

MERRIOTT MESSENGER

Delivered free to 1,000 homes

February 2021

Inside this issue:

Plans re Development in Merriott	2
Have you considered fostering?	3
Did you know Sheeted Somersetshire Cattle	4
News from All Saints Church	5
Planning Applications	6
18 th century Recipe for Washing	7
Sponsors	8

The information and views in the Merriott Messenger are those provided by the named individual contributors and are not necessarily supported by the Editorial Team. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the information given is accurate, the Merriott Messenger cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Copy date for the March issue is 12th February.

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Development in Merriott

Whenever a significant housing development is proposed, the understandable comment made by most of us is "there are enough houses here already". Within living memory, the number of houses built in Merriott has been significant, and the large majority of residents live in one of these. So what is enough? How many are there already? How many are expected to be built shortly? How many more can be expected in the future? Can we influence matters?

There are around 1,000 homes in Merriott currently and about 50 have been built in recent years. Planning consent is in place for about another 100, most of which are on the land at the end of Manor Drive and the field in Church Street opposite Footlands Farm.

In planning terms Merriott is classified as a 'Rural Settlement', at the very bottom of the settlement types categorised in the planning system. This is the same category as the smallest hamlets such as Dinnington. This fact alone should have minimised the likelihood of significant development here, but as government development targets are so high, the system is over-ridden, consents are given which in objective planning terms should not be.

In the last three years, thirty developments for ten or more homes have been refused by SSDC area planning committees. These were then re-considered by the SSDC Regulation Committee, which allowed twenty seven of them. Two of the three refused were subsequently granted consent by the government inspector on appeal. Just one of all applications failed. This is not the fault of SSDC, if they refuse them, the inspector passes them anyway. So it has not been possible to stop developments. This situation may be changing soon, with government targets now being met in South Somerset.

Merriott Parish Council gives considerable attention to planning applications and is objective in its submissions to SSDC. While it has not been possible to stop development, some success has been achieved in such matters as the housing mix, including the provision of a significant number of Affordable Homes. These are either rented or sold at below local market prices.

Notwithstanding the significant development Merriott is absorbing, it is quite possible that more could be approved. There are categories

of land such as 'Brown Field' that may receive positive support. The old idea of 'Infill' could also be argued by landowners, but hopefully without success. However, all development does not need to be residential, small business units could be very useful here.

Turning to development expected this year, the 'Shiremoor' application was very contentious, and opposed by many people and as is known, the outline application for 31 dwellings was supported by Merriott Parish Council.

While it was a 'Green Field Site' development which would normally be opposed, it was of minimal agricultural value, being effectively an informal dog 'walking' area of no use to its owners.

MPC was also influenced by the then owners of the land to give two thirds of their holding to the village as 'Community Land'. The offer was not only attractive in itself, but guaranteed that it would never be built on. The concern was that sooner or later it would be. The Helaa map shows it as 'Suitable, Available and Achievable'. (Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment). It is not a guarantee that development will take place, but is a good guide and used by developers in the planning process.

Although MPC supported the original application, it opposed the later detailed one for 39 houses, as did the SSDC Area West Committee and the SSDC Regulation Committee. The government inspector approved it.

The Church Street application was opposed by MPC and the SSDC Area West Committee, but approved by the SSDC Regulation Committee. MPC will now take as positive a position as possible, in conversation with the developer to make the best of the site. For example, we will press for the minimum 35% Affordable Homes offered in the Outline Application and make suggestions that will improve the 'Street Scene' as much as possible. Many residents will value the additional raised footway in Church Street that will be part of the development and we will press for its extension to Newchester Cross as part of necessary 'Off-Site Accommodation works'.

Please address any comments to our clerk on merriott-clerk@hotmail.co.uk.

Merriott Parish Council

See plans on page 2.

Merriott Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment



Shiremoor Site Layout Plan





Fostering is looking after a child who can no longer be looked after by their family. This may be because of a temporary issue within the family. However, it may be something more serious, such as a family experiencing problems with domestic violence, addiction or abuse. In these circumstances, a child may be removed from their family by local authorities for their safety and protection. A court order will decree if living conditions are not working and allow the child or young person to come under the protection of the law.

Have you considered fostering?

Foster care is a way of providing a young person with a stable, safe home environment where they are looked after by a foster parent. This arrangement allows a child, who was previously neglected or inadequately cared for, to benefit from all the things you would expect in a family; love, respect, security, safety and support.

Choosing to become a foster carer is a life-changing experience, but it can be one of the most rewarding careers out there. When you choose to become a foster carer, you are choosing to make a difference, to help and support a disadvantaged young person and to give back to society. You are giving someone

a chance at a new life, where they are cared for, supported in their development and most importantly, safe.

If you have a space in your home and heart, you could really make a difference by choosing to foster a child. If you're interested in providing a loving family for a child, have ever considered fostering or would simply like to learn more about the process, contact our friendly team at Fusion Fostering today.

For an informal chat, contact Nigel Bell email: nbell@fusionfostering.co.uk or mob: 07974658782 or visit: www.fusionfostering.com

Nigel Bell

In Liz's good books!



Here I am, back again after the Christmas and New Year break! We are so fortunate in living in a picturesque village and

having gardens and outdoor areas which attract birds and other wildlife. As I write, two Collared Doves have flown into the maple tree looking for seeds thrown out of the bird feeder by the fussy Sparrows. The Blackbirds are enjoying the crab apples having stripped the variegated Holly Bush of berries before Christmas. They also like the mealworms I sprinkle about for the Robins, but Bryher also likes these, so I have now resorted to putting mealworms in the tortoise garden which is dog proof!

During lockdown I can recommend jigsaw puzzles as a time filler though they do stretch one's patience and I am not blessed with too much! You'll be pleased to know I am basking in L's "good books" as a lovely box of Isles of Scilly Narcissi arrived yesterday just as all the cards and decorations had been taken down – the harbingers of Spring!

Peter Fisk

Merriott Childcare - Charlotte Hamlin

We are a registered childcare provider in Merriott. We strive to provide flexible, and ad-hoc, professional childcare in a safe home from home environment.

All children have the right to be understood as individuals and given opportunities for imagination, creativity & play. We have a large garden with climbing equipment and space to explore.

We are now offering forest school sessions for the children at the setting. This involves lots of outdoor activities: learning about nature, arts and crafts with natural products, exploration and discovery in the local outdoor environments and respecting the



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07721 018335
www.charlottehamlin.co.uk

environment. For the older children we may also use tools and fire to learn important life skills. Children are involved in animal care, enabling them to have an understanding of the animals' needs.

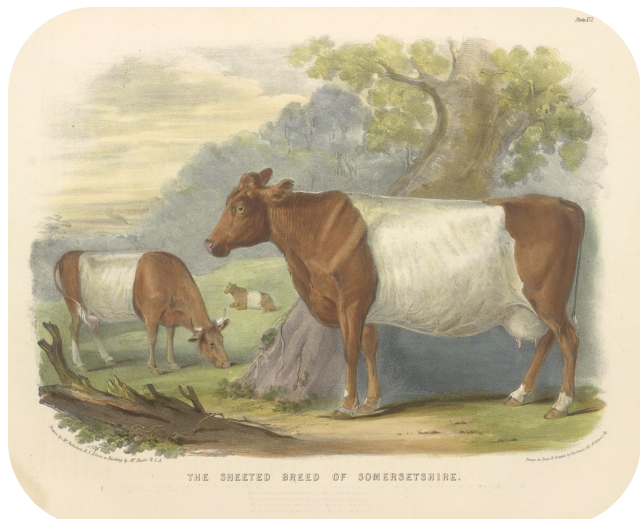
We regularly visit the local community facilities, the aqua centre in Crewkerne and small holdings in the village. Outside providers visit the setting bringing individual skills and activities.

Opening times are 06.00 - 18.30 Monday to Friday. We provide school runs to Merriott First School and Merriott Pre-school. We accept early years funding. Please visit the website for more information.

Did you know

Somerset used to have its own breed of cattle.

In the 18th century the Dutch nobility allowed their highly prized belted cattle to be imported into Somerset, where they were mated to local red cattle, possibly Devon Reds. The offspring, which were used for both milk and beef, had a distinctive white belt, or sheet and were known as Sheeted Somersetshire cattle. There is one famous illustration of this breed, in a book on livestock of the United Kingdom by Professor David Low of Edinburgh University dated 1842, showing a horned cow owned by Sir John Phelips of Montacute House, and a polled cow owned by Mr John Weir of West Camel. The last herd of these cattle died in the 1930's as a result of tuberculosis.



Sheeted Somersetshire cattle; Polled cow, 4 years old belonging to Mr John Weir of West Camel and a horned cow, also 4 years old, belonging to Mr John Phelips of Montacute House

Distinctive sheeted cattle are found in Scotland. Belted Gallo-ways are a hardy beef breed there, though they are also found in other parts of the UK. Four years ago, Mr Andrew Tanner of Chew Stoke in north Somerset started to re-create Sheeted Somersetshire cattle. He is doing this by importing, as semen, the same belted breed of cattle from Holland as was brought over in the 18th century and mating them with local red cattle. The Dutch breed is the belted Lakenvelder, which can be red or black with a white stripe. The cows have small fat globules in their milk which is very suitable for cheese making. The first calves were born in the spring of 2018 and a Breed Society formed in 2019. Several farmers are participating in this project one of whom lives not far from Merriott. I was fortunate to make a visit to the farm in the autumn and to see the newly created Sheeted Somerset cattle. The farmer concerned

(Simon Saunders) is keen for the county to have its own distinct breed of cattle, which is a strong selling point for the beef and dairy products coming from these animals.

It will take a few generations for the breed to become separate and distinct but there is considerable enthusiasm for this 'recreation' to become a local feature of the landscape and to provide high quality beef and dairy products.

John Bowman



Three cows at the farm in Chew Stoke taken in summer 2020



A local 'recreation' of Sheeted Somerset cattle bred by Simon Saunders; cow with its calf born in 2020



A Great Initiative

The team at the Merriott Social Venue (Leyland and Zephania Elson) have been busy refurbishing the IT equipment that was no longer needed and had been donated by folks in the village. As a result of the Elson's hard work and expertise, the Merriott First School has been provided with 4 working laptops and 3 tablets that can now be distributed to youngsters that currently don't possess the ability to engage with their teachers and the COVID driven home schooling.

Thank you to all who have made this support possible and especially to the Elsons for giving these machines a new lease of life. If you would like to support this initiative, you can drop off any electronic items in the green recycle collection bin to the side of the Merriott Social Venue.

Steve Bateman

News from All Saints' Church



Warm greetings and best wishes from all of us at All Saints to you and your families for this new year of 2021. But here we are in Lock-down mk.3 and 2021 doesn't look that great so far. We will have to work hard to find a joy or blessing in the days ahead. First the bad news. On the advice of Bishop Ruth, and with the support of our Churchwardens and PCC members, we have taken the decision to suspend Sunday services for the time being.

While the law allowed us to continue with public worship, we felt that we have a duty to protect our congregations, community and church staff.

Worship in the church may have stopped for a while, but that does not mean that the church has disappeared or gone to sleep! Here's what you can do:-

- Join one of our Sunday virtual services! These will either be films posted on YouTube (search for the 'Merriott Benefice' Channel) or live via Zoom.
- Join our weekly service of 'Compline' (Night Prayer) via Zoom every Wednesday at 8pm. Links and invitations for these go out by email, so....
- Get yourself on our weekly email list for help and resources. Contact details below.
- Come to one of our churches for some quiet prayer. Merriott, Lopen and Hinton churches will remain open twice a week for as long as it is allowed:- 10am-12pm on Sundays and 2pm-4pm on Wednesdays. Dinnington is open 10am-12pm on Sundays.
- Check the national Church of England website (www.churchofengland.org/) for lots of resources on prayer and worship.
- Visit the Bath and Wells Diocesan website (www.bathandwells.org.uk) for local information, ideas and things to join in with.
- Get in touch with us if you want a chat, are worried, lonely or want prayer for something.

Finally, please be assured that God is with us...

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Rev Bob Hicks 01460 76406
bobhicks66@gmail.com

Merriott Help Reminder

We are still here for you if you find yourself self isolating or shielding once again.

We are a group of volunteers in Merriott or very close by, who can help you with shopping, pharmacy trips, dog walking or just someone to talk to on the phone. Hopefully you will still have the contact numbers of who to ring, but if you don't you can ring Revs Bob and Julia Hicks on 01460 76406 or Sue Wright on 01460 279897 and we will put you in touch with someone who can help.

Stay safe everyone.

Sue Wright

Gardening quote of the month



Sent in by Mo Frampton

"He knows no winter, he who loves the soil,
For, stormy days, when he is free from toil,
He plans his summer crops, selects his seeds
From bright-paged catalogues for garden needs.
When looking out upon frost-silvered fields,
He visualises autumn's golden yields;
He sees in snow and sleet and icy rain
Precious moisture for his early grain;
He hears spring-heralds in the storm's turmoil
He knows no winter, he who loves the soil."
Sudie Stuart Hager, 'He Knows No Winter'



Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Lent – the 40 days leading up to Easter –

was traditionally a time of fasting and on Shrove Tuesday, Anglo-Saxon Christians went to confession and were "shriven" (absolved from their sins). A bell would be rung to call people to confession. This came to be called the "Pancake Bell" and is still rung today.

Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast and pancakes are the perfect way of using up these ingredients.

Paula Bateman



Fusion
Fostering

Have you considered Fostering?

There is a national shortage of foster carers, for the many children needing a stable and supportive home life. Fostering can be a challenging but also a hugely rewarding experience; Foster families play a critical role in supporting the emotional and behavioural needs of young people, whilst offering them a consistent, stable and happy place to live, a sense of belonging and the opportunity to experience positive parental role models.

Fusion Fostering is based in North Curry; your local team of social workers and support workers are there to provide ongoing support and training for foster carers to enable the children in their care to settle in and thrive in their new environment. For more information, please call Nigel on 0797 465 8782 or email: nbell@fusionfostering.com.



Inspired by this photo which we published in the May 2020 edition of the Merriott Messenger, Janet Lailey wrote this poem.

Tumble-Down Dick

A bright, sturdy succulent plant
growing straight up, a handspan tall,
a silvery sheen on bulbous fingers,
swelling directly from its stem;
nothing like twigs or leaves
as usually known.

A clown of a plant
taking himself seriously, proudly
exhibiting the swollen cockade
of extra shoots crowding his crown.

And today he toppled over
and we saw his rotten stem,
quite brown and decayed.
His connection to his root,
his precarious hold on life, severed,
probably gradually decaying for weeks.
He spent the summer sunbathing
on the doorstep, happily growing big,
but then had suffered too many autumn downpours.
Even so he had still looked flourishing.

Don't we all try to do the same?

Janet Lailey



Haselbury Mill, Underhill

Application to vary condition 1 (approved plans) to slightly change the position of building 20/03085/S73A Status: Awaiting decision

43 Shiremoor Hill

Notification of intent to carry out tree surgery works within a conservation area 20/03203/TCA Status: Decided

The Hamstones Church Street

Notification of intent to carry out tree works within a conservation area 20/03202/TCA Status: Decided

7 Higher Street

Proposed extension to dwelling. Replacement dormer roofs, front dormer windows, gable end render and carport. 20/02877/HOU Status: Approved

Bramble Nook Moorlands Road

Erection of single storey rear extension to dwelling, alterations including conversion of existing garage to form additional living space and the erection of detached garage 20/01880/HOU Status: Approved

2 Sherlands Gardens

Loft conversion to include 2 bedrooms/1 bathroom, a store room, 3 rear dormer windows and 2 front velux windows. Single storey extension to rear and additional first floor window to be added to front of dwelling. 20/01152/HOU Status: Approved

Marion Biggs

Council Budget 2021/22

At the Parish Council meeting on 11th January it was agreed that after a four year freeze on any increase the Precept would be increased by £4,000. The Precept is the amount that the Parish Council receives from Merriott council taxpayers and the increase would help fund the projects that are planned for the next two years, of which more next month. This increase will result in a Band D household being charged an extra £5 per year, comparing favourably with other large communities; this can be checked on the South Somerset District Council website.

Please note that our target is always to achieve at least 50%, and as much as 75% of all capital costs from outside sources; for example all the recent Recreation Field improvements were funded on this basis.

Claire Feasey

Clerk to Merriott Parish Council

Dates for your diary in February

(well there's not much else going on!)

12th - Chinese New Year (Year of the Ox)

14th - Valentines

16th - Shrove Tuesday

17th - Ash Wednesday



Back in time ...

14 Feb - around 270AD, Valentine, a holy priest in Rome in the days of Emperor Claudius II was executed.

1 Feb 1884 - the first portion, or fascicle, of the Oxford English Dictionary is published.

18 Feb 1885 - Mark Twain publishes "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn".

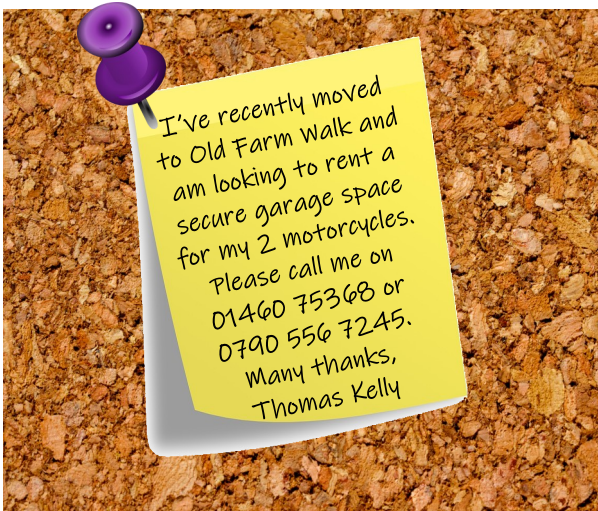
28 Feb 1953 - Cambridge University scientists James D Watson and Francis H C Crick announce they have determined the double-helix structure of DNA.

5 Feb 1958 - parking meters first appear in London's Mayfair district.

15 Feb 1971 - Pennies, bob's & half crowns all disappear as Britain goes decimal.

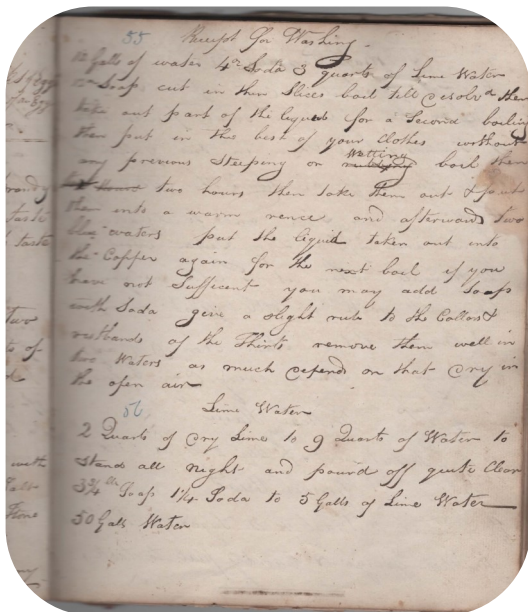
11 Feb 1975 - *Iron Lady* Margaret Thatcher becomes the first female leader of the British Conservative Party.

Paula Bateman/Jane Jackson



Another recipe from my grandfather's old book. Thank goodness we don't have to do the washing like these instructions from the early part of the 18th century. Count your blessings next time you throw your washing in the machine and forget about it!

Marion Biggs



Receipt For Washing

10 Galls of water 4 oz of Soda 3 Quarts of Lime Water
12oz soap cut in thin slices boild til dissolvd then take and part of the liquid for a second boiling then put in the best of your clothes without any previous steeping or wetting boil them two hours then take them out and put them into a warm rince and afterwards two blue waters put the liquid taken out into the copper again for the next boil if you have not sufficient you may add soap with soda give a slight rub to the collars and wristbands of the shirts remove them well in two waters as much depends on that dry in the open air

Lime Water

2 Quarts of dry lime to 9 quarts of water to stand all night and poud off quite clean 3 3/4 oz soap 1 1/4 Soda to 5 Galls of Lime Water 50 galls of water

South Petherton WI

Writing a monthly article on behalf of our WI is becoming harder if it is not to be boring. Without our usual speakers and activities there is less news to report. However, we have kept up our plan of delivering a monthly 'Meeting in a Bag' to all members and the Christmas one, with suitable festive contents, was also well received. The crocuses in our November bag are now coming into bloom, giving us a promise of Spring. The challenge to write a limerick starting with the line 'The President's cancelled our meeting' produced loads of clever and funny results. One, thinking of a non-WI President, was very funny even if the WI is supposed to be non party-political!

We base each month's contents on a combined theme and WI campaign and January's bag is based on Burns Night and, thinking of Auld Lang Syne, the campaign to alleviate loneliness by keeping in touch with members of our wider community and friends.

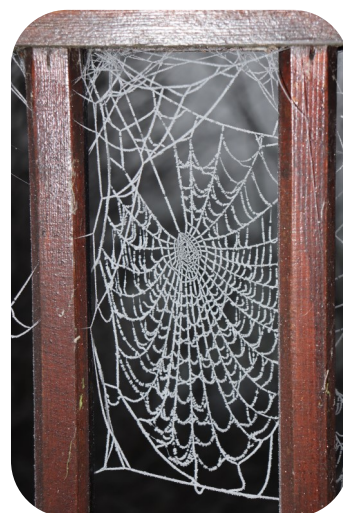
The WIs new membership year starts on 1st April. If reading these little monthly articles has made you wonder whether you would like to join, then please get in touch with either our Secretary, Jacky Spence at jhsfchapel060@gmail.com or Jan Kemp at jan Kemp@btinternet.com to find out more.

The WI Committee and I send our best wishes to everyone, hoping that we can keep ourselves and our community safe and looking forward to when, with the arrival of the vaccines, we may be on the way to a better future.

Jan Kemp

Nature at its very best

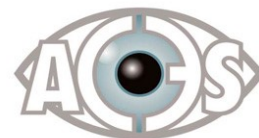
Photos sent in by Steve Bateman



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01935 478463

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