

Witheridge Voice



Spring 2026

Issue 64



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Editorial

Welcome to our Spring Issue of the Witheridge Voice, please take time to read through the many articles to find out what's happening in our village.

It's great to see that the Knight's of Witheridge have organised a St George's Day Fair and, by the time you read this, it should be a great success. You'll see from the Knight's article all the groups they've been able to give money to, also Nomansland Beer Festival and Gifts of Kindness have helped people in the village.

For those of you who like live entertainment make sure you read the information about events organised by Withyfest.

I'm sure many of you are aware of the incidents of anti-social behaviour that have taken place in the village but this should not detract from the many positive things that are taking place.

Ruth Towers

Deadline for the Spring issue is 4th July

Please let me have your articles, by email before that date, so I can edit the magazine and have it to 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.

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

Parish Hall Update

We are happy to say the work on the railings behind the hall is now almost complete. For the time being, this will bring to an end, the amazing transformation the hall has gone through.

There are various events going on throughout the summer and into the autumn with Country Strong returning in November so keep an eye on the Parish Hall web site or FaceBook page for all the information about these.

We have moved into the season of grass cutting so I ask you again to please make sure clear up after your dog, if you don't it is revolting for the poor man cutting the grass - indeed it is revolting for everyone.

We are very pleased to welcome Mel, who will be helping David look after the hall so if you have any ideas how we could improve, we would love to hear from you spicerclare@gmail.com

It is a really beautiful place now so please make the most of it.

Clare Spicer



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Film Club.

After the disgusting behaviour of some young residents at the last film night, we had thought to discontinue these popular film showings. However, it was felt that their abhorrent behaviour should not dictate our pleasure.

Consequently, we are showing *The Choral* on May 9th, and we all hope for a peaceful and enjoyable evening. The film stars the redoubtable Ralph Fiennes as the chorus master in this very British film.

Any further disturbance we will, of course, review this decision.

Please come and join us. The film starts at 7.30 and tickets are available on the door.

Margie and the team.



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Wetheridge Ladies' Club

Our first meeting of 2026 was our AGM, all committee members gave an account of their roles in 2025 and agreed to stand for another year.

June provided us with a game called Higher or Lower to play. It was great fun. She also gave us a quiz. Sue and Celia organised the tombola and there were lovely prizes. Irene brought the latest scrapbook to the meeting so that we could catch up on the contents.

Our February speaker was Lisa Chanter who told us the story of her Grandfather Giovanni (John), who was an Italian prisoner of war in Devon during WWII. Lisa showed us many of his documents and also his army hat decorated with capercaillie feathers. He married a local girl and they eventually bought a farm and raised a dairy herd.

At our March meeting Colin Andrews told us about the long history of Morris dancing and played music to accompanying his talk. We particularly enjoyed his playing the pipe and tabor, a well recognised sound we associate with Morris dancing.

Morris dancing has a long recorded history in this country, the earliest reference being from 1448. It evolved from court entertainment to a staple of village festivals and May Day celebrations. It involves choreographed, rhythmic stepping, often with bells, handkerchiefs, or sticks.

Our club also has a book club and lunch club. Why not come along to see what we are up to! We meet on the 2nd Tuesday in the month in the Parish Hall 2–4 pm, except when we have an outing.



Ladies' Club programme for 2026

- April 14th It did happen to a vet nurse!: Speaker Lottie Dale
- May 12th Decorate and fill hanging garden pots
- June 9th An outing to Barnstaple Museum with afternoon tea
- July 14th Decorating glass jars with decoupage
- Aug 11th Our annual Cream Teas and Stalls, an open meeting, everyone welcome
- Sept 8th Speaker Tricia Sail, her experiences, adventures and time on the BBC Programme 'Race across the World' as a visually impaired person
- Oct 13th An outing to Tiverton: Lunch, followed by a visit to Happy Glaze Pottery
- Nov 10th More Songs from the Musicals with Ruth Towers
- Dec 8th Members' Christmas lunch

Coral Simmonds.



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Witheridge in Bloom

Hi, Everybody,

We managed to complete our works on Chapple Corner in between all that awful weather. Hope you all think it looks so much better!

The decision has been made to tackle the flower bed by The Angel bus stop. Because of the many tree roots it is nigh on impossible to work.

A raised bed, we believe, is the answer and with a kind donation from 'one of our own' we are progressing with this and a difference will be seen shortly.

We haven't escaped the anti-social behaviour – plants going missing, signage thrown over someone's garden (thankfully retrieved) and other signage damaged. Even the daffodils on Chapple Corner being trampled on.

Spring has sprung and believe it or not summer will be fast approaching when we will again replant all our container displays.

New volunteers are always welcome.

Carol Northam

carol.northam1@pobroadband.co.uk

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The Rest A While



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Here at The Rest A While, we are really thrilled that we now have a new disabled ramp . The builders from Allison Homes did a great job, and they caused minimum disruption to the centre. It is now so much easier for anyone with mobility issues to access the building. A very big thankyou to Allison Homes for funding the project and carrying out the work.



We are a registered Warm Space looking out for the wellbeing of everyone within our community. The centre is open from 10 – 12 , every Monday to Saturday and everyone is welcome. Come in for a chat and a cuppa with like minded people. There are lots of things going on.

Our Easter raffle raised a grand total of £200, which helps us with running costs. There were some lovely prizes including a hamper.



The Men's Den is proving very popular and is held on the 2nd and 4th Wed. of the month from 2pm – 4pm. Sean and Peter are the able hosts

A Bring and Buy sale is held on the last Friday of the month, offering seasonal produce and home made goods.

In May we are planning to hold a jumble sale. Please look out for posters.

The live music sessions are continuing . These sessions take place on the fourth Saturday morning of the month and are very popular and the musicians are great fun. Come and have a sing along.

There is now a craft group taking place every Friday afternoon from 2pm-4pm. It is £2 per session which includes a hot drink. Everyone welcome to come along and bring your craft projects along, or just chat. For more info please contact Alison 07368686224

We are always looking for volunteers to join our happy band, so if you have 2 hours to spare per fortnight you would be very welcome. Please contact Val on 01884860709

Pat Grant
secretary

Men's Den

The men's den has now been running for 2 years.

Dates.

May 13th & 27th

June 10th & 24th

July 8th & 22nd

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Witheridge Parish Council-Chairman's annual Report 2025/26

2025/26 has as usual proven to be a very busy year for Witheridge Pariah Council with some projects still work in progress: some nearing fruition, the remainder completed.

The work in progress items centre around the 106 money, £400.000 contribution from the builders of the new housing for open space projects in Witheridge. The Parish council have been allocated £100.000 for the provision of a multi wheeled concrete skate park at the adventure playground to replace the existing. A small working group has been formed to take the project forward. An explorative meeting has taken place with a skate park provider who has estimated a build cost of between 200K and £250K and the steps forward outlined. Firstly a village consultation meeting with prospective users and local residents; A tender prepared and placed on the government web site and a design plan submitted by the successful bidder for appraisal which in turn will go to the planning authority for approval. Step two is the application for funding from several organisations e.g. sport England, skate park UK ,and the lottery.

Adjacent to the proposed skate park is the old existing pump track. We are hoping that Alison Homes honour their promise to refurbish this by upgrading the ride surface with stone. Fingers crossed it is not “kicked into the long grass?”

Whilst on the subject of Alison Homes the transfer of the land adjacent to the adventure playground known as the Northern Open space (NOS) to the parish council still has not come to fruition despite the hand over date having long expired. Their solicitors are constantly being reminded by the PC of this commitment so hopefully once the construction of Benson Grange is finalised the transfer of ownership will finally take place?

The District Council also allocated to the PC £40.000 from the open space fund, for the purchase of amenity land around the village. Requests were sent to all local land owners by letter but unfortunately none was offered. However the amenity land at Cannington Road was put up for auction.

The District council condition of purchase was that it become a community project. A village meeting was held for interested parties to discuss the possibility of planting an orchard and create a community space around it with benches and picnic tables. A large number of attendees supported the venture and agreed to become volunteers. The land however was sold at auction before the community bid could be considered. All is not lost however as a new piece of land has been identified, the old allotment site at Merryside villas, although smaller than the original, could become a viable community space. The plot belongs to the District but due to the governments insistence that Devon become a unitary council the District council will no longer exist. The Parish have submitted the necessary "Expression of Interest form" which will be considered in due course when hopefully the land ownership passes to the PC Many thanks go to councillor Woody Fox for putting the wheels in motion and moving this project forward.

Nearing fruition are the playground lease from the Parish Hall, The new defibrillator and the playground railings installation. The Parish council put in a request to the Parish Hall for a formal lease of the land occupied by the tots playground and the youth shelter. Not an easy ask for the Parish Hall, as they are a trust and therefore it needed the charity Commission consent for an approval both for a children's playground and the subsequent lease. This necessitated the employment of a designated advisor from a narrow band of professions to act in the Parish Halls interest as to land values etc. The existing land registry document had to be updated as the of the existing names some had left the committee and one had died. The new deed will have a custodian trustee. Once this has been processed by the Land registry the draft lease will be available for the PC for approval. Many thanks to the Parish Hall chair and committee for their diligence.

Last May the Parish Council voted to replace the deteriorating post and Rail fence around the playground with bow topped railings since when the installation has become a "comedy of errors" that you honestly couldn't make up .

Initially the contractors didn't follow the spec whereby the railings bordering the two moors way, were not installed and some set at a jaunty angle. The contractors gates drop rods did not have a receiver allowing the gates to move back and forth. Receivers were duly installed, set in concrete, but were so long that the gates could not open!! I'm afraid it all went downhill from there until the contractor sent in a new team who have attended to our long list of snagging complaints. We will however await for our upcoming playground operational inspection report before any payment is approved.

A successful bid was made by the PC from the Legal and General community fund for another defibrillator to serve the community at the Tiverton end of the village. Initial talks were had with the doctors surgery to ascertain if they would consent to having it sited undercover on their entrance wall to which they agreed. The PC will be responsible for the ongoing support charge, weekly inspection and insuring the machine against theft and damage. This important project however seemed to be facing death by solicitors as our insurers would not cover any injury claims, that may occur on the surgery premises whilst collecting the de fib. Due to an eleventh hour meeting with the practice manager and Doctor Owens they have agreed to indemnify us should any claim arise on their premises The project now can proceed. Our thanks go to councillor Carol Northam for both getting this project off the ground and her commitment to the ongoing maintenance / inspections for both the village defibrillators.

One of the completed projects is the toilet block re-roofing due to water ingress. The original tiles were removed but most showed signs of deterioration and needed replacement. Council made the decision to use slate that would match the majority of the surrounding roofs in the square.

The Parish clock threw its annual "spanner in the works", costing the Parish £7548 for the repair and replacement of both the quarter and strike automatic winding units.

A request was made from East Worlington Parish council to Witheridge PC for a merger of the two councils.

After much deliberation we voted against the proposal due to our current sustained workload.

At the December meeting the council approved the finance committees recommendation to set a budget for 2026/2027 of £57,366 by setting a precept of £50,000 the remainder being funded by our general reserve. This will result in an increase of just under 4%.

Regrettably I cannot finish this report without mentioning the anti social behaviour that took place in our village last year in the parish hall grounds, the youth shelter, the church, and the bus shelters in the square. Our police advocate councillor Steven Smith took an active role resulting in a positive response from the police with patrols through the village and visits to the youths in the parish hall. A community protection warning was issued to one family and four anti social letter follow ups following the damage in the Church. The police advise that, should you witness any incident as it happens dial 999 and, if the incident has already happened, 101. I urge you should anyone experience this senseless behaviour please report it to the Police and send in any video/CCTV/doorbell footage or photos if you have it. This will ensure that police presence is maintained and police authorities cannot use the perceived decrease in crime statistics to reduce police numbers.

Finally we have to say goodbye to our clerk Peter Dunn after 21 years of exemplary and conscientious service to Witheridge Parish and with whom it was a pleasure to work alongside. We welcome Faye Davies who has accepted the post. I am sure we will all support her and look forward to working together.

Jacky Harvey Chair Witheridge Council

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St John the Baptist Church

As May arrives with longer days and warmer sunshine, we are surrounded by signs of new life. Gardens begin to bloom, trees fill with leaves, and the village seems to slow into a gentler rhythm. It is a season that invites us to pause, notice, and give thanks for the beauty around us.



In the church, this is a time of renewal. After Easter, we continue to hold onto its message of hope—reminding us that even in uncertain times, new beginnings are always possible. Like the natural world, growth often happens quietly and steadily, encouraging us to be patient with ourselves and one another.

Our village is built on simple but meaningful connections—friendly greetings, shared moments, and small acts of kindness. The church is part of this shared life, offering a place of welcome, reflection, and support for all, whether you attend regularly or not.

You are warmly invited to join us at any of our Sunday services or upcoming gatherings. There is no pressure—just an open space to sit, reflect and be part of the community. Please also feel free to pop in and see the newly laid floor and take a moment to think and rest.

While May is a joyful time, we also remember that not everyone finds this season easy. Loneliness and worry can still be present. As a church, we are here for anyone who may need a listening ear or quiet support.

As we move through this beautiful season, may we each take a moment to notice the small signs of hope around us. May this season bring you God's peace, human connection, and a renewed sense of encouragement.

Vicar Adrian

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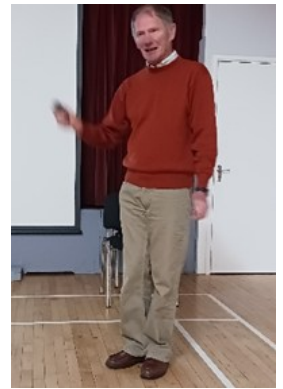
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Witheridge Garden Club

February was our first meeting of the year, and we had a very interesting, illustrated talk on the Gardens of Madeira. Jonny Hartnell gave us a potted history of the island which was discovered in 1419 and covered in a dense forest. Later when the island became inhabited, the forest was cut back to the north of the island, and the south of the island gradually became more built up and populated. Currently its population stands around 250,000 which, in the tourist season, expands to many more with the arrival of the cruise ships and tourist flights.



Jonny told us that there are not many native plants in Madeira – the rest being imported. Native trees are Stinkwood :Laurel, Canary Laurel and Tree Heather – all found in the Laurisilva Forest in the north of the island.



Birds native to the island: Madeira chaffinch, Madeira fire crest and the Madeira buzzard.

Flowers – Madeira Violet, Pride of Madeira (Echium Candicans) and the Madeira Orchid.



Although the striking Bird of Paradise plant (Strelitzia) is the national flower of Madeira, it was originally imported from South Africa.

The wonderful Botanical Gardens were originally owned by William Reid (Reid's Hotel) and then gifted to the government.



Madeirans are well known for their love of gardens, colour abounds everywhere and Jonny showed us photos of gardens he had visited in Madeira



In Funchal there is a wonderful market selling all kinds of fresh fruit, vegetables, and flowers as well as household good etc.



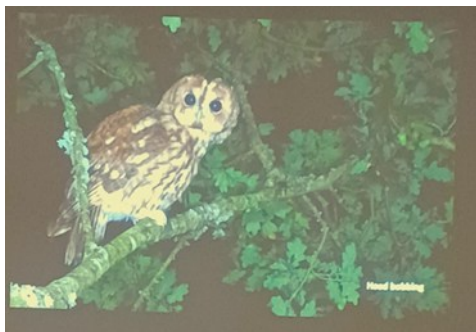
In March, Stephen Powles came to talk to us about Tawny Owls. Stephen has set a number of cameras around his property and is fortunate to have had Tawny Owls visiting on a regular basis over the last 21 years. He played a recording of both Tawny Owls and Barn Owls calls – what a difference between the two! The Tawny Owls have the call we all know, whilst Barn Owls have a high pitched screech.

The Tawny Owls usually breed once they get to 2 years old, usually in March, laying eggs two days apart so there is a succession of hatching. The owls are very widespread in England, Scotland and Wales, but not in Ireland.



Stephen showed us some of the remarkable photos he had taken of owls and explained some of the tricks and methods he uses to get just the right shot.

Tawny owls are very territorial and don't go far from their territory, usually no more than 4 km. The juveniles usually leave the nest in the autumn and have to hunt around to find their own territory.



2026 Talks Programme

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
29 th April	New Tricks for Old Gardeners	Katherine Crouch
27 th May	Plants for Five Seasons – Intrigued?	Michael Stephens
24 th June	Woodland Gardens	Saul Walker
29 th July	My Favourite Cornish Gardens	Clive Lloyd
1 st August	SUMMER SHOW	
30 th September	Growing a New Garden	Becky Searle
28 th October	People4ponies	Faye Stacey
25 th November	AGM & SOCIAL EVENING	

Jill Horwood



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Spring Show March 2026

Despite the varied weather conditions thrown at us during the week, our exhibitors rose to the challenge and the hall was filled with vases and vases of daffodils, tulips, primroses, flowers of all sorts, flowering and foliage shrubs, and fantastic craft items, cakes and lots of children’s entries.

Ros Knight won The Witheridge Gardening Club Show Cup for the most points in the Show



Ruth Cooper-Wedge won The Witheridge Gardening Club Shield for the runner up.



Arthur Walker won the award for most points in the Children’s Classes



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Witheridge Methodist Church

We've had a busy few months with both our monthly coffee mornings and community lunches being well attended; our April coffee morning was our busiest ever! Thank you to all who support us at these events, it's lovely to see familiar faces and new ones.

Everyone is welcome to our Sunday worship at 10.30am. The service usually lasts an hour with tea and coffee afterwards.

On Palm Sunday we joined with Christians in Witheridge for an afternoon Café Church, complete with Lily the Donkey who led our procession around the Parish Hall. Special thanks to John Gibson for bringing Lily down for us.

The next event we have planned is Breakfast Church on Sunday 31st May, at the Parish Hall. Full English breakfast is served at 10am followed by a Family Friendly short act of worship.



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Nomansland Beer Festival



Last May's festival was another resounding success. We served over 2,000 pints (that's one every 30 seconds!) and raised £13,000. In total, our three previous festivals have raised over £30,000 for local good causes, thanks entirely to our generous sponsors and your support from our local communities.

We are a not for profit company - all funds raised go back into the community. We have been pleased to support many local organisations, including the Rest a While Centre, Witheridge Warriors YFC, Witheridge Brownies, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Exeter, Chulmleigh PCC fund for disadvantaged children at Chulmleigh Academy, North Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team, Nomansland Cricket Club, and all our local primary schools. Last winter we funded Witheridge School PTFA's visiting pantomime enjoyed by all. We remain open to requests for support.

We look forward to running the festival again on 29th & 30th May this year at Nomansland Cricket Club. We will again have over 20 Devon beers and ciders, various food outlets and a range of live music across Friday night and Saturday all day and night. A 70s and 80s duo are headlining on Friday and Saturday sees Stillyano returning to close the festival.

Book your tickets, contact us, and find out more at: <https://nomanslandbeerfest.org/> Advance bookings help us to plan, and help you, as they are cheaper than on the door.

See you there!

Chris Clark

for Nomansland Festivals CIC

Hello all, our Committee has been very busy with both fundraising and organising future events. We hope this year-round fundraising will allow the Committee to provide even more hampers to nominated individuals, couples, or families this Christmas.



Our table at the monthly farmer's market has proven very popular, with February's market putting another £85 in the pot, and March's raising a record £111.50 from both a raffle and a "name the rabbit" competition. The Farmers Market runs every third Saturday of the month in the Parish Hall from 10 am until 1 pm. Join us to find out more.

We are very excited to announce we will be hosting a Family Disco on Saturday, 16th May, from 7 pm until 10 pm. We are very lucky to have the support of DJ Christopher of HnR Disco, who has given his time to get the party started with fab music and a fantastic light show. We hope to sell tickets in advance and on the door. Alongside a bar, we are running a tuck shop and a raffle. Look out for posters nearer the time for more information.

The group has applied for a grant from both the "Knights of Witheridge" and the Amory Trust. If we are successful, these funds will be used for general running costs and advertising (banner and business cards etc).

A committee member has put the group forward to join the Tesco Blue Disc Campaign. Asda have a similar Green Disc Campaign, which we hope to enrol on. Any help collecting discs while you do your weekly shop would be very welcome. Details will be posted on social media if successful.

The Community's support is always appreciated and vital to ensure we can support even more nominations this year.

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A poster for a community meal. The background is dark with illustrations of various vegetables: green leafy herbs in the top left, a purple onion in the top right, orange carrots in the top right, a yellow corn cob in the bottom right, and a brown root vegetable in the bottom left. A white banner at the top contains the text "Community meal, every fourth Friday of the month". Below the banner, the time "12:30PM" is written in large white letters. Underneath the time, the location "Hele Lane Chapel, Black Dog EX17 4QS" is written in white. The main title "Fourth Friday Feast" is in a large, white, stylized font. Below the title, the dates "22nd May, 26th June, 24th July" are listed. A horizontal line separates the dates from the booking information. The booking information states: "To book in please contact Mary on 07814590220 or hosepipe54@yahoo.com by Wednesday." Another horizontal line separates the booking information from the donation information. The donation information states: "Donations are welcome and support the children we sponsor via CompassionUK.org".

Community meal, every fourth Friday of the month

12:30PM

Hele Lane Chapel, Black Dog EX17 4QS

Fourth Friday Feast

22nd May, 26th June, 24th July

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Donations are welcome and support the children we sponsor via
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Monday Club

At the time of writing there have been three speakers. The first in February was about CHAT (Church Housing Action Team), which was started by Sally Chapman 30 years ago and initially focussed on young people, particularly men, that became homeless. Today it's a one stop shop providing a food bank, housing advice and 10 years ago became an official debt advisory service. At present there are about 20 homeless people in Tiverton and last year help was provided to manage £1.2 million of debt.

The first talk in March, by Dennis Day reminiscing about his time working for the Post Office and how, much to his surprise, he was promoted several times into positions that he didn't feel he was qualified for! He recalled the time when mechanisation was being introduced and his role in the construction of a new building which was equipped with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) machines to read post codes.

On 23rd March there was a talk by Trevor a retired courtroom officer with an interesting canter through the history of magistrates' courts. It was in 1919 that the first women could become magistrates and today 57% of magistrates are women. It was interesting to note that all criminal cases start in magistrates' courts with 95% being dealt with; the remainder go to the Crown Court. Magistrates are unpaid volunteers who receive training but are not usually lawyers.

The meeting on 20th April will be about the crypt that was uncovered in the church and will be given by Sue Wells.

27th April will see our first coach trip; the destination is a mystery. On 1st June we will be going to Bath, 29th June Paignton and 20th July Sidmouth. If you would like to join the Club please call Steven Smith on 01884 861037.

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St George's Day Event

I am something of a hostage to fortune this time as the main event of the year so far, our first ever St George's Celebration, will happen between the deadline for articles and the date of publication. At present, the Knights, under Alison Jeatt's leadership, are busy getting ready for the event. We have got games organised; we have booked the Tiverton Town Band and the Exeter Morris. We are negotiating for a Fire Engine and there should be a 5-a-side, a Tug-of-War, a Fancy Dress, live music, craft stalls, breakfast burgers, cream teas a barbecue and more besides. But all that is in the future at present. I hope it all came together successfully and that the weather was kind. In the meantime, thank you to the Sports Club and the Playing Field Committee for letting us use their facilities and to all the volunteers that have helped out both cooking food and providing help on the day.



Grant Applications: Supporting Local Initiatives

The closing date for applications for grants to support local clubs, organisations, and societies in Witheridge and neighbouring villages was 21st April. We are pleased to have received applications from a wide range of local organisations, all working to support our community, including:

Witheridge in Bloom
The Benita Community Project
The Witheridge Voice
Christians in Witheridge
Witheridge Parish Hall
Witheridge St Johns Fair
Witheridge Warriors
Gifts of Kindness
Thelbridge Parish Hall
Witheridge Guides and Brownies.

The Knights will meet in May to look at the applications and to allocate funding, We have had more requests for funds than we have money to allocate but we will do our best to meet them in whole or in part. Remember, the more support we receive at our various events, the more we can give back to the community.

Ongoing Fundraising Activities

Quiz. The fortnightly quiz in the Sports Club is still regularly attended. If you have not come along, why not give it a try? All quizzes commence at 19:30 in the Sports Club, Tickets are just £2, and your participation helps us support more local initiatives. We give half the money we take in prize money so the more of you that come, the bigger the prize! The next quizzes are: 13th & 27th May; 10th & 24th June and 8th & 22nd July. The dates are also published on the Knights Facebook page and the Witheridge Facebook pages.

Meat Raffle. Our fortnightly Meat Raffle, with a chance to win a £25 meat voucher, is also back up and running. Tickets are only £1, the draw is held in the Sports Club at 17:00 on the Saturday following a Quiz. Look out for Roy Harknett selling tickets in the Rest-A-While and the Sports Club.

St John's Fair. We will have a stall at the St Johns Fair this year. The final shape of the stall is still being finalised. Please come and give us your support.

Future Plans. Later in the year, we are hoping to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Two Moors Way by walking from Knowstone to Witheridge with a Guess the Steps competition. We are also looking at holding a Tea Dance in the Parish Hall.

Join the Knights: Make a Difference in Your Community

Becoming a Knight is a great way to meet people, support local events, and make a visible difference in the community. Our last appeal for members bore fruit and we welcome Alison Jeatt, Karen Bangs and John Barkell to the Knights. If you are interested in joining the Knights and helping local good causes, please call the telephone number on the back page of the Voice. The more members we have, the more funds we can generate to benefit everyone.



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Witheridge Parent and Toddler Group

Toddlers had a lovely start to Spring with lots of new faces coming to join us. Firstly I must say a massive thank you to Stacey for stepping in and running multiple sessions this term, and to Chris for some amazing crafts!

Over the next few weeks we will be doing some fun Easter activities and hopefully planting some of our own seeds to watch grow over the summer.

Unfortunately this winter was not kind to our toy collection. The majority of our dolls and dressing up outfits got too damp in our shed and have had to be thrown away. If anyone has any spare toys they wouldn't mind donating they would be much appreciated by our toddlers.

Sessions run from Witheridge school on Wednesday afternoon (13:45 till 15:30) and Friday morning (9 till 10:30) at only £1 per family. Drink and snack included!

Please feel free to get in touch on our Facebook page or talk to me directly on 07875127064.

Rebecca Robinson

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Fri	5 - 11pm
Sat	2 - 11pm
Sun	4 - 9.30pm



The Club is a Members Only establishment. Membership is open to all.

Details can be found on our facebook page, by contacting the club at

WitheridgeSportsClub@gmail.com
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Witheridge Warriors Return Home in Style

After a challenging winter spent playing away fixtures due to relentless weather, the Witheridge Warriors are delighted to be back on home ground — and what a return it has been.

The club has shown fantastic spirit and resilience over recent months, with all age groups continuing to train, compete, and grow despite the disruption. Now, with brighter days and firmer pitches, the energy around the team is unmistakably high.

The younger squads, particularly the U10s and U7s, have been in excellent form. Both teams have been playing regularly and delivering some impressive performances, showing great teamwork, determination, and enthusiasm. Their progress is a testament to both their commitment and the support from coaches and families alike.

Exciting developments are also underway for the U8/U9 team, who are now being led by their new coach, Eleanor. With fresh leadership and a growing sense of confidence, these squads are eagerly preparing to step into match play, with friendly fixtures set to begin in May.

Looking ahead, the club is thrilled to be expanding even further. After Easter, the Warriors will be welcoming reception-aged children, with free training available for the whole term — a fantastic opportunity for the youngest players to get involved in a fun and supportive environment.

The club is also keen to recruit more players across all age groups, particularly in school years 6 and 7. Increasing numbers in these squads will allow the teams to play more competitively and continue developing their skills on the pitch.

To encourage new joiners, training is free for all ages for the first two weeks. After that, sessions cost just £2 per week, with a £30 registration fee. The club is committed to being inclusive, and financial support is available to ensure that no child misses out. The Warriors would also like to extend a huge thank you to Firs Care Home for their generous sponsorship for the 2025–26 season. As the club continues to grow, they are now seeking a sponsor for the 2026–27 season. Any local businesses or individuals interested in supporting grassroots football are warmly encouraged to get in touch.

The team is also looking ahead to a fun-filled end to the season, with an end-of-season presentation and colour run celebration planned for the end of May — a fantastic way to bring players, families, and the community together to celebrate a great year.

For more information, please contact WitheridgeWarriorsYFC@gmail.com, find the club on Facebook at Witheridge Warriors YFC, or message Tommy on 07969 485366.

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WITHERIDGE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

May is a good month to look low down towards the NE for the constellation Lyra. [Beta Lyrae](#), the second brightest star is the prototype of a class of [binary stars](#) known as [Beta Lyrae variables](#). These binary stars are so close to each other that they become egg-shaped and material flows from one to the other. Lyra also hosts the [Ring Nebula](#), the second-discovered and best-known [planetary nebula](#).

Lyra, shaped rather like a Christmas stocking dangling from the fireplace on Christmas Eve, is worth looking for with a small telescope. At the bottom of the constellation lies the famous Ring Nebula, the remains of a star that exploded many years ago.

At the top of the constellation, where the pin holding the sock would be, can be found the star Vega. It is a nearby star at only 25 light years from the Sun. it is also the second brightest star in the northern celestial hemisphere.

Looking now at June, The nights are very much shorter and viewing is restricted to a brief time in the early morning. Looking low down in the south west the constellation of Virgo can be seen. The galaxy contains the brightest quasar, 3C 273, a large telescope will be needed to see this object which is mag 13 and is estimated to be 2,000 million light years away.

There are two meteor showers this month but neither of them is especially prolific. The first on the 28/29 July, the δ -Aquariids whose parent body is Comet 96P/Machholz, and the second on the 30th July is the α - Capricornids whose parent body is Comet 169P/NEAT. A bright moon will not help in meteor spotting and the hourly number is low in both cases.

Early Notice - On August 12th we shall experience a partial Solar Eclipse at tea-time. Classed as partial we shall see about 98% of the Sun covered by the Moon and so expect there to be significant darkening. I propose holding an eclipse party on the Parish Hall

Car Park giving everyone a safe way to observe the eclipse. All are invited. Next month I will give details of how to make a 'pin-hole camera'. This is one of the safest ways to observe the Sun. Advance notice – a smallish cardboard box will be required together with some greaseproof paper.

The Witheridge Astronomical Society has changed its meeting night. Our meetings are monthly at 7.30pm but now on the third Tuesday in the Committee Room of Witheridge Parish Hall. We are not a 'highbrow' society, our aim being to introduce people to the hobby/ science/ wonders of the night sky. After our meeting, and if the sky is clear, we hold an observing session looking at some of the better objects to be seen. If you have an interest do come along and join us. No experience or knowledge is needed. We have kindly been given some telescopes which are available to borrow.

Steven Smith

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I act as a go-between, a middleman, for the people of the parish. I may be found in the Parish Hall Committee Room as follows:

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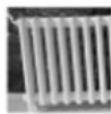
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Witheridge Allotment Society – Spring has sprung!

As I write this, we have had a weekend of fantastic weather, and the days are definitely getting longer.

For allotment holders, March/April is an important time to prepare the soil, sow new seeds, and make sure the allotment is set for the year ahead. Healthy soil means a healthy garden! Turning over the soil and raking out any unwanted debris helps oxidise the soil and improve its structure. Healthy soil retains moisture better, which is vital as the warmer weather arrives.

Early crops like broad beans, peas, and onions can be planted. Also, early potatoes are going in.

With the arrival of April showers and warmer weather, means keeping on top of your weeding. Weeds compete for resources with your crops and can cause nutrient deficiencies. Removing weeds as soon as they appear is essential to ensuring your plants receive enough water. If the crops are growing, the weeds are growing too!

We have no mains water so collecting rainwater is essential and ensures that plants thrive as they establish their roots and begin their growth cycle.

We all look forward to Spring and, for us allotmenters, an allotment becomes a flourishing haven of productivity and beauty throughout the growing season, reaping the rewards with fresh produce.

If you would like an allotment please get in touch





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District Councillor Update – April 2026

I hope you're enjoying the warmer weather and the feeling that the days are stretching out just a little more each week. The past few months have been busy, dealing with both ongoing local issues and some specific matters that have come up. I'm pleased to share my latest update with you as your District Councillor.

East Nutcott Inert Waste Application

A planning application has been submitted for land near Rackenford at East Nutcott Farm, proposing a large-scale land restoration scheme involving the importation of inert soil waste over several years to reshape the land, described by the applicant as a rewilding project. I have formally objected to the application.

The community has raised concerns, arguing that the proposal is effectively a commercial landfill for inert building waste, particularly as the site includes culm grassland, a sensitive habitat that does not require rewilding. The proposal has raised wider concerns across surrounding villages, as HGV movements are expected to approach from multiple directions, impacting a broad rural road network. Objections also highlight the site's proximity to the Little Dart River, with the threat of sedimentation and the risk of invasive species spreading through the sensitive wildlife corridor. Significant concern focuses on the strain on narrow and fragile roads from up to 75 lorry trips per day.

A community petition has been launched, and residents are encouraged to have their say by commenting on the planning portal—full details and links can be found on my Facebook page.

Local Government Reform in Devon – Update

The Government is considering proposals to replace Devon's two-tier county and district council system with unitary councils, where a single authority would run all local services. Consultation has just taken place, and the final decision is expected most likely in July or August. It was my expectation that we would see a larger Devon wide unitary, but announcements in other areas, such as Hampshire, have seen several smaller unitaries, so let's wait and see what happens in Devon. There will most likely be elections in May 2027, with the new councils taking over in April 2028, during which time current district councillors will remain in post.

Old Allotment Land Adjacent to Amenity Land at Willow Rise

I have been exploring the opportunity to rent or purchase the land adjoining the new park at Willow Rise from the District Council for community use. Unfortunately, with Local Government Reform imminent, parish and town councils have been requesting most available land in their areas. The council is going through a formal process to release the land. We still have a good chance of securing it; it's just taking a little longer than expected.

Potholes and Blocked Drains

The horrendous winter conditions have caused serious damage to our roads. Please report any potholes or blocked drains on the Devon County Council website. If anything is urgent or not being addressed, contact Richard, our County Councillor, at richard.hopley@devon.gov.uk.

Stay in Touch

I'm here to represent you and help however I can. You can contact me by email at peter.jones@northdevon.gov.uk, call or WhatsApp on 07708 187 305, or via Facebook Messenger on my councillor page. Please follow my Facebook page for the latest updates and information.

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The Mount Pleasant Inn
Nomansland
EX16 8NN

www.themountpleasantinn.com
01884 860271

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Visit our websites or find us on social media for further information and updates on what we are up to:

 Broadclose Farm Market Garden
 @broadclose_farm
 menchine.co.uk

Withyfest Update

Withyfest Open Sessions

Location: Rest a While, 3 Fore Street, Witheridge, EX16 8AG

Time: Last Saturday of the month 10am – 12pm

What to expect: This is an open session where all musicians are welcome. We provide a warm, welcoming and supportive environment for musicians of all stripes. As a result there is a satisfying variety of different music genres. Longstone Moon, Dylan Reader and Steve Sutton are regular contributors. It has been over a year since this session started and it has been a huge success with musicians and audience alike.

May Withy Fest

Location: Witheridge Parish Hall, 3 North Street, Witheridge, EX16 8AH

Time: Saturday 23rd May 12:30pm to 11pm

What to expect: We aim to provide a full day music festival. The day will be action packed from 12:30 to 11pm. Over 10 amazing acts are set to entertain all day. Headlining this year is Blind Man Earl, who deliver a unique combination of Blues, Rock, Funk and Reggae. With Entry £5 in advance (£8 on the door) and all alcoholic drinks £3 or less (including a range of 4 real ales at £3 a pint) it represents an inexpensive way to enjoy this May bank holiday.

Folk Withy Fest

Location: Witheridge Parish Hall, 3 North Street, Witheridge, EX16 8AH

Time: Saturday 25th July 12:30pm to 11pm

What to expect: Celebrating all things folk and highlighting the depth of local folky talent we have 10 acts providing a full day music festival. The day's program is packed from 12:30 to 11pm. The star studded includes the highly rated Fox Willow and Arnwyn. With Entry £5 in advance (£8 on the door) and all alcoholic drinks £3 or less (including a range of 4 real ales at £3 a pint) it represents real value for money

WITHEFEST 26

23rd MAY

WITHERIDGE PARISH HALL (EX16 8AH) OPEN 12PM

BLIND MAN EARL
MONKEY WRENCH
LLONGSTONE MOON
RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT
NO SHENANIGANS YVE
THE MICK OSBORNE EXPERIENCE
WIVELELE ROB CRAIG
ANTHONY CHIPPERFIELD

ENTRY £5 ADVANCE £8 DOOR FULLY LICENCED BAR
TICKETS AND LINE UP INFO WWW.WITHEFEST.CO.UK

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.



Wetheridge Newsagents t/a Two Moors Store

16a The Square, Wetheridge

New opening hours:

Monday – Thursday 6.00am - 6.00pm

Friday and Saturday 6.00am - 7.00pm

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**

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07811 408157

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Website: www.tricky2cut.co.uk

Email: info@tricky2cut.co.uk

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Josh: 07792 906258

Becky: 07368 499893



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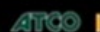
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36 North Street, Witheridge, EX16 8AG



Witheridge Farmers Market

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We also serve tea, coffee & cakes!

Witheridge Parish Hall

THIRD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
10 AM - 1 PM



**WITHERIDGE
TENNIS CLUB**



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

FREE SCRAP METAL COLLECTION WITHERIDGE AREA

Fully licenced with the Environment Agency.
Please call to arrange collection.

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Short mat bowls

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

Green fee is £3.50 per session there after

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



Photo - Robin Thomason

Badminton

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

Anyone interested in coming along should contact Linda Williams 07966131522

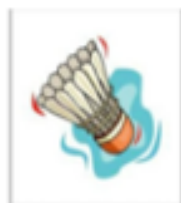


Table tennis

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

Friday 11.00am - 12.00 in Parish Hall

Greg Henderson

Witheridge C of E Academy Celebrates a Season of Community, Creativity and Kindness

It has been an exceptionally vibrant and uplifting term at Witheridge C of E Academy, with pupils, staff and families coming together to celebrate a wide range of events that highlight the school's strong sense of community and shared values.

At the heart of school life is the vision to "Encourage One Another and Build Each Other Up," and this has been clearly reflected in both the classroom and the many activities taking place beyond it.

Music has played a leading role in recent celebrations. Pupils delighted audiences with a lively and confidence-filled concert led by Mr Rogo, showcasing not only their musical talents but also their enthusiasm and support for one another. This was closely followed by an energetic drum concert with Mr Godfrey, where the school hall came alive with rhythm. The performances were a testament to teamwork, dedication and the joy of shared achievement.

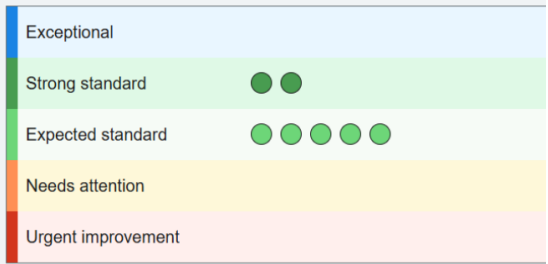
Beyond the school grounds, pupils involved in the Exmoor Challengers have been busy preparing for their upcoming challenge. As part of their training, they recently took part in an inspiring session led by students and staff at Tiverton College, gaining valuable experience while building confidence, resilience and teamwork.

Seasonal celebrations also brought the school community together. A thoughtful and reflective Easter Service, led by Adrian, provided a moment for pupils and staff to consider the themes of hope, joy and new life. These values were echoed in daily school life, as children continued to demonstrate kindness and encouragement towards one another.

The festivities continued with a highly successful Easter Fayre, organised by the school's PTFA alongside Mrs Seymour. Filled with laughter, activities and a strong sense of community spirit, the event proved to be a highlight for families and supporters alike. Adding a splash of colour to the term was Voyager Silly Sock Day, where pupils arrived in an array of bright, bold and imaginative designs, bringing smiles across the school. Meanwhile, Class 3 celebrated the completion of their swimming sessions, showing impressive determination and progress throughout.

Charity and enrichment have also been key focuses. Pupils embraced Red Nose Day with enthusiasm, dressing in red to support Comic Relief and raising £54, alongside additional funds from Red Nose sales. Younger children in Reception and Year 1 were thrilled to take part in trampolining sessions, demonstrating both excitement and exemplary behaviour.

The school has also welcomed strong engagement from families, particularly during Parents' Evening, where staff and carers had valuable opportunities to discuss pupils' progress and achievements. This ongoing partnership between home and school



continues to play a vital role in supporting every child's development. Alongside celebrations, the school maintains a focus on wellbeing and safety for all members of the school community, highlighted in our recent OFSTED report. We were delighted with the

strong outcomes and positive comments from the inspectors.

As the term draws to a close and the Easter break begins, the Witheridge school community reflects on a period filled with positivity, achievement and togetherness. With a continued commitment to kindness, encouragement and mutual support, the academy looks forward to welcoming pupils back for another exciting chapter ahead.

Kind regards,
Miss Ratcliffe

Head of School
Witheridge C of E Academy
Part of TEAM Academy Trust
01884 860518
<https://www.witheridge.devon.sch.uk/>

What's Happening in the village.

Parish Hall Chair		Clare Spicer 860135
Parish Hall booking	(meetings are free)	Steven Smith 861037
Allotment Society	David Williams	07811979488
Art Group	Rest a While –Wed 7.30pm	Eileen Curtis 860564
Badminton	Parish Hall Fri 7.30pm Linda	Williams 07966131522
Brownies and Guides	Witheridge School	Carole Chapple 855329
Charity Bingo	Thelbridge Hall alt Wed 7.30pm	Marion Crane 860530
Bell Ringer	Belfry Thur 7.30pm Ken	Ramsbottom 861108
Dog training	Parish Hall Mon 6pm Jackie	McDevitt 01769 550155
Film Club		Margie Cosker 861695
Gardening Club	Parish Hall last Wed 7pm	Jill Horwood 861323
Knights of Witheridge	Chairman	Ian Tench 860770
Ladies Group	Parish Hall 2nd Tues 2pm Coral	Simmonds 07759845052
Methodist Church	Sunday 10.30am Ruth Towers	07980104347
Monday Club	Rest a While alt Mon 2pm	Alison Jeatt 561683
Rest a While	Mon– Sat 10-12,	Val Dickinson 860709
Short mate bowls	Parish Hall Tues 6.30, Thur 2pm	Greg Henderson 860819
Table tennis	Parish Hall Fri 11-12	Greg Henderson 860819
Tennis club	Www.witheridgetennisclub.com	Sarah Vertigan 07939241025
Taekwondo	Parish Hall Thur 6-7pm	Kevin Raven 07804471165
Astronomical society	Committee Room 3rd Thur 7.30-9	Steven Smith 861037
Witheridge in Bloom	Carol.northam@pobroadband..co.uk	
Witheridge Golf Society	Ken	Ramsbottom 861108
Witheridge Parish Church	Sunday 9.30am	Rev Adrian Wells 861383
Witheridge Primary School	& pre-School Head of School	Miss Ratcliffe 869518
Witheridge parent and toddler group	Witheridge School Wed 1.45-3.30 Fridays 9-10.13am	Rebecca +Nick Robinson 07875127054
Witheridge ploughing association	Gill Gilbard	gill@helebartonfarm.co.uk
Witheridge Young Farmers	Emma Gilbard em	ma.gilbard@markalengroup.com
Witheridge Youth Club	Parish Hall 1+3rd Thurs 7-8.30pm	Andrea Court 860815
Witheridge Striders	Edward Fyson 07517148284	Janet Ashelford 860234
Worlington Photography group	Worlington Parish hall 3rd Tue 7.30pm	Terry Brown 861268



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