

MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL PARISH BOOKLET

Written reports from Council, Community Groups
and Organisations

15th April 2024

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MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

- Neighbourhood Plan Review*
 - Implementation, monitor and use of policies in NHP#1
 - Review of Plan of current Plan, production of draft NHP#2, formal consultation and submission to Wiltshire Council
- To input and influence the Local Plan Review with Wiltshire 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 to progress installation of water refill points at Shaw & Bowerhill sports field
- To review the Emergency Plan*
- Move towards pilot of Real Time Information (RTI) in bus shelters (Mitchell Drive and Melksham Market Place)*
- 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 East of Melksham Community Centre with Melksham Town Council
- * with Melksham Town Council

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

- To continue to use less paper/become more climate friendly (in line with Wiltshire Councils goal of being Carbon Neutral by 2030)
- Work towards obtaining Quality Gold Award <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-council-award-scheme>
- Continue to provide enhanced access to council meetings via remote technology to improve community engagement
- To obtain mains drainage for Beanacre (Westlands Lane installation already taking place in 2023)
- To achieve best outcome for the parish as a whole, for the A350 Bypass
- To continue to progress wider Realtime Information (RTI) in bus shelters across the parish and town*
- To seek to obtain higher speed internet access in the parish
- To develop a policy to improve road safety in the parish, maximising the levers that the council have control or influence over
- *working with Melksham Town Council

Melksham Without Parish Council

Reports from Council, Groups and Organisations

April 2024

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

15th April 2024

Councillor John Glover

In my third annual report for the Annual Parish Meeting, I am extremely pleased to report that the move of the Council to our new facilities at Melksham Community Campus has proceeded with remarkable success. Footfall to the council offices has increased, and as a central facility for the parish, they are well served by public transport and free car parking.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting, we have had to say goodbye to former Councillors Stefano Patacchiola and Rob Hoyle and welcomed Councillor Martin Franks, who was co-opted to the Council, and the election of Nathan Keates.

PRECEPT

The Precept set for 2024/25 is £261,592, an increase of 6.65% on last year's precept. An average Band D household will contribute £89.94; a rise of just £5.23 for the year. The precept has risen because of the effects of general inflation across all aspects of the Council's business. As Parish Councils continue to fill some of the gaps left by County Councils, more money will inevitably be needed to provide, maintain, and improve facilities such as village halls, play areas, and playing fields. However, the parish council has strived to maintain services 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 70 planning applications, including 6 large developments. Since last year's Annual meeting, we have seen occupation of all of the houses in both the Boward View, Semington Road, Berryfield and the Pathfinder Place, Bowerhill developments. The Davey Play Area has still not been accepted by the Parish Council, (because of access restrictions), but the play area on Bowood View has.

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 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.

These included a further 144 houses on Semington Road, 210 houses and a 70-bed nursing home off Pathfinder Way (West side), together with 50 houses behind Townsend Farm. (the latter on appeal). Further proposals were submitted for 53 dwellings adjacent to this site with the Parish Council objecting. An approval was given but due to a change in regulations, this was reconsidered with the Parish Council providing direct input into the public session, together with a reduced four-year land supply the proposal was rejected. A similar fate was given to a speculative 650-house development for the Blackmore Farm area.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The final spate of opportunistic planning applications further underlined the importance of a Neighbourhood Plan. Your Council, working with Melksham Town Council, supported by Place Consultants with some Government funding, submitted its plan for local consultation in Autumn 2023 and is now being reviewed in the light of comments received from developers, residents, and other statutory bodies. Once complete this will be consulted on again, be examined by a Planning Examiner and go out to you as the public to vote on at a Referendum next year.

The parish council also submitted detailed and robust responses to several Wiltshire Council consultations including the draft Local Plan, the draft School Places Strategy, the draft Design Guide, and Local Walking & Cycling Improvement Plans; as well as some central government consultations on changes to the Planning process.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Community Emergency Group in Shaw and Whitley continues 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. They were used by Wiltshire Council and the Emergency Services for a pilot exercise to simulate how a “community hub” idea would work in a civil emergency such as a major power cut or severe weather event. They did so well, that they were asked to do it again a few months later so it could be filmed and attended for future training purposes both in Wiltshire and at the national Emergency Services show.

VILLAGE HALLS

The council has facilitated some meetings with representatives from village halls in the area so that ideas and information can be shared. This has gone well with a WhatsApp group being set up so that information can be shared in one place and provides a framework of support for all the volunteers giving up their time to run these valuable community spaces.

GRANT FUNDING

The parish council are always astounded at the amount of great work undertaken by volunteers in the community, many of you are represented here tonight through a variety of wide-ranging organisations, groups and venues. We are pleased to support you in the work you do and tonight will be giving out grants totalling £38,000.

SHURNHOLD FIELDS

This is a joint project 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, there have been some holdups with this project while

discussions were taking place between the Environment Agency and the Land Drainage team at Wiltshire Council in respect of flood prevention. Wiltshire Council has been successful in obtaining grant funding from the Environment Agency for a flood alleviation scheme in the area, which includes bunds being created to help protect the properties in Dunch Lane, which will need to be completed before the car park and entrance improvement project can commence. It is hoped that the flood prevention works will start later this year once land drainage consent has been received.

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

Following the resignation of several of the Committee Members last year, there had been concerns that the Friends of Shurnhold Fields Group would fold; however, I am pleased to say that several people have stepped forward and the group continues with their excellent work.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The parish council maintain assets ranging from play areas and sports fields to bus shelters, noticeboards and bins. These all need regular maintenance and a programme or replacement on a rolling basis. These things are often unseen; the grass cutting, cleaning, weed spraying and bin emptying, but would be very noticeable if not done. A big thank you to the volunteers who check the defibrillators and keep the noticeboards up to date every week, whatever the weather.

The parish continues its successful partnership with the Town to fund the Market Place toilets and continues with the deployment of its own Speed Indicator Devices (SID) to deter speeding on our roads.

SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The parish council have jointly funded an Age UK project worker specifically for the Melksham and Melksham Without area for the last year, with some great results in helping members of the community to live a good life in later years. It has also taken on the legacy of Melksham Community Support which was originally started in covid. We are pleased to continue to support this in the coming year providing direct support, and access to information and practical help, primarily for those over 60.

AT THE COUNCIL

I would like to congratulate all the staff for their continuing work and extra training undertaken over the last year. Staff have undertaken courses for all sorts of topics, from safeguarding, to council administration, to wellbeing, to running community

buildings, inspecting play areas and ensuring the council is financially compliant. For several members of staff this has also involved becoming qualified in their area of work.

WHAT NEXT?

The council will continue to take on play areas provided by developers. Although we have yet to take on the new Davey Play Area on the new Pathfinder Place estate in Bowerhill, vehicular access over the estate for play area maintenance purposes is still to be agreed upon, which has delayed our acceptance of this facility.

External grant funding is being sought for new gym equipment to be installed at Bowerhill Sports Field, as well as plans to improve the drainage on the football pitches as so many matches have been cancelled due to the incessant rain waterlogging the pitches. A new defibrillator has been installed on Pathfinder Way and one is shortly to be installed outside Bowerhill Village Hall for all to access.

I am also delighted that we are finally able to move forward with a project we have been working on for several years, to install Real Time Information in bus shelters. The first installations will be in Mitchell Drive and Kestrel Court in Bowerhill, with others planned across the parish.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Finally, once again, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support over the last 12 months and for the work they have undertaken as Chairman, Vice Chairman or member of numerous committees. This is a voluntary task which involves some of us in a weekly evening commitment, never mind the ad-hoc meetings on-site, at Wiltshire Council or further afield in the interests of MWPC residents.

Thank you all once again.

Councillor Phil Alford- Melksham Without North & Shurnhold

This past year has been one which, somewhat paradoxically, has managed to be both quiet and busy at the same time. At the beginning of the year, we were facing unplanned developments around the town, but due to a lot of hard work, this threat has diminished. As a council, we moved forward with our Local Development Plan. This planning document sets out the spatial development plan for the county over the next 14 years. It has now moved through the consultation phase and is sat with the Planning Inspectorate. Now that it's at such an advanced stage, Wiltshire is benefitting from changes to the national planning policy framework so that we are able to refuse unwanted planning applications again. Consequently, many large applications have been withdrawn or refused, giving us a short planning hiatus.

This year's budget debate resulted in a 5% increase. Whilst this is the maximum allowed by central government, we have been working towards this goal for some time. Like last year, this is made up of 3% for the County increase and a further 2% as an adult social care levy. The 2% equates to approximately £7m and will be exclusively spent on adult social care. The 3% increase in the general budget is approximately £11.5m and will fund general activity. This will be spent largely on significant increases in wages as well as inflationary linked costs in service activity. It is worth mentioning that the Wiltshire Council budget is fully funded and balanced. We will not be taking any money from reserves, and because of the success of preventative investment, we are expecting next year to be equally sound.

In terms of activity, as a council, we have focused very much on prevention this year. We have been successful in bidding for money from government and this has been invested in housing. We have acquired tens of new homes for Ukrainian families unable to find private accommodation. Our reablement teams are helping people stay in their homes rather than go into residential care, and we are investing millions extra in the road network to prevent surface water pooling and to repair potholes. Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers are helping residents stay in their homes by working with them to access all the financial support available, resulting in fewer evictions. Estimates suggest this alone has saved the council upward of £2m in temporary accommodation costs.

With regard to my own council portfolio, I am handing over the Assets aspect of it to Cllr Tamara Reay. Much of the work I was keen on

delivering locally has been done now as the old Melksham Library site is soon to be developed as a sheltered housing scheme, the Christie Miller site is being repurposed, and Melksham House has seen its £4m investment turn it into a fantastic modern facility and a rare example of a Grade 2 listed building of that size becoming a carbon zero school. Frustratingly, the Blue Pool site is still waiting to be progressed. An offer was made to the Town council to take it about 18 months ago, but they are yet to make a decision.

Locally, a lot of work has gone into the highway network, and although the disruption has been irritating, we have seen more resurfacing on the A350 and across parts of Whitley. However, moving forward, there is a new, greater battle to be had. The pre-consultation by Limedown Solar to build a battery storage facility off Littleworth Lane in Whitley is nothing less than terrifying. Their initial plan for 60 acres of battery storage will scar the landscape and result in a grotesque industrialisation of the countryside. The short termism of swapping food security for energy security is both unnecessary and foolish, so I am working closely with residents, CAWS, and the MP to challenge this proposal. Looking forward, this will clearly be a major issue, but other exciting projects lie ahead, and I look forward to supporting residents and the parish council at every opportunity.

Councillor Nick Holder Bowerhill Division

Before I started to write this report, I looked back over my report from last year, and I could almost have cut and pasted the first few sentences.

Over the last year, I have continued to work very closely with the Parish Council on the major planning applications submitted, all of which sought permission to drastically increase the size of the Bowerhill settlement. Without the changes to the NPPF, it is likely all of these would have been approved. I am grateful for the support from residents and the Parish Council for their support in helping me lobby our local MP in support of those changes. This resulted in some much-needed protection against speculative development on sites not identified in either the local plan or the Melksham Area Neighbourhood Plan. Unfortunately, the changes did not come early enough to affect the outcome of the planning appeal for the development of the site south of the A350, but I will continue to work with the Parish Council to make sure there are very specific conditions to any detailed application, and ensure we get the best outcome for our residents.

Staying on the planning theme, we seem to be edging towards the completion of the TW obligations at Pathfinder Place, with some help from the LPA enforcement team, and I am hopeful, rather than confident, that these will be completed by the summer and the roads will be adopted. The planning application for the new Primary School at Bowerhill, should be coming forward in the next few months, but this will not be formally submitted until both the design has been fully approved and the land transfer have been formally signed off.

I am pleased to have supported several grant applications which came to the Area Board for consideration, and I would like to highlight the continuing support which we have provided for the upgrade of Bowerhill Village Hall and the support of the Bowerhill Baby and Toddlers Group who were a first-time applicant.

In addition to my local activities over the last 12 months, I held Cabinet responsibilities for Environment and Climate Change, and I would like to highlight a couple of areas from that role. Wiltshire Council is on track to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and 99.7% of our kerbside waste is collected on time, on the correct day. I have recently been asked to take over the challenge of Highways, Streetscene and Flooding.

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

COUNCILLOR JONATHON SEED - MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH REPORT

I have now been your Wiltshire Councillor for three years and am getting settled to working in the local area of Berryfield and associated parts of the Parish of Melksham Without. I am in the area most weeks and work closely with the excellent Parish Council on local government matters. As the Wiltshire Councillor for your area, I am always happy to help residents to resolve your issues with local government matters. For Wiltshire Council this particularly means planning concerns, highways issues, waste collection matters, and lots of other services provided by Wiltshire Council.

Over the past year, there have been several big issues of concern with planning proposals in the Semington Road area. Let me be clear that I know that the Parish Council and local residents are not against the planned development of houses for local residents in the local area, and I support that stance. The Parish Council has a well-developed Neighbourhood Plan which makes clear where local housing is wanted and where it should go. However, what we are against is developers forcing development wherever they like simply to make the biggest profit, regardless of local wishes. This was happening locally, and unwanted developments were being forced through using technical loopholes in the planning system. Largely due to strong lobbying by your local Wiltshire Councillors, including myself, and your local MP, Rt Hon Michelle Donelan, we were able to press hard to successfully change national planning policy, with the result that unwanted local developments in the Semington Road area have now been refused.

One issue which I have been working on for many years has been the illegal use of the Semington Bus Gate. I represent the Parish of Semington as well as parts of Melksham Without Parish, and I have been able to help to coordinate a resolution to the issue. With support of those two Parish Councils an Automatic Number Plate Recognition camera will be installed in the near future. This will record use of the bus gate and may result in enforcement action against those using the route illegally.

Over the past year, I have increased my work within Wiltshire Council and I am now a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee as well as the Strategic Planning Committee, the Western Area Planning Committee and I also chair the Melksham Area Board. My work in County Hall has included chairing policy development committees on social housing allocation and speed limit assessment.

In summary, there is always lots to do as a Wiltshire Councillor, which is supposed to be a part time role(!), however I will always make time to help local residents with local government issues. I try to communicate regularly with an active Facebook page where you can follow me at www.Facebook.com/JSforWC

I also write a monthly Parish article and finally, if you need to contact me directly then my contact details are below.

Email Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk Tel 07770774463
www.Facebook.com/JSforWC

Report on Melksham Area Board for MWPC

When Wiltshire Council was formed in 2009, 18 area boards were created, including Melksham. They are designed to give people a voice and to get the best solutions for local issues. Melksham area board covers the parishes of Broughton Gifford, Melksham, Melksham Without, Steeple Ashton, Keevil, Great Hinton, and Semington.

The area board agreed priorities in June 23 based on available data and local discussion and has been busy stimulating and supporting local community action to address these, through hosting regular business meetings, engagement activities, events, surveys, and working groups.

In Sep 23, the area board meeting focused on Melksham's history and heritage, with around 50 people going on a walk in the rain before coming together to discuss how we can protect and promote it. As a result, we are well on the way to adding Melksham to the Explore Wiltshire App and are looking at exhibiting local historic artefacts in public spaces for people to see.

The December meeting was dedicated to all things highways, where we brought together the Cabinet member for Highways, the Director for Highways and Transport as well as other officers. Questions ranged from potholes to sustainable transport, and from roadworks to verges.

We have awarded nearly £50,000 to 25 local community groups and projects since April 23. This has included funding village halls, sports and arts clubs, and detached youth work in both Melksham and the surrounding villages. An additional £60,000 has been invested locally through the board's Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group in response to improvements that the community has requested.

The Melksham Health and Wellbeing Group is a sub-group of the area board meets quarterly and brings together all who want to help the vulnerable and older members of our community. Over the past year, it has supported carers of all ages and worked with Age UK to aid those who are struggling in our community. We have worked with the foodbank and other organisations to provide additional funding, slow cookers, and cookery classes to help with the cost of living, and are now exploring how we can offer additional community support to those who are struggling with poor mental health.

We would love to see you at one of our meetings, or do get in touch to discuss any ideas that you have. To find out dates and more information or to apply for a grant, please go to www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6142 or contact Richard.Rogers@wiltshire.gov.uk

Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)

2023/24 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 benches, which were vandalised once again, and some benches have had new barbecue stands installed. 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.

The Great British (Bowerhill) Spring Clean litter-picking initiative was successfully resurrected in 2023, and we have another session already planned in March 2024. The group has continued to loan out litter picking equipment to the local Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and other groups 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, is now progressing. The team have planted new Hawthorn bushes and spring bulbs, as well as wild seeds and seedlings. We have engaged with a local "wilding" expert who has been able to provide advice and importantly some preparation and maintenance cuts to the area which will promote wild plant growth.

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.

We continue to work with MWPC to monitor the coverage of bins, in particular in Hornchurch Road Public Open Space where issues have arisen with overflows.

The group are still actively participating in the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as well as providing feedback on planning applications, such as those to the east and south of Melksham.

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 new housing developments deliver all that is promised.

- 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

Community Action Whitley and Shaw Annual Parish Report

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, 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.

Development Consultations

CAWS provided a detailed community response to the Local and Neighbourhood Plan consultations during the year and is now part way through a large consultation regarding a Solar Farm north of the M4, and, more importantly, from a local perspective, an extremely large battery storage facility in Whitley. Whilst we expect Stage 1 of the consultation to come to an end at the end of April 2024, we are planning to remain engaged with the scheme for the rest of the year.

Shaw & Whitley Summer Music Fair

We held our 2023 event in July 2023. The event was a roaring success, with all objectives met and very positive feedback from residents. Attendance was very strong. The event required a significant financial investment but thankfully broke even. Funds were raised for the Shaw and Whitley Community Hub, Shaw Church, community projects, and a donation was made to Melksham Foodbank.

Topography Signs

With the support of MWPC through a grant last year, we have developed information boards for Shaw and Whitley that identify local points of interest and footpaths. The signs are now in production and we hope to have them installed in the next 2 months.

Speedwatch and Road Safety

Our Speedwatch teams have continued to do sterling work during the last year, with regular deployments around the villages. We are pleased to have seen an increase in speed enforcement in the area in the last year, but road safety remains still a big issue locally, and so we will continue to press for ways to reduce risk, either through engineering projects or trying to change driver behaviour. We are grateful to MWPC and WC for the recently installed "Slow" road markings in the villages.

Tree Planting

Eight Jubilee Trees have been planted around the villages. The species were recommended by the Gardening Club and the trees themselves were kindly donated by Lowdens. We also had support from MWPC and WC to identify planting locations and from J H Jones & Sons Ltd for planting. The trees are now starting to blossom!

Local History

Our Local History Book, "A Short History of Whitley and Shaw and the Surrounding Area" was published in June 2023. It turned out to be very popular and sold out before the end of the calendar year. A second edition is now in train that will add significant new content.

Community Emergency Group (CEG)

In 2023 CAWS was delighted to be able to broker a grant from SSE for another new mobile generator, a first aid kit and First Aid Training.

During Storm Henk on 4 January 2024 there were 5 floods in Shaw and Whitley. CEG deployed and work was done on the culvert on Top Lane (unblocking trash screens etc), clearing gullies, contacting residents at risk, and liaising with local authorities (e.g. WC Drainage, MWPC, Shaw School et al). Despite this being the most substantial flooding event since 2014, the villages luckily escaped any significant household flooding. Work has since been conducted on clearing the gully opposite Eden Grove and a number of blocked drains, potholes, and remedial works etc have been reported to WC for resolution.

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 deliver at least two Litter Picks, continue consultation on community planning and development activities as necessary, and provide, with the support of MWPC, two Chatty Benches.

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!

Bowerhill Village Hall 2023-24 Annual Parish Report

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

We currently have 22 regular user-groups plus numerous ad-hoc bookings, mainly party bookings at weekends. We now have three baby and toddler groups, three 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, in particular by the NHS for no less than five Diabetes Prevention groups. Age UK and the Alzheimer's Support Group also continue to use the hall for their regular meetings.

With the aid of grants from Melksham Without Parish Council and the Melksham Area Board, the flooring in the main hall and both meeting rooms was replaced, and the results are nothing less than spectacular. The management committee would like to express their thanks to the Parish Council and the Area Board for their financial support of this project.

Other regular maintenance work is ongoing, including replacing fire extinguishers that have come to the end of their useful working lives and enhancing our CCTV system with the installation of an additional camera.

In 2023 we were able to form a committee with three elected officers, six user-group representatives and one member of the public.

The elected officers are Mark Harris (Chairman), Andy Russell (Vice-Chair) and Chris Broom (Secretary). Terry Broom, our 'behind-the-scenes' man who carries out an awful lot of the day-to-day repairs and maintenance at the hall, stood down from the committee but continues to assist us whenever he can.

Unfortunately, our previous Treasurer resigned just before the AGM and a replacement was sought. Shortly after the AGM we welcomed Lynne Smith to the role. Lynne is now busy familiarising herself with the hall's finances and has already made a significant impact.

The committee comprises 9 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 has met regularly throughout the past year.

Our website www.bowerhillvillagehall.org.uk and booking system continue to work well, and bookings are still increasing year-on-year, so much so that we are struggling to accommodate new regular user requests.

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, 3rd April 2024

Berryfield Village Hall Annual Parish Report – March 2024

- Berryfield Village Hall celebrated its first year of operation with a networking event in March 2024 for all our regular hirers. It was an enjoyable afternoon with some demonstrations and collaboration between our activities.
- The hall now hosts 17 regular groups and a diverse range of activities for all ages. For example, baby/toddler groups, art/crafts, fitness, dance classes and free community events for all ages and local people. It is also well used by private hirers for children's parties, meetings, and training.
- We have organised and completed three projects this year: Improvement of the planted beds around the car parking area; fitted blinds to main windows and skylights; and installation of purpose-built shelving in a large cupboard space to accommodate our regular groups' storage needs.
- We have a couple of new capital projects in the pipeline to undertake this summer, which we have submitted funding bids for.
 - 1) Install acoustic ceiling rafts to improve sound resonance in the hall. Due to the low pitch of the roof, the ceiling has many angled surfaces. Users of the hall have reported this causes a problem, particularly for those that are hard of hearing or with a hearing impairment. This work will ensure that the hall is accessible to all and will improve the acoustics for large group events and musical activities.
 - 2) Install air conditioning. Last summer, we had feedback from users of excessive temperatures in the main hall space. The existing air ventilation/circulation system does not cool the air temperature and as windows are sealed (due to planning requirements) the heat soars. On a number of occasions, the room temperature reached in excess of 30+ degrees and some booked activities were unable to run. Air conditioning units will improve user comfort in all seasons.
- The Trust cannot run without our volunteers and I thank my fellow trustees for all their time and commitment to help make the hall a success. Thank you also to the parish council for their ongoing support.
- **Can you help us?**

We are looking for a new secretary and more volunteers to help with opening/closing the hall for one-off bookings and our moveable partition. If you are interested then please contact me.

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 2024

MELKSHAM FOOD AND RIVER FESTIVAL

The 2023 Melksham Food and River Festival was again very well attended. It is hard to be precise about the numbers attending this FREE-to-attend two-day event, which now attracts people from the entire Melksham area and surrounding villages - and increasingly from a wider catchment area. We estimate that approximately 6 - 8,000 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 Melksham Without Parish Council 2023 grant contributed towards paying for the ever-increasing costs of hiring the necessary specialist professional electrical, insurance, medical, security, toilets, and waste disposal service providers needed to support the event.

The festival weekend again 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.

Planning for the 2024 Festival is already well advanced. Our team of volunteers is planning to run another two-day Melksham Food and River Festival in the King George V Park and on the River Avon over the weekend of 31st August and 1st September 2024.

Our planning includes some minor site layout changes to take account of recent developments in the park. We also face some new challenges this year such as seeking solutions to some issues outside our control - for example making provision to arrange car parking to replace the former Cooper Tires site.

Demand for the increased number of stalls has been high this year. At the time of writing, the expanded number of stalls is already full booked and we are operating a waiting list. Also - and by public and stallholder demand - we are planning to extend the entertainment with a Big Band in the afternoon and a 'Sunnies' concert until 19.00 hrs on Saturday evening.

So, we will look forward to welcoming Parish Council residents again to this Festival.

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club

Shaw and Whitley Garden Club meet at the Methodist Chapel, Top Lane, Whitley SN12 8QU every second Wednesday in the Month from 7pm to 9pm .

We have a range of speakers on Garden related topics. These range from Plants for Small Gardens, suitable Trees to plant, Flowers for wildlife, how to plant for Bees , how to grow and use Herbs , and many other subjects . Also trips to gardens to inspire us all.

We are a very friendly Group with tea/coffee cake or biscuits and a chat before the speaker.

A warm welcome awaits anyone who would like to come along.

Melksham Gardeners Society

Melksham Gardeners Society meet on the last Tuesday of the month at the Rachel Fowler Centre. The Society's aim is to bring together gardeners of all abilities to share our passion for gardening in all its forms, everything from a few house plants to growing fruit and vegetables for the annual flower and produce show.

We currently have over 90 members with about 40% of these based in Melksham Without and surrounding areas, the remanding being based in Melksham Town.

Every year we put on a full programme of talks and presentations which are open to members and non-members, the plant swap and quiz night is always a big success. Two coach trips are arranged each year, last year we visited Wakehurst Place in West Sussex and RHS Wisley in Surrey. The highlight of the year is the Flower and Produce Show which takes place in September at the Assembly Hall, the show is open to members and non-members with a wide range of classes for adults and children.

Other benefits to members are a 10% discount card at Lowden Garden Centre and a bulk seed purchase scheme with a major supplier where we enjoy a 50% discount.

FITNESS & FRIENDSHIP CLUB: BOWERHILL



Age UK Wiltshire is grateful to Melksham Without Parish Council for its continued support of our Fitness & Friendship Club. It takes place fortnightly at Bowerhill Village Hall and has 33 members, of whom 15 live in Melksham Without Parish.

The Fitness & Friendship Club offers older people the opportunity to socialise and stay active. The Club provides exercise classes that are specifically designed to strengthen the core, improve balance and increase / maintain mobility. In addition to these chair-based routines and Tai Chi, Club members can also take part in games such as Bowling, Skittles and Quoits, enjoy refreshments and meet other people. One member said:

"I thoroughly enjoyed the club. Everyone was very friendly. The best bit was the gentle Tai Chi. I particularly liked that."

Older people who attend tell us that the exercises help with mobility, particularly for people with arthritis and stiff joints. Our club leaders and volunteers have received Low Impact Functional Exercises for Older Adults Training as well as First Aid.

As a result, the benefits of attending the club are two-fold:

- The exercises strengthen the core, improve balance, help to reduce falls, and increase older people's confidence
- The social side of the Club with tea and biscuits following exercising is a lifeline for some as it may be the only opportunity that they have to mix with other people in such a setting.

Club members report feeling healthier and fitter for attending the Club, and also comment on improved wellbeing having been able to spend social time with other older people in a safe and non-judgemental environment thus increasing community connectedness and reducing social isolation. A new member to the Club remarked:

"I went to Fitness & Friendship Club for the first time. I was greeted at the door by a lovely lady and the whole session was very friendly and inviting. I am looking forward to the next session, to continue to meet new people and try different things."



Bowerhill Movement for the Mind

Introduction

This report is to update and thank Councillors for their very generous grant of £300 to Alzheimer's Support towards the costs of our dementia-friendly Movement for the Mind activity group based at Bowerhill Village Hall every fortnight.

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 which 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 the risk of becoming isolated behind the door of their own homes 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 with people who are facing similar issues.
3. Giving respite to family carers by providing 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



As can be seen from the image (left), the benefits of our Bowerhill Movement group are clear.

The chance 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 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 parish council and we very much look forward to continuing that relationship in the years to come. Should any parish councillors or officers wish to visit our Bowerhill group, they will be received very warmly.

Julian Roberts (Trusts and Foundations Fundraiser)

JulianR@alzheimerswiltshire.org.uk Tel: 01985 624005 / 07718 262165

Alzheimer's Support

Movement for the Mind group meets fortnightly at Bowerhill Village Hall for gentle exercise to music in a supportive and friendly group setting. Sessions start with a gentle warm-up before moving on to the main activity. Taking part in a social group activity is stimulating and uplifting, and can enhance the wellbeing of people in the early to mid-stages of dementia, together with their family carers. Contact us on 01380 739005 or www.alzheimerswiltshire.org.uk We welcome volunteers and rely on fundraising so let us know if you'd like to get involved.

Help Counselling Annual Parish report:

For the local community of Melksham, our counselling services provide vital support to individuals facing various mental health challenges. Through compassionate listening and evidence-based interventions, we strive to empower our clients to navigate life's complexities. Our skilled counsellors provide a safe and confidential space for individuals to explore their emotions, enhance coping strategies, and foster resilience. By promoting emotional well-being, we contribute to the overall mental health of our community.



Wiltshire Citizens Advice

Chief Executive Update

I am pleased to present this report for Wiltshire Citizens Advice for the period April 2023 to March 2024.

During the calendar year we provided direct advice to 121 clients from the area, approximately 1 in every 27 households. These 121 clients were helped with 528 issues, an average of more than 4 issues each. Of these clients 43% identified as disabled and a further 11% with a long term health condition. 12% were from a non-white British background.

Our most frequent advice area was instances of help with Benefits and Tax Credits as well as additional cases of Universal Credit. The biggest single benefit enquiry area remains Personal Independence Payment where we helped with 48 issues. For Universal Credit clients we saw both a mixture of needing help with new claims and also ongoing issues around housing costs, and capacity for work. A claim for Personal Independence payment which is non means tested can increase a household income by more than £5,600 each year.

As well as benefits we helped clients with 100 debt issues, and also in line with the rest of Wiltshire saw a significant increase in the number of housing issues.

During the year we have and will continue to increase the number of people we see face to face by appointment. We continue to work with a range of local partners on policy such as fuel poverty, access to food and other charitable support, and the fastest rising problem, access to affordable housing. We have been able to provide clients with direct cash and voucher assistance for

The grant will support us in paying for staff and volunteers reference materials, IT kit and supervision. We would like to thank you for supporting us and for valuing and supporting the service we provide.

Suzanne Wigmore

Chief Executive Officer

Client helped and issues

Summary

Clients	121
Quick client contacts	
Issues	528
Activities	367
Cases	132

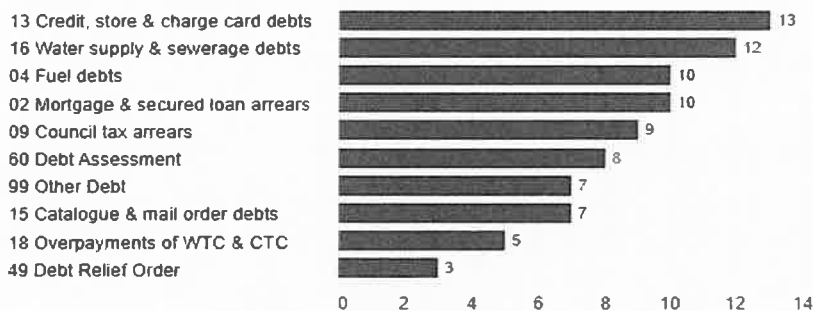
Issues

	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	128	47
Benefits Universal Credit	34	18
Charitable Support & Food Ban.	6	6
Consumer goods & services	19	11
Debt	100	18
Education	1	1
Employment	33	13
Financial services & capability	26	14
GVA & Hate Crime	2	2
Health & community care	11	7
Housing	69	24
Immigration & asylum	11	8
Legal	33	21
Other	1	1
Relationships & family	32	16
Tax	10	5
Travel & transport	5	4
Utilities & communications	7	6
Grand Total	528	

Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



Impact

For every £1 invested we expect to save £3.67 in public services and gain £29.16 in wider economic and social benefit. Research shows that we also have a positive impact on clients' wellbeing and family lives. 6 in 10 clients who received advice tell us that they feel less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received.

**8 in 10**

people said their problem was solved following advice - 80% of those said they could not have resolved the problem without us.

**9 in 10**

people said we helped them find a way forward.

**6 in 10**

people said they felt less stressed, depressed or anxious as a result of the help they received from us.²

**£5.35 million**

was saved by the government and public services from the advice we delivered. That's almost £3.50 for every £1 we spent on the service.

In 2022/23 for every £1 invested in Wiltshire Citizens Advice we generated at least:

**£3.67**

in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits)
By helping stop problems occurring or escalating, we reduce the need for public services like health, housing, or out-of-work benefits.

Total:
£5.12 million

**£29.16**

in wider economic and social benefits (public value)
Solving problems improves lives - and this means better wellbeing, participation and productivity for the people we help.

Total:
£40.72 million

**£10.67**

in value to the people we help (financial outcomes of advice)
As part of our advice, we can increase people's income, through debts written-off, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems

Total:
£14.90 million

Gender



Female
Male

Disability / Long-term health



Long-Term Health Condition
Disabled
Not disabled/no health problems

Ethnicity



White
Black
Asian
Mixed
Other

2024 and Beyond - The Challenges

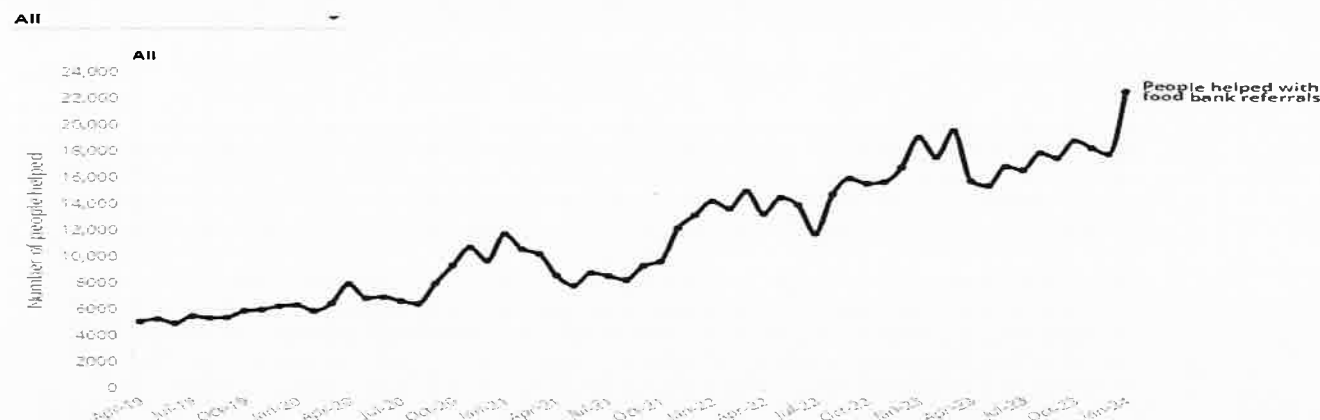
We know that in 2024 many households continue to be significantly impacted by the cost of living crisis. We are increasingly helping clients with crisis support, the graph below shows the figures from National Citizens Advice about the number of clients seeking foodbank support in 2023 and into the new year. This situation is reflected locally.

We are working with a range of local partners including other charities, housing providers, food banks and grant making trusts to make sure that there is support for the people of Wiltshire who need it.

Free, confidential advice.

Whoever you are.

The number of people we're helping with food bank referrals each month



Notes: Part of the decrease in some months (e.g. December) is caused by fewer working days as a result of bank holidays. Note: Figures primarily across these charts, as the same demographic information is not disclosed for all people we help. Data for England and Wales. *The Jan 2024 projection is based on data up to January 1, 2024.

citizens
advice

Melksham WI Report:

Melksham WI meet at 7.30 pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 'That Meeting Space', Market Place, Melksham. The first two visits and all refreshments are free.

We had a very interesting year; in March we had a talk from Dawn Lawrence the Born Free foundation followed in April with Matthew Middleditch and his explosive talk on bomb disposal.

May was our 40th birthday and Waafa Powell catered for our party – a lovely evening with the addition of belly dancing!

In June we all went home with a piece of jewellery when Sue Waldron came along.

July, we had a skittles evening which we hope to repeat this year. A talk on 19th from the very talented lady, Liz watts on Clay and Art.

August is our month to support breast cancer with a quiz and cream tea. Followed in September with Keri Johnson a colour analysis expert.

In October we had lessons in photography from Fiona Turnbull and November was a registrar's story of love and marriage from Anne Ewing

December brought David Gray and our Xmas evening making table centrepieces.

January, we had Susan Simpson showing us how to make paper beads. And finally last month Joanne Huntly brought along some beautiful antique lace.

We try to host a mix of speakers and crafts and in the last few months we have gained new members.



Wiltshire
Air Ambulance
funded by you, flying for you

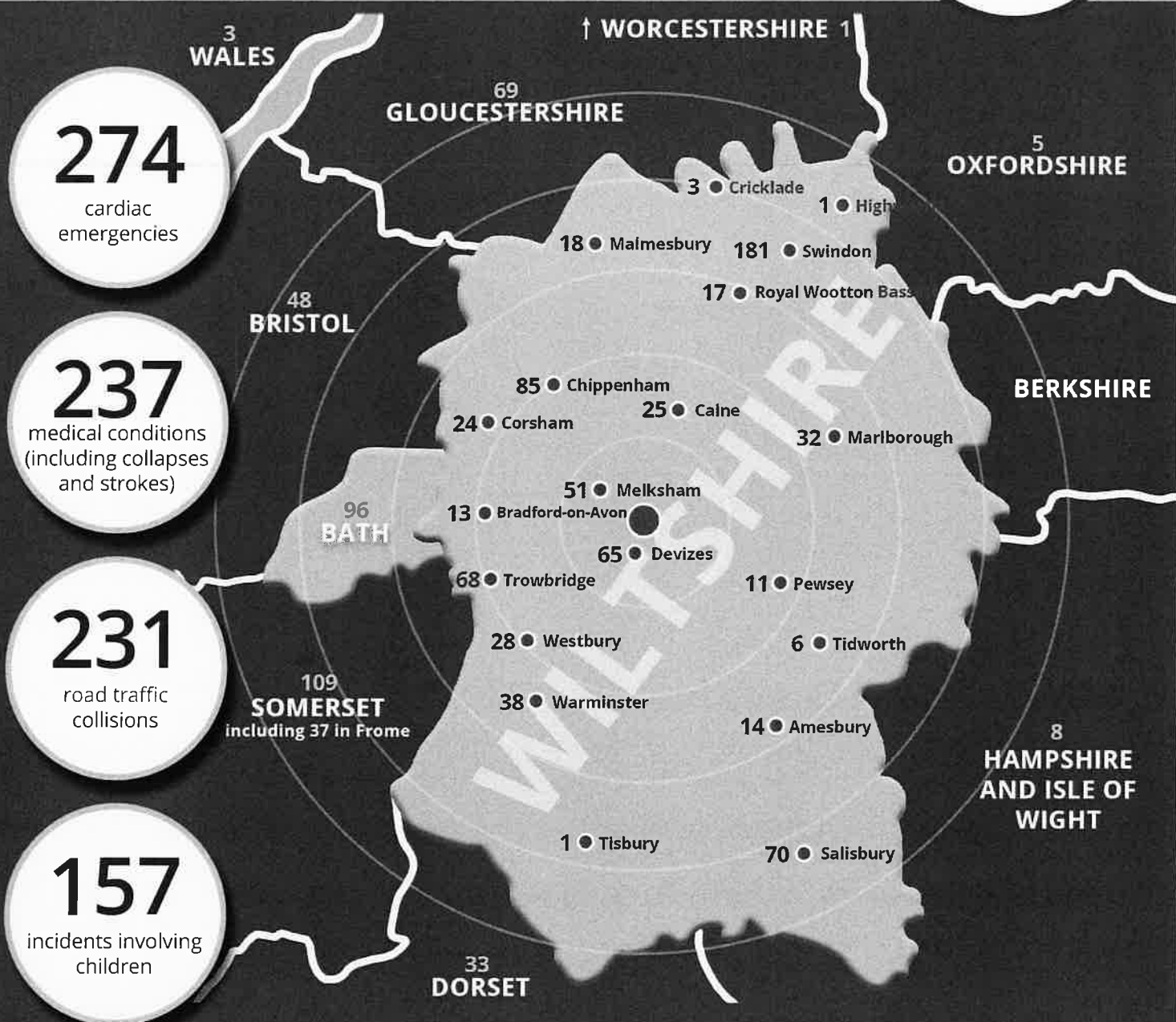
2023 Missions

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

1,167
total missions



646
521



registered charity number 1144097

www.wiltshireairambulance.co.uk

4Youth (South West) report for Melksham Without Parish Council

4Youth (South West) delivers services for children and young people up to 18 years old, or 25 for those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND).

We run two centre based youth club sessions per week, including during the school holidays at Canberra; one Street based youth work session in Melksham and three centre based youth clubs per week at Atworth including the dedicated SEND club.

Our Mission is to support and challenge young people to become the best that they can be.

Our Vision is that all young people grow up healthy, able to navigate a fulfilling career and make a positive contribution in their communities.

We recognise the importance of a safe space for young people and are committed to keep the upkeep and refurbishment of The Canberra Centre in Melksham.

What we did in 2023 for young people who live in Melksham Without Parish

Location	Sessions Run	Young People we Worked with who live in Melksham Without Parish	Total number of contacts made with young people who live in Melksham Without Parish
Atworth & Melksham	191 sessions across the 2 centres	78	443

Although 4Youth (South West) is a charity working across Melksham, Atworth, Chippenham, Westbury & Devizes we continue to ring fence the funding received from Melksham Without Parish Council exclusively for providing services in Melksham Town and from The Canberra Centre.

Without this dedicated funding we would not be able to deliver the range of services we do.

In addition to our youth work we offer through TeenTalk our person centred one to one counselling service for young people. This service enables us to offer free mental health support through a course of up to 8 in person counselling sessions.

2385 (Melksham) Squadron Air Training Corps

The Squadron is currently in its 62nd year. We currently have 68 cadets, 4 uniformed members of staff, 5 civilian instructors and 10 committee members. We are parading every Wednesday and Friday evening and have activities on nearly every weekend. Activities we have participated over and above the normal training syllabus in the last year include, Flying, Gliding, Shooting, Annual Camps, Fieldcraft exercises, Adventure Training, Go-Carting, Flight Simulation using the Squadron's own Simulator, Sports Events, Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, Educational Visits and much more. We continue to recruit new cadets and are also always keen to recruit new members of staff to be able to support with the continuation of these activities.

FRIENDS OF SHURNHOLD FIELDS

Over the last several years the volunteer group has helped maintain and improve the old George Ward school playing fields to shape how it looks today. Planting trees and bulbs, mowing, pruning, clearing weeds and overgrowth and weekly litter picking. The team has nurtured over 200 saplings donated by the Woodland Trust in a tree nursery before planting out to create a WW1 memorial area with each tree representing a lost son of Melksham and the local villages. Further trees have been planted alongside a small Orchard of endangered fruit trees and several memorial trees have been planted throughout the fields to enhance the look as well as help with biodiversity.

Although ongoing projects by the volunteer team have been hindered by the lack of equipment they have organised a free Easter Egg Hunt this year. With entries in excess of 100 children the team are currently discussing other family activities to organise during future school holidays as the hunt was so popular despite the weather. The once overgrown abandoned pocket of land is now a much-loved communal space. It has brought members of the community together by providing a focal point for all to enjoy. An easy, safe place to enjoy nature on our doorstep.

LIFE EDUCATION CENTRE WILTSHIRE (LECW)

We are a small charity that delivers age appropriate mental and physical health education programmes to all Wiltshire primary school children aged 4 to 11.

Aims and Objectives

The programmes are delivered by our trained specialist educators in the school classroom using a system called LifeBase.

The programmes build year on year the aims being:

- 1 Through social and emotional learning to help the young people acquire the skills they need for good academic progress.
- 2 To ensure that children can make positive choices about their health.
- 3 To help the children develop the skills and self confidence to put their decisions into practice
- 4 To work with class teachers to provide the educational support they need to ensure the positive mental health and wellbeing of the children. This has become very important. In 2020 one in six (16%) children aged 5 to 16 were identified with a probable mental disorder, up from 10.8% in 2017.

Educational Programmes

Coram Life Education (the national organisation to whom we are affiliated) have developed a dedicated PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curriculum called SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience and Friendship) that forms the basis for the classes taught by our educators.

LECW(W) educators deliver the age-appropriate programmes in the classroom using specially designed teaching aids which ensure that the teaching is memorable and engaging.

The programme is for the whole school with the pupils being taught how to tackle more difficult issues such as Relationship and Sex Education, peer pressure and cyberbullying as they progress up the school.

We deliver this programme by Workshops in Schools and enabling those schools to use the SCARF educational material.

We have at some time delivered these programmes to all the Primary Schools in the Melksham Without Area ie:-

- Bowerhill Primary – circa 400 children
- Forest & Sandridge Primary – circa 460 children
- Shaw Primary – circa 200 children
- Churchfield Primary, Atworth – 130 children
- Seend Primary – 100 children
- St Mary's Broughton Gifford – 75 children

Total Children potentially benefiting – 1,365

In addition some children residing in the Melksham Without area may attend a school in the Melksham Town area eg Aloeric Primary, River Mead and The Manor

We have 2 fully trained Educators who deliver the Education programmes (with the objectives detailed above) to schools in Wiltshire – including these local schools.

These are delivered directly in schools using the LifeBase system. SCARF in-class workshops support the teachers in meeting the new Relationship and Health Education statutory requirements. This is supplemented by enabling the school teachers to use our SCARF software throughout the year which provides follow up to the classroom workshops.

Governance

We only have 2 employees – our Educators – they account for 80% of our costs. Other expenditure is kept to a minimum

The charity has 6 Trustees who provide their services at no cost. These Trustees manage the day by day operation, control the finances and ensure appropriate governance. The Trustees also source potential grants and donations.

Grant awarded

We sincerely thank Melksham Without Parish Council for the grants awarded in this and previous years. This is a very helpful contribution to the funding gap (between income from schools and our expenditure) which we have to meet each year

Martin Coles
Trustee and Treasurer

Group Five Annual Parish report

Group Five is a furniture Charity operating in West Wiltshire and providing free furniture to needy families who for whatever reason are unable to afford to purchase their own. Last year we were able to help 122 families in the Melksham area and expect a similar number this year

Melksham carnival

We would like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who supports us each year in anyway!

This past year we have been fundraising and being part of many community events to keep us visible and to be present in our amazing town.

These events include:

The remembrance parade,

Melksham Hospital fete

The MTC platinum Jubilee and coronation events

Climatefest

And hosted a few off our own including the return of our lantern parade (with a craft workshop to create the lanterns)

Bonnie baby

And we also ran the Christmas Grotto at the town light switch on.

We are very excited to be bringing you Melksham Carnival 2024 and can't wait to see our fantastic supporter's lining the streets with row upon row off smiles-making the years hard work worth it!

Our Melksham Carnival Royalty 2022-24 have been fabulous in their duties and all off the events which they have been part of.

The generosity we have seen over the past year from Melksham Without, as well as their support of the new team has been invaluable and we appreciate all help, and hope to grow a fulfilling future relationship.

Melksham Community Money Advice

Melksham Community Money Advice, based at the Baptist Church (Old Broughton Road), provides free, impartial, and confidential debt and budgeting advice to those in need in the local community. Unlike many national organisations, we provide in person, bespoke advice which makes us very accessible to anyone in the local community. We are staffed entirely by volunteers and currently have 3 qualified advisers and three in training. In 2023, on average, we helped one new client every month and we successfully arranged one Debt Relief Order (DRO) for a client every 2-3 months - a DRO is a potential debt solution for a client with up to £50,000 in debts (and no significant assets). Our only source of income is via an arrangement with Wessex Water, which is very limited, and consequently we are totally reliant on grants from organisations such as Melksham without Parish Council.

Melksham Sixty Plus Club Annual Parish Report

As suggested by the name, Melksham Sixty Plus Club is a social group for older residents of Melksham. We meet at Queensway Chapel every Tuesday and it's "eyes down" at 2.00 p.m. (members arrive at about 1.30 p.m.) for a friendly game of bingo with refreshments and a raffle at half-time. We have an ongoing contract with Melksham Community Bus for our members who don't have transport to be picked up from their homes and returned after our meetings. There are currently 52 members on our books. We have had a very successful year- this year we celebrated our 75th year! Each year we run coach trips for everyone, and have visited many different places including Weymouth, Weston-Super-Mere, Sidmouth and the donkey Sanctuary, and pantomime at Swindon Wyvern Theatre. Our year culminated when we provided every member with a free Christmas Dinner at Cumberwell Park! We were very fortunate that we were able to visit this lovely venue due to the donations of families of some of our members who are, sadly, no longer with us. We have already had a social afternoon at the Rugby Club where we enjoyed a bingo session followed by a lovely cream tea served by the Rugby Club, and we finished off with a raffle. This was a completely free event for members! As a non-profit making club, any spare monies are spent on our members. We have arranged our calendar for 2024 and have organised several outings to various destinations.

For more information, please feel free to phone Chairman Mrs. Rosemary Nash on 01225 707712 who will be very happy to help you.

SHAW AND WHITLEY ART GROUP

I would like to thank Melksham Without Parish Council for awarding the above Art Group with £250 towards recruiting new members.

With this money I will be able to invite Artists from the local area to come and teach Art on a monthly basis, as feedback from the community is that they would join if someone could give lessons.

Report from 'that meeting space'

April 2024

Behind the big red doors in Melksham Market Place is 'that meeting space', administered by GoodNews Church. Offering space for groups and organisations to meet, grow and thrive, 'that meeting place' has served as an incubator for fledgling groups to gather and establish themselves. Whether art or music, discussion or demonstration, 'that meeting space' is ideal for groups of up to 40 people.

During 2023/4 groups such as the *Nature and Art Friends* have continued to grow, while the *Red Door Singers* have become well established. The *Melksham WI* have made 'that meeting space' their home. The *Tuesday drop-in* has continued to be a safe space for anyone who wants some company with a friendly, welcoming group, and The Bereavement Journey continues to help many who have suffered loss.

With last year's grant from Melksham Without Parish Council, the signage for 'that meeting space' has been improved, which has heightened the profile of the space to welcome new courses and organisational meetings.

If anyone is exploring the idea of forming a new group or looking for the right venue for a new activity, call 'that meeting space' on 07389 866714 or email thatmeetingspace@gmail.com

Wiltshire Youth Canoe Club (WYCC)

<https://www.facebook.com/WYCCMelksham> (the club doesn't have a website – only facebook)

Based in the centre of Melksham, alongside the King George V park, on the River Avon.

Wiltshire Youth Canoe Club grew during the year and offering a wider range of Paddlesport opportunities for our community.

Stand Up Paddleboards (SUPs). added so even more sessions available - kayak canoe & SUP.

Over 150 new young people tried Paddlesport at the club, around a 50/50 split of boys/girls joining the club sessions.

A new group of 8 volunteers were trained at the club, developing SUP skills, and gaining qualification. We welcome more volunteers to join us. Its great fun and very rewarding plus get out outdoors and exploring too.

The club continues with canoe and kayak opportunities plus opportunities for those keen to get involved at any level in competitive disciplines of the sport as it has done previously, with club members representing Great Britain again in 2023 at international levels of Paddlesport.

The club also offer opportunities to explore a range of other venues, with club trip on rivers and canals. Due to popularity more trips will be on offer in 2024.

We are training up more group leaders to enable us to carry out more trips.

We will upgraded our SUP coaches into Paddle Sport Instructors which will enable them to do multi craft sessions, canoe, kayak and SUP.

We will run intro sessions through the year at the club - main sessions are Saturday mornings and Wednesday & Thursday evenings in the week.

We have paddlers successfully competing at multiple events at local & national level. Plus regular trips to other places to paddle just fun, to adventure and explore - its whatever you fancy.

Come and find us.

ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVES

For 2023/24

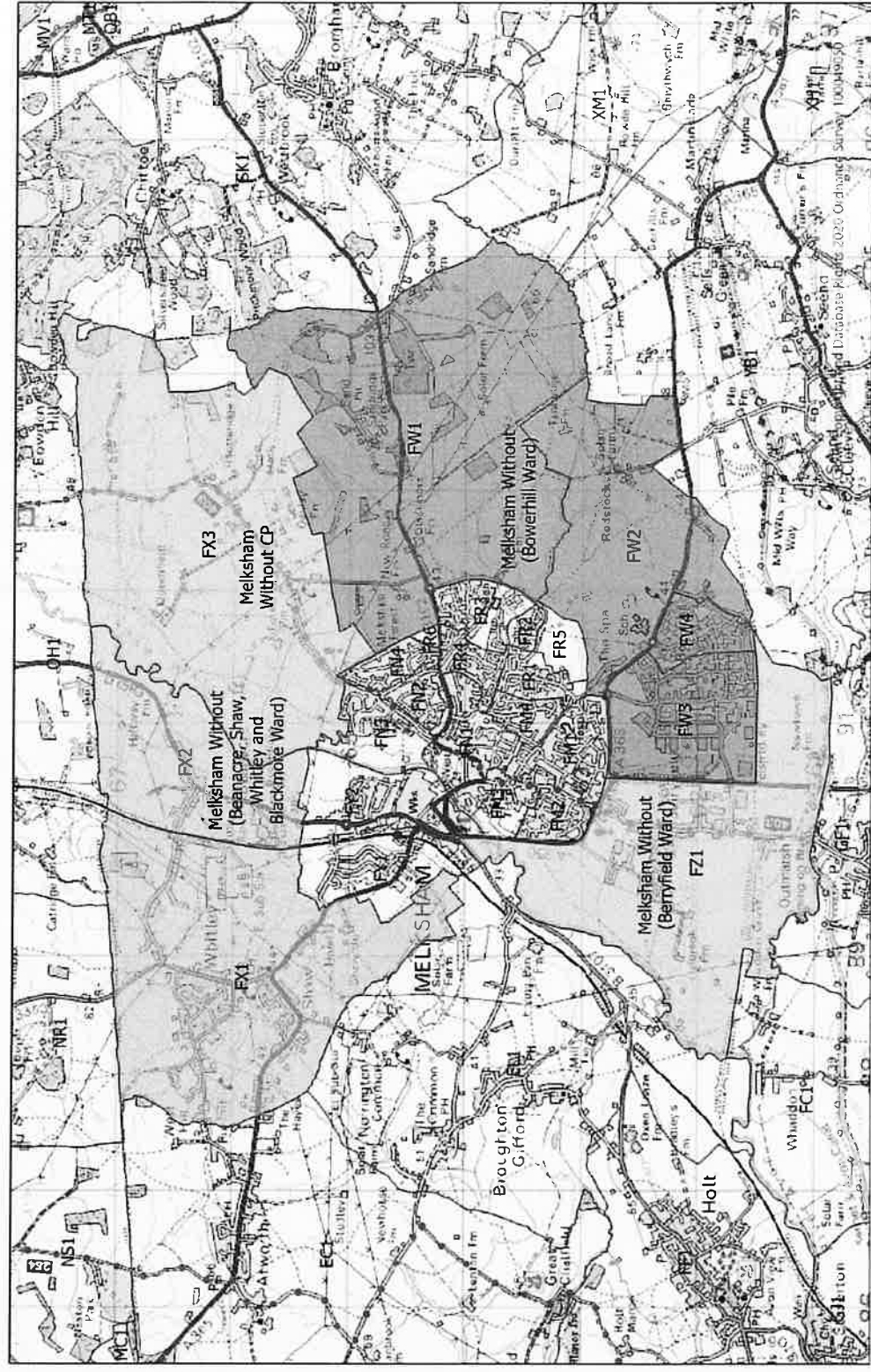
Organisations:

Age UK	John Doel
Berryfield & Semington Road Action Group (BASRAG)	Richard Wood
Berryfield Village Hall	Shona Holt
Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG)	Nathan Keates (Sub: Andy Russell)
Bowerhill Village Hall Trust	Andy Russell
CCTV Working Group (Town Council)	Mark Harris
Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) & Flood Wardens	Peter Richardson
CPRE (Wiltshire Branch)	Martin Franks
Health & Wellbeing Group (Melksham Area Board)	John Glover
Local Highways & Footway Improvement Group	Alan Baines
Melksham Area Board	John Glover & David Pafford
Melksham ATC	Andy Russell
Melksham Charities/Almhouses	R Shea-Simonds & John Doel
Melksham Hospital & Community (Friends of)	Robert Shea-Simonds
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
Police Liaison	Officers
Press Representative	Clerk – Teresa Strange
Shaw Hall Management Committee	Martin Franks
Shurnhold Fields (Friends of)	(from Shurnhold Working Group Reps)
Whitley Reading Rooms	John Doel
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	Mark Harris
Wiltshire, Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership	Mark Harris
WALC (Wiltshire Association of Local Councils)	VACANCY

Footpath Representatives:

Beanacre	Terry Chivers/John Doel
Berryfield	Richard Wood
Bowerhill, Redstocks and The Spa	John Glover & Andy Russell
Sandridge & Blackmore	Alan Baines
Shaw & Whitley	John Doel & Terry Chivers

Melksham Without Parish Council Ward Map



Drawn by: ruth.fry
18/12/2020

[TITLE 2]

[TITLE]

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MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Teresa Strange

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Email: clerk@melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

Web: www.melkshamwithout-pc.gov.uk

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BEANACRE SHAW, WHITLEY & BLACKMORE WARD

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HOW TO CONTACT MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL



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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

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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
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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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