridge County Council or East Cambridgeshire District Council or in the case of service faults to the service company. Remember that we do not have full time Parish Council staff, so the councillors can only deal with genuine emergency actions outside of the Clerk/Maintenance Managers official hours. Facebook groups are not an official route to report issues and therefore any posts cannot be acted upon.

Verge Maintenance plans for 2023

We are just finalising the in-house plans for grass cutting and the 2023 schedule will be outlined on the website when agreed. Please note that any schedule is dependant on resources and also the weather!

Mepal Matters Newsletter

We are having some changes in distributors due to a variety of reasons, but this is a request that if anyone is available to share the High Street and Wilton Gardens delivery route that they contact mepalmatters@mepalparish.org. Thanks to our new volunteers for Bridge Road and New Road.

Mepal Neighbourhood Plan

Well, after a lot of work and analysis of your responses to last years survey we are finally at the draft consultation stage, and this issue has the consultation announcement and paper form on pages 5 and 6. There is also a very easy to fill in form on the Parish Council website that will go live on 1st March. Please try to engage through the various opportunities during the warm hub sessions in the village hall on Mondays from 10am and also at the dedicated sessions in the Community Pavilion located on the Witcham Road end of the Recreation Field. We have copies of the draft plan and all the support documents for you to read and we ask you all to send your feedback in to have your voice heard.

Vandalism and Antisocial Behaviour

After the damage caused to the noticeboard reported in the last newsletter, the Parish Council have agreed to fund a low cost replacement, with the Maintenance Manager being asked to repair the board as best as possible.

We continue ask Mepal residents to use the correct communication routes to report all concerns, anti-social behaviour and other issues. The Police have asked that all vandalism and antisocial behaviour is reported to them, however trivial you may think it is, to enable them to build up a better picture of what is happening in our community. Without official reports being made to the correct agencies, the community will continue to be targeted. Any issues related to Parish Council land or assets should

Elections May 2023

District Council and Parish Council elections are due to take place on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Warm Hubs
Let's get together to support each other this winter.

A Warm Hub is now open in:
MEPAL - LAST DATE 27TH MARCH

We look forward to seeing you:
Location: **MEPAL VILLAGE HALL, SCHOOL LANE**
Days: **MONDAYS** Times: **10AM - 1PM**

It's a safe, warm & friendly place to:

- share the company of others
- enjoy refreshments & social activity
- obtain information & advice on winter challenges

Find out more about the Warm Hubs network at:
www.cambsacre.org.uk/warmhubs Tel: 01353 860850
Search for #WarmHubsCams on Facebook

FUNDED BY:
East Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System

DIARY DATES

March

| | | |
|-----------|--|---------------|
| Weds 1st | Friendship Club Bingo, Book/Jigsaw Swap at the Village Hall | 10:00 |
| Sun 5th | St Mary's Parish Eucharist | 11.30 |
| Wed 8th | Friendship Club Coffee morning with Raffle at the Village Hall | 10:00 |
| Sun 12th | Mepal Market at the Village Hall | 10:00 - 12:00 |
| Sun 12th | St Mary's Holy Communion | 11.30 |
| Weds 15th | Friendship Club Games morning at the Village Hall | 10:00 |
| Sun 19th | St Mary's Parish Mothering Sunday service | 11.30 |
| Wed 22nd | Friendship Club Jacket potatoes at the Village Hall | 11:30 - 13:30 |
| Sun 26th | St Mary's Parish Holy Communion | 09:30 |
| Sun 26th | St Mary's Parish Morning Prayer | 11:30 |
| Sun 26th | St Mary's Parish Parishioners' (Vestry) meeting | 12:15 |
| Sun 26th | St Mary's Parish Annual Parochial Church Meeting | 12:30 |
| Weds 29th | Friendship Club Easter bonnets/ table decoration at the Village Hall | 10:00 |

April

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|-----------|---|-------|
| Sun 2nd | St Mary's Parish Palm Sunday Eucharist | 11.30 |
| Tues 4th | St Mary's Parish Compline | 19:00 |
| Fri 7th | St Mary's Parish Easter Garden activity | 10:30 |
| Fri 7th | St Mary's Parish Good Friday Last Hour service | 14:00 |
| Sun 9th | St Mary's Parish Easter Eucharist | 11:30 |
| Tues 11th | Annual Parish Meeting at the Mepal Pavilion | 18:00 |
| Tues 11th | Full Parish Council Meeting at the Mepal Pavilion | 18:30 |
| Sat 15th | St Mary's Parish Coffee Morning at church | 10.30 |
| Sun 16th | St Mary's Parish Eucharist | 11:30 |
| Sun 23rd | St Mary's Parish Holy Communion | 09:30 |
| Sun 23rd | St Mary's Parish Morning Prayer | 11:30 |

D.E.C. Turkey & Syria

On Sunday 12th February 2023 we managed to raise £600 from the VILLAGE BRING & BUY event held in the Village Hall.

A big thank you to all who brought and all who bought!

And thank you to everyone who organised and helped run this day.

