

Witheridge Voice



Autumn 2024

ISSUE 58

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Printed by Pharoah Print and Design

Advertising in Witheridge Voice

Advertising rates to include the next 4 quarterly issues of the magazine are:

Full page £119

1/2 page £65

1/3 page strip £49

1/6 page box £29

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EDITORIAL

As I write this editorial it is raining very heavily but the temperature is in the late teens, that's the pattern of our weather.

I hope you've had chance to see the Scarecrow trail (This year's theme is 'Heroes') over the past few weeks, yet again there were some very imaginative ideas and hopefully they made you smile. A big thank you to all those who took part.

Along with our regular contributors we also have articles from Exe Valley u3a and Mid-Devon Messenger, please take time to read them as they may be of interest to you or someone you know. There is also an article about the 'new look' Witherfest and events organised by them.

There is also notice that the Parish Hall is holding its AGM on November 26th. Do go along if you want to get involved or have ideas about the Parish Hall.

If you'd like to be involved with Witheridge Voice, or have any ideas for the magazine please come along to our AGM on January 9th. We have been discussing whether any residents would prefer a digital copy, rather than a paper copy, and would appreciate your opinions on this.

Due to technical problems there is no report from the Parish Council in this issue but, hopefully all the information will be in the Winter issue.

Ruth Towers

Special thanks to Claire Hook for her photo of the recent Aurora as seen from Witheridge.

Deadline for articles for the Winter Issue is 4th January

Please let me have your articles, by email before that date, so I can edit the magazine and have it with the printers in good time.

It is important that this deadline is kept to as we have a very quick turn around with the printers.

WITHERIDGE VOICE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

9th JANUARY 2025

7.30pm COMMITTEE ROOM

WITHERIDGE PARISH HALL

Witheridge Parish Hall AGM

Tuesday 26th November

7.30pm

Parish Hall Committee Room

PARISH HALL UPDATE

In response to so many people mentioning it in the questionnaire I am thrilled to let you know that the heating in the hall is to be replaced. The hall will be closed for a week at the beginning of November to allow the new heaters to be installed.

As our constitution is out of date we have decided to update it, so if you are part of a group that uses the hall or if you are an individual who is thinking of setting up an activity or class in the hall, please let Ruth Towers or me know so that, potentially, you can be added to the list of groups which could be represented on the hall committee.

This issue will be discussed at our AGM, in the committee room of the Parish Hall, on November 26th. Everyone is welcome.

There are many new people to the village who, I am sure, will have new ideas for activities and events in the hall. We would love to hear from them! The new Farmers Market is a good example. Please give some thought to whether you might like to be involved in running the hall ... it can be quite fun!

Ruth email: wruth9@aol.com

Clare email: spicerclare@gmail.com

Clare Spicer

Bell Ringing Practice

Anyone wishing to learn to ring the church bells or previous ringers wishing to ring again, we meet at the church tower 7.30pm

Thursdays. ALL WELCOME

Contact: Ken Ramsbotham Tower Captain

01884 861108 07702226287

WITHERIDGE LADIES CLUB

On Saturday 22nd June we were pleased to support the return of the St John's Fair with our cake stall. Our cakes and savouries were very popular and quickly sold out. Many thanks to all those who provided cakes and savouries, your efforts were very much appreciated. A thank you also to the organisers of SJF for bringing back the fair to the village

At our July club meeting we experienced a most enjoyable afternoon with our speaker Lottie Dale. This lady has made over 1200 parachute jumps and had a 17 year skydiving career, including demos into Wembley Stadium and competing at National level. Her illustrated talk was both amusing and fascinating; we hope to have her back with another talk next year.

On Tuesday 13 August we held our annual cream teas and stalls in the parish hall. We had the usual successful tombola, a great raffle and wonderful cream teas. It was a good occasion to visit the plant, book and bric a brac stalls and enjoy a sit down (with a cream tea) and a good natter. An occasion always looked forward to by our members and an excellent fund raiser for our club.

Our club also has a book club and luncheon club. Why not come along to see what we are up to! A warm welcome awaits you.

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THE REST AWHILE charity no 801038

Now that Autumn is upon us, come in out of the wind and rain.

The Rest a While is open Monday to Saturday from 10-12. There is always a warm welcome, and it is a good place to meet up with friends for a chat and a cuppa.



We have a Men's Den group that meet up on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 2-4pm. It has proved to be very popular, so thanks go to Sean and Peter for hosting it

On Saturday 26th Oct we are holding our first live music morning from 10-12. It should be fun, so come and join us. There are lots of posters around the village showing the groups that are playing.

We are always looking for volunteers to join our merry band and help with serving the drinks and socialising. If you have a couple of hours spare once a fortnight please get in touch with Val. Telephone no. 860709..

Everyone is welcome.

Pat Grant secretary

Monday Club

All of us at the Monday Club would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy New year.

We are very excited about our agenda for next year as we have booked some exciting and interesting speakers, two of our meetings are not in the Rest a While which is adding more excitement.

Our coach trips are always popular with our members and non members who join us regularly, this year we have added another coach trip, where to is a secret until all members get their schedules at our AGM next year.

2025 is looking good for The Monday Club if you are aged 60 or over and not a member please phone Val 860709 for more details we do have a short waiting list at the moment but the sooner your name is on the quicker you get to the top.

A huge thank you to all the committee who work so hard to keep the club so special.

Best wishes to you all. Val Dickinson. Chair



Witheridge in Bloom

Hi Everyone,

Summer is ending and Autumn is with us already so we are now turning our displays into winter themes. This year we have had support, amongst others, from The Knights of Witheridge – so thank you Knights!

Thanks must also go to two contractors (they know who they are) who saw me clearing up the path outside the Adventure Playground. They used their time and tools for which I was extremely grateful. Even taking away the debris. Thanks, also to John Burd – without his expertise at welding my trolley back together, our work would be seriously compromised.

Thanks to Robert who donated a Peony which has been planted in the Fore Street bed – so watch this space!

One of our volunteers has had to leave us and we are now looking for someone to fill that gap. Could this be you? No qualifications needed in gardening, just a few hours in your own time to make the village the best we can.

Go on, give it a go!!! Please contact me

carol.northam1@pobroadband.co.uk

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St John the Baptist church

Rev Adrian Wells

Sunday Services are usually at 9.30am, either Holy Communion or Morning Prayer



Early in October I had the opportunity to visit Budleigh Salterton on a bright windy day. Walking around the town was like any other, charity shop after charity shop and a friendly tearoom with delicious cakes! Walking along the coastal path towards the River Otter, the river with beavers creating a habitat that slows flood waters, I came across a new bridge made of plastic spanning the re-established marsh lands - the lower Otter restoration project.

The tide is now (opened in February 2024) able to come inland to Otterton creating a wildlife reserve of mud flats and salt marsh. There were many birds feeding as it was low tide.

200 hundred years ago the sea defenses were introduced so that the area covering 55 hectares could be farmed. This project cost £27 million and took two years to restore the wetlands. As climate change makes a greater effect on our lives, less future management will be needed.

The cricket pitch which situated on the flood plain, was regularly under water after heavy rain, has been moved to higher ground with a brand-new pavilion.

It is wonderful that we, as local communities and as a nation, can create habitats for wildlife. It improves our lives as well, seeing and being in these environments. The improvement to our rivers is so beneficial in getting the life cycle of fish to enter them, spawn and die allowing nutrients to feed other animals and plants.

The Church celebrates a season of creation in September ending on the 4 October with the remembering of St Francis of Assisi, who had a great affinity with animals.

We are privileged to live in a area of outstanding natural beauty with the coasts, moors and everything in between. I hope you will be able to spend time in these havens resting and relaxing which supports our health in so many ways.

May God bless you as you enjoy his wonderful and beautiful creation and in which we can co-exist and mutually benefit.

Adrian

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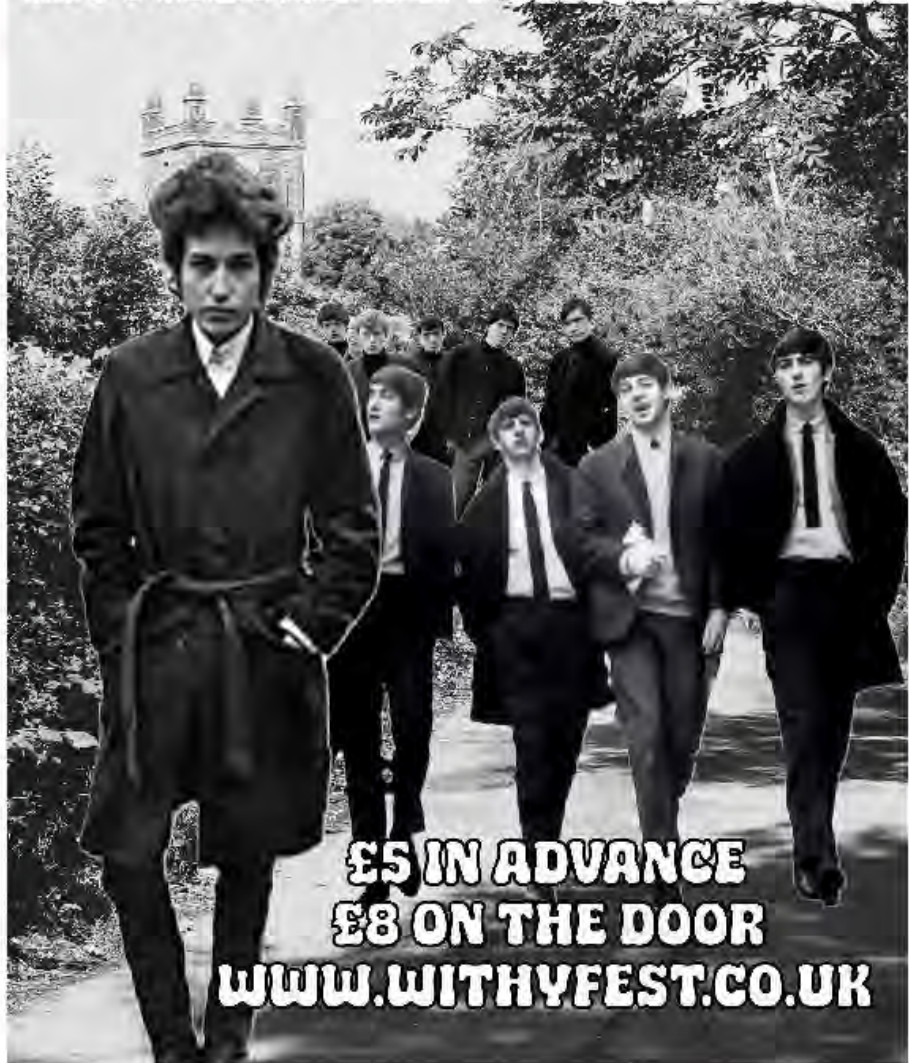
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Council & Committee Meetings

Meetings are usually held monthly on the first Thursday with additional meetings scheduled as required – **please refer to the website for current up to date schedule of meetings and cancellations.**

Agendas detailing venue and start time are published at least three days in advance on noticeboards located in the Square & Drayford Green, and on the council website together with minutes of meetings. Minutes of proceedings of a council and of its committees must be kept. They are intended to be formal records of official acts and decisions, not reports, still less verbatim reports of speeches.

Planning applications received after agenda publication will be dealt with owing to a 21 day limit on the council responding to consultations from the Planning Authority. The parish council is only a consultee, and does not determine applications.

Residents can make representations in writing to the clerk or in person during the public session held at the start of a meeting. Please note in accordance with Council Standing Order 3(h) a question shall not give rise to a debate or require an immediate response

Contacting the Council :- Tele : 07922 926017

Email : parishclerk@witheridgepc.org

Website : www.witheridgepc.org

Parish Councillors are listed in the Register of Interests on the website.

Contact Details for the District & County Councils services and councillors can all be accessed via the parish council website **Council Contact / General Info.** page.

Links to report Highways issues (potholes, block drains etc), issues with overgrown trees are also available including "A-Z" links to other services.

2024 Meeting Schedule

(See website for any amendments)

Chairman: Cllr J Harvey Tel: 860629

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
4	1	7	4	2	6
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	1	5	3	7	5

WITHERIDGE FILM CLUB



On October 12th we showed Wicked Little Letters with Olivia Colman. I thought it a very funny film and I hope you all did too. I have cancelled the November film night as we are having a new heating system installed.

Hooray. Hopefully, that will make it a much more comfortable evening for you all.

December 14th is the date for our film evening, but no film has been scheduled.

Any suggestions for films would be appreciated.

On Saturday 24th August Peter and Andrea allowed me to shelter under their scaffolding to sell jams and marmalade to raise money to help the donkeys in Gaza. As usual Witheridge didn't let us down. Dotty, the donkey, came with her owner Sarah and she behaved impeccably! Thank you to everybody who came and supported this wonderful charity. I was able to send £160 to Safe Haven for Donkeys in the Holy Land.

Thank you Witheridge! X

Margie 01884 861695



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Witheridge Gardening Club

We had a visit from Dennis Balsdon at our July meeting to talk to us about his collection of carnivorous plants. Dennis is a member of the Carnivorous Plant Society and was its Chairman some years ago. His interest in these plants started about 35 years ago when he and his wife went to a specialist plant show and he became hooked!

Dennis brought with him a selection of his plants, and also a quantity to sell – quite a few of our members went home with one or two. We bought one, but it hasn't caught any flies yet!! If you have a carnivorous plant at home, remember that it needs to stand in approximately 1cm of rainwater – don't use tap water.

All profits from this sale went to the conservation of the plants. There are about 800 species of carnivorous plants around the world, 12 of which are native to the UK. The plants live in sphagnum moss, bogs, marshes etc.



A most interesting and informative evening.

Summer Show 3rd August 2024

What a great day! Over 300 exhibits, all of a very high standard and the hall was packed with visitors during the afternoon. We served cream teas as well as cakes, tea and coffee.

Prize winners:

Gold Cup David Williams
Ralph Tarr Cup Ros Knight
Margaret Leat Memorial Shield Maureen Andrews
Heathcote Jones Cup Doreen Leat
Children's Challenge Cup Taya Burrows
Ruby Piercy Memorial Shield Jenny James
Arthur Leat Memorial Shield David Williams

(Gardening club– cont.)

Pat Housam Memorial Cup David Williams
Edward Sweeting Memorial Cup Doreen Leat
Peter Jones Cup Jill Cronk
Millie Williams Memorial Shield Doreen Leat
RHS Banksian Medal David Williams
Top Tray – Vegetables Luke Harris
Top Vase – Flowers Gail Rose-Harris

This show was the last one which Alan and I organised, and we would like to say a massive Thank You to all who helped in whatever way, to all the exhibitors and to all the visitors – everyone made the day a huge success. A great way to end our running of the Spring and Summer Shows. Susan Trudgill and Peter Moss have taken over from us and we know the shows are in good hands for the future.

Jill Horwood Secretary





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WITHERIDGE GOLF SOCIETY

On Wednesday 4th September 2024 18 players played for the Autumn Trophy on a sunny day. The winning team were: Stuart Gedrim, Keith Jenkins, Ken Ramsbotham and Tom Clow all from Witheridge.

The Wooden Spoon Trophy went to Mike Hillard, Paul Brooke, Norman James and John Avens. Nearest to pin was Tony Harris. Another good day was had by all, and a good meal was enjoyed by everyone. Thanks to the staff at Waterbridge Golf Club. We welcomed a new member Stuart Gedrim.



Next Meeting: 4th December 2024
New members welcome.

Contact Ken Ramsbotham:01884861108 mob: 07702226287



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1st Witheridge Brownies & Guides

It was good to be back at Brownies and Guides after our summer break. We have welcomed some new Brownies and Guides and said goodbye to our older ladies. We do have spaces for more Brownies (7 to 11 years) and Guides (10 to 14 years), if you have a daughter who is interested in joining us please register on <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-a-child>



We also said goodbye to one of our leaders, Georgia, at the end of last term and desperately need more leaders to keep the units open. If you would like to join us, please come along on a Tuesday evening to meet us and find out more information. We meet at Witheridge Primary School on a Tuesday evening at 6.30pm.

This term we have been focusing on kindness and the girls are completing a random acts of kindness calendar challenge. They have also worked hard on our two scarecrows of our Guiding Heroes - Lord and Lady Baden-Powell, our founders. These can be seen outside the school. We have also been completing challenges from the Make a Change skills builders and looking at what we can do to make a positive change in our daily lives, to our local community and to the wider world.



A few Brownies and a Guide took part in the Harvest and Pet service at St John The Baptist and were joined by two dogs. They will be taking part in the service of Remembrance and this year we are hosting the district Christingle in December.

Carole & Jane



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WITHERIDGE TODDLERS GROUP

A new term and lots of new faces! It has been a lovely start to the school year with a good mix of older and younger toddlers. We are currently enjoying some autumnal crafting, including yarn wrapped hedgehogs and leaf painting. Our crafting supplies are running a little low though so if anyone has any spare bits knocking around we would love them!

As we get closer to the tree planting season we will be talking about how plants grow and what they need to thrive though story time and imaginative play. We will also be planting our own saplings so we can watch them grow!

Thank you to Witheridge school again for hosting our group and supplying us with delicious and nutritious snacks!
Our sessions run on Wednesday, 1:45-3:30 and Friday, 9:00-10:30.
Please just come along or contact me with any questions. £1 donation a family, snack included!

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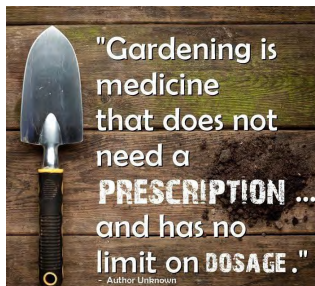


Allotment Society — Winter

The allotments have yielded well this year with a bumper crop of peas, runner beans, dwarf beans and potatoes. Still harvesting carrots, beetroot, cabbages, kale etc.

Growing your own veg is very rewarding whether it is a small part of your garden or an allotment but it does take commitment and time. You can't plant something, go away for a month and not expect weeds to have taken over. But if you have a few hours a week to spare why not have an allotment? There is nothing better than the taste of your own veg with Sunday roast or fresh salad at lunchtime.

We will have allotments available from January so please get in touch and make it your New. **Amanda Williams**



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[@burrowcrosschristmastrees](https://www.instagram.com/burrowcrosschristmastrees)



Witheridge Scarecrow Trail October 2024

Some of the scarecrows from this year's trail. Do you know who they are ?







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Update from Cllr Peter Jones Your Independent District Councillor

Hi All,

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer, I enjoyed the downtime, spending some valuable time with my family and getting out for some wild swimming and paddle boarding on our beautiful rivers and beaches. Autumn has now certainly arrived and it has been a busy few weeks. Please see my latest update as your District Councillor.

Willow Heights / Juniper Way Development

Work on the site has been progressing quickly, with the first properties to be available for occupancy from most likely November. A retrospective application went in for a substation, there was understandably surprise that this application has come so late. This is required to ensure that there is enough power to meet the needs of the development, which includes electric car charging points.

With a large proportion of social and affordable rent properties, many who may not have been accepted for housing previously may now be able to access one of these homes. Those with local connections to Witheridge will be prioritised first, followed by those with a connection to the surrounding Parishes, followed by a local connection to North Devon. Full details are graphically shown on my FB page. Anyone interested in bidding must register on the Devon Homes choice website asap.

I am frequently contacted about rumours of the new homes being used to provide accommodation for asylum seekers or to home people for various inner-city councils such as Birmingham or Liverpool. I can confirm that this is not true and ask the community assistance in stopping the spread of such rumours.

Allison Homes £15.5K Community Donation

In addition to the Section 106 funding, Allison Homes will be making a donation of £100 for every new home being built on the Witheridge development, totalling £15,500. If you are a local organisation or charity that would like to apply for part of this donation please send the below details by 22nd of November 2024 to planningsw@allison-homes.com.

Peter Jones—District Councillor Update. (continued)

I have spoken to the team and confirmed the applicant does not need to be a charity. Do CC me in, so I can follow up Peter.jones@northdevon.gov.uk

1. What is the charity / group / organisation name? 2. Provide some brief information about the charity / group / organisation and what they do. 3. What would the charity/ group / organisation like the money for / what do they plan to spend the money on and how much is required?

S106 Community Asset Projects

As arranged, Allison Homes has completed the early transfer of the full S106 contribution for the new development to the County and District Council. The community are working to put forward applications based on what was included in the plan. The Playing Fields Committee has created a sub-committee to work on a project for a multi-season pitch. The village hall committee are submitting an application for cladding to extend the life of the hall. The parish council have formed a working group to understand the feasibility of buying amenity land and also to look at a project for a new skate park. Another group led by Cllr Woody Fox is exploring the feasibility of a community orchard. I will continue to work closely with these groups to make sure we can get the most out of the available funds.

Buses

In July, Cath Cottingham and County Cllr Jeremy Yabsley attended the County Council Cabinet meeting to present Emilie Gilbert's petition to reinstate the 155 direct bus route from Exeter to Barnstaple; this was accompanied by a long list of issues which Naomi Ainsworth had put together from the Facebook log. Eventually, we had confirmation that the community concerns were generally ignored. Some changes were announced, including a 'continuous' service from Tiverton to Barnstaple, which is two services, the 155 and 346; although passengers can stay on the bus, they do need to pay for two tickets. There was also a promise to use new buses on the route and increase the use of double-decker buses to increase capacity. Frustratingly just days into the new term, there were reports of children being left at bus stops due to capacity issues. Please continue to report all issues on the Facebook log. We will organise more PR and continue to highlight the issues the community faces due to this failing service.

Peter Jones—District Councillor Update. (continued)

Police Advocate Surveys

Our Police Advocate, Steven Smith, is holding a Surgery where the community can discuss policing concerns with the local policing team on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 10 am to 12 noon in the Witheridge Parish Hall Committee Room. The dates for the rest of this year are: 10th and 24th October, 14th and 28th November. For more information, you can contact Steven Smith on 01884 861037.

Water Monitoring and 'The Protest for Clean Water'

I continue to regularly test the Little Dart along with the team of testers; we have had some issues recently, which have been investigated by the environment agency. This looks to have resolved some continuing problems our regular testing has picked up. My work as chair of the sub-group looking at water pollution on North Devon's rivers and beaches continues, with meetings planned with key organisations, including the West Country Rivers Trust, in the coming weeks. As a family, we will be taking part in Feargal Sharkey's Protest for Cleaner Water in London on the 3rd of November. If you would like to take part with us, please contact me.

Rural Prosperity Fund Grants

Funding from the Rural England Prosperity fund is available for small businesses for:

- Funding for net zero infrastructure
- Diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture
- Growing the local social economy and supporting innovation

Visit North Devon Plus for more detail. If we don't use the allocated funds, it will be returned to the government! We must use all funds available to benefit North Devon. Please spread the word (and share) to any businesses that may be eligible for grants.

Here when you need me!

Like and follow me on Facebook to stay up-to-date. You can contact me on Facebook messenger, Peter.jones@northdevon.gov.uk or call or WhatsApp me on 07708 187 305.



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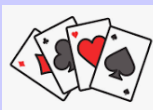
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Witheridge Methodist Church



Sunday service 10.30am
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at the end of the service.

As we enter Autumn we have a few important services to look forward to.

On the 6th October some of us joined with St John's Church for their Harvest Lunch, and the following Sunday we celebrated our Harvest Festival with food donations either sold, for church funds, or taken to CHAT.

We've also taken part in the Scarecrow Festival, our hero was Moses.

During our Coffee Morning, on the 2nd November, there will be a sale of crafts, so please come along and support us.

On November 10th our service will take place at 10.15 which will give us the opportunity to join in the Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial at 11am.

On December 7th we will be holding a Stained Glass Window Festival and are inviting people to 'create' a window for us, this could be made from fabric or paper but not glass.

Our Coffee morning will be held that morning where we'll also be serving Bacon, Brie and Cranberry Rolls.

Following the success of last year's Posada we are hoping that we'll have enough host families for 2 boxes to make the journey round the village leading up to St John's Christmas Eve Crib Service. Please contact me if you'd like to take part or would like more information on what's involved.

Ruth Towers



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Knights of Witheridge

The Knights have continued to run their fortnightly quizzes in the Sports Club. It only costs £2 per person to enter and half the money raised is given back in prizes. The remainder is used to fund various events and good causes during the year. At our recent AGM, we were able to make the following donations:

Witheridge Voice - £200 towards development and maintenance of their internet site.

Witheridge in Bloom - £200 towards the costs of developing and maintaining the floral displays around the village.

Rackenford School - £120 towards soft furnishings for the school library.

A contribution of £100 towards coaching fees for a local U19 International Pentathlete.

Friends of the Surgery - £450 towards the cost of a machine to be used for the diagnosis of asthma at the Witheridge Medical Centre.

In addition to these, we have been able to underwrite some of the costs of community events such as the Christmas Market and Christmas Tree Lighting, not to mention a bench for walkers.

But just as importantly, events such as the quiz provide an opportunity for people to meet and socialise, so why not come along both to enjoy yourselves and to do something for the community at the same time?

Dates of the quizzes for the remainder of the year are:

13th Nov, 27th Nov, 11th Dec.

Look out for the announcement on the Knights' Facebook page as well as the What's On in Witheridge and Witheridge Spotted Moan and Groan Facebook Pages as well as the signs in the village.

Finally, our current Chairman, Gary Dorow has stood down and Fred Hanbury has made a welcome return as the new Chairman.



QUIZ NIGHT

People4ponies Update

Small victories is what we have to focus on at the moment, morale depends upon it. We've very recently learned that the land we graze will be put up for sale in the near future and so we face the huge, daunting task of not only finding a new location to rent, but also another big move of all our equipment and the ponies themselves, some of whom aren't that keen on travelling. The ponies have loved being on this conservation site for the time we've had and we're thankful for it. But we just don't have the means to buy land to secure a permanent location. It's a scary position to be in and it's such early days that I don't have any obvious answers/solutions as yet.

Of imminent importance has been trying to winter-proof the area we are on now - mud control mats making areas actually traversable to feed the ponies. It's a lot of work to do - which ultimately will all need to be taken up - but the incessant rain means that we need some hard standing for the ponies to feed from. Haymaking had to be abandoned due to the weather - but thankfully we have locally sourced some beautiful hay which we are having delivered in batches. We are feeding a bale a day already which is unheard of at this time of year - usually that wouldn't happen until January - deep winter!



What we are excited to announce/focus on is our next fundraising event that Faye's organising - "For The Love Of Animals" Christmas Fair - which will be held at the Quince Honey Farm, South Molton on 16th November 2024, from 10am to 3.30pm! It's a chance to support your local animal rescues - including stalls from People4ponies, Nowzad, Dogs Trust, Saving Strays, Littlest Wildlife Hotel, Barnstaple Cats Protection and Fleecehaven Sheep Sanctuary. With local businesses there too, there'll be exciting gifts for your pets, animal lovers and for wildlife. From Horse Agility, to herbs and supplements, to treats and animal themed gifts. As well as a raffle and multiple tombola ! It is free entry, free parking and free access to the Quince Honey farm shop and award winning cafe/restaurant. Well behaved dogs on leads are already welcome at the venue. We hope to see you there!

The Wednesday Charity Bingo

We are having very good support and our players are enjoying the bingo.

We have just sponsored three new Guide dogs pictured below are: Doris and Jasper. Our third dog is Clyde who we sponsored for Shapland and Searle the South Molton butchers who supply us with a smashing meat dinner every fortnight—this is in a separate draw. We donated £500 for the Guide Dogs and have also donated £900 to our other Charities, so well done everybody and a very big thank you.



Forth coming dates for bingo are

November 6th and 20th.

December 11th, this will be our Christmas Bingo.

January 15th, 2025.

All have a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Marion, David, Suzi and Hayley.

Witheridge Art Group

Do you feel like expressing yourself in Art?

Why not try Witheridge Art Group? We meet every Wednesday evening in the Parish Hall Committee room, 7-30 pm until 9pm.

We are a small friendly group who help each other. For more details please phone Dave on 860709 or just turn up on the evening you will be made most welcome. **Dave Dickinson.**

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NEWS FROM WITHERIDGE PRIMARY C of E ACADEMY



We have had such a great start to the new school year. The wet weather hasn't dampened our spirits at all and it has been great to see the children full of enthusiasm for their new classes and the challenges ahead.

I want to take this opportunity to officially welcome our new Reception children to the main school. You have been AMAZING! Well done to Riley, Bille, Amelia, Taylor, Rosalie, Phoebe, Monty, Jayden-Lee, Dylan, Harvey, Imogen, Felicity, Toby and Maeve.



At Witheridge Academy, we are very proud of our lunchtime provision on offer to all children from Reception-Year 6. We have been using the OPAL playtime provision for a few years now and it is firmly established at our school. OPAL is all about allowing children to explore lots of different types of play at lunchtime. They can build dens, dress up, play in the mud kitchen or even race around on the push along toys. To keep our playtimes fun, we are in need of lots of donations. We would love any old toys, tents, windbreaks or wellies. Mrs Wyborn regularly updates the board outside the playground with suggested donations, but we will take most things. This term, we had an OPAL session for parents and carers of children in Key Stage 2 so that they could find out more about the philosophy behind OPAL. Thank you to Kate for leading the session and to all the parents and carers who joined the den building session afterwards.



Wetheridge Primary C of E Academy and Pre-school (Continued)

You may not be aware that every Friday we have Golden Time across the school. The children have the opportunity to sign up for various staff-led sessions (for example Zumba with Mrs Bragg, cake decorating with Mrs Wyborn or FSU Fun with Mr Hearne!) or they can stay in their own classroom and participate in a session with their Class Teacher. This is a really special time in the week and the whole school looks forward to it. It follows on from our weekly Celebration Collective Worship - so it really gives us all that Friday Feeling!

This term, some children in Class 4 have had the opportunity to participate in the Wave Project at Westward Ho! beach. Mrs Bowles was thoroughly impressed with the children's bravery and positive attitude towards the surfing sessions.



Class 4 have been to Blundells School for a Languages and Hockey day this term. It sounds like the children had a fab time, and I am so pleased that we have been able to continue with this excellent partnership.



We have had lots of trips this term. KS1 (Class 1 and 2) went to Northam Burrows as part of their 'Coastlines' topic. Class 4 went to Bristol for their big event linked to the 'Maafa' topic and Class 3 have been to Barnstaple Museum to view the Turner exhibition and participate in a workshop.

We held our Harvest Festival at the Church this term. Thank you to Vicar Adrian for leading the service and to Sue for participating with a reading. The children did so well singing their songs, reciting poetry, leading the prayers and telling us about the history of farming in Great Britain. Thank you so much to the parents and carers who were able to join us in the church.



We were blown away by the generous donations to our Harvest Box collection this year. We needed 5 boxes in the end. The produce will be in the church until next week and then it will be taken to CHAT to be donated to the food bank.



Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to officially welcome Mrs Ware to Witheridge Academy. Mrs Ware joined us in September to support the children in Class 3 alongside Mrs Nott and Mrs Seymour.

As always, if you would like to book in a tour of the school, please contact the office via our email address: admin@witheridge.devon.sch.uk and arrange this with Mrs Eastman



Kind regards, Miss Ratcliffe *Head of School*
Witheridge C of E Academy Part of TEAM Academy Trust
01884 860518 <https://www.witheridge.devon.sch.uk/>

Withyfest: Celebrating Community and Music

In a vibrant display of local collaboration, Withyfest continues to weave its musical magic throughout the community. This grassroots festival has been expanding its reach, partnering with various local groups to bring the joy of music to diverse venues and events.

June saw Withyfest gracing the stage at St Johns Fair and July delighting patrons at The Two Moors Café. These successful outings have paved the way for future partnerships, promising more melodic treats for the village.

Starting October 26th, music enthusiasts can look forward to monthly acoustic sessions at Rest A While. Held on the fourth Saturday of each month from 10 am to 12 pm, these gatherings will be led by Withyfest regulars. Keith Pragnell is set to kick off the inaugural session, welcoming musicians of all ages and skill levels to join in the harmony.

Mark your calendars for November 16th, when Withyfest joins forces with Witheridge Parish Hall for a nostalgic Sixties Night. The event will showcase six live acts, including Tony Kilshaw, David Craig, Red Light Green Light, Longstone, and Backtrax, promising a night of retro rhythms and timeless tunes.

As winter approaches, the festivities will heat up with the Withyfest Winter Festival on January 18th. This event is sure to be a highlight of the new year, bringing warmth and melody to the cold season.

From town council collaborations to café gigs, Withyfest is proving to be more than just a festival—it's becoming a cornerstone of community engagement through music. As it continues to grow and evolve, Withyfest invites all to be part of its harmonious journey, celebrating the power of music to unite and inspire.

Russell North

[Www.withyfest.co.uk](http://www.withyfest.co.uk)

A special thank you to
Knights of Witheridge for their
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of the
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WITHERIDGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

November – the evenings are getting better for observing. Venus, that bright searchlight in the sky, is climbing higher. We also have the Milky Way shining as a glowing band in the skies. Grab some binoculars, look at this band, and see it come to life with countless stars, star clusters, and nebulae.

The Pleiades star cluster is a well known object to view. With good eyesight six stars are visible. Keen sighted observers may be able to see up to eleven stars. Years ago this was an eye test. Looking through binoculars many more can be seen for there are at least 1,000 stars lying 440 light years away. All of the stars are young being around 100 million years old (2 percent of the Sun's age).

December – Christmas is approaching and we start to think of the bright star guiding the Three Wise Men. This month we are treated to two bright lights in the heavens. Two planets, Venus and Jupiter, will shine like lanterns in the sky. Jupiter is always worth observing to catch the four Galilean moons in orbit around the planet. Nightly observing will reveal the moons changing their position and, if you are lucky, showing their shadow on the cloud tops of Jupiter. On the 14th December Jupiter lies just below the Moon.

The winter is moving on as we have the Winter Solstice taking place on the 21st December at 09.20am. This is when the Sun reaches its most southernmost, giving us, in the northern hemisphere, the shortest day and the longest night.

Mercury may be glimpsed on the 28th December just before dawn. Look to the left of the crescent Moon low down in the morning twilight to catch a glimpse, however, be careful of the Sun. **DO NOT LOOK AT IT.** Better still to have someone with you holding a large card to cast any shadow from the Sun onto your face.

January – Orion, the Hunter, has been making its presence known as the winter progresses. The three stars that make up its belt lie at an angle with the hunter's sword hanging down below on the left side. Here is where the Orion Nebula may be found, M42, which is a great interstellar gas cloud where new stars are born. It contains over 700 young stars and is visible as a fuzzy object just below the sword.

Once again we have much to look out for, and there will be more as the winter progresses. The key to successful observing is to keep warm. Throwing a coat on might be OK for a quick look, but for more than a few minutes get plenty of layers on – its dark so no one will see you standing there like Michelin man or woman

Why not come to the Witheridge Astronomical Society's meetings on the third Thursday at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall Committee Room as we learn from each other and share observation experiences. Don't forget, we have equipment, telescopes and binoculars, that may be borrowed to aid you explore the night sky.

Steven Smith



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What is the u3a?"

We've heard this a few times, as whilst the u3a is very good at providing activities for retired and semi-retired people it isn't always good at blowing its own trumpet!

The University of the Third Age, normally known as u3a was founded in 1982 and is a UK wide movement of locally run interest groups that provide a wide range of opportunities for people no longer in full time work to come together to learn, have fun. Making new social contacts is just as important to u3a as the topic activity.

We provide a range of interests and activities, at very modest cost. All our groups are run entirely by volunteer members, so admin costs are kept to a minimum. Some comments from members are heart-warming: "when I lost my husband, I was so lonely but joining the u3a changed all that", "When I was made redundant, I joined the walking group and made so many new friends", "I don't know how I had time to go to work", are typical ones.

The u3a can help lift gloomy thoughts of dark evenings, bad weather, (even) more rainy days and cold!

Of course meeting like-minded people is always a joy, so if you are, say, keen on history, having history talks, visits and discussions will expand your knowledge too. Recently our Local History Group had a guided tour of Bickleigh church, followed by an excellent tea in the village hall.

In June we had a coach trip to Lyme Regis where we learnt about Mary Anning, the pioneer fossil collector and paleontologist, who despite her rather lowly background is now recognized as having greatly contributed to changes in scientific thinking about prehistoric life and the history of the Earth.

There was plenty of opportunity afterwards to stroll along the sea front and enjoy an ice cream in the sunshine.

In addition to individual group activities we hold a regular all members meeting on the third Wednesday of the month at the Cherith Hall in Tiverton. Over the next twelve months we are looking forward to guest speakers giving talks on a wide variety of subjects ranging from Exmoor Zoo, Outer Space, Hadrian's Wall, Animals at War, The Sky at Night, the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to name just a few, all followed afterwards by the opportunity to meet up with old friends and new over refreshments.

In October we had a visit from former politician, writer and "Strictly Come Dancing" star Ann Widdecombe which has caused a great deal of interest amongst our members and resulted in a full house to hear her talk.

If you wish to learn more please take a look at our website or feel free to give me a ring on 07885 515630.

Mike Turner. Chairman



Witheridge sports club

Mon	7.00 - 10.00pm
Tues	7.00 - 10.00pm
Wed	7.00 - 10.00pm
Thurs	7.00 - 10.00pm
Fri	7.00 - 10.00pm
Sat	2.00 - 10.00pm
Sun	2.00 - 7.00pm



Short mat bowls

We meet in the Parish Hall on Thursdays at 2pm. Club woods are available for those who have not played before. The first three afternoons are free and tuition will be given.

Green fee is £3.50 per session there after

Short mat bowls is open to residents of Witheridge and surrounding villages. Children over 10 and under 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Greg Henderson



Photo - Robin Thomason

Badminton

The Badminton club meets on Fridays at 7.30pm and the cost is £3.00 per session.

Anyone interested in coming along should contact Linda Williams 07966131522



Table tennis

Come and join our small friendly group for adults aged 16 or over. All equipment is supplied and we offer tea and coffee too. Come along and pass an enjoyable hour. All levels of ability, from beginners to Olympic contenders, are most welcome.

Friday 11.00am - 12.00 in Parish Hall
Greg Henderson

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Is someone you know 'print disabled'?

You, or someone you know, may struggle to read due to poor vision. But did you know that there are also other people who, for medical reasons, no longer find reading a pleasure? They may have a long-term condition such as Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Dyslexia or the early stages of Dementia, which can make reading difficult. Importantly, their medical condition, coupled with their print disability, can lead to a sense of loneliness and isolation.

The Mid Devon Messenger can help to keep people who are print disabled connected with their local community via weekly local audio news, information, entertainment ... and audio books – all free of charge!

A new listener recently wrote: "Thank you for ... making it possible for people like my brother to keep in touch with the outside world." Other listeners tell us they feel that the Messenger gives them a sense of being part of a community.

Helen McIntosh, Chairman, says, "It's so easy to get started: simply call Yvonne on **07721 065008** to arrange a home visit. Yvonne and husband, Nigel, pictured below, will be pleased to meet you and to help you get connected. You'll wonder why you didn't do it sooner!"



Yvonne & Nigel, MDM Visitor and Technician

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Change someone's LIFE!

Join Our Caring Team at The Firs

Are you passionate about making a difference in people's lives? We have an exciting opportunity for caring individuals to become part of our team at The Firs.

Imagine working in an elegant period-style building that holds a rich history as the former doctor's manor house from the early 1900s. Our home is surrounded by gardens, providing seating spots and a close-to-nature experience. You'll find vegetable plots and a pond with a variety of fish, creating a soothing environment that residents are encouraged to engage with. Our skilled gardener welcomes their input and gardening insights, fostering a sense of community.

Join our dedicated care team, offering personalised and compassionate care that revolves around each individual's unique needs. We take pride in providing flexibility and choices that cater to the day-to-day lives of our residents.

Residents' well-being is paramount at The Firs. We've appointed a dedicated Well-Being Coordinator who curates a comprehensive 7-day activities schedule. This includes a range of engaging group events, one-on-one activities, and even the planning of major events like our annual summer fete.



My mother was taken into hospital last week. I was walking out of the cubicle when a nurse asked in which care home my mother was a resident. I said The Firs and the nurse said to me "I am not surprised it's The Firs as you can see that your mother is so well cared for, her skin is soft and she is clean and well kept." Christine.

If you think you can make a difference to our residents at The Firs and change their lives and yours for the better, apply online here: www.southwestcarehomes.co.uk/apply



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What's Happening In the Village ?

Parish Hall Chair		Clare Spicer	860135
Parish Hall Bookings	(meetings are free)	Steven Smith	861037
Allotment Society	David Williams	07811	979488
Art Group	Parish Hall– Wed 7.30pm	Eileen Curtis	860564
Badminton	Parish Hall Fri 7.30pm	Linda Williams 0796613	1522
Brownies and Guides	Witheridge School	Carole Chapple	855329
Charity Bingo	Thelbridge Parish Hall-alt Wed 7.30	Marion Crane	860530
Bell Ringers	Belfry Thursday 7.30 pm	Ken Ramsbotham	861108
Dog Training	Parish Hall Mon 6pm	Jackie McDevitt 01769	550155
Film Club		Margie Cosker	861695
Gardening Club	Parish Hall Last Wed 7pm	Jill Horwood	861323
Knights of Witheridge	Chairman	Ian Tench	860770
Ladies Group	Parish Hall 2nd Tues 2pm	Coral Simmonds	861366
Methodist Church	Sunday 10.30am	Ruth Towers 0798	0104347
Monday Club	Rest-a-while Alt Mon 2pm	Val Dickinson	860709
Rest-a-while Mon-Sat 10-	12 Bingo alt Fri, Bring + Buy last Fri	Val Dickinson	860709
Short mat bowls	Parish Hall Tues 6.30pm. Thur 2pm	Greg Henderson	860819
Table Tennis	Parish Hall Fri 11-12	Greg Henderson	860819
Tennis Club	www.witheridgetennisclub.com	Sarah Vertigan	07939 241025
Taekwondo	Parish Hall Thurs 6-7pm	Kevin Raven 07804	471165
Astronomical Society	Committee Room 3rd Thurs 7.30-9	Steven Smith	861037
Witheridge in Bloom	carol.northam1@pobroadband.co.uk		860817
Witheridge Golf Society		Ken Ramsbotham	861108
Witheridge Parish Church	Sunday 9.30am	Rev Adrian Wells	861383
Witheridge Primary School	& Preschool	Head of School Miss Ratcliffe	860518
Witheridge parent and Toddler group	Witheridge school Wed 1.45-3.30pm	Rebecca +Nick	0787512706 4
	Fridays 9-10.30am	Robinson	
Witheridge Ploughing Association	Gill Gilbard gill@helebartonfarm.co.uk		
Witheridge Young Farmers	Emma Gilbard emma.gilbard@	markalengroup.com	
Witheridge Youth Club	Parish Hall 1st & 3rd Thurs 7-8.30pm	Andrea Court	860815
Witheridge Striders	Edward Fyson 07517 148284	Janet Ashelford	860234
Worlington Photographic Group	Worlington Parish Hall 3rd Tue 7.30	Terry Brown	861268

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