

Witheridge Voice



Spring 2025

Issue 60

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Printed by Pharoah Print and
Design

Advertising in Witheridge Voice

Advertising rates to include the
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magazine are:

Full page £119

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1/3 page strip £49

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EDITORIAL

As I write this editorial, I'm watching the rain in our garden - let's hope we've not seen the last of the fabulous weather.

There are several articles that I'd like to draw to your attention.

Those of you who walk along Butts Close will have already seen the Little Library, outside Sam's house, if not, read about it on page 12. It's a brilliant idea and I hope it will be supported.

Steven Smith has also given detail about his role as Police Advocacy (pg. 48) it's good to know we have someone in the village, in this role.

We are all aware of the Knights of Witheridge regular quizzes, but their key purpose is to raise money for local projects. If you're interested in applying for any funding have a read of their article on pg.50.

The big village event is the return of St John's Fayre on Saturday 28th June 2025—Save the day!

The committee would like your help— please see their advert on page 60 of this edition.

If you would like to be a stall-holder, have a food van etc or a classic car, tractor or motorbike to take part in the parade, please contact the St John's Fayre committee by email on:offer any help .

Deadline for the Witheridge Voice Summer issue is 4th July.

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 turnaround with the printers.

The deadline also applies to advertisers, if they need to change any details, please let us know as soon as possible.

PARISH HALL UPDATE

The painting in the hall is now finished and it looks fantastic, we just have to get some new blinds, and the redecoration will be complete, I hope you all enjoy the fresh new look.

There is a lot going on in the hall, Pilates, Taekwondo, Badminton, Bowls, Table tennis along with many clubs and groups. The film night continues to be popular so keep a look out for the next film. There is also the fabulous monthly Farmers Market.

We have several music events coming up in the hall, Big Al is at the end of April then in September we have Dirty Money performing for the first time in Witheridge. Also, in the summer Withyfest might be having an event, so lots to look forward to.

Keep an eye on our website www.witheridgeparishhall.co.uk and Facebook page for news about what is going on.

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WITHERIDGE LADIES CLUB

In January we had our AGM, all committee members agreed to stand again, plus one more joined us on the committee.

In February we had great fun making crepes. We also made decorative hanging items using macrame rope and wooden curtain rings. Very therapeutic.

In March we enjoyed the return of Lottie Dale, talking about her early career as a trainee nurse at St Barts. She later spent time working in the hospital theatre. She told many amusing stories. She is still in touch with some of her colleagues from her student nursing days in 1969.

We have a full programme booked for 2025; great speakers, outings and lots of activities. A warm welcome awaits members new and old. Subscriptions remain at £20 for a year's membership.

Our club also has a book club and lunch club. Why not come along to see what we are up to!

2nd Tuesday in the month. Parish Hall 2–4 pm.

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Witheridge in Bloom

Hi Everybody,

We could do with your help. Volunteers move on and we would welcome new ones. Would you be able to take on a planter? We would like to expand our displays, but will be unable to do this without increasing our team.

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Carol Northam.

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THE REST AWHILE (Charity no 801038)

Wishing everyone a Happy Easter. Spring has arrived, with longer days, and what a delight to see all the Spring flowers.



Here at The Rest A While, we welcome anyone looking for a morning cuppa and a chat which usually turns into a few laughs. The Rest A While is open from 10am until 12 noon from Monday to Saturday throughout the year, and we only close on Christmas Day.

On the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month we run a **Mens' Den** from 2pm-4pm which has proved to be very popular. Thanks to Sean and Peter for running it.

On the last Friday of the month we hold a **bring and buy stall offering seasonal produce and homemade goodies. There is always a raffle.**

Every 4th Saturday we host a **music session** from 10am to 12noon. Thanks to Local musicians from Withy Fest who come to The Rest A While and play and sing for us. We get a good crowd, and everyone has fun.

On 8th May we have decided to celebrate VE Day for the 80th anniversary in style.

We will be open from 10am and will be providing free refreshments. The room will be decorated and there will be some of the old favourite wartime music. Do come and join us. We are always looking for volunteers to help with the running of The Rest A While. If you could spare just 2 hours once a fortnight you would be very welcome. Please get in touch with Val- Tel No 860709.

Thank You

Pat Grant
secretary.

The Little Library

New to Butts Close, Witheridge. The Little Library is for everyone. Please come and look. If you find something you would like to read, please help yourself.

All books have been donated by local villagers or sourced from Charity Shops, a special thanks to the "Rest a While" who donated children's books. Many donated books have already found a new home and some have been re-donated for others to enjoy.

The books are regularly rotated and added to, to try and keep a wide selection available.

The library is one of many in Devon, the majority being in and around Exeter. I hope it will be well received & promote a love of reading.

Please text me, Sam Spurway on 07935 135539 or place donations in the box next to the Little Library.



Witheridge Charity Bingo

Hello All,

Dave and I are always amazed at the good turnout we have on some of the coolest nights at the Thelbridge Charity Bingo, our supporters come in with hot water bottles tucked in their jackets and blanket for their legs, I do have a chuckle to myself, but we do appreciate their support.

We have just donated £1,100 pounds to our chosen charities and the latest update from our sponsored Guide Dogs, their training is going well, so keep up the good work Doris and Jasper.

As I have mentioned before Shapland and Searle supply all our meat for the Bingos and top class it is too, so I thought I would enclose two pictures of the two line and full house prizes, these are from a couple of weeks back, also the other photo is of the dinner donated from Shapland and Searle every fortnight which is a separate draw from the main one.

Once again, I say a very big thank you to all our supporters, see you all soon.

Marion, David, Suzi and Hayley.

Bingo dates for your diaries

May 7th and 21st

June 4th and 18th

July 2nd and 16th and 30th

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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



April is the Church reporting season. We, as a local church, must put together an annual report and financial statements for the past year, which is a requirement of the Charity Commission. These reports contain information about what we have done and who's been involved, as trustees, the people who run the day-to-day operations of our local church. You can view this document in church.

It is also a chance for me, as the vicar, to show appreciation and gratitude to everyone who has been involved, giving their time and energy to support it. We think of Alan for churchyard tidying, cleaners, refreshments offered, Worship Wardens, Eucharistic Ministers, flower arrangers - Pat and Ruth - with their amazing creations, the local ministry team, those who open and lock church and John, our organist and editor of the monthly newsletter. Thanks to Jill for creating the seasonal quilted banners which adorn our church. Also, our successful Sunday Club, Messy Church and Vintage Messy Church. They are the church in this place, worshipping together and offering Christian service throughout the week, every week.

Whether you are looking for a service of the Word, Holy Communion, a musical event, a chance to explore faith, a game of Scrabble, learn to bell ring or a cozy coffee morning, you will be very welcome to join us, and fresh coffee awaits you!

The Church is a great venue for weddings and celebrating new life.

We are, also, here to help you celebrate a life that has ended, whether or not you require a burial in the churchyard. We can give you time to express your thoughts and memories.

I look forward to the many different special occasions families wish to celebrate and mark.

Please feel free to have a chat with me.

Adrian Wells

07570 803237

vicaradrian@gmail.com

Job Vacancy

Thelbridge Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

The post is part-time, about 100 hours per annum, and requires the applicant to have suitable facilities for home working. Working hours are flexible, however the applicant must be able to attend the evening meetings held at the Thelbridge Parish Hall, usually six times each year. Experience of local government would be an advantage, but training is available. Good IT skills to include Word, Excel and website administration are essential.

Key responsibilities include servicing the Parish Council meetings, implementing decisions, monitoring and managing the Council's finances, dealing with enquiries and maintaining the website. Further information is available on the website www.thelbridge-pc.gov.uk

Salary £1,185 - £1,326pa, depending on experience. Starting date as soon as possible. Applications should be emailed to clerk@thelbridge-pc.gov.uk by 23rd May 2025. For an informal discussion please email linseyfrost@hotmail.com to arrange a call.



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Witheridge Tennis Club

The Club's new season began on 1st April when all our members re-subscribe for the 2025-26 season. So, if you are thinking of joining us, now is a good time to start and taking out an annual subscription is a very economical way of using the court. You only need to book six 1-hour sessions to make a membership financially worthwhile!

If you haven't picked up a racket for many years but would like to test the waters, we would be happy to organise some 'Rusty Racquet' sessions if we have enough takers. Our contact details are on our website: www.witheridgetennisclub.com We also have coaching for adults on Mondays and run Junior coaching throughout the holidays (details are posted nearer the time).

We hold five tournaments throughout the summer season when we encourage players of all standards to come and join in a fun day's tennis and have lunch.

For the first time last year, we introduced an evening's social tennis every Friday from May to September which proved to be such a success that we will be resuming this again from 16th May. Come along after work and play a few games of tennis and enjoy a drink in the 'exclusive' clubhouse. All standards of tennis are encouraged to come along. A great way to start the weekend.

Once again, we will be holding a Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall on Saturday 3 May, so come and meet us or just come and have a coffee and browse the stalls. We look forward to seeing you there.

The dates for your diary are:

Saturday 3 May – Coffee morning in the Parish Hall (10am to 12 noon)

Sunday 18 May – Open tournament

Saturday 14 June – Open tournament

Saturday 5 July – Open tournament

Saturday 9 August – Open tournament

Saturday 13 September – Dodds Cup (members only)

Further details about the Club can be found on our website: www.witheridgetennisclub.com. We hope to see you soon.

Sarah Vertigan

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Witheridge Film Club

Dear loyal supporters of Witheridge film nights, you will have seen the film Conclave, and hopefully enjoyed it, by the time this edition of The Voice is published.

On the 17th May we are showing A Complete Unknown, a biographical portrait of the folk icon Bob Dylan.

On the 14th June we are hopefully going to show Mad About the Boy, the new Bridget Jones film, as she navigates life as a widow and a single mum. We are still waiting to see if we can obtain the DVD for that date.

July and August we are having a rest but will be back in September.

In March we showed Paddington goes to Peru and because of his love of marmalade I decided to sell some of my homemade marmalade to raise a bit of money for the donkeys in Gaza. I was able to send £15 to Safe Haven for Donkeys in the Holy Land. So, thank you.

Some people have remarked that 9 pm is too late for children to attend film nights. I have suggested that parents come and find out how to put films on for themselves with Terry who is our projectionist.

So, thank you for your continued support and any suggestions for future films to me on 01884 861695

Margie



With generous donations from Family and villagers alike a memorial bench for Tim Leach has been placed at Witheridge Sports Club

Witheridge Parish Council Council Information



Council & Committee Meetings

Meetings are usually held monthly on the first Thursday with additional meetings scheduled as required, see www.witheridgepc.org for full schedule and any changes.

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

Chair : Cllr J Harvey Tel: 07751 974412

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.



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Sunday 6.00am - 1.00 pm

A little known fact is that we have been delivering groceries throughout this year and intend to continue this service. We also accept payment by debit card over the phone making life easier we hope. If you've not been in to see the range recently please come on in and have a nose. Tel: **01884 860815**

Witheridge & District Gardening Club

We had a very well attended meeting in February with Katherine Crouch providing an interesting and entertaining talk on growing your own food.



The meeting in February was on fuchsias with Derek Dexter, which everyone found very entertaining and informative. There were also lots of beautifully grown fuchsias for sale.



The Spring Show and plant sale took place on Saturday 29th March, with a record number of exhibits. Photos below of the prize winners and some of the exhibits.]



Future meetings, all starting at 7pm in the Witheridge Parish Hall, are:

30th April The Care and Management of Trees and Shrubs

28th May Wildlife Gardening

25th June My Time as Chelsea Show Manager

30th July Witheridge in Bloom

2nd August Summer Show – entry forms will be available from the Two Moors Store a few weeks before the show.

24th September RHS Rosemore through the seasons

29th October Bees and bee keeping

If you have never been to one of the meetings, why not give it try? The charge for each meeting is £3 or pay just £10 membership for the rest of the year.

Witheridge Golf Society



On Wednesday 12th March the first game of the year took place at Waterbridge Golf Club. The weather was fine and dry and a good day was had by all 18 players in 5 teams followed by a good meal with thanks to the staff at Waterbridge Golf Club.

The winning team were:

Richard Hurd, Andy Howes, Frank Whitcombe and Jacky Harvey.

The Wooden Spoon went to:

Tom Clow, Mark Joslin and Mike Hislop.

Nearest to Pin: John Avens

Next meeting: Wednesday 7th May 2025 New members welcome.



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1st Witheridge Brownies and Guides

Witheridge Brownies and Guides have had a busy term, we started off making pictures of birds and taking part in British bird week, girls then learnt about saving Water and how in some countries they don't have clean water. The girls were then invited to take part in the Girlguiding Thinking Day event held in Tiverton; to think about Girlguiding around the world and we choose Kenya as our country.



Girls have entered the spring show at Village Hall and were awarded prizes and to finish the term girls were invited to take part in a district Easter Egg hunt.



If anyone is interested in joining our group, we meet at the school from 6.30 to 8.00 pm on a Tuesday evening during term time only.

Contact Carole Chapple on 07957 808981



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South West Care Homes

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Witheridge Toddlers Group

Good morning from Toddlers!

We have had a lovely couple of months despite the rainy start to the year. We have decorated trinket boxes, made love bugs for Valentine's Day and made full scale toddler outlines (and grandmas!)

For our last session before the Easter break, we will be having an Easter party complete with egg hunt, bunny ear making and Easter stories.

One of our regular toddlers and Grandma are leaving us this term as she starts her new chapter of activities. We had a lovely farewell party with plenty of cake, and we will miss them massively! Thank you so much for all your help and support with playgroup and for being so reliable when I inevitably find myself running late...

Playgroup sessions run on Wednesday 13:45 to 15:30 and Friday 9:00 to 10:30. Sessions are £1 a family and take place at Witheridge school. All new faces very welcome!

Please feel free to contact me at:

Rebeccarobin44@gmail.com or 07875127064 with any questions.

We are always looking for toy donations if anyone is having a clear out!

Lots of love,
Rebecca

Wetheridge Rocks

Since Christmas we have had our own Bake-off competition, had a Valentine's themed evening making heart - shaped cookies and cards, we have made soaps and done clay modelling. But the highlight has been our First Aid course. The young people learnt about what to do in an emergency, putting someone in the recovery position, using a defibrillator, doing CPR and much more. They all received a certificate at the end.

Following our AGM, it was decided that, due to the large number of children attending and the number of helpers available, we would split the youth club into 2 groups.

Year 6 & 7 will now attend on the 2nd Thursday of the month, and Year 8 upwards will attend on the 4th Thursday of the month. This will be trialled until we break up for the summer at the end of July, after which we will decide whether or not to continue like this.



Wetheridge Rocks would like to thank Alison Homes for their donation of funds, which has allowed us to buy a brand-new pool table and cover.

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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.

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District Councillor Update - April 2025

Please see my latest update as your District Councillor.

This month marks the official halfway point of my elected term. It's been an enjoyable but challenging two years, and I look forward to continuing to work hard to serve the community over the next two years. Thank you to everyone who has helped and supported me.

Local Government Reform

The government continues its push for local government reorganisation and required initial proposals from District Councils by the 21st of March on restructuring Devon into unitary councils covering around 500,000 residents. This would replace the current two-tier district and county system with a single unitary system, aiming to save money. I'm concerned this may not achieve the expected savings and could harm services, particularly for the most vulnerable, while also risking local job losses.

Along with my independent group colleagues, I have pushed for North Devon Council to keep its options open before fully committing to the 1-4-5 model. The current interim proposal, supported by all district councils merges North Devon with Torridge, Exeter, Mid Devon, and East Devon; Torbay with West Devon, Teignbridge, and the South Hams; and Plymouth standing alone. However, this may change. The next step is consultation, followed by the submission of formal plans in November. If approved, the new structure could be in place as early as 2027/28.

(District Councillor update- continued)

Update on Affordable/Social Homes at Benson Grange, Witheridge

The first batches of houses have been released, with the majority going to those with a local need.

If you've been unsuccessful in previous bidding rounds, do keep trying—there are likely more properties than local demand in most categories. For instance, the need for 2-bed homes has already been met, so even lower-priority applicants (band E) still have a good chance. Ensure your application details are correct, as errors may have led to missed opportunities.

The following properties will be released over the next two years:

- 14 one-bed homes
- 21 two-bed homes, including six bungalows
- 25 three-bed homes
- 5 four-bed homes

Once Witheridge needs are met, applications will open to neighbouring parishes and then North Devon, so please spread the word. Even without a local connection, registering is worthwhile, as future properties may have fewer restrictions. However, priority will go to higher-band applicants. Part-ownership properties will be going on the market later this year.

Local Grants

L&G, which has taken ownership of the new development, is offering £15.5K in community grants. Details are on my Facebook page. This is in addition to the £15.5K awarded to local

(District Councillor update- continued)

County Council Election

County council elections are taking place on the 1st of May. As your District Councillor, this does not impact me, but your County Councillor, Jeremy, will be standing down after 25 years serving the community.

Remember, you will need ID to vote and must be registered. If you are likely to be away or may struggle to get to the polling station, you can apply for a postal vote.

Section 106 Projects

I'm pleased to share that applications are now being submitted for the 106 community fund, which is money available from the development. An application has been submitted for updates to the village hall, to improve and preserve the facilities for the coming years. Groups are also investigating a multi-surface sports pitch on the sports field, and a skatepark.

The parish council are also looking at options to buy amenity land. I will be presenting an outline plan for the 106 money at the May parish council meeting, all are welcome at 7pm on the 1st of May.

Here When You Need Me!

Like and follow me on Facebook to stay up to date. You can contact me via Facebook Messenger, email me at Peter.jones@northdevon.gov.uk, or call/WhatsApp me at 07708



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Witheridge Methodist Church



Sunday Service 10.30am, everyone welcome. Coffee and tea served at the end of the service.

Coffee morning, with bacon rolls, toasted teacakes and jigsaw library first Saturday of the month.

Community lunch served first Wednesday of the month, booking required, contact Carol 07901 377411 or Ruth 07980 104347.

Over the last few months, we've been involved with a number of successful events. It was good to see some different people at the Beetle Drive, at the end of March and then again at the Breakfast Church, held on Mothering Sunday. Both of these events were part of Christians in Witheridge activities.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism said

Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can.

With this in mind, we think about this when planning what we do. Our congregation isn't very large, with a number of elderly people, so we do what we can.

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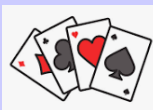
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Annual Witheridge Parish Council Chairman's report for 2024/2025

In March 2024 a meeting was held in the parish hall for residents to discuss the changes to the planning application for Juniper Rise, with Alison homes the builders and Legal and General who now own and manage the site. The change was the 30% affordable homes became 100% with a mixture of affordable rent, social rent and part ownership. The first tranche of rental homes was released in February 2025 and are occupied by people with Witheridge connections.

However, the Parish council still await the transfer of the green space abutting the adventure playground known as the Northern Open space (NOS) which was part of the 106 agreement when the planning application for Willow Rise was approved by the District council. Mr. Cattermole of Alison Homes attended our June meeting and explained that building materials had been stored on the land to enable the path improvement alongside the B3137 to take place and once completed in July the NOS transfer would take place. The Council will now have to engage enforcement of the 106 agreement.

Councillor Cunningham has been in negotiation with Alison Homes for some agreed improvements of the BMX track at the Adventure playground, however as regards "spades in the ground" nothing yet has materialised, but now the Spring weather has arrived we are hoping talks will continue?

The council budget of £60,000 for the financial year 2025/26 was approved by full council in December. This will be raised by setting a precept of 43,000, the difference coming from our

general reserve. There are several expensive capital projects to fund this financial year. The new tarmac path at the adventure playground, repairs to the toilet block leaking roof, the existing skate ramp repairs, the funding of the tots playground lease, the railings around it and the recently vandalised motor bike Springer in the playground. The tarmac path has been completed satisfactorily, and the erecting of the tots playground railings are due to commence in April.

There is a defibrillator on the outside wall of the toilet block in the square, however the council decided that another needs to be sited closer to the new housing development. Consultation has taken place with the doctor's surgery staff who have agreed to have the defib attached to the outside of their building. Full quotations have been obtained from the Community Heartbeat Foundation for both the defib and cabinet, plus installation and electrical costs. However, it was decided that because of the capital projects mentioned above the request has been submitted to the Legal and General Partnership fund to finance the project.

I am delighted to report that the existing skate ramps at the Adventure playground will soon be dismantled and taken away for repair to be reinstated in situ. Council approved a revised quotation in February, and it is hoped the contractor will be able to commence work in the next few weeks.

The 106 monies to fund village projects comes from the Juniper Way developers, as part of planning approval, the recipients of which are decided by the district council and are called the "heads of terms." They are amenity green space land acquisition, refurbishment of the Adventure Playground skate park, allotments, an all-weather football pitch, children's play park

equipment, and the Parish Hall. The Parish council have set up a subgroup to explore the possibilities of land acquisition and the feasibility of a new skate park. Letters have been sent out to twelve local landowners seeking interest in selling land for recreation to the parish and the group has had a very positive teams meeting with a skate park provider who outlined possible layouts, costings, and suggestions of several other organisations for further funding.

Parish council meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month at the parish hall committee room however the format has changed. “Doors open “at 7pm whereby our county councillor, district councillor and our police advocate Cllr. Smith give us their monthly reports. Parishioners and council alike are then invited to ask questions on these and updates on previous reports. Also, during this time residents can bring to our attention any village concerns or their comments on a planning application to be discussed later by the council. The parish council meeting begins hopefully around 7.30 whereby there is no further public participation.

In my opinion the best attribute for a councillor is patience and resilience. Apart from the aforementioned BMX track and the NOS there are so many identified village projects that require county funding still awaiting completion.

The Lakelands newly installed bus shelter is not fit for purpose as it needs sides to keep out the inclement weather.

The chestnut trees at the entrance to Lakelands need a survey and remedial work which has been requested so many times by the parish.

The pedestrian path from Fore Street leading to North Street and the entrance to the village hall is known as “The Bow”. The existing pair of railings complies with regulations designed to stop children and bicycles entering a main road at speed. However the positioning of such prevents any motorised buggies or large baby buggies from entering the path, which forces them onto using the dangerous “narrows” for access to the village shops, the existing pavement being too narrow. Council have campaigned for years to have the railings altered and a ramp to allow access and keep people safe and away from the ever-increasing heavy traffic.

The perennial need for road repairs is the subject every month brought before the county councillor. Those in desperate need are two routes out of the village. One is the back road from Nomansland to the Link Road and in particular Farm Flowers hill which when driving takes the form of a slalom trying to avoid the worst of the holes. The other is the B3137 the main route out of the village to Tiverton. The road through Nomansland at the crossroad needs re surfacing as does so much of the hill out towards Cruwys Morchard woods. It is quickly becoming a bone shaking experience especially when potholes cannot be avoided because of oncoming traffic. This section of the road is in Mid Devon so becomes their responsibility and Cllr. Yabsley is in contact with his counterpart to hopefully have repairs scheduled.

We intend to keep pushing Devon County Council to get the above needs to come to fruition this financial year.

Jacky Harvey Chairman

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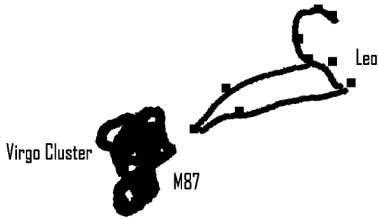


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WITHERIDGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

The month of May gives us a good view of our galactic neighbours. Looking south locate some stars that look like a backwards question mark. This is the head of the Leo constellation. Travel to the left following the pattern below. Just off the point and looking through binoculars some 2,000



galaxies should be seen (looking like fuzzy blobs). This cluster of galaxies lies some 54 million light years away and they are bound together by gravity. We also fall within its gravitational pull making

the whole a super galactic group.

When going outside to start observing give your eyes 20 minutes to adjust. Do not look at bright lights. Now your eyes will enable you to see quite dim objects.

Not the dimmest object but look at Saturn. At the start of the year we were looking at the rings from the top. We have now passed through the plane of Saturn's orbit and are now looking at the rings from below.

Moving to June we have the shortest night, not the best for observing. However, we have a full Moon at its lowest point o the sky. This happens every 19 years and is on the 10th/11th June. The Moon will be just 10⁰ above the horizon.

Now is a good time to look at your equipment. If you are considering buying new binoculars aim to get ones with the largest lens.

(Continued)

WITHERIDGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

The lens gathers the faint starlight so the larger this lens the better. A number approaching 40mm is reasonably good. The other figure is the magnification. Normally a single figure here. A pair advertised as 40x7 means a 40mm lens and a magnification of 7.

Highlight of June is the summer solstice on the 21st. July will still see light skies. Uranus, never an easy planet to spot is a worthy target. On the 4th July Uranus can be found halfway between Venus, shining brightly in the ENE, and the Pleiades cluster above and slightly to the left. Binoculars should show it as a small disc.

Most nights it is possible to see satellites crossing the heavens. Used to improve phone connection and internet in remote parts of the world, there are now 537,267 satellites. The downside is that they interfere with star photography.

To learn more come and join the Witheridge Astronomical Society meeting on the 3rd Thursday of the month in the Parish Hall Committee Room at 7.30pm. All welcome.

Steven Smith

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Each month: -1st Monday evening from 6pm to 7pm,
2nd Thursday morning from 11am to 12 noon
4th Thursday morning from 11am to 12 noon

You are invited to come along to share your problems. These I can send directly to the appropriate police department without any delays. If appropriate I can offer advice or suggestions. If any matter is urgent call 999 immediately.

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Quiz

Following the reopening of the Sports Club, we have continued to run our fortnightly quizzes which have been well attended. In the coming months we are also hoping to add a Pudding Quiz with the support of our patrons.

The quiz dates for the next part of the year are:

14 & 28 May

11 & 25 June

9 & 23 July

6 & 20 August

For those who have not been to one of our quizzes, they only cost £2 per person and half the money raised is given back in prizes. The remainder is used to fund various events and good causes during the year. We have a different person asking the questions each time, which means there is a good variety of types and styles of question. We are always on the lookout for question-masters so if you fancy having a go, why not get in touch? If setting rather than asking questions is your thing, we are happy for someone to read them out on your behalf

(Continued)

Free Money!

The purpose of the Knights is to raise funds to support local groups and community projects in and around Witheridge and the adjacent villages. Over the years we have given over £13,000 to different causes and projects. Those of you that subscribe to the Village Facebook page, or the Knights own page will have seen the announcement asking for bids for grants to support local organisations and good causes for this year.

The closing date for bids is 17 May so if the Voice is out on time, you still have a chance to submit a bid for your club or group. Copies of the forms and the rules can be found on the Knights' page of the Voice website



<https://www.witheridgevoice.org/knightsofwitheridge>

or by following the link on the Knights' Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/780955702008444/>

As ever, the Knights are looking for more people to join us. If you would like to help to raise money for the local community, why not get in touch? The contact telephone number is in the back of the Voice magazine.

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People4Ponies

****STOP PRESS**** As of 8th April People4ponies has been offered a new grazing location - hopefully things will be finalised next week - so thank you everyone! It really has come so very "close to the wire" as you will read below.

As many of you will have seen, in February we received notice of 31st May 2025 to vacate the land that we rent (it is being sold). We have had to cancel our fundraising events, including the plant sale/dog show in May as it just isn't possible to hold an event so close to the moving deadline. I was holding off writing this report in the hope of better news but at the date of publishing we have not found anywhere to move to.

We sold most of our mud control mats, which were our biggest asset, to raise funds quickly. Many tears have been shed the last couple of weeks because I have to face up to the reality that if nowhere suitable for us becomes available very soon, I will have to "put the ponies to sleep" as a group.

This is so against everything we have stood for and I have literally given every part of myself for the ponies (along with super dedicated Witheridge based volunteers along the way) to keep P4P going. The ponies are my family but with no place to be - there is essentially no forward option. Not because we want to give up on P4P or the ponies, or because there is any financial reason - but there are no other options remaining.

I am heartbroken and whilst it will take every bit of my strength, if it comes to that I will be with each of them when the end comes. It's so much easier to fight a situation when there is something to fight against, but right now it's a lack of land/rentable premises. Without a place to be we essentially cease to exist. With the loss of North Devon Animal Ambulance, the recent announcement of the Dog's Trust centre cuts and our situation, it is a very sad, unfortunate time for animal rescue in our region indeed.

NEW- The Listening Book Club at Tiverton Library

An exciting new book club began last month at the Tiverton



Library aimed at those who are unable to enjoy books due to poor eyesight, or those who find it hard to hold a book and turn the pages.

The Listening Book Club has been initiated by the Mid Devon Messenger, a local charity providing news and entertainment for people for whom it is easier and more enjoyable to listen than to read. Members will be able to express their reading preferences, their likes and dislikes in terms of genres as well as authors they enjoy and would recommend. The most important aspect of the group is the opportunity to meet and get to know each other. Creating a peer support group. The group is free to attend and runs on the second Thursday of each month

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Fri 5.00pm – 12.00

Sat 1.00pm – 12.30

Sun 1.00pm – 11.00



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 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

Worthy Trees & Gardening Services

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Men's Den

**Call in for a cuppa
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The Rest A While
2nd + 4th Wednesdays every month
2 – 4pm
Hot drinks from £1
Warm Space

For more information contact:
Sean Murphy – 07503 197282

Charity No. 801038



Mens' Den

The Mens' Den has now been meeting for a year and recently marked its first anniversary.

Roy took cakes in, which all were able to enjoy.

The meetings have been so successful they are now held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month and give the opportunity for men to meet and just sit and chat.

Tricky2Cut

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**Have your own trees sawn into useful timber at
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Contact Richard (Tricky) for further information
07811 408157

Facebook page: Tricky2Cut

Website: www.tricky2cut.co.uk

Email: info@tricky2cut.co.uk

Serving Witheridge and surrounding area
Fully insured for sawmilling and chainsaw work.
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undertaken)

St John's Fayre, Witheridge Saturday 28th June 2025



Any new or returning stall-holders, food van owners etc, we would love to hear from you!

Owners of classic cars, tractors & motorbikes, please contact us to be included.

Musicians, bands and artists of any kind please contact us.

This is a community event & we need your support to bring it to life. Please email us: **witheridgesjf@outlook.com**

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**WITHERIDGE
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We welcome new members of all ages and abilities

Non-members may use the court
at a cost of £10 per hour
Bookings can be made through the LTA ClubSpark
system which can be accessed via our website
You will first need to register with the LTA (free)

For more information about the club,
visit our website:

www.witheridgetennisclub.com
or contact: Sarah Vertigan on 07939 241025

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Introducing Benson Grange

New 2, 3, 4 & 5 bedroom
Shared Ownership homes in Witheridge




Benson Grange Shared Ownership homes offer a range of designs and sizes finished to a high specification and include turfed gardens. Homes are energy efficient, built with sustainability in mind and include Air Source Heat Pumps.



Community Funding

We are proud to be contributing £15,500 to help support community projects in Witheridge. Visit our website to find out how to apply.

 [benson-grange.co.uk](https://www.benson-grange.co.uk)

To register your interest or to find out more about these **Shared Ownership** homes call **01884 510 253**

REGISTER
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T&C's apply. Subject to status and eligibility criteria, Min and max share values apply and rent is payable on the unsold share. Homes will be prioritised to those with a local living or working connection to Witheridge. Interior images are CGI dressed representations taken in actual homes at Benson Grange, April 2025.

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	Secretary	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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