

MERRIOTT MESSENGER

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August 2020

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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 September issue is 12th August.

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Support for the re-opening of Merriott First School



With a nationwide shortage of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to address the threat of COVID-19 infection, the school team has worked hard to gather together sufficient items to maximise the safety of both staff and children.

One of the scarcer items has been good quality hand sanitiser and the science supporting the response to the virus made early identification that a fluid with an 80% alcohol content was immediately fatal for the bugs.

Reacting to a significant reduction in demand for the drinkable product, the normal production operations at the Salcombe Distillery shifted into a low gear and the creation of

Hand Sanitiser as a spin off was a clear win for the company's part in countering the illness.

As it happens, the 'spoil' left at the bottom of the copper still following distillation of gin proved to be a perfect fit for the sanitiser and with a little imagination it was bottled and **provided free** to schools in the area. After a request, the Salcombe Distillery agreed to send a box of 24 bottles of the Hand Sanitiser to the staff at Merriott (and the Federated CofE School over in Haselbury Plucknett) where it was issued to the staff for their use. (It was determined that it was not a product for use by the children). The staff are extremely grateful to Salcombe Distillery for their generous provision of a product which would otherwise have been very difficult to obtain in time for the [partial] reopening of the school at the start of June.

Steve Bateman

Free food available in Crewkerne from July 23rd

A new community group is giving people the chance to pick up a bag of free food on Thursday mornings from July 23rd.

Crewkerne Community Kitchen (CCK) is getting donations from local supermarkets of food that they can no longer sell and making it available to anyone who would like to use it, from 10.30am to midday on Thursday mornings.

Bar5 on Market St, Crewkerne is kindly opening its doors to host the distribution and COVID precautions will be in place.

It has all been made possible by the national food charity FareShare, which arranges for supermarkets to pass on food they can no longer sell (but which is still edible) to local organisations to distribute.



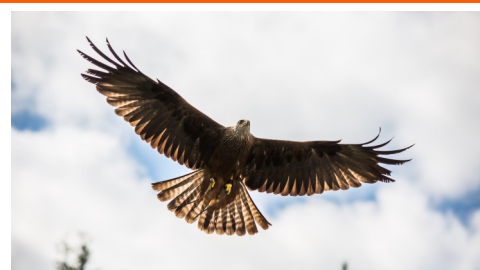
CCK has been set up by local residents Kate and Michael Fox. "This is a bit of an experiment for us," says Michael. "We will have to see what's donated, but we think there are lots of people who

would find this food useful and enjoy making use of food that would otherwise get thrown away.

Once we've got going we are hoping to start doing some cooking and providing good value meals too.

It would be great to have some volunteers to help distribute the food. If you're interested, you can get in touch with us through our Facebook page Crewkerne Community Kitchen."

For more information contact Michael Fox on 07515 483994 or michaelbernardfox@yahoo.com



Spotted in Merriott recently, have you seen this bird of prey and do you know what it is? Answer page 9

Garden Wildlife

We are all advised to diversify our lockdown experiences by taking advantage of the increased time we have on our hands by observing the wildlife on our own patch, which I duly do.

About a week ago, when looking around for some flowers for the house, I saw a completely white spider. It was chalk white – body, legs and ‘face’ – and fairly large, a bit like a common garden spider, sitting quite still in full view, on a blue iris. Other people may know this species well, but it was new to me.

Intrigued, I went to look for it again next day, and it was still sitting still as before, its front legs spread wide, apparently basking in the sun. The day after, I

brought my camera and it sensed my intrusive attention and sidled away slightly to shelter under a downturned petal.

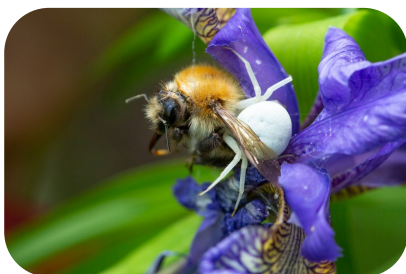
I began to wonder how it made its living: no web and no attempt at camouflage. But then I realised that the petal on which it was posing had white markings on its blue surface, so that the spider was in fact disguised as part of its chosen flower. It must be waiting for some hapless insect to alight within grabbing-range, so that it could pounce.

This turned out to be only too true! The last time I visited it, it had caught a bee, as big or bigger than itself. Still clinging to the swaying iris, the spider had its

mouth parts deeply embedded in the bee, which was thoroughly dead and looked to me as if it had an expression of horrified surprise, like any victim of sudden death.

Somehow, after that, I felt a bit squeamish about watching it any more. Next time I looked for it, it had gone. Its meal must anyway been enough to last for a week! Google tells me it was the ‘fairly rare’ White Crab Flower Spider, which lies in wait for its prey just as I had seen. To me, however, it will always be the Ghoul of the Garden. Nature can be red in tooth and claw, even when disguised as chalk white.

Janet Lailey



White Crab Flower Spider
Photos taken by Tom Nicholson-Lailey



A local agent with local property knowledge!



Martin & Co (Yeovil) are a Letting and Estate agency who keep the specific needs of our clients at the forefront of our business at all times. Completely customer-focussed, we are a locally-owned franchise of the award-winning national chain with many years of property letting, management and sales experience behind us.

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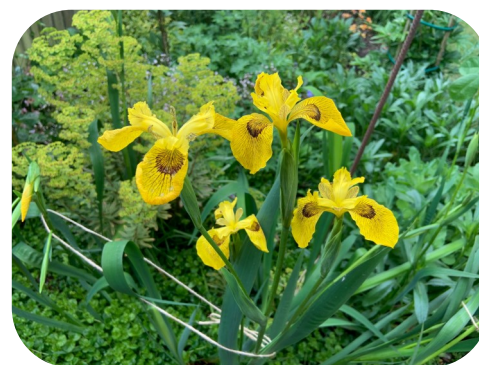
18 Princes Street, Yeovil

yeovil.martinco.com 01935 420555

yeovil@martinco.com

The flower photographs in the July issue have inspired other Merriott residents to send in theirs. If you'd like to have photos of your garden included in the next issue, please send to merriottmessenger@gmail.com

Sent in by
Mitchell Philp



Sent in by
Veronica Cameron

Thank you from Merriott Pre-school

Merriott Pre-school would just like to send out a couple of 'THANK YOUs' as we close for the summer holidays. Firstly to all our children, parents and wider community for their continued support throughout the pandemic. It has been a very unsettling, challenging, stressful and unknown time which has seen the pre-school close for over 12 weeks (which it has NEVER had to do in over 40 years of business) closing its doors suddenly to all and remaining silent inside.

However, we took all necessary precautions as set out by the Government and re-opened on 1st June to 17 children, across 5 days in 2 bubbles, where every single child literally 'skipped' through the gate on return and that's how it remained. And that was down to you all

preparing your children for the return and the wider community for allowing me to place footprints and posters up around the setting to inform all about how we were changing and alterations that had to be made.



Lastly to our fantastic five members of staff who remained working throughout on projects, training, implementing new planning and reorganising the building

with recycled furniture to make Pre-school feel like home. Staff put their lives on the line to ensure children could return and critical workers could return to the NHS. Girls you are AMAZING.

To Charlotte Hamlin and her team at Merriott Childcare for caring for the children when we were not able to... it was daily phone calls and checking data, national guidance but together we got there in the end. Thank you!

Finally to Joyce James for the donation made to our clothes bank. We have used the money to buy water funnels, containers and tubes for our new water/wet area which the children have enjoyed daily! Thank you.

Jenny Hayne

Life in a Merriott pond

I was watering the garden this morning, as instructed by my lovely wife, and had quite a shock when a large light brown frog leapt out of the undergrowth and made a hurried escape into the smaller of our two ponds. It is interesting to note that frogs are able to alter their colouring to match their current environment.

The small pond was here when we bought the property and the frogs seem to prefer this one to the larger one we had built about 3 years ago, though they assemble in the larger one for reproduction. I have counted as many as 20 frogs at spawning time!

The heron has not been seen recently, there are in excess of twenty Goldfish in the larger pond, which I have seen basking in the shallows so we cannot have lost many fish.



There are froglets and small newts in the large pond. It's a picture at present with the water lilies in flower; as usual there is a large amount of duck weed, unwanted but difficult to remove! I found a small tadpole amongst the weed I had removed but definitely not from a frog as it was a sandy colour, could it be a newt?

The birds continue to visit regularly, the sparrows are very choosy and throw a lot of seeds out which is much appreciated by the wood pigeons, collared doves, dunnock and robins who are happy to eat off the ground, as does our lovely Labradoodle! Wouldn't it be boring if everything was perfect!

Peter Fisk

My partner would like to fly his model helicopter somewhere in or around Merriott. Does anyone know of any model flying clubs nearby, or perhaps a farmer who would allow him to fly in a field? He flies electric models and they are not noisy. Thanking you in advance.

Shirley Gibbs 07912 218 864

An appeal to your kindness

Refugee Support Group has received an appeal for small tents, sleeping bags and blankets to replace those destroyed by the authorities leaving refugees without shelter of any kind. I am willing to collect from anyone if necessary. Thank you.

*Geraldine Downey
01460 271358*



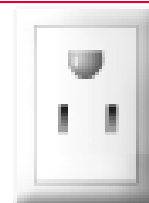
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News from All Saints Church



Dear all

At the time of writing I feel both excited and nervous about starting services again. I think many of us feel cautiously optimistic about the future and wel-

come the chance to carry on a bit more 'normally'. But some of us are still wary for a whole variety of reasons.

We are glad to be able to open All Saints church again, albeit on a reduced basis. It is just good to be able to see each other and to pray and worship in the same place. We are taking care to do this very safely so that you can return with confi-

dence. It is too early to tell you what is coming up next month, so please keep your eye on the Link magazine, church noticeboards, Facebook page and 'Achurchnearyou' website – all of which we will try to keep up to date!

Although we cannot sing yet, we are fortunate to have organists who are willing to play, which will make a big difference to our services.

We will continue to send out resources to people at home and do some online services. Please get in touch if you need help accessing any of this.

If you are like me, you may have found all of this change and decision making a

bit challenging! In some ways it was easier when it was clear cut. Now we have to use more of our own judgement to decide what is best for us and for others. I hope that people in our communities continue to be kind and patient with each other. And I hope we remember the many for whom this is still a very difficult time; those who struggle with isolation, illness, financial or relationship problems.

Our church buildings are important, but people are far more precious to God. We will need to offer each other a whole lot of love, encouragement and support as the coming months unfold.

Rev'd Julia Hicks

Meadowsweet and Bedstraws by C B Plants

Hedgerows, ditches, riverbanks and damp corners of fields in summer are where you will see the frothy cream flowers of Meadowsweet, *Filipendula ulmaria*. The common name comes from the Anglo Saxon 'meodu swete' meaning mead sweetener as the flowers have been used to sweeten mead, beer and wine since ancient times. Other names are Queen of the Meadow and Bridewort from its use as a sweet smelling strewing herb both in homes and at marriage ceremonies. It is said to have been a favourite strewing herb of Queen Elizabeth 1 and has also long been used in herbal medicine.

Meadowsweet (1st photo) is a perennial plant that dies back to the ground in autumn. It grows to a height of 1.25m, the small creamy-white flowers are held in clusters at the top of stiff stems. The deeply veined mid-green leaves are the food plant of a number of moth caterpillars.

Another flowering plant of summer hedgerows is the Hedge Bedstraw, *Galium album*. Billowing clouds of tiny



white flowers on thin green stems spill out of the hedges. This plant is related to Cleavers or Goosegrass and similarly it is an annual, setting seed to overwinter for the following year. Also of the same family, Ladies Bedstraw, (2nd photo) *Galium verum* is a perennial plant of meadows, verges and other grassy areas, it has clusters of tiny bright yellow flowers on sprawling stems that grow from a dense mat to scramble amongst and up through grasses. The flowers have a lovely honey scent and were once used to curdle milk for cheese making and also to impart a yellow colour. As the common name suggests, the Bedstraws were once used to stuff mattresses, the dried foliage has the smell of sweet hay, aiding sleep and also helping to repel lice and fleas. The herb Sweet Woodruff, *Galium odoratum*, a woodland plant that has small starry white flowers in May, was also used in the same way.

Both Meadowsweet and ladies Bedstraw can be grown in wilder parts of the garden, included in wildflower areas, on banks or at the base of hedges.

Catherine Bond

Breast Cancer Unit Appeal



Like so many charities, our fundraising events have unfortunately been cancelled. So far, we have raised over £1,380,000 of our needed £2 million. Therefore to help the Appeal, we are asking people if they might like to look in their jewellery boxes for unwanted and/or broken pieces of jewellery that they might like to donate to the Appeal while we have this enforced rest. We had hoped to have this much needed Breast Cancer Unit at Yeovil Hospital built by the beginning of next year. but now it will be delayed, as with many other things.

It would be wonderful if you felt you would like to support the Appeal with unwanted or broken jewellery. Just contact the number below and we will collect when hopefully everything is more normal.

Contact: Maggie Hague, Appeal Committee Member

Telephone Number: 01963 250108

Try This for Sighs

We must shun every one: not much fun.
 All alone; mustn't moan. Got my phone.
 When will it end? Call a friend; just press' send'.
 Let them come to my room, via Zoom.
 Propose a feast, invite a guest – ten at least!
 Plan a menu, choose a venue, when the end's due.
 To soothe and heal enjoy what's real, a song, a meal.....
 Though we're fractious nature will patch us, love will catch us.
 Life is testing but birds are nesting.
 Children play as best they may through a long day.
 Not much scope: adapt and cope, wait in hope.
 Help each other, father, mother, sister, brother.

We may sigh for days gone by, we will cry
 for those who leave; we must grieve.
 But also, live! Let us thrive and survive.
 Clouds do not last. This too shall pass.

By Janet Lailey, 17th April 2020



ARK at Egwood is finally open!! Thank you to everyone who has helped us to achieve this; we could not have done it without the loyal support of a group of volunteers, who have helped us with planting and growing, carpentry, upholstery, looking after animals and the list goes on; over the last few months the site has changed dramatically.

During lockdown we were able to support a number of vulnerable members of our community, with access to safe outdoor space. We are now fully open. on a small scale due to COVID, but hopefully we will be able to open up our services further as the pandemic subsides.

We are always looking for more volunteers, so if you are interested please contact Jackie at volunteer@arkategwood.com or call 07952 514 363. We will be arranging an Open Day as soon as we possibly can; we'd love you all to come up and see us in the very near future.

Amanda Bell



The Old Vicarage, Church Street

Notification of intent to carry out Tree Surgery works within a Conserva-

tion Area 20/01839/TCA Status: Awaiting decision

Land at Pye Corner

Application to vary condition2(approved plans) of approval 19/01021/FUL Status: Awaiting decision

Land Adjoining Moorlands Road

Application to carry out works to de-culvert a 280m stretch of the Merriott Stream near Moorlands Road, restore the stream to an open meandering natural channel, create backwater areas and a site compound and associated works 20/01464/FUL Status: Awaiting decision

Land to rear of Lower Beadon

Formation of an agricultural access and track and the erection of post and rail fence 20/01429/FUL Status: Awaiting decision

West Bassetts Higher Street

Notification of intent to carry out tree surgery works to 17 trees within a Conservation Area 20/01277/TCA Status: Decided

Milton Cottage, 20 Higher Street

Alterations, two storey and single storey extension 20/00667/HOU Status Approved

Land off Shiremoor Hill

Erection of 39 dwellings and associated works including access, open space, parking, landscaping and drainage infrastructure 20/00005//REF Status Appeal Allowed subject to conditions

Details were posted by Merriott Parish Council on Facebook on 12th July

Marion Biggs



Saturday 1st August Merriott Village Sale is back

From 10am until 3pm various houses will be selling items from their doorsteps. For further details contact Lola on 07885 424 588 or start at 8 The Piece, Hitchen, Merriott where you can find details of all the others participating or see posters.

Lola Clarke

ARB

TREE AND GARDEN SERVICES



01460 77605 / 07799 331 805



info@arbtreetandgarden.co.uk

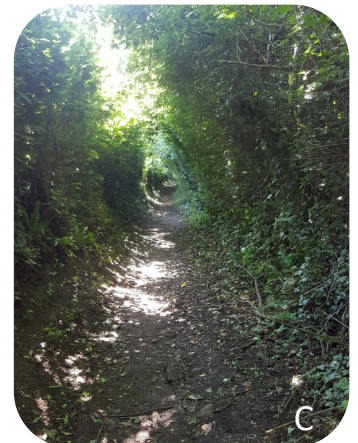
My name is Mark Boucher and I have run ARB Tree and Garden Services for the past 12 years. We cover a wide range of work including all aspects of tree management, hedge cutting, fencing and much more - no job is too big or small.

I live in Merriott and carry out work for Merriott Parish Council and have recently carried out tree works on many of the churchyard trees. We are fully qualified and insured. Visit our website to see some of our recent work.

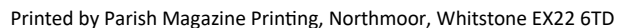
www.arbtreetandgarden.co.uk

South Circular Merriott Walk (3 miles)

1. From the Co-op head to Merriotsford, turn right at Pye Corner mini roundabout and after 100 yards on the left are 5 steps up to a kissing gate. You are now on your way.
2. Follow the path across the field, then alongside a hedge through another 2 kissing gates and you are at Tinkers Lodge Farm.
3. Turn right and you will see a large yellow arrow directing you along the path between 2 farm buildings through a broken kissing gate and leading you to the A356 passing through another kissing gate en-route.
4. Cross the A356 with care (remember your Highway Code!) and go up Boscombe Lane opposite, partially blocked by a stone trough which I think is to deter travellers - not you - and after 30 yards go through the gate and bear slightly left.
5. You are now heading towards the first of 2 lines of trees (see photo A). Keep going until you reach the beginning of a second line of trees which is distinguished by also being home to a large tin water tank. (Photo B). Pause here and look at the view to the north over the solar farm.
6. Here you turn right and follow the path round the edge of the field, aiming to the left of the large tree on the horizon in Photo B, until you reach the stile on your right. (There is actually a gap to the right which saves you climbing the stile).
7. Keep following the path (known as Waterfield Lane) which hugs the field edge, crossing just one stile, all the way up to the back of Ashlands Road. Note: ignore an inviting gate leading onto a beautiful meadow part way along - you may never be found again! Also don't be deterred if there is a large trailer nearly blocking the path up to Ashlands. I think it is another vehicle deterrent (or as its on the Crewkerne boundary it may be to keep out people from Merriott!)
8. Follow the track along the back of the houses for 50 yards where it bends sharply right and you are now on Longstrings Lane (see photo C) which will bring you out at Broadshard.
9. At Broadshard turn left along the main road (A356) for 150 yards and immediately after the house named Meadow View, turn right through a chain gate and just follow the path (this parallels Goulds Brook which you may have noticed flowing under Merriotsford Bridge).
10. The path is easy to follow and you eventually pass through Gate 1 then up a slight incline through Gate 2 and then Gate 3 which is in a little dip (see photo D) The busy main road to Crewkerne at the top of the picture seems a world away.
11. The path goes through a squeeze stile to cross the drive to Moorlands House, then along a short stretch of path through a gate and around the top of the field (its often boggy to cut across the middle) to come out opposite where you climbed up to your first kissing gate, finally turn left and stagger back to the Co-op where you started.



Peter Bryans





**MERRIOTT & HASELBURY PLUCKNETT
FIRST SCHOOLS FEDERATION**

MIDDAY SUPERVISOR

5 hours per week (Monday – Friday) 38 weeks per year, based at Merriott First School

Salary: GRADE 16 Point 2 £9.18 per hour

The Federation is looking for a friendly, energetic and enthusiastic individual to join their lunchtime supervisory team to start as soon as possible. You will work from **12.15pm to 1.15pm 5 days a week at Merriott First School**, term time only. Applicants should be:

- Well organised
- Able to demonstrate a positive and enthusiastic approach
- Enjoy working with children and young people
- Able to organise activities to ensure children are active during lunch play

The ability to offer extended time when other Midday Supervisors are unavailable and hold a Food Hygiene Certificate would be advantageous too.

Enquiries and visits are welcomed. Please contact Miss Higginbotham, Executive Headteacher on 01460 72547 or email **office@merriott.somerset.sch.uk**

Merriott First School places high importance on Safeguarding and Child Protection and the post requires a criminal background check via the disclosure procedure. All references will be verified.

Open and ready to welcome you

It is with great pleasure that I can confirm Merriott Social Venue has opened its doors again to the community.

We have had to make a few changes to the way we operate and our opening times, due to government guidelines and to keep our staff and customers safe.

Our new opening times are:

Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday 7-10pm

Thursday 7.30-10.30pm

Friday 7-11pm

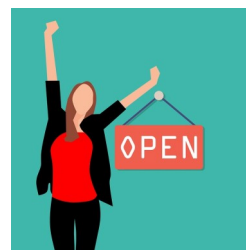
Saturday 6-11pm

Sunday 12-6pm

I would like to ask you all to be courteous to our staff when you visit as they will be following the rules set out by the Government and the executive committee, to help keep you all safe whilst visiting the venue.

Take care, stay safe and we look forward to welcoming you.

*Isaac Lisney
Chairman*



Did you know

It took the creator of the Rubik's Cube, Erno Rubik, one month to solve the cube after he created it; as of June 2018 the world record is 4.22 seconds.

Ketchup originated in China as a boiled-down brine of pickled fish and spices called 'ke-chiap'.

Facebook has more than 2.45 billion monthly active users.



**HASELBURY
MILL**



Lakeside Restaurant

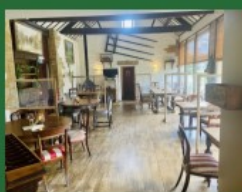
**Open 7 days a week for
Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner**

Lunch - 12pm-3pm
Set Menu (Monday to Saturday)
2 course set menu £12.95
3 course set menu £15.95
Specials Board

Light snacks - 3pm-6pm
Panini's & Sandwiches
Afternoon Tea
Picnics (24 hours notice required)

Dinner - 6pm-9pm
A La Carte Menu/Specials Board

**Not quite ready to dine out?
Collect a Takeaway and enjoy
Haselbury at home**



Spectacular Sunday Carvery 12pm-6pm

Option of Beef, Turkey, Pork, Gammon, Nut Roast

Served with selection of season vegetable, Cauliflower cheese, Roast Potatoes, Yorkshire & Gravy

Adults £12.95 Small Plate £8







Haselbury Mill, Haselbury Plucknett, Crewkerne TA18 7NY 01460 77095

www.haselburymill.co.uk



Some people have been spending a lot of time at the Allotments this summer!

Sent in by Beryl Bellamy.

Our Pets: Household hazards and a sizzling summer

I am sure our use of hand sanitisers has increased exponentially during the pandemic. There have been reports that these can be toxic to pets. They do have a high alcohol content and so are potentially harmful if a whole bottle is inadvertently eaten. However, during normal use, it rapidly evaporates from the skin and so is not harmful if our pets lick our hands afterwards.

As well as washing our hands regularly we have also been advised to clean surfaces. It is important to take extra care when we have cats or dogs in the house as most disinfectants are irritant and can cause damage to their skin or mouths, especially if they have licked treated surfaces or if cats groom themselves afterwards. Tea tree oil is used by some people as a skin antiseptic to treat wounds or other skin conditions. Pure tea tree oil should never be used on pets – even a few drops can cause severe side effects and fatalities have been reported. There is a national 24

hour helpline called the Animal Poison Line (01202 509000), which can be useful if you suspect your pet may have come into contact with some sort of poison. They give excellent triage advice and will let you know whether or not your pet needs to be seen by a vet. This is a chargeable service. About 80% of calls to them result in the pet being able to stay at home and that way your pet only receives treatment when absolutely necessary. Alternatively, you may wish to speak to your vet directly.



Our pets are hopefully getting more accustomed to the heat but, as ever, please do take care on hot days. Do not leave

When you read this, I hope we are enjoying beautiful weather after such an amazing start to summer.

your dog in a car even for just a few minutes, as cars heat up very quickly. On hot days, it is a good idea to walk your dog early in the morning or late in the evening. This is especially the case with short nosed breeds such as pugs. Pavements can get surprisingly hot and can harm your dog's feet – feel the pavement with your hands- it can hurt! If you think your dog is getting a bit too hot but are well in themselves, then cool them down with cool (not icy) water and put them in front of a fan. If, however, you think they have overheated to the extent they might be suffering from heatstroke and are getting poorly with symptoms such as excessive panting, excessive drooling, agitation, lethargy or staggering, then telephone your vet immediately. It is a good idea to pour cool water on them via a hose or bucket as a first aid measure before transporting them to the veterinary surgery as this has been shown to improve chances of survival but check with your vet first.

Danusia Nosek BVetMed MRCVS



Gardening quote of the month

Sent in by Mo Frampton

"To create a garden is to search for a better world. In our effort to improve on nature, we are guided by a vision of paradise. Whether the result is a horticultural masterpiece or only a modest vegetable patch, it is based on the expectation of a glorious future. This hope for the future is at the heart of all gardening."

Marina Schinz

Copper Beech Seedlings Free to Good Homes

I have a large, green beech tree in my garden and my neighbour has a copper beech with both trees propagating plenty of seedlings each year. I have a small number of copper beech seedlings to give away this autumn. First come, first served. Please call at my house (3 Boozer Pit) or ring 07810 128 137/01460 76544.

Mitchell Philp



Answer: Red Kite



As required by Government, the Hall has been closed since March 23rd. Recently the Government

has announced that some limited activities may resume in village halls.

The MVH committee has been in touch with regular users to enquire when they may wish to resume activities. Most previous users have indicated that they will not want to restart inside until September at the earliest and some not before next year. The Hall committee is carrying out a thorough risk assessment of the procedures which will be needed to re-open and will be requiring future users to carry out their own risk assessment.

If anyone is considering the use of the Hall please enquire via the Hall website:
www.merriottvillagehall.org.uk

John Bowman

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07970 279778 / 07738 632746

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Jayceeplumbing@gmail.com

Update on the Merriott Culvert Proposal



The proposal is to open up the Moorlands Road culvert by creating a meandering channel with backwaters (to temporarily store flood water) including a variety of in-stream habitat, seeding species rich meadow mix on the banks and tree planting. The Merriott culvert is a major factor contributing to the catchment's poor ecological status. The status is poor because of high phosphorus and sediment concentrations in the stream as well as low fish numbers caused by barriers to migration and low habitat values.



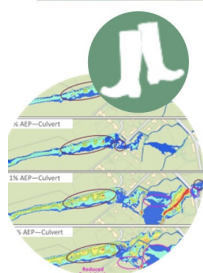
The detailed construction design (by Ghyston Engineering and Hydro-Morph) includes:

- * Cross sections and long sections defining the meandering channel allowing fish passage, floodplain connection and including suitable substrate for habitat creation and erosion reduction.
- * Engineered step-pool ramps that gently lower the stream bed from the alleviation dam to the open channel at the upstream end as well as from the open channel back into the culvert at the downstream end—passable for native fish.
- * A number of backwater areas to provide flood storage and wetland habitat.
- * Engineering drawings for a ford to allow for vehicle and livestock crossing. Construction phases, instructions to contractors, utilities and health and safety considerations.
- * Planting and habitat creation plan including securing logs in the stream, tree planting on the banks and seeding a diverse meadow mix on disturbed ground.

You may have seen the signs on the footpath - the [planning application](#) (reference 20/01464/FUL Moorlands Road Merriott) was submitted in May, along with the application for Ordinary Watercourse Consent with Somerset County Council. We have also had continued liaison with the landowners and drawn up landowner agreements.

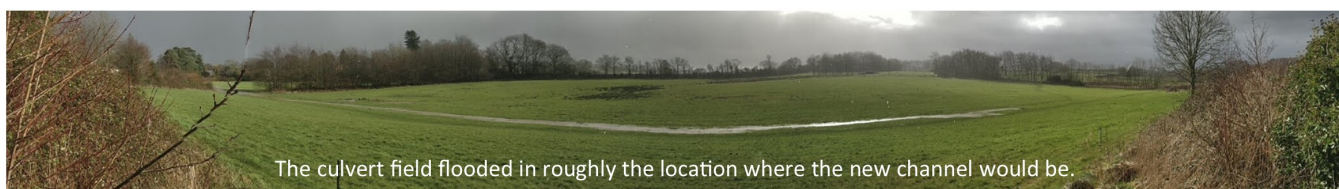
Legend

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Gates 1 | Ford |
| Permissive Footpath | Backwaters |
| Footpath | New Channel |
| Fencing | Culvert |



Flood risk modelling on the detailed design (Edenvale Young). The results were largely as reported in the last newsletter article: For flood events between 1 in 2 and 1 in 100 year storm events, the models predicted flood reduction. The functioning of the alleviation dam, protection for events up to 1 in 25 years, remains unaffected. For extreme flood events (those in excess of 1 in 100 years when the existing flood alleviation dam would be overwhelmed and Merriott already flooded) the model predicts a nil effect with possible minor increases in depth in certain areas (up to a maximum of 4cm flood depth on top of the baseline flood depth of >0.5m) and respective decreases elsewhere. Please note that the model's inaccuracy level is $\pm 2\text{cm}$.

The current **footpath will be improved** by: 1) levelling and spreading stone on the surface towards the Flood Alleviation Dam and 2) removed the hedge on the culvert side in places of low habitat value, which will widen the footpath, improving the view of the field and removing the current 'tunnel feel' and allowing use of the footpath in all weathers. The landowner is offering to **create a permissive path** through the field along the northern boundary of the stream so that walkers can enjoy the newly created wildlife areas. Please enjoy the field responsibly and adhere to the permissive path. A permissive path is granted by the landowner rather than it being a statutory right and the landowner has the right to remove a permissive path.



The culvert field flooded in roughly the location where the new channel would be.

Preliminary ecological surveys were carried out. Current guidance from the planners is that no further surveys are required. The grassland is semi improved with a few areas that are species rich, which will be avoided during construction. The hedge between the footpath and the culvert field is mainly made up of non-native or non-valuable species. The few isolated bushes of spindle and dogwood in the hedge, as well as all other trees on site, will be retained. The site provides suitable habitat for reptiles like slow worms and grass snakes. Phased strimming will encourage reptiles out of construction areas. Whilst the potential of bats using the culvert was assessed as low, we are organising an emergence survey. Construction may mean a temporary loss of habitat for bats, but the scheme will overall enhance the habitat. The site currently is not suitable for water voles and otters, and there is no evidence of badger activity.



What could our next drone photo look like?

Timescales



- * Ongoing: contractor tender
 - * Latest mid September: planning decision
 - * Autumn 2020 or spring 2021: construction
- The footpath will have to be closed whilst construction and footpath improvements are taking place.

Funding



The Merriott project is funded by a scheme under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE – EU funding) called the Water Environment Grant (WEG). The scheme is being designed to support delivery of projects to improve ecological status of rivers in England. The Merriott project attracted the funding because of its poor ecological status. The UK was underspent in the RDPE budget from the EU. If the remaining budget is not spent, it would have to be sent back to the EU.



View from the Flood Alleviation Dam in high flows

Monitoring and view to the future

Whilst the funding ends, post construction and the management responsibility falls to the riparian landowners. FWAG is not planning to walk away from the site, but to monitor the site and provide ongoing habitat management advice. Monitoring will include:



- * Assessing which species develop on the site
- * Understand / map the stream's natural evolution: use drone footage and cross sections before, during and after construction, after the first winter etc.
- * Monitoring water levels in the channel and backwater areas to check whether they temporarily store flood water on the floodplain
- * Assessing whether adaptive management is required and securing funding for those

Looking to the future, we are hoping this site will be suitable to attract maintenance funding through the Government's Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs). The schemes vision is to provide public funding for public goods, in this case thriving plants and wildlife, flood attenuation and beauty and engagement with the environment.

Thank you to all landowners involved: for their time, effort, and cooperation and for giving up land, and to anyone else who has helped this project to progress.

For further information contact Sabine McEwan on 07769321135
or sabine.mcewan@fwagsw.org.uk

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