

# ANSTEY, BRENT PELHAM & MEESDEN NEWSLETTER

June - July 2021

## Diary of Events

Date	Event
June - TBC	Tree works at St George's Church, Anstey
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup> - Sun 7 <sup>th</sup> June	Brent Pelham Hall Open Gardens, 2pm – 5pm <b><i>NB This event is now cancelled (see News section)</i></b>
Wed 16 <sup>th</sup> June	Brent Pelham Parish Council meeting – Village Hall
Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Anstey School Sports Day
Sat 26 <sup>th</sup> June 12.00 noon	Celebration of the Ellacombe Chimes, St George's Church, Anstey
Sat 26 <sup>th</sup> June 10.00am	Brent Pelham Village Hall Spring Clean
Sun 27 <sup>th</sup> June 1.00pm	Bench blessing for 'Moth' Beach, Meesden village green.
Tue 6 <sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm	Brent Pelham Village Hall AGM
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Aug	Herts & Essex Country Fair, The Park, Brent Pelham

Editor: David Oxley, 2 Castle Cottages, Anstey / [oxleydj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oxleydj@yahoo.co.uk) / 07802 733398

Please send your local news to:

Jackie Godfrey on 01763 848732 or [rjmo2@btinternet.com](mailto:rjmo2@btinternet.com) (for Anstey)

Martin Hügi [brentpelhamnewsletter@protonmail.com](mailto:brentpelhamnewsletter@protonmail.com) (for Brent Pelham).

Mike West [mikewest181@hotmail.com](mailto:mikewest181@hotmail.com) (for Meesden)

*And, for last minute material, direct to the editor.*

A reminder that back issues of the Newsletter are available to view on the Anstey Village website at [www.ansteyvillage.co.uk](http://www.ansteyvillage.co.uk)

**The next deadline for copy is 15<sup>th</sup> July**



With acknowledgements: Private Eye

# GENERAL NEWS & FEATURES

## GOOD GARDENING! Topical tips and ideas for June and July

After a dry April and a wet May there is now plenty to do outside! The longest day of the year is approaching fast (June 21st) and the extra light and warmth encourages the garden to put in an exuberant burst of growth. These are just some of the jobs you could do during the months of June and July.

- 1) Prune Spring flowering shrubs such as Weigela and Philadelphus, thinning out the old wood.
- 2) Pinch out the tips of fuchsias and bedding plants to encourage bushier growth.
- 3) In July, cut back delphiniums and geraniums after the first flush of flowers to encourage a second flowering period. Feed with a general fertiliser after cutting them back.
- 4) Feed tomatoes, chillies and cucumbers with a high potash fertiliser every week to encourage fruiting.
- 5) Sow small batches of fast maturing salad leaves, rocket and radishes every few weeks for continuous pickings.

## PLANTS FOR JUNE AND JULY.

Here are two plants I would like to recommend that would add colour and interest to your garden over the next few months.

Harlow Carr. A Pink English shrub rose with a strong fragrance. It is repeat flowering throughout the summer, grows to about 90cms by 90cms and can be grown in a pot. Grow in full sun or part shade.



Salvia x jamensis 'Nachtvlinder'. Rich velvet colour. A perennial salvia which likes full sun and will flower from June to November. Extremely attractive to bees and butterflies. Height 60cms, spread 45cms. All salvias are good companion plants for roses as they help to keep black spot and mildew at bay.



I would also like to recommend this month a nursery called 'Beeches' at Crown Hill, Ashdon, near Saffron Walden. It is a small independent nursery but has a good selection of unusual shrubs and perennials.

Happy Gardening, Wendy Hillier.

## DR. DIMSDALE'S FIRST RUSSIAN VISIT, 1768

*Wilfrid Dimsdale continues the fascinating story of his forbear's illustrious career*

Variolation (inoculation) had been practised in Asia for some time before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, the wife of the English Ambassador to the Sublime Porte at Constantinople, recognised what the locals were doing and it was through her that variolation was brought to England in the 1740s. Variolation had found its way to the American colonies in 1721 from the coast of West Africa through a slave, Onsemus, who passed on the method to a local clergyman.

Variolation entailed the patient having a small cut in their arm, and matter from a person afflicted with smallpox being inserted into the cut and then bandaged. The person being inoculated was dangerously infectious and had to be kept isolated, during some of the time having flu-like symptoms.

Thomas Dimsdale of Hertford was 56 years old when he first went to Russia. The visit had been precipitated by a smallpox outbreak at the Russian Court, from which the fiancée of Catherine's first minister Nikita Panin, Anna Sheremeteva, had died.

The Russian Minister in London was tasked to find a suitable practitioner. He looked to his own doctor for advice, who recommended his friend Thomas Dimsdale. He was at first unwilling to accept, but was persuaded, setting off with his second son Nathaniel in July 1768, arriving in St Petersburg exactly one month after having landed in Holland.

Neither the Empress Catherine II nor her only son the Grand Duke Paul had had the disease naturally, so it had been decided that inoculation was the best way to safeguard not only the Court but also the country. The Court and Catherine herself were to set an 'enlightening' example. Hence the need for a prominent practitioner to provide a proper launch in Catherine's dominions. Nikita Panin, as Governor of the young Grand Duke, needless to say retained a close interest in the Dimsdales, who were to be created Barons of the Russian Empire.

The Empress wanted Dimsdale to get a move on. Not unnaturally he wished to gain an understanding of his patients' constitutions and to undertake a trial. However, that did not go at all well; the two cadets who were the subjects of the trial may well have had the disease already, one of them becoming seriously ill. Another trial was instigated; that also did not go well. Catherine did her best to allay his fears; "I do not like to see you unhappy - tell me what is the matter" she said. "Be of good spirits, we can but do what is right".



The inoculation took place in secrecy at the Winter Palace in St Petersburg on the 12<sup>th</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> October,\* and the next day she went to the Summer Palace, saying she had gone there to 'see about some alterations'. No Russian doctor would have anything to do with the venture in case anything were to go wrong. When courtiers did follow, the true reason had to be divulged. Dimsdale's success was extraordinary and he became part of Catherine's publicity drive, which included popular prints to spread the message of inoculation throughout her country, setting up inoculation centres in St Petersburg and Moscow.

Dimsdale, in conversation with 'one of her noblemen,' was told that Catherine had become aware that there were people who thought that the 'English Doctor' was undeserving of all the civilities shown to him. The Empress' response was "you seem surprised at the notice I take of Dr. Dimsdale – if a physician had made his terms I would have been careful that he should have no reason to complain, and I should have known how to treat him. But Dr. Dimsdale has been so generous as to come without terms. I consider him a Gentleman who pays me a visit, and he shall have all the respect I can show him".

One day, Dimsdale wrote 'I was called out of my bed and ordered into one of the Empresses (sic) coaches with eight horses and three postillions without knowing where I was to go but they soon hurried me 15 or 16 versts\*\* into the country where I was set down at a shooting hut. I found the Empress there with 4 of the most considerable noblemen & guns etc for a day's diversion. The day was spent most enchantingly. Her Majesty shot 9 and I shot 4. The Empress commands all ceremony to be laid aside and everyone knows it pleases her.' Dimsdale was presented with a fine set of arms by the Empress, which is still in the family's possession.

Thomas and Nathaniel returned home in January 1769, via Berlin. Frederick the Great was unimpressed with them.

*\*The first date, New Style, the Gregorian Calendar, the second date, Old Style, the Julian Calendar. Russia adopted the New Style in 1918.*

*\*\*A Verst: about one kilometre.*

*With acknowledgements:*

*By the Banks of the Neva. Anthony Cross. Cambridge University Press.*

*Letters from Thomas Dimsdale and Research by Robert Dimsdale*



Dimsdale's instruments and case

## 'ECHO'

PCSO Leon De Bruyn, from the Safer Neighbourhoods Team, writes:

'Echo is the Herts police communication platform for local communities to use to let us know what areas they think the police should be focusing on. The feedback received by each community is automatically assessed and reviewed and discussed at the Local Policing Priorities meeting which takes place each quarter. This information contributes to new policing priorities being set for the next quarter.

The Local Policing Priorities for the current quarter were set on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021. They are:

- To reduce agricultural plant theft
- Speeding

Local SNT officers have conducted several speed checks over the past months and will continue to do so from information received from police reports and Echo.

However, much of the feedback we have received includes other issues which we, the police, have no control over. Examples are:

- Wider pavements
- Poor traffic signs
- Improved or increased traffic calming measures.

These areas will need to be reported to the correct agency who can look into each location and assess what measures can be reviewed. In this case it would be the Highways Dept.

ECHO is a one-way communication platform, which means we are unable to contact each person directly with regards to their comments. However, we always appreciate and welcome all feedback from our communities. To use the Echo service please go to

<https://www.herts.police.uk/Information-and-services/Get-involved/echo>

*Our local Safer  
Neighbourhoods Team*



PC Rob Wenham



PC Jack Culverhouse



PCSO Leon De Bruyn

**Emergency call: 999    Non-Emergency call: 101  
or report online**

**Anstey, Meesden, Hormead, Hare Street, Albury,  
Brent Pelham, Stocking Pelham, Furneux Pelham,  
Little Hadham, Much Hadham, Widford, Hunsdon,  
Wareside, Eastwick & Gilston**

## **BENEFICE GOOD NEIGHBOURS**

We are now up and running, so if you need taking to your local surgery or the hospital please ring Patricia Hamilton on 01763 848536. There will be a small charge to cover petrol and parking. You will need to wear a mask and sit in the back of the car - for the time being anyway.

## **HARE STREET SHOP AND DELI**

Jackie Godfrey writes to say that 'Emma and the girls are now to be found at the farm just before you get to the junction with the A505 at Flint Cross. Still selling all the lovely food they are well known for'.

## RECIPE CORNER - MUSHROOM QUICHE WITH PARSLEY PASTRY

With the onset of warmer weather this tart is perfect for picnics!

I always think the best way to make pastry is to use a food processor, but you can also make it by hand.

### Pastry

155g/5oz plain flour

90g/3oz cold butter

15g/1/2oz chopped parsley

1 egg yolk

### Mushroom Filling

30g/1oz butter

175g/6oz mushrooms, sliced

Chopped parsley

Chopped chives

1 red onion, chopped

1 tsp lemon juice

1 egg, lightly beaten

80ml single cream

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan oven 190°C/gas mark 5 and grease a rectangular flan tin.
2. Process the flour, parsley and butter for 15 seconds or until crumbly. Add the egg yolk and 2 tbsp of water. Process in short bursts until the mixture comes together. Add a little extra water if needed. Refrigerate for 30 mins.
3. Roll out the pastry until big enough to fit the flan tin. Lift the pastry over a rolling pin and fit it into the tin. Trim excess pastry.
4. Cover the pastry with baking paper and fill with baking beads. Bake for 5-10 mins. Reduce oven to 180°C/gas mark 4.
5. To make the mushroom filling, fry onions in butter until soft, add the mushrooms, cook for further 2-3mins. Stir in the lemon juice and herbs.
6. Mix the egg and cream together and season.
7. Spread the onions and mushrooms into the pastry shell, pour over egg mixture.
8. Bake for 25-30 mins until set.

Elaine Wyld - Tel: 01763 289 738 m. 07501 495 940

Facebook – Sumptuous Soups and Country Cakes



## TREE WORKS AT ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

James Stewart-Brown of Wye Valley Tree Services has written to advise us that the following tree works are planned for St George's Church in early to mid June.

Beech (T1) - Fell due to advanced decay of stems and the significant hazard potential that it now presents to road users/road and property.

Beech (T2) - Crown reduction of approximately 4m from the north and the same again from the southern crown spread, then a further 3m reduction and reshape on the eastern side of the crown. This would reshape Beech (T2), balancing the tree and giving it a good wind profile - if left as is, then Beech (T2) would present a significant hazard potential without the current shelter and shared wind profile it enjoys with the presence of Beech (T1).

These works will entail some traffic control, with road works signs in place. The road will remain open with 'Stop & Go' boards only in use as and when necessary to safeguard road users. The tree works will be carried out with the aid of an access platform and chipper by a fully trained and experienced tree surgery crew supplied by Wye Valley Tree Services and in accordance with BS3998 (*British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work 2010*). All arisings will be removed from site, including large diameter timber in 8ft-10ft lengths which will be laid by the roadside for up to 3 weeks until removed by a timber lorry. Some stacks of smaller diameter timber in 3ft-4ft lengths may be left for firewood. Mr Stewart-Brown does not envisage any need to interfere with the telephone lines due to the size and capabilities of the access platform that he will be using.

Any queries or concerns, please contact Alison Cossor, Secretary, Anstey Parochial Church Council – telephone 01763 848479 or email [alicossor@gmail.com](mailto:alicossor@gmail.com)

## THE ELLACOMBE CHIMES

A Bicentennial celebration coming to Anstey Church on 26th June 2021.

Tucked behind a stone column under the central tower of Anstey Church is a wooden frame with six ropes disappearing into the belfry. This apparatus is known as the Ellacombe Chiming System whereby just one person can chime each of the six bells in the tower. This is done by pulling on the separate ropes to move hammers to strike the individual static bells. It's rather a poor substitute for the 'proper' full circle ringing, when bells rotate 360 degrees and one person is needed for each bell rope.

However, it does allow ringing when a full bell-ringing team is not available and has been a real

bonus in this time of coronavirus, when bell ringers exercising in close proximity has not been allowed.

Interestingly, the system was devised in 1821 by Rev Henry Ellacombe at Bilton in Gloucestershire. He wanted just one person to be able to chime the bells as an alternative to his local team of ringers. These he viewed as an unruly bunch, not interested in ringing bells for church services but mainly in competitions (for prize money) which were usually accompanied by a jolly social event!

Since 2021 is the Bicentenary Year of the introduction of this apparatus, towers around the world are preparing to celebrate. This will start at noon in New Zealand (11pm BST 25th June) and move across the world, with noon chiming on Saturday 26th June in some of the 400 'Ellacombe' churches in the UK, including St George's, Anstey.

Gus Goymour



*Gus also writes..*

‘Following a really enjoyable Zoom quiz on 20th March £1500 was raised for much needed church funds. Questions were set by Edward Burton and we were ably guided through the technology by our quizmaster Revd James Sawyer, who together with our scorer Jo Newsom did a magnificent job. Our thanks to all three and also to the 17 teams who supported us.’

## **PLANT SALE**

Many perennials have been sold from the three cottages: Dawes Cottage, Little Thatch and Woodside. There will be many more plants available once the weather improves, including tomatoes, runner beans, dahlias and lots of annuals. Keep an eye on Ansteyleink to know when they will be ready.

Jan Pledger

## **‘TWO TWITS’**

A warm welcome to Alan and Leah Claydon, who are settling in at Two Twits near Bandon. Leah writes: ‘I am a local lass, born in Buckland but spent my youth in Sandon and Barkway, went to school at Cokenach, Barkway (it was a kindergarten in the ‘70s) then on to Reed Primary School, Brownies at Barley. I just about lived in The Woodman beer garden as a kid! It is so wonderful to finally be back on home turf. We had to move to Norfolk temporarily, as after returning from living in Cyprus for 10 years after the credit crunch we couldn’t get a mortgage. BUT ... we are back to my network of friends and near my Dad too who lives in Kelshall.’

## **IN MEMORIAM**

Barry Moule of 2 Lincoln Hill died on 14th March after a short illness. He will be greatly missed by his children Gracie, Tim and Rob, and all who knew him.

Sadly we report the death of Carol Clark, of Bell Cottage, who died on 26th April.

She will be greatly missed by all of us who knew her. Our thoughts are with Graham, Zoe, Nicola, Angela and Colin and their families.

We must also report the sad passing of Jenny Sebley. On April 13th her daughter Rebecca posted on Ansteyleink: ‘I wanted to let you know that sadly and shockingly, Mum was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer 3 weeks ago. She was sent home, the place she most wished for, and died on Sunday evening. I was by her side.’

## **NEWS FROM ANSTEY SCHOOL**

Anstey School staff and pupils were delighted to be all back together again after the end of the national lockdown in March. The emphasis at first was on lessons and activities to promote wellbeing and mental health, which helped children settle back into the school routine, and then on identifying any gaps in learning caused by the disruption to the school year. The focus this term is on helping children to make progress right across the curriculum, in academic areas and in their physical and creative development. Cricket lessons with a new coach, and lacrosse lessons with a

staff member (who is a former county player) have been particularly popular, and everyone is looking forward to the school Sports Day on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Older pupils have volunteered to



form a Sports Crew to help younger children play games and stay fit at lunchtimes, and the new chess club is well attended. All pupils spend a weekly session at Forest School, in the woodland near the school, which acts as the inspiration for a range of learning experiences, from science, to



art, creative writing and the development of team-working skills.

The admissions process for the next school year has now been completed, and Anstey

School's Reception class for September 2021 has its full complement of ten pupils, though there are a few spaces remaining in the Nursery. Let's all hope for a more settled and uninterrupted year at school in 2021-2!



Kate Oxley, School Governor

## ANSTEY VILLAGE HALL

For obvious reasons, the Village Hall has been largely unused for many months. However, it is now available for hire, and we are looking forward to restarting our exercise classes, clubs and social events in due course. Please check Ansteylink for more up-to-date news.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Email - [ansteylink@googlegroups.com](mailto:ansteylink@googlegroups.com)

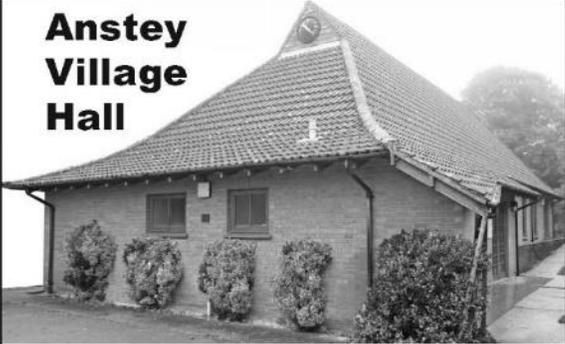
AnsteyLink 'connects local residents to share local information, list items for sale, free or loan, recommend local businesses, services and events, and anything else that may be useful to contact local residents about.' The group is managed by Sarah Cruise – [cruise.s@icloud.com](mailto:cruise.s@icloud.com)

## Facebook

The **Anstey and Meesden Community Group** is 'a community group for residents of Anstey and Meesden to share thoughts and a place for local businesses to advertise.' The administrator is Gemma Jacobs.

**ANSTEY DEFIBRILLATOR.** A reminder that the Anstey defibrillator is located outside The Blind Fiddler, just to the left of the entrance porch. The code to open the cabinet is **3456**

### Anstey Village Hall



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Ruth Hart: 01763 849724 E: [ruth.hart9@btinternet.com](mailto:ruth.hart9@btinternet.com)

[www.ansteyvillage.co.uk/hall](http://www.ansteyvillage.co.uk/hall)



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- **Pupils are encouraged to become independent life-long learners**
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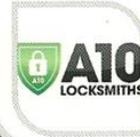
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# BRENT PELHAM NEWS

[www.brentpelham-meesden-pc.org](http://www.brentpelham-meesden-pc.org)

*Presented by Martin Hügi*

## Dates for your diaries:

### **Brent Pelham Hall Open Gardens – now no longer going ahead**

Sadly, due to unforeseen circumstances, we will not be holding our NGS Open Gardens event this June.

### **Wednesday 16th June - 7.30pm - Full Parish Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be in person and held at Brent Pelham village hall. The Agenda will be published one week before the meeting and will be available from the Brent Pelham & Meesden Parish Council Website. Residents are welcome to come along.

If reading this after the date, minutes can be found of the meeting, and previous meetings at the same web address.

### **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June - 10am - Village Hall Spring Clean (Part II)**

Please come and continue the clean-up of the village hall now that we are coming out of lockdown. Lots of volunteers are needed, start at 10am for a couple of hours.

### **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July – 7.30pm – Brent Pelham Village Hall AGM**

Held at the village hall

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> August – The Herts & Essex Country Fair held at The Park, Brent Pelham**

We are happy to announce that the Herts & Essex Country Fair, Dog and Heavy Horse Show will be taking place this year in The Park, Brent Pelham, SG9 0AT on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2021.

The Country Fair is a traditional local Country Fair which provides an entertaining day out for all the family.

The beautiful shire horses will be out in force again & the Heavy Horse enthusiasts will be running a range of classes to recognise the breeds of heavy horses which have played such an important role in agriculture in the past.

The main ring events will feature a variety of displays by sheepdogs, gun dogs, foxhounds, beagles, bassets and falconry as well as a parade of vintage tractors.

This year, we would again like to welcome quality local trade stands - all enquiries should be sent to

[hertsandessexcountryfair@gmail.com](mailto:hertsandessexcountryfair@gmail.com) or please call 07968 444 890 / 07841 912 473 for further information.

Also see

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/TheHertsandEssexCountryFair/posts/> for updates, information and photos from past years.

## **The Black Horse - Open again!**

We are open again to welcome you back indoors from the evening of Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May. We are hugely grateful for your continued support, and to see so many of you joining us again.

With the recent spring rain after the prolonged dry period the garden is looking fantastic!

Once again, we look forward to seeing you all over the coming weeks. Please do give us a call on 01279778925 for a reservation. More details can be found at the website

<http://www.blackhorsebrentpelham.co.uk/> and Facebook page <https://en-gb.facebook.com/theblackhorsebrentpelham/>



### Facebook page "The Pelhams"

You can find interesting local stories and histories on the **The Pelhams** Facebook page, a place to share local news, stories and images so everyone can see what a beautiful part of the world we live in. Please take a look, join the page and add any stories, pictures or posts. [The Pelhams Facebook page](#)

### Captain Tom 100 Khandel light challenge.

With the current COVID crisis ripping through India right now a group from the village joined the Khandel light Team Spirit walkers on Saturday and Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of May to raise funds via the Captain Tom 100 Challenge. They walked as team, to help cover the 100 miles in 5 days.

*Dear All,*

*Thank you so much for your donations to Khandel light.*

*Shirley Lacy*

### Pilates continues on Zoom

Pilates continues on Zoom, at 7pm Monday night for 40 minutes, 6pm on Thursday night. The cost is £3.50 a session. If anyone is interested please email Becky at [rebecca.ashman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rebecca.ashman@hotmail.co.uk) or Hazel at [hazelnorris@icloud.com](mailto:hazelnorris@icloud.com) or telephone 777316.

### Email addresses

Of course, if you are receiving this by email you will, unless someone has forwarded it on, have registered your email address to receive this as a digital copy. Please do check with neighbours, if and when you see them, that they are aware of the newsletter being digital for the time being. If they are not and they would still like to receive it they can email

[brentpelhamnewsletter@protonmail.com](mailto:brentpelhamnewsletter@protonmail.com) and it will be sent on and future digital editions.

If you are aware that a neighbour does not have an email please consider printing them a copy, whilst checking with them first, maintaining social distancing and taking hygiene precautions whilst printing and delivering. Thank you.

### Community WhatsApp Group

There is a Brent Pelham community WhatsApp group to share news, information, and informal chat. Open to anyone living in the village and is administered by Hazel Norris. Please get in contact with her to be added to the group at [hazelnorris@icloud.com](mailto:hazelnorris@icloud.com)

### Brent Pelham Facebook page

If you are a Facebook user then don't forget to like the Brent Pelham Facebook page to keep up to date with upcoming events & local news. Fraser Murray sends out emails to the village with general news, these are useful for getting out urgent news, reminders and information quickly. To add your name to his distribution list, or if your email has changed, then send a blank email to [frasermurray@me.com](mailto:frasermurray@me.com) with your name and address in the header.

### **BRENT PELHAM VILLAGE HALL**

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*For further details and to book:*

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*Telephone:* 01279 777 281

**Village hall internet** - The WiFi network is BP-Village-Hall and the password is shonk5moat. It's free to use for basic respectful use, and for those 'your-internet-is-down' emergencies. For prolonged heavy use a small (or large) donation would be very welcome, simply post through the letter box at the Village Hall with an explanatory note.

**Village defibrillator** - As a reminder, the village defibrillator is located near the village hall and post box opposite the church. The access code for the box is **C159X**.



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# MEESDEN NEWS

[www.brentpelham-meesden-pc.org](http://www.brentpelham-meesden-pc.org)

## AN UPDATE ON STEPHEN BEACH, AND MOTH'S BENCH BLESSING by Wendy Sellers



Following the death of our lovely mum Margaret, aka 'Moth,' on 26<sup>th</sup> October last year, poor dad (Foth) went downhill pretty quickly. His dementia worsened and even his 24 hr home care was not feasible, as he was getting up 20 or more times during the night.

On 15<sup>th</sup> January he moved into Margaret House and was reasonably happy, taking part in the activities and being well looked after. With Covid restrictions he was allowed no visitors until late February. I was then able to see him briefly twice a month, and a second visitor (my sister Heather) could visit under the same conditions from 12<sup>th</sup> April. He has lately become quite agitated and confused and is currently being assessed by the mental health team at a hospital in Peterborough where they are trying him on different medication.

At present, we are not sure what will happen to him when he comes out of there but we will be looking at him moving to a Nursing Home, possibly within walking distance of Heather in Surrey. Once we have a more permanent address for him I will share it with you in a further Newsletter, as I know he would absolutely love to hear from his village friends. Farthings is now being rented for a year, we wish our tenants every happiness there.

We now have a date booked for blessing the bench that has been so kindly donated by his friends and family. Thank you for your generosity; we have collected £1,100, leaving £200 which we would like to donate to Dementia UK. Thank you for the kindness, support and interest you have shown to me and my family during this difficult time of our lives. May God bless you all.

*You are all warmly invited to Meesden Village Green on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 1 pm where Revd James will bless the Bench followed by a glass raised to "Moth". Revd James has also very kindly said that he will dedicate the 5 pm Service of Light at Meesden Church to Moth and family. You are of course all very welcome to both so please pop this date in your diaries.*



## NEWS FROM ALMA COTTAGE

The blossom has been wonderful here in our garden at Alma Cottage. The sound of Spring is a delight, buzzing of bees feeding on nectar-rich plants and even a few butterflies seen. Birds singing, saying we have come through winter and a better season beginning.

We have such a variety of trees, shrubs and plants, some that we inherited and many that we have introduced ourselves, some unusual. Most of those hardy perennials we divide or take cuttings from and grow them on for you to buy at our garden gate and enjoy in your garden or give as a present. These plants have been selling well so do not miss out, come and see, our prices are very reasonable. Once again all profits will go to St Mary's Church Meesden and the NHS.

Elaine and Andrew McNeile

A warm welcome to Jayde and her children Romi, Jesse and River, who are 7, 6 and 9 respectively, and to Craig, who have recently moved into Farthings, Stephen and Margaret Beach's old home. Jayde is 'a country lass at heart,' so will hopefully enjoy the beautiful countryside here. Craig is a professional motocross rider and is currently ranked second in the country! He is often away at competitions at weekends, and he also runs his own tiling company, so he has plenty to keep him occupied.

Has anyone any tadpoles?! Some may remember that last year, I reported a lack of frogs in our garden pond, and virtually no tadpoles. This year, we had some frogs and toads migrating to the pond at the end of March / beginning of April. Whilst this was encouraging, I have not seen any frogspawn, though there must have been some somewhere, since we now have a few tadpoles. The numbers however are low, and I am wondering whether this is the case for other local ponds, or whether it's peculiar to the one at Puddles Barn.

Many thanks and hopefully catch-up before too long.

Mike West



**RT HON SIR OLIVER HEALD QC  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
FOR NORTH EAST HERTFORDSHIRE**

If you have any concerns please contact me

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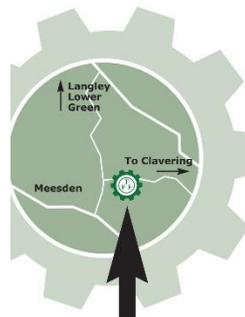


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