

A photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered with a dense carpet of small, white, bell-shaped flowers, likely snowdrops, interspersed with green ivy leaves. In the upper left, there are fallen tree trunks and branches, some covered in moss. The background is a dark, dense forest. The overall scene is a natural, woodland setting.

The Villager

February 2021

Sherbornes and Pamber



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Editorial

Happy New Year Let's hope that 2021 will be better, vaccinated and able to restart our lives.

My thanks to George and Rosemary Rust who, after many years of organising the Villager distribution team, have decided to enjoy a well-earned and restful retirement. We welcome Liz and Chris Gwynn who have kindly agreed to take over the task, and our marvellous team of magazine distributors who personally deliver the Villager to your doorsteps.

Welcome to any new residents who have recently arrived in our area. We look forward to a time when events, clubs, classes, full church services, fetes, parties etc all resume and we can all meet up again properly



Here is something that has made lots of people in SSJ smile when out for their exercise around the village! Keep it up.

In these peculiar times when people are walking more than usual and many are interested in finding new local walks.

My website, Walking in Hampshire, www.walkinginengland.co.uk/hants has loads of walks available for free download and printing John Harris 01920 822887

Mary Silk – 100th Birthday



On 14th December our mother, Mary Silk, celebrated her 100th birthday. As many readers will know, she has been part of the Sherborne St John village community for over 20 years and, until quite recently, enjoyed going to the weekly Sunday church services at St Andrew's.

Mary would like everyone to know that, despite her age, she is still going strong! She would also like to thank you all for your kind thoughts, lovely cards and special group singing happy birthday to her from a socially distanced position on her doorstep! She had a wonderful birthday and wishes you all a very Happy New Year.

Jane, Liz and Richard Silk

Whilst we are happy to publish items and opinions in this magazine it should be noted that the views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily endorsed by the Editorial team. Readers should also make their own enquiries about, and assessment of, claims and services made by advertisers in this magazine.

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Autumn into Winter 2020/21

The year 2020 has been rather similar to many recent years with some seriously dry months (e.g. May 2020) and others that were seriously wet (e.g. February and October 2020) and some long spells of dry weather at critical times (especially May when I recorded only 1.1mm of rain – average is 55mm) which resulted in seriously reduced crop yields and some complete failures (especially beans) and caused considerable stress to livestock; wildlife also suffered badly at the peak time of bringing up their young.

Every month of the year had above average temperatures, even December at +0.1C. My measurements gave the annual day maximum temperatures at

+2.6C for the whole year and +1.3 for night minima – that is quite exceptional at almost 2C up. April and May were both very warm but often had clear nights, so days were warm but nights were chilly; the daytime maximum temperatures in April were 6.5C above the normal and in May they were 5.7C above. This is very unusual for months early in the year.

Sunshine totals were above the normal, especially in the Spring months and again in September which I recorded as very sunny, with 21 days with NO rain and only 5 days with more than 1mm of rain. October was a very wet month with a total of 195mm of rain (88mm fell between 9am on the 1st until midnight on the 3rd).

From the 27th December 2020 to the 10th January 2021 the daily maximum temperature has averaged at 3.0C (i.e. 4.3C below average) and the night-time minimum temperature has averaged -1.1C (i.e 2.4C below average) – that is quite a cold snap and we are teetering on the edge of a longer cold spell; we wait to see which way it will go.

David Cullum
Tel. 850315

I wonder whether wetter winters and drier summers are going to become the norm – as some soothsayers are warning! And will there be another ‘Beast from the East’?

2020 into 2021 Pamber Green	August	September	October	November	December	To 12 Jan 21
Avg Day Max Temp C	24.3	20.9	14.5	11.4	7.6	3.9
Diff from 30-yr ave C	+3.8	+2.9	+0.4	+1.9	-0.6	-3.4
Highest Max Temp C	36.1	28.1	17.5	15.6	12.9	8.5
Avg Night Min Temp C	13.6	9.0	7.7	5.5	2.8	-1.6
Diff from 30-year ave C	+3.4	+0.4	+1.6	+2.0	+0.8	-4.1
Lowest Min Air Temp C	7.1	2.0	2.1	-1.7	-3.7	-3.1
No. of mornings with air frost	0	0	0	5	10	6
Dif from 30-year ave	0	0	+1	-2	-3	
Total Rainfall mm	92.3	26.6	195.3	68.0	108.4	8.8
Percent of 30-year ave	145%	43%	260%	92%	157%	30%
No. of days with >1mm rain	10	5	17	9	18	1
Diff from 30-year ave	+3	-5	+6	-2	+6	
No. Days with NO Rain	14	22	5	14	7	6

WOMEN’S FELLOWSHIP

Yes, another lockdown to endure, but some of us will be vaccinated in the foreseeable future if we haven’t already been vaccinated, so perhaps there is a little light at the end of a dark tunnel.

As the news, instructions and ‘fake news’ are changing on a daily, even hourly, basis, I am not going to mention possible what-ifs for the rest of the year just yet. Suffice to say, I hope everyone is staying safe and well and we will soon

be able to look forward to the Spring, and hopefully some weather acceptable enough for us to meet again, wherever that may be.....pub.....pavement.....

Rose Cooper



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YOUR LOCAL

ROTARY

ROUNDUP

February 2021

MAKING THE BEST OF IT

Our Rotary President usually takes on their role of leading the club in June each year, but in these altered times it was decided last June, when we all thought life would be different by Christmas, to roll this forward to January. So now after being our President for 18 months Alf McCarthy has handed over the role to our new President Gareth Lewis. The club wishes him well for his Presidency

And so we review our year
All our social activities have been cancelled. Our formal events such as Charter Night, Presidents Night and Charity evening didn’t happen. Most of our fundraising has come to an abrupt end but prudently we did have some funds tucked away that we could put to good use

So did we achieve anything worth mentioning?

We helped Mencap sell some of their produce - which raised much needed money for them. More importantly we helped Mencap fund the replacement of their dying van without which they would not be able to function.

We also helped Besom replace their van. Besom in Basingstoke helps people make a difference. It provides a bridge between those who want to give time, money, things or skills and those who are in need. It ensures what is given is used effectively. The service it provides is free. For example someone may be refurbishing a room and have good quality furniture to donate to Besom who then give it someone who has been

homeless and is moving to an empty new home. Effective recycling!

We purchased equipment for Helping Hands for the Blind allowing them to continue running the community radio station from volunteers homes. An essential lifeline in normal times but this year many more people have learned about, and benefitted from, the work of this great local charity.

We supported the Spotlight food bank both financially and with drivers in the longer term to help deliver food parcels. Rotarians also helped Inspiro deliver their food parcels

We have again supported Age Concern with their social therapy groups

We continue to support Lend with Care, a microfinance charity which enables people in the UK to make small loans to entrepreneurs from poor communities around the world. This charity changes lives by lifting people out of poverty by financing loans for them to start their own businesses

Against all the odds we managed to set up a pop-up restaurant to provide Christmas lunch for the clients and volunteers of the Camrose Centre who do wonderful work caring for the homeless in the borough

As Rotarians, the icing on the cake at the end of 2020 was that, at very short notice, we, along with the other Rotary Clubs in North Hampshire were asked to help the local GP practices with setting up the site and marshalling patients for the vaccination programme. It’s our hope for the future.

Rotary Foundation is one of the largest charities in the world. During the year we received three grants totalling £5,000 from Foundation towards our projects, including –

“A Healthier Hampshire in a Heartbeat”



We are raising funds to finance the provision of equipment for Basingstoke Hospital to treat a debilitating heart condition called Atrial Fibrillation, which whilst a little known condition, affects large numbers of the population.

The equipment will cost approx. £60,000 in total, towards which we have to date raised £18,000. Our Rotary target is £30,000 with the balance being funded by a matched grant.

You’ll find more information on our website:

www.rcbd.org.uk

Still a chance to donate - go to:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/a-healthier-hampshire-in-a-heartbeat>

So how did we do in 2020? Think we made the best of a difficult year! We were delighted to welcome Laura and David as two new members of our club this year. If you like the sound of what we do & would like to share in the fun read the notes below.

Basingstoke Deane Rotary is a group of 35men & women from a wide variety of backgrounds. All live locally in the borough but some commute to work outside Basingstoke. Most joined Rotary to help others less fortunate, and they find Basingstoke Deane Rotary adds another extremely enjoyable dimension to their lives.

If you would like to find out more about how we enjoy ourselves, just tune in to www.rcbd.org.uk to see what we have coming up, or contact Helen or Paul above to find out more . We think you’ll be pleasantly surprised.

Facebook: @RotaryBasingstokeDeane

Twitter: @RBstokeDeane

Hampshire and Isle of Wight COVID-19 Vaccination Programme Briefing



The information below was up to date and relevant at the time of the magazine going to press.

Vaccine programme update: In December last year, we began rolling out the vaccination programme with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine reaching patients 80 years of age and above, as well as frontline health and social care staff, based on the JCVI guidance for priority groups.

The COVID-19 vaccination programme has gained further momentum with the news that the Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine has been authorised for use. The first Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccinations started to be delivered to sites across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight this week. Before the vaccine can be distributed, each batch needs to be checked and approved. As soon as this happens the NHS can deliver.

Prioritisation of first doses of COVID-19 vaccines

The four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) have said that, 'Prioritising the first doses of vaccine for as many people as possible on the priority list will protect the greatest number of at risk people overall in the shortest possible time.'

National policy has been amended in light of this meaning that second doses of both vaccines will be administered towards the end of the recommended vaccine dosing schedule of 12 weeks. This will maximise the number of people getting vaccinated and therefore receiving protection in the next 12 weeks maximising the impact of the vaccine programme in its primary aims of reducing mortality and hospitalisations and protecting the NHS and equivalent health services.

Two doses of the vaccine are still needed to get the best protection from the virus.

Local delivery of the vaccination programme

The NHS has planned extensively to deliver the largest vaccination programme in our history, providing three different delivery methods:

1. Hospital Hubs – focus on NHS Trust and social care staff
2. Local Vaccine Services – provided by GPs working together as Primary Care Networks (PCNs)
3. Vaccination Centres – large sites based within local communities and convenient for transport networks.

Basingstoke Centres: Hampshire Court Hotel Chineham, and the Basingstoke Fire Station.

The feedback from both patients and staff attending all of the sites has been very positive about how well clinics have run.

Effectiveness of the vaccines

People cannot choose which vaccine they receive. All available vaccines have to be approved by passing the Medicines & Healthcare Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) tests on safety and efficacy. So, people should be assured that whatever vaccine they get, it will be highly effective and protect them from coronavirus.

Reaching friends and family of the over 80 population

We want to vaccinate as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. The NHS has a clear vaccine delivery plan and the vaccine is being rolled out as quickly as doses can be supplied and quality checked, with over a million people already vaccinated right across the UK.

Groups of GP practices are working together as Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to deliver the vaccine to their registered populations at Local Vaccination Services. This means that

some residents in the priority groups may find that friends and family have been vaccinated before them. They should not worry or assume they have been missed. We will reach everyone as soon as we can.

Residents will be contacted directly with an invitation for their vaccination, and all those vaccinated will need a booster jab within 12 weeks.

Understandably many people are keen to get vaccinated, and some people are frustrated not to have been invited for the jab yet. However some GP surgeries are being inundated by calls from family members asking when they will get the vaccine. We are urging members of the public not to contact their practice about vaccination as practices are being hindered from making outgoing calls, booking appointments, or taking calls from those who need urgent care.

Your support in reiterating these key messages with your local population will be most appreciated:

- Please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine, we will contact you
- When we do contact you, please attend your booked appointments
- Please continue to follow all the guidance to control the virus and save lives.

Vaccinating care homes

We have been doing everything we can to ensure care homes in England are getting the support they need to tackle COVID-19. In terms of vaccination, we are working hard to vaccinate all care home residents and workers as quickly and safely as possible.

All care homes have received regular written and verbal briefings over the past five weeks in order to prepare for vaccine administration. This includes sessions by safeguarding leads on consent, capacity, best interests decision-making and Lasting Power of Attorney as well as

clinical and administrative information of both the Pfizer/BioNTech and more latterly the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine. Further sessions have been delivered to care staff to support confidence in the vaccination process and ensure informed choice with the aim of achieving the desired high level of coverage in the care home workforce.

The Public Health England (PHE) leaflets to support the vaccination programme and inform residents and staff have been electronically distributed, including:

- Guide for older adults
- What to expect after vaccination
- Guide for social care workers – for social care staff
- Guide to COVID-19 vaccination for women of childbearing age, who are pregnant or currently breastfeeding.

Three separate forms covering residents with the capacity to consent, relative's views (for residents who lack the capacity to consent) and Lasting Power of Attorney have also been made available to homes in order to support early discussions.

Homes have been requested to make preparations to support the safe delivery of the vaccination process, including setting up spaces that:

- Enable privacy for clinical assessment, seeking consent, and managing circumstances where people lack mental capacity
- Preparation of vaccines close to where residents will be vaccinated to minimise risk of deterioration when transported following reconstitution/drawn up
- Support patient flow around the care home to enable social distancing for residents and minimising delay between vaccinations
- Enable the agreed arrangements for 15 minutes post-vaccination observation.

Keep abreast of vaccination updates

We will continue to provide regular updates on progress with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

- For more information on the vaccine, please visit www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination
- Figures on vaccination uptake for the UK will be published on a weekly basis on the PHE coronavirus data dashboard
- Follow and share messages from our social media accounts:

Twitter: @HIOW_CCGs
Facebook: @HIOWPartnershipCCGs / @westhampshireccg / @urgentcarepompey
Instagram: @westhantsccg

BEWARE:

Unfortunately there are scams around offering people "private" Covid vaccinations for a fee.

Remember the NHS is the ONLY organisation delivering the vaccinations and they are Free of Charge to everyone.



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Sherbornes with Pamber

The unfolding of recent events has revealed the potential for unsettling change in important areas of our society. In order to control the spread of COVID-19 and save lives, the Government has exercised far-reaching control which has been felt in almost every aspect of our lives—work, education, leisure, travel, how many people we can meet with, who is allowed in our houses, whether we can meet for corporate worship and the detail of how it is to be conducted. For some, these measures will not have gone far enough; for others, they will have gone too far. The need to interpret and enforce the legislation has led police in Derbyshire to fine two women who drove five miles for a walk, who were also told that their hot drinks were not allowed as they constituted as a picnic; although the fines have since been withdrawn and an apology issued. I am not calling into question the motivations of those who have made these decisions. However, it does create a situation which could be exploited by others for their own ends. Sometimes fiction communicates more clearly than an argument.

Over the Christmas holidays, my family and I were watching the Star Wars prequels, in which the crisis of a separatist movement leads the Senate of the Galactic Republic to vote to give Chancellor Palpatine emergency powers which enables him to authorise an army, and he eventually becomes the Emperor. We watched the news from across the Atlantic in horror as rioters stormed the Capitol in Washington D.C. In our present society, power is held not just by those who are elected to office, but the increasingly small number of large businesses who control access to the information we read and watch. Chancellor Angela Merkel, who spoke out against the riots on the Capitol and Donald Trump's refusal to admit defeat in the election, called the decision by Twitter to suspend his Twitter account permanently "problematic" and described free speech as a "fundamental right of vital importance".

I believe the Bible can help us start to make sense of this situation, navigate it, and give us hope. Civil authority is a good thing. Even before human beings rebelled against God, there would have come a point where it was necessary for a well-ordered society. Civil authorities can provide the structure necessary for human flourishing. Following humanity's rebellion against God, civil authority has a further purpose, to commend what is right and to punish what is wrong, and therefore we should obey them and honour them (1 Peter 2.13-14, 17). If you are a praying person, we should pray for them to that end (1 Timothy 2.1-2). In our governmental system, as well as our Queen, that includes our MP

and borough and county councillors. The development of Christian thought about law in the Middle Ages gave rise to what we now take for granted as human rights. At the same time, we all have an inbuilt tendency to rebel against God and seek our own interests rather than those of others, and that includes those in authority. That affects all forms of government and is not limited to one section of the political spectrum. As we have seen in the history of our own country, monarchies can become tyrannies; democracies can become bureaucracies. The last book of the Bible, Revelation, uses a startling picture of this: a beast is given authority over the world, and another beast causes others to worship the first beast (Revelation 12). The developments we see in our society at the moment shouldn't come as a surprise to us. We should keep civil authority under close scrutiny and hold it to account by the means available to us.

Jesus came as the perfect king. The name 'Christ' is a title meaning 'anointed king'. He used his power to serve others, healing and teaching. Jesus said: "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles [nations] lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10.42-45). The Son of Man is one of Jesus' titles for himself. He died on the cross so that those who trust in him can be with him in his perfect kingdom when he returns. Up until Easter, we are looking at Jesus' identity in Mark's account of Jesus' life. Do join us online or in person (if we're allowed).

The Revd Daniel Newman
Rector



SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2021

At the time of writing, the government has decided that the risk is sufficiently low to allow churches to remain open for corporate worship. We are currently holding one Sunday service a week at St Andrew's, which includes a child's spot. You are welcome to join us. Please don't attend if you are symptomatic. Please use the alcohol hand gel on entering the building and maintain social distancing of 2m. Government legislation requires the wearing of a mask unless exempt, and prohibits mingling with anyone outside your household or bubble. Details of how to advise us of your attendance are included in our weekly email to the members of our congregation. If you aren't on our database please contact our Parish Administrator, Wendy Howe (pa.swppcc@gmail.com) or our Rector, the Revd Daniel Newman (rector@sherborneswithpamber@gmail.com – 01256 541607). This is used for test & trace purposes as well as ensuring we can accommodate safely all those wishing to attend. Out of a concern to protect their own health and the health of others, many are watching our services online.

These are live streamed on our YouTube channel and are available to watch afterwards. Visit https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBbHQM4CvpnnPsSGuuglR_w or the link on our website under the Resources Menu.

Sermon Series: 'The Servant King' – Mark 1-8

07 February

10.00am	Lord's Supper	St Andrew's
The Opposed King	Mark 3:7-35	The Revd Daniel Newman

14 February

10.00am	Morning Service	St Andrew's
The Hidden King	Mark 4:1-34	Warren Trask

17 February

7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Lord's Supper	St Andrew's <i>Preacher to be confirmed</i>
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21 February

10.00am	Morning Service	St Andrew's
The Victorious King	Mark 4:35-5:43	The Revd Daniel Newman

28 February

10.00am	Morning Service	St Andrew's
The Rejected King	Mark 6:1-29	Warren Trask

07 March

10.00am	Lord's Supper	St Andrew's
The Shepherd King	Mark 6:30-56	The Revd Daniel Newman

Mid-Week

Home Groups meet in the week of Monday 8 February. We meet for **Central Prayer** at 8pm on Tuesday 2 February.

Unless there is a change to Government guidelines for meeting in person these will be held via Zoom.

LENT MEETINGS

We are holding three Lent meetings on Tuesday 23rd February, 10th & 17th March at 7.45pm

Venue will be dependent upon the Government regulations in place at the time.

Further information will be available on our church Builder database and Facebook page.

Roman Catholic Services (Tel: 819772)

Sunday Mass will be celebrated at the Church of St Bede, Popley at the following times: 9.00am 11.00am 6.30pm

Weekday Mass

Tuesday	Church of St Bede, Popley	9.30am *
Wednesday	HG Church, Basingstoke	9.30am *
Thursday	Church of St Bede, Popley	9.30am *
Friday	HG Church, Basingstoke	9.30am *
Saturday	Church of St Bede, Popley	9.30am *

** Time & Venue could vary*



PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council are continuing to hold their advertised meeting via Zoom so if you wish to attend please e mail me at clerk@sherbornestjohn-pc.gov.uk so I can send you an invitation to join. There has been an increase in the number of residents joining the meetings and taking an active interest in their Parish and Community.

Parish Matters

Speeding has become a problem again especially people turning into Cranes Road from the A340. The police have informed the Speed watch volunteers that they cannot operate at present. As an alternative the police have been asked to site their speed van in the area to try to halt the speeding.

The Parish Council has asked 2 residents to discuss and compile a list of verge areas which, if only cut once or twice a year, could allow wildflowers to grow and enhance the visual aspects of the Parish.

Telephone Box in Village Centre. The Parish Council is still in the process of investigating whether it could be utilized as a Book Exchange run by volunteers. One resident has been in touch with other Parish areas for advice and information and is presenting a plan to the Parish Council for discussion. A decision as to how to proceed with the refurbishment the phone box will be made once we've received quotes and feedback from other local parishes who have refurbished their local phone box(es). A further discussion can then be had as to how and when we put the phone box into service. It's clear that the cost of refurbishment is potentially much higher than originally anticipated (and could take potentially up to 1 year as it seems the firms that specialise in this work are working at full capacity on other phones boxes). A proper refurbishment of the phone box is the preferred route as any temporary repairs are deemed to be only delaying the inevitable full refurbishment and

therefore would not be a proper use of funds. With the current COVID lockdowns and the anticipated duration of the same the PC would not expect the phone to be available for use as a library or alternative, until at least summer 2021.

The Parish Council decided to fund a Basingstoke Community Bus service to run once a week on Fridays to Chineham Centre – picking up at 10.30a.m. and returning at 1.00p.m. for elderly and disabled residents. This started before Christmas and one resident was happy to act as 'booking secretary'. It was well received and was to run till the end of March 2021 when it would be reviewed. Unfortunately, with the current situation it has been cancelled until further notice because of the vulnerability of the passengers.

A flagpole is to be erected on the edge of the Village Green as soon as the National Trust gives permission.

There has been some vandalism locally in the last months. Residents are asked to continue to report any incidents to the police who have been made fully aware of recent incidents

Roads/Footpaths

The Parish Council is in the process of arranging for footpath repairs – 208/14a/2 by the kissing gate - and new signage. Many residents have contacted me to ask for a copy of the footpath map so hopefully more people are enjoying the countryside during this pandemic. Please let me know if you see any issues needing attention while you are using them. The Parish Council has agreed to install a large Heritage Oak Lectern, showing the footpath map, which is in the process of being supplied by HCC but if you have any suggestions on where to site it in the Village please let me know so I can inform the Councillors before they make their decision.

Chute Recreation Ground & Pavilion

The Commemorative bench for Dr Judith Darmady has now been placed at the Recreation ground.

The Parish Council is in the process of having a bike rack installed to secure bikes when using the facilities or footpaths.

The new drainage has allowed many people to enjoy exercising on the recreation grounds. While dogs are welcome to be exercised on the grounds some owners are failing to clear up after their pets. This is very unpleasant to parents with children running around and carries a substantial fine if reported so please consider others and maintain the grounds so all can enjoy using them.

While some of the clubs did manage to run some sessions again this is now prohibited although some tennis is still allowed so please check the regulations.

The Parish Council is now focusing on the last area of the Recreation ground that needs improvement. They are in the process of obtaining quotes to improve and increase playground equipment installing new items for older children. They are hoping to install larger swings and a play-trail with parallel bars and picnic table money permitting.

Finance

Despite the current situation the Parish Council finances are still adequate and will support continuous efforts to improve the Parish and its facilities for the benefit of all residents. Budgets have been agreed for the 2021/22 year. The rate per band D for the 2021/2022 precept remains the same as for last year.

It just remains to wish you all a Happy New Year and hopefully we will soon see an end to the restrictions and be able to return to some sort of normality. However, it has bought out the best in many residents and people who have worked extremely hard to help others in difficulties.

Do not forget to contact if you wish to be able to view the meetings clerk@sherbornestjohn-pc.gov.uk or have anything to raise.

Penny Mayo

February 2021

24 - Sherborne St John Parish Council Meeting, via Zoom. (Planning meeting 6.30pm) - 7.30pm

March 2021

24 - Sherborne St John Parish Council Meeting, via Zoom. (Planning meeting 6.30pm) - 7.30pm

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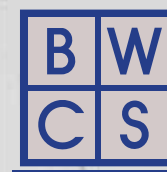
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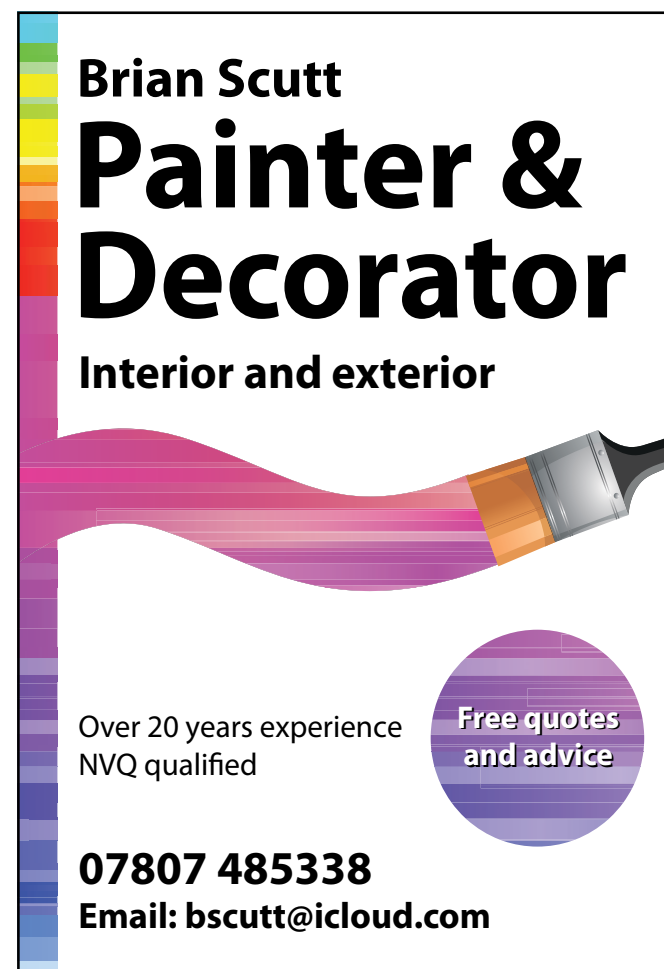
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Sherborne St John Church of England Primary School

We had a single day back in school before lockdown happened again! The school is still fully staffed to support children of key workers, and at the time of writing we have about one third of the children attending school in person, with the rest having access to lessons online. The teachers

are quite stretched having to deliver lessons both in school and online, but they are coping well and are very grateful to the support that we are receiving from parents. The older children are benefitting from live lessons via Zoom, and all are able to submit work to their teachers and

receive personal feedback via our online platform.

We are all keeping fingers crossed that we will be back to normal after February half term!

Sherbert
SSJ School Villager Correspondent

The Royal British Legion

We live in strange times but, as we learn to adapt to the "New Normal", the Royal British Legion still has a huge task on its shoulders to provide support for those in need.

The Poppy Appeal each year raises a large proportion of the funds required to support this work but clearly much of this fundraising could not take place this past Autumn due to Covid restrictions. Despite this, the Poppy Appeal in our area raised £5,488 and

this despite it not being possible to hold the usual collection at Basingstoke Hospital. Especial thanks go to an anonymous donor and to the Bramley Parish Council for significant donations.

This year is the Centenary of the Royal British Legion and we will keep you informed of what can take place to mark this occasion.

Meanwhile, now that so much is done using Zoom, we are hoping to lay on



interesting talks/lectures to enable people to keep in contact. More on this later.

John Delafield
Chairman
Bramley & District Royal British Legion

Thanks from The Besom & Foodbank

A huge thank you to everyone for your generosity and kindness during the couple of months prior to Christmas.

We delivered over 900 Christmas hampers to local individuals and families. We received donations from schools, businesses, churches, clubs and individuals from every part of Basingstoke. Over 80 volunteers helped us to put together and deliver the hampers.

We have received loads of messages of thanks, including:

- Thank you all so much for all you are doing and have done to make Christmas special for our families.
- The family was feeling really low. They didn't have any Christmas

decorations or gifts and they weren't looking forward to Christmas. You have made their Christmas!

- Thank you for caring for our families in need over Christmas.
- I cannot tell how grateful we are for this. Thank you to everyone involved.
- The lady was delighted to receive a hamper at a time she's facing challenges. Thank you,
- This is so precious
- I can't believe it. Thank you
- Is it really for me? That is so kind – thank you so much.
- You don't know how much this means to me.
- Overwhelmed isn't even the word

Huge thanks from the Basingstoke Foodbank for your support over the last year: - 8,500 people fed in 2020 compared to 4,248 fed in 2019



Abigail Compton-Burnett & Paula Vallance

Monk Sherborne Parish Council

The Parish Council meetings continue to be held via Zoom and for the foreseeable future this will be the case. Members of the public can still attend and we would be delighted to 'see you'. Please send an email to the parish Clerk Cally Morris on mspcclerk@gmail.com to attend. The last meeting was held on 20th January with the next meeting scheduled for 17th March 2021.

The Parish Website is being updated (long overdue) to make it a valuable source of information for local residents. As well as reports from the Parish Council, we will also include reports from the local Borough and County Council members to provide one place for accessing information affecting parishioners.

Ideas and comments for content are actively sought- please email either Sheila Mellor on Sah21@btinternet.com or Aaron Minter on aaronminter@gmail.com

Planning:

Concern continues to be expressed in relation to the breach of planning law at the Blackberries site. Enforcement notices are understood to have been served, but due process has to be observed and whilst frustratingly slow, it is important to get this resolved properly.

Comments in relation to the Local plan were discussed, in which it is stated, that Monk Sherborne and Charter Alley are not suitable for sustainable developments.

A Conservation review is being undertaken within the borough, area by area. BDBC will notify the parish council at the appropriate time.

Rural Policing

Rural farms continue to be targeted. Residents are to be reminded to report any unusual or suspicious behaviour. The village community Facebook page is useful in alerting people to strange vehicles etc. but does not substitute for informing the police on 111.

Fly tipping is on the increase - the road out of Monk Sherborne past the church was strewn with sofas, bags and general rubbish just after Christmas. BDBC were contacted to request a full litter pick of the area.- they were very quick to remove once informed- thank you.

Please remember to use the notification process on the BDBC website to report flytipping.

Thanks are also expressed to our Chairman, Mr P Boyle for undertaking a litter pick within the local area during the Christmas break.

Cycling

With the advent on the third lockdown, it is lovely to see more people exercising - walking, running and cycling. Please can we ask that cyclists are aware that they are NOT allowed to cycle on footpaths? This is not optional- it is a safety issue, particularly since so many children are at home and likely to be on a walk during the day.

Village play area

We are looking to conduct a review of the existing play area in Monk Sherborne and would welcome comments from users. The three broken benches have been removed and we are undertaking repairs to the net climbing area as well as the area around the slide and under the swings.

With more families with children coming into the village we feel it is a good time to review the whole scheme. Please forward any comments or suggestions to the Parish Clerk, at mscclerk@gmail.com

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to our Chairman in the swift removal of the fallen tree within the village just prior to New Year. It was cleared and sorted before the first email reporting it had even been sent! Thank you.

The Arts Society Basingstoke



LATEST LOCKDOWN.

Are you wondering how to fill your day during the restrictions of another lockdown? Why not join one of our Zoom lectures. We are the Basingstoke branch of The Arts Society and we have moved our programme of monthly lectures on to Zoom during lockdown. We enjoy stimulating talks from Arts Society registered lecturers on a wide range of topics. We are inviting anyone who is interested to join us at these lectures which are live on Wednesdays at 10.45 am. Lectures last for one hour and there is an opportunity to put questions to the lecturer at the end.

At Christmas we watched video clips from a Royal Ballet production of The Nutcracker whilst a member of their orchestra treated us to a unique glimpse of how things worked backstage.

On February 17th we will be learning about **Fakes and Forgeries: The Art of Deception** from a former specialist police detective. Or if you prefer to learn about a topic in more detail we have a Study Day on February 24th from Peter Medhurst entitled **Paintings inspired by Music and Music inspired by Painting** who will discuss and analyze a range of

magnificent paintings as well as giving us a live recital.

Lectures cost £5 and Study Days cost £15 for non-members

For more information on these and future lectures and to register for either of these events visit;

theartsocietybasingstoke.org.uk

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Hampshire County Council Update

Cllr Rhydian Vaughan, Calleva Division

National Lockdown

Updated National, HCC Guidance and details of key services are available via the links below. HWRCs and Country Parks remain open but residents are urged to stay local.

www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/general-advice

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/impacted-services>

Police and Crime

The Police and Crime Commissioner has launched his annual survey to ask residents their views on the policing precept of the council tax and if they would agree to an increase to support policing across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

Following the announcement that Police and Crime Commissioners would have the flexibility to increase the policing precept by up to £15 a year for a Band D property for 2021/22, wider consultation is now being undertaken and residents are being encouraged to give their view. The survey can be accessed through the Commissioner's website: Your view on the policing precept of the council tax 2021-2022 - Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner (hampshire-pcc.gov.uk).

The Chief Constable and her team have made a compelling operational case for investment in policing through an increase in the council tax. An increase

of up to 7.1% (29p week based on a Band D property) would enable the force to build on what has been achieved during the last year, take the fight to criminals and to start to reduce crime. An increase would enable:

- the early recruitment of 50 new police officers
- targeted operational policing to take drugs and weapons off our streets
- an increase in further prevention work, including diverting young people away from crime
- an investment in forensic capability to enable officers to get evidence to bring more offenders to justice
- continue investment in police officer wellbeing to improve productivity even further.

The public survey will be supported with online focus groups to explore residents' views around policing priorities and levels of an increase in more depth.

Local Transport Plan for Hampshire

Hampshire County Council is asking for your views on the vision, desired outcomes and guiding principles behind a NEW Hampshire Local Transport Plan. This is the start of a conversation to help develop a new transport strategy and plan.

Since 2001, Hampshire's Local Transport Plan has set the objectives, policies and strategy for transport across the

County, helping people to maintain their quality of life and go about their daily business. Seven years have now passed since the Plan was last updated, and there is a need to review outcomes and design principles in the changed context of new technologies, the pandemic and increased focus on active lifestyles and the challenges of climate change.

You are invited to influence

the early development of the new Local Transport Plan by sharing your views on the emerging:

- **Vision:** What will our transport system look like in 2050?
- **Outcomes:** What are we trying to achieve in terms of climate change, economy, the environment, and society?
- **Guiding Principles:** How we will change the way in which we plan and deliver transport?

To view more information and leave your feedback, visit:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/localtransportplan>

Ash dieback

The link below gives some helpful guidance on the responsibilities and options for landowners dealing with ash die back disease.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/en/landplanningandenvironment/countryside/ash-dieback-disease>

Pamber Parish Council

Pamber Parish Council Report:

We have exiting new plans for Pamber Park. Thanks to S106 contributions from developments in the North Ward we have been able to fund the construction of a wheelchair accessible path to run from the car park to the Beacon together with 2 new benches and a wheelchair usable picnic table and bench. We have also ordered a 6 piece exercise pack to be placed in the park, again funded from S106 contributions. We will be investigating further improvements to the park in particular a wildflower area and hope to make the park even more attractive to our parishioners at a time when outdoor exercise is even more important than ever.

We are also investigating the possibility of purchasing 2 specialist benches dedicated to all the key workers who have supported us all during the pandemic. One to be placed in Little London and one in Pamber Park together with a replacement for the bench dedicated to Ruth Elliot, again in Little London. We have been able to do this due, in part, to CIL money paid to the Council from more recent developments.

Pamber Green, Pamber End and Little London notes

Such difficult times we are trying to cope with. Whilst I hear a few people saying they like the isolation, the vast majority of us find it very challenging and depressing. The best we can do is follow the regulations and await our turn for vaccination to keep our families, loved ones, older residents,

and those with health challenges as safe as possible.

The festive season is now a thing of the past and we all tried to make the best of it. Decorations cleared away and time to review our exercise programmes. Recent walks in Pamber Forest have brought a wide range of ground conditions. Initially, though there was significant rain the very dry Autumn allowed the ground to soak up the moisture. However, the longer it went on the more the mud developed. We have a brief respite with firmer ground as the ground freezes.

Nature is very confused and started its Spring cycle too early. The magnolia tree, which nearly popped its clogs in the drought of 2019, has dropped its autumn leaves and immediately pushed buds through. A rose bush has had a bloom on it for the last month and a nearby hazel tree has catkins. Lots of the shrubs are still in bloom and, until 3 weeks ago, bumble bees were in and out pollinating! The buzzards are fighting, the tits are in and out of the bird box daily which cannot be the usual sign of the mating season yet. The blackbirds and mistle thrushes are at war over the pyracantha berries then flying off over the cars with predictable results. A stunning addition to birds in our garden has been a pair of Redwings which are very distinct.

There has been a large increase in dog waste left in plastic bags around villages, their footpaths and in Pamber Forest. Bags are left in many visible places, including hanging on trees and bushes. These spoil peoples' walks

and enjoyment of the countryside and can cause life threatening diseases in children, adults and animals. Basingstoke and Deane have introduced a Public Space Protection Order effective from 1st December 2020. The legal implications of this are: -

- It is an offence for people in control of a dog if it fouls in a public place and they do not clear up.
- It is an offence for people not to have a means to clear up after their dog has fouled, for example sufficient dog poo bags, when asked to do so by an authorised officer.
- Failure to comply could end up with an on the spot fine of £100 or ultimately prosecution.

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/PSPO-dog-fouling> Please be a responsible resident/dog owner.

Local parish news is rather quiet of late and December Council minutes are yet to be approved. However, news has arrived that the appeal to the Secretary of State for permission to build 4 houses at Berry Court Farm in the field opposite St Stephens Village Hall has been allowed, giving Permission in Principle. Planning permission must still be sought which will constrain the type and style of housing.

So little is happening locally at the moment and I would welcome any news and stories that you may have.

Keep safe in these troubled times.

Ann Ellis
annjellis@googlemail.com

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Charity Plant Stall in Monk Sherborne



2020 was a horrendous year with many of us finding solace in our gardens. Certainly the stall was busier than ever

and continued to be even after garden centres re-opened.

This resulted in a record year raising a total £6,250: Macmillan Cancer Support £4,500, Basingstoke Hospital Medical Fund £1,600 and British Legion Poppy Appeal £150

This year we will again be opening the stall on the drive of Lynten House in Monk Sherborne late February/early March (weather permitting) with daffodils selling at 50p a bunch, plus pots of bulbs and polyanthus, as well as wallflowers, sweet william and Canterbury bells.

Later we will have a wide variety of perennials, many of which sell for just 50p a pot. These will be followed by summer bedding and fresh fruit and vegetables. We will also have freshly cut garden flowers only £1 bunch.

Many thanks to all of you who supported us and if you haven't visited the stall we hope you will give it a try; these are very worthwhile charities.

Happy gardening

Chris & Bebe Moore

Notes from Rural France:



When we first bought our home in rural France the field behind the house and this field in front were used by our neighbour's son to graze his sheep. Or as Fredo calls them... his brebis, which I think means they are ewes. There are many cheeses in France made from their milk but these brebis are used for breeding lambs each year. If we are lucky enough to be there in spring we get to see the lambs frolicking in the field. We reclaimed the field behind the house as our lawn which takes a few days to mow back to an acceptable

standard but this front field is left to the sheep. This arrangement suits us very well as it means the grass is kept low and fertilized and we don't have bother with it.

Once they have eaten all our grass and the time comes for the sheep to be moved to another local field until our grass grows again Fredo's whole family arrive to chase them into the trailer. There is much running around, arm waving and loud instructions to Maman and Papa about where they should position themselves in the field. We watch and help where we can but mostly leave it to the professionals, not wanting to get in the way or accidentally send a sheep running to the far end of the field.

Sentimentality does not intrude in our neighbours' farming methods and the lambs are butchered for food, either for our neighbours' own consumption or barter for goods and services. So none of them have names and no attachment is formed other than the care for their wellbeing. Times change and sons grow older and sadly we have been informed that next year the sheep are going for good. So a request has been

made for a "Sheepy" portrait which I have already completed and framed ready for our eventual return to France. That word makes me giggle every time I hear it. Our neighbours speak no English and so when they came to round up the sheep, to move them to another field, imagine the shock I had when I heard them calling out "sheepy" to the bundles of wool instead of "mouton" or "brebis". I can't imagine where they learnt that word from! The first time I heard them calling I thought I had misheard but subsequent years of sheep rounding have confirmed it is definitely "Sheepy".... I try to keep a straight face...

The Mrs



A Socially-Distanced Walk or an abundance of F-Words?!

A walk in the forest with my good friend, Mabel illustrates why 'social distancing' and good manners are so important!

Every day we venture out for a lovely wander in the forest - enjoying the outdoors, the trees, the wildlife, the smells, the sights. Mabel is getting on a bit now...just hit 70. She has the beginnings of dementia, a bit hard of hearing and failing eyesight. Our walks are a highlight of the day in these strange times. We walk side by side, 'arm in arm' and try to 'socially distance' from others.

Ahead of us I notice a group of 'young lads' - they are boisterous, having fun and their ringleader seems not to notice us. As they get closer we're spotted ... they head in our direction ... I sense that Mabel feels a little uneasy, she likes her personal space, she is quite an anxious little lady. I'm a little concerned too - especially as we've been asked to 'socially distance'!

The 'lads' keep coming...the ringleader looks up from his phone, ignores us. They are now blocking our path. Initially, we stop, stand really still - Mabel is frozen to the spot! They are moving closer to us. We try to walk a little faster in order to get past. We step to the side - they mirror our movements. They really seem to be lacking good manners!

Mabel is becoming increasingly concerned, agitated and frightened - there is no escape! If we turn they will follow, we can't out run them. Some people think Mabel can be a little rude nowadays - she tells them to "GO AWAY" (I don't think she actually used the F-Word!) They take no notice! One of them reaches out towards Mabel... I look pleadingly at their ringleader - "they're just trying to be friendly" ...

things go from bad to worse...'voices' are raised, a bit of pushing and shoving and eventually we manage to 'escape' - shaken but uninjured physically.

The following day Mabel wasn't too keen on walking in the forest, she hesitated to go outside and preferred to stay in the comfort of her home. I too give the forest a miss.

Instead I decide to go to the park with Sidney - he's only young, still quite little and learning new things every day. He loves getting out and about, playing with his ball, dashing around but he doesn't venture too far away from me yet! He knows that you don't talk to or go off with 'strangers'.

We've just got into the park when we see a van arrive in the carpark. Out jump a couple of 'teenagers' - whilst the driver is locking the van, they head over towards us. They try to get Sidney to follow them he checks back with me, and decides to back away from them - they start running around him, getting closer and closer, one of them takes his ball, they are 'shouting' at him to come and play...eventually the driver comes over to us. He can see that Sidney is 'upset'. He encourages the 'teenagers' to leave us alone.

Mabel and Sidney are my faithful, four-legged canine companions. Mabel is an 'old lady' now at 10 and Sidney still a pup at 1.

Mabel is now happiest walking on a lead - if you are walking your 'lads' or 'teenagers' spare a thought for dogs like Mabel. They may be on their lead due to old-age, illness or perhaps like Sidney still in training and learning to stay close.

Mabel, Sidney as well as myself found these encounters worrying and frightening. When any of us feel

threatened or afraid we revert to the F-Words ... Freeze, Flight, or Fight!

If you allow your 'lads' to rush up to others you risk a reaction! Even just allowing your canine companion to go off and play with their 'doggy friends' means it won't be long before they could decide they prefer their company to yours! When you call them back - they decide to ignore you - you are no longer in control!

Check out the **Dangerous Dogs Act**. Unfortunately, not everyone loves your dog as much as you do! **Under the Act it is illegal for a dog to 'be out of control' or to bite or attack someone. The legislation also makes it an offence if a person is worried or afraid that a dog may bite them.** (Further details RSPCA website)

Mabel and Sidney (and many others) may feel threatened by these encounters. They may 'stand still' ('FREEZE') - this does not mean they are happy with what's going on! They might try to get away ('FLIGHT') - impossible if they are on-lead.

Finally, if your canine 'lads/teenagers' do not move away when 'politely' asked (a growl or a grumble) the last option could be for one or more of the dogs to bite ('FIGHT').

Polite Request! (Or how to avoid the final F-Word!)

If you are out and about enjoying a wander in the forest or at the park and you see a Mabel or a Sidney - keep your canine companions close by until you know that a friendly encounter is welcome!

(Names may have been changed!!)

Alison Johnson

North Hampshire Prostate Cancer Support Group News

With the somewhat dampened Christmas and New Year festivities behind us, we are now looking forward within the North Hampshire Prostate Cancer Support Group (NHPCSG) to renewing our monthly Zoom Meetings. As a group we seek to help men and their partners to cope with the challenges of being diagnosed and living with this increasingly prevalent disease.

However we have enlivened the programme starting with what promises to be a real wake up call with a talk by Stephanie Wallis a personal trainee specialising in providing suitable exercise for cancer sufferers. The title of her talk at January's meeting is 'The Benefits of exercise', and she plans to show for example how exercise boosts well being as well as helping surmount

treatment side effects, before finishing with more detail on how specific exercises achieve these benefits.

Stephanie is continuing to run the group's exercise classes on Zoom during the current lockdown.

Moving on into February, Sarah Grey from the organisation 'Tackle Prostate Cancer' will explain how her charity works in its aim to support people with and beyond prostate cancer.

We have combined our March AGM with what promises to be a highly informative and entertaining talk 'A day In Parliament' to be given by Sian Woodward, a senior clerk in the legislative office. As one of the clerks on the rota who sit in front and advise the speaker, Sian's talk promises to be

both fun as well as an insight behind the scenes.

Whilst the speaker for April has not yet been finalised, our May speaker will be the cyber security champion Mike Eacott, who will be helping member stay safe on line, and how to avoid being hooked by phone scammers.

In addition, as soon as lockdown restrictions permit, the group hopes to organise a lunch gathering locally, as well as an interesting visit programme.

For more details of the NHPCSG contact:-

Email: info@nhpcsg.org.uk

Phone or text 07746 848192

Website www.nhpcsg.org.uk



Ranil Jayawardena MP

Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire



None of us wanted to be here. This new strain of COVID-19 is spreading rapidly across all parts of the country though and - following scientific advice - HM Government took the difficult decision that it is safer to close down schools until it is under control.

My wife and I - like many of you - are juggling home schooling our two daughters whilst keeping up our usual work schedules - so I wholeheartedly understand the challenges this decision presents parents with.

Throughout the pandemic, children's education has been a key priority for me. As part of the government's commitment

that no child is left behind, I am pleased to confirm that a million laptops and tablets will be delivered to schools across the country, for those who need them. To date, over 560,000 devices have been delivered to councils in England, with our students here in Hampshire benefiting from well over 1,500 devices. This - backed up by the distribution of over 54,000 4G Wi-Fi routers and updated remote education requirements for schools - means children should now be benefitting from hours of high-quality remote learning a day.

This crisis is unprecedented, as is the vaccination programme we are seeing rolled out across the United Kingdom.

It is the largest our country has ever seen and the Prime Minister's announcement that 15 million people - the over-70s, healthcare workers and those required to shield - should have been offered a vaccination by mid-February shows the vast scale to which our NHS is working. So far, we have vaccinated more people in the Britain than in any other European country.

We are beating this deadly virus back and we will get there before long. We have all sacrificed so much so far - but the day is darkest before the dawn.

As ever, if I can help you, please drop me a line to email@ranil.uk

Probus - Operation Prince - November 1985



Probus Club member, Chris Perkins MVO, a retired RAF Squadron Leader gave an insight into a humanitarian

mission in South America in November 1985.

As aircrew on an RAF Odiham Puma helicopter squadron, we were used to being caught on the hop during those uncertain days of the 1980s! It all started on a November Friday evening 35 years ago at a supper evening with the 'Boss'. A short telephone call turned the evening upside down for four of us with an early departure to Bogota in Columbia the following morning. The British Government had been requested to provide search and rescue plus humanitarian aid in the wake of a volcanic eruption. The information was sketchy and our task was to augment helicopters crews flying down from a squadron detachment in the Central American country of Belize. Flying kit gathered we eventually reached the Station Medical Centre. A standby doctor had been called in to administer a plethora of jabs against 'horrible afflictions'. This he did at one go and very reluctantly, as alcohol had been 'imbibed' during the evening!



At Heathrow early the next morning we met with civilian SAR (Search & Rescue) specialists to grasp a fuller appreciation of the unravelling situation on the other side of the world. An 18,000ft high volcano, the Navado del Riuz, had erupted three nights previously, melting the ice cap and sending down a wave of mud and boulders to engulf the town of Armero.

There followed an 18 hour flight via Miami to Bogota arriving late at night. An attack by the M19 guerrilla movement on City's Palace of Justice had resulted in the enforcement of rigid military control and there was evidence of tanks and armed patrols on the streets. It was quite reminiscent of being back in Northern Ireland! Overnight accommodation was provided by the Defence Attache and an RAF Hercules transport deposited us at the Palenquero Colombian Air Force base the following day.



Our helicopters travelling down from Belize had been refused diplomatic transit clearance by the Nicaraguan Sandinista regime and would not arrive for another 36 hours. That said, within two hours of arrival the helicopters were ready for first sorties. Arriving over Armero, we were stunned with what we saw. A town the size of Hook had all but disappeared under a covering of mud. 23,000 people had been killed or missing, swept away in the mud flow. Human and animal remains were abundant and smaller helicopters were darting about with rescue parties collecting those alive, moving them to aid posts. We made our first approach into one of these for offload, using the rising smoke from a burning mound as a signal giving the wind direction. I don't think that I will ever forget the smell on opening the door on finals to land. With temperatures in the upper 30 degrees, typhoid had broken out and before effective fumigation, the Colombian Army were initially burning corpses using petrol.

The ever-present dust and layers of volcanic ash covered everything and made approaches to the confined landing sites in mountain villages extremely hazardous. 'Ample muscle' was essential to aid the

offload of supplies and prevent 'unwanted passengers' climbing on board to escape the area. On one particular heavily loaded sortie 'a man from the BBC' was enlisted to give a hand. With camera and mike capturing both picture and sound, he unwittingly recorded an 'interesting arrival' at the 7500 ft Villahermosa football pitch in 40 degree temperatures. This was shortly aired embarrassingly, with 'no bleeps', back home. During the ten days of operations shuttling supplies and personnel into the Armero area we were part of an international relief operation that included the United States Air Force together with French and Colombian Armies. Working from dawn to dusk 76,000lbs of supplies were transported by our two helicopters. During our journey back to Belize via Panama we too were held up by the Sandanista regime in Nicaragua resulting in an overnight stop in Costa Rica. We had covered some 1500 miles with a total flight time of 11 hours and 15 minutes to Belize Airport Camp.

Detachment business carried on as normal supporting the British Army and Belize Defence Force in a deterrent role against possible invasion from Guatemala. The flying logbook always proves to be invaluable against fast-fading memories, often recording places and incidents. I see that there's a note on an entry for the 23rd December. It involved a re-supply sortie to a remote army post on the Guatemala border. During the flight back to base we 'clandestinely' paused on a pine covered ridge to source Christmas trees in aid of 'seasonal festivities'. Operating over the jungles and pine covered ridges of Belize in all weathers was an incredible experience and the subject, maybe, of further record before permanently forgotten.

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Are you planning on popping the question this Valentine's Day?

If you are, make sure you do not just put a ring on their finger – give consideration to a prenuptial agreement.

You may not be a wealthy celebrity but if you are planning on getting married, you should think hard about having a prenuptial agreement because they are for ordinary people too.

That is the advice of solicitor Hayley Eachus, who heads the Family Law team at Phillips.

She says rather than being regarded as something unromantic and mercenary, prenups should be considered by anyone contemplating marriage.

Marriage is about love and sharing the rest of your lives together, but in the eyes of the law, it is a contract between two people and it deals with the financial consequences of the marriage ending.

Naturally, you are not going into marriage thinking that your relationship might break down, but unfortunately that happens more frequently nowadays, so here are just a few good reasons why you should have a prenup:

If you are much wealthier than your partner, then a prenup can ensure that your partner is marrying you for all the right reasons.

If you are remarrying and you have children from a previous marriage, own a home or other significant assets, then

a prenuptial agreement can ensure that when you pass away, your assets are distributed according to your wishes, and that neither your first family, nor your new family are cut off.

If you own part of a business and your marriage ends, your spouse could end up having an interest in your share of your business if you do not have a prenup. You and your business partners may not want this to happen.

It may seem tough to talk about your loving, committed relationship as if it were a business arrangement and it may seem unromantic, but if you can sit down and discuss your future plans and expectations, logically rather than emotionally, you will find it much easier. This may also prevent highly contested divorce proceedings, if you were ever to separate.

A legal professional like Hayley will help you to understand the different kinds of issues that might be covered in a prenup. The better informed you are, the easier it will be for you to explain things to your intended spouse.

Contact Hayley if you would like any help with this or any other family law matter by calling 01256 854633, emailing hayley.eachus@phillips-law.co.uk or by visiting www.phillips-law.co.uk/family

When contacting Phillips, please mention The Villager.

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Few people realise that the majority of legal cases about inheritance, property and businesses are also resolved in a mediation. Unfortunately, these mediations tend to happen between 9 months and a year after lawyers have got involved. And by that time, the relationships between those affected are often seriously damaged and thousands have been spent on legal fees.

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Prefix helps with a wide range of inheritance, property and commercial disputes as well as divorce. Please feel free to contact us to discuss whether we can help you solve a problem before it becomes a legal case.

Jeremy Ellis - Prefix

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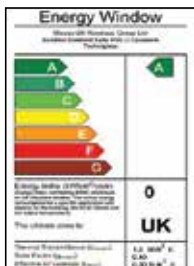
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