

Mepal Matters

The newsletter for Mepal

January/February 2024

www.mepalparish.org

Village Hall News



We're very grateful to Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire ACRE for the funding, and volunteers who have come forward, enabling us to open the Hall as a Community Hub (basically the same as last year's Warm Hub). Come and enjoy a warm drink, a biscuit and a chat, Mondays 10.30 am- 12.30 pm. We hope to have added attractions on some days, and by the time you read this we shall already (18th December) have had a session on crafts kindly arranged by Ruth Marley.

We have applied to the County Council's Capital Priorities Fund for a grant to help us remove partition walls from the old toilets and create better useable storage space. Many thanks to the Youth Club and the Friendship Club for their letters of support. If you would like to add your own note supporting the project, please let us know.

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.



The final Mepal Market was held on 10th December 2023 at the Village Hall, and we pass on a big shout out from the village to Evelyn Woodward for all the hard work she has put in to make the Mepal Market a lovely event for the community.

Friendship Club

The year has flown by, and our club is still thriving which is great. We can all look forward to carrying on.

I would like to thank all ladies and gents for all the support that they give to help setting up, making the teas, and serving and the ladies who make our meals; the list is endless.

We have enjoyed a lot of activities this last year and we are always looking for new ideas for our members at each meeting. Anyone can also just come and have a chat and cup of tea and feel part of something.

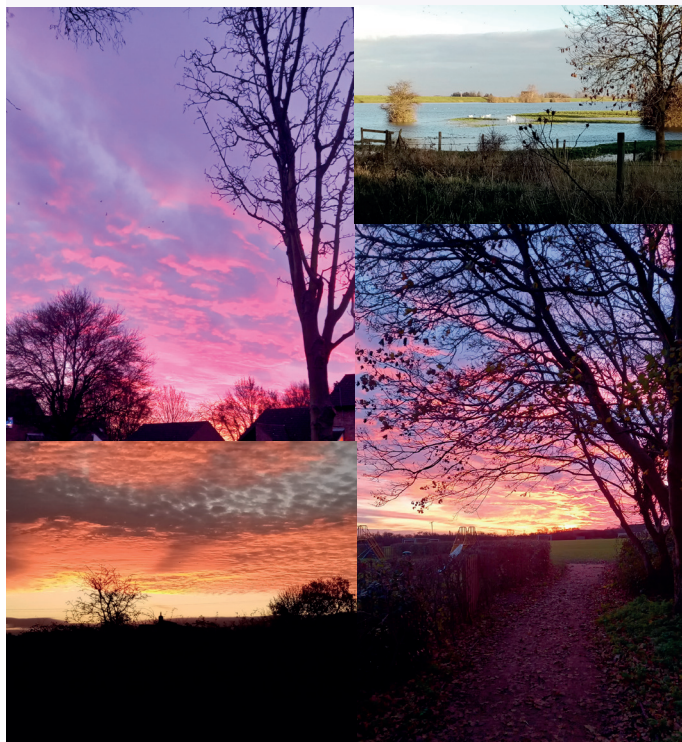
Our aim is to bring people together in the village and surrounding areas and help them feel less lonely. We offer an opportunity to make new friends and engage in different activities at our meetings, meeting at the village hall on Wednesday mornings at 10am, unless we are out for lunch!

We are already planning for things to do for 2024 you can see these in the dates for your diary in this publication, so why not come and join us.

The Friendship Club would like to wish everyone A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Mepal People

If you don't follow the Mepal People Facebook Group, you will have missed out on all of Gill Sykes and Carol Giles lovely landscape photos of the village this year. So, we have added a few of the latest ones for you all to enjoy.



St Mary's Parish Church

A Happy New Year to all readers!

Sunday Services - weekly services continue at 11.30am each Sunday, except for 14th January - see below, with an additional service of Holy Communion at 9.30am on the 4th Sunday of each month. We are looking to change our service times to the earlier time of 10.30am in the near future - please look out for notices at the church and at Mepal Stores.

Plough Sunday 14th January.

There will be a Blessing of the Plough at the green near the village sign at 10.45am, followed by a service at the church. In this celebration of rural life and the blessing of those who work on the land, children will be invited to take part in the blessing of seeds and will be able to take home a packet of seeds to grow. There will then be a **Ploughman's Lunch at 12.15pm** at the Village Hall - we'll be serving bread rolls, cheese, chutney etc. Can you contribute a 'bring & share' pudding?

Other Events

Afternoon Tea with Bring & Buy Sale at 3pm on January 27th at the Village Hall - meet up with friends for tea and cake and find a bargain in the sale.

Pancakes at the Village Hall on Shrove Tuesday February 13th - we'll be serving pancakes from 3-4.30pm - come for pancakes and a 'cuppa' - bring the children for an after school treat!

Interim Priest-in-Charge: the Reverend Canon Mark Haworth 01354 699491 or 07932160009 mhaworth50@hotmail.com

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

Elizabeth Stazicker 01353 778129 email eliz.stazicker@gmail.com

Lesley Sculthorpe 01353 777267 email lesleysculthorpe@gmail.com



St Mary's Church Events

Saturday January 27th 3pm

at the Village Hall

Afternoon Tea

with Bring & Buy Sale



Come for tea & cake - bring your unwanted items and browse the sale for a bargain!

Tuesday Feb 13th 3 - 4.30pm

Pancakes!



at the Village Hall

Come for pancakes and a 'cuppa'
Bring the children for an after school treat!

Mepal Ladies

If you are free on alternate Friday afternoons, you would be welcome to join us at The Three Pickerels from 2.30- 4pm for a friendly chat, cup of tea and a slice of cake: it's a pleasant way to meet new people or catch up with friends. We meet every blue bin week Friday; the next dates are 12th January.

Alison posts a reminder on Mepal People. We look forward to seeing you.
Hilary Bowcock and Alison Eden



Mepal & Sutton Football Club



Following a successful merger of 2 local clubs (Sutton Rangers & Mepal Sports) in the summer of 2023, Mepal & Sutton FC aim to provide safe, fun & friendly grassroots football for local children, and a pathway to adult amateur football with one of our 3 (2 men & 1 lady's) teams in the Cambs County League. We aim to provide friendly teams for players (of all ages and abilities) from Mepal, Sutton-in-the-Isle, and their neighbouring villages. The ethos of MSFC is all about fun, inclusion & development. Our mini-soccer teams are committed to the FA philosophy. We ensure that they implement equal opportunity of game time to all squad members before they reach the competitive world of Colts football at Under 12.

Mepal and Sutton FC are looking for players in Year 5/6 to play in the new U11 Girls team. Training and matches will be on Saturday mornings.

If you are interested, please email msfcfinance@gmail.com

Useful Contacts.....

If you have any questions or interest in our club, please don't hesitate to get in touch by email at infosuttonrangers@gmail.com

If you are interested in signing-on your child to play or even just to come for a free try-out, you can either contact the email above or speak to one of our managers, they'll all be keen to help.

Club Secretary – Chris Moore – infosuttonrangers@gmail.com
Child Welfare Officer – Charlotte Daleworth – infosuttonrangers@gmail.com
Chairman – Jamie Chamberlain – infosuttonrangers@gmail.com
Treasurer – Darren Ayres – suttonrangersfinance@gmail.com

2023/24 Season

Mini Strikers – Ryan Storey
Under 9's manager – Darren Ayres & Chris Green
Under 10's manager – James Brennan & Roly Gurner
Under 11's manager – Edmundas Karpinas
Under 12's manager – Louis Corfield & Rob Davies
Under 18 Girls manager – Chris Moore

Mepal Pantry

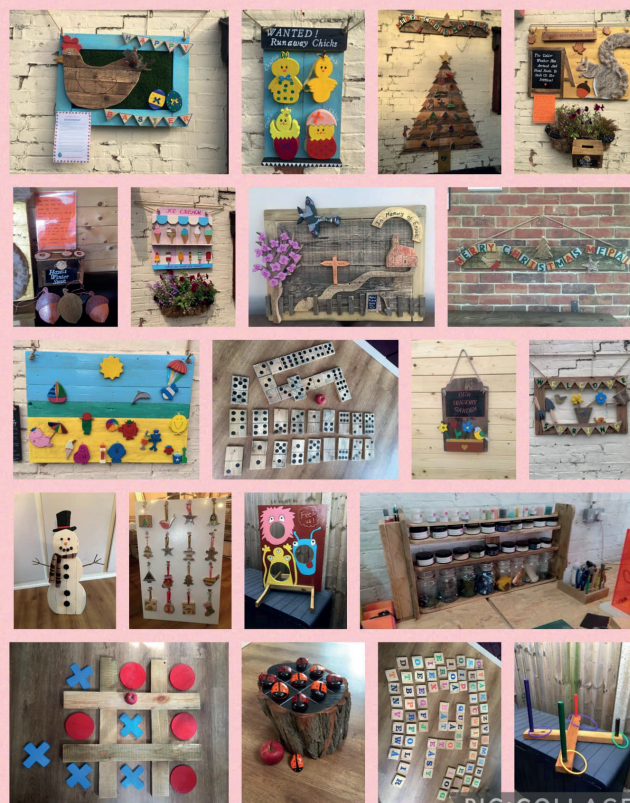
The Mepal Pantry has found a new home at the Mepal Village Hall. with a reminder that the containers marked are for everybody to help themselves and we encourage Waste Warriors to the Pantry, however the other containers (also



marked) are only for those struggling (with little or no other food available to them)- this ensures everyone who needs immediate food in our village has access to it. All local emergency food parcel contact information and national helpline numbers are posted on the inside of the doors.

We can all be a part of the Mepal Pantry by contributing when you can, engaging young and older residents with how a Village Pantry works and ultimately helping the planet by using up food surplus, never doubt the value of your support because your actions can truly make a difference.

We would like to thank Rebecca Margieson for all the wonderful wooden signs she has made for the village over the year and look forward to these returning some time in the future!



PIC-COLLAGE

PASTORAL LETTER

The Light of the World

Advent Sunday fell this year on December 3rd, so the 1-25 calendar and candle countdowns still don't work! Notwithstanding the lack of visual precision, we embarked on another Advent knowing that the retail Christmas actually started in November, with our schools having to also beat the Advent clock before the end of term! We in Church try to do our best with the four Advent Sundays in suitably restrained liturgical mood, but also run with the reality of the world around us; both/and is always possible, so we anticipate the joy of Christmas that meets all our expectations. The days of parishes not having their Christmas Carol service until the Sunday after 'The Big Day' is never going to feel right, and not so here. (nb the 6.30pm January Evensong at Sutton becomes an Epiphany Carol Service on January 7th, so do go there and keep the end of the twelve days of Christmastide).

At the time of writing, my new (and only) grandson is just 6 weeks old, joining his 2 year old sister down in Hove, and three other cousins across my other two children in London and Bury St Edmunds; his birth elicits deep joy that 'unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given'. In his own way he is of course a light to our family world, and in his own small way heralds the universal anniversary of the birth of the Son of God, whose task and purpose is our annual celebration; the Saviour of the World is born again in our hearts as we recall the story of the prophecy, his arrival, and why He came.

With grateful thanks for iPlayer (or "catch-up"), hats off to Simon Reeve who in his 2022 BBC2 series revealed the real context of the Lake District National Park in the everyday life of the county of Cumbria, in all its stunning beauty of course, but with the evident difficulties of post-industrial economic and social deprivation. As a 'Friend of The Lake District' and having both worked and holidayed regularly there, I had a weeks fellwalking there back in September, inexorably inclined to feed my yearning for those 'roots of heaven' and with this series am reminded of George Herbert's immortalised phrase 'heaven in ordinary', but there's more to it even than that....I believe this has something to say to us at this beginning of a new yeara sense of looking beyond the baubles and tinsel, the simply 'pretty', to the real meaning of our contextthe dawning of a new year, the promises we might make, the thanksgivings for another Christmas, for our families and friends, and the resolve to do better as we journey together into a New Year of Our Lord 2024.

January of course takes its name from the Roman God Janus, who is depicted as looking both ways at once, so we will look back at this old year, and at the same time into the new, remembering that famous 1939 prayer of King George VI in his Christmas Broadcast 'The Gate of the Year'...."Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.....". Perhaps we remember Holman Hunts 'Light of the World' (Revelation 3:20"behold I stand at the door and knock") as Jesus stands through the gate, noting that there is no handle on his side of the gatethe meaning being that the gate can only be opened from the inside, it's down to us.

Our friends in the Methodist Church use the new year for the renewal of the covenant between us and God...' put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will....I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.....'. Additionally, the Church of England (and we are glad to borrow from our Methodist friends, as they from us), particularly in rural parishes, often employs the first or second Sunday of the New Year as Plough Sunday...the turning over of new furrows with all the possibility of fresh sowing, and a crop for which we will pray at Rogationtide, and the Harvest that will (at least in our climate) be a realistic expectation. The turning of those furrows is something about burying the old year, for good and not so good, and a sense of fresh life in the new as we rejoice in the birth of Jesus at Christmas. So we begin the journey towards his destiny on the Cross.... to get there we follow his teachings, learn about his love of friendship, loyalty and commitment, and above all rejoice in the completion of his destiny as we look now to Good Friday, Easter Day and his Resurrection.

Our New Year life is all about anticipation of the Resurrection, as Advent is about the anticipation of Christmasthe turning of the soil and the potential for new beginnings and new life. Church-going people are called to live the Resurrection that encourages us all to lead lives worthy of our calling as we renew our covenant with God, with each other, and deep within ourselves a commitment to live up to be the person that God has called us to be.

'No one who sets his hand to the plough and keeps looking back is fit for the kingdom of God' (Luke 9:62), so let each us be drawn forward by the Light, with the Light also behind us, illuminating our path.

Wishing you, and your families & friends a very Happy New Year.
Rev'd Canon Mark Haworth

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 (As at 11th December 2023)



Lorna Williams



Jack Hickman



Sam Knightley

Tree Planting Working Party

In the July Mepal Matters we asked for volunteers to help us plant the free trees and hedge plants in some of the gaps in the hedging. We raised this again in the September issue and the plants have finally arrived (a little later than we expected). As you are reading this, hopefully we will have completed this project.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped and also thanks to any volunteers who due to other commitments were unable to join us on the day. Due to the delayed delivery, we didn't have time to find a date that all were available for.

Dog Fouling

We continue to have issues with dog owners not picking up after their dogs or leaving filled bags and not depositing them in the waste bins. The main point we would like to make is that it is extremely important that all dog walkers using the recreation field follow the rules. Please do not walk dogs over the pitch area (stick to the perimeter). Please keep your dogs fully under control and on a lead so that they don't foul the pitch areas. Please make sure you pick up poop and put it in one of the two designated dog bins at either end of the field area. Due to some dog walkers continuing to take too many of the bags from the recreation field dispenser at a time, this has meant that often there are no bags left for anyone else. We had an annual allowance of bags that has now been used up, but we are open to suggestions about how to reinstate the dispenser in future.

Football

We now have senior Men's and Ladies football and also Youth football back at Mepal, which is why the request in the previous dog fouling article is even more important to note. Would

you want your child or partner being subject to running through (or worse) dog faeces? Any football related questions should be directed to the club, the details of which are available on the Parish Council website under Useful Information and on page 4.

New Councillors

By the time you read this we hope to be able to confirm that we have been able to co-opt a new Parish Councillor but as the print deadline is before the December Council meeting, we will wait until the next Newsletter to confirm and welcome them officially. We still have vacancies so if you are able to volunteer a few hours a week we would welcome your application.

Grants

According to our published policies, the Section 137 grant window closes on 31st October each year for approved grants to be paid out in the following April. The applications are considered in the November Parish Council meeting, and we are pleased to be able to support the Youth Club and the Friendship Club again. Details are available in the November meeting minutes.

Streetlights – Mepal Parish Council stock

The Parish Council own and maintain only 5 of the streetlights in Mepal and, as minuted in previous meetings, we had resolved to replace the unit on one in River Way that was not working. The process took a lot longer than desirable due to the age of the lights (replacement parts not available quickly) and the previous maintenance company withdrawing from the market. As a result, it was decided to replace all 5 lights to LED models to save running and maintenance costs in future and this work has now been completed.

The Parish Council wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!



Picking up the pieces: tackling littering and fly- tipping in Mepal

Litter and fly-tipping is environmental vandalism – it's unpleasant, unnecessary and unacceptable. Not only does fly-tipping create an eyesore for residents, it's also a serious public health risk, creating pollution and attracting rats and other vermin.

There are certain areas in Mepal that are particular blighted by littering. The ditches along Brangehill Drove and the verges as you enter the village, plus the Old Mepal Road that runs parallel to the A142 towards Sutton are probably the worst areas.

Not picking up after your dog, or even worse discarding the bags on your walk rather than using one of the bins provided, is littering and it's really not pleasant for those walking in the countryside. We have some really great residents in the village who regularly try to clear the litter, and this is at times really unpleasant with some of the revolting waste that is dumped. We want you all to take pride in our village, which means that we all need to take responsibility and make sure that if we see litter then we all try to pick it up and dispose of it responsibly in a bin. If we all tried to just pick up a couple of pieces on every walk it would make a real difference.



Of particular concern is the amount of beer cans and bottles being dumped at the village entrance verges and if these are being dumped by village residents then we issue a plea to please use the public bins instead of just throwing your empties in the grass or take it home with you! Another problem area is the parking areas at Engine Bank and we are working with Cambridge County Council or East Cambridgeshire District Council to evaluate how we can help keep Mepal cleaner.

You have control when it comes to the way you either help or hinder the problem of littering. Make sure your rubbish makes it into the bins every time. It's pretty common to see people throwing litter out of cars onto the roads, pavements and verges because either they are too lazy to throw it in the rubbish bin, or they just don't care for the environment. Please don't be one of those people and make sure your children are also not one!

We need to be responsible for our own waste, and it is one of the best ways that you can join the fight against litter. Not just picking up litter but disposing of it in the appropriate bin is a powerful way to make sure that less debris ends up in our streets and ecosystems. Don't underestimate the amount of litter that can fall out of a cluttered car. Why not start carrying a litter bag always with you and hang on to litter until you find a garbage or recycling receptacle.

The litter that you throw on the ground may not seem like much, but that litter is usually blown around until it ends up in a stream, river, or the ocean. In addition, litter can harm or even kill many animals who might ingest or get caught in litter. Even if you don't see what goes on, litter that is thrown on the ground will, at some point, become the problem of another human or animal.



DIARY DATES

January

Wed 3rd	Friendship Club Bingo	10:00
Sun 7th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Mon 8th	Full Parish Council Meeting at Mepal Pavilion	18:30
Wed 10th	Friendship Club Bring and buy unwanted Christmas gift's	10:00
Fri 12th	Mepal Ladies at the Three Pickerals	14:30 - 16:00
Sun 14th	St Mary's Holy Communion	10:00
Sun 14th	St Mary's Blessing of the plough	10.45
Sun 14th	St Mary's Ploughman's Lunch at Village Hall	12.15
Wed 17th	Friendship Club meal at Seasons	10:00
Sun 21st	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30
Wed 24th	Friendship Club quiz	10:00
Sat 27th	St Mary's Tea & Sale at Village Hall	15:00
Sun 28th	St Mary's Holy Communion	09.30
Sun 28th	St Mary's Morning Praise	11.30

Feb

Sun 4th	St Mary's Parish Eucharist	11.30 tbc
Wed 7th	Friendship Club Bingo	10:00
Sun 11th	St Mary's Holy Communion	11.30 tbc
Mon 12th	Full Parish Council Meeting at Mepal Pavilion	18:30
Tues 13th	St Mary's Pancakes at Village Hall	15:00 - 16:30
Wed 14th	Friendship Club chocolate tasting	10:00
Sun 18th	St Mary's Parish Communion	11.30 tbc
Wed 21st	Friendship Club Arbuckles	10:00
Sun 25th	St Mary's Holy Communion	09.30
Sun 25th	St Mary's Morning Praise	11.30 tbc
Wed 28th	Friendship Club brain teasers	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 March/April 2024 issue then please ensure these are provided before the copy deadline.

Send articles & dates to:
mepalmatters@mepalparish.org

Next copy deadline:
12th February 2024

PLEASE NOTE THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW!

Thank you to the volunteers who help distribute the Mepal Matters issues!