



Community Newsletter – Spring 2022

Keeping residents of Meon Vale informed of estate management and development activity.

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF THE MEON VALE NEWSLETTER

It's been an great start to the year for the local environment at Meon Vale, with much of the open space around the village now officially designated as a Local Wildlife Site by Warwickshire County Council. Following donations from the Woodland Trust and the village landscaping team Whiting, Kevin Balchin from the Meon Vale Residents Working Group was joined by volunteers from the community to coordinate and plant hundreds of new trees.



In addition, we recently saw the planting of five new apple trees donated by St. Modwen as part of the Queen's Green Canopy – helped along by local schoolchildren!

Elsewhere, it was fantastic to see the warm welcome pupils put on for Education Secretary and our local MP Nadhim Zahawi, who helped to officially open Tudor Grange Primary Academy at a fantastic ceremony organised by the school.

It was great to speak to so many people at the Community Safety Day organised by the Meon Vale Residents' Association, and we're very grateful to the Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, and attendees from our local councils for coming along.

You can read more about all of these exciting updates in this newsletter and we look forward to seeing everyone at the events coming up over the next few months!

Best wishes

The team at Meon Vale

SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR OFFICIALLY OPENS MEON VALE SCHOOL

Tudor Grange Primary Academy Meon Vale was formally opened in March by a very special guest.

Pupils welcomed Nadhim Zahawi – Secretary of State for Education and local Member of Parliament for Stratford-on-Avon – with a performance of a song they wrote and performed themselves.

After cutting a ribbon and a cake and then delivering a short speech, the MP met many of the children as they participated in a range of Shakespeare-themed activities involving puppet-making, art, storytelling and dance.



SAVE THE DATE!

After all the excitement of spring, we're looking forward to another great season of free events – make sure to note these dates in your diaries.

Saturday 7 May, 2-8pm: Feast Streat Social comes to Meon Vale

Saturday 22 May, 12-4pm: Village Hall craft fair

Sunday 5 June, 12-4pm: Jubilee Celebration picnic and BBQ

Saturday 13 August: Meon FunFest

Monday 29 August: Family BBQ and games

If you would like to get involved in helping out with events, please contact Christine Johnson, Community Mobiliser: meonvalecommunity@gmail.com

MEON VALE ANNUAL SURVEY

The team at St. Modwen is very grateful to residents for taking the time to fill in our annual survey and we always make sure we consider all of the responses received. We wanted to share the results of our most recent survey and let you know how we're making progress on responding to the key issues that you have raised.



You said that our previous managing agent for Meon Vale was not providing enough value for money.

Following your feedback, we reviewed our arrangements with our managing agent and put the contract out to tender. We invited residents to be part of the process in choosing a new managing agent and are grateful to everyone that attended our webinar about this.

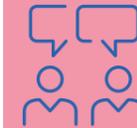
Following the community's input, we have now appointed a new managing agent for Meon Vale, Preim, who will be taking over responsibilities from 1 July 2022.



You raised concerns about speeding through the village.

St. Modwen introduced speed bumps along Wellington Avenue following requests from the community. This helped to discourage speeding, but an unintended consequence of installing the traffic calming measures was an increase in noise and vibrations from HGVs driving over them.

We've since removed the speed bumps and are working with Stratford-on-Avon District Council to install CCTV. We will continue to work with residents, stakeholders and the council to help resolve this issue and are exploring options including increased signage.



You asked for more support for residents and families at Meon Vale with special needs.

The local Diocese and Barnardo's have worked together to set up the Meon Vale Families and Children Partnership. As part of the well-attended inaugural meeting in January, we heard from residents about how the local community can work to support each other.

We're now looking at ways to implement the measures discussed during the meeting with various stakeholders, and continuing to listen to the community for other things we can do to help.



You asked for help tackling anti-social behaviour at Meon Vale.

MVRA worked with Stratford-on-Avon District Council to invite our local Police Community Support Officer to a collaboration group meeting where we heard and discussed your concerns.

Together with the district council, Marston Sicca Parish Council, and Meon Vale Residents Association, we supported the Community Safety Day on Saturday 26 March – more details in this newsletter!



You said that managing and protecting the facilities and green open spaces in and around the village was important.

We've been working with our Residents Working Group, stakeholders including local councillors, and the Meon Vale Residents Association (MVRA) to explore the best ways of managing and enhancing the local facilities across the village.

One of the options we're exploring is for the woodland to be managed and maintained by a specialist third party or charity. We've been holding discussions with The Heart of England Forest and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and will keep residents updated as soon as we know more.



You said that sustainability and the environment are important at Meon Vale, and asked what we can do to help.

Working with members of the local community, we are looking to support residents in setting up a new Woodland Working Group. A recent Community Planting Day saw over 500 trees planted that have been donated by the Woodland Trust and Whiting.



In addition, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee this summer, five apple trees were also planted with help from children at Tudor Grange Primary Academy.



You said we could communicate better with residents.

We issue a newsletter, as well as frequent written updates on specific development or construction work taking place, and are reviewing how we can improve these including putting more community updates on our website.

We will also be working closely with new managing agents, Preim, on implementing a new residents communication system. If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact us: meonvalestates@st.modwen.co.uk



You said that a community café is really important to life at Meon Vale.



We are continuing to support The Pavilion Coffee Shop which we know is hugely valued by the community, and are working to ensure that provision of a café facility continues to be part of our future strategy at Meon Vale.



You asked for more information about volunteering opportunities.

As part of our work with local stakeholders including the parish council, primary school and Meon Vale Residents Association, we will be looking to identify and increase the number of volunteering events, initiatives and activities for residents to take part in.

We'll make sure we provide relevant information through our newsletter, website and locally in the village.





MEON VALE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



MEON VALE COMMUNITY SAFETY DAY

The Meon Vale Residents Association (MVRA) in partnership Stratford-on-Avon District Council Communities hosted a community safety event with support from St. Modwen and many others on Saturday 26 March. The event was held across The Pavilion Coffee Shop and car park.

The event was organised for people to find out more about keeping safe around the community, with help from the Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, Pebworth Fire Station, and the Cotswolds First Aiders.

With lots to see and do for all the family including riding in a police car, seeing the kit of a fire engine, and learning first aid skills as well as checking bike safety with Dr Bike and bike security marking with the local police, we hope everyone found the event as fun and informative as we did.

FUNDING FOR GREEN FINGERS

The MVRA has been awarded £4,900 in funding from Warwickshire County Council's Green Shoots Fund for its 'Making Meon Vale Sustainable' project.

MVRA secured the funding to support the planting of new wildflower meadows which will help to attract more wildlife and increase biodiversity across the village. More information about this is set to be confirmed soon.

The funds will also support the purchase of compost bins and new water butts to support both households and the new community allotments.

MVRA COMMUNITY PLAN

The Meon Vale Community Plan 2022 has been updated – it will provide guidance for working with other organisations in the Meon Vale Partnership and for applying for grant funding. A draft will be published shortly for comment.

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP

The Meon Vale Families and Children's Partnership (MVFCP) will bring services and support to help families living in Meon Vale. It has been organised by Barnardo's and the local Diocese. It will offer assistance to those facing challenging times and may compliment the FoodShare initiative by providing support in other areas.

For further information about these updates, you can visit the MVRA's website: www.meonvalera.org
Get in touch: meonvaleresidents@gmail.com

MARSTON SICCA PARISH COUNCIL



GET GARDENING AT MEON VALE ALLOTMENTS

St. Modwen has finished preparing the site for Meon Vale's 14 new allotments, handing the site over to Marston Sicca Parish Council, who will run the allotments on behalf of the community. Each plot has now been staked out and are available to rent as either half or full-sized plots.

One plot will be retained by the Parish Council as a community plot, for cultivation by the school and other local community groups, with fresh produce grown at the plot to be sold at The Pavilion.

Green-fingered residents can contact Debbie Woodcliffe, Marston Sicca PC Clerk on clerk@marstonsicca-pc.gov.uk, to register for an allotment, costing £35 per year for a full pitch.

THE PAVILION COFFEE SHOP, MEON VALE

Open: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 4pm
Introduction by Steph Hillier

The Pavilion Coffee Shop, situated next to the recreational fields, is a not-for-profit community space, staffed mainly by volunteers. We sell local produce and use organic coffee that is roasted locally by Alison of Origin Eden, who roasts in small batches to guarantee consistent quality. The same is true of our homemade cakes. Our main supplier uses freshly laid eggs from her own ducks!

Our next little project is to refit the kitchen so we can offer a more diverse menu. (It's currently a very small kitchen!).

We also operate The Community Foodshare which has offered extra help to families and vulnerable people to feed themselves since the very first lockdown. We are working alongside Neighbourly, which helps businesses make a positive impact, and FareShare's charitable food redistribution programme. Our volunteers collect fresh produce from local large retailers which otherwise would go to waste. We then distribute to our families in the surrounding villages.



Please contact **Steph Hillier** on 07720 975023, or **Jane Batchelor** on 07522 559865 if you feel you require our help or would like to discuss any of the above. All conversations are confidential.

We have many more projects in the pipeline, but the reality is that for us to move forward with these ideas, we need the community support. Please get involved through volunteering or popping by!

TREAT A FRIEND

Nikki Goh spearheaded the 'Treat a Friend' pilot project over the February half-term where the community paid for packed lunches from The Pavilion at £3. Children could claim one packed lunch a day at no charge or questions by saying "I'm a friend". Thanks to the amazing kindness of the community, 89 meals were distributed.

The scheme also ran over the Easter holidays.

@thepavilioncoffeeshop

EVENTS

Wednesdays at 10.30am – Knit n Natter with Janet Brown. The current project is knitting bunting for The Queen's Jubilee. Beginners are welcome – she's a very patient lady!

Thursday mornings – Parkinson's UK hold a weekly exercise class in the leisure centre, funded by the MVRA. You can then head over to The Pavilion for lunch and a chat in the coffee shop.

@thepavilionatmeon



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TOP OF THE TREE

A few weeks ago, Meon Vale residents got their hands dirty at two dedicated community tree planting events.

A group of volunteers led by Meon Vale Resident Working Group member Kevin Balchin, with help from the village's landscaping team Whiting, planted over 300 whips and saplings kindly donated by the Woodland Trust.

Efforts resumed the following weekend to plant an additional 200 trees as part of a donation made by Whiting.

The events were a fantastic example of how people within the community have been working together to continue to improve the village's woodland and green open spaces.



WHITING UPDATE

We're pleased to confirm that the Whiting team has been back on site at Meon Vale five days per week from the beginning of April. This is to make sure the open and green spaces around the village are cared for as we enter spring and summer. The team provides maintenance on site and are landscaping experts. Please say hello when you see them out and about!

QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY PLANTING

Five new apple trees from the Whiting nursery were planted near the allotments as part of the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) – a national planting initiative created to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

By inviting everyone to plant considerable numbers of new trees throughout the country, the QGC seeks to highlight the significant value of trees and woodlands as nature's simple but highly effective way to clean the air we breathe, slow the impact of climate change, create important wildlife habitats and improve our general health and wellbeing.

21 pupils from Tudor Grange Primary Academy attended the planting for a special talk from the ecologists at Tyler Grange – and to help out by stomping down the soil around the trees. Suki Powar, Principal at Tudor Grange Academy said 'The students will be able to take great pride in being part of this unique national initiative as they grow up alongside the trees.'

Great job everyone!



MEON VALE SPORTS CENTRE

SOCIAL SPORTS

Meon Vale Sports Centre has launched a series of new social sports sessions. These have been funded by a grant obtained by MVRA from Sport England through the L&Q Foundation. Residents can enjoy **No Strings Badminton** Monday-Friday between 10:00am–12:00pm. Over 50's and those less mobile are welcome. Come along to enjoy a game at a steady pace and meet new friendship groups. **£3 per session.**



Walking Football takes place every Tuesday 10:00am–11:00am, indoors or outdoors, weather dependent. An instructor-led session, this is perfect for participants who love our beautiful game but are now less mobile. The session concentrates on a gentle warm-up and stretch. Players enjoy a coffee and chat afterwards at The Pavilion Coffee Shop. **£3 per session.**

Bat & Chat Social Table Tennis is played every Wednesday from 10:00am–12:00pm. This session is also targeted at the over 50's who like nothing more to enjoy a nice social game and make some new friends. **£3 per session.**



COMING SOON! COMMUNITY TENNIS SOCIAL SESSIONS

New balls please! Tennis courts will be available to book for free by Meon Vale residents from 1 May until the end of September. Courts can be booked through the Leisure Centre and will be available at no cost to Meon Vale residents during weekend hours, and at certain times during school holidays. Contact the Leisure Centre for more details: reception@meonvaleleisure.co.uk

UPDATE ON THE NEW PLAYGROUNDS

As part of the overall development at Meon Vale, St. Modwen has a commitment to delivering new play spaces to suit both younger and older children.

To help us shape the vision for the playgrounds, last year we consulted with residents for their thoughts, ideas and comments about what people wanted included in the plans. We used the feedback to develop our proposals, which we presented at a community drop-in event.



The new playgrounds located near the woodlands have been designed to cater for all age groups and abilities, as community-led spaces and to encourage access to nature. The comments we received about the plans were extremely positive and supportive.

We have now submitted a planning application for the playgrounds and, subject to securing approval, are hoping to start work towards the end of the year.

The application can be viewed on the Stratford-on-Avon District Council website, by searching reference no.: 22/01075/FUL. The council is now running its own consultation which is open until 16 May.





MEON VALE SECURES LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE STATUS

Meon Vale has been awarded Local Wildlife Site status by Warwickshire County Council, identifying our village as one of the region's valuable wildlife areas.

The designation recognises Meon Vale as a home to some of the UK's most distinctive and threatened species as well as habitats important to local, regional, and national ecosystems.

The habitats at Meon Vale that include ponds, wetlands, woodlands, and wildflower grasslands support and are home to a wide variety of wild animals such as water voles, butterflies, newts, birds, and bats, who have all made their home in our village.

Meon Vale was the site of the first sighting in Warwickshire of the very rare Bechstein's bat species.

The wetlands additionally provide a valuable habitat and breeding ground for wading birds including the specially protected Little Ringed Plover, and is home to two pairs and five juveniles of the species – out of a total of only 15-20 pairs in the county. A pair was recently recorded as actually having successfully bred in the wetland area in June last year.

St. Modwen is committed to making further enhancements to the woodland and open green spaces, and biodiversity at

Meon Vale, including: designing and managing the wetland area as a nature park, adding new habitats and pathways, installing and monitoring bat boxes, further enhancing streams and ditches, and restoring grassland through more sympathetic management to create wildflower meadows.

If want to become involved in any future community initiatives, we'd love to hear from you!



OUT AND ABOUT IN MEON VALE

Village Hall: Meon Vale's village hall has now reopened for bookings! We've been working with a group of residents and stakeholders to consider the best way to manage the venue in the longer-term and want to make the space available again for a trial period. To book the hall for private functions, group events, and parties for all ages you can contact meonvalecommunity@gmail.com.

Streetlights: New street lighting columns have recently been installed on Bailey Avenue and Chestnut Avenue by contractors, PMHarris. The lights are now being connected by Murphy's, who will continue to be on-site over the coming weeks. Following final checks by PMHarris, they will then be switched on.

Fish relocation: The fish from the pond area in phase 4 at Meon Vale have been safely moved to their new home in the wetland pond with the help of our on-site ecologists from Tyler Grange.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the Meon Vale newsletter. If you have any questions or would like to share any comments with us, please do get in touch:

- **Estates mailbox** – meonvaleestates@stmodwen.co.uk

We'll be continuing to share updates and announcements through our newsletter, email, website and community noticeboard. If you have any news that you would like to share with the community then please just let us know.