

Death threats target Melksham's mayoral team



MELKSHAM'S Mayor, Tom Price, and Deputy Mayor, Saffi Rabey, have both been victims of death threats.

Cllr Saffi Rabey reported that on Wednesday 24th July, she received a threatening phone call around 2pm from a number with no caller ID. It was also revealed that Cllr Tom Price had received a similar call a few weeks earlier.

"I do answer those calls because you don't know if it's someone who needs to talk to you," explained Cllr Rabey, who was elected as the town's deputy mayor earlier this year. "It was two men, one talking directly to me and the other shouting in the background, saying how they were going to find me, hunt me down, and then kill me. They were screaming and shouting really

loudly. They eventually hung up, and I was just so shocked. "What has shaken me is that things have suddenly completely changed and that's what is strangely aware of what I am doing."

Cllr Rabey said that the only place where her telephone number and Cllr Price's number were listed was on the town council's website, along with their home addresses. "These have since been removed by the town council," said Cllr Rabey. She reported the incident to Wiltshire Police and has been referred to Operation Bridger, a nationwide police protection programme set up after MP Jo Cox was murdered to safeguard MPs and public figures.

Continued on page 23

'We are the Grey People' - local men write song to give older men a voice



A GROUP of men aged 65 plus who attend a new social group for men at Melksham Library have written a powerful song expressing their thoughts on life as an older person.

The song, titled 'We are the Grey People', was written with the help of local musician Bob Heath, who facilitated the session organised by Celebrating Age Wiltshire (CAW), an

organisation led by Wiltshire Music Centre in partnership with other creative arts and health organisations.

The lyrics of the song express how strongly the men feel about feeling overlooked.

"They are making a stand and they want to let everyone know that they have experience and skills and can make a valuable contribution to society," explained Lucy Simms, a

project assistant at Celebrating Age Wiltshire.

Group members who worked with Bob said they were impressed and moved by the process.

"They loved working together to come up with the lyrics. At the beginning of the session, many of the men didn't think it would be possible to write a song in just a two-hour session and

were amazed at what they had achieved," says Lucy.

"It just blew my mind," said a member of the group, David Walker. "In the space of two hours, we had come up with this tune that typifies the group of people that were there. We all agreed on how it should be played, it is just brilliant. The 'grey people' connotation is fairly obvious but the other connotation is that older people

tend to be seen as 'grey people', insignificant, in the background and not having any real worth in the world. I would say, I feel concerned about the world I find myself living in. I don't feel particularly comfortable with the world I find myself living in. If you listen to the words of the song, it's actually a fight back - 'we are the grey people.'

Continued on page 23

INSIDE THIS EDITION



THRILL-SEEKER TO JUMP 10,000 FEET IN CHARITY SKYDIVE PAGE 2



LOCAL COUPLE RAISE OVER £4,500 FOR AIR AMBULANCE PAGE 5

MELKSHAM TOWN FIXTURE PULLOUT ALL THE GAMES FOR THE SEASON AHEAD PAGES 16 & 17



Local woman donates funds for life-saving defibrillator in memory of community stalwart

A DEFIBRILLATOR has been installed outside Bowerhill Village Hall following a donation of funds made by local woman Marilyn Mills in memory of her husband Mike Mills, who died in 2018.

Marilyn donated funds for the new equipment, which has been installed as part of a Melksham Without Parish Council initiative, in memory of Mike who was a stalwart of the local community.

She said, "Mike fought hard to get the first defibrillators installed in the town, it was his call in life to work with the community."

He was a Melksham Without Parish Councillor for 27 years, where he served as chairman for 12 years, the longest serving chairman in the parish council's history.

Mike also won Melksham News' Person of the Year award in 2017 for his work and passion with the community. He worked with local groups such as Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG) and was on the Bowerhill Village Hall committee since the 1980s, where he was also

chairman for three years and served as the vice-chairman.

"Everybody in the town knew him," explained Marilyn. "The parish council, the

town council, he was known by everyone.

"Mike collected old coins and when I sold these, I thought it would be nice for the money

to go towards a defibrillator outside the village hall.

"The village hall has one inside but you cannot access it if the hall is locked. I thought it

would make sense to have one like Berryfield Village Hall has outside, because it gives the community 24-hour access."

Continued on page 23



L-R Cllr Andrew Baines, cllr Mark Harris, Marilyn Mills, cllr Robert Shea-Simonds and cllr John Glover

'We are the Grey People' - local men write song to give older men a voice

Continued from front page
we will not be ignored."

The six men who wrote the song first met at Celebrating Age Wiltshire's men's Creative Conversations session, which was held at Melksham Library and made possible with extra funding from the Wiltshire Community Foundation. Four of the men joined Bob at the Wiltshire Music Centre in Bradford-on-Avon in June to record the song. The new version now captures these men singing their own lyrics.

Bob said, "It was great to work with these men. They have written a great song and I see it as a bit of a battle cry."

Creative producer Rebecca Seymour at Celebrating Age Wiltshire said, "A lot of these men are isolated, lonely, bereaved and/or struggle to find their place within their local community. Consequently, their mental health can get very low. Our project aims to support them with the tools to get back out and meet other men, who may be dealing with similar issues, and potentially find new hobbies and activities to rekindle the flames of creativity and boost their self-esteem."

"We have already proven the

need for our activity in Melksham and the retention of the men in the group has illustrated their desire to continue. These men have openly expressed their need for a men's group by telling us that they struggle with anxiety, meeting new people, missing their partners if bereaved and how tough they find it to even leave the house sometimes."

Celebrating Age Wiltshire has been delivering music, arts and heritage events in community settings around the county for the last seven years to support the wellbeing of vulnerable or isolated older people. This year, they started to think about how they could reach more older men, as most of the people who come to their events are women.

Some of the men from the Creative Conversations group continue to meet at Melksham Library and Celebrating Age Wiltshire are planning more facilitated sessions for the group in the autumn.

To listen to the song and watch a video of group recording it at the Wiltshire Music Centre visit the Creative Conversations page on the centre's website: <https://www.wiltshiremusic.org.uk/project/creative-conversations/>

DEATH THREATS TARGET MAYORAL TEAM

Continued from front page

"Wiltshire Police have been incredible. It is part of town council policy to report this kind of stuff after the MP, Jo Cox, was murdered," said Clif Rabey. "It's one of those things that happens to everybody else, and you hear about female MPs being targeted, but it does happen, no matter what level of politics you are in. It is a reality where people think it's

okay to do that."

All Melksham Town councillors and officers have been briefed on the situation and are working together with local police to assist in their investigations. "We have removed all personal telephone numbers from our website and remain vigilant to potential risks to the safety of our council members and staff," said the council.

Local woman donates funds for life-saving defibrillator

Continued from front page

Marilyn said that Mike would check the defibrillator at The Pilot and she checks the one inside Bowchill Village Hall every Friday. "This involves checking the battery is still charged. If it's running out, I put in a report into the parish council. The masks need renewing, so I also check the renewable

dates. I check there is no water in the cabinet and that it has not been tampered with.

"I think to have a new defibrillator that is accessible 24 hours a day means that we have got more access for people. There are still other areas across the town that need defibrillators for the community."

Oyez, Oyez, Oyez! Melksham seeks its next town crier

MELKSHAM is now seeking a new town crier following the resignation of the town's first-ever female town crier, Jax Brady.

The new town crier will be selected at a competition of short-listed applicants at this year's Food and River Festival on Sunday 1st September, at King George V Park. Applications are invited to be submitted to the town council by Sunday 11th August.

Jax Brady won last year's competition at the Food and River Festival after the town's longstanding crier, Peter Dauncey stepped down after 16 years of service.

During his time in post, Peter was awarded Freedom of the Town at the Mayor's Reception last year and he continues to be an active member of the Melksham community as well as of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers.

Melksham Town Council's communications officer Sarah Askew, said, "We are seeking a charismatic individual with a captivating presence, strong voice and a passion for community engagement."

As the official messenger of Melksham, the town crier is responsible for delivering important announcements, embodying the spirit of tradition and representing both the town council and the community at key events, ceremonies and celebrations.

"The ideal candidate will possess a clear, powerful voice, a passion for public speaking and a strong stage presence. The ability to engage with diverse audiences, an enthusiasm for Melksham's heritage and future developments, plus an authoritative yet approachable demeanour, will also be crucial for this role."

At last year's competition, Jax impressed the judges with her excellent audition featuring a self-penned poem honouring the community spirit of Melksham, which showcased her big voice and even bigger heart. She has continued to engage and inspire the community ever since, attending local events and ceremonies, as well as school assemblies and fetes.

"Three generations of town criers even came together when Jax had the honour of presenting a special town crier doll, hand-knitted by Peter Dauncey's wife Joan,



to aspiring young crier, Ada-Rose, following her own impromptu audition, at last year's competition.

"Melksham Town Council would like to thank Jax for her dedication and enthusiasm during her time as town crier. She has been a welcome addition to many events and engagements over the last year, and her warmth and humour will be missed."

Those interested in applying for the role of Melksham Town Crier will need to submit a completed application form by Sunday 11th August. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an audition which will involve performing a 'copy' of their own in front of a panel of judges. Auditions will be held at the Melksham Food and River Festival on Sunday 1st September at 2.30pm at the King George V Playing Fields.

Application forms can be obtained from the Melksham Town Council website or the town hall. Completed forms will need to be returned to Melksham Town Hall or emailed to communitydevelopment@melksham-tc.gov.uk by Sunday 11th August. For more information email communitydevelopment@melksham-tc.gov.uk or phone 01225 704 187.

LOCAL JOB VACANCIES

We are now RECRUITING

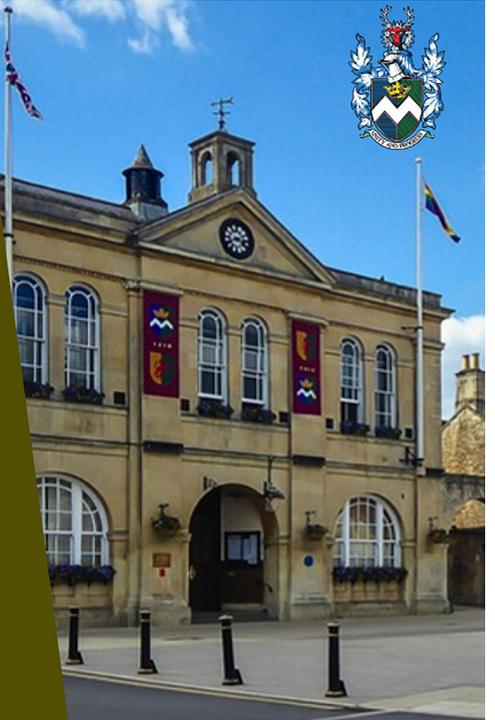
EVENTS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

£29,269 - £30,825

- Pay award pending
- Full time 37 hours per week
- Melksham Town Hall
- 23 days leave (rising to 28 after 5 years)
- Local Government Pension Scheme
- Closes: Sunday 4th August (midnight)

APPLY NOW

- steve.milton@lgrc.uk
- 07701 032 010
- <https://www.melksham-tc.gov.uk/about-melksham-town-council/vacancies>



We are now RECRUITING

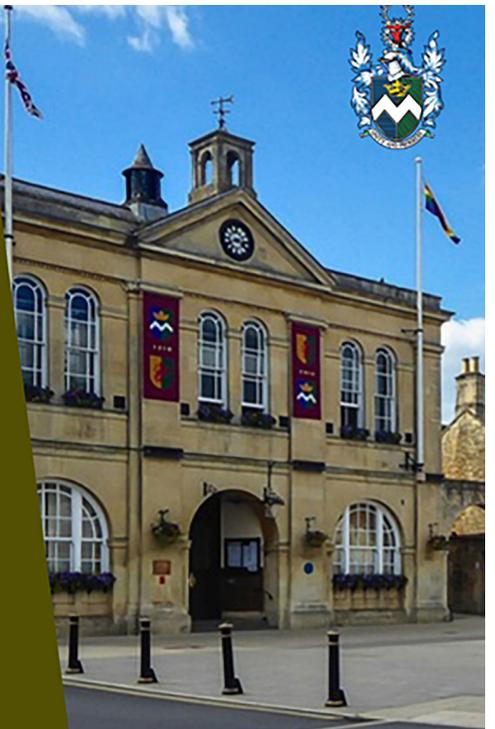
DEPUTY TOWN CLERK MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

£33,024 - £35,745

- Pay award pending
- Full time 37 hours per week
- Melksham Town Hall
- 23 days leave (rising to 28 after 5 years)
- Local Government Pension Scheme
- Closes: Sunday 4th August (midnight)

APPLY NOW

- steve.milton@lgrc.uk
- 07701 032 010
- <https://www.melksham-tc.gov.uk/about-melksham-town-council/vacancies>



Local groups play disability-friendly bowls

THE team at Avon Bowls Club has been welcoming groups of people with disabilities to play bowls every Monday.

For the sixth consecutive year, the club has hosted an average of 20 individuals and their carers throughout the outdoor season. The sessions are organised by John Crowder with assistance from Steve Fivash, Rachel Crowder and Ken Bray.

Initially, the sessions saw participation from the Yarn in Devizes, and last year, a group from Riverbank in Chippenham joined. This year, they have two rinks every Monday with a group from Riverbank in Chippenham and Medley in Trowbridge.

"Avon Bowls Club gets great pleasure in welcoming the groups and seeing the excitement and pleasure they all get out of it is reward enough for all of us," says a spokesperson for the club.

Commenting on the positive impact, the manager at Riverbank Day Service in Chippenham, Karen Rogerson, said, "The benefit of people attending has resulted in some individuals that would not previously consider leaving the service returning from their bowls sessions thoroughly proud of themselves for attending and they cannot speak highly enough about you."

