

Mepal Matters

The newsletter for Mepal

July/August 2023

www.mepalparish.org

Village Hall News

Our public Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday 10th May. Nobody came forward offering to join our Committee, but we can always do with more volunteers. If you would be able to help, let us know, and we can always co-opt new members during the year.

The new defibrillator is now installed on the outside wall of the Hall, near the right-hand end as you look from the car park. Please spread the word, as these devices can be crucial in saving people who suffer medical emergencies such as heart attacks. There are printed instructions but it's always better to have some practical training, and the East Anglian Air Ambulance have kindly offered to run a training session at the Hall. Look out for the date, which we will publicise round the village. We are already grateful to the Air Ambulance organisation for attending a recent open meeting of the Friendship Club and talking about their vital life-saving work, which is heavily dependent on voluntary contributions of money.

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.

Friendship Club

Hope everyone is enjoying the weather we have had lately and taking care.

We've had a busy couple months at the club. In May we all enjoyed Afternoon Tea to celebrate the Kings Coronation with a quiz about the royal family. Later in the month we had a visit to Bury St Edmunds for a bit of shopping and a walk around the Abbey gardens. We had meals out to Scotsdales and Seasons garden centres where our member's could buy any plants they want.

On 31st May we had a combined talk with the Village Hall from East Anglia Air Ambulance. The Village Hall was opened up to the whole village and was very well attended, raising £468 that morning which was absolutely fabulous. Our speaker Roy Swain would like to thank everyone for their donations, we would also like to thank everyone who organised the event and those that set up and served tea. Well done everyone!

After all that, to end June, we are chilling with a Sangria and Snacks afternoon.

The Friendship Club meets at 10am on Wednesday mornings, unless we are out and about. It's a great way of meeting people if you are new to the village or if you have lived in the village a while, you can come along and have a good chat with everyone and join our activities. Have a look at the Diary Dates page for our upcoming schedule.

Rev'd Canon Mark Haworth

This morning's 'Thought for the Day' on Radio 4 by Brian Draper from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) was very helpfully on the subject of kindness. It reminded me of my delight in reading the 2019 bestseller 'The Boy, the mole, the fox, and the Horse' by Charlie Mackesy, a book of remarkable wisdom. One line, amongst many, has stayed with me, where the mole asks the boy "so what do you want to be when you grow up?" and the boy replies "kind", stark in its simplicity and massive impact.

Brian Draper was anxious that we should never regard kindness as an easy or soft option, and nor is it, in a world which can often feel increasingly and overly adversarial or combative, ungenerous, selfish, and for many lonely. Random acts of kindness stand out as beacons of hope in what can be a dark world, and the parable of The Good Samaritan bears much re-telling.

This area of our common life is not owned by any agency, least of all the Church, but is one where we do have something to say, and which is part of mutual flourishing within society.

Your parish priest, Mark

St Mary's Parish Church

Sunday services: there is a weekly service of Eucharist at 11.30am for the first three Sundays of the month. On the fourth Sunday this is at 9.30am, with a Morning Praise service at 11.30am. You can find details of all our services and events on the Diary Dates page and on the notice boards at the church and at Mepal Stores.

Many thanks to all the kind people who donated plants for our Plant Sale in May. It is much appreciated and helped to make this a successful fundraising event for St Mary's.

Future events: our next event will be the Safari Lunch on Sunday August 13th - three courses with wine for £12. We have kept our price low as what we want is to enjoy your company; though we are always very grateful to those who want to give us more! Please see our ad in this issue and August notices. We'll be taking bookings for the lunch from 1st August- contact 01353 778871.

Can you help? The small team who work hard to keep the church presence alive in the village are now very few in number and getting on in years! If you are able to offer occasional help in any way- cleaning & maintenance, admin duties, catering for or helping at events, please contact the churchwardens. You don't have to be a regular churchgoer to help in this way- just an interest in the church and its part in our community.

Interim Priest-in-Charge: Rev'd Canon Mark Haworth. For enquiries regarding baptisms, weddings and funerals please contact the churchwardens: Elizabeth Stazicker 01353778129 eliz.stazicker@gmail.com or Lesley Sculthorpe 01353777367 lesleysculthorpe@gmail.com



Sunshine and Smiles at the School Summer Fete!

We welcomed local families onto the school field on Brangehill Lane for a fun filled afternoon organised by the Friends of Mepal and Witcham Primary School Committee.



Thank you to our sponsors who kindly donated raffle prizes for a night away, family days out, vouchers, beauty treatments, meals and much more.

The Friends, consisting of 9 parents started planning the summer fete months ago. Days before, we had our fingers and toes crossed that the expected storms were not going to spoil the day! It did not! With the help of volunteer parents/grandparents and Heron's pupils (year 5&6), we hosted a range of stalls; tombolas, children's games, second-hand books and preloved uniform as well as serving hot drinks and homemade bakes in the tearoom, Pimms and cold drinks at the bar and freshly cooked pizzas. Children were kept busy with the bouncy castle, facepainting, ice creams, egg and spoon and 3 legged races! Everyone was kept entertained by Pro Martial Arts School Kickboxing Club, Band of Ukes, vocalist Stuart Green and Baz and his guitar.



**£1,593
profit**

The Friends of Mepal and Witcham Primary School is a Charity with the sole purpose of raising money for the enrichment of the pupils of our super school.

If you would like to get involved as a Parent, Carer or Friend of the school please contact:

friends@mepalwitcham.cambs.sch.uk

We also have a list of 'helping hands' who volunteer their time at our events, which anyone can join.

When you shop online, please consider using Easy fundraising to help us raise money

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and link your account with 'Friends of Mepal and Witcham School Association'.



The Mepal Bake Off

19 people entered the Mepal Bake Off which had two categories; sweet or savoury and 3 age ranges. Judged and taste tested by the ladies from Coveney WI.

The winners were:

- 11 and under – Immy & Erica Saunt
- 18 and under – Ruby Rae-Smith
- 18+ sweet – Lucy and Fred Evans
- 18+ savoury – Alice Whatley

A big thank you to everyone who came to support us.

Thank you to the adult volunteers and Heron's children who helped set up, managed stalls and helped tidy up.

A special thank you to Michael Thorley and his pizzeria team who kept everyone well fed with delicious pizzas.

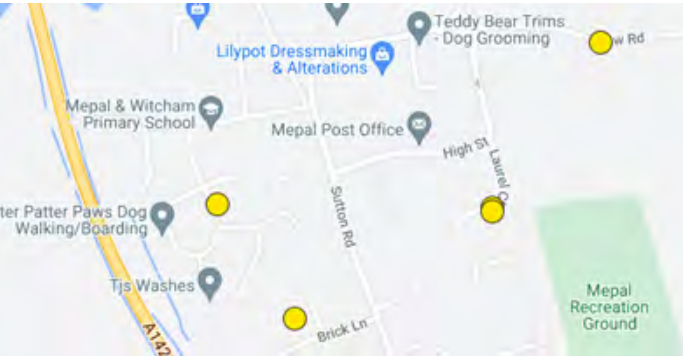
Thank you to everyone who entered the bake off, who then donated their bakes to the tearoom for everyone to try.



Charity Number 1101157

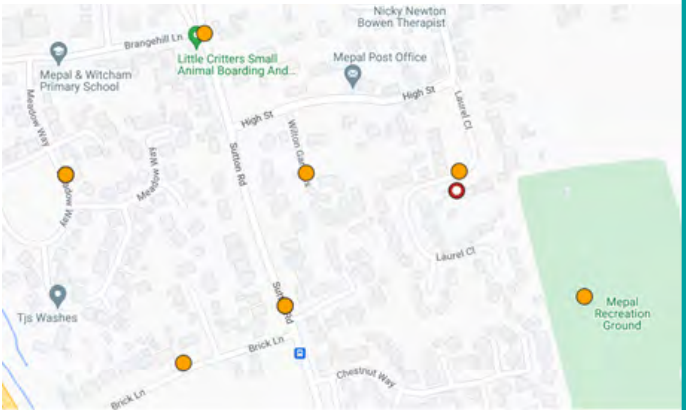
Neighbourhood Watch Launches its Biggest Recruitment Drive in Recent Times

Mepal currently has 4 areas covered by a registered Neighbourhood Watch scheme (Laurel Close, New Road, Brick Lane and Meadow Way)



police. Members can sign up in three easy steps, and as they move area, their account moves with them. It is hoped that the BETTER PLACE TO LIVE campaign will see a similar surge in participation and membership.

Reported Crimes in Mepal



Why not become a registered member? Registered members will receive a New Member Welcome Pack from us by email and regular crime prevention advice. They can opt to receive further information from local organisations, such as the

Together, we support each other through eggs-traordinary times

With more of us watching out, burglars won't say do-u-thinky-saurus!

Help us stop fraudsters, that last one was one heck of a unique-con!

You may find companionship where you leashed expect it!

Neighbours by chance. Working together by choice.

Join us in making this a better place to live. Together.

Neighbourhood Watch Network is a charity registered in England & Wales, CIO no: 1173349

Find out more at:

www.ourwatch.org.uk/betterplacetolive

There is also information on the parish Council website:

www.mepalparish.org/directory/neighbourhood-watch/

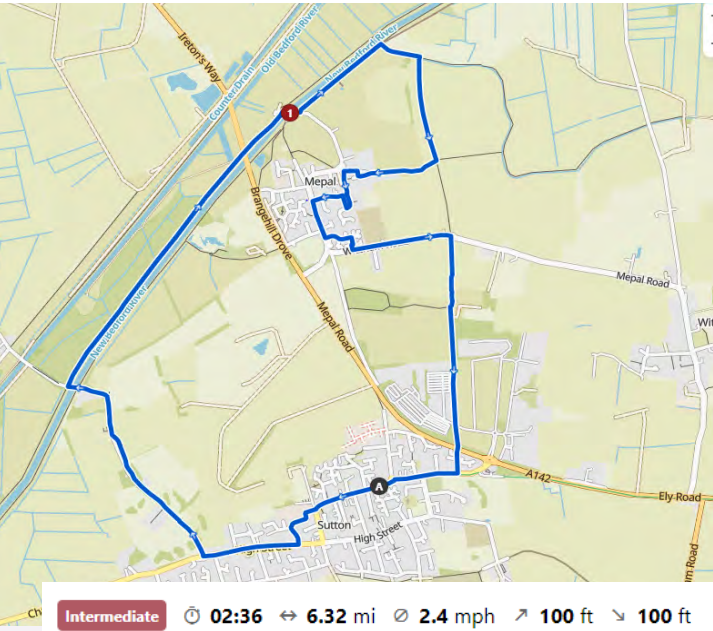
Mepal Walks

As suggested in the last issue, we are running a series of short feature articles with details of the different walks you can go on around the area.

The Parish Council website has a section on Mepal Way and Walks in Mepal that can be found at:
www.mepalparish.org/directory/mepal-way-and-walks-in-mepal/

Below is a map of the 'Three Pickerels bridge loop from Sutton'

This is a 6.32 mile loop with easily-accessible paths.



Keep burglars out of your property



The advice in the previous Mepal Matters issue looked at preventing theft from a vehicle and here we are looking at how to keep burglars out of your property.

www.cambs.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/protect-home-crime/keep-burglars-out-property/

Burglars will use a variety of ways to avoid being noticed. They don't want to be seen or heard by a neighbour or passer-by because they will feel exposed and identifiable. Distraction burglars will pretend to be someone they are not, so it's important you are aware of the common methods they will use to get you to let them into your property.

Here's some useful advice, firstly on helping to keep burglars out by giving them no hiding place and, secondly, on how to prevent a distraction burglary.

Keep it visible

You'd think that it would be best to make a property less visible from the street, and to keep it hidden from prying eyes behind overgrown bushes, trees, high fences, or walls. In reality, all that this serves to do is make it easier for a burglar to get close to a home unnoticed and provide somewhere to hide while carrying out a burglary or theft from the property.

1. Lower fences at the front around one-metre high are preferable to high fences as they allow for a clear view over the top and don't provide cover for anyone wishing to hide.

2. At the rear and sides, taller fencing is recommended to prevent easy access.

3. Trellis, thorny plants, or a suitable anti-climb topping such as plastic spikes make it difficult for anyone climbing over a fence or gate.

Summer Holiday Scheme Places for free

Would your child like to attend a fully funded holiday scheme this summer where fun experiences, a meal and snacks are included?

Children in receipt of income-related free schools meals are eligible to attend for up to 64 hours. Other children may also be eligible, visit the County Council webpage for further details.

Further information:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/haf
 (or scan the QR Code)
 Questions: HAF@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Department for Education | CAMBRIDGESHIRE HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & FOODS PROGRAMME | Cambridgeshire County Council

4. Planting prickly or barbed shrubbery along boundaries and fence lines acts as an effective natural barrier.

5. Gravel driveways and paths will make sure you hear anyone approach. We will be featuring some other ways to make it difficult for burglars in the next issue.



Parish Council News

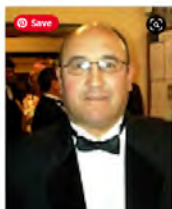
Who are your current Parish Councillors?

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



Lorna Williams



Brian Rollason



Jack Hickman



Sam Knightley



Jim Stewart

Replacement Defibrillator project

A new defibrillator, connected to The Circuit has now been installed on the outside wall of the Village Hall to replace the old obsolete unit previously installed at Mepal Post Office Stores. The costs of the new defibrillator were shared between the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council who quickly worked together to get a replacement for the older model with a new model, in a heated cabinet, when we were unable to quickly get spare parts after it was used by the Ambulance Service to save a life. The other defibrillator in the village, installed by the Parish Council last year is located on the front wall of the Community Pavilion and is also registered on the Circuit.

You should always call 999 in an emergency but if you want to use the online defibrillator locator to understand where defibrillators are located locally a tool can be found here: www.defibfinder.uk

Antisocial Behaviour and Cambridgeshire Police

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd May Sergeant Mat Lupton-Pike and his colleague presented the council and the members of the public in attendance with current local crime data. The main message that the Police wished the community to understand was that reporting all incidents, however minor was the key to preventing escalation.

www.mepalparish.org/reporting-crimes-and-antisocial-behaviour-in-the-village/

Social media will not report, prevent, or protect residents from crimes and the Police can only act if they receive your reports.



Antisocial Behaviour Awareness Week – 3rd to 9th July 2023

Taking place between 3- 9 July, the overarching theme for the week is Know Your Rights. There is lots planned for the week and plenty of ways for you to get involved (see: www.resolveuk.org.uk/act)

Street Lighting – Parish Council Stock

The failure of one of the PC owned streetlights on River Close was reported a few months ago by a member of the public, but we have been unable to obtain the replacement parts for these very old units. We discussed decommissioning some of the lights and considered what other options were available. Due to the substantially reduced maintenance and running costs and lower carbon footprint of new LED lights, all Parish Council lighting stock (5 units) will be replaced by Holophane Mars Line led lanterns and brackets. The estimated payback is less than 3 years on this investment.

Grass Cutting – a Marmite™ issue for the village

The rain/sun cycle this year has caused the grass to grow very quickly and we have received both positive and negative feedback with the way we are trying to manage the grass cutting within our resources. Any road and path maintenance (eg weed spraying) or overgrown hedgerows or tree surgery is the responsibility of the County Council (or for Meadow Way and River Close this is ECDC) and any comments or complaints should be directly communicated via the links available on the PC website contact us page.

We have aligned our verge cutting schedule to bring it in line with the Plant Life policy and some areas on Brick Lane, School Lane and Witcham Road are being trialled for “yellow rattle” (often described as ‘the meadow maker’ Yellow Rattle is continuously praised for its ability to weaken grasses in a meadow to allow wildflower blooms to, well, bloom!). The Parish Council also maintain weekly safety inspections of junctions to make sure visibility is not limited. We do our best to accommodate all views, but please try to avoid making public comments or personal criticism – remember to be kind in your comments.

If you feel strongly, please contact the Parish Council directly. We do not respond to social media questions. Here are a couple of the positive messages we have received: “...utterly amazed how beautifully the longer grass green spaces, & Play Park are being managed. Especially the village green by the bus stop, the Laurel Close green space, & the village sign/bench area. All beautiful & accessible. The Fairy paths make it look ‘cared for’, whilst still sharing the space with nature.” and “People don’t like change. It’s hard to change their minds. Keep fighting. We need people like you !”

Details of the annual schedule are again always available on the website and on posters in the PC noticeboards.

Area	Cuts per year	Date of operation	In-house or outside contract
Village Greens	16	March-October	In-house
Mepal Village Verges	2	Mid April - October	In-house
Play Park	16	March – October alternative weeks with greens	In-house



Neighbourhood Plan Update

We are currently discussing a number of comments made following the Consultation in relation to the settlement Boundary, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the and also the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the intention is to strengthen these parts and look again to make sure we are able to protect the character of our village from over development. Our plan is to take this to the September Parish Council Meeting to pass a resolution to submit under Regulation 15

Parish Council Information

Details of meetings, minutes and financial statements are all available on the website;

www.mepalparish.org

Please contact the Parish Council directly if you have any questions, concerns or comments via the details provided on the website or by emailing the clerk: clerk@mepalparish.org

We will not respond to any social media questions.

Reporting crimes and ASB - Facebook doesn't report it for you!

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council Meeting held on 22 May, we asked PC Sergeant Mat Lupton-Pike to join us to discuss the recent spate of antisocial behaviour and vandalism that many have experienced. They actively encouraged all crime to be reported to 111, via the really easy online reporting tool: www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/

We understand that a common comment to this is 'what's the point, they won't do anything', but we would stress that if you all report EVERY occurrence, this allows the police to intervene to try to re-educate those children and young people that may be starting down a path we would like to discourage.

If you have time to post of Facebook – you have time to send a message online to the police to report the issue, and it can help.

Working party for tree planting in November

We have secured some free trees and hedge plants to fill in some of the gaps in the hedging that is managed by the Parish Council, and to create a new hedge line leading up to the allotments.

We would like to form a Planting working party for when the plants arrive in November.

Do you want to volunteer to help plant the trees/hedges?

Contact the Parish Council to offer your time for this important task.



DIARY DATES

July

Sun 2nd	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Weds 5th	Friendship Club Bingo at the Village Hall	10:00
Sun 9th	St Mary's Parish Holy Communion	11:30
Wed 12th	Friendship Club Pink Bags at the Village Hall	10:00
Sun 16th	St Mary's Eucharist	11:30
Weds 19th	Friendship Club Trip to Cherry Tree	10:00
Sun 23rd	St Mary's Parish Holy Communion	09:30
Sun 23rd	St Mary's Parish Morning Praise	11:30
Mon 24th	Full Parish Council Meeting at the Mepal Pavilion	18:30
Wed 26th	Friendship Club Cakes Galore, bring and buy cake sale at the Village Hall	10:00
Sun 30th	St Mary's Parish Joint Service	11:30

August

Wed 2nd	Friendship Club Bingo at the Village Hall	10:00
Sun 6th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Wed 9th	Friendship Club Games Morning at the Village Hall	10:00
Sun 13th	St Mary's Parish Holy Communion	11:30
Sun 13th	St Mary's Safari Lunch	13:00
Wed 16th	Friendship Club Linda's Birthday tea at the Village Hall	14:30 - 16:30
Sun 20th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Wed 23rd	Friendship Club Pub in the Park	10:00
Sun 27th	St Mary's Parish Holy Communion	09:30
Sun 27th	St Mary's Parish Morning Praise	11:30
Wed 30th	Friendship Club TBA	10:00

St Mary's Church

Safari Lunch

On Sunday August 13th
1.30pm at The Willows
Low Bank, Mepal

Cost £12 Entrance by reservation
in advance - contact 01353 778871
by August 10th latest please.

Parking is available, but if you can car-
share this would be helpful.



All funds raised in aid of St Mary's Parish Church

If you want to provide any
diary dates for the September/
October issue then please
ensure these are provided
before the copy deadline.

Send articles & dates to:
mepalmatters@mepalparish.org

Next copy deadline:
14th August 2023

**We are looking for a volunteer
to manage the distribution
of delivery for the ongoing
publications. Can you help?
Please email the above for
further details.**