

Meltham Mercury

Meltham Town Council's Newsletter - March 2012



Meeting with Morrisons

At the beginning of February, Councillors Jean Wrathall, Susan Andrew and Terry Lyons, along with Melvin Gibson from Friends of Meltham Greenway, met with Guy Mason from Morrisons' Head Office, and Peter Goodman the Store Manager at Morrisons' Meltham premises.

The Meltham Greenway project and some youth community project workers have re-built a crumbled wall at the top of the cliff top pathway that leads to the steps to the car park. Prior to the rebuilding work, some youths had been throwing stones from the collapsed wall onto Morrisons' roof, causing a quite serious amount of damage. Since re-building the wall, the vandalism has ceased.

The plans for the Meltham Greenway's initiative for a skate park to be built at the Broadlands recreation ground have now been approved, and the funding is approximately two thirds of the way there. But the scheme still needs further financial input. The representatives from Morrisons were going to discuss with their Head Office the possibility of helping this community project with funding.

We are also happy to report that the rural bus service, route 933, which was under threat, due to lack of funding, is still going to run, at least for the next two years. This is a valuable local bus, as it runs daily (except Sundays) picking up passengers all around the village and takes them into Meltham Centre and by Morrisons' front door.

Town Meeting - have your say!

It's the **Annual Town Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 16 May 2012 at the Civic Hall, Carlile Street, Meltham.** This is your chance to come along to a meeting of the Council to 'have your say' or put questions to the Council about any issues that concern you. You will also be able to hear a short report on the various projects and work the Council has undertaken over the year.



The Crossroads shop opened in February 1996 and it has become a much loved and well-used resource for our community. Whether you are looking for a cup and saucer, a babygro, an outfit for a wedding or a new paperback, you are likely to find it. The prices are very low, as our aim is to make available good quality goods at affordable prices for local people.

Around 70 volunteers, drawn from all the churches in Meltham, work in the shop on a rota system. All goods are donated. We are very grateful for the generous daily contributions of things to sell. Our staff work very hard, turning the stock around in two weeks, so that there is always something new to look through and buy. The shop is a friendly and welcoming place; many people pop in to browse through the stock or just to chat.

As we have no salaries to pay, we are able to give back a large proportion of our profits in grants to the community. Grant forms are available in the shop; we consider applications from local groups and organisations or from individuals who are working to help others at home or abroad. Since opening in 1996, we have given more than £425,000 in grants back to the community.

The Crossroads Centre opened in 1997, in premises opposite the Fire Station. It provides free, confidential advice and information through recognised agencies. The Centre is open every weekday morning from 10.00-12.30. Further details of the Centre will be in the next edition of Mercury.

A **huge thank you** should be given to all the many volunteers who work in the shop and centre. Without them giving their valuable time and commitment, this extremely worthwhile asset would not exist in Meltham.

Nominated Neighbour Cards

Do you know someone who would benefit from using a Nominated Neighbour Card? The Scheme aims to take away unnecessary confrontation from the doorstep and offers protection against bogus callers. Once registered with the scheme, if someone calls at the door unexpectedly and the homeowner feels uncomfortable answering the door, all they have to do is show the Nominated Neighbour Card, with the house number of a trusted and friendly neighbour, who can vet the caller for them. The Cards are available from the Town Hall, or by calling your local Neighbourhood Policing Team on **101**.



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Meltham Faces Change

It seems that the reach of the world economic crisis has now come to Meltham. This, and recent changes by Kirklees, are set to bring challenging times for your local Town Council. Compared to many local Town and Parish Councils in West Yorkshire, the people of our parish have had a built-in financial advantage: the sale of land beside Robert Ashton Memorial Park, which now forms the Hall Close Estate, brought in large capital funds to the Council in 2007. Over the last five years, the interest from this money has enabled the Town Council to keep the local Council Tax down at a level below what it actually costs to run the Council, with no increase in the precept, (the amount the Town Council receives from Kirklees). However, the recent drastic fall in interest rates has now reduced this income to the Town Council.

Kirklees' Changes

Last year the boundaries of the parish were changed, removing a significant number of houses around Blackmoorfoot and parts of Netherton that previously belonged to the township. This means that fewer households now are responsible for the local Council Tax burden. At the same time Kirklees has also significantly increased their charges for election expenses. These combined external pressures have forced the Town Council to reconsider how it can continue best serving the Township area in these difficult economic circumstances.

The Robert Ashton Memorial Park

The Town Council's total expenditure of around £70,000 a year is small peanuts compared to Kirklees, which handles some £188 million per year, or even the local Holme Valley Parish Council, which expends £122,000. By far the Town Council's biggest expense is the upkeep

of the Robert Ashton Memorial Park. Unless the Town Council is able to make up for the external losses outlined above, we are threatened with being unable to keep up the maintenance of this valued public amenity. The Town Councillors feel that the people of the township value the park and the children's play area. We think it would be a loss to the township if the park was allowed to deteriorate. In light of this, we have decided to keep expenditure on the park the same this year as in previous years. However, we are asking the Township to cover the loss of income resulting from the actions of Kirklees and the lower bank interest. This will mean an increase in the local Council Tax of around one pound twenty pence per year, which will mean an increase of less than 3p a week for a Band D household — even less for Bands A to C.

The Future

The financial pressures on the Town Council are not likely to go away. The general economic problems of the government and budget pressures from Kirklees will continue, along with a reduction in services provided by Kirklees. Your Town Councillors feel that there are important questions about the future to be discussed by our community: What role should the Town Council play in this situation? Should we continue to maintain the Robert Ashton Park? What could, or should, the Town Council do if Kirklees pulls out of providing some services? Over the coming year, we hope to organise events to enable you to voice your opinion and discuss the options we have as a community.



Let us know
what you think

Remember—if in doubt, keep them out!

www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk



Cllr David Woodhead
One of the most popular TV programmes recently has been *Who Do You Think You Are?* where each week a celebrity is helped to find their roots. This has fuelled a growing interest in family history and genealogy. Meltham has a great resource for our local family historians and genealogists. In 1987 the Huddersfield and District Family History Society (H&DFHS) was established as a mutual help group. As it grew, it looked for a home, finding one in a shop on Huddersfield Road. Last year it moved into new premises in the forecourt of Greens End garage.

I have made use of both these premises to research my family history — not only the Woodheads, but also the maternal lines of Brook, Peters, Gledhill and Bower. Along the way, I found out that in the 16th century 40% of the people of Meltham were called Woodhead!

The development of the Internet has revolutionised family history, with many websites and software packages now available. Some are free to access, whilst others make a charge; but if you join the H&DFHS, you will have access to most of these online services. The classic source of material is the National Census, which began in 1841. There is a plan to put all this material online, but until then, you can access the original data at H&DFHS.

There is another great resource available at H&DFHS: the parish and church records, which have been collected into a series of booklets by dedicated local researchers. The H&DFHS centre is open every afternoon, except Friday; it's also open on Thursday evenings.

Playground extension

In February we completed an extension to the toddler area in the Robert Ashton Memorial Park. The area was a grim, previously unused, flagged area. This has now been transformed into a play area, with an 'old fashioned' hopscotch and a road track, on brightly coloured spongy tarmac. We know that the area has already been getting some good use, despite the weather. We hope you enjoy taking your children to this new area.



Come on Grandads and Grandmas — show the young ones how to play



Try it out!

Meltham 'Environmental Audit'

Many people will have noticed in September's issue of the Meltham Mercury that the Town Council had agreed to do an 'environmental audit' of the Township, in order to help improve how our town looks.

The main conclusion so far is that much of the town is well cared for and most of the streets are fairly well maintained; and as many of you have commented, Meltham is a great place to live. However, there are exceptions, with a number of badly littered locations, and dog fouling continuing to be a problem. Broken walls and untidy verges have also been highlighted.

Your Councillors are now sharing this information with Kirklees Council and other private property owners to seek improvements. For example, British Telecom has agreed to smarten up the area at Near Lane; and we are having conversations with Morrisons to improve the litter situation at the beginning of the Meltham Greenway. The Town Council have provided additional waste bins around the town, and we will be placing more dog fouling signs, as part of our plea for all residents to take care not to litter and be more responsible dog owners.

Police - new number 101

As another year begins, it's right to firstly wish you all a Happy New Year and hope that you have had a crime-free Christmas. The Valleys Neighbourhood Policing Team has been working hard over the festive period in and around the Meltham area, and we continue to do so.

For this new year, we have a new number for non-emergency numbers; the old 0845 number has finally been laid to rest. **As well as contacting The Valleys NPT on the usual office number (436855), you can now contact the police on 101.** Our e-mail address and web site remain the same: ea.valleysnpt@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk www.westyorkshire.police.uk/kirklees/valleys

We are now holding regular contact points at Morrisons each Wednesday between 10am and noon, where you can speak with your local Police Community Support Officer or Police Constable when you are out and about in Meltham. We offer crime prevention advice and a listening ear.

If you have any concerns, please contact us by phone or e-mail. Or why not follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/westyorkshirepolice) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/WestYorksPolice)?

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee



Please let us know about any interesting ways in which you feel we should commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee this summer.

There will be an extra long weekend, from Saturday 2nd to Tuesday 5th June to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's reign of 60 years.

Email the clerk with your ideas or contact one of your Councillors — see the town council website for contact details.

www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Meltham Sports & Community Centre

Meltham Sports and Community Centre continues to provide top class facilities for a wide range of sporting and community based activities. The centre's badminton facilities are quite popular, and are available at competitive rates.

Regular users of the club include the Bridgewood Trust, Friend to Friend, and the Forget-Me-Not charity. As well as being used by the main sporting bodies for fundraising activities, the centre receives private bookings for a variety of occasions — christenings, weddings, and even funerals.

Forget-Me-Not's luncheons are well-supported, helping to raise £100,000 for the children's hospice. The Bridgewood Trust caters for the disabled; they have regular bowling competitions, where recently every participant was awarded with a medal.

Highlights from the sporting sections that use the centre include the Meltham Cricket Club, who have won both the under 15 and

under 17 cups. This is a great achievement, considering these competitions include entry from all teams in the surrounding area.

The Meltham Subscription Bowling Club was awarded the best kept green trophy, mainly due to the hard work of Michael Pogson. The bowling club also hosted a Yorkshire Ladies County Match. The Veterans section of the bowling club is one of the most active in the area. They run weekly three, ten-man teams, and one six-man section.

Similarly, the Meltham Athletics Club, which uses the centre, are enjoying increasing success. Their recent 10K run attracted 167 entrants, and their January 10K run normally has 300 entries.

This local and welcoming sports and community centre can cater for up to 120 guests, with full bar and kitchen facilities. We are happy to discuss your requirements — just give a call them on 850198, or pop in to see the Manager.



Walking your way to health — Kirklees Walking Groups

Walking is good for your heart, lungs, muscles, bones; and it can help you feel more positive. It is also a very sociable activity. Almost everyone can join in: you just need comfortable shoes or boots and a water-proof jacket.

We have two friendly and sociable walking groups in Meltham. We meet on a Monday at 10.00am, and on Tuesday at 1.30pm in the Carlile Street Car Park.

We walk for one hour, although sometimes this extends to one and a half hours if we walk around Digley Reservoir, Netherton Woods or Slaithwaite. We drive to these venues, sharing transport.

If you are interested or would like more information, please ring:
Monday Group — Jean 850299
Tuesday Group — Ann 859341

Or just come along; **you will be very welcome.**

Carols in the Park

It was wonderful to see so many people in the Robert Ashton Memorial Park on 11 December 2011, enjoying "Carols in the Park".

This annual free event, organised by Meltham Churches Together, saw large numbers of people singing, listening to readings and enjoying free mince pies and mulled wine. Even into the New Year, the Churches are still hearing from people who had not been to any of the previous events, saying how delighted they were to walk into the park to the sounds of music and singing, and with the glow of candlelight all around.

We hope that this Christmas tradition will continue for many years to come. The Town Council were happy to show their support with the use of the park, and by way of a grant of £400 towards advertising costs.

