

# Mepal Matters

The newsletter for Mepal

**September/October 2023**



[www.mepalparish.org](http://www.mepalparish.org)

## Village Hall News

We were sorry that we had to cancel the table-top sale we had planned for Saturday 29th July. There simply weren't enough takers to make it worthwhile. Events of this kind are usually well supported, so perhaps it was a bad time of year. We hope to try again nearer to Christmas.

The defibrillator jointly funded by the Village Hall Committee and Mepal Parish Council has now been at the Hall for some time, and we hope this is generally known so that anyone suffering a medical crisis near the village centre can be helped without delay. These devices are designed to be easy to use, but the East Anglian Air Ambulance organisation have kindly agreed to run a training event in this, and on "CPR" resuscitation, at the Hall on the afternoon of Saturday 30th September. Nearer to the date we shall publicise full details and invite bookings, and depending on the number of people who ask to attend, there may need to be two sessions.

Our Saturday breakfast mornings used to be very popular, but we had to abandon them because the Hall is normally in use then for other events. However, in late October there is likely to be a vacant slot and we are planning a breakfast morning at that time. It isn't yet clear which Saturday this will be, but we shall publicise this nearer to the date, so look out for details.

Our website [www.mepalvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.mepalvillagehall.co.uk) is fully operational and we are pleased to include information not only about the Hall and what's going on there, but about activities by other village organisations.

So, if you are organising events for a local group, please let Alan Fayers know by email [committee@mepalvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:committee@mepalvillagehall.co.uk)

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



**\*\*NEW\*\***  
**Mepal Art Club**

**Come along if you love art, would like to learn, improve, or just enjoy being with like-minded folk.**

**Join Polly Ash at Mepal Village Hall  
Wednesday evenings 7-9 (adults only.)**

## Friendship Club

The Friendship club has been active in Mepal for over 20 years and our aim is to bring together people in the village and surrounding area's to meet every week in the village hall. It is an ideal opportunity to meet other people, especially if someone is new to the area, have a chat, make new friends, and get involved in what we do at our meeting.

We have meals out and lots of other organised social activities for everyone to enjoy. We meet every Wednesday in the Village Hall on School Lane at 10am, unless we are out and about. Why not pop in for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat and see what you think.

We have a few things planned for the Friendship Club in the next few months. We are having a trip to the Cambridge Botanical Gardens in September, so hopefully the weather will be nice.

We are doing cake making, jewellery making and lots more, so please check out our dates for the dairy (and why not cut the dates out and put them somewhere safe!)

## Events at St Mary's Church

### Tea at the Church

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September**

**Do come along at 3pm to St Mary's  
for tea and cake**

No charge - but donations are always welcome

### Harvest Supper

**A sausage & cider supper on**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October**

**at 7pm at the Village Hall**

**Cost £7.50 under 16s £5**

**Entry by booking in advance - you can book  
tickets from Oct 1st - phone 01353 778871**

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

# Pastoral Letter

## A NEW TERM?

While the Church Year begins at Advent, as my smart new (red this coming year, blue currently) Church Book & Desk Diary reminds me, (thus charting the arrival on earth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God) so inexorably, post-summer holiday, the month of September with its back-to-school energy is the start of the new academic year, the Michaelmas Term. What about all of us though? Is it 'same old', another annual cycle, or has the summer given us time to re-think what we are about, and perhaps what is missing from our lives, and what has the Church got to say on the subject?

Well, our stock-in-trade is Salvation...in a society in which many do not seem to value the consolations of faith, salvation looks a hard-sell. The Church's task then is to make it clear that just as we need food, shelter and warmth, so we also need spiritual nourishment and sanctuary. Questions about meaning, purpose and value, spiritual questions, remain pertinent to many. Our attempts to try and make what goes on in church more relevant or appealing doesn't really seem to scratch where people are itching? If it was just a matter of getting that more right, we would perhaps have full churches on a Sunday morning! No, peoples need of salvation is the answer to the problem of our difficult lives, the abiding human condition; Jesus did not come to call the righteous; it is the sick in body, mind and estate who need a doctor, not the healthy. So it is fair to say that those who do make their way to worship know their need of God, rather than it being one of many options in contemporary society, or even worse, a form of entertainment.

If we are alienated from God we are condemned to live in a world of fleeting pleasures, shopping, and mere survival, frustration of not having what we want, and having to endure what we don't want, including sickness, ageing and ultimately death. In the face of which, faith in God through Jesus Christ teaches us the way back to integration with God, and our true selves. We inhabit a world where we are prone to being obsessed with ourselves, our potential, our vulnerabilities, our victimhood, and I for one continue to see public worship as a lens through which we transcend our me-centredness, and are connected with the Divine and each other in a unique way. Great occasions of State, civic life, christenings, weddings, and funerals all bear witness to the sharing of emotion, respect, love, and prayers in thankfulness for God's good providence in the past, and hopes for our futures. The Church's ministry and mission is to make that available week by week at a church near you, which it does.

The Church is tasked with meeting people where they are, a point well-made by St Paul in his

epistles. This we do quite readily where we have human resources in and out of our buildings, serving our parish communities, but for those of us with concern and responsibility there is always the question about serving peoples spiritual needs....how is the Church showing people the way of truth which leads to life, which is the knowledge and love of God?

Parishes which are small, and likely to be poor, are equally seen and inherently valuable in the economy of the Kingdom of God; our theology must continue to value the small and fragile 'a bruised reed He will not break'. The Christian Faith carries with it the compulsion to spread the Good News of Christ's salvation for us all. The delight, comfort and vitality that comes with a life lived in Christ is impossible not to share, even if churchgoers need encouragement to share their faith more readily with their families and friends. How that is received is entirely in God's hands through his Holy Spirit, and here we need to note that success is never measured by church attendance, and the paying of the Parish Share; Church Growth is an unlooked for consequence of discipleship, not its object.

Mark

## St Mary's Parish Church

**Sunday services:** Parish Eucharist weekly at 11.30am. On the 4th Sunday of each month Holy Communion at 9.30am and Morning Praise at 11.30am. For full details of all our services and events see notice boards at the church and Mepal Stores.

**Afternoon Tea at St Mary's:** On Sunday September 10th we'll be celebrating our patronal saint's day with afternoon tea – do come along from 3pm to join us for tea and cake at the church.

**Harvest Supper:** Our Harvest Supper is at 7pm on Friday 13th October at the Village Hall; we'll be taking booking from October 1st for a traditional sausage & cider supper. Tickets price £7.50, £5 for under 16s – phone 01353 778871.

### Interim Priest-in-Charge:

The Reverend Canon Mark Haworth  
01354 699491 or 07932 160009  
mhaworth50@hotmail.com

For all enquiries in the first instance please contact the Churchwardens:

Elizabeth Stazicker 01353 778129  
eliz.stazicker@gmail.com

Lesley Sculthorpe 01353 777367 lesleysculthorpe@gmail.com

## Mepal Pantry Update



When someone finds themselves in a place where they are struggling to make ends meet, the Mepal Community Pantry can and does help.

Community Pantries have been set up to help to address the issue of food poverty, and in particular affordability and access. It's not just about providing help at the point of crisis, but instead offer a more sustainable solution by doing its part to tackle food waste - by giving away surplus food for free.

For nearly three years this initiative has teamed up with local supermarkets, volunteers, kind neighbours and green-fingered growers to give the community a grocery shopping boost while reducing waste in the village. We welcome Waste Warriors, but it is vital that surplus food reaches the cupboards and fridges of those in need.

We have supported local families day and night, but even with the donations given (which has gone down drastically) it also costs around £25 every fortnight to provide the basics for the Pantry. A lot of people think the food we receive is free from Fareshare, but it is not free, we are charged for that also. If you can help with this or can leave a food donation in the Pantry please, please do. Times are extremely tough for a lot of people right now. Soup and Squash are always the first items to go so if you could consider donating once or twice a month it would be a great help and gratefully received.

Of course, there have been difficulties, but a few local families have supported with fantastic donations. Thank you to The Scunthorpes, The Stazickers and Mr. Chadwick and through their kind donations we were able to support the families in our village with gift cards and also to upgrade the Pantry - which is happening right now with a larger and stronger unit.

I've had a few messages that people are fearful of coming down the road to the Pantry due to the barking and being scared. I've put it to a few people in the village about relocating the new pantry to a more central area so if you have an idea where I'd be very happy to discuss it.

One quick moan before I go.....almost every time I go out to refill it, the lids are off and/or the door is open. I don't ask for anything in return to provide this service to our village but, in the words of Aretha...just a little respect. I could tell you how difficult it's been to be the person who is told painful stories of what people are going through in our village. That part has been really tough. Instead, I'll tell you all that I do regarding The Mepal Pantry is completely voluntary and please, with a cherry on top, REMEMBER TO CLOSE THE LIDS! THANKS.

Ruth Marley  
Director

Re-imagine Resource Centre CIC  
Company No. 8399788  
Witchford Recycling Centre  
Stirling Way, Witchford, CB6 3FA



**Thanks to the talented Rebecca Margieson, we have all enjoyed the Mr Men Annual Holiday and are glad that everyone made it in time to start their summer holiday!**



## Mepal Walks

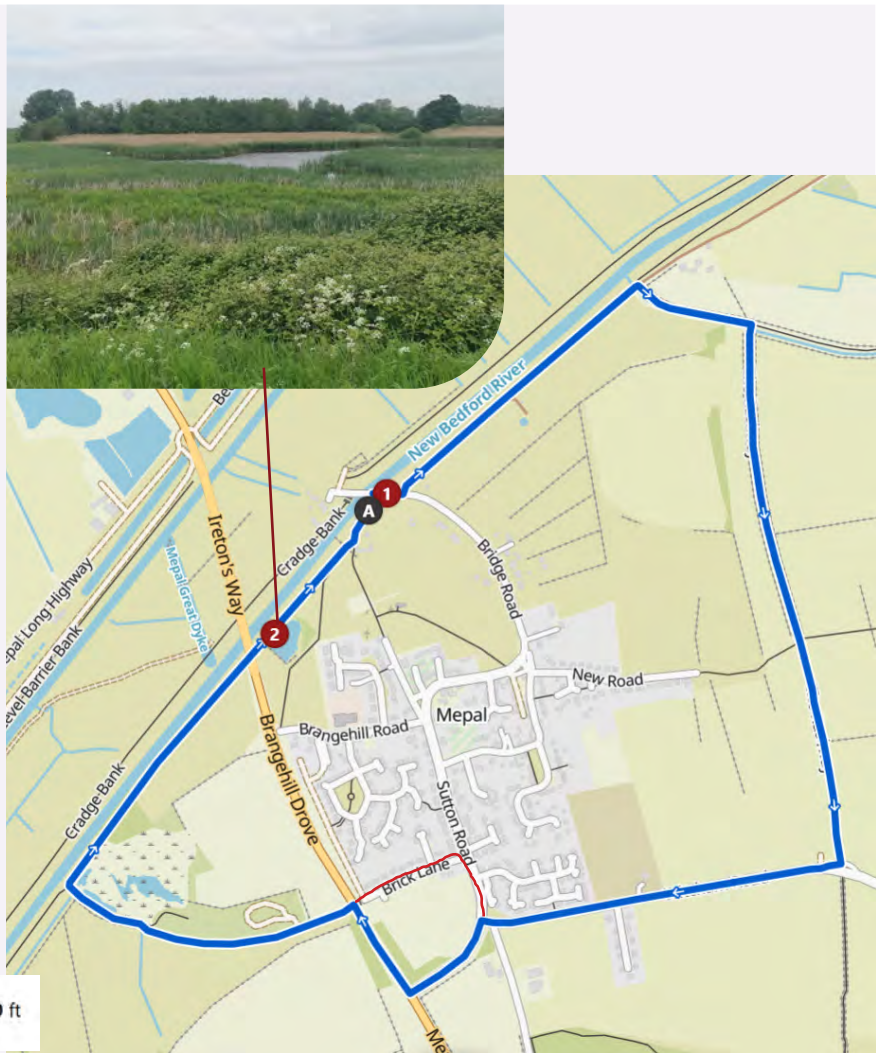
We are continuing our series of short feature articles on the different walks you can go on around the area.

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/](http://www.mepalparish.org/directory/mepal-way-and-walks-in-mepal/)

**This issue features the 'Three Pickerals Bridge – Hidden pond loop from Mepal'**

This is a 2.91 mile loop with easily-accessible paths. The starting point is right next to the parking lot.

*(This map is from komoot - whilst this is the published walk, we recommend changing the route to avoid the A142 by walking up Sutton Road and turning left into Brick Lane, use the footpath at the end to access the A142 and simply cross directly to the other side to rejoin the marked route - suggested change in red)*



## Cancer support service receives 'much deserved' Carer Friendly Tick Award

Cambridge University Hospital Cancer Support Service has been awarded Caring Together's Carer Friendly Tick Award – Health.

The award is in recognition of their work to identify and support unpaid carers- people that look after a family member or friend. Unpaid carers being recognised by the hospital has benefits to the carer, the person they look after, and enables the hospital staff to fulfil their roles more effectively. The Cancer Support Service receiving the Carer Friendly Tick Award – Health, will help unpaid carers know what they can expect when they are attending the service and what support is available.

Sarah Jayne Rodwell, Senior Cancer Support Advisor at Cambridge University Hospital Cancer Support Service said, "The Cancer Support Service being awarded the Carer Friendly Tick Award – Health gives carers accessing our service assurance that we value the important role they play in our patients' pathway.

The cancer support service's work includes: introduction of the Carers Passport – carer identification within a health setting promotion

of the Carers Handbook staff trained in carer awareness, provided in-house and by Caring Together and Cambridge Cancer Help Centre carer information displayed on department information boards and on social media.

Jill Nooij, Awareness and Voice Delivery Lead at Caring Together said it has been a pleasure to work with Sarah and her colleagues and added "Congratulations on achieving the Carer Friendly Tick, it's very much deserved!"



# 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/](http://www.mepalparish.org/parish-council/councillors/)

### Mepal Parish Councillors



Lorna Williams



Brian Rollason



Jack Hickman



Sam Knightley

## Football to return to Mepal in September

The Parish Council are delighted to have received an official proposal from Sutton Rangers Football Club to use the Mepal facilities for the 2023-24 Season for all their home games, with a signed Memorandum of Understanding being presented at the last Parish Council Meeting. Subsequent to the proposal it has been confirmed that this will be a merger of the Mepal Sports and Sutton Rangers clubs and the newly formed club (which is Men's, Ladies and Youth teams with players from both Sutton and Mepal) will be named the Mepal and Sutton Football Club. The proposal includes a commitment to the use of the facilities with a significant annual payment, including taking responsibility for grass cutting and general pitch maintenance. The Proposal was accepted at the last Parish Council meeting, and we look forward to the return of football to Mepal.

## Neighbourhood Plan – Update

After some additional consultations recommended by ECDC, we have worked with the planning consultant to incorporate the comments and to revise the draft documents. We intend to propose a resolution at the September council meeting to approve the resulting draft of the plan for submission to ECDC for the next stage.

## Listing request for Mepal War Memorial

As noted in the last Parish Council minutes, the Parish Council have been advised of an anonymous request to list Mepal War Memorial as a Building

of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The Draft Mepal Neighbourhood Plan had identified the War Memorial as a 'Non-Designated Heritage Asset' to avoid the additional complexity that listing the memorial could introduce. If it were to become a listed building then any future maintenance/repair may then require listed building consent and additional costs; we will therefore not be able to do any cleaning or maintenance work until we are informed of the outcome of the request.

## Vandalism

Unfortunately, we must report more vandalism in the Laurel Close playpark, with deliberate burning of the benches and also loosening of the bolts in the play fort. The Parish Council are considering how we can manage what appears to be an ongoing problem, and do not want to let this effect the enjoyment of most play park users who do not cause any issues.

## Grants

The Councillors and Clerk are investigating the availability of any grants, within our limited resources to manage such projects. Grant applications take time and effort to apply for, but can help us improve facilities more cost effectively.

## Why it is never pointless to report Antisocial behaviour to the Police



It is completely understandable that people believe that low level crime and antisocial behaviour is not worth reporting to the Police, but once again we are issuing a plea for people to report all incidents to 111, or via the easy online reporting tool: [www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/howto-report-a-crime/](http://www.cambs.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/howto-report-a-crime/)

This is particularly important for antisocial behaviour involving vehicles that perhaps should not be being driven, where they are being badly driven and where they are putting other people at risk. Incidents where people are setting fire to benches, where damage is being caused, or where residents are experiencing threatening behaviour should all be reported every time by the person witnessing or experiencing it. All reports are vital so that a pattern of behaviour is established, and if enough reports are submitted the Police will act.

One thing we can say is that if you do not report ASB or crime then the Police will definitely not take action. Reporting it at least gives us a chance that we can try to change behaviour.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### Tree Planting Volunteers

Following the request in the last newsletter, we are still looking for volunteers to help us plant the free trees and hedge plants we have sourced. Can you volunteer to help plant the trees/hedges in November?

Please contact the Parish Council (clerk@mepalparish.org) if you can.



### Mepal Matters Distribution Coordinator

We are still hoping to find a volunteer to coordinate the distribution for delivery for the ongoing publications. The box of about 500 copies will be delivered to you, and you will need to package it up into the 12 sets to be taken to the current individual volunteer distributors.

Can you help? Please email [mepalmatters@mepalparish.org](mailto:mepalmatters@mepalparish.org) to volunteer or to get further details.

### Village Hall

The Village Hall can always do with more volunteers. If you would be able to help, let us know, and we can always co-opt new members to the committee during the year.

## The Library Presents Autumn Season starts in October!

**The Library Presents** is back for a jam-packed autumn season of arts activities in libraries across the county. As always, there are performances and workshops to suit all ages, with music, theatre, dance, magic, puppetry and even some film. The season starts on 1st October 2023 with a reduced version of Macbeth, 'the Scottish Play', and runs through to mid-December, with arts and crafts workshops and many more performances. There is a theme of horror, murder and chills, with Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde, murder mystery and sinister silent film; but the season also has a lighter side, with fairytales, magic and balloons. Altogether there is a glorious mix of uplifting, enchanting and playful treats for the autumn months ahead.

### Tickets available from early September

For ticket information please follow the online links at: [www.library.live/the-library-presents](http://www.library.live/the-library-presents)

Telephone: 01353 616991

In person at Participating Libraries (cash only)

On the door at all activities (subject to availability/cash only)

By Exchanging Digital Time Credits



**LIBRARY  
LIVE**

The final programme details will be available in late August.

## Please Drive Sensibly in our village

Mepal is a cul-de-sac village, with mainly a 30mph limit, but from regular posts on the village Facebook group, people feel there are drivers who are not behaving sensibly and are driving too fast. We should remember that many of these 'speeding' drivers are locals living in the village, so we have the power ourselves to moderate our driving to keep other road users and pedestrians safe.

One 'hot spot' is the bend in school lane adjacent to the Village Hall, where it's reported that people are parking on the bend and head on collisions are a risk. The plea here is to avoid parking in that location, but more importantly for drivers to be more aware that in a village, where speeds should be lower and cars are more likely to be parked on roads, to drop your speed to reduce the risk of accidents. Other areas mentioned are Brangehill Lane, again mainly residential and close to the school, so please moderate your driving style and speed to take account of the increased risks.

The Parish Councils options to implement practical

measures are limited but we can raise awareness. We can apply for a Local Highways Initiative (LHI) project, but this

is a very expensive option with limited partial grant funding, and projects that are submitted are sadly ranked on the accident statistics, where Mepal is lucky to score low at present.

**We are asking the children in Mepal to design some posters relating to sensible parking and driving slowly in our village and send them in to the newsletter to feature in the next Newsletter. The Parish Council will be able to use these in an information campaign later in the year.**

They can be emailed to [mepalmatters@mepalparish.com](mailto:mepalmatters@mepalparish.com), or posted to the Parish Council Chairman c/o 24 Laurel Close. We look forward to seeing your designs!



# DIARY DATES

## September

Sun 3rd	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Wed 6th	Friendship Club Bingo in the Village Hall	10:00
Wed 6th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Sun 10th	St Mary's Patronal Eucharist	11:30
Sun 10th	St Mary's Afternoon Tea at the church	15:00
Wed 13th	Friendship Club Trip to Cambridge Botanic Gardens	10:00
Wed 13th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Sun 17th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Mon 18th	Full Parish Council Meeting at Mepal Pavilion	18:30
Wed 20th	Friendship Club Trip to Arbuckles	10:00
Wed 20th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Sun 24th	St Mary's Holy Communion	09:30
Sun 24th	St Mary's Morning Praise	11:30
Wed 27th	Friendship Club Cake making in the Village Hall	10:00
Wed 27th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00

## October

Sun 1st	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Wed 4th	Friendship Club Bingo in the Village Hall	10:00
Wed 4th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Sun 8th	St Mary's Harvest Festival Eucharist	11:30
Wed 11th	Friendship Club Guess who in the Village Hall (bring in photo)	10:00
Wed 11th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Fri 13th	St Mary's Harvest supper at Village Hall	19:00
Sun 15th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11:30
Mon 16th	Full Parish Council Meeting at Mepal Pavilion	18:30
Wed 18th	Friendship Club Trip to the Three Kings, Haddenham	10:00
Wed 18th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Sun 22nd	St Mary's Holy Communion	09:30
Sun 22nd	St Mary's Morning Praise	11:30
Wed 25th	Friendship Club Bring&Buy sale in the Village Hall and jewellery making	10:00
Wed 25th	Art Club in Village Hall	19:00 - 21:00
Sun 29th	St Mary's Joint service at Witcham church	10:00

***Dates/times were correct at time of print - please check with clubs directly for any changes.***

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

Send articles & dates to:  
mepalmatters@mepalparish.org

**Next copy deadline:**  
**16<sup>th</sup> October 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.**