

Witheridge Voice



WINTER 2024
ISSUE 55

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EDITORIAL

Wishing you all a slightly belated New Year. Winter is definitely with us, it being a very cold frosty night as I finish writing this.

There are certainly a lot of interesting articles in this Issue.

I'm sure that you will join me in saying a huge thank you to everyone involved in organising and putting on the fabulous lighting of the Christmas Tree, the Procession of Lanterns and the Christmas Fair.

It's events like these that make our village a very special place to live.

Please take time to read the updates from Councillor Peter Jones' and the Parish Council as they both have information about the Church Clock and also the next stage of the development of Willow Rise. Issues that I know are of great concern to many people in the village.

I hope that you will also notice new articles in the magazine and fingers crossed that these become regular features.

You might also see that we have space available for advertising, please contact Robin Thomason if you are interested. Robin's contact details are on the Contents page on page 3 of this issue.

Finally, Winter can be a lonely and challenging time for many. Please spare a thought for elderly neighbours or those with mobility issues or recovering from illness in this cold weather. Maybe we could pick up shopping for them or just check and make sure that they are OK.

Also, Jules at Two Moors Gallery has a food box outside at the front of her premises. It's available for those in need. Please do contribute if you can.

Ruth Towers

Deadline for articles for the Spring Issue is 4th April.

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.

PARISH HALL UPDATE

Circus Berzercus was a triumph! The kids loved it and so did the adults, thanks to everyone who put in so much work to make it such a success.

The questionnaires are back, and we will collate them in the next month. Thanks to everyone who filled them in, it is going to be very interesting to see the results. We will publish them on the web site.

The committee came up trumps delivering questionnaires to every house in the village, it was a fantastic effort.

We are so grateful to the Two Moors Store for allowing them to be collected there, it was hugely helpful to have a central point for collection.

Lastly on a sad note Harry Richardson died at the end of last year. He was a hugely knowledgeable secretary to the Parish Hall for many years and was largely responsible for starting the petition that saved the Hall in 2010. Those of us who love the hall will always be grateful to him for that.

Clare Spicer

Bell Ringing Practice

Thursday at 7.30 p.m. at St John's Church.

Anyone welcome !

Ken Ramsbottom. Tel: 01884 861108

WITHERIDGE LADIES CLUB

In October our speaker was Pippa Griffith of the Tiverton Museum, she told us about the number of exhibits they hold, also the many photographs. She showed some photographs of the local area, and the history attached to them. We were given leaflets on the walks provided by the museum and times of openings etc. It is a valuable asset to the local area, we should consider visiting it; volunteering or donating (we donated a cheque for £50). We thanked Pippa for such an interesting talk.

In November Linda Fisher took us through the heady subject of wills, LPAs and planning our estates. Linda is a professional will writer and estate planning manager. Linda gave us advice about wills, probate and lasting power of attorney. We were given lots to think about on these subjects and were all given a pack full of useful information to take away with us.

In December our Christmas lunch was at the Mount Pleasant Inn, Nomansland. Linda welcomed everyone to the lunch. The food was 'spot on and superb in every way, just perfect' (quote from Linda). The 2 or 3 course meal was followed by an assortment of sweet treats, 'a perfect fun end to our meal.'

Linda sends a big 'thank you' to Sue Toms for arranging the venue; also to June and Sue for running the Secret Santa, and Eileen for ensuring all the monies were collected.

Our club also has a book club and luncheon club. Why not come along to see what we are up to! We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, at the Parish Hall, from 2pm-4pm.

A warm welcome awaits you.

Coral Simmonds



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THE REST AWHILE

We at The Rest A While wish everyone a Happy and peaceful 2024.



In these dark and dismal Winter months we invite you all into our Warm Space to meet up with friends, relax in a warm, comfortable environment and have a chat and a laugh while enjoying a nice cup of coffee, tea or hot chocolate with a biscuit thrown in.

We are open from 10-12 each morning, Monday to Saturday. You will be ensured of a warm welcome by our lovely volunteers.

The last few months have been very busy.

On 27th October we held a charity day for 'Wear pink for Breast Cancer Awareness, and raised £285 for the charity. Many thanks go to Sam who organised the event, and to everyone who contributed and helped on the day. It was a very successful morning and the cakes were scrummy.

On 24th Nov. we held our monthly Bring and Buy stall, which raised £138 which included a raffle.

On 20th Dec we held our Christmas Draw. A big thank you to all who donated prizes, bought tickets, and helped on the day. The draw raised £146 which goes towards the running costs of Rest A While.



The London Inn at Morchard Bishop was the venue on 7th Dec. for our lovely annual Xmas meal for all the volunteers and committee of The Rest A While. Thank you so much to everyone! You are really appreciated. The meal was delicious as always, Thank you.

We are always looking for volunteers to join our happy band, so if you can spare 2 hours per month to help serve refreshments, and like to have a friendly chat please contact :-
Val tel. no. 860709

Pat Grant secretary



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Witheridge in Bloom

WOW!!!!!!

We wish to say a huge thank you to the following businesses in Witheridge who responded to our 'Sponsor a Hydrangea' campaign for Chapple Corner. We intend to use their donations totalling £280 to fund the planting in the Spring.

Dart Electrics Ltd

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Two Moors Gallery

Witheridge Garage

FIS. Engineering

John Burd Motors

Little Dart Company

Mount Pleasant Inn

Village Hair Shop

Witheridge Newsagents

Also to Robert Brown, Colette Wing and Kay Woollacott who are kindly donating shrubs.

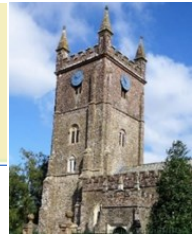
May I wish everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Carol.Northam

carol.northam1@pobroadband.co.uk

01884 860817

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



At the School Christmas service I talked about life not always going to plan. Mary and Joseph would not have chosen to give birth to their son in a stable - who would. Our Christmas may not have gone to plan either, not been perfect, in any time of life plans can be made that lead to disappointments along the way, illness, poor weather leading to travel disruption and other incidents that have to be dealt with immediately.

We might need to help another person who is struggling and give our full support to that situation. Recently our Son, Benjamin, had a major water leak in his roof space, resulting in a ceiling collapse and saturated carpets. Sue dropped everything to help him clear the attic, lifting and drying carpets and assist in working out what had to be done now and what could wait.

At Morning Prayer, today (Wednesday 3 January), the Psalm set was 127 and the prayer that follows it helps us to remind ourselves what is important in life even in the midst of the unpleasant unexpected circumstances we can find ourselves in.

‘Lord, you are ever watchful and bless us with your gifts; as you provide for all our needs, so help us to build only what pleases you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

These gifts include all our relationships, with partners, children, grandchildren, indeed all our families and friends. Everyone who supports and loves us in the good times and bad.

We are blessed that we have a loving God too, who is always there for us. The refrain to this Psalm is ‘The Lord shall keep watch over your going out and your coming in’, this can bring comfort during the unexpected events in life knowing that the Lord is with us if we just ask him to be there.

(Continued on next page)

There is a poem you may know called 'Footprints' by Mary Stevenson this suggests that there are two sets of footprints in the sand as we walk through life one is me and the other is God, the Lord. The author berates God because she notices that when life became tough, when we face the unexpected, there was always only one set of footprints. God simply replies 'my child that is when I carried you'.

As we travel through winter into spring, let us be aware that God is with us in the unexpected and the expected, in our loneliness, isolation, relationships, work, leisure time, illness and even death. A light has come into the world to take away the darkness and no matter how dark it feels it can never extinguish that light.

I pray that you may know the light of God in your life and may you be aware of God's blessing on you and your families.

Adrian

Andrew Clark

We are sorry to report the passing of Andrew Clark on 23rd December 2023. Andrew had lived in Witheridge for a long time; he was a member of the Parochial Church Council for many years, and secretary for more than 16 years.



He was a Leader for Morning Prayer in Witheridge and Thelbridge, as well as giving the talks. Andrew was the Raffle Master at Coffee Mornings and Church fetes, a member of the Concert committee and ticket seller, and organiser of the service personnel rotas for our church services. A wise and considerate person who was always supportive of the churches.

Andrew loved his golf and ran Witheridge Golf Society from 2000. He was a respected member of Chulmleigh Golf Club, playing 2-3 times a week and was a past Captain. He was also a member of the Chulmleigh Golf Society which played different courses around Devon.

Andrew's outlook on golf was enjoyment and friendship.



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WITHERIDGE PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

Christmas tree Lighting Event

Firstly, many thanks for the huge turn out on such a cold night, in support of our re-instated lighting of the Christmas tree ceremony on the 1st December. The feedback from the public was positive support and enjoyment of an atmospheric village event and the hope that it may continue. The event was brought about by a dedicated and positive few and I must mention firstly the children, without whom the ceremony would be pointless, and with the support of the school academy, lantern making, the procession and the Christmas singing. The Mitre for their hospitality, Eileen Curtis, and Dave Dickinson for judging the children's art; Paul Bragg alias "the Grinch"; Claire and John Bibby; The Knights for the burger stall and Sarah Bragg who was everywhere completing so many tasks. I must not forget to thank Santa Claus and Mrs Claus for coming to our church to bring gifts for the children, please return next Christmas Santa.

Sale of Amenity Land at Cannington Road

Of a more serious nature, it was brought to the attention of the Parish council at our December meeting that correspondence had been received by residents whose homes border the public open space between Drayford Lane and Cannington Road, giving them the opportunity to purchase lots to enhance their properties. This open space is protected by a deed of covenant between the owner and North Devon District Council, and I quote a couple of the clauses. "Not to use or permit the use of the Open Space otherwise than as an open space for free public use and enjoyment. At all times allow full and free public access to the Open Space." Any attempt by the owner to offer it for sale is clearly a breach of the deed of covenant and has been brought to the attention of the enforcement office at North Devon District council whose responsibility it is to act upon this breach.

(Parish council update– continued)

Tots Playground at the Parish Hall

The Parish council has all our play equipment inspected quarterly by an independent company -Wicksteed leisure, and unfortunately the motor bike springer was flagged up as a having a broken cover. Quotes were received and the motor bike will be replaced by a smiley elephant.

October / November Meetings

Parish Grants were approved for Witheridge in Bloom for their insurance renewal and plant purchases/compost for this year and to the Knights of Witheridge to purchase Christmas gifts for the children when meeting Santa on the 1st December.

Councillor Carol Northam, after eight years, has stepped down from organising and leading the village litter pick. Many thanks to her for all her hard work. Councillor Clive Richardson, who is our first aider, has kindly agreed to take over the reins of organisation but he will still need all the help from existing and new volunteers.

At our finance meeting on the 16th November the upcoming budget was discussed, and it was agreed to raise the village precept by 5% to £40,950 with the use of the general reserve to fund the difference between precept and budget. The precept amount to a band D property will be £79.05.

Recently there have been lots of publicity and television programmes about the controversial release by water companies of raw sewage into our rivers at times of high water and a massive increase of the number of frequencies that it happens. In October the Parish agreed to make representation to South West Water seeking in respect of Witheridge sewage works: -

- Capacity of the works
- Frequency of releases
- Frequency of solid waste removal
- Frequency of liquid waste removal

(Parish Council update– cont.)

However no reply has yet been received for our questions except an email from SWW to ask if our requests had been answered?

Councillor Peter Jones is gathering volunteers to monitor water quality in the little Dart catchment area and is awaiting the training course.

Parish Clock (On St John’s Church)

The Parish Council received correspondence from North Devon District Council Environmental Health dated 24/11/2023 that a complaint had been made about the church clock sounding every 15 minutes through the night.

Many of you may not be aware the Parish council is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the clock. This complaint was obviously discussed at our meeting on 7/12/2023 and the subsequent progress of the District as to the complaint. It was agreed that once the resulting report was received any implications and action by the Parish council would be considered further. North Devon District subsequently upheld the complaint serving the Parish council with an abatement notice in respect of statutory nuisance on 22nd December, giving us 14 days to silence the clock, otherwise we would be guilty of a criminal offence and would be liable on summary conviction to a fine.

The clock must be silenced between the hours of 11pm and 7am, having no mechanism to achieve this as yet we had no option but to silence it 24/7 and this was done at noon on the 5th January. The clock itself will remain operational. It was agreed at our January meeting to seek costings and options to comply with the abatement notice from Cumbria clocks and once received, council will publish the costs and options and would welcome resident’s comments and may hold a public meeting to discuss these.

Jacky Harvey (Parish Council Chairman)

Witheridge Parish Council Council Information



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



Dear Witheridge film goes!!

On February 24th we are showing The Great Escaper with Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson.

On March 16th we are showing A Haunting in Venice with Kenneth Branagh.

Then on April 20th The Miracle Club with Maggie Smith and Kathy Bates.

Thank you everyone for your support and thank you to the team.

All suggestions for films warmly received.

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Witheridge Gardening Club

Unfortunately, our speaker for the October meeting was unable to come due to illness, and at short notice Paul Tebble agreed to come and talk to us about Bonsai. He brought with him a cotoneaster plant and showed us how to trim the branches. Some members had a go at trimming, and Paul will be returning in February to show us how to do the next stage.

It was suggested that members might like to purchase a plant, have a go at branch trimming themselves and bring them to the February meeting for Paul to look at and comment on.

We held our AGM in November, when Cyril and Doreen Leat formally retired from the Committee and were thanked for their many years of service and support to the club. Alan presented them with Garden Vouchers and thanked them both for their help and knowledge.

The Committee were re-elected en bloc:

Alan Horwood Chairman

Janet de Rochefort Treasurer

Jill Horwood Secretary

Susan Trudgill and Peter Moss – joint Show Secretaries

Committee Members – Jenny James, Sheila Manley,

New Committee Members – Peter and Janette Moss

Following the AGM, we had a bring and share supper and a raffle.

Gardening Club Programme for 2024

Wednesday 28th February Bonsai Demonstration – Paul Tebble

Wednesday 27th March Jonty Barlow – update on Biodigester

Saturday 6th April Spring Show

Wednesday 24th April Stephen Powles “The Countryside Detective”

Wednesday 29th May Littlest Wild Life Hotel – Animal rescue

Wednesday 26th June Nigel Wright – Bonsai “Little Trees – Big Story”

Wednesday 31st July TBC

Saturday 3rd August Summer Show

Wednesday 25th September “Help! someone's given me an orchid - what
Do I do now?”

Wednesday 30th October Devon Orchards and how Devon took to
Cider. Michael Gee

Wednesday 27th November AGM and Social Evening

All meetings, apart from the Spring and Summer Shows, start at 7.00pm.

Jill Horwood Secretary

REMINISCENCE PROJECT.

TACKLE THE WINTER BLUES BY SHARING YOUR MEMORIES

Do you feel a bit deflated in the new year? Maybe you miss the cheer and hustle associated with the festive season, feel wiped out or even underwhelmed after all the build-up. What better way to overcome the winter blues than by sharing your memories over a chat and a cup of tea?

The Reminiscence Project is an ongoing project run by Crediton Library which collects memories of people living, or who used to live, in Mid Devon. Volunteers visit people in their own homes or in the community to chat about their younger years, school, jobs, or anything else they might like to talk about.

The conversations are recorded and stored online in a digital collection. This is open to the public for all to access, whether they want to find out about how their local area has changed over the years, whether they'd like to know what it was like to live in a certain time period or whether they just enjoy hearing other people's stories.

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this project has been made possible thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

If you would like to set up a time to have a chat with one of our volunteers, or if you'd like to find out more about the project, you can get in touch via email:

creditton.library@librariesunlimited.org.uk

or phone: 01363 772578.

WITHERIDGE GOLF SOCIETY



Many of you will already know that, sadly, Andrew Clark died on the 23rd December. Andrew ran the Witheridge Golf Society from 2000, organising games at Waterbridge Golf Club 5 times a year.

The Golf Society didn't meet in December, due to Andrew being in hospital and it was then too wet to play in January.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 13th March.

Ken Ramsbottom will be acting as secretary. Contact 861108



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We had a busy Autumn term with our usual meetings, where we earned badges for First Aid and Communication. The girls also participated in various activities, such as: The Firs fete in September where Brownies and Guides served visitors with tea, coffee or a soft drink. A visit to the Fire Station in October where they learnt about the important work of our Firefighters and Fire Safety leading up to Bonfire Night. The Remembrance Parade and service in November where each Brownie or Guide took part with either carrying a Flag, Reading, leading prayers or laying a wreath. At the end of November several girls joined in the district Christingle in Tiverton and each made their own Christingle.



In December The Guides had a fun day trip to London. They visited Girl Guiding Headquarters in Buckingham Palace Road and took part in ICANDO where they faced some challenges including walking over 5 miles to see the sights of London: Buckingham Palace, Green Park, The Ritz, Fortnum and Mason's amazing

Christmas windows, Leicester square, Trafalgar Square and even though it was December they all enjoyed and an ice-cream whilst exploring Covent Garden! It was an early start and a long day but they enjoyed the train ride from Tiverton to Paddington and back. They are planning another outing soon!



We welcome volunteers who can help us run our sessions. We have Brownies (ages 7 to 10) and Guides (ages 10 to 14) in our group. We meet on a weekly basis during term time on Tuesdays from 6.30pm to 8pm. Please get in touch if you'd like to join us, it is as much fun for us leaders as it is for the Brownies and Guides!

Jane Pemble and Carole Chapple

Autumn Term at East Worlington Primary School



The Autumn term was action-packed with a wide range of enrichment activities that every child, from Nursery to Year 6 has been able to access. These include: 'Sleeping Beauty' at Barnstaple Theatre, Tiverton Museum for the Victorians, and WW1 and WW2 projects, Bear Town, local walks, local theatre group projects, and sports

festivals and competitions. Huge thanks must go to our PTFA who pay for **all** of our trips and enrichment activities such as circus skills and the animal encounters coming up (6th February 11-12pm during our Playgroup session - £1 entry - all are welcome). This is brilliant

for the children because without the need to ask for parental contributions we can offer so much more than most schools.



We are also very grateful to Yeatheridge Camping and Caravanning site who with their generous gift of their playing field

and swimming pools enabled us to provide 10 free 45-minute swimming lessons for every child from Reception onwards, each year. We are very proud of the progress every child had made, from our non-swimmers who are now doing unaided widths to our club level swimmers. In addition to this all clubs including Out of School sports clubs are free of charge which has enabled lots of children to take part in sports they would not have had an opportunity to. We are always really pleased when this opens up new interests such as the girls who now attend Chulmleigh Football Club as a result of how much they enjoyed local tournaments.



In other news, our school was very proud to receive a glowing report from OFSTED recently. OFSTED commented on how well our children get on with and support each other and the superb support that the children get pastorally, particularly for those with SEND.



‘Pupils are happy at East Worlington Primary School. Staff know pupils as individuals. They learn an ambitious and interesting curriculum that meets their needs well. Leaders have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve.

‘Pupils know what it means to respect others regardless of their background.

‘Parents comment that pupils are warmly welcomed into the school community and settle quickly. They commend staff for the high level of care they show for each pupil. Many parents say that the school feels like a family.’



We have changed our class structure this year and now go all through from 2 years old to the end of year 6. This means that we have only 2-year groups per class and very small classes in the morning with our largest class being 13 children with a teaching assistant per class.

As a thriving village school, we have found that the bus from Meshaw - that also picks up at Witheridge square and our wrap- around care (8:00-9:00 and 3:30-5:30) has given many new families access to what would previously have been a remote rural school.

We do still have some places available in most year groups including nursery, so please contact us for a visit if you are interested in looking around.

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WITHERIDGE TODDLERS GROUP

What a lovely few months we have had with the toddler group! With the departure of a lot of our regulars moving up to the reception class, I must admit I was rather worried it was just going to be me turning up. However, thanks to a few familiar faces and plenty of new ones, the group has gone from strength to strength.

At the start of the term we had a massive sort out of our toy collection, which meant we had a bit of room in the shed for some new and exciting additions. Thank you so much to everyone who has donated such lovely items and for helping me find Facebook market gold. The school jumble sale was also a treasure trove of educational and craft essentials.

As the Festive season kicked off we started to enjoy some Christmas crafting. We began with salt dough hand and foot prints for the Christmas tree and moved on to decorating wooden rounds, Christmas cards and Dough hearts. Plenty of glue, pompoms and pipe cleaners were enjoyed by all.

Just a quick reminder that the toddler group meets on Wednesday at 13.45 and Friday at 9.00. The sessions are £1 per family and are held at Witheridge C of E Academy. All welcome and new faces would be great !

We have a baby weighing scale available for use and plenty of toys for imaginative and structured play. My contact details are 07875127064 or rebeccarobin44@gmail.com for any questions.

With the addition of a little one to our family, on Christmas Eve, my husband Nick Robinson will be taking over the running of the Friday sessions, for a few weeks, as we settle into life as a family of four.

I look forward to seeing you again in the New Year !

Rebecca Robinson

Allotment Society Winter

Happy New Year from the Allotmenters!

How was your gardening year? It was a bit of a mixed bag of weather here in North Devon - everything was fine until the weather changed and the rain came in bucket loads! Our Christmas dinner included home grown carrots, swede, cauliflower, broccoli and potatoes so we considered that a success and delicious!

If your New Year's resolution is to spend more time outdoors, with a bit more exercise consider having an allotment. Cheaper than a gym membership and you reap what you sow. Get in contact if you're interested we have a few plots available.

Potatoes have cropped well as they did last year. Consider growing slug resistant varieties, Kestrel, Markies & Nadine. There are also some good blight resistance varieties available.

Tip - Don't leave carrots or beetroot in the ground over winter. Though they will survive, the longer they are left in the ground the more likely they will be attacked by slugs or other pests. They will keep on growing during milder spells but will become woody and lose their flavour.

Anyone who has time for drama is not gardening enough!

Amanda Williams

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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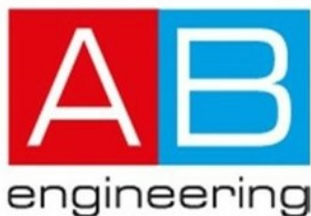
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Update from Cllr Peter Jones Your Independent District Councillor

Happy New Year to you all! Firstly, thank you to everyone involved in the many Christmas events and celebrations organised throughout the ward, we are fortunate to live in such spirited communities.

I aim to bring an inclusive, positive and proactive approach to the position. At times it is challenging but rewarding and often enjoyable. A big thank you to all of you who have helped and supported me, you all know who you are!

Willow Heights - 100% Affordable Housing - Many of you will now be aware that developer Allison Homes is in talks with Affordable Housing Provider Legal and General in relation to the Willow Heights development in Witheridge. It has been confirmed by the North Devon Planning Team and Allison Homes that the site may be developed as 100% affordable housing instead of 70% open market properties, and the 30% affordable as approved in the planning agreements. More detail on this and also what is meant by affordable housing can be found on posts I have shared onto my Facebook page.

Many of you have contacted me, and whilst there may be different opinions on this, there is one consensus. Most feel it is unacceptable that such a change can happen without any public consultation or review through the planning process; including an understanding of how this change will impact on existing infrastructure and community resources including transport, healthcare and schooling.

I have been informed by the planning team that unless there is a significant change to the application there is nothing which can be done to prevent the developer from continuing to develop the site as 100% affordable. Whilst the developer could not reduce the percentage of affordable housing, there is no restriction for them to increase this. I will be writing to the MP to ask why there is no mechanism to prevent such a substantial change and ask that she looks into this. You may also wish to contact our local MP Selaine Saxby (selaine.saxby.mp@parliament.uk).

Peter Jones—District Councillor Update. (continued)

I have had extensive conversations with the Head of Planning, the Head of the Planning Committee, many members of the community and I updated the Parish Council at the 4th of January PC meeting. I have contacted the Campaign for the Protection of support and have raised concerns with the Chief Exec. of NDC. I am working hard to ensure that the community can have their say and will raise questions at full council later this month.

Please note that posters and leaflets have been distributed throughout the community with my details, I must be clear that these have not been produced or distributed by me.

I will continue to update the community with the latest updates on my Facebook page and on the Witheridge Facebook group. If you would like more details or wish to discuss this with me, do get in touch.

Bus Issues - Following a request from the community, I have been supporting our County Councillor Jeremy Yabsley to collate the many issues that our community is experiencing with the bus service. I have also been taking these issues directly to the Managing Director of Stagecoach, Peter Knight. His initial response was that 99% of planned journeys for our community run as planned. With help from many of you we compiled more examples and showed that this figure did not match the experiences of those using the service daily. He has agreed to make some changes at the next opportunity in March and I will continue to relay the issues and concerns of the community to hopefully see an improvement from what is currently a very poor service particularly at peak times. You will find further posts in relation to this on my Facebook page.

Waste Collections – Due to unplanned staff absences over Christmas there were some issues reported to me, which were resolved. In general, I have the impression there is an improvement with waste and recycling. If you are having on going issues, do let me know. Please remember, in the first instance to report any missed collections to the customer service team on 01271 327711 or

customerservices@northdevon.gov.uk.

Peter Jones—District Councillor Update. (continued)

Water Monitoring Network - In November a group of local volunteers were trained to be citizen scientists, to regularly test the water quality of the Little Dart. Excluding a few teething issues in receiving our kits we should be up and running imminently. For more details do take a look at the Devon Live article on my Facebook page. If like me, you are concerned about the impact of pollution on our rivers and beaches save the date for a public scrutiny meeting I have organised in relation to these issue. Experts will gather to take questions from the committee, and public, to give us all a deeper understanding of the issues. The meeting will be held on **Thursday, February 29th at 6:30pm at Petroc Barnstaple.**

Potholes, Roads and Drains – Please do remember to report the many potholes, and blocked drains on the county council website. Severe issues can reported directly to County Councillor Jeremy at Jeremy.Yabsley@devon.gov.uk.

Here when you need me...

Don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have an issue or query. If you see me out and about do say hello. You can email me on **Peter.jones@northdevon.gov.uk** or call me on **07708 187 305**. For my latest updates follow my Facebook page www.facebook.com/PeterJonesIndependent or scan the QR code with your phone camera.





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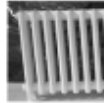
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Witheridge Methodist Church

Sunday service 10.30am

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We've had a busy few months with our usual activities of Sunday services, Community Lunches and monthly coffee mornings. It's lovely to see so many people coming along to these events and supporting us.

During the first weekend of December we held a Crib festival where people had been invited to bring a Nativity Crib scene to be displayed. We had over 20 different ones ranging from handmade knitted designs; pottery (from Mud and Moor Pottery); a quilted wall hanging, from Jill Horwood; and then those belonging to families that had been owned for many years, or more modern ones.



During the weekend of our crib festival we had people call in to see us both on the way down to the Christmas Fair, and others on the way back. So it was good to be a small part of that.

We stayed open during the daytime on Saturday, serving Bacon rolls—with brie and cranberry for those who wanted them— and also mince pies.

We look forward to seeing you at our Coffee mornings and Jigsaw Library, held on the first Saturday of each month and our Community lunches on the first Wednesday of the month. To book in for lunch contact either

Carol Pryn 860685

Ruth Towers 860228

We will also be holding our Craft and Chat afternoons on the 3rd Thursday of each month, from 2-4pm.

CHRISTIANS IN WITHERIDGE

We were involved in 2 events during December.

On December 1st, 2 small figures of Mary and Joseph began their Posada journey from the Methodist Church and then spent the next 23 nights at over 40 different houses in and around Witheridge. At each house people had the opportunity for a chat; a cup of tea and cake; or even afternoon tea.

On Christmas Eve they reached the end of their journey and were placed in the crib scenes at St John's Church as part of the afternoon crib service.

Our next event will be

At the Parish Hall: Breakfast Church for Mothering Sunday on 10th March from 10am.

Come along and enjoy a full English breakfast, or just cereals and toast, with a short family friendly act of worship.

Donations welcome.

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Knights of Witheridge

First of all, a Happy New Year to everyone. Let us hope by the time you read this the weather will have picked up a bit. Following a quiet Autumn, the main event of the Winter for the Knights has been the lighting of the village Christmas Tree and Christmas market held in The Square on 1st December. This was an event organised by the Knights in conjunction with Witheridge and East Worlington schools (Sarah Bragg, Kimberley Veen).

For those that missed it, it was a splendid occasion that really brought the village together and put everyone in the Christmas mood. The children from Witheridge and East Worlington Schools made their way from the school to the Square in a procession carrying lanterns they had made, then entertained the crowd with carols.



Six year old Hattie Palmer switched on the Christmas tree lights as part of her reward for winning the art competition for the best Christmas painting, thanks to Dave Dickinson and Eileen Curtis who judged the competition. We also had a small market and barbecue selling hot dogs and burgers. Meanwhile, Father Christmas found time in his busy schedule to appear in a grotto inside the church. The Mitre Inn provided additional Christmas warmth in the form of mulled wine and mince pies.



There are many to thank for their help and assistance in putting the event together. We had started fund raising for the event as far back as May, when the Knights held a charity event at Eastway Clay shoot, thanks to Graham and his team for all their support

In November, the Parish Council also very generously gave the Knights a grant of £300 to assist with the costs of the event. These together with money raised by the barbecue went a long way to covering the costs of the event and the associated Event Insurance that is essential these days.

The Knights would like to thank the school for organising the lantern parade and the singing and the Sports Club for looking after the children

before the parade. Thanks too, to Jon Bibby for making such a splendid commemorative switch/plunger to turn on the lights and for persuading Santa, Mrs Claus, and the Grinch to run the Grotto.



Thanks to Andy and Barbara and the Mitre for the mulled wine and mince pies and a big thank you to Andy Bell for supplying the PA equipment and Kathryn & Al Stewart for letting us use their electricity to run the PA system!



Last but not least, a big thank you to all the children for brightening the evening with their lanterns and singing, and a special thank you to all who attended and made it a great night.

We would very much like to be able to do the same thing in future years if the funding and participants can be organised. To this end, if any local people or companies would like to have a stall at a future market, could they contact Sarah Bragg.

On a serious note, if we are to run such an event like this or any other future community events, the Knights are in urgent need of additional trustees and helpers. If you feel you can help, please contact us on the telephone number at the back of the Voice or by email at witheridgeknights@gmail.com. We also have our own Facebook page and website.



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NEWS FROM WITHERIDGE PRIMARY C of E ACADEMY and PRE-SCHOOL



We had so much fun over the festive period at Witheridge Academy. It was a privilege to watch the FSU Nativity. The children did such a good job of remembering their lines and the words to their songs. Well done FSU, and thank you to all the staff for your hard work.

On Elf Day, the school was full of cheeky little elves! The children looked so good in their elf outfits, and it was wonderful to discover that we had raised an enormous £51 for the Alzheimer's Society. Thank you to everyone who donated via our JustGiving page.

It was great to see lots of colourful and exciting Christmas Jumpers on Christmas Jumper Day and we managed to raise £20 for Save the Children.



The children in Classes 1,2,3 and 4 really impressed all of us with their fantastic performances in the KS1/KS2 Nativity - 'Christmas with the Aliens'. We are so proud of all the children, for their wonderful performances.

We also enjoyed our DELICIOUS Christmas Lunch, cooked by Bobbie. Thank you Bobbie for the yummy meal!

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



The children in Classes 3 and 4 visited the residents at The Firs to sing some songs and spread good cheer.

We had a VERY special visitor in school on Thursday! Father Christmas came to visit us and delivered a very special present to each Class! The children were amazed and very, very excited to see Father Christmas - they had plenty of questions for him as well!

On the last day of term, we held our special Christmas Church service. Well done to Year 6 for their fantastic readings, Reception for their beautiful Tableau and to Reception and Class 4 for their beautiful singing.

Thank you to Adrian and Sue for leading the service.



The children have returned to school full of joy in 2024 and ready to start a new term of learning. It was so lovely to see all the children again and to hear about their Christmas holidays.

The children are enjoying finding out what their new topics are for this term. In Class 4, the children will be finding out about where their food comes and land use as part of their 'Sow, grow and farm topic'. In Class 3, the children will be learning all about volcanoes in their 'Rocks, relics and rumbles' topic. In Class 1 and 2, the children will be finding out about Antarctica during their 'Great Scott!' topic. The children in EYFS will be enjoying exploring their surroundings as part of their 'Let's Investigate!' topic.

The children in Classes 1 and 2 have been busy this term! They had their Polar Explorers Day to launch their new topic at school. Then, the children visited the Museum of the Moon in Barnstaple to follow up on their learning from last half term about Space, and their focus on Neil Armstrong - the first man on the moon!

We have had some very cold weeks at Witheridge Academy, with the temperature staying at or below 0 degrees for much of the time. Despite the frosty conditions, the children have had a great time - especially during lunch times as they have had so many lovely new OPAL donations to play with. Thank you to all the Parents and Carers who have donated items for the children to play with. Our OPAL bin is located outside the big playground gate, so please continue to donate any old or unwanted toys, materials or art supplies.



Class 4 started their swimming sessions this term. Mr Manning was very impressed with the children's behaviour both on the way to and from the pool and during their swimming session. Well done, Class 4! A great start.

The children in Class 1 were fortunate enough to visit the Farm this term, as part of the Farm School provision we offer here at Witheridge Academy. A huge thank you to Farmer Olly for your continued support and for delivering such wonderful sessions.

With best wishes,

Lucy

Head of School

Witheridge C of E Academy

Part of TEAM Academy Trust

01884 860518

Witheridge Striders



Tarr Steps



Dulverton

Do come and join the rest of the Group for a walk of approximate five to six miles. These are along local lanes and footpaths. We meet in the Village Square on Monday and Thursday mornings. Departure time is 10.00am and return approximately 12.30pm.

To create variety some walks may require a short car ride out of the village environs. During the summer months excursions are made to places similar to Simonsbath, Pinkworthy Pond and Exe Head, grounds of both Killerton and Knightshayes National Trust properties, Hambledon and Meldon Reservoir

There are no membership charges. If we go to Nomansland, Black Dog, Rose Ash there is a charge of £1. On trips further from the village the charge is £3. This is paid directly to the volunteer driver of the car one travels in. This is to cover the cost of fuel and depreciation.



Knightshayes Court

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If a doctor has prescribed or suggested some additional exercise, you will be warmly welcomed to join. Please wear High Visibility or Light coloured clothing.

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WITHERIDGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Do you have a telescope, or a pair of binoculars? They work better if they are set up, not only for our latitude and longitude, but also for our eyes. Come along to the Witheridge Astronomical Meetings and we will happily show you how to set them up to enable you to get the best view through them. Now to look at the next few months and what they have in store for us.

February

February, a cold month but, if we are blessed with a clear sky it would be worth going out to try to see the Andromeda Galaxy, which is the nearest galaxy to the Milky Way. Just after sunset, if you look towards the northwest, the Andromeda Galaxy can be seen near the Andromeda and Cassiopeia constellations. This galaxy can be seen with a simple pair of binoculars or even the naked eye!

March

Moving into March and we are still devoid of many of the planets because Venus, Mars, Saturn and Neptune are unfortunately way too close to the Sun this month and are therefore not observable. But we do have Jupiter which will be the best sight of the evening. The King of the solar system has a lovely conjunction with the Moon on the 13th. Close on its heels is Uranus which will set about one hour after Jupiter. Mercury can be seen from the 13th to the 27th March with a magnitude of -1.2, however, be careful of the Sun. Do not look at the Sun with any optical aid, or even your eyes!

March is typically the month when amateur astronomers attempt the Messier Marathon, an attempt to observe all 110 objects listed in the Messier Catalogue in one night. This feat is possible because, in late March, the positions of the Earth and the Messier objects align so that they are all above the horizon during a single night. Wrap up well because it is an all-night exercise.

(continued on next page)

April

The Lyrid Meteor Shower will be visible from 14-30 April, peaking on 22-23 April. Although not the most active meteor shower, the Lyrids can sometimes feature meteors with bright dust trails that glow for several seconds. The best time to look for the Lyrids, if the weather permits, is in the early hours of 23 April. This year, the shower comes to a maximum at full Moon, so moonlight will affect viewing conditions.

Do you wish to know more? If so, come along to the Witheridge Astronomical Society meeting on the third Thursday at the Parish Hall Committee Room. Meeting at 7.30pm you will be made very welcome. Beginners to the science are more than welcome. We are open to all who share an interest in the night sky, and we extend a warm welcome to new faces. New or expert it will be good to meet you. Just come along.

Steven Smith

WORLINGTON PHOTOGRAPHIC GROUP

We are a friendly group of photographers of all abilities meeting monthly at Worlington Parish Hall, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm

We have a yearly programme with regular trips out and also hold meetings in the Parish Hall to take indoor photographs with a theme, such as still life or portrait.

Contact: Terry Brown – (01884) 861268



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Witheridge sports club

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



Short mat bowls

We meet in the Parish Hall once a week throughout the year. Club shoes and woods are available for those who have not played before. The first three evenings are free, then a green fee of £2.50 per session and a subscription of £20.00 per year. 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.

ACTIVELY SEEKING NEW MEMBERS.

We meet Thursday afternoons 2.00pm start.



Photo - Robin Thomason

Greg Henderson

Badminton

The Badminton club meets on Fridays at 8pm and the cost is £3.50 per session.

Anyone interested in coming along should contact Linda Williams 07966131522

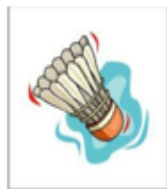


Table tennis

Come and join our small friendly group for adults aged 16 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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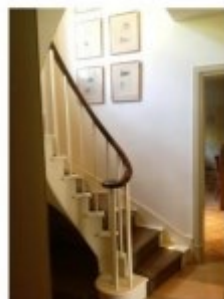
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People4ponies!

The relentless weather has had a big impact on us - the extreme conditions now mean that we are feeding multiple bales of hay a day and a bag of feed that normally lasts us a week we are ploughing through in just over a day! Everything is harder in mud, rain and gale force winds! As we move into 2024 I always wonder how fundraising will keep up - but of course our current rate of consumption of hay and feed will tail off. Thea donated apples for the ponies at Christmas and they very much enjoyed these over a few days.

Thank you very much to Suzy Grace who donated a stall to P4P at her Mudita Mind, Body and Spirit event in Tiverton! We are so missing events that were always such important fundraisers and morale boosters in our year - St John's Fayre, The Christmas Without Cruelty festivals in Exeter and London - and also the South Molton Winter Wonderland Xmas event - all cancelled in 2023. We are still planning to have our P4P plant sale at Witheridge village hall in May we will have veg and garden plants for sale. We are so grateful for how well it has been supported by you all in the last couple of years! If you have any extra plants that you grow and have spare please do feel free to bring them along....and we are also in need of plant markers/tags (pre event) for labelling everything that is for sale. Thank you!

Faye

people4ponies@yahoo.co.uk



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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.

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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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www.witheridgetennisclub.com

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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	860630
Art Group	Parish Hall– Wed 7.30pm	Eileen Curtis	860564
Badminton	Parish Hall Fri 8pm	Linda Williams 0796613	1522
Brownies and Guides	Witheridge School	Carole Chapple	855329
Charity Bingo	Thebridge Parish Hall-alt Tue 7.30	Marion Crane	860530
Bell Ringers	Belfry Thursday 7.30 pm	Ken Ramsbottom	861108
Dog Training	Parish Hall Mon 6pm	Jackie McDevitt 01769	550155
Gardening Club	Parish Hall Last Wed 7pm	Jill Horwood	861323
Knights of Witheridge		Chairman 07935	661397
Ladies Group	Parish Hall 2nd Tues 2pm	Coral Simmonds	861366
Little Dart Singers	St John the Baptist Church Tue 7.20	John Harris	861084
Methodist Church	Sunday 10.30am	Ruth Towers	860228
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	Tennis court book at Two Moors	Store	860815
Taekwondo	Parish Hall Thurs 6-7pm	Kevin Raven 07804	471165
Astronomical Society	Parish Hall 3rd Thurs 7.30-9pm	Steven Smith	861037
Witheridge in Bloom	carol.northam1@pobroadband.co.uk		860817
Witheridge Golf Society		Ken Ramsbottom	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 and Nick Robison	07875127 064
Witheridge Ploughing Association	Gill Gilbard gill@helebartonfarm.co.uk		
Witheridge Young Farmers	Emma Gilbard emma.gilbard@	markallengroup.com	
Witheridge Youth Club	Parish Hall 1st & 3rd Thurs 7-8.30pm	Andrea Court	860815
Witheridge Striders	Edward Fyson 07517148284 or	Janet Ashelford	860234
Worlington Photographic Group	Worlington Parish Hall 3rd Tue 7.30	Terry Brown	861268

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