

MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL PARISH BOOKLET

Written reports from Council, Community Groups
and Organisations

3rd April 2023

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MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23

- Neighbourhood Plan Review
 - Implementation, monitor and use of policies
 - Review of Plan
- To input and influence the Local Plan Review and Statement of Common Ground with Wiltshire Council and Melksham Town Council
- To influence and lobby in conjunction with Wiltshire Area Local Planning Alliance (WALPA) Central Government to change the new NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) legislation for Neighbourhood Plans protected to a 3-year land supply, to hold for more than 2 years (working with WALPA Wiltshire Area Localism & Planning Alliance)
- Water refill points – post covid to look at installing water refill points at Shaw & Bowerhill sports field
- To review the Emergency Plan (reflect on learning from Covid)
- To engage with stakeholders and contractors to ensure a smooth transition for staff, councillors and parishioners during the Parish Council's move into new office and meeting space accommodation at the Campus in Autumn 2022
- Construction of Berryfield Village Hall
- Bowerhill Sports Field enhancement project – teen shelter/gym equipment
- Shurnhold Fields car park and improved entrance project
- To continue to maintain a good working relationship with Wiltshire Council, the Area Board and all the neighbouring parishes who abut Melksham Without.
- Progress a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) sharing arrangement with Melksham Town Council now the Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted.
- Progress East of Melksham community centre with Melksham Town Council

LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES FOR 4 YEAR TERM OF OFFICE 2021 - 2025

- To use less paper/become more climate friendly (in line with Wiltshire Council's goal of being Carbon Neutral by 2030)
- Work towards obtaining Quality Gold Award <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-council-award-scheme>
- To provide enhanced access to council meetings via remote technology to improve community engagement
- To obtain mains drainage for Beanacre
- To achieve best outcome for the parish as a whole, for the A350 Bypass

Approved at Annual Council meeting on 16 May 2022

Melksham Without Parish Council

Reports from Council, Groups and Organisations

April 2023

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 3rd APRIL 2023

Councillor John Glover

In my second report for the Annual Parish Meeting, I am extremely pleased to report the move of the Council from our property at Queen Elizabeth Playing Fields, (Pavilion) to our new facilities at Melksham Community Campus in August last year. The environment and location are better for staff, Councillors and Residents. Nevertheless, this is not a permanent home and work remains to be undertaken to ensure that our future is secured. Whether it be in the Campus or elsewhere. In doing this we need to ensure value for money of any proposed solutions.

Since the last Annual Parish meeting, we have had to say goodbye to former Councillor Mary Pile and welcome to Councillor Peter Richardson who was co-opted to the Council following 3 people following discussions with 3 applicants.

PRECEPT

The Precept set for 2023/24 is £245,271.03, an increase of 4.1% on last year's precept. An average Band D household will contribute £84.71, the same as last year. The precept has risen because of the effects of general inflation across all aspects of the Council's business. As Parish Council's continue to fill some of the gaps left by County Councils, it is inevitable that more money is needed to provide, maintain and improve facilities such as village halls, play areas and playing fields. However, because of additional houses within the parish, the Parish Council Tax element has remained the same. The parish council have strived to maintain services without increasing the burden on residents, against the backdrop of the current cost of living crisis.

PLANNING

Reviewing and commenting on plans submitted to Wiltshire Council are an important part of MWPC's responsibilities, one we take very seriously. This year we received 91 planning applications, including 8 large developments. Since last year's Annual meeting we have seen occupation of the 150 houses in Semington Road, Berryfield and the Pathfinder Place development, Bowerhill, where buildings have been occupied on the eastern part of the site and work has commenced on the western part. The Davey Play Area has been accepted by the Parish Council but the play area on Bowood View still remains with developers. The Semington Road development has provided Berryfield with a much needed new village hall, the cost of which was largely provided by developers. Rigg Construction had the task and the project handover was in September 2022.

The current village hall committee were involved with the final fitting decisions, as have members of the community that have come forward. A new committee now runs this new facility with bookings, since the end of February 2023.

As a Council we continue to be very proactive on new proposals. Whether we approve of them or not, it is our responsibility to get the best deal for our parishioners

in terms of community gains. The continuing lack of a five-year land supply from Wiltshire Council has resulted in several opportunistic proposals from developers for sites over the last few years which would not normally have been considered at this stage. One of these proposals, for 144 houses in Semington Road, was vigorously opposed but narrowly passed by Wiltshire Council. We are still in discussions with the developers and start on site is still awaiting.

There have been other potential developments put forward in a speculative way to take advantage of the lack of a five-year land supply. A second application for approximately 200 houses and a 70-bed care home has been made for a site south of Western Way. This too is opposed by Parish and Town Councils, on access grounds and a preference for employment use for the site. An application, for 50 houses near Townsend Farm, turned down by Wiltshire planners, was approved on appeal, notwithstanding presentations having been made by both Wiltshire Council and the Parish Council against the appeal as it did not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan. Proposals have recently been submitted for 53 dwellings adjacent to this site with the Parish council objecting to proposals and a decision pending. The site to the west of the A350 between Melksham and Beanacre had been put forward, and again Town and Parish had been concerned with the sustainability of the site for major development. However, this has not proceeded.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The continuing spate of opportunistic planning applications further underlines the importance of a Neighbourhood Plan. Our plan passed all its hurdles and was made in July 2021. Whilst having a Neighbourhood Plan does not stop development outright, it does ensure that it goes where we want it and meets our criteria for design and facilities. For the first two years it also offers protection against speculative development, even if the local authority can only demonstrate a 3 year housing land supply; this strength expires in July 2023 and at present the Local Plan review by Wiltshire Council is yet to be completed.

Therefore, your Council, working with Melksham Town Council and Place Consultants, with Government funding, embarked on an early review of the plan to ensure an updated plan is in place to extend the 3-year land supply eligibility by a further 2 years, with a view to completion in July 2023. We are slightly behind schedule but if a Government Review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is brought in, we may have further protection for another 3 years under this updated legislation.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Community Emergency group in Shaw and Whitley continue their excellent work monitoring the flood risks in their area. They have regular work parties and are always on hand in times of heavy rain. They always work with enthusiasm and great community spirit, and are held as exemplars of what a local emergency group can do.

A community resilience practical exercise took place on 28th and 29th March, testing resilience during a power cut and I am pleased to say our community volunteers in Shaw & Whitley took part in this exercise.

SHURNHOLD FIELDS

This is a joint project of with Melksham Town Council. One of the remaining major tasks to complete is the construction of a small car park and improvements to the entrance. Unfortunately, this has been held up by discussions between the Environment Agency and the Land Drainage team at Wiltshire Council, as some flood prevention works are planned with the spoil for the ground works, whilst the diggers are on site.

A new wildflower meadow area is proposed to be planted by Wessex Water as biodiversity offset for their first-time mains drainage project planned for Beanacre.

Following the resignation of several of the Committee Members, there had been a concern the Friends of Shurnhold Fields Group would fold; however, I am pleased to say several people stepped forward at their AGM in November last year and the group continue with their excellent work.

The parish continues its successful partnership with the Town to fund the Market Place toilets and continues with the deployment its own Speed Indicator Device (SID) to deter speeding on our roads; with the purchase of a 2nd device to give more regular coverage in the parish in eligible sites.

AT THE COUNCIL

I should like to congratulate all the staff for their work over the last few years, but especially our seamless move from the Pavilion to the Campus and our attempts to go paperless!!! I would also like to praise staff who, in their own time, have continued to study for appropriate qualifications to assist with their tasks.

WHAT NEXT?

The council will continue to take on play areas provided by developers. Although we have still to take on the new Whitworth play area on the Bowood View estate. Legal and technical issues have prevented both Wiltshire Council and ourselves from accepting this facility.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Finally, once again, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support over the last 12 months. Especially during my 3-month absence in Australia. I am still trying to get back in the swing of things after that rest!

Thank you all once again.

Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford- Annual Parish Report

At the time of preparing my last annual report I was hoping to see us moving towards normality and getting back to 'business as usual'. If only. This has been another quite extraordinary year, and instead of recovering from the hangover of the pandemic we are now having to deal with the fallout of a war on Europe's mainland. The impact on fuel and food prices has compounded global inflationary pressures, itself an initial result of the pent-up demand caused by the worldwide shut down and blockage of the Suez Canal. This has battered council business plans and spending programs and we are now seeing councils across the country debilitated by unbalanced budgets and unknown future cost savings pencilled into their forecasts. Fortunately, at Wiltshire Council we weathered the storm far better than our peers.

Despite substantial pay rises agreed by local government representatives and staff, and construction material inflation averaging 13%, Wiltshire Council has been able to pass a balanced budget with a 5% increase, 2% of which is dedicated to adult social care. It has also managed to maintain a capital investment strategy and program resulting in a £4m investment in Melksham House, an expansion of its social housing stock, an energy efficiency program retrofitting council houses and buildings as well as a significant investment in gully clearing, litter cleaning and environment investment programs. We have been able to do all of this due to a relentless focus on efficiency savings and sound business models underpinning investment decisions.

The economic back drop is perhaps of lesser significance relative to the human tragedy of the many refugees that have been welcomed into Wiltshire homes by some generous residents of the county. As a council, Wiltshire has sought to chart a sustainable path to rehousing these individuals and is using money provided by government, alongside borrowing to acquire new homes for their use. This is in addition to the many properties that the council is buying and developing for residents in housing need. When our guests return to the Ukraine, these homes will be made available for Wiltshire residents, a lasting legacy contrasting with the short-term approach of subsidising rents by many other councils.

As a Cabinet member, I have been fortunate enough to be sat around the table shaping these decisions, difficult as many are but in addition, I have also been working to shape the town and support the electorate at a more local level too. In my Cabinet capacity I have been working with officers to influence the future of the sites vacated as part of the campus program including Melksham House, the old Christie Miller sports centre, the library, and Blue Pool sites.

This year has also been my second year as the Chairman of the Melksham Area Board. This group have invested around £60,000 in local community projects and through the LHFIFG (Local Highway and Footway Improvement group), circa £30,000 in highways improvements including the resurfacing of the pavement between George Ward Gardens and Shaw. I have also been able to focus its work on a local place shaping agenda and at our last Area Board Meeting we had about 50 town and parish residents discussing the neighbourhood plan, town centre masterplan, highway works and environmental projects.

Looking to the next year, I have several exciting projects that I am keen to push forward including expanding social and affordable housing for our residents, working to ensure more investment in the highways network, developing environmental projects and further investment in our community groups.

Councillor Nick Holder Bowerhill Division

Over the last year, I have continued to work very closely with the Parish Council on the planning applications submitted in Bowerhill. Due to the excellent collaboration with them and residents in the Pathfinder Place development, we have finally got to a position where the developers have completed most of their planning obligations, and importantly the pedestrian crossings and the street lighting have been completed and are fully operational. There are a few minor issues still to be resolved, and we continue to challenge the developer to complete, what are, their legal obligations. I am pleased that a Pathfinder Place Residents Association has been set up and I have been asked to sit on their committee to assist them as they grow into the role.

The planning application for the new Primary School at Bowerhill, should be coming forward in the next few months, and it has now confirmed the process to appoint a contractor has been started.

The work to provide a sustainable solution to the hedging and ditch issues backing onto Hornchurch open space from Kittyhawk Close was completed in the Autumn and this has worked well. The input we had from residents was very helpful and vital in ensuring the final scheme would work.

Continuing the theme of input from residents, I was pleased to work with families in Magister Road to amend the area of grass cutting/wildflower near to their houses and Harvard Close. We were able to work with council officers to provide a safe place for their children to play football and still be visible to their parents. I was delighted to be invited to join them for a kick about!

I know you will be continued to be well served by your Parish Councillors supported by the excellent officer team led by the Clerk.

Finally, if any resident needs to contact me please do so, on 07931 905520 or by email nick.holder@wiltshire.gov.uk

Councillor Nick Holder

Bowerhill Division

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ANNUAL REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR JONATHON SEED

Another year passes and I am really getting stuck in to representing the parts of my division that are included in the Melksham Without Parish Council Area. I have also worked to develop a good working relationship with the Parish Council. I try to attend all full meetings of the Council, although they often clash with the other six Parish Councils that I need to attend, so sometimes I have to attend briefly at each. I believe that it is important for your local Wiltshire Councillor to be visible and accessible, so Parish Council attendance is vital. In addition, I am always happy to be contacted directly by e mail or telephone on local government issues.

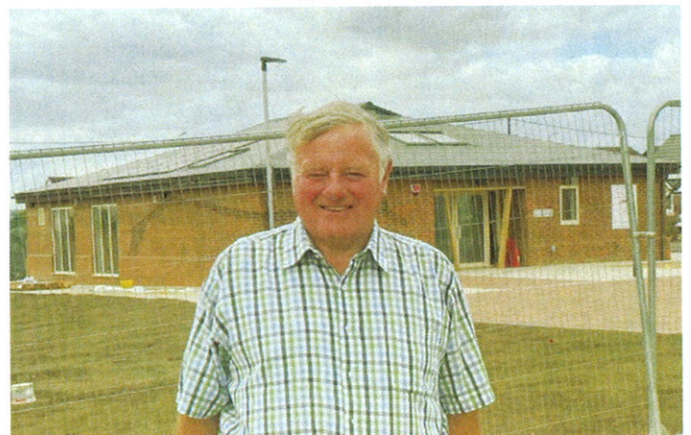
Visibility and connection to the community are critical and for me the more local the more important. I enjoyed attending the opening of Berryfield Village Hall earlier this year and it was good to join with the local community and dignitaries in celebrating the opening of this long awaited and much welcomed community asset. I attended the inaugural meeting of the Village Hall management committee and it is great to see them operating so effectively with strong bookings for the Hall. Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group are a small but important community group who do wonderful work to bring their community together. I found the meeting that I attended in March to be really informative and I left with several dates in my diary where I can join the community at local events.

There are also many other local issues on which your Wiltshire Councillor has particular focus. These include planning, highways and Council services. I have worked closely with the Parish Council on planning issues and share their concern over poorly planned large developments that appear with monotonous regularity in the area. I am also very concerned at the state of our roads but was pleased to see the Government grant over £3million for pothole repairs in Wiltshire in the spring budget. We now need to make sure that we get our fair share of that funding and that can only be by everyone reporting every pothole on the MyWilts app. If it is not reported it will not get fixed.

I also keep a careful watch on Council service delivery and will not be constrained by Party policy. One issue is that I do have concerns at new Recycling Bin policies. I support an attempt to increase recycling targets but have real concerns that the policy is not being delivered with a light touch. I do not feel that any rummaging through bins or photographing of bin content, as reported on social media, is acceptable and I am campaigning against this. I also have concerns at refusal to empty bins after little warning about content and am representing this to the Cabinet Member. We need to find a way of improving recycling rates whilst at the same time maintaining the service that residents want.

On a personal note, I am pleased to report that I have been reselected by my Party to fight the next local election and hope to be able to represent you for years to come. Finally, if you need to contact me, please e mail me or telephone me, details below.

Jonathon Seed
Wiltshire Councillor for Melksham Without West and Rural
Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk
07770 774463



Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)

2022/23 Report

The BRAG picnic area working party volunteers continue to meet at the picnic area on Tuesday mornings during the spring, summer and autumn months (weather permitting) and have done an amazing job maintaining and improving both the picnic site and the footpath/bridleway leading to the canal. Maintenance has been performed on the noticeboard, that was starting to show signs of rot due to water ingress, and benches have been repaired once again after more vandalism. The display lecterns at the picnic area are now showing signs of rot and there is a plan to restore and replace them with more robust and more maintainable replacements.

In conjunction with MWPC a number of benches around the Bowerhill area have been replaced and some new reclaimed plastic ones installed. Also, a new picnic table and bin was installed at the Hornchurch Road Public Open Space in the summer giving teenagers somewhere to meet away from the toddlers play area. In various areas of the village some new litter bins have been installed and some moved to offer a better coverage.

The litter-picking normally carried out by BRAG members/volunteers has had to be put on hold but will hopefully be resurrected soon. The group has continued to loan out litter picking equipment to the local Beavers, Cubs and Scouts for use in the village.

The new re-wild project at the end of Brabazon Way, which is intended to create a wildlife friendly area with wild flowers and grasses, has suffered some setbacks as the council's maintenance contractor inadvertently keeps cutting the grass across the whole area. Priority for the moment is to replace dead Blackthorn and Hawthorn on the site and start planting once the contractors are re-advised.

We continue to work with MWPC to address locality issues such as restore community resources damaged by weather, vandalism and natural overgrowth of trees and shrubbery.

The group are now represented on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Of course, the big issue currently on residents' minds is the proposed Melksham A350 bypass. The group has committed to an against the bypass stance and continues to work with and support the Stop The Melksham Bypass group.

Plans for the future

- Working with our local councillors and MWPC to ensure local residents are kept fully apprised of any future housing developments and the impact that any future Melksham bypass may have on them, the surrounding green areas and wildlife. Where appropriate gain support and campaign for change.
- Continue to work with our local councillors and MWPC to ensure that the housing development at Pathfinder Way delivers all that was promised, in particular the new proposed Primary school and that it is positioned so that it benefits the whole village.

- Working with our local councillors and MWPC, local residents and interested youth groups to identify whether a youth shelter is appropriate and if so where it is best located on the estate.
- Arrange regular litter picks and continue to involve residents - in particular the younger generation.
- Look to obtain funding to support the addition of further benches and picnic tables around the estate.
- Continue with the work at the Picnic area and the promotion of its use - in particular to local schools and nurseries.
- Continue to develop any green areas or any unused areas within the village with planting of trees, bulbs and plants.
- Listen to residents' concerns and act appropriately to address issues that arise.
- Find new members, elect a new committee and appoint new Executive Officers in an effort to inject new life into the group and carry its business forward into the future.

Thank you to all Bowerhill residents for your continued support and a big thank you to the outgoing committee and Executive Officers for your tireless work in making Bowerhill a better place to live and work.

Mark Blackham,
Chair
Bowerhill Residents Action Group
February 2023.

Community Action Whitley and Shaw

About CAWS

Community Action: Whitley and Shaw (CAWS) is a community group that has been set up to represent local residents and businesses, seeking to achieve changes and improvements to the quality of life and wellbeing of local people. It promotes community cohesion, coordinates community action, increases awareness and consults on future developments, and provides a vital link between residents and businesses and the local authorities. CAWS campaigns and projects are wide ranging from trying to improve road safety for drivers and pedestrians, to providing input to the Neighbourhood and Local Plans. CAWS is run entirely by volunteers with a commitment to recycle any funds raised through local events etc. back into the community and we have a number of active campaigns and projects, some of which are mentioned below, to that end.

Shaw & Whitley Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fair

The Jubilee Fair took place on 4 June 2022. This was 9 months in the planning and, for a while, was at risk of being a complete washout! However, it was a magnificent success with approx. 2,000 attendees over the course of the afternoon, fantastic feedback, and over £4,500 raised for community projects. A highlight of the event was the "Create a Crown" competition which involved all the children at Shaw School designing a crown. The winning design was made in silver by Coppins of Corsham and will soon go on display at Shaw School. We are very grateful for the support of MWPC and local sponsors in providing funding towards the event. To further mark the jubilee, we will be planting some trees around the villages in the autumn which have kindly been donated by Lowdens Garden Centre. The 2023 Summer Event will be on 17 June 2023, again at Shaw Playing Field.

Road Safety

The CAWS road safety campaign is progressing well and we have had positive discussions with MWPC to better understand where we should focus our efforts and any limited funding. Activities are wide ranging in include improving signage (we are hopeful that 30 MPH road marking may be provided in 2023), bin stickers (over 500 slow down stickers have been provided to residents), discussions regarding parking outside Shaw School, and, potentially, changes to Speed Information Display deployments and some speed limits although these might be understandably constrained by legislation, other local priorities and limited local authority funding. We have been delighted to see more active speed enforcement over the last 6 months and our Speed Watch team continue to do excellent work.

Local History

A project to collect and publish local history etc. is progressing well with input from many local residents, and CAWS hopes to publish a short book in the next few months. Also, with the support of MWPC, we hope to place two topography signs in the area to provide information on local points of interest and walking routes between them.

Support to the other Local Groups

Our volunteers in the Community Emergency Group have done sterling work over the last year supporting our local communities with flooding, snow and ice risks and other emergency planning activities and CAWS was delighted to be able to broker a grant from SSEN for a new mobile generator for the team. We were pleased to be able to provide a donation to Melksham Foodbank in 2022, support the Shaw School Summer Fete, support the Shaw Church Christmas Tree event in December 2022, and work with Shaw Village Hall regarding funding for some capital repairs. We have also been working more closely with the Gardening Club whose help and advice on our tree planning project has been particularly helpful.

Other Projects and Campaigns

We have also been busy over the last year keeping our Telephone Box Library operational which is a local asset valued by many local residents. In the next year we will continue to develop our understanding of how best to improve the broadband service in our area, deliver at least two Litter Picks, continue consultation on community planning and development activities as necessary, and provide at least one Chatty Bench somewhere in our area.

Summary

We have had a very busy 12 months but we are proud to be pushing forward with initiatives that will benefit our local communities in one way or another and the ongoing support of MWPC is very important to us in delivering on those commitments. Thank you MWPC!

Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group Annual Parish Report **(BASRAG)**

BASRAG (Berryfield and Semington Road Action Group) has been active in Berryfield for many years, with a remit to organise community events throughout the year. We were very active up until early 2020 when COVID called a halt to all such activities. We always worked closely with the old Village Hall committee, basing all our events around the hall and playground.

With the advent of the new hall, the time had come to resurrect BASRAG, which we did with a meeting on March 9th in the new hall. We were delighted when several new members attended, and we have decided to arrange and fund the following events for this calendar year:

- March 18th. Litter pick
- April 8th. Easter Egg Hunt
- April 13th BASRAG AGM, Village Hall
- August (date to be arranged) Fun in the Sun at the Village Hall
- October 28th (tbc) Halloween Crafts
- December Christmas Event

We hope the new committee to be elected on April 13th will be able to continue the good work.

Shaw Playing Fields and Village Hall Trust Report - March 2023

The Shaw Playing Fields and Village Hall trust have had a successful year with income through bookings continuing to rise following the adoption of a new Hall Booking system. The hall remains busy with the playing fields in regular use and offering an important set of facilities to the local community. The key challenge remains the ability for the committee to attract volunteers over the longer-term.

The Chair of the Committee remains Mike Booth who is supported by Joan Boorer as Treasurer and Patrick Hunt as Secretary. The committee's long-standing Grounds Member, Mr Geoff Williams, has decided to step down but a relief has already been found. The committee is grateful for Geoff's enduring support and commitment. The Hall continues to maintain a close relationship with the Community Action: Whitley & Shaw (CAWS), the chief fund-raising body for the community, who along with the Hall put on a highly successful Jubilee Event last year.

The damage to the north gable end wall was not as serious as first thought but still required significant work. The focus for the remainder of 2023 is to finalise the long-term strategy for the hall and complete the negotiations for a significant extension to the current lease on the Hall and Grounds in similar manner to that achieved by Berryfield Village Hall.

As ever, the committee is keen to welcome new members, especially those with a few hours a month to spare...

Mike Booth

Chair

Bowerhill Village Hall 2022-23 Annual Parish Report

The hall continues to be a very well used local community facility.

We currently have 20 regular user-groups plus numerous ad-hoc bookings, mainly party bookings at weekends. In September 2022 the hall welcomed Moo Music so we now have three baby and toddler groups, two craft groups and several groups dedicated to supporting the more vulnerable members of our community.

The hall is also used by health and well-being groups, for 1-to-1 tutoring and counselling, and for family conferences.

After having the hall roof de-mossed it has now been chemically treated to prevent the moss growing back. Other regular maintenance work is ongoing. The work to alleviate the car park flooding has been temporarily put on hold as there has only been one flooding event in the last 12 months and other issues have taken precedence.

With the aid of grants from Melksham Without Parish Council and the Melksham Area Board we replaced all the exterior doors (with the exception of the main front door, which was replaced a few years ago) with uPVC items in December 2022. The hall is now much warmer and draught-free. We've also been able to turn the heating down by two degrees, thereby saving money on our energy bills.

As a result of changing the doors we had to make some changes to our intruder alarm and took the opportunity to upgrade to a wireless system which has some additional features, one of which is being able to turn the alarm on and off remotely via an app on a smartphone.

In 2022 we were able to form a full committee with four elected officers, six user-group representatives and two members of the public.

The elected officers are Mark Harris (Chairman), Andy Russell (Vice-Chair), Chris Broom (Secretary) and Julie Cole (Treasurer). Terry Broom, our 'behind-the-scenes' man who carries out an awful lot of the day-to-day repairs and maintenance at the hall, also continues as an indispensable member of the team.

The committee comprises 12 volunteers (who are also Trustees of the hall) representing various user-groups including Bowerhill Primary School, 1st Bowerhill Scout Group, Melksham Free Dining, Melksham PHAB Club and Melksham Without Parish Council. The committee have met regularly throughout the past year.

Our new website www.bowerhillvillagehall.org.uk and booking system, which went online on the 1st of December 2021, continues to work well and bookings continue to increase year-on-year.

We also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bowerhillvillagehall>

We look forward to seeing the hall go from strength to strength and continue to provide a service to the local community.

Mark Harris, Chairman, Bowerhill Village Hall Trust, 19th March 2023

Berryfield Village Hall Annual Parish Report – March 2023

The opportunity to have a new purpose-built village hall in the Berryfield community was made possible with the development at Bowood View. Developers paid for the cost of the village hall project, about £880,000 – funded by section 106 and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) monies. Land was transferred to Melksham Without Parish Council, who appointed local firm Rigg Construction as the main contractor; building work took place during 2022.

The inaugural AGM of the new Berryfield Village Hall was held on the 16 November 2022 to form a management committee that would undertake the day-to-day running of the building. Since then, a group of nine volunteers from across Berryfield have met weekly as a committee and achieved the following:

- Set up the Berryfield Village Hall Trust (charity number 1201530) and constitution
- Administration of banking arrangements
- Arranged necessary insurances and licences
- Written required policies, procedures and documentation
- Put in place a website booking system and invoicing facility
- Dealt with the initial 50 or so booking enquiries and mapped regular user requests
- Organised a mobile contact and Facebook page
- Installed wifi, equipped the hall and kitchen, plus cleaning needs
- Co-hosted the opening event in January 2023 with the parish council
- Signed a 125-year lease on 20 February 2023
- Opened the doors on 21 February!

A lot of work has been completed in a very short space of time, and I thank my fellow volunteer trustees for all their time and ongoing hard work in achieving this. Thank you also to the parish council for their constant support.

The hall is a real asset to our local community that provides a warm, welcoming and inclusive space where people can gather and socialise, or learn and inspire. We currently have nine regular bookings in the calendar each week, which will increase to 13 across the month from April. The range of activities includes art, craft, dance, exercise, music, singing, slimming group, tai chi, yoga, Zumba or simply as a meeting space. The hall is also the perfect choice for events and parties.

Our work will be ongoing as trustees continue to seek grant funding for other items in the hall, such as window blinds, while ensuring our running costs are met.

Get in touch:

Website www.hallbookingonline.com/berryfield

Facebook www.facebook.com/BerryfieldVillageHall

Email BerryfieldVillageHall@outlook.com

Phone 07566 746788

Shona Holt, Chair of Berryfield Village Hall Trust
March 2023



AFC Melksham Annual Parish Report

AFC M FA Standard Chartered Club

AFC Melksham Sunday Adult Chippenham & Bath Sunday League.

AFC in their 20th season of Bowerhill "residence" continue to be one of the best teams in Wiltshire, last year's Premiere Champions and losing Knock Out cup finalists are under new management as Mike Rogers takes a move upstairs with Jordan Kirk, Sam Clarke and Aaron Wiltshire taking on joint managers roles.

This season has been great so far with AFC winning the KO cup semi to play the final at Chippenham Town ground on 30th April and the prem title in the balance with 4 teams with all to play for in April.

AFC Melksham Ability counts x3 teams

With two adult disabled teams and an under 16 team this "branch" of the club are in their 15th year and continue to receive the support of MWPC (who helped us start up and every year provide massive help) and weekly Coaching sessions occur on Wednesday nights 17:30 to 18:30 on light spring /summer evenings outside the Pavilion and winter months we hire Melksham Oak gym Wednesday 17:00 to 18:00.

As each year we have a turn round of players ALL are welcome to "attend".

If you know of anyone who wishes to turn up for details, please contact Mike Rogers 0757833516.

FA qualified coach (DBS cleared) Pat Johnson is the manager

No Cost to participants!

Mike

AFC Melksham chairman

MELKSHAM FOOD AND RIVER FESTIVAL

The 2022 Melksham Food and River Festival took place in the King George V Park and on the River Avon over the weekend of 3rd and 4th September 2022 and was again very well attended.

Public attendance is hard to be precise of this FREE-to-attend two-day event, drawn from the entire Melksham areas - and increasingly from a wider catchment area. We estimate that approximately 8 - 10,000 people, enjoyed the programme of field and river-based activities; family musical entertainment; a fun fair and other activities for children and people of all ages.

The festival weekend enabled community, educational, fund raising and social opportunities to promote the activities of local Melksham artisans, communities and charities; as well as being a shop window for a range of hot food and other stalls to promote the food and products for many local small suppliers.

We are very grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council for their grant contribution, which helped us to fund the specialist professional electrical, insurance, medical, security, toilets and waste disposal service providers needed to support the event.

Help Counselling Services

Help Counselling Services has gratefully received many years of support from Melksham Without Parish Council. It can be hard to see the benefit of one single grant of £200. However, the young man below, very eloquently summarises how important that grant was. He was able to give a donation of £5 per session and was given 16 sessions of counselling, which privately would have cost him at least £800 in total. Together with his counsellor who gave his time for free and your grant, this young man was able to have the support he needed.

"Being able to talk about my problems with a real human being has changed my life drastically in the last couple of months. The HELP Counselling Services in Trowbridge have helped me gain a better understanding of myself, my thoughts, and my feelings. The relaxed and personal experience I have been given has been invaluable to me. Having a set time frame and help with setting goals for self-improvement has helped me do just that, improve myself. Thanks to the funding I did not have to worry about money, which was one of my key anxieties, without the funding I do not know if I would have engaged with the counselling as much as I have. I would like to thank you for helping me overcome my fears and for allowing me to explore my insecurities and preparing me to be kinder to myself. Thank you for all the support, the funding has really made a world of difference to me personally."

Thank you from all of us at Help Counselling Services

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club meet at the Methodist Church, Top Lane, Whitley SN12 8QU every second Wednesday of the month 7pm-9pm. We have tea/ coffee and a get together before we listen to an invited speaker. These talks range from trees in your garden, bulbs, plants and vegetables to bees and many more. We also visit interesting gardens and hold an annual plant sale in May.

The Club has grown over recent years and we always extend a warm welcome to new members and make them feel part of the friendship we all have.

Pauline Farr

Chairwoman

Melksham Gardeners' Society

Our Society aims to bring information, share ideas, give presentations and hold talks for club members (and visitors) with regards to gardening for themselves and across the country, in line with helping them to garden sustainably.

We achieve this by inviting speakers, going on visits to gardens (NGS, RHS etc). This year we are hoping to travel by coach to Wakehurst and perhaps Yeo Organic in the summer. We have an annual show with approximately 90 classes for members and the public to enter. Principal beneficiaries of the Society are people from Melksham Town, who form 2/3rds of the members and for Melksham Without Parish (including surrounding areas) who form the remaining 1/3rd of club membership.

The Society, which currently has approximately 90 members, is an affiliated member of the RHS which brings additional benefits. We bulk purchase seeds which give our members a 60% discount and also our members benefit from a 10% discount card with Lowden Garden Centre. We meet at the Rachel Fowler Centre on the last Tuesday evening of the month.

AGE UK Wiltshire FITNESS & FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Age UK Wiltshire is grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council for the generous donation towards the cost of running a Fitness & Friendship Club in Melksham.

Age UK Wiltshire's Fitness & Friendship Club meets fortnightly at Bowerhill Village Hall. There are 27 members, 12 of whom are residents of Melksham Without Parish Council. The group provides a space for older people to come together and take part in exercise routines designed to keep them mobile and healthy.



The exercises have an emphasis on maintaining and/or improving mobility, flexibility, strength, and balance, thereby aiding longer term independence and reducing the risk of falls. Refreshments are provided together with a variety of games and activities, including a Samba session that proved very popular with one couple, who were new to the group, saying how much they had enjoyed the session and that they would come back, which they did!



Bowerhill Movement for the Mind

Introduction

This report is to update and thank the members of the Melksham Without Parish Council for their very generous grant of £200 to Alzheimer's Support towards the total costs of running our weekly dementia-friendly Movement for the Mind activity group, based at Bowerhill Village Hall.

The project

As noted in our original application, this bid was to support the running costs of our Bowerhill Movement for the Mind activity group, including the costs of our dedicated instructor and crucially, the specialist dementia-friendly support staff. This project supports local people living with dementia and their (often family) carers at several levels:

1. Providing an opportunity to "get physical" with a range of gentle but fun exercises and in doing so, improving physical wellbeing and stimulate brain activity through increased blood-flow.
2. Combatting social isolation by giving both those with dementia and their carers a reason to get out of the house and meet up with other people in a group, knowing that they will be looked after and have fun.
3. Giving respite to carers by offering a few precious hours where they can safely leave their loved one with their friends, knowing they will be both content and safe.

The impact



A can be seen from the image (left), the benefits of the Bowerhill group are clearly evident. The opportunity to meet with others within the local community is invaluable for both members and their carers alike. And of course, the exercises themselves, although not strenuous, nonetheless benefits their health

Both our members and the Movement team thoroughly enjoy their regular get-together – something only made possible through the generosity of the Melksham Without Parish Council.

Please do accept our profound thanks for the Council's support of our work – it really is making a difference.

We are delighted to have such good relations with the Council and we very much look forward to continuing that relationship in the years to come. Should any Councillors wish to visit the Bowerhill group, they will be received very warmly. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Citizens Advice Wiltshire Annual Parish Report

Wiltshire Citizens Advice have continued to support the people of Wiltshire with a variety of issues. The top 4 issues are around benefits, financial services & capability issues, debt and housing. In relation to the Melksham Without Parish Council we have helped 118 clients with 553 issues in the year from 1st March 2022 to 7th March 2023. Please see the attached statistics that break down our help further.

We aim to help people find a way forward in challenging and uncertain times. For many people their problems are only just beginning as they continue to struggle with soaring inflation, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis. The impact that our service has on our clients include: 6 in 10 people say they feel less stressed, depressed or anxious after coming to us. Around 2 in 5 found it easier to do their job or find a job. 75% said they now know more about the issue after our advice, so they'll be better equipped to know what to do in the future.

Key Statistics

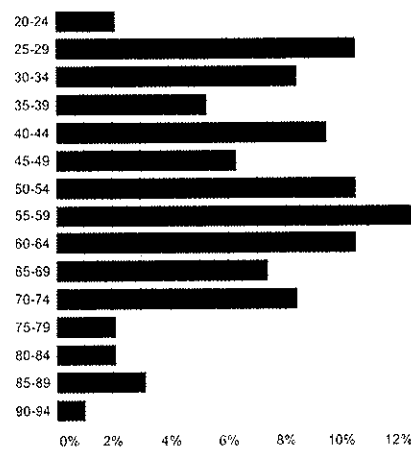
Summary

Clients	118
Quick client contacts	
Issues	553
Activities	436
Cases	135
Outcomes	
Income gain	£88,903
Re-imbursements, services, loans	£14

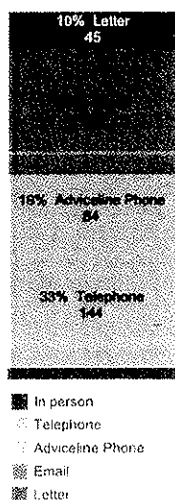
Issues

	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	158	54
Benefits Universal Credit	62	27
Charitable Support & Food Ban..	13	8
Consumer goods & services	12	7
Debt	53	15
Education	1	1
Employment	48	15
Financial services & capability	15	9
GVA & Hate Crime	5	4
Health & community care	12	7
Housing	51	26
Immigration & asylum	12	9
Legal	20	14
Other	3	3
Relationships & family	48	18
Tax	9	7
Travel & transport	8	7
Utilities & communications	23	12
Grand Total	553	

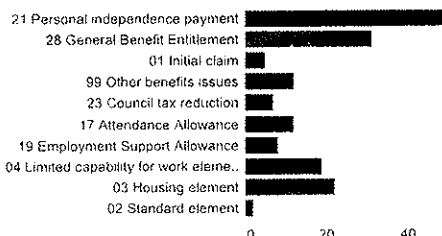
Age



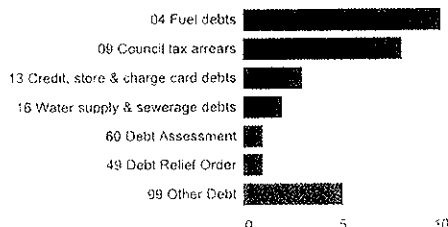
Channel (Client and third party)



Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



FearLess

2022 was a very busy year for FearLess (formerly Splitz Support Service). As a charity, we support adults and children experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking and since COVID, our referrals have continued to increase 20% year on year. In Wiltshire alone, we received 3808 referrals from adults in need and 633 referrals from children in desperate need of our support. We provide a vast range of services from crisis support to long term trauma recovery. Thanks to support from the Melksham Without Parish Council we've been able to provide resources at the point of crisis to local victims and families – whether that be emergency overnight accommodation, a new phone to make safe contact or supermarket vouchers to help families who are really struggling during this cost-of-living crisis. Thank you for helping us to change and save lives!

Melksham WI Annual Parish report

As a group we have had an interesting year, getting back in the swing of it after Covid.

Back in March last year we had a talk on Roman women, followed in April with a look at 100 years of WI. In May we held our birthday party accompanied by Melksham Ukulele group, John Girvan hosted a guess what quiz in June and in July we had a talk on Beau Nash and the naughty ladies of Bath. August is our month to support Breast cancer and we held a prosecco and cream tea evening. September was an interesting insight on homeopathic remedies followed in October by a talk on the History of Melksham from Pete Maslen. November, we held a craft evening with Margaret from the scrapstore and December David Grey came along to show us how to make a table centre piece for Christmas. January was again an interesting talk and demonstration on Reflexology and last month we had a Valentines Day themed quiz.

We also have had a few meals out - last one was last Saturday - lunch at Lowden Garden Centre.

Our WI is 40 years old in May so we will be partying!

If anyone is interested in joining, we hold the meetings on the 3rd Wednesday at 7.30pm at 'That Meeting Space' in Melksham Market Place. The first 2 meetings are free to give everyone a chance to see if it what they are looking for in a group. Melksham WI are also on Facebook.



**Wiltshire
Air Ambulance**
funded by you, flying for you

2022 Missions

Wiltshire Air Ambulance is very grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council, and to members of the local community, for supporting our lifesaving work.

1,061
total missions

670
391




351
cardiac
emergencies

177
medical conditions
(including collapses
and strokes)

174
road traffic
collisions

139
incidents involving
children





IT'S A KNOCKOUT

21 May 2023
Melksham RFC



Wiltshire
Air Ambulance
funded by you, flying for you

wiltshireairambulance.co.uk/events

that meeting space Annual Parish Report

'that meeting space' in Melksham Market Place, aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment that anyone in the Melksham area can access for friendship, activities and community initiatives.

Since opening in November 2021, 'that meeting space' has benefited a wide range of Melksham area residents through its community drop-in, bereavement courses, provision of English lessons for Ukrainian refugees, tech savvy courses, and support of community events. In addition, 'that meeting space' has been rented by an art group, a singing group, a book club, a women's networking group, 4Youth, the Food and River Festival committee, Read Easy, Swindon Council, Wiltshire Council, with more organisations scheduled to use the space in the near future for the benefit of area residents – including hosting Maketon classes.

'that meeting space' has become an incubator for community groups – three have already moved to larger premises because of growing demand. The Melksham Community Larder started in 'that meeting space' before being given their own premises; Wiltshire Wildlife Energy initiative trialed their Energy Café at 'that meeting space' before moving to other venues around the area.

If you would like to use the venue, or if you have an idea for a community group and would like to explore it further in a low-risk way, contact John Firth by calling 07389866714, or email thatmeetingspace@gmail.com

Find out more about the activities and initiatives at www.thatmeetingspace.org.uk

Melksham Almshouse Charity Annual Parish report

Melksham Without Parish Council have for more than 20 years provided Trustee Representatives to serve on the Melksham Almshouse Charity. Currently, Parish Councillors Robert Shea-Simonds (Bowerhill Ward) and John Doel (Beanacre, Shaw, Whitley & Blackmore Ward) represent the Parish Council as Trustees, on the Committee of the Melksham Almshouses Charity. The Trustee Committee is made up of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and committee members from Melksham Town Council and local Residents.

The town's row of five attached 19th-century Almshouses were built in 1862 by philanthropist Rachel Fowler to provide homes for the poor of the town, and were left to the benefit of the parish after her death. In her day Rachel was known as a philanthropist; today she would be an enterprising single lady, making waves in the field of social welfare, and along with the fund, her gifts to the town are all as relevant and needed today as they ever were. Today, they continue to provide shelter to people in need. The homes continue to be run today by the Melksham Almshouses Public and Eleemosynary Charities.

A complete modernisation in 2014 when all five houses were literally gutted, left them with modern interiors with state-of-the-art insulation and energy-saving equipment and heating, with the same historic exterior. The gardens have also been modernised, and there's a communal garden for the five residents. Several smaller charities combined to form the Almshouses Charity in 1960, and their investments have carried on, with five residents as tenants currently in occupancy. From its substantial investment funds, twice a year the Charity receives, reviews and dispenses financial donations to Melksham community-based organisations.

During the last year the committee has continued to run the operational side of the Charity, including

- Financial control and accounts management
- General ongoing Property Maintenance & Repair
- Gardens upkeep
- Support of Residents

- Planned further property upgrades primarily in the light of upcoming Landlord required EPC (Energy Performance) legislation.
- Distribution of financial grant donations to local not for profit community organisations to around £10,000 per annum mostly in small grants to local activities
- Involvement in the recent production and placement of a Memorial Plaque to honour Melksham benefactor, Rachel Fowler, has been erected in the Friends Garden, behind the former Spiritualist Church, in King Street.

MELKSHAM COMMUNITY SUPPORT – THE NEXT GENERATION

Melksham Without Parish Council and Melksham Town Council are delighted to announce that they are working in partnership with Age UK Wiltshire to provide a dedicated project worker for their areas. This new role will be funded by both councils, with a grant of £5,000 from the Melksham Area Board's Health & Wellbeing fund and is initially for a year, with plenty of evidence being gathered as the project progresses for further sustainability. It's planned for the next financial year, commencing 1st April, and is at a cost of £23,000.

The new project manager will oversee and manage the Melksham Community Support Scheme, which will help support older people to resolve practical difficulties, to access information and advice, and to become better connected with their communities; as well as supporting the existing volunteers who currently support users still on the scheme since the Covid lockdowns.

The Melksham Community Support service was originally borne out of the first covid lockdown, which is now at its third-year anniversary. The service provided a staggering amount of support by volunteers to residents who were shielding at home. The service continued providing support to any local residents who did not have a support network, with a small core of volunteer call handlers and residents still collecting prescriptions and undertaking shopping; under the Age Friendly Melksham banner. A big thankyou to all of the volunteers who have continued to provide support to their community for such a long time.

Moving forward, as suggested, the new dedicated Age UK project worker will be recruiting, supporting and supervising the volunteers, who will provide a range of practical and other support to older people in the area served by Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council, including helping people with shopping, tasks around the home and offering companionship.

It's all about having a holistic approach to support planning and co-ordination of inputs from different professionals and organisations and to give access to residents for so much more than just their immediate practical needs, it's about helping residents live independently for longer, to help them overcome the barriers to living a good later life.

Look out for more information about the new service for over 60s in coming weeks, and if you have any queries or would like to get involved, please contact either the town or parish council.

Melksham Town Council 01225 704187 linda.roberts@melksham-tc.gov.uk or Melksham Without Parish Council 01225 705700 clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

Sarah Cardy, CEO, Age UK Wiltshire:

'We are really pleased to be working with Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council to support the Melksham Community Support Scheme. It has been a difficult time for older people. The impact of Covid has meant many older people are struggling to access services. We can provide advice and guidance to help access services and increase income, this might be help with fuel bills, and/or practical support as well as giving support to the fantastic volunteers.'

ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVES

For 2022/23

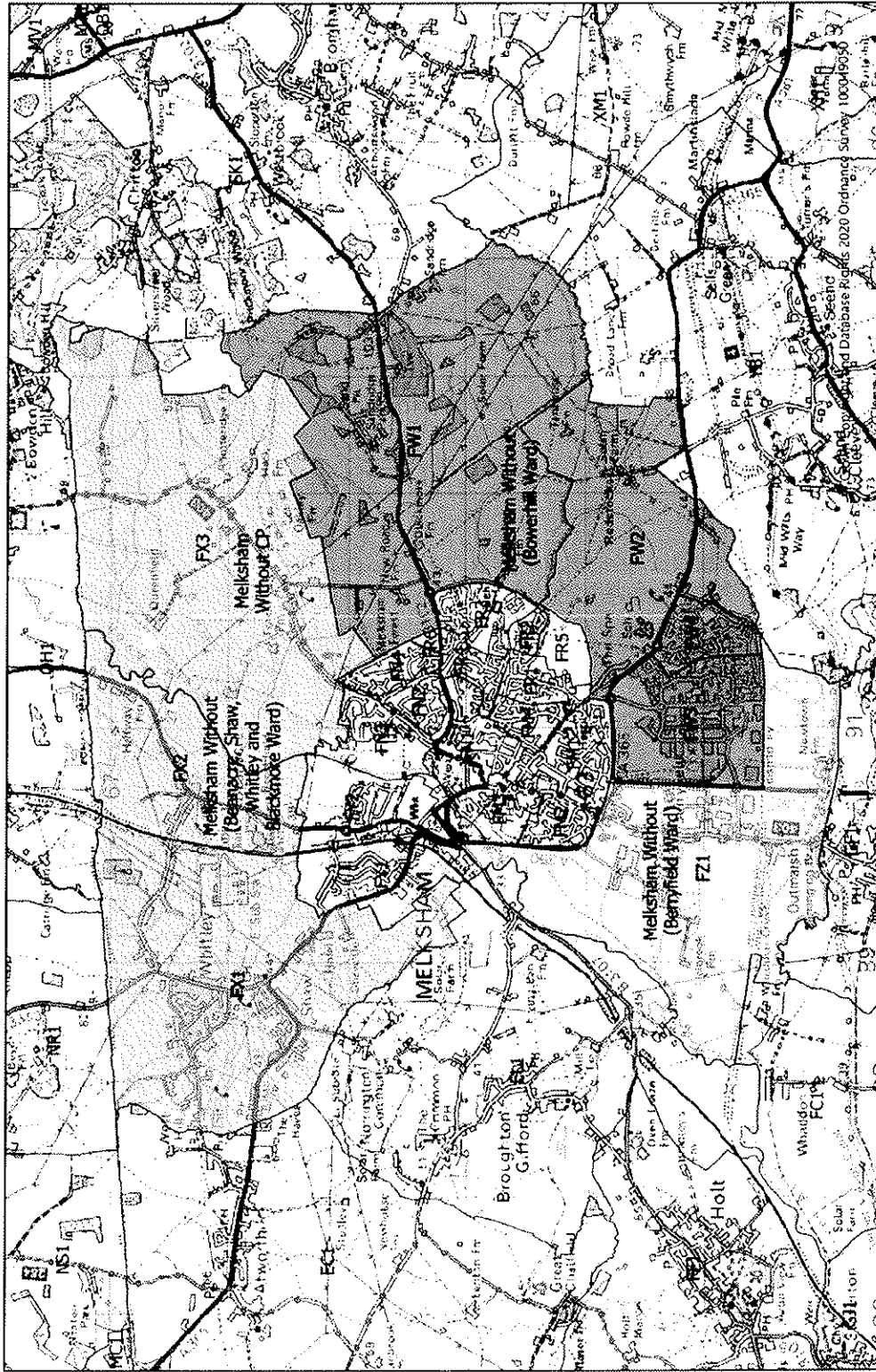
Organisations:

Age Friendly Melksham	John Doel
Berryfield & Semington Road Action Group (BASRAG)	Richard Wood
Berryfield Village Hall	Shona Holt
Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)	Rob Hoyle (Sub: Andy Russell)
Bowerhill Village Hall Trust	Andy Russell
CCTV Working Group (Town Council)	Stefano Patacchiola
Climate Friendly (NEW)	John Doel
Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) & Flood Wardens	Peter Richardson
CPRE (Wiltshire Branch)	VACANCY
Dementia Action Alliance	Robert Shea-Simonds
Market Place Toilet Joint Venture	Alan Baines & John Glover
Melksham Area Board	John Glover & David Pafford
Melksham ATC	Andy Russell
Melksham Chamber (previously Chamber of Commerce)	Rob Hoyle
Melksham Charities	R Shea-Simonds & John Doel
Melksham Community Area Transport Group	Alan Baines
Melksham Hospital & Community	Robert Shea-Simonds
Melksham Joint Health Forum	John Glover
Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	John Glover & David Pafford (A Baines & R Wood – reserve)
Melksham Oak Community School Governor	David Pafford
Melksham Transport Group	Mark Harris
Operational Flooding Working Group	Alan Baines
Parish Highways & Street Scene Rep	Parish Officer – L. McRandle
PCSO Liaison	Officers
Press Representative	Clerk – Teresa Strange
Shaw Hall Management Committee	Stefano Patacchiola
Shurnhold Fields (Friends of)	(from Shurnhold Working Group Reps)
Whitley Reading Rooms	VACANCY
Wilts & Berks Canal Partnership	Mark Harris
WALC (Wiltshire Association of Local Councils)	Rob Hoyle

Footpath Representatives:

Beanacre	Terry Chivers
Berryfield	Richard Wood
Bowerhill, Redstocks and The Spa	John Glover & VACANCY
Sandridge & Blackmore	Alan Baines
Shaw & Whitley	Stefano Patacchiola & Terry Chivers

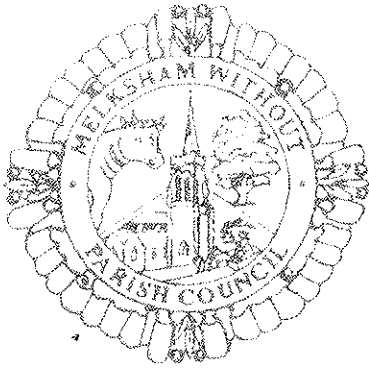
Melksham Without Parish Council Ward Map



Drawn by: ruth.fry
18/12/2020
[TITLE 2]

[TITLE 1]

N 391346E 164201N m 1:41,304 Wiltshire Council
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MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Teresa Strange

First Floor
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Email: clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
Web: www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

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JOHN GLOVER Chair - 15 Wellington Drive, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6QW 01225 705798
john.glover@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

MARK HARRIS – 1 Brampton Court, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6TH 01225 351444
mark.harris@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

DAVID PAFFORD Vice Chair - 26 Britannia Close, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6WB 01225 702379
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ROBERT SHEA-SIMONDS- 18 Barnes Wallis Close, Bowerhill, Melksham, SN12 6UJ 01225 703961
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ROB HOYLE – 62 Hornchurch Road, Bowerhill, SN12 6QR 07747 328370
rob.hoyle@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

BEANACRE SHAW, WHITLEY & BLACKMORE WARD

TERRY CHIVERS - 7 Eden Grove, Whitley, Nr Melksham, SN12 8QJ 07784 837122
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STEFANO PATACCHIOLA J.P.– Shaw Court, Bath Road, Shaw, SN12 8EE 07487 871678
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PETER RICHARDSON – Lagard Farm, First Lane, Whitley, SN12 8RL 07500 989556
peter.richardson@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

JOHN DOEL – 227 Lower Woodrow, SN12 7RB 01249 730666
john.doel@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

HOW TO CONTACT MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL



CONTACT DETAILS

Email the Clerk	clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
Email the Parish Officer	office@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
Email the Finance & Amenities Officer	admin@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk
Contact us by phone	01225 705700
Postal address	Melksham Without Parish Council First Floor Melksham Community Campus Market Place Melksham Wiltshire SN12 6ES
Council office opening hours	Monday to Thursday 9.15am-5.15pm Fridays 9.15am-4.45pm

Please note the office is open to the public for queries and enquiries

Monday to Thursday
10:00am - 12:00noon
2:00pm - 4:00pm

For news and to access meeting dates and agenda's please visit the parish council website- www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

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